

GORDON Gazette

Weekend, June 20, 2020

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Calhoun-Gordon County's #1 Source for News

Local school officials weigh in on Georgia seeking Standardized Testing Waiver for 2020-21

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On Thursday, Georgia Governor Brian P. Kemp and State School Superintendent Richard Woods of the Georgia Department of Education issued a statement concerning their intent to seek a Standardized Testing Waiver for the upcoming 2020-21 school year, becoming the first state in the country to seek the waiver.

The move, if approved, will suspend all standardized testing for the upcoming

school year. "On March 16, Georgia became one of the first states in the nation to suspend standardized testing requirements in the wake of the COVID-19 school closures, and later received approval from the U.S. Department of Education for the cancellation of all remaining standardized tests in the 2019-2020 school year," said Kemp and Woods in a statement.

"Given the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic and the resulting

state budget reductions, it would be counterproductive to continue with high-stakes testing for the 2020-2021 school year. In anticipation of a return to in-person instruction this fall, we believe schools' focus should be on remediation, growth, and the safety of students. Every dollar spent on high-stakes testing would be a dollar taken away from the classroom."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

From left: Gordon County Schools Dr. Kimberly Fraker; Calhoun City Schools Dr. Michele Taylor.

See **TESTING**, page 7A

Gordon County Juvenile Court seamlessly navigates COVID-19 pandemic using technology

Serving for 30 years as the lone Juvenile Court judge in Gordon County, Judge Lane Bearden and his team continues to successfully fulfill their duties to the community through less traditional methods

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Sitting on the bench as the Gordon County Juvenile Court Judge for 30 years this month, Judge Lane Bearden has seen plenty of change in the way the Court handles juvenile hearings during his decades of service, but nothing could have prepared the judge and his staff for the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic closings; changes that the judge and his staff have handled with resolve and professionalism.

"It's been a burden, but we've been really proactive and we did things before we had to," said Judge Bearden of the shuttering of court services on March 13. "It hit us pretty hard because we have a lot of hearings that have to be scheduled. We have intake hearings within 24 hours, or sometimes within 72 hours; we have to have reviews within five days. So when they said 'Stop doing all of that,' it put a real challenge on us."

Gordon County Juvenile Court

is responsible for hearing juvenile delinquency cases, child abuse and neglect cases, and juvenile traffic offense cases. In addition, Judge Bearden is also the Chairman of the Legislative Committee for the Council of Juvenile Court Judges. Juvenile Court also administers CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), which is a state and privately funded organization of private volunteer citizens, appointed by Bearden, who monitors, evaluates, and provides reports about a child's case.

In recent years, Bearden had a couple of staff members retire, so he has brought in several fresh faces to Juvenile Court: Amberle Dillard pulls double-duty as the new CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Director and Deputy Clerk Juvenile Court of Gordon County; Melissa Curvin is the Clerk of Dependency Court and Alyssa Watters is the Executive Director of Juvenile Court Services. Together, they work hard for the benefit of the children in DFCS custody, among other cases.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Judge Lane Bearden, who has served as Gordon County's lone Juvenile Court Judge for 30 years this month, has utilized technology, especially the Zoom Meeting platform, to continue emergency hearings through his court during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

See **COURT**, page 7A

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HEALTH 4A



Red Cross now testing all blood donations for COVID-19 antibodies.

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UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The Profess Movement was held Thursday evening in downtown Calhoun as answer to the division taking place across the nation

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Dozens in the community showed up Thursday night to BB&T Park in downtown Calhoun for The Profess Movement.

"The Profess Movement is meant to bring people from all walks together to profess the love of Jesus Christ," said organizers in a statement. "The world wants to divide us, but there is power in unity when we unify as one body of Christ."

The movement, organized to bring down the walls of race, religion and politics, was a night of praise and worship in contrast to the protests that have been held throughout the nation in reaction to several police-involved shooting deaths.

Paul Gay, Executive Pastor of Crane Eater Community Church, Benjamin Moore, Pastor of Faith Moves Maranatha, and Joe Stewart, Pastor of Victory

Fellowship Center all spoke to the crowd on the need of being one in Christ and focusing on His Word during this time of unrest.

Gay said a special prayer, asking God to provide the direction and guidance needed to help, not just our city, but our nation during these times.

Moore spoke on Unity of Diversity, which he's been speaking on at Faith Moves, and the glimpse of heaven from the Book of Revelation, Chapter 7.

"A glimpse of heaven that God wants is a heaven filled with people from every nation, from every race and every language," said Moore. "There's going to be a lot of people surprised when they get to heaven. We'd better get used to it now, because diversity is God's idea; He planned it and He created it. God loves diversity and He wants us to be unified."

Stewart spoke on



PHOTOS: BRANDI OWCZARZ/Staff

ABOVE: Pastor Paul Gay (far left), Pastor Joe Stewart (far right) and Pastor Benjamin Moore (second from right) spoke at The Profess Movement on Thursday evening.



See **PROFESS**, page 3A

Second Front

Calhoun Library Is Developing Drive-up Service

The Calhoun-Gordon County Public Library will soon begin offering service via a drive-up (no-touch) service. Curbside service testing will begin soon, as supplies are being delivered daily. The service will open as soon as all supplies are in-house.

STAFF REPORTS

The Northwest Georgia Regional Library System (NGRL) closed on March 12th as the COVID-19 news updates made clear to us that we were ill-equipped to guarantee the safety of library users and library staff members.

“We have been busy developing virtual programs and no-touch procedures to bring library services back to you via a drive-up curbside delivery system,” said Darla Chambliss, Library Director Northwest Georgia Regional Library System. “Testing of the new service delivery methods have begun.”

According to the library, the instructions to request library services are available on

the website nrgl.org. The services offered will be limited to checkout of Calhoun-Gordon County Public Library books, audio/CDs and other circulating items. Each patron is limited to five items.

“As we perfect the new delivery methods, we will be adding additional services,” said Chambliss.

The library building will not be open to the public at this time.

“I feel that I can speak for the entire staff of NGRL (Dalton, Chatsworth and Calhoun branch libraries) when I say that we have missed our library users,” said Chambliss. “We know how much users need our materials, technology and services

at this challenging time. The technology staff are researching the feasibility of extending free WiFi connectivity to the library parking area. We will make an announcement at nrgl.org as soon as we are able to provide this service.”

According to Chambliss, Chatsworth and Calhoun Public Libraries were nearing grand-reopening celebrations as renovations at those branches were almost completed. Unfortunately, the pandemic began and the progress delayed.

“As you would imagine we are restarting and getting back on track for quick completion while we are offering curbside service to our library



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

users,” said Chambliss. Chambliss also addressed book returns.

“Many people are wondering when the book return boxes will reopen. Because public libraries follow Centers for Disease Control and Institute of Museum and Library Services

guidelines, we needed to implement a new book return process,” said Chambliss. “This new method needed to include a sanitization step and a non-circulation area. We have ordered the recommended cleaning supplies. The library will make an announcement

when the public can begin to return their items. The library will charge no fines or fees during the COVID-19 crisis. We look forward to the day you can pop into the library and visit with Nyala Edwards, the library manager and her excellent staff.”

AdventHealth Gordon to host virtual Living Well class featuring Julia Danforth, MD

CONTRIBUTED

AdventHealth Gordon is hosting a virtual Living Well class featuring Julia Danforth, MD, on Tuesday, July 7 at 6:30 pm online via a Zoom meeting. During this class, there will be a viewing of “PlantPure Nation” and a group discussion afterwards. The film follows three people on a quest to spread the message about the health benefits of a plant-based diet.

Dr. Danforth is a board-certified family physician. She believes that health is more than just the physical body, but mental and spiritual wellness as well. Dr. Danforth earned her medical degree from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine in California followed by a residency in family practice at Florida Hospital in Orlando. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Practice and the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. Dr. Danforth was board-certified in Lifestyle Medicine in 2017 and is blessed to be able to formally pursue her lifelong career passion.

To join this virtual Living Well class, email georgialivingwell@gmail.com to request a Zoom meeting invitation. Participants can use Zoom on their smartphone, computer or tablet. Participants can also dial in with their phone to join the meeting. For more information, please call 770-773-9201 and press 1 to speak with or leave a message for Dr. Danforth’s nurse.



About AdventHealth Gordon
Founded in 1935, AdventHealth Gordon is proud to be a member of AdventHealth. With a sacred mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ, AdventHealth is a connected system of care for every stage of life and health. More than 80,000 skilled and compassionate caregivers in physician practices, hospitals, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies and hospice centers provide individualized, wholistic care. A shared vision, common values, focus on whole-person health and commitment to making communities healthier unify the system’s nearly 50 hospital campuses and hundreds of care sites in diverse markets throughout almost a dozen states. For more information about AdventHealth, visit AdventHealth.com or Facebook.com/AdventHealth.

GNTC awards students with scholarships

CONTRIBUTED

The Foundation at Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC) has awarded a \$500 scholarship to one qualified student at each of the 26 high schools and five college and career academies in the northwest Georgia region. Two students at Trion High School received a scholarship of \$250 each.

