

LANIER COUNTY ADVOCATE

VOLUME 13, EDITION 2 • © 2023 LANIER COUNTY ADVOCATE • WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2023 • LAKELAND, GEORGIA • 8 PAGES, ONE SECTION

Bargains, Coupons & Deals INSIDE with these sales papers:



NEWS BITS

'August Dawg Days' every Friday at church

Lakeland Methodist Church is hosting "August Dawg Days" every Friday in August from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. For \$5, you can get a hot dog, chips, soda and cookie. Proceeds go to benefit Lanier Family Connection. Drive-thru pickup or come inside to eat.

Family needs help with funeral expenses

The McVey family is looking for any help they can get in purchasing a headstone for McKenna McVey, who passed away recently (see story from last week). She is buried next to her sister, Makayla, in Valdosta. The combined funeral expenses for both Makayla and McKenna wiped out their parents' savings. If you're able, please go to GiveSendGo.com and search for "McKenna McVey."

Foster parents needed in Lanier

Lanier County's children need you - there are currently 30 children from this community in foster care and only four foster families. We need families to open their hearts and homes for our children. If you are interested in foster care or adoption please call 877-210-KIDS.

Tri-County Authority meeting moved

The Tri-County 911 Authority will have a called business meeting on Wednesday, August 9 at 10 a.m. instead of our regular business meeting on Wednesday, August 16.

Cassia Lodge Friends & Family Night

Cassia Lodge #224 in Homerville will hold a Friends and Family Night on Thursday, August 17. A meal will be served at 6:30 p.m. followed by presentation of aprons, recognitions and fellowship. All members, family, and friends are welcome to attend.

CASA Volunteer Info Session on August 15

There will be a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteer Information Session on Tuesday, August 15, from 6-7 p.m. at 1015 Exum Street in Nashville. Call Elaine at 229-686-6576 or e-mail Carol at ckelly@fcisberrien.org for more information.

Accepting new students for GED classes

The Lanier County Adult Education program of Wiregrass Georgia Technical College is now accepting new students to enroll in free GED® Classes. The Lanier County Adult Education program is located at The Threatte Center at 209 US Highway 221 in Lakeland, and classes are offered Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 am-1:00pm and 4:00pm - 8:00pm.

Award Winning Newspaper

Georgia Press Association

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM
IP CODE 31634
PERMIT #010940

8 06805 93344 4

NOW \$1 AT THE NEWSTAND

With school back in session, officials urging bus safety

By Rebecca Galardo
Staff Writer

Cars passing stopped school buses are on the rise, as are child deaths related to this crime. More than 24 million children take the bus to school, and across the United States more than 13 million times a year an impatient or careless driver will pass a bus illegally.

The greatest danger for children isn't in actually riding on the bus - it is getting on or off of it. A national average of 19 children each year are killed by drivers not paying attention, and the average age ranges from only 5 to 7 years old.

This school year, like others, the Lanier County Sheriff's Office and Lanier County schools are working together to monitor school bus stops. They are specifically looking for vehicles that pass buses while stopped loading or unloading children.

Sheriff Nick Norton has assigned deputies to watch as the buses make their stops. With the school year just starting, all drivers should plan to leave a little early and slow down, especially when kids are waiting for a school bus or playing near the road.

"We have to remember these are children and they sometimes do the unexpected things. We need to slow down and be aware," said Sheriff Nick Norton.

During the last school year, the driver of a semi-truck was cited by deputies after they failed to stop for two different buses that were stopped in different locations.

"The driver was distracted and not paying attention to the road. We are fortunate no one was injured," Norton said.

According to Georgia law, drivers are required to stop for all school buses when the lighting is active and the stop sign deployed. The penalties for passing a stopped school bus include a possible fine up to \$1,000.

"That school bus is yellow for a reason," Norton points out. "That (color) means caution and slow down. Allow yourself a few minutes extra to drive and be aware that children may be playing on the roadside as they wait for their bus."

Just because you don't see an officer on location, doesn't mean you won't be caught passing a school bus. Georgia was one of the first states in the US to require school buses to have stop-arm cameras. That fine of up to \$1000 may arrive in your mailbox, if the stop-arm camera catches you in the act.



Above, artist Andrew Sabori and John Fitton discussing placement of bolts on a damaged mural in downtown Lakeland.

Maintaining Milltown's Murals

By Rebecca Galardo
Staff Writer

Lakeland is known as the "Historic Mural City" for the "Milltown Murals" that span the town. These murals are a constant surprise for new people passing through. They cover many historical people, places and symbolize events from the 1920s-era. The name 'Milltown Murals' comes from Lakeland's original name, Milltown.

