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GA

THE GEORGE-ANNE

VOTING ENDS TOMORROW!

Meet your SGA exec candidates SEE PAGE 4

GSU Equestrian team rider Allison Gilbert is one of the 16 riders in the nation to make Nationals SEE PAGE 14

PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAM MCCARTHY

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE

THE NEXT GUS?

ONE
MORE
TIME

GSU Athletics is looking for a new Gus and is currently taking applications. Are you the Eagles No.1 fan?

SEE PAGE 12

COME OUT TO SPRINGFEST SEE PAGE 2

3 outdoor study spots to brighten your day

BY CHRIS ROSSMANN
The George-Anne staff

It's spring, and with the coming of spring comes the long hours in the library studying for those last

exams, putting together papers, and preparing for all your finals. But take a break from the

fluorescent lights, breath some fresh air and give these outdoor study spots a try.



The first spot is behind the **COBA** building. The area has several benches and tables perfect for setting out books and getting