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2 Sections, 18 Pages

WORD OF THE DAY

A MAN'S HEART PLANS HIS WAY, BUT THE LORD DIRECTS HIS STEPS.
PROVERBS 16:9
(NKJV)

This is...
Robins



Check out this month's edition of This is Robins

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GOT NEWS?

Submit your news tips to newsroom@hhjonline.com or call us at 478-987-1823.



PERIODICAL

From the Council Chambers

This week's key discussions from Warner Robins and Houston County



Councilman Derek Mack asks a question during the City of Warner Robins' Pre-Council Meeting on Monday, April 21.

Warner Robins talks sewage spill, sidewalks

By BRIENNA SMITH
HHJ Managing Editor
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WARNER ROBINS — The city detailed cleanup efforts of a sewer system break and discussed sidewalk plans during their April 24 pre-council meeting.

A 15-inch sewer line near the Holiday Riviera Mobile Home Park was damaged on April 14 due to a fallen tree and a collapsed creek bank, resulting in a significant spill into Bay Gall Creek. City Administrator James Drinkard

said that the utility and public works departments responded quickly to the incident.

"It was a mess. Initially, the spill Montie [Walters, Utility Director] estimated somewhere around a million gallons. But by that time they they did recapturing once we got pumps on site and were able to reroute the flow back into the system," he explained.

Approximately 90% of the spill has been reclaimed by crews, who are currently rerouting sewage

See SIDEWALKS page 2A

Commissioners approve annexation request, hear more concerns about dismissed lawsuit

By OWEN JONES
HHJ Staff Writer
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WARNER ROBINS — The Houston County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, April 22.

In new business, the Board concurred with an annexation request from the City of Warner Robins. This property is located at 120 Kennel Drive containing 22.97 acres.

Commissioner Mark Byrd said the City of Warner Robins required additional buffering adjoining the additional residential area.

"I want to express my appreciation to the City of Warner Robins for agreeing to only provide emergency vehicle access on Mauk Circle," Chairman Dan Perdue said. "This body has considered this annexation before, and we asked for no access from Mauk Circle. We reached a compromise

See COMMS page 3A



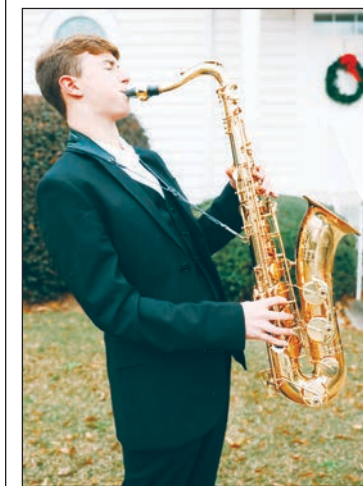
The Houston County Board of Commissioners hear more concerns about a dismissed lawsuit during their most recent meeting April 22.

Supporting our youngest heroes



Children of Robins Air Force Base Airmen celebrate Purple Up Day by making tie-dye shirts at the installation's youth center, April 15, 2025. See more in This is Robins about how the base celebrated Month of the Military Child, and how the base continues to uplift military children.

'A really huge honor' High school musician wins first prize in national jazz challenge



Drew Bragg, pictured, recently won top prize in the Gerry Mulligan Jazz Challenge, a national competition.

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ
HHJ Staff Writer
sandra@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Houston County High School student Drew Bragg won first prize in the national 2025 Gerry Mulligan Jazz Challenge.

Every year, the Gerry and Franca Foundation invite high school musicians to learn a Gerry Mulligan song and perform it on YouTube. Their performance is judged by a team of professional musicians on sound, technique, intonation and presentation.

See JAZZ page 3A



Tires wait to be recycled at a previous event. This year's event will be held for two days to celebrate the Great American Cleanup and Earth Day.

Keep Warner Robins Beautiful invites Houston County residents to recycle tires free of charge

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ
HHJ Staff Writer
sandra@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Keep Warner Robins Beautiful and Houston County invites the commu-

nity to recycle their old tires during the Tri-City Tire Amnesty event.

Houston County residents are encouraged to bring their tires to one of three

See TIRES page 7A

Spring Travel Showcase to help residents and visitors jump start spring and summer plans

By OWEN JONES
HHJ Staff Writer
owen@hhjonline.com

PERRY — Whether you have been a long-time resident of the City of Perry or just passing through, Visit Perry will be hosting their Spring Travel Showcase on Saturday, May 3, catered to those looking for fun activities in the city and surrounding area.

This free event is open to all ages and will be located at Perry City Hall from 9 a.m. to noon.

Visit Perry Executive Director Anya Turpin said the Spring Travel Showcase is built on the success of the New Residents Reception and Expo last fall.

"We saw a lot of success

See TRAVEL page 7A



The Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter are just one of the many attractions attending the Spring Travel Showcase.

Dawson News acquired by Georgia Trust for Local News Printer's ink flowed in long-time newspaperman's veins

By **CARLTON FLETCHER**
carlton.fletcher@albanyherald.com

DAWSON — As Tommy Rountree shared stories from his career at The Dawson News, a career that's just shy of 50 years, a thought occurred.

"This is home; 139 West Lee Street in Dawson, Georgia, has been my home for my entire life," Rountree said, allowing just a hint of melancholy to color his words. "I grew up in this building; I've spent a lot of time here since I was a little boy."

"It's going to feel strange to wake up on Monday morning and not come to this building."

Rountree bid his "other home" goodbye last week, turning the reins of the newspaper that had been an integral part of his family's life for the past 79 years over to DuBose Porter, the executive director of The Georgia Trust for Local News, which began publication of the News this week. Utilizing reporters affiliated with The Georgia Trust — primarily from The Albany Herald — and other local contributors, The Georgia Trust will continue operations of the newspaper that had become synonymous with the Rountree family for the better part of a century.

"I knew DuBose Porter's history in the newspaper business, and I knew about the Georgia Trust," the now former editor/publisher of the Dawson paper said. "I think this is a perfect fit for our little newspaper. DuBose has a love for the newspaper business; he has a passion for it. I knew that he, working through The Trust would be a good outcome for our community. It's important for a community like ours to have a weekly newspaper."

Porter praised the Rountree family for the work they've done in establishing The Dawson News as a key part of this small community some 25 miles west of Albany.

"Tommy Rountree, his dad (Carl) and his family are among Georgia's great newspaper folk," Porter said. "We are honored that the family has the trust and confidence in the Georgia Trust for Local News to carry forward this legacy publication for



Tommy Rountree (left) and DuBose Porter (right.)

Carlton Fletcher/The Albany Herald

Dawson and Terrell County.

"We are a community newspaper company, and The Dawson News fits in our mission. We look forward to serving the people here and recording their history."

The Dawson News will be the 20th newspaper under the Georgia Trust for Local News.

Tommy Rountree started his full-time tenure at The News in 1976, after deciding he really wasn't cut out for that certified public accounting degree he'd been working on for the better part of three years before realizing the printer's ink of The News, which his father had bought on Feb. 1, 1946, was too deeply imbedded in his bloodstream.

"I went to Valdosta State (College) for two years thinking I wanted to be a CPA," Rountree said. "When I transferred to the University of Georgia, I still planned to get a degree in accounting. My dad had a heart attack, and when I came home that

summer, I spent the whole season working with him. That's when I got a complete feel for the business.

"Dad never pressured me or my siblings (brother Don and sister Anita) to work at the paper, but when I went back to school, I changed my major to journalism."

When Tommy Rountree graduated, he returned home to Dawson and started working with his dad at The News. Carl Rountree passed away in 1985, and the passing of the torch to Tommy was seamless.

"Working at a weekly paper is different from larger papers; you have to do it all," Rountree said. "Over the years, I've sold ads, wrote stories, picked up the mail, swept up ... whatever had to be done. You can't be specialized at a weekly paper. But I wouldn't trade it for the world. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to subscribers, advertisers and the community for their support and readership over the

decades.

"The people of Dawson have been so kind over the years; this is just a great community. It's a wonderful place; it's home."

Now Rountree's days won't be filled with all of the chores required to publish a newspaper. He'll spend more time with wife of almost 30 years, Judy, do a little more hunting and fishing, and enjoy his family.

"I have a fishing partner, and a couple of times a year we take a weekend and go fishing, from Thursday to Saturday and then come home on Sunday," he said. "I called him up and let him know of my plans to retire in an ideal way. I told him we needed to change the days of our fishing trip, and he asked, 'What day?' I said, 'Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday ...'

He said, 'You can't do that, you've got to ... Oh.'

"Yes, this is going to be a big change for me because this newspaper business has become my life. I spent more time here than I did anywhere else, and that includes my 'other home.' I love being a part of this community and telling its stories. But I have no regrets. I'm leaving things in good hands."

SIDEWALKS

From page 1A

flow to a nearby manhole. Repairing the sewer line is estimated to cost around \$290,000. This will involve rerouting the pipes and close collaboration with the Environmental Protection Division, according to Drinkard.

"As part of those repairs, we will reroute that line about 40 feet from its current location. That will ensure that we don't have this issue," he said.

Following discussion of sewage system improvements, Councilman Charlie Bibb voiced apprehension regarding city infrastructure, particularly in the vicinity of Lake Joy Road and Russell Parkway. He urged the city to complete the installation of sidewalks and crosswalks along that section of road.

"I just seen a sight, just the other day, of a mom pushing a baby carriage from Lake Joy Road over there to Walmart, and just high grass. Pushing that through didn't sit well with me," he said.

Drinkard said the city prioritizes sidewalk projects based on a program that favors connections to schools, parks, libraries, and similar community structures. Priority is also determined by the number of residents served and the availability of right-of-way.

Councilman Derek Mack asked whether grocery stores could be included

in the list of structures for connectivity.

Transportation Planner Jessica Bird clarified that retail centers are already considered connectivity hotspots, with the Lake Joy project being a high-priority sidewalk initiative. She suggested collaborating with traffic signal analysts to guarantee adequate pedestrian crossing times given the existing infrastructure.

Drinkard then mentioned the city's ADA transition plan, saying several sidewalks and ramps that are out of compliance are also on a prioritized list for repairs.

During council meeting, the city recognized Fair Housing Month, Community Development Week, Earth Week, Animal Control Week, and accepted a donation of socks from the Kings Chapel Elementary Beta Club for the Haven Hope House.

Council approved all agenda items.

A full livestream of the meeting can be found on the city's Facebook page: "City of Warner Robins Government." Supporting documents from the meeting can be found at wrga.gov/documents/agenda-center/547295.

The next Warner Robins City Council meeting will take place Monday, May 5, at City Hall, located at 700 Watson Boulevard. Pre-council will start at 4:30 p.m., council meeting will follow immediately.

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CALENDAR

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Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball

Welcome to Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball! Join us for a night of elegance and grandeur at the Anderson Conference Center. This is a Bridgerton theme event. Get ready to dance the night away in a setting fit for royalty. This in-person event promises to be a night to remember, filled with live music, live performances, food, and unforgettable memories. Don't miss your chance to experience a taste of the royal life at this majestic ball. Get your finest Victorian (Bridgerton) attire ready and come celebrate in style at Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball! The Ball will take place April 26th, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the 5171 Eisenhower Parkway, Macon.

Old Book Sale

Houston County Friends of the Library is hosting the 20th Annual Old Book Sale at the GA National Fairgrounds in the Georgia Grown/Baby Barn Building from Thursday April 24th to Saturday April 26th.

Over 90,000 books in 60 categories will be in the building ready for sale.

Admission will be \$5.00 on Thursday going from 10AM to 8PM.

Admission will be free on Friday and Saturday going from 9AM to 8PM Friday and 9AM to 3PM Saturday. All items half price on Saturday!

Cash, Check, Credit, and Debit all accepted. (Convenience fee for electronic transactions.)

For more information, please call (478)-923-0128 or visit <http://houpl.org>. Click "Support the Library," then click "Friends of the Library."

2025 Talent Hunt

Calling All High School Performers!

The Omega Gamma Gamma Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. invites Houston County high school students (grades 9-12) to showcase their talents in our Annual Talent Hunt Competition! Whether you sing, dance, act, play an instrument, or create visual art—this is your stage!

Date: Saturday, May 3, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Fellowship Bible Baptist Church, Reid Building (Warner Robins, GA)

Cash Prizes: 1st Place - \$500; 2nd Place - \$350; 3rd Place - \$200

Categories: Music (Vocal & Instrumental), Dance, Theater (Drama, Comedy, Spoken Word), Visual Arts

Application Deadline: April 23, 2025, at 11:59 PM

How to Register: Download and submit both the Talent Hunt Application & Parental Consent Form to qggtalenthunt@gmail.com.

For more details, visit qggques.org. Encourage your students and friends to participate—let's celebrate the talent in Houston County!

St. Christopher's Services

St Christopher's at the Crossroads Episcopal Church invites the community to Sunday services at 1207 Macon Road, Perry, GA 31069.

Services are Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.

Traditional Afternoon Tea

The 25th Anniversary All Saints' English Traditional Afternoon Tea will be held on May 4 at 2:30 pm in the Parish Hall of All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins.

Guests will be welcomed by a Scottish piper (Shirley Blunk) playing the bagpipes. In addition to the ever-welcome traditional sandwiches, savories and sweets there will be door prizes awarded and a "grand raffle" with some nice prizes.

In celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen (author of *Pride & Prejudice*), the tea will have a Jane Austen theme. Ladies and gentlemen are encouraged to attend in Regency costume. A prize will be awarded to the "most original" costume.

Tickets for the tea are \$30.00. Reserved tables for 4, 6, or 8 may be purchased in advance. No entry without a ticket!

Additionally, at 1.30 pm in the Sanctuary of All Saints, there will be FREE recital prior to the Tea by All Saints Organist & Choir Master, Ted Babbitt, and a flute quartet with flautists Shirley Blunk; Joy Brown; Cindy Kurtz & Dawn Miners.

For ticket information, call the church office at 478-923-1791, or 478-335-1487.

McCormick touts extending Trump tax cuts

By **DAVE WILLIAMS**
Bureau Chief
Capitol Beat News Service

ROSWELL — Extending the tax cuts Congress passed early in Republican President Donald Trump's first term will be the first order of business when federal lawmakers return to Washington next week from the Easter recess, U.S. Rep. Rich McCormick said Thursday.

The tax cuts, which are due to expire at the end of this year without congressional action, played out to former President Joe Biden's advantage when the Democrat gained the White House four years ago, McCormick, R-Suwanee, said after hosting a roundtable for North Fulton business owners at the offices of Axis Infrastructure.

"The impacts gave Biden a pretty decent economy," he said.

McCormick gave the business owners a sense of hope

that the uncertainty plaguing the business climate in the wake of Trump's roller-coaster tariffs will settle down.

