

# **Welcome to the September 2024 Digital Edition**



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**Georgia**  
MAGAZINE

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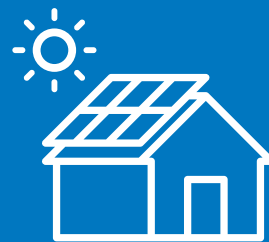
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# GEORGIA'S EMCs Powering a Brighter Tomorrow with Solar Energy

As trailblazers of solar energy among electric cooperatives nationwide, Georgia's electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) are leading the transition toward a cleaner energy future.

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*State and local leaders visit the 106-megawatt Clay Solar Project in Clay County, Georgia.*



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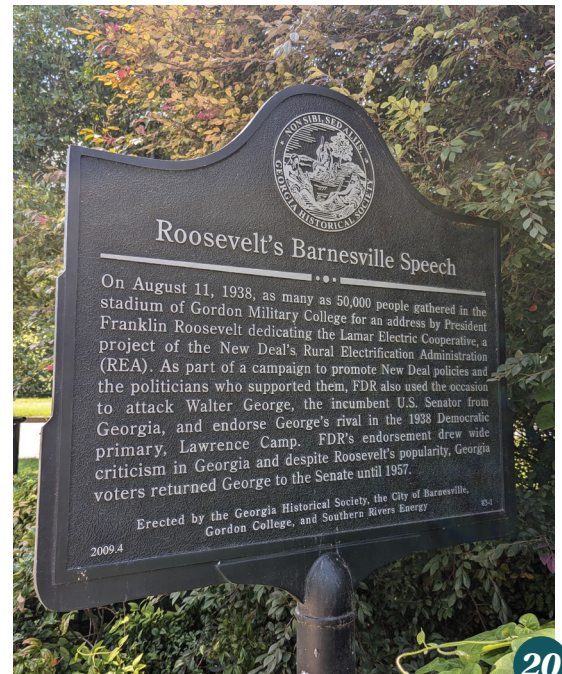
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### On the cover

U.S. Army veteran George Eshleman pauses at McAfee Knob in Virginia on the Appalachian Trail. In 2016, he hiked the trail while carrying 363 uniform name tapes of U.S. military veterans who had died by suicide, to raise awareness of the problem. His story is told in the 2024 movie "The Keeper." (Photo courtesy of George Eshleman.)

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## We recognize that place!

June's Picture this? contest featured a photo of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Lilburn. Nearly 100 readers recognized the location, including Tejesh Patel of Perry.

According to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir website, [baps.org](http://baps.org), a mandir is a Hindu place of worship as well as a community center for social, cultural and spiritual activities. The Lilburn mandir opened in August 2007 after 17 months of construction, including 1.3 million volunteer hours. The more than 34,000 stones that make up the structure were handcarved in India, shipped to the U.S. and assembled on-site.

Patel's family has visited the Hindu temple three times.

"We are [followers] of the BAPS organization," Patel says. "We meet at this place to perform rituals and spiritual activities throughout the year. It is also a symbol of ancient Indian architecture. We want our kids to learn all Hindu values and [incorporate] them into their lives."

Flint Energies serves the Patels, and he says their favorite thing about *Georgia Magazine* is the calendar of community events, which they use to plan trips. To see this month's Picture this? photo, turn to page 6.



Visiting the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Lilburn last year are Tejesh Patel; his daughter, Akshara; son, Yagna; and wife, Madhuri.

—Lindsay Penticuff

We go into Columbus often and get to see the actual "Lady Columbus" mural in person! [See "The big picture: Georgia muralists add splashes of color to drab surfaces," June 2024, page 21; [bit.ly/gmart624](http://bit.ly/gmart624).] Thank you!

—Julie Miller, Mauck

## Story shoutout

As soon as *Georgia Magazine* hits my mailbox I'm scanning the contents page as to what to read first.

In the January 2024 issue, the story about the linemen who went

to Guatemala to bring electricity to a small village there was heartwarming. [See "Illuminating Guatemala," page 32; [bit.ly/emcgama0124](http://bit.ly/emcgama0124).]

We are so blessed in America!

—Marv Preast, via email

## In memoriam

We at *Georgia Magazine* were saddened to learn of the death of Lucy Brown of Metter (far left) in March. She and her sister, Mattie Collins of Cobbtown, were featured on our February cover and in that month's *Georgia Cooks* story, "From Metter with love." (See February 2024, page 30; [bit.ly/metter224](http://bit.ly/metter224).)

We offer our heartfelt condolences to her loved ones.



## From THE EDITOR

This month's cover story is a powerful one that addresses the serious public health issue of suicide but also brings a message of hope.

George Eshleman of Calhoun gained the nickname "The Keeper" in 2016, when he hiked the Appalachian Trail while carrying the name tapes of U.S. military veterans who had died by suicide. He, too, found himself in a dark place but, in a moment of clarity during his hike, mustered the strength to move forward.

Eshleman's story is chronicled in the movie "The Keeper," which was released in theaters in May. Today he honors his fallen comrades and raises awareness through speaking engagements and ongoing work to help those living with depression, anxiety and PTSD.

Read more about his journey on page 16.

Do you know what you'd need to have or do if a disaster strikes, such as an ice storm, tornado or tropical storm like Debby, which caused flooding and storm damage last month? September is National Preparedness Month, and it's a good time to assess your plans and put together a Ready Kit for your family.

Getting stranded on Interstate 285 for more than 20 hours in 2014 during "Snowmageddon" inspired me to put together my own Ready Kit for my car.

Turn to "Navigating the elements" on page 24 to learn how weather forecasters keep an eye on Mother Nature and emergency-management teams spring into action when disasters occur.

Many of us pass by those historical signs along roadsides every day, but have you slowed down or stopped to read one?

In the last 25 years, the Georgia Historical Society has erected more than 300 new signs, and the organization also maintains the more than 2,200 historical markers around the state. For more about this program, turn to "Signs of the times," beginning on page 20.

I hope you enjoy these and the other stories in this month's issue.

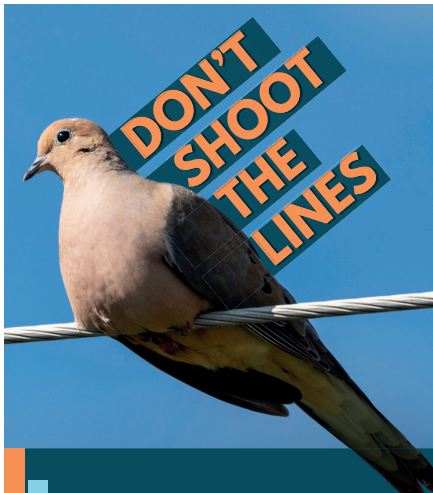
Take care,

*Jennifer*

Jennifer J. Hewett  
Editor


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# Picture this?

## Guess where this is and you could win a \$25 gift card!

The reader whose photo is published in "Picture this?" wins a \$25 Target gift card—as does the person who correctly guesses what the photo is and where it was taken in Georgia. The winner's name (drawn at random from correct guesses) and the answer will appear in a future issue. The winning photo selected by our staff will be published in exchange for a gift card. Georgia EMC claims no right to and will ultimately destroy or delete all photos that are not selected.

If you're ready to guess or have taken a photo for us to consider, email [picturethis@georgiaemc.com](mailto:picturethis@georgiaemc.com) or mail to *Georgia Magazine*, Picture this? Contest, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085. Submissions should be 300-dpi photos of locations in Georgia that are accessible to the public and easy to identify. Please send photos and guesses separately.

**Guesses for the September contest must be received by Sept. 23, 2024.** With all correspondence, please include your name, mailing address and phone number.

JULY 2024



Our winners from July 2024 are Joey Kinard of Lizella, who submitted the photo, and William D. Hallman of White Plains, who correctly guessed that it is a picture of the Birdhouse Tree outside the Carrollton Center for the Arts in Carrollton. The piece was created by artist Alan Kuykendall, arts center summer camp students and visitors during the Arts Festival of Carrollton. We received 154 correct guesses!

Celebrating the Georgia lifestyle  
**Georgia**  
MAGAZINE

*Georgia Magazine*, the largest-circulation monthly magazine in the state, is published by Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (GEMC), the trade association for Georgia's 41 consumer-owned electric utilities. On average, more than 560,000 members welcome the magazine into their homes each month. Georgia's not-for-profit electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to more than 73 percent of the state's land area, serving 4.5 million residents. For more information, visit [www.georgiaemc.com](http://www.georgiaemc.com).

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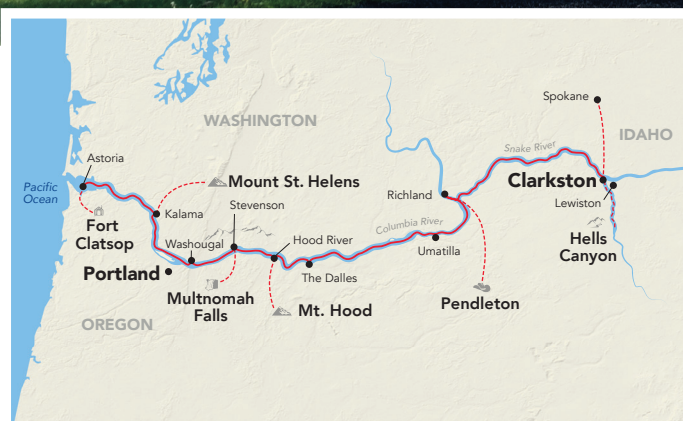
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# Uncovering Penfield's lost history



Volunteers help to clear the underbrush and clean the gravestones.

GREENE COUNTY AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

Last year, the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University in Atlanta, in collaboration with Historic Rural Churches of Georgia, joined the ongoing efforts to clear, restore and map the cemetery.

**M**amie Hillman, director of the Greene County African American Museum, stumbled upon a forgotten chapter of Georgia's past. While exploring the historic Penfield Cemetery, where many of Mercer University's founders are buried, Hillman discovered an African American burial ground just beyond the cemetery's walls in 2019.

Hillman and a friend used a ladder to scale the wall and were met with a sobering sight: an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 gravestones.

Many of the markers bore the names of formerly enslaved people and their children, telling the story of a community that had been neglected and forgotten for decades.

"Cemeteries are important. They are often the only existing memorials of individuals who were the first folks in our communities," Hillman says. "I want to bring attention to the graves [and] acknowledge that those individuals were and are significant even to this day. We may never know what plantation they worked on, but we know now that they did exist."

A concerted effort began in late 2020 to uncover the African American section of Penfield Cemetery. Hillman and the Greene County African American Museum led the initial clearing and documented many of the known burials on the museum's website and [findagrave.com](https://findagrave.com).

Mercer University partnered with Hillman and the museum to conduct a detailed scan of the cemetery using ground-penetrating radar. This noninvasive technique allows researchers to locate burial sites without disturbing the soil, helping to map out the cemetery's full extent.

In fall 2022, Spencer Roberts, head of the Chandler School

of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, began holding monthly clearing days, inviting Georgians to participate. Volunteers included those with personal ties to Penfield and others who simply wanted to help reclaim an overlooked piece of history.

Last year, the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University in Atlanta, in collaboration with Historic Rural Churches of Georgia, joined the ongoing efforts to clear, restore and map the cemetery.

In August, Roberts presented a poster about the project at the Digital Humanities 2024 (DH24) conference at George Mason University in Virginia. Digital Humanities is an annual conference of the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations.

Like most old cemeteries in the South, Penfield Cemetery was segregated from its inception. The front half was designated for white graves, while the back half was reserved for African Americans. In 1948, a wall was erected to divide the two sections. This barrier made access to the African American graves difficult. The area was largely abandoned after the last recorded burial in 1953. The white section of the cemetery remains active, with burials as recently as 2022.

"It is time that we ... celebrate our own, and in so doing, celebrate ourselves—our resilience, our traditions that have gotten us through, and the fact that we are the wildest dreams of those who came before us," Hillman says.

While the project has been on a summer hiatus, the monthly clearing days will resume after the weather cools.

For more information about the Penfield Cemetery project or to volunteer, visit [gcaam.org](https://gcaam.org).



# Rock Lobsters on ice



The Athens Rock Lobsters hockey team, the newest member of the Federal Prospects Hockey League (FPHL), is preparing to make its debut on Oct. 26 at the Classic Center Arena.

More than 8,000 participants voted on the team's name, which pays tribute to the song by the Athens-based band, The B-52s. The rival name, the Classic City Panic, also honored another iconic Athens band, Widespread Panic. In the end, the Rock Lobsters triumphed by a narrow margin of just 565 votes.

"From the start, we knew we wanted a name that encapsulates the unique energy and spirit of Athens," said Britton Briley, director of marketing for the Rock Lobsters. "The response from the community was incredible. The name 'Rock Lobsters' struck a chord with our fans, blending music, creativity and a touch of humor. It's the perfect identity for our hockey team."

