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VOLUME 20 ♦ ISSUE 3

2026 ♦ FREE



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From the Editor

A fellow church member had a doctor's appointment recently and in the waiting room, he picked up the previous issue of Lakelife. The following Sunday, he looked me up to tell me that while waiting, he had ample time to read numerous stories, from which he "learned so much."

As he described what he read, he seemed genuinely pleased to have learned details he said had "never heard before." Apparently his wife trained him well because he was quick to add that he always looks at each issue of Lakelife, and "they are always good," but he seemed quite impressed with his newfound knowledge on topics that interested him.

In hindsight, I should've asked him to write a letter (and maybe I will next Sunday). But I was smiling to myself, not in pride, but because I, too, am constantly discovering new things with each issue of Lakelife that I work on.

And that is our goal. Not just nice pictures and coming up with words to fill pages, but sharing real stories—stories about our own little world around the lakes (pp. 12, 40, 98) and beyond to other cities (p. 20), states, and countries (p.46). Stories that'll not only enlighten your world, but enable you to appreciate it better (pp. 66, 92), make you laugh (pp. 36, 46), smile (p. 30) or reminisce (p. 104).

In every issue, we have resources to help you find things to do (pp. 58, 62, 63, 72) and places to eat (pp. 50-51). Quite a few new restaurants were added to the restaurant list, so check them out and let us know your favorite. And finally, see what you may have missed and want to catch next time (pp. 80, 84, 86).

As always, each issue renews my belief that Lakelife is the best life! Till next time,



Lynn
lynn@lakelife.today

Lakelife

1106 MARKET STREET
GREENSBORO, GA 30642

VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 3

Contact us at:
706-749-7241 • lynn@lakelife.today
www.Lakelife.today

Dedication

MARK SMITH JR. (1965-2019)
Executive Editor 2018-2019

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Lakelife Magazine is sent to subscribers of the Lake Oconee News and The Eatonton Messenger. To subscribe to either newspaper, call 706-485-3501. It is also available free in kiosks all around Georgia's Lake Country.

SMITH
COMMUNICATIONS
PO Box 4027 • Eatonton GA 31024 • 706.485.3501
Newspapers • Magazines • Printing

PUBLISHED BY THE

Lake Oconee News

A division of Smith Communications, Inc.
100 N. Jefferson Ave. • P.O. Box 4027 • Eatonton, GA 31024
A. Mark Smith, President
706.485.3501 • Fax: 706.485.4166



Publisher
A. Mark Smith



General Manager
Matt Smith



Advertising Manager
Matt Plocha



Editor
Lynn Hobbs



Associate Editor
Leigh Lofgren

**Managing Editor
& Creative Director**
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CONTRIBUTORS

MICHELE BECHTELL • TREVOR BOWDEN • GEORGE DISSMEYER
 MARK ENGEL • BRAD GILL • MAURIEL PHILIPS JOSLYN • SUZANNE LAWLER
 KATHERINE MAHLBERG • TERRY N. MASSEY • HANK SEGARS
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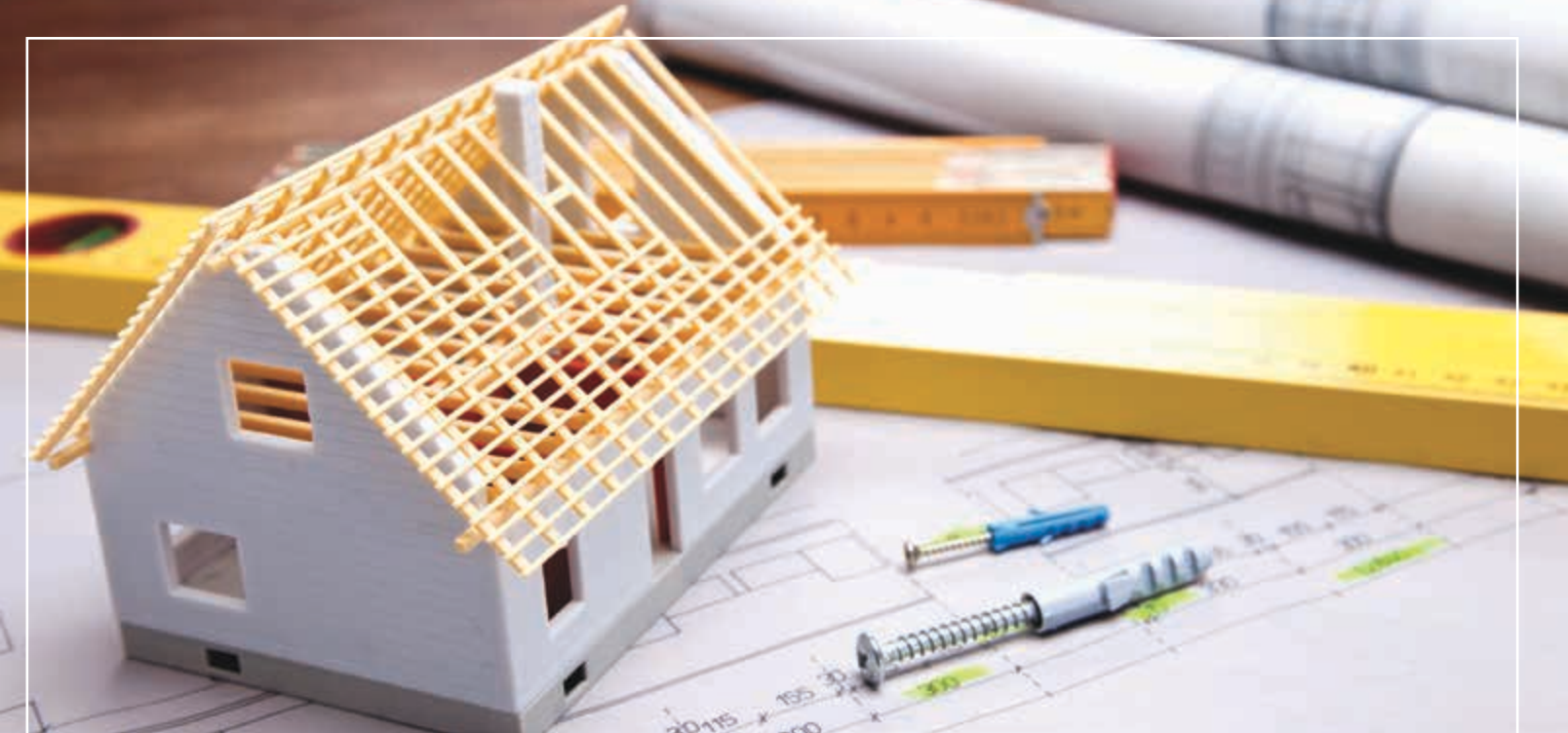
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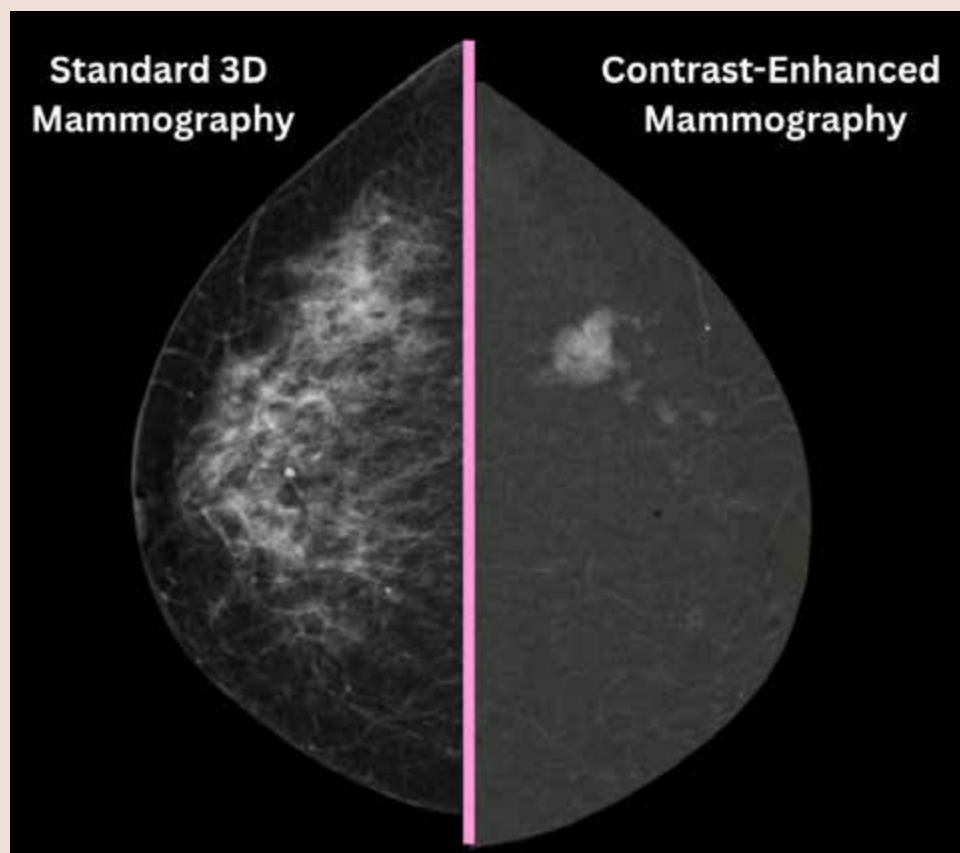
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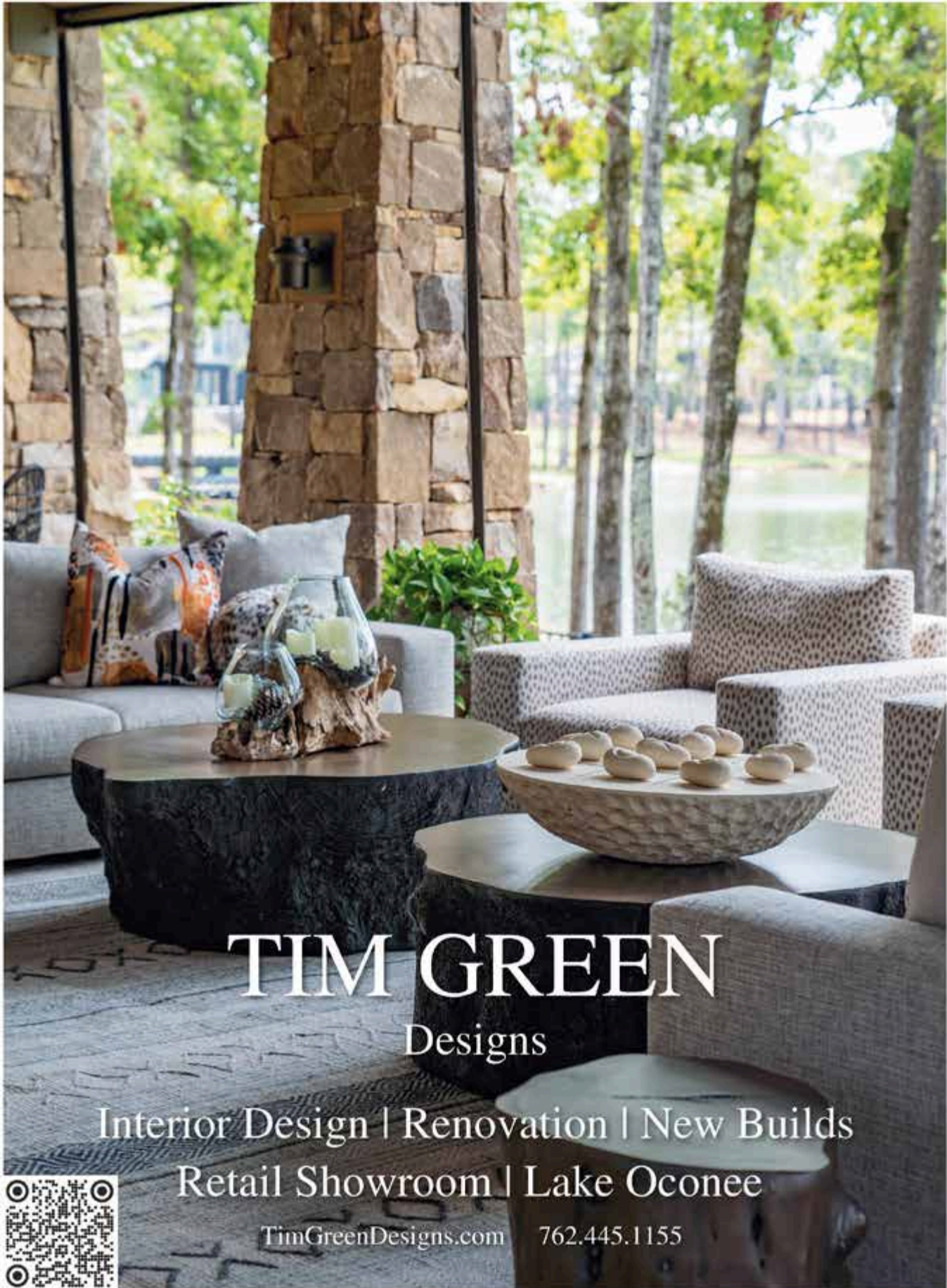
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Lake Oconee Equestrian
Center owners Till and
Renee von Ruexleben
(Photo by Crystal Sheridan)



Lake Oconee Equestrian Center

High Tech Meets Luxury and Conservation in a Beautiful Setting

■ Story by **Suzanne Lawler**

Lake Oconee Equestrian Center is a tale of two remarkable worlds. Nestled across 155 acres in Eatonton, the property exudes a serene, timeless charm — where a rooster’s crow marks the morning and horses graze lazily in rolling green pastures throughout the afternoon.

Yet it is also a place of modern luxury, equipped with innovative technology designed to minimize its carbon footprint while enhancing the riding experience for both horse and rider.

“We are very concerned about the health and wellbeing of the horses,” owner Till von Ruexleben said. “I know it sounds cheesy, but we actually call it the Ritz Carlton for horses.”

He is not kidding!

Till and his wife, Renee, who came to the United States from Germany, have backgrounds in software. They love technology and are committed to leaving a minimal carbon footprint while maintaining a high-end experience for people and horses.

That philosophy is evident in every detail of the property.

“One of the things we do is we very carefully monitor their (horses) water intake because if they don’t drink enough, that might be an early indication they could be colicky,” Till described. “So, I get automated texts from their water buckets which are Wi-Fi connected if they don’t drink enough. I can also monitor

how much they drink each day and at which times to make sure that everything is in perfect order.”

The couple takes that level of care even further for the 17 horses that live on the property.

“We also make sure that the water has everything they need in terms of minerals, no bacteria in the water or other problems, so we have an industrial size treatment plant. Our little well house is packed to the roof with equipment where we treat the water with two high power UV lights,” Till proudly described. “We have six filters in there and make sure the water they get is just the healthiest possible water for them.”



“Our trails have space for horses to ride side by side and the horses don’t need pulling, kicking, or any kind of force. Actually, most of our horses, if you turn your head, they feel the weight shift and they go in that direction without any force, and we believe in gentle horsemanship.”



The attention to detail continues inside the barn.

Walking into the Lake Oconee Equestrian Center barn feels like stepping onto a movie set. Soft tones, chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, and leather chairs create a space where guests can tack up their horses or enjoy a glass of wine.

“I want them to feel at home,” Renee said.

The horses have direct access to lush grass and plenty of land to wander throughout the day. Do not be surprised if you see the majestic animals lying down in their stalls. It is perfectly normal here.

“So, in the barns we have mattresses to protect the joints of the horses,” Till explained.

That same focus on comfort extends outdoors.

Another way the couple cares for the horses’ joints is by giving them pool time — in a horse kind of way. A dedicated pond, complete with a fountain, allows the animals to cool off and relax.

All of this meticulous care creates an exceptional riding experience for guests.

When the von Ruexlebens bought the land a few years ago,

(Photo by Crystal Sheridan)



Till walked the property himself to map out the riding trails. In keeping with his conservation values, he carved out the trails without cutting down a single live tree. Instead, he carefully maneuvered machinery to move dead trees out of the way and create pathways through the landscape.

Then, he brought in the technology.

“We have a semi patented spider removal tool, so we run the trails once in the morning and remove spider webs so it’s really an elevated experience on the horse,” he said with a smile.

The spider-free trails wind through the woods, across creeks and into breathtaking open fields. Till made sure to include wide-enough paths so riders have access to plenty of shade and sun.

“We have been on trail rides where it’s nose to tail, where you just follow the horse in front of you and I don’t know how exciting that is,” Till said. “It’s not exciting to us. So, our trails have space for horses to ride side by side and the horses don’t need pulling, kicking, or any kind of force. Actually, most of our horses, if you turn your head,



(Photos above by Suzanne Lawler)



(Photo by Suzanne Lawler)

they feel the weight shift and they go in that direction without any force, and we believe in gentle horsemanship.”

The center offers several membership-based programs for guests who want riding experiences, horse boarding, or weekend getaways built around the equestrian lifestyle.

