

PREMIER ISSUE!

Mature

Living in the South

Granny Herndon makes
cooking look easy

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I am thrilled to announce I have joined the Nancy N. and J.C. Lewis Cancer & Research Pavilion at Wayne Memorial Hospital. While helping oversee cancer patient care with infusions at the Jesup location, I will still continue to see patients at my current Waycross office. You may reach me at either location. The staff and I look forward to providing quality care in both communities.

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That's the word that comes to mind when we think about this new publication. For over 15 years our family of companies have published Mature Living titles in the southeast Georgia area. Our staff is extremely excited to introduce Mature Living in the South, a new quarterly magazine focused on news and features for people 50 and older in Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Pierce and Ware counties.

This quarter's issue has great articles about our friends and neighbors as well as timely articles on health and tourism.

Mature Living would not be possible without the support of our advertisers and we express our sincere gratitude for your support.

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Camden local launches crusade on workforce

BY MARLA OGLETREE

Vince Lombardi once said, “The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.” That’s a sentiment Rachel Baldwin relates to retirement.

“I’m a failure at retirement,” she joked.

Baldwin grew up a Southern Baptist in Smyrna and was a part of the Sunbeams, a church program to teach children about mission work and sharing the word of God all over the world. She knew she wanted to bring others closer to God, but felt it would be in another way.

“I was so scared I’d be called to live in a grass hut with no running water,” she laughed.

Growing up, her father worked as an engineer for Georgia Power Company and owned all different types of merchandise printed with the same motto – “A citizen wherever we serve” – a lesson which would stay with her throughout her life.

In school, Baldwin’s focus wasn’t quite on her studies and says she wasn’t the best student. Her guidance counselor exclaimed her transcript reflected she was just not college material.

With a feeling of depletion, a young Rachel sought counsel with her church’s librarian and mother’s Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Doris Morris. She says she stormed in a “hot mess” and was given a thick book with all of Georgia’s colleges listed – Peterson’s Guide to Colleges and Universities. In this book, not far from the

cover, she found Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) – a college with a three to one ratio of male to female students. This, however, was not a deal breaker to this 16-year-old.

Fueled with determination, Baldwin returned home and got to writing. She sent off a letter to ABAC, written entirely in pencil, and was excited to receive an acceptance letter two weeks later. Her first stop was to her guidance counselor who was certain there had been a mistake. One phone call later, it was confirmed, Rachel was going to ABAC. Majoring in Home Economics, she quickly discovered school wasn’t her “thing” and crammed three years of schooling into two and graduated with an Associate Career Diploma in Food Management imbedded with college academic core.

The plan paid off when, after working ten years in the food industry by managing restaurants, being a food industry program trainer for mentally challenged adults, a Food Service Manager for Irwin County Schools and the GA Baptist Student Center at UGA, and owning a catering business she decided it was time to go back to college for middle grades education. After graduating and moving to Camden County in 1988, she landed, ironically, in a dream career as a teacher – a career she had insistently avoided.

“Some of the jobs were very physical, so I decided it was time to go back to school,” she said.

She quickly discovered being the teacher she never wanted to be was exactly what she was meant to do. So she transferred to Valdosta State University to finish her degree. She attended a conference on work ethic curriculum for middle schoolers and also found a Career Connection Grant through the Department of Education. This grant allows students in sixth through eighth grade to develop, plan, carry out, and evaluate projects over six to

nine weeks. Students focus activities on different aspects of career development and can choose a unit, then plan and carry out related projects that strengthen their awareness of skills needed for careers. And the school loved it.

“We only had the students long enough to love them. When we all began to get exasperated, it was time to rotate,” she laughed.

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RACHEL BALDWIN WAS TAUGHT THE LOVE OF SEWING BY HER GRANDMOTHER AT THE AGE FOUR.

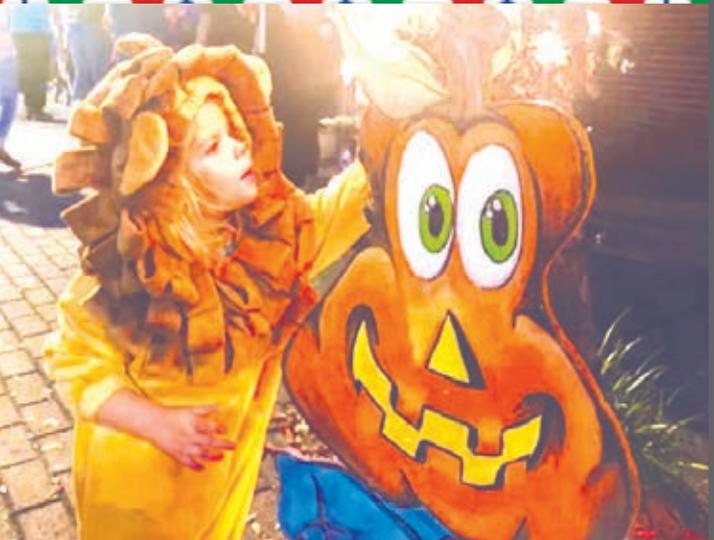


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Approximately 3,200 students have gone through this program.

Baldwin's greatest mission is to "make taxpayers" and believes telling students they have to go to college to be successful is a myth.

"We're lying to students, diminishing their ability and saddling them with debt. They translate and hear this rhetoric as 'I'm stupid'," she remarked.

In 1995, Governor Zell Miller created Youth Apprenticeships (YA) to pilot 16 programs around the state. Former Assistant Superintendent, Gary Blount tasked Baldwin to submit a planning and implementation grant to the DOE. Working over Spring break in 1995 resulted in a full grant award for Camden County to implement the following fall.

"We got the big grant," she said proudly.

She moved from the middle school to high school in an effort to create more connecting and transitioning activities leading to growing apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities. This required pushing for numerous initiatives, including providing more course options by implementing block scheduling, organizing committees and focus teams, and growing technical dual enrolment.

