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GA

GSU, ARE YOU READY
FOR A 'FIGHT NIGHT'?

THE GEORGE-ANNE



MIGOS BOOKED FOR SPRING CONCERT

Hip-hop group Migos was the top-voted artist by students for this year's spring concert and is scheduled to perform on April 18. Tickets will go on sale this Thursday. **SEE PAGE 5 FOR FULL STORY**

PHOTO COURTESY OF GSU MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO COURTESY OF GAWKER.COM

Michele Norris,
Award winning journalist to
speak at the PAC

SEE PAGE 4

Georgia Southern rocks
American College
Theatre Festival

SEE PAGE 6

Eagles host
Ga Tech baseball
game tonight

SEE PAGE 9

Award-winning author coming to GSU

BY JOZSEF PAPP
The George-Anne staff

David Levithan, an award-winning novelist of young adult (YA) fiction, will give a reading of some of his work on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. in the Georgia Southern University Arts Building Auditorium.

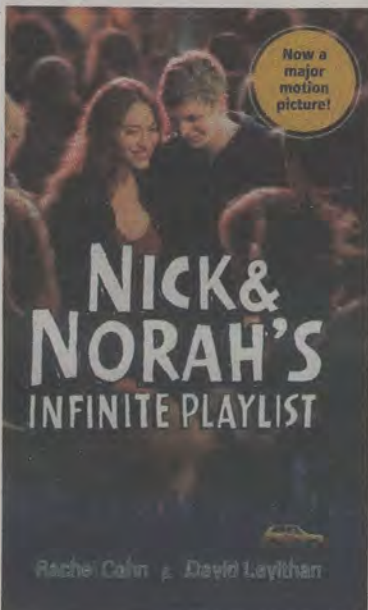
The author is known for his work such as, "Boy Meets Boy", "The Realm of Possibility", "Every Day", and "Two Boys Kissing". His novels, "Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist" and "Will Grayson", were both New York Times bestsellers.

In addition, Levithan is an editorial director at book

publisher Scholastic and a professor of Young Adult Literature at The New School in New York.

"We are thrilled to be able to bring David Levithan to Georgia Southern," Caren Town, Ph.D., professor of English in the Department of Literature and Philosophy, said. "I've taught young adult literature for more than 20 years, and I have rarely found an author who is so engaging and appealing to students."

Levithan will be available for questions during his appearance and there will be a book signing after the reading.



BY CAITLYN OLIVER
The George-Anne staff

A former Ohio State University student is coming to campus tonight to talk about the college drinking problem, putting a different spin on the topic at 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center (PAC).

However Jake Byczkowski's message is not to discourage drinking.

He just wants to answer the question, "Why do many college students continue to drink even after experiencing alcohol related harm?"

Byczkowski wants to make students more aware of alcohol related harm, what it really means to help students

make better choices and discuss bystander intervention.

He was a Delta Tau Delta fraternity brother, a party DJ and a representative for Red Bull. More than once, Byczkowski said he found himself and his friends in bad situations because of alcohol consumption.

After acknowledging his own drinking problem, Byczkowski started speaking at universities nationwide to address the college drinking problem, hoping to help students learn to make good decisions in a safe environment without fear of judgment.

Admission will be free and open to the public. Proof of attendance will be provided.

Scholarship Opportunities

BY LINDSEY KEHRES
The George-Anne Staff

College students are no longer limited to the classic scholarships after a recent Huffington Post article shared 10 "weird but worthy" scholarships.

Scholarships include:

Scholarshipexperts.com offer a **Flavor of the Month Scholarship:** In 250 words or less answer the question, "If you were an ice cream flavor, which

would you be and why?"

Jif Most Creative Sandwich Contest: The only requirement is that students must use 2 tablespoons of any Jif product.

Zombie Apocalypse Scholarship: Create a plan to avoid the Zombies. Respond to the "Walking Dead" inspired prompt in 250 words or less for a chance to win \$2000.

THE GEORGE-ANNE & JOE

FREE COFFEE & HOT CHOCOLATE WITH YOUR COPY

LOCATED AT THE RUSSELL UNION EVERY THURSDAY 8 A.M. TO 10 A.M.

SPORT SHORTS

■The Georgia Southern Baseball team swept the series ending on Sunday at J.I. Clements Stadium, with a 9-8 win against the Bethune-Cookman Wildcats. (See page xx for full baseball recap)

■The Men's Basketball team took home a win in overtime against UALR 72-70 on Saturday in Hanner Fieldhouse.

■The Women's Basketball team falls short to UALR 60-43 in Hanner Fieldhouse on Saturday.

■The Women's Tennis defeated the Kennesaw State Owls 4-3 on Saturday at Wallis Tennis Center.

This day in Black History

BY ARAYA JACKSON
The George-Anne Staff

On this day in history, Congress passed a resolution readmitting Mississippi in 1870.

This was nine years after the state seceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy in the midst of the Civil War. Mississippi had grounds on which it had to follow in order to rejoin the union, including to never change its constitution in a way that would disenfranchise blacks.

Today, Mississippi has proportionally more African Americans than any other state and the highest number of black elected officials.

WEATHER BAR

Tuesday



High: 57°
Low: 27°

Wednesday



High: 50°
Low: 27°

Thursday



High: 37°
Low: 16°

WEATHER PENGUINS



"I'M GLAD WE DIDN'T
HONEYMOON
IN STATESBORO"

R REFLECTORGSU.COM

50 Shades of Controversy

By Yasmeen Waliaga,
(Alexandra McCray
contributed)

"50 Shades of Grey" premiered this weekend with ticket sales reaching \$81.7 million, making it the biggest R-rated movie premier in history. Lines at Statesboro's Carmike Cinemas wrapped around the building throughout the weekend as moviegoers waited to see the "Twilight" fan fiction come to life. We asked students their thoughts on the film and the controversy that surrounds it with critics saying it promotes physical and emotional abuse.

"The manipulation and control tactics used by the main character in the relationship are interpreted as acts of caring or passionate love, when in a real life situation that kind of a relationship isn't romantic or even healthy," said Brett Thompson, a freshman economics major.



said Hayley McGhee a senior sports management major. "We are being insensitive to the men and women in real life abusive relationships by saying it's okay for Mr. Grey to treat Anastasia this

way because she 'signed a contract.' I'm appalled that people are willing to pay money to go see a movie that promotes such disgusting subjects," said Kandice Dubay a junior criminal justice major.

