

GORDON Gazette

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

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Calhoun-Gordon County's #1 Source for News

DOT visits latest County meeting to discuss issues, wrecks at the new Bypass at Hwy. 53

Brandi Owczarz
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Representatives with the Georgia Department of Transportation were on hand Tuesday night, Jan. 19, at the latest meeting of the Gordon County Board of Commissioners to discuss issues with the new South Calhoun Bypass at the Hwy. 53 East intersection.

When traveling the Hwy. 53 East/Fairmount Highway area heading west toward Fairmount in the area of the bypass, which has been totally overhauled, a traveler must make a stop to turn left onto Hwy. 53 East to travel toward Fairmount or turn right onto Hwy. 53 to head toward the

other end of the bypass onto Hwy. 53 West/Rome Road just west of the Fairgrounds.

The project, which just needs final touches such as stripping, has already opened to traffic in the last couple of months, but 10 wrecks have occurred at the South Calhoun Bypass at Hwy. 53 East since Dec. 14, 2020, according to Gordon County E-911 Director Debbie Vance. One of the wrecks included a school bus in the early morning hours of a recent Saturday, where luckily no children were on board. Some of the wrecks have been caused by travelers not seeing the stop sign and running straight through the intersection

into the woods across the highway, others have had t-bone type wrecks where they did not have good sight turning east due to various reasons. It was also pointed out that some of the cause was probably due to people from out of county not being aware that the roadway has changed.

"After the opening of the South Calhoun Bypass at its intersection at Highway 53 East, we've had several traffic accidents and (the issues) started coming up on social media," said County Administrator Jim Ledbetter.

Being a state highway, the County has no control over the issues other than alert GDOT and work with the state to find a



The intersection of the South Calhoun Bypass at Hwy. 53 East, which has seen 10 wrecks since Dec. 14, 2020. (BRANDI OWCZARZ/Staff)

solution.

Georgia DOT District 6 Northwest Georgia District Engineer Grant Waldrop was on hand to talk about the Bypass and answer questions

from the Board.

"What's basically happened is we've taken (Highway 53), which used to come into town from Fairmount to Calhoun; it now continues on to the

South Calhoun Bypass and you now have a stop control on the approach from Calhoun going

See **BYPASS**, page 11A

Gordon County E9-1-1's Gurnee presented with 2020 Kathy Cox Guardian Angel Award

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At the Tuesday night, Jan. 19, 2021 meeting of the Gordon County Board of Commissioners, Gordon County E9-1-1 Corporal Misty Gurnee was awarded the annual Kathy Cox Guardian Angel Award, named in honor of the former Gordon County Ordinance Officer who was tragically killed when her department truck was struck head-on by an armored car on Highway 136 in 2008. Officer Cox had served

in law enforcement for 30 years and was a volunteer member of the Gordon County Fire Department.

AdventHealth EMS Deputy Director Donald Bowen presented the award to Gurnee at the meeting. He told those in attendance that the award presentation began in 2009 to recognize members of the public safety community who displayed the same attributes as Officer Cox.

"Some of the attributes and strengths that Kathy exhibited every day are compassion, dedication, commitment,

teamwork, sense of humor, mentorship and confidence," said Bowen. "When I was reading through the nominations, I noticed the comments from (Gurnee's) co-workers included 'she's a mentor,' 'she follows the rules but is there for her employees,' 'she's understanding, cool-headed and calm,' 'she wants to be there for others,' 'enforces a positive attitude by having one herself as

See **GURNEE**, page 11A



Gordon County E9-1-1's Misty Gurnee, center, was presented the 2020 Kathy Cox Guardian Angel Award on Tuesday night. Pictured with Gurnee is Kenny Cox, left, the husband of Kathy Cox, and AdventHealth EMS Deputy Director Donald Bowen. (BRANDI OWCZARZ/Staff)

CPD continues investigation into Haney's burglary

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Calhoun Police Detectives continue to investigate a robbery that occurred at Haney's Jewelry on Court Street in downtown Calhoun on Monday, Jan. 18.

The call came in just before 4 p.m. on Monday that a white male subject had entered the longtime business and requested to see merchandise behind the counter. Once the suspect was shown the items, he grabbed them and ran from the store, jumping into a dark

colored, originally reported as black Lincoln Continental or Town Car with a Tennessee license plate and fleeing the area.

There was also a white female in the car when the vehicle left. The car had two different types of wheels on the driver's side of the vehicle.

The man had on a white cap and a white hoodie, and was described as about six-feet tall.

Anyone with any information concerning the theft, or the identity of the suspects or suspect vehicle is asked to contact Detective Dhruv Desai at 706-629-1234.



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GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Task gets tougher for contact tracers amid rapid COVID spread.

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County approves budget amendment to move Elections Department

Brandi Owczarz
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The Gordon County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday night, Jan. 19, voted on several budget amendments put on the table including one in the amount of \$50,000 for rental and utility needs to house the Elections Office.

This will be the third time the Elections Office has had to move in the last couple of years and Gordon County

Administrator Jim Ledbetter hopes this will be the last move for at least the next three years.

The Elections Office was housed in the Courthouse Annex building on Piedmont for years and moved to the Government Plaza (former BB&T) building on North Wall a few years ago. This new move for Elections is required because of the huge Courthouse Annex/Courthouse SPLOST renovation project that

has just begun.

"We had new machines mandated on us by the State of Georgia and ran out of room because of the size and amount of machinery, so (Elections) was moved (from the Government Plaza back) to the Annex," said Ledbetter. "Now we have to vacate the Annex for construction."

Ledbetter said that



See **ELECTIONS**, page 11A

The Gordon County Board of Elections will be moving soon into this stripmall located at the corner of Court Street and River Street.

Second Front

AdventHealth Gordon to host virtual Living Well class

ADVENTHEALTH GORDON

AdventHealth Gordon is hosting a virtual Living Well class featuring Julia Danforth, MD, on Tuesday, February 9 at 6:30 p.m. online via a Zoom meeting.

During this class, participants will learn how to properly read food labels. Sally Lipsky, the leader of Plant-Based Pittsburgh, an organization dedicated to teaching the health benefits of plant-based eating, will lead the virtual class alongside Dr. Danforth and share guidelines for reading packaged food labels on cereals, snack foods, veggie burgers and more. Sally is also a plant-based

nutrition educator and author of Beyond Cancer: The Powerful Effect of Plant-Based Eating.

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.

Calhoun Eye Care announces impending closing after almost 60 years in business in Calhoun

STAFF REPORTS

Calhoun Eye Clinic has announced via social media that they will be closing their doors this year after almost 60 years in service. An exact date for closing has not been decided; that date is expected to be announced later in the first quarter of 2021.

"After 57 years, Calhoun Eye Clinic will soon be closing," said the facility in their statement. "We appreciate all the years we have been able to serve this community.

We have seen almost 6 decades of patients. Starting with Dr Leon Gresham in 1963, he opened his office up at The Johnson Hall Clinic. In 1969 he built the current location at 100 South Court Street. Dr Robin Scoggin starting seeing patients in Calhoun in 2009 up to present day. Dr Scoggin will continue his practice at his location in Rome."

According to the statement, all patient records will be available at the Rome practice after the first quarter of

2021. At the present time, Calhoun Eye Clinic is still taking orders for contact lenses and eyeglasses for their established patients, and are referring all eye exams to the Rome location.

"We will announce our final day a little later into the first quarter of this year," said the statement.

Ginger Worde, LDO is still at the Calhoun office. Office hours right now are Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Later times can be arranged by calling the office at 706-217-7326



2021 Dancing with the Stars cast revealed

United Way of Gordon County MOHAWK

MOHAWK PRESENTS
CALHOUN'S DANCING WITH THE STARS
— THE FINALE —

- COUPLE #1 ABBY CROWE & BEN BINGHAM
- COUPLE #2 AUBRY DORSEY & ISAAC NANCE
- COUPLE #3 CARLY CURTIS & SKYLAR BENHAM
- COUPLE #4 CARSON GLAZE & GRANT GLAZE
- COUPLE #5 JOY & GARRETT NUDD
- COUPLE #6 KAYLAN GAINES & ADDISON BAKER
- COUPLE #7 LILY STEPHENS & NATE STOCKMAN
- COUPLE #8 MEGAN WRIGHT & CHRISTIAN LEWIS
- COUPLE #9 MOLLIE SURRATT & ADRIAN LYLES
- COUPLE #10 RAVEN PASLEY & IAN KING
- COUPLE #11 SUZANNE ROBERTS & TONY PYLE

STAFF REPORTS

The 10th annual Dancing with the Stars, a fundraiser of the United Way of Gordon County and presented by Mohawk, is scheduled for Friday, April 16, 2021 at the Calhoun Performing Arts Center. Tickets will go on sale in February. Social distancing measures will be in place for the event.

