

# *My Georgia Magazine* **Hometown**

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

## *Fall 2017*

**Andrew Sabori &  
Ellis Island Murals**

**Area Artists:**

**Bailey Bullard**

**Roger Johnson**

**Salute to  
First Responders**



*The family business*



# My Georgia Magazine Hometown



## Our Thoughts on Irma's Trek Through South Georgia

The staff and writers of My Georgia Hometown wish to send our prayers and heartfelt sympathy to all who were in Hurricane Irma's path and are still recovering from her wrath. We also send our heartfelt thanks to all First Responders, tree removal and road crews, linemen, camera crews, and volunteers who stepped quickly into Irma's wake to help our region.

Irma will go down in history as the largest, most powerful, slow-moving storm system the Southeast has ever experienced. Her breadth and power engulfed Florida and Georgia as she lingered over the Southeast causing much flooding and destruction. We hope that we will never have a storm like this again. South Georgians are a resilient people and will rise above the storm.

—Vickie & Stanley Harsey

Hurricane Irma spared many of us in Lowndes County. After the devastation we witnessed from two powerful hurricanes, we as a county were truly blessed. Because of the abundance of trees surrounding our home my husband, daughter, and I stayed with family until the storm was over. We returned home to find no damage and minimal debris. Throughout our neighborhood there were fallen trees, downed power lines, and wreckage in the streets. It was heartbreaking to see fallen trees on homes and apartments, but thankfully there weren't any casualties in the Lowndes County area.

I think I can speak for every Lowndes County resident by saying we did not experience the worst of the storm. It was inspiring to see linemen, police officers, firefighters, and other civil servants working hard to restore not only power but order to the city.

These were the people who risked their lives during and after the storm to ensure that all of Lowndes county was safe. To them my family and the residents of Lowndes county are very thankful.

—Geneva Crooks

When the news broke about Irma, I instantly thought about Hermine, the tropical storm that hit Valdosta last year. When Hermine hit us, she took no prisoners. My resident advisors at VSU made me stand outside in a hallway at 2:00am because the winds had gotten so bad, and they were worried my windows would shatter. I was without power for days.

Needless to say, with Irma I took no chances. I traveled back to my hometown of Warner Robins soon after Lowndes County declared the state of emergency. I wasn't met with much traffic on my way back, but I couldn't help but to notice the high number of Florida tags passing me by.

When Irma hit Warner Robins, the hurricane had weakened to a tropical storm. I'm happy to report we survived Irma with little to no damages. I send my condolences to the families that lost their homes, valuables, and loved ones to the storm.

—Jada Dukes, Intern



"The Spirit of the American Doughboy", located in Nashville, Ga., is the first of several pressed copper versions of the statue honoring the fallen soldiers of WWI. Its base bears the names of those lost in the sinking of the troop ship Otranto in 1918. The statue was created by sculptor E.M. Viquesney.



Members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart placed a plaque designating Nashville as a Purple Heart city. In 2014 Gary Nelms initiated the move to name Berrien County as a PH county. *Left to right:* Matthew Bridges, National Purple Heart Trail Coordinator ; Larry Osheim, of American Legion Otranto Post 115; Russell Morgan, MOPH; Rondal Tomberlin; Mellissa Gschwend; Pat Morgan, Aux. President for Unit 1000 MOPH; and Bryan Shaw, curator of the Berrien Historical Foundation.



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Cover: The Brevard family takes it from harvest to market. Back Cover: Noah Warren, son of Daniel and Lindsey Warren and grandson of Dwayne and Lee Warren and Kim Stahl, won an honorable mention award for his photo of the Valdosta courthouse. Congratulations Noah!

## National Council of Negro Women



The Valdosta-Lowndes metropolitan section of the National Council of Negro Women hosted their second annual state conference in August. Collegiate and state sections from all over Georgia gathered for the two-day event to meet with new and old members and to elect new officers. Valdosta's mayor, John Gayle, and county commissioner, Bill Slaughter proclaimed August 18 as National Council of Negro Women's Day.

Far right Sandra Davis-Forrest (DeKalb Section President), Lois Keith (NCNW National Vice Chair), Tiffany Vinson (Valdosta-Lowndes Section President), Valdosta City Councilwoman District 1, Vivian Miller-Cody, Sarah Denton (Valdosta), National Vice Chair of NCNW Young Adults & NCNW State of Georgia President, Dr. Darlene Ruffin-Alexander (Greater Atlanta) State Parliamentarian, Valdosta City Mayor, John Gayle, Lowndes County Commissioner Chair, Bill Slaughter, Lowndes County Commissioner of District 1, Joyce Evans, NCNW National Executive Director, Attorney Janice Mathis, NCNW State Treasurer, Myrtle Mayfield, NCNW State Interim Secretary, Derrica Williams



Collegiate Chapter of NCNW, Valdosta State Section welcomed attendees.



Representatives from Chocolate Ancestors, LLC.

## 2017 Legislative Breakfast

The Tift County Legislative team was joined by a big crowd at the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's Regional Office in Tifton one Thursday morning for the 2017 Legislative Breakfast, an annual event presented by the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce. Each legislator spoke briefly to the crowd about legislative initiatives that affect South Georgia and those present had time to speak one on one with each legislator as well. Pictured are (left to right) Rep. Clay Pirkle, Rep. Penny Houston, Rep. Sam Watson, Sen. Greg Kirk, Ga. Chamber Regional Manager Molly Giddens, Tifton-Tift County Chamber President Brian Marlowe and Chamber Chairman Tyron Spearman.



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## Freedom Gallery Honors Our Valiant Heroes

TIFTON—When Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College unveiled the Freedom Gallery in Tift Hall one year ago, it was obvious to everyone that the pictures and stories go far beyond the life of Tifton's only Medal of Honor recipient.

"We wanted to tell the story of Second Lieutenant Harold Bascom Durham, Jr., but we also wanted to convey the fact that he was just one of many men and women who sacrificed their lives for this great country," Lindsey Roberts, director of marketing and communications for ABAC, said.

Durham, nicknamed "Pinky," was a 1960 graduate of Tifton High School and attended ABAC for a short time. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously on October 31, 1969 for his bravery on a Vietnam battlefield.

Roberts headed up the mammoth Freedom Gallery project which opened to the public on October 13, 2016. It is now open for public viewing from 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from



Members of the Black Lions, comrades of Harold Bascom Durham, Jr., pose with the Black Lion painted by the ABAC Grounds Crew for the opening of the Freedom Gallery.

8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Fridays.

"The Freedom Gallery is a tribute to all the brave men and women who place themselves in harm's way every day so that all Americans can be free," ABAC President David Bridges said. "It is a key component in our Veterans Initiative."

The ABAC Veterans Initiative includes a Veteran Success Center in J. Lamar Branch Hall, a student veterans' organization, recognition as a Purple Heart College, recognition as a Military Friendly College, free tutoring for veterans beyond the normal tutoring hours, and advanced preferred registration for veterans.

The Freedom Gallery includes information on the Veterans Initiative as well as words on ABAC's role in Carry The Load, a national relay which aims to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day by connecting Americans to the sacrifices of our military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel.

"We are doing this because I want future generations of ABAC students to know that we respect the honor, the integrity, and the valor of those who serve in the armed forces of our country," Bridges said. "We will continue to invest in those who invested so much in us. We must not forget that some of them invested their lives for our freedom."

The Freedom Gallery explores the life of Durham, who gave his life for his country as a forward observer for the United States Army in the Vietnam War on October 17, 1967. The official news release

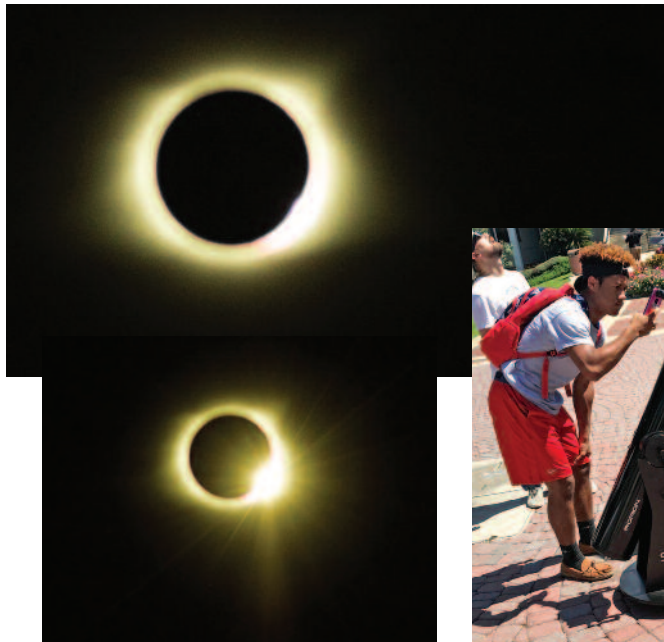


Lindsey Roberts, Kim Bridges, ABAC President David Bridges, John Durham, Marilyn Durham, and Genie Durham Horton in the Freedom Gallery at ABAC.

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# Solar Eclipse



Above: Full eclipse and diamond ring shot at Toccoa Falls by Wenda G. Bailey



Top and far right: Valwood students gather to view the eclipse through special glasses. Far left and center: VSU had numerous telescopes available for students to view and take pictures of the moon. Photos courtesy of Wil Hillmer and Jada Dukes.

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# GRACEY'S SALVATIONS

By Jada Dukes



**E**ven as a small child it was very clear there was something different about Gracey Reed. Her mother, Kelly Reed describes her as very determined and strong willed; others might even say she's a supergirl. One thing for sure is that Gracey is not your average 11-year old.

She may be young but she's already got an impressive resume. In the third grade, she earned the highest reading average in her class. In the fifth grade, she earned the highest overall average for girls. She's also

a part of the gifted program. Language Arts is one of her favorite subjects, and her essays have placed her in the winner's circle. This year she has added cross country.

Not only an excellent student, Gracey is also a creative young entrepreneur. Two years ago, she became interested in salvaging old pieces of furniture and turning them into something new. "I would go to yard sales and flea markets and buy old pieces and repurpose them," she said. Her interest in flea market flips started in her grandfather's barn where he stored his flea market purchases. She now sells her unique creations right out of her backyard under the banner of Gracey's Salvations.

Recently, Gracey's Salvations ventured down to the Adel Daylily Festival where she made a tidy profit. Some of which she plans to donate to the American Cancer Society (ACS). She became interested in ACS after a young cousin was diagnosed with multiple cancers. Perhaps this also affects her desire to become a pediatrician. "I just want to help people," Gracey said. Her mother confirmed that Gracey has always wanted to be a pediatrician.