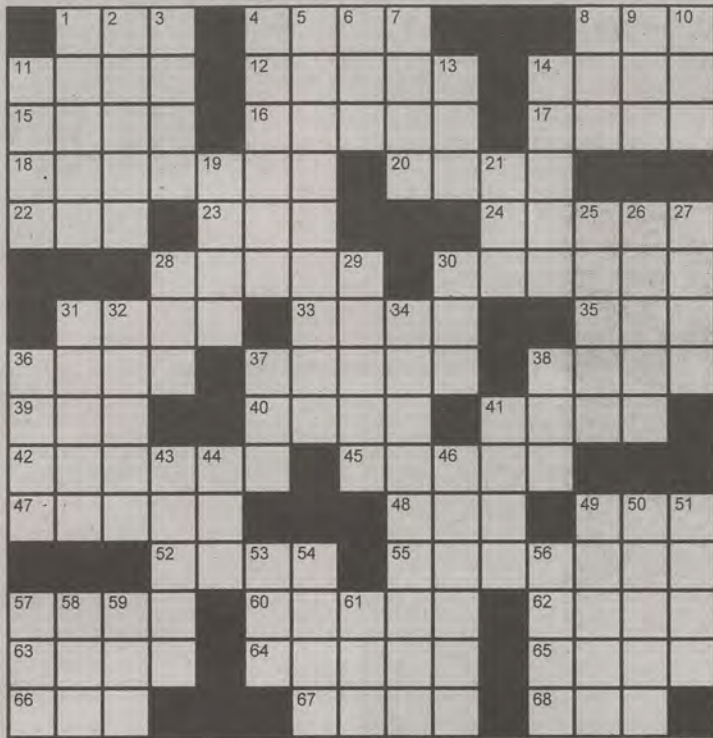
Classifieds & Puzzles

2-17-15

3

Across

- 1 Cut off
- 4 Aeneid
- 8 To and
- 11 Roof
- 12 Wonderland girl
- 14 Appeal
- 15 Dill seed
- 16 Jamborees
- 17 Expel
- 18 Majestically
- 20 Hateful
- 22 Age
- 23 Affirmative vote
- 24 Egg holders
- 28 Retrieve
- 30 Mollusk
- 31 Gazelles
- 33 Adolescent
- 35 Macaw
- 36 Fuse together
- 37 Dig
- 38 Shade trees
- 39 Goal
- 40 Brink



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- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 66 Allow | 11 Challenge | 38 Golfer Ernie |
| 67 Not daughters | 13 Compass point | 41 Meet |
| 68 My (Fr.) | 14 Cornbreads | 43 Sweetener |
| | 19 Caustics | 44 Ostrich relative |
| | 21 Some | 46 Electrodes |
| | 25 Moth-eaten | 49 Cubic meter |
| | 26 Conditions | 50 Blighters |
| | 27 Sp. ladies (Abbr.) | 51 Queries |
| | 28 Craze | 53 Old records (Abbr.) |
| | 29 Wife of Hagar the Horrible | 54 Mouth parts |
| | 30 Single | 56 Garden man |
| | 31 Spirit | 57 Under the weather |
| | 32 More anile | 58 Expire |
| | 34 Fir, for example | 59 Consume |
| | 36 Espouses | 61 In favor of |
| | 37 Pa. neighbor | |

Down

- 1 Hermit
- 2 Gr. letter
- 3 Conservation org.
- 4 Young bird
- 5 Performed on stage
- 6 Cooking additive
- 7 Swindle
- 8 Grippe
- 9 Thing, in law
- 10 Cereal grain

CLASSIFIEDS

Certified Math teacher with 10+ years experience available for tutoring! Services include: Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, College Algebra, Trigonometry, PreCalculus, Calculus as well as organization and study skills. Flexible schedule. Call 843-214-0548 TODAY / or email info@mathmadesimplesc.com for rates and to set up your first session.

FOR LEASE 417 S Main Street 6 bedroom house AVAILABLE NOW or AUGUST Also 4 bedroom at GSU entrance - Marvin Avenue AVAILABLE AUGUST (912) 682-7468

Looking for part time worker (20-25) hours a week. Physically light job in unique hookah warehouse setting. Visit 32 Joe Kennedy Blvd. behind Ogeechee Tech. next to Lewis Color to fill out an application.

February is Fix-A-Feline for \$50 Month, Stop "accidental" litters before they happen. Cats can reproduce at five months and can have several litters a year. Fixing your pet saves lives. Mention "February is Fix-A-Feline Month" when calling: Best Friends: 912-764-7387, Statesboro/Bulloch Regional: 912-764-1001, Gateway: 912-681-7387, SNAC: 843-645-2500, Sponsored by: statesborohumane.org

Part time sales position available approximately 30-35 hours per week. Fun, energetic, and ambitious individuals should apply in person at 32 Joe Kennedy Blvd. (behind Ogeechee Tech next to Lewis Color). You may e-mail your resume or direct inquiries to britny@saharasmoke.com.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

The George-Anne is the official student newspaper of Georgia Southern University, operated by GSU students using facilities provided by the university. The newspaper is the oldest continuously published newspaper in Bulloch County.

The newspaper is published twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during most of the academic year. Any questions regarding content should be directed to the student editor by phone at 912.478.5246 or at gaeditor@georgiasouthern.edu.

ADVERTISING: The newspaper accepts advertising. Inquiries may be made by calling 912.478.5418 or 912.478.0566. For questions e-mail ads1@georgiasouthern.edu.

The George-Anne receives additional support, in part, from the Student Activities Budget Committee. For more information, rate cards, or sample publications, contact the advertising manager or student media director. The advertiser is responsible for any errors in advertisements and its liability for adjustments is limited to the amount of space the error occupied in the ad. Further, the newspaper is not responsible for any damages caused due to an ad's omission from a particular edition and its responsibility solely is to reschedule the ad in the next regular edition at the regular advertising rates.

STUDENTS BEWARE: The George-Anne screens all advertisements prior to publication. The newspaper strives to accept ads for legitimate products and services only. Students are urged to exercise caution when replying to ads-- particularly those that require personal information. Students are also urged to report to the newspaper any suspicious offers which they might see in an ad.

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NOTICE: Unauthorized removal of multiple copies from a distribution site constitutes theft under Georgia law, a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine and/or jail time.

CORRECTIONS: Contact the editor at gaeditor@georgiasouthern.edu for corrections and errors.

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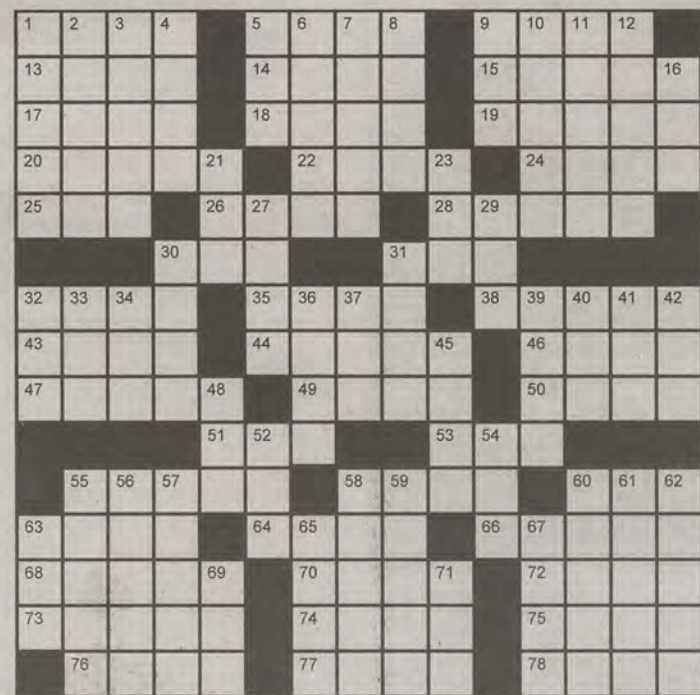
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Across

- 1 Former
- 5 Movie pooch
- 9 Bearded animal
- 13 Kitchen extension?
- 14 Speaker's platform
- 15 Secret language
- 17 Any day now
- 18 Have supper
- 19 Saint-Germain's river
- 20 Comb stoppers
- 22 Table extender
- 24 Aquatic plant
- 25 Slangy assent
- 26 Supermodel Benitez
- 28 Carnival attractions
- 30 Pig's digs
- 31 Auction action
- 32 Cantina cooker
- 35 Dash
- 38 Washed-out
- 43 Get-out-of-jail money
- 44 Hard wood
- 46 Dollar rival
- 47 "The Wild Duck" playwright
- 49 Icelandic epic
- 50 "Groovy!"
- 51 Cashew, e.g.
- 53 Engine part
- 55 Robber
- 58 Fizzy drink
- 60 Infamous Amin
- 63 Pride member
- 64 Polecat's defense
- 66 Summer TV offering
- 68 Gung-ho