This year, the final year of the popular fundraiser, will feature both student and adult couples performing. According to the UW of Gordon County Facebook page, a total of 11 couples are participating this final season.

Couple #1: Abby Crowe & Ben Bingham
Couple #2: Aubry Dorsey & Isaac

Nance
Couple #3: Carly Curtis & Skylar Benham
Couple #4: Carson Glaze & Grant Glaze
Couple #5: Joy & Garrett Nudd
Couple #6: Kaylan Gaines & Addison Baker
Couple #7: Lily Stephens & Nate Stockman
Couple #8: Megan Wright & Christian Lewis
Couple #9: Mollie Surratt & Adrian Lyles
Couple #10: Raven Pasley & Ian King
Couple #11: Suzanne Roberts & Tony Pyle

Hamilton Physician Group
Calhoun Campus

Michelle Little, DO Family Medicine
Jennifer Smith, FNP-C Family Medicine
Justin Hare, DO Neurosurgery and Spine

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Obituaries

January 20, 2021

George Childers, Jr.

George Watson Childers, Jr., age 72, of Fairmount, passed away on Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021 at AdventHealth Gordon.

George was born on Feb. 5, 1948 in Pickens County to the late George Watson Childers, Sr. and Ora Parker Childers. He was employed by Soloman & White for 40 years as a truck driver, and Mohawk for 10 years. George loved mowing his lawn and driving trucks.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by brothers, Max Childers and his wife Jean, Tom Childers and his wife Wanda, Guy Childers and his wife Brenda; brother-in-law, Ham Childers; sister-in-laws, Betty Jo Chastain, and Ann Childers.

He is survived by his loving wife of 48 years, Sandra Childers; daughter, Dondra Hendrix and her husband Allen; brothers, Ed Childers, James Childers, Herman Childers and his wife Lynn, Bobby Childers and his wife Martha, Melvin Childers and his wife Sally; sisters, Linda Childers, Gail Neighbors, and Bonnie Pruitt and her husband Ronnie brother-in-law, Tim Stafford, Jeff Stafford and his wife Vanessa, and Johnny Chastain; two grandchildren, Dawson Hendrix and Donovan Hendrix; special nephew, Blake Childers and his wife Elizabeth; two special cousins, Kenneth and Dennis Childers; his special dog, Tazz also survives.

Celebration of life will be conducted on Thursday, Jan. 21 at 3 p.m. from the Chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Rev. Mark Johnson officiating. The family will receive friend from 1 – 3 p.m.

Due to the National health crisis and Covid-19 virus, mask must be worn properly at all times and social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

You may leave the family online condolences at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of George Childers, Jr.



Diane Forsythe

Diane Lynn (Beason) Forsythe, 67, of Calhoun, died Monday, Jan. 18, 2021. She was born on March 12, 1953 to Shirley Beason Robertson. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, John Robert Forsythe III.

To honor her wishes her body was cremated and the family will have a memorial service at a later date.

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 Diane Lynn (Beason) Forsythe.



Geraldine Green

Geraldine M. Green, 68, of Oakman, GA died Monday, January 18, 2021. She was born on March 16, 1952 in Fairmount, GA to the late Hubert Clifford Silvers and Arizona Cordia Silvers.

She is survived by her husband of 27 years, James D. Green; children, Joe(Melissa)Young, Phillip(Heather)Young, and Jamie Green; brother, George Roscoe Silvers; grandchildren, Jacob Young, Samantha Young, Sawyer Edens, Beau Young, Trenton Young(Ruth), Gracey Stone, Thomas Stone, Lily Newton, Alyssa Newton, and Reahgan Newton; great grandchildren, Jaxon and Lydia Young, and Collum Edens; she is also survived and love by many nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 from 5:00 PM until 9:00 Pm at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

The funeral will be held Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 3:00 PM from Fairview Church of God with Bishop Terry Jones, Rev. Michael Stone, and Rev. Jerry Green. Her body will lie in state at the church from 2:00 PM until the service hour of 3:00 PM. Pallbearers are, Sawyer Edens, Beau Young, Trenton Young, Jacob Young, Jonathon Silvers, and Matthew Silvers. Burial will follow in the Church Cemetery.

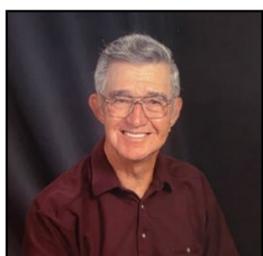
To leave condolences and sign the online guest book please go to, www.maxbrannonandsons.com

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Geraldine M. Green.



Raymond Langley

Raymond Calvin Langley, 93, of Calhoun, GA died Monday, January 18, 2021. He was born in Gordon County on November 26, 1927, to the late Chester and Stella Carroll Langley. In addition to his parents,



he was preceded in death by his son, Lamar Brown; his siblings Raiford "Red" Langley, Austin Langley, William "Dude" Langley, Ed Langley, Bonnie Morrow, and Thelma Glass.

Raymond was a veteran having served in the United States Army where he was assigned to a Heavy Vehicle Unit as a driver, he was awarded the Korean Service Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars, National Defense Service Medal, and the United Nations Service Medal. He was a member of South Calhoun Baptist Church.

Raymond is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Joanne Langley; his daughters, Roxanne Douglas Johnston and Susan Brown; siblings, Bob Langley, Melanese "Tig" Langley, (Elsie) Langley; grandchildren, Daniel Brown, Michelle Brown, Alex Ray, Kimberly Johnston; great-grandchildren, Alexis Nesbitt, Anna Brown, Abigail Brown, Nathaniel Brown, Arizona Jack and Logan Ray.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 21, 2021, from 11:00 AM until the hour of service at 1:00 PM in the Chapel of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home with Rev. Clifford Free and Rev. Kent Thomas officiating. Burial will follow at Fairview Cemetery at Hall Memorial Church with Rev. Gary Bowman officiating. Pallbearers include Larry Stamey, Kevin Holsomback, James Langley, Jerry Holsomback, George Hutchinson, and Steve Glass. Honorary pallbearers include Spencer Brown, Harold McEntyre, and Jerry Clark.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Raymond Calvin Langley.



Annis Mulkey

Annis Mulkey, 82, of the Ranger community, died at her home on Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. Annis was born on March 9, 1937; she was the daughter of the late Joe and Mamie Stone Silvers.

Annis is survived by her husband of more than sixty-two-years, Ed Mulkey; their daughter and son-in-law, Edna and Terry Tatum; her granddaughter, Heather Tatum; many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Monday, Jan. 18, 2021, from 5 – 8 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

The funeral service was conducted on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021, at 1 p.m. from the chapel of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home With Rev. Richard Pack officiating. Burial followed the service at Liberty Baptist Church Cemetery.

Online condolences may be expressed and the guest book signed at www.maxbrannonandsons.com

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Annis Mulkey.



Tony Newman

Tony Albert Newman, 57, of Sugar Valley, died Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021. He was born on Aug. 25, 1963, son of H.A. Newman and the late Glenda Payne Newman.

He worked for many years as a chemical compounder at Arrowstar. Tony loved sports: golf, baseball (The Braves) and football (Georgia Bulldogs). Tony's real treasure was his family; his favorite pastimes were the hours he spent playing with his grandchildren.

He is survived by his loving wife, Rita Newman; sons and daughters-in-law, Derek and Erica Newman, Chase and Angie Newman, and Zach Newman; daughter and son-in-law, Hannah and Duston Priest; father, H.A. Newman; brothers, David Newman and Scott Newman; sister and brother-in-law, Cindy and Oscar Derrick; grandchildren, Elle Causby, Zaylen Clark, Kelson Newman, Cuyler Newman, and Cyrus Newman; nephew and niece, Easton Derrick and Emily Derrick; best friend, Richard Cannon; several friends and other relatives also survive.