"I am so grateful for the cooperation of my colleagues and administrators motivating my mission," she said.

Working from 1995 through 2011, she sought to provide students and teachers opportunities to tour businesses and industry, link with vocational and postsecondary advisory committees, internships, and building connections with the local workforce. Over 100 students were placed in work programs anywhere she could secure opportunities for them.

Checking on students during work, she visited the paper mill, numerous refit shops, and internal workings of industries around the state. Touring the nuclear plant at Baxley reminded her of her father's engineering work with Georgia Power.

"Industrial tours are better to me than a day at Disney World. You can't believe all I got to see," she remarked.

In 2011, Baldwin became one of the "49ers", teachers who work part time. It wasn't until 2018 that she officially retired, but she wasn't done yet.

Partnering throughout her career with the Camden County Chamber of Commerce, she chaired the Workforce Committee from 2006-2018. Partnering further facilitated youth connecting activities and 23 Youth Job Fairs for Camden students. As a 49er, she gained opportunities in engaging with local economic development. Her advocacy for a local technical college became radical. The solution to improve Camden's economic outlook was to build on strong high school technical programs in order to recruit industry. This required local technical postsecondary training.

Over 23 years of advocacy with the technical division of local colleges, the need grew more apparent to Baldwin. She was relentless in advocating to educators, business leaders, elected officials and the Georgia legislature.

With this goal in mind, Baldwin became a part of the local Republican Party. While involvement in politics prior to full retirement was nonpartisan, post retirement became political in 2018 when she became Chairwoman of the party.

"I've always been a conservative voter. Fiscal responsibility, whether it is the local digest or our state and federal tax dollars are essential to keeping a strong economy that supports employment and grows strong families. Those values are important to me," she shared.

Adding to her already impressive resume', she also chaired the Workforce Committee.

She expressed, "Workforce will always be an issue. We put so much value on a

college degree, but see so many grads unprepared for work."

With lots still on her plate, Baldwin realized it was important to set some time aside for herself and made a rule not to work after 5:00 p.m. or weekends. This became her time to sew.

"I began to sew with my grandmother when I was four years old," she told. "I even made my own clothes".

Welcoming a grandson in 2010 and a granddaughter in 2016, she has made numerous soft books, costumes, and dresses, making quilt shows a scavenger hunt adventure for her grandchildren. Time with them, and proudly observing her own son's career as a middle school principal, has been her favorite part of retirement.

"Busyness exercises my brain and keeps me out of the nursing home," she laughed.

Measuring success for her is seeing former students successfully employed, proud of their work and accomplishments and of course, paying taxes.

"In a spiritual sense, being fulfilled leads people to God," she shared with a smile.

Baldwin has worked hard to make people proud and fulfilled, bringing families closer together and closer to God – with no grass hut in sight.



GROWING UP, BALDWIN WAS INSTILLED WITH A HARD WORK ETHIC BY HER PARENTS.

HEALTH NEWS

Who is at elevated risk for COVID-19?

COVID-19 continues to dominate headlines across the globe. This novel coronavirus first made headlines in late 2019 after an outbreak in Wuhan, the sprawling capital city in China's Hubei province. The virus has since spread beyond China's borders, leading to school closures and changes in public life, such as the shutting down of professional sports leagues, that many might never have thought they would see in their lifetimes.

Despite the relative infancy of COVID-19, doctors have learned much about it, including who might be most at risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, early information out of China revealed that some groups are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 than others. Older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions are at the greatest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Heart disease, diabetes and lung disease are the chronic medical conditions that appear to make people especially vulnerable to sickness from COVID-19.

How people in at-risk groups can reduce their risk of getting sick

It's important elderly people and people with chronic medical conditions take their risk for getting sick from COVID-19 seriously, as the virus had already contributed to thousands of deaths by early March 2020. The CDC notes it is especially important that people at elevated risk take actions to reduce their risk of getting sick with the disease. The following strategies can be part of a proactive ap-

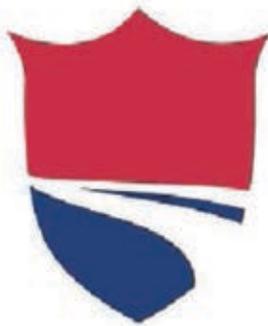
proach that may help at-risk people lower their risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

- Stock up on health supplies. Contact your physician and arrange to obtain extra necessary medications so you do not have to leave your home should an outbreak occur in your area. If that's not plausible, the CDC recommends signing up for mail-order medications. Stock up on over-the-counter medications and medical supplies, including everyday items like tissues, so you don't have to leave the house if an outbreak occurs.

- Stock up on groceries. Make sure you have enough groceries on hand so you can stay at home if restrictions on leaving home are put in place during an outbreak.

- Embrace the basics. Basic strategies like avoiding people who are sick; washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or spending time in public; avoiding touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.; and avoiding crowds can help to reduce your risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

Since the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in China in late-December 2019, doctors have learned certain people are especially vulnerable to getting sick from the virus. Such people can take certain steps that may reduce their risk of getting sick. More information about COVID-19 is available at www.cdc.gov.



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Tom Bragg

By Jason Deal

Blackshear Resident Tom Bragg looks over his medals and a collection of memories from his military and civilian career.

He is dressed in his military uniform — the same uniform he wore proudly as an Army Ranger some 40 years before.

“It still fits me and it’s not even snug,” he says with a laugh.

Bragg recently constructed a display case in the garage of his home in the Okefenokee Country Club Community.

Looking over the honors and accomplishments, he is quick to point out he knows who allowed him to succeed.

“The good Lord has blessed me to do well,” he says. “I’m very thankful for that.”

The Retired Master Sergeant overcame a learning disability and became a “one percenter.”

Bragg notes that in military lingo a “one percenter” describes the one percent of Army soldiers who become airborne, the one percent who become Rangers, the one percent of those who become Ranger instructors and the one percent of those inducted to the Ranger Hall of Fame.