Her desire to help is natural. Her father, Glenn Reed is a firefighter with the Adel Fire Department and is also a SCUBA rescue diver. Helping people is part of who he is. If you ask him about his daughter, the gigantic smile on his face says everything. He and Gracey enjoy hunting and fishing together; and of course, he helps her with her business.



Another one of Gracey's favorite things is helping with younger children at her church and babysitting. According to young Riley, her cousin Gracey is fun. She entertains them with crafts, face painting and storytelling-- the latter of which she is also proficient. Her proficiency also extends to artistically applying makeup, both for every day wear and costumes. Her mom especially likes it when Gracey does her makeup.

Creativity comes in handy for Gracey when she has to endure one of her brother Griffin's travel ball games. She finds lots of ways to avoid boredom such as "spending \$100 at the concession stand."

Gracey definitely comes from a family that loves and supports her dreams, no matter what they may be. "She's going to change the world one day," her mother said. ✨



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# Bailey Bullard

## Artist. Musician. Missionary. Teenager.

By Geneva Crooks

### Bailey Bullard isn't your typical high school senior.

"Bailey is one of the most diverse students I know—participating in art, music, the ag program, soccer and other church-related events," Coby Rice, art instructor at BCHS, said of her prized student.

This teen is an award-winning artist, an Advanced Placement student at Berrien High, and a missionary, the latter being her heart.

Last Spring, Bullard won First Place in the 2017 Turner Arts' High School Invitational Exhibit for one of her AP portfolio pieces on Poverty and Third World countries. Her overall portfolio gained her a 5, the highest score possible. To add to her

artistic accomplishments, she was recognized and noted as a desired candidate by schools like Hartford Art School during a national invitation-only event where the top art schools met with rising artists and viewed their portfolios.

Although Bullard's passion for art has grown significantly since her childhood art lessons, she believes that God has other plans for her and her talents. Growing up in a close-knit Christian home has influenced her life greatly. Her love for spreading the Word of God is shaping her dreams into a new reality.

"I don't want to do what I want to do, I want to do what God wants me to do," said Bullard.

Currently, she serves as Chaplin of her FFA chapter at BCHS. She has been involved in FFA since the 7th grade. She is also a talented musician and active in various ministries in her church. As a missionary, she has traveled to Alaska to help a small village.

Bullard face glowed as she told of her journey to the tiny village of Gambell and Yupik people.



In 2016 she took her first missionary trip to St. Lawrence, a tiny Alaskan island with a population of less than 1,300.

"We get there on a little bush plane," she said. "The runway is one big concrete slab that's also the airport."

The missionaries are met by an entourage of natives on 4-wheelers who transport the group and their stuff to their lodging.



Placing First at the Turner Arts Center High School Invitational. Above: "Poverty Stricken," created by weaving painted strips of paper, features a blending of chalks and charcoal. It represents mental pain.

Left: "Pure Thirst," created with chalks.

Top right: "Refreshed," created with water color.

Right: Bailey Bullard (center) with Bill Shenton, artistic administrator of Turner Art Center and Coby Rice, art teacher at BCHS.







"We walk to the church. Everything is in walking distance," she recalled.

Because most of the island of Gambell is covered in gravel, there are no trees and very little vegetation. Transportation is by walking or by 4-wheeler. Home for a Yupik family is either a shack or a trailer. Even their diets are limited to whale and seal meat due to the harshness of the island. Pastimes for many are simple games such as basketball. School is even enjoyable for the children.

Unfortunately, like many communities, the island of Gambell has its issues. Depression, drugs, alcohol, abuse, and suicide becomes more prevalent during the darkness of Alaska's winter days. Whaling accidents rob many children of their fathers, adding to the problems of



the island. Bullard was concerned when learned that 10-year-olds were using drugs and alcohol to ease their miseries.

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## Congratulations 2017 GRPA 10U Machine Class C State Champs



The Little Lady Dawgs reveled in hometown pride when the Super Sluggers of the softball field brought home the golden trophy. Congratulations to the Lanier County 10U All Stars Softball team for winning the 2017 Georgia Recreation and Park Association 10U Machine Class C State Championship. The win is a first for the Lanier County girls' recreation team. The excitement of the win beat the team home to Lakeland where they were celebrated with a parade.



Above: A well-deserved leap for joy! The Little Lady Dawgs made a clean sweep of the tournaments and state championship, thanks to their lucky broom. The story of the broom is unique in that it was first used to sweep the rain out of the Lady Dawgs' dugout. A touch before each game brought the luck of the broom.

Top: Members of team are: Kneeling, left to right Jaycee Newsome, Shelby McKetrick, Makenli Armstrong, Japonica Brockington, Lucy Spikes, Jaden Benefield. Second row: Kenlyn Taylor, Evie Murray, Emma Courson, Jacie Faircloth, Katie Burton, Jocie Holbrook. Back row: (coaches) Chris Newsome, Lee McKetrick, Cary Taylor, and Kevin Benefield.

Photos submitted by Sharon Taylor and Lanier County fans.

## Three of Turner County's Kids Take Home National Championship

*Air-Pistol Champs beat out 5 teams to take gold on Olympic Stage setting*



In August, three of Turner County's finest young marksmen took home the 4-H Air Pistol National Championship and the Gold Medal East Coast Championship. The Longshot Clovers, Remington Smith, Will Watson, and Ike Hobby, earned a combined total of 2180, earning them the Gold. The boys' individual rankings are: Smith, 4th place; Hobby, 6th place; and Watson, 8th place. Coach Faye Belflower acknowledged the Tift County 4-H coaches as their mentors. With their guidance, the young Turner County team was able to compete against high school shooters. The boys attend Turner County Elementary School and Crisp Academy. Top, pictured left to right: Coach Faye Belflower, Ike Hobby, Remington Smith, and Will Watson. Story and photos submitted by the Turner Chamber of Commerce.



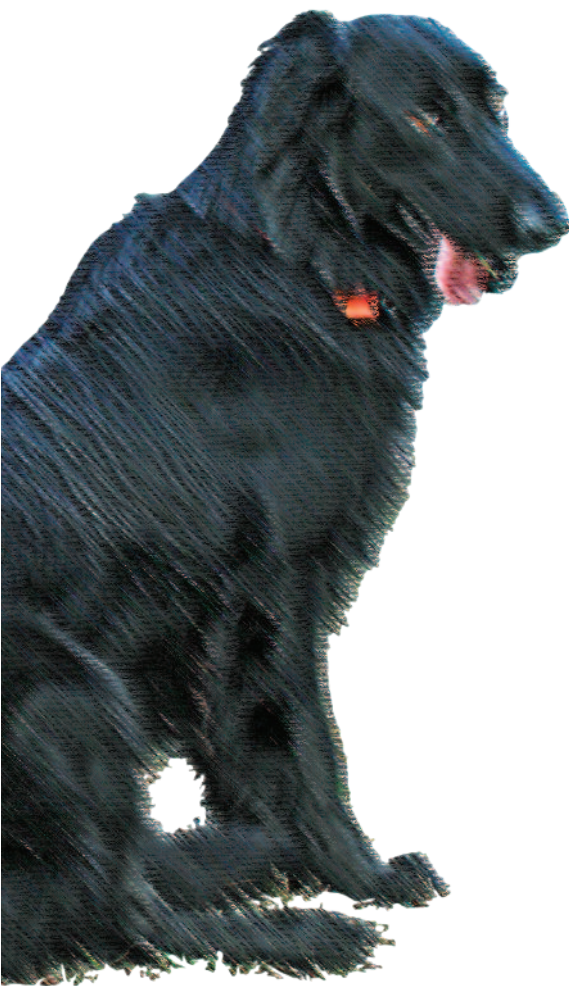
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Ben Baker

# A Dog Named Nekkid

around and doesn't know the dog's name.

I could tell Susan and Jesse "Go outside and get Nekkid." Or, I could loudly announce to everyone, "I'm going outside to get Nekkid." If the kids take their time, "Where are them young'uns? I told them to get Nekkid. Reckon I need to get Nekkid myself."

That should be exceptionally useful for getting rid of unwanted guests.

If the dog jumps on the furniture. "Get off the couch, Nekkid!" Alternately, "Get out of the kitchen, Nekkid!" and the all-purpose "You ain't supposed to be in here, Nekkid!" or the equally useful "What are you doing in there, Nekkid?" and the real show stopper "What are you doing in the bedroom Nekkid?"

Shopping becomes a new experience.

---

*Deep in the woods,  
you could hear me holler  
"GET 'IM, NEKKID!"  
I'd probably be hunting  
by myself a lot.*

---

I wish the Baker Clan could adopt a new dog, but the yard isn't big enough. I miss having a dog. A big friendly dog with a deep voice, but not a slobber-machine like a bloodhound. A dog that likes hunting, fishing, pickup trucks, and kids. A dog that hates armadillos, politicians, and revenueurs.

I already have a name.

Nekkid.

Note the important extra "k." This is because there are three states of undress.

1) Naked. You just ain't got on clothes. Nothing funny or unusual. You are naked when you take a shower.

2) Nude. You ain't got on any clothes; and it is for a reason, art usually. You pose nude for a photographer or a painter.

3) Nekkid. You ain't got on any clothes, and you are up to something. Pole dancers are nekkid.

Just think of all the fun I can have, especially when someone is standing

could "hunt Nekkid" for coons, deer, hogs, coyotes or whatever else Nekkid might be interested in chasing. Deep in the woods, you could hear me holler "GET 'IM, NEKKID!" I'd probably be hunting by myself a lot.

I could become a plantation guide.

"I 'preciate you gennulmen hunting with us today. We'll be hunting Nekkid til lunch."

If the dog tangled with skunk, "Get some tomato juice and pour it on Nekkid. That stink's about to kill me."

Of course, if the dog actually disappears, I could really "be hunting Nekkid."

The conversational shorthand Larry "Hawgin'" Fishbreath and I share:

"Ducks?" he'd ask.

"Bull Creek," I'd reply.

"Huntin' Nekkid?" Hawgin' would ask.

"Finest kind," I'd reply.

Lots of other things come to mind.

Get mad at the dog: "GET OVER HERE NEKKID!"

Praise the dog: "Good boy, Nekkid!"

Teach the dog tricks: "Roll over Nekkid. Shake Nekkid. Speak Nekkid. Sit Nekkid. Fetch Nekkid."

It would have to be loads of fun at a public park.