The family received friends on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

The funeral will be Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021 at 3 p.m. from the Chapel of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home with Rev. Joey Henderson and Rev. Dewayne Smith officiating. Burial will follow in Chandler Cemetery. Pallbearers are Scott Newman, Kenneth Sisson, Paul Defoor, Oscar Derrick, Easton Derrick, Nash Cannon, and Vernon Sergeant. Honorary pallbearers are, David Newman, Richard Cannon, Kevin Johnson, Phil Kelsoe, Tommy Kelsoe, Dale McClamrock, and "Balljoint" Knight.

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 Tony Albert Newman.



Candy Peterson

Candy Peterson, 55, of Adairsville, died Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021, after a 5-month illness. She was born on May 25, 1965, in Haverty Grace, Maryland to the late Allen Tate Sr. and Virginia Bomen. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Kassandra Reed; brother, Tommy (Mary) Tate; sister, Debbie Sue Tate;

brother-in-law, Randy Reed.

She is survived by her son, Jedadia (Alicia) Peterson; daughters, Virginia (Steven) Brackett and Myriah (Preston) Sneed; brothers, Allen (Dena) Tate and Walter (Brandi) Watkins; sister, Marilyn Tate Houser; grandchildren, Charlotte Peterson, Dayton, Noah, Wendy, Jedadia Leiva, Willow, Alannah, Levi Dietrich, Cy Sollicito, Memphis, Savannah, and Jackson Brackett; several friends and other family members also survive.

To honor her wishes her body was cremated and all services are private.

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 Candy Peterson.



Eva Parker

Eva Parker, 93, of the Erwin Hill community, passed away at her home on Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021.

Eva was born in Calhoun on Sept. 17, 1927; she was the daughter of the late William Jackson Bradley and Nettie Elizabeth Cook Bradley.

Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, J. R. Parker; her grandchildren, Gary Robert Parker, Stephen Parker, and Melissa Pinyan; sisters, Bessie Petty and Mildred "Millie" Manning; her brother, Dennis Bradley.

Eva was a woman of many talents. She stayed busy making quilts, crocheting, doing embroidery and sewing; these tasks were easy for her. She loved to cook, especially the epic Sunday dinners that she made for her family. For many years, she worked in textiles. Eva was a member of Erwin Hill Church of God.

Eva is survived by her children and their spouses, Bobby and Marilyn Parker, Billy and Patsy Parker, Johnny and Iris Parker, Shirley Parker, Willard and Marcia Parker, and Wayne and Sharon Parker; brothers, Zeb (Marcelle) Bradley, Louie (Janet) Bradley; nineteen grandchildren, fifty great-grandchildren, and thirteen great-great grandchildren; other relatives and many family friends.

The family would like to express their appreciation to the staff of Tapestry Hospice and to her caregivers, Janie Massingill, Martha Ray, and Glenita Seagraves. The Parker family requests that donations be made to The American Cancer Society, cancer.org, in memory of Melissa Pinyan or to the MS Foundation, msfocus.org, in honor of Rebecca Lee.

The family received friends on Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 from 12 – 7 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

The funeral service was conducted on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021 at 1 p.m. from Trinity Baptist Church, with Dr. James Shope officiating. Burial followed at Gordon Memorial Gardens. Pallbearers included Jaron Gilbert, Michael David Parker, Kevin Parker, Parker McBurnett, Eric Dale, and Richie Parker.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Eva Parker.



Mildred "Millie" Phillips

Mrs. Mildred "Millie" Louise Phillips, age 77, of Resaca, departed this life Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 at the local hospital. She was born May 15, 1943 in Copperhill, Tenn., a daughter of the late Reverend Willie and Minnie Patterson. She was also preceded in death her son, Martin Dean Whitaker; brothers, David Patterson, Willie Patterson Jr., Bill Patterson, Amom Patterson; sisters, Rachael Ball, Cathy Patterson.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Karen Denise and Roland Freeman of Resaca; son, James Noah Whitaker of Dalton; grandchildren, April and Brandon Hays, Malissa and Marty Rolen, Mandy and Chris Gazaway, Megan Whitaker, Noah Whitaker, Jimmy Whitaker, Curt Whitaker; brothers and sisters-in-law, Jerry and Linda Patterson of Talking Rock, Jimmy and Patricia Patterson of Chatsworth, Reverend Donnie and Sharon Patterson of Ranger, Melvin and Tonta Patterson of Resaca, Andrea Patterson of Dalton; sisters and brothers-in-law, Evon Stout of Knoxville, Tenn., Elizabeth and Harold Malone of Chatsworth, Shirley and Yavanny Simon of Ranger; companion, David Phillips of Chatsworth; several nieces and nephews.

Service to celebrate the life of Mrs. Mildred Louise Phillips will be held Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021 at 12 p.m. from the Ponders Melrose Chapel with Reverend Donnie Patterson and Sharon Patterson officiating. Interment will follow in the Harmony Grove Baptist Church Cemetery. The family received friends at the funeral home from 5 – 9 p.m. on Tuesday.

Due to the National health crisis and the Covid-19 virus, masks must be worn properly at all times and



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RELIGION

THERE'S ALWAYS A STORM BREWING



Randy Muse
Antioch Baptist Church
Youth Minister
rmuse1@yahoo.com

There's not a storm within 200 miles that my mother doesn't know about, and rightfully so. Before I was born,

mom and dad had a mobile home where their house sits today. A neighbor across the street watched from her basement window as a tornado, which killed several members of the Goble family, picked up their home and flipped it over several times before slamming it down on the roof with mom and Patty (my sister) inside. Mom has shown me the nightmarish ruins of what they once knew as home.

As I have watched the news in recent years and looked over videos and photos of the aftermath of various storms and tornadoes throughout the

Southeast, I am left with gratitude that I haven't personally suffered such a disaster. I'm also left with much sympathy for those who did.

As much as we'd love the case to be, storms aren't limited to weather related events. As a matter of fact, the weather related storms are just avenues by which we arrive at spiritual storms.

We're all victims of storms. The truth is that, every day, we're either coming out of a storm, in the middle of a storm, or about to go into a storm. Sometimes they arise from mistakes we make. Just as much, or

probably more so, storms are times in our lives that are way beyond our control.

One thing is for sure: storms can't even come in our lives without the Lord's permission. There's a great example that pops into my mind from scripture. At His own leading, God allowed Satan to attack Job. Job pretty much lost everything he had, including his wealth, family, and health. Even when his own wife encouraged Job to curse God and die, Job refused to let the storms overtake him.

Job proclaimed, in Job 1:21, "Naked came

I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Storms can leave you feeling discouraged, drained, defeated, and determined. Fear is a major component of storms. We become afraid of potential dangers, and possible destruction. However, our faith in God will help us to trust Him. He always does what is right.

It's easy to trust in Him when things seem to be going well. God has a great purpose for each and every one of our lives. Ultimately, that

purpose is to bring glory and honor to Himself. This happens at a greater level when things aren't going well, and we trust Him anyway; when we determine, like Job did, to praise the Lord no matter what.

A preacher once said, "Storms remind us that life is fragile, and can easily be broken. Storms remind us that our faith is fragile, and can be shallower than we think." Most importantly, "Storms remind us that God is faithful, and that if it brings us closer to Jesus, it is time and tears well spent."

Be Blessed.

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 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.

--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, Find 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 Dwayne 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.

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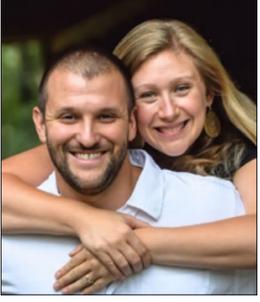
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FINANCE

CASH FLOW WITH JOE: A good property management system



Joe & Ashley English

Owners of Focus Property Solutions, LLC
focuspropertysolutionsllc@gmail.com

I have been out working on rentals a lot this past week. Contrary to what you hear about most landlords, I actually like working on our properties. The reason for this is because I get to see how our people are doing, how they are keeping the house up and if they are doing the four jobs of a tenant.