Yet Renee and Till also designed the property to appeal to more than just horse lovers.

The Roany Pony Café offers a

cozy space to grab coffee or relax with a glass of wine. The café includes Wi-Fi and a large-screen television, while children can enjoy a whimsical fairy garden illuminated at night by 100 solar lights. There is even a zip line for adventurous visitors.

“It’s not only about riding,” Renee said. “It’s about having a good time.”

The couple also hosts wine tastings and charitable events that benefit the local community.

“But when you’re not on the horse, we have an observation deck where you can see the horses grazing and see the stream down below. We do wine tastings, and we do a lot of charitable events which help the community,” Till described.

In a world that often moves too fast, the Lake Oconee Equestrian Center offers something increasingly rare: space to slow down, breathe deeply and ride in harmony with nature. ♦



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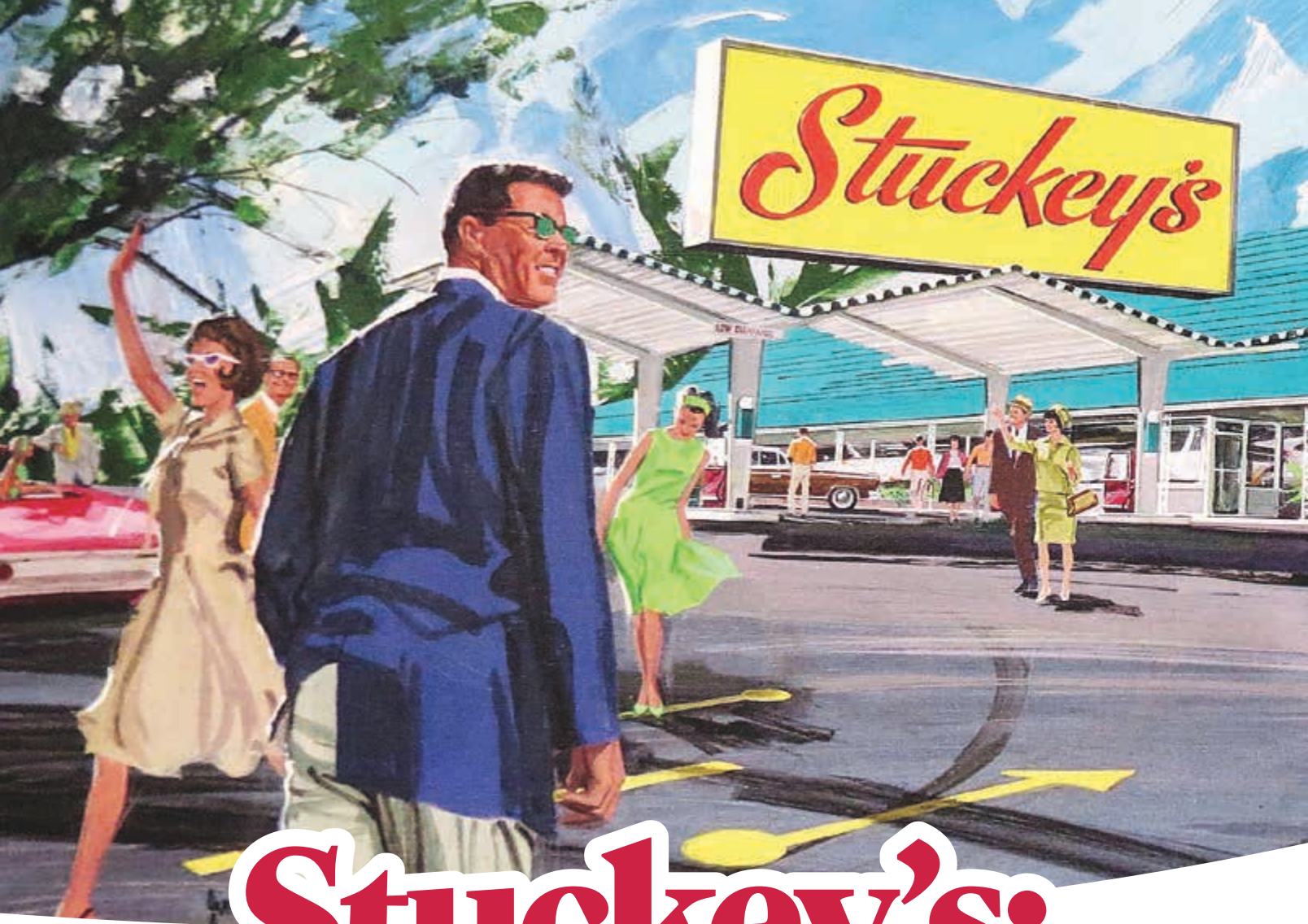
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Stuckey's:

Reviving an Iconic Roadside Brand

■ Story and Photos by **Hank Segars** and contributed

Have you ever wondered
what happened to those popular
Stuckey's stores?



“

From Georgia pecan farmers to your table, we take fresh, local crops, roast them, coat them, flavor them, and—because we can’t help ourselves—sometimes wrap them in chocolate and nougat.

”

**Stephanie
Stuckey**



Stuckey's headquarters in Wrens.

This story, quite frankly, is the result of sheer happenstance and the good fortune of catching the tail end of a syndicated radio interview with Stephanie Stuckey, the face of the company that bears her name. As Stephanie's enthusiasm and passion for her family's famous company resonated through my speaker, I thought of Stuckey's roadside stores' peak popularity and travelers' fondness for them.

Those teal-blue-roofed Stuckey's stores are still remembered by those of us who stopped at the roadside oases while traveling to Daytona Beach, Pigeon Forge, and other destinations across Dixie. Today, while remaining a nostalgic memory, a Stuckey's revival is underway.

The company's history

As a forerunner of Buc-ee's, QuikTrip, and other modern travel centers, Stuckey's was founded in 1937 during the Great Depression by W.S. Stuckey, Sr., who, like

many others across the nation, needed a job. With his wife Ethel's extraordinary secret recipe for an old-fashioned pecan log roll treat, the business grew from sales out of Stuckey's car to roadside stands. In 1948, the cooking operation moved from the family's small kitchen with the opening of a candy plant and distribution center in Eastman.

When World War II began, pecans were still sold, but candy-making and travel changed due to wartime rationing of sugar and tires. Stuckey produced candy for the military, but all his stores except the original Eastman site closed. After the war, more than 100 stores reopened. Stuckey's became known as a roadside destination offering clean restrooms, gasoline, and specialty candies, including sweet divinity, pralines, saltwater taffy, and nut-based products. The log rolls, made with Georgia pecans and dipped in caramel, became the most popular item.

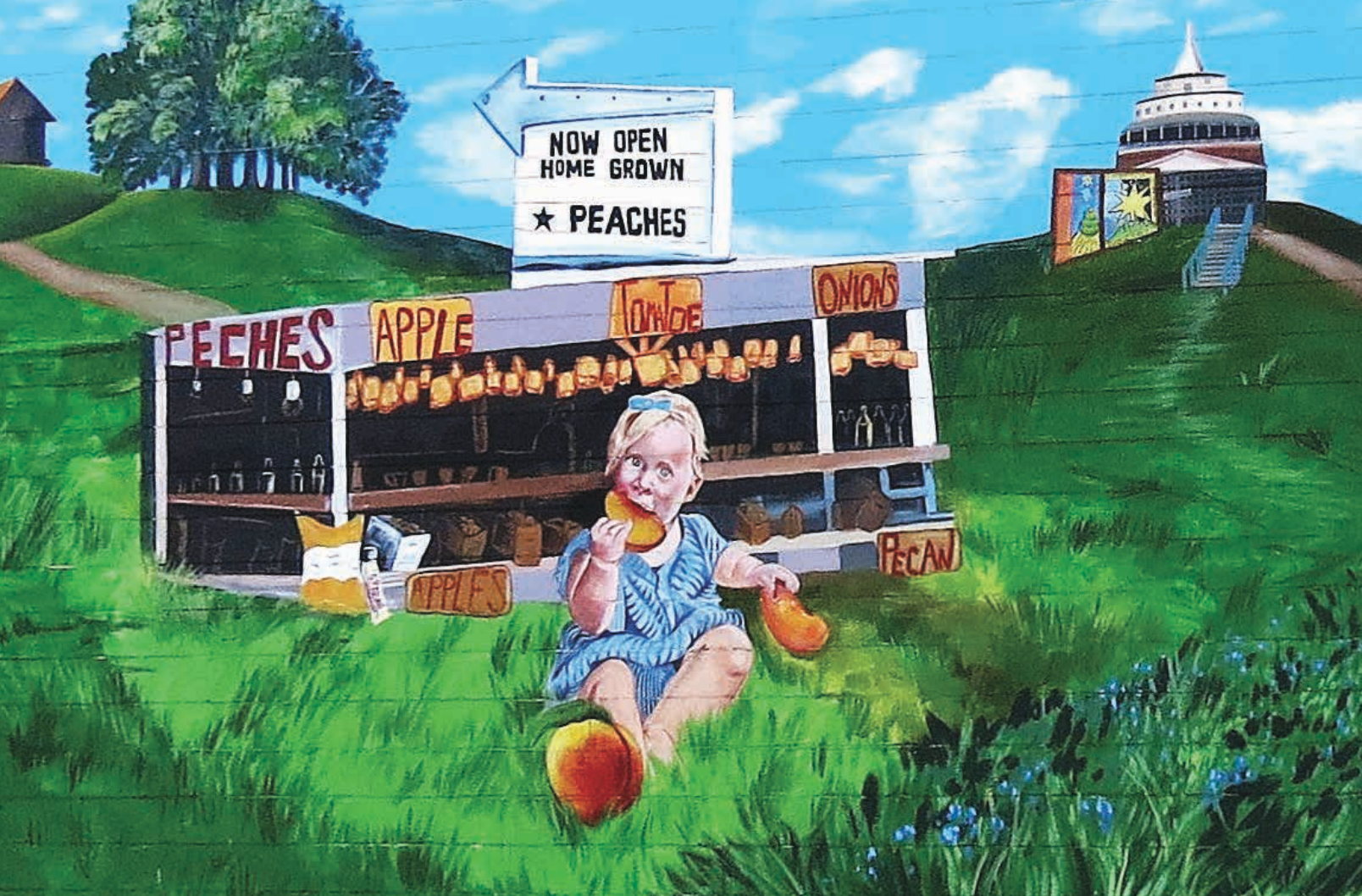
A Stuckey's stop also meant that kids of all ages could buy treasures

not available back home—rubber alligators and scary snakes, coonskin caps and drinking-bird toys, T-shirts, and a boatload of kitschy souvenirs.

From the 1950s through the 1970s, Stuckey's reached its heyday with 368 stores across 30 states and over 4,000 roadside signs. In the pivotal year of 1964, Stuckey's merged with the Pet Milk Company to secure capital for continued expansion across the nation.

The founder, W.S. Stuckey, Sr., died in 1977 and times were changing. A year later, the Pet Milk Company was purchased by Illinois Industries, and they began to close hundreds of Stuckey's stores across the country.

The founder's son, W.S. "Billy" Stuckey Jr., a well-known, five-term Congressman (1967-1977) from Eastman, reacquired the family's business in 1984. He launched a new concept to sell candy products in retail stores rather than stand-alone roadside buildings.



A mural on the Stuckey's Factory in Wrens featuring peches sign located at produce stand on Hwy 441 near Eatonton.

The Great Recession closed the Eastman candy plant in 2009, and outside vendors began producing the company's candies.

In 2019, Billy Stuckey's daughter, Stephanie, a University of Georgia law graduate and former state legislator representing DeKalb County, became an owner and invested her life savings in the company. Stephanie says, "I am now Chief Growth Officer, and am highly involved in sales and marketing, a chief brand ambassador like Colonel Sanders for KFC."

Stephanie is also an innovator in new product development, manufacturing, and distribution. She visits the Wrens factory from her home in Atlanta at least twice weekly and is constantly traveling

across the South and the country to promote the business. The online and social media presence is substantial, with over 120k followers on LinkedIn and 16k on her personal Facebook page alone.

Presently, Stuckey's boasts 50 licensed locations, candies sold in 5,000+ retailers, and a food manufacturing facility and distribution center in Wrens, Georgia.

Celebrating local

I recently telephoned Stephanie and received a prompt callback to arrange a visit to the Stuckey's candy outlet and factory in Wrens, east of Lake Country. Arriving from Madison, I could see that this entrepreneur was passionate about the company and its legacy.

As we toured the company's gift shop and candy factory, I was amazed by her ability to multitask, greeting customers, arranging displays, and overseeing operations, all while leading me and my wife through the factory.

While walking with Stephanie to the company's candy shop, I learned a few things about her family's business as she fielded calls on her cellphone. This CEO was clearly a "workhorse" with a "hands-on" management style.

"We're all about celebrating local at Stuckey's," she said. "From Georgia pecan farmers to your table, we take fresh, local crops, roast them, coat them, flavor them, and—because we can't help ourselves—sometimes wrap them in chocolate and nougat. Call it



Sea salt glazed snacks available at Ingles.



Chocolate and pecan candy.

candy. Call it snacks. We call it doing important work in the food chain.

“The pecan log roll is often the entry point to Stuckey’s. It’s what most people associate with us and yes, we’re even mentioned on the Wikipedia page for log rolls, but it’s just the beginning. Our brittles are outstanding, our flavored pecans (especially glazed) are a personal favorite, and our chocolate turtles, which we call gophers, are a hidden gem. Ideally, people come for the log roll and discover a lot more to love.”

My biggest questions for Stephanie concerned the brand’s future plans. “I often describe Stuckey’s as an 89-year-old startup,” Stephanie replied. “We’re deep in the entrepreneurial hustle of rebuilding a classic American brand focused on selling our pecan snacks and candies through great retail partners like Ingles, Jet Foods, and independent stores across the country, including Madison Produce.

“I really hope your readers will take an easy day trip to visit our candy outlet store on Hwy. 1 in Wrens, Georgia,” Stephanie continued. “We’ve got product so fresh it’s practically still coming off the roasting line. You’ll also find a variety of local goods that, like Stuckey’s, are part of the Georgia Grown program. And please ask for me if you stop in—if I’m there and we’re in production, I’m happy to hand out a hairnet and give a quick walk-through of the plant so you can see how the candy magic is made.”

Will the visit bring back memories, nostalgia, and great pecan treats? Of course! ♦

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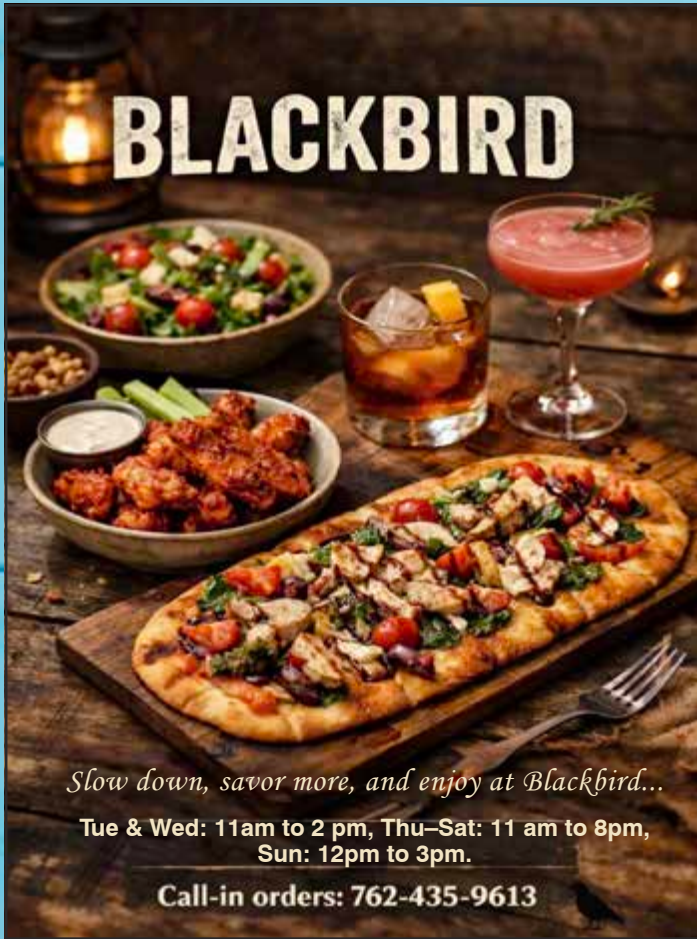
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(Casey Brady photo)

Backyard Feeding Frenzy

■ Story by Lynn Hobbs

Here he is again, one of God's amazing creations, staring me down eye-to-eye. He's 3-inches, 0.12-ounces of beauty that can fly forward, backward, straight up, straight down, or even hover mid-air like a helicopter.

Even though it seems there are hundreds of colorful, pollinating florals around our yard, make no mistake, this guy wants more.

I'm not fooled by his smallness—he is determined to eat us out of house and home. My husband and I may as well become shareholders in the sugar-manufacturing conglomerates so we can recoup a small portion of the bags of money I've spent making the 1-to-4 parts sugar water the hummingbirds crave.