Someone comes up and asks the dog's name.

"He's Nekkid," I'd say.

The person would look at me funny.

"He's Nekkid," I'd say again.

I'd look back at 'em funny and say, "Load up, Nekkid. We're going home. Some folks just don't like dogs." ❀

"Load up, Nekkid. We're going to the store." Driving around town, I could pull in to a business parking lot. "Can't stay long," I'd say. "I got Nekkid on the back of the truck."

Come time for the dog's annual checkup, I'd run him by Dr. Katz' (Our vet is Dr. Alec Katz, and I ain't making that up) office in the morning. That afternoon I'd head home "Got to get Nekkid at the vet's before I go home" I'd loudly announce as several people lined up at the counter to pay their annual subscription fee.

Outside the Piggly Wiggly, I could call home. "Get Nekkid on the phone." Someone hands the phone to the dog. "What ya wanna eat tonight Nekkid?" I could ask. I wouldn't expect a reply, except maybe a "woof."

When hunting season comes in, I

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.





# Jarret Dean:

## *Firefighter, Farmer, Friend*

*The firefighters had 29 minutes to get out of the World Trade Center or die.*

*They were not aware that the 110-story building was ready to collapse, crumbling from the explosions and impact of the airliner as it crashed into it. They knew only that there were people still in the building and that they had to get them out.*

*Within 30 minutes, 2,974 victims would be dead. Among them, 343 firefighters and 71 law enforcement officers who gave their lives to save the life of someone else. September 11, 2001. Across America, hearts break.*

**H**e was only 6-years-old when terrorists launched four attacks on United States soil. What Jarret Dean did not know then was how much 9/11 would impact his life.

Dean was in Lisa Carter's first grade class that day. He remembers the voice of Dona Fields coming over the intercom, announcing the news.

"We all had a moment of silence," Dean said. "Then my mom came and picked me up."

"I've been obsessed with firefighting since that day," he said, noting that he wasn't sure where his interest came from. His mother, Libby Dean, said that he used to race his tricycle to the end of the driveway to see where the fire trucks were going.

"When Jarret was growing up, everyone knew about his fascination with fire trucks and being a fireman," said Joe Dixon, an Alapaha businessman. "Members of the Alapaha Fire Department all loved

him and included him as often as possible, whether it was letting him ride on the fire truck, wash it down, or clean up at the station."



Eventually, Dean convinced the team to let him be one of them. At 17, he became the youngest volunteer firefighter at the Alapaha station.

Now, at 22, he is a member of the Valdosta Fire Department where he and his fellow firefighters answer an average of ten calls per day, 4,000 calls per year. Dean and his crew members risk their lives daily, extinguishing potentially deadly fires. And while many are not life threatening, all require a speedy response.

"When the alert tone goes off, you feel a burst of adrenaline, and you start preparing yourself for whatever may happen and to do whatever it takes," he said.

He has already been to scenes which had fatalities. "That's a thing you relive in your mind and never forget," he said.

Since September 11, 2001, "Never forget" is the mantra



Dean graduated from the Valdosta Recruit School where he earned the Scholar Award for maintaining the highest academic average in his class. He is continuing his education to advance his rank as a firefighter. He has already completed training to be an Emergency Medical Technician.





In New York (2002), Members of the Alapaha Fire Department traveled to St. Patrick's Cathedral to attend funeral services of the last firefighter pulled from Ground Zero. Standing (left to right) with Jarret Dean, age seven, are Ray Tremmer – Rescue 5 Fire Department of New York, J. H. Moore – Alapaha Fire Chief, Dick Clancey – East Freehold New Jersey Fire Department, and Bill Kanzler – East Freehold New Jersey Fire Commissioner.

every First Responder understands. That day, many lives were lost in a terrorist attack. Two of the attacks took down the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center making it the single most deadly incident for firefighters and law enforcement offices in US history. Dean and the Alapaha Fire Department had bonded with one of the units prior to the attack. His humanitarian spirit lead him to send help to his fellow firefighters.

Joe Dixon explains: "The New Jersey East Freehold Fire Department had donated a fire truck to the AFD back when J. H. Moore (deceased) was the Fire Chief," said Dixon. "So when our Fire Department heard that some of the firemen with the East Freehold Fire Department were affected by the September 11 attacks, they collected money to send to their families."

Members of the East Freehold Fire Department, along with a member of the Fire Department of New York, traveled to Alapaha from New Jersey to meet the members of the AFD. "Jarret was on the welcoming committee and went around to local businesses to collect items to go in gift baskets for them."

Ray Tremmer of FDNY Rescue 5 was among those who came to visit. Ray lost 11 members from his company and numerous friends in the attacks.

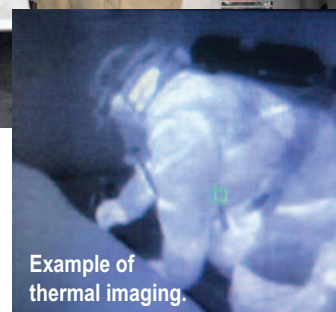
"We're still friends to this day," Jarrett added. "He is my mentor."

Jarret's mother recalls how their family and Alapaha Fire Chief J. H. Moore had traveled to New Jersey seven months after the September 11 attacks to attend the funeral of the last firefighter pulled from the Ground Zero site.

**"...being a public servant  
is just who we are..."  
Jarret Dean**



Dean and Lt. Caron Wright at the Valdosta Fire Department. Wright believes a firefighter's life is easier because of the new technology available to firefighters. "We have better equipment and gear and better fire trucks," said Wright, who has worked with Jarret since he started with the Valdosta Fire Department last August. "One piece of new technology is our thermal imager which helps us detect bodies at the fire scene, wherever they may be inside the home or structure."



Example of thermal imaging.



Being a public servant is ingrained deeply into Dean's character and his life.

"My Dad [Jackie Dean (deceased)] was a police officer as well as my Mom, and several members on his side of the family are also police officers, so I guess that being a public servant is just who we are, and this is just something that we have to do." Dean's sister, Jackla, is married to a police officer and works with abused children.

Besides being an active firefighter, Dean also enjoys a farmer's life. When he's not on a tractor, he's helping out at Dixon's Seed & Chemical store. His friends know that he loves the dirt almost as much as he loves being a firefighter.

Though Dean is far too modest to take credit for his good deeds and for the love and goodwill he spreads, friends such as Joe Dixon and his coworkers at the Valdosta Fire Department won't let him just brush praise aside – some people, such as Jarret, are just born with a need to give and whose efforts are appreciated by all those around him!

"Jarret is the type of guy who gives 100 percent to everything he does," said Lt. Caron Wright of the Valdosta Fire Department. "He is honest, dependable and hard working and you know that if he does something, it will be done right."

So where does Dean see himself 20 years from now?

"I'm not sure where, but I know I'll either be on a fire truck or a John Deere tractor!" he said. ✕



# We Salute Our First Responders. Thank you!



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The air ambulance is on the scene when expedited medical transportation is needed for individual emergencies or for major catastrophes such as hurricanes Irma and Harvey.

Recently, the team landed the Bell 206 helicopter on the front lawn of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College to give students and staff an up-close view of the air ambulance and its crew. Nursing students like Kristen Garrett (r) of Sycamore had an opportunity to discuss a future with the air-evac service with flight nurse Molly Bond. The crew described to a group of ABAC nursing students a typical day

for the three-person team, which includes two medical staff members and a pilot.

"These people are crucial to health care in South Georgia,"

Troy Spicer, Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, said. He also noted, "Flight nurses are at the top of the food chain of the nursing profession." ✕

*Photo and information courtesy of ABAC*



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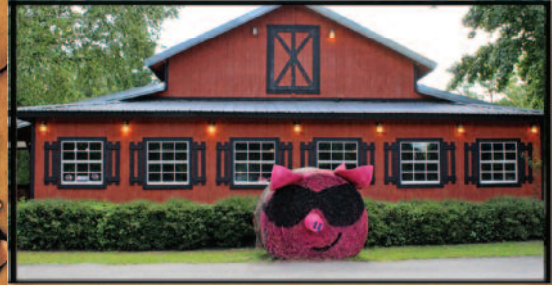
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# Vets Wall of Honor

**THE ORIGINAL WALL OF HONOR**

The original Honor Roll was painted on the west wall of the McLamb Building, at the corner of Washington and Davis. It was painted during and shortly following WWII by local house and sign painter, James Carter McKinnon and his son, Aubra. Over the years, the names grew dim and were lost to the elements. They have been recreated here by artist Jill Whitley in 2017.



These are three of the original photos of portions of the original wall. They were painted as such service men entered the military, not in alphabetical order.



Picture courtesy of the Berrien Historical Foundation



Top: Allene Shaw Brown and sister. Above: The Shaw sisters Martha S. Keffer, Mary S. Catoe, Betty S. Vickers and Allene S. Brown. Left: Troy W. Harsey and Edward Harsey in front of the Honor Wall circa 1950. Photo by Troy Harsey.

## Quilts of Valor

Recently in Fitzgerald, veterans were acknowledged with a gift of handmade quilts. Quilts of Valor is an organization dedicated to honoring military veterans through quilting. Quilts are awarded to veterans as a way of thanking them for their service. The quilts are also described as an offering of healing to those who suffer from PTSD.

Willie Lattimore, Tony Woods, Horace Clements, Grant Cowan, Larry Apperson, Ezekial Traver, and Larry Osheim were all awarded quilts of valor (not listed in order). On the left: Myrtle Hucks Jane Green (Sewing Seeds of Kindness) On the right: Patricia Padgett and Mary Ward (Quilts of Valor).



The Blarney Cup Veterans: Buzzy Wynne, Dale Braswell, Curtis Haag, Ken Fox, "LT" Dan L. Dalhave (President Chapt. 1090 VVA), Jessica Ogletree (she made the beautiful flag table), K. Lynn O'Linn (Owner), Billy Brown, Bobby Swain, James Taylor, Tom Skinner. See their story on our website: mygeorgiahometown.com



Ray City – The Valdosta Elks Lodge provided door prizes like the uniform photo album won by Anthony Gutierrez. Left to right: Exalted Ruler Roy Hunnewell and Vet Chairperson Kathi Hunnewell; Gutierrez; Leslie McGhin, Co-Vet Chair.



BULLARD/Crooks Continued...



In 2017 Bullard and her fellow missionaries returned to Gambel and distributed fresh fruit, jackets and clothes to help the Yupiks through the winter. They also helped with structural repairs to homes and buildings, and started building a new church. Bullard worked with the basketball camp where she distributed snacks and ministered the Gospel to the children.