Usually presented to graduating high school seniors towards the end of the school year, the scholarships assist students with paying for their first year of college. This year, awarding the scholarships was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recipients of the 2020 GNTC Foundation Scholarships are Aden Edwards, Armuchee High School; Austin Garner, Calhoun College and Career Academy; Marvin Alarcon, Calhoun High School; Jacquera Jester, Cedartown High School; Austin Cordle, Chattooga High School; Trinity Wood, Coahulla Creek High School; Jasmine Michell Kerce, Coosa High School; Haven Tripp, Dade County High School; Karla Rivas Tirador, Dalton High School; Leah McElveen, Floyd County College & Career Academy; Alfredo Peguarez, Gordon Central High School; Courtney Allen, Gordon County College & Career Academy; Sally Thomison, Gordon Lee High School; Alyssa Isler, Heritage High School; Steven Matthew Davis, LaFayette High School; Clyde Mussared, Lakeview Fort Oglethorpe High School; Jonathan Casey, Model High School; Gisselle Reyes, Morris Innovative High School; Nohemi Ramirez, Murray County High School; Autumn Sims, North Murray High School; Amelia McClure, Northwest Whitfield High School; Jazmine Colindres, Northwest Georgia College & Career Academy; Logan Johnson, Pepperell High School; Jasmine Collier, Phoenix High School; Bladdimir Reyes-Alvarado, Polk County College & Career Academy; Katelyn Gates, Ridgeland High School; Alexander Greynolds, Ringgold High School; Leah Phanmanee, Rockmart High School; Horace “Tre” Morgan III, Rome High School; Lexi Hill, Sonorville High School; Zane Cochran,

Southeast Whitfield High School; Harley Harris and Seth Hall, Trion High School.

“We are so honored to support the best and the brightest talent coming from every high school in our nine-county service area,” said Lauretta Hannon, director of Institutional Advancement at GNTC. “We hope that these scholarships encourage the students and get them off to a terrific start at GNTC.”

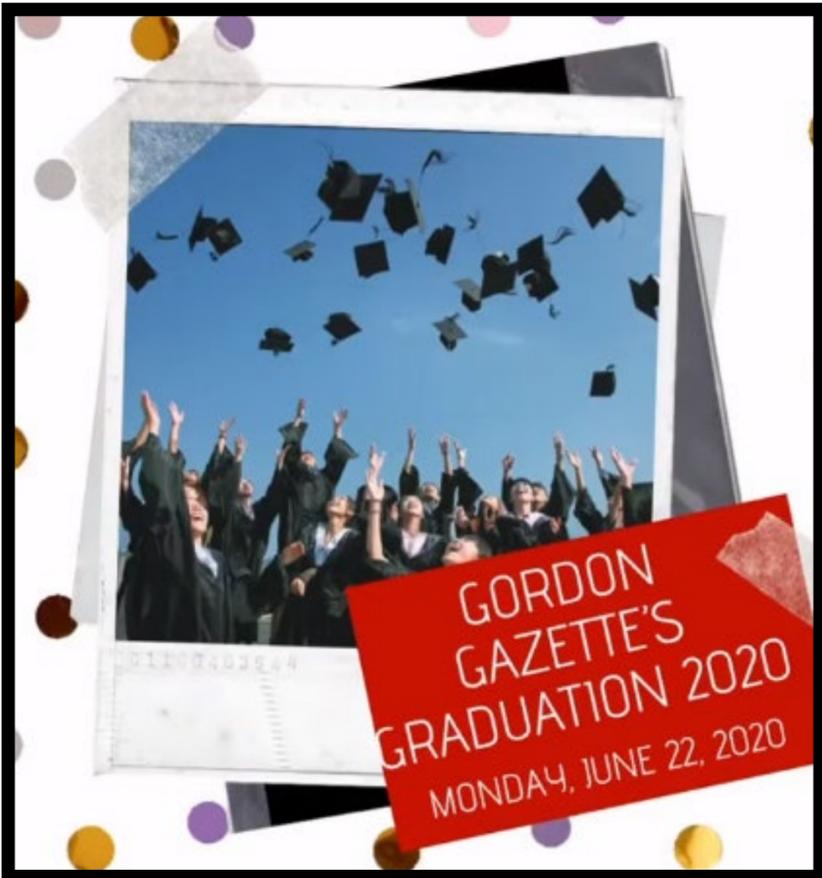
Five additional students received the Chattooga High School Alumni Scholarship. This scholarship is made possible through alums of Chattooga High School, a husband and wife began this financial aid to help graduating students of the school. The GNTC Foundation awarded the \$500 Chattooga Alumni Scholarships to the following Class of 2020 graduates: Karsen Gilliam, Gabrielle Morgan, Kayla Rosser, Madison Smith and Gabrielle Schoenfeld.

The Foundation at GNTC helps fund academic and support programs at the college throughout the year and has helped thousands of students in the northwest Georgia region attend college. GNTC employee donations on all six campuses and annual fundraising events raise resources for the GNTC High School Graduate Scholarships.

The Foundation Trustees are Valerie Brown, Whitfield County; Linda Case, Dade County; Jay LeGrande, Polk County; Gary McConnell, Chattooga County; Sherrie Patterson, Murray County; Damon Raines, Walker County; Becky Redd, Gordon County; Mitch Sanford, Whitfield County; Jay Still, Whitfield County; Wil Stiles, Catoosa County; Scott Tucker, Floyd County; Carolyn Walker, Walker County; and Doris White, Walker County.

Georgia Northwestern Technical College provides quality workforce education to the citizens of Northwest Georgia. Students have the opportunity to earn an associate degree, diploma, or a certificate in business, health, industrial, or public service career paths. For more information about GNTC, visit us at www.GNTC.edu. GNTC is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia and an Equal Opportunity Institution.

www.gordongazettega.com



DOWNTOWN CALHOUN

Farmers Market

Mondays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Beginning June 1

Every Monday at 10 a.m. throughout the summer, the Downtown Calhoun Farmers Market will be set up in the parking lot of the Depot at the corner of Court Street and South King Street.

Obituaries

June 20, 2020

Sgt. Melvin Hall

Sgt. Melvin Douglas Hall, age 68, of Calhoun, passed away Tuesday morning, June 16.

Melvin was born April 23, 1952 in Gordon County, son of the late Glenn Deward Hall, Sr. and Margie Lavallo Sloan Hall. He was a veteran of the United States Army serving in Vietnam. Melvin was a member of the Midway Church and a lifelong resident of Gordon County. He was a retired Sergeant with the Georgia State Patrol. Melvin was an avid fisherman, hunter and outdoorsman. He loved spending time with his family and making others laugh.

Melvin was preceded in death by his first wife, Shirley Ann Silvers Hall; his second wife, Judy Tynes-Hall; and brothers, Glenn Deward Hall, Jr., and Lee Eaker.

Survivors include his three sons, Joel Hall and his wife Carrie, Steven Greeson and his wife Kim and Shane Greeson and his wife Amy; two daughters, Alison Chadwick and Karey Flener; three brothers, Thomas David Hall, Greg Eaker, and Joey Eaker; one sister, Vickie Eaker. Eight grandchildren, Will Hall, Josh Greeson, Starr Greeson, Alex Greeson, Emily Greeson, Reese Greeson, Abby Chadwick, and Emma Chadwick. Melvin's special friend, Eddie Freeman also survives.

Funeral services were conducted Friday, June 19 at 1 p.m. from the chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Rev. Dwaine Shadix and Rev. Hershel Pierce officiating. Burial followed in Pine Chapel Cemetery.

Pallbearers serving included Will Hall, Josh Greeson, Zane Holsomback, Ashley Johnson, Brandon Tomlinson, and Jamie Hall. Honorary Escorts will be officers and staff of the Georgia State Patrol.

The family received friends from 6 until 9 p.m. Thursday evening at the funeral home.

You may send condolences to the family at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home is in charge of the funeral services for Sgt. Melvin Douglas Hall.



Thomas
Funeral Home

Avery Roberts

Mr. Avery Ragan Roberts, 64, of Calhoun, died Wednesday, June 17, 2020, at his residence.

Avery was born in Floyd County on July 26, 1955, son of Emma Louise Greeson Roberts and the late Thurman Roberts. In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by two brothers, David Thurman Roberts and Ken Stacey Roberts.

He was a member of the 1973 graduating class of Calhoun High School. He enjoyed being outdoors, an avid Georgia Bulldog fan and enjoyed fishing. He loved his family dearly, was a very proud father and grandfather.

