

**Welcome to the
April
2018
Digital Edition**



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M A G A Z I N E

April 2018

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Drug Companies Fear Release of the New AloeCure

Big Pharma stands to lose billions as doctors' recommend drug-free "health cocktail" that adjusts and corrects your body's health conditions.

by David Waxman
Seattle Washington:

Drug company execs are nervous. That's because the greatest health advance in decades has hit the streets. And analysts expect it to put a huge crimp in "Big Pharma" profits.

So what's all the fuss about? It's about a new ingredient that's changing the lives of people who use it. Some call it "the greatest discovery since penicillin"!

The name of the product is the AloeCure. It's not a drug. It's something completely different. And the product is available to anyone who wants it, at a reasonable price. But demands may force future prices to rise.

TOP DOC WARNS: DIGESTION DRUGS CAN CRIPPLE YOU!

Company spokesperson, Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist recommends AloeCure before she decides to prescribe any digestion drug. Especially after the FDA's stern warning about long-term use of drugs classified as proton pump inhibitors like **Prilosec**®, **Nexium**®, and **Prevacid**®. In a nutshell, the FDA statement warned people should avoid taking these digestion drugs for longer than three 14-day treatment periods because there is an increased risk of bone fractures. Many people take them daily and for decades.

Dr. Leal should know. Many patients come to her with bone and joint complaints and she does everything she can to help them. One way for digestion sufferers to help avoid possible risk of tragic joint and bone problems caused by overuse of digestion drugs is to take the AloeCure.

Analysts expect the AloeCure to put a huge crimp in "Big Pharma" profits.

The secret to AloeCure's "health adjusting" formula is scientifically tested **Acemannan**, a polysaccharide extracted from Aloe Vera. But not the same aloe vera that mom used to apply to your cuts, scrapes and burns. This is a perfect strain of aloe that is organically grown under very strict conditions. AloeCure is so powerful it begins to benefit your health the instant you take it. It soothes intestinal discomfort and you can avoid the possibility of bone and health damage caused by overuse of digestion drugs. We all know how well aloe works externally on cuts, scrapes and burns. But did you know **Acemannan** has many of other health benefits?...



HELPS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM TO CALM INFLAMMATION

According to a leading aloe research, when correctly processed for digesting, the Aloe plant has a powerful component for regulating your immune system called **Acemannan**. So whether it's damage that is physical, bacterial, chemical or autoimmune; the natural plant helps the body stay healthy.

RAPID ACID AND HEARTBURN NEUTRALIZER

Aloe has proved to have an astonishing effect on users who suffer with digestion problems like bouts of acid reflux, heartburn, cramping, gas and constipation because it acts as a natural acid buffer and soothes the digestive system. But new studies prove it does a whole lot more.

SIDE-STEP HEART CONCERNS

So you've been taking proton pump inhibitors (PPI's) for years and you feel just fine. In June of 2015 a major study shows that chronic PPI use increases the risk of heart attack in general population.

UNLEASH YOUR MEMORY

Studies show that your brain needs the healthy bacteria from your gut in order function at its best. Both low and high dosages of digestion drugs are proven to destroy that healthy bacteria and get in the way of brain function. So you're left with a sluggish, slow-to-react brain without a lot of room to store information. The **acemannan** used in AloeCure actually makes your gut healthier, so healthy bacteria flows freely to your brain so you think better, faster and with a larger capacity for memory.

Doctors call it "The greatest health discovery in decades!"

SLEEP LIKE A BABY

A night without sleep really damages your body. And continued lost sleep can lead to all sorts of health problems. But what you may not realize is the reason why you're not sleeping. Some call it "Ghost Reflux". A low-intensity form of acid reflux discomfort that quietly keeps you awake in the background. AloeCure helps digestion so you may find yourself sleeping through the night.

CELEBRITY HAIR, SKIN & NAILS

Certain antacids may greatly reduce your

body's ability to break down and absorb calcium. Aloe delivers calcium as it aids in balancing your stomach acidity. The result? Thicker, healthier looking hair...more youthful looking skin... And nails so strong they may never break again.

SAVE YOUR KIDNEY

National and local news outlets are reporting Kidney Failure linked to PPI's. Your Kidney extracts waste from blood, balance body fluids, form urine, and aid in other important functions of the body. Without it your body would be overrun by deadly toxins. Aloe helps your kidney function properly. Studies suggest, if you started taking aloe today; you'd see a big difference in the way you feel.

GUARANTEED RESULTS OR DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK

Due to the incredible results people are reporting, AloeCure is being sold with an equally incredible guarantee.

"We can only offer this incredible guarantee because we are 100% certain this product will work for those who use it," Says Dr. Leal.

Here's how it works: Take the pill exactly as directed. You must see and feel remarkable improvements in your digestive health, your mental health, in your physical appearance, the amount inflammation you have throughout your body - even in your ability to fall asleep at night!

Otherwise, simply return the empty bottles with a short note about how you took the pills and followed the simple instructions and the company will send you...Double your money back!

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering our readers up to 3 FREE bottles with their order.

This special give-away is available for readers of this publication only. All you have to do is call TOLL-FREE **1-800-746-6095** and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: **JC025**. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.



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Former governor is the first Georgian to lead the USDA.
By Jackie Kennedy

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And why the fun is more vital than ever.
By Leslie Moses

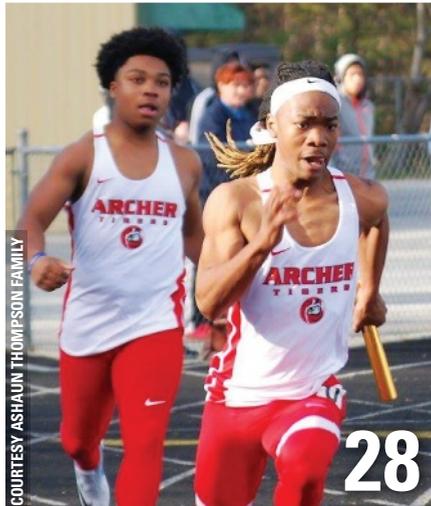
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Organ donations give another chance at life.
By H.M. Cauley



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ON THE COVER:

George Ervin "Sonny" Perdue III served as Georgia's 81st governor from 2003 to 2011 and in 2017 was sworn in as the 31st secretary of agriculture. Perdue is the first Georgia native to hold this office. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.)

FROM THE EDITOR

Former Gov. Sonny Perdue was sworn in as the 31st U.S. secretary of agriculture on April 25, 2017—a red-letter date for our state, as Perdue is the first Georgia native to hold that office. “Secretary Sonny,” as he is known on Twitter, oversees one of the nation’s largest federal departments, charged with administering farm policy and food safety programs and funding food stamps, other nutrition programs and the U.S. Forest Service.

Perdue amassed his agricultural knowledge the old-fashioned way. He grew up on a farm in Bonaire, and during his professional life as a farmer, agribusinessman and veterinarian, he has experienced the industry from every possible perspective. Turn to page 16 to learn how he’ll bring this experience to bear on his new role and about his plans to foster a culture of approachability in the USDA.

April is also noteworthy for another reason—it’s National Donate Life Month, which makes it fitting that we feature a story on LifeLink of Georgia, a nonprofit organ-recovery service that works to find donors and deliver organ donations.

See “A legacy of life” on page 28 to discover how LifeLink helps give transplant patients a second chance, thanks to the generosity of organ and tissue donors. Through this organization’s work, we are learning that death need not always have the last word.

Finally, on a more lighthearted note, we take a look at the entertainment-driven world of minor league baseball. See “Major fun in the minor (and wood-bat) leagues” on page 22 to find out how teams like the Savannah Bananas and the Macon Bacon are ramping up the fun with antics like break dancers, “Star Wars” nights and sumo wrestlers. Any way you look at it, it’s a whole new ballgame.

Enjoy!
Samuel
Laurel George
Editor

Liberty County 4-H student uses outreach project to help military children... Want to win? Find it this month! TARGET gift card \$25... How to enter:...

Inspired to serve the community

It is such an incredible honor to be featured in your magazine! [See “Liberty County 4-H student uses outreach project to help military children,” Georgia News, February 2018, page 9; bit.ly/4hsophia.]

I hope other young people will read about my story and be inspired to give back to their communities through some form of service. Thank you for highlighting my project and for supporting positive youth development.

I’m so grateful to 4-H for giving me the platform to reach out to the next generation and to you all for celebrating the efforts of those who are striving to make the world a better place. I’m excited to continue to spread awareness of mental health and share my project. Thank you so much.

—Sophia Rodriguez, Hinesville

My cast-iron skillet still going strong

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the story “Diary of a cast-iron skillet.” [See Georgia Cooks, February 2018, page 38; bit.ly/gmciiron.] I, too, received a cast-iron skillet (already seasoned) as a bridal gift 57 years ago. I have cooked just about anything you can think of in it over the years. Mine also sits on the top of the stove, ready to be used

each day. Over time I have acquired other cast-iron cookware, but nothing beats my old skillet!

I look forward to GEORGIA Magazine and read each issue from cover to cover. Keep up your good work!

—Jeanette Gordon, Talbotton

Georgia cooks... Diary of a cast-iron skillet... The joys and hows of cast-iron cooking... BY JANE HUNTER... Includes photos of a skillet and a person cooking.

An interesting read

Thanks for the magazine. I always find something interesting to read and good recipes, too.

—Betty Royal Ricks, Savannah

Georgia’s film industry is booming

Peggy Gardner @atnative • 26 August 2017 Love this new city slogan Y’allywood instead of Hot L’anta! We’re such an entertainment mecca now. Kudos to @georgiamagazine

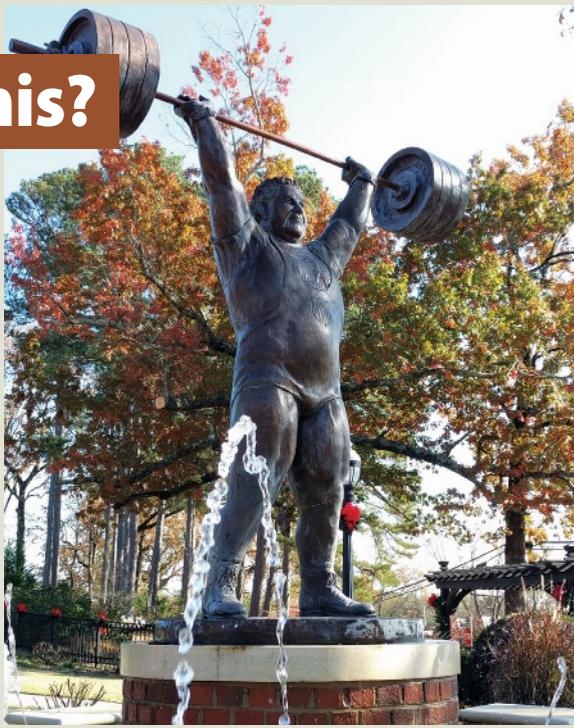
FROM THE EDITOR “Yallywood” is giving Hollywood a run for its money. In July, Gov. Nathan Deal announced that film and television production companies spent a record \$2.7 billion Georgia during fiscal year 2017, a Georgia is now the No. 1 filming location in the world. The overall economic impact

[See the September 2017 issue for several stories about Georgia’s film industry; bit.ly/gm917.]

Share your thoughts. Email us at magazine@georgiaemc.com. Please include your name, address and phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

Picture this?

Guess where this is and you could win a \$25 gift card!



In "Picture this?" the reader whose photo of a Georgia place is published wins a \$25 Target gift card—as does the person who correctly guesses what the photo is and where it was taken. The winner's name (drawn at random from correct guesses) and the answer will appear in a future issue. The winning photo selected by our staff will be published in exchange for the gift card; Georgia EMC claims no right in and will ultimately destroy or delete all photos that are not selected.

If you're ready to guess or have taken a photo for us to consider, email picturethis@georgiaemc.com or mail to "Picture this?," P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085. Submissions should be 300-dpi photos of locations that are accessible to the public and easy to identify. Please send photos and guesses separately.



Guesses for the April contest must be received by April 19, 2018. With all correspondence, please include your name, mailing address and phone number.

◀ Our winners from February 2018 are Donna Hope Dow, of Cochran, who took the photo, and Krystle Rodgers, of Marshallville, who correctly guessed that it is a giant Radio Flyer wagon in front of a child-care and learning center in Warner Robins.

February 2018

Celebrating the Georgia Lifestyle
georgia MAGAZINE *Established 1945*

How to get in touch

Subscriptions: Contact your electric cooperative first; they may send the magazine by request. Or send check or money order for \$10 (12 issues) or \$16 (24 issues) to address above. Allow 4-6 weeks for first issue.

Change of address: If you personally subscribe, mail your address change to the above address. If you receive the magazine through your electric co-op, please contact that office directly.

Article submissions or story ideas are welcome for review; send to the above address. Guidelines are available by emailing magazine@georgiaemc.com.

"My Georgia" submissions are limited to 500 words; photos are required. Mail to the above address or

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Website: www.georgiamagazine.org
Email: magazine@georgiaemc.com

email to mygeorgia@georgiaemc.com. Digital images, 300 dpi, are accepted. Published stories pay \$100.

"Snapshot" submissions: Send photos, along with all names of children and parents (or guardians), city of residence, electric co-op (if served by one), phone number, email address and mailing address, to "Snapshot" to the above address. Or send digital (300 dpi) photos to snapshot@georgiaemc.com. (Photos become magazine property.)

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GEORGIA Magazine, the largest-circulation monthly magazine in the state, is published by Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (GEMC), the trade association for Georgia's 41 consumer-owned electric utilities. On average, more than 540,000 members welcome the magazine into their homes each month. Georgia's not-for-profit electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to more than 73 percent of the state's land area, serving 4.5 million residents. For more information, visit www.georgiaemc.com.

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GEORGIA Magazine (USPS-473120, ISSN 1061-5822) is published monthly by Georgia Electric Membership Corp., P.O. Box 1707, 2100 East Exchange Place, Tucker, GA 30085. Periodicals postage paid at Thomaston, GA, and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Send changes to **GEORGIA Magazine**, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085. Printed in Georgia by Quad/Graphics.

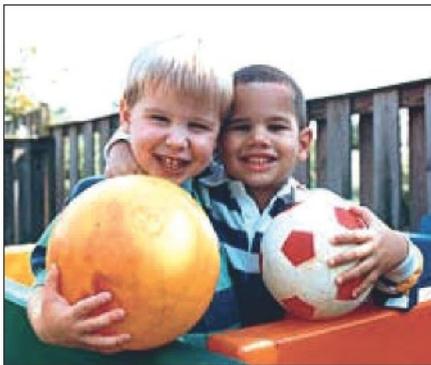
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Eye Doctor Helps Tennessee Legally Blind To See

Tennessee

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving.

A Lebanon optometrist, Dr. John Pino, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

"Some of my patients consider me the last stop for people who have vision loss," said Dr. Pino, one of only a few doctors in the world who specialize in fitting bioptic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other debilitating eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. If you're a low vision patient, you've probably not only imagined them, but have been searching for them. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you the independence you've been looking for. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50 or better.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss in people over 50. Despite this, most adults

are not familiar with the condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula is only one small part of the retina; however, it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp central vision. When it degenerates, macular degeneration leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision, making it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver's vision test.

Nine out of 10 people who have macular degeneration have the dry form. New research suggests vitamins can help. The British medical journal BMC Ophthalmology recently reported that



A scene as it might be viewed by a person with age-related macular degeneration.

56% of patients treated with a high-dose combination of vitamins experienced improved vision after six months. TOZAL Comprehensive Eye Health Formula is now available by prescription from eye doctors.

While age is the most significant risk factor for developing the disease, heredity, smoking, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure have also been identified as risk factors. Macular degeneration accounts for 90% of new legal blindness in the U.S. While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts. "My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person

functioning, especially driving," says Dr. Pino.

When Elaine, 57, of Kingsport, TN, came to see Dr. Pino she wanted to keep her Tennessee driver's license and was prescribed bioptic telescopic glasses to read signs and see traffic lights farther away. Dr. Pino also prescribed microscope glasses for reading newspapers and menus in restaurants.

As Elaine puts it, "My regular glasses didn't help too much – it was like looking through a fog. These new telescopic glasses not only allow me to read signs from a farther distance, but make driving much easier. I've also used them to watch television so I don't have to sit so close. I don't know why I waited to do this; I should have come sooner."

"Bioptic telescopes can cost over \$2,000," said Dr. Pino, "especially if we build them with an automatic sunglass."

"The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you're looking at," said Dr. Pino. "It's like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise."