A native of the Nankipooch community near Columbus, Bragg recounts his life story from humble roots. He recalls leaving home at age 15 following the death of his father in an effort to make life easier for his mother and the rest of



a true overcomer

TOM BRAGG IS SHOWN WITH HIS RIBBONS AND MEDALS EARNED DURING HIS MILITARY CAREER.

his family.

“Mama did the best she could, but it was hard times and I figured I could go out and try to get a job,” he said.

Despite having dyslexia, which severely limited his ability to read, Bragg managed to get into the Army.

“I started at zero in life. I was not just an average idiot. I was the number one idiot,” he said.

Bragg is frank about his struggles, noting he failed first grade three times because his dyslexia rendered him unable to learn and schools at the time did not have resources to help students like him.

“I was bullied and ridiculed because I couldn’t learn,” he said. “That was a

tough period of my life but it taught me to be tough and to fight and that served me well once I got into the Army and then into the Rangers.”

Bragg enlisted in the Georgia National Guard in 1957 then joined the Army about a year later to become a paratrooper. He was a demonstrator in an early Rangers-In-Action demonstration, showcasing hand-to-hand combat and repelling for President John F. Kennedy.

“President Kennedy patted me down because he thought I had on protective padding during the hand-to-hand combat,” he said. “I didn’t. The other guy and I were actually beating each other up.”

Rangers must pass rig-

orous training designed to prepare them for special operations – and many soldiers do not make the cut. Aspects include endurance and the ability to lead a small unit in combat through ground, air or amphibious missions.

Bragg completed 300-400 jumps in the Airborne division.

Bragg’s resilience did not go unnoticed. He persevered even when an injury threatened to sideline his career.

While training rangers, he had an accident that crushed two vertebrae and fractured his right hip.

“I was told I would be paralyzed and they told me I would be sent home and be on disability the rest of my life,” he said.



TOM BRAGG IS SHOWN WITH MEMORABILIA FROM HIS TIME AS AN ARMY RANGER.

Seven days later Bragg insisted he leave the hospital and return to his company, where he served as the first platoon leader for 10 months. He was the only staff sergeant platoon leader of his company, while his platoon accomplished 75 missions and lost only one man.

After attending Ranger school, he worked his way up through the Army and became a Ranger instructor reaching the rank of Master Sergeant. His time in the service also included two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Later, he would become a military recruiter in Florida and in Chicago before retir-

ing. After his military career ended, Bragg became an engineer for CSX Railroad and moved to Blackshear about 9 years ago. He retired after his career with CSX.

Bragg was inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame in 2013

Not one to be idle, Bragg published a memoir several years ago titled “Nankipoo Ranger”.

“It is basically my life story,” says Bragg. “I’ve wanted to be able to record how a poor ol’ country boy with a learning disability was able, by the grace of God, to overcome obstacles and serve

his country and to become a ‘one percenter,’” he says.

The retired Ranger has recently talked with Pierce County’s own Nikki DeLoach about taking his story to Hollywood.

“We are just in the beginning stages, but we are talking scripts and a movie about my life story is under consideration,” he says.

Whether his story is a Hollywood feature or not, Bragg gives God all the glory for his accomplishments.

“God has blessed me in my life and I wanted to have the opportunity to share with people about how you can go from zero to the best,” he

says. “I owe it all to God.”

Bragg and his wife, Marji, have a son, Thomas A. Bragg Jr., and a daughter, Tammy Bragg Lovins. He has remained active in the community through his church and civic groups.

He is a former member of the Blackshear Rotary Club where he was in charge of the American flag displays.

In a life that has taken him across states and overseas multiple times, Bragg has lived in Pierce County for over 9 years – longer than any other place he’s called home.

Bragg was also chairman of the Pierce County Board of

Elections and Registration. He has taught Sunday school at Blackshear First Baptist Church.

He was Pierce County's citizen of the year in 2016.

"Looking back on my life, I know God has been so good to me," he says. "I am so blessed."

TOM BRAGG IS SHOWN WITH AN ILLUSTRATION DEPICTING HIM LOOKING FOR HIS SOLDIERS AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON. THE ILLUSTRATION WAS CREATED BY LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER STEVE JEFFORDS.



Chicken Pot Popovers

An immune friendly recipe

Ingredients

Popovers:

Nonstick baking spray with flour
1 cup whole milk
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Kosher salt
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1/4 teaspoon baking powder

Filling:

3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup frozen peas and carrots
1/2 rotisserie chicken, skin discarded and white and dark meat shredded (about 3 cups)
1/4 cup loosely packed flat-leaf parsley, chopped, for garnish

Directions: Special equipment: a 12-cup muffin pan

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Spray a 12-cup muffin pan generously with the baking spray.
2. For the popovers: Whisk the milk, flour, eggs, vanilla and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl until combined. Drizzle in the melted butter while whisking until combined; let the batter stand for 5 minutes. Add the baking powder; whisk the batter to combine and divide it evenly among the muffin cups (a scant 1/4 cup batter per muffin cup). Bake the popovers until puffed and browned around the edges, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the pan about halfway through.
3. For the filling: While the popovers are baking, combine the broth and flour in a medium saucepan and whisk until the flour is dissolved. Place the saucepan over medium heat and whisk continuously until the mixture comes to a boil; continue to whisk until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and whisk in 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Stir in the peas and carrots, then the chicken; cover to keep warm.
4. To assemble: When the popovers are done, turn them out of the pan, using a small spatula if necessary. Arrange 2 popovers on each of six plates or bowls and top with the chicken filling, dividing evenly among the popovers. Garnish with chopped parsley and sprinkle on the remaining 2 tablespoons of grated Parmesan.



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Granny Herndon makes cooking look easy

Evelyne ‘Granny’ Herndon makes it look easy — cooking that is.

After decades spent honing the art of Southern cooking, Herndon rarely consults a recipe. She rattles off complicated directions with ease while buzzing around her tiny kitchen on College Avenue in Blackshear.