Survivors include his daughter and son-in-law, Cassie and Brad Ferguson; grandchildren, Trent, Abigail and Amelia Ferguson; mother, Emma Louise Roberts; sisters, Carol Alford and Candi Knight and



her husband Donald; one brother, Kelly Roberts and his wife Laronda; best friend, Hugh Cox, his fur baby, Missy and a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A memorial service will be held Monday, June 22, at 7 p.m. from the chapel of Max Brannon & Sons Funeral Home with Rev. Clifford Free and Eddie Brannon officiating. The family will receive friends at the funeral home on Monday, between the hours of 5 – 7 p.m. In lieu of flowers, Avery loved children and his family would be honored if contributions were made to "Scottish Rite, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation, 3395 NE Expressway, Suite 100, Atlanta GA 30341 or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis TN 38105 in memory of him.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Avery Ragan Roberts, 64 of Calhoun.



James Silvers

James Franklin Silvers, 77, of Oakman, died Sunday, June 14, 2020 after a 15-year illness. He was born on Dec. 15, 1942 to the late H.C. and Cordia Silvers. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Deborah Silvers; brothers and sisters-in-law, Eugene Silvers, Jack and Barbara Silvers, Grady Silvers, and Arvil and Levita Silvers; sisters and brothers-in-law, Gladys and Frank Lyles, Thelma and Harley Morris, and Mary and Lee Petty.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, James (Calvin) and Stacy Silvers; daughter and son-in-law, Donna and John Graves; brother, Roscoe Silvers; sister and brother-in-law, Geraldine and James Green; grandchildren, Zachary Koelling, Jonathan Silvers and Veronica Waldon, Matthew Silvers and Sarah Thomas, Jamie Gifford, John Paul Graves, Ashley Graves; great grandchildren, Carter Silvers, Jasper Silvers, Brynlee Thomas, Hailee Gifford, Dylan Gifford, Emma Gifford, Kallie Graves, Aaliyah Graves, Lexi Graves, River Graves, Colton McGee, Draedyn McGee, and Kamariaye Moore, Kaitlynn Waldon, Petee Waldon, and David Waldon; step-granddaughter, Viola Williams Silvers; sisters-in-law, Nellie Silvers and Linda Kay Silvers; numerous nieces and nephews also survive.

The funeral will be held Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 3 p.m. from Fairview Church of God with Michael Stone officiating. Pallbearers serving include, Beau Young, Trenton Young, Sawyer Edens, Zachary Koelling, Jonathan Silvers, and Matthew Silvers. Burial will in the Church Cemetery.

The family received friends on Friday, June 19, 2020 from 5 – 9 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

To leave condolences and sign the online guest book please go to, www.maxbrannonandsons.com.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of James Franklin Silvers.



Helen Stabenow

Mrs. Helen Blankenship Stabenow, 84, of Calhoun, departed this life Tuesday June 16, 2020 at Erlanger Hospital.

Mrs. Stabenow was born in Gordon County on July 27, 1935. She was a daughter of the late



Tom and Jessie Junkins Blankenship. In addition to her parents, she was also preceded in death by her daughter, Sherry Ray Curry; a son, Danny Joe Ray; sisters, Pearl Scott and Mildred Hand; and brothers, Ben Blankenship and Jimmy Blankenship. Along with her husband, she was a member of Heritage Baptist Church in Calhoun.

She is survived by her loving husband, George Stabenow of the residence; sons and daughter-in-law, David Ray of Chatsworth, Donny and Loria Ray of Dalton, and Charlie Ray of Murfreesboro, Tenn.; sister, Ruth Blankenship of Calhoun; brother, Gene Blankenship of Adairsville; eight grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

Services to celebrate the life of Mrs. Helen Stabenow will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 2 p.m. in Ponders Calhoun Chapel. Reverend Mitch Crow will officiate. Mrs. Stabenow will be laid to rest at Gordon Memorial Gardens. Stevie Cochran, Jackie, Andy, and Jeff Blankenship, Joshua Ray, and Bill Hutchinson will all be honored to serve as pallbearers.

The family received friends on Friday evening, June 19, 2020 from 6 – 9 p.m. at Ponders Calhoun Chapel.

Condolences may be sent and the guestbook signed by visiting our website at www.pondersfuneralhome.com.

Arrangements by family owned and operated Ponders Calhoun Chapel and Ponders Crematory. 675 Jolly Rd Calhoun GA 30701 706-625-7577



Mark Stanley, Sr.

Mr. Mark Dewayne Stanley Sr., 63, of Calhoun, departed this life Wednesday June 17, 2020 at his brother's house surrounded by his loving family.

Mr. Stanley was born in Whitfield County on April 9, 1957. He was also preceded in death by his father Vernie "Bill" Stanley; mother, Hazel Timms Hardy.

He is survived by his sons, Mark Dewayne Stanley Jr, Justin Stanley of Calhoun; brothers and sisters-in-law, Steve and Becky Stanley of Jasper, Jimmy and Darlene Stanley of Dalton, Ronnie and Kay Stanley of Chatsworth, Billy Stanley of Jasper, Greg and Angela Hardy of Atlanta; sisters and brother-in-law, Lisa and Bruce Dean of Dalton, Cindy Plummer, Patti Martin of Chatsworth; grandson, Skylar Stanley; mother of his children, Charlotte Higgins of Calhoun; special friend, Veda Ray of Chatsworth; several nieces and nephews.

Services to celebrate the life of Mr. Mark Dewayne Stanley Sr. will be held on Sunday, June 21, 2020 at 3 p.m. in Ponders Calhoun Chapel with Reverend Lamar Bond and his nephew Chris Stanley officiating. Mr. Stanley will be laid to rest at the Stanley Chapel Cemetery in Blue Ridge, GA.

The family will receive friends on Saturday evening, June 20, 2020 from 5 – 9 p.m. at Ponders Calhoun Chapel.

Condolences may be sent and the guestbook signed by visiting our website at www.pondersfuneralhome.com.

Arrangements by family owned and operated Ponders Calhoun Chapel and Ponders Crematory. 675 Jolly Rd Calhoun GA 30701 706-625-7577



Help for the Hurting

-The Life Choice Hospice Bereavement Support Group will be meeting the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The support group is open to anyone in the community who would like to attend. The office and support group are located at 189 Professional Court, Suite 300, Calhoun. For Information, contact Jennifer at 706-602-9001.

-The Northwest Georgia Parkinson Disease Association, Inc., is offering a monthly support group for persons living with Parkinson Disease, their caregivers, family and friends. The support group will meet at Gordon Hospital; Conference Room A. For any questions about the support group and future meetings, call James Trussell at 706-235-3164 or 706-346-5678.

-Families Anonymous is a 12-step program, for those concerned about drug abuse and behavior problems of a relative or friend. Completely anonymous, non professional, and non religious. No dues, no fees. Not connected with any hospital or agency. Located on Red Bud Road in plaza below Fitness First, next to Calhoun Counseling Center (Dr. Bledsoe's office). Meeting every Thursday 7 - 8 p.m. Call 770-548-7849 for more

information.

-Bondage Breakers- Breaking the chains of addiction one soul at a time. Every Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Crane Eater Community Church, located at 3168 Red Bud Rd Calhoun, GA 30701.

-The Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is sponsoring a monthly support group at Morning Pointe Assisted Living, 660 Jolly Road, on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information or directions, call Mary Braden at 770-548-4683 or Karen Parrott at 706-346-5220. For more information about dementia and Alzheimer's disease, call 800-272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/georgia.

-Special Care Plus, a free one-on-one consultation program, offers education and information to primary caregivers of persons with dementia. Any primary caregiver who is caring for a loved one with dementia in the home is eligible to receive this program. To learn more about the Special Care Plus program, call 800-272-3900.

-Want to make a difference in the community? Tapestry Hospice is seeking volunteers to provide companionship to our patients, read books, make crafts,

garden, light house cleaning, administrative work, etc. If you're interested contact Megan at megan.guthrie@tapestryhospice.com

-The Alzheimer's Association's Caring Closet was created to help offset the high cost of incontinent products and give the families support they often desperately need. If you would like to visit the nearest Closet, call the chapter office to receive a flier with locations and hours. Morning Pointe in Calhoun has a Caring Closet; call Mary Braden at 706-629-0777.

-Community volunteers are needed at Countryside Hospice Care, where the mission is to promote comfort and dignity at the end of life. The agency covers 26 Northwest Georgia counties between three offices in LaFayette, Rome, and Newnan. If you would like to participate in this rewarding program, call 706-638-7651 or 1-800-660-7381.

-Discovering Hope, an autism support group for Northwest Georgia, meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Friendship Baptist Church, Rocky Face. For more information, call Connie Post at 706-673-7765 or www.discoveringhope.us.

PROFESS

From page 1A

Christians being the light of the world.