To learn more about bioptic telescopes or to schedule a consultation with Dr. Pino, give us a call at 1-855-405-8800. You can also visit our website at:

www.lowvisiontn.com

For more information and a FREE telephone consultation, call us today:
1-855-405-8800

Offices located in Lebanon,
Knoxville and Columbia.

John M. Pino, O.D., Ph.D.



Macon murals unveiled

Three recently installed murals in downtown Macon have brought color to the wall of the Macon Transit Authority transfer lane at Terminal Station. The murals were made possible by a Downtown Challenge Grant from the Community Foundation of Central Georgia.

The Macon Arts Alliance spearheaded the project, which features works by three artists: Mary Frances Burt, Isaac Ramsey and Christopher Logan.

Burt's mural, "A Celebration of Grace," features representatives of three cultures—Native American, African-American and European—surrounded by flowers. Ramsey showcases Georgia's birds of prey and the state's sports teams. Logan created silhouettes of people he met and photographed at Terminal Station.

"This project is about community engagement and connectivity," says Kathy Hoskins Nolan, marketing consultant to the Macon Arts Alliance. "The murals have created a new, vibrant space for locals and visitors to connect by sharing a public art experience."

For more information, visit maconartsalliance.org. To read more about Georgia's mural cities, see "Off the wall," March 2017, page 28; bit.ly/gamural.

—*Patricia A. Keene*



MARYANN BATES



MARYANN BATES



KRIS BURRIS

Meadowcreek High School's culinary team won the 2018 Hospitality Education Foundation of Georgia's ProStart State Championships. The students will head to the national competition later this month.

Top student chefs cook, chop under extreme conditions

Basil-Parmesan arancini with tomato salad. Pan-seared chicken breast with caramelized onions and butter-milk mashed potatoes. Vanilla bean and chocolate sponge cake with fresh fruit relish. Sound like the menu at a top-rated restaurant? It may be one day, given that the chefs behind those creations are budding culinary stars.

Five students at Meadowcreek High School in Nor-

cross prepared those dishes and wowed the judges of the Hospitality Education Foundation of Georgia's ProStart State Championships, a culinary cook-off for high schoolers. The March 2 event at the Art Institute of Atlanta drew 11 teams from around the state who had one hour to whip up their menus.

"It's a choreographed dance: They have to know what needs to be completed and what to do next," says Simone Bryan, coach of the winning team, who also was named ProStart Teacher of the Year.

In addition to preparing their three-course meals without the use of running water or electricity, students in this "Top Chef"-style competition also were required to butcher a chicken and demonstrate five precision knife cuts.

"It takes a lot of practice and support," Bryan says. "[The students have] been working hard on this since November."

Second- and third- place culinary honors went to Westover Comprehensive High School in Albany and Marietta High School in Marietta, respectively. Westover also took first place in the management competition, which required students to learn and explain business and marketing strategies.

The Meadowcreek High team of Wayne Miles, Carlos Barboza, Jorge Narvaez, Jose Martinez and Arturo Perez will represent Georgia and vie for scholarships at the national competition April 27-29 in Providence, R.I.

—*H.M. Cauley*

April is Safe Digging Month



ISTOCK.COM / IDEONE

Has the cable TV service ever gone out right as your team was about to kick that game-winning field goal? Or has the power gone out in the middle of making dinner? While these could have been storm-related outages, nearly 1,000 of these incidents each month are caused by unsafe digging practices in Georgia.

As summer approaches, more people are outside doing yardwork, and that makes April, designated Safe Digging Month, the perfect time to remind everyone how to practice safe digging habits. Even small projects, such as planting a shrub, can cause damage to underground utilities, so it is best to contact Georgia 811 to determine where and how to dig for any project.

Simply call 811 or go online to Georgia811.com before you dig and tell them where you want to dig. The affected utility companies will come out to mark your digging area. Using Georgia 811 is safe, free and easy.

Meghan Wade, president of Georgia 811, stresses that calling first “not only helps prevent utility damage but can also help to avoid serious injury, environmental damage, utility service interruptions, project delays, extensive repairs and legal problems. Contacting 811 should be the first step in any safe digging project.”

Plus, you don't want to be that neighbor.

—Katie Cowart

Thank you, linemen!

Electric utility linemen help keep the lights on whenever you flip the switch. Their expertise and knowledge are vital each day but especially critical when outages occur and power must be restored. Working with electricity is inherently dangerous, but the hazards linemen encounter are often compounded by extreme weather conditions and difficult terrain, such as remote mountain areas, rivers, streams and swamps.

For this type of extraordinary work and the important role they perform each day, electric utilities in Georgia have designated April as Linemen Appreciation Month. Take time today to thank your local co-op line crew!



The lineman specialty license plate is still available and helps show your appreciation for electric lineworkers while supporting a worthy cause. Proceeds from the sales of the plate go to the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation in Augusta, which helps the families of burn patients. Visit bit.ly/gaprstgp for details.

Find it this month! Want to win a \$25 gift card?

Are you a resourceful reader? One lucky reader who finds and submits the correct answers to these trivia questions will win a \$25 Target gift card.

- 1) What nonprofit organization honored Coastal Electric Cooperative by including it on a T-shirt for the group's St. Patrick's Day celebrations?
- 2) What was the name of Peter Loose's dog, who had a special friendship with artist Howard Finster?
- 3) What recycled item is recommended for making mini-greenhouses over seeds to speed up sprouting?
- 4) What is the name of the antique boat shown in this month's Calendar?
- 5) Kidney recipient Ashaun Thompson is a member of the track team at what school?

How to enter:

Send an email to magazine@georgiaemc.com with the answers to all five questions by April 30, 2018. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. (If more than one person answers all the questions correctly, we'll draw from among all correct answers to determine the \$25 Target gift card winner.)



Berry fun in Reynolds

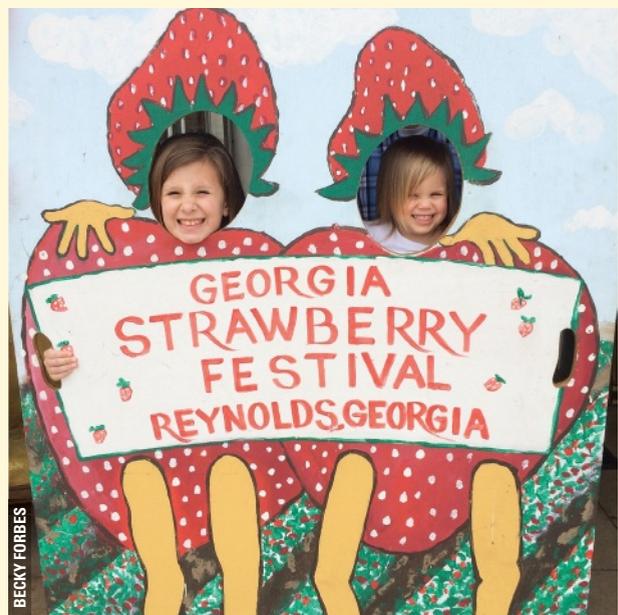
For 20 years, the people of Reynolds have celebrated the sweet, juicy strawberry at the official **Strawberry Festival of Georgia**, which takes place this year on Saturday, April 28.

Several events prior to the festival help build the excitement. On April 7, the Georgia Strawberry Princesses and Queens will be chosen to serve as official ambassadors and reign over festival events. Musicians gather on April 20 for the Strawberry Jam Concert at the Community Fellowship building on Reynolds Street. On April 27, the Emmaus Road Quartet headlines Gospel Music in the Park in downtown Reynolds.

On April 28, downtown will be abuzz with two parades, a 5K Run for Literacy, an arts and crafts fair, an antique tractor show, music, a firetruck pull and Dachshund and lawn mower races.

For more information, visit ga-strawberry.org or call (478) 847-5301.

—*Pamela A. Keene*



BECKY FORBES

HISTORIC HIGH COUNTRY

One Stop Shop Hop, April 6-7, Northwest Georgia Convention and Visitors Center, Dalton. Quilters' event with vendors from five states. (706) 217-8111.

Buchanan Car Show, April 7, downtown, Buchanan. Antique cars, trucks and motorcycles, plus music and food. (770) 722-8938.

Georgia Steeplechase, April 7, Kingston Downs, Rome. Horse racing, hat parade, Jack Russell terrier races. georgiasteeplechase.org. (866) 928-7856.

Tallapoosa Dogwood Festival and Dogwood Dash, April 14, downtown, Tallapoosa. Parade, handmade crafts, demonstrations, music, 5K walk/run. tallapoosaga.gov. (770) 574-2345.

2nd Annual Cowboy Festival, April 14-15, Pine Mountain Gold Museum, Villa Rica. Live cowboy shows, including train robbery performances; kids' fun, mining and blacksmithing demonstrations, music, food. bit.ly/pinmtng. (678) 840-1445.



MICHAEL VALENTINE PHOTOGRAPHY

West Georgia Jazz Festival, April 28, The Mill Amphitheater, Villa Rica. Stooges Brass Band from New Orleans headlines the jazz concert. bit.ly/dtvrc. (678) 840-1160.

On Broadway, April 20-21, Carrollton Cultural Arts Center, Carrollton. The Carroll County Community Chorus presents a musical journey through the world of Broadway. carrolltonarts.org. (770) 838-1083.

EarthDayz, April 20-22, Rock City Gardens, Lookout Mountain. Recycling crafts, birds of prey show, climbing wall. seerockcity.com. (706) 820-2531.

National Astronomy Day, April 21, Tellus Science Museum, Cartersville. Visit the observatory to view the sun and stars, plus NASA-sponsored events for all ages. tellusmuseum.org. (770) 606-5700.

7th Annual BBQ Boogie & Blues, April 27-28, downtown, Calhoun. Professional and backyard barbecue competitions, music, crafts, kids' activities. bbqboogieblues.com. (706) 625-3200.

Blue Ridge Trout Festival and Outdoor Adventures, April 28, downtown, Blue Ridge. Outdoor outfitters, fishing guides, seminars, home décor, fine arts. bit.ly/brtrtf. (706) 374-2390.

NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS

Annual Plant Sale, April 6-7, Hart County Botanical Garden, Hartwell. Hard-to-find plants, plus shrubs, perennials and annuals. hartcogardens.org. (706) 436-1557.

Simply Elegant Taste of the Town, April 7, Unicoi State Park & Lodge, Helen. Enjoy samples from area restaurants, wineries and breweries; music by Legendary Heroes. bit.ly/wbcoch. (706) 865-5356.

Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival, April 13-14, Union County Fine Arts Center, Blairsville. Hear the voices of Appalachia through storytelling. bit.ly/gamtnstf. (828) 389-2654.

Oldies but Goodies, April 13-14, Savannah River Playhouse, Hartwell. Relive the hits of the '50s and '60s. bit.ly/sauprod. (706) 376-7397.

Spring Bierfest, April 21, Festhalle, Helen. Beer tastings, German band, food and dancing. belenchamber.com. (706) 878-1908.

Trillium Trek Trail Run & Walk, April 21, Elachee Nature Science Center, Gainesville. Race through the trails in the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve and enjoy Earth Day activities. elachee.org. (770) 535-1976.

Bear on the Square Mountain Festival, April 21-22, downtown, Dahlonega. Arts and crafts, folk and bluegrass music, kids' activities. bit.ly/bonsquar. (800) 231-5543.

"Charlotte's Web," April 27-29, Lavonia Cultural Center, Lavonia. Beloved children's story comes to life on stage. bit.ly/frankcp. (706) 491-9374.

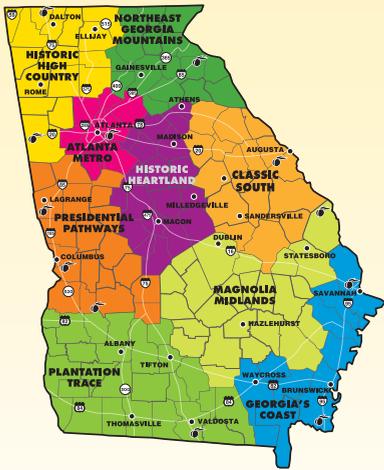
19th Annual Celebrate Clayton, April 28-29, downtown, Clayton. More than 100 artists, crafters, music, kids' activities. celebrateclayton.com. (706) 212-9958.

Fiber, Farm & Art Festival, April 28-29, North Georgia Zoo, Cleveland. Learn about sheepshearing and spinning, plus arts and crafts, interactive farm demonstrations. myfavoritezoo.com. (706) 348-7279.

ATLANTA METRO

A Taste for Art, April 7, Roswell Fine Arts Alliance, Roswell. Original artwork, silent auction, wine and tapas tastings. rfaa.org.

"Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story," April 12-15, 17-22, 24-29, Georgia Ensemble



Regions are determined by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. See its online calendar at www.exploregeorgia.org for additional events.



TONY SMITH

Lake Hartwell Antique Boat Festival, April 21, Hartwell Marina, Hartwell. Antique boats, antique car cruise-in, parade, kids' activities, crafts, music. hart-chamber.org. (706) 376-8590.

Theatre, Roswell. Witness the musician's rise to fame through his many hit songs. get.org. (770) 641-1260.

82nd Annual Atlanta Dogwood Festival, April 13-15, Piedmont Park, Atlanta. Fine art, international entertainment, midway rides, food. dogwood.org. (404) 817-6642.

9th Annual Cars & 'Q for the Cause, April 21, Choate Construction Co. headquarters, Sandy Springs. Classic car show, barbecue, craft brews, music. splsbtbat.com. (404) 983-7406.

42nd Annual Big Shanty Festival, April 21-22, downtown, Kennesaw. More than 200 arts and crafts vendors, food, parade, entertainment, kids' zone, grizzly bear show. (770) 423-1330.

Artsapalooza, April 21-22, 6100 Lake Forrest Dr., Sandy Springs. More than 125 artists, crafters, music. bit.ly/sspart.

Pinner's Conference & Expo, April 27-28, Cobb Galleria Centre, Atlanta.

Pinterest comes to life with exhibits, classes and ways to make the most of Pinterest. bit.ly/gapincnf. (801) 822-1333.

All About Kids Expo, April 28, Gwinnett County Fairgrounds, Lawrenceville. Vendors, entertainment, games, summer camp information. bit.ly/akidexp. (770) 963-9205, ext. 1203.

The Fantastic Movie Run 10K, April 28, City Hall, Powder Springs. Road race supports artists with autism; music, dance performances, plus food trucks and movie screenings. bit.ly/bsartfnd. (404) 793-4431.

Duluth Spring Arts Festival, April 28-29, downtown, Duluth. Arts and crafts, music, food trucks. duluthartsfestival.com.

PRESIDENTIAL PATHWAYS

FDR Commemorative Ceremony, April 12, Roosevelt's Little White House State Historic Site, Warm Springs. U.S. Marine Color Guard, Fort Benning Army Band and a speaker mark the anniversary of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. bit.ly/roosvub. (706) 655-5870.

Second Annual Open Air Meriwether, April 12-May 6, Artisans on the Square Gallery, Greenville. See artists paint on location April 12-14; exhibit until May 6. bit.ly/grnwart. (404) 386-1328.

"Spring Awakening," April 13-15, 19-21, Riverside Theatre, Columbus. Columbus State University production of the Tony Award-winning musical. theatre.columbusstate.edu. (706) 507-8444.

Kaleidoscope, April 14, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts, Columbus. Large-scale instrumental and vocal performances by students from Columbus State University. bit.ly/cskald. (706) 256-3612.

20th Annual Spring Fling/Roosevelt Days, April 14-15, downtown, Warm Springs. Arts and crafts, entertainment, food, kids' train rides and activities. (770) 990-6406.

Kevin Spirtas: Night & Days, April 19, Griffin Auditorium, Griffin. Broadway and television star sings show tunes and shares stories about his career. griffinconcerts.org. (770) 228-3229.

Verdi's "Requiem," April 21, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts, Columbus. The Columbus Symphony Orchestra presents the classical masterpiece with the Columbus State Choral Union, the Auburn University Chamber Choir and the LaGrange College Choir. rivercenter.org. (706) 256-3612.

Senior Exhibition, April 27-May 20, Lamar Dodd Art Center, LaGrange College, LaGrange. Paintings, photography, ceramics and other art created by graduating seniors. bit.ly/srexbbt. (706) 880-8211.

Pea Ridge Festival, April 28, downtown, Buena Vista. Art exhibits, demonstrations,

kids' activities and tours of Pasaquan, Eddie Owens Martin's art compound. buenavista.ga.org. (229) 649-2842.