"Everybody understands that what we see now is not what we're going to get," he said. "Hopefully, the EU (European Union) tariffs will zero out. The big unknown will be China."

er, McCormick said the tariffs are likely to produce supply-chain disruptions when the dust settles.

"A lot of people are withholding orders right now," he said. "When the market reopens, there's going to be a glut of orders and a shortage of supplies. That's what happened with COVID."

McCormick said there's widespread agreement in the House Republican Caucus on the need to maintain the 21% top marginal tax rate on corporate income the 2017 tax cuts put in place. How to pay for removing taxes on tips and Social Security, as

Trump promised on the campaign trail last year, is less certain, he said.

Congressional Democrats oppose extending the tax cuts, arguing it would benefit primarily upper-income Americans while threatening the social safety net.

But McCormick said programs including Social Security and Medicare will go bankrupt by the middle of the next decade unless federal policy makers take action to control entitlement spending, which makes up 76% of the federal budget. But he called warnings by Democrats of looming cuts to Medicare and Medicaid "scare tactics."

Republicans only have three votes to spare from their narrow House majority in order to extend the Trump tax cuts. In the Senate, use of the "reconciliation" process means only a simple majority vote will be required to pass the legislation.

COMMS

From page 1A

with the city, and this is an important redevelopment project for that area."

The Board also approved the hiring of poll workers for the June 17 special election and personnel requests.

During public comments, the Board heard more concerns about the dismissed lawsuit issued by the DOJ against the Houston County Board of Commissioners

NAACP Youth Advisor Dr. Rutha Jackson said she still has some unrest about the lawsuit.

"Is this the final say of changing the voting process? The Voting [Rights] Act guarantees that all eligible citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process and to elect representatives of their choice regardless of race or ethnicity," she said.

Jackson said it has been 33 years since there has been an African-American presence on the Board of Commissioners, and the situation could be

rectified by implementing districts instead of at-large seats.

"With our working together, I believe we can get this done. The DOJ brought clarity and understanding concerning a group disenfranchised people in the election process," she said. "The facts are proven and solid with percentages as well as possible maps drawn to solidify. The numbers needed to substantiate it, leveling the playing field are there, but allegedly the coffin is closed."

Rev. Daryl Vining spoke on how the county is divided into urban, suburban, rural, and farm areas. He said those distinct areas require different perspectives.

"It would make better sense that we partition our county commissioners in the same way so that those voices can be heard," he said.

Houston County NAACP President Jonathan Johnson expressed his concerns about the dismissed lawsuit, adding the African-American community will keep pushing this issue until they find some common ground.

"I don't understand how you all can sit on that Board and live in the community and not address these issues of what's going on with the African-American community that says that they feel like they should have the same opportunity to sit on the Board, to vote and if they want to run for office," he said. "Those districts need to be put in place so that someone of the African American community can represent us. It's nothing hard to do and you all have the power to do it."

Houston County Fire Chief Christopher Stoner also spoke on the new and improved ISO-PPC rating the fire department had received. Read more about what the ISO-PPC rating is and Chief Stoner's thoughts on our website.

The full agenda for this meeting can be found at www.houstoncountygga.gov/minutes/2025-04-22%20Department%20Head.pdf

The next Houston County Commissioners meeting will be held Tuesday, May 6, at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry.

Community Calendar

Email your information to:
brianna@hhjonline.com

Houston Home Journal

1210 Washington St. Perry, GA 31069

478-987-1823

JAZZ

From page 1A

Drew received top scores from all judges. The prize for his accomplishment was a \$500 grant.

"It's actually a really huge honor to be selected as one of hundreds across the nation to win this challenge. I'm just very excited because it's money and [Mulligan] was a great musician to begin with," he said.

Drew performed a piece called "Etude for Franca," named and written after Mulligan's wife. Franca, the president of the foundation, heard his rendition while listening to the winning recordings, and Drew was able to send her a thank-you message.

Mulligan passed away in 1996 and the foundation was established in 2010 to fulfill his wish to provide free music education to young musicians in need. Contest winners are announced every year on April 6, Mulligan's birthday, and during Jazz Appreciation Month.

Drew shared that he found out about the challenge through his private lessons teacher, Ryan Johnson. He learned of the contest a week before submissions were due and signed up for the challenge a few days before the deadline.

He wanted to participate because of the potential prize money, since he was starting to save up for a soprano saxophone; the prize money will be put towards the purchase.

Saxophones are very expensive instruments, Drew explained, especially because he plays both concert band and jazz music. This requires a lot of reeds

and mouthpieces.

Recently, he purchased a tenor mouthpiece and now he is saving up for the soprano saxophone.

His mother, April Bragg, shared that they were excited when they found out her son won the competition. She describes him as an accomplished musician at only 16 years old.

Drew has been a member of one All-State band every year since he was in eighth grade. Additionally, he is the lead tenor saxophone in the Atlanta Youth Wind Symphony Orchestra. April said Drew has had incredible opportunities, like soloing at Carnegie Hall and attending Interlochen's summer intensive in Michigan. He was also invited to perform at Columbus State University and the Georgia Music Educators Association Annual Conference.

"We recognized Drew's talent very early on, but I think the thing as a parent [that] makes me most proud is not necessarily the wins, but it's him taking his talent and truly pursuing it as a passion," she said.

Drew has always been a musician at heart. When he was a little kid, he played on his drum set every day. He said he was set on being a percussionist until instrument tryouts in sixth grade. It was then he figured out the saxophone was for him.

His dad, who was the middle school band director, also loves music and plays every other instrument except the saxophone.

Drew's favorite part of being a musician is the bonds he creates with others.

"It's always a good thing to meet new people and I feel like music is a very

big catalyst because everybody loves music and it's very easy to meet new people and make friends," he said. "Also, the individual expression of it; I like to improv and jazz and there's something about it that gives me a detachment from reality that I just love so much."

Drew plans to pursue degrees in saxophone performance and Computer Science or Software Engineering when he graduates high school. This will foster his love for the arts and math and science.

April describes her son as hardworking and willing to put himself out there to better his craft.

"He loves it, he chases after the sound, the tone he wants," she said. "He listens to music that inspires and challenges him and he's always putting himself out there to try new experiences and new opportunities. This competition is just one of those experiences."

Drew advises younger musicians and those wanting to pursue playing the saxophone to listen to other musicians. He said to figure out how other musicians sound and if they like the instrument they are playing, choose it and learn it.

As far as learning the instrument, he advises putting their unique spin on what other musicians do. This is something that Drew continues to do, and it has helped him improve his sound since he is constantly listening to professionals.

"You can't really make bad music because everybody likes music anyway," he said. "So just [have] fun with it and [make] sure the joy that music brings to you is shared with others."



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VIEWPOINTS

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Our Goal

The Houston Home Journal is published for the citizens of Houston and surrounding counties by a division of The Georgia Trust for Local News. Our goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication towards printing the truth.

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Share Your Viewpoint

There are three ways to submit a Letter to the Editor: Email it to brianna@hhjonline.com, mail it to Houston Home Journal at 1210 Washington St., Perry, GA 31069, or drop it off at the same location between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number (the last two not to be printed). The newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject letters for reasons of grammar, punctuation, taste and brevity.

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A genuine show of honesty

George Washington's father, apparently, really loved cherry trees.

So much so that when he came home one afternoon from doing whatever people did during colonial times and saw his favorite specimen lying on the dirt, he was livid. It's unclear why the elder Washington loved the tree so much, perhaps he planted it with his own hands, or maybe he had carved a swear word in the trunk to impress someone. But at any rate he was irate to see it turned to firewood, though cherry wood is fine fuel for a cooking fire.

He confronted the future first president seeking an explanation. The young man famously replied, "Father I cannot tell a lie. I cut down the cherry tree." It didn't help that he was caught holding an ax with wood chips in his little powdered wig. The father was so moved by his son's honesty that he handed down only a trivial punishment of limiting his screen time for the afternoon but not taking away his cellphone.

This, of course, is a myth. There's no evidence to back up this tale that has been handed down as gospel truth for generations. In one account George is only 6 years old and only marred the tree with a hatchet given to him as a gift. Who gives a 6-year-old boy a hatchet for their birthday? That sounds like the last-minute preparations of a nearly-always-inebriated uncle. It's only asking for trouble. The tall tale is just one of many that surfaced after the death of the larger than life figure whose image graces everything from our

New Southern Dad



Kyle Dominy

k.l.dominy@gmail.com

money to portraits in fine museums.

The story has become a parable about honesty. Honesty is always the best policy, yet it's strange that we teach that by making up a lie.

A recent trip to the store brought upon a show of honesty that revealed I must be doing something right. I volunteered to do the weekly grocery run with son in tow. After walking the aisles, filling the shopping cart, waiting in line and checking out we made our way through the parking lot to the car. While loading up the haul the boy finds an unbagged item at the bottom of the cart.

"Uh, oh," he said. "I think I forgot to put these on the conveyor belt."

I handed him the receipt and he scanned the long strip of paper. Sure enough, it was not to be found. So back in he marched to hand over the inadvertently stolen item. He didn't give me a chance to convince him otherwise, nor did I try. He still sees the world in boyish innocence, a wrong had been committed and it needed to be corrected. No gray area.

That in fact did happen. No twisting of the truth to teach a lesson. No myths or fables. Just a boy who told the truth. He didn't even have to have an ax.



Something in the Air

Columnist



Kelly Burke

www.kellyburke.com

Recently I've seen several career openings that provided comical relief. My favorite goes to the Free State of Florida, which admittedly gets a lot more right than they get wrong. Florida is about to outlaw chemtrails! That is the headline at least.

So I had to inquire. I asked my AI search engine, what is a chemtrail? It said: "A chemtrail (short for chemical trail) is a term used in a conspiracy theory that claims some of the trails left by high-flying aircraft are actually chemicals being deliberately sprayed into the atmosphere for undisclosed purposes—like weather control, population control, or mind manipula-

tion."

It explained further: "In reality, what people see in the sky are called contrails (short for condensation trails). These are harmless, and form when hot, humid air from jet engines mixes with the colder, lower-pressure atmosphere, causing water vapor to condense into ice crystals."

Never one to let facts get

in the way of a good column, I pursued the issue, and this much is true—Florida will create a toll-free hotline so callers can report any attempts by The Illuminati to mysteriously seed the atmosphere. Now, the obvious situation that you and I see, but the fine legislators in Florida don't, is that there is no way to distinguish a chemtrail from a contrail. So I want to get a state salary, hopefully a condo on a beach, and a Tesla as well, to man that hotline.

FTFH monitor: "Good morning, this is the Florida Toll-Free Hotline to Report The Unlawful Seeding of our beautiful Florida Atmosphere by People Bent

on Doing Us Harm. How may I help you?"

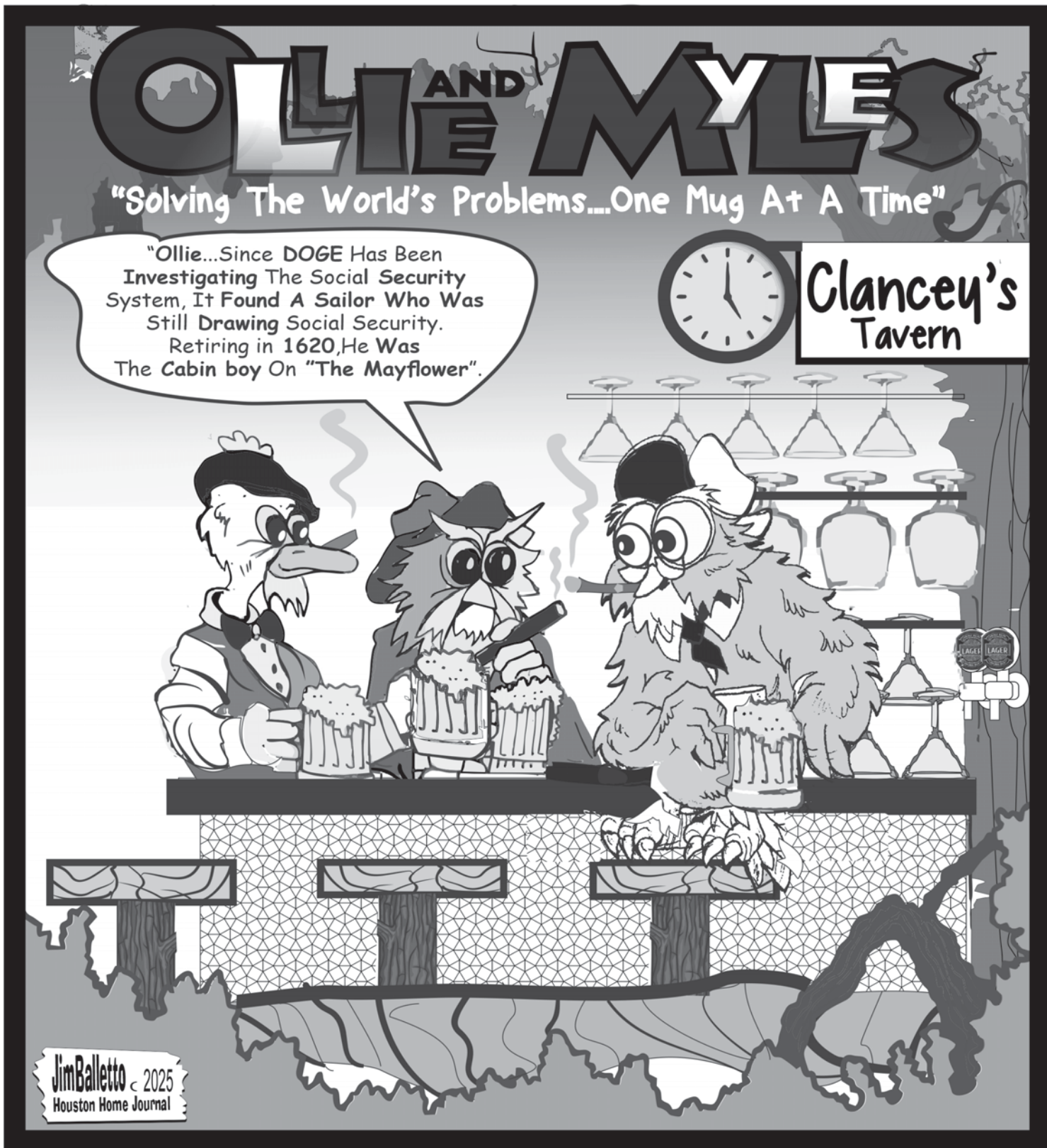
CC (concerned citizen): "Yeah, this is Elmer Fudd, here in Happenstance, FL, close to Tallahassee, and I want to report someone spraying chemicals in our air."

FTFH: "What did you see, sir?"