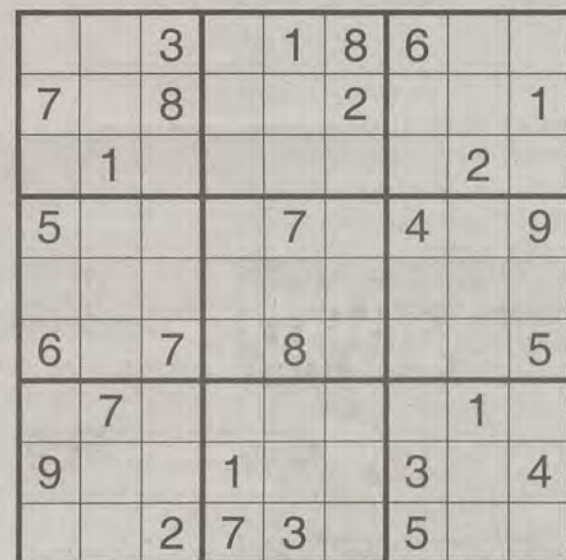


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- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 70 Military group | 9 Interstate sign | 42 "so fast!" |
| 72 Gather leaves | 10 Mountain nymph | 45 Garden area |
| 73 Vineyard fruit | 11 Spry | 48 GPS heading |
| 74 Dwarf buffalo | 12 Picker-uppers | 52 ET's craft |
| 75 Route for Ben-Hur | 16 Mad Hatter's drink | 54 Crew tool |
| 76 Hill dwellers | 21 Workout unit | 55 Coronet |
| 77 Actress Redgrave | 23 Datebook abbr. | 56 Paul of Crocodile Dundee |
| 78 Love | 27 Harp's cousin | 57 Bungling |
| | 29 Nev. neighbor | 58 Boxer Liston |
| | 30 Store sign | 59 Heavenly hunter |
| | 31 Road turn | 60 Boiling mad |
| | 32 -Wan Kenobi | 61 "Put up your ___!" |
| | 33 Chem class | 62 Like krypton |
| | 34 Fleur-de- | 63 Journey part |
| | 36 Assist, in a way | 65 Twofold |
| | 37 Atlantic food fish | 67 Hibernia |
| | 39 Dispatch | 69 Hi-___ monitor |
| | 40 Cry's partner | 71 Summer shade |
| | 41 Historic period | |

Down

- 1 Annoying
- 2 Priest's urging
- 3 Sitting spot
- 4 Carnival sight
- 5 Append
- 6 Crossjacks, e.g.
- 7 Fungal infection
- 8 Away from port



Award-winning journalist to speak at PAC

BY CHANCE SHELTON
The George-Anne staff

Michele Norris, first Black National Public Radio host and award-winning journalist, will be speaking at Georgia Southern University's Performing Arts Center on Wednesday Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.

Norris created The Race Card Project in 2010 after looking into her own family history.

The Race Card Project in its entirety is to create dialogue about the mindset of America in regards to racial thinking. On Norris's website, she allows anyone to express what they think when they hear the word "race," and submit their "thoughts, experiences, or observations about race into" a six word sentence, stated on the official Race Card Project site.

On the site, people from all over have submitted and posted their own individual race card, and by doing so people are able to see what others actually think and feel when the topic of race comes up.

Before creating "The Race Card Project," Norris interviewed Oscar winners, astronauts, influential newsmakers, high ranked military officials and even U.S. Presidents. She is well-known for her style of interviewing which has been referred to as a well-balanced dance of meticulous and relaxing.

As a journalist, she focused her time and passion on issues that affect people from all spectrums of life, which has given her the ability to be the face of a topic that is so controversial, such as race.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MELISSA BEAR

Michelle Norris is an award-winning journalist, and will be speaking at the PAC on Wednesday, Feb 18.

Norris, because of her drive and accomplishments she has been awarded a number accolades:

- Journalist of the Year (2009)
- Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcasting (2008)
- NABJ's Salute to Excellence Award (2006)
- Essence Magazine's 25 Most influential Black Americans (2009)
- Ebony Magazine's Power 150 (2009)
- Ebony's 8th Outstanding Women in Marketing and Communications Award (2007)
- Emmy Award (2001)
- Peabody Award (2001)



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAN BOND

Ogeechee Tech and Georgia Southern have had the pilot program in place since this past Fall. On Feb 5 they signed the contract.

Ogeechee Technical College partners with GSU

BY MACY HOLLOWAY
The George-Anne staff

This past fall, a new pilot policy began which allowed Ogeechee Technical students to take up to three classes as well as use various facilities and attend sporting events at Georgia Southern University.

On Feb. 5 in the Marvin Pittman Building, GSU President Dr. Brooks Keel signed a contract with OTC President Dr. Dawn Cartee agreeing to the pilot project which allows a number of benefits to OTC students on GSU's campus. OTC recently received the proper SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation allowing a number of OTC student course credit hours to be successfully transferable to GSU.

"It is really just that opportunity for students to put their toe in the water to see how they'll like it. As well as hopefully encourage people from the SACS accredited programs to move on to the levels of a university. That's the biggest thing and really what it's all about," Dr. Teresa Thompson, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment said.

100 seats are held for OTC students in Healthful Living, 50 seats in Career Exploration and 50 seats in University Singers and Southern Chorale; however, since the programs launch this past fall only one OTC student has paid to take a class at GSU.

As far as tuition, OTC students taking advantage of the program are expected to pay the specific tuition according to the number of credit hours they decide to take. The required fees for an in-state student are \$414.93 per one credit hour and \$584.86 for two.

From GSU football games to Recreation Activities Center privileges, OTC students have a variety of new collegiate amenities only about a 30-minute drive away.

Any OTC student interested in GSU's many other recreational activities such as attending football games and utilizing the RAC have to pay a flat fee of \$656.

This pilot program leaves room for much growth in the future between the two universities. Both university presidents say that it is a step toward hopefully one day being able to allow students who receive two year degrees at OTC to be able to complete a four year bachelor's degree at GSU within their specified major or program.

RELIGION AND HOT WINGS

BY OZZIE BUNBURY
The George-Anne staff

Georgia Southern University's annual Hot Wings & Hot Topics event last Thursday focused on the differences and similarities between five of the world's largest religions.

With representatives from five religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and the Baha'i faith), each panelist contributed to an array of highly controversial topics. Topics included creationism versus evolution, differences between Yahweh and Allah, why the Jewish population hasn't grown since WWII and each faith's stance on the LGBTQ community and their acceptance of "alternative" lifestyles.

The event was moderated by Dr. Francys Johnson, president of Georgia's NAACP, and was sponsored by the University Wellness Program and the Multicultural Student Center. The program has been going on for over 12 years.

BAHA'I FAITH- ADOWA ULZEN

"One thing helpful to know about the Baha'i faith is this concept of oneness. The fundamental principle of the Baha'i faith is unity. The oneness of religion and that all religions are one. We come from the same source, God has been represented in different ways at different times based on the needs of humanity."

ISLAM- NADIA KAMAL HEMMALI DREID

"Islam is a monotheistic religion, an Abrahamic tradition that considers itself a logical step after Judaism and Christianity. It teaches a lot of the same things other religions teach. A lot of concepts or stereotypes people have of Muslims are not accurate. A lot of that comes from not knowing what Islam is."