The B-52s expressed their excitement in a statement: "Athens, Ga., is our birthplace and where we started our journey 'down the Atlanta Highway' to spread our homegrown groove out to the universe. 'Rock Lobster' was one of our very first songs, and we can testify that millions in the galaxy have gone wild to this deep-sea surf anthem. We are truly honored to have our hometown hockey team named the Rock Lobsters. As the song declares, 'Let's rock!'"

In preparation for their first season, the Rock Lobsters announced Steve Martinson as the head coach in June. Martinson's 14-year playing career includes 49 NHL games and two championships. He has spent 26 years as a head coach in AA hockey and secured 10 championships.

Scott Hull, executive vice president of the Rock Lobsters, emphasized the team's commitment to community engagement.

"Athens is a city with a rich cultural heritage, and the Rock Lobsters will be an extension of that," he said. "We're not just building a hockey team; we're building a community. The support from local artists, musicians and fans has been overwhelming, and we can't wait to hit the ice in October."

For more information about the Rock Lobster hockey team or to purchase tickets, visit [rocklobsterhockey.com](http://rocklobsterhockey.com).

## Georgia glimpses

- **Master 4-H'er.** Savannah Bryant of Marietta is the Georgia 4-H 2024 State Photography and Videography Contest winner. She was recognized as a Master 4-H'er for her video project. Here, she is pictured with Jim Jess, associate editor of *Georgia Magazine*, which sponsors the contest. ▼



GEORGIA 4-H

- **Making Macon VisitAble.** Visit Macon has completed the VisitAble Advocate certification, which underscores the city's dedication to ensuring accessibility for all people. The visitor center will collaborate with local stores and restaurants in downtown Macon to ensure they have facilities and services that are universally accessible and accommodating.
- **Much-needed shade.** Funded by a \$1 million grant from the Georgia Forestry Commission, the Savannah Tree Foundation aims to plant 1,600 trees in the next four years in marginalized communities around Savannah to help fight canopy loss and prevent tree thinning.
- **Making history.** More than \$120,000 was awarded to eight local governments in Georgia to help support historic preservation activities. These grants are a product of the 2024 Historic Preservation Fund, a federal program managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service. The recipients include Walker County and the cities of Cartersville, Dallas, Douglas, Monroe, Rome, Thomaston and Tybee Island.
- **Missing your license or ID?** Replace a lost license or ID by using DDS Online Services at [dds.georgia.gov](http://dds.georgia.gov). 🔄

## Postal Service honors baseball great



USPS

The Atlanta Braves and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) introduced a special "forever" stamp to honor the late Henry Louis "Hank" Aaron in July.

The stamp design features a portrait of Aaron as an Atlanta Braves player, inspired by a 1968 photograph. The stamp and pane were designed by USPS art director Greg Breeding, with original artwork by Chuck Styles and typography by Kevin Cantrell.



# Riverfest gives back to Cherokee County children and families

The **40th Annual Riverfest Arts and Crafts Festival** will be held Sept. 28-29 at Etowah River Park in Canton. The event is sponsored by the Service League of Cherokee County, which gives back to the community in many ways. For example, the group provides eyeglasses to youngsters and assists Cherokee County families in need with utility bills.

"Our community support is made possible through Riverfest, our major fundraising event of the year," says Savannah Holcomb, publicity chair for the 100-member volunteer women's organization. "For our members, it's a joy to be able to give back to our neighbors."

The festival features more than 175 arts and crafts vendors, food trucks, entertainment, children's activities, the Lions Club train and a petting zoo.

Last year, the Service League of Cherokee County invested more than \$105,000 in the children of the county.

"Members donate countless hours to make each year's Riverfest successful. However,



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we couldn't be successful without the people of Cherokee County who attend each year and our wonderful sponsors. They make it all possible," Holcomb says.

For more information, visit [bit.ly/slccrivfst](http://bit.ly/slccrivfst).

—Pamela A. Keene

Please call or check event websites to ensure that these events are taking place before you go.

## ■ North Georgia

**Members Show**, through Oct. 11, Currahee Artists Guild, Currahee. Works on display include watercolors, oil paintings, acrylics, pastel paintings and ceramic art. (706) 886-6138. [bit.ly/fbcartg](http://bit.ly/fbcartg).

**Moonshine Runners**, through Nov. 3, Savoy Automobile Museum, Cartersville. See cars and trucks modified for power, speed and stability to transport illegal liquor during prohibition. (770) 416-1500. [savoymuseum.org](http://savoymuseum.org).

**U-Pick Apples**, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 28-29, Red Apple Barn, Ellijay. Pick apples, pumpkins and flowers, plus play games and have a picnic beside the creek. (706) 635-5898. [redapplebarn.com](http://redapplebarn.com).

**Contemporary Southern & Folk Art Exhibit**, Aug. 31-Oct. 13, The Art Center, Blue Ridge. Southern-inspired works by regional artists include turned wood, pottery, paintings, abstract art, mixed media, collages and folk art. (706) 632-2144. [blueridgearts.net](http://blueridgearts.net).

**Acoustic Sunsets at Hamilton Gardens**,

Sept. 5, 12, 26, Oct. 3, Hamilton Gardens at Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Hiawassee. Enjoy acoustic music and a mountain sunset, plus food court, wine. (706) 896-4191. [bit.ly/gamtnfg](http://bit.ly/gamtnfg).

**Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival**, Sept. 7, Lake Lanier Olympic Park, Gainesville. Colorful Chinese-inspired 10- and 20-seat boats compete, plus cultural activities and cuisine from around the globe. (678) 316-5031. [bit.ly/drgbtatl](http://bit.ly/drgbtatl).

**"Exit Laughing"**, Sept. 13-15, 20-22, 27-29, Tater Patch Players Theater, Jasper. Comedy about lifelong friends who play one last bridge game after the funeral of their fourth player, not expecting what happens next. (706) 253-2800. [taterpatchplayers.org](http://taterpatchplayers.org).

**An Evening with Emmylou Harris**, Sept. 14, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Hiawassee. The winner of 14 GRAMMY Awards and a Billboard Century Award sings hits that span her 40-year career. (706) 896-4191. [bit.ly/gamtnfg](http://bit.ly/gamtnfg).

**Big Red Apple Festival**, Sept. 21, North Main Street, Cornelia. Entertainment, train rides, arts

and crafts, food, kids' zone, cornhole games, ax-throwing and more. (706) 778-8585, ext. 209. [discovercornelia.com](http://discovercornelia.com).

**Southeastern Mounted Drill Team Association Competition**, Sept. 22-24, Rabun Arena, Tiger. Equestrian teams compete in drill routines choreographed to music. (706) 248-7508. [semdta.org/home](http://semdta.org/home).

**"The Play That Goes Wrong"**, Sept. 27-29, Oct. 4-6, Elbert Theatre, Elberton. This comedic play within a play follows a theater production of a mystery with a "corpse" that can't play dead, an unconscious leading lady and actors who trip over everything, including their lines. (706) 213-3109. [elberttheatre.org](http://elberttheatre.org).

**51st Annual Fall Regional Shelby/Mustang and Ford Show**, Sept. 28, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Hiawassee. Mustang cars will be displayed throughout the fairgrounds and on the banks of Lake Chatuge. (706) 896-4191. [bit.ly/gamtnfg](http://bit.ly/gamtnfg).

**Harvest Festival**, Sept. 28, Blue Ridge Methodist Church, Blue Ridge. Carnival games, car cruise-in, food drive, cake walk, health





**"Daddy Long Legs,"** Sept. 13-15, 20-22, 27-29, Oct. 4-6, Legacy Theater, Tyrone. Musical tells the story of an orphan and her letters to the mysterious benefactor who paid for her education. (404) 895-1473. [legacytheater.com](http://legacytheater.com).

tent and concessions. (706) 632-2327. [bit.ly/brmthdch](http://bit.ly/brmthdch).

## ■ Atlanta Metro

**56th Annual Yellow Daisy Festival,** Sept. 5-8, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain. Arts and crafts, including jewelry, pottery, paintings, woodworks and textiles, plus crafter demonstrations, music, food and a beer garden. (800) 401-2407. [bit.ly/smntpk](http://bit.ly/smntpk).

**"Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales,"** Sept. 7-8, 12-15, 19-22, 26-29, Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse, Atlanta. Boisterous adaptation of Geoffrey Chaucer's writings in a sketch-comedy format. (404) 874-5299. [shakespearetavern.com](http://shakespearetavern.com).

**Concerts by the Springs,** Sept. 8, Sandy Springs Amphitheater Lawn, Sandy Springs. Grains of Sand band performs doo-wop, Motown, Carolina beach music and Memphis soul. (770) 206-2022. [citysprings.com](http://citysprings.com).

**Gwinnett County Fair,** Sept. 12-22, Gwinnett County Fairgrounds, Lawrenceville. Carnival rides, music and livestock exhibits. (770) 963-6522. [bit.ly/gwcofair](http://bit.ly/gwcofair).

**Mosaic Multicultural Festival,** Sept. 14, Douglasville Cultural Arts Council, Douglasville. Music, performances, cultural exhibits, international foods, interactive demonstrations, arts and crafts. (770) 949-2787. [artsdouglas.org](http://artsdouglas.org).

**North Georgia State Fair,** Sept. 19-29, Jim R. Miller Park, Marietta. Piccolo Zoppe Circus, carnival rides, bull riding, demolition derby, petting zoo, beauty pageant, animal and produce exhibits, food, monster trucks. (770) 423-1330. [bit.ly/nogastf](http://bit.ly/nogastf).

**Sarah Chang and Sonya Ovrutsky Fensome,** Sept. 20, Schwartz Center for Performing Arts,

Emory University, Decatur. Violinist Chang and pianist Ovrutsky Fensome perform. (404) 727-5050. [schwartz.emory.edu](http://schwartz.emory.edu).

**JapanFest,** Sept. 21-22, Gas South Convention Center, Duluth. Kabuki theater, master storyteller and comedian Katsura Sunshine, Maturiza Taiko Japanese Drum Troupe, martial arts demonstrations, Japanese cuisine and cultural exhibits. (404) 522-6938. [japanfest.org](http://japanfest.org).

**Peachtree Corners Festival,** Sept. 21-22, Town Green, Peachtree Corners. Arts and crafts, music, car show, kids' activities. (770) 378-4226. [bit.ly/ptreecorn](http://bit.ly/ptreecorn).

**Suwanee Fest,** Sept. 21-22, Town Center Park, Suwanee. Parade, entertainment, rides, arts and crafts, games, inflatables. (770) 945-8996. [suwaneefest.com](http://suwaneefest.com).

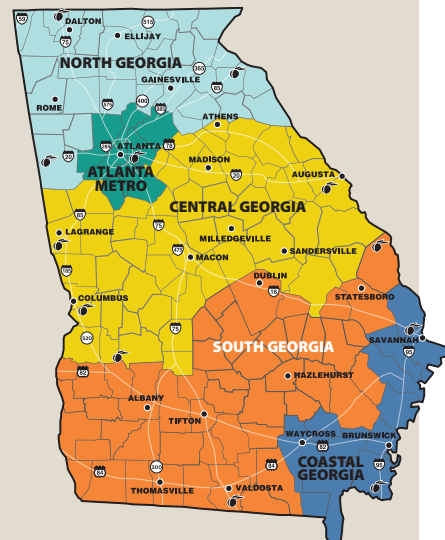
**Glover Park Concert Series,** Sept. 27, Glover Park, Marietta Square, Marietta. The Bourbon Brothers presents a Rat Pack tribute. (770) 794-5601. [bit.ly/cmgps](http://bit.ly/cmgps).

**15th Anniversary "Imagine a Circle" Songbook Concert,** Sept. 28, Oakhurst Center for Community, Decatur. Concert featuring original songs performed by students at the Global Village Project, a school for young refugee women. (404) 371-0107. [bit.ly/gvpicsbc](http://bit.ly/gvpicsbc).

**40th Annual Duluth Fall Festival,** Sept. 28-29, Town Green, Duluth. Arts and crafts, parade, musical entertainment, Donut Dash 5K road race. (855) 385-8841. [duluthfallfestival.org](http://duluthfallfestival.org).

## ■ Central Georgia

**Blind Willie McTell Music Festival,** Sept. 7, 1021 Stagecoach Road, Thomson. Wynton Marsalis headlines a tribute to the Georgia blues guitarist, along with blues musician Shinyribs,



Regions are determined by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. See its online calendar at [www.exploregeorgia.org](http://www.exploregeorgia.org) for additional events.

Cajun performers The Revelers, country blues artist Jerron Paxton and ragtime musicians Blair Crimmins and the Hookers. [blindwillie.com](http://blindwillie.com).

**Justin Moore & Randy Houser,** Sept. 7, Atrium Health Amphitheater, Macon. Country music duo presents its The Country Round Here Tonight Tour. (478) 803-1593. [maconcentreplex.org](http://maconcentreplex.org).