"I believe that even though it's a lot to go there [Gambel] and it's a big investment, it's worth it," she said. "Although it's just a week out of the



year and things go back to normal when we leave, I believe it still makes a difference. We just can't give up on them. If we give up on them, they'll give up on themselves."

Bullard has been accepted to Toccoa Falls College and is excited to pursue a degree in either cross-cultural studies or music performance. Although Bullard is yet undecided, she knows that the balance hangs between being a full-time missionary and a worship leader.

"If God gave us the gifts to do it then he's going to utilize it where he sees fit,"

Following God's lead is her plan, and she intends to do that until she is right where He wants her to be. ✨

# JASON WEBB

# SCUBA

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

By Ben Baker

Bodies. Guns. Vehicles. Jason Webb has found them all working as a diver in public safety. He is one of the people whom law enforcement calls when the search for evidence goes underwater.

The best part of the job? Closure.

"It is closure for a lot of people. For me, the fun of the diving is mission completion. As a diver, getting that mission and going out and completing it," Webb said. "I can say there is closure. It gives closure to the family."

One of the cases that he helped bring closure to was in North Carolina in salt water. He was called in to dive and look for a woman who had been missing for two weeks. Law enforcement at the time said it might be a murder case. Turns it, they were correct. After a two-day search in the water, her body was found about 600 yards away from the boat.

"She had been strangled, roped off and sent to the bottom," he said. The boat she was supposed to be in was also sunk, probably part of the effort to hide the murder. That recovery happened before Webb started teaching Public Safety diving.

Public safety divers are called on to find anything and everything that can be linked to crimes or accidents. Guns are a common search item. A shooter throws the gun into a waterway expecting the water to both hide the gun and remove the evidence. True, fingerprints and powder residue can be washed away. But the rifling in the barrel stays a lot longer. Rifling, the unique patterns of grooves in the barrel and the marks these leave on a fired bullet, are how bullets are matched to the gun. Other evidence on the gun can also stay around even underwater.

Webb has recovered plenty for firearms, the largest being a 45-caliber handgun. So far, finding larger guns like a shotgun or a rifle has not happened.

Webb got his start in diving in the Marine Corps. After becoming a recre-

ational diver, Webb became interested in being an instructor. Looking at the instructor courses and types is what convinced him to go into Public Safety diving. He's taught public safety diving while stationed in Japan and later in the United States.

Public Safety diving instruction can be grouped into four loose categories; Line drills, Blackout or Dark Water drills, Search & Rescue and Search & Forensic. Once the certified diver hits the water, all of these skills may be used in one case.

Line Drills involve two divers communicating with 50 to 100 feet of rope and a series of tugs. A rope connects Diver A,



who stays in one spot, to Diver B who starts a search pattern. One searches in a circle, a box or a square, looking for a car, a gun or a body, for example.

"Different movements of the rope between the two mean different things," Webb explained. "Tug twice may mean I found something, come to me." The divers work out their signals before getting in the water.

Rope communication also works between a diver and the boat at the surface.

Blackout drills simulate low light conditions. In South Georgia, public safety divers can expect low and bad light conditions pretty much everywhere. Most farm



ponds have enough algae to turn the water into a green soup. Even the rivers can be stained with enough plant debris and plant tannins to limit visibility to a yard or so at most. Blackout drills are also part of firefighter training.

To get a good idea of what this is like, have someone place chairs, tables and all kinds of other objects in a room. Now, wear a blindfold. On your hands and knees, crawl around the room, working by feel, to find a specific object. Underwater this is complicated by water currents that push a diver around and move objects in the water.

"We take the mask tinted up to be dark. We start in a pool. Crawl, run, walk, that kind of deal," Webb said. "It's all about knowing your equipment. Maintain your buoyancy and know where the controls are. Know where the rope is located," he said.

In class, students learn "how to search with their hands without mucking up the bottom and maintaining your buoyancy without standing on the bottom."

Search & Rescue usually comes to mind when people think of public safety

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**"Tug twice may mean I found something, come to me," said Webb**

---

diving. Divers enter the water and look for something, bodies, guns, weapons, etc.

"In Search & Rescue, say a car flips into a pond or lake. We get information from the Sheriff's Office who has us on the scene. They say, 'This is where we think a body is.' We go and search and hopefully find what they are looking for," he said.

Webb said he's been in some disturbing search operations, particularly in Japan. He recalled one in which the divers went out expecting to be on a rescue operation. It turned into a recovery. Looking for the bodies is the worst part of the job.

"We did one - I'm not going to identify the people - where the farmer rolled over a tractor. We had to find the location of the farmer and find the body. He was away from the tractor. It was quite a large pond, rather deep and very dark waters, an irrigation pond," Webb said.

In a rescue, the object is to find the per-



son, alive, and keep them alive long enough for more help to get there. Once on the surface, the diver has to perform basic life-saving skills until the boat arrives. Imagine trying to do CPR in the water. Once the person gets into the boat, CPR can be done on the deck.

CPR may happen even if the person is gone beyond hope of recovery. Why? The person may be an organ donor and keeping those organs alive and able to be transplanted is the goal.

Search & Forensics sounds like Search & Rescue, but it has a major difference. The object here is to retrieve a body or evidence from the water without affecting it, or affecting it as little as possible.

"A lot of the forensics is on the weapons side. Someone shoots someone (else) and they throw the gun in the water, thinking it will never be found," Webb said. Search divers need to know how to handle a waterlogged weapon to bring it up without contaminating the evidence.

Webb also dives for fun, making two trips to go spearfishing in Florida every year. His favorite is the hogfish which is ranked as one of the best eating fish by seafood aficionados. Webb goes after other species as well. He's taught other divers who also enjoy spearfishing, but do it in Georgia's freshwater lakes and rivers. They are just not interested in ocean diving. He teaches recreational diving as well.

Jason Webb now part owner of The Dive Shop in Albany and teaches public safety courses at Albany State. Webb lives in Turner County. ❀

# Best of Luck

## at the Georgia Country Music Awards



Top: Danny Dawson (Pearson, GA) has been nominated for Traditional Artist; Center and Bottom: Zach Lambert (Hahira, GA) and Jordan Rowe (Adel, GA) have both been nominated for Male Artist of the Year. To vote: [georgia-country.com/awards.php](http://georgia-country.com/awards.php)





Infantry Regiment Color Guard from Fort Benning at the opening of the Freedom Gallery.

from the Department of Defense describes Durham's heroism as "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the cost of his life."

Utilizing a radio to call in artillery fire on the enemy from an exposed position, Durham repeatedly subjected himself to intense sniper fire. While moving to a better sight line to replace another wounded forward observer, Durham suffered severe wounds to his head when the enemy set off a mine.

**"The Freedom Gallery is a tribute to all the brave men and women who place themselves in harm's way every day so that all Americans can be free," ABAC President David Bridges said. "It is a key component in our Veterans Initiative."**

Even in his weakened state, he continued to direct artillery fire on the enemy, "almost directly on his position." Refusing to seek cover, Durham moved to a better vantage point to direct the American artillery attack. The enemy immediately began firing at him with a machine gun.

In the last moment of his life, Durham saved more of his comrades by shouting a warning about two approaching Viet Cong.

"Lieutenant Durham died moments later, still grasping the radio handset," according to the press release. Durham was buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Tifton on October 31, 1967. Exactly two years after he sacrificed his life for his country, Durham's family received a phone call from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense on October 17, 1969 that Durham would be honored posthumously with the Medal of Honor.

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew presented the Medal of Honor to Durham's mother, Grace Jolley, on October 31, 1969 at the White House in Washington D.C. Durham's actual Medal of Honor occupies a prominent place in the Freedom Gallery.

"We spent a lot of time reconstructing the life of this American hero for the Freedom Gallery," Roberts said. "He said he was serving his country in the military so that other men would not have to leave their families."

Ironically, Durham is not the only ABAC alumnus in the Freedom Gallery to



Lindsey Roberts and Cindy Barber with Mike McDonald, President of the Black Lions 28th Infantry Regiment Association in Kansas City.

express that sentiment.

"Henry Will Jones played on the 1937 ABAC state championship basketball team and later joined the Marines when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor," Roberts said. "He served at Guadalcanal and Bougainville in World War II. In 1944, he received his commission as a captain in the Marines and was offered a position as a Marine training officer.

Jones, a native of Lakeland, was killed in action on October 18, 1944 at Peleliu in the Palau Islands in the South Pacific. He received the Silver Star citation for his bravery under fire. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal described the scene.

"Observing a tank misdirecting its fire, he unhesitatingly braved the enemy's intense barrage to climb into the tank and attempt to direct its fire by heading it forward of the lines to a position for close-range fire against the principal emplacement.

"While engaged in this perilous task, Captain Jones was mortally wounded when the vehicle struck an explosive charge planted in the ground. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

Jones was selected posthumously for the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013. His story is a part of the Freedom Gallery exhibit, which also includes a salute to the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and the Coast Guard. ✕



# Unearthing the Past

Excerpt from "On the Hunt for Graves" by Brenda Sutton Rose

I've been hunting graves for years. It's my hobby. No. It's more than that. Hunting graves is an addiction that takes me back to the land and its beauty and wildness. A longing for the country lives in me.

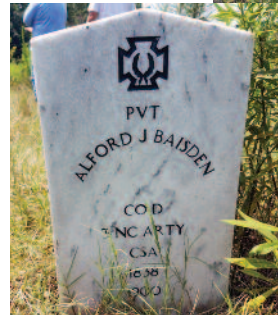
I headed to Emory Tucker's house; he's my father's first cousin. I once again irked my grave-hunting group by getting them lost. My cousin lives so far in the boonies the government can't find him. This time, knowing we'd passed the turn, we wasted no time in getting help. We stopped, called Emory for instructions, and soon arrived

at his home.

With Emory as the lead driver, the only one who knew where to find the graves, we pulled out of his land and headed to Atkinson County, to the place where my Great Grandpa Jowers used to live on the Willacoochee River, to the place that hid a small graveyard.

We passed the creek where my family had once gathered for family picnics, passed the Rowe-Jowers cemetery where many of my kin are buried, passed places where my father used to help his Grandpa Jowers on the farm.

Deeper and deeper we snaked among curving roads in Atkinson County. A dirt road turned into a paved road and then



into another dirt road. Emory was taking us to Mike Stone's house. Mike met us riding a 4-wheeler, then led us into a field. At last, we stopped at an area surrounded by barbed wire.