Each morning, I rise before the crack of dawn to wash and fill the all-you-can-eat buffet of feeders hanging around our yard. As the sun peeps over the horizon, I pull back the kitchen window curtain and see him hovering impatiently at the window because he knows my morning routine.



(Janet Swahn photo)



I carefully balance the filled feeders so not a drop spills as I carry them out the door and into the battle zone. As I proceed, these exquisite hummers become miniature birds of prey, darting back and forth figuring out which hook I'll head to first. Once the feeders are in place, they all dine amicably, simultaneously. They are hungry, so there isn't a single fight at the table as the first meal of the day begins.

As the minutes pass, the colorful males launch a feisty, day-long territorial battle over each feeder.

One will perch on a nearby fence, tree branch, or even on top of the feeder itself. From there, he

constantly guards the battle stations of homemade nectar and chest-bumps the other hummers away with loud chirps. It's a showy exhibition of nature's masculinity at its finest.

But one female has her own cunning strategy of dining without disturbing the peace. She waits demurely in a hidden place under the eaves without making a peep. As soon as king hummer fights off the squadrons and chases them to a faraway tree to prevent imminent return, she moves in. She doesn't hover at the feeder as she dines. Instead, she confidently sits on the little perch and chugs that sweet liquid like my sons used to down Powerade after baseball practice. She doesn't come up for air until a familiar hum breaks the silence, signifying king male's return. She abruptly disappears to her hiding place until the next opportunity arises, and I smile triumphantly at her success.

At the end of a long day at work, I return home, pull into the driveway and open my car door. In an instant, the tiny-but-mighty ruby-throats swarm down



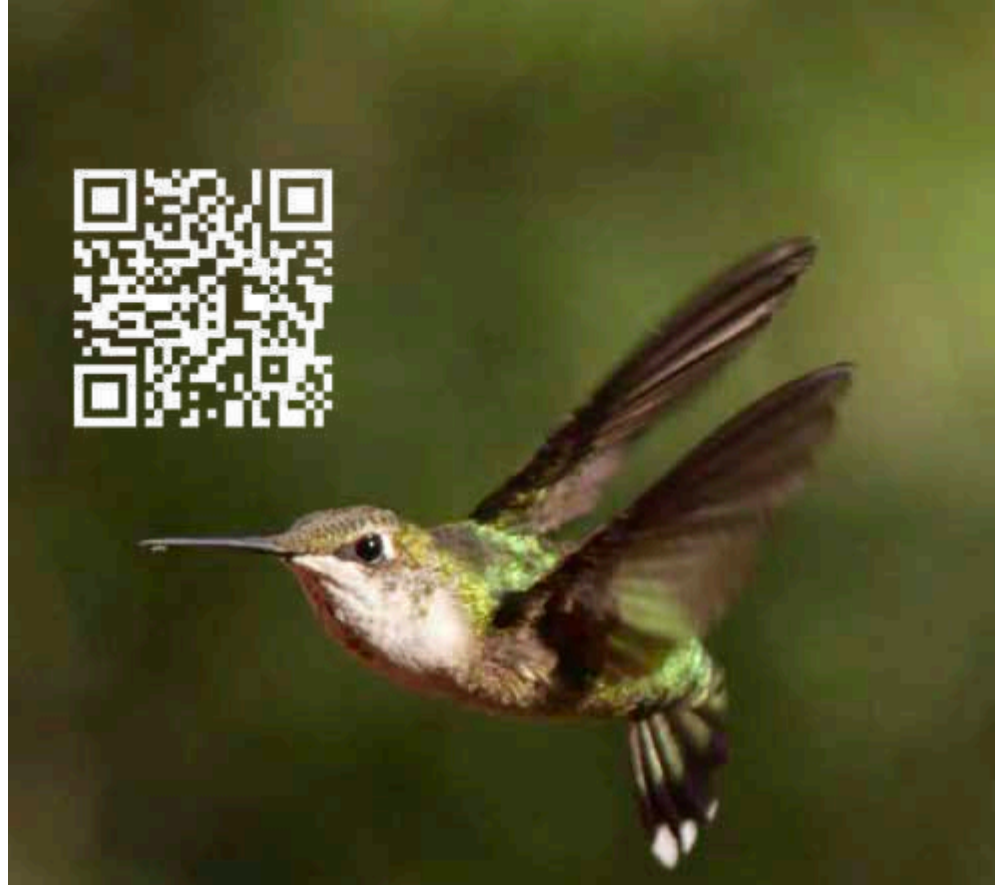
(Virginia Lynch photo)

from the trees and command my attention with their agile, aerial acrobatics.

The drone of their rapidly approaching wings sound like miniature WWII aircraft zooming in. They chirp me off in no uncertain terms, using chirps that would probably make a sailor blush. Their antics cause me to question my audacity of being a single minute late to refill their feeders. What kind of a person am I, delaying their dire need for a sugar fix? Just in case I didn't get the message, they impatiently zoom around to the emptied feeders as if to point them out, then zoom back again to chirp-fuss some more.

Unlike the peaceful (dare I say, "humdrum"?) morning feeding, the evening feeding time buzzes with chaotic excitement. The bees and hornets have emerged and occupy the feeding ports, feasting on the dribbles left by the sloppy-eating hummers. The stinging insects join my ranks of being chirped-off by the hovering hummingbirds as they wait to dart in on a nectar-filled plastic flower as soon as the insect flies away. Likewise, I must engage defensive dodging tactics to replace the emptied bottles with filled ones.

Last year, a new culture in



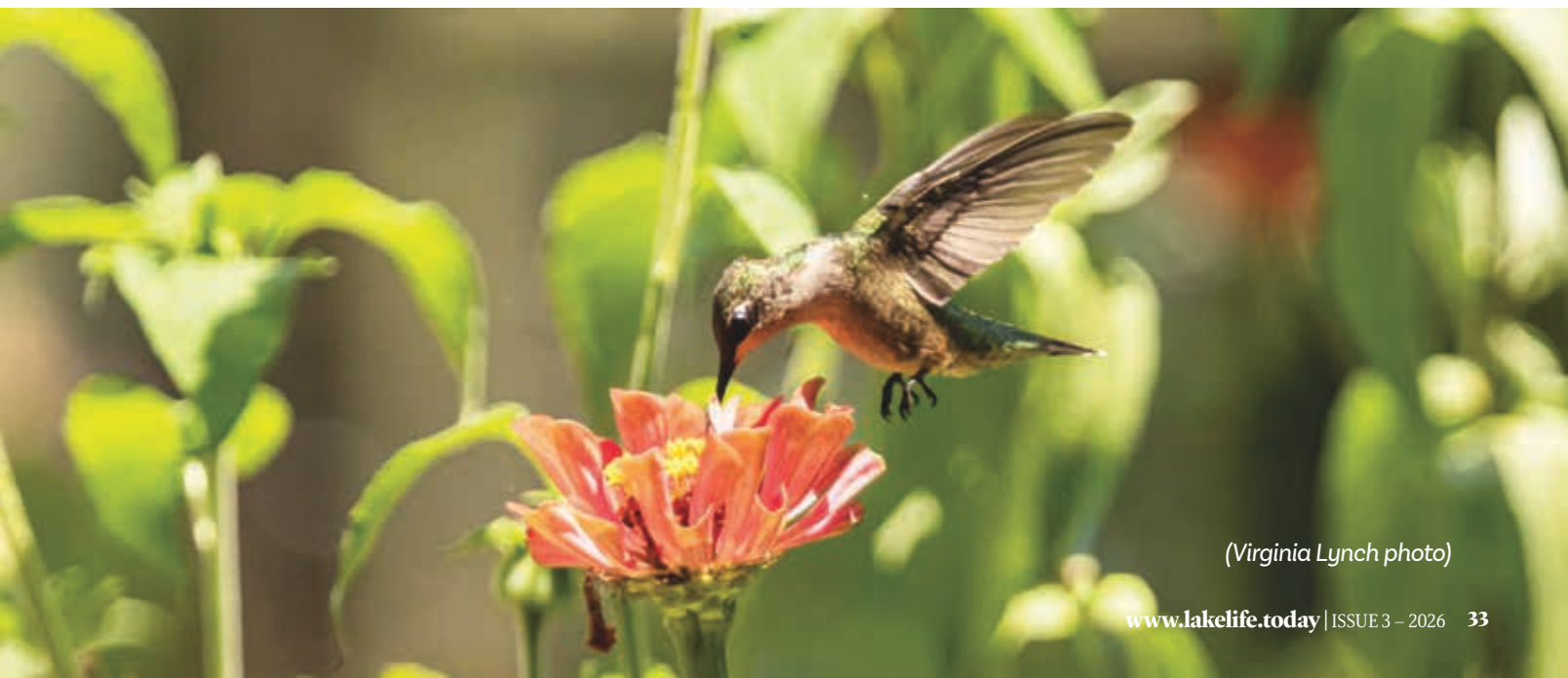
See video from the Lakelife editor Lynn Hobbs' feeder as multiple humminbirds compete for a sweet meal.

feathered behavior presented itself, and already has returned this year. I've caught small chickadees in the act of sitting on the nectar feeder perches, seeming to dine while keeping king male hummer and his backups busy defending their turf. Neighbors have reported woodpeckers doing the same. Plainly, sugar water trumps "birds

of a feather flock together," and backyard hummingbird feeder-keg parties are becoming a trend.

But my feathers aren't ruffled – I know king male and quick-witted female ruby-throats will fly above the rest and reign supreme. My triumphant smile returns.

Backyard life is a grand life, indeed. ♦



(Virginia Lynch photo)



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What Did You Think of Where You Weren't?

■ By Mark Smith Jr.

I got back in my car and looked down at my phone. The little light was blinking. My phone had an urgent message it wanted to give me. I touched the icon and the message read:

“What did you think of Kroger?”

What a silly question. Anyone who knows me knows the answer. Anyone who doesn't can tell just by the surface area of my shadow. Being as my phone is neither, I refused to answer; but, of course, I love groceries and I love grocery stores. Kroger is no exception.

Later that same day, I stopped at the BP station on Highway 44 to get gas and, as I was preparing to leave, my phone harkened me once again:

“What did you think of El Agave?”

Now I do love El Agave's chips and salsa like Andy loves Helen Crump, but I had not been to the Mexican restaurant located next to the BP. My phone thought otherwise. It concerned me a great deal that my phone was making assumptions about me based on my proximity. This made me wonder what other incorrect assumptions the folks at Samsung were gathering about my activities and travels.

Some nights before I go to bed, I will plug my phone into the charger and it will send me a message, “Hooray, today you walked 10,732 steps!” On days when I sit in a fishing boat all day,



it says nothing. There may be nothing on the screen, but I can sense the disappointment.

When I am on the interstate and driving 70 miles per hour in a 65 zone, I am sure my phone is taking notes and saying to itself “Keep it up, Richard Petty. You just wait until I tell your insurance company about this.” Surely the same phone that lies about me being at a Mexican restaurant is going to tell State Farm I was going 98.

Back in October, I flew to Kansas City and rented a car to drive to Columbia, Missouri for the Georgia football game. Having rented the most affordable economy car available, it was all I could do to get the small car up to the speed limit. My phone sent me a message:

“You cheap bastard, you are

going to get us both killed.”

The Northern Ozarks made for a beautiful drive with plenty of wide-open pastures, picturesque barns, deep rivers, and giant adult superstores along the interstate. Nothing quite paints the landscape's portrait like a 9,000-square-foot building painted bright pink. Alexander Shunnarah billboards come close.

I was quite shocked at the number and size of the adult mega stores the Show Me state wanted to show me. I could not help but wonder why so many? Were there very specific items that discerning individuals sought that

were not readily available in all adult stores? Why so big? From the interstate, most of these stores looked bigger than the Tallahassee airport. Are there really that many different items to purvey inside or is it a volume based store, like Sam's, where folks are required to buy in bulk?

“Back up the truck, Marge! These inflatable dolls are on clearance and you get an extra 20 percent off if you buy 20 or more!”

The answer to these and many more questions will remain unknown for now. I did buy gas at an exit where one of those mega adults stores was located. My phone did not ask me what I thought of Passions Adult Superstore, but I am sure it was making judgments. ♦

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High school bass tournament anglers pray before blasting off in an eight-hour bass tournament.

Morgan County schools offer bass tournament fishing for middle and high school students

■ Story by **Brad Gill** ■ Photos contributed by MCHS

For some student athletes, it's Friday night stadium lights. For others, it's a sea of red, white and green boat lights, often mixed with fog over the water as the sun's first hints of glory begin to appear. Such is the life of a teenage bass tournament angler.

Aiden Moore (left) and Tripp Ray finished in 16th place out of 111 boats in the Georgia High School Association's State Championship on May 9 at Lake Sinclair.

Aiden and Tripp are freshmen on Morgan County High School's bass fishing team.



More than 10 years ago, the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) recognized “Bass Fishing” as a sport. For those who might question whether a bass angler qualifies as an athlete, I challenge you to balance yourself on the front deck of a bass boat, foot on the trolling motor, casting hundreds of times while balancing wind, waves and sometimes driving rains. Of course, you only have to do it for eight hours as you work to put together the heaviest five-fish limit of bass that you possibly can...

Morgan County High School Athletic Director Greg Thompson acts as the bass fishing coach for the MCHS Bulldogs fishing team, a group of 12 anglers. All students fish on two-man teams and have voluntary boat captains who offer up boats, fuel and time for these kids to pursue what they enjoy.

When Lakelife magazine first reached out to Greg about a story on his Bulldogs team, he referred us to Tammie Moore, who he described as “our school representative who handles all things bass fishing.”

Indeed she does. She’s the string that keeps it all tied together for these high schoolers. Things happen in this sport... a boat breaks down in the middle of a bass tournament, a replacement boat has to be found, then approved before it’s sent to the location of the stranded team. Then is gear unloaded, placed onto the new rig, and ensure the busted boat somehow gets back to the dock and on somebody’s trailer... all to make sure the teen team has enough time to catch the best five bass they can by weigh-in time. It’s just one of hundreds of things she does on any given day.

However, Tammie says her role as a “Bass Mom” is more of an investment than a job. Her freshmen son, Aiden, is on the high school team and says that he, along with most of the others, eat, breath

and sleep bass tournament fishing.

“If they are out hunting and fishing, then we are not out hunting them. I can assure you my son is out fishing all the time,” Tammie said.

Aiden, 15, fishes with Tripp Ray, another 15-year-old freshmen on the high-school team. Aiden’s dad, Brian, is the boat captain for the team.

“My husband and I were not fishermen,” Tammie noted. “We bought a boat two weeks before the first tournament. When these kids love tournament fishing, it’s all they want to do.

“Everything at our house revolves around bass fishing. My son will get onto Google Maps and look over the topography of these lakes.”

“Then he’ll figure out what kind of lures are going to work on that lake. He’ll look at a bait wall at our house and, depending on the time of year and whether it’s a herring lake or not, he’ll choose lures for that tournament. It is something my husband and I don’t understand. My son far exceeds anything we can do.”

For freshmen, Aiden and Tripp have done very well this tournament season, which will wrap up in June. They had a 14th place finish at the March 7 GHSA tournament at Clarks Hill and finished in sixth place at a Georgia B.A.S.S. Nation (GBN) tournament on April 25 at Lake Eufaula. Their tournament sack was anchored by a 7.54-lb. Eufaula

largemouth, which took “Big Fish” honors in the 101-boat field. In addition, Aiden and Tripp were the only high school Bulldogs to qualify for the GHSA State Championship on May 9 at Lake Sinclair. With 12.13 pounds, they finished in 16th place out of 111 boats. It’ll be fun to watch these freshmen boys as they continue to hone their skills in the coming years.

Aiden and Tripp are certainly not the only shining starts on the MCHS team. All six teams qualified for the GBN State Classic June 12-13 at Lake Seminole on the Georgia/Florida line.

The State Classic tournament will be the last one for current MCHS seniors Brody Torbush and Cooper Pitman. While a number of high school anglers only bass fish, Brody managed to wrestle and play golf while being on the fishing team. Cooper was a member of the football team.

“Both are really good kids, and we’re going to miss them next year,” Tammie said.

While neither senior angler has current plans to compete on a college bass fishing team, that’s not always been the case for Morgan County student anglers.

“Cole Holloway and Ryan Thomas were tournament partners at Morgan County High School when they graduated in 2020,” said Tammie. “Both went to college on fishing scholarships. Cole went to Emmanuel University, and Ryan went to the University of Montevallo in Alabama.”

Like most GHSA sports, bass tournament fishing comes with a hefty price tag. While it’s not required that interested youth provide their own boat or boat captain, they will have to chase sponsorship money. However, some funds might be available for teens unable to reach their total financial goal, so Tammie asks that interested anglers contact her to

discuss more.

“We ask each boat (team) to raise \$1,500,” she explained. “Those fees are for their jerseys, hoodies, tournament entry fees and some other things.”