The Lakeland/Milltown area (which was originally considered a part of Alapaha) was first settled by James and Elizabeth Patten in 1819 - the name 'Milltown' came in 1857. It was changed to 'Lakeland' on September 15 of 1925 - in fact mural #6 commemorates this change.

They're a beloved part of the town and, for many younger or newer residents, it seems as though they have always been there.

In fact, the murals have been up for less than thirty years and for the last eight of those years, artist Andrew Sabori has been renovating them. With thirty-eight murals spreading all over the town, he has his work cut out for him.

Many know very little about the history of the murals themselves. In 1998, local community leader and archivist/historian Nell Patten Roquemore (known by most as 'Ms. Nell') commissioned the murals. And yes, she is related to the original settlers of Milltown/Lakeland.

Her passion for her hometown of Lakeland knew no equal. Even after traveling the world extensively (see the Lanier County Advocate: Volume 11, edition 8 - September 22 of 2021 to read just a fraction of her incredible story), Lakeland was her home and her love, through and

through. Roquemore was a life-long lover of the arts and owned a healthy obsession with the beautification of Lakeland. Those two things within her combined wonderfully with her passion for Lakeland's history. The result was the idea for the murals.

So, in 1998 Roquemore found two artists (Ralph Waldrop and Billy Love) to create that vision that now graces so much of her beloved town. The Milltown Foundation was created in order to fund the project.

The thirty-eight murals include large ones that span entire buildings, like #3 The Church Hotel (a hotel built in 1896 by Tom Church that was destroyed by a fire in 1941) to smaller ones like #26 The Cows - which is exactly what it sounds like. Did you know that in the 1920s, cows roamed the town freely?

Many of the murals show just how much the town and county has grown in just over a century. The Byrd Building (#2) was originally built in 1904, but when Lanier County was created in 1920, the upper floor was converted into a space for a courtroom, the clerk of courts office, a law office and the main office for the Lanier County Telephone Company. The mural depicts J.L. Byrd standing by the doorway, while Vera Wooten - Lakeland's telephone operator for 39 years - sits working. That little boy in the window is her two year old son Benny, watching the street and people below.

Some of the murals were more personal for Roquemore. #12 The Patten Playhouse now rests in Roquemore Memorial Park - it's fifth location in just under 100 years - and shows Roquemore as a young girl with her sister picking flowers.

Each and every mural, however
(Continued on Page 3)

Banks Lake paddling event held August 1

By Rebecca Galardo
Staff Writer

Just under 20 excited paddlers surrounded the boat entrance at Banks Lake on August 1. They listened to the safety briefing given by first-time outings leader, Meredith Crosby. Crosby was friendly, bubbly and as eager to get out on the water as every one there.

Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman was there as well. While overseeing the event, he was happy to answer any questions or help in any way.

After a slight delay, the group began their paddle. Lots of laughter and excited chatter could be heard across the water. Event members chose their own path to the first meet-up location. Some went in pairs in single-person kayaks. Others had two-person kayaks or the

canoes from Banks Lake. These canoes were rented for free for the outing (courtesy of the Lakeland-Lanier Chamber of Commerce and Banks Lake Outdoors).

Everyone went their own way as Crosby sent a scout ahead to find a new spot to observe bats. According to US Fish and Wildlife Service, bats are one of the most important misunderstood animals on our planet. "Bats play an essential role in pest control, pollinating plants and dispersing seeds. Recent studies estimate that bats eat enough pests to save more than \$1 billion per year in crop damage and pesticide costs in the United States corn industry alone." At Banks Lake, bats can be seen descending the trees as the sun goes down, skimming the water for bugs.



Above are some of the paddlers who participated in the August 1st event at Banks Lake.

As the group spread out, Crosby and Quarterman helped the members by pointing out the attractions of Banks Lake and sharing information on the Full Sturgeon Moon. This month the full moon was also a "supermoon." A supermoon happens when the moon comes nearly as close to the Earth as it can get at the same time that it is full (or new). With the full moon also being a supermoon, the size of it seems much larger. These outings are hosted

by the WWALS (standing for Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, Suwannee) Watershed Coalition, a nonprofit corporation. WWALS holds at least one paddle outing a month, plus frequent cleanups, and even occasional hikes. For non-members, the outings fee is \$10 per person, or \$11 online. For members, the outings are free and the membership dues go to help the Coalition with
(Continued on Page 2)