“She’ll have all of this (recipes) in her head,” says Herndon’s daughter, Karen.

“I just like to cook!” Herndon says modestly.

And, it’s easier to cook for a crowd, she says.

Aunt Bee of Mayberry would have felt right at home in Herndon’s kitchen with bright yellow curtains and a two-burner stove. The folks who gather each week around her large oak table for Sunday dinner get a taste of Mayberry, too.

“This is one of my homes. This is like Sunday dinner at home — the way it’s supposed to be,” says the Rev. Bill Young, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Blackshear.

Troubles melt away and friendly conversation flows around Herndon’s table.

Young has passed up lunch offers at the Country Club for a seat there, she brags. His favorite meal is Herndon’s chicken-n-dumplings.

Family and friends lucky enough to taste Herndon’s stick-to-your-ribs meals know second helpings are expected at her table. Bring big appetites, and make yourself at home — that’s her motto.

“Lunch here is only for the strong,” Young says with a laugh.

Herndon’s Sunday dinners often feature more than one main course and multiple side items, but folks have to save room for thin layer chocolate cake with scratch-made icing or a heavy pound cake topped with fresh strawberries, too. And, they wash it all down with Southern-style sweet tea. She keeps their glasses filled to the brim.

Herndon, raised in a farmhouse on Peacock Dairy Road in Pierce County, remembers when folks used every part of a chicken or hog, canned all their summer produce, and made hog head cheese. She grew up playing in the



EVELYNE HERNDON, LONGTIME BLACKSHEAR RESIDENT, RECENTLY PUBLISHED A COOKBOOK, “IF MY APRON COULD TALK.” HERNDON IS PICTURED IN THE KITCHEN WHERE SHE’S BEEN WHIPPING UP SAVORY MEALS FOR DECADES.

smokehouse and large canning storeroom where the yummy results of her mama’s hard work lined the shelves.

Now, in an era where most of those ingredients could be

found easily at the grocery store, Herndon doesn't cut corners. She 'puts up' summer veggies and fruit every year, buying it fresh in bulk from local farmers.

Yes, she'll even make hog head cheese on occasion, a tradition long-forgotten by most Southerners these days. Herndon enjoys making jellies with fresh summer berries and brining pickles, too.

Herndon recently celebrated her 80th birthday and, to the delight of her family and friends, has compiled many of her recipes in a cookbook, "If My Apron Could Talk."

Her cookbook was heavily influenced by the children

and grandchildren who gather at Granny's table. One granddaughter came up with the title while another drew the artwork for Herndon's apron featured on the front cover.

and can't keep them in stock.

Decades worth of recipes created and collaborated on with family and friends can't be contained in one book



THE REV. BILL YOUNG HAS A HUG FOR THE COOK. EVELYNE HERNDON, WELL-KNOWN FOR HER DELICIOUS SOUTHERN RECIPES, WRAPPED YOUNG UP A LARGE SLICE OF HOMEMADE POUND CAKE TO GO.

Folks have been clamoring for a copy since the first editions rolled off the press, Herndon says. She is selling

though. Her children are already pointing out staples at her table that didn't make the cut, like her chicken-

n-dumplings and pistachio salad. A second edition might be in the works before long.

Cooking is instinctive for Herndon. She could whip up food for 50 in her cozy kitchen with her eyes closed, but she enjoys cooking so much she often fixes a big breakfast just for one.

"I cook for myself," Herndon says.

She's even been known to cook a full meal with all the fixings on a camping trip, Karen adds.

When she's not buzzing around the kitchen, Herndon enjoys attending Gospel sings with friends, and one of her cookbook recipes, "Vestal's Coconut Cake" is named for Southern Gospel artist Vestal Goodman.

Herndon retired from Pierce County Home Health Care, but still does private sitting for the elderly. Most likely, she slips her patients a taste of fried chicken or turnip greens 'the way mama used to make it' on occasion. ¶

Did you know?

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is often mistaken as something that only affects aging men and women. While the Alzheimer's Association® notes that age is the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer's, the group also warns that even men and women nowhere close to retirement age can develop the disease. In fact, the Alzheimer's Association reports that, in the United States alone, roughly 200,000 people under the age of 65 have early-onset Alzheimer's disease. According to the Alzheimer's Association, many people with early-onset are in their 40s and 50s. Recognizing that

Alzheimer's is not just for retirees but capable of affecting younger men and women with families and careers is important, as the Alzheimer's Association points out that healthcare providers typically do not look for signs or symptoms of Alzheimer's in young people. In such people, symptoms of Alzheimer's may be incorrectly attributed to stress. Adults who suspect they might be suffering from early-onset Alzheimer's should have a comprehensive medical evaluation, which may include a neurological exam and/or brain imaging, conducted by a physician who specializes in Alzheimer's disease.



**“MR. BILLY” HOLDS DOWN
THE FORT AT HOPKINS-
GOWEN OIL COMPANY IN
FOLKSTON.**

Billy Clark: Going strong at 90

By DEBRA PAMPLIN

There is an often-repeated phrase “it isn’t how you start in life, but how you finish”. The inspirational quote applies to few people on the planet more than it does to Billy Clark.

Despite numerous tragedies and setbacks as a child, Billy overcame nearly impossible odds and went on to make a successful life for himself. He has a positive outlook and simply states that he “has lived a blessed life”.

Mr. Billy (as he is now known by most) was born in 1929 in Burnt Fort, Georgia. Tragedy would strike just three years later when, in 1932, Billy’s father passed away. Toward the end of the 1930s, Billy was diagnosed with polio. He had to learn how to talk, walk and swallow all over again. It took several years to fully recover, as his body was more susceptible to illnesses such as colds and pneumonia.

While still recovering from his illness, Billy lost his mom in 1941. At the age of eleven, Billy was separated from his

siblings when they went to live with different family members. Billy moved in with his sister and his brothers moved in with aunts and uncles. Although they were living in separate houses, the siblings were still able to see each other often.