“We are very appreciative for the companies and individuals who choose to sponsor the Morgan County fishing teams. Without our sponsors, we won’t have a team and our kids can’t compete. Last year, the Athletic Department started kicking in some funds, which certainly was a help.”

In addition to funding, Tammie said they are always on the lookout for boat drivers willing to offer up their time and boats to captain a pair of youth anglers. Student anglers are not allowed to drive the boats during tournaments, and captains can’t offer any fishing information during the events.

“Typically, the boat captains are going to be a relative of one of the anglers, but it does not have to be a family member,” Tammie said. “We have a school bus driver who is a big fisherman, and he agreed to take on a sixth-grade team.”

The Morgan County Middle School has a Bulldog team coached by Brian Cousins. This group of 28 anglers has a strong eighth grade class that will yield a larger high-school roster next tournament season.

Boat captains must pass a background check and be prepared to cover boat expenses. In Morgan County, all boat captains must be at least 25 years of age.

Surprising to this writer, Morgan County is the only school in the Lake Country area that has bass fishing teams. If you’re interested in learning more about starting a bass-fishing team at your school, call the GHSA at 706.647.7473 or check them out atghsa.net.

You can also contact the GBN by email at gbn_admin@georgiabassnation.com or gbn@georgiabassnation.com. ♦



Not all high school anglers continue competing in college, but these two Morgan County Bulldogs sure did. After graduating in 2020, Cole Holloway (left) and Ryan Thomas both received college scholarships and continued to compete at the collegiate level.



Seniors Brody Torbush (left) and Cooper Pitman will take their final ride in a bass boat as high school anglers at the Georgia B.A.S.S. Nation State Classic June 12-13 at Lake Seminole. They will be fishing for a spot in the Bassmaster High School Championship in late July.

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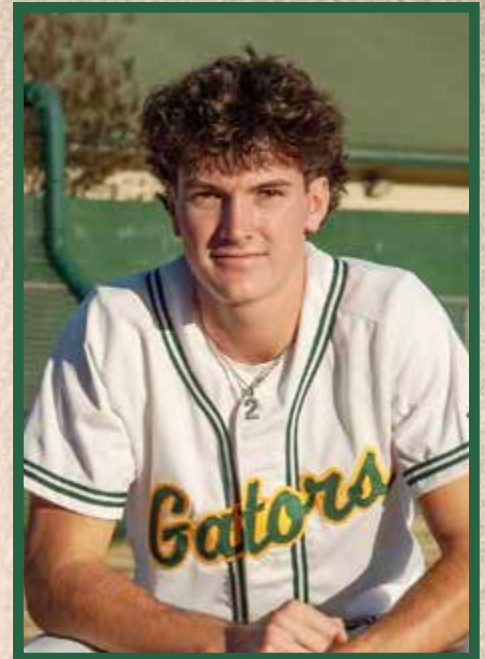
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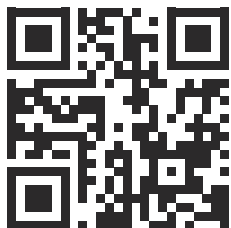


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Anchors Aweigh

■ By George Heiring

The Abaco Islands lie in the northern Bahamas, one hundred nautical miles from the tourist glamour of Nassau. Consequently, they are a destination regarded as an uncouth uncle bunking in the attic and rarely acknowledged. But if you favor the Abaco's laconic lifestyle and choose to relax on its pristine beaches, you must play by its rules. That includes its boating protocol.

On my first visit to the Abaco isle of Elbow Key, a thin strip of sand and palms flanked by the Atlantic Ocean, I began to appreciate the local style of anchoring a boat, a ritual shrewd in design and poetic in execution.

In these islands, virtually everyone gets about by boat, so they have the same problem urban auto drivers do—finding parking places. And there are other challenges. Once your boat is anchored or tied to a pier, winds and tides swing it about. In crowded anchorages, boats bashing together tend to set off naval warfare--friendly neighbors begin dueling with

cutlass and pistols.

To avoid that mayhem, when tying to a pier, a sea-side anchor is dropped over the stern so your craft remains at right angle to the dock, secure as if hung on a clothesline and taking up a minimum of parking space.

My anchor-appreciation came one evening when my wife, Donna, and I were picked up by motorboat and taxied to the Elbow Cay Club for their specialty dinner of fresh conch served in every digestible form. Great service! If we had oversampled rum cocktails—not confessing anything here—we would have been deposited on our dock and pointed toward our cottage door.

Our water taxi was driven by a silver-haired gent in a red flowered shirt. To my surprise, we approached the restaurant wharf moving at a daringly fast clip. About fifty yards out, he stood, lifted a galvanized steel anchor and tossed it nonchalantly over the transom, letting the line reel smoothly between his fingers.

As the anchor splashed into the water behind us, he shifted into reverse. The bow of the boat rose obligingly. The skipper casually stepped forward and slipped the forward line neatly over a cleat on the pier. Wow! Just like that, we were secure, fore and aft. I sat openmouthed in admiration.

During our two-week stay on Elbow Cay, we took daily excursions in the 19-foot Boston Whaler rented with our cottage. As my self-taught boating skills improved, I watched with envy as fellow boaters executed the Bahamian anchoring ballet. So majestic. So unbelievably cool. Way cool! By now, of course, I was convinced even I could do it.

On a cloudless morning, with Donna beside me and trustingly unaware, I aimed our Boston Whaler straight at Hope Town's massive public dock where two elderly Haitian fishermen were dozing in the sun, poles in hand. Knifing through turquoise water, I pushed the throttle full forward. Then I picked up the steel anchor that lay at my feet on a curl of yellow rope. Striking a heroic, way cool pose, I confidently heaved it over the transom letting the line slither across my palm. Suddenly, I was staring at my empty hand.

"What the..." I never finished the sentence. The rope had disappeared through my fingers and was arching into the sea, a thin yellow rainbow, its butt end waving a lingering, taunting goodbye. Our \$150 anchor vanished with a sploosh. I doubted I would see it again. Dammit! Why hadn't it been secured to the boat? I added a string of profanity for emphasis.

The anchor was gone, but, at the moment, there was an even greater emergency. Why was my wife screaming? Because, I discovered, the concrete dock was now less than 30 feet away.

I jammed the throttle into reverse. The whining prop dug into the waves. The prow of the outboard rose above the huge pier like a breaching whale. I lunged forward to wrap a line around the nearest piling. Instead I fell against it, wrapping my arms around it and hugged it like a visiting grandchild. Then I glanced up at the wide-eyed Haitian fishermen. Trying not to offend a white stranger, they held their hands over their mouths to mask their gap-toothed laughter.

It took five dives to the bottom of the bay before I found the anchor and wrestled it into the Boston Whaler. By then, Donna was already on our cottage porch gulping her evening glass of wine six hours earlier than usual.

Even now, when I hear a Navy chorus singing Anchors Aweigh, I feel myself flinch. ♦



A native of Iowa, the late George Heiring lived many years on Lake Oconee with his wife, Donna, during which time he helped found the Georgia Writers Museum and remained active in the community. This story is taken from his book, *Turning Leaves*, which is available at Georgia Writers Museum.



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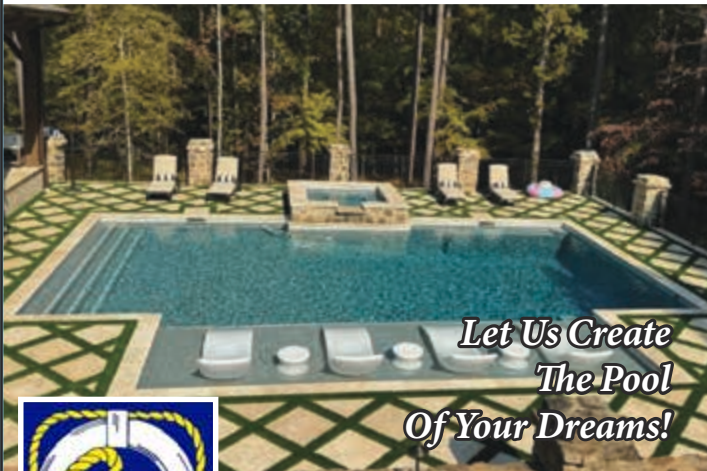
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A close-up photograph of an acoustic guitar, showing the neck, fretboard, and body.

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Linger Longer Steakhouse

Ritz Carlton Reynolds
1 Lake Oconee Trail
706-467-7135

Los Torres Mexican Grill

117 E. Broad St.
706-453-0092

Marcos Pizza

1010 Market St.
706-920-2727

Metropolis Cafe

1000 Parkside Main
762-445-1182

Pedros Mexican Grill and Cantina

6161 Lake Oconee Pkwy.
762-445-1141

PJ's Coffee

1010 Market St.
762-445-1187

Ripe Thing Market

112 W. Broad St.
706-454-2155

Sammy's by the Lake

6141 Lake Oconee Pkwy., Greensboro
706-817-0197

Santoro's Italian Kitchen

1061 Village Park Dr.
706-453-1110

Table at the Lake

1010 Cowles Clinic Way.
706-786-1127

Tin House Thai

4950 Carey Station Rd.
706-454-5999

Yesterday Café

114 N. Main St.
Greensboro
706-920-1099

putnam

Brenda's Fish & Wings

102 Oak St.
706-749-8439

The Deck, Safe Harbor Marina

144 Collis Marina Rd.
706-485-7596

El Agave

960 Greensboro Rd.
706-484-2025

El Cazador

104 N. Jefferson Ave.
706-991-5003

El Sitio

106 Harmony Rd.
706-485-6105

Giant Subs at Oconee Wild

1133 Lake Oconee Pkwy.,
706-816-9676

Inaho Japanese Steak & Sushi

103 Harmony Crossing, Ste. 6
706-991-5122

Iron Fork Café

106 Harmony Crossing
762-220-1033

Italian Chop House on Lake Oconee

920 Greensboro Rd.
706-705-7005

Kina's Krazy Creations

102 N. Jefferson Ave.
706-473-7641

Lake House & Tap

1137 Lake Oconee Pkwy.
762-220-1212

Lake Oconee Bistro

1130 Lake Oconee Pkwy.
706-452-4400

Mellow Mushroom

105 Harmony Crossing
706-484-2074

Pho & More

113 Harmony Crossing
706-991-6003

Salty Claw

107 Oak St.
706-333-4041

The Silver Moon

1077 Greensboro Rd.
706-485-5698

Sips 31024

104 W. Marion St.
762-298-2420

Surchero's Fresh Mex

109 Thunder Point Dr.
762-220-1080

Sweet Kneads

103 Clack Circle
706-484-1588

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706-485-9988

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706-749-8131

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107 Oak St.
706-485-1276

Tipsy Turtle Bar & Grill

112 N. Jefferson Ave.
762-777-0726

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100 Scott Rd.
912-536-2370

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MADISON

Amici Italian Cafe

174 W. Washington St.
706-342-0000

Betty Gene's

231 Hancock St.

Brookshire BBQ

270 W Washington St.

Cracker Barrel

2003 Eatonton Rd.
706-343-9963

Crowe's Bar-B-Que

1320 Eatonton Rd.
706-342-7002

The Dining Room

146 E. Washington St.
706-478-7893

Dos Amigos Mexican Grill

1650 Eatonton Rd.
706-438-1556

Dunkin Donuts

1800 Eatonton Rd.
706-847-4205

Farmview Market

2610 Eatonton Rd.
844-210-7030

Happy China

1143 Eatonton Rd.
706-342-7679

Hart & Crown Tavern

142 E. Washington St.
706-438-8050

Madison Chophouse Grille

202 S. Main St.
706-342-9009

Madison Drug Company

213 North Main St.
706-342-1722

Madison Produce

111 W. Jefferson St.
706-342-1908

Madison Square Nutrition

132 E. Washington St.
678-634-8157

Martha's Favorites

325 W. Washington St.
706-342-1600

Oconee Coffee Roasters

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443-994-0242

R+B Soul Café

461 Burney St.
706-438-3030

Ricardo's Kouzzina

271 W. Washington St.
706-342-0729

Sakura Sushi and Hibachi

1512 Eatonton Rd.

The Sinclair

298 Hancock St.
706-438-1101

Scoops Ice Cream Shop

123 W. Washington St.
706-342-3002

Tequila's Mexican Grill

863 N. Main St.
706-343-1519

Tickled Pig BBQ

270 W. Washington St.
706-438-3027

Town 220

220 W. Washington St.
706-752-1445

Wing Night's at Benny Paul's

139 E. Jefferson St.
706-438-3200

Yanmi Kitchen

1682 Eatonton Rd.
706-438-1588

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Caboose

102 W. Main St.
706-557-9021

Rutledge Wings

148 Atlanta Hwy D
706-557-7369

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A Town Wings

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Ste C2
478-295-0585

AJ's Hotwings to Go

400 S. Elbert St.
478-451-0101

Amici Milledgeville

101 W. Hancock St.
478-452-5003

Applebee's

106 Roberson Mill Rd. NE
478-453-8355

AJ's Hot Wings

2601 N. Columbia St.
478-804-0101

Aubri Lane's

3700 Sinclair Dam Rd. NE
478-454-4181

Barberitos

146 W. Hancock St.
478-451-4717

Biba's

2803 N. Columbia St.
478-414-1773

Blackbird Coffee

114 W. Hancock St.
478-454-2473

Bollywood Tacos

107 W. Hancock St.
478-453-9547

The Brick

136 W. Hancock St.
478-452-0089

Buffalo Wild Wings

2472 N. Columbia St.
478-804-0022

Chicken Salad Chick

1901 N. Columbia St.
478-288-5350

Chili's

2596 N. Columbia St.
478-452-1900

China Garden

1948 N. Columbia St.
478-454-3449

China Wings 3

1071 S. Wayne St.
478-453-3655

Country Buffet

1465 S. Jefferson St.
478-453-0434

Cravings!

108 W. Hancock St.
478-295-2646

Down South Seafood

972 Sparta Hwy.
478-452-2100

Duke's Lounge & Dawg House

162 Sinclair Marina Rd.
478-453-8440

El Amigo Mexican Rest.

2465 N. Columbia St.
478-453-0027

El Tequila Mexican Rest.

168 Garrett Way
478-414-1702

Flavor of Texas

960 N. Wilkinson St.
478-234-9445

The Front Porch

3065 N. Columbia St.
478-295-0351

Good Eats Healthy Living

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478-804-0101

Great Wall

1304 N. Columbia St.
478-452-5200

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478-295-2300

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1972 N. Columbia St.
478-295-0865

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478-452-0332

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706-413-3166

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478-454-1237

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478-295-3212

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478-804-0083

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478-452-8886

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478-295-0098

Longhorn Steakhouse

2470 N. Columbia St.
478-414-7700

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3052 N. Columbia St.
478-453-0271

Mama J's

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478-295-3155

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706-623-8700

Metropolis Café

138 N. Wayne St.
478-452-0247

Morning Grind

451 W. Montgomery St.
478-456-1464

Ms. Stella's

1850 N. Columbia St.
478-453-7311

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478-453-0098

Ned Kelly's Downstairs

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478-295-2699

Octagon Café

2400 N. Columbia St.
478-452-0588

Old Clinton BBQ

2645 N. Columbia St.
478-454-0080

Pho Little Saigon

2601 N. Columbia St.
478-295-2686

Pickle Barrel Café

1892 N. Columbia St.
478-452-1960

Real Deal Grill

185 W. Andrews St.
478-804-0144

Ruby Tuesday

2440 N. Columbia St.
478-452-5050

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2789 N. Columbia St.
478-295-1115

Shark's Fish & Chicken

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478-295-3306

Shima

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478-451-0245

Shrimp Boat

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478-452-0559

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478-414-4348

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108 Roberson Mill Rd.
478-215-4542

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335 Allen Memorial Dr. SW
478-295-0601

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478-295-3838

The Velvet Elvis Grille and Tap

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478-453-8226

Tropical Smoothie Café

1860 N. Columbia St.
478-295-3290

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3015 N. Columbia St.
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478-389-9464