CC: "I seen white chemtrails from a high-flying jet. It's up there right now over my alpaca farm. Probably spraying mind-altering fluoride but I'm not sure. Scramble a F-14 and intercept it while you can!"

FTFH: "Sir, how do you know it's a chemtrail and not a contrail?"

See BURKE page 8A



The Perfect Man Cave

Guest Columnist



Neil Joiner

joinerscorner.com

A man cave is a relatively new expression. A 1992 edition of The Toronto Star has been credited with its first published use. Generally it refers to an enclosed space where a man's routines are not unduly influenced by his wife's input. The previous word for that was grave.

The nuances of cave life are many, so I'm not claiming to have found the perfect man cave for everyone. From a country boy's view, however, I've seen a place that comes real close.

Al Willis, a friend for many years, transformed an old storage shed into a side-yard haven. It's a place to work, visit with a neighbor, or just do some pondering.

My purpose in going to see Al had nothing to do with man caves. I didn't know he had one. What I went to see was a shallow well he dug unconventionally. Our family enjoys going to a picnic area in the woods near my mother's childhood home. A working hand pump would be a splendid addition. Unlike some of my projects, I sought

advice before beginning. YouTube videos show various ways of digging shallow wells. One man added extensions to a hand-turned auger to drill through the earth. If I start tomorrow we might hit water during my lifetime.

Another fellow drove a pointed pipe into the ground with a sledge hammer. That could work, depending on how big a hammer Jane can swing.

Another method placed a water hose in a pipe and let the faucet wallow out a hole. That was okay in Florida's sandy soil but I'm dealing with limerock. Al's technique was similar but more forceful. He used an air compressor along with a pressure washer to boil the dirt up. But wells are a deep subject and incidental for today's column. What impressed me more than the well was his man cave.

It was my first time drinking coffee made on a wood-burning stove. I figured Al was boiling water for instant fare, but he brews old-style with a cobalt blue percolator. The dual-purpose stove also warms the room on wintry days.

His man cave is big enough for a work space and a couple of chairs. The walls are filled with things he likes to collect. Nothing is fancy. Decor is based on an earlier era. The antique irons are the kind that were heated in fireplaces, heavy black irons which outlived the women who used them. They blend nicely with cast iron skillets and pans, one of which his grandmother made cornbread in. Tender memories, seasoned with love, still simmer in the sturdy cookware.

He has utensils, sausage grinders, wooden bowls, and such. An old item which was new to me was a round emery rock with a hand-crank, designed for sharpening blades of farm implements. The portable sharpener can be clamped to a flat surface for field use.

Not far from the building is a 1946 Farmall tractor used for mowing grass plus tilling his garden. It doesn't have a three-point hitch so he customized a plow. Just behind his hideaway is a red hand pump that's mounted atop his self-dug well.

Al and I had a great visit and he invited me to come again. I hope to do that before long. The coffee was smooth, the atmosphere welcoming, and the conversation easy. I suppose there's no such thing as the perfect man cave for everyone, but from a country boy's view I'd say Al Willis has a place that comes real close.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: SEND THEM TO BRIANNA@HHJONLINE.COM TODAY!

LIFESTYLE & FAITH

Things You Need to Know

At the age of ten, I would slip into the Perry gym through the rear basement. One Saturday I went there to play. I heard a ball bouncing inside and wondered who it was. Once inside, I met a short, chubby man with a tam on his head who was shooting baskets. He threw me the ball, saying, "Hey, boy, you want to shoot with me?"

This began my friendship with Bill Holland. Growing up in Perry, I played basketball with Bill in practically every backyard in Perry. We played in Tommy Mobley's backyard where Bill would shoot atop a tree stump 30-feet away and ring the goal repetitively. We played at Bert Bozeman's house where Bill would deliver a twirling 360-degree shot and knock the bottom out of the net.

At the Powell house, Bill would ricochet the ball off overhanging tree limbs and swish the net. Bill had an insatiable fascination with basketball. He loved to launch a basketball 25-30 feet from the goal and watch it come crashing down through the net. I usually teamed with Bill to set him up for spectacular shots.

When Bill attended school at Perry, the high school team did not have a gym—they played outdoors. Bill arrived at school soon after sunup and start shooting baskets. Old-timers say that Bill could eat his breakfast sandwich in one hand, shoot with the other, and never miss a bite.

William Harrison remarked: "I'll always remember Bill's funny-looking cap, a tam!" He worked for years for his brother-in-law, Phelan Andrews at the Ice House on Highway 41. Bill lived north of Houston Lake. Bill attended every Perry

Parables to Ponder



Billy Powell

billypow@aol.com

home game. Coach Staples arranged for him to attend free. Someone would usually give Bill a ride to out-of-town games. If not, he rode the school bus. He was the Perry Panther's number one fan. He always sat next to the cheerleaders who enjoyed his company. The Perry fans loved Bill. He will never be forgotten.

Perry Mayor Jim Worrall stated: "My recollection of Bill was his insistence that I carry a rabbit's foot for good luck. On several occasions at basketball games, he would come up the seats to ask me to show him the rabbit's foot he gave me."

"Bill usually gave the Perry players a victory handshake before the games," My brother, Dwayne Powell, said: "Bill insisted we shake with both hands but with our arms crossed. Bill's magic always worked."

Seeing Bill sitting among the cheerleaders cheering with all his heart, shouting encouragement over his megaphone, and brandishing a string of lucky rabbit feet was an inspiration to Perry teams and their fans alike. I shall never forget Bill's enthusiasm for basketball, but the attribute that impressed me most was his faithful church attendance. When the doors of Thorpe Memorial Church on Highway 41 opened, Bill was there. He was a mainstay in the church choir. Always smiling and affable, Bill never met a stranger and never spoke an ill word about anyone.

Near the end, Bill lived with his sister, Mrs. Phelan Andrews, on Highway 41 North. A basketball goal stood in the backyard. On the day that Bill died, Mrs. Andrews said: "On the afternoon before Bill died, he worked in the garden and then shot baskets until the sun went down."

That night God called Bill home and he stepped inside the Eastern gates of Heaven to begin his first ten-thousand years with the Lord. I know where Bill is today.

The Master said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." Bill is shooting baskets in Heaven and, if that hallowed old gym is there (burned down in 1969), he's lighting up the scoreboard.

Others who attended Perry's basketball games were Gunrod (janitor at Bank of Perry) and O.W. Waddell (a local painter). These men usually sat on the Perry side near the scoreboard in the old gym. Perry was a basketball town. Out-of-town games would see caravans of cars leaving Perry to see the game.

Contributing heavily was Perry's basketball coach, Eric Staples, the winningest coach in the nation. His teams won 83 percent of their games, often against higher classification schools. Staples' teams won 8 state championships in 15 years. Coach Paul Hartman's team won a 9th state championship in 1969. No state championships since. For verification, ask U.S. Senator Sam Nunn or Georgia House Majority Leader Larry Walker or Judge George Nunn, all of whom played for Coach Staples. A book by Billy Powell is titled "Pride of the Panthers." You can order from Amazon. It contains the foregoing and much more.

'Dude' Larsen Postcards

Recently happened upon some interesting cowboy postcards for sale on American Picker Mike Wolfe's website. I thought our readers might enjoy a short story about this interesting man named Lewis H. "Dude" Larsen. Larsen's name, often whispered with a nostalgic sigh and painted with the romantic hues of a cowboy artist, was far more than the revisionist historians might have you believe. While his legacy is brushed with the strokes of a poet and public servant, a closer look reveals a hard-nosed businessman who navigated the rugged terrains of commerce as deftly as any open range.

Larsen, who adopted the moniker "Dude" as a distinctive artistic flourish, wasn't just sketching for the love of the West; he was meticulously crafting a postcard empire. Conjecture suggests Larsen possessed a genuine artistic talent, painting scenes that captured the popular imagination. However, his motivations were decidedly pragmatic. Unlike artists driven by a desire for historical documentation, Larsen understood the lucrative potential of mass-produced imagery. He recognized that his oil paintings, transformed into affordable postcards, held the key to a fortune.

Astute collectors will note the remarkable fact that 99% of Larsen's postcards bear the mark of self-publication, a testament to his fiercely independent spirit and an unwillingness to share his burgeoning profits beyond his partnership

All About Antiques



Jillinda Falen
Columnist

with his wife, Dorothy. Larsen's business acumen extended beyond the easel. He was a shrewd guardian of his intellectual property, ensuring no other publisher could graze on his artistic range. A significant majority of his images were fiercely protected by copyright, each card bearing the stern warning: "use with permission only."

Adding another layer to the "Dude" Larsen enigma is the cowboy poetry often found gracing the address sides of his postcards. While it remains a subject of scholarly debate whether Larsen himself penned these verses, the emergence of cowboy poetry as a recognized genre within 20th-century American literature provides an intriguing backdrop. Often characterized by its simple rhyme schemes and amateurish charm, one professor of American literature posited that postcards served as the perfect canvas for this form, aligning the romantic ideal of the cowboy lifestyle with the vastness of nature.

In a surprising turn, the entrepreneurial "Dude" Larsen ventured into the political arena in 1949. Running as a Republican, he successfully secured a Utah State Senate seat representing District #10, the area west of Salt Lake

City. His tenure in public service lasted a single term. Following his unsuccessful bid for reelection, Larsen and Dorothy pivoted their ambitions, establishing a service business catering to the volatile world of crude oil speculators in Utah.

The late 1940s, 50s, and 60s were a period of high stakes in the Utah oil boom. Fortunes could be made or lost with the drill of a bit, and securing payment for services rendered was a constant gamble. Larsen Enterprises, located at 259 7th Avenue in Salt Lake City, found itself navigating this precarious landscape, dealing with individuals chasing black gold and the watchful eyes of the Bureau of Land Management's Oil & Gas Division, ensuring the state and federal coffers received their due share.

Larsen's signature, a familiar mark on countless claim forms processed by the Utah oil and gas commission, speaks to his deep involvement in this industry. Yet, it was not the unpredictable returns of the oil fields but the steady stream of royalties from his self-published postcards that truly cemented "Dude" Larsen's financial success.

Larsen postcards are colorful and relatively inexpensive and easy to find. There are several series to collect including dogs and other animals. One of the rarer series is the Everyday Life series. These little works of art don't take up a lot of room and make a colorful and interesting display. Happy Collecting!

A Self-Inflicted Homicide

This is not a subject that I like to write about, its sensitive, morbid, can bring to surface very hurtful memories and can be offensive. There is so much pain and tragedy that surrounds, suicide and mass homicide, it seems to put a morbid blanket over public conversation on details that could be very helpful in possibly finding commonalities between many of these cases. One commonality that suicide and mass homicide both share is both attempt mass harm, (one is inward, the other is outward).

On April 18th, the front page of the Atlanta Journal Constitution, had both the details of the current school shooting (at Florida State University), and an update on the Apalachee school shooting. I have personally started a file of extraordinarily crazy events ranging from individual suicides, to mass shootings at schools, local murder suicide, Kentucky Sheriff killing a district judge in his courthouse office, and more recently a Georgia judge that took his own life while sitting on the bench in his courtroom.

Locally we have gotten hit as families, friends and communities with many suicides over the past year. There were several that were friends of mine in the past year that left us in a sudden and tragic way. One was a member here at the gym and had just come in and renewed his membership the day before, and we had a very good and lengthy conversation, and he told me that he missed the month before because of a knee injury. The next day this husband, father, had a loving mother, and many friends who loved him made the decision to end his life. My first cous-

Your Health



Wade Yoder

in, Roland Kauffman, had a loving family, wife, and two daughters but made a final and fatal decision to end his life during his lunch break from work. This has been quite a few years ago, but the pain of his loss continues in the lives of the ones left behind. This is mirroring what is happening in other areas as well and the fact that legislative bodies from local, state and federal are not actively bringing up this subject and the causation of this epidemic is concerning.

Questions the public and legislators should be asking: what might they have in common with each other? It seems technology and data crunching are in place to red flag anything else that connects incriminating evidence to the source. If this data is being collected by our consumer protection agencies on violent death, why is there not more public awareness?

CDC and FDA: we have had suicides, and homicides that are psychopathic in nature, that has been growing in front of us in epidemic proportions, and it seems our consumer protection agencies should be uncovering what has changed to cause this spike in violent deaths over the past 20 years. However, these are the same agencies that should have detected (and sounded the alarm) on the death and destruction that mass prescriptions of opioids, (the pharmaceutical form of heroin) were causing, but they didn't for

years. Eventually, the pharmaceutical companies were sued by various states but quite oddly our consumer protection agencies (that should have seen this coming), were not called out for being blind as a bat, complicit or ignorant. They did however put out plenty of warnings during this time period against a food that is 1000's of years old (raw milk, which is milk in its best form). They also maintained their firm stance against an herb (marijuana) that had been used as medicine for thousands of years with the earliest recording of medical use being 2700 BC). It was criminalized in 1942, removed from US Pharmacopeia by 1942, and has been considered a schedule one drug for the past 50 years in the same group as heroin. These are the types of results we get when corporations, lobbyist, and policy makers get too interwoven with each other and give birth to bad policy, (aka wolves left guarding henhouses).

Our rash of suicides and crazed homicides: we need to ask ourselves a question, "what has changed most over the past 20 years, when it comes to brain, chemistry and psychiatry?" The primary answer that comes to my mind is the mass distribution of psychotropic drugs. Until we as a public acknowledge what has changed over the past 20+ years (put it under a microscope) and connect these dots, we most likely will continue to have powder keg's (occasionally ignite) amongst us, that will either do the most harm they can do inwardly (suicide) or outwardly (mass homicide).