CHRISTIAN- MINISTER JERRY JOHNSON

"Everyone desires a life that matters, that means something. Something that isn't just a fad, that isn't here today gone tomorrow. Wait around for the next 'thing' that comes along. The reality is it isn't just like that, the truth is reality isn't what you decide it to be... The Christian worldview answers the deepest questions about life... The nature of reality, is there a god or many gods... Who am I or why was I here?"

JUDAISM- RABBI ROBERT HAAS

"Why is Judaism relevant to the modern world? Because we are the best [religion] (sarcasm). We believe there is a god, and that each religion has a way to god, and you can get to god with whatever religion you choose. We believe everyone is expected to behave a certain way, and there is a basic principles of morality that we are expected to follow. We believe that we have the opportunity to choose for ourselves, and that's why we like living in a country like America."

HINDUISM- MR. MAULIK PATEL

"As far as Hinduism is concerned, one of the biggest misconceptions is if there is more than one god. There has been an ongoing debate about whether it's monotheistic or polytheistic... A lot of individuals in the 21st century don't grasp the concept on where it was founded."

Spring Bling with MIGOS

BY MACY HOLLOWAY
The George-Anne staff

The contracts have officially been signed and on April 18 in the Hanner Fieldhouse, Migos will be performing for Georgia Southern University's 2015 Spring Concert.

Migos is a hip hop trio from Atlanta, Georgia. It is comprised of three rappers, Quavious "Quavo" Marshall, Kirshnik "Takeoff" Ball and Kiari "Offset" Cephus. They have collaborated with a large variety of very popular artists such as Juicy J, Drake, B.o.B. and Gucci Mane among many others.

Migos' first really popular song "Versace" was remixed by a number of artists and the trio made \$1 million from the single alone.

Tickets are live on Thursday, Feb. 19, on etix.com and there will be a table at the Russell Union Rotunda ready and waiting for students to come by and purchase tickets.

Given that the concert will be held in Hanner, there is limited space, GSU students will be the only group to get a discount on ticket prices and all other seats will be general admission.

There will be a floor level price, which is standing on the court around the stage, first level price at the lower part of Hanner, and the rest of the fieldhouse is all upper and will run at the same price.

SPRING BLING 2015

ARTIST
MIGOS

DATE
SATURDAY, APRIL 18 2015

LOCATION
HANNER FIELDHOUSE

TIME
DOORS OPEN AT 7 P.M. AND
SHOW BEGINS AT 8 P.M.

MOST POPULAR SONGS

1. VERSACE
2. HANDSOME AND WEALTHY
3. FIGHT NIGHT
4. FREAK NO MORE
5. HANNAH MONTANA

TICKET PRICES FOR GSU STUDENTS

UPPER ARENA: \$10

LOWER ARENA: \$15

FLOOR (GENERAL ADMISSION/ STANDING): \$20

TICKET PRICES FOR ALL OTHER (FACULTY, STAFF, COMMUNITY)

UPPER ARENA: \$20

LOWER ARENA: \$25

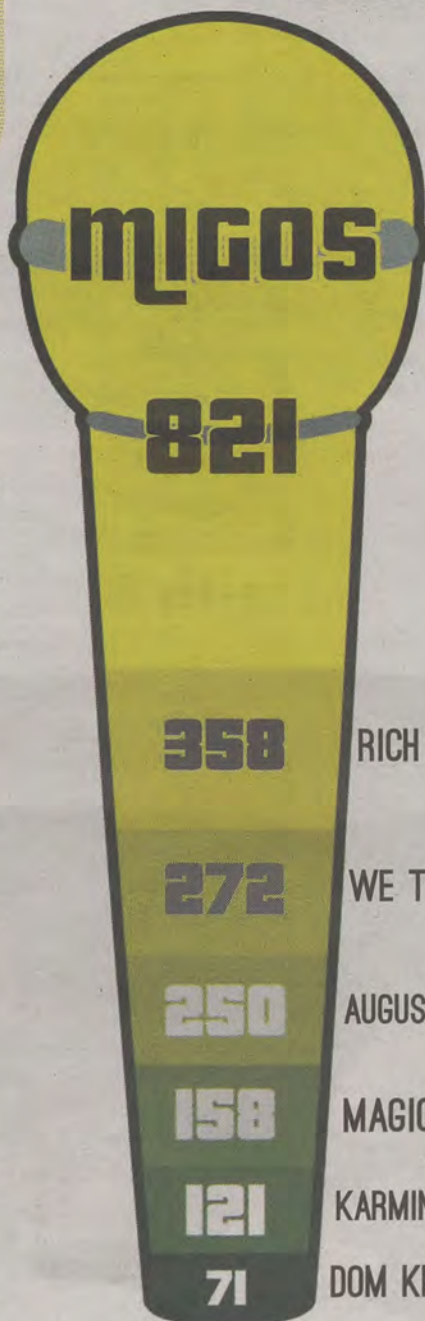
FLOOR (GENERAL ADMISSION/ STANDING): \$30

2 TICKETS PER EAGLE ID FOR STUDENT TICKETS.

4 TICKETS PER TRANSACTION FOR GENERAL TICKETS.

UPB WILL HAVE 20 GIVEAWAY TICKETS AS WELL AS 5 MEET AND GREET PASSES, ALL WITH A 'PLUS ONE' (TOTAL OF 10)

STUDENT VOTES



Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, author, and op-ed columnist for *The New York Times*

NICHOLAS KRISTOF

A PATH APPEARS



FEB. 23
7pm

Have dinner with
KRISTOF

Submit a question:
GeorgiaSouthern.edu/KRISTOF

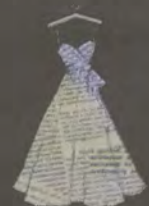
Performing Arts Center

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5TH ANNUAL NEWSPAPER DRESS MAKING COMPETITION



NOW ACCEPTING TEAM APPLICATIONS

You and three of your friends can create an outfit from recycled Student Media publications, display it in a fashion show, and win prizes! Teams of four consist of one model and three designers.

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 25

3.5.15

Submit team member names and all contact info to:
Lauren Little, Event Coordinator
ll01932@georgiasouthern.edu

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STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY FEES AT WORK!

THE BUZZ LIST

MATT SOWELL
Features editor



► Saturday Night Live, television gold, turned 40 last night. The 3 1/2 hour special was a star-packed reunion that tipped its hat to multiple skits and was so great, then, Kanye came. Is that guy even real? He looked like he had fallen from too much dope and the director was like "okay can he still sing? Cool we'll stage this with him rolling around." Ima let him finish, but that should've been Beyonce. I'm sure Kim was still proud though.

► Speaking of Kardashians; Bruce Jenner, the dad on Keeping up with the Kardashians and former track star, has announced to his family that he is a woman and has known he was since age 5. Talk about a plot twist on the show. I respect him for it, being in the closet about anything is tough. No one is sure how this is going to change Keeping up with the Kardashians, we can only hope for at least one scene of Kim ugly crying.

► Mama June, Boobearian mom from the hit/cancelled show Here Comes Honey Booboo, has moved into her new crib with her daughter. The house is definitely an upgrade, mainly because it's clean. TMZ reported that she has a bucket next to the door for people's shoes. Remember kids; you're in college scraping by while these people have big houses with shoe buckets because they acted dumb on TV. Work hard!