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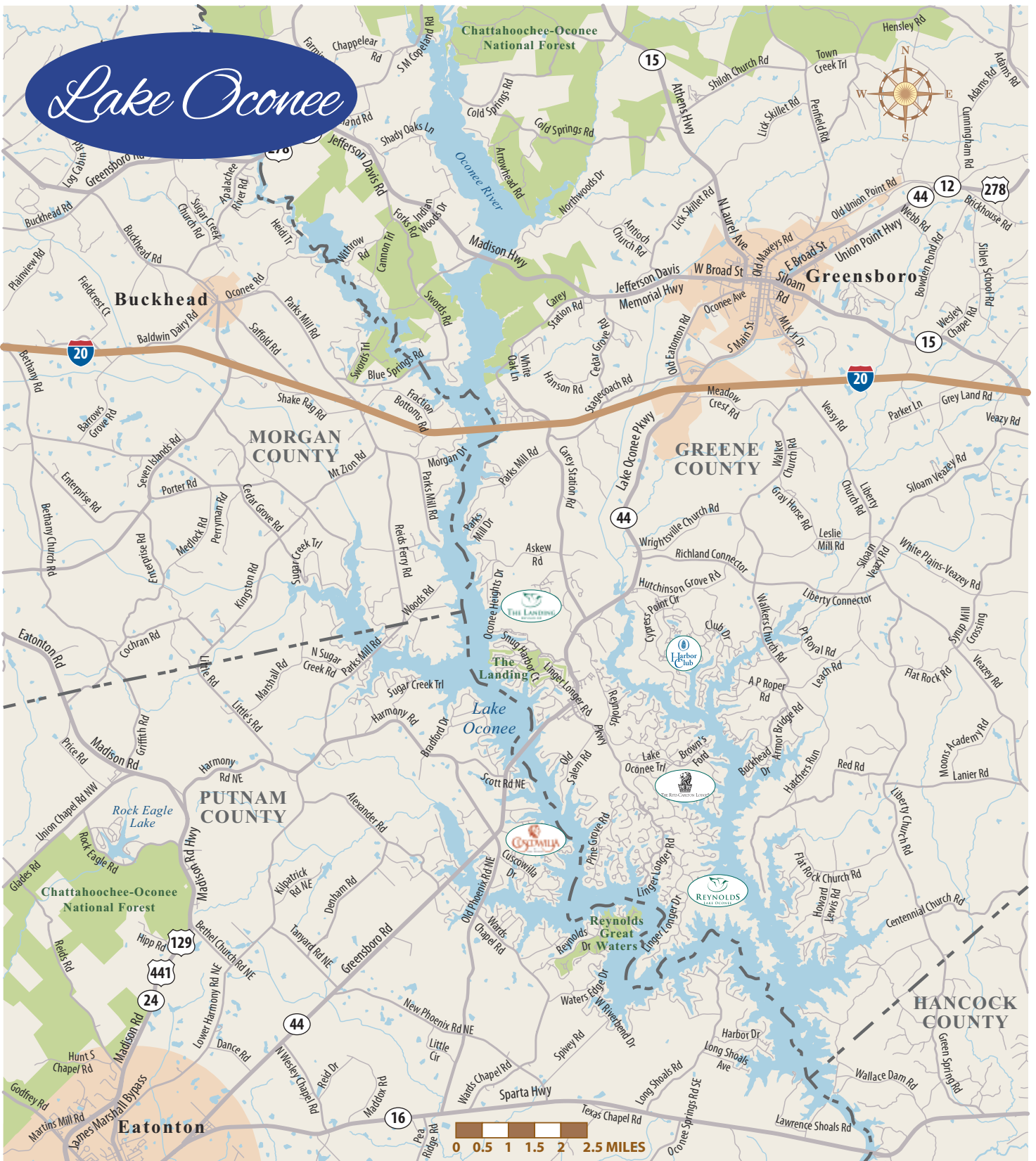
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BARTRAM FOREST

Originally inhabited by Native Americans in 1794, Bartram Forest today features educational hiking and biking trails that allow visitors to see wildlife and natural wetlands. 478-445-5164.

CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL MUSEUM AT THE DEPOT

Located in the west wing of The Depot, a Seeking Asylum Photo Gallery is displayed alongside other exhibits. Open during office hours by reservation and every Saturday 10a.m.-2p.m. (478)453-1803.

HISTORIC TROLLEY TOURS

Milledgeville's guided trolley tour includes visits to historical venues throughout the downtown area. For tour information, call 478-452-4687 or go to visitmilledgeville.org.

JOHN MARLOR ART CENTER

One of four historic buildings making up the Allied Arts Center, the art gallery features rotating exhibits of local and regional artists. 478-452-8672; milledgevillealliedarts.com

LOCKERLY ARBORETUM AND ROSE HILL

A unique horticultural laboratory surrounding an 1850 Greek Revival home. For more information, call 478-452-2112 or visit lockerly.org.

MEMORY HILL CEMETERY

The final resting place of many people from Milledgeville and Georgia history, including L.Q.C. Lamar, Congressman Carl Vinson, Flanner O'Connor, early Georgia governors, legislators, college presidents, enslaved people, soldiers. Self-guided tour of 47 points of interest begins at the gazebo and follows numbered signs. Download brochure at www.friendsofcems.org/MemoryHill/

OCONEE RIVER GREENWAY

This park and riverwalk offer trails, paths, boardwalks, a dog park, observation decks on the river, individual fishing stations, boat ramp, and canoeing or kayaking opportunities. Open daily, sunrise to sunset. Free parking. visitmilledgeville.org.

OLD GOVERNOR'S MANSION

This National Historic Landmark was home of eight Georgia governors from 1839 to 1868 and occupied by Sherman. For more information, call 478-445-4545 or visit gcsu.edu/mansion.

SALLIE ELLIS DAVIS HOUSE

Born in 1877 to a Black woman and Irish man, Sallie Ellis Davis worked her entire career as a teacher and principal at the Eddy School, where she educated and was an inspiration to hundreds of Black children. Her legacy, preserved in her home, is one of excellence. Open for tours each week. ADA compliant. Call 478-445-5889 or visit gcsu.edu/sallieellisdavis for more details.

THE STETSON-SANFORD HOUSE

Located at 601 W. Hancock St., Milledgeville, this historic house was built in 1825 in the "Milledgeville Federal" style and was a hotel for many visiting legislators who came to the state capital. Open by appointment or on the Milledgeville Trolley Tour. 478-453-1803, visitmilledgeville.org.

GREENE

GREENE COUNTY AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

Dedicated to the empowerment of and truth-telling about African American lives in Greene County, the museum shares the important contributions and stories of Greene's African American community. Visit gcaam.org or call 706-372-4562.

THE OLD GAOL

This 1807 rock jail is one of the oldest penal structures in Georgia. Patterned after Bastilles with castellated battlements. Open by appointment. 706-453-7592.

GREENE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Collection of artifacts, photographs and manuscripts provide a glimpse of the people and events that shaped Greene County's beginnings. For more information, call 706-453-7534.

GREENSBORO CEMETERY

Located on North East Street in downtown Greensboro, unique stones and ironwork mark the burial sites of soldiers, senators, a governor and other notables from Greene County's history. Graves date from the 18th century to the present day and include soldiers from the Revolutionary War and more than 45 unknown confederate dead. Open daily.

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

Historic home built in 1848 in Union Point and one of the oldest houses in the city. Originally a raised cottage, it was enlarged along Greek Revival lines. Drive by tour only. 706-453-7592.

THE IRON HORSE

The 2,000-pound iron sculpture was created by Abbott Pattison and placed at the University of Georgia in 1954; later, it was moved to a Greene County farm near the Greene-Oconee countyline. An awesome photo spot, this iron horse is located in a cornfield on Hwy. 15 North and can only be seen seasonally. Call Greene County Chamber of Commerce, 706-453-7592, for more information.

LAKE COUNTRY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Packed with historical exhibits, interactive multi-media displays, kiosks, nostalgic memorabilia, art, photographs, a 10-foot scale topographic map of Lake Oconee and more. 6340 Lake Oconee Pkwy., Greensboro. 706-999-3513.

L.L. WYATT MUSEUM

This law enforcement museum and hall of fame was named for Loy Lee Wyatt, a Greene County sheriff for 37 years. Century-old arrest warrants, a seized corn liquor still and an authentic former cell block are among items on display. 706-453-7592.

ROBINSON PARK SPLASH PAD

Located directly behind the Greensboro Police Department, features green space, playground equipment, picnic tables, and a splash pad. The splash pad is open as long as temperatures allow. Users can turn it on by pressing a button on a short blue pole.

SCULL SHOALS,

This site on the Oconee River was home to Native Americans 10,000 years ago, a frontier settlement in 1782 and then Scull Shoals Mill Village in the early 1800s. For more information, call the Oconee Ranger District Office at 706-485-7110 or visit scullshoals.org.

MORGAN

GEORGIA SAFARI CONSERVATION PARK

Dedicated to wildlife conservation and stewardship, this 530-acre safari-style park features pastures of free-roaming animals from around the world. Enjoy various tour and/or lodging packages, which include ADA compliant amenities, for an immersive, wildlife-focused experience. 706-608-8203 georgiasafari.com

HERITAGE HALL

Greek Revival House & Museum, furnished in the period. Tours available as well as rental for special events. Tours offered daily. Closed on Mondays. For more information, call 706-342-9627 or visit friendsofheritagehall.org.

MADISON ARTISTS GUILD GALLERY

A co-op of artist members showcasing painting, pottery, jewelry, metal sculptures, textiles and photography. Classes for kids and adults. 706-342-9360; madisonartistsguild.org.

MADISON HISTORY MUSEUM

The museum presents "Madison, Georgia in the 19th Century -- Everyday Life in a Small Southern Town." Carefully curated exhibits and a historic timeline details Madison's first century. Located in the Madison Morgan Cultural Center, closed Sunday-Monday. 706-342-4743, www.mmcc-arts.org/the-museum

MADISON-MORGAN CULTURAL CENTER

Romanesque Revival-style building built in 1895 served as a school and library before becoming a center for visual arts exhibits and performing arts events. For more information, call 706-342-4743 or visit mmcc-arts.org.

MORGAN COUNTY AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUM

Housed in the former home of Horace Moore (c. 1895), this museum serves to preserve, teach and research African-American history, art and culture. For more information, call 706-342-9191 or visit mcaam.org.

THE ROGERS HOUSE AND ROSE COTTAGE

The Rogers House was built circa 1810. The Rose Cottage was built circa 1891. Tours of

both are offered daily. Closed on Mondays. For more information, call 706-342-9627 or visit friendsofheritagehall.org.

STEFFEN THOMAS MUSEUM OF ART

This museum was built by the family of artist Steffen Thomas to display his varied works from drawings to sculptures. It also hosts rotating exhibits of other artists and offers workshops. For more information, call 706-342-7557 or visit steffenthomas.org.

PUTNAM

ALICE WALKER TRAIL

A driving tour highlighting points of interest relating to Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*. 706-485-7701.

THE ARTISANS VILLAGE

The gallery/guild/studio on West Marion Street in downtown Eatonton showcases a full range of one-of-a-kind artisan items by local artists. Guild members provide art lessons. Visit theartisansvillage.org or call 706-623-7757.

THE BRONSON HOUSE

This Greek Revival house is rich with history and now serves as headquarters for the Eatonton-Putnam Historical Society. For group tours and other information, call 706-485-6442 or visit e-pgahistory.org.

BUTTERFLIES & BLOOMS IN THE BRIAR PATCH

This certified butterfly habitat sustains butterflies through all their life stages, tags and monitors migrating monarch butterflies and educates the public on how to incorporate larval host plants into their own gardens. Admission is free. Located at 617 North Jefferson St., Eatonton. Call 706-473-6035 for more information.

GEORGIA WRITERS MUSEUM

This museum has permanent exhibits for local authors Alice Walker, Joel Chandler Harris and Flannery O'Connor, and rotating exhibits of other Georgia authors. For more information, call 706-991-5119 or visit georgiawritersmuseum.org.

VETERANS WALL OF HONOR PARK

Located on West Marion Street in downtown Eatonton, this park includes the names and information of more than 1,800 Putnam County veterans from the

Revolutionary War to present. Open daily. For more information, call 706-473-5406.

OCONEE SPRINGS PARK

This family park nestled on the shores of Lake Sinclair features a swimming area with sandy beach and floating waterpark, cabin rentals, campsites, recreational areas, marina, store, kayak rentals, event space and more. Go to oconeespringspark.com or call 706-485-8423.

OLD SCHOOL HISTORY MUSEUM

Located at The Plaza Arts Center in downtown Eatonton, the museum chronicles Putnam County's history, economy and notable residents from the days of Creek Indian occupation to today. For more information, call 706-485-3156 or visit georgiawritersmuseum.org.

THE PLAZA ARTS CENTER

The Center is housed in a renovated school built in 1916 and offers a variety of performing arts shows, art exhibits, community events and creative classes. For more information, call 706-923-1655 or visit theplazaartscenter.com.

ROCK EAGLE 4-H CENTER

Encompassing 1,428 acres, including an 110-acre lake, Rock Eagle is the largest of five centers operated by UGA in support of the state's 4-H Program. For more information, call 706-484-2899 or go to "Georgia 4-H Facilities" at georgia4h.org.

ROCK EAGLE MOUND

This stone effigy and its viewing tower are located at Rock Eagle 4-H Center. It is believed to have been created by Native Americans and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

ROCK HAWK EFFIGY & TRAILS

The site of Putnam County's second stone effigy offers historical and recreational options, including camping, trails, boating, archery and educational displays. For more information, visit rockhawk.org.

THE UNCLE REMUS MUSEUM

Museum dedicated to the life and literary works of Putnam County native and author Joel Chandler Harris, who wrote the Uncle Remus stories. For more information, call 706-485-6856 or visit uncleremusmuseum.org.

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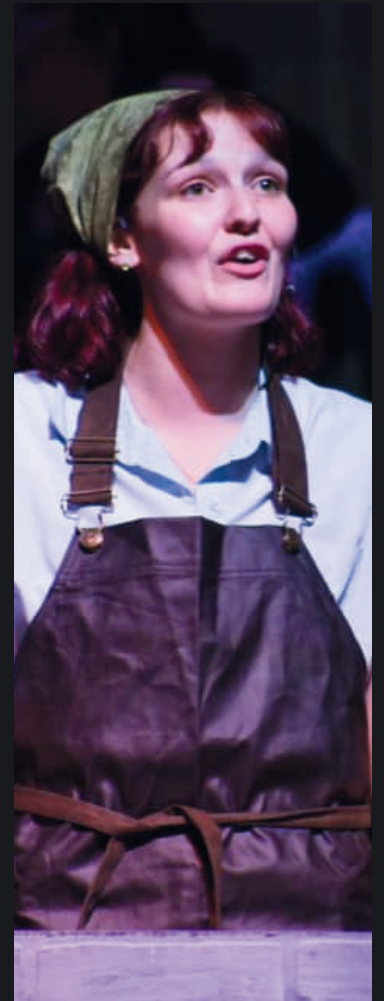




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-Meryl Streep




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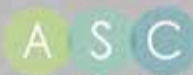
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The Creek Club at Reynolds	72	7,079	18	J. Lopez	Engh	M	N/A	706-467-1680
The Creek Course at Hard Labor Creek State Park	72	6,612	18	K. Gross	McCloud	M-G-P	\$23-44	706-557-3006
Cuscowilla	70	6,730	18	R. Radel	Crenshaw/Coore	M-G	\$114-225	706-484-0050
Great Waters at Reynolds	72	7,073	18	R. MacNeil	Nicklaus	M-G-R	N/A	706-485-0235
Harbor Club	72	7,048	18	K. Kelly	Weiskopf/Morrish	M-G-P	\$75-199	706-453-4414
The Landing at Reynolds	72	6,691	18	P. Shelley	Cupp	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1564
Little Fishing Creek	72	6,718	18	N/A	Player	P	\$12-15	478-445-0796
The National at Reynolds	72	7,034	18	R. Frisch	Fazio	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1142
The Oconee at Reynolds	72	7,029	18	I. Milhouse	Jones	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1200
The Preserve at Reynolds	72	6,674	18	J. Sitler	Cupp	M-G-R	N/A	706-467-1135
Richland at Reynolds	72	7,090	18	R. Frisch	Fazio	M	N/A	706-467-1142
Uncle Remus	72	6,780	9	L. Dunn	Ellis	P	\$34-\$47	706-485-6850

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COUNTRY BOY RV PARK (PRIVATE)

Located at 2750 Eatonton Rd. (Highway 441), Madison. (706) 342-1799.

CROOKED CREEK MARINA

Boat launches, restaurant, convenience store and RV/tent camping located on Lake Sinclair at 208 Crooked Creek Road in Eatonton. (706) 485-9693.

DURHAMTOWN PLANTATION

Located in Union Point, Durhamtown Plantation offers cabin and RV rentals for the avid dirt bikers, ATV riders, hunters, and more. 2350 Randolph Church Road, Union Point. (706) 486-4603.

HARD LABOR CREEK STATE PARK

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**LAKE SINCLAIR BEACH
CAMPGROUND**

(US FOREST SERVICE)

Camping, picnicking, hiking, boating, fishing and swimming. Hikers can enjoy the 1.8-mile Twin Bridges Trail, which originates at this site. Fees are required. (706) 485-7110, www.fs.fed.us/conf.

**LAWRENCE SHOALS,
LAKE OCONEE**

(GEORGIA POWER RECREATION AREA)

Camping and RV sites, picnic pavilion, picnic tables, public beach and boat ramp at 123 Wallace Dam Road, Eatonton. (706) 485-5494.

**LITTLE RIVER PARK,
LAKE SINCLAIR**

Boat launch and marina, RV sites, beach for campers, children's playground. Located at 3069 N. Columbia St., Milledgeville. (478) 452-1605.