"All that's going on in the world is like a spiraling, out of control. We wonder what's going on and what can we do stop it? We've got a government that puts out hate laws. That's fine, but you're still not addressing the problem. It's like putting a band aid over cancer. If we want to address the problem, it's going to take more than more laws. If more laws could do it, we would be in utopia. The Word says we are the light of the world. This is a dark place, this is an evil place and the only way light is going to shine in this place is that we step into the position that God has called us to step into. This nation and this world God has placed. If all He wanted is for us to get saved, we would've dropped dead and gone on to heaven, but he left us here for a purpose. Our purpose was to reach out and snatch as many people from hell as we possibly can. If we're not doing what He's called us to do, then chaos exists. People say this is a Christian nation, but I beg to differ. This is not a Christian nation and never has been a Christian nation. This is a nation that was founded on Christian principles that if we stood up by those principles, we'd be in a lot better place. But the church has neglected its responsibility. When we begin to do what the Lord says, humble themselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways, then He'll heal our lands. Until we begin being obedient to the Word of God, chaos will still reign."

The evening ended with special singing and worship.

Red Cross now testing all blood donations for COVID-19 antibodies

Urgent need for blood donors to help prevent summer shortage \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card for all who come to give in June
CONTRIBUTED

Beginning this week and for a limited time, the American Red Cross is testing all blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies, providing donors insight into whether they have been exposed to this coronavirus. At the same time, there continues to be an urgent need for blood donations as hospitals resume surgeries and treatments that require blood products.

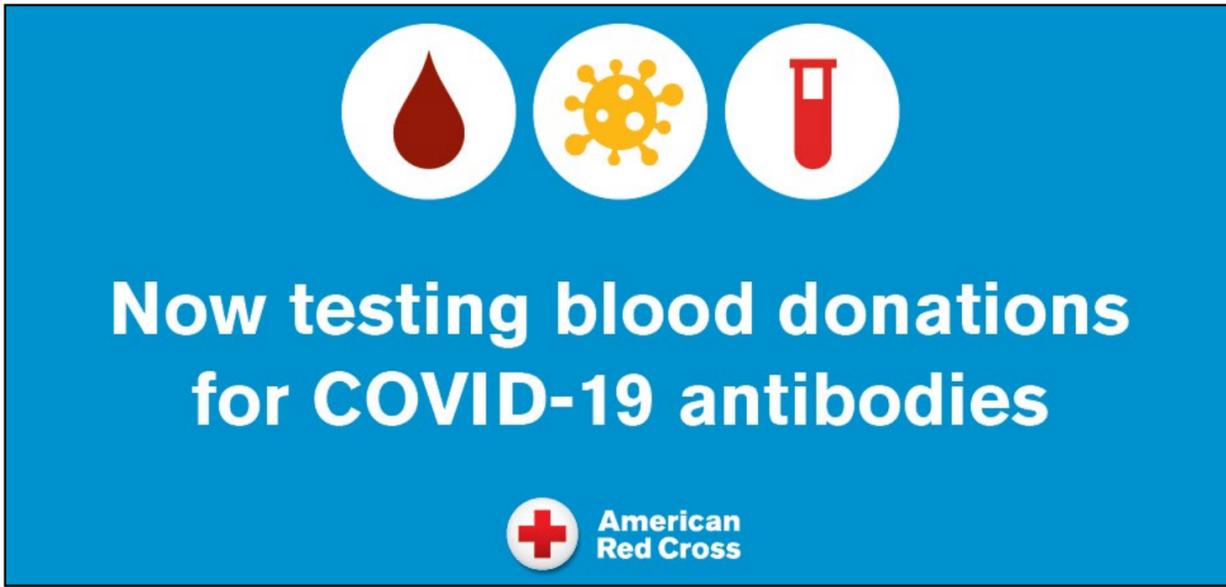
Antibody testing will indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether they developed symptoms. Donations will be tested using samples pulled at the time of donation and sent to a testing laboratory where they will also undergo routine infectious disease testing. A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity.

COVID-19 antibody test results will be available within 7-10 days in the Red Cross Blood Donor App or donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org. The test has been authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"As an organization dedicated to helping others, the Red Cross is pleased to provide more information about COVID-19 to our valued donors," said Dr. Erin Goodhue, executive medical director of direct patient care with the Red Cross Biomedical Services. "If you are feeling healthy and well, please schedule an appointment to not only help saves lives but also learn about your potential exposure to COVID-19."

The Red Cross is not testing donors to diagnose illness, referred to as a diagnostic test.

Donation appointments can be made by downloading the free Blood Donor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767), or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. Thanks to Amazon, all those who come to give June 1-30 will receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card via email.*

Blood drive safety precautions
To protect the health and safety of Red Cross staff and donors, individuals who do not feel well or who believe they may be ill with COVID-19 should postpone their donation.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including temperature checks, social distancing, and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment

prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face-covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

About blood donation
All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also must meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-

donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

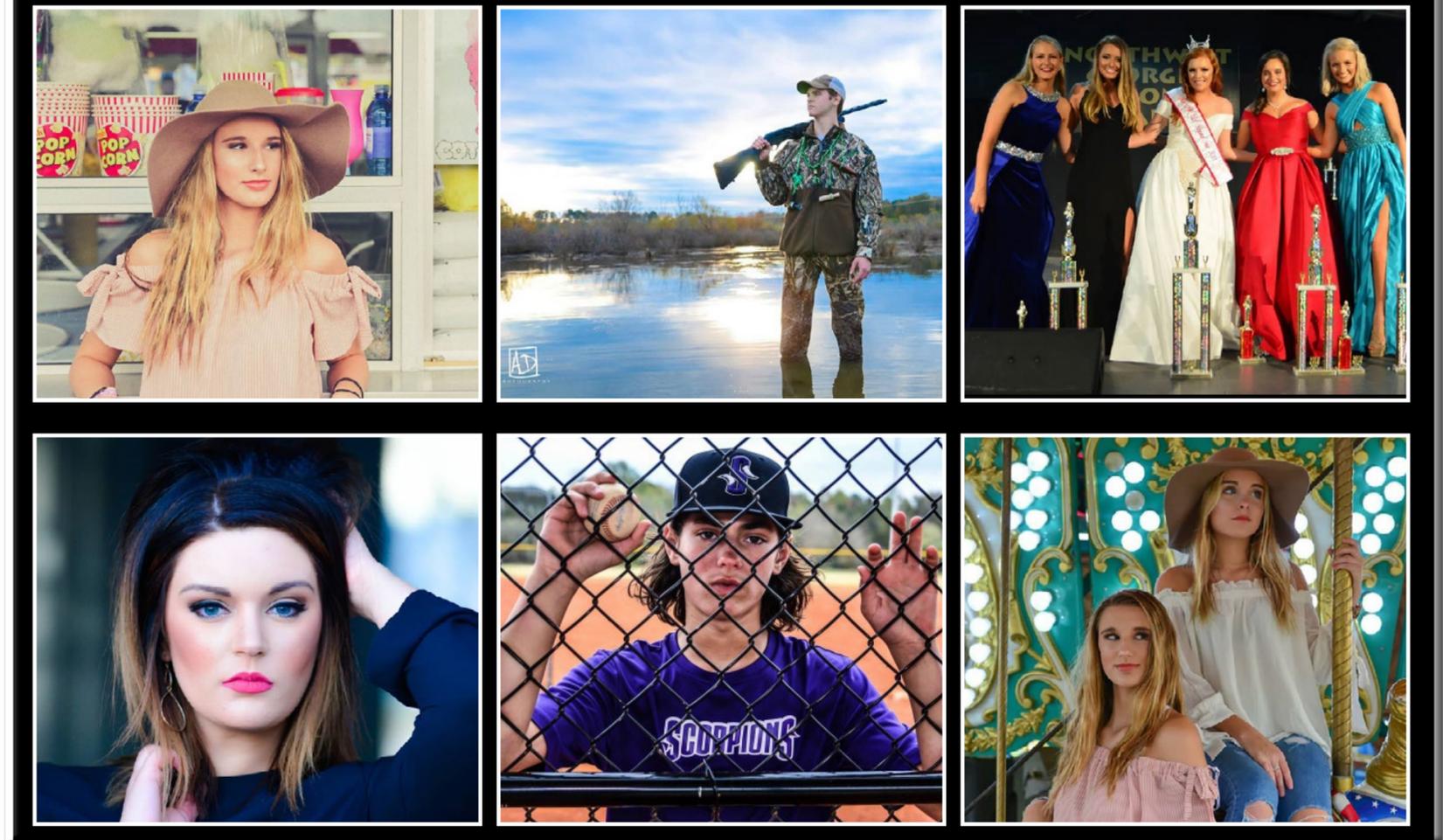
About the American Red Cross
The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.

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Adam Dortch
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GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Fort Benning cases cause COVID-19 surge in Chattahoochee County

ANDY MILLER,
Georgia Health News

New COVID-19 hot spots have emerged at a major Army post near Columbus, as well as in South Georgia farm country.

A large part of Fort Benning is located in Chattahoochee County, a thinly populated area that has among the highest rates of recently reported infections in the nation, according to data published by the New York Times. The fort includes residential and administrative areas, as well as extensive undeveloped land used in training and maneuvers.

As of Wednesday afternoon, state Public Health data show 304 individuals infected in Chattahoochee County, up 32 cases from the day before.

The rise in cases in certain Georgia counties coincides with an overall increase in new infections in the state.