► Duck Dynasty is getting a musical. I wonder if they'll have a homophobic ballad with racist undertones. The show will hit Vegas, moral capitol of the US, in February at the Rio Hotel and Casino. Fun fact: that's also where the Chippendales show is. I hope the "real American family" know that the musical theatre world is filled with those evil gays and other minorities that Phil Robertson talked about. If it transfers to Broadway, I will cry for a week.

SOUTHERN SOARS AT AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATRE FESTIVAL



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA ABBOTT

BY MATT SOWELL
The George-Anne staff

When you think of Georgia Southern the first thing that comes to mind is probably not theatre. Our theatre and performance program is booming, giving students high quality performances multiple times a semester.

Two weeks ago, some members of the theatre department attended the American College Theatre Festival. The festival is a big deal, according to Lisa Abbott, a theatre professor at Georgia Southern, if this were football this would have been the semi-finals.

"ACTF is an educational conference in which students from every sector of theatre-including acting, design, stage managing, and critiquing- can go learn more about their field of study from professionals already in that world," Sally Henry, Senior Communication major and ACTF attendee, said.

It all started with Race, a play directed by Abbott, which was put on in the Black Box Theatre last semester. The show was a hit on campus.

The shows performed on campus are not just for entertainment, there's an entire nation-wide competition involving college productions.

Colleges all around the country submit their plays and a panel of judges, normally faculty members from another school. Race was nominated to attend the conference as an evening performance, which

is a big deal. "There are about 60 participating shows in our region. Out of those four will go to afternoon performances, they usually have a new script or a devised theatre or black box production, then there are four shows that go into the evening performances, they're the highlighted performances," Abbott said.

She explained that Race was performed in a 900 seat house that fully packed. "The show was incredibly well received, hands down outstanding work from the actors, designers and technicians. It's a controversial show and the audience ate it up, the response was incredibly positive. We nailed it," Abbott said.

"It was an amazing honor to be invited by the conference to perform such a controversial play for our theatre peers.

RACE was well received and it was such a good feeling to have my fellow castmates, crew, director, and Georgia Southern peers supporting us. The week was informative, inspiring, and all around a good time for my last ACTF" Tatyana Arrington, a recent Georgia Southern graduate, said.

On top of the performance of race, numerous students competed for various awards in a number of competitions, all of the winners can be seen to the (whichever side the side bar is on)

"We do really quality work here, and it's good to have that recognized. It's like during Oscar season when you hear 'all that matters is getting nominated', the truth behind that is what's exciting about this conference; it doesn't matter if you win or lose. Being invited

to be there and watching students network with their peers and and having that opportunity to be with people who are just as passionate about theatre in every aspect. We covered the full range, we had a student represented in every category. It doesn't feel like a competition, it's a celebration of the work that we do" Abbott said.

AWARDS WON

OLIVIA CARTER - 2nd place Allied Technical Awards

BRANDON MUGGY - 2nd place stage management

SALLY HENRY - 2nd place Critics Institute

CAST AND CREW OF RACE - Golden Hardhat Award

TEUNDAS OAKS - 1st place Dramaturgy Fellowship



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA ABBOTT

Student actors perform "Race" at the American College Theatre Festival. The show, which was first performed last semester in the Black Box Theatre, was a hit at the festival.

VISAGE

FASHION COMPANY

BY RASHIDA OTUNBA

The George-Anne staff

Stylish, unique and provocative are all words that can be used to describe Visage Fashion Company, the newest modeling organization on Georgia Southern University's campus.

Created last April, Visage Fashion Company is an organization on campus that is not afraid to try something new by pushing boundaries and testing their limits.

"We try to pull people out of their comfort zone. A lot of these people have never modeled before. In most modeling organizations when you get in, the people who are the best get picked to do every show and people don't try to work with you. We try to bring people out of their comfort zone, teach them how to interact and express themselves." Titi Popoola, vice president of Visage Fashion Company and junior middle grades education major, said.

It's not just a student club, members can also gain valuable modeling experience during their time in the organization.

"Professionalism is one of our biggest things. When models take pictures, we're compiling a portfolio for them. If you join our organization, we want you to learn something from it. We want people to leave our organization saying that they gained something from it, not that you did one show and nothing happened," Morgan Tatum, president of Visage Fashion Company and senior early childhood education major, said.

Tryouts are held twice a year and the organization is open to a diverse range of students and caters to people of all interest levels, including those who have never modeled before and who are not fashion majors.

"We teach models two of our easiest turns and we teach them model stance and then they work on walks. We make them loosen up and make them comfortable and then after that we teach them the rest," Tatum said.

The new group held their first solo show last Friday called "Language of Lingerie," which was a performance audience members will not soon forget.

"It's where poetry and modeling meet," Tatum said.

The event consisted of six scenes, five of which were set to spoken word poetry. The Valentine's Day themed event centered around love, ranging from the innocent to the erotic and everything in between. The performance also included an intermission performance which featured lingerie-clad models dancing to a sensual synchronized routine.

If you would like to see more of Visage Fashion Company, they are hosting a fashion show March 27.



NICOLE MCINTYRE THE GEORGE-ANNE

Visage Fashion Company performed their first fashion show last week. The show was a sensual experience that highlighted various types of love while showing off stylish lingerie.

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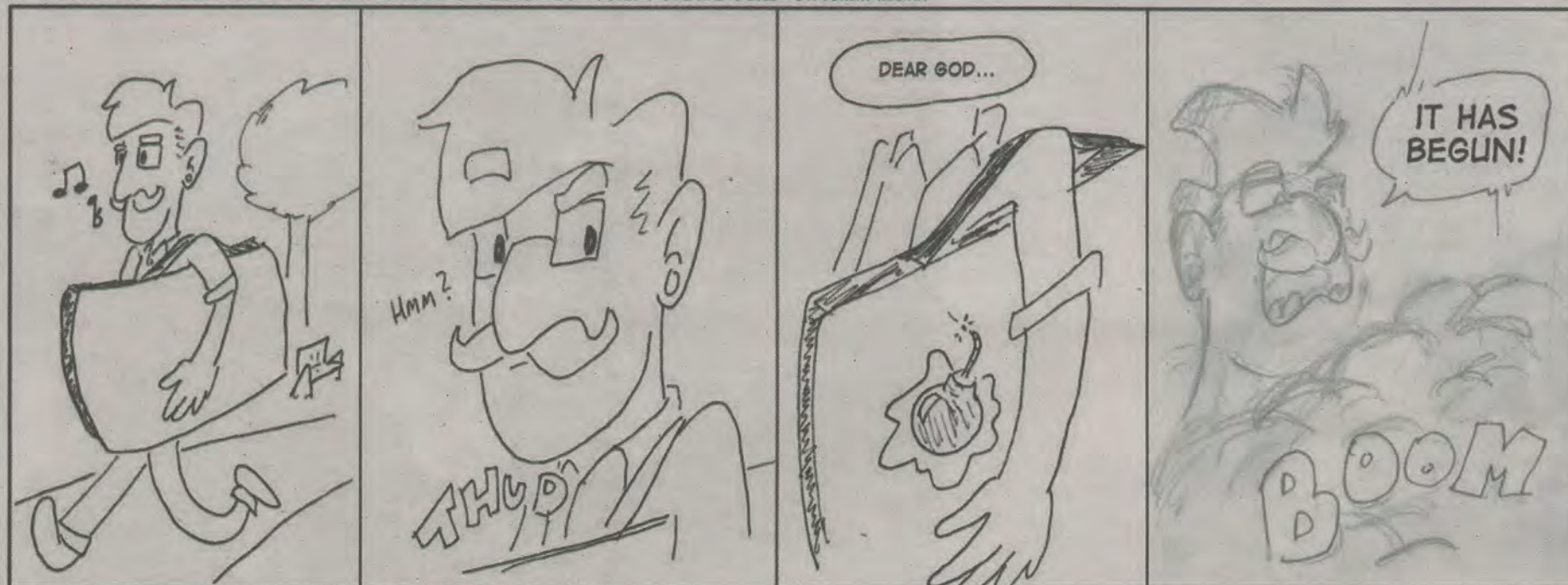
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Mardi Gras

RELIGIOUS REVELRY OR DRUNKEN DEBAUCHERY?