The first headstone we examined belonged to Pvt. Alford S. Baisden, 1838-1900. We discovered many slabs, headstones, and monuments in the thick of tall weeds. Under the looming threat of snakes, and unable to contain my excitement, I got on my hands and knees near gofer holes, determined to uncover slabs, knowing I might stick my

Continued on page 33



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Above: Edward Laning and three assistants work on one panel of his masterpiece, "The Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America."

Below: Laning at the dedication of his mural at the 42nd Street Library. Both murals are part of the WPA Project.

*Photos courtesy of the Smithsonian.*



## What is the WPA

The Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in 1935 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was part of the New Deal. Its purpose was "to provide useful work for millions of victims of the Great Depression. It included employing thousands of artists, such as Edward Laning (Ellis Island murals), to create art for public buildings, to document local life, and to organize community theaters. Many murals of community life adorned the walls of buildings, barns, and other structures. Across America (and in South Georgia), a few of these beautiful murals still exist.

Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica* – [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

ANDREW SABORI and

By Dalton Spangler

# THE LOST MURAL OF ELLIS ISLAND

**The idea of artifacts or relics being lost to history, just waiting to be unveiled to the world, has been inspiring treasure-hunters and history-buffs for years. Sometimes it's an act of chance that causes the hunter to stumble upon forgotten artifacts.**

Muralist Andrew Sabori had one of those chance encounters that lead him to a set of forgotten masterpieces. It was a small photo of a lost WPA mural which once hung inside the dining hall at New York's immigrant station on Ellis Island. The mural, simply named "The Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America", was a multi-panel work created by artist Edward Laning in the mid-1930s. It literally covered the walls of the dining hall. But fate made it a lost masterpiece.

Because of the mural's location, Laning's life-sized paintings remained unknown to world, only seen by those seeking a new home in America. Ellis Island was a quarantine zone for immigrants undergoing the citizenship process.

After the island closed during WWII,



the mural was forgotten. In the 1950s, most of the canvas panels were destroyed by a hurricane that struck the island, collapsing the roof of the cafeteria where they hung. Only one panel was salvaged and hung in the US Immigration Court in New Jersey, its history unknown to those who walk the halls. Until recent years, the only people who knew of the mural's existence were the immigrants who passed through and the staff who worked at Ellis Island.

Because of the mural's obscurity, it took Sabori, months to track down its information.

In 2003, he was working on murals in New York and New Jersey. He heard about the mural while searching for his own roots. His father was a Sicilian immigrant, but Sabori knew very little about his life and his immigration into America. So, he went to Ellis Island. It was there that he stumbled onto the mural.



"Coming to America: The Immigration Experience": Native Americans marveled at the newcomers and their cultures.





While he was searching his family's records, Sabori's wife found a display case with a photo of the cafeteria; in the background of the photo was the mural. Sabori recognized the WPA art style right away but was bewildered since he had never heard of a mural on Ellis Island before.

No one had heard about the mural. Sabori exhausted every historical avenue he knew of but found no records. From the front desk of the Ellis Island museum to Washington, DC, not even New York nor New Jersey, not even the Smithsonian, no one had information on the WPA mural.



It was at Princeton University where he finally received a tip on Julliard art history professor who could help. Professor Greta Berman confirmed the mural's existence and told them the story of the artist. American painter Edward Laning was most famous for his mural "The Story of the Recorded Word" at the New York Public Library, but only a few people had ever seen his masterpiece on Ellis Island. Laning himself was discouraged that the massive work gained no notoriety. The Ellis Island mural was nearly



Sabori at work at his Lakeland home. His latest creation, a home at Banks Lake, captures life in South Georgia.

20-foot high and 400-foot long.

Sabori was inspired.

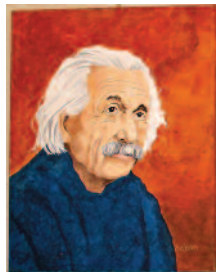
"Maybe I could duplicate the mural and show it somewhere as the lost mural that nobody ever saw," he said.

In order to do that, he needed photographs of the original. Neither the Smithsonian nor the Library of Congress could help, but they searched their archives for information.

"Time elapsed and I had almost forgotten about it. Then about three months later, the Library of Congress called me and said 'We found photos of the lost mural you were telling us about. Do you still want it?'"

I said 'Yea!! Sure!'

It had been 3 years since his search began. He learned about the one original panel hanging in the New Jersey immigration court. From that, he was able to



Sabori's series of portraits and documents tell the story of some famous immigrants. Can you guess who these are?

## Some Facts About Artist Andrew Sabori

- He lives in Lakeland and is refurbishing the Milltown Murals.
- He has traveled extensively, painting murals and portraits of famous people.
- Some of his portraits are of famous immigrants who passed through Ellis Island, such as Albert Einstein.
- In 1994, he created murals for the host cities of the 1996 Olympics held in Atlanta.
- He started his career in the 60s as a poster artist, working at the renowned Fillmore West in San Francisco.
- He painted and partied with many musical stars of the 60s, such as Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, and the Grateful Dead.

Visit: [andrew-sabori.com/about\\_the\\_artist](http://andrew-sabori.com/about_the_artist).

For a video interview please go to Andrew C. Sabori - Artist/Muralist on Facebook

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• Tours by request. Admission is free.

Continued on page 24







get an idea of the colors Laning used. After years of work, Sabori has accurately reproduced a scaled-down version of the original mural and has been showing it throughout the United States.

Now it is South Georgia's turn to view the forgotten masterpiece of Ellis Island.

The Thomasville Center for the Arts was the first to display several panels of the "The Lost Murals of Ellis Island".

The Colquitt County Art Center in Moultrie will exhibit the murals in its entirety from October 12 until December 14. Then the exhibit moves to the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts in Valdosta on January 8, 2018. ✂

*For more information contact Andrew Sabori at [acsabori@yahoo.com](mailto:acsabori@yahoo.com) or call at 706-434-8824.*



David Dunbar Buick



actress Maureen O'Hara



Alexander Graham Bell

On page 23 are Albert Einstein, physicist, and Annie Moore, the first documented immigrant at Ellis Island.

# Rocks!

## They're Everywhere!

By Jayden Futch

Rocks are spreading across the United States of America!

Now, I know what you're wondering. Why am I talking about such a silly thing as a rock? Well, the reason is that rock painting, rock hiding, and rock finding has been an inspiration to the whole country! How cool is that?



Painting has been bringing people together for years. It showed off their artistic talent. It also embraced what was in their hearts, or what was on their minds. Now, we have found a new way to use art to express ourselves. That new item is rocks.

Rocks are fun to paint, in my opinion. The new past-time rock hide-n-seek is a great way to bring people together by getting them out into town. I absolutely love the fact that people come up with so many different designs, rock sizes, and paintings for the rocks.

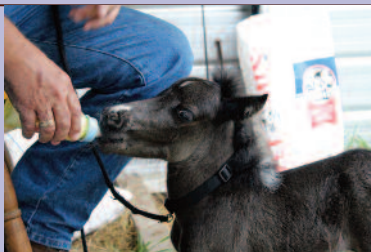
I think rocks will spread on, and the business will never go out. ✂  
(See Fun Fact on right.)





# Raising Minis

By Jayden Futch



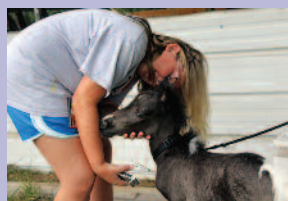
## ponies & mules



On July 13, 2017, I interviewed a very nice man named Klim Nessmith, who is a miniature horse farmer. He has 23 horses, including the little miniature mule named Sassy. She is a Tobiano, a pattern paint mule. Sassy was born on June 27 and stays in Mr. Klim's home! Aww! Isn't that sweet?

Mr. Klim has been raising miniature mules for three years. That may not seem like a lot, but it is. He started when his friend Miss Rosemary suggested it. He says that the ponies and his cocker spaniel have been great therapy for his PTSD.

Mr. Klim explained to me before I left about the differences between the little mules. He said, "Not many folks know this, but a female donkey is a jenny or janet, and a male donkey is called a jack, or jack donkey." I learned so many things that day, and saw so many horses, ponies, donkeys, and mules! ✂



Courtesy of: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)



**Fun Fact:** Who remembers the pet rocks of the 70s? Gary Dahl practically became a

millionaire overnight when he invented the Pet Rock, which sold for \$3.95. Dahl referred to the idea as a fantasy escape from boredom. The idea popped into his head after listening to folks at a bar discuss their problems. He announced, "I have a pet rock!"



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# SCULPTOR OF ANGELS

BY MONIQUE NAGEL

**N**estled among the piney woods of Ray City is a place where a pair of magnificently carved angels kneel in perpetual prayer. The curvature of their shoulders gracefully melts into an exquisite set of wings which support the altar at St. Anthony of Padua Church. Behind them, cherubs lift the veil of a tabernacle box.

The artist behind these beautifully carved sculptures is Lakeland native, Roger Johnson. Living deep among the pines himself, Johnson appreciates the

he saw an orange-red glowing figure standing in his yard where the stump was. The glow startled him; it was a phenomenon known as foxfire. In the glow was the figure of a man—the image he needed to carve the sculpture of Christ which now stands in a nook on St. Simons Island.

Carving the sculptures which grace St. Anthony of Padua Church was another labor of love and inspiration. He reverently created the work as a representation of the resurrection of Christ, living, dead and resurrected to a higher purpose.

Johnson had access to various pieces of cypress that proved suitable. For the

multiple passions. He likes to draw and paint; he works with metal and clearly has an elegant hand in wood carving. He has even worked with National Geographic, both behind and in front of the camera. More projects are up and coming in that arena.



tranquility and serenity of nature and often takes inspiration from it. Sitting in a deer stand or gliding across a lake in a fishing boat are some of the quiet moments when God gives him ideas for his work.

Sometimes the inspiration comes with a jolt. One particular project was proving difficult. The image he wanted was hidden inside a large old piece of fallen cypress. One evening as he came home,

lighter colored angels, he used young bald cypress. For the altar top, a centuries-old piece of dark sinker-cypress pulled from Banks Lake was used.

The strength and beauty of this craftsmanship takes the breath away. Male and female, the angels are carved with such attention to detail that one almost expects to see their chests rise and fall in respiration.

As many true artists do, Johnson has



Johnson compares the cherubim's actions to various stages in life as well as to the community of any church. When God tells us to do something, some people rush right out and get started; some work but resolve to delegate; still others start work but tire quickly or are easily distracted.