And just to remind you, the four jobs are: 1. Take care of the house.

2. Pay on time. 3. Be comfortable to work with by staying in good communication and being respectful. 4. Be a good neighbor.

These four jobs are the rubric we use to determine if an applicant will become one of our tenants. Our whole application process is designed to uncover whether or not an applicant can do them. And once we have decided someone can do the jobs, we “hire” them as a tenant. But we continually reiterate the four jobs so our tenants understand their importance and how our lease is centered around them.

And because of that fact, we tend to get great people, who take care of the houses and communicate well with us.

Going out to work on the properties helps me solidify in my mind that we did our jobs during

the applications process. And the results speak for themselves. Let me tell you about it.

The tenants at the first house noticed a water issue in the kitchen coming from the shared wall with the bathroom. They checked to make sure it wasn't something they could fix before calling. When they did, they also sent pictures and video to help me diagnose the issue before I got there. And because they were being proactive in taking care of the property and using good communication, we were able to fix the water leak coming from the shower head before it did any real damage.

Next, we had a tenant call about a sewer smell in the house. After talking with them, I called our septic man. He suggested changing the wax rings on the toilets before he pumped because the smell only came on rainy days,

which apparently is a symptom of a bad wax ring. I didn't know that. Our tenants volunteered to change the wax rings themselves. They did, but it did not fix the issue, and we had to have the tank pumped.

On the day of pumping, I went out there to check on things. The husband was home sitting on the front porch, talking with the elderly next-door neighbor. I went up to thank him for changing the wax rings and asked him why they had volunteered. He smiled and said, “Because it was less than \$50.”

He was referring to a portion of our lease that gives our tenants a discount on their rent for doing repairs around the house that cost less than \$50. He was glad to do the repair and I was glad we had a great tenant who was taking care of our property.

On top of both these

tenants being proactive with repairs, the properties themselves were being kept neat and clean on the inside as well as the outside. This let me know they took pride in living in our houses. I also observed them being good neighbors. And on top of that, they tend to pay early.

That is a great place to be with your tenants. Many landlords only get to observe payment history with their tenants. And by the time they find out there is a problem, it is too late. But by going out on service calls, I regularly get to see if our tenants are doing the four jobs correctly. And as you can see from what I experienced, these two tenants were doing an outstanding job.

This outcome was not just happenstance. It is the result of a methodical application process, along with a well thought out management system.

And I can't take credit for either. Our system has some personal touches on it that we have developed over time, but a majority of what we do comes directly from the teachings of David Tilney and his course, Hassle Free Property Management.

If you are a landlord or thinking of becoming one, you need to take his class. Normally, it is a three-day live event in Atlanta. But this year, David is teaching live, but virtually. It will be Feb 5-7, and the cost is \$595. And trust me, it's worth every penny. To sign up, go to www.davidtilney.com. You will be glad you did.

Joe and Ashley English buy houses and mobile homes in Northwest Georgia. For more information or to ask a question, go to www.cashflowwithjoe.com or call Joe at 678-986-6813.

FINANCIAL FOCUS: Pre-Retirees - Plan Now for Health Care Costs



Dewayne Bowen

Financial Advisor
 at Edward Jones
dewayne.bowen@edwardjones.com

If you're close to retirement, you'll have several financial issues to consider. But you'll want to pay attention to one of the most important of these issues: health care costs. How can you prepare yourself for these expenses?

First, get an early

start on estimating health care costs. More than two-thirds of those planning to retire in the next 10 years say they have no idea what their health and long-term care costs will be in retirement, according to the Edward Jones/Age Wave Four Pillars of the New Retirement study. And some people don't worry much about these costs, which may be considerable, thinking that Medicare will pay for most of them.

While Medicare does cover many medical expenses, it also has its own costs. You probably won't pay a premium for Part A (inpatient/hospital coverage), since you likely had this cost deducted from your paycheck when you were working. But if you

are hospitalized, you'll have to pay deductibles and coinsurance (the percentage of costs you pay after you've paid your deductible). Part B (doctor's visits) requires a premium, deducted from your Social Security checks, and you must pay an out-of-pocket deductible. After you meet this deductible for the year, you typically pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount for most doctor's services. And when you enroll in Part D (prescription drug plan), you will likely also have to pay a monthly premium, an annual deductible and coinsurance or copays.

To help pay for the Medicare deductible, coinsurance and copayments, you may want to get supplemental

insurance, known as Medigap. Premiums for Medigap vary, depending on the plan you choose.

As an alternative to original Medicare, you could select Medicare Advantage (sometimes called Part C). Medicare Advantage plans are offered by private companies approved by Medicare, but the benefits and costs vary by plan. These plans generally will incorporate Medicare Parts A and B and will provide additional medical coverage, such as prescription drugs.

When you incorporate all the above, the annual out-of-pocket costs for traditional medical expenses likely will be about \$4,500 to \$6,500 per year, per person – not insignificant, but

certainly a number that can be addressed by careful planning.

But there's one more expense to keep in mind: long-term care. The average cost of a private room in a nursing home is more than \$100,000 per year, according to the insurance company Genworth. And Medicare typically pays few of these expenses.

Clearly, between regular medical costs associated with Medicare or those not covered by it, and costs resulting from the possible need for long-term care, your health care bills can mount. To meet these costs, you need to plan ahead – and take action.

For example, it's essential that you incorporate health care expenses into

your overall financial strategy. You can also work with a financial professional to run some “what-if” analyses to see if your strategy would be derailed by a potential long-term care stay. And the professional you work with may be able to suggest specific protection vehicles that can help you meet the costs of long-term care.

The best time to prepare for your health care costs during retirement is well before you retire. So, if you haven't already started, now is the time to do so. When it comes to paying for health care, the fewer surprises, the better.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

CONSUMER ED: Re-activating old debt

CONTRIBUTED

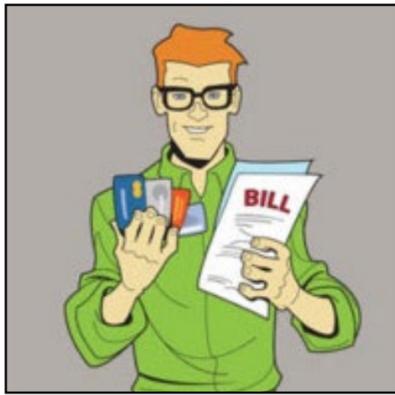
Dear Consumer Ed:

If I ask questions about an old debt that might have expired, will that make it active again? I'm not sure what the original debt was for before it was sold to a debt collector, and I need to find out the date the debt was incurred.

Consumer Ed says:

Old debt that has reached the statute of limitations is considered time-barred. Time-barred doesn't mean the debt can't be collected, only that the person who incurred the debt cannot be sued for it. Be cautious inquiring about potentially time-barred debts. Typically, simply acknowledging a debt can toll the statute of limitations, or restart the clock. Georgia law, however, gives enhanced protections for consumers by providing a statutory written requirement whereby you as the debtor, or someone authorized by you, would have to provide a written acknowledgement sufficiently recognizing the debt in order for a creditor to collect on a debt that would otherwise be time-barred.

If you're curious as to what the original debt was for, consider reviewing a copy of your credit report from one of the three credit reporting agencies (Experian, Equifax and TransUnion). In consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion are now offering free weekly online reports through April 2021. To access your free credit report, go to annualcreditreport.com.



You have one additional avenue available to you if the debt collector contacts you. The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act give you the legal right to what is called “debt validation.” The law requires debt collectors to provide a notice of debts within five days of their initial communication to collect on a debt, if not included in the initial communication. The notice must include the amount of the debt, the name of the creditor, and a statement notifying the consumer of his/her 30-day right to dispute the debt. You also have the right to request within this 30-day period, the name and address of the original creditor. A written request to dispute a debt, so long as it is stated as a dispute and not an acknowledgment, stops debt collectors from further attempts to collect until the debt is verified. Failure to respond to a notice of a debt on the part of the consumer does not imply an acceptance of the debt and therefore has no effect on the statute of limitations.