HISTORIC HEARTLAND

Spring Home & Garden Show, April 6-7, Georgia National Fairgrounds, Perry. Family event and plant sale with trees, shrubs, garden plants. mgcg.org. (478) 919-1985.

23rd Annual Southworks, April 6-May 4, Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation, Watkinsville. National juried art exhibition. ocaf.com. (706) 769-4565.

13th Annual Fired Works Regional Ceramics Exhibition and Sale, April 13-22, Central City Park, Macon. More than 6,000 pieces of pottery by 65 ceramic artists. bit.ly/fwksmac. (478) 743-6940.

Jasper County FFA Alumni Antique Tractor and Diesel Truck Pull, April 14, Shady Dale Rodeo Grounds, Shady Dale. Antique tractors, trucks, concessions to benefit the Jasper County High School FFA. (706) 816-8142.

Plantapalooza!, April 14, various locations, Athens. Plant sales at three locations: State Botanical Garden, Trial Gardens at the University of Georgia, and UGA Horticultural Club at College Station and Riverbend roads. botgarden.uga.edu. (706) 542-6014.

Miguel Castro and Guests, April 15, First United Methodist Church, Warner Robins. Performance by the drummer/percussionist. wrconcert.org. (770) 241-3842.

"The Sound of Music," April 19, The Classic Center, Athens. The musical story of Maria and the von Trapp family. classiccen.com. (706) 357-4444.

3rd Annual Hayneville JamFest, April 28, Kingsland Farm, Hayneville. Southern rock concert featuring Stillwater, Jack Pearson Band and Wet Willie to raise funds for the Museum of Aviation Foundation. bit.ly/musavia. (478) 747-5570.

3rd Annual Oconee Garden Tour, April 28, various locations, Watkinsville. Promotes the Watkinsville Garden Club and raises funds for a program for local students. bit.ly/oconres. (706) 769-4974.

Madison Fest, April 28, Town Park, Madison. Garden, art, craft and farm vendors; entertainment and plant sale. bit.ly/madsfest. (706) 342-1251, ext. 208.

22nd Annual Pan African Festival of Georgia, April 28-29, Tubman Museum, Macon. Celebrate African-American art, history and culture. bit.ly/panaftm. (478) 743-8544.

CLASSIC SOUTH

Augusta Collects Southern Art, through April 29, Morris Museum of Art, Augusta. View works from private collections in the Augusta area. themorris.org. (706) 724-7501.



DAPHNE WALKER

"Tales From the Altamaha," April 19-21, 24-28, Blue Marquee Theater, Lyons. Award-winning folk-life play based on the writings of Col. T. Ross Sharpe, who established Georgia's first electric cooperative (Altamaha EMC) during the 1950s and 1960s. talesfromthealtamaha.com. (912) 526-6445.

Historic Pews & Pulpits Ramble, April 14, various locations in Greene, Hancock, Taliaferro and Warren counties. Tour of historic churches. bit.ly/bstchur. (706) 465-9604.

Boots, Brews & BBQ, April 20, 27, Columbia County Amphitheatre, Evans. Country music, beer tastings and local barbecue. bit.ly/evtwnpcpk. (706) 650-5005.

Mitchell Springfest, April 20-22, downtown, Mitchell. Arts and crafts, kids' activities, food, community church service on Sunday. mitchellgeorgia.com. (706) 598-2004.

Sacred Heart Garden Festival, April 20-22, Sacred Heart Cultural Center, Augusta. Garden show with speakers, vendors and private garden tours. bit.ly/scrdbrt. (706) 826-4700.

20th Annual Southland Jubilee, April 21, downtown, Greensboro. Arts and crafts, music, car show. bit.ly/sojub.

The Wall That Heals, April 26-29, Curry Colvin Recreation Complex, Lincolnnton. Exhibit of a three-quarter-scale replica of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., along with a mobile education center, to honor the 3 million Americans who served in the Vietnam War and more than 58,000 who lost their lives. bit.ly/fbwallbeal. (706) 401-1476.

20th Annual Greene County Professional Rodeo, April 27-28, Greene County Arena, Greensboro. Bull riding, steer wrestling, girls' barrel racing, kids' stick horse race. (706) 338-9000.

Sharon Shenanigans, April 28, Sharon/ Raytown Community House, Sharon. 66-mile bike ride, arts, crafts, antiques, music. bit.ly/sbrsbng. (706) 816-3844.

PLANTATION TRACE

Mini-golf Tournament, April 6, Reed Bingham State Park, Adel. All ages welcome

to test skills on the park's mini-golf course. bit.ly/rbspadel. (229) 896-3551.

Paddle Under the Stars, April 14, Stephen C. Foster State Park, Fargo. Watch meteors, planets and the stars in one of the darkest places in the Southeast. bit.ly/scfspark. (912) 637-5274.

Spring Fling & Backyard BBQ Festival, April 20-21, downtown, Moultrie. Crafts, barbecue competition, music, kids' activities; free concert featuring The Swingin' Medalions on Friday night. bit.ly/fbsfdtm. (229) 890-5455.

35th Annual National Mayhaw Festival, April 21, Spring Creek Park, Colquitt. Arts and crafts, parade, bike ride, 5K and fun run. colquitt-georgia.com. (229) 758-2400.

Lyrids Meteor Shower Paddle, April 21, Seminole State Park, Donalsonville. Paddle 2.5 miles to a low-light spot to see this annual meteor shower. bit.ly/gspmsmp. (229) 861-3137.

97th Annual Rose Show and Festival, April 26-28, downtown, Thomasville. Flower shows, parades, concerts, arts and crafts. thomasvillega.com. (229) 227-7020.

MAGNOLIA MIDLANDS

Hawkinsville Harness Festival, April 7, Hawkinsville Harness Training Facility and Arena, Hawkinsville. Harness horse races, arts and crafts, food, concert, fireworks. bit.ly/hawkpul. (478) 783-1717.

31st Annual Spring into Art, April 9-June 6, Turner Center for the Arts, Statesboro. Exhibit by artists age 18 and older; works are judged and offered for sale. turnercenter.org. (229) 247-2787.

ArtsFest, April 14, Sweetheart Circle, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro. Concerts, artist market, kids' activities. bullochrec.com/artsfest. (912) 489-9087.

Tree Trek Fun Run & 5K, April 14, downtown, Baxley. Run through downtown, then attend the Boy Scout Troop 472 Pancake Breakfast. bit.ly/baxttfr. (912) 367-7731.

Oratorical Speech Contest: A Celebration of MLK, April 15, First African Baptist Church, Dublin. Celebrate the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s first public speech. bit.ly/milkorsp. (478) 272-4002.

Sidewalk Prophets Something Different Tour, April 21, Theater Dublin, Dublin. Celebration of music, worship, storytelling and praise with Sidewalk Prophets and special guest Bonray. bit.ly/dubspsd. (478) 277-5074.

"A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder," April 23, Turner Center for the Arts, Statesboro. Touring production of the 2014 Tony Award-winning musical. turnercenter.org. (229) 247-2787.

41st Annual Vidalia Onion Festival, April 26-29, downtown, Vidalia. Celebrate the harvest with music, a parade, crafts, street dance, concert by Phil Vassar. vidaliaonionfestival.com. (912) 538-8687.

GEORGIA'S COAST

Shell-e-brate, April 5-6, Georgia Sea Turtle Center, Jekyll Island. Environmental celebration highlights local and regional projects. jekyllisland.com. (912) 635-3636.

15th Annual Swampfest, April 6-7, downtown, Waycross. Crafts, music, contests, kids' activities. swampfest.us. (912) 287-2969.

50th Blessing of the Fleet, April 13-15, Waterfront Park, Darien. Marine parade, juried art show, crafts, music, classic car show, fireworks. bit.ly/blesof. (912) 437-6684.

25th Annual Art in the Park, April 14-15, Postell Park, St. Simons. More than 60 artisans and craftspeople offer sculpture, jewelry, photography, glass. glynvisualarts.org. (912) 638-8770.

Classic Nashville Road Show, April 15, Historic Ritz Theatre, Brunswick. Country classics featuring Jason Petty and Katie Deal. goldenislesarts.org. (912) 262-6934.

Daughters of Bluegrass Festival, April 18-22, Mossy Oak Music Park, Guyton. Bluegrass and gospel music by top groups. bit.ly/bluegft. (912) 772-5142.

Savannah Earth Day Festival, April 21, Forsyth Park, Savannah. Kids' activities, fitness games, interactive exhibits and demonstrations. bit.ly/savedfst. (912) 662-5162.

Skidaway Reptile & Amphibian Festival, April 21, Skidaway Island State Park, Savannah. See and touch reptiles and amphibians. bit.ly/gspskdis. (912) 598-2300.

"Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike," April 21-22, 28-29, May 5-6, Brunswick Actors' Theatre, Brunswick. The story of middle-aged siblings and their movie-star sister. soglogallery.com. (912) 280-0023.

14th Annual Tybee Turtle Trot, April 28, Tybee Island Pier and Pavilion, Tybee Island. 5K beach run at low tide to benefit the Tybee Island Marine Science Center, plus turtle release, music. bit.ly/tybmars. (912) 786-5917. 🐢

Events for the July 2018 issue
are due by April 15.
Email calendar@georgiaemc.com.

Spring

Festival and Events Guide

April 19-28

Tales from the Altamaha

"I Saw the Light!"
(The Story of Georgia's First REA)

Blue Marquee Theater
Lyons, Georgia

Buy Tickets Online NOW!

www.TalesFromTheAltamaha.com
Tickets \$10 \$15 & \$20
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Call for info
912-526-6445

June 2-3, 2018

PENNY MCHENRY
HYDRANGEA
Festival

Garden Tour & Flower Show
Douglas County-Douglasville, Georgia

HydrangeaFest.org

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SACRED HEART
Garden FESTIVAL
April 20 - 22, 2018 • Augusta, GA

A Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 Event

FEATURED EVENTS
Garden Tea with Pat Branning • Preview Party
Vendor Market • Private Garden Tours
Landscape & Floral Exhibits • Speaker Series
Butterflies • Friday Night Concert in the Garden
NEW: Seedling Saturday

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AN INITIATIVE OF THE GILMER CHAMBER

Presented by Coca-Cola

APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL
EAST ELLIJAH, GA

MAY 5-6
SATURDAY 9:00AM-5:00PM
SUNDAY 9:00AM-4:00PM

FREE ADMISSION
ARTS | CRAFTS | FOOD
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PET-FRIENDLY

LOCATED ON: CRAIG STREET
GeorgiaAppleBlossomFestival.com

APRIL 21st
Greensboro
9 AM - 4 PM

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ART . FOOD . MUSIC . HERITAGE

22nd Annual
Dillard Bluegrass & Barbeque Festival
August 3 & 4, 2018
Dillard, GA
City Hall Fairgrounds
Music • Food • Family Fun
www.dillardbbq.org

Knoxville - Roberta
The Place to Be May 19, 2018

5-K / 1 Mile Fun Run
POTTERY
Lawn Mower Races
Tractor Show
Free Entertainment

May 17-18 Pre-Events see web pages
www.gajugfestival.org

Saturday, May 5, 2018
Historic Downtown Toccoa, GA

TOAST OF TOCCOA
ART • WINE • CRAFT BEER

Take artwork from dozens of regional artists, add live music, mix with specialty food offerings, craft beer and wine tastings from over five regional north Georgia wineries, and that's what you'll have at the 2nd Annual Toast of Toccoa, 12-5 p.m.
www.mainstreettoccoa.com or 706-282-3309

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Boogie & Blues

April 27th and 28th

www.bbqboogieblues.com

Georgia's
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Celebrate the 44th Annual
Georgia Blueberry Festival
June 1 & June 2, 2018
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Georgia Mountain EggFest
May 18 & 19
4th of July Fireworks July 4
Georgia Mountain Fair July 20-28
Landfest Sept. 6-8

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April 13th, 14th & 15th, Downtown Darien

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5K, Classic Car Show, Parade,
Art in the Park, Food/Crafts, Children's
Activities, Entertainment,
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73rd Annual
Pine Tree Festival
& Southeast Timber Expo
May 4 - 5, 2018 Swainsboro, GA
Antique Cars and Trucks, Parade & Entertainment
pinetreefestival.org

Let more than a million readers know about your Fall event in our Fall Festival Guide - coming up in the August issue. Deadline to reserve space is June 1st.

Short takes

- **Seeing the light:** Marietta-based Cobb Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) plans to convert 60,000 streetlights to brighter, safer light-emitting diode (LED) lights in Cobb, Fulton, Bartow, Paulding and Cherokee counties. The lights will require less maintenance (they have a 10-year warranty) and also are designed to send an alert to Cobb EMC if one goes out.
- **Shining example:** Tucker-based Green Power EMC and its partner, Silicon Ranch Corp., received the 2017 Best of the Best Energy/Industrial Project award from *Engineering-News Record* for the 72-megawatt solar facility in Hazlehurst. The award was part of the organization's annual Best of the Best Projects awards. For more information, go to bit.ly/2018enrwards.
- **Hot commodity:** Sumter EMC in Americus recently donated \$3,000 to Lee County Fire and Emergency Services for a thermal imaging camera. The heat-sensing device will help firefighters locate people through the dense smoke of a house fire or in the dark. Sumter EMC also recently donated \$2,325 to the Positive Direction Youth Center, an after-school development program, which will use the money for Lego kits to introduce children to engineering and for speakers to help the children hear educational videos.
- **New digs:** The Randolph County University of Georgia Extension and 4-H office has moved into the building formerly occupied by LaGrange-based Diverse Power's Pataula District office. The building on Blakely Street in Cuthbert was donated to UGA Extension of Randolph County after the district office moved into a new building.
- **Leader among leaders:** James Wright, vice president for corporate services at GreyStone Power Corp. in Douglasville, was installed as the new chairman of the Paulding Chamber of Commerce on Jan. 20. One of his goals during his tenure is to recruit employers and jobs in fields such as health care and advanced manufacturing to Paulding County. To read a Jan. 15 *Marietta Daily Journal*

Continued ➤

EMCs go back to school



COURTESY GRADY EMC

A doll called "Little Susie" learns the hard way about touching live electrical lines during Grady EMC's demonstration at Washington Middle School in Cairo.

February was a busy month of school visits for electric membership cooperatives (EMCs).

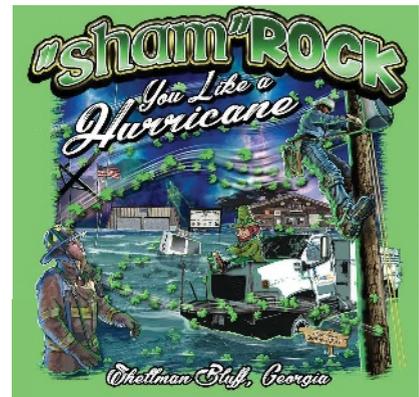
- On Feb. 12, Hart EMC in Hartwell demonstrated high-voltage electricity to students at Hart County High School. The next day, Hart EMC participated in the school's Career Day event.
- On Feb. 13, Millen-based Planters EMC was part of Burke County Middle School's eighth-grade Career Fair.
- On Feb. 16, Cairo-based Grady EMC visited two Cairo schools: Washington Middle School, where a doll called "Little Susie" assisted in a live-line demonstration; and Eastside

Elementary School, where two employees used an acoustic music performance to introduce the principle of cooperation and cooperatives.

- On Feb. 20, Monroe-based Walton EMC gave a safety demonstration to fourth-graders at Prince Avenue Christian School in Bogart who had just finished studying electricity and magnetism.
- Employees of Jefferson Energy Cooperative in Wrens took some time in February to read to students at Goshen Elementary School in Augusta and to talk about the electrical industry with students at Augusta Christian School during its annual Career Day.

A T-shirt tribute

The Friends of Shellman Bluff, a Townsend-based nonprofit organization that works to improve life in the Shellman Bluff and surrounding communities, had a unique way of thanking the linemen of Coastal Electric Cooperative in Midway for their efforts to restore power after last year's Hurricane Irma. A Coastal Electric truck and lineman are included in artist Lissa Shearouse's design for the organization's St. Patrick's Day T-shirt, which was sold locally in March. An annual St. Patrick's Day parade is the organization's primary fundraiser.



ART BY LISSA SHEAROUSE



A camper takes aim at Camp Braveheart, part of Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge. About 75 percent of the children and teens attending that camp last year live in Southern Rivers Energy's service territory.

Southern Rivers Energy sponsors scholarships to special-needs camps

The Southern Rivers Energy Trust in Barnesville recently awarded \$10,000 to Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge to provide scholarships to campers from Southern Rivers' service area.