When he was a teenager, Billy’s sister and brother-in-law operated a café and service station on the St. Marys River, just across the state line in Florida. When a Stuckey’s store across the street from their service station burned, Billy’s brother-in-law was able to get the candy recipes from an employee. For the next several years, from the age of thirteen until he graduated from high school, Billy made candy for the gas station. Although the candy isn’t sold locally any longer, to this day Billy uses the recipes at Christmas time to make gifts for family and friends.

After graduating from high school, Billy moved in with his aunt and attended Massey Business College in Jacksonville, Florida. In April 1948, Billy went to work at the Ford

Dealership in Folkston. He was drafted into the Army in 1950, but returned to his job at the dealership when he got out of the military. He left the dealership in late 1967, after his boss passed away.

That same year, Billy was hired as a bookkeeper at Hopkins-Gowen Oil Company, where he also aided in running general operations. A couple of years later, Billy was in complete control of the day-to-day operations of the company. In 1972, Billy bought into the business when he purchased a one-third stake of the company.

One of his major accomplishments was recognizing the special fuel needs of



EVERY YEAR, CLARK'S UNIQUE GO-CARTS ARE FEATURED IN THE OKEFENOKEE FESTIVAL PARADE.

logging trucks. In addition to having special fuel tanks created that could withstand the demands of logging operations, Billy also delivered the fuel to the logging trucks himself.

Billy prided himself on serving his fellow man. In fact, he always tells his employees, "Anyone can sell gas and oil, but what the company actually sells is service".

Billy's love of helping people extended to his employees as well. Until a few years ago, Billy would personally cover for his drivers while they took their vacation time. His employees could always count on Billy for a friendly smile and a funny joke.

Billy has several go-carts stored at one of the company's earliest buildings. They all have different looks; one was made to look like a logging truck (complete with

trailer) and another like a Corvette. At logging conventions, he would let children sit on the trailer and give them go-cart rides. Employees said he always had as much — if not more — fun than the kids.

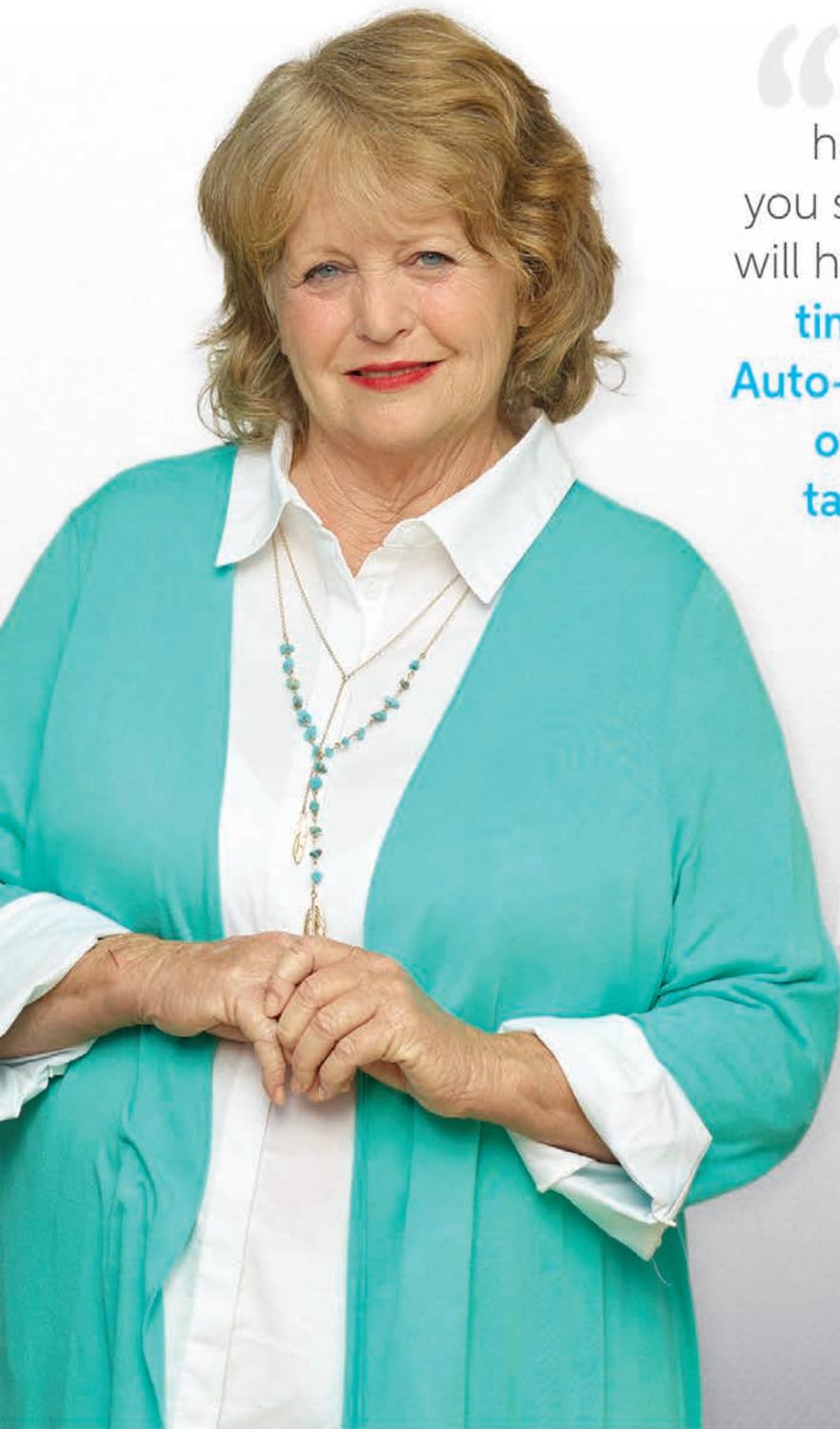
Billy enjoys interacting with high school students as well, and says he always gives them the same advice, "Don't drink, don't smoke, don't chew or don't do drugs because the Good Lord didn't make your body to accommodate those things".