Psychotropic drugs: a psychiatrist has to get 4 more years of training, than a medical doctor, but yet the

STOP CRIME NOW 742-2330

 AMBLER, JAMES WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING.	 ATES, LAWRENCE WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FAILURE TO REGISTER AS A SEX OFFENDER AND CHILD MOLESTATION.	 BENNETT, SONNY WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR SUP. CT. VOP. O/C BEING GIVING FALSE INFORMATION TO L.E., AND THEFT BY TAKING (M).	 BOECK, MICHAEL HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR PUBLIC INDECENCY.
 CROSS, KENNETH WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE/CRIMINAL TRESPASS/DAMAGE VIOLATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDER.	 DUMAS, BILLY WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL IDENTITY FRAUD.	 FULLER, BRANDON WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FAILURE TO REPORT AS A SEX OFFENDER.	 GORDON, JAMAL WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY - FAMILY VIOLENCE/CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY - 2ND DEGREE/ CRUELTY TO CHILDREN - 3RD DEGREE
 HIGHTOWER, TAYLOR WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING.	 JOHNSON-ROUSEY, JANIE WANTED BY THE CRAWFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY, FALSE STATEMENTS AND WRITINGS, CONCEAL FACTS OR FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS IN MATTER OF GOVERNMENT, AND OBSTRUCTING OR HINDERING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.	 KNOLTON, DAMARIO WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT/ AGGRAVATED BATTERY/ POSS. OF A FIREARM DURING CRIME/ POSSESSION OF A FIREARM OF CONVICTED FELON/ SUP. CT. VOP.	 MARTINEZ, DIEGO WANTED BY THE BIBB COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CHILD MOLESTATION.
 MOSS, CURTIS CRUELTY TO PERSON OVER 65/SIMPLE BATTERY/TERRORISTIC THREATS AND ACTS - FELONY	 SALAS, ABEL WANTED BY THE BALDWIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED CHILD MOLESTATION/ CHILD MOLESTATION.	 WILDER, JONATHAN WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY DECEPTION.	 YOUNG, JOSHUA WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FAILURE TO REGISTER AS A SEX OFFENDER.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO PULL CRIMINALS OFF OUR STREETS! Macon Regional Crimestoppers is a local non-profit serving the Bibb, Baldwin, Houston, Jones, Twiggs, Crawford, Monroe, and Peach regional areas. Through our deployed systems as well as the cooperation local law enforcement agencies and the 911 Center, citizens in our community have a safe, secure, and confidential means to report crimes. IF A "TIP" RESULTS IN AN ARREST - A REWARD WILL BE PAID TO YOU CONFIDENTIALLY AND ANONYMOUSLY!

If You Have Information On The Whereabouts Of An Above Shown Individual, Call Our Tip Line at 478-742-2330 or 1-877-68CRIME

ENTERTAINMENT

Sense + Sensitivity

Dad won't stop smoking around grandchildren

Dear Harriette: My dad's a heavy smoker and has been for as long as I can remember. When I was growing up, he used to smoke inside the house constantly. I remember the smell being everywhere — in my clothes, in the walls, even in my toys. I developed some health issues that I believe were tied to all that secondhand smoke exposure, and it's something I've carried with me into adulthood.

I have two young children of my own, ages 2 and 6, and I'm protective of their health. I've made it clear to my dad that I don't want him smoking around my kids. He doesn't smoke inside the house when he visits, but whenever we're outside together — like in the backyard, at a park or even just walking around — he lights up without thinking twice. I've reminded him multiple times, but he either brushes it off or says things like, "We're outside, it's fine," or "One puff isn't going to hurt them." It's beyond frustrating. How can I get through to him in a way that doesn't feel like an attack but still makes it clear that this is non-negotiable for me? — Stop Smoking

Dear Stop Smoking: Now is the time to be direct and firm. Tell your father that



Harriette Cole

Columnist

askharriette@harriettecole.com

if he continues to smoke around your children, he is no longer welcome to come over. Show him data regarding the negative impact of secondhand smoke on others, and tell him that as much as you love him, you are unwilling to subject your children to what you had to endure your whole life.

You are not overreacting; the negative impacts of secondhand smoke are significant. Think coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and adverse reproductive health effects in women, as well as sudden infant death syndrome, respiratory infections, ear infections and asthma attacks in children. For more information, visit cdc.gov/tobacco/secondhand-smoke/health.html.

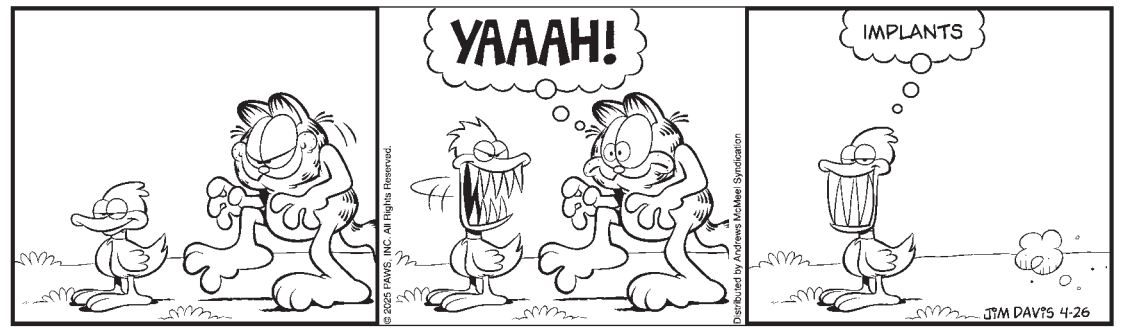
Dear Harriette: A close friend of mine will be celebrating a milestone birthday in about two months. We've been friends for nearly 15 years, and she has always made it her duty to

be there for me — especially for special occasions. We haven't lived in the same city for eight years, so it means the world to me that she's always supporting me. For her birthday this year she's taking a trip to the Caribbean. I won't be able to join due to financial constraints, but I still want to celebrate her. Do you have any unique and affordable suggestions for making a loved one feel special when you can't be present with them? — Long-Distance Birthday

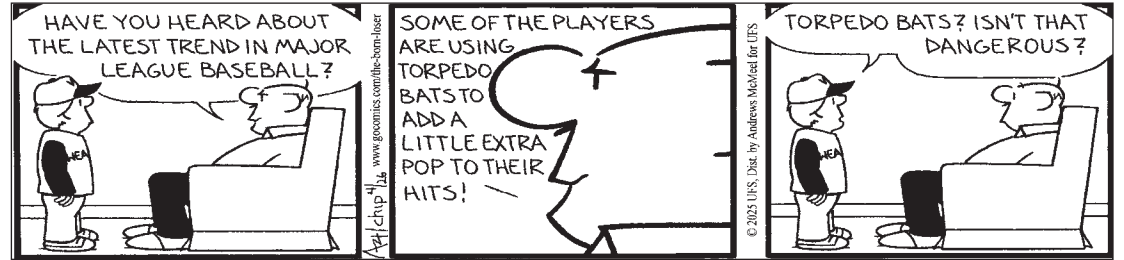
Dear Long-Distance Birthday: Make her a birthday video telling her highlights of your friendship and how much you appreciate her. If you know her other friends, invite them to submit birthday messages and create a compilation that you share with her. Coordinate with someone who is going on the trip to have it played for her during one of the celebratory moments.

If you know where's she's staying, you could call ahead and have the front desk deliver a bottle of champagne or bouquet of flowers that she can enjoy on the trip.

Garfield, by Jim Davis



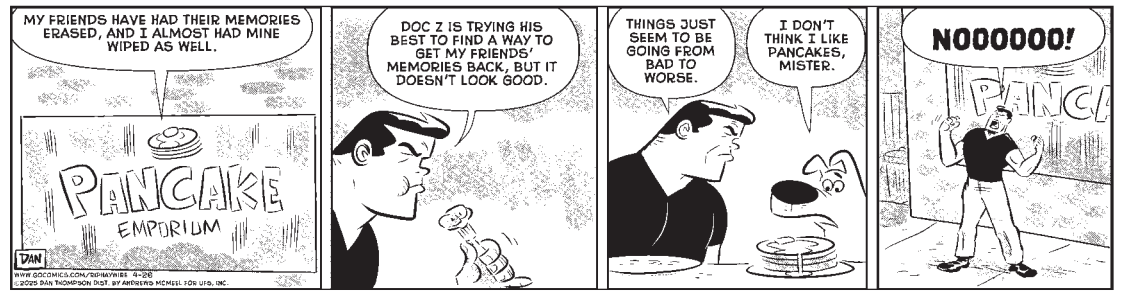
The Born Loser, by Chip Sansom



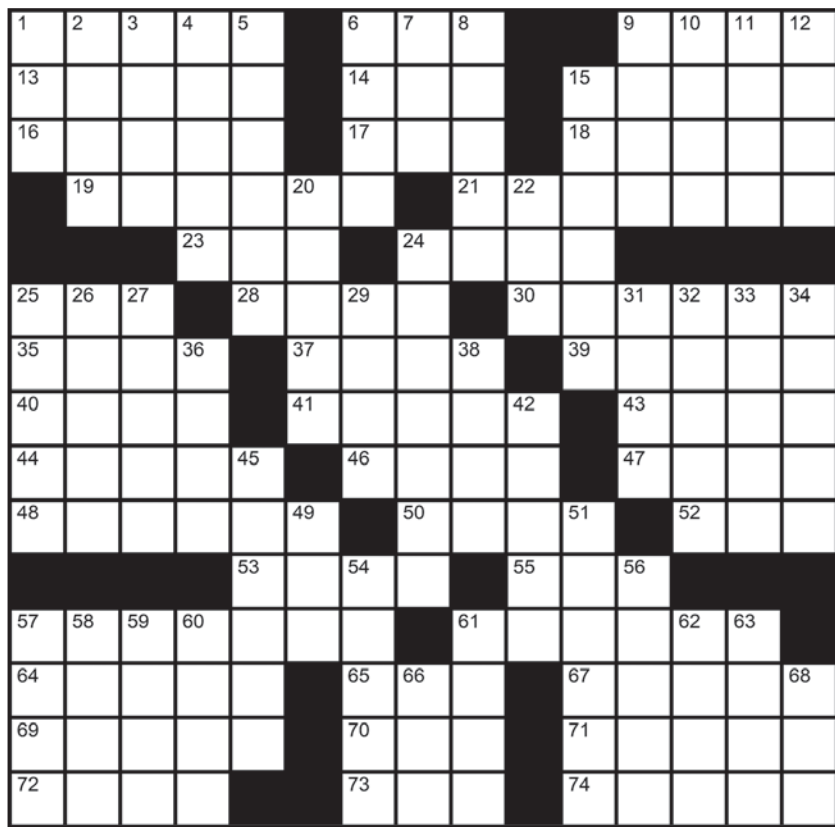
DeFlocked, by Jeff Corriveau



Rip Haywire, by Dan Thompson



CROSSWORD 4-26-25



CLUES ACROSS

- T. Rockwell's "How to Eat Fried ____"
- Pro football org.
- Tea servings
- Relating to axis
- Gershwin or Levin
- Break of day
- Repeat, in music
- Red Cross bed
- Arm bones
- *Mother ____, personification of physical world
- *Mother ____, fictional dog owner
- Opposite of hence
- Sleeveless garment
- Money source

- Golfer's destination
- Pass, as time
- "Metamorphoses" poet
- *The Beatles: "Mother ____ comes to me"
- "The Goldbergs" sibling
- Unacceptable, to a baby
- Alpine singing
- Resembling wings
- Fill with optimism
- Fill to satisfaction
- Orion's ____
- Like funereal atmosphere
- Lice eggs
- Remainder of a cigarette
- Before skip and a jump
- *Mother of ____, a.k.a. Daenerys Targaryen

- *Mother ____, Missionaries of Charity founder
- PassÉ
- Stir or fuss
- Add together
- Anomie, alt. sp.
- Decompose
- Very angry
- Puppy sounds
- "____ no evil, hear no evil"
- Tennis-affected joint

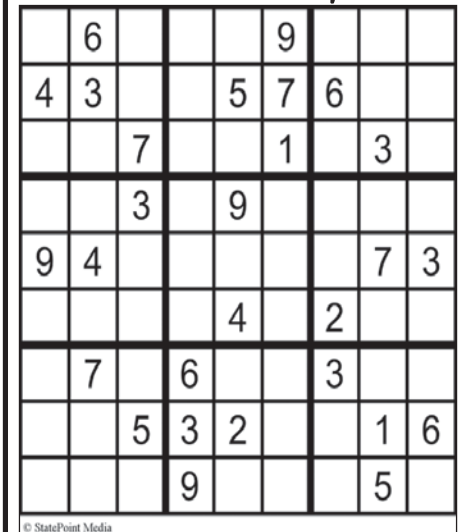
DOWN

- Took place
- Yoked team
- Capital of Latvia
- Kind of ray
- Cast-off skin
- French Riviera city
- "To" follower
- Wood turning device
- Tulip starter
- Leo's Karenina
- ____ gum, food additive
- Put metal to the pedal, p.t.
- Difficult to detect
- With ample space
- Employ
- Green and lush, as in trees
- *Mother ____, investigative journalism nonprofit
- Convex molding
- Twofold

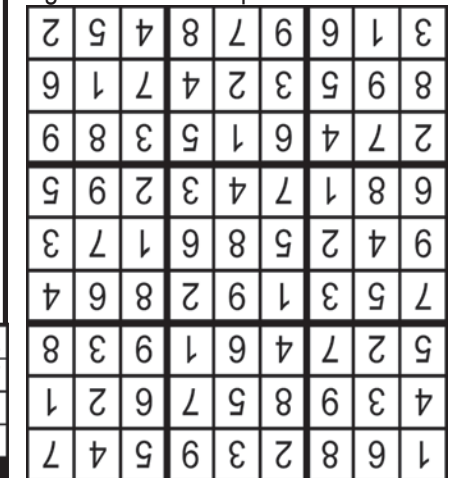
- Cambodia's neighbor
- A in UAE
- Heaped
- Famous Teatro alla ____
- *Mother ____, personification of planet
- Shower with affection
- Abominable snowman
- River in Hades
- Personify
- *Mother Superior is the head one at the convent
- Foray
- Former Russian leaders
- *Mother of ____, a.k.a. nacre
- June 6, 1944
- Raja's wife
- On the surface
- Emeralds and rubies
- Carrying bag
- Hunk of something
- Lowest female singing voice
- Female forest ruminant
- Archery bow wood



SUDOKU



Here's How It Works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Sudoku answer featured above. Crossword answer featured to the left.

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DOING WHAT IS RIGHT AND FAIR ALWAYS MATTERS.
EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING.

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Federal judge weighing whether to extend order protecting international students whose visitor status was revoked

By **TYTAGAMI**
Staff Writer
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A federal judge in Atlanta said she will decide by month's end whether the government must extend the visitor status of 133 current and former college students who were suddenly revoked for no apparent reason.

Judge Victoria Marie Calvert heard oral arguments Thursday in the case involving at least 26 foreign nationals attending a Georgia college or university or doing post-graduate work. Another 106 are in other states, but the students' lawyers argue their cases should be bundled together in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia to reduce the workload on the court.

It's a core issue that Calvert must consider before she decides on the preliminary injunction sought by the students. Calvert already issued a temporary restraining order against the federal government on Friday, ordering that the students'

visitor status be restored. But her order expires May 1, and a preliminary injunction would secure the students' status under the Student and Exchange Visitor Program until the trial concludes.

Their lawyer, Charles Kuck, argued that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security failed to follow its own rules when it revoked his clients' visitor status without providing a reason.

Assistant U.S. Attorney R. David Powell argued that a preliminary injunction could allow the international visitors to stay past the original expiration dates of their visitor status. He asked that any preliminary injunction be tailored to each plaintiff's expiration date.

The case may be the largest of its kind in the country, but numerous others have been filed, including two class action lawsuits, one in Washington and another in New Hampshire.