NORTH SHORE RESORT

Located on Carey Station Road in Greensboro, this unique private resort on Lake Oconee features full hook-up campsites. Amenities include a clubhouse, two pools, a private beach, boat slips, boat launch, tennis and store and grill. www.northshoreresort.net (706) 453-4505.

**OCONEE RIVER CAMPGROUND
(US FOREST SERVICE)**

Located along the bank of the Oconee River, the recreation area offers camping, picnicking, hiking, boating and fishing. Hikers can enjoy the mile-long Scull Shoals Trail, which originates at the site. A fee is required. (706) 485-7110, www.fs.fed.us/conf.

**OCONEE SPRINGS PARK,
LAKE SINCLAIR**

(PUTNAM CO. RECREATION AREA)

Camping, cabins, boat ramp, beach and bath facilities, picnic tables and pavilion. Located on Lake Sinclair at 109 South Spring Rd. SE, Eatonton. (706) 485-8423.

**OLD SALEM, LAKE OCONEE
(GEORGIA POWER RECREATION AREA)**

Camping and RV sites, picnic pavilion, public beach, and boat ramp. 1530 Old Salem Rd., Greensboro. (706) 467-2850.

**PARKS FERRY, LAKE OCONEE
(GEORGIA POWER RECREATION AREA)**

Camping and RV sites, beach and boat ramp, wildlife habitat area. Located at 1491 Parks Mill Rd., Greensboro. (706) 453-4308.

ROBINSON PARK

Located just past downtown Greensboro, Robinson Park features picnic benches and walking path. 1141 Siloam Road, Greensboro.

**ROCKY CREEK PARK,
LAKE SINCLAIR**

Swimming beach, boat ramp, picnic tables, grills, restrooms, fishing pier, playground. Georgia Power park. (706) 485-8770.

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Uncovering the buried past



Representative Abram Colby (c.1820-1872)

African-American leader Abram Colby represented Greene County's Black community following emancipation. Under the US Southern Homestead Act (1866), Colby unsuccessfully applied for land in Arkansas to relocate Greene County African-American citizens. Colby later advocated for Black education and fair labor contracts. Elected a Republican state representative in 1868, Colby and his fellow Black legislators were expelled because of their race. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) targeted Republicans who supported Reconstruction and assaulted Colby in a near-fatal attack. In *White v. Clements* (1869), the Georgia Supreme Court affirmed African Americans' right to hold political office, reinstating Colby's seat. In 1871 Colby testified about the KKK's political terrorism in the South before a federal congressional committee, leading to the prosecution of KKK members and shifting public perception. Colby was targeted until his death in 1872.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society
and the Greene County African American Museum

2026.1

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Greensboro's new historical marker honors **Abram Colby**

■ Story and photos by **Lynn Hobbs**

For decades, the story of Abram Colby was buried and unknown, even to many of his descendants. But this spring, his story was not only uncovered, it now stands as a permanent reminder, an inspiration, through a Historical Marker in downtown Greensboro.

One of only five new historical markers installed in Georgia this year, the Abram Colby marker was unveiled on the Greene County Courthouse lawn April 26. It honors Colby, one of the “Original 33” first Black members to be elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 1868 during the Reconstruction era. Colby, elected as a Republican state representative, was a lifelong resident of Greene County at the time. But what seemed like a promising start of hope, change, and a bright future quickly turned dark with hatred and violence that led to Colby's mysterious untimely death four years later.

Colby's life was celebrated at the ceremony unveiling the marker. Mamie Hillman, historian and founder of the Greene County African American Museum, and Greer Brigham, a political science graduate, historian and author, were instrumental in getting the historical marker. Brigham worked with Hillman in the research and he wrote the application for the marker, which was accepted by the Georgia Historical Society.

After the event, Brigham shared the news on his social media pages that he had worked five years to uncover the true story of Abram Colby. “The story of his life — the story so many tried to bury — is finally published,” he said. “I've had the chance to work on some amazing projects over the years, but I am more proud of this one than any other. Colby is an American hero and his story deserves to be known.”

Abram Colby was born in 1820 to Mary, an enslaved teen, and John, a wealthy white plantation owner near Greensboro. Brigham wrote in an



Pamela Colby shares what the historical marker honoring her great-great grandfather Abram Colby, means to her family. She traveled from New York for the ceremony.



Mamie Hillman and Greer Brigham worked together to get the Colby Marker in Greensboro.



Greensboro Mayor Corey Williams says he had the opportunity to run and be elected to political office because of the sacrifice and suffering of men like Abram Colby.

article that when John passed away in 1850, his white family members expected to receive the entirety of the inheritance. But to their shock, John had willed his plantation home to Mary and her children. And so, though technically still a slave, Abram Colby grew up in his own plantation home a decade and a half before the Civil War ended.

When the war ended, Colby helped to organize the “First Colored School” in Greensboro, with John Jackson, a Black Union Army cook, as its first teacher. Yet even with their new freedoms, extreme poverty forced many former slaves back onto their old plantations to work for their former owners for a minimal wage while still living in their old cabins.

Colby worked diligently to find economic opportunities and homes in Arkansas for his neighbors (Arkansas promised free land), but to no avail. So he decided to run for office in 1868 and was elected in a landslide to represent the county in the state house.

“This exact week in 1868, freed people were allowed to vote and to run for office like Abram Colby did,” Brigham said in his speech at the marker unveiling ceremony. “They cast their ballots in this very courthouse,” he noted as he pointed to the Greene County Courthouse. “And due to the intimidation of the Ku Klux Klan, they marched over this hill to cast their ballots together in this very building this week in 1868. That’s why this location is so important.”

Their first day in office, Colby and the other 32 newly installed Black state legislators were immediately expelled from the Assembly by their white counterparts who claimed they were ineligible to hold office due to the color of their skin. In 1869, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled the Blacks had the right to hold office and reinstated those who had been expelled.

The Ku Klux Klan launched violent and even murderous attacks against newly freed Blacks during that time. They stormed Colby’s house in Greensboro one night and beat him so severely he almost died and was left partially paralyzed. But Colby refused to be intimidated and continued to work for Civil Rights in Georgia. He even testified before a federal congressional committee about the KKK’s political terrorism, which led to the prosecution of KKK members and shifted public perception, as is written on the historical marker.

Colby died in 1872, although the cause of his death remains a mystery. Brigham said Colby took a night train home from Atlanta to support a political ally speaking in Greensboro. Although there is no evidence of what happened onboard, newspapers across the state reported the Colby died on the train.



Part of the attending crowd listen as Mamie Hillman describes the work and people involved in getting the Abram Colby historical marker for Greensboro.

“
I’m so grateful to the Georgia Historical Society and Miss Mamie telling me the stories that have been lost or erased; they are so powerful and important to remember.
”

— Greer Brigham

“And I’m so grateful for the Greene County Board of Commissioners who agreed that (the courthouse lawn) should be the spot that honors one of Greene County’s greatest residents.

“So, it has been the absolute honor of my life to be a part of this work, to get to know Miss Mamie Hillman and Mr. Hillman, and the Colby family who are representing here what was probably Rep. Colby’s wildest dream.”

Brigham recognized others who helped with his research, including Greene County Library Branch Manager Tara Coile, who he said “contributed substantially to the research” and uncovered Colby’s journey to Arkansas.

Greensboro Mayor Corey Williams said he, also, was grateful the marker was placed in downtown Greensboro.

“It’s because of men like this – Abram Colby – that enabled men like me to actually run and win elections,” Williams said to the approximately 35 people in attendance. “So, I thank the Colby family, and Mr. Brigham for all his work, and especially I want

to thank the African American Museum for the work they continue to do in the city of Greensboro and in Greene County.”

Pamela Colby, the great-great-granddaughter of Abram Colby, came from New York for the ceremony. She said she did not know her great-great-grandfather’s story until Brigham met with her and told her. Colby said she is writing a play about Abram’s life so that his story will continue to be told on stages and in classrooms.

Mamie Hillman served as the mistress of ceremonies of the unveiling event. She thanked everyone for their help, and also voiced her appreciation to the Greene County Board of Commissioners for approving the courthouse lawn as the site. Most of all, she thanked her Heavenly Father. “To God be the Glory,” she said several times throughout the day.

Georgia Historical Society Program Manager Brianna James thanked Hillman for her “tireless work throughout the whole process to get us here where we are today.” James also thanked the Greene County African American Museum Board of Directors for supporting the work of the museum, without which the marker wouldn’t have been possible.

“Historical markers share historical stories like these in little bite-size pieces,” James said. “Yet markers are accessible. Anyone and everyone can walk up to a marker and learn more about the person, place or events that make that spot significant. ... Colby’s story is a reminder of our state’s rich and complex history. When we study the past, what we’re really doing is trying to understand how the world today came to be. And armed with that knowledge, hopefully we can create a better world in the future.”

The Abram Colby Historical Marker is near the sidewalk at the corner of Main Street and East Greene Street in downtown Greensboro. ♦

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Calendar of Events



THROUGH SUNDAY, MAY 31

PUTNAM: Voices & Votes of Democracy Exhibit

This Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit includes historical and contemporary photos, educational and archival video, and historical objects. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wed., Fri., Sat., and 2-8 p.m. Thur. at Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Dr., Eatonton. Free admission. 706.991.5119, www.georgiawritersmuseum.org

SUNDAY, MAY 31

PUTNAM: ESL Classes

Lean English as a Second Language in these free classes. 4-6 p.m. at Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church, 113 Scott Rd., Eatonton. 706.484.0600, www.lopc-pca.org

MONDAY, JUNE 1

GREENE: English-Spanish Class

Necesitas aprender ingles? Need to learn Spanish? Learn with a professional tutor every Monday and Wednesday, 4:30-6:00 p.m. at Greene County Library, 610 S. Main St., Greensboro. 706.453.7276.

MONDAY, JUNE 1

GREENE: Monday Pickleball Open Play

Anyone is welcome to play without reservations on a first-come, first-serve basis. Balls, paddles provided for beginners. 6-8 p.m. at Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church, 113 Scott Rd., Eatonton. 706.484.0600, www.lopc-pca.org

MONDAY, JUNE 1

GREENE: Movie Day

Kick off summer with a free showing of the movie “A Goofy Movie.” 1:30-4:30 p.m. at Festival Hall, 212 N. Main St., Greensboro.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 1-5

PUTNAM: Camp Broadway

The Plaza Arts Center and The Arts Barn present this summer camp for rising 3rd-8th graders. Campers will explore acting, song and dance which will culminate in a performance for the community. 12:30-4:00 p.m. daily, performance on the evening of the 5th. bit.ly/4tROOXf

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 1-5

MORGAN: Shakespeare Camp!

The Atlanta Shakespeare Company hosts this camp for children grades 2-8, at Madison Morgan Cultural Center’s Hall on Foster, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday-Friday, followed by a performance at 3 p.m. June 5 in the MMCC auditorium. 706.342.4743, www.mmcc-arts.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 2

MORGAN: Chair Yoga

Adults may participate in Chair Yoga with Shani Allen every Tuesday. Free. 10-11 a.m. at Morgan County Library, 1131 East Ave., Madison, 706.342.1206 www.azalealibraries.org/ma-county-library

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

BALDWIN: Catching & Observing Night Bugs

Join Director of Education Kensey Amerson to catch fireflies in mason jars, observe moths and other light-attracting critters on a light sheet. 8:00-9:30 p.m. at Lockerly Arboretum, 1534 Irwinton Rd., Milledgeville. This is an adult event, \$15-\$25, includes instruction, materials, beer/wine. 478.452.2112, <https://lockerly.org/events/>

FRIDAY, JUNE 5 & 12

MORGAN: Glow for a Hike Firefly Walk

Join a Ranger along a moderate to strenuous nature trail under the starry sky looking for firefly species and other night creatures. Ages 8+, \$10 plus \$10 parking fee. 8:30-10 p.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, 706.557.3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek



FRIDAY, JUNE 5

BALDWIN: First Friday Beach Bash

Downtown Milledgeville will feature sand spread in the Deep Roots parking lot for a fun beach party. BYO beach chair to relax while the kids enjoy beach toys, games, family fun. 6 p.m. 478.414.4014.

FRIDAY-THURSDAY, JUNE 5-25

BALDWIN: Young Artists Exhibit

Big ideas, bold colors and serious creativity take center stage with this exhibit featuring artwork by local artists ages 6-17. Displayed Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Allied Arts, 102 N. Wayne St., Milledgeville. 478.452.3950

Have an event you'd like listed in Lakelife's community calendar? Email it to lynn@lakelife.today by July 6



VARIOUS DAYS JUNE 5-29

GREENE: Lake Oconee Wild Things

Enjoy the Wild Things baseball team's home games vs Brookhaven Bucks, Cartersville Cannons, Alpharetta Aviators, Atlanta Crackers, and Choccoloco Monsters. 7 p.m. June 5,6,12,13,15,26,27,29 at Lake Oconee Academy's Bank South Park, 1021 Titan Circle, Greensboro. bit.ly/4dTRYVz

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

PUTNAM: Putnam County Dairy Festival

Family-friendly tribute to the dairy industry includes parade, tractors, 5K & 10K foot races, 1-mile fun run, kiddie rides, food & crafts vendors, live music, speakers, cow milking demos. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Putnam County Courthouse Square in downtown Eatonton. www.putnamcodairyfestival.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

MORGAN: Edible, Multi-Use Plant Hike

Join a Ranger to learn how plants around us have been used historically for food and survival. Learn the basics of plant identification, safety and uses on this 1-mile hike. Ages 10+, \$3 plus \$10 parking, 2-3:30 p.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, 706.557.3001 <https://gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek>

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

MORGAN: Twilight Kayak Tour

Explore Lake Rutledge, scan the sky and woods for wildlife, watch the sunset's changing colors on the water on this Ranger-led tour. \$20 w/ your craft, \$25 w/ park's, \$10 parking, 7-9 p.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, preregister 706.557.3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

BALDWIN: Rosehill Tours

Tour this 1850s Greek Revival style house on the National Register of Historic Places. Guided tours begin every hour 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. \$5. 478.452.2112, lockerly.org/rose-hill/

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 8-12

PUTNAM: Art Intensive Camp

Rising 6th-12th graders will create daily art projects working on advanced art skills with advanced instructors. Painting, pottery, and more. 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at The Plaza Arts Center, Eatonton. Call 706.923.1655 for details and to register.

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 8-12

BALDWIN: Summer Art Camp

Ages 6-11 will explore artistic activities to create a different project each day. 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at Allied Arts, 101 Floyd L. Griffin Jr. St., Milledgeville. \$85 per child. 478.452.3950, milledgevillealliedarts.com

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8-10

MORGAN: Junior Ranger Day Camp

Camp for ages 8-10 includes hiking, survival skills, forest ecology, animal adaptations, park history, etc. \$90/child, \$70/additional child, \$10 parking fee. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, 706.557.3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

PUTNAM: Meet the Author: Lynn Cullen

National bestselling author Lynn Cullen presents her dazzling new novel, *When We Were Brilliant*, about Marilyn Monroe and photographer Eve Arnold. \$45 tickets. 7 p.m. at Georgia Writers Museum, 109 S. Jefferson Ave., Eatonton. 706-991-5119, www.georgiawritersmuseum.org/lynn-cullen-2

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

BALDWIN: Pickling for a Purpose

Grab your paddle, bring your friends and play pickleball for a purpose. \$5 games with optional \$5 mulligans benefit Milledgeville-Baldwin County's Habitat for Humanity. 6-8:30 p.m. at Baldwin County Pickleball Complex at Walter B. Williams Park, 59 GA-22 West, Milledgeville. bit.ly/4v3mOkr

Lake Adventures

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

BALDWIN: Sip & Paint Fridays

Step-by-step guidance along with a pre-sketched canvas allows the inexperienced to express their creative flair. \$25 includes all supplies. Extra charge for loaded teas. Every second Friday, 6-8 p.m. at The Ville Downtown Nutrition, 117 S. Wayne St., Milledgeville. 478.212.6633, bit.ly/4urtFnG



FRIDAY, JUNE 12

BALDWIN: Y2K Summer Throwback Movie Night

Dress up in your best early 2000s styles, enjoy a themed cocktail/mocktail from the cash bar, popcorn, candy, while watching Disney's Lizzie McGuire The Movie. \$15 at Robbins Farm, 223 Cox Woodland Rd. NW, Milledgeville. Other movies shown each Friday in July. 706.444.3675, bit.ly/4usxXLK

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 12-14

BALDWIN: Georgia Jeep Invasion

Three days of mud, motors & memories. Jeep enthusiasts from across the Southeast will test their rigs on obstacle courses, off-road challenges, and enjoy great family-friendly fun. 8 a.m. at River Rock Off Road Park, 298 Pebble Hill Rd. SE, Milledgeville. \$65+, georgiajeepallianceclub.com/event-6465785



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SATURDAY, JUNE 13

PUTNAM: Downtown GetDown Concert

Enjoy a live, outdoor Southern Rock concert by Roofdog. 7-10 p.m. at Eatonton City Center Stage, 124A N. Jefferson Ave., downtown Eatonton. BYO chairs, blankets, dancing shoes for this free concert. Coolers welcome, also food trucks on site. DowntownEatonton.com/events or 706.749.9150.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13 & 27

MORGAN: Fantastic Fungi: Intro to Mycology

Learn from a Ranger about the different parts of a mushroom, how to ID them, etc. on a 1-mile hike looking for fungi. \$3 plus \$10 parking. 12-1:30 p.m. June 13; 1-2:30 p.m. June 27 at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, 706.557.3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek

WEDNESDAYS, JUNE 17-AUG. 12

ZOOM: Beginning Writing for Television

The Georgia Writers Museum brings TV show creator, director, writer, producer, actor Bo Kaprall for this unique course designed for aspiring writers who seek to learn television writing. 6:30-8:30 p.m. each Wednesday except the week of July 4th via zoom. \$400, more info and registration at georgiawritersmuseum.org/writing-for-television

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

GREENE: Moonlight on Main Summer Concert

BYO chair, dancing shoes to Main Street for a free concert by Nu South Players. 7:30-9:30 p.m. in downtown Greensboro. The evening ends with a fireworks show.