**The Mystical Arts of Tibet,** Sept. 8-14, RiverCenter for the Performing Arts, Columbus. Tibetan monks create a mandala of colored sand, a sacred Tibetan Buddhist art form. (706) 256-3612. [rivercenter.org](http://rivercenter.org).

**4th Annual Clays for Community Clay Shoot,** Sept. 13, Big Red Oak Plantation, Gay. Shoot clays to raise funds for Coweta-Fayette EMC's Operation Round Up program, which provides grants to local nonprofits and educational opportunities for local students. (770) 502-0226. [bit.ly/orucfemc](http://bit.ly/orucfemc).

**Kountry Wayne & Friends,** Sept. 14, Bell Auditorium, Augusta. The actor and comedian is joined by Comedian CP, Daphnique Springs, Preacher Lawson, Cortez Macklin and Comedian Sasedrick on this national tour. (706) 722-3521. [bit.ly/augentc](http://bit.ly/augentc).

**The Bachelors of Broadway,** Sept. 17, Griffin Auditorium, Griffin. Three of New York City's top theatrical performers perform Broadway classics from "Hamilton," "Phantom of the Opera," "Wicked" and more. (770) 228-3229. [griffinconcerts.org](http://griffinconcerts.org).

**Sunflower Concert Series,** Sept. 17, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, Athens. Southern singer-songwriter Randall Bramblett and his Randall Bramblett Band perform. (706) 542-1244. [botgarden.uga.edu](http://botgarden.uga.edu).

**MORE** ►



## EVENTS Calendar

**Slow Exposures**, Sept. 20-22, various locations, Pike County and Zebulon. Photos capture the essence of the rural South in this juried exhibition displayed in eight locations across the county. (770) 841-9268. [slowexposures.org](http://slowexposures.org).

**"Amy's Wish,"** Sept. 20-22, 27-29, Rose Theater, Forsyth. Romantic comedy about two recently married senior citizens and their new life at a retirement village in Florida. (478) 994-0443. [thebacklotplayers.org](http://thebacklotplayers.org).

**Barnesville Buggy Days**, Sept. 21-22, downtown, Barnesville. Parade, arts and crafts, entertainment, food, family activities, fiddle contest, wagon pulling. (404) 733-7034. [barnesville.org](http://barnesville.org).

**"Clue,"** Sept. 21-22, 27-29, Oct. 4-6, Warner Robins Little Theatre, Warner Robins. Based on the 1985 movie that was inspired by the classic board game, this stage production is a hilarious farce-meets-murder-mystery. (478) 929-4579. [wrlittletheatre.com](http://wrlittletheatre.com).

### ■ South Georgia

**Southern Arts Invitational**, through Sept. 30, The Arts Center, Moultrie. Art on display includes oil and watercolor paintings, pencil and ink drawings, clay and metal sculptures, fiber art, ceramics and jewelry. (229) 985-1922. [moultriearts.org](http://moultriearts.org).

**First Friday Sip & Stroll, Concert**, Sept. 6, Ritz Amphitheater, Thomasville. Mainstream Band Ga. performs country, Southern rock, pop and rock 'n' roll from the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s. (229) 227-7977. [thomasvillega.com](http://thomasvillega.com).

**The Mad Hatters**, Sept. 6, Averitt Center for the Arts, Statesboro. Tribute band plays homage



SAVANNAH THEATRE

**Savannah Live**, Sept. 10-13, 18-19, 24-27, Oct. 2-3, 12, 16-17, 22, 24, 26, Savannah Theatre, Savannah. Musical variety show featuring pop, Broadway, Motown and rock 'n' roll. (912) 233-7764. [savannahtheatre.com](http://savannahtheatre.com).

to Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. (912) 212-2787. [bit.ly/avrtctr](http://bit.ly/avrtctr).

**Rocking with the Wild**, Sept. 6, Flint River Entertainment Complex, Albany. Concert by hip-hop, soul, rock and celebration band Unbreakable Bloodline, plus exhibits from Chehaw Park and Zoo, food trucks, kids' zone. (229) 430-5200. [bit.ly/fntrivec](http://bit.ly/fntrivec).

**Tribute Concert at Theatre Dublin**, Sept. 6, Theatre Dublin, Dublin. Concert by Jimmy Buffet tribute band A1A. (478) 272-2560. [visitdublinga.org](http://visitdublinga.org).

**Music in the Art Park**, Sept. 13, Turner Center for the Arts, Valdosta. Singing duo Kerri Kent and Jolyn Smith of 2River Station plays a blend of funk, blues and soul. (229) 247-2787. [turnercenter.org](http://turnercenter.org).

**Picnic on the Farm**, Sept. 14, Georgia Museum of Agriculture, Tifton. Southern Fixin's picnic baskets, historical crafts demonstrations, family-friendly activities, historical re-enactors, concert by country music artist Megan Fowler. (478) 405-3461. [gafoundationag.org](http://gafoundationag.org).

**Autumn Artisan Market**, Sept. 28, The Ritz Amphitheater, Thomasville. Arts and crafts, food trucks. (229) 227-7020. [thomasvillega.com](http://thomasvillega.com).

### ■ Coastal Georgia

**A Night of Live Music**, Sept. 1, Lighthouse Lawn, St. Simons Island. Sounds of Motown plays a musical blend of soul, R&B and pop. (912) 634-7099. [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org).

**Cash Unchained**, Sept. 7, Tybee Post Theater, Tybee Island. Tribute band brings back the songs of Johnny Cash. (912) 472-4790. [bit.ly/tybpcash](http://bit.ly/tybpcash).

**Art in the Park and 2nd Saturday Block Party**, Sept. 14, Bradwell Park, Hinesville. Daytime arts and crafts show with food vendors, followed by an evening concert featuring Mason Jarr Band playing Southern rock with a twist, plus games and food. (912) 877-4332. [bit.ly/artprkhines](http://bit.ly/artprkhines), [bit.ly/hinesbpty](http://bit.ly/hinesbpty).

**Music in the Park**, Sept. 14, St. Marys Waterfront Park, St. Marys. North Florida's The Honey Badgers recreate the sounds of Woodstock. (912) 882-4000. [visitstmarys.com](http://visitstmarys.com).

**Savannah Jazz Festival**, Sept. 18-22, Forsyth Park and other locations, Savannah. Renowned jazz and blues musicians perform, including the Doreen Ketchens Band, Airmen of Note, saxophonist Ed Calle, guitarist Bernie Williams and Gino Castillo & the Cuban Cowboys. (912) 228-3158. [savannahjazz.org](http://savannahjazz.org).

**The Buttermilk Barn Sale Vintage Market**, Sept. 28, 5078 Buttermilk Road, Sylvania. More than 120 antique and home-goods dealers and collectibles vendors, plus music and food trucks. (904) 814-7628. [bit.ly/bmlkbrn](http://bit.ly/bmlkbrn).

**55th Annual Art Under the Oaks Fine Art Festival**, Sept. 28-29, Postell Park, St. Simons Island. Juried art show features sculptures, jewelry, ceramics, photography, textiles, wood, metal and glass art by more than 60 artists. (912) 638-8770. [glynnvisualarts.org](http://glynnvisualarts.org).

Events for the December 2024 issue are due by **Sept. 15**. Email [calendar@georgiaemc.com](mailto:calendar@georgiaemc.com). See more event listings at [georgiamagazine.org](http://georgiamagazine.org).



FITZGERALD DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

**Fitzgerald Fall Festival**, Sept. 28, Paulk Park, Fitzgerald. Antique tractor show and parade, a fly-in, children's activities, food vendors and an artisan market. (229) 426-5033. [bit.ly/fitzfall](http://bit.ly/fitzfall).





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**NOV 1-2:** Easterseals Pro Rodeo

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# EMC linemen shine at state rodeo

**E**lectric cooperative line crews excelled at the 2024 Georgia Lineman's Rodeo on May 4 at the FFA Camp John Hope in Perry.

Among the 25 three-man journeyman teams participating were crews from Canoochee Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) in Reidsville, Cobb EMC in Marietta, Flint Energies in Reynolds, GreyStone Power Corp. in Hiram, Habersham EMC in Clarkesville, Jackson EMC in Jefferson and Snapping Shoals EMC in Covington. Also participating were two journeyman crews from Marietta Power.

Nine of the top 10 overall scores for the journeyman teams belonged to EMC crews. Snapping Shoals teams finished first and third; Cobb EMC teams, second and ninth; GreyStone Power, fourth and 10th; Jackson EMC, fifth and seventh; and Flint, sixth.

Among the 131 apprentices competing were representatives of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC in Young Harris, Canoochee EMC, Carroll EMC in Carrollton, Cobb EMC, Coweta-Fayette EMC in Palmetto, Excelsior EMC in Metter, Flint Energies, GreyStone Power, Habersham EMC, Hart EMC in Hartwell, Jackson EMC, Snapping Shoals EMC, Walton EMC in Monroe and Washington EMC in Sandersville.

All but one of the top 10 overall scores for apprentices were earned by EMC linemen: Trapper Ramsey of Cobb EMC, first; Jake Edgeworth, Cobb EMC, second; Ashley Trimble, Cobb EMC, third; Hunter Walton, Flint Energies, fourth; Stevie Arrington, Flint Energies, fifth; Cody Rainey, GreyStone Power, sixth; Ben Adams, Jackson EMC, seventh; Peyton Thorpe, GreyStone Power, ninth; and Mason Tolbert, Walton EMC, 10th.

The Georgia Lineman's Rodeo gives linemen the opportunity to showcase their unique skills and talent to family members and friends. To learn more and to see the full results, go to [garodeo.com](http://garodeo.com).



*The Georgia Lineman's Rodeo gives crews a chance to showcase their skills in a friendly competition.*

COURTESY SNAPPING SHOALS EMC



## Sumter EMC donates toward educational fire-safety robot

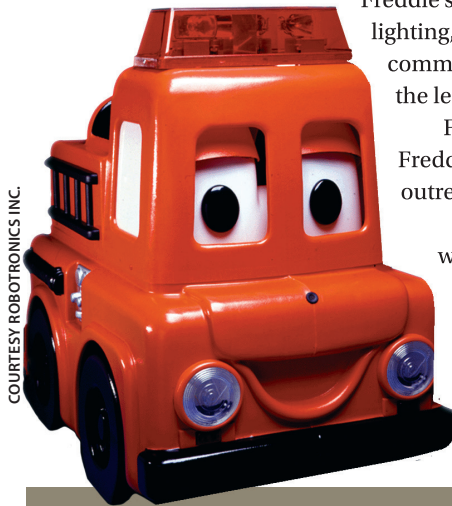
**T**he Americus-based Sumter Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) Foundation awarded a \$5,000 grant to Sumter County Fire & Rescue to help fund the purchase of an interactive fire-safety robot known as Freddie the Fire Truck. The animatronic fire truck will be used in teaching local children vital lessons about fire prevention and emergency response in an engaging and memorable way.

Freddie's design engages children with interactive lighting, sounds and movements. Freddie also can communicate with children at eye level, making the learning experience more personal.

Fire departments nationwide have used Freddie the Fire Truck in their community outreach and school programs.

"By supporting fire and safety education, we are investing in the well-being of families across Sumter County," said Andrea Walker, chairman of the Sumter EMC Foundation. "We are proud to equip Sumter County's first responders with this innovative teaching apparatus."

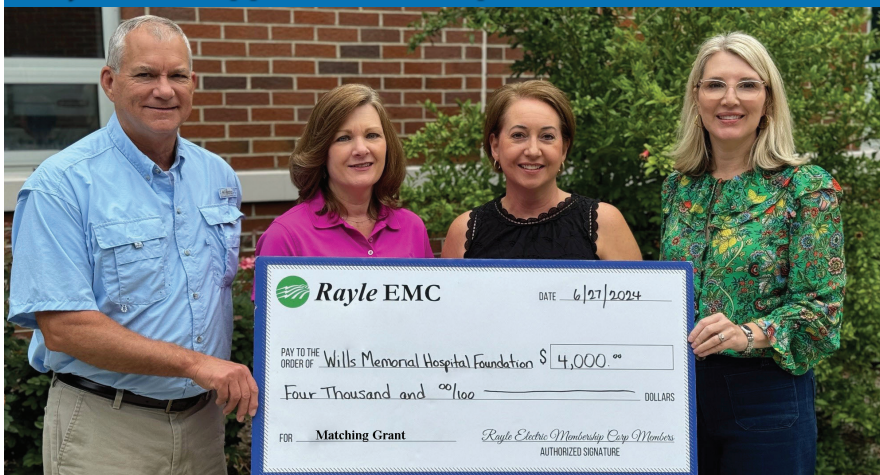
—Mary-Margaret Fox



COURTESY ROBOTRONICS INC.