Johnson has always had a strong love of architecture. Anyone can describe a building to him right down to what kind of floor tile it should have, and Johnson can see it in full-color in his mind. He can then build it – without the need of a blueprint. This architectural and contractor talent will come in handy in a few years when he rebuilds his home, which was lost when a gas tank exploded. He and his wife Loretta lost everything but remain





From top left: From his thoughts to the drafting table to rough carved images, the final beauty emerges in the intricately carved faces and wings of Roger Johnson's angels.



Sinker-cypress statue of Christ Rex at Holy Nativity Church on St. Simons.

optimistic about God's plans for them. It was God's provision that opened doors when all seemed lost.

Since the loss of their home, the Johnsons sleep in a tent nestled under a

canopy of pines. Roger swears that waking up on a dewy summer morning, hearing the birds calling back and forth, and the sunlight streaming through the screened roof of the tent above him

makes him feel like he is 25 again. He appreciates the freedom of a life unencumbered by tons of possessions and payments can afford him, and he relishes the peace of mind that it brings.

Roger spent years restoring houses and buildings. He spent his time chasing the next job, the next paycheck. A lifelong Catholic, Roger finds that his thoughts and his work reflect his faith more and more. He and his wife firmly believe it was the Lord's work in their life that gave provenance for him to create the altar and tabernacle box.

As I leave the beautiful St. Anthony of Padua, my eyes can't help but be drawn once again to the angels. Was that a little white feather caught by the corner of the eye or just a mote of dust? My eye is not quick enough to catch it. Could have been though...could have been. ✕



Johnson at Flatlander's Frolic, 2015



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# Bring on the **BISCUITS**

By Ben Baker

***The first batch of cane syrup is ready!***

**Cane syrup is older than the United States. How old is something no one knows for sure.**

Making syrup ranges from big commercial operations like Baldree Syrup in Omega, Ga. to small family producers that can be found in just about every county in the South. The Cook clan in Turner County is one of those families keeping this sweet tradition alive.

Patriarch Sheldon Cook got into "making" a few years ago. He and the family process two or three times when the cane is ready to be harvested. It's a small operation, making just enough for family and friends and a few bottles to sell to cover expenses.

Son Justin, son-in-law Michael, and various grandkids help with the whole process. The ladies in the family, led by the matriarch Desiree, pitch in too and cook up breakfast for those gathered at the cook shack. Plenty of homemade biscuits are timed to come out of the oven when the first batch of syrup is drawn off.



## **Grinding & Cooking**

Before the biscuit sopping begins, the syrup has to get to the table. That begins with the grinding of the cane.

The Cooks use an iron grinder that was originally mule-powered. It once had a long pole strapped to the top and a mule harnessed to the pole, walking in a circle, turning the grinder. Sheldon converted the grinder to a tractor-drive. Now, a PTO shaft turns the grinder's gears.

Grinding cane is seriously hard work, even for the tractor. As the Cook grandsons shove giant cane stalks between the grinder's crushing drums, the tractor's motor pitch drops under the strain. (Just imagine how hard a mule had to work.) Sometimes the cane gets stuck. The pliers come out, and the stalks are yanked and twisted until they're freed. On large stalks, Michael uses a machete to cut an angle that

makes them easier to feed into the grinder.

Sometimes it works, sometimes not.

The crushing produces a gray-green juice that runs out the lip of the grinder and rolls down across a wire mesh filter and into a bucket. When the bucket is full, an electric pump submerged in the raw juice pumps it to a distilling pot in the cooking shack a few yards away.

Before the process is over, the finished syrup will be screened several more times. Before it's done, the raw juice, which looks like dirty water, will change to dark brown.

Inside the shack, a heated 50-gallon pot built into a home-made brick kiln awaits. A propane burner system has replaced the unpredictable wood fire once used. Controlling the temperature is important to rendering the sweet, dark syrup.

For this, an interesting-looking device is suspended from the ceiling into the syrup. It's a car radiator thermometer mounted to a piece of conduit.

Cooking boils water out of the syrup. It also sends bits of stalk debris and foam to the surface where it's constantly skimmed. At 227° F, the syrup is done.

"If it boils at 11 o'clock, maybe 1:30 or so it'll get up to 227 degrees," Sheldon said.

Sure enough, about 1:30 p.m. Michael checks the temp. 227°. The fire is turned off, and the head of foam drops.

"Down at Mule Days [a Georgia festival] they say if you dip it and turn it three times [with a ladle] and it makes a ribbon. (That means the syrup is done)," Sheldon said. "I ain't that good. I use temperature."

Referring to the various cooking methods used around the South, Sheldon said, "You can get people to tell you how they make it. I decided I wanted to make it like I want it."

The rendered syrup is filtered one more time before going into bottles and out to the breakfast tables.

**Somebody pass the biscuits. ❀**





❶ A pile of crushed stalks. Matt Perry piles more on.

❷ Feeding fresh stalks and pulling the crushed ones through the grinder. The piece of channel iron atop the grinder is a reminder that the old grinder was once mule-powered.

❸ Piping fresh juice from the grinder bucket into the kettle.

❹ Sheldon continually dips and pours the hot juice, close to bin syrup, to keep it from getting too hot. The metal band around the pot keeps it from boiling over.

❺ Grandson Matt skims the reducing juice. Someone is constantly skimming the juice during the cooking.

❻ Sheldon pours hot syrup into the bottling stand.

❼ Michael feeds bottles to Justin for filling.

❽ Breakfast at the cook shack!

*Far left:* Justin pours out a mixture of cane and corn syrup. Corn syrup is added to keep the cane syrup from crystalizing in the jar.

## Ancient History of Sugar Cane

Cane grinding dates back a millennia in Asia. Its history in the South is only about 300 years old. Its first introduction to North America was in Florida, along the St. Johns River, because of the immediate water supply and the temperate climate.

Although King Cotton is the talked about crop during the slavery era, cane plantations were also common. The juice was harvested and distilled into syrup, reduced to sugar, and became the basis for rum.

Cane production also became the target of taxes and laws as our young nation became more independent of Great Britain. The Molasses Act of 1733 put heavy taxes on cane products from the West Indies. This was another major spur for cane

production in the South, Georgia in particular. The Sugar Act of 1764, which tightened Great Britain's restrictions on sugar and sugar cane is a lesser known but major



impetus behind the Declaration of Independence. Sugar cane really took root in South Georgia around 1828 with plantations adding it to the major crops of the time.

In 1883 the Southern Agriculturist magazine visited the Hopeton Plantation on the Altamaha and wrote a glowing report about the production of the many crops, including sugar cane. A shows sugar prices near rock bottom in 1824 then spiking to be worth more than rice and far more than cotton by 1831, only to slump starting in 1834.

The Jarrell Plantation in Juliette is Georgia's oldest, still-operating facility. The 8-acre site is open to the public Tuesday-Sunday and still grinds cane. More locally, the Georgia Museum of Agriculture (Agrirama) in Tifton grinds cane to make syrup with a press and pot donated by the author's family in Colquitt County.

*Photos: The Grady Bryan family making syrup, February 1968*





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# Just A Shadow

By Amanda H. Williams

"What was that, mommy?"

"Just a shadow, honey."

A shadow is what they perceived.

*Just a shadow.*

So much more, though.

Very few investigated beyond initial reasoning.

I imagined it.

*Only the branches of a tree.*

*Maybe a stray cat stalking.*

*Perhaps nothing at all.*

Zain's purpose? To provide protection in the midst of darkness. An angelic warrior whose presence orchestrated the shadows like a maestro in a symphony performance. In the absence of light, he directs shades that startle people out of the moment, into awareness. His assignment—to provide an excuse to pause, a moment to contemplate who might be there, or what might be lurking. A nanosecond for the conscience to be heard. An opportunity to choose, to consider, to reconsider.

From Central Avenue, the energy of the train reverberated and caused silhouettes of the unseen to vibrate. The others, good and evil, shifted and stretched lurking in the peripheral of the image bearers. The created ones who wreaked havoc or demonstrated the gift of benevolence—love through their actions. Too many, driven by pride and selfishness, chose the former.

Battle weary, yet determined, Zain retreated to dusty dirt roads and fallow fields, hiding places that darkness covered. Guerrilla warfare reigned in the rural areas, where the enemy lulled humanity into believing all was safe and good. Yet, evil enjoyed the quiet of the wood as much as the clamor of the city. While inhabitants of sleepy towns slumbered, blind to actions that fled into the night, the presence of evil—ever-patient, waited to pounce on its prey.

*Tick tock. Tick tock.* Echoes of time passing rang in the distance, mattering only on this side of eternity. The constant reminder threatened to drive him

mad, yet the steady cadence served as a symbol of fate hanging in the balance. The course of history altered in the span of a cricket's cry.

Hovering over the rural area, Zain paused before the passing began. He relished the coolness of the crisp October air and reveled in the brilliance of the Creator. *Tick, tock. Tick, tock.* It was time. Raising his hands, he sent the army of guardians to their assignments.

*Use them for good. Let them see.*

Parked pickups in the dead of night, bent on destruction. Bump!

*What was that?*

Young lovers seeking cover past curfew, innocence destroyed.

*Wait, stop.*

Lost trying to numb the relentless emptiness haunting their every moment, a fix ready. A noise! *A head turned sharply, dropping the poisonous contents to the ground.*

Those choosing their moment to exit this world, pain overtaking reason. A comforting whisper. *A gun, shaking violently in desperate hands, lowered onto the leather seat.*

Would they pause, would they consider, would they re-think?

Yes and no. Sounds of sobs rang through the night. Tears of anguish and tears of joy shed in a life-altering moment of decision. Consequences rippling through the passage of time, altering events no one but the Creator saw.

Dawn's rays broke through and Zain, along with the others, retreated to count the victories and casualties of the night. ✕



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## Cross Critters Resort, LLC: Pet Boarding at Its Finest

Envisioning and starting a new business holds its own fears; but when real life problems highlight and confirm the reason for the vision, the purpose is realized. For the Cross family, the need for a pet boarding facility was realized shortly after Cross Critters Resort, LLC opened for business.

Out of town on a family vacation before school began, Danielle and Patrick Cross were in Chattanooga, Tennessee when they received a call from their pet sitter back home in Nashville, Georgia.

"When she called and said that our two dogs [Lexie and Samson] had just gotten out of her fenced back yard and she was trying to find them, my heart just sank," said Danielle, remembering the sense of despair and helplessness she felt, being 200 miles from home and unable to search for her family's pets.