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

BALDWIN: String Puppet Circus

High-flying trapeze artists, friendly creatures and colorful clowns all come to life in this marionette show by Puppet Pants. This children's show is filled with jokes, stories, and audience interaction. Free, 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Allen's Market, 101 Floyd L. Griffin Jr. Street. 478.452.3950

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY, JUNE 24-25

MORGAN: Hike and Paddle

Enjoy a 1-hour Ranger-led hike on a trail by swamps and through forests. After the hike, kayak one hour on Lake Rutledge looking for raptors, herons, migrating birds. \$20 w/ your craft, \$25 w/ park's, \$10 parking, 6-8 p.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, preregister 706.557.3001 bit.ly/3RAYD2X

THURSDAY, JUNE 26

PUTNAM: Juried Art Show Reception & Awards

All are invited to the opening reception of the 10th Annual Lake Country Juried Art Show, 5-7:30 p.m. at Barrel 118, 118 N. Jefferson Ave., Eatonton. Meet the Artisans Village Art Guild artists and see and shop their new works. The show will be displayed at The Artisans Village Art Gallery, 110 W. Marion St., Eatonton, until September. 706.623.7757.

FRIDAY, JULY 3

MORGAN: Independence Day Picnic

Free Independence Day patriotic concert on the Cultural Center's front lawn. BYO picnic baskets, coolers, tables and/or chairs or take advantage of food trucks on site. Pre-celebration 6 p.m., program & concert 7 p.m. at Madison Morgan Cultural Center, 434 S. Main St., Madison. 706.342.4743, www.mmcc-arts.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 4

MORGAN: We The People

A public reading of the Declaration of Independence by readers of all ages. 10-11 a.m. on the Town Park stage in downtown Madison.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 4-5

MORGAN: Star Spangled Wagon Rides

Join a Ranger for a trailer ride around the park, learn about Hard Labor Creek, celebrate the birth of our country. Rides depart from the mini-golf area every 20 minutes. First-come, first-serve basis. \$5 plus \$10 parking fee, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Hard Labor Creek State Park, Hard Labor Creek State Park, 5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, 706.557.3001 gastateparks.org/HardLaborCreek

MONDAY, JULY 6

MORGAN: Open Mic Night

Share your song, poem, story or joke 7-9 p.m. the first Monday of each month through Dec. 7 at Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, 434 S. Main St., Madison. 706.342.4743, www.mmcc-arts.org.

TUESDAY, JULY 7

PUTNAM: Meet the Author: Charles Seabrook & Ann Litrel

AJC science/environmental writer Seabrook and nationally published watercolor artist Litrel present their book, *35 Natural Wonders of Georgia to See Before You Die*. \$45 tickets. 7 p.m. at Georgia Writers Museum, 109 S. Jefferson Ave., Eatonton. 706-991-5119, georgiawritersmuseum.org/charles-seabrook

THURSDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 9-19

PUTNAM: Shrek the Musical

A performance from the Plaza's Broadway Intensive Program & The Arts Barn., based on the Oscar-winning animated film. Tickets \$15-\$25. Performances July 9-11 & 16-18 at 7 p.m. and July 12 & 19 at 2:30 p.m. at The Plaza Arts Center, 305 N. Madison Ave., Eatonton. 706.923.1655, plazacenter.org

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 10-11, 17-18

GREENE: Lake Oconee Wild Things

Enjoy the Wild Things baseball team's home games vs Gainesville Gol'Diggers and Atlanta Blues. 7 p.m. July 10, 11, 17, 18 at Lake Oconee Academy's Bank South Park, 1021 Titan Circle, Greensboro.

SATURDAY, JULY 11

BALDWIN: Watercolor with Krista Kugaraj

Explore watercolor in a fun, relaxed class for all skill levels. \$20 per person. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Allen's Market, 101 Floyd L. Griffin Jr. St., Milledgeville. milledgevillealliedarts.com. Also on Aug. 15.

THURSDAY, JULY 16

ZOOM: Georgia Writers Museum's Distinguished

Writers Book Club will discuss *Bombingham* by Anthony Grooms 7-8 p.m. Visit georgiawritersmuseum.org/book-clubs for links.

FRIDAY, JULY 17

GREENE: Moonlight on Main Concert

The Swinging Medallions will take center stage. BYO chairs, coolers, and dance moves. 7:00-9:30 p.m. on Main Street in downtown Greensboro.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 18-19

PUTNAM: Speed Dating with a Publisher

Three executives/editors of Warren Publishing, will lead sessions to answer questions about publishing, editing, and book marketing. A limited number of manuscript samples will be reviewed. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, 3-9:30 p.m. Sunday at Georgia Writers Museum. \$25-\$60 per session. georgiawritersmuseum.org/speed-dating-with-a-publisher/#tab-id-1

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 24-25

MORGAN: Firefly Festival

Friday is Family Night, 6-9 p.m. BYO blankets, chairs for free family fun, complimentary popcorn and outdoor screening of movie "David." Food trucks on location. Saturday is a concert, 7-9:30 p.m. featuring Chris, Jon & Scott. Between sets, DJ Donnie Z will host easy-to-follow line dances. \$10 at the gate, BYO chairs, blankets, coolers, no pets. Both Fri. & Sat. events at Town Park, downtown Madison.

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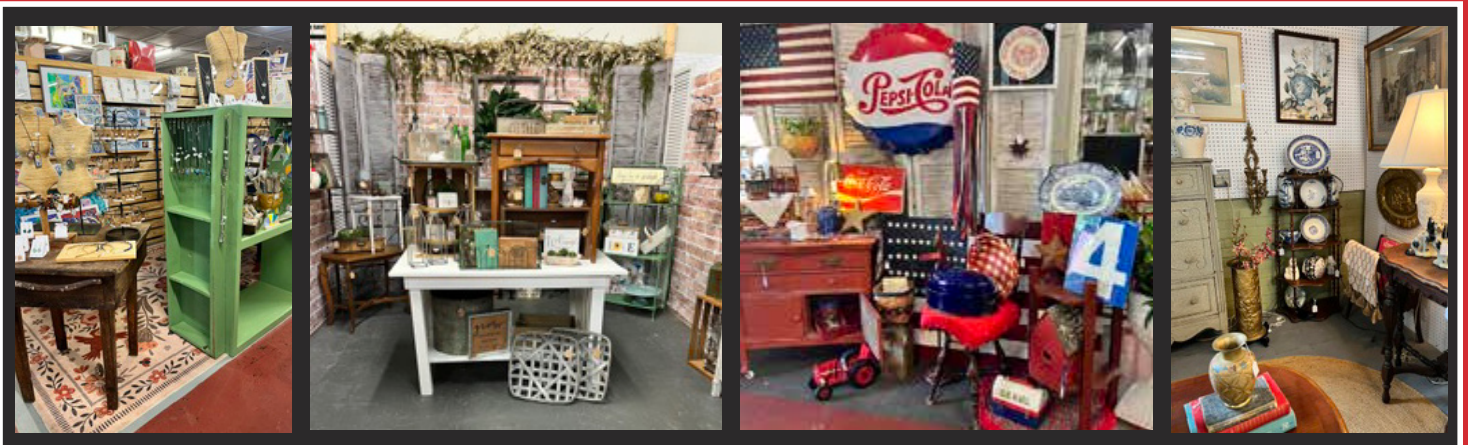
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Community Events

State Banana Pudding Festival of Georgia

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Photos by Lynn Hobbs



Jennifer Watkins, Rebecca Brasher with Milledgeville Theatre Collective



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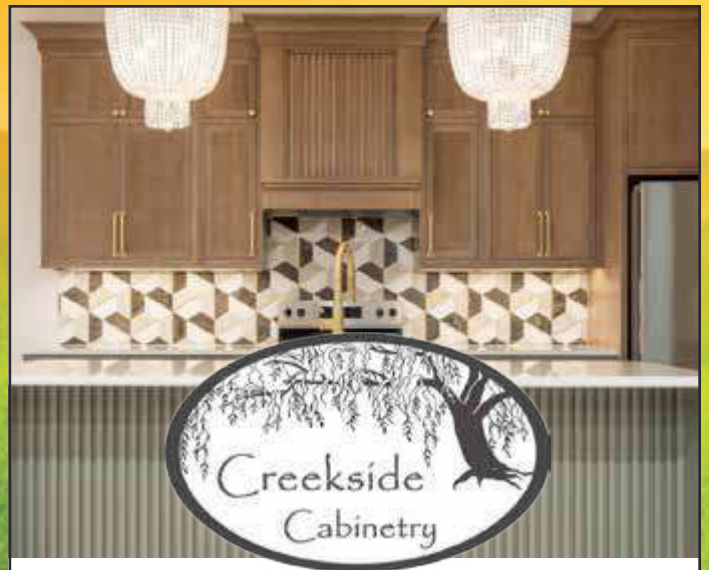
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Madison Town Park – Madison – April 25, 2026

Photos by **Lynn Hobbs**



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Community Events

Sunday at the Museum Lecture, “History of Rock Eagle 4-H Center”

Old School History Museum at The Plaza - Eatonton - May 3

Photos by **Lynn Hobbs**



Joy Levins, Peggy Lynn Gibson, Betty Ann Jamieson



Faye Swain, Jane Welch Etheridge



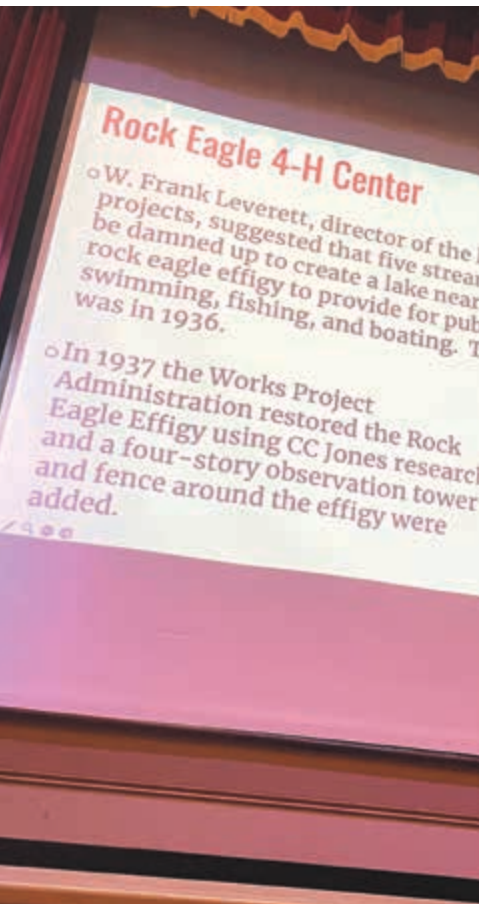
Linda Bishop, Sandra Hammond



Gail and Doug Pohl



Speaker Arch D. Smith



Rock Eagle 4-H Center

W. Frank Leverett, director of the projects, suggested that five streams be dammed up to create a lake near rock eagle effigy to provide for public swimming, fishing, and boating. This was in 1936.

In 1937 the Works Project Administration restored the Rock Eagle Effigy using CC Jones research and a four-story observation tower and fence around the effigy were added.



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105 min	120 min
120 min	135 min
135 min	150 min
150 min	165 min
165 min	180 min
180 min	195 min
195 min	210 min
210 min	225 min
225 min	240 min
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Before 1800

Once upon a time what would become Putnam County was a land stewarded by the Muscogee Indians. They had a sophisticated social structure in which “tribal towns” maintained local autonomy united under a central Council for national affairs. (sound familiar?) They harbored the view that land was a partnership to be protected not a product to be consumed. When the first British traders encountered the Muscogee, they called them “Creek” because their villages were built near rivers and creeks.

Early ambitious European settlers saw the land as opportunity and the Muscogee’s sovereignty as irrelevant. It would be a recurring historical theme—the collision of aspiration with authority. Tensions often lead to violence. One example was the 1715 Yamasee War fought over abuses with the deerskin trade and enslavement of Natives. It resulted in the death of 400 settlers. Early efforts at reconciliation through treaties always resulted in the Muscogee (Creek) relinquishing land already theirs.

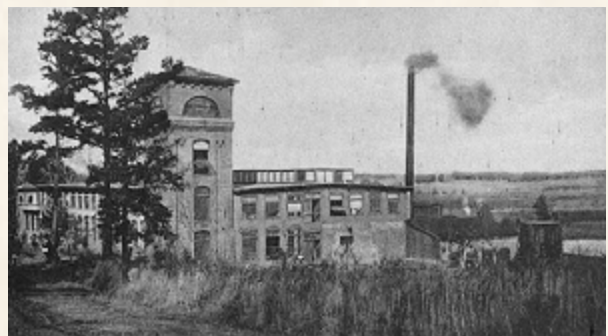
At the end of the Revolutionary War, the 1783 Treaty of Augusta opened lands between the Savannah and Oconee Rivers. The Treaties of Indian Springs removed all Muscogee peoples from their lands to make way for white settlement in central Georgia. Muscogee Chief William McIntosh negotiated the treaty and was sentenced to death by his people for violating Muscogee law. To encourage settlement in these newly ceded lands, Georgia implemented the Headright System in 1783 that granted 200 acres to heads of households, plus additional acres for dependents and enslaved persons.

1800–1865

Distribution of land shifted from the Headright System to Land Lotteries by 1805. If a white family promised to cultivate the land and was lucky enough to win a plot, they were granted 200 acres. That guarantee attracted an influx of settlers. In 1807, the Georgia General Assembly whittled Putnam County out of Baldwin County and named it for Major General Israel Putnam. “Old Put” was famous for his charismatic leadership, often acting as a “go-to

fixer” for George Washington during early years of the war. The county seat, Eatonton, was designated in 1808 and named for William Eaton, hero of the First Barbary War.

With wars top of mind, civic organization echoed military readiness. Georgia Militia Districts organized men for defense, tax collection, and census-taking. It became the first political structure in which delegates were selected for office. Voting in Putnam County began in coroner George Hill’s log cabin near the Crooked Creek Bridge (on Highway 16). His tiny “courthouse” would be replaced in 1835 with a brick one in Eatonton. By 1810, the county’s population had grown to 6,809 whites and 3,220 enslaved people.



(Georgia Archives)

Putnam County’s early economy depended on cotton. It was made more productive by the 1835 creation of the Eatonton Manufacturing Company on Little River. In 1861, the Georgia Secession Convention voted 208 to 89 to secede from the union. Putnam delegate Richard R. David voted against secession. The Civil War marched into Putnam County in November 1864 when General William Sherman’s 14th Corps burned Eatonton Manufacturing along with warehouses and the train depot. Sherman spent the night in a hotel in Shady Dale, Georgia.

1865–1950

When the Civil War ended in 1865, it left 7,000 formerly enslaved people free in Putnam County. The Freedmen’s Bureau was formed to assist freed people transit to self-reliance. The Bureau mediated labor contracts, established schools, and taught the process of civic life. At the integrated 1868 Georgia Constitutional Convention, Black and white delegates joined to draft a new state constitution that gave Black men the right to vote.

However, such democratic progress was swiftly challenged. When federal troops left in 1870, white conservative “Redeemers,” assisted by the Ku Klux



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(Atlanta Constitution, August 19, 1945)

This period was characterized by important steps in educational equality and civil rights. Schools, formerly separate by race, were integrated. African American political leaders broke through historical obstacles. Jimmy Davis was elected as the first African American County Commissioner in 1983, John Reid was elected as Eatonton’s first African American mayor in 2003, and Janie Reid was the first African American woman elected to both the Board of Commissioners (in 2004) and the Eatonton City Council (in 2019).