Billy takes his own advice, as he has only had one can of beer in his entire life.

Now, over five decades later, Billy is still working at the company. At ninety years of age, he currently serves as president of the organization. He says he plans to retire when he is one hundred years of age, but "has no plans after that". ¶



FROM A YOUNG AGE, BILLY COULD ALWAYS BEEN SEEN WITH A SMILE.



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A love for one another and the outdoors



BOBBY HARRIS IS SHOWN WITH DEER ANTLERS THAT ADORN A SHED AT HIS HOME IN THE RAYBON COMMUNITY. -PHOTO COURTESY WAYNE MORGAN

By Jason Deal

Bobby Harris might have what you call a deer antler museum in and around his home in the Raybon Community of Brantley County.

A well-known local outdoorsman, Harris, 81, says he and his late wife, Sarah Morgan Harris, began putting up the deer antlers each year as they harvested deer from the piney woods of Brantley County.

“It was just something we did to decorate I guess you could say,” he said.

The larger prize bucks are mounted and adorn the walls inside his home, while dozens of antlers adorn the walls of a shed located beside his house.

Harris bought his wife, Sarah, a brand new Remington 1100 shotgun in 1969 and she began using it in 1970.

She soon became a skilled hunter in her own right.

Mrs. Harris always cut a groove on the stock of her gun after each kill. At the time of her death in 2004, the gun stock featured 60 notches.

“She was the cook and the boss,” Mr. Harris says, recalling memories of his late wife.

Harris says Sarah always kept a sharp knife and could skin a deer on the tailgate of their truck as fast or faster than most men in the area.

“She was a skilled hunter,” he says. “She was very good with a gun.”

Harris doesn’t hunt much anymore and has since sold all of his deer dogs but he enjoys reminiscing on what he says are now precious memories.

The Harris’ made a good team and their love for one another was reinforced by their love for the outdoors.

“She was a better hunter and fisherman than I am without a doubt,” Harris says with a laugh.

Mr. Harris is retired from Brantley County Government, having worked as a landfill operator at the Smyrna Landfill near Lulaton. Mrs. Harris was Brantley County’s dog control officer, but was also a homemaker and enjoyed making yard art.

The couple had two children, a son, Blake “Tater” Harris, and a daughter, Regina Landaverde, who are both now deceased. Mr. Harris has three grandchildren, including granddaughters, Seirra Landaverde and Tiffany Walker and a grandson, Stetson Landaverde.

The Harris’ always enjoyed being in the woods, hunting all over the northern part of Brantley County mainly in the Kneeknocker Swamp and the “backwoods” near Smyrna Church, both along the Satilla River.

Sarah bagged several eight point bucks during her years

in the woods and many of those antlers are displayed on the wall at the Harris' home.

Harris recalls that his wife was also an accomplished cook, but didn't even let that get in the way of a good, successful hunt.

One day Mr. Harris and Mrs. Harris' sister and brother-in-law, Junior and Gertie Knox, took the Knox boys on a hunting trip.

"Sarah stayed home to cook, but she was listening to the action on CB radio," Mr. Harris recalls.

The Harris' had their hunting dogs on the hunt and the dogs started running a buck. The hunting party pursued with several taking shots at the animal.

"We had numbered locations and spots we referred to and one of the boys mentioned we were near the forks in the road," he said. "Sarah knew where that was. She turned off the stove, jumped in the truck and went straight to the location."

Mrs. Harris showed off her hunting skills that day.

"Out stepped the buck and Sarah killed it with one shot,

got back in the truck and went back home to finish cooking,"

her husband remembers.

Mrs. Harris also had a way with animals, a skill that came in handy working hunting dogs and later in her role as dog control officer.

Once during her days as the dog control officer, Mrs. Harris was called by Sheriff Cordell Wainright to come and get a dangerous dog that had torn the bumper off a car and was snarling at one of his deputies.

"Sarah got out of her truck and opened the door to her dog box," Mr. Harris recalls.

The deputy was concerned for his safety and for Mrs. Harris, but Mrs. Harris didn't flinch.

"She looked at the dog, clapped her hands and hollered get your *&^ in this box and the dog complied," he said.

Harris enjoys remembering hunting tales and can relate nearly everyone to a set of antlers displayed on the shed wall and in his homes.

"I really enjoy those memories," he said.



THE LATE SARAH MORGAN HARRIS IS SHOWN WITH ONE OF THE PRIZE BUCKS SHE KILLED DURING HER YEARS IN THE WOODS.

Woodpecker Trail

By Jason Deal

The Woodpecker Trail is one of the oldest tourist routes in the United States. The trail follows Georgia Highway 121, which runs north to south through portions of Charlton, Brantley, Pierce, Appling, Tattnall, Candler, Emanuel, Jenkins, Burke and Richmond Counties.

The trail began as the Woodpecker Route back in the early 1920s. As far back as 1922, it was listed in the Automobile Legal Association's 'Automobile Green Book'. Tradition holds that the highway route was once a horse and carriage lane and may have been created by Native Americans.

The description of the Route at that time was from Augusta to Lake City and Jacksonville.

Much of the general line of travel is still followed. It is thought the Depression may have reduced many motorists' financial ability to travel to the extent the Route was no longer used.

In 1947, a group of leaders from several communities met at Magnolia Springs near Millen to discuss the revival of the tourist route, this time, under the name of the Woodpecker Trail Association. The Association secured permission to use Walter Lantz' cartoon character "Woody Woodpecker" as the trail's mascot. Signs with "Woody" on them lined the high way from Charlotte, NC to St.



PICTURED ABOVE IS ONE OF THE SIGNS FOR THE WOODPECKER TRAIL. THIS SIGN IS LOCATED NEAR THE OVERPASS IN CHARLTON COUNTY.

Petersburg, FL.