ConnectingVets.com reported earlier this month that more than 140 new recruits at Fort Benning had tested positive for COVID-19. All but four had tested negative previously, when they arrived at the base.

None of the people known to be infected in Chattahoochee County have died. Seven have been hospitalized, according to state data.

Fort Benning media representatives declined to answer questions about the outbreak. Military services "will no longer release the number of cases at each base, at any level of the illness," a spokeswoman for the facility said in an email.

The fort conducted contact tracing, and all affected buildings, common areas, dining facilities and training areas within the unit area have been sanitized, according to ConnectingVets.com.

A lot of cases among farmworkers

Colquitt County in South Georgia has also seen a surge of COVID-19 cases.

Public Health officials said some of the increase is "directly connected to congregations at a couple of churches there," said Dr. Charles Ruis, district health director, in a statement Tuesday.

Church services and funerals have been linked to some past outbreaks in Georgia because of people crowding together.

Health officials said that as restrictions on gatherings continue to loosen, churchgoers and attendees of other social gatherings should use caution and avoid shaking



hands, hugging and kissing.

Colquitt's cases jumped from more than 400 a couple of weeks ago to almost 700 now, the Moultrie Observer reported.

A Public Health epidemiologist also pointed to infections among the county's agricultural/migrant farmer population.

Farmworker cases have also driven surges in other counties in South Georgia. In 24 hours, coronavirus cases in

Lanier County nearly tripled from Friday to Saturday, from 37 to 96, the Valdosta Daily Times reported.

The spike reflects a surge in recent coronavirus tests among farmworkers in Lanier, said Kristin Patten, South Health District public information officer. It is unknown whether the workers came from a single farm or from multiple farms in the county, Patten said, according to the Daily Times.

Recently, Echols County, which borders Lanier County, saw cases skyrocket after a COVID-19 testing event for migrant farmworkers revealed a high rate of cases, the Daily Times reported.

Echols remains the Georgia county with the highest infection rate.

Andy Miller is editor and CEO of Georgia Health News. Visit www.georgiahealthnews.com.

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TESTING

From page 1A

According to the statement, Georgia will submit a waiver to the U.S. Department of Education for the suspension of the 2020-21 Georgia Milestones assessment and CCRPI school and district rating. Additionally, effective immediately, the Georgia Department of Education is suspending the teacher evaluation (TKES) summative rating for 2020-21.

“These efforts are in line with our longstanding shared belief that assessment has a place and a purpose in education, but the current high-stakes testing regime is excessive. Though the legislative session was shortened due to COVID-19, we are continuing to pursue Senate Bill 367, which aims to get Georgia’s state testing requirements in line with the federal minimum and maximize time for

instruction.”

Locally, both Gordon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Kimberly Fraker and Calhoun City Schools Superintendent Dr. Michele Taylor support the move.

Fraker said the main concern at Gordon County Schools will be filling the educational gap created by the long closure this school year.

“I am pleased that the state is supporting the school systems,” said Fraker. “This is something Gordon County Schools hoped would happen, for our staff and for our students, because we feel like the focus in the upcoming year needs to be on filling the educational gap that was created by the COVID-19 pandemic school closure. Suspending the testing will help us to be able to get our students back on their educational track; that would be harder to do if we also had to focus on the testing.”

Taylor said that Calhoun City Schools shares

the opinion of Governor Kemp and State School Superintendent Woods that the focus in the upcoming year should be on “remediation, growth and the safety of students, not standardized testing.

“Calhoun City Schools continually looks at how to provide the best balance between the amount of testing in the schools and the feedback needed to help guide classroom instruction,” said Taylor. “There is no doubt that the amount of standardized testing takes an inordinate amount of time away from classroom instruction and teachers’ ability to provide engaging learning experiences for students. CCS plans to continue to utilize classroom assessments to drive instruction and will monitor the growth and progress of students throughout the school year.”

Kemp and Woods said that they are hopeful the federal government will recognize that the upcoming school year will not be ‘business as usual’ and will accept their request for the waiver.

COURT

From page 1A

“Thank goodness we have a good CASA program; we are very lucky to have Amberle because of her various experiences with victim’s assistance, the court system and appointing attorneys and going through the defense lawyer’s aspect of the process. She brings a wonderful aspect to the proceedings,” said Bearden. “She’s really hit the ground running; she’s tried to recruit more CASA volunteers. She has a lot of energy and is a very good judge of people. We’re really fortunate to have hired Melissa, who has DFCS experience as a caseworker and (has experience with) Medicaid services in different counties as Clerk of the Dependency Court. And I brought Alyssa in because she had prior experience working with appointed attorneys. I knew that with her getting her degree and working with attorneys, she would bring a certain skill set that would be very helpful to our court; she’s the hard guy here. She’s the bearer of bad news and has a skill set that helps with that. She has really fit in and does a few things that we weren’t able to do before.

“We’re really remaking the (juvenile) court in a lot of ways and are about complete with that process,” said Bearden. “We’ve finally got a great combination and now we’re hit with COVID-19, and it’s forced us to do some new things. It’s forced us to introduce new technology.”

A lot of the technological aspect Bearden references are Zoom hearings.

“The way we’ve tried to accommodate the COVID-19 (shutdowns), we have hybrid hearings and we have digital hearings,” said Bearden. “Hybrid hearings are a combination of live (in court) and digital hearings. We do have some people coming to the hearings in person, so we’ve set up a screening station and co-ordinate social distancing. Throughout the crisis we’ve had a clerk and a staff member available 24/7 to be able to handle emergencies. The digital hearings have made things easier. We deal with three types of kids: the dependency, which is abuse and neglect; we deal with the delinquent kids, everything from traffic violations to serious crimes; and we also deal with Children in Need of Services (CHINS). In all fairness, the state has really limited the punishment aspects of delinquent kids. For the most part, we’re definitely following computer programs and guidelines and don’t contain a child unless they are very serious cases, and law enforcement has complied with that.”

The technological aspects during the COVID-19 shutdowns have been helpful for juvenile court.

“I don’t have to bring a (foster) child up from Brunswick and have that child transported six hours to make a brief appearance,” said Bearden. “Traditionally, I want the kids to talk to me; we talk in the chambers all the time and we’ve always had great communication with the kids in court. But now with the COVID-19 pandemic, technology has been introduced that allows the kids the ability that, if they don’t want to travel here but still want to be heard, we have this great technology now, and we know how to use it.”

Bearden said that in addition to the pandemic changing the way court hearings are handled, the pandemic has also put a burden on the local foster population, and that the number of foster children in Gordon County is expected to increase as the economy and community begins to open back up.

“We have a unique population; we have 197 children (at this time) in foster care. We expect those numbers to go up because the reporting of

abuse will rise as things begin to open up,” said Bearden. “But it’s also the stress of the pandemic; a lot of folks are under stress, they are not used to having to spend so much time at home with their kids. When their kid gets to be loud and gets on the parent’s nerves, we don’t have the means we normally have – sending the kids to school, sending them to their grandparents – and we expect there to be those (abuse) issues as well. We’re all bracing for a big increase in cases.”

According to Bearden, 103 of the 197 foster children are residing in Gordon County at this time. The goal for foster children is the reunification of family when possible unless the abuse is so severe the court has to terminate parental rights. For those who are on the path to reunification, technology has helped with family visitation during the pandemic.

“It’s better than 50 percent,” said Bearden of having just over half of the foster children from Gordon County residing in the community. “But every time we place a foster child out of county, they change schools, they change counselors, they change their friends, and it becomes harder for them to have (family) visits. We don’t have public transportation when parents don’t have a ride to visit. So, if we have to move a child to Brunswick, the visitations become difficult. Between all of that, we are mindful of trying to return the kids that we can (back to their families). DFCS did a good job of gleaning all of their cases, reviewing them, and saying, ‘these are the close cases; let’s try to return these (children).’

“So we’ve been in sort of a holding pattern; even at DFCS, because they couldn’t facilitate their normal visits (due to the pandemic),” said Bearden. “We don’t have a visitation center (in Gordon County) for these families anymore; we were meeting with some families at the Child Advocacy Center, at the DFCS offices, at local restaurants or in the parks, but during this COVID crisis, all of those options were shut down. The DFCS offices shut down and their staff worked from home; the Child Advocacy Center wasn’t meeting, the restaurants all shut down. So what we did was we tried to individualize as many visits as we could, but when we ran out of those options, all we could do was digital visitations, and that’s just not the same.”

While the pandemic has probably been the most unfamiliar issue Juvenile Court has ever faced, the increase in the number of foster children in Gordon County is the issue at the forefront of the court as the way court hearings are handled has changed, starting with the increase of hearings per case.