2000–Present

Democracy in Putnam County is today characterized by wide-ranging civic engagement and modernization. The 2020 election, for example, saw an 80% voter turnout. Since 2000, the county has successfully used the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to enable voters to

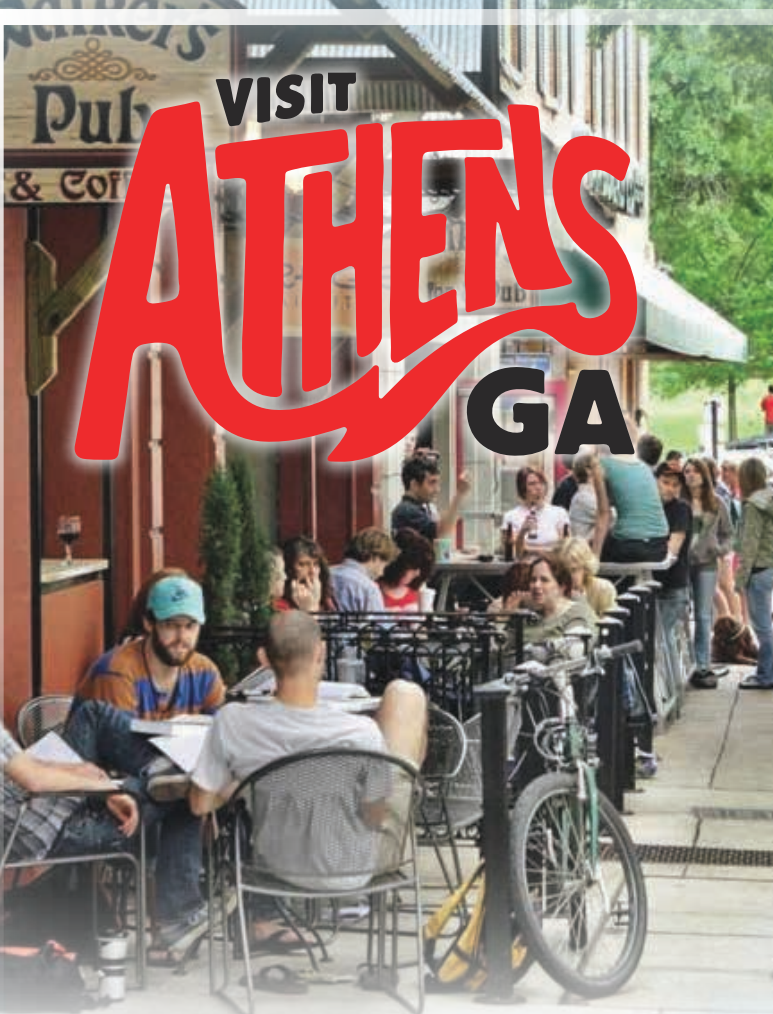
directly fund public safety, roads, and state-of-the-art educational technology. As Putnam County looks to the future, initiatives like the push for greater digital transparency by the Board of Elections represent a commitment to open-source governance.

From the contested banks of the Oconee River of yesteryear to the digital ballot boxes of today, the history of Putnam County is a testament to the enduring, ever-evolving nature of local democracy.

Chip Bell serves as a board member and curator for Georgia Writers Museum. He is also managing editor of the museum’s magazine, Page Turner.



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Tree City USA



Growing Madison's Quality of Life

- Story by **Lynn Hobbs**
- Photos by **Skyla Morris**

From carving initials in a heart on a tree trunk to carefree afternoons reading, whittling or picnicking in the shade, climbing to pick a bellyful of apples and swinging sky-high on a tire swing with the wind in your hair, trees were synonymous with good times in the good old days.

“But you can’t just look at the older generation, you have to look at the young generations, too,” Madison Mayor Fred Perriman said. “Nature is what our young kids need because it gets them out of the house to see real life. They don’t see real life on a tablet or cell phone. You’ve got to let them see a frog hopping, or a bug crawling, let them see a real snake sometimes, and let them just see nature itself. Nature is the beauty that God made for us to enjoy.”

Now in his fourth term as mayor, Perriman is proud that the city of Madison is preserving its small-town charm and rich history while embracing modern technology, innovative infrastructure and eco-friendly practices. “Keeping it real is what’s important,” he said with a smile.

As part of its environmental sustainability, Madison has been a certified Tree City USA for 36 years. It also earned a Growth Award from the Arbor Day Foundation for exceeding the Tree City USA standards in community engagement and outstanding improvements in tree care, according to arborday.org. And





the Georgia Forestry Commission recognized Madison as a Sustained Level Community for its focus on conserving the city's natural resources.

The proof is obvious to anyone who drives into town. The roads are shaded by trees lining each side. The downtown area's skyline is noticeably filled with many trees towering over the rooftops. The sidewalks are bustling with walkers of all ages, some pushing babies in strollers or accompanied by dogs on leashes. People not only greet each other as they pass, but stop to chat. It's almost as if the shady trees downtown have become the neighborhood front porches of days gone by.

"The trees keep the temperatures down," noted District 2 Councilman Eric Joyce, who serves as the liaison on the Madison Greenspace Conservation Commission. "We have a lovely city and people love to walk in it. In the summertime, it's nice to walk on a shaded sidewalk, not to mention the beauty of it all.

"And I recently learned that it's been clinically proven that trees planted along a major thoroughfare such as Main Street

actually slow down traffic," he added. "It has something to do with wide open spaces give people the idea they can drive faster than they would if there's a whole bunch of trees on the side."

Although trees themselves grow naturally as the Creator intended, keeping them healthy in an urban setting without interference on the infrastructure takes planning, work, dedication and money. Mayor Perriman credits the people.

"A city can't stand alone," he said. "You have to have sponsorships and you have to have relationships with the people in your community. And I kid you not, without volunteers, there's not too much that you can do. What helps Madison is we have a Greenspace Commission; and it's a Greenspace Commission Board who never gets tired."

Joyce agreed, and said the City and Greenspace Commission partner together.

The Greenspace Commission is made up of volunteers who apply to be on the board and are approved by city council. Their many projects are funded by grants, donations, and volunteerism, Perriman explained.

Madison's celebration of Arbor Day often stretches into an entire week of activities. Councilman Joyce said this past year, the Madison City Council issued a tree proclamation certifying the City as an official Arbor Day Tree City. They hosted a tree giveaway in which the Greenspace commissioners had solicited tree wholesalers for discounted pricing on trees planted in 2-gallon buckets. Then, they gave those 150 trees to the residents of Madison and Morgan County who signed up to receive them.

Other activities included a partnership with Bob Fuhr's Trolley Car to take people on free tours to see various centennial trees on private properties.

"We call them 'Champion Trees' because they're 100 years old, and they went to see those," Joyce said. "And they also actually had a film festival where they showed small documentaries on trees. So, it was a full week and we cherish every minute those volunteers gave us in that effort."

The Ricketts T.R.E.E. Program is another project offered by the Greenspace Conservation Commission. Established in 2001, the program is named after

Gwyn T. Ricketts who left money to the city for a dedicated trust fund for trees. Interest from the fund combined with donations support annual Tree Grants to plant trees. The City covers planting labor and ensures the trees are planted in a proper location.

To maximize the benefit of having trees, they must be planted in a front yard or near the public right of way where they are seen. Trees make public spaces feel more tranquil and livable, reduce stress and foster a sense of belonging. They cool asphalt streets, filter air and reduce noise, thus improving the overall sensory experience of a city.

The trees in the right of way, known as “Street Trees”, are important because in addition to the cooling shade, their leaves and branches intercept heavy rains, slowing and spreading its fall to prevent flooding. The roots absorb the water, which also reduces flooding; and that water then evaporates from the leaf pores back into the air. Basically, they are more like water managers than water hoarders. But they still create some extra work and expense as they age.

“Sometimes they can become a nuisance with limbs falling,” Mayor Perriman said, and then he chuckled. “Trees are just like our bodies—they get older and they start losing some things. But we just have to sort of keep our bodies in shape. In the same way, the city tends to that tree to keep it in shape.”

Larger trees, such as oaks, have roots that spread out and break sidewalks, creating “pedestrian tripping obstacles,” Joyce said. He noted they are “doing a little better job of picking better trees that won’t get as big.”

After noticing some other concerns the past couple of years, the city council implemented a few new tree-friendly requirements within the city limits. Now a designated arborist is involved in deciding if a tree needs to be removed from downtown streets due to perceived danger or disease. Also, property owners city-wide must now pay a nominal fee to get a permit to remove a tree. Joyce said the main thrust of that ordinance falls on large-scale property developers who clear-cut, and is intended to ensure a sufficient number of trees for the size of the property.

The Greenspace Commission also oversees the city’s parks and trails. Perriman said grants are used to create and maintain trails, and the people on the Greenspace Commission do the work themselves.

“It is an expense of money and time,” Joyce admitted. “But we, as a city and as a Greenspace Commission which is made up of all unpaid citizens, we all agree that it’s an effort well worth it. The benefits of trees to our town and how it appears and what it means to our citizens is really immeasurable. That’s why I think it’s really worth all the effort.” ♦



Georgia Forestry Commission Director Tim Lowrimore, left, presents Gov. Brian Kemp’s State Arbor Day Proclamation to Mayor Fred Perriman.



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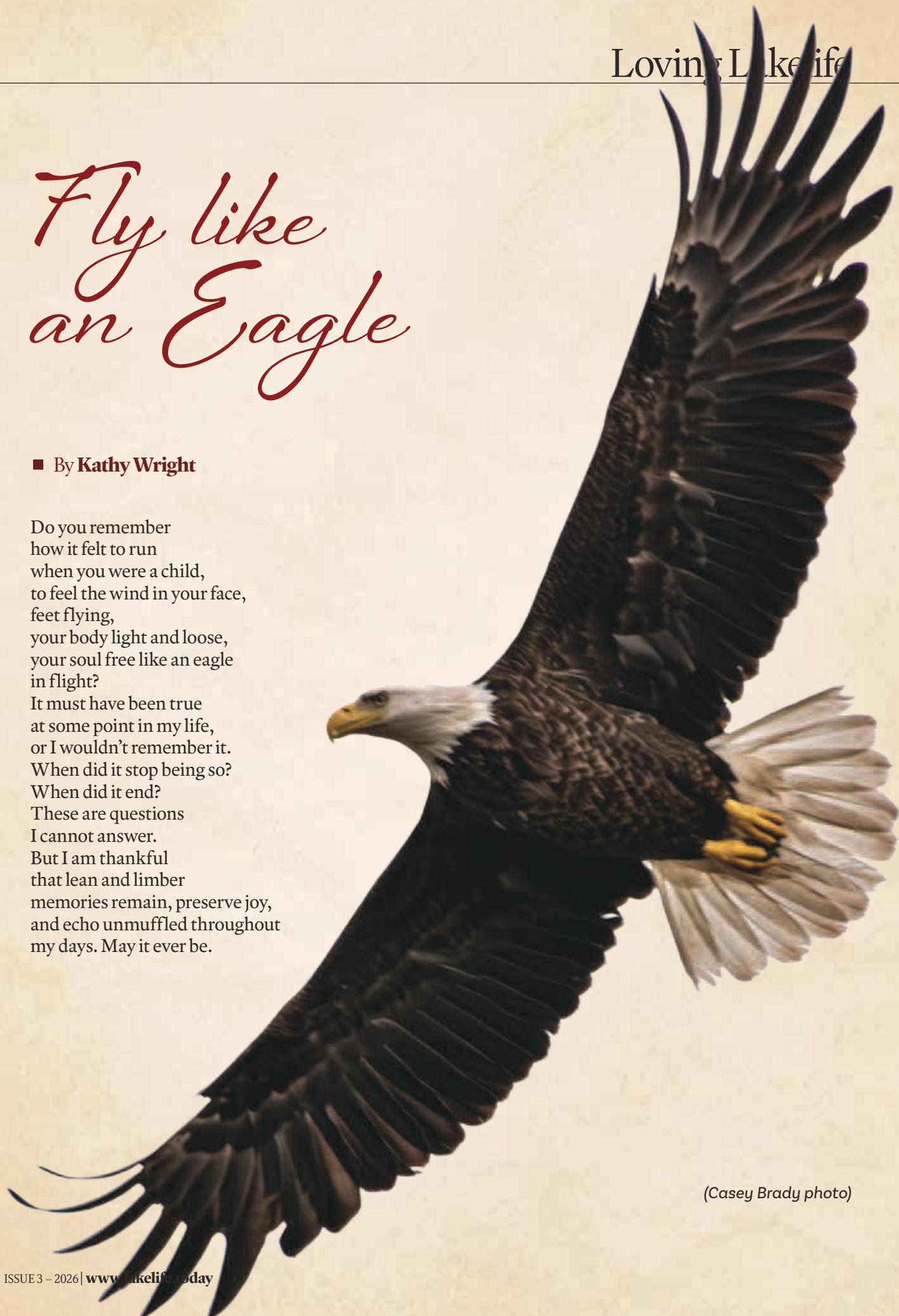
■ By **Kathy Wright**

Do you remember
how it felt to run
when you were a child,
to feel the wind in your face,
feet flying,
your body light and loose,
your soul free like an eagle
in flight?

It must have been true
at some point in my life,
or I wouldn't remember it.
When did it stop being so?
When did it end?

These are questions
I cannot answer.

But I am thankful
that lean and limber
memories remain, preserve joy,
and echo unmuffled throughout
my days. May it ever be.



(Casey Brady photo)



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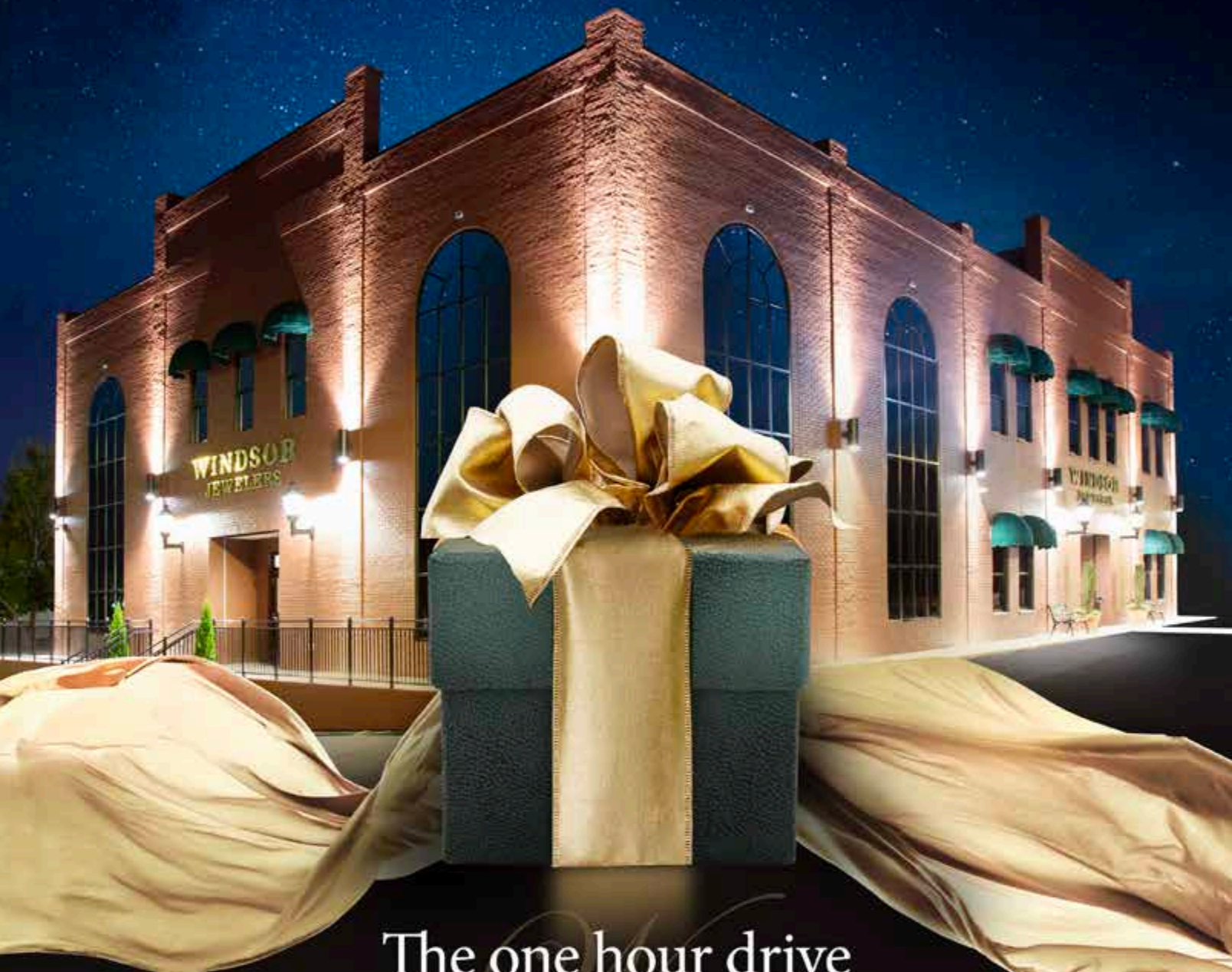
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