CONNOR WHITE

White is a senior multimedia communications major from Fayetteville, Ga.

Mardi Gras is a curious holiday in the United States. It's part of Carnival, a festive season of celebration before the fasting and religious obligations of Catholic Lent, and is practiced within the United States by only a few select cities with strong ethnic ties to France, such as Galveston, Texas, Pensacola, Florida and most popularly, New Orleans. Despite many of us thinking that Mardi Gras is uniquely American, its early traditions migrated from Europe much the way Halloween's and Christmas' did, and is not recognized nationally, unlike many other primarily Catholic countries. This is a celebration that has been around for hundreds of years, and yet it's still unable to pierce American culture the same way many of our other public holidays have.

"Religious" is not the first

word that comes to mind when picturing Mardi Gras celebrations in the United States. If anything, Girls Gone Wild is higher up on that list. Sexuality and indulgence is tossed around as much as those beads we're always clamoring for, perpetually fueled by alcohol, music and colorful costumes. But don't take me for someone who looks down the edge of their nose at anyone who takes part. I feel quite the opposite; I celebrate any reason to celebrate. It's just genuinely curious that unlike other holidays, Mardi Gras has seemed to drift further from its religious roots than its other calendar-year counterparts.

Obviously, all holidays are vastly different than they were at their inception. Halloween and Christmas both were celebrated by primarily Pagan (note: Pagan means outlying, NOT Satanic) populations in Europe, and many people are frustrated with the rampant commercialism in these and others like Valentine's Day

and Easter. But I hear more about how long it takes to clean up New Orleans, more about who's pregnant and who's still recovering from a hangover, than I do anything else. They've become the "traditions" most apparent in the US's variant of the holiday (or at least how the media portrays it),

likely scares away older or tamer observants, and thus perpetuating the party. It's the same reason why you don't go to Daytona or Panama City Beach for a relaxing oceanside getaway. This is strange, considering that the wildest partying, at least in New Orleans, is

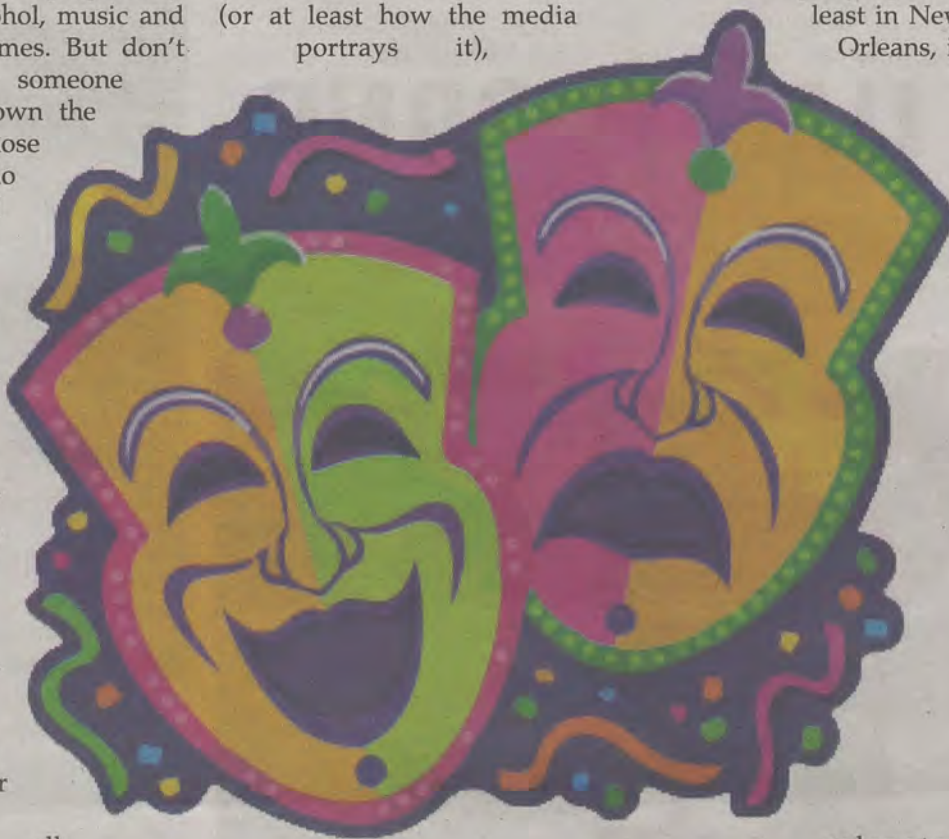
Even more curiously, Carnival (and by extension Mardi Gras), is a holiday steeped in Catholicism, which is unassuming until you learn that its' largest American celebrations are in states that are primarily Baptist. For those unaware, Baptists originated as a branch from Protestant Christianity, which for the most part, doesn't observe Carnival or other Catholic holidays. None of the primarily Catholic states in the US celebrate Mardi Gras close to the intensity of the deep south, and if I can go out on a limb here, maybe that's why it's thought of as a drunken riot. Baptists and Protestants are generally more rigid and hardline when it comes to alcohol consumption than Catholics, so a borderline religious excuse to let loose and party until you have trouble standing seem like a pretty good deal, all things considered.

There is much more to Mardi Gras than meets the eye. At its core, its the very definition of "good times" and it appeals to all ages and interests to take part. But because the loudest and wildest parts of the party are the most talked about, most of us are still unwilling to spread Mardi Gras across America. It'll take some hard work, but I'd love to see what kind of powerhouse Carnival could grow into if the rest of the United States chooses to observe it. It'd be one hell of a party.

a statement cities which celebrate Mardi Gras vehemently try to prevent.

That might have something to do about those who most loudly celebrate it. It's public reputation as an enormous party for young adults (especially college students) to get completely trashed at

relegated only to Bourbon Street, which is locally known as a less-than-proper part of town. But it's the part the media flocks to for their annual "look how awful this party is" coverage. That might even be why it struggles to spread to other, larger cities: because they don't want to pick up such a mess.



Georgia Southern hosts yellow jackets tonight

BY COLIN RITSICK
The George-Anne staff

The reigning ACC Champions, Georgia Tech, visit Statesboro tonight to take on Georgia Southern at J.I. Clements Stadium in the first game of a home-and-home series.

The Eagles (3-0) beat the Yellow Jackets (2-1) last year 4-3 at home before getting smacked 13-2 in the second game in Atlanta. The home game brought out 3,213 fans which is the second-largest turnout in Georgia Southern baseball history.

A similar crowd is expected tonight, even with low temperatures looming.

"I think it's always fun anytime you play a good team, and this game always generates a lot of interest locally," head coach Rodney Hennon said. "Hopefully people will bundle up and come out."

Junior RHP Ryan Frederick will get his first start of the year tonight. Frederick transferred from SCAD and walked on last year before appearing in 24 games. He is one of only three returning pitchers to appear in more than 20 games.