"The thought of them being out on their own, hungry and scared, made my heart break," she recalled.

Stuck in Tennessee, Danielle immediately sent out an alert to all her friends back home. Sick with worry about their pets, they returned home as quickly as possible.

For the next three days, Danielle and Patrick, and their three children, Ciara (16), Lainie (13), and Tristan (15), worried about Lexi and Samson as they traveled home to follow up on leads that would help find their pets.

"We checked out every message from anyone saying that they had seen dogs that looked like ours on various dirt roads and

For the Cross family, it was hard to believe that only the week before, they had held a ribbon cutting ceremony for their new business, Cross Critters Resort, LLC. It was created as a pet haven for people who need someone to care for their animals when they have to be away.

"We [had] decided to close the resort for a week so that we could take our family vacation," said Danielle. "So, we left Lexi and Samson with a friend."

She never dreamed that their vacation would be cut short.

"After three or four days of following up on leads on miles of dirt roads, we finally found our Lexi and Samson," she said. "They were scared, filthy, and hungry. We were overcome with emotion and relief when we finally got them safely back home!"

The agonizing journey endured by the Cross family has only reinforced their dedication to Cross Critters Resort.

"That is our number one goal now," said Danielle, "We plan to do whatever it takes to make sure that every animal is safe with us."

As you walk onto the grounds of Berrien County's newest pet haven, you won't find the cages, crates, and kennels normally seen at pet care facilities. Instead, you'll find open, fresh-air, comfortable cabins in which pets reside with plenty of room to roam, unhindered, in a safe environment.

Danielle's brainchild business of an overnight pet boarding and daycare facility sprang from her deep love for animals,



which began during her early childhood years. Danielle may be familiar to many local exercise enthusiasts as one of the personal trainers on staff at Nashville's pet-friendly Anytime Fitness.

Danielle readily admits that her love for animals is not limited. "I love all animals, from dogs, cats, and lizards, to rats and more," she says. She and her family have several pets, including three dogs, two cats, and two pot-belly pigs.

With her own pets in mind, Danielle considered what she wanted in an overnight pet boarding facility.

Then proceeded with her vision of a stress-free, home-away-from-home for pets.

"We knew that people who are looking for pet care for their animals would like for them to have all the freedoms and comforts that they enjoy in their own home," she said.

Cross Critters Resort offers boarders individual cabins with climate-controlled heat and air, a covered porch, a private yard, one-to-three hours of playtime, and a community playground area with a pool.

To ensure pet safety, boarders must meet CCR's requirements for vaccinations, flea prevention, and special medication. Owners must provide copies of such



wooded areas," said Danielle. "I vowed then that I would never use another pet sitter for our babies."

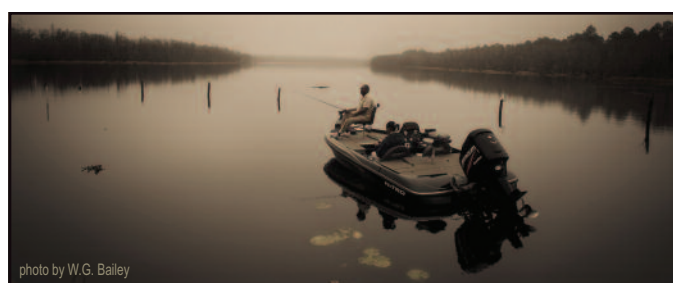


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Daily rates are available for one or more pets, along with weekly and long-term rates. Owners may provide their own food items and vitamins or purchase them through the facility.

Other services offered include bathing, nail care, tooth care, and de-shedding.

The Cross family's love for animals extends to the unfortunate, unwanted canines and critters. A portion CCR's proceeds will be used to foster animals for rescue centers and shelters. Animals housed at the facility are available for adoption.

"People who are interested in possibly adopting are welcome to call and make an appointment to visit the animals, play with them, and choose the one they would like to take to their forever-home," Danielle said. Adoptions are held quarterly.

Now open for business, Danielle and her family are eager to continue doing what they love, she says. "This is truly a unique standard of pet boarding facilities for Berrien County for all those pet owners who want a beautiful nice place for their fur babies to stay when they are away!" ✂

## UNEARTHING/Rose Continued...

nose in the face of a rattlesnake.

When we finished at the graves in the field, Mike led us from Atkinson County to a location in Berrien County. We stumbled over roots and bowed beneath low-hanging limbs, and we continued to search.

Hearing Mike say that he hadn't seen the graves for about twenty years, I feared we wouldn't find them. Several of us were discussing giving up when we came upon an unmarked



slab. And then another, right beside the first, covered by dirt and leaves, sinking into the earth. We gathered around the two graves, concealed in the shelter of the woods. We studied the graves, a few yards from the beginning of a field, through weary eyes, studied them as though we'd discovered a hidden treasure of pirate's gold. Mike told us that when he had last visited the area he'd seen at least a dozen more graves, but on this trip, we couldn't find them.

Perhaps the graves we couldn't find had been crushed when the field was extended and trees downed. We may never know.

When the day ended, we explorers were hot and sweaty and tired and satisfied and thirsty and ready for a bath. ✂



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# *From* **Harvest to Table**

*Spotlighting  
Southern favorites*

## **Fried Pork Chops**

### **INGREDIENTS**

Servings: 4

4 bone in center pork chops\*  
(1 inch thick, about ½ a pound each)  
salt to taste  
ground black pepper to taste  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup buttermilk

Season the pork chops with salt and pepper evenly on each side. Dip them in buttermilk and then coat them in flour. In a large heavy skillet over medium high heat, fry the chops in hot oil for about five minutes on each side until golden brown. Drain the pork chops on a paper towel.

\*Cheaper cuts may be used for frying.

## **Boiled Cabbage**

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 head of cabbage  
1 teaspoon salt  
Hamhocks/bacon/ham slices  
Bacon grease

Cut the cabbage into chunks and place the chunks into a large dutch oven or heavy saucepan. Salt to taste. Add meat of choice and bacon grease. For 30 minutes, cover the pan and boil until tender. Taste the dish to determine if more salt is needed.



## Sweet Potato Crunch

### INGREDIENTS

3 or 4 large sweet potatoes  
1 cup sugar  
½ cup butter or margarine  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Bake sweet potatoes until soft. Leave to cool. Peel and place into electric mixer bowl. Add sugar, butter and eggs. Beat the mixture until fluffy then add vanilla. Place the mixture in a 9 x 12 baking dish.

### CRUNCH TOPPING

4 tablespoons butter  
1 cup brown sugar  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350 F. Mix ingredients together. Top the sweet potato mixture with crunch topping, cover with foil. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake for 10 more minutes.

## Cornbread

### INGREDIENTS

3 cups self-rising cornbread mix (white lily) buttermilk type  
1 cup self-rising flour  
6 eggs (beaten)  
2 cups buttermilk or plain milk  
2 sticks melted butter

Heat oven to 375 F. Mix the ingredients together and pour the mixture into a greased cast iron skillet. If the mixture seems too thick add more milk. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

## Brown Rice Casserole

### INGREDIENTS

Servings 6-8  
½ cup margarine  
1 cup white long grain rice  
1 can condensed onion soup (10 ½ oz)  
1 can condensed beef soup (10 ½ oz)  
1 can sliced mushrooms (4 oz)

Heat oven to 350 F. Place margarine in a 9x13 casserole dish. Add rice, along with beef and onion soup, mix well. Add mushrooms and cover the dish tightly with foil. Bake for one hour.

This recipe may be doubled. Beef base may be used instead of soups. Just mix as directed to make 21oz of liquid.



## Fresh Pear Pie

### INGREDIENTS

Servings: 8-10  
8-10 pears large pears peeled and sliced (or canned)  
1 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon cinnamon  
1 stick butter  
2 refrigerated pie crusts

Heat oven to 350 degrees F In a saucepan, cover pears with water, add sugar and boil until tender. In a casserole dish or pie plate, sprinkle pears with additional sugar if they are not sweet enough. Add cinnamon and mix together. Place slices of butter on top of the pears. Cut the pie crusts into strips and make lattice crusts over top of the pears. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the crusts is light brown color and the pears start to bubble.



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# Thyme to Garden

By Samantha Reese, Southern Seasons  
Landscape/Nursery, Dawson, GA



## Winter Cassia A Pot of Gold in Your Garden



Give your garden guests a warm autumn welcome with the golden glow of *Cassia bicapsularis*, winter cassia, also known in South Georgia as the peanut bush.

Planted around the great lawn of the Columbus Botanical Garden, winter cassia enthralled visitors with its mass of golden yellow butterfly-shaped flowers. The flowers are displayed in spike-like clusters at the end of the slender branches with each cluster having up to 12 individual blossoms.

A nectar source for a variety of pollinators as well as a larval host plant for Sulphur butterflies, winter cassia begins flowering in mid-autumn and continues until frost. Interestingly, the butterfly larvae that feed on the foliage are mostly green while those that feed on the blooms are yellow – making it a fun addition to any butterfly garden.

Reaching a height of 8-10 feet with a similar spread, this fast-growing herbaceous perennial may require staking as taller specimens tend to fall over.

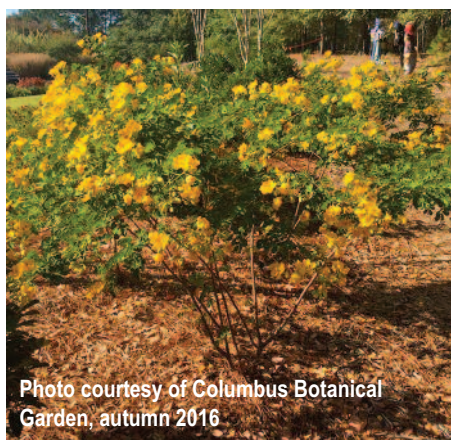


Photo courtesy of Columbus Botanical Garden, autumn 2016

To avoid staking, simply prune young shoots during spring and up to August, creating a shrubbier form or plant in a

shrub border where its companions can help hold it up. Pruning also encourages flowering.

Winter cassia performs best in a full sun, well-drained location with supplemental water provided during drought. Semi-evergreen in Zones 9-11, it freezes back to the ground in Zone 8 but returns each spring. Be sure to mulch around the base for winter protection as well as provide a good monthly watering if the winter is dry.

So if you are searching for a show stopping autumn floral display, plant winter cassia and watch your garden glow. ✕

*A note from the editor: Please let us know what types of information you'd like to see on our gardening page: seasonal plants or gardening tips.*

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# If You Can... *Can!*

By Carmen Statham



Most of us grew up on a family farm and learned the basics of food preservation from our grandmothers and mothers. Continuing our canning story from where we left off in our summer issue, we would like to share with you now some *Mechanics of Canning*.