The Trail was promoted to tourists in the northeast as the fastest way to the Gulf coast. Florida and South Carolina changed their state highway numbers to match the Geor-

gia State Route 121, so tourists could travel through three states following the same state highway number, "121".

The Interstate Highway System opened in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and

travelers found a fondness for the fast lane, 24-hour restaurants, gas stations, motels and no traffic lights. They bypassed scenic byways such as the Woodpecker Trail (Georgia Highway 121), and



the highway's use faded as a tourist route.

By the mid 1990s, however, many of the traveling public had grown weary of the fast lane and again desired the much more scenic and relaxed two-lane highways of old.

Visitors to Welcome Centers would occasionally ask "What ever happened to the 'Woodpecker Trail' they remembered traveling as a child?"

Gradually, interest grew to again revive the Trail. Representatives from the 10 counties in southeast Georgia along Georgia 121 met, felt the timing was right and began working to revive the Woodpecker Trail.

The group was incorporated with a representative from each of the 10 counties as well as many local and state agencies.

An effort to again use 'Woody Woodpecker' as the Trail logo was unsuccessful, so the newly established board modified the 1920s-era logo while still holding true to many of the original elements. After several drafts, a colorful, travel-oriented sign was created.

Several signs designating the trail are displayed in each county.

In 2004, the Georgia State Legislature approved a resolution once again designating the 238-mile-long Georgia State Route 121 as "The Woodpecker Trail" running from the Savannah River

near Augusta to the Florida state line south of Moniac in Charlton County. On September 19, 2005, Governor Sonny Perdue and other officials formally dedicated the Woodpecker Trail Highway in Augusta.

The newly designed logo was imprinted on highway

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signs and erected along the Trail, guiding the traveling public through the great communities, scenic farms, state parks, historic homes and wonderful downtowns located along the Trail.

Maps have been developed, printed and distributed to the visitor's centers and Chambers of Commerce around the state, and efforts continue to bring Florida and South Carolina back in to the newly revitalized Woodpecker Trail.

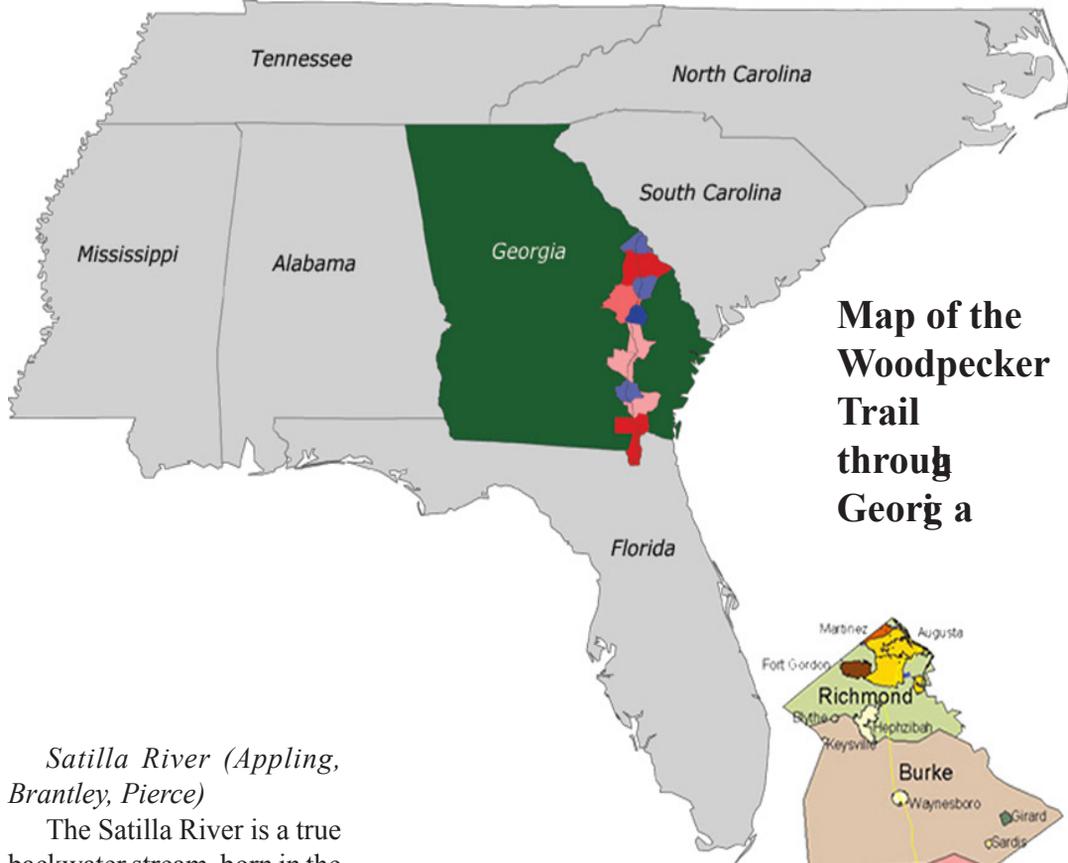
Other places to visit while traveling the trail

The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 to preserve the Okefenokee Swamp. The refuge includes approximately 396,000 acres, (about 650 square miles), almost 90 percent of which have increased protection as a National Wilderness Area. The swamp, which extends 38 miles north to south and 25 miles east to west, remains one of the most well-preserved freshwater areas in America.

Visitors find ample opportunities for recreation in the refuge, including fishing, boating, canoeing, birding, and wildlife photography. They can also bike or drive a 9-mile paved road that follows the edge of the swamp. Visitors can also find endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers, cranes, robins hawks, owls, and bald eagles. The refuge is open year round.

For more information on the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge visit www.fws.gov/refuge/okefenokee.