*Freddie the Fire Truck, an educational robot manufactured by Utah-based Robotronics Inc., can talk, listen, move, play sounds and move his eyes while teaching youngsters about fire safety.*

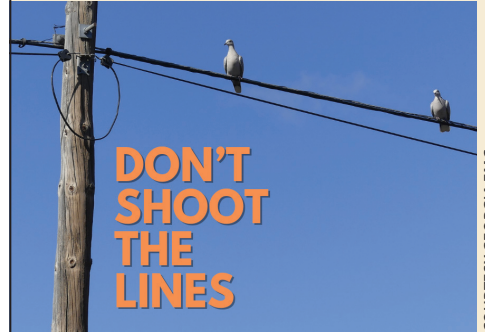
## Rayle EMC supports local hospital



COURTESY RAYLE EMC

Rayle Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) in Washington recently participated in a community program called Sharing Success. The program is an initiative of Colorado-based CoBank, a national nonprofit banking cooperative that matches donations made by the electric cooperatives and other rural businesses it serves to support charitable causes in their local communities. The Rayle EMC board of directors partnered with CoBank through Sharing Success to deliver a \$4,000 donation on June 27 to Wills Memorial Hospital in Washington. The hospital has served Wilkes and surrounding counties for more than 100 years. At the check presentation are, from left, Tony Griffin, general manager of Rayle EMC; Karen Chafin, manager of administrative services at Rayle EMC; Tracie Haughey, CEO of Wills Memorial Hospital; and Susan Pope, Wills Memorial Hospital director of human resources.

**Watch your aim:** Georgia's electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) are conducting a statewide educational campaign about the dangers of shooting at doves when they are perched on power or broadband lines. The campaign coincides with the start of dove-hunting season on Sept. 7. Hunters who shoot these lines can cause very costly repairs that can affect members' power bills as well as long outages while the complex lines are being repaired or replaced. Please emphasize to any hunters you know that they should never shoot in the vicinity of power lines.



COURTESY GEORGIA EMC

**Here comes the Sun(belt):** The annual Sunbelt Ag Expo will take place Oct. 15-17 in Moultrie. Georgia's EMCs will greet guests with popcorn and water, will conduct high-voltage safety demonstrations and will offer "climb a pole" photo opportunities for children. Among other expo highlights is the Farmer of the Year presentation, at which the Southeastern regional winner will be announced from among eight participating states' winners. Georgia's Farmer of the Year is Bruce Allen Redmond of Shiloh Farms in Guyton. Learn more and plan your visit at [sunbeltexpo.com](http://sunbeltexpo.com).

**Lining up workers:** Carroll EMC in Carrollton awarded six \$5,000 Lineman School Scholarships this year. The recipients—Bailey Frederick, Grayson Gullede, Trevor Hansford, Chase O'Neal, Tucker Philpot and Clayton Rose—can use the funds to pursue a lineworker program at the schools of their choice.

**Still truckin':** Flint Energies in Reynolds recently donated a retired truck to the Taylor County School District Police Department. Here, Jimmy Towns, chief of police for the Taylor County School District, accepts the truck.



COURTESY FLINT ENERGIES



# 'THE KEEPER'

Independent film chronicles Georgia veteran's journey, message of hope



GEORGE ESHLEMAN

By Amber Lanier Nagle

**U.S. ARMY VETERAN** George Eshleman of Calhoun is known as “The Keeper.” He earned the nickname in 2016, when he walked the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia while carrying 363 uniform name tapes of U.S. military veterans who had died by suicide. He had posted his intentions online and collected the names of fallen veterans until just a few weeks before he got on the trail.

Other through-hikers helped him at every turn of his journey and told him something he says he will remember for the rest of his life: “No one walks the trail alone.”

“I hiked the trail to raise awareness of the problem,” the “keeper of the name tapes” says. “Veterans are 57 percent more likely to take their own lives than people who haven’t served. Almost 6,400 veterans died by suicide in 2021.”

Thousands of people followed Eshleman’s progress on social media and wrote encouraging comments under each post. When he met other hikers on the trail, they’d inevitably ask him about the name tapes, and he would explain that he was carrying the names for the family members and for the veterans

themselves to raise awareness of the problem.

But Eshleman had another reason for embarking on the long foot journey—a secret he had not shared with anyone.

“I had lost a very good friend to suicide, and it put me in a very dark place, and I found myself on the path to the same outcome,” he says. “I had decided to take my own life on the trail and end things. I really can’t explain it. I had kind, caring people in my life, but I felt so alone.”

A few days into his journey, Eshleman sat beneath a tree, pressed a loaded gun against his chest and wept.

“It was at that moment that I realized I wasn’t alone and that I had to complete [the hike],” he says. “I had to get those name tapes to Georgia for all of the people those strips represented. I put the gun away, stood up and got back on the trail.”

He also notes that in a moment of great clarity, he realized

**Above:** George Eshleman snaps a selfie with the uniform name tapes on Mount Katahdin in Maine. The mountain in Baxter State Park is the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.





LAMA ENTERTAINMENT



GEORGE ESHLEMAN



AMERICAN LEGION POST 47

**Top:** Director and lead actor Angus Benfield reviews footage from “The Keeper” with crew members. **Left:** The movie’s end credits list the 363 names that George Eshleman carried. **Above:** Eshleman (in cap) and Jim Rosencrance of the Calhoun-Gordon Community Foundation and GEM Theatre boards of directors present donations from the film screenings in Calhoun to Brenda Blake (left), VFW Post 5376 Auxiliary, and Joann Meadows, American Legion Post 47 Auxiliary.

that every individual who dies by suicide affects other people: family members, friends, co-workers and more. Eshleman didn’t want to hurt anyone, and he also didn’t want some stranger hiking the trail to happen upon his body. He chose to live and help veterans find stronger connections and greater mental health through research and resources.

## PATH TO THE BIG SCREEN

Eshleman finished his hike in five months. Along the way he met dozens of folks, shared his mission and explained the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression,

anxiety and suicidal thoughts among combat veterans. These men and women often hide their problems from those closest to them, he emphasized.

He continues to advocate for veterans.

“I’m tired of [just] talking about it,” Eshleman says. “We’ve got to find ways to help all these men and women. Awareness is great, but it’s past time for action.”

When Eshleman returned home to Calhoun, he pulled out a journal he kept on the Appalachian Trail and used his notes to write a story about the journey, titling it “The Keeper.”

**MORE** ►



## Learn more

"The Keeper," [thekeepermovie.info](http://thekeepermovie.info);  
on Facebook: [fb.com/thekeepermovie.info](https://fb.com/thekeepermovie.info);  
on Instagram: [instagram.com/thekeeper.movie](https://instagram.com/thekeeper.movie)

# NO ONE WALKS THE TRAIL ALONE

From left, Bacon (portrayed by Nicholas Asad), The Keeper (Angus Benfield) and Taz (Andrew Ferguson) take in a view from the Appalachian Trail in a scene from the movie.

LAMA ENTERTAINMENT

Todd Tavalazzi, a friend and "military brother" he met in 2019, took Eshleman's story and turned it into a screenplay, which he shopped around until 2021. Angus Benfield, a Los Angeles-based independent filmmaker with LAMA Entertainment, made it into a movie that was released during the Memorial Day weekend in May.

"I don't want to just make films for the sake of it or do things for vanity purposes," Benfield says, referring to Eshleman's story. "I want to do a film that I believe goes beyond the four walls of the theater—something that will affect people in their everyday life."

Eshleman was on set during many of the filming sessions in Maine, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia and California, even making a short but significant cameo near the end of the movie.

In Eshleman's adopted hometown (he is originally from Louisiana), the Calhoun-Gordon Community Foundation partnered with LAMA Entertainment and the GEM Theatre to facilitate two free advance screenings of "The Keeper" days before its official release. Both evenings, seats were packed and donations poured in—directed to the local American Legion Post 47 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5376. A portion of the proceeds from ticket sales to "The Keeper" is being donated to Disabled American Veterans and other groups that work to prevent veterans' suicides.

To date, thousands have watched the powerful film that portrays Eshleman's quest to honor fallen comrades, chronicles his own struggles with mental-health issues and spotlights the pressing issue of veteran suicide. In honor of Veterans Day, "The Keeper" will be released on streaming platforms in November.

And a trigger warning: Some scenes in the movie may be disturbing or upsetting to some viewers. Because it deals with mature themes such as suicide, the film carries an R rating.

"It's hard to talk about suicide and mental health," Eshleman says. "But the movie is prompting much-needed conversations here in Georgia and across the country. We can't not talk about this any more."

"The Keeper" has been screened at film festivals nationwide and earned a host of awards. In July, it won several awards from two monthly, international film festivals, including best picture from the Florence Film Awards and best feature film from the International Gold Awards. "The Keeper" received best feature film and best editing from the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival Awards and was nominated for best docu-drama feature film at the Seattle Film Festival.

## BATTLE'S NOT OVER

With the success of the film, Eshleman has been invited to speak at civic group meetings and schools. On Nov. 2 he'll participate in the Murray County Veterans Parade in Chatsworth and will stay for a free showing of "The Keeper" at 7 p.m. at Chatsworth City Park.

He doesn't like the attention, but he continues to press forward to raise awareness and help those who are living with depression, anxiety and PTSD.

Eshleman notes that he still has tough days, but he's learned some helpful coping strategies.

"And I now realize that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness," he says. "If you see [that] someone around you is struggling and in a dark place, let them know you are there, and let them know you care."

"And remember: No one walks the trail alone. The trail is just a metaphor for life. No one is alone in this life. Someone is always there. Remember that!" 🌀

Amber Lanier Nagle is an Adairsville-based freelance writer.

Confidential crisis support is available to active-duty military members, veterans and their loved ones 24/7 through the Veterans Crisis Line. If you or someone you know needs help, dial 988 and press 1; send a text message to 838255; or chat online at [veteranscrisisline.net/chat](https://veteranscrisisline.net/chat).





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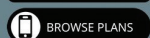
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Ellijay, GA pricing shown. Pricing may be different in some areas, subject to change, and does not include land improvements.

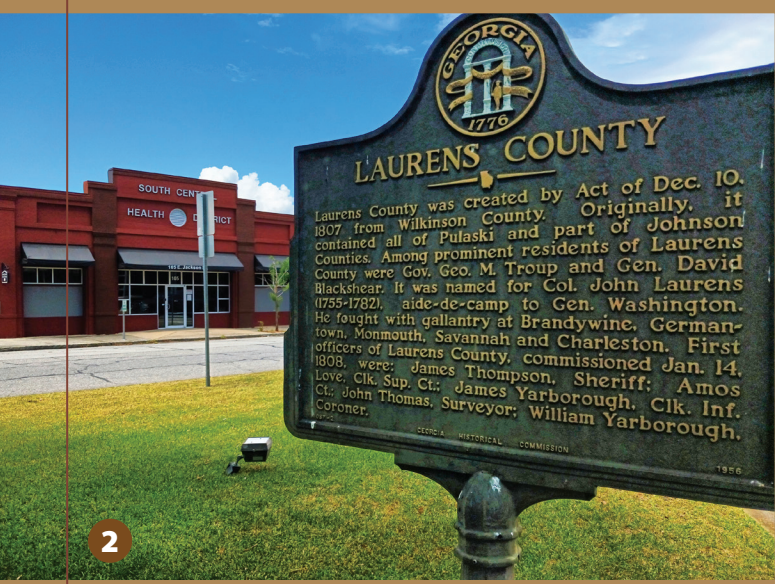




**TYBEE LIGHTHOUSE**

A lighthouse on Tybee was one of the first public structures in Georgia. Completed in 1769 by William Blithman of Cape May and Gloucester, its 90 foot height made it the loftiest in America. Destroyed in a storm, it was replaced by another built by Thomas Sumner in 1792, which Oglethorpe called "one of the best buildings of that kind in America." It was almost entirely rebuilt in 1807 by Cornelius McGarry and James Weyms. In 1793 John Jenkins built the third lighthouse on a third site. The lighthouse forms the base of the present structure, which is part of it of colonial construction. In 1791 Georgia ceded to the United States the right to the lighthouse. Partially destroyed during the Union occupation, it was repaired and today is one of the famous lighthouses on the Eastern seaboard.