Frederick went 4-1 with a 3.88 ERA in 53.1 innings and was named the Southern Conference Pitcher of the Week (3/24/14) for notching wins over Clemson and Appalachian State in a five-game span last season.

Georgia Tech is similar to GSU in some aspects. Both teams return established position players. Both teams can swing the stick, and according to Hennon, both teams are in an ongoing process of evaluation and trying to define some roles.

"They've got some experience coming back position wise..."

they're always going to have good players," Hennon said.

The infield trio of Thomas Smith at first, Connor Justus at shortstop and Brandon Gold at third turned the most double plays in GT history last year with 77. Smith was the third-leading hitter for the Ramblin' Wreck in 2014, hitting .301 with 36 RBI.

OF Matt Gonzalez, who hit .314 with 37 RBI also returns for GT. Gonzalez struggled in Opening Weekend, going 1-12 in three games. Georgia Tech has a good offense, but an MLB scout said over the weekend that he thinks Georgia Southern has the best bats in the state.

Cather Chase Griffin had two hits in each of the three games against Bethune-Cookman. He's got a .429 average as of now. OF Kody Adams hit .455 going 5-11 with three runs, and drew three walks. 3B Will Hudgins, a freshman, hit safely in each of the three games as well.

The Eagles bullpen had a strong outing this weekend, too. Nine different pitchers saw action. LHP Jason Richman didn't give up a run over 2.1 innings and earned his first win. LHP Anthony Peasano picked up a save in Saturday's game in 2.0 scoreless innings.

LHP Byron Yelverton, RHP Caleb Pressey and Frederick all threw in relief and didn't allow a run.

For fans of offense, good baseball, fun atmospheres and plenty of blankets, tonight is your night. Hennon said playing against Tech is always a good game to coach.

"I think it's fun for the coaches and the players, on both sides, to play in front of big crowds. That's what college baseball is about," Hennon said.

OPENING WEEKEND: EAGLES SWEEP BETHUNE-COOKMAN



BRANDON WARNOCK THE GEORGE-ANNE

Eagles line up along the dugout during the playing of the national anthem. An undefeated 3-0 start is a good follow-up to a previous season ending with a SoCon conference title.

BY COLIN RITSICK
The George-Anne staff

Georgia Southern baseball swept Bethune-Cookman in the first three games of the 2015 season this weekend. The Eagles (3-0) pitched a two-hit shutout on Friday, scored 12 runs on Saturday and gave up a seven-run lead before winning the game on Sunday.

"All three games were a little bit different. Probably from a pitching standpoint and defense, I thought Friday was our most complete game," head coach Rodney Hennon said.

Coming into the weekend, Hennon said that these games were an important time to learn about his team. There were holes to be filled on the mound and in the infield, and a lot of new players to evaluate.

Offensively, the majority of the lineup contributed in all three games. Seven of nine starters had a hit in Saturday's game, and seven of nine starters had a RBI in Sunday's game. Defensively, Hennon wasn't thrilled. The Eagles committed six errors in three games and there were a few other plays that were recorded as hits, but could have gone either way.

Pitching was the biggest question mark coming into the season. And it still is. But the pitching staff, especially the bullpen, threw well all weekend and gave the Eagles a chance to win every

ballgame. Hennon said he was pleased with how his team pitched this weekend.

Game 1 - GSU 3, BC 0

LHP Evan Challenger made his first start since May of 2013 on Friday night, and he did not disappoint. The redshirt sophomore took a no-hitter into the fifth inning. He struck out six batters, walked none and didn't allow a run en route to his first win on the year. He gave up two hits in the fifth before getting pulled after 5.1 innings.

"I had a lot of nerves going, so it was good to get the first batter out and keep going from there," Challenger said. "[I] located the fastball well, and the changeup has always been my pitch."

LHP Jason Richman, RHP Tripp Sheppard and RHP Chris Brown didn't allow a hit over the next 3.2 innings of relief pitching. Brown got his first save in an Eagle uniform. OF Hunter Thomas hit a solo home run in the third inning, and catcher Chase Griffin was 2-4 from the plate.

Game 2 - GSU 12, BC 8

SS Dalton Busby didn't have a single hit, yet batted in three runs on two sacrifice flies and a fielder's choice. OF Kody Adams was 2-3 with two runs, two walks and an RBI. Griffin was 2-5 with two runs and an RBI. 1B Ryan Cleveland was 1-2

with three runs, two walks and an RBI.

The Eagles went deep into their bullpen on Saturday using eight different guys to pitch nine innings. LHP Anthony Peasano pitched 2.0 innings and struck out three to earn his first save at GSU.

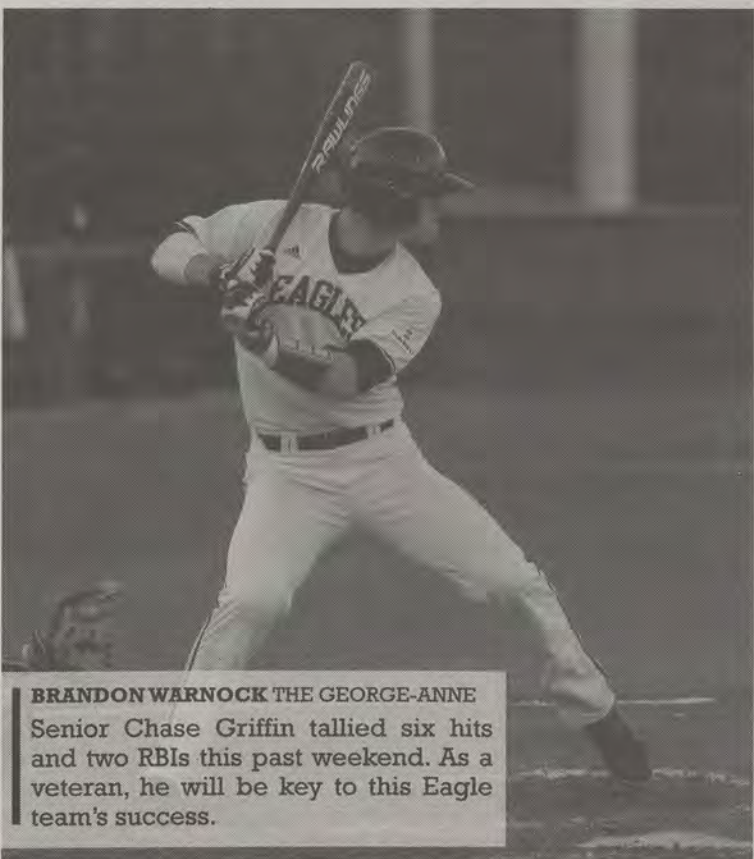
Game 3 - GSU 9, BC 8

The Eagles jumped out to a 7-0 lead in the second inning only to watch it disappear by the eighth inning. In the bottom of the eighth with the score tied 8-8, 3B Will Hudgins' sacrifice fly to right field allowed OF Aaron Mizell to tag up and score from third. Not a lot of coaches would have sent the runner with a ball as shallow as this one, but assistant coach Chris Moore ran the risk.

The Wildcats (0-3) outfield hadn't gunned anyone out all weekend and had noticeably weak arms. Moore decided to send Mizell, and the Eagles won because of it.

Adams, Griffin and Hudgins all recorded multi-hit games. RHP Connor Simmons made his first NCAA start and scattered two hits across four innings. He struck out three and walked two.

Hennon said, "I thought he handled himself real well. At the end of the second inning when he got himself into a little trouble he made some big pitches, got a big strikeout with a man on third with less than two outs."