On Wednesday, Judge Leigh Martin May, who serves in the same courthouse as Calvert, denied a temporary restraining order

sought by three foreign students whose visitor status had been revoked.

But Kuck said the trend favors students. He said judges nationwide have issued 17 temporary restraining orders in similar cases.

Powell acknowledged the impact, saying U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has been busy restoring students' status.

"More orders are coming out every week and every day," he said. "Sometimes multiple per day."

Kuck said after the hearing that he hopes the government backs down, but he said he doubts President Donald Trump will allow that to happen. He said he is prepared for a fight that could go on for "a long time."

The immigration attorney said his office has been bombarded with calls and emails from nearly 700 students nationwide whose visitor status has been revoked.

"We're going to file a class action (lawsuit)," he said. "This is a disaster."

TIRES

From page 1A

locations on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Keep Warner Robins Beautiful manager Tiffany Bowen said this is a biannual event hosted in partnership with Houston County Public Works. She shared the event is hosted during those two days in conjunction with Earth Week.

As long as tires are off the rim and not from a commercial business, people can bring as many tires as they want, Bowen said. It also does not matter if the tire is cut into pieces or if there is a hole; KWRB will take them regardless of condition.

Bowen also shared that it is free of charge for all Houston County residents.

There are three convenient locations where people can drop off their tires:

- Houston County Annex, 200 Carl Vinson Parkway
- Perry Purchasing Department, 2020 Kings Chapel Road
- Houston County Landfill, 2080 Highway 247

"We have made it just as easy as possible for folks to recycle their tires," she

said. According to Bowen, tires are hard to recycle unless done so immediately after purchase. She also cited a lack of recycling options for tires; the only option is the landfill, but there is a fee.

Bowen believes the landfill route is problematic. KWRB's goal is to reduce what goes in the landfill; the more they can keep out of it, the better for the environment.

She added there is no age limit to recycling, encourages anyone to do it, and benefits are endless for the environment when we reduce, reuse and recycle.

"With this program, it is grant-funded and they do go to a tire recycler. These tires may end up going to rubber fencing or they may end up being shredded into mulch or for playground material, but they do get recycled, which keeps them out of the landfill and it keeps them from being dealt illegally which is an ongoing problem for many towns," she said. "It's one of those harder to recycle and hard to get rid of materials that we felt was important to focus on."

KWRB also hosted the event to celebrate the Great American Cleanup and Earth Day. Bowen

said both holidays go hand-in-hand and raise awareness for environmental protection.

While environmentalism is a year-round effort, Earth Day is a special day to encourage people to make a positive impact. The Great American Cleanup is a 90-day stretch where people are also encouraged to clean up their area.

Bowen believes with many partnerships and everyone working towards the same goal, they can accomplish a clean environment.

"That is the end goal: to try and get every single person to do their part to have a litter-free environment, not just for us, but for everything out in nature [that] is experiencing the same world we share with, so that we can have a cleaner environment for future generations to come, so that we can leave everything better than we found it—from our waterways to our natural spaces—to reduce that pollution," she said.

The Tri-City Tire Amnesty event will be on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Those interested are encouraged to bring off-rim tires to one of the three locations.

TRAVEL

From page 1A

with the [New Residents Reception and Expo], but we also heard from people that have lived here for a while that they may not be aware of all the things going on in Middle Georgia and beyond," she said. "We pivoted and decided to do a Spring Travel Showcase that highlights not just things happening not just in Perry but

across Georgia and invited some of our partners to come as well."

Turpin believes more people are looking for rural tourism. She said people may be trying to stay away from the more congested areas and making smarter decisions with their money.

"The truth is your dollar does stretch further when you're travelling in small towns, so I think Perry makes a great place to visit, however, we're not

just showcasing Perry," she said. "There will be different attractions, whether you're a Perry local looking for things to do in Perry or a visitor looking for things to do in Perry, we'll be able to serve both of those demographics at this one event."

Turpin hopes the Spring Travel Showcase helps residents and visitors leap into travelling around the city of Perry and the surrounding area.

"By talking face to face

with these representatives from the businesses or organization, you can get those questions answered and take the next step to either book that trip or make a visit to that attraction while setting yourself up for a successful spring and summer of travel," she said.

Turpin wants this showcase to improve residents' quality of life who may be looking for a day trip somewhere else.

"We also want to hit

the people who are in our hotels for that weekend and visit Perry to make sure they know what's going on," she said. "Perry has seen so much growth that even over the last five or ten years, people may not be aware of everything that's going on in Perry, so we want to just help them to make the most of their time while they are with us in town."

Turpin said the Spring Travel Showcase can make a great addition to your

day in Downtown Perry.

"I think people should come for that element of surprise. Even if you think you know everything that takes place across Georgia, you are always surprised when there's new businesses, attractions or even things you're familiar with," she said.

The full list of vendors at the Spring Travel Showcase can be found on our website.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Mako Bay car wash opens on Watson



Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce

Mako Bay of Warner Robins, located at 6151 Watson Boulevard, officially opened its doors last week with a ribbon cutting hosted by the Robins Regional Chamber on April 17. When the sun's out and your car's coated in Georgia's signature blend of dirt and pollen, Mako Bay promises to leave it sparkling clean.

YODER

From page 5A

drug industry has it set up to distribute psychotropic drugs through medical practitioners that are not licensed in psychiatry. How do regular practitioners know the details of psychiatric drugs, in comparison to a psychiatrist that qualify them for distribution of psychiatric drugs? Before starting someone on anti-depressants, do they make certain their patient has a clear understanding what could happen if they suddenly discontinue taking them, or if they mix alcohol or any other drugs with the psychotropic medication (when they themselves are not schooled in psychiatry)?

School shootings: what happens when a depressed child who is put on psychotropic medications, but during the adolescent/teen years, decides it is no longer necessary or mixes

alcohol or other drugs with psychotropic drugs? Have the parents been warned about this, does the teenager who is now in control of what they consume or do not consume aware? It is easier to chalk it off as a deranged killer, but is it an otherwise good kid, who's chemistry has gone haywire? One thing quite certain it is quite easy to see where the object of their rage is consistently at.

Good and bad behavioral decisions on a scale of 1-10: we have seen mental health prevail itself tragically through suicide, and even mass homicide, but there are many decisions an individual can make, that are not nearly as tragic, (none-the-less can be very tragic and costly to the individual and/or ones around them). Letting psychotropic drugs be distributed so easily throughout our population, seems to mirror the same blindness when

the medical industry was allowed to flood our country with opioids. Is this happening once again but in the shape of psychotropic drugs?

Opinion: Peach and Crawford County just went through a very intensive process with the UGA Carl Vincent Institute that helps counties and municipalities develop best practice for handling mental health crisis, mental health in the jail, judicial system, and stabilization and care in the community. However, if we do not quit putting the masses on psychotropic drugs, and side-stepping the responsibility of doing what it takes to keep individuals on psychotropic medication's that have severe mental health difficulties, (that would have received an elevated level of care in state institutions), we are going to continue living in a powder keg society, where occasionally one gets lit.

Don't be bullied by door to door pine straw scams

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is again noticing an increase in calls related to door-to-door pine straw scams, particularly targeting elderly homeowners. Consumers complain about aggressive tactics used by disreputable landscapers showing up at their door, claiming to have left over pine straw or mulch from a previous job. The "landscaper" is willing to offer it to the unsuspecting homeowner at a heavily discounted rate.

Once the homeowner agrees to a price or number of bales, the scammer will either lay down fewer bales than agreed and then need more money to sufficiently cover the area; or completely cover the area and insist that the consumer pay the extra costs. If the consumer refuses, the scammer will then resort to intimidation tactics to frighten the homeowner into paying more. One elderly consumer agreed to pay \$400 for their yard, but when the workers were finished, they demanded \$1,200, or else. In the end, the consumer was bullied into paying the exorbitant fee.

Many door-to-door salespeople are legitimate, but others might only be looking to make a sale and then, move on. BBB recommends consumers be suspicious of too good to be true offers and to have a plan in place when hearing that tell-tale knock:

Ask about licensing. Many cities require door-to-door salespeople to have a peddler or solicitor license. Ask if the salesperson has checked in with the city and gotten proper licensing. Not sure? Call the city or county offices to verify.

Check identification. A

BBB Tips



Kelvin Collins

BBB of Central Georgia

reputable seller will provide all the information asked of them, including a photo ID and a business card. If possible, use your phone to take a photo of their vehicle and tag.

Verify the individual and the company. A reputable salesperson should not have a problem with having their identity checked with a quick phone call to the company. Research the company and contact them to check if the salesperson is in fact an employee. Read the company's Business Profile and customer reviews at BBB.org.

Get promises in writing. If you are interested in a product or service, get everything in writing including price, contract details and all other terms and conditions. Tell the salesperson the proposal will be reviewed, and a decision will be made. Verify the physical address and valid contact information for the company are included.

Don't give in to pressure. Watch out for high-pressure sales tactics and be aware that anything you sign could construe a contract. If you feel pressured, end the sales pitch and ask the person to leave. Be prepared to call the police if they refuse.

Know your rights. The Federal Trade Commission's Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule gives the customer three days to can-

cel purchases over \$25 that are made in their home or at a location that is not the seller's permanent place of business. Along with a receipt, salespeople should also include a completed cancellation form that customers can send to the company to cancel the agreement.

Stand strong. Be careful about allowing strangers into your home. If you do allow a salesperson inside your home and decide during the presentation that you are not interested in making a purchase, simply ask them to leave. If the salesperson refuses to leave, tell them you will call the police – and follow through if they do not leave immediately.

People who have issues with door-to-door solicitors can submit a BBB Scam Tracker report at BBB.org, as well as reporting anyone suspicious to local law enforcement.

Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia, and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the International Association of Better Business Bureaus (IABBB). The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: BBB.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org

BURKE

From page 4A

CC: "Err, what's that?"
FTFH: "Sir, a contrail follows almost every high-altitude jet. It's simply ice crystals."

CC: "So why do you answer this hotline if you are a denier? You aren't scrambling the jets, are you?"

FTFH: "Not just yet. I guess it could be an illegal chemtrail. I'll make a report. So, you want your case number?"
CC: "I do!"

FTFH: "It's 2025LUN-ATIC1256."

CC: "Thank you. He's disappearing from sight but if you scramble them jets, you can catch him before he reaches the state line."

FTFH: "We are on it, sir. I'd suggest you wear a gas mask for the rest of the day."

CC: "I usually do."

FTFH: "Yes sir, I assumed as much. Goodbye."

Florida is cutting-edge in many ways. Our Georgia Legislature is pretty blasé by contrast.

Kelly Burke was born in Knoxville where he spent his younger years, followed by high school years in Atlanta where he graduated from Georgia Tech. He then graduated from Mercer Law School. He has been in private practice, a magistrate judge, and an elected district attorney. He writes about the law, politics, music and Ireland. He and his wife enjoy gardening, playing with their Lagotto Ramanolo named George Harrison, and spending time with their grandchildren.

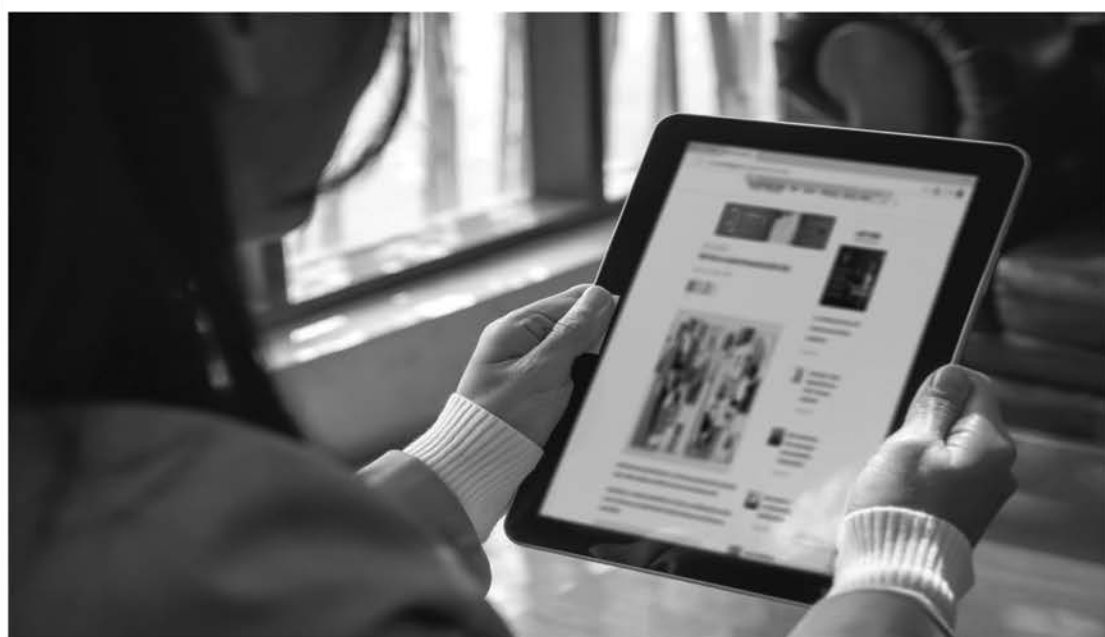
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Houston County Baseball

Kendall Jackson and Vick Gann propel Bears offense past Apalachee in round one

By **CLAY BROWN**
HHJ Sports Editor
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — The Garden saw playoff baseball once again on Wednesday as the Houston County Bears swept the Apalachee Wildcats and advanced to the second round.

Kendall Jackson and Vick Gann had two home runs each in the series in 6-0 and 11-0 victories.

Three observations:

Defense might be their greatest weapon

Hot take: Teams that defend well win more times than not.

Sarcasm aside, the “defense wins championships” saying isn’t for nothing. HoCo will (hopefully) be a prime example of that, and the defense had a good start to the playoff run.

The Bears blanked Apalachee in both games, and it wasn’t for lack of opportunities.

In Game 1 the Wildcats had runners in scoring position in the first and fifth innings, and had runners on throughout. But the defense showed up and kept those players on the bags.

Ethan Buffone picked up a ground ball and beamed it to Isaiah Galason, who after tripping on a runner sliding into second base made the throw to first to end the top of the opening inning by stiff arming the Apalachee offense.



Max Willhide (18) celebrates with Logan Elbie (right) after a big side-ending out.

An at ‘em ball to Tyson Ganas in the sixth turned into a double play as he got it to Logan Elbie at first to clear the bases.

Initially Will Allen seemed hesitant to put the ball in the strike zone, but he trusted his defense and they delivered.

“I thought they played well,” Bears coach Matt Hopkins said of his defense. “When you’re throwing strikes and

that other team is putting the ball in play a decent amount, usually you’re going to get better defense because they’re expecting the ball and they’re on their toes. I thought they did a good job of handling it today.”