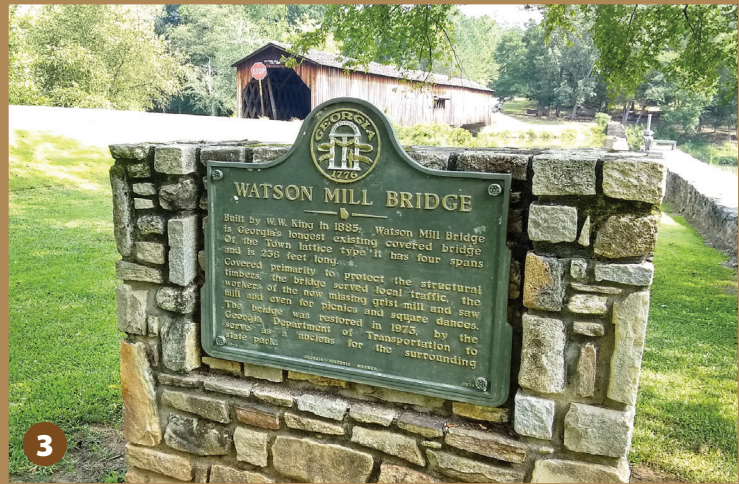
1769 GEORGIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION 1988



**LAURENS COUNTY**

Laurens County was created by Act of Dec. 10, 1807 from Wilkinson County. Originally, it contained all of Pulaski and part of Johnson Counties. Among prominent residents of Laurens County were Gov. Geo. M. Troup and Gen. David Blackshear. It was named for Col. John Laurens (1755-1782), aide-de-camp to Gen. Washington. He fought with gallantry at Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, Savannah and Charleston. First officers of Laurens County, commissioned Jan. 14, 1808, were: James Thompson, Sheriff; Amos C. John Thomas, Surveyor; William Yarborough, Coroner.

GEORGIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION 1986



**WATSON MILL BRIDGE**

Built by W.W. King in 1885, Watson Mill Bridge is Georgia's longest existing covered bridge and is 225 feet long. Covered primarily to protect the structural timbers, the bridge served local traffic, the mill and area for picnics and square dances. The bridge was restored in 1973 by the Georgia Department of Transportation to serve as a link to the surrounding area.

GEORGIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION



**Poole's Mill Covered Bridge**

Cherokee Chief George Welch constructed a grist mill here on his extensive homestead c. 1820. An uncovered bridge was later added. With the 1838 removal of the Cherokees, the land was sold to Jacob Scudder. Dr. M. L. Pool purchased it from Scudder's family in 1880. Abandoned in 1947, the mill burned in 1959. The original bridge washed away in 1899 and was replaced with the present 96-foot by Bud Gentry, the bridge's web of planks crisscrossing at 45-to 60-degree angles are fastened with wooden pegs, or trunnels, at each intersection.

Erected by The Georgia Historical Society and the Historical Society of Forsyth County, Inc.

2000-7 58-1





# SIGNS of the TIMES

Historical markers capture key people, places, events in Georgia

Story and photos by Jim Kelly

Throughout the state, metal signs proclaim snippets of local history and lore as they piece together the people, events and places that shaped Georgia. These historical markers—easily identified by their unique shape and perched atop sturdy posts—stand tall alongside roadways, in town squares and in front of historic buildings.

If they attract your attention and pique your curiosity, that was the intent.

According to the Georgia Historical Society (GHS), “historical markers originated as a way to promote tourism as Americans increasingly gained access to better roads, vehicles and leisure time.”

Local governments, civic groups, historical societies and clubs are the usual sponsors of historical markers in their own communities, and some have erected markers on their own, but the official, statewide program falls under the purview of the GHS in a public-private partnership with the state of Georgia.

The historical-markers program began in 1951 with the (now-defunct) Georgia Historical Commission, then was overseen by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The GHS took responsibility for the program in 1998.

The GHS maintains a database ([bit.ly/gahistoricalmarkers](http://bit.ly/gahistoricalmarkers)) that includes descriptions, photos, sign text and locations for the more than 2,200 historical markers. Enter your



*This marker in Savannah commemorates the SS Savannah, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean, and the SS John Randolph, America's first successful iron steamship in commerce.*

county, region or subject to find nearby markers.

“The next step that we are currently working on is making that directional aspect come to life” with directions that can be turned into a personalized route to visit markers of interest, says Breana James, historical marker and program coordinator for the Georgia Historical Society.

## A class by themselves

What distinguishes a historical marker from a monument or even an interpretive sign? A monument can be a statue, an obelisk, a building or even a headstone that commemorates or symbolizes a person, a group

or an event. Interpretive signs are found along walking trails or in front of a museum exhibit. They differ from historical markers in that they are usually larger, are colorful and have many graphic elements.

“Markers are their own unique thing. They’re different from monuments and statues in that they aren’t necessarily commemorative of anything,” James says. “They aren’t pointing or bringing someone toward an emotional conclusion. ... They’re not dedicated to anything or any movement or person. They are quite short—an executive summary of something that happened in the place where you are standing.

“It’s funny. You can say more about a marker than you can fit on one.”

The GHS markers placed today are black with silver lettering and the society’s logo on top. Earlier markers are green and have the state seal on top. (Markers erected independently by garden clubs, local history groups, towns, counties, the Works Progress Administration of the Great Depression and other entities can be a variety of colors and designs.)

Also notable on the newer markers is an identification code. In one corner there could be a number like 2024-4. That means that it is the fourth marker erected in 2024. The other

**1** The historical marker at the Tybee Lighthouse on Tybee Island was erected in 1958 and tells about the three different structures that have stood there. **2** A marker in Laurens County mentions that the county is named after Col. John Laurens, aide-de-camp to Gen. George Washington. **3** Watson Mill Bridge in Oglethorpe County is the state’s longest existing covered bridge at 236 feet long. **4** Newer markers, like this one erected in 2000 in Forsyth County, bear the Georgia Historical Society logo at the top. **5** Breana James of the Georgia Historical Society leads a dedication ceremony for a new historical marker in Vinings.

MORE ►



corner could have a number like 121-12, which represents the county in the GHS's internal system (121 is Richmond County) and denotes that the marker is the 12th to be installed in that county.

## History in the making

An organization must go through an extensive application process to obtain a marker through the Georgia Historical Marker Program. (Markers are not available for individuals.) Documents required include a research paper with a bibliography of sources, signed easements from property owners and sponsor agreements. The subject must relate to a broader context of Georgia history or even national history as it relates to Georgia.

The process can take between six months and a year while the Georgia Historical Marker Review Committee works with all parties to discuss the details.

"Historians and other professionals from across the state come together and analyze all of the applications and make deliberations on which ones they think would make successful markers," James says, adding that the committee is "amazing."

Sponsors and the Georgia Historical Society enter into a cost-sharing agreement, with the society covering half of the price tag and any overages. Each marker costs more than \$5,000.

## Special focuses

The GHS also has a Business History Initiative, with markers that tell the stories of companies significant to Georgia's economic development. The list includes mega companies such as Coca-Cola (marker located in front of 14 Marietta St. in Atlanta) and CNN (on Centennial Olympic Park Drive just south of Marietta Street in Atlanta) as well as some lesser-known firms like Fieldale Farms (located in Poultry Park, 444 Jesse Jewell Parkway, Gainesville), which helped to establish Gainesville as "the poultry capital of the world."

The Civil War Historical Marker Initiative was conceived in 2014 to highlight the war's 150th anniversary. In anticipation, the GHS surveyed more than 900 markers relevant to the war



*Relatives of the late artist Nellie Mae Rowe and members of the Judith Alexander Foundation and the Vinings Village Homeowners Association pose at the new historical marker in Vinings.*



*Several markers in Georgia commemorate events of the Civil War. This one in Loganville describes an initiative by Union Brig. Gen. Kenner Garrard to disrupt the Confederacy's communications and supplies.*

in Georgia and discovered that the majority dealt with military tactics. The initiative sought to erect new markers that describe the impact of the war on families, women, children and the enslaved. Today, the society encourages input to continue to tell the stories of these populations.

For the 50th anniversary of the modern civil rights movement in Georgia, the society established the Georgia Civil Rights Trail in 2014 with more than 60 markers focused on the cultural, political and social history of the movement. As the GHS tells it, these markers invite people "to stand on the ground where struggles and events took place and [provide] a foundation upon which to build and cultivate a deeper understanding of the past and its relevance to the present."

"There's really a marker out there for any topic you can think of, and they're a really great way to learn about Georgia's history in an easily digestible format," James says. "I always encourage people ... if you've driven past the same marker every day and you haven't stopped to look at it, go find it online, because it really is interesting and it might get you hooked." 📍

*Jim Kelly is a freelance writer based in Gwinnett County.*

## Learn more

- **Georgia Historical Society**, [georgiahistory.com](http://georgiahistory.com): Explore the database of more than 2,200 historical markers maintained by the society. Browse by region or topic, or pick a place on the map.
- **Historical Marker Project**, [historicalmarkerproject.com](http://historicalmarkerproject.com): This site maintains a large collection of historical and other markers throughout the country.
- **Historical Marker Database**, [hmdb.org](http://hmdb.org): This database lists more than 200,000 entries of "public history cast in metal, carved on stone or embedded in resin."
- **William G. Pomeroy Foundation Historical Marker Grant Programs**, [wgpfoundation.org/history](http://wgpfoundation.org/history): The foundation offers a "signage grant program that aligns with the local history you're passionate about." Subjects include folklore and food and transportation history.



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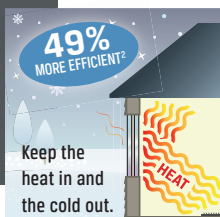
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# Navigating the elements

## Stay ready for **GEORGIA WEATHER**

By H.M. Cauley

**T**hat old saw “If you don’t like the weather, just wait a minute” has a lot of truth behind it.

Experts like veteran meteorologist David Nadler know firsthand that no one can accurately predict climate conditions from day to day or even hour to hour, but they are certain of one thing: The weather is extremely changeable.

“It’s up and down; that’s what weather is,” says Nadler, who is based at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Peachtree City. “It depends on a million variables. In this state, we can see just about everything from ice storms to land-falling hurricanes that bring heavy rains leading to flooding, high winds and tornadoes.”

Though weather watchers have gotten better at predicting

the timing of major events, the details are often impossible to nail down.

“We’re able to pinpoint the potential for a snowstorm or a tornado outbreak, but exactly where or how much ice or snow there will be, well, those details can be very challenging,” Nadler says.

Georgia’s location in the Southeast generally means enviable weather, with long springs, extended falls and mostly mild winters. But rapid temperature changes or sudden storms common in the summer months can lead to deadly and destructive natural disasters.

The state is most prone to floods, wildfires, winter storms, severe thunderstorms (conducive to tornadoes) and hurricanes, both those from the Atlantic Ocean and those that barrel across land from the Gulf of Mexico.

Being prepared for whatever Mother Nature might conjure is a good plan. September is National Preparedness Month, when residents are encouraged to take stock of what’s needed to defend against

possible catastrophes and to devise plans to avoid or cope with them.

The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA) can be tapped for suggestions and ideas long before a disaster strikes. Its website, [gema.ga.gov](http://gema.ga.gov), and the national site, [ready.gov](http://ready.gov), offer a plethora of resources for what to do before, during and after a natural disaster.

GEMA meteorologist Will Lanxton was hired after the 2014 “Snowpocalypse,” when an unexpected snowstorm paralyzed the Atlanta metro area, as part of a task force charged with bolstering the state’s preparedness plans to prevent a similar meltdown, but snow and ice aren’t what he’s most concerned about. He’s particularly wary of a coastal hurricane because of the storm surge it could bring.

“That’s the one that keeps me up nights, even though we have not had a major coastal strike since 1898,” he says. “We have one of the most vulnerable coastlines with a concave shape. So, when a hurricane is pushing water toward the coast, it has nowhere to go but inland. Some of our barrier islands and 15 miles inland could get surges 15 to 20 feet above ground level.”

Individual counties also have their own emergency directors, who are familiar with the challenges specific to their geographic regions. Nadler says his organization meets with them as well as with city managers and local volunteers to educate them about severe weather.

Officials in Effingham, Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, McIntosh, Glynn and Camden counties, where coastal waters and rivers can be severely affected by hurricanes, are well-versed in handling those storms, which can form anytime from June through November.

Camden County Emergency Management Director Chuck White maintains a website with detailed information about flood zones and a comprehensive hurricane guide, complete with the season’s possible storm names and evacuation routes. Those routes were carefully constructed through a partnership with neighboring counties, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA.

“We try to make the site as user-friendly as



Gov. Brian Kemp gets live updates inside the GEMA Operations Center during Hurricane Idalia in August 2023.

**SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH.**



***'Listen to your local officials when they give any kind of preparedness advice. They're the ones who make decisions about things like evacuations. When they say go, people should go.'***

***—Will Lanxton, GEMA meteorologist***



possible, so people don't get confused when they have other things to remember," White says. "We know there's a relatively low probability of a highly consequential event, but that still means we must mitigate that probability by having public engagement and strategies in place with local governments."

Farther inland, Glenn Polk directs Spalding County's Emergency Management Agency, where tornadoes pose the biggest threat.

"Our 'claim to fame' was a tornado in 2011 that destroyed 400-plus homes and businesses," he says. "Then in 2023, we had five tornadoes all at one time. These are claims [to fame that] I didn't want."