When canning, you will need the appropriate canner (boiling water bath or pressure), jars, ring bands, and new lids. It helps to



have a jar-lifter, a bubble freer, and a ruler.

The simplest method of canning is water bath. Sterilize the jars and lids in boiling water for at least 5 minutes, then fill the jars with the prepared foods such as tomatoes, berries, or cucumbers and vinegar. Top with lids, and screw on rings. Submerge the filled jars in

boiling water until they reach the recommended amount of time for whatever you're canning. If done correctly, as the hot jars cool an airtight seal is created. High-acid foods will keep in the pantry for at least a year.

With a little more skill and a pressure canner, you can preserve meats (like poultry and seafood), beans, or plain (not pickled) vegetables. It's very important to know how to handle these low-acid foods to eliminate the risk of spoilage caused by bacteria and its toxin-producing spores. Low-acid foods must be heat processed at a temperature of 240F. Pressure canning is the only way to do this.

All of this information can be found at [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu) or in *So Easy to Preserve*. Beginners should follow research-based directions and recipes. The National Center for Home Food Preservation ([nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu)) is a great resource.

## Old Methods to Avoid

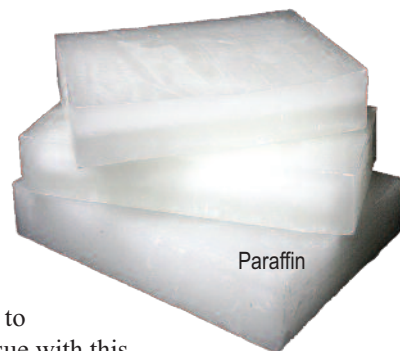
Home canning has come a long way from our grandmother's time because some of their methods are no longer recommended. Methods, such as open kettle canning, paraffin wax seals, and upside down sealing, are not as effective at removing bacteria.

Open kettle canning is a sealing method in which hot preserves are poured into a hot jar, the rim wiped, and lids and rings applied. The heat from the preserves produces a seal. But without the back-up of the boiling process, there is a higher risk of developing mold or other bacteria in the preserves.

Upside down sealing is a variation of the open kettle approach. After filling the jars, wiping rims, and applying lids and rings, the jars are inverted and covered with a kitchen towel and left to cool. Again, you can't expect a quality seal with this technique and you may end up with your jam or jelly up against your lid.

Paraffin wax seals are another technique which should be avoided. Here, thin layers of wax are poured over the preserves until there's about half an inch of wax on top. The inability to check your seal is the primary issue with this method. These seals also have a high rate of failure.

Solar canning, oven canning, microwave processing, and using canning powders such as aspirin/salicylic acid are also not safe and no longer recommended. ✕



Paraffin

To read the full article on canning, go to our website at [www.mygeorgiahometown.com](http://www.mygeorgiahometown.com)





# harvesting the sun

## new purpose for the family farm

By Jada Dukes

**P**eeping through the shrubs and trees along Highway 82 in Alapaha is a field of gleaming metal and glass panels. Not easily noticed by passing motorists, the sparkling fixtures reflect a new trend in farming in South Georgia—solar farms.

The Alapaha solar farm is not the first of its kind. There are solar farms being built all over Georgia. Cities like Douglas, Tifton, and Lakeland have all jumped aboard this solar powered wagon. The panels, which track the sun, are designed to harvest the sun's power and feed it back into the power grid, which serves the surrounding town or community.

In Alapaha, the panels occupy 4.5 acres of farmland belonging to the Gaskins family. Beltline Energy, the managing agency, harvests the sun's power and feeds it into Georgia Power's (GP) power grid.

According to Ryan Sanders, founding partner of Beltline Energy, the solar farm is a part of Georgia Power's Advanced Solar Initiative (GPASI) Prime, Medium Scale Program. The

Alapaha site is a 2.2MW solar array and will produce enough energy for 500-600 homes a year.

According to the GP website, the GPASI was primarily created to spur economic growth within the solar community in Georgia, while offering pricing that encourages more renewable development and avoids any upward rate pressure and reliability impacts to Georgia Power customers.

The big question here: Will it make a difference where it counts—the pocketbook.

"The solar farm will put downward pressure on the GP power rates. This downward pressure equates to savings for the Georgia ratepayer," Sanders said. In other words, the savings for the consumer will be minimal.

But what about the farm itself? The trend to convert to solar allows farmers, like the Gaskins, to make use of large tracts of untenable or dormant farmland in exchange for power in their rural areas.

"This is a marriage of interest between the solar and the ag commu-

nity because solar farms do not need access to water and it makes it easier for utility companies to provide power," Sanders reported.

This marriage of interests makes one notable Georgia peanut farmer smile. According to the *Atlanta News (AN)*, former President Jimmy Carter recently converted a soybean field to solar power to serve his hometown of Plains. Carter, a visionary for renewable energy sources, created the US Department of Energy before leaving office. In 1979, he reinforced his vision by installing solar panels on the White House roof and a solar water heater. Of course, everyone had their own opinions about the outrageous conversion. Ronald Reagan had them removed when he became President.

Carter told *AN* that the Plains solar site will be as symbolic as the 32 panels on the White House.

As more and more cities in Georgia slowly convert to solar energy, they prove that Georgians are not afraid of a little change. ✿



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## **HEADLINER: BIG BROTHER'S BOOMBOX FEATURING DERRICK DOVE**



Big Brother's Boombox: one of South Georgia's top party bands! Members Derrick Dove, Don Hill, Johnathan Thomas, and Jamie Richardson play music from the 60s through today's hits. The band has

toured the country and shared the stage with artist Blackberry Smoke, Robert Randolph, Tracey Byrd and Gary Allen.

Tanner Strickland opens this year's Nashville South Jams. Strickland, born in Valdosta and raised in Nashville, has excelled in both music and sports. After graduating from BCHS, Tanner, an all-prep football player, continued his career for four years at UGA. These days, Tanner is back to his musical roots, touring and playing around the Southeast, and currently living in Valdosta.



One Way Out follows Strickland to the stage. The band is a trio of local artist with a long musical resume. Members Jerry Stokes, Robert Griner, and Loyd Cole play rock, blues and contemporary

country. One Way Out members have shared the stage with The Pointer Sisters, Thunder Chief, Black Foot, Kenny Wayne Sheperd, The Neville Brothers, and B.B. King.

*"The Nashville South Jams event was hugely successful last year," said Faye Jernigan, Chairwoman, Berrien County Chamber of Commerce. "Rebranding the fall concert to Nashville South Jams, has help put a spotlight on the musical talent in and around Berrien County. We are excited about this year's lineup of artist."*

Advance ticket purchase is highly recommended. Tickets for the concert are currently on sale at the Berrien County Chamber of Commerce, 201 North Davis Street (inside the Berrien County Administrative Building), Nashville-229-686-5123 or at Horse Creek Winery, 2873 Highway 76 West, Nashville \ 229-686-5646 or 229-686-WINE.

# **GOLD CITY**



Above: The internationally known gospel quartet, Gold City, recently performed at the Threatte Center in Lakeland.

Right: You can always tell the groupies by the motorbikes parked down front. The ladies had a wonderful time at the concert before turning their four-legged rides toward home.

## **Upcoming Events**

**ADEL**  
Christmas Parade  
Sat., Dec.2

**ASHBURN**  
Christmas Parade  
Sat., Dec. 9, 10 am

**FITZGERALD**  
Halloween Downtown  
Blast & Zombie Run  
Thurs., Oct. 26  
Trick or Treat, afternoon;  
Zombie Run, 5:30 pm

Doug Stone  
Thurs., Nov. 9, 6:30 pm  
Grand Theatre  
Advance tickets at  
Fitzgerald Chamber

**TIFTON**  
Dwight Yoakum Concert  
Thurs., Nov. 2

**NASHVILLE**  
Cancer Lunch & Learn  
Thurs., Oct. 12, Noon-1pm  
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Christmas Parade  
12 Days of Christmas  
Sat., Dec. 2

**OCILLA**  
Halloween Boo Bash  
Fri., Oct. 13, 5 pm

Sweet Potato Festival  
Sat., Nov. 4

**LENEX**  
Lean-Ox Festival  
Fri.-Sat., Nov. 17-18





## ROCKS FITZGERALD!



## Up & Rocking ARTISTS

These up and coming musicians have really been making a name for themselves down South. Fitzgerald's rising stars, Dallas Rodgers and the SoulShine band, are making their hometowns proud. Both took the stage at the Fitzgerald Grande Theatre to open for big time country music artists.

The passion these artists have for country music is the undeniable heartbeat that drives them forward. While these artists may share a similar background, it's their uniqueness that really sets them apart.

SoulShine was established in 2006 by Jason Fuqua. Fuqua along with bandmates Jason Jordan, Joel Jones, and John Graham made it their goal to play only "the real country music." They are held in high regard by their community, who dubbed them the #1 party band in the south. They had the honor of opening for Daryle Singletary, a well-known country singer and a fellow South Georgia native. Their goal is to do a whole lot more.

Dallas Rodgers has been involved with the country scene for nine years now, opening for many popular artists such as Lee Brice, Travis Tritt, and Jeff Bates. He recently opened the show for the Grammy award winning country band, Shenandoah. Rodgers' determination is inspiring. Having just put out a new CD. Rodgers is one step closer to becoming the next big thing to come out of Fitzgerald.

Be on the lookout for these amazing artists as they continue to showcase their talents. ✨



Top left and right: Dallas Rodgers opened for Shenandoah and met up with Marty Raybon backstage. Above: The members of SoulShine take a moment to relax between sets.

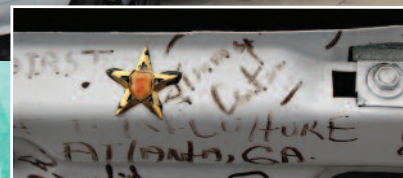




## Tifton Harley Davidson Car & Bike Show Rockabilly Edition



Mike Fuches uses his Mustang to pay tribute to Law Enforcement. Inside are hundreds of signatures of officers and dignitaries, such as Jimmy Carter.







# VSU Happenings



Fun in The Sun—Students and faculty enjoy themselves at “The Happening” an annual event put on by the Department of Student Life at VSU. Campus organizations and area vendors offered free gifts and prizes to promote their businesses.







*Photo courtesy of Noah Warren*

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