Camp Twin Lakes provides a full range of traditional camp activities for children with disabilities or illnesses through adaptive and accessible programming. All activities intentionally engage campers in their own diagnoses, encouraging self-sufficiency, understanding, independence, physical activity and overall health. For example, children with Type 1 diabetes learn how to check and regulate their blood sugar in a safe and supportive environment, and children with heart defects and/or transplants maintain their cardiovascular health through swimming and other activities.

In 2017, 75 percent of the children and teens attending three of Camp Twin Lakes' specialized camps—Camp Ache Away, for those with arthritis; Camp Kudzu, for those with diabetes; and Camp Braveheart, for those with heart defects and/or transplants—were from Southern Rivers Energy's service area.

The grant was funded through Operation Round Up, in which members of the cooperative round up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar, with the difference set aside to support local nonprofit organizations.

To read more about Camp Twin Lakes, see "I can't walk, but at Camp Twin Lakes, I can fly!" in the July 2017 issue of *GEORGIA Magazine*, online at bit.ly/ctwin717.

Grady EMC supports historic theater

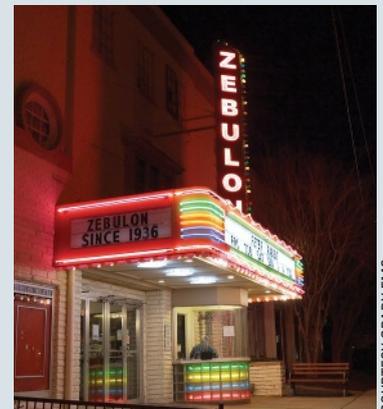
Cairo-based Grady Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) is a supporter—known as a "Friend of the Zeb"—of the historic Zebulon Theater, also in Cairo. The nonprofit theater, which opened in 1936, is one of the state's only remaining single-screen theaters and has a seating capacity of 350. In exchange for its support, Grady EMC gets some advertising opportunities as well as four passes to each showing, which it offers to members through Facebook promotions or trivia questions. Adam Starr of member services at Grady EMC says that the hope is that these members will support the theater not only by buying concessions and returning to see additional movies there but also by considering becoming Friends of the Zeb themselves.

Short takes *CONTINUED*

story about Wright's plans as head of the chamber, go to bit.ly/pauldingchair.

- **STEM supporters:** Jackson EMC in Jefferson sponsors the annual Gwinnett Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair, which promotes students' interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Engineers from Jackson EMC served as judges for middle and high school projects. Samantha Williamson, a senior at Buford High School, won Jackson EMC's Energy Innovation Award for her project, "Improvement in Solar Energy Efficiency by Minimizing Conversions."

- **Spreading the love:** The Sawnee EMC Foundation in Cumming recently awarded \$18,500 to four local charities through its Operation Round Up funds. The American Legion Auxiliary Post 307 will use the funds to send 10 Forsyth County boys to the American Legion Boys State leadership experience; the ALS Association Georgia Chapter will help Sawnee EMC members battling the illness; The Place of Forsyth County will put its grant toward the Focus on Forsyth program, which assists senior citizens; and Friends of Disabled Adults and Children, Too! will use the funds to refurbish home medical equipment for those in need. The funds come from EMC members who round up each monthly bill, with the difference going toward charitable causes.





COURTESY USDA

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue

First Georgian to lead the USDA

BY JACKIE KENNEDY



PRESTON KERES

With his wife, Mary, by his side, Sonny Perdue is sworn in as the 31st secretary of agriculture by U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas on April 25, 2017, at the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

It's just another way he's gotten his new administration off the ground.

Perdue was sworn in April 25, 2017, as the nation's 31st U.S. secretary of agriculture. Fellow Georgian and U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas officiated in a ceremony at the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C. That morning, Perdue introduced his official USDA Twitter handle: *@SecretarySonny*.

Farmhand history

Perdue is up before the sun most mornings, arriving at his Washington, D.C., office by 6:45. That may sound early to some, but for Perdue this schedule allows more sleep than he got growing up on a dairy farm in

Sonny Perdue's first year as secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has found him in both new and familiar territories. Among the new: riding shotgun in a Blackhawk helicopter over flooded Texas cotton fields. The familiar: visiting farmers and ranchers to hear their stories and concerns.

Last summer, Perdue and his team traveled through the Midwest via RV on what they called the "Back to our Roots" tour. They talked with food producers, students and stakeholders to prepare for the USDA's input on the 2018 Farm Bill. He says the "listening tours" give him the opportunity to hear straight talk from rural people.

"They are the ones on the front lines of American agriculture, and they know best what the current issues are," Perdue says.

The former Georgia governor visited the front lines himself in September, accompanying Texas congressional leaders in a helicopter to survey agricultural damage caused by Hurricane Harvey.

Top right: Perdue spent much of last year visiting farmers and rural residents throughout the country to hear their concerns. Here he visits the Delaware State Fair in July. **Middle:** Perdue proves that “once a farmer, always a farmer” at the Mississippi Valley Fair in August during his “Back to our Roots” RV listening tour. **Bottom:** Perdue spends time with his grandchildren, from left, Rabun, Thomas and Eleanor, before being sworn in as the 31st secretary of agriculture. He and his wife, Mary, enjoy having their grandchildren visit them in the nation’s capital.



Bonaire, where he had to rise even earlier in order to milk the cows. He figures his Middle Georgia farm roots prepared him well for his new post.

In choosing him to lead the USDA, President Donald Trump said of Perdue, “From growing up on a farm to being governor of a big agriculture state, he has spent his whole life understanding and solving the challenges our farmers face, and he is going to deliver big results for all Americans who earn their living off the land.”

During Perdue’s Senate confirmation, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) questioned the authenticity of his farm upbringing, according to Perdue, who responded, “Sen. Leahy, I can still taste that slimy Holstein tail slapping across my mouth on a cold January morning.”

Perdue also has many positive memories of farm life.

“I also remember the benefits of going to that milk tank and getting out a dipper of fresh, cold milk,” he recalls. “I feel so blessed that I grew up with the opportunity—although I didn’t consider it opportunity at the time—to accomplish meaningful, purposeful work. By plowing a field or mowing a hayfield, you could see your progress and your accomplishment throughout the day. That made me goal-oriented and gave me a great work ethic.”



Perdue worked as a farmer, Air Force captain, veterinarian, state senator and governor prior to leading the USDA, a position he never craved but may have been created for.

“It’s amazing how God works in our lives,” he says, noting that before, when encouraged to seek national office, he’d reply, “I’ll run for that when they move the federal capital to Atlanta.”

But when tapped for the secretary of agriculture position, a job that didn’t require an election campaign, he felt uniquely qualified for it.

“I never had any inkling I’d be sitting here, but—and not wanting to sound hyperbolic—it’s been exhilarating,” Perdue says from his Washington, D.C., office.

On the job

Perdue has found that each aspect of the USDA piques his interest, including food safety, nutrition, research, education, forestry, farm programs and animal, plant and health safety.

“The USDA is vast and broad, wide and deep, and affects every American in some way and resonates internationally as well,” he says. “It’s absolutely fascinating every day.”

Of the objectives he’s set for programs under the USDA umbrella, his major goal as secretary is “simple but ambitious”: “I want the USDA to be known as the most efficient, most effective and most customer-focused agency in government by the time I leave.”

To accomplish that, he’s tackling major concerns of the farm sector, including international trade and regulations. He says his USDA will work hard to promote American agriculture’s interests to international markets.

“Over 20 cents out of every farm-income dollar depends on international trade,” he says. “We’re blessed to have enough food in this country, but to continue to enhance prosperity for our producers, we need to expand ... and continue to go around the world and sell this great production of our farmers and ranchers.”

Likewise, he says he’ll work to reduce regulations

that have stifled the agricultural industry.

"We have experienced a sustained time in history where our farmers have been regulated to death," Perdue says. "To unleash the productivity we know American entrepreneurs can achieve, we have to peel back job-killing regulations so our people can do what they do best, which is to produce products and grow the economy."

Those who make their living off the land work diligently to maintain their way of life, diversifying as necessary to stay on the family farm, according to the secretary.

"Farmers are very creative and innovative when it comes to looking for ways to gain revenue on the farm," he says, pointing out the growing trend of agritourism.

Despite farmers' "do-it-yourself" mentality, some things are beyond their control, such as the availability of reliable internet service in some rural areas. Perdue recently met with stakeholders at the White House to "focus federal effort on broadband connectivity across America," he says.

'Farmers are anxious to use [broadband] connectivity to enhance precision agriculture as well as electronic commerce. All farmers need to be able to take advantage of these technologies.' —*Sonny Perdue*

At a farm show in the nation's heartland last summer, he witnessed the demonstration of a GPS-enhanced tractor that could plow a furrow for fertilizer in the fall and return in the spring to place seed in the exact same spots.

"It could reach down in that subsoil right where the fertilizer was...and ultimately produce a 10 to 15 percent bushel increase," Perdue says. "Farmers are anxious to use [broadband] connectivity to enhance precision agriculture as well as electronic commerce. All farmers need to be able to take advantage of these technologies."

When governor, Perdue invited Georgians to share their concerns in person; during "Saturdays With Sonny," residents could meet with the governor for 15 minutes to discuss any ideas or concerns.

"It gave everyday citizens access, and I learned of some issues I never would have learned through routine channels, and we made efforts to correct those," says Perdue, noting that last summer's RV tours and other listening sessions are designed to accomplish the same.

"It gives me [the] opportunity to hear issues I would not hear by sitting in the office all the time," Perdue says. "It's a matter of being approachable, of providing a culture of approachability American citizens need to have in their government." 🍌

Jackie Kennedy is a freelance writer living in LaGrange. Her story about former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue and his wife, Mary, appeared in the April 2005 edition of GEORGIA Magazine.

Georgia agriculture commissioner applauds USDA secretary



AMY CARTER

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, left, and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue ham it up in the Georgia Grown building at the Georgia National Fair last October.

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black doesn't hesitate to call his longtime colleague, Sonny Perdue, "the most-qualified and best-prepared" of anyone who's ever served as secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"You have to add up his life experiences of growing up in agriculture, having formal training as a doctor of veterinary medicine, then agribusiness owner and grain trader, then several areas of public service all the way up to being the chief executive of the state," Black says. "I think we'll find during his term of service he'll be the rock star of the entire cabinet."

Black has known Perdue since 1991, when Perdue started serving as state senator representing Georgia's 18th Senate district and Black was a lobbyist for the Georgia Agribusiness Council. The two worked together on several pieces of legislation through the 1990s.

One of Black's proudest moments occurred during Perdue's tenure as governor.

"I worked hand in hand with him to establish his advisory agriculture committee that put National Agriculture Day on the map in Georgia," Black says. "Prior to Gov. Perdue, we did news releases and everybody yawned. When Perdue was governor, it turned into something that drew quite a bit of attention during the General Assembly."

Black heaps praise on Perdue's ability to "track down the best talent" and feels the USDA team he's put together is exceptional. He calls the new secretary "a man of integrity" who will stand firm for what he believes in.

"He's a vigilant fighter," Black concludes, "and that's what we need for the future of agriculture at this juncture in our history."



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70-74	\$27.40	\$21.40	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$89.00	\$69.00	\$221.00	\$171.00
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EMC Spotlight



COURTESY HABERSHAM EMC

Habersham EMC rewards environmental excellence

From left are Alan English, Rabun County solid waste director; David Foster, Habersham EMC community and business development director; Daniel Watts, Rabun County recycling superintendent; and Susan Baker, Habersham EMC member services manager.

BY JACKIE KENNEDY

Since 2011, Habersham Electric Membership Corp. in Clarkesville has presented its annual Environmental Excellence Award to a business or organization that exemplifies vision, leadership and concern for the environment.

Susan Baker, Habersham EMC's manager of marketing and communications, created the award to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Georgia's first renewable-energy program, Green Power EMC.

"We saw it as a way to promote environmental awareness," Baker says, noting that the award is presented each April in conjunction with Earth Day.

Last year's recipient, the Rabun County Solid Waste and Recycle Department in Clayton, was honored for its work to preserve local streams by testing them before releasing sediment pond water, for managing the county's recycling program and for partnerships with schools to encourage students to recycle.



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35	10.47	9.77	11.81	10.94	15.48	14.19	59	34.77	25.43	64.14	44.24	114.09	79.49
40	12.28	10.73	13.97	13.54	22.40	20.67	60	37.97	27.25	70.84	48.14	126.20	85.98
41	12.54	10.99	15.27	14.19	23.70	21.54	61	40.57	29.41	77.55	53.54	140.04	94.63
42	12.89	11.25	16.13	15.05	25.00	22.40	62	43.51	31.92	85.12	59.81	153.45	104.15
43	13.32	11.59	17.43	16.13	27.16	23.27	63	47.06	35.03	94.63	67.60	169.45	116.26
44	13.75	11.94	18.51	17.21	28.89	24.13	64	50.86	38.23	104.36	75.60	186.32	128.80
45	14.27	12.28	20.02	18.29	31.05	25.43	65	55.19	41.87	115.61	84.90	205.35	143.07
46	14.71	12.72	21.54	19.16	33.65	27.16	66	60.55	45.41	125.12	94.20	223.08	158.64
47	15.22	13.15	23.05	20.02	36.24	29.32	67	66.61	49.48	136.15	104.79	242.98	175.94
48	15.92	13.75	25.00	21.32	40.14	31.92	68	74.13	54.50	149.56	117.99	267.63	197.57
49	16.52	14.36	27.16	22.40	43.60	34.51	69	82.00	59.69	163.61	131.61	293.58	220.06
50	17.30	15.05	29.54	23.92	47.92	37.54	70	91.00	65.65	179.62	147.18	322.99	244.71
51	18.51	15.74	31.70	25.21	52.25	41.00	71	101.21	72.40	203.62	159.07	373.16	271.96
52	19.81	16.61	34.30	26.73	57.44	44.89	72	112.80	80.10	230.65	172.48	430.25	303.10
53	21.45	17.65	37.54	28.67	63.92	49.65	73	127.07	89.61	264.17	188.92	500.75	341.16
54	23.18	18.68	40.78	30.62	70.41	54.41	74	142.03	99.56	299.20	206.43	574.27	381.38
55	25.09	19.90	44.46	33.00	77.76	59.60	75	159.07	110.89	339.21	226.11	658.18	426.79
56	26.99	21.02	48.35	35.16	85.12	63.49	76	194.54	138.83	405.60	279.52	787.93	536.65
57	29.24	22.23	52.89	37.76	93.33	68.25	77	234.76	170.49	480.85	340.29	934.98	661.21

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Major fun in the minor (and wood-bat) leagues

And why the fun is more vital than ever

BY LESLIE MOSES

Savannah Bananas owner Jesse Cole had a crazy idea: Swap the team's first-base coach with a break dancer and play Michael Jackson's "Thriller." "You can imagine the reaction from the crowd," says Bananas President Jared Orton. "We're literally starting to interrupt the game."

The Bananas are an entertainment business with a baseball team, leaders say. But record-breaking attendance for the Coastal Plain League, a wood-bat collegiate summer league, can be chalked up to near-nonstop entertainment. A 15-piece pep band greets fans, staff members sing while serving peanuts and boot-scooting senior citizens dance as "Banana Nanas."

"Now there are baseball purists out there who might not get all the antics," Orton says.

But times have changed, and teams' financial success depends on entertainment. Research—six years of

Above: Fans pack Coolray Field in Lawrenceville, the home park of the Gwinnett Stripers (formerly Braves), for last year's July 4 game. The Gwinnett team saw a boost in fan enthusiasm after it announced a name change to differentiate it from the Atlanta Braves. The teams share the same metro Atlanta market. **Right:** Chopper, the Gwinnett mascot, greets young fans during Kids Run the Bases, a tradition after each Sunday home game.

study by Pennsylvania-based professors Chip D. Baumgardner and Michael J. Gallagher—shows it's critical for minor league and independent baseball teams to offer promotional activities at many games if they want to stay afloat financially.

Teams must remain competitive among a burgeoning number of entertainment options and stand out among more and more minor league clubs.



Even new-stadium appeal isn't enough long-term. Baseball teams left Savannah and Macon for new stadiums elsewhere, but a new venue's charm wanes after a few years, according to Baumgardner. Teams still need more promotional activities to draw fans—especially casual fans—back year after year.

But Peach State teams aim to satisfy both purists and fans who care little for RBIs (but want bobbleheads). And all the while, they boost their communities with outreach and economic impact.