After the 2011 disaster, the county organized a twice-yearly emergency-response program for anyone who wants to attend. This spring marked the 20th program and covered the history of weather events in the county and preparedness tips residents can take. The county also received grants to install tornado sirens, but those assets have limited effectiveness.

"The sirens only give off a warning within a 1-mile radius," Polk says. "So we've focused on outdoor facilities like rec centers [to be used as shelters]. We also established an emergency notification system people can tailor to get specific notifications. All you have to do is opt in. We have ongoing campaigns to get people to have that extra free resource."

GEMA also sends alerts for major events to cellphones. The program is built into most phones, Lanxton says; users just have to go to notifications and turn them on.

Because each area of the state has its own disaster concerns, experts highly recommend reviewing local and state websites for specific preparedness guidelines.

"Listen to your local officials when they give any kind of preparedness advice," Lanxton says. "They're the ones who make decisions about things like evacuations. When they say go, people should go. No one will force you to leave, but the reality is if you need any public service, there's no guarantee they'll get to you until it's safe to do so. That's the risk people are taking."

Nadler says the last two decades have brought vast improvements to satellite and radar data that help with predictions and monitoring, but weather still comes with a level of uncertainty.

As White points out: "Yes, we live in a beautiful environment. But you've still got to be prepared." ☪

*H.M. Cauley is a freelance writer from Atlanta.*

**Above:** Canoochee Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) linemen work to restore power in a remote corner of the Altamaha River system after Tropical Storm Debby in August. **Inset top:** Hurricane Michael tore through Seminole County in October 2018, leaving a path of destruction behind. **Inset above:** Dougherty County felt the effects of Hurricane Michael, with several homes and businesses left without power.





Paul Wesslund

NRECA

# How your air conditioner is like your car

## And other surprising trivia that could save you money on your electric bill

**D**rew Hook would like you to think about your home heating and cooling system the same way you think about your car.

"After your house and your car, it's probably the third-most-expensive thing you own," says the manager of residential energy services at Hiram-based GreyStone Power Corp. "You get your oil changed in your car [and] you get your tires rotated because [tires] cost a lot of money and the replacement cost is high. The same goes for heating and cooling equipment"

Hook is one of the many energy advisers who assist members at Georgia electric cooperatives.

Hook hopes you'll schedule a professional preventive maintenance visit every year or two. He says that a \$100 to \$200 checkup could help you avoid a \$10,000 replacement cost. He adds that it also could save you money by keeping your heating and cooling system running at top efficiency.

Hook visits co-op members and talks to them about how they can make the best use of energy and maybe save money as a result.

That mission of Hook's also explains a puzzle about electricity in Georgia: While Georgia's residential electric rates are well below average (32 states have higher electric rates), monthly electric bills for Georgians are slightly above average.

Why? The basic answer is weather. People spend money on electricity to run their air conditioning during Georgia's notoriously hot summers.

But another reason is that Georgia homes aren't as energy-efficient as they could be. On Hook's home visits he offers energy-saving suggestions. No. 1 on the list is regular upkeep of the heating and cooling system.

And it's not just to prevent a breakdown. For example, a dirty air filter can make the system work harder than necessary to keep you comfortable. He says to check the air filter monthly. If it looks dirty, change it, even if it's supposed to last three months.

Hook has more suggestions for getting better control of your electric bill:

- **Get an energy checkup.** Many co-ops offer home visits to show you how you can spend less on energy. That professional check can also advise whether you have enough insulation and whether your ductwork is leaking or doesn't reach some rooms effectively.
- **Check around your doors.** If you can see light coming in through



Drew Hook, manager of residential energy services at GreyStone Power

COURTESY GREYSTONE POWER



ISTOCK.COM / ZIMMYTWS

a crack, air you've spent money heating or cooling is flying out.

- **Don't heat up a hot house.** Run your clothes dryer at night and avoid using the stove or oven during the hottest part of the day. Hook's a big fan of summer cookouts.

- **Use ceiling fans.** Warm air rises, so you want to stir it around. In the summer, Hook says you should feel a slight breeze from the fan. In the winter, set it to run slowly enough so you don't feel the air moving around. Also, reverse the direction of the fan in the winter so it blows heated air down instead of pulling it upward.

- **Install energy-efficient windows.**

- **Use your window shades.** Close curtains or blinds to block the hot sun. Then when it's not beaming in, open them to use natural light.

- **Adjust your thermostat.** Hook says many people could save money by setting their thermostat at 68 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer. That may be too extreme for some people, so don't make yourself uncomfortable. But you can use those temperatures as a guideline.

As we all struggle with higher prices for almost everything, electricity offers an opportunity for a little bit of effort to make a real difference. ☺

*Paul Wesslund writes about consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

**Contact your electric cooperative to schedule an energy audit and to get more energy-saving tips and answers to other questions about how to save money on your energy bills.**



# Autumn

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## A love song for Appalachia

Foxfire Village Museum and Mercantile preserves history, culture for future generations

In the hills of Mountain City, among several hand-hewn structures with tin roofs, the air carries the fragrance of conifers mixed with wood smoke. Amid the stillness, someone rings a nearby church bell while a blacksmith hammers metal and a musician strums a dulcimer.

"There's magic up here," says Todd Faircloth, executive director of the Foxfire Village Museum and Mercantile. "If you close your eyes and stand here for a minute, you can almost see the people who settled in southern Appalachia all those years ago—people with grit and ingenuity."

Faircloth, staff members and volunteers are keepers of a time capsule of sorts—an outdoor village situated on 8 wooded acres with more than 20 historic log buildings filled with artifacts that capture the daily lives of North Georgia mountain people from 1820 to present day. Foxfire is committed to preserving the soul of these mountains and sharing the stories and wisdom of yesteryear with the site's many visitors.

### A student-driven project

Foxfire's roots stretch back to 1966, when an English teacher at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School and his students decided to launch a magazine to spotlight local folklore, skills and culture. These 10th graders interviewed their family members and others in the community, collected oral histories and wrote down detailed steps for useful, primitive skills and then printed the pieces in the magazine.

"The students decided to call it *Foxfire* after a glow-in-the-dark fungus found in the local hills," Faircloth says. "From the very start, the magazine explored how the past contributes to who we are and what we can become—how the past illuminates our present."

The students raised \$450 to pay for the initial printing of 600 magazines, and the first *Foxfire* was published in 1967. The issue cost 50 cents and included an interview with a local retired sheriff, Luther Rickman, who chronicled a 1936 bank robbery in nearby Clayton; a page of passed-down superstitions, including "If you hang a black snake in

*Continued on page 30*

**Top:** "Aunt" Arie Carpenter, who was interviewed many times by the Foxfire students, became a grandmother figure to many of them and was a favorite among readers. This photo was taken in 1969. **Above left:** A regular at Foxfire's Heritage Days in June, Tom Estes entertains a crowd with his Appalachian-style music selections.





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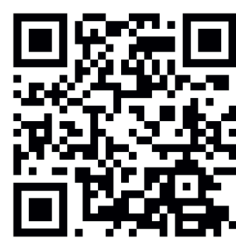
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**Top:** The art of blacksmithing dates back thousands of years.

**Above:** Joe Williams of Old Fort, N.C., demonstrates blacksmithing during Foxfire's Heritage Days. He has been part of the Foxfire team for 20 years.

*Continued from page 28*

the branch of a tree, it will rain in three days"; a list of ancient sayings, such as "sure as thunder"; and poems.

"It sold out in a week, and so they printed 600 more, and they sold out quickly, too," Faircloth says.

It wasn't long before the homegrown *Foxfire* had subscribers in all 50 states and other countries. Riding the wave of the magazine's success, Doubleday Press began publishing compilations of favorite stories from the magazine, with the first

### Foxfire Mountaineer Festival

In addition to the Heritage Days in June, the Foxfire Village Museum and Mercantile hosts its annual Foxfire Mountaineer Festival on the first Saturday of October. This year's festival will be at the Rabun County Civic Center in Clayton on Oct. 5 and will feature Appalachian arts and crafts, old-time and bluegrass music, food, activities for children and Foxfire demonstrations.

simply titled "The Foxfire Book" in 1972. The debut book offered chapters on hunting game, baking the old-fashioned way, moonshining and using the phases of the moon and the zodiac signs as guides in planting crops. It made *The New York Times* bestseller list and propelled Appalachian culture into the national spotlight. Since 1972, 12 volumes and many other special editions have followed.

"With the royalties from the books, the students acquired the 106 acres of land on Black Rock Mountain to create the Foxfire Village Museum and Mercantile," Faircloth says. "They purchased the structures you see here today [from other locations in the South], disassembled them on site and reassembled them here. I want to emphasize that students built Foxfire from the ground up. Kids took the idea of preserving culture and ran with it, and today the Foxfire Village stands as a testament to the vision and hard work of students as well as a [tribute] to the Appalachian people and their way of life."

### Travel back in time

Though most tours are self-guided, Foxfire also works with schools, churches and groups to organize guided field trips.

Some days, the venue hosts heritage-skills workshops.

Scheduled classes for this month are basic basket weaving (Sept. 10), an introduction to yarn spinning (Sept. 14) and beginning sewing (Sept. 28). Other days, guests are treated to live demonstrations, including flint knapping, primitive fire building, fiber arts and traditional weaving, basket weaving, leatherworking, blacksmithing and cooking using a wood stove.

"If you've never tried cornbread made in a wood-burning stove, you don't know what you're missing," Faircloth says. "It's really something!"

The first stop on the self-guided tour is the Savannah House, built in 1820, which has an open-house design to accommodate 12 family members. Food would have been prepared on the fireplace hearth. The

*Continued on page 32*



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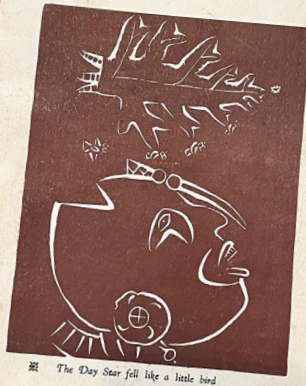
## Foxfire Student Leadership Program and internships

The Foxfire Student Leadership Program is a six-week, paid experience for up to 12 Rabun County students, who learn about cultural journalism, oral history, formal and creative writing, heritage crafts, marketing and other vocational skills. Students have the opportunity to work on magazine publication and other projects.

Foxfire also offers internships to students in high school and college who are interested in exploring Appalachian heritage and contributing to the Foxfire legacy.



# FOXFIRE



**Above:** Foxfire visitors test their balance on handmade stilts. **Far left:** In 1975 Foxfire students made an audio recording of Harry Brown as he described how to weave the seat of a chair. **Left:** The first issue of Foxfire magazine was published in 1967 and cost 50 cents each.

*Continued from page 30*

21-foot-by-21-foot cabin features an upper loft for the older children, a rope-style bed and a vintage dining table and chairs donated by “Aunt” Arie Carpenter of North Carolina, who was one of the Foxfire students’ favorite sources.

“We also celebrate Cherokee heritage here,” Faircloth says. “We partnered with the Museum of the Cherokee People [in Cherokee, N.C.], and they helped us design an exhibit that walks you through the past and present of the Cherokee people. In the Wagon Shed, the [Zuraw Wagon] is believed to be the last wagon of its kind to have been used during the Cherokee removal.”

Past the Blacksmith Shop, the Moore House is a traditional “dogtrot”-style structure, meaning that there is an open passageway between the rooms that promotes air circulation on hot, humid days. Today, the Moore House is home to Foxfire’s collection of folk art and pottery.

At the top of the property, there’s an open-air pavilion, where guests can enjoy a picnic lunch; a Children’s Village with scaled-down versions of Foxfire buildings; and a chapel.

Down the hill, the Warwoman Cabin, built by Jesse and Sarah Turpin in the 1880s, is set up to represent a typical Appalachian home in 1940.

Along the footpath, tourists wander through areas devoted to scalding hogs, working iron, gardening, storing food and grinding grain.

The last exhibit along the trail is the Moffitt Barn, a bungalow-style structure that Fred Moffitt built by hand in 1935. It contains photos and information dating back to Foxfire’s origins.

Before leaving, visitors can slip into the Mercantile to purchase copies of the magazine, a book or two, locally made crafts and other mementos.

The Foxfire Village Museum and Mercantile stands as a monument to the past and the ingenious, indomitable Appalachian pioneers.

“We can’t preserve the world, but we can preserve a piece of Georgia’s heritage and culture,” Faircloth says. “It’s important to know where we came from.”

*Amber Lanier Nagle is a freelance writer based in Adairsville.*

## When you go

**Foxfire Village Museum and Mercantile**, 98 Foxfire Lane, Mountain City. (706) 746-5828. [foxfire.org](http://foxfire.org).

The online shop sells Foxfire merchandise, such as T-shirts, hats and magnets; local artisan goods, such as kitchen towels, soaps and yarn; and individual copies of (or a subscription to) *Foxfire* magazine, which is published twice a year by students at Rabun County High School in Tiger.