As long as they have hope

Game 1 wasn’t as dominant as you’d expect a matchup between a one seed and a four seed to be.

Especially not when the four seed had 18 losses coming in and had lost 11 of their last 12.

HoCo only tallied seven hits (same as Apalachee) and four of their six runs came from Jackson and Gann’s home runs.

Some of that was bad luck on some hard hit balls. They also got under a few pitches too much and didn’t have the distance, leading to easy fly outs.

But in Game 2 Gann rocketed his second home run of the day in the first inning to rejuvenate HoCo, who

scored seven of their 11 runs in the last three innings.

Hopkins said something to his dugout in Game 1 along the lines of, “The longer they’re in it the longer they’ll believe.” But it felt like the Bears broke Apalachee’s spirits in Game 2 as they dominated start to finish.

“Game 2 we were able to bat first and as soon as we came out, jumped on top... It immediately put them in a hole,” Hopkins said. “They had their main pitcher Game 2, they’re gonna feel like they’ve got some

life. Luckily we were able to piece some stuff together [in] Game 2 that’s a little more consistent than Game 1.”

“Playoffs are always hard when you start them. Round one, I’ll tell everybody, round one’s always one of the hardest rounds for me,” he continued. “Just because you’re adjusting to the motions, you’re adjusting to the schedule and everything else.”

It only gets tougher from here

At the end of the day, HoCo beat a team they were supposed to in round one. They made a better effort in Game 2, but there were still some things that won’t fly against better teams.

There’s potential for the Bears and Pope to meet in the quarterfinals which is only one series win away. Brunswick, their round two opponent, is a scrappy team that beat a 24-win region champion Villa Rica.

One of the adjustments they made in Game 2 was getting on top of pitches a little more. Hopkins specifically mentioned Elbie and Buffone after the game.

“Elbie had a really good hit in the second game and he’d been hitting some balls really high and just been getting under them,” Hopkins said. He made an adjustment [and] got on top of it a little bit more. Same thing with Buffone, he got on a couple times because he didn’t hit the ball in the air.”

UP NEXT

HoCo will play Brunswick on Tuesday. Time is to be determined.



Max Willhide throws a pickoff attempt to first base.



A teammate pats Vick Gann (11) on the head after his first of two home runs against Apalachee.

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Houston County Signing Day

Four more Bears across three sports sign Letters of Intent

By **CLAY BROWN**
HHJ Sports Editor
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Friends, family and teammates gathered in the Houston County High School media center on Tuesday to send off four of their own to the next level of athletics.

Four Bears signed across three sports:

Kendall Jackson, Baseball, Chattahoochee Valley Community College

HoCo baseball coach Matt Hopkins had nothing but glowing remarks for Kendall Jackson, who's having an outstanding senior campaign as the Bears enter the state playoffs.

At the time of writing Jackson is batting .480 on the season with a .561 on-base percentage. Along with seven doubles, two tri-

ples, three home runs and 30 RBIs, he's broken his own single-season stolen bases record with 54. Hopkins said 59 would put him at second all-time in the state of Georgia.

Harrison Bird, Soccer, Georgia Military College

Harrison Bird received high praise from HoCo coach Elvar Gudjonsson for his contributions in his career as a Bear, but especially during his senior season.

Gudjonsson commended him and Jaheem Wright for bringing a mature presence to the locker room during their 12-5 regular season.

Jaheem Wright, Soccer, Georgia Military College

Jaheem Wright also received lofty praise from Gudjonsson for his mature presence on the team.

Wright said he wanted to give all glory to God, and to thank his mother and team-

mates for everything they've given him during his career.

Aniyah Robinson, Cheer, Columbus State University

One of HoCo cheer's own is headed to the next level with Aniyah Robinson signed with Columbus State University, but not before being sent off with a stellar review from football and competition cheer coach Jessica Leaptrot.

Leaptrot made note of her athleticism and flawless technique in her tumbling, stunting and jumping.

On behalf of the Houston Home Journal, congratulations to all of these athletes! Good luck in your future endeavors, and represent Houston County well!

Warner Robins Signing Day

Three sports represented at Demons' signing day a month ahead of graduation

By **CLAY BROWN**
HHJ Sports Editor
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — After sending two athletes to the next level last week, Warner Robins signed six more across three sports during Tuesday's signing day.

Here's the latest Demons to sign to continue their academic and athletic careers:

Korveanna Slaughter, Basketball, East Georgia State College

Korveanna Slaughter has been a staple in Demonettes basketball since her freshman season, and led the team this year to an undefeated regular season for the first time in school history.

She was also Region 1-4A Offensive Player of the Year during her senior campaign.

Trey Bradley, Basketball, Young Harris College

Trey Bradley made a return to the Demon Den for his senior season after earning Player of the Year honors at Central Christian Fellowship Academy in 2023-24.

He helped lead Warner Robins to a region championship and also earned a Region 1-4A First Team selection.

Kelsey Perkins, Jordan Addie, Jeffrey Johnson, Football, Columbus State University

This trio of Demons signed to play football at Columbus State University. All three

were contributors on a Warner Robins offense that swept the county and finished with a 7-4 record.

Mykiah Williams, Volleyball, Stevenson University

Mykiah Williams was the lone representative for volleyball, though both her high school and club coach had high praises for her athleticism and leadership on the floor.

On behalf of the Houston Home Journal, congratulations to all of these athletes! We wish you the best in representing Houston County at the next level.



Aniyah Robinson committed to cheer at Columbus State University during Houston County's signing day.



Six Warner Robins athletes across three sports signed to play at the next level during Warner Robins' signing day.



City of Warner Robins FOOD TRUCK ROUNDUP

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This is... Robins



Volume 7 Number 5

May 2025

1 Section, 8 Pages

“We’re here to support” How the base celebrated Month of the Military Child, uplifts military children



U.S. Air Force photo by C Arce

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Some children of Robins Air Force Base Airmen celebrated Purple Up Day by making tie-dye shirts at the installation’s youth center, April 15, 2025. Purple Up Day is observed every year and it shows support and thanks to military for their strength and sacrifices.

By **BRIANNA SMITH**
HHJ Managing Editor
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ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE — Military children serve alongside their parents, and on Robins Air Force Base, local organizations want them to know they don’t have to serve alone.

The youth center, directed by Linda Cleveland, provides four main programs for school-aged children: school age care, open recreation, teen center and youth sports.

The school age care program includes before and after school care for children five to 12 years old, and provides transportation to and from school. Children’s social, physical and cognitive needs are met through this program.

The open recreation program includes pool, air hockey, video games, computers and a teen lounge and is available to pre-teens and teens.

The teen center is open after school and provides an advisory program and tutoring.

Youth sports clinics and camps are also offered through the youth center. Summer camps and lesson plans which include field trips to Atlanta and Statesboro are also available.

Parents have access to a family advocacy office and a family readiness center on base, which Cleveland has connections to.

“Any time a parent needs a resource, if I can’t help them, I’m going to send them to [Military and] Family Readiness Center. I’m going to send them to family advocacy, whatever they need,” she said.

The center provides activities year-round, but April is Month of the Military Child, giving even more opportunities for families to celebrate together. Cleveland explained that this month’s activities included a teen

gaming night, purple pancakes before breakfast, tie-dyed shirt making, and a costume dance.

“Throughout this month will be a lot going on at the youth center: Lots of activities. Parents get to come in and sit with their kids. We have activities going on throughout the month. It’s just a great time,” she said.

Military children uniquely experience parental deployments, according to Cleveland, a military parent herself. Children either stay with their other parent or with relatives if their parent is single.

“One parent has to take care of the household while the other parent’s gone and that’s hard for the kids to understand: when daddy’s gone, he won’t be coming home in the afternoon, and they just talk to him every now and then,” she explained.

Military children are also adaptable due to frequent relocations for new assign-

ments.

“[For] most of them, it’s not the first time that they moved. But when they do get to the new base, of course, they’ve got to meet new friends. Everything is different. They’re in different environments, and that could be a very traumatic experience,” Cleveland said.

To facilitate smoother transitions for relocating families, Cleveland proactively contacts the youth centers at their destination bases, sharing pertinent information. Additionally, upon arrival, the base often pairs newcomers with existing children to foster immediate connections and ease the integration process.

“[I’ll] talk to them and give my parents the information for the program that’s at the new base that they’re going. They can send them information before they even get to the next base, to try to get the kids familiar with the area,” she said.

Open communication and

strong relationships are essential to helping military children overcome challenges, according to Cleveland. She cites the example of a child who felt isolated and alone when their close father was deployed.

“Kids have to have a relationship with you before they feel comfortable talking to you ... Once I built the relationship and my staff built the relationships, that’s when she overcame that challenge,” Cleveland said. “Yes, she still misses her dad, but she knew from talking to us on a daily basis that dad was coming back.”

Cleveland hopes military children know their challenges do not go unnoticed, and the youth center is there to help ease their struggles.

“We’re here to support you. We love you. I understand what you’re going through,” she said.

Cleveland also hopes that the community will show their support and recognize the bravery of military children. She encourages the community to offer activities for military families and praised Texas Roadhouse and the City of Warner Robins for their support of military families. The City of Warner Robins hosted a Month of the Military Child Celebration on April 24, and Texas Roadhouse offered free meals to military children.

“Military kids are unique. They’re special. They go through a lot more than kids [whose] parents are not in the military. They hold a lot on their shoulders. So I really hope [the community] could see that and give them extra love,” she said.

See more information about the Youth Center at robinsfss.com/youth.

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From high school graduation to careers, Edwards students obtain full-time positions on base



STARBASE students visit a class called Advanced Aircraft Maintenance Technology at the Desert High School Aerospace Lab on Edwards Air Force Base, California. Two alumni of Muroc School District and currently employees at the 412th Test Wing, Savannah Wilson and Kevin Koper, describe how jet engines work to the visiting students.

By Chase Kohler
412th Test Wing

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. --

There is nothing wrong with growing where you are planted. That statement rings true for two Edwards Air Force Base, California, team members, Savannah

Wilson and Kevin Koper, who graduated from Desert High School in 2023.

Within months of graduating, both found full-time positions with the 412th Test Wing, working on aircraft engines and maintenance. They join a handful of other recent graduates

who have launched their careers at Edwards to enhance Air Force technology and capabilities.

The quick transition was assisted by unique programming at Edwards, including the Advanced Aircraft Maintenance Technology Lab at Desert High School.

As part of a commitment to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and trade careers, students gain hands-on experience in aerospace maintenance and fabrication, including immersion opportunities with the 412th Maintenance Group. This allows them to

quickly join the workforce after graduation.

As Edwards continues to grow its test scope, the Muroc Joint Unified School District and base leaders are working together to further develop and certify curriculum that will directly impact stu-

dents' professional aspirations. This is in addition to continued efforts through the school liaison office, STARBASE and the 412th Test Wing STEM program to ensure America remains at the cutting edge.

Robins public health notice: rabies

By 78th Medical Group
Public Health

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. --

The Georgia Public Health Laboratory reported a raccoon at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, tested positive for the rabies virus.

If you have pets that are not currently vaccinated against rabies, it is very important to have them vaccinated, both dogs and cats, immediately. If your pets begin to act in a strange manner (e.g., excessive drooling, increased aggression, staggering, paralysis, abnormal vocalizations, etc.) please contact the Robins Veterinary Clinic at (478) 327-8448 or the Houston County Health Department, Environmental Health section at (478) 218-2020.

What you need to know about rabies:

- It is an infection caused by a virus that is transmitted in the saliva of infected animals.
- It is transmitted by a

bite or contact with infected saliva through open wounds, nose or mouth.

• Wild animals are the most likely potential source of rabies for both humans and pets.

• If you are bitten or scratched by an animal, it is critical you seek medical care immediately. Without proper treatment, rabies is almost always fatal.

All Active Duty and Tricare beneficiaries can be seen at the Medical Group. If you are seen off base, please follow-up with your Primary Care Manager because we still need to track the incident.

If you are a civilian, and it happened while at work, you can be evaluated at Operational Medicine Services, building 207. If you are a contractor, please seek care at your approved medical facility.

How to protect yourself and your pet:

- Vaccinate your pets against rabies.
- Avoid contact with stray



The Georgia Public Health Laboratory reported that a raccoon at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, tested positive for the rabies virus.

or wild animals or any animal exhibiting unusual behaviors.

- Bat-proof your home.
- Teach your children how to protect themselves.
- Do not feed stray pets or wildlife.

For more information, contact the 78th Medical Group Public Health at (478) 327-8019 or Houston County Environmental Health at (478) 218-2020.

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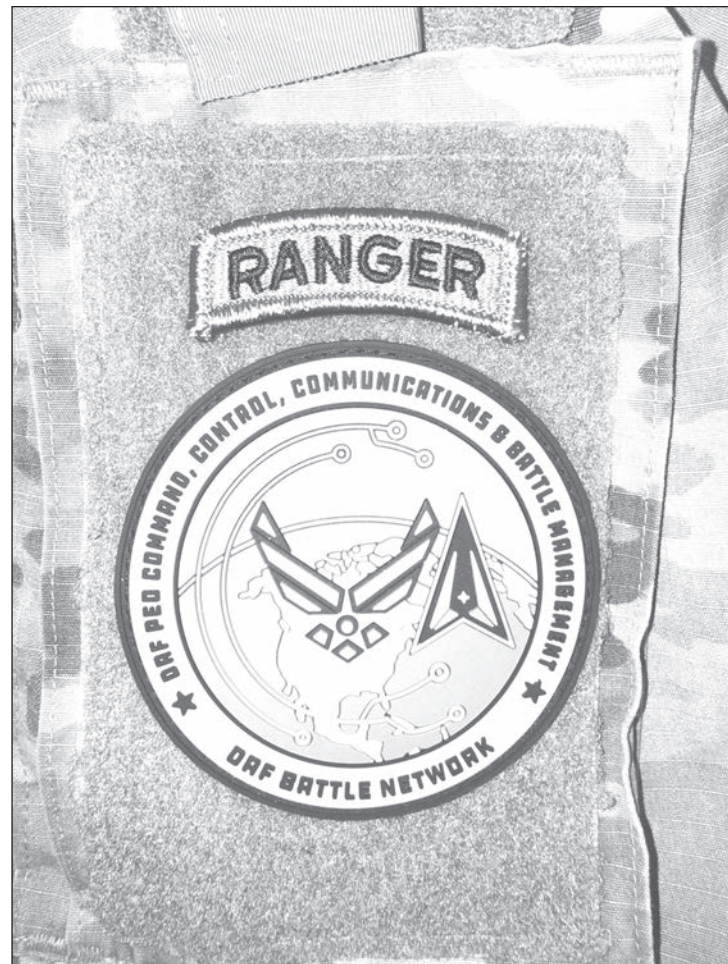
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From keyboards to rucksacks: An Air Force acquisition officer's journey through the Army Ranger Course



Capt. Daniel Webber graduated from the Army's Ranger Course, Jan. 24, 2025. The Colleyville, Texas, native was presented with the coveted Ranger Tab after completing the grueling 62-day course. Webber is an acquisitions officer with Kessel Run, the largest software development and acquisitions unit within the DoD.