Gwinnett Stripers (formerly Braves), Class AAA affiliate of the Atlanta Braves

Stripers General Manager North Johnson upset hardcore baseball fans on social media by saying he's successful if people leave games without knowing the score.

"If we relied just on baseball fans to come to our games, we'd have a lot of empty seats," Johnson says.

He hopes fans remember entertainment—sumo wrestling, "Star Wars" nights, fireworks, giveaways—more than how many runs the team scores.

"All sports now are very much in the entertainment business," he says.



And following a more-positive social media ripple last year, even more fans enjoyed the fun. Game attendance grew by 20 percent between July and the season's September end after the Gwinnett team announced plans to change its name. People confused the then-Gwinnett Braves with the major league Atlanta Braves on TV and radio advertising. Both share the metro Atlanta area.

But the Stripers' economic impact, even before the name change, was strong.

"You're talking millions of dollars," Johnson says.

Dozens of players move there, buying gas, groceries and such; scouts and visiting teams fill hotel rooms, buy plane and movie tickets and ride buses; 125 game-day employees find jobs; and 20 full-time staff members buy houses and pay taxes.

"The economic impact goes far beyond our county," Johnson says.

Augusta GreenJackets, Class A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants

Speaking of money, sales grew greener in Augusta after their bug got meaner.

The GreenJackets usher in the season with a fresh identity: new stadium, new colors and a grittier bug logo.

The GreenJackets' rebranding has "really been a good help for us," General Manager Brandon Greene says. Luxury suites sold out months before the season began, and the season ticket base increased—by 400 percent.

Fan intensity remains rock solid. The Diamond Club, about 80 fans strong, includes baseball purists who keep stats and attend every game to support players.

"We definitely have a nice group of those guys in Augusta," Greene says.

Fans also include people who just like singing to the music and enjoying fireworks. And should they want to wed at the home stadium, the new SRP Park—just across the river in North Augusta, S.C.—will host ceremonies in addition to postseason concerts and trade shows.

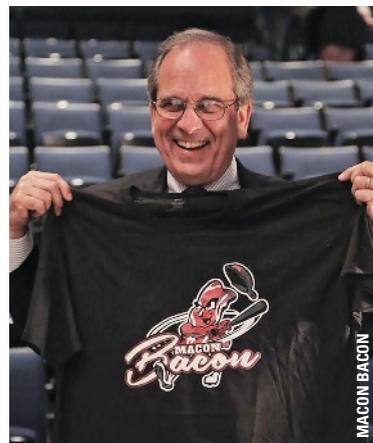
The GreenJackets mascot even visits schools, where young fans read books to earn game tickets.

"We're a part of the [Augusta's River Region] community," Greene says. "I think we have an impact in so many different ways."

Macon Bacon, Coastal Plain League

In Macon, the sizzle started long before the season. "People love the Bacon," team President Todd Pund says.

He estimates that about 400 people attended the new team's naming reveal last September, and the nation heard the rhyming nomenclature soon after.



Macon Mayor Robert Reichert shows his team spirit. The Macon Bacon begin play this year in the Coastal Plain League. The first home game at Luther Williams Field is June 1 against the Lexington County (S.C.) Blowfish.

"We were on [ESPN's] 'SportsCenter' five hours later," says Pund, who told a local Rotary Club, "We got Middle Georgia on national news."

The Coastal Plain League team fills a gap left by teams that stayed in the Macon area for only a short time—"fly-by-night" teams, Pund calls them—and the Macon Braves, which left for Rome in 2003. A \$2.5 million renovation to Luther Williams Field that began late last year adds



Children line up to greet Augusta GreenJackets players as they come onto the field before the game.

perks such as VIP and group seating.

Besides good seats, team leaders give fans a say. Locals chose the name, the best Bacon logo for a collared shirt and ingredients for a Macon Bacon pizza.

And forget \$8 hot dogs. Fans can buy \$15 all-you-can-eat tickets, which includes the game.

Pund praises the entertainment mentality in "The Ultimate Toolkit," a guidebook to sports and event marketing by Jon Spoelstra and Steve DeLay. At the game's end, it's not about the score.

"It's got to be about entertainment," Pund says.

Rome Braves, Class A affiliate of the Atlanta Braves

Bobblehead giveaways aside, Class A baseball in Rome is serious.

The Atlanta Braves' star first baseman, Freddie Freeman, played in Rome, as did pitcher Julio Teheran and infielder Ozzie Albies.

"We have a rich history of players who have moved on to the highest level of the game and done very well," says Jim Jones, assistant general manager.

Athletes develop at each level in the minor league system; Rome is one step toward improvement and allows many to play their first full season of 140 games.

Rome fandom helps, and fan support often extends past players' time there. Locals still follow Brian McCann, a former Rome Brave who is now a catcher for the

The Savannah Bananas players honor a "Banana Baby"—"Lion King"-style—before every game.



Houston Astros, last year's World Series champions.

The Rome Braves show players' hometowns on the high-definition video board they use for replays. That information, along with player meet-and-greets, strengthens the connection with fans.

The team returns the support. Making a difference in the community is "paramount," Jones says. Players visit schools, and an annual silent auction with hot dogs and chicken tenders benefits local charities.

Yet on-field play remains serious.

"We focus really on the players themselves and getting them to the next level," Jones says. "That's what it's all about."

Savannah Bananas, Coastal Plain League

Yet teams know there's room for both serious baseball and entertainment. After all, the fun-focused Bananas won the league championship in their first season.

"It's really satisfying as a baseball event," says Savannah's Greg Miller, a baseball purist who was won over after a game or two. He now buys season tickets.

But the former baseball coach knows he's more die-hard than others. "Look, I've sat in the stands with people who don't care about baseball," he says.

That's why a break dancer coached first base. A Bananas player told Miller it's like going to a circus and a baseball game breaks out.

Baseball is the sideshow, says Orton, the team president. "It's nonstop entertainment from the time you walk in." 🍌

Leslie Moses is a freelance writer who lives in Savannah. She was MVP for the Angels YMCA baseball team in second grade.



MTPHOTOGRAPHY



Rome baseball is serious. Many former Rome Braves have moved on to baseball's highest level and excelled.

Take in a game

Many Georgians know about the "big three" (MLB, NFL and NBA) teams based in Atlanta: the Braves, Falcons and Hawks. But there are several other sports and leagues to enjoy throughout the state. Here are a few.

Baseball

- **Augusta GreenJackets** (South Atlantic League), greenjacketsbaseball.com
- **Rome Braves** (South Atlantic League), romebraves.com
- **Gwinnett Stripers** (International League), Lawrenceville, gostripers.com
- **Macon Bacon** (Coastal Plain League), maconbaconbaseball.com
- **Savannah Bananas** (Coastal Plain League), thesavannahbananas.com

Basketball

- **Atlanta Wildcats** (American Basketball Association), atlantawildcats.com
- **Central Georgia Rattlers** (American Basketball Association), Macon, atlantawildcats.com
- **Atlanta Dream** (WNBA), dream.wnba.com
- **Universal Basketball Association teams** (five Georgia teams), ubanow.com

Football

- **Columbus Lions** (National Arena League), columbuslions.net
- **Georgia Doom** (American Arena League), Macon, georgiadoom.com
- **Atlanta Havoc** (American Arena League), Buford, atlantahavoc.com
- **Peach State Cats** (American Arena League), Dalton, peachstatecats.com
- **Savannah Coastal Outlaws** (American Arena League), facebook.com/coastaloutlaws

Ice hockey

- **Atlanta Gladiators** (ECHL), atlantagladiators.com
- **Macon Mayhem** (Southern Professional Hockey League), maconmayhem.com

Soccer

- **Atlanta United** (Major League Soccer), atlutd.com
- **Atlanta Silverbacks** (National Premier Soccer League), atlantasilverbacks.com
- **South Georgia Tormenta FC** (Premier Development League), Statesboro, tormentaafc.com
- **Peachtree City MOBA** (Premier Development League), mobasoccer.com

Lacrosse

- **Atlanta Blaze** (Major League Lacrosse), atlantablaze.com
- **Georgia Swarm** (National Lacrosse League), Duluth, georgiaswarm.com

Georgia co-ops participate in USDA conservation program

BY JENNA SAXON



HEATHER GREENE, MITCHELL EMC

Lucius Adkins Jr., chairman of the Mitchell EMC Board of Directors and a member of the Georgia Farm Bureau Board of Directors, left, and Tony Tucker, president/CEO of Mitchell EMC, stand next to a center-pivot irrigation system on Adkins' farm in Elmodel in Baker County.

Water and energy are two of the most critical requirements for agricultural operations in Georgia. Recently, three of Georgia's electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) committed to an innovative program to conserve these vital resources.

Last fall, Tucker-based Georgia EMC was contacted by the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District and invited to participate in a grant program called the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The proposed RCPP project, led by the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District, would develop innovative approaches to

conservation, with a focus on water and energy. One of these includes a pilot program with EMCs in South Georgia that encourages the use of energy- and water-efficient irrigation on cropland. The program activities occur while implementing best management practices for irrigation and energy through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Altamaha EMC in Lyons, Mitchell EMC in Camilla and Planters EMC in Millen agreed to participate, and the grant was awarded in late February. These EMCs will disseminate information about energy- and water-efficient irrigation and promote its use for the next three years.

The project focuses on South

Georgia below the Fall Line, a geographic boundary marked by a significant difference in soil type between the Coastal Plain and Piedmont regions. Most irrigation takes place south of the Fall Line, where major underground aquifers are accessible.

Several river basins and watersheds in this region will benefit from more widespread use of energy- and water-efficient irrigation. The project targets the Chattahoochee, Flint, Suwannee, Ochlockonee, Satilla, Ocmulgee, Altamaha, Ogeechee and Oconee river basins, where center-pivot irrigation systems are powered by electric motors.

The RCPP provides a unique opportunity to formalize a public-private partnership that will enhance water-use efficiency, improve energy efficiency and support renewable-energy initiatives. This nontraditional approach to conservation, with grassroots local leaders at the helm, will positively affect the natural resources, agricultural producers and rural communities of South Georgia. 🍌

Jenna Saxon is a government relations representative with Tucker-based Georgia EMC.

EMCs request broadband funds

President Trump and congressional leaders recently pledged \$20 billion to infrastructure development for the next two years. America's electric cooperatives are requesting Congress dedicate a significant portion of these funds to bridge the digital divide for rural America. Georgia's EMCs are asking Congress to allocate at least \$2.5 billion in each of the next two years to the Rural Utilities Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture to fund broadband development in rural areas.

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COURTESY RENEE THOMPSON



COURTESY SHERRELL GAY

A legacy of *life*

Organ donation gives recipients another chance at life

BY H.M. CAULEY

Anyone watching Ashaun Thompson tear up the track during competitions wouldn't know that the 18-year-old has had to overcome more than racing hurdles to make the team. The Grayson teen's biggest obstacle was learning to live with his second donated kidney.

Heart disease almost kept Waynesboro's Sherrell Gay from meeting the grandkids who call her "Suga." But after undergoing two heart transplants and a kidney transplant, she's busy spoiling them, as a good nana should.

Thompson and Gay are just two Georgians whose life stories would be drastically different without LifeLink of Georgia, a nonprofit organ-recovery service with offices in Norcross, Augusta and Savannah that works with hospitals statewide to find donors for those in need and to deliver donated organs within hours. It also works to dispel the many misconceptions about organ donation.

"One of the most common myths is that it costs to be an organ donor," says Tracy Ide, LifeLink's senior public affairs coordinator in Augusta. "In fact, the recov-

ery process is paid for by LifeLink; it doesn't cost the donor family anything."

Anyone renewing a driver's license in Georgia can indicate a willingness to be a donor, but many people don't think they qualify.

"They say they're too old or too young, but there is no age limit," Ide says. "Organs are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. What's most important to know is that one organ donor can help up to 75 people, and that's a huge legacy to leave."

That legacy is achieved by donors who give not just hearts, lungs, livers, kidneys, small intestines or pancreases; the donation list also includes skin, bones, cartilage, tendons and eyes. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, 282 donors in Georgia contributed 898 transplanted organs. It's happening, Ide says, through LifeLink's outreach, not just in educating people about organ donation but also in getting them to commit to being donors.

"We used to focus just on telling people about donation," she says. "Now we're encouraging them to make



COURTESY SHERRELL GAY



COURTESY SUSAN PUCKETT

Far left: Ashaun Thompson runs track for Archer High School in Gwinnett County. **Left:** “Our three grandchildren are a big part of my bonus years,” says Sherrell Gay. She and her husband, Tony, are pictured with Roy, 4, Sadie, 2, and Harrison, 2 months. **Above:** Sherrell and Tony Gay enjoy a trip to Canyonlands National Park in Utah. **Above right:** Thomas Puckett rides his Appaloosa in a competition.

a decision by going online and registering. Once people know the facts, they’re more willing to go forward.”

But the need for organs still outpaces the number of donors. In the U.S., more than 115,000 people are on organ-transplant waiting lists; in Georgia, the number is 5,400, and 4,800 of those are patients awaiting kidneys.

LifeLink is just that: the link between donors and recipients that helps doctors make matches and then transports donated organs to one of the state’s four transplant centers within four to six hours. It’s a mission the organization has supported since its founding 30 years ago.

“With LifeLink, there’s no competition for organs,” Ide says. “We work closely with all hospitals in the state and two counties in South Carolina to offer donation options. We look up what organs are viable, compare that to the waiting list and, if a match pops up, we send out the information immediately. Once we have the organs placed, they’re flown to transplant centers, and we coordinate the whole process.”

An important part of that process is working with donor families. Because Georgia is a first-person-consent state, an individual’s choice to be a donor cannot be vetoed by family members. Volunteers whose loved ones donated organs are often called on to support a grieving family and to share the benefits of donation.

LifeLink hosts memorial services for families of donors and connects them with the organ recipients—a connection that often results in lifelong friendships.

“Our care doesn’t stop once the donation process is over,” Ide says. “We’re here for the families, too.”

Donor names are displayed in the LifeLink offices and added to a memorial quilt, support groups are available and remembrance services honor donors’ memories. And many donor families volunteer their stories to inspire others.

‘What’s most important to know is that one organ donor can help up to 75 people, and that’s a huge legacy to leave.’

—Tracy Ide, LifeLink’s senior public affairs coordinator in Augusta

For Ide, being part of the LifeLink team fulfills a family mission. As a child, she watched her mother—that two-time heart recipient, Sherrell Gay—collapse on the kitchen floor as her body rejected her first transplanted heart. Ide’s grandmother, who died recently at 81, was an eye donor. And Gay and her husband, Tony, offer the services of their business, Augusta Aviation, to fly organs and doctors throughout the state.

“LifeLink is part of our entire family,” Gay says. “Without it, I wouldn’t be here.”  **More** 

H.M. Cauley is an Atlanta-based author of three guidebooks to Georgia and a feature writer whose work regularly appears in local newspapers and magazines.



Thomas Puckett

COURTESY SUSAN PUCKETT

Susan Puckett's son Thomas, Statesboro

Susan Puckett is a proud parent of a young man who gave his organs so that others could live.

In August 2008, Thomas Puckett was 17, working in construction for the summer and looking forward to attending Georgia Southern University when an accident on the job left him with a traumatic brain injury. After he spent a week in a medically induced coma, doctors pronounced him brain-dead. A year before, he had indicated on his driver's license that he'd be an organ donor.

"That was a burdensome decision we didn't have to make," says Susan Puckett.

Puckett knew about LifeLink's monthly meetings for recipients and donors but found it difficult to talk about her son. But she began volunteering by working in the office and staffing booths at health fairs, and soon she found she was ready to tell her story.

"My husband met a health teacher from the local high school and volunteered me to talk there," she recalls with a laugh. "I was very scared about public speaking, and the beginning was hard. But by the end, I felt I'd been doing it my whole life, and now I go wherever anybody lets me speak—schools, civic organizations, churches, you name it."

Sharing the story of her son's gift also has helped Puckett heal.

"This is what I feel I've been called to do," she says. "I needed a purpose after Thomas died, and sharing his legacy is it."

Ashaun Thompson, Grayson

High school senior Ashaun Thompson, 18, doesn't remember his first kidney transplant. Born with the rare Eagle-Barrett syndrome, Thompson wasn't expected to live more than a year, but he beat the odds, only to suffer kidney failure at age 6. After his first transplant, he led a normal life until his body rejected the organ in 2013, when he was in eighth grade.

"That was really tough," says his mom, Renee Thompson. "He was in ICU for two weeks and had two seizures. It was touch-and-go."

After recovering, Ashaun Thompson was on dialysis while waiting about eight months for a new kidney.