See the website for information about scheduled classes and events.





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# Feed me: Georgia's carnivorous plants

**P**lants feeding on insects? It sounds like science fiction, but carnivorous plants worldwide survive on diets of insects and small amphibians.

The Broadway musical “Little Shop of Horrors” introduced audiences to Audrey II, a carnivorous plant gone rogue that became the star of the show with the famous line, “Feed me.”

In the wild, some carnivorous plants, such as the well-known Venus flytrap, have extremely limited range.

“The only place that Venus flytraps occur naturally anywhere in the world is in the Carolinas,” says botanist Keith Bradley with the South Carolina Natural Resources Department, who also is a faculty member at the University of Georgia’s Wormsloe Research Institute on the Isle of Hope. “In South Carolina, there are three known populations—all located in Horry County—and we regularly monitor them to preserve their habitat. All the other known flytrap populations in the world are found in 15 counties in southern North Carolina.”

However, several species of carnivorous plants are Georgia natives. The most common are pitcher plants, sundews and bladderworts, each of which has distinguishing traits and habitats.

One thing all carnivorous plant habitats have in common is that they are low in nutrients. These plants had to evolve a way to supplement their diets, and nature has plenty of insects.

## Pitcher plants

“Of the carnivorous plants native to Georgia, the most prevalent and easiest to identify are the pitcher plants,” says Stephanie Koontz, plant ecologist for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, wildlife resources division. “We have eight unique species in the state, all with their own special habitat requirements.”

Growing in boggy areas, savannas and ditches and at the edges of ponds, some pitcher plants are tall with hollow leaf-stems that can grow up to 3 feet high, making them easy to distinguish among grasses and other wetland plants. Other varieties are much



*Tiny hairs line the purple pitcher plant to trap insects, preventing their escape and enabling the plant to digest them and absorb their nutrients.*

**‘Of the carnivorous plants native to Georgia, the most prevalent and easiest to identify are the pitcher plants.’**

*— Stephanie Koontz*

shorter and hide among the vegetation.

“Georgia’s coastal plains are known for colonies of pitcher plants,” Koontz says. “They can be hooded, flat-topped or completely open. Colors [include] red, yellow, white or green tubes that lure insects to nectar along the top of the pitcher, where they get trapped on the slippery edges and slide down inside the tube.”

As insects move farther down the tube, fine hairs prevent them from climbing back out. Enzymes and liquid at the bottom of the tube dissolve the soft tissue of the prey to provide nutrients to the plant.

The purple pitcher plant inhabits part of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains.





ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

*The white-topped pitcher plant has white “windows” that attract insects, especially wasps. When in bloom, the plants produce large, red flowers that can grow up to 3 feet tall.*

“Shorter with wider tube openings, they are burgundy with red veins,” Koontz says.

Colquitt’s 600-acre Doerun Pitcher Plant Bog is one of the best places to see three species: hooded, parrot and yellow flytrap trumpets.

## Sundews and bladderworts

Sundews feed on gnats, mosquitoes, bees and small wasps. Short clusters of leaves, covered with tiny tentacles coated with a sticky substance, grow in a rosette.

“Sundews are often called ‘flypaper plants’ because the tentacles produce a powerful adhesive,” Koontz says. “The sticky droplets glisten in the sun; that’s how they got their name.”

The spoon-shaped leaves fold around the prey to immobilize it. The process requires only about 15 minutes, but digesting the meal takes several weeks.

Most sundews can reach 10 inches tall and grow along the ground in bogs and wetlands. The white or pink flowers that bloom on their long stems are self-pollinating.

Thirteen species of bladderworts can be found in lakes, ponds, coves and wetlands in southeast Georgia.

“These rootless aquatic plants float atop the water, but it’s the tiny underwater bladder-shaped leaves that catch aquatic prey, including mosquito larvae, small tadpoles and protozoa,” Koontz says. “All the action happens below the surface. Each summer the plant’s flowers attract pollinators that make it possible to reproduce.”

Except for the purple bladderwort, these plants have yellow blooms in the summer.

## Threats to carnivorous plants

Georgia’s carnivorous plants are listed as endangered, threatened, unusual or of specific concern. In Georgia, they are protected at the state level against poaching.

“Loss or degradation of habitat and poaching are the two biggest threats to Georgia’s carnivorous plants,” Koontz says. “In our state it is



ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

*The thread-leaf sundew is among the largest of the North American sundews and has tentacles that reach up to 18 inches.*

illegal to take them from the wild unless you have a permit.”

More than 50 pitcher plants on a construction site in Glynn County were relocated last year to the Wormsloe State Historic Site near Savannah, General Coffee State Park near Douglas and Laura S. Walker State Park near Waycross. Pitcher plants, sundews and bladderworts also can be seen in the Okefenokee Swamp.

The Atlanta Botanical Garden maintains a large wetlands area with multiple plant habitats.

“Our Conservation Display Garden was created about 30 years ago to educate our visitors about Southeastern plants that are threatened or endangered, including pitcher plants and sundews,” says Paul Blackmore, manager of the Conservation Display Garden. “The pitcher plants are one of many native plant species that ... make up the rich and diverse flora of the bog garden.”

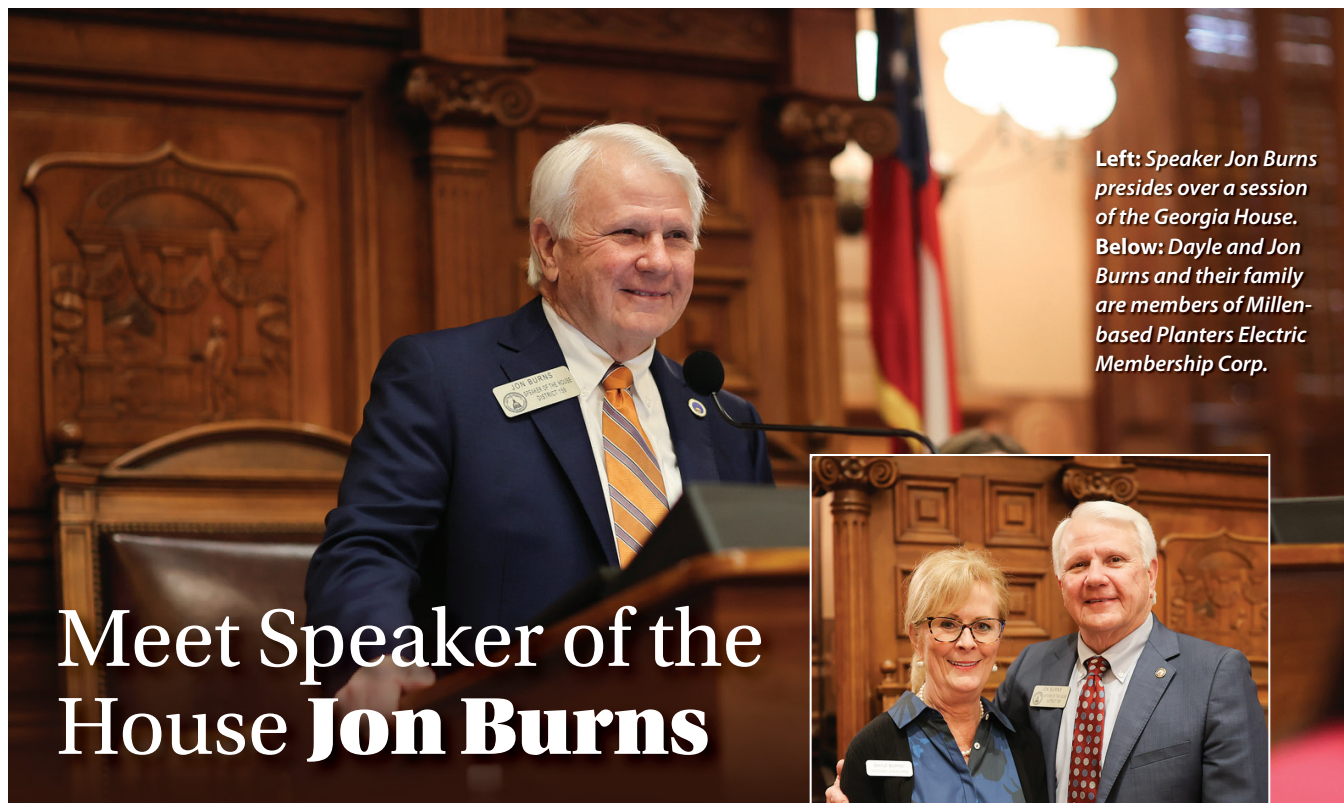
Seeing carnivorous plants can be difficult except for in display gardens maintained by botanists.

“People are fascinated by the concept of carnivorous plants,” Koontz says, “but ideally the best way to enjoy them is in their native settings and just take photos.”

“Yes, there are nurseries that sell them—and many of those are raised from seeds rather than taken from wild populations. If these plants are removed from the wild, the chance of survival is low, because it’s challenging to match natural habitat conditions needed for the pitchers [and these other plants] to survive.” 🍷

*Pamela A. Keene is a Flowery Branch-based freelance writer.*





Left: Speaker Jon Burns presides over a session of the Georgia House. Below: Dayle and Jon Burns and their family are members of Millen-based Planters Electric Membership Corp.

## Meet Speaker of the House Jon Burns

**A**s the 75th speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, Jon Burns of Newington is known for his political prowess and drive to create change. He's held the high-profile position for the last two years and hopes to be tapped to continue in 2025.

Being the speaker is a far cry from his beginnings on a family farm in Effingham County, where he still harvests timber and raises crops and livestock. But those rural roots were precisely what set him on the path to politics.

"I was active in the community with the Young Farmers association and the Effingham Chamber of Commerce," Burns says. "That was my first foray into public life. From there, I was elected to the Department of Transportation board."

Being part of the state board that oversees the planning, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure, from airports to bicycle paths, appealed to Burns, who grew up hearing about rural roads from his dad, a county commissioner.

"Being a country boy, I've traveled a lot of dirt roads," he says. "Everywhere we went was at least a 15- to 20-minute drive. I saw firsthand the benefits of paved roads—hard roads, as country folks like to say. So when the chance to be part of the board came up, I took it."

In 2004, a redistricting opened a House seat that Burns won to represent District 159, which encompasses Screven County and parts of Effingham and Bulloch counties in Southeast Georgia. He became the House majority leader and in November 2022 took over the speaker's role after the death of David Ralston.

As the House's chief administrative officer, Burns presides

over the floor sessions, assigns bills to committees and calls for debates.

"I help guide the ship, but I'm part of a team," Burns says. "I'm really following up on good ideas like mental health services for all Georgians, which was a passion of David Ralston's. We're also focused on the workforce because it is critical to whatever we do. And now we have a real focus on literacy and ensuring [that] all Georgia children can read by third grade."

"I give credit to my wife, Dayle, a former educator, who worked closely with legislators on that. She taught several grades and was an elementary school principal, so she understands the importance of reading."

When he's not at the House podium, Burns is often back home connecting with constituents to hear about their needs and concerns. He also relishes time on his family's 900-acre Centennial Farm, one of about 600 in Georgia that have been in operation for more than 100 years. Burns' property was cleared by his grandparents, who raised his father there, who then raised Burns and his two brothers there. Today, it's home to his five grandchildren.

"This job pretty much consumes your time, especially when we're in session," he says. "Whenever I can, I enjoy being at the farm with my grandchildren. They're the reason we're here; they're our future. That's why my focus is on making things better for tomorrow." 🍎

*H.M. Cauley is a freelance writer from Atlanta.*





## GEORGIA WAR VETERANS HOME MILLEDGEVILLE



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**For more information, visit the GWVH website at [www.georgiawarveteranshome.com](http://www.georgiawarveteranshome.com).  
To schedule a tour or request an application, call the Office of Admissions at 478-445-4295.**



# Perfect pies satisfy Georgia Grown Executive Chef's sweet tooth

**A**rmed with four original pie recipes—classic apple, coconut cream, peanut butter cream and bourbon chocolate pecan—Lauren Bolden opened her first Pie Bar in downtown Woodstock nine years ago.

Bolden, who earned a degree in political science from Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, accepted an internship in Gov. Nathan Deal's office in 2012 and joined his staff in 2013. It would be a revelation for the young woman from Waynesboro.

"I started noticing that when people from across the state came to see the governor, many times they brought home-baked goods. Pies and desserts were especially popular. Until then, it never occurred to me that I could earn a living in the food business," says the Canton resident, who recently was named a 2024 Georgia Grown Executive Chef by the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Georgia Restaurant Association. The Georgia Grown Executive Chef program fosters relationships between Georgia's farmers and chefs statewide who educate the public about locally sourced and grown products.

After Bolden and her husband, Cody, found success selling pies at local farmers markets, she abandoned the idea of working in politics to dive headfirst into the baking world, opening Pie Bar in downtown Woodstock in 2015.