BRANDON WARNOCK THE GEORGE-ANNE
Senior Chase Griffin tallied six hits and two RBIs this past weekend. As a veteran, he will be key to this Eagle team's success.

Young team struggles in Eagle Classic



CRISTEN GULLIAT THE GEORGE-ANNE

The Eagles have seven freshmen on their roster, two of which were in the circle this weekend. The amount of inexperience showed with GSU's 1-4 performance at the Eagle Classic.

BY ROBERT GEORGE
The George-Anne staff

The Georgia Southern Eagles softball team hosted the Eagle Classic this past weekend. The Eagles struggled, going 1-4 against Boston College, Campbell, Tennessee Tech and Binghamton.

GS vs. Binghamton (W 21-12)

The Eagles started off right, winning their home

opener against Binghamton 21-12. The Eagles offense came out on fire as sophomore Emily Snider blasted a two-run home run in the top of the first to take an early 2-0 lead.

Every Eagle who came to the plate got at least one hit in the game. Senior pitcher Brooke Red started the game and went four innings while allowing six earned runs on seven hits. Newcomer Kierra Camp relieved her and pitched the final three innings to pick up the long save.

GS vs. Campbell (L 6-7)

The Eagles had to battle better pitching and frigid weather in the second game that didn't start until about 9 p.m. As the temperature outside cooled down, so did the Eagles' bats. They could only muster two hits in the first five innings, and fell behind 4-1 entering the sixth inning. The Eagles finally heated up in the bottom of the sixth, when they scored three runs to tie the game.

Campbell would take the lead in the top of the seventh on an Eagle error, but sophomore Morgan Robinson tied the game back up in the bottom of the inning. She hit a solo home run that sent the game into extra innings. But, the excitement was short lived, as Campbell hit a two-run home run in the top of ninth that proved to be the game winner.

Another newcomer this season, Heather Felt, pitched a complete game and gave up seven runs, four of which were earned, on 10 hits and two walks.

GS vs. Boston College (L 3-6)

The Eagles returned to action Saturday afternoon against Boston College and lost 6-3. The Eagles took a 1-0

lead in the first inning but couldn't keep the momentum going and surrendered six unanswered runs.

Junior catcher A.J. Hamilton hit a solo home run in the sixth and freshman Alesha Mann added another in the seventh. That was all the offense the Eagles got in the final two innings, and the Eagles fell 6-3.

GS vs. Tennessee Tech University (L 2-4)

Georgia Southern lost another game in extra innings in the nightcap of Saturday's action. The Eagles trailed 2-1 entering the bottom half of the seventh inning, but senior Lexi Allen smacked a triple and later scored on a Taylor Rodgers' infield single that tied the game at 2-2.

Olivia Bennett gave TTU the lead on a two-run homerun in the top of the eighth that proved to be the game winner.

Freshman Camp made another appearance and gave up a run in the first, but she settled down after that and pitched four straight shutout innings. TTU pitcher Danielle Liberatore was masterful all night, striking out 10 Eagle hitters on her way to a four-hit complete game.

GS vs. TTU (L 4-5)

The Eagles wrapped up play in the Eagle Classic against TTU, losing another close game 5-4. TTU jumped out to a 2-0 lead, but freshman Rowan McGuire responded with her first home run of the year, a two-run blast that tied the game.

TTU broke a 3-3 tie in the fourth by scoring two runs on a couple of singles and an Eagle error. The Eagles would get one more run across to make the final score 5-4.

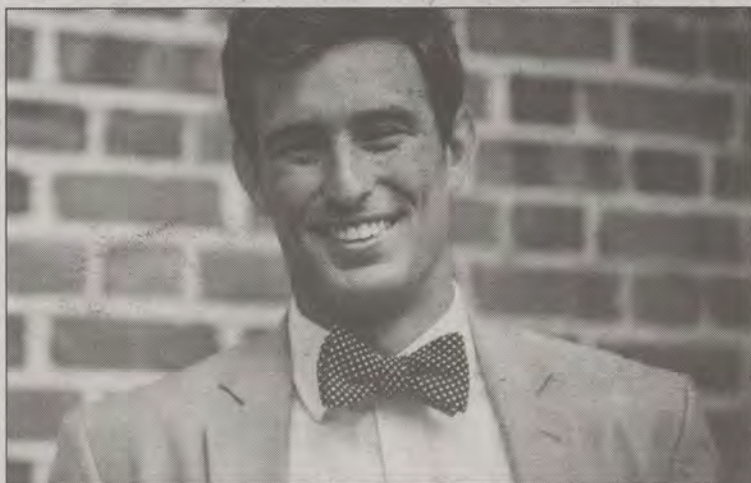
Head Coach Annie Smith was disappointed in the results, but knows that her young team will get better.

"I always tell the team that as long as we've got a shot in every ballgame, we're going to be ok. We kept fighting today and we had a chance to get the win down the stretch today," Smith said.

Six underclassmen got significant playing time this weekend, which is something Coach Smith knows will help prepare them for conference play.

"It's invaluable. It will make them so much better and make our team so much better as we get down the road," Smith said. "We've got such a young team, I see us continuing to get better, and I see us continuing to battle."

The Eagles will travel to Raleigh, N.C. to play in the NC State Hyatt Place Challenge this coming weekend.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF ELAINA LANSON

For Georgia Southern, Elaina Lanson was among the top 2014-2015 performers in the 50 freestyle, 200 medley relay, 400 medley relay, 200 free relay and 400 free relay.

ELAINA LANSON: ON THE BIG STAGE

BY KATIE TOLBERT
The George-Anne staff

This past weekend one of Georgia Southern's top senior swimmers, Elaina Lanson, took part in the 2014-2015 Arena Pro Swim Series in Orlando, Fla.

This meet included all of the top swimmers from around the world competing to make the cut for the Olympic trials. This included 2008 Olympian Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace from the Bahamas, swimming with SwimMAC Carolina.

Not only was Lanson doing this event in addition to her collegiate swimming, but she also has been dealing with an injury.

"I have a partial tear in my achilles, and I've had to back off a lot of yardage especially kicking yardage and practicing starts," Lanson said. "I didn't really add anything to my collegiate training, just kind of used that and went off my taper that was planned for conference."

Many swimmers were at the meet with their affiliated club teams, but Lanson was in the minority as being 'unattached.' She was also one of only two swimmers represented from the state of Georgia.

"I went with one of my college coaches, Miffy, and a club coach from Savannah that helps out at some of our practices. It was nice to have the support from multiple coaches at this big meet," Lanson said.

Lanson had an early start Friday morning as the meet began with the preliminary round at 9 a.m. Her only event for this meet was the 50 freestyle, which is her best. This round was held in order to narrow down the competition for the finals.

In the preliminaries, Lanson placed 19 overall with a time of 26.89. This put her way above the cut because only the top 32 girls made it to the final round.

The meet started early and ended late. The final round

was held at 6 p.m. Lanson needed to get back in the water, and give the 50 freestyle another attempt with even more energy than before. And, she did just that.

Not only did Lanson move up a rank, but she also shaved time off. She finished the meet as No. 18 with a time of 26.71. Unfortunately, she did not qualify for the trials, but Lanson mentioned how she moved up 20 places in the meet.

"The meet was really fun and exciting because there were a lot of big names there," Lanson said. "Doing this meet gave me a lot of confidence going into our conference championships, and I can't wait to see how the hard work the team has put in all year pays off."

Lanson will be back on the road tomorrow, but with her whole Eagle team. The Eagles will be heading to Athens for the CCSA Championships.

Lanson finished the meet as No. 18 with a time of 26.71.



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