GORDON Gazette

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This special, online publication of the Gordon Gazette will be FREE for all to enjoy beginning Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021, in observance and honor of the 171st birthday of Gordon County.



GORDON GROWN

Home Vegetable Garden Disease Management



Greg Bowman
Gordon County
Extension Agent
gbowman@uga.edu

results when disease issues reduce your production.

This week, I will be sharing more tips on how to deal with disease issues in the home vegetable garden. I will be sharing information from a revised UGA publication by Elizabeth Little, UGA Home Garden/ Small Farm Plant Pathologist.

As part of a quick review, there are four primary organisms that cause plant diseases. Those are fungi, bacteria, nematodes and viruses. You may see these organisms called plant parasites or pathogens.

Keep in mind that most vegetables are susceptible to at least a few diseases and you can have some diseases more of a problem than other diseases. In the first article on this topic, we discussed several cultural practices that can reduce your problems with diseases. First, proper site selection is important.

This week will be the second in a two-part series on disease management in the home vegetable garden.

For starters, growing vegetables from home can be a rewarding and even healthy activity. It can bring a sense of pride to provide fresh garden vegetables to family and friends.

It can also be a healthy activity to work outdoors in the garden. On the flipside, it can be disappointing to have less than favorable

Full sun areas that

drain excessive moisture well is important. The use of crop rotation in a home garden can help starve out disease pathogens and not allow buildup. Make sure you are using diseasefree seed and transplants and take advantage of disease-resistant varieties. Also, make sure you are following proper planting dates.

One additional cultural practice you need to consider is the use of mulch. Mulch options can come in

many forms. Mulch can be straw, bark, leaves, shredded paper or plastic. The goal is to reduce contact with pathogens that can live in the soil. Mulch can keep soil from splashing up on the plants and can also keep fruit from touching the bare soil. Our info states that a mulch layer can really reduce early blight that we see in tomatoes. Some ripening fruit such as from strawberries, tomatoes and squash for

example can keep fruit rots from touching bare soil. Mulch can help in other areas by helping to conserve soil moisture, reduce weed issues and can help overall plant health.

Proper watering in the vegetable garden is important in reducing disease also. Little states that constantly wet soils can lead to soil-borne disease issues such as seed decay, damping-off plus root and crown rot. Wet plant foliage can lead to foliar diseases. Watering deeply and only when needed will help encourage a healthy root system. Our information suggests to water deeply at one inch equivalent and no more than once per week if possible based off natural rainfall.

Note that more water will be needed when the weather is hot and dry.

The method of how you irrigate is important too in regards to disease management. Ideally, you will use drip irrigation options such as a soaker

hose. This will slowly release water to give a complete soaking to the ground. If the garden is small, you may use hand watering as long as you water at the base of the plant.

I know sprinklers can be easy to use, but they can be the least desirable form of irrigation in terms of efficiency and disease prevention. A sprinkler will soak the entire plant. If you turn on a sprinkler in the afternoon, for example, the plant can stay wet till the next day. This can aid the start of foliar diseases.

Keep in mind that we want to keep foliage as dry as possible. If you must use a sprinkler to irrigate, do so in the early morning hours so the sunshine can dry the foliage quickly when the irrigation event is done.

Another rule-of-thumb is to not work in the garden when plants and soil are wet. Little states that bacterial and fungal diseases can

spread from one plant to another on hands and clothing when the above ground plant parts are wet.

You also should incorporate proper spacing and trellising in the garden. You should space plants properly to allow good air circulation. You will keep plants wet longer if the space is crowded. Many plants such as tomatoes, beans and cucumbers will be assisted by staking or trellising. This can help reduce foliar, fungal and bacterial diseases. Proper staking or trellising can help air circulation thus drying of foliage also.

Finally, vegetable gardening season is just around the corner. Taking steps now to prepare for potential disease issues can reduce problems in the upcoming home garden season.

For more information, contact UGA Extension-Gordon County at 706-629-8685 or email gbowman@uga.edu.

Gordon County Young Farmers announce winners of GCYF Annual Classic Youth Livestock Show



GORDON COUNTY YOUNG FARMERS

The Gordon County Young Farmers recently held their annual GCYF Annual Classic Youth Livestock Show at the Murray County Ag Center. This year marked the Young Farmers' 18th year to provide this opportunity for the community's youth. There were more than 40 youth representing three counties that exhibited more than 100 animals at the event.

WINNERS:

Goat Showmanship winners

Hunter Petty
Mia Lumpkin

Goats

Supreme Champion Doe- Mia Lumpkin
Reserve Champion Doe- Hunter Petty

Gordon County Born & Bred Doe

Winner- Hunter Petty
Reserve- Breanna Manning

Sheep Showmanship winners

Emma Long
Matthew Manning

Sheep

Supreme Champion Ewe- Emma Long
Reserve Champion Ewe- Emma Long

Gordon County Born & Bred Ewe

Winner- Matthew Manning

Cattle Showmanship 1st place

Olivia Tierce
Rebekah McElrath
All Jo Cook

Cattle

Supreme Champion Heifer- Olivia

Tierce

Reserve Champion Heifer- Rebekah McElrath
Supreme Champion Steer- Grace Johns
Reserve Champion Steer- Rebekah McElrath

Gordon County Born & Bred Heifer

Winner- Olivia Tierce
Reserve- Rebekah McElrath

Gordon County Born & Bred Steer

Winner- Rebekah McElrath
Reserve- Hannah McElrath

Pig Showmanship winners

Parker Fleming
Roberto Romero
Nathan Johnson
Olivia Smith
Lauren Waters
Mia Lumpkin

Pigs-

Supreme Champion Gilt- Nathan Johnson
Reserve Champion Gilt- Parker Fleming
Supreme Champion Barrow- Nathan Johnson
Reserve Champion Barrow- Chloe Mays

Gordon County Born & Bred Gilt

Winner- Matthew Manning

Gordon County Born & Bred Barrow

Winner- Matthew Manning

Gordon County Young Farmers appreciates the support of local businesses. Their commitment and contribution to the show allows every exhibitor the opportunity to receive a payout. The success of the show is greatly due to the generosity of the

sponsors:

Jones Oil Distributor, Inc.
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Northeast Georgia Livestock, LLC
Sacketts Western Wear
Johns Cattle Company-In Memory of Jimmy Johns
Calhoun Stockyard
Fairmount Poultry & Building Supply, Inc.
Landscape Creations
North Georgia National Bank
Sherman Hall Construction, LLC
Joey Martin Auctioneers
Calhoun Farm Supply
Hinton Milling
Gravitt's Farm Supply
Sims Showstock
Tractor Supply- Jasper
Pickens County High School- FFA

Show Committee Members include:

Carla McMorris
Zach Waters
Carly & Darren Sexton
Greg Jones
Rebecca Macedo
Callie Dobson
Lacy Powell

Jason Johns

Brent McDaniel

Gordon County Young Farmers also thanks Brandi Hurd with Colima Farm Photography for taking photos and Mary Manning for helping with show entry.

In addition to GCYF's youth livestock show, the organization offers high school seniors the opportunity to earn a GCYF scholarship toward their future studies. Youth who have been active in the program are encouraged to fill out the application, found on their Facebook page, which is due April 16, 2021.

All GCYF events can be found on their Facebook page.

For more information about the Gordon County Young Farmers, please reach out to :

Annemarie Carr
Gordon County Young Farmers
1282 SR 53 Spur SW, Suite 200
Calhoun, GA 30701
770-519-3619

More photos can be found on the Gordon Gazette website at www.gordongazettega.com

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HEALTH NEWS

GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Task gets tougher for contact tracers amid rapid COVID spread

ANDY MILLER,
Georgia Health News

With COVID-19 cases spiking, it's basically impossible for the state's contact tracers to reach the burgeoning number of people potentially exposed to the disease.

That's the assessment of the state agency running the program.

"With new cases hovering around 10,000 daily, it is not possible to keep up with them," Nancy Nydam, spokeswoman for the Georgia Department of Public Health, told GHN recently.

Tracing an infected person's recent contacts is a way to contain the spread of a disease — if it can be done fast enough. COVID is only the latest disease to necessitate such tracing.

Contact tracing is being prioritized in line with CDC guidance, Nydam said. That means contacting a person's household members first, then pursuing contacts in "congregate community settings" such as schools or workplaces, she said.