“When I first started, we had 364 cases in 1990,” said Bearden. “The way they count cases has changed, but the number of kids involved is closer to 1,200 now. The actual number of cases now, and you’ll have multiple kids from one family, is closer to 800 cases. But we’re dealing with a lot more kids. And because the statutes have changed over the years, there are a lot more hearings for all of those cases. Back in the day, if we took a kid into custody, we basically warehoused them and two years later, we had a hearing whether we needed (a hearing) or not. Now, we have 72-hour hearings, five-day hearings, 10-day hearings and 30-day hearings; then four month, six month, 10 month and 12 month hearings, all trying to reunify the family. We do a lot more hearings now. By my count, it has quintupled since I began.”

A big help for Bearden over the years has been a strong CASA program. CASA volunteers are community members from all walks of life who have been vetted and screened, then trained to become sworn officers of the court appointed by the juvenile court judge to advocate for children who are living in foster care as a result of abuse



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SIGN OF THE TIMES: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the courts have been in a holding pattern, especially Juvenile Court, which has only been able to hold emergency hearings.

or neglect. CASA volunteers review documents and records pertaining to the child’s case, spend time with and build a relationship with that foster child to learn more about what the best interest of the child is.

“The CASA’s are a wonderful aspect, sort of a square wheel within the system because much like our guardian ad litem attorneys, the CASA volunteers are the eyes and ears of the court,” said Bearden. “They’re able to talk to people and get different perspectives they can bring (to court) concerning the children. If a child has a CASA, they’re going to keep that CASA throughout the process. So that CASA can bring that relationship to court that people might not otherwise do.”

“When I talk to our CASA volunteers before court hearings, they have some of the best stories about how resilient the foster children are,” said Dillard. “Just how wonderful the visits are going with mom and dad, how the volunteer witnessed the mom step up and do things. They’re giving me mostly positive input; they’re seeing positive steps the parents are taking that they can share with the court to show the judge. There are some negative stories, but the majority of the stories are definitely positive, where the parent is moving in the right direction for reunification.”

And the pandemic has affected the way CASA operates as well.

“I have utilized the technology a couple of times; it has really been a benefit for CASA at this time,” said Dillard. “I used it recently for a remote interview with a potential CASA volunteer through Zoom. That worked out really well. I have also done training with our current CASA volunteers via Zoom with just about all of our volunteers. A lot of our volunteers are older, so for them to want to work to learn this technology means those kids are important to them. They also wanted to see me and the other volunteers, and Zoom gave us the opportunity to do that. We were able to discuss training and discuss the possibility of new court reporting from CASA volunteers and if that reporting was feasible for Gordon County CASA. We did training on updating policy, and it went really well. During this whole crisis, I have maintained contact with our volunteers at least once per week; them being able to be accessible to me through Zoom has been invaluable to me. The collaboration of our team (in Juvenile Court) of what we can do and how we can do things has been essential.”

While there’s hope that things will return to normal soon for the court, there are areas where Bearden would like to continue to utilize the technology aspects of the COVID shutdown, and other areas where he prefers things as they were before.

“Especially in the kind of court that we do, a lot of people don’t tell

you the truth,” said Bearden. “With the influx of drugs that we’ve had in the community, having a parent there in person and sizing them up, and them sizing you up to see that they’re in a serious situation, is very helpful, and I miss that. I miss not having those people there. Sometimes I can trust someone more because they can convince me of that; sometimes they’re a really good actor, and sometimes you can see in their eyes that they’re no better than they were prior. In 30 years, I’ve seen the issue of cocaine, then it went to crack, then to crank then to prescriptions and opioids; now we’re having heroin. I’ve seen waves of different drugs and the different symptoms for each one. So the part where someone is in court, so you can witness them is helpful. I also like to see the kids and have that relationship with them; they usually waive cross examination so it’s not like they are on the stand and are going through cross examination. We have all the lawyers, the guardians and the CASA’s and we meet in my chambers; I take off my friendly. If they’re 12 and older, I just talk to them; no pressure is put on them. I tell them ‘I don’t want you to tell me where you want to live;’ I want them to relax and I tell them, ‘I want to know what your dog’s name is, I want to know what you enjoy doing where you’re at right now, is there anything that if you had a chance to talk to your siblings right now you’d tell them?’ We have these conversations so we can avoid putting the pressure on the child...that live ability is something that’s hard to replicate over the internet.

“On the other hand, if mom’s in drug treatment somewhere, I don’t want to yank her out of treatment to come here to court,” said Bearden. “That’s the last thing I want to do is to have her come out and stay with her buddies for the weekend if she’s doing well, so that’s an instance where the technology has been helpful.

“It’s easy to get depressed up here,” said Bearden. “You sometimes feel like you’re not accomplishing things. You get someone who does really well (in treatment and counseling), gets their child back then relapses back into drugs and then we remove the child again. That doesn’t mean you give up on the person, but it makes it harder for them to get their child back another time. It’s sad, but we’re going to keep doing what we’re doing. We report to the Grand Jury once a year and they’ll sometimes ask why we allow visits with the parents. We have to explain that our goal is to reunify the child with the parent if we can, and we take that very seriously.”

In Gordon County, there are only around 40 certified foster families for the almost 200 children in foster care. A

Hamilton Long Term Care facilities hold social distancing parades for residents, family members

HAMILTON MEDICAL

Wood Dale, Regency Park and Ridgewood Manor (Health and Rehabilitation facilities for Hamilton Long Term Care) recently hosted parades for residents and family members. Visitation has been restricted since early March to protect residents from COVID-19.

Quinton Memorial was the first one to hold a parade in early May.

Members of the care plan team had been working on creative strategies to allow family members and residents to see each other, and the social distancing parade idea was developed.

Wood Dale residents Sara Lusk, Yvonne Hawkins, Elizabeth Hughes and Peggy Stinson all said they enjoyed the parade and appreciated it. Stinson said she even danced.

"It was just wonderful," said Lusk. "Everything was so organized. I even heard the birds singing as I was getting ready for the celebration to begin, and then I saw my son and his wife and the banner they made. I started to cry. I was so happy."

Ken Lusk, son of Sara Lusk attended. "I really appreciate the effort that was put into the parade, including how the residents were kept safe and separated," he said. "That 25 seconds of joy, passing in front of my mom really meant a lot – job well done."

Staff members helped residents make posters to hold up as their family members drove by at a safe distance. Residents lined up outside the facility while following social distancing guidelines.

Regency Park resident Bettie Lane said the parade was her favorite activity since she's been there. Kenneth Montieth, husband of resident Virginia Montieth said the parade was wonderful for he and his wife.

"I could see the smiles even with masks on," said Fostene Wimpy, daughter of Regency resident Geneva Walker. "Their faces were lit up."

Ridgewood Manor resident Nola Bramlett said she was happy to see her girls. "The parade was so much fun," she said. Her daughters said they felt blessed to be able to see their mother.

Many residents and family members said they were ready to have another parade soon.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Church Calendar

ONGOING

-Philadelphia Christian School is located off Highway 41 between Calhoun and Adairsville. The school offers 4-year-old kindergarten through 12th grade, using the A-Beka curriculum. To find out more about the school, call the office at 706-625-3233.

-Faith Deliverance Ministry and Outreach will be taking donations of clothes, shoes, also all house hold items to help needy families. Call Minister Evelyn Adams at 706-671-7988.

-Celebrate Recovery, a faith based 12-step program, meets every Tuesday at 6 p.m. at Relevate Church in Ranger off 411. Call Nicole for information: 706-979-4713/706-290-8028.

-East Calhoun Church of God, at 401 Peters Street, gives out groceries and clothing through the "Feed the Needy" ministry each Saturday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The church hosts a miracle healing service every first Friday at 7 p.m. For more information, contact "Feed the Needy" ministry director Florence Jones at 706-409-1981. Senior pastor is Keith Reid.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

-Fairmount Church of Christ, located at 265 South Avenue in Fairmount, Ga. Minister Bobby Gayton. Everyone is invited to visit and worship with us. Sunday morning Services at 11 a.m.; Bible study at 10 a.m.; Wednesday Bible study at 6 p.m.

-Fairmount United Methodist Church-Loving One Another To Christ. Sunday School at 10 a.m.; Worship Service at 11 a.m. Children's Church provided. New Minister now Leading. New programs and community outreach coming soon.

-Pastor Terry Reisner invites everyone to the Vision Pentecostal Ministry located at 401 South Wall Street in Calhoun. Come hear the truth of God's Word Sundays at 11 a.m.

-Faith Deliverance Church & Outreach Ministry Welcomes Everyone to an Anointed Church Service at 1320 Dawnville Road in Dalton every Sunday at 6 p.m. and Thursday at 7 p.m. Pastor and Evangelist Evelyn Adams, also an Anointed Gospel Singing. Come expecting Jesus to move for you. Miracles, Healing, Deliverance, Salvation. For more information or directions, call Minister Evelyn Adams (706) 671-7988

-Pine Chapel United Methodist Church, located at 2232 Pine Chapel Road in Resaca, "A place to begin, belong and become." Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m. Pastor Louise W. Elmore.

-Resaca Assembly of God, located at 904 Resaca Lafayette Rd NW, would like to welcome everyone to please come and join in worship and meet our Pastor Steve Burns and his lovely wife Cathy. Sunday school at 10

a.m., worship service on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.. Everyone is invited.