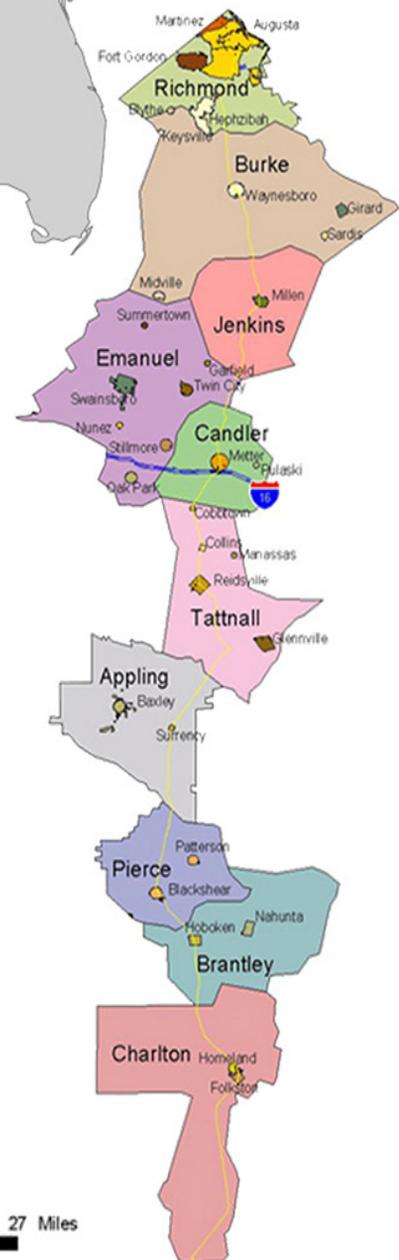


Map of the Woodpecker Trail through Georgia

Satilla River (Appling, Brantley, Pierce)

The Satilla River is a true backwater stream, born in the river swamps of the coastal plain, and flowing 206 winding miles before emptying into the St. Andrew Sound on the Georgia coast. Adding to the Satilla's beauty are the adjoining swamplands and bottomland forests that buffer the course of the river it winds between white sand banks.

The novice canoeist feels comfortable on the Satilla. Camping can be excellent on small beaches found on the inside turns of the river, or on the higher bluffs that rise to 6 feet above the river in the upper reaches eight feet in the lower reaches. As the river approaches the lower reaches, it broadens and loses its canopy of trees. Below US 17 (at Woodbine, Georgia), the river widens and becomes tidally influenced, and the surrounding vegetation consists of marshland flora.



World's Smallest Pacemaker Debuts at SEGHS

On December 6, 2019, Southeast Georgia Health System became the only hospital between Savannah and Jacksonville to offer heart patients the world's smallest pacemaker. Assisted by the Health System's Heart Catheter team, cardiologist Mark T. Watkins, M.D., FACC, successfully implanted the new device in two patients. The minimally invasive procedures each took less than 20 minutes.

Both patients suffer from bradycardia, a condition causing low or irregular heart rhythms. Bradycardia can create dizziness, fatigue, shortness of breath or fainting spells, especially during physical activity. The pacemaker's electrical impulses or "pacing therapy" relieves these symptoms by restoring the heart's normal rhythm.

The new pacemaker, known as the Micra® Transcatheter Pacing System (PTS) is unique for several reasons. About the size of a large vitamin, it is one-tenth the size of a traditional pacemaker. Weighing little more than a penny, the Micra does not require cardiac wires (leads) or a surgical "pocket" under the skin to deliver electrical impulses. The device automatically adjusts pacing therapy based on each patient's activity levels.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the Micra pacemaker in 2016. It is also approved for Medicare reimbursement.

Watkins and cardiologist Mitchell T. Jones, M.D., Southeast Georgia Health

System Brunswick Campus medical staff members, received specialized training in device implantation and use.

"The Micra pacemaker is a milestone for our heart patients who now have access to this technology close to home. I'm pleased that we can improve heart function and quality of life for bradycardia patients in a way that's unobtrusive and offers lower risk than what was available with a traditional pacemaker," says Watkins.

According to Lance Simpson, a senior clinical specialist with Medtronic, Micra's manufacturer, this is currently the only leadless pacemaker available. Simpson feels the technology offers important advantages over regular pacemakers. "First, the patients have no visible or physical reminders of the pacemaker. More importantly, the implant success rate with Micra is nearly 100 percent. And patients implanted with this device experience 63 percent fewer complications than they would with a traditional pacemaker."

The tiny device is implanted into the patient's heart through a catheter inserted into the femoral vein. "There are fewer potential complications with this device because it does not use lead wires," Watkins says, adding, "It is a permanent pacemaker, but should it need removal or replacement, it can be permanently shut down and a new device implanted without any risk of electrical interference."



LEFT TO RIGHT: JERRY LEZOTTE, R.N., CARDIOPULMONARY SERVICES, SOUTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM; MARK T. WATKINS, M.D., FACC, CARDIOLOGIST, COASTAL CARDIOLOGY, P.C.; LANCE SIMPSON, SENIOR CLINICAL SPECIALIST, MEDTRONIC

Patients implanted with the Micra may safely undergo full-body magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and TSA airport screenings.

From his perspective as a cardiologist, Watkins is especially enthusiastic about the device's ability to track heart health. "The device sends data to the Medtronic CareLink Network, which allows me to follow the patient's condition via remote monitoring. Patients only need a 'device check' once a year in my office."

To schedule a consultation with Watkins, call 912-264-0760. To schedule a consultation with Jones, call 912-264-1520.

An advertisement for Vewell Lodge & Resort Okefenokee Swamp. The background is a dark, textured image of a swamp with trees. At the top, the word "Vewell" is written in a large, elegant, light blue script font. Below it, "LODGE & RESORT" and "OKEFENOKEE SWAMP" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. In the center, the word "Families" is written in a large, yellow, cursive font. Below that, "love it here.." is written in a smaller, yellow, cursive font. At the bottom, "RESERVATIONS:" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font, followed by the phone number "(912) 496-2838" in a slightly smaller white font. At the very bottom, the address "661 Ozzie Rowell Road" and "Folkston, GA 31537" is written in a white, sans-serif font.



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