"I missed a lot of middle school because I had to leave early three days a week and be on a machine for four hours at a time," he recalls. "That failure humbled me."

It also made the teen appreciate the

second lease on life he was given as a result of his second transplant.

"I share my story as often as I can," he says. "I tell everybody how being a donor works. I even urge my friends to donate at blood drives because I needed [a lot of blood transfusions], and they're helping me."

Thompson also tells his story by not being held back. Last



Ashaun Thompson

COURTESY RENEE THOMPSON

year, he was part of the track team at Gwinnett County's Archer High, and he's pestering his doctors for the green light to play football at Middle Georgia State University in Macon this fall.

"I keep doing things not for me but for the kids out there who live their lives in fear," he says. "I want to show that if I can do it, you can, too. As many times as I've been told I should not have lived [another] day, I have no time to live in fear."

Sherrell Gay, Waynesboro

That day in 1994 started with chest pains, but Sherrell Gay wasn't deterred; she had a shopping trip planned. Within an hour, she couldn't walk, but her doctor recommended medicine and rest.

A few days later, Gay was in the emergency room, where she learned that her heart was twice its normal size and functioning at 20 percent capacity. The prescription: medicine and bed rest for a year.

After venturing to the breakfast table one morning, Gay collapsed; her heart stopped on the way to the hospital.

"I woke up a week later with my own defibrillator and had three surgeries just for that," she recalls. "But I had no energy. Finally, the cardiologist said my only chance was a transplant."

Gay's wait was short. Within a few weeks, she underwent a four-hour surgery for a new heart that gave her the strength to walk a mile after just three weeks.

"It was such an amazing feeling to be able to breathe and talk at the same time," she says.

Seven years later, though, Gay was back on the heart transplant list when rejection set in. This time, the wait was 17 months, eight of which were spent in the hospital.

"Then my kidneys were failing, so they decided I needed a new kidney at the same time," she says.

In December 2012, two perfectly matched organs were found, and Gay underwent a 17-hour surgery. The recovery was equally daunting.

"I had to learn to walk again," she says. "But now I'm living life to the fullest and am so thankful for the decision those donors made."

In the five years since the transplant, Gay has seen her children finish college and has welcomed three grandchildren. And she's become a mentor to volunteers, both recipients and donor families.

"As a mentor, you share your story as the face of hope," she says. "I've got a story with all these complications, but it lets people see that transplants are successful." 🍌



Sherrell Gay

COURTESY SHERRELL GAY

Become a donor

- Fill out a donor card when renewing your driver's license or learn more at dds.georgia.gov/organ-donor-program.
- Register with Donate Life Georgia at donatelifegeorgia.org or the national donor registry at registerme.org.
- Learn about LifeLink's services at lifelinkfoundation.org.

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'A champion of artists'

Finster Fest celebrates Southern folk art, legendary founder

BY LAURA RAINES

On Memorial Day weekend, artists, musicians and folk-art lovers will gather again at Paradise Garden in Summerville for Finster Fest, a celebration of the life and legacy of Howard Finster (1916-2001). Finster would welcome all comers.

The garden with his visionary art, prophetic words and whimsical structures was his way to get his messages out to the world. "Someday, sometime, people on this planet are going to realize they need what Howard Finster's got, whether it's religion, whether it's art or whether it's building a garden," he said.

Thanks to the ongoing restoration by the Paradise Garden Foundation, the garden he built in North-west Georgia is still reaching people, and the festival that Finster started in 1991 is still attracting top-notch regional talent.

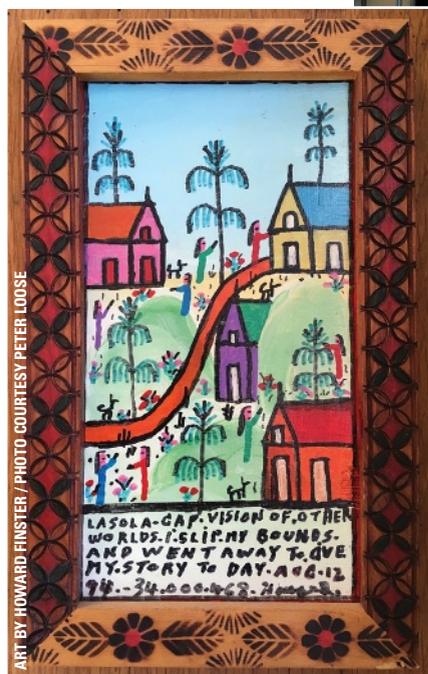
Finster was many things in his lifetime: Baptist preacher, builder, bicycle repairman, recycler, gardener and artist. He's been called a man of visions, the Andy Warhol of the South and the grandfather of Southern folk art.

"He was an empowering kind of mentor and tremendous art supporter," says Howard Pousner, vice president of the Paradise Garden Foundation and curator of the festival. "Artists are proud to come. The shadow that he still casts on the folk-art world is huge.

"People's joy in the garden is palpable. The Howard vibe is still here. I can see him looking down from heaven on the garden he created, seeing hundreds of people visiting again and smiling."

About 50 mostly self-taught folk artists from eight states are expected to show their paintings, sculpture, pottery, textiles and furniture at the fest. In the past, renowned artists Missionary Mary Proctor, Deb "Miz Thang" Garner, Jim Shores, Peter Loose, and C.M. and Grace Kelly Laster have come.

"The garden was always a mecca for artists. [Finster]



ART BY HOWARD FINSTER / PHOTO COURTESY PETER LOOSE



LAURA RAINES

Top: Donnie Davis, an artist from Summerville, describes this oversized Coke bottle in the Paradise Garden visitors center as a tribute to Howard Finster on what would have been his 100th birthday in 2016. The bottle features 100 floating photos of Finster, and well-wishers were encouraged to put birthday greetings inside. "People still leave him a note occasionally," Davis says. **Left:** Howard Finster's paintings were the epitome of Southern folk art and often bore messages he wished to convey to the world.

attracted all kinds and ages of people," says Janet Byington, former president and founding member of the non-profit Paradise Garden Foundation.

Born and raised in Summerville, she recalls Finster repairing her bicycle and having a heart for helping people.

"It's remarkable that he took a plot of marshy land and turned it into something internationally known. Many consider it sacred ground," Byington says. "When you go to the garden, you walk away with the feeling that you could do that. It makes you want to go home and create something. There is so much inspiration there."

The foundation has raised \$940,000 to date in gifts



People flock to Paradise Garden in Summerville each year for Finster Fest, a celebration of Southern folk art.

and grants to restore and maintain the garden, and she says visitation is up. With more than 6,000 visitors from 33 countries last year, the garden is an economic engine for cultural tourism in rural Chattooga County.

“Today, we have at least 40 artists making a living by their art in the county,” Byington says.

The foundation has cleaned up the creeks that run through the garden; shored up Rolling Chair Ramp, where



Peter Loose, right, knew better than to visit Howard Finster, left, without Loose's dog, Bongo.

artwork hangs; stabilized the mirror house; and created a visitors center with restrooms and a video about Finster. Because of its unique setting and Finster's influence, “there is no other festival quite like this,” Pousner says. It's fitting that visitors get to discover new artists while walking the paths and seeing the structures that Finster created.

'I'm an artist because of you'

Thomas E. Scanlin is a jeweler at Studio Jewelers in Dahlonega and collects 20th-century American art. He was a close friend of the Finsters, serves on the foundation's advisory board and often loans his iconic Finster pieces to museums.

“I met Howard in the mid-'80s, and we became close friends. He called me his ‘guarding angel.’ I was always fascinated by his interaction with people,” Scanlin says. “He affected others in amazing ways.”

Finster often told the story about how he became an artist. He was painting a bicycle at 59, when paint on his finger formed a face that said: “Paint sacred art. Paint sacred art.”

“He said God told him to paint 5,000 pieces, but he made more than 46,991 works before he died,” Scanlin says. Many pieces are in museums worldwide.

Scanlin remembers driving him down to Folk Fest in Atlanta.

“At the end it would take over an hour to get him out of the building. Artists and vendors would line both sides of the path, wanting to speak with him. Many would say, ‘Howard, I'm an artist because of you,’” Scanlin says.

Artist Donnie Davis of Summerville came to Paradise Garden for a fourth-grade field trip and listened as Finster explained his inventions.

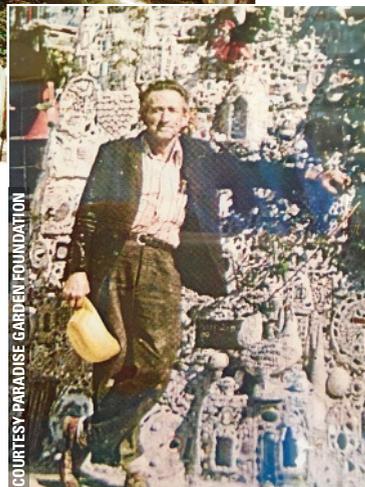
“He was an inspiration,” says Davis, who went on

Left: Howard Finster called this 40-foot-high structure the World's Folk Art Church because he said he preached through his art.



COURTESY-PARADISE GARDEN FOUNDATION

Right: Howard Finster poses beside his mosaic wall at Paradise Garden in the 1980s. **Top:** Visitors still marvel at it today.



COURTESY-PARADISE GARDEN FOUNDATION

to earn an art degree in 1997 from Georgia State University in Atlanta. "I started painting landscapes inspired by the garden, and I'm still doing it."

Davis' canvases sold out at Finster Fest a couple of years ago.

Russell Cook of Ranger came to the garden as a boy at the suggestion of his junior high school art teacher.

"Rev. Finster looked at my work and said it looked a lot like his. I was using bright, flat colors in the folk-art style," says Cook, now an assistant professor of art at the Cartersville and Marietta campuses of Georgia Highlands College. "Talking to him was eye-opening about the possibilities of art, and the garden was magical with so many layers of content and visual stimulation."

Cook will be showing his mixed-media art using found objects at Finster Fest again this year.

'If you were with him, you were a friend'

Peter Loose of Hull is another returning artist.

"I was already making art and had gotten some recognition when I was going past Summerville and decided to stop. Howard was still actively working in the garden then. I ended up spending two days with him, making art," says the nationally known artist, whose work is inspired by nature. "It was an instant friendship. That's the way he was; if you were with him, you were a friend."

"I had taken him this little painting of a fish. He was busy working, but he looked at it, stuck it up in the rafters of his studio and said, 'You're going to make a million dollars someday.' I took that as a big thumbs-up."

Finster's favorite saying was "God is love," Loose says. "I think that sums Howard up. He was a tuning fork, tak-

ing in all the world's vibes and making his own weird connections. His thinking was so far out there."

One of those connections was with Loose's dog, Bongo.

"They had a special relationship," Loose says. "At the end of [Finster's] life, his daughter would call me and say: 'Daddy's not doing good. He isn't making art. Could Bongo come down?' It was a three-hour drive from Athens, but we went, and Howard would get up. It made me feel good."

Loose believes that having Finster's work hanging on his walls elevates his home. As an artist, he was especially influenced by how hard Finster worked.

"If you look at his output, the garden and all the works, it's a miracle that one man could do that. He was a maker," he says. "He also never let other people's opinions take over his visions. He just kept doing it. He felt he was a conduit, giving people the messages they needed. His art was transformative."

Loose loves the atmosphere of Finster Fest.

"I feel honored to show there. It's so important for younger artists to be together, to share their work and make connections," he says. "People who think folk art is over just aren't talking to the artists practicing today."

"Absolutely," agrees Tina Cox, clay artist, folk-art collector and new executive director of the Paradise Garden Foundation. "The folk-art movement is vibrant, alive and well. Southern folk art is fun and whimsical. If you surround yourself with it, it's hard to have a bad day."

Cox learned about folk art when she was a member of the High Museum of Art in Atlanta in the 1990s and

(Continued on page 37)



ART BY DONNIE DAVIS

Artist Donnie Davis was so inspired by a fourth-grade field trip to Paradise Garden that he later earned an art degree and began painting landscapes based on the site, such as this one. His canvases sold out at Finster Fest a couple of years ago.



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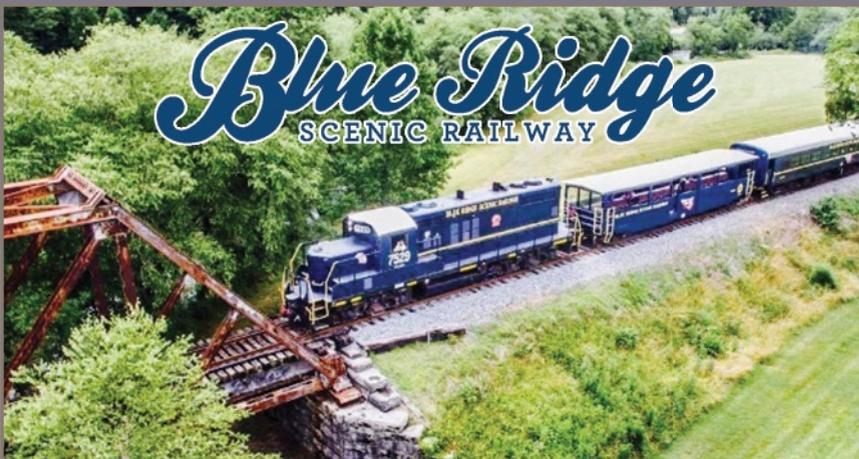
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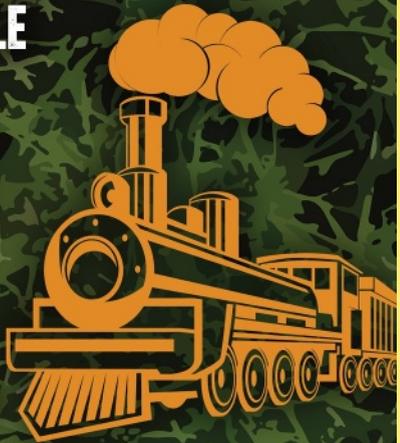
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Artist Peter Loose, who was a friend of Howard Finster's, creates art inspired by nature, including this barn owl. Loose feels that Finster Fest is an important gathering of a new generation of folk artists that helps to keep the genre alive and thriving.

(Continued from page 34)

participated in the museum's events and gatherings with other supporters.

"I drove a van of 14 museum members out to Paradise Garden and fell in love with Howard Finster. He was so charismatic and filled with love," she remembers.

Being the foundation's new executive director is her dream job. "It takes muscle to keep everything up and running at the garden, but it's more than a passion for me. This festival really embodies the spirit of the man. Finster was such a champion of artists." 🍌

Laura Raines is a Mableton-based freelance writer who was enchanted by her visit to Paradise Garden. She found the "Howard vibe" to be very much alive there.

When you go: Finster Fest

When: May 26-27, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days

Where: Howard Finster's Paradise Garden, 200 N. Lewis St., Summerville

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To learn more: paradisegardenfoundation.org

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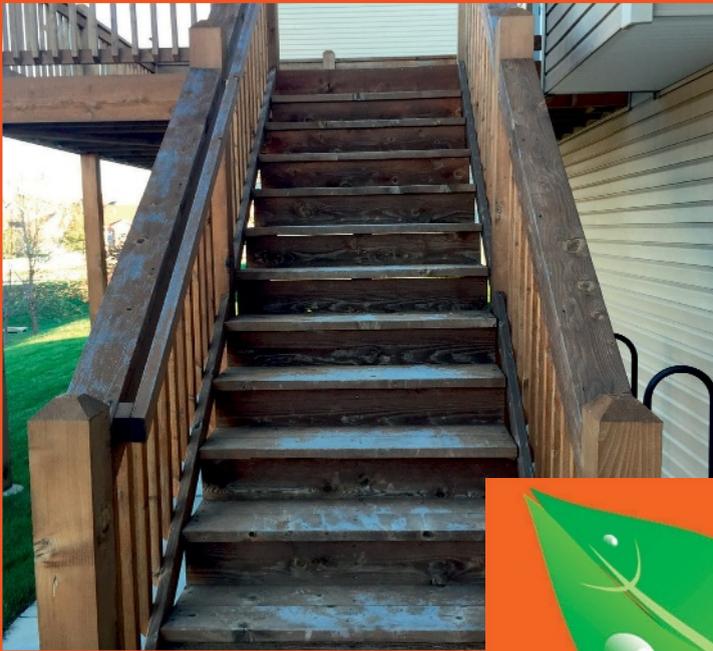
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Casting a line with Grandpa

BY ANNA MIDAS

We'd been out on Sullivan Lake in Newnan since 6 a.m. without any luck. I think the fish knew it was too hot and rightly stuck to the bottom of the lake, where our bait didn't reach. It was nearing noon, and I was ready to call it quits and relax in the cool basement.