By Richard Blumenstein
DAF PEO C3BM Public Affairs

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass. --

Capt. Daniel Webber boasts a trait rarely associated with Air Force acquisitions officers – he's lethal.

Since 2015, of the 150 Airmen who started the Army's Ranger Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, only 84 graduated and earned the right to wear the coveted Ranger Tab. Webber joined the microcosm of Airmen who have earned that right, completing the 62-day course Jan. 24, 2025.

Ranger training is regarded as one of the most challenging courses within the Department of Defense. Each year, only half of all students who pass the initial prerequisites to attend actually graduate. Service members succumb to injuries, quit from mental exhaustion, or are peered out for failing to display

suitable leadership skills. Often, they are sent back, or 'recycled,' to repeat portions of the training for a myriad of reasons. Few prevail from those setbacks.

Webber was recycled. Twice.

He said a combination of support from his loved ones, friends, and peers in the course helped him find the mental fortitude and stick-to-itiveness he needed to overcome the challenges he faced.

"Ranger Course teaches you that failure isn't the end, it's just a delay," he said. "Getting recycled forced me to dig deeper, to push past what I thought were my limits. It made me realize that giving up wasn't an option."

"It felt like getting knocked down after you thought you'd won the fight," he said.

The Airman endured.

The course is the Army's premier small unit tactics

and leadership event. It develops functional skills directly related to units whose mission is to engage the enemy in close combat and direct fire battle. Students become proficient in leading squad and platoon dismounted operations around the clock in all climates and terrain. Rangers are better trained, more capable, more resilient, and better prepared to serve and lead.

The Colleyville, Texas, native's career hardly mirrors that of the Army infantry officers who primarily attend the course. Webber is an acquisition officer with Kessel Run, the largest software development and acquisition's unit within the DoD, and a division within the Department of the Air Force Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications and Battle Management.

At KR, Webber manages contracts and resources to

support teams of developers, designers, and product managers. His job focuses on ensuring Kessel Runners are empowered to create software solutions that are user-centered and effective.

"My job is to make sure the software we build is as tough and reliable as the Airmen who use it," he said. "We're developing the tools that give Airmen the edge they need, whether it's planning a mission or analyzing intelligence."

While Webber isn't your traditional Ranger candidate, the course is open to all service members who meet prerequisites and receive command approval. For Webber to attend the course, he said getting approval from his leadership was a challenging hurdle, but he was thankful to have their support.

"I couldn't be the dude to tell him no; it was so awesome," said Lt. Col. Jonathan Ng, the branch

chief for Kessel Run's All Domain Common Platform. "Airmen in general don't often get to go to this course. Air Force officers normally don't get to go ... and acquisition officers ... it's unheard of."

"This course embodies that warrior ethos we all strive to, the mission of what we do," Ng said. "Webber attending not only makes him a better Airman, but it improves the Airmen around him."

Once Webber had his command's approval to attend, he began finalizing all the necessary paperwork to obtain a seat in the course.

"Getting that green light from my commander was a huge moment," Webber said. "It meant they believed in me, and trusted that I could bring something back to the unit, even if it wasn't immediately obvious what that would be."

Webber was able to attend the course as a 'walk on,'

after completing a preparation course. For him, earning a Ranger Tab was a dream he had for as long as he could remember.

"It might seem strange for a software guy to chase a Ranger Tab, but it was a dream I had since I was a kid," he said. "It was about proving that even an Air Force acquisitions officer could answer that call to adventure."

He said he spent six months preparing for the course, and had to completely overhaul his lifestyle, dedicating every spare moment to rigorous physical training and immersing himself in Army tactical doctrine.

"I had to learn a whole new profession," he said. "I spent all my time reading the Ranger Handbook front-to-back, listening to the audiobook on runs and while driving to work."

Webber began a strict training regimen and diet to prepare for the course. He allocated all his free time to the single focus of preparing himself for the challenges ahead.

"It became my life," he said. "Physically, I trained seven days a week, two-a-days, mixing weights, calisthenics, running, and rucking."

"I had to be in the best shape of my life," he said.

He was.

Webber was able to complete the course and earn the coveted tab. He returned to Kessel Run a more well-rounded Airman, with an experience that will forever make him lethal, a better leader, and above all – an asset to his fellow Airmen dedicated to delivering decisive decision advantage through software.

"It's a different kind of battlefield here at Kessel Run," he said. "Instead of mountains and mud, we've got deadlines and data streams. But the mission is just as vital; supporting the Air Force with cutting edge software."

"And honestly, I kind of like having a roof over my head while I do it," he said.

AFIMSC celebrates 10 years of making Air Force success its mission

By Mila Cisneros
AFIMSC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – On April 6, 2015, the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center was activated to centralize management support and consolidate enterprise-level installation and mission support operations to help commanders focus on their primary mission areas. Ten years later, AFIMSC is celebrating its remarkable journey of growth, innovation and mission success.

Since its stand up in response to significant Department of Defense budget cuts, AFIMSC, under Air Force Materiel Command, has evolved into a critical enabler of the Department of the Air Force mission, driving lethality and readiness, while providing vital support to warfighters and their families.

Maj. Gen. Theresa Carter led the establishment and stand-up of AFIMSC, integrating six primary subordinate units and activating 10 detachments to provide

direct support to DAF commands. By 2015, the center, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio – Lackland, Texas, was fully operational, managing over 150 mission support capabilities. AFIMSC achieved full operational capability in 2016, solidifying the center's role as a vital component of DAF mission execution.

Between 2017 and 2019, Maj. Gen. Bradley Spacy's leadership focused on stabilizing and rightsizing the organization. Known as AFIMSC 2.0, this phase consolidated financial functions and reduced subordinate units from six to four. The center fostered innovation through initiatives including the Installation and Mission Support Weapons and Tactics Conference and the Innovation Rodeo, both of which became annual flagship events.

From 2019 to 2022, under Maj. Gen. Tom Wilcox, AFIMSC adapted to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading efforts to secure contracts for critical supplies

and providing essential support to the DAF and DOD. The center also expanded its role with the U.S. Space Force and developed the Office of the Future Initiative to support the post-pandemic work environment. In 2021, AFIMSC released its first strategic plan, focusing on increasing readiness, supporting Airmen and families and driving organizational excellence.

Since 2022, under Maj. Gen. John Allen's leadership, AFIMSC has continued to evolve to meet the changing global security environment. The center transitioned to an A-Staff structure for better strategic planning, with a focus on agile combat employment and countering future threats, particularly from China.

Check out the <https://www.afimsc.af.mil/Home/AFIMSC-Ten-Year-Anniversary/> to learn more about AFIMSC's impressive journey and its ongoing commitment to the DAF mission success.



Capt. Daniel Webber, center, stands with his parents, Sylvia and James, following his graduation ceremony at the Army's Ranger Course, Jan. 24, 2025. The Colleyville, Texas, native was presented with the coveted Ranger Tab after completing the grueling 62-day course. Webber is an acquisitions officer with Kessel Run, the largest software development and acquisitions unit within the Air Force. Both parents are Army veterans.

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Air Force personnel involuntarily discharged over vaccine mandate offered reinstatement

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS) -- The Department of Defense is offering a pathway for reinstatement for service members involuntarily discharged for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine. The military departments will review discharge records, using standardized criteria, to identify those separated solely due to the vaccine mandate. Those whose records don't clearly indicate a sole-cause separation will be contacted directly.

Each eligible former service member will be contacted by mail, email (if possible) and phone by a uniformed representative and invited to apply for reinstatement. The outreach will explain the streamlined application process, potential financial benefits (including required offsets) and the requirement for a four-year service commitment upon reinstatement.

Interested individuals will undergo pre-screening to assess their physical and medical eligibility, utilizing Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS). While screened according to accession standards, they'll be adjudicated against retention standards, with waivers liberally applied. Only presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed civilians can disapprove waivers.

The Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NRs) will prioritize these reinstatement cases, subject to existing statutory priorities. The BCM/NRs will review records for errors or injustices and may order corrections, including reinstatement without a break in service, restoration of rank and credit for lost service time. The service secretaries retain final disapproval authority for reinstatement of eligible service members.

Pre-reinstatement assistance will include expedited pay and benefits estimates. The gap in service will count as active service for retirement pay calculations for those previously in full-time status. Ready Reserve members will receive retirement points as outlined in 10 U.S.C. § 12732(a) (2), with a minimum of 50 points annually.

After receiving a compensation estimate, former service members will have 60 days to accept reinstatement in writing, acknowledging the four-year service commitment (a two-year option exists for those within two years of retirement eligibility at their separation date). Those declining reinstatement may still apply to the BCM/NR for other relief. This policy does not apply to those separated for misconduct unrelated to the vaccine mandate.

More information can be found at <https://www.af.mil/COVID-Reinstatement/>.

Developing Lethality: Steward of the Digital Thread



Developing Lethality: Steward of the Digital Thread Part 1: The Air Force Test Center's Role in Warfighter Dominance.

By Tech. Sgt. Robert Cloys
Air Force Test Center

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. --

Part 1: The Air Force Test Center's Role in Warfighter Dominance

In a rapidly evolving battlespace, where peer threats continue to challenge global stability, the Department of the Air Force is accelerating its approach to warfighting readiness. Success on future battlefields will depend on how quickly the Air Force can develop, test, and integrate lethal capabilities across air, space, and cyberspace. Ensuring these capabilities are credible, survivable, and effective requires a test enterprise that is seamlessly connected from concept development through operational employment and sustainment.

At the forefront of this effort is the Air Force Test Center, headquartered at Edwards Air Force Base, California. As the premier developmental test and evaluation organization for the U.S. Air Force, AFTC provides the critical link between capability development and warfighter execution. With three primary locations across Air Force Materiel Command, no other entity in the Department of the Air Force operates at every stage of the acquisition lifecycle, assessing, refining, and validating systems both technically and operationally to ensure lethality where it matters most.

To achieve this, AFTC is expanding its role as an integrating center, advancing a concept known as the Digital Thread—a seamless, data-driven framework that connects modeling and simulation, ground test, and flight test into a continuous cycle of innovation and improvement.

“We don't just test a system once and walk away,” said Maj. Gen. Scott A. Cain, AFTC commander. “We are actively engaged from the initial design to the moment it reaches the hands of the warfighter and beyond. Our role in developmental test spans a system's lifecycle.”

This four-part series will explore how AFTC develops, refines, and delivers lethality, starting with the Digital Thread's role in test and evaluation, and then diving deeper into the three key phases of lethality development:

— Part 2: Modeling and Simulation – Exploring Lethality Before It's Built

— Part 3: Ground Test – Where Lethality is Designed

— Part 4: Flight Test and Test Flags – Proving and Sustaining Lethality

Through developmental testing, AFTC is shaping the future of Air Force lethality and ensuring that every system is faster, smarter, and more lethal from the moment it's conceived to the moment it's employed in combat.

The Digital Thread: Linking Every Stage of Lethality Development

The Digital Thread is transforming how the Air Force designs, tests, and fields combat capabilities. Traditionally, testing was conducted in separate, disconnected phases. Modeling and simulation, ground test, and flight test were often isolated from one another, limiting the ability to apply real-world data to capability development. Today, AFTC is ensuring that test data is shared, analyzed, and applied across every stage. This shift allows for earlier identification of potential failures, reducing risk before physical testing begins. It enables faster refinement of weapons and aircraft by integrating test results into real-time

design improvements. Most importantly, it ensures that systems meet operational needs before deployment, providing warfighters with battle-ready solutions.

“Every test we conduct—whether it's in a wind tunnel, a flight test range, or a simulated battlespace—feeds into the next phase,” said John Grigaliunas, AFTC technical advisor for flight test and evaluation. “This isn't about passing tests. It's about continuously improving capabilities as early as possible, mitigating risks to mission assurance.”

AFTC is extending its test role earlier into the acquisition lifecycle while also integrating test data with operational forces. By applying credible, verified, and validated models, the test enterprise enables decision-making advantages in force design. The accuracy of tactics, techniques, and procedures development is improved through the use of tools like the Joint Simulation Environment. Additionally, modeling and simulation efforts, combined with advanced data analytics and test range capabilities, are accelerating the development of combat capabilities.

Cain emphasized AFTC's long-term vision: “We are building a trusted source of high-fidelity models, anchored with test results, that will increase confidence in integrated capability development.”

AFTC's Role in Lethality Development

Lethality is developed through a multi-phase approach, where every stage contributes to the final warfighting capability.

“Lethality is explored in modeling and simulation, where advanced capabilities like the Joint Simulation Environment integrate into the earliest stages of weapon development leveraging

tailable high-fidelity digital surrogates with operator feedback to enhance integration.

“Lethality is designed in ground test, where facilities such as wind tunnels, propulsion test facilities, avionics and weapons evaluation laboratories characterize system behavior and validate engineering assumptions under controlled conditions prior to flight.

“Lethality is refined and proven in flight test and Test Flag events, the final crucible for warfighter capabilities, where developmental and operational test efforts converge to ensure real-world effectiveness.


Each of these test phases is connected through the Digital Thread, creating a continuous feedback loop that increases speed, efficiency, and effectiveness in developing lethal combat capabilities.

AFTC's Commitment to Accelerating Warfighter Capabilities

The future of warfare depends on speed—not just in combat, but in how quickly the Air Force can develop and field lethal, survivable, and effective capabilities. AFTC's role in stewarding the Digital Thread ensures that warfighters receive systems that are not only lethal today but continuously improved to remain dominant in future conflicts.

“Every test event is accomplished with a purpose,” Cain said. “Our purpose is to ensure that when the warfighter goes into combat, they have the most lethal, effective, and survivable systems possible.”

Through developmental testing across the life cycle, AFTC is shaping the future of Air Force lethality—ensuring faster, smarter, and more lethal systems from conception to combat employment.

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US, French forces conduct joint parachuting exercise in Djibouti



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mitch Munn

U.S. service members sit and stand in an MV-22 Osprey in Djibouti, March 19, 2025. Participants in the exercise included personnel from the U.S., France, and Djibouti, representing 16 units, including eight French units specializing in rigging, medical support, ground support, and flight operations.