Along the way, she has added dozens more pie recipes, all of which rotate on and off the menu at both stores (her Marietta Square location opened in 2020), but her classic apple pie has been replaced with apple streusel pie.

Guests can purchase slices of sweet pies or whole sweet pies for dine-in or takeout. And she offers savory take-and-bake pies such as quiches, meat and vegetable potpies and shepherd's pie to enjoy at home.

Here, Bolden shares a few of her pie recipes. Enjoy!

*Pamela A. Keene is a freelance writer from Flowery Branch.*



COURTESY PIE BAR

Tart Cherry Crumble Pie



COURTESY PIE BAR

Lauren Bolden recently was named a Georgia Grown Executive Chef. Her Pie Bar commissary baking kitchen and offices in Kennesaw are served by Marietta-based Cobb Electric Membership Corp.

## PIE BAR'S SUPER FLAKY PIE CRUST

- 2-1/2 cups (312.5 grams) all-purpose flour or pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 cup cold, unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup cold water

In a large bowl, combine flour, salt and sugar. Add butter. Using your fingers or a pastry blender, cut the butter into the flour (using a pinching motion) until the mixture resembles pea-sized pebbles in sand.

Place the mixture in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Once chilled, remove the mixture from the fridge and add in cold water, 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time. Incorporate water using a spatula or your hands after each addition of water until the dough comes together but is not sticky. Stop adding water at this point (this could vary from 8 tablespoons to 12 tablespoons of water).

Form into 2 evenly-sized dough balls. Wrap each ball in plastic wrap, press into a disk shape and place in the refrigerator to rest for at least 2 hours before rolling out and making a pie. Yields dough for 2 crusts.

## When you go

**Pie Bar**, 8720 Main St., Suite 130, Woodstock, (678) 402-6245; and 60 Powder Springs St., Marietta, (678) 402-5176. [orderpiebar.com](http://orderpiebar.com)



## PIE BAR'S PEACHY HUMMINGBIRD PIE

1 regular pie dough, rolled out

### **Fruit Filling**

4 cups Georgia Grown peaches, peeled, diced

2 cups pineapple, diced

1 banana, sliced

1 tablespoon spiced rum

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1 tablespoon cornstarch

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

1/8 teaspoon coarse kosher salt

### **Crumble Topping and Pecan Garnish**

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup sugar

3 tablespoons light brown sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon coarse kosher salt

1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon Georgia Grown pecans,  
toasted, finely chopped, divided

7 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

### **Cream Cheese Frosting**

1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened

3 ounces cream cheese, softened

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/8 teaspoon coarse kosher salt

1 cup powdered sugar

**For the filling:** In a large bowl, combine peaches, pineapple, banana and rum.

In a small bowl, combine light brown sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Pour the dry ingredients on top of the mixed fruit. Using your hands or a wooden spoon, mix until combined.

**For the crumble topping:** In a large bowl, combine all-purpose flour, sugar, light brown sugar, cinnamon, kosher salt and 1/2 cup pecans. Pour melted butter over the dry ingredients. Using your hands or a wooden spoon, mix until combined. *Note: The crumble topping should have a slightly "sandy" texture.*

**For the cream cheese frosting:** In a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, combine softened unsalted butter, softened cream cheese, vanilla extract and salt on low. Gradually increase speed until smooth and creamy. Periodically turn off the machine and scrape down the sides with a spatula.

Slowly add in powdered sugar in thirds. Allow the sugar to fully incorporate before adding more. Start on low speed and slowly increase to medium-high speed until completely combined. Periodically turn off the machine and scrape down the sides with a spatula. Once completely combined and smooth, remove the frosting from the stand mixer and spoon into a plastic storage bag with a piping tip. Place in the refrigerator until ready to use.



Peachy Hummingbird Pie

COURTESY PIE BAR

To read more about the 2024 class of Georgia Grown Executive Chefs, see our April 2024 article at [bit.ly/ggec0424](https://bit.ly/ggec0424).

**To assemble the pie:** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the rolled pie dough in a 9-inch pie pan. Pile the fruit filling into the pie crust. Using your hands, press the fruit down gently. Using your hands, spread the crumble topping evenly over the fruit, making sure to cover the entire pie.

Place the pie on a baking sheet and bake for 25 minutes on the bottom rack. Reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees, move the pie to the middle rack and continue to bake for 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Rotate the pie 180 degrees and bake for an additional 20-30 minutes, depending on your oven. The pie is ready when the crust is golden brown and the fruit juices are bubbling slightly.

Once the pie is done, remove it from the oven and allow it to cool on the counter. When the pie is completely cooled, carefully pipe 8 cream cheese frosting rosettes around the edge of the pie. Sprinkle the remaining 1 tablespoon finely chopped pecans evenly over the rosettes. *Note: This pie will last in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. Serves 8.*

**MORE** ►



## PIE BAR'S TART CHERRY CRUMBLE PIE

1 regular pie dough, rolled out

### Filling

6 cups tart cherries, fresh or frozen, pitted

1 cup granulated sugar

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

1 tablespoon lemon zest

3 tablespoons quick-cooking "minute" tapioca

### Crumble Topping

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1-1/4 cup quick-cooking oats

3/4 cup light brown sugar

1/4 cup sliced almonds

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon coarse kosher salt

9 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

**For the filling:** Place the pitted tart cherries in a large bowl. In a small bowl, combine granulated sugar, almond extract, lemon zest and "minute" tapioca. Pour the combined ingredi-

ents over the cherries. Mix with your hands until the cherries are completely coated.

**For the crumble:** Combine flour, oats, light brown sugar, almonds, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Pour melted butter over the dry ingredients. Mix until combined.

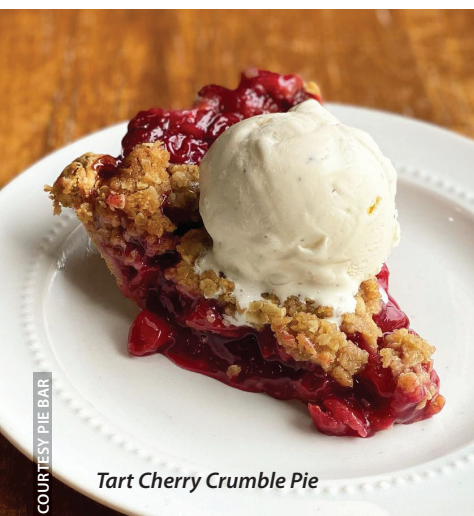
**To assemble the pie:** Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Place the rolled pie dough into a 9-inch pie pan. Pile

the cherry filling into the pie crust. Using your hands, press the cherries down gently. Pour the crumble topping over the cherries, making sure they are covered completely.

Place the pie on a baking sheet and bake for 25 minutes on the bottom rack of the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees, move the pie to the middle rack and continue to bake for 45 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees. Rotate the pie 180 degrees and bake for an additional 20-30 minutes, depending on your oven. The pie is ready when the crust is golden brown and the cherry juices are bubbling. *Note: If using fresh cherries, your bake time may be a bit shorter.*

Once the pie is done, remove it from the oven and allow it to cool on the counter. *Note: Once baked, this pie will last in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. Serves 8.*



Tart Cherry Crumble Pie

COURTESY PIE BAR



Apple Streusel Pie

COURTESY PIE BAR

## PIE BAR'S APPLE STREUSEL PIE

1 regular pie dough, rolled out

1/4 cup ready-made caramel sauce, plus a pinch of sea salt for salted caramel sauce, if desired

### Filling

6 cups apples, such as Granny Smith

1 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

### Streusel Topping

1 cup all-purpose flour

4 tablespoons granulated sugar

3 tablespoons light brown sugar

1/8 teaspoon coarse kosher salt

6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cubed

**For the filling:** Peel, core and slice apples 1/4-inch thick and place in a large bowl. Combine sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and flour in a small bowl. Pour the combined dry ingredients over the sliced apples. Mix with your hands until the apples are completely coated.

**For the streusel:** Add flour, granulated sugar, light brown sugar, salt and cold cubed butter to a food processor fitted with the blade attachment. Quickly pulse the ingredients together until the butter resembles tiny peas through the dry ingredient mixture. *Note: Avoid overmixing because it will acquire a paste/dough consistency.* If not using immediately, place in the refrigerator to keep the butter cold.

**To assemble the pie:** Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the rolled pie dough into a 9-inch pie pan. Pile the apple filling into the pie crust. Using your hands, press the apples down gently. Pour the streusel topping over the apples, making sure they are covered completely. Using your hands, gently press down the streusel topping to flatten it out.

Place the pie on a baking sheet and bake for 25 minutes on the bottom rack. Reduce oven temperature to 375 degrees, move the pie to the middle rack and continue to bake for 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Rotate pie 180 degrees and bake for an additional 20-30 minutes, depending on your oven. The pie is ready when the crust is golden brown and the apple juices are bubbling slightly.

Once the pie is done, remove it from the oven and allow it to cool on the counter. As it cools, drizzle caramel sauce (or salted caramel sauce) over the top of the pie. *Note: Once baked, this pie will last in the refrigerator for up to 7 days. Serves 8.* 🍏



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## Find it this month! Want to win a \$25 gift card?

Are you a resourceful reader? One lucky reader who finds and submits the correct answers to these trivia questions will win a \$25 Target gift card. All answers can be found in this month's issue.

- 1) Before opening Pie Bar, Georgia Grown Executive Chef Lauren Bolden worked for which Georgia governor?
- 2) What is the most prevalent type of carnivorous plant native to Georgia?
- 3) How many uniform name tapes did George Eshleman carry with him on the Appalachian Trail?
- 4) A journeyman team from which electric membership cooperative took first place at the Georgia Lineman's Rodeo?
- 5) Students at what school launched *Foxfire* magazine in 1967?

### How to enter:

**Send an email to [trivia@georgiaemc.com](mailto:trivia@georgiaemc.com)** with the answers to all five questions by Sept. 30, 2024. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. (If more than one person answers all the questions correctly, we'll draw from among all correct answers to determine the \$25 Target gift card winner.)





# Beth Clymer nurtures horses, youths

**B**eth Clymer has dedicated her life to helping both youths and horses thrive and reach their full potential.

From the first moment Clymer gazed into the deep, knowing eyes of a horse, she was hooked. As soon as she had a driver's license, she drove herself to a local barn near her hometown of Lilburn and began working with horses and learning to ride.

While attending Georgia State University in Atlanta, she helped form an equestrian club, and after college, Clymer managed stables in Alpharetta and offered lessons to youths.

She became somewhat of a horse magnet—attracting horses from various backgrounds and situations, loving them and retraining them to fill new roles. For example, Clymer adopted a retired racehorse in 2016, rehabbed him from an injury and trained him to compete with her in dressage, show jumping and cross-country events.

"I think horses are a lot like us," she says. "They want to have a purpose, and I try to find that with them."

Just before the COVID-19 outbreak, Clymer felt pulled in another direction. Her mother had been a nurse for 40 years, and the "horse girl" was retrained to become a health care professional. In 2020, during the darkest days of the pandemic, she worked as a nurse extern in the intensive care unit at Northside Hospital Atlanta.

After work, Clymer traded her scrubs for jeans and riding boots. She found working with horses to be therapeutic after difficult shifts at the hospital and knew she had to get back to sharing that experience—and the mental tranquility that comes from working with equines—with others.

"That same year, I founded Firefly Farm [in Chattahoochee Hills]," says Clymer, a member of GreyStone Power Corp. in Hiram. "My goal is to provide affordable access to horseback riding for youths in my community and foster a love of horses in young riders while nurturing the horses and giving them the best lives possible."

Today, she cares for six horses (two are leased to her) and a donkey and works with 10 to 15 student riders. She sees her work with youths and horses as a way of giving back to the world.

"It's also a way for me to preserve the tradition of horsemanship—an activity that seems to be less popular today," she says. "And by teaching, I learn and grow, too. I get as much out of this as my students do."

Clymer's lessons go beyond equestrian-related skills. Her students learn to care for and respect animals, form close relationships with others, support one another, practice empathy and develop patience and confidence.



**Top:** Beth Clymer, center in riding hat, poses with some of her Firefly Farm students. **Above:** Clymer cares for one of her horses and her donkey.

FIREFLY FARM

MARIBETH WANSLEY

"They will carry these skills with them throughout their lives," she says.

Parents rave about their children's experiences working with Clymer and the horses.

"It's a loving and uplifting environment—a safe place for [my daughter] Isla and the other young people to talk about problems and situations and learn to support one another while working with the horses," says Rachael McNally of Palmetto, whose 11-year-old daughter takes lessons at Firefly Farm. "Isla has realized how strong and smart she is, and she's learned that if she falls off her horse, she shouldn't get discouraged; she should just brush herself off and climb back on. I think that's a great life lesson." 🍷

Amber Lanier Nagle is a freelance writer based in Adairsville.



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