Public health experts view contact tracing as a vital function to bring down the rate of transmission of the virus.

This tracing activity, though, hasn't been getting much public attention in recent weeks. It's been overshadowed by the rollout of COVID vaccines in the United States, and by daily reports of new cases, hospitalizations and deaths that regularly break state and national records.

"There are now so many cases, we can't reach everyone," a contact tracer told GHN. "There's not enough personnel and not enough money." This public health worker requested anonymity, citing a state directive to such employees not to talk to the media without authorization.

There's more focus on prisons, schools, law enforcement facilities,

and medical facilities, along with other workplaces, the contact tracer said. "We've had to streamline the process."

Yet with a more contagious strain of COVID surfacing in Georgia and other states, contact tracing may be more important than ever. This variant, first identified in Britain, is spreading rapidly in this country, the CDC reported last week.

Help for contact tracing may be on the way, though, under President-elect Joe Biden's massive COVID package. Biden takes office as president Wednesday.

Finding and warning people

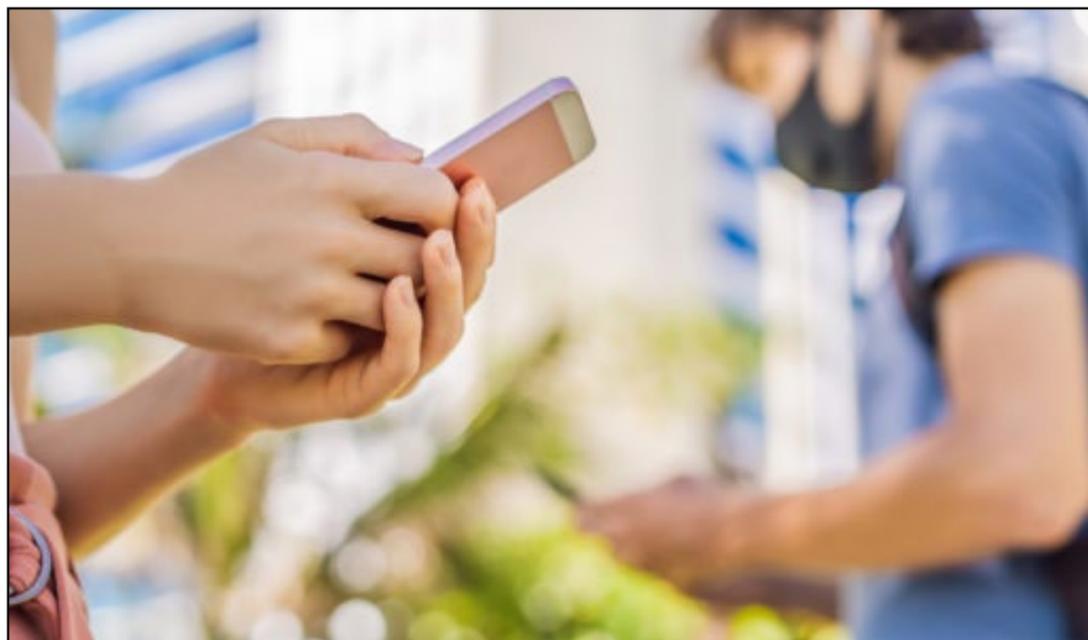
The tracing begins with case investigators working with patients who have confirmed or suspected COVID, helping them recall everyone they've had contact with while infectious. Then contact tracers warn those exposed individuals that they should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. These people are advised to get tested and potentially self-quarantine.

The goal is to break the chain of new infections.

The effectiveness of contact tracing depends on cooperation from the public, people getting COVID test results back quickly, and public health workforce capacity, said Adriane Casalotti, chief of government and public affairs for the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The surge of COVID, she said, can force public health workers into the triaging of cases and contacts.

Along with contact tracing, health departments also are having to do COVID testing and vaccinations, and help with reopening schools, among other functions, Casalotti added.

The state of Georgia now has a contact



tracing/case investigator workforce of 1,500, up from about 1,000 in early summer.

But their workload is expanding as well. Georgia currently has the seventh-highest rate of new infections per 100,000 population over the past seven days, according to a New York Times chart Tuesday. And on Tuesday, Georgia reported a single-day high of COVID deaths, with 170.

"The volume is high, and it's challenging," said Dr. Charles Ruis, medical director for the southwest Georgia Public Health district. "We're working days, nights, and weekends. The state has made it possible for us to hire extra help, and that temporary help has been good to have."

Reaching people potentially exposed is a critically important mission, said Amber Schmidtke, a microbiologist who tracks COVID-19 in Georgia.

"If people don't know they're exposed, they will not test early. You could be sick and not have the early treatment," she said. "They don't know that they have to quarantine."

Schmidtke noted that 40 percent who are infected with COVID have no symptoms at all.

"You have to identify that 40 percent."

The state's number of COVID cases classified as "unknown" in terms of details is growing, she added. "It's an indication that they're getting overwhelmed."

NPR reported in October that the U.S. had more than 50,000 contact tracers, according to a survey of states conducted by the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.

That's four times the number that states reported to NPR in its initial survey in late April, but it fell far short of the more than 100,000 that public health experts have been calling for since the pandemic began seven months ago.

Only a handful of states had enough public health workers to investigate their coronavirus cases, NPR said. That did not include Georgia or other Southeastern states.

"Contact tracing, if up and running and robust, and you have available testing with rapid results, it can be incredibly valuable to reduce rate of transmissions," said Dr. Harry Heiman, a public health expert at Georgia State University. But he added, "We've never had a robust system in place" in the state.

Public sometimes skeptical

Contact tracers can run into obstacles, including limited cooperation from the public.

"A percentage of individuals would never speak to us. They didn't believe we were part of the health department," said the contact tracer. "Many times people will withhold information about their friends."

There are also people whose dishonest behavior helps feed this public suspicion. These include scammers falsely claiming to be health officials, and those who use COVID as a pretext for spam calls. It should be emphasized that legitimate contact tracing focuses on infection-related issues, and it never includes questions about people's financial or other sensitive personal information.

A second contact tracer, Sombal Bari, who talked to a reporter with the state's permission, said the work "has been a bit more busy making sure that we're reaching out to a certain amount of contacts per day. I wouldn't really call it a challenge, but it's been a lot busier than it was before."

What has helped, said Bari, who works in the southwest Georgia district, is sending a text

message if the person doesn't answer the initial call. "They feel comfortable and they know it's not just like a random number, or someone who's trying to get their information and stuff like that."

The COVID relief package championed by Biden includes funds to beef up contact tracing.

Biden's proposed plan would add 100,000 new community health workers, creating a workforce for tasks such as vaccine outreach and contact tracing. These workers are also intended to become a permanent fixture in the U.S. public health infrastructure.

NACCHO's Casalotti said Tuesday that the Biden plan is a positive sign for the fight against COVID.

"It's very hopeful to have a focus on workforce," she said. "But it's important to sustain this long term. This marathon is far from over."

Madeline Laguaite contributed to this article. She is a freelance journalist and a health and medical journalism graduate student at the University of Georgia.

Andy Miller is CEO and editor of Georgia Health News.

 **Anna Shaw**
Children's Institute

Southern Magnolia room on the lower level
201 Burleyson Road | Dalton, Georgia

Parent Support Group

The Parent Support Group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm.

All parents, grandparents, guardians, and other family members of children with special needs are invited to take part in a new parent-led Parent Support Group.

Anna Shaw Children's Institute follows social distancing and CDC safety guidelines.

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Locals make GHC President's and Dean's list for fall 2020

GEORGIA HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

achieve at least a 3.5 average.