By Master Sgt.
Kayla White

406th Air Expeditionary Wing
RAMSTEIN AIR BASE,
Germany (AFNS) --
U.S. Pararescuemen
and French paratroopers
conducted a three-day
parachuting exercise

in Djibouti, March 17-19, strengthening their partnership and demonstrating NATO interoperability with a series of jump operations with various U.S. and French aircraft and parachute systems.

The exercise, led by a master sergeant and parares-

cueman assigned to the 82nd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, saw the two nations exchange parachute systems and techniques.

"The master sergeant's expertise as our most experienced Military Freefall Jumpmaster was essential," said Capt. Courtney

M. Bailey, 82nd ERQS commander. "His meticulous three-month planning effort, encompassing waivers, aircraft coordination, liaison visits and academic training, ensured the exercise's success."

He also served as the primary jumpmaster for the deployments from U.S. aircraft, conducting inspections, verifying the release point and overseeing the deployment of jumpers.

The exchange allowed French paratroopers to use the U.S. MC-6 parachute system, jumping from a U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J, while American jumpers used the French EPC parachute, jumping from a French Casa CN 235.

"This exercise highlighted the procedural interoperability between our forces," Bailey said. "We share similar safety restrictions and jump procedures, crucial for safe and effective operations. Increased frequency of these exchanges will streamline future collaborations."

The exercise culminated in a combined military freefall jump from a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey at 13,000 feet — the first time any participant

ing jumper had used the Osprey as a jump platform and only the second known instance of such an operation in Djibouti. The successful jump showcased the adaptability and readiness of both forces.

"It was the highlight of an intense aeronautical week," said a French sergeant major, a military freefall instructor, in charge of managing all French airborne activities, who has 28 years of service. "Through our exchanges, the 'paratrooper spirit' that drives us all allows us to successfully carry out our missions and always strive to do what others won't. We are driven by the same enthusiasm."

A total of 83 individual jumps and two equipment bundle drops were executed. Participants included personnel from the U.S., France and Djibouti, representing 16 units, including eight French Land Army and French Air & Space Force units specializing in rigging, medical support, ground support and flight operations.

"I believe training with partner nations is essential," said French Chief Sergeant Frédéric. "It allows us to share knowledge and

improve together and even evolve our own techniques. The jump was the most memorable part for me. The atmosphere was excellent and sharing that experience with the Americans made it unforgettable."

"Future 82nd ERQS teams will continue training with French Forces Djibouti as opportunities arise, focusing on close air support, parachuting, vertical lift operations and weapons training," the commander said. He also noted the morale boost the exchange provided: "These exchanges are always rewarding, and the French tradition of serializing jump wings adds a unique element of prestige."

The event underscored the shared regional interests of both nations and their commitment to stability in the Horn of Africa. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa emphasized the importance of such partnerships in promoting regional stability, free trade and countering violent extremist organizations. The exercise serves as a testament to the strong partnership between U.S. and French forces in East Africa.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jana Somero

U.S. and French military personnel prepare to board a French Casa CN 235 to participate in a joint jump exercise at Base Aérienne 188, Djibouti, March 18, 2025. The exercise included 83 parachute jumps and two equipment bundle drops, with participation from 16 U.S., French, and Djiboutian units.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jana Somero

A U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Control Party Airman, assigned to the 82nd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, carries a parachute at Base Aérienne 188, Djibouti, March 18, 2025. The exercise included 83 parachute jumps and two equipment bundle drops, with participation from 16 U.S., French, and Djiboutian units.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jana Somero

U.S. and French military personnel pose for a group photo at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, March 17, 2025. They participated in a jump exercise which included 83 parachute jumps and two equipment bundle drops, with participation from 16 U.S., French, and Djiboutian units.

OC-ALC hosts Japanese Air Self-Defense Force, strengthening interoperability



By Ashley San Miguel
Oklahoma City Air
Logistics Complex

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. --

The Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex recently hosted the Japan Air Self-Defense Force to explore a joint maintenance center, part of a global push to enhance military readiness.

The visit emphasized shared maintenance and logistics strategies, particularly relevant following the launch of GENUS, the Global Enterprise Network for Universal Sustainment. GENUS aims to extend depot capabilities beyond U.S. borders.

Discussions between American and Japanese maintenance and logistics

experts focused on solutions for supply chain issues, automation and logistical operations.

"Showcasing the OC-ALC and our capabilities is crucial in ensuring a strong partnership with our allies," said Brig. Gen. Brian Moore, OC-ALC commander. "We have a shared interest in the maintenance, repair and overhaul of several shared weapons systems, sustaining them for the fight."

The JASDF delegation toured the complex's specialized facilities, including its Process, Repair, Operations and Critical Tooling and Reverse Engineering and Critical Tooling, better known as PROACT and REACT labs. They showcase additive manufacturing, repair and

3D printing — key elements of the maintenance, repair and overhaul process.

"Our engineering team at the Complex is one of our greatest strengths," said Brad Stahlman, OC-ALC director of engineering. "Our unique engineering processes, incorporating advanced manufacturing technologies, enable us to rapidly repair critical components, returning aircraft to service ahead of schedule."

The OC-ALC plays a crucial role in the global industrial base network, specializing in engine maintenance and repair. The visit with JASDF officials highlighted the importance of collaboration on shared weapons systems.



U.S. Air Force photo by Ashley San Miguel

The Japanese Air Self-Defense Force officials visited the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex at Tinker Air Force Base, March 13, 2025. The OC-ALC provides maintenance, repair and overhaul services for various weapons systems, aiming to ensure combat readiness.

Leading recruiter teams offers challenges, opportunities

By 2nd Lt. Olushino
Bolden Jr.
66th Air Base Group
Public Affairs

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass. — When most people think about a military recruiter, they picture someone at a booth in a school or event, encouraging young people to join the military.

Few realize the complex operations going on in the background meant to help recruiting efforts. A key component of this process is the role of recruiting officers.

For officers, the opportunity to lead in the recruiting service is rare. Selection requires applying through a special assignment process for an Officer Instructor and Recruiting Special Duty, a competitive program. The Air Force seeks the best to fill these roles.

One example is Capt. Tyler Sullivan, director of operations for the 319th Recruiting Squadron. A former enlisted Airman and Air Force ROTC graduate, Sullivan has worked hard to get where he is today. That same dedication now drives

his efforts to strengthen recruiting and support his team.

As director of operations, Sullivan has spearheaded multiple initiatives to improve recruiting and set his team up for success. One of his key efforts has been shifting the culture and mindset of his recruiters.

"I want you to picture yourself as an entrepreneur and you have started your own business in this spot in New England. It belongs to you," said Sullivan "Which, it truly does because we give recruiters so much autonomy to figure out where they are going to get the most bang for their buck to bring in applicants. They have to know their area, and the only way they're going to be able to that is if they personally own it."

Though he may not be the face of recruiting efforts, Sullivan ensures all his recruiters across a vast area, including New England, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, have the resources they need. To accomplish this, he relies on data analytics to provide actionable insights that inform and empow-

er recruiters. He has also shared this approach with other recruiting officers to strengthen their operations.

These initiatives have given Sullivan leadership experience rarely afforded to young officers in traditional units. He says this is one of the main factors why he loves this special duty assignment and encourages other officers to consider applying.

"The point of this job is next-level leadership," said Sullivan. "If you can gauge how your leadership wants the operation to run, you can be more effective. If you do your best to understand and bring your best approach, whatever your skillset is, I promise by the time you leave, you'll be a better person."

To further encourage others, Sullivan wrote a letter titled, "Why CGOs Should Jump on a Recruiting Assignment." In it, he explains that officers in a recruiting squadron take on a dynamic, multi-faceted mission that sharpens leadership, research, program management, and emotional intelligence skills.

"Here's my advice: Take



U.S. Air Force photo by Jerry Saslav

Capt. Tyler Sullivan, right, 319th Recruiting Squadron Operations Flight commander, talks to Senior Master Sgt. Christopher McClendon, 314th Recruiting Squadron production superintendent, during a break in a training at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., April 8.

the leap. Do this assignment. Connect with your community, empower your team, and push yourself out of your comfort zone," said

Sullivan. "When you return to your career field, you'll be battle-tested and ready for whatever comes next."

To learn more about the

Air Force Recruiting Service or the OI&RSD, visit Air Force Accessions Center and the myFSS Guide on OI&RSD Knowledge Detail.

Surviving Sunday: Former Airman credits fitness, safety course for survival



U.S. Air Force photo by Craig Z. Rodarte

In late October 2024, Collin Cox, a Desktop Technical Support contractor for the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center, was involved in a near fatal motorcycle accident. Cox, also a former Airman, recently returned to work after rehabilitation and therapy for multiple injuries including a broken neck, broken pelvis, motor function loss of his left arm, brain bleed, ruptured bladder, nerve avulsion and carotid artery trauma.

By Craig Z. Rodarte
AFIMSC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO - LACKLAND, Texas --

The distance between his motorcycle and the broad side of a box truck closes quicker than he can form a thought. He doesn't think, he reacts with front brake, rear brake, no clutch and then his body and his bike slam into the stalled vehicle.

Collin Cox's life was forever changed by a major motorcycle accident on Sunday, Oct. 20, 2024.

His reaction to the inevitable collision mitigated

the force of the impact but he still sustained several major and life-threatening injuries including a broken pelvis, broken ribs, brain bleed, ruptured bladder, carotid artery trauma and nerve avulsions.

Cox a desktop technical support contractor for AFIMSC and former Airman, credits the motorcycle safety classes he took when he was on active duty as a major reason why he survived the accident.

Since 2020, 80 Airmen have died due to fatal motorcycle accidents, according to Air Force Safety Center statistics. Although civilian personnel aren't required

to complete training or have active Motorcycle Unit Safety Tracking Tool accounts, DAF offers all training courses to DoD civilians, with priority given to active-duty riders.

"Training equips riders with the ability to handle emergency situations, such as executing sudden stops or evasive maneuvers, to avoid potential collisions," said Michael Hampton, the safety manager at AFIMSC. "By practicing in a controlled environment, riders build confidence in their abilities, which is crucial for safe riding on public roads."

As an Airman, Cox was required to complete motor-

cycle training that included initial training, intermediate training, refresher training and a mentorship program.

In the moments before the crash, the muscle memory of Cox's training rushed to his hands and feet. He knew the appropriate amount of pressure to apply to his front and rear brake as to not be thrown from his motorcycle. He also knew that with the clutch disengaged, he allowed for engine braking.

"I reacted as best I could, I don't remember anything about the actual collision," he says.

On the day of the acci-

dent Cox was a muscular 195 pounds with less than 10% body fat. He was strong, and he earned that in the weight room as a self-proclaimed 'gym rat'. He said his physical fitness was also a major factor in his survival.

"The muscle structure I had through my shoulders and neck kept me alive, but the accident still snapped my neck," he said. "My C4, C5 and C6 were damaged. My C7 and C8 completely came out."

And so started his road to recovery. Cox's weight dropped from 195 lbs. to 145 lbs. as he worked to heal from the injuries which had him in a wheelchair for more than three months. He currently has very little motor control of his left arm and hand but with a pending surgery to repair nerves and open a line of communication between the brain and muscle, he hopes to get to 50% - 60% mobility back.

"I told the surgeon all he has to do is get my brain talking to my muscle again and I'll take care of the rest."

Cox, a self-described "gym rat," did not have a problem throwing all of himself at his physical recovery.

"I've been faithful to my physical rehabilitation but recently I was asked about my mental health and how healthy my mind is during this time," said Cox. "I'm starting to put time into the rehab you can't see."

Cox was out from work for four months and in that

time the team at AFIMSC kept track of his journey to recovery and awaited his return to work.

"We made it a point to stay connected with him during his recovery. After his surgery, our primary focus was on his healing and well-being," said Mason Wilson, an IT project manager and Cox's supervisor. "I knew the motorcycle accident was a tremendously life-altering event for him, but I was confident it wouldn't change his upbeat personality. I anticipated that upon returning to work, he would have a renewed perspective on the value of life and might share insights from his experience with us."

The life he brings to work and his team would not suggest that he almost died a few months ago but that's a testament to his resilience; evidence of a rooted support system. Proof that people endure.

"At AFIMSC, every member of our team is valued, considered family and vital to the success of our mission," said Hampton. "Whether our riders use motorcycles for transportation, work, or leisure, our priority is ensuring that everyone returns home safely."

For more motorcycle safety information, visit Air Force Safety Center's Occupational Safety Division.



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Small Business Office wins Air Force Innovation Award



Air Force Sustainment Center Small Business team members work the Small Business booth at the Logistics Officer Association Symposium in 2024. The AFSC Small Business Office recently won the Air Force Small Business Innovation Award for fiscal year 2024.



Ronnie Hobbs, Air Force Sustainment Center Small Business director, speaks during the 2024 Tinker and the Primes event in Midwest City, Oklahoma. The AFSC Small Business Office recently won the Air Force Small Business Innovation Award for fiscal year 2024.

By Amy Schiess
Air Force Sustainment Center
Public Affairs

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. --

The Air Force Sustainment Center Small Business Office and the AFSC Small Business Innovation Research Program is the recipient of the Air Force Small Business Innovation Award for fiscal year 2024, thanks to the team's focus on connecting innovative businesses with AFSC organizations who can use their expertise.

"It is sometimes daunting to figure out the right connection point across our

organization," said Ronnie Hobbs, AFSC/SB director. "However, once you are able to make that connection, it is very satisfying to see the excitement and appreciation from our small business community."

The team's efforts with the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer program led to an increase of \$8 million in SBIR Phase III awards. They also created the first-ever "Small Biz Buzz" monthly newsletter and crafted a customer engagement guide to help industry, academia and mission partners understand the small business program

and AFSC as a whole.

The team operates out of Tinker AFB, Oklahoma; Robins AFB, Georgia; and Hill AFB, Utah. "The professionals at each location have a passion and desire to see small businesses succeed," said Hobbs. "The team takes pride in performing the research, and ensuring our small businesses know how and where to engage the AFSC ecosystem."

Hobbs will be leaving Small Business for a new role in AFSC Logistics, Operations, and Civil Engineering in mid-April. "When I began this role three years ago, I made a commitment to help over-

come the 'valley of death' for industry," he said, referring to the difficult phase of contracting with the government. Through working with several different organizations both on and off base, he believes that has become reality. "We have achieved historic outcomes over the

past several years, and is a testament to the professionalism, passion, and commitment from our AFSC leaders and teammates."

Small business personnel are Ronnie Hobbs, Stacy Cochran, Crystal Reid, Lily Wilkerson, Kathryn Stafford, Lisa Stoker,

Beth Shackelford, Tracey Beringer, Tim Inman, Randy Miller, Joseph "Jay" Herrera III, Lavetta Williams. Also included in the award are the AFSC Engineering Directorate SBIR Program points of contact Lindsay Fries, Jason Joy, Phong Do, and Jonathan Foster.



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