I was rounding up the gear and started up the rocky path to the house when my grandpa got a sly look on his face and said, "Hold on; you've never used a fly rod before, have you?"

I replied, "No."

"Run up there and grab one. We're gonna try for just a bit longer."

My countenance (probably very noticeably) fell as I pictured more hours in the sun with no reward for my efforts. But I obeyed and got the fly rod.

Grandpa took me straight across the lake to one of his many "spots." If you could have anti-hope, that's what



I had for this little lesson. He taught me the basics: flick of the wrist, a few moments' pause, then out of the water again. Handing the rod over to me, Grandpa had a solemn look, as if he was passing down a sacred rite that oughtn't be derided.

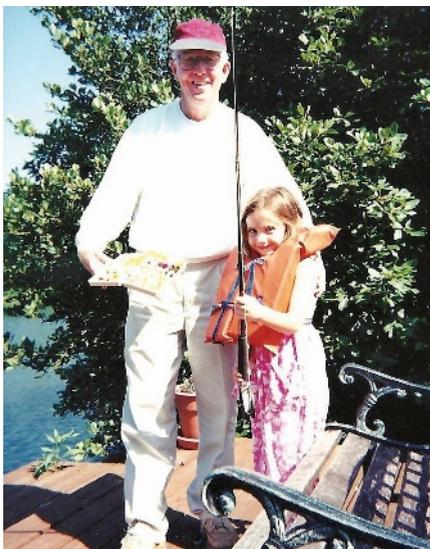
I cast my first few poppers a bit awkwardly but soon caught the rhythm of it. It is fun learning something new. Even now, as an adult, learning new things has a way of reminding you that there will always be some part of you that is a child who needs to learn.

Handing the rod over to me, Grandpa had a solemn look, as if he was passing down a sacred rite that oughtn't be derided.

As the sun settled at its peak, I was busy casting and recasting. "This was fun," I thought. "Not too bad." Little did I expect that, within seconds, I would see the lure submerge, to my grandfather's elation.

I remembered his admonition: "Wait a second, then strike." And soon I was reeling in my surprise sunfish. I will absolutely never—and I mean never—forget the shine of blue and silver as the little fish wriggled in my hand. We didn't have a camera to take a picture, but we didn't need one. I painted mental pictures of this precious moment. And now I deposit them here—for my family, for my grandpa.

Here's to you, Grandpa. 🍷
Anna Midas lives in Chesapeake, Va., and is a student at Virginia Tech. She has fond memories of spending every childhood summer with her grandparents in Georgia.



Anna Midas and her grandfather, Michael Midas, prepare for an adventure on Sullivan Lake. They would go fishing nearly every day during her summer visits.



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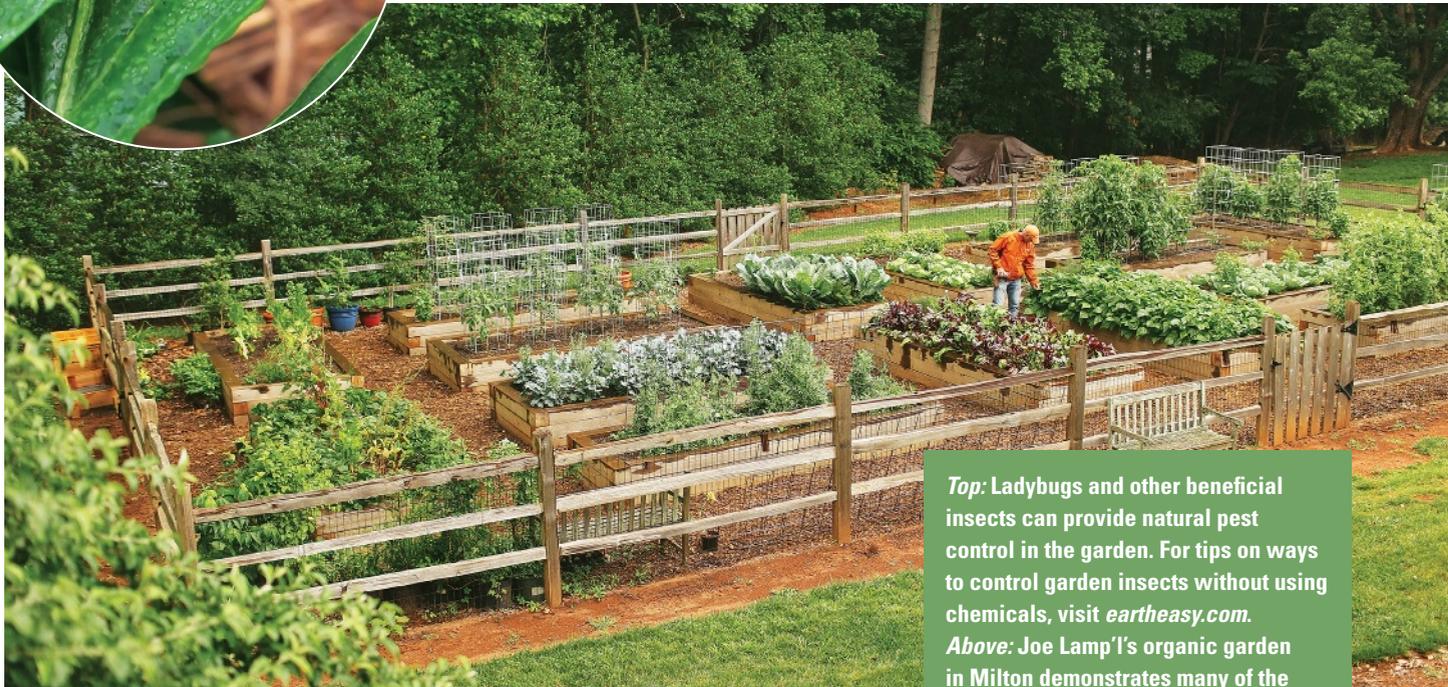
Grow green

Easy ways to be eco-friendly in your garden

BY PAMELA A. KEENE



COURTESY JOE LAMP'L



COURTESY JOE LAMP'L

Top: Ladybugs and other beneficial insects can provide natural pest control in the garden. For tips on ways to control garden insects without using chemicals, visit eartheasy.com.
Above: Joe Lamp'l's organic garden in Milton demonstrates many of the sustainable-gardening principles he espouses in his TV series, videos, podcasts and blog posts. For more information, visit joegardener.com.

Organic gardening practices—such as harvesting rainwater and creating compost from junk mail and kitchen scraps—are more than just a passing trend. Organic gardening is healthier for wildlife and for humans, and it's not nearly as difficult as people may think.

"Today there are more resources about how to garden organically than ever before, and for the home gardener it's just a matter of doing some research and making some simple changes," says Joe Lamp'l, Georgia-based national gardening and sustainability expert and host/executive producer of public television's "Growing a Greener World." "It's vital to our planet and future generations to grow environmentally friendly gardens and landscapes."

So exactly what does sustainable, organic gardening mean?

"It's being mindful that your gardening and landscape are wildlife- and natural-resource-friendly, from



COURTESY JOE LAMP'L

Starting seeds in recycled containers is a great way to practice sustainable gardening. Paper cups, cardboard egg cartons and pizza boxes are a few of the items that can be repurposed as seed-starter containers.



Wooden shipping pallets can be easily and inexpensively repurposed as an open-bin composting system.



Joe-pye weed is a late-blooming, native perennial that is a favorite of butterflies. For a list of plants native to Georgia, plus a directory of nurseries that sell native plants, visit the Georgia Native Plant Society at gnps.org.



using water wisely to gardening without chemicals,” Lamp’l says. “Even if you take only a few steps, it will certainly help.”

Go with the flow

Water management is vital to growing green and eco-friendly landscapes.

“Statistics show that between 30 percent and 50 percent of the water consumers use goes toward outdoor activities, including car-washing and gardening,” he says. “Look for alternatives, like using rain barrels to collect rainfall for garden use or mulching to conserve moisture in the soil.”

Buy a rain gauge so you know how much water your plants get naturally. More plants become distressed or die because of overwatering than underwatering, so it’s good to know how much water your landscape is receiving.

“Then you can schedule your watering based on the rainfall,” Lamp’l says.

Water in the morning to avoid evaporation and to help your plants’ roots grow deeper. And use soaker hoses or drip irrigation to deliver the water right where it’s needed.

Choosing native plants can save water as well.

‘It’s vital to our planet and future generations to grow environmentally friendly gardens and landscapes.’ —Joe Lamp’l

“In Georgia, we have a good selection of natives that bloom, produce fruit and provide interesting foliage,” he says. “Natives are naturally adapted to our soil and climate, making them very desirable in a low-maintenance landscape, and they’re more drought-tolerant.”

Brown + green = compost

To avoid using manmade chemicals and fertilizers, start with the best soil possible.

“People have the power to create great soil simply by composting,” Lamp’l says. “Save your non-meat kitchen scraps and combine them

with brown leaves, shredded paper and other ingredients, and you can have the ultimate soil, rich with nutrients with no cost to you.”

You don’t need fancy equipment or tools to start a compost heap. Select an out-of-the-way spot in your yard and begin putting the ingredients into a pile. Start with woody materials, branches or sticks that will aid in ventilation. Then alternate layers of “brown” and “green” materials, using a formula of roughly two-thirds brown and one-third green. “Green” materials include fresh grass clippings, weeds and non-meat and non-fat kitchen scraps, such as vegetable and fruit peelings, coffee grounds and used tea leaves. “Brown” additions include dried leaves, shredded cardboard or paper, and small wood chips.

“Keep it moist, and you can even add a little nitrogen-based fertilizer, such as Milorganite, to speed up the process,” he says.

If you want to contain the pile, build a three-sided wire cage or fasten three wooden shipping pallets together with coat hangers. You also can order closed composting systems

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online or from garden centers; your batches will be smaller than those produced using an open bin, but the results can be faster.

Once you've added compost and organic matter to your soil, it will dry out less quickly, but to decrease further the need to water, add a layer of mulch.

"Mulch can benefit your garden in several ways. It helps hold in moisture around your plants, and it's an excellent deterrent for weeds," Lamp'l says. "I encourage people to use natural mulches, such as wood chips, pine straw and pine bark. Usually a 1- to 2-inch layer works well."

Good bugs vs. bad bugs

Insects, pests and diseases can be challenging, but Lamp'l says there are many alternatives to using manmade chemicals to combat these garden issues.

"Only about 3 percent of all insects are true pests in your garden, so



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COURTESY JOE LAMP'L

that means the other 97 percent are either beneficial or neutral,” he says. “Ladybugs eat aphids and other pest insects, for instance. When you use a broad-spectrum, manmade insecticide, you’re eliminating all the insects, even the good ones.”

Visit your garden in the early morning to remove insects by hand. Fill a cup with soapy water or insecticidal soap and drop them into the cup. Or you can buy floating row covers—lightweight netting—to create a barrier against insects, but this also will prevent the good insects, such as bees and butterflies, from pollinating your vegetables and flowers. Weigh the pros and cons when making your decision.



Think about recycling in your garden as another way to be “green.” Use plastic milk jugs as mini-greenhouses over seeds to speed up sprouting, or use clear plastic produce clamshells with a layer of soil in the bottom to start seeds.

“The covers create a humid environment,” he says. “Just be sure to put them in a sunny spot and be ready to transplant them when they’re a couple of inches tall. Yogurt cups make good pots for this.”

Lamp’l says that gardeners are limited only by their imaginations and their willingness to research ways to be organic in the landscape.

“Between the internet, the garden television programs, podcasts and even [websites] like Pinterest, you can easily become more green in your gardening practices,” he says. “Better and more-effective water use, soil amendments, gardening without chemicals and choosing native plants can go a long way toward reducing the impact on the environment. Just think: If everyone made a few changes in their gardening approach, what a difference it would make.”

Pamela A. Keene is a freelance writer and gardening enthusiast living in Flowery Branch.

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Kids in the Georgia State Parks Junior Ranger program explore the diverse plants and animals that live in a rotten log during a nature hike at Red Top Mountain State Park in Cartersville. Children ages 6 to 12 can earn three levels of Junior Ranger badges, either at their own pace or at special camps offered at state parks.

Getting back to nature

BY VICTORIA SCHARF DECASTRO

Many children today spend too much time indoors. Child advocate Richard Louv addressed this problem in his 2005 best-seller, “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder.”

‘Kids need time to just be kids, to explore our natural world and have fun while doing it.’

—Kim Hatcher, Georgia State Parks public affairs coordinator

The term “nature-deficit disorder,” coined by Louv, describes the effects on kids who are more plugged into electronics than the outdoors. He associates their separation from nature with obesity, Type 2 diabetes and other chronic health conditions. The solution, he suggests, is to help parents find ways to reacquaint their children and themselves with nature.

“Kids need time to just be kids, to explore our natural world and have fun while doing it,” says Kim Hatch-

er, Georgia State Parks public affairs coordinator. “Plus, they’re more likely to get exercise when they’re having fun. That’s why it’s so important for families to go hiking, biking, paddling or do other outdoor activities together. Georgia’s state parks make it easy to enjoy outdoor recreation on a regular basis.”

The success of Louv’s book resulted in the Children & Nature Network (C&NN), a Minneapolis-based nonprofit co-founded by Louv and several others in 2006. C&NN’s mission is to spark a worldwide movement that reconnects children, their families and communities to nature through “innovative ideas, evidence-based resources and tools, broad-based collaboration and support of grass-roots leadership.” The C&NN envisions a world in which youngsters interact with nature in their everyday lives and become stewards of our natural resources.

To learn more, visit richardlouv.com or childrenandnature.org.

Victoria Scharf DeCastro is a freelance writer living in Winder.

Go outside and play!

Here are a few resources to help you enjoy the outdoors.

Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites offers events and initiatives such as the Junior Ranger program that are tailored to encourage families to spend time together outdoors. For information and a calendar of events, visit gastateparks.org.

Here are a few upcoming activities:

- **Frog Walk**, April 27, Florence Marina State Park, Omaha. Learn about frog populations along the Chattahoochee River and go on a guided night hike. gastateparks.org/florencemarina. (229) 838-4706.



- **Wild Cave Tours**, Cloudland Canyon State Park, Rising Fawn. Each week during April, guides lead groups through the caves of Northwest Georgia. Age 6 and older. For dates and times, visit gastateparks.org/cloudlandcanyon. (706) 913-7170.

- **Parents & Tots**, Panola Mountain State Park, Stockbridge. Each month, children ages 2 to 4 will be introduced to a different nature topic through interactive play. For dates and times, visit gastateparks.org/panolamountain. (770) 389-7801.

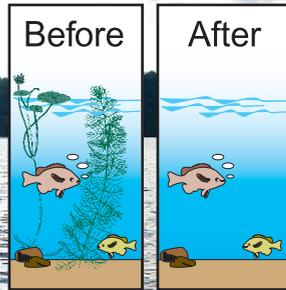
The Plum Landing Explore Outdoors Toolkit provides parents and educators with ideas that help children “get outdoors, get moving and have fun learning science.” Visit pbskids.org/plumlanding. For more educational resources, go to gpb.org/education.

Georgia Kids Outdoors is a free online resource for families looking for outdoor activities. Visit georgiakidsoutdoors.com.

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LAUREN KRESS / KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

Food for thought

Hickory Grove Farm supplies Kennesaw State University

BY JANE F. GARVEY

Urban agriculture has grown markedly in recent decades, as underutilized plots of urban land are turned into community gardens. One example of reclaimed urban land is Hickory Grove Farm, which supplies Kennesaw State University (KSU) with much of its foodstuffs.

Jasper native Michael Blackwell is the farm manager. The longtime photographer grew up on a farm and “was always a ‘hobby farmer.’”

The 26-acre operation sits on an abandoned Georgia Department of Transportation site that the university has leased from the state. Twelve acres are in production with tomatoes, strawberries and blackberries, Tuscan kale, 150 chickens, and about 50 apple and pear trees, plus a few producing peaches and plums.

Three greenhouses—and another that’s under construction—constitute the core of the operation, but the garden doesn’t just feed KSU students; it also teaches them.

Every semester Blackwell in-

structs 35 to 40 students from all sorts of majors—mostly women, he observes—in the fundamentals of organic gardening.

“Organic practices work,” he says. “They’re better for the soil and for productivity.”

That’s right: *organic*. This former concrete-laden site now is an organic producer of comestibles. The program also uses the grass clippings and leaves from campus landscapers for compost, saving the university that dumping cost.