The following students from Gordon County were named to the President's List:

- GA-GORDON
- Amanda Barnett, Calhoun
- Joria Brooks, Calhoun
- Tabatha Collins, Calhoun
- Tanya Farmer, Calhoun
- Kirsten Gordon, Calhoun

- Stephanie Griner, Calhoun
- Destiny Johnson, Calhoun
- Kaitlen Kiser, Calhoun
- Miriam Lister, Calhoun
- Maria Palmerin Palmerin, Calhoun
- Priya Patel, Calhoun
- Zachary Rush, Calhoun
- Brittani Weber, Calhoun

- GA-GORDON
- Emma Burger, Calhoun
- MarKayla Carroll, Fairmount
- Callie Dobson, Calhoun
- Josie Mirtes, Calhoun
- Maliyah Parks, Calhoun
- Jacquelyn Perez, Calhoun
- Jordan Romine, Calhoun
- Keifer Stroup, Adairsville

The following students from Gordon County were named to the Dean's List:

15-year-old rebuilds Remote Control GNTC Tractor-Trailer

GEORGIA NORTHWESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE

What started out as a broken Remote Control (RC) tractor-trailer truck found in a storage room has turned into a mascot for Georgia Northwestern Technical College's (GNTC) Commercial Truck Driving program, says Program Director Robert Browder.

The four-wheel drive RC tractor-trailer Robert uncovered was missing several parts, but instead of throwing it away he handed it off to 15-year-old Elijah Knox, son of GNTC graduate Joshua Knox. Elijah has a passion for finding broken RC cars and fixing them up.

"The reason I got into this project was because my dad was going to GNTC at the time and I wanted to give myself a challenge and pull something off that no one else had been able to do," Elijah said. "This has been a hobby of mine since I was 14 and it is something I am really passionate about."

The cab of the truck was too badly damaged to be fixed, Elijah explained, so the 15-year-old built an entire new cab using parts from other RC cars and trucks. The original cab was built in 1986 and Elijah tried to make the replacement as close to the original as possible.

"The cab was made from a plastic die cast and the frame from two Ford® F-250 trucks," he explained.

This four-wheel drive RC tractor-trailer was restored by 15-year-old Elijah Knox, son of GNTC graduate



LEFT: 15-year-old Elijah Knox, son of GNTC graduate Joshua Knox, has a passion for finding and repairing broken RC cars. RIGHT: This four-wheel drive RC tractor-trailer was restored by 15-year-old Elijah Knox, son of GNTC graduate Joshua Knox. The truck back was wrapped to look like one of the tractor-trailers driven by students in GNTC's Commercial Truck Driving program.

Joshua Knox. The truck back was wrapped to look like one of the tractor-trailers driven by students in GNTC's Commercial Truck Driving program.

This four-wheel drive RC tractor-trailer was restored by 15-year-old Elijah Knox, son of GNTC graduate Joshua Knox. The truck back was wrapped to look like one of the tractor-trailers driven by students in GNTC's Commercial Truck Driving program.

After Robert got the truck back, he had it wrapped to look like one of

the GNTC tractor-trailers driven by students during class. The RC rig sits on a shelf in Robert's office where it stands out against the others in the program's collection.

"I keep a model of every truck company that hires our students," he said. "It makes a cool visual and shows what we do at GNTC works."

The Commercial Truck Driving certificate program provides basic training in the principles and skills of commercial truck operations. At the

completion of the program, the student is administered the Georgia CDL Skills exam. The program is offered both day and evening. The Commercial Truck Driving program is one of the High-Demand Career programs, covered by the HOPE Career Grant for qualifying students. For more information about GNTC's Commercial Truck Driving program, contact us Monday - Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 4:15 p.m., at 866-983-4682.

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GORDON Gazette

Robles recognized as CCCA Student of the Week

CALHOON CITY SCHOOLS

Calhoun High School 12th grader, Juan Robles, is the Calhoun College and Career Academy (CCCA) Student of the Week for January 11-15, 2021. Juan has been a student in the game design and computer science pathways for four years and an inaugural member of the esports team at Calhoun High School. Juan's information technology teacher, Dr. Cherri Rains, nominated Juan stating, "He has excelled in all my classes including AP computer science principles. Juan is a hard worker both in his class assignments and in extracurricular activities. He is committed to excellence in everything he does."



Juan chose the IT pathways at the CCCA because he likes working with computers and wanted an opportunity to learn more about how computers work. Juan is diligent in his work and demonstrates self-assurance and the ability to take on new and unfamiliar tasks. He is always willing to try new things and help others.

Juan not only does well academically, but is a very versatile student. He is an active member of the varsity e-sports team and has played on the team for three years. Juan demonstrates good communication skills and the ability to work well with others. Juan is also a worked-based learning student and works at Field Turf, USA.



Juan is very thankful that CCCA offers an

opportunity to explore the world of computer science. He aspires to work as an electric utility operations specialist with a local utility company. He hopes to join an apprentice program after graduation.

When asked about his thoughts on the computer science pathway, Juan stated, "The computer science pathway has helped me form a belief that hard work and dedication will always lead to success. Don't

let the past determine the future and never give up on your dreams."

Congratulations to Juan Robles, CCCA Student of the Week for January 11-15, 2021

BYPASS From page 1A

towards Fairmount. You have to make a left-hand turn to continue on to Fairmount. We still have some lanes closed out there right now. We're still modifying the way it operates; we've built up the additional lanes and performed some shoulder work out there. We still have to put on the final topping; so we're not finished yet but it is getting pretty close to its final alignment as in the plans."

Waldrop said that DOT is looking into two of the crash reports they have received this month and that the DOT has a few things they can try to make the intersection more conspicuous if travelers are approaching the stop sign from Calhoun heading east toward Fairmount.

"From what I've heard, that seems to be the common problem (in the area)," said Waldrop.

The Board raised concerns about different issues, including lighting in the area at night; that with no lighting it is hard to see the median in the center of the Bypass and suggested adding lighting or putting a type of light that flashed in the area, and that sight distance when turning is an issue.

"One thing that I've heard is that the sight distance as you look to the west (at the stop sign), that there's a dip and a hill, then a guard rail that kind of obscures your view to the right

(west)," said Ledbetter. "Another comment I've received is that traffic is backing up at the stop sign significantly."

It was asked if there were any plans for lighting to be added to the Bypass, since similar issues were happening at the Rome Road area as well.

"GDOT does not install street lighting; we do allow permits for local governments to install street lightings," said Waldrop. "As a requirement, you would have to sign an agreement that you will pay the ongoing maintenance and energy costs before we'd let you install on the right-of-way. (Lighting) is not a GDOT activity, so no, that's not included in the project."

Waldrop said that the installation of stop lights was also not something GDOT plans during a project, that sometimes they were included in the projects but would have to be maintained by the local government.

"So if that's the request, you can make (the request). It might be too late in this project but we can look into options, but typically, when you're talking interchange lighting, that's about a three-year-out program to get GDOT to start a separate project for a lighting project."

GDOT said that the project still needs final topping in areas, and thermo-plastic striping needs to be added.

"If this were our road department, I think I would've already told them to increase the signage to indicate the road ends and splits left to right," said Ledbetter. "And maybe have a more pronounced stop sign."

Ledbetter then asked what the DOT could do to make things better, since the public was already contacting him and the commissioners about this issue, and the issue isn't a local one since the roadway is a state highway.

GDOT told the Board they were working with contractors to implement a couple of remedies, including raised rumble strips to indicate travelers are approaching the intersection, to add and enlarging directional signs and to switch out the smaller, 36-inch single stop sign and install two larger 48-inch stop signs, one on each side of the intersection.

Waldrop was asked what the next steps are if none of the changes implemented work and the County still sees a large number of accidents.

"Street lighting is a good idea; it's just not something the State does. I'd be glad to rush through a permit to have lighting installed at the intersection," said Waldrop. "I think that'd help with the nighttime crashes."

Waldrop said he feels the larger stop signs and rumble strips will be very effective in alerting travelers of the intersection area.

"Unfortunately, a lot of crashes happen due to distracted drivers," said Waldrop. "The rumble strips have been a very effective tool for us to really call the driver's attention back to the road. I think that's going to be the most effective change."

The State said they are willing to work with the County on the issue, and will be receiving additional crash reports from the area to review.

GURNEE From page 1A

an example, 'level-headed, 'doesn't cause controversy,' and 'handles responsibility with ease and professionalism.'"

Kenny Cox, the husband of Kathy Cox, then spoke a few words about his late wife, saying that the award is a way to make sure his wife is always remembered.

"Those who knew (Kathy) and knew her well know of the impact that she made. She was just one of those people

who could never be forgotten," said Kenny Cox.