-Calhoun First United Methodist Church Sunday Worship times: 9:00 a.m., traditional worship; 10 a.m., Sunday school; 11 a.m., contemporary service (in the CAC). Calhoun First UMC is located at 205 East Line Street in downtown Calhoun.

-First Presbyterian Church, located at 829 Red Bud Road N.E. in Calhoun. Pastor David McDonald invites you to join us on Sunday for Sunday School at 9:45 a.m., Worship Service at 11 a.m., and Bible Study Class Tuesday 10 a.m.

-Oakman Baptist Church located at 397 Oakman Rd. Oakman, Georgia, has Sunday school at 10 a.m. Covered dish dinner every third Sunday following worship. Everyone is invited!

-Damascus Baptist Church, located on North Highway 41 in Calhoun, Sunday School at 10 a.m. Sunday worship at 11 a.m. and Sunday night at 6 p.m.

-Old Sugar Valley United Methodist Church located at 2659 Old Rome Dalton Road in Calhoun has Breakfast Social at 9:30 am every Sunday. The church history is colorful, dating back to the Civil War, small cozy country church nothing fancy! Come join us!

-Faith Deliverance Ministry and Outreach with Evelyn M. Adams, Minister has been ordained as a Minister of the Gospel since 1972. Call anytime to come minister to your church of place or event at 706-337-3241. 24-hour prayer line at 706-671-7988. Send all prayer requests to P.O. Box 394, Fairmount GA, 30139.

-Pleasant Valley Baptist Church is a Bible believing & teaching church located in the Red Bud Community. Pastor Keith Gibson and the congregation invite you to come and worship with us at 3882 Red Bud Rd., Calhoun. Opportunities for worship: Bible Study for all ages 10 a.m., Children's Church up to 5th grade 11a.m., Worship service 11 a.m. Wednesday night service times Prayer Bible Study and Student Ministries 7 p.m. 706-624-0198, Fine us on Facebook or email pvbccalhoun@gmail.com

-Maranatha Baptist Church on Hwy 225 across from paradise Drag Strip, Calhoun would like to invite you to attend our services for Sunday School starting at 10 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m. Wednesday Night Services are at 7 p.m. Everyone is Welcome. Pastor Richard Webster.

-Evangelistic Outreach Ministries on 1590 Dews Pond Road. Pastor Mark Kirby invites everyone to Fellowship and Worship with us. Children's Church on Sunday Services starts at 11:00am Childrens Church starts at 11:30am Wednesday nights Bible Study 7:00pm-8:00pm. Come out and see what the Lord is doing!

-The College Street Church of God,

731 College St., Calhoun, 706-483-3666, pastor Dewayne Smith, holds weekly services: Sunday school at 10 a.m., Sunday; morning worship at 11 a.m., Sunday; Sunday night service at 6 p.m.; and Bible study on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

-Victory Fellowship Center, 925 Oothcalooga St., invites you to weekly worship services held at 11 a.m. every Sunday morning. Pastor Joe Stewart and the VFC family also invite everyone to join each Wednesday at noon and 7:30 p.m. for anointed and enlightening Bible studies. If you are looking to grow in your understanding of God's plan for your life and gain greater insight of the life changing power of His word, come and join us as we study the word.

-Boone Ford Baptist Church invites you to attend its services for Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. and Worship services at 11 a.m. every Sunday. Sunday night services are at 6 p.m. on the first and third Sunday night of each month. Wednesday night services start at 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome. Gary Quarles, pastor.

-Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and Pastor David Peeler invite everyone to attend weekly services. Sunday School begins at 10 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m. Sunday evening activities and discipleship training begin at 6 p.m., and children's and youth programs at 7 p.m. Wednesday service begins at 7 p.m., along with Bible study programs for children and youth.

-Pastor Steve Corbin invites everyone to regular services at New Zion Baptist Church. Sunday School is at 10 a.m., worship service at 11 a.m. and Sunday night service at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday night Bible study is at 7:15 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

-Greater Mt. Tabor Baptist Church, 259 Herring Road, NW, Armuchee, invites you to come worship and fellowship with us on Sunday morning at 11 a.m. Pastor Reginald McDaniel and Church Family also welcome you to attend Mid-Week Bible Study, Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. and Sunday School at 10 a.m.. We are a church on the move for Christ, come share with us as we grow in the Word of God.

-Resaca First Baptist Church and Pastor Rev. Harold Blackstock would like to invite you to attend our Sunday School at 10 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m. Sunday night service is at 6 p.m. Wednesday night service at 6 p.m. for children and youth.

-Liberty Baptist Church Pastor Gene Ratcliff invites everyone to church services in Ranger; service times are 10 a.m. Sunday School, 11 a.m. Sunday worship and 7 p.m. Wednesday worship.

-Brother Joe Hall and the congregation of Ranger Baptist invite everyone to its regular services on Sunday morning. Sunday School begins at 10 a.m. Worship is Wednesday night with dinner at 6:30 p.m. and

Bible study at 7 p.m. For more information, call 706-629-3425.

-Oak Grove Baptist Church of Adairsville is located at 997 Brownlee Mountain Road S.W. Service times are Sunday school 9:45 a.m., with worship at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday and 7 p.m. on Wednesday. Pastor: Roger Fisher.

-Fellowship Baptist Church of Plainville will hold a Brotherhood Breakfast on the second Sunday of each month at 8 a.m.

-Hope in Christ Ministries, 306 Peters St., is holding services every Sunday morning. Adult Bible Study starts at 10 a.m. with praise/worship service at 11 a.m. Bishop W. S. (Billy) Weems is the pastor. Rev. Earnest Diamond Jr. is assistant pastor. For more information, call the church at 706-602-2433.

-Talking Rock Creek Chapel has a new pastor, the Pastor Donald Broeuhurst and family. Service times are 9 a.m. for Sunday school and Children's Church and 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Wednesday. For more information, call 706-669-0854.

-Rev. Israel and Bishop Rita Partin Spaulding will host a Gathering of Eagles Revival Service each Saturday night at 6:30. These meetings are designed for those individuals who have a desire to go higher in God. Come expecting your breakthrough. The location is 799 Pine Street in the Church of God in Christ building. Rev. Israel and Bishop Rita are International Speakers with a Life Changing Word. For more information please call 423-883-3138.

-Philadelphia Baptist Church operates North Georgia Baptist College and is registering students. It is a local church ministry designed to prepare men and women for serving the Lord. It will provide basic training for preachers, Sunday school teachers, Christian schoolteachers, evangelists and missionaries. For more information call the church office at 706-625-3233 or visit the college's web site at www.northgabaptistcollege.com.

-Calhoun Church of Jesus Christ, located at the corner of Damascus Road and Pine Drive, invites everyone to attend their weekly services. Sunday services take place at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday's service is at 7 p.m. The church's pastor is Joshua Maddox and assistant pastor is Hunter Quarles.

-Big Springs Baptist Church, 3326 Dews Pond Road SE, Calhoun, invites families and individuals from all walks of life to attend their services (casual dress). The worship service includes contemporary music along with traditional hymns and Southern Gospel. Children's Church is provided for ages K- 3rd grade and nursery for babies – pre-k. Service times: Sunday mornings: fellowship breakfast, 9:15-9:30 a.m.; Bible study (all ages) 9:45 a.m., worship 10:45 a.m. Evening worship 6:30 p.m. Wednesday evenings 6:30 p.m. For more information on the church you may contact rev. Tommy Phillips at 678-986-7404.

COURT

From page 7A

lot of times, children are placed with relatives who are not certified through the state. Unfortunately, there are no benefits or protections for those relatives who step up to help out, but the federal government has been making a push to help those relatives out.

“A really interesting thing coming up is Families First, which is federal funding legislation that we just started over the last year,” said Bearden. “We’ve been trying to move to more placements in the homes of families, foster families, but actual family, relatives of the child. We’ve been trying to do this for five years, but this time, the federal government has said ‘we’re not going to fund state DFCS unless you agree to have a major effort to put the families together first.’ We’ve always had grandparents, aunts and uncles to step up. But part of this means that if they’re not (certified) foster parents, they don’t get counseling. The biological mom, if their child is placed with a grandparent that’s not a certified foster parent, doesn’t get drug counseling or help through DFCS, so it’s very limited. So the new federal funding legislation is going to provide a lot of money in the community for relatives, not foster homes, for resources like counseling, treatment, therapy; things like respite care, because some grandparents are older and can’t watch the children all the time and might need someone else to watch the kid at times, additional healthcare, school assistance like tutoring...all of those resources you couldn’t get before unless you were a certified foster family. So we started doing Temporary Alternative to Foster Care (TAFC) with relatives with a goal of reunification. We’ve done more of those in Gordon County than any other county in the state. We’ve had 30 hearings over 15 removals, where they’ve placed (a child) not in foster care, but with a relative. So the child is not in state custody. There are still some kinks, but it’s a step towards Families First.”