Blackwell’s team also is experimenting with developing new cultivars, such as a tomato to see if it can achieve the same yield on a shorter vine, making it ideal for small plots and greenhouses.

Experiments are going on all over Hickory Grove Farm.

Holding a doctorate in applied and environmental microbiology, Kyle Gabriel, mycologist, devotes all of his time to research. With a \$60,000 U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture grant to explore specialty crops in Georgia, Gabriel plans to grow mushrooms in a pair of temperature-, humidity- and CO₂-controlled, highly insulated 20-foot shipping containers. He’s looking at using waste streams from other industries, such as spent grains from Dry County Brewing Co. in Kennesaw, to grow mushrooms.

Gabriel is not the only researcher working at the site. Associate professor of biology Sigurdur Greipsson has been awarded a grant to experiment with using grasses to remove lead from the soil in a lead-contaminated corner of the property. And assistant professor of construction management Charner Rodgers is building a tiny house on the farm. The 1/8 acre behind her tiny house will be used to demonstrate how affordable housing and high-intensity urban agriculture can be combined.

With campuses in Kennesaw and Marietta and 35,000 students plus staff, KSU Executive Chef Brian Jones has a lot of folks to feed—5,000 to

7,000 people daily. He uses the farm's produce to do that.

The Atlanta native and alumnus of the Art Institute of Atlanta's culinary program did a three-year stint with Restaurant Eugene, a noted Atlanta fine-dining establishment.

There, he recalls, "a farmer walks in the back door and drops off a product, and we were able to tweak it and put it on the menu in an hour or two.

"[At KSU] we're doing similar techniques and ingredients. Only I'm not able to take the 5 to 7 minutes [it takes] to plate up one plate."

At KSU there can be surprises and interesting combinations of ingredients. One recent afternoon, Blackwell sent down 112 dozen eggs and 15 pounds of lettuce. "[Our] bake shop and pastry [makers] use most of the eggs," Jones notes, unruffled.

"Like at Restaurant Eugene, we allow the season and the farmer to create the menu," Jones says. "[The chef] is just responsible for steering that menu and making sure the techniques are right for this small larder of produce, depending on what season it is. In theory it's easy, *but ...*" He trails off, laughing.

Blackwell hopes the future will bring security for the farm and all its work for the university. With more trained staff, the farm could be more productive, he says.

But meanwhile, 112 dozen eggs and 15 pounds of lettuce will be put to good use.

Jane F. Garvey is a freelance food, wine and travel writer from Decatur.

Kennesaw State University's culinary program, housed in the Michael A. Leven School of Culinary Sustainability and Hospitality, uses the talents of many area chefs on its faculty. Here are recipes from a few of them that incorporate produce from the university's Hickory Grove Farm.

Chef Liason Aaron Russell likes to use the herbs produced by the farm along with its tomatoes, arugula, cucumbers and bell peppers to craft this panzanella, an Italian salad that also relies on good bread for its character. Halloumi cheese is a semi-hard, unripened, brined cheese originating in Cyprus. It's made from goat's and sheep's milk and sometimes cow's milk. Having a high melting point, it's good for grilling.

Grilled Panzanella Salad

Herb Oil

- 2 cups extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup fresh oregano leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary

Wash and dry the herbs. Heat the olive oil with the herbs over low heat (less than 200 degrees) and bring to a simmer. Turn off the heat and allow oil to cool. Strain and reserve.

Salad

- 1/2 pound Halloumi cheese, cut into 4-6 slices
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- 1/4 loaf sesame batard (or any firm white bread with a good crust), sliced
- 1/2 cup Herb Oil (see recipe above)
- 1/8 cup white balsamic vinegar
- 1/8 cup diced red onion
- 3/4 cup fresh basil, washed, dried, stems removed and leaves torn into rough pieces
- 1/2 cup baby arugula
- 4 ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 pound cucumbers, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1/2 pound ripe bell peppers, stems and ribs removed, seeded, cut into 1/2-inch dice

Grill the Halloumi cheese on a flat top griddle, in a dry sauté pan or on a charbroil-style grill. Set the temperature to medium-high heat (high if using a charbroiler). Lightly rub the cheese with the herb oil, and season to taste with salt and freshly ground white pepper. Sear on all sides until browned; reserve.

Brush slices of bread with the herb oil. Sear bread on a hot grill until toasted, less than 2 minutes. Remove from heat and reserve.

To assemble the salad, cut the grilled Halloumi into 1/2-inch dice. Cut the grilled bread into 1/2-inch dice.

In a glass or ceramic bowl, combine 1/2 cup herb oil, vinegar, diced red onion and torn fresh basil leaves. Add the diced cheese, arugula, tomatoes, cucumbers and bell peppers; toss to coat. Add the grilled bread last, and toss again. Adjust the sea-



Chef Humberto Guardiola's class in Latin American culinary immersion gathers around the fruits of its labors.

soning with salt and pepper. Serve immediately. *Serves 4-6.*

For his class in Latin American culinary immersion, which is taught in Spanish, Chef Humberto Guardiola uses mesclun, a mix of lettuces and other greens, grown at Hickory Grove Farm.

Ensalada Caribena (Caribbean Salad)

- 1/2 pound mesclun, washed, dried
- 3/4 cup mango, peeled
- 3/4 cup papaya, peeled
- 3 tablespoons passion fruit
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 tablespoons mint leaves, cut into thin slivers
- 1/4 cup plantain chips



JANE GARVEY

Hickory Grove Farm grows Tuscan kale among other vegetables in several greenhouses.

Tear the mesclun into pieces and reserve in a non-reactive (glass or ceramic) bowl. Cut the mango and papaya into medium dice and reserve.

In a blender jar, place the passion fruit and vinegar, and blend on medium speed. While the motor is running, add the oil in a slow, steady stream to emulsify. Add white pepper and kosher salt to taste.

Mix the vinaigrette with the mesclun and toss to coat leaves evenly, being careful not to overdress. Add the mint and toss to combine.

Arrange dressed mesclun on a serving plate and top with mango and papaya. Garnish with plantain chips. Serve immediately. *Serves 8.*

Serving a diverse student body means being on top of the vegetarian game for many of today's young people. This dish, using kale grown at Hickory Grove Farm, is one that Executive Chef Brian Jones likes to serve.

Crispy Kale and Brown Rice

- 1 bunch lacinato (dinosaur or black) kale, stems removed, thinly shredded
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 shallot, peeled, minced
- 1 stick celery, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoon whole grain mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Pinch of salt and black pepper
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter

In a small mixing bowl, combine shredded kale, brown rice, shallot, celery, mustard, lemon juice, olive oil and salt and pepper. Mix until well-combined. *Note: It should have the consistency and flavor of a composed salad. Adjust seasoning, balancing the salt and acid, if needed.*

Place a cast-iron skillet over high heat and add butter. Once butter is hot and foamy, add the kale/rice mixture in a single layer. Allow mixture to sear, without stirring, for several minutes or until the rice and kale mixture is slightly caramelized. Once it's caramelized, stir and allow

to sear for a second time. Serve immediately. *Serves 6.*

Coulis are sauces made from puréed vegetables or fruits. Veggie coulis make a great, healthy embellishment to grilled meats and vegetables, and fruit-based coulis go well with poached, chilled fruit. This Roasted Red Pepper Coulis is a favorite with grilled chicken or stirred into a plate of mixed roasted or grilled vegetables. Add goat cheese or Boursin cheese to the vegetables for a bit of protein and extra flavor.

Roasted Red Pepper Coulis

- 2 large red peppers
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons vegetable stock or broth, or as needed
- Dash hot sauce, to taste, optional
- Freshly ground sea salt and black pepper, to taste, optional

Wash and dry red peppers. Turning them frequently, hold the peppers over a gas flame or over a charcoal fire until peppers are completely charred. If using a charcoal fire, close the grill lid but leave the dampers open; the contained heat helps loosen the skin.

When the peppers are blackened all over, place them in a zip-top plastic or paper bag to steam for about 5 minutes. Remove peppers from the bag when cool enough to handle. Peel off the skin. *Note: If you are using a charcoal grill, the skin will slip more easily off the peppers.* Remove ribs and seeds, and cut the peppers into pieces.

Place the peppers in a blender jar with the garlic; purée them. Add extra-virgin olive oil and the vegetable stock or broth. Purée on high until the sauce is smooth and all ingredients are incorporated. *Note: If the coulis is too thick, add more vegetable stock.* Remove from blender jar and add a dash of hot sauce, if desired. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Mixture will keep for a few days in a jar in the refrigerator or freeze short-term in small amounts for future use. *Makes 1-1/2 cups.* 🍷

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Editor's picks

BY JIM JESS



1

1. Mackenzie enjoys a field of sunflowers in Perry. She is the granddaughter of Joe and Faye Tripp, of Hawkinsville (Flint Energies).

2. Kylan, 1, dances to a tune from the “Trolls” movie soundtrack, while his sister, Kenlea, 3, checks out his moves. They are the children of Rodreil Walker and Jesilea Thompson, of Eastman (Ocmulgee EMC).



2



3



4

3. Caroline loves calves and couldn't wait to pet this one. The photo was taken at the farm of her grandparents, Eldon and Darlene Callaway, of Claxton (Canochee EMC). Caroline is the daughter of Max and Jessica Penny, of Stilson (Excelsior EMC).

4. Lynn Keen and her granddaughter, Aubrianna, made a “tie-dyed” snowman after a rare December snowstorm. Aubrianna is the daughter of Matthew and Raime Stewart, all of Pembroke (Canochee EMC).

5. Scott Templeton and his grandson Luke ride their “gators” in the woods near Templeton’s home. Luke is the son of Brad



5

and Erin Templeton, of Kingston, and the grandson of Scott and Carolyn Templeton, of Cartersville (Cobb EMC). The photo was taken by Mandy Wilson, Scott Templeton’s daughter and Luke’s aunt.

6. Colleen Morris, of Douglasville (GreyStone Power), captured this scene after the snowfall that blanketed much of Georgia last December. She and her husband, Don, were driving through Winston when she snapped this picture.



6

Future Snapshot photo themes:

August 2018—“Back to school,” due by April 26

September 2018—“Go fish!” due by May 25

October 2018—Georgia 4-H Photography Project winners

Please see submission information for Snapshot on page 6.

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- Lightweight 34 lbs.

NOW \$5999 **SAVE \$40**

COMPARE TO \$9999 DURALAST MODEL: T91501L

ITEM 60653/62160 62496/62516 60568 shown

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

PREDATOR **SUPER COUPON**

4000 MAX. STARTING/3200 RUNNING WATTS 6.5 HP (212 CC) GAS GENERATOR

NOW \$28999

\$33999 • GFCI outlets

COMPARE TO \$1999 HONDA MODEL: S6000Z

COMPARE TO \$1709 HONDA MODEL: S6000Z

ITEM 69729/63080/63079 shown

ITEM 63090/63089, CALIFORNIA ONLY

Wheel kit sold separately.

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

SUPER COUPON

FREE WITH ANY PURCHASE

Grant's

MICROFIBER CLEANING CLOTHS PACK OF 4

COMPARE TO \$599 PROLEITE MODEL: 887400

- 12" x 12"
- Non-Abusive

ITEM 63358/63925 63363 shown

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

SUPER COUPON

20% OFF

ANY SINGLE ITEM

LIMIT 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discounts, coupons or any of the following items or brands: Fishing, Truck Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale item, compressors, floor jack, rollers, boat pump, storage cabinets, coats or coats, toolless hammers, welders, Admiral, Ames, Bauer, Cobra, CoverPro, Daytona, Earthquake, Fisher, Hercules, Iron, Joltex, Lyncx, Phoenix, Predator, Ridgid, Ryobi, Sunex, Zurich. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/31/18.

EARTHQUAKE XT **SUPER COUPON**

1/2" COMPOSITE PRO EXTREME TORQUE AIR IMPACT WRENCH

1190 TORQUE FT. LBS. BOLT BREAKAWAY

- Weighs 4.4 lbs.

NOW \$12999 **Customer Rating** **\$14999**

COMPARE TO \$52495 SNAP-ON MODEL: M6725

SAVE \$384

ITEM 62891

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC **SUPER COUPON**

21 GALLON, 2.5 HP, 125 PSI VERTICAL OIL-LUBE AIR COMPRESSOR

- Air delivery: 5.8 CFM @ 40 PSI 4.7 CFM @ 90 PSI

NOW \$14999 **Customer Rating** **\$16999**

COMPARE TO \$219 HUSKY MODEL: C201H

SAVE \$69

ITEM 69091/61454/62803/63635/67847 shown

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

SUPER COUPON

220 lb. capacity 16" x 30" TWO SHELF STEEL SERVICE CART

NOW \$2999 **Customer Rating** **\$3799**

COMPARE TO \$5999 ARCAN MODEL: ASS2003

SAVE 50%

ITEM 60390/5107 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

PITTSBURGH **ATV/LAWN MOWER LIFT** **SUPER COUPON**

- 300 lb. capacity
- Weighs 72.5 lbs.

NOW \$7999 **Customer Rating** **\$8999**

COMPARE TO \$17999 PRO LIFT MODEL: T-33508

SAVE \$100

ITEM 60395 62325/62493 61523 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR

NOW \$1999 **Customer Rating** **\$2999** **SAVE 60%**

COMPARE TO \$4999 COLEMAN MODEL: 2000020293

ITEM 62314/63066 66383 shown

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

COVER PRO **SUPER COUPON**

10 FT. x 17 FT. PORTABLE GARAGE

NOW \$16999 **Customer Rating** **\$19999**

COMPARE TO \$270 SHELTER LOGIC MODEL: 76377

SAVE \$100

ITEM 62859 63055 62860 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

CENTRAL MACHINERY **SUPER COUPON**

8", 5 SPEED BENCHTOP DRILL PRESS

NOW \$4999 **Customer Rating** **\$6799**

SAVE \$53

COMPARE TO \$10299 BUFFALO BLACK MODEL: DP5UL

ITEM 62520/60238 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

PITTSBURGH **9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS** **SUPER COUPON**

Customer Rating **\$599**

TYPE ITEM
SAE 69043/63282/42304
METRIC 42305/69044/63171

LIFETIME WARRANTY

COMPARE TO \$1797 HUSKY MODEL: HX100PSAE

SAVE 66% **\$899**

Item 42304 shown

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

luminar **OUTDOOR** **SUPER COUPON**

24 FT., 18 BULB, 12 SOCKET OUTDOOR STRING LIGHTS

NOW \$1999 **Customer Rating** **\$2599**

COMPARE TO \$3998 PORTFOLIO MODEL: SLC128K

SAVE 50%

ITEM 63483

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

WINDSOR DESIGN **SUPER COUPON**

60" HARDWOOD WORKBENCH WITH 4 DRAWERS

NOW \$12999 **Customer Rating** **\$15999**

Tools sold separately.

COMPARE TO \$415 GRIZZLY MODEL: H7723

SAVE \$285

ITEM 93454/69054/63395/62603 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

drillmaster **SUPER COUPON**

4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

NOW \$999 **Customer Rating** **\$1499**

SAVE 61%

COMPARE TO \$2580 PERFORMAX MODEL: 2411-1

ITEM 69645/60625 shown

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

HaulMaster **SUPER COUPON**

3/8" x 14 FT., GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN

NOW \$1999 **Customer Rating** **\$3999**

- 5400 lb. capacity

COMPARE TO \$6499 MIBRO MODEL: 429520

SAVE 69%

ITEM 60658/97711 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

HARDY **SUPER COUPON**

POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100

- 5 mil thickness

NOW \$599 **Customer Rating** **\$799**

COMPARE TO VENOM MODEL: VEM4145

SAVE 55%

ITEM 61363, 68497, 61360, 61359, 68498, 68496 shown

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

PITTSBURGH **SUPER COUPON**

32 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET

LIFETIME WARRANTY

NOW \$599 **Customer Rating** **\$799**

COMPARE TO \$1778 PERFORMAX MODEL: 48201

SAVE 66%

ITEM 90764 61259 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

THUNDERBOLT MAGNUM solar **SUPER COUPON**

100 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT

NOW \$18999 **Customer Rating** **\$14999**

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2X MORE POWER

COMPARE TO \$32592 SUNFORCE MODEL: S0180

SAVE \$175

ITEM 64335 63585 shown

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/31/18

CENTECH **SUPER COUPON**

2/10/50 AMP, 12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER

NOW \$2999 **Customer Rating** **\$4999**

ITEM 60581 60653 shown

COMPARE TO \$6999 SCHUMACHER ELECTRIC MODEL: SE-1250

SAVE 57%

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