Gurnee began her employment with Gordon County E9-1-1 almost 10 years ago, on Feb. 7, 2011.

"During her time here she has been a huge asset to the department," said E-911 Director Debbie Vance. "Besides serving as a shift supervisor, Misty also serves on the Tactical Dispatch Team. She has shown great dedication to the team members and has always shown professionalism on scene. She never asks more of others than she is willing to give of herself, which is the way Kathy Cox was. She is always willing to help any of the staff and do anything needed for the department."

According to Vance, Gurnee has previously been issued the highest honor offered at E-911, being voted as Telecommunicator of the Year in 2016, along with several other accolades.

"The award is given to the person by nomination votes from their peers, which is a testament as to how other employees feel about her," said Vance. "She also got the Horizon Award in 2012 and Call of the Year in 2015."

Vance said that in 2019, Gurnee received a letter of Commendation for going above and beyond on a call of a burglary in progress in which the caller and responders were kept safe and the burglar apprehended.

ELECTIONS From page 1A

the new address the Elections Office will be located at is 408 Court Street, which is in the strip mall located at the corner of Court Street and River Street.

"Hopefully, they will be planted at 408 North Court Street for at least three years, so they'll be through moving for a little while," said Ledbetter.

Ledbetter said the move is being paid out of fund balance. Communications and Internet is budgeted at \$1,800; Repair and Maintenance is budgeted at \$15,500; Rental is \$21,000; some needed small equipment is budgeted at \$1,500; and there will be money needed for utilities of water, sewer and electric. The administrator said \$50,000 would be needed from January 2021 through June 2021 and that the lease does call for a proration for January rent.

The building is about 5,500 square feet and is being leased for 36 months. The first 12 months will be at \$3,000 per month with an escalator each year thereafter at \$3,100 per month in year two and \$3,200 in the third year. Ledbetter said if a fourth year is needed in the building, it can be rented for \$3,300 per month. He said this location was the best option regarding both price and location, along with the building being in good condition and regular maintenance performed on the building.

Ledbetter told the Board that there would be security measures in place for the office as well according to state regulations.

The Board approved another budget

amendment, along with a services agreement, in the amount of \$79,000 for the human resources department. The money was originally budgeted for a payroll clerk position, but is being transferred to go towards a service agreement with ADP for payroll services.

"Some of the things we get with ADP is workforce compliance resources, law advisement and it benefits administration," said Ledbetter. "They have their own data cloud backup in addition to what we have. They provide tax services, wage garnishment services, wage payment services, state unemployment insurance services, time and attendance services, Affordable Care Act services, employment eligibility verification services such as E-Verify, business continuity and disaster recovery. The cost of this program is \$69,719.50 per year. We've got \$8,975 in setup fees. We think it will make us more efficient."

The Board also approved a budget amendment in the amount of \$4,800 for rent of the GEM Theatre for to use in a courtroom-type manner for non-jury trials due to losing a courtroom while the Annex is under construction. The GEM is being rented by the county for \$200 per day each Thursday and is large enough for social distancing needs due to COVID-19.

In other news from the meeting:

The Board approved a declaration of surplus property for the Gordon County Sheriff's Office for miscellaneous items and equipment.

The Board approved Calnet Telecommunications Services Agreement for 2021 for both internet and Ethernet for the new elections facility. The internet is \$99 per month

and Ethernet is \$150 per month.

The Board approved a pre-event debris removal list of vendors for contract in the event that a major catastrophic event, such as a storm, was to do enough damage to need massive amounts of debris removed that could not be handled by the County. There is no cost to the County but the agreement locks in prices in the event the services are needed with companies that can help with debris

removal and help with reimbursements from FEMA.

The Board approved a declaration of surplus property for pews being removed from the Annex Courtroom. They will be donating the pews to Skyline Church in Adairsville.

The next meeting of the Gordon County Board of Commissioners will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 2 at the Administration Building in downtown Calhoun.

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OBITS

From page 3A

social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

Condolences may be expressed to the family at www.pondersfuneralhome.com.

Arrangements by, Ponders Melrose Chapel 138 Melrose Drive Dalton, GA 30721, 706-226-4002



Mary Ralston

Mary Frances Fisher Ralston, 75, of Calhoun, died Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021 after several years of declining health. She was born on Sept. 16, 1945 in Calhoun, daughter of Mary Daniel Fisher and the late Jesse Fisher Sr. In addition to her father, she was preceded in death by her sister, Melba Fisher Phipps.

She is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law, Howard and Donna Ralston and Doug and Sandy Ralston; daughter, Carol Ralston; brother, Jesse Fisher Jr.; grandchildren, Gabrielle and Jazmine Ralston; several friends and other family members also survive.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021 from 11 a.m. until the service hour of 1 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home with Rev. James Nix officiating. Pallbearers are Tony Williams, Joel Garland, Caleb Fisher, Edwin Ralston, William Daniel, and Clifford Daniel.

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 Mary Frances Fisher Ralston.



Randy Shepherd

Randy Lee Shepherd, age 65, of Calhoun, passed away on Saturday, Jan. 16 at his residence.

Randy was born on May 30, 1955 in Gordon County to the late R.V. Shepherd and Evelyn Louise Shepherd. He was employed by the Gordon



County Road Department for 40 years as a Foreman. Randy was an avid outdoorsman who loved to fish and hunt. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his loving wife, Johnnie Mae Shepherd; brother, Ronald Shepherd, Sr.; sister, Elaine Thomas.

He is survived by a son, Michael Shepherd; brother, Garry Shepherd, Sr., three grandchildren, Devlyn Shepherd, Erika Shepherd, and Xander Shepherd; many nieces and nephews also survive.

Funeral services were conducted on Monday, Jan. 18 from the Chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Reverend Roy Smith officiating. Burial followed in Chandler Cemetery. Pallbearers serving were Steven Dunn, Jr., Isaac Logan, Wayne Bradley, Jimmy Bradley, Ronald Shepherd, Jr., and Dylan Bradley.

The family received friends on Monday, Jan. 18 at Thomas Funeral Home from 1 – 3 p.m.

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

You may leave the family online condolences at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Randy Lee Shepherd.



Cecilia Sevilla

Cecilia Mayela Sevilla, age 69, of Calhoun, passed away Monday evening January 18th in Redmond Regional Hospital.

Cecilia was born July 20, 1951 in San Jose, Costa Rica, daughter of Juan Rafael Gonzalez and Rosa Sanabria Soto. She was a member of the St. Clements Catholic Church and was employed by Nance Carpets prior to her retirement.

She is survived by one son, Henry Valle of Calhoun, one daughter, Evelyn Sevilla and her husband J. Cruz of Calhoun, two brothers, Gerardo Gonzalez Sanabria and Jorge Gonzalez Sanabria, three sisters, Teresa Gonzalez Sanchez, Cristina Mireya Calvo, and Angelica Gonzalez Sanabria. Three grandchildren, Kendra Sevilla, Jasmine Sevilla and Noah Sevilla and two great-grandchildren, Zayden Perez and Draco Perez also survives.

A Funeral Mass will be conducted 10am Saturday January 23rd from St. Clements Catholic with Fr. Feiser Munoz officiating. Burial will follow in Fain Cemetery.

The family will receive friends Friday evening from 5 until 8pm.

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

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Cecilia Mayela Sevilla.



Mary Thompson

Mary Janice “Williamson” Thompson, 81, of Calhoun, died Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. She was born on Sept. 2, 1939 in Cedartown to the late Woodrow Turner Williamson and Ruby Estelle Farmer. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Melvin Lee Thompson; two daughters, Connie Davis and Teresa Guice; grandson, Jamie Welchel.



She is survived by her children, Paul Smith, Gene and Judy Smith, and Susie Parker; brother and sister-in-law, Johnny and Rhoda Williamson; 13 grandchildren; 30 great grandchildren; 17 great great grandchildren; several nieces and nephews also survive.

The family received friends on Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021 from 1:30 p.m. until the service hour of 3 p.m. at Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home. The service followed at 3 p.m. at Chandler Cemetery, with Rev. Bobby Banks officiating. The Hellions Motorcycle Club will serve as pallbearers.

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 Mary Janice “Williamson” Thompson.



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