As the Chairman of the Legislative Committee for the Council of Juvenile Court Judges, Bearden gets additional insight into the Families First legislation.

“It’s very different from foster care,” said Bearden. “When a kid gets into foster care, they automatically get Medicaid. You place a child with a grandparent, maybe the grandparent has health insurance, and maybe they don’t. Maybe the grandparent can qualify for Medicare or a state service, and maybe they can’t. But that child in care has got to have medical insurance. We’re trying to figure out what this

means for those kids. Melissa gets to see all of the changes, and how everything is being encouraged to push to Families First and the federal funding but it comes slowly.”

“And the families, the ones we do place children with, they go through foster care IMPACT training,” said Curvin.

IMPACT is an acronym for Initial Interest, Mutual Selection, Pre-Service Training, Assessment, Continuing Development and Teamwork. During the IMPACT training, families are provided with information on numerous topics to assist them in understanding the Division of Family and Children’s Services’ role in working with birth families, the roles and responsibilities of foster and adoptive parents, and the effect of abuse and neglect on children and their families.

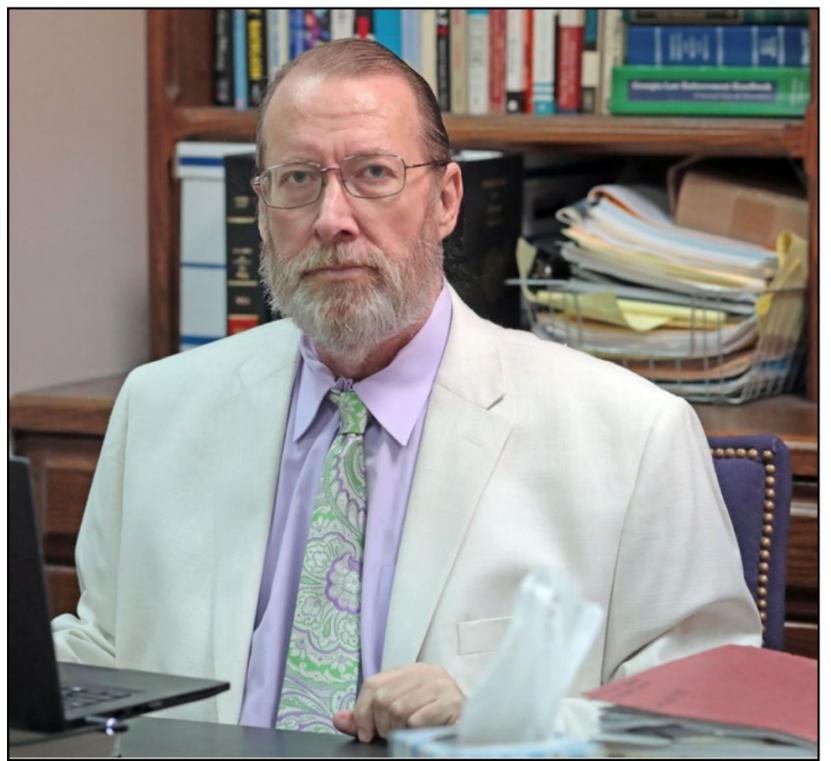
“I think Gordon County has very good IMPACT training,” said Bearden. “It covers the judicial branch, goes through what Superior Court does, covers what the case workers do and covers some child development training. It covers what foster parents might experience and what happens when children begin disclosing details to them.”

Thousands of foster children have been through Judge Bearden’s court through the past 30 years, and one of the most meaningful parts of the job is running into a former foster child whose life was turned around by decisions made in the court.

“I run into some of these kids from years ago, and they ask if I remember them,” said Bearden. “I ask them how their life turned out; they’ll usually give me a really good story. They’ll tell me they’re an EMT now; that they have got kids of their own now. They tell me ‘you terminated my rights and I was adopted by (someone that gave me a good home) and now I’m a nurse.’ Those are great stories. We’ve had some really good success stories of children that have aged out of care. The local DFCS has done a good job; we don’t like kids to grow up in foster care, we don’t want that. But they can stay in foster care now and go to college and some of those kids have been very successful.”

For now, the court continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic successfully and plans for next steps to the continuous changes faced due to the coronavirus.

“Before, we were doing Monday court until, sometimes, seven o’clock at night,” said Bearden. “But then the COVID crisis hit, and now we’re doing the cases digitally but before, we were having 10-15 phone calls a day, now we’re having 40 plus a day. The new technologies; there are some things you can’t substitute for but there are a lot of technologies we can start fitting into the court and start using regularly. There are some



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Judge Lane Bearden operates the Juvenile Court with professionalism and dedication to changing children’s lives. “I run into some of these kids from years ago, and they ask if I remember them,” said Bearden. “I ask them how their life turned out; they’ll usually give me a really good story.”

horror stories around the state about some of these things not done well. (Our success) is probably because of our team; we have Alyssa who has the understanding of the technology and including the county IT department, plus we jumped on this early, and I think it’s made a big difference. Another thing is we have never been reversed in Gordon County Juvenile Court in my 30 years. We have not had the Court of Appeals of the Supreme Court reverse our decision and say, ‘you made a mistake.’ So trying to keep that record through this COVID process has been very important to us. We’re trying not to make any mistakes; we have zero tolerance for it. We catch each other and we communicate with each other. If somebody is not doing their job, everybody pulls together.”

“I think as a newer employee, the communication has been wonderful,” said Dillard. “It’s an ease; there’s no forcefulness to it. It’s an immediate and effortless communication, which I think as a team, really makes things flow better.”

Curvin said that at this time, the court is behind about 80 regular hearings due to the COVID shutdowns.

“We’re not behind in emergency hearings or intakes,” said Bearden. “Those proceedings we’ve been keeping up with. But judicial reviews, reuniting families, those are the types of things we’ve been behind on because we’re not supposed to be doing those hearings yet. But we’re prepared to

do what we have to. My people are prepared to work at night if we have to in order to catch up.”

Also helpful before and during the pandemic is the ease Juvenile Court works with other departments.

“We work with other departments well; we work with the District Attorney’s office seamlessly; the Child Advocacy Center, a wonderful new addition, has made it so much easier for law enforcement; we work well with our connections within law enforcement; we work well with the schools, the superintendents especially. We’re a court, we’re not another agency and we’re not all on the same team. We’re a check and balance. The result is that the kids will turn out better when everyone does their job. I think that coordination outside the department has gotten a lot better. There have been times over the years where an agency, group or an individual kind of wanted their own way, but that just doesn’t work well in a small town. You’ve got to rely upon the other agencies and groups.”

No matter what happens with the COVID-19 pandemic, Juvenile Court is ready to tackle the challenges faced with the shutdowns.

“We’re in a great position, utilizing the technology and our staff to get the job done,” said Bearden. “I am confident in our ability to continue to perform at the level needed to continue to serve and perform our duties.”

Community Events

May 1, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Gordon County residents who qualify will receive either \$350 or \$400 toward their electric bill.

To schedule an appointment, visit the Tallatoona website at www.tallatoonacap.org and click ‘BookNow,’ or call 770-817-4666, extension 2.

It’s important to note that due to health and safety concerns related to COVID 19, appointments for assistance will be completed remotely by phone. Tallatoona officers are currently closed until further notice.

-Story times at the Calhoun-Gordon County Library, 100 N. Park Ave. in Calhoun, are 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays

-Fairmount Library is now located inside of City Hall on the second floor. Story time is held every second Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. and New Horizon Book Club is held on the second Thursday of the month. For more information call 706-337-5306.

-If your school, church, civic or other

organization would like a representative from the Georgia State Patrol to come and speak with your group on law enforcement or public safety matters, call 706-624-1477.

-Story times at the Calhoun-Gordon County Library, 100 N. Park Ave. in Calhoun, are 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays.

-The Calhoun Adult Learning Center has so much to offer. Make the center your window to the world. Free study programs are offered during the day and evening sessions. Enroll in adult education today. Call 706-624-1111. The center is located on the campus of Georgia Northwestern Technical College.

-The Gordon County Saddle Club meets the fourth Thursday of each month. The meetings will be held at the Gordon County Agricultural Service Center, 1282 Hwy 53 Spur SW Suite 200, Calhoun, Ga. 30701. Contact 770-548-5956 for more information.

June 2020

-Copper Creek Farm Sunflower Festival: Friday, June 12 - July 11. Copper Creek Farm is located at 1514 Reeves Station Road SW in Calhoun. For more information, visit www.coppercreekfarm.com

Notices

-TALLATOONA BEGINS LIHEAP COOLING ASSISTANCE. Low Income Energy Assistance Program Cooling Assistance available; appointments have begun for seniors: Tallatoona Community Action Partnership, Inc. has begun the annual Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Cooling Assistance for Gordon County.

On April 1 at 8:30 a.m., Tallatoona began accepting appointments for the LIHEAP cooling program for senior households age 65 and older, along with homebound households. Appointments for the general public will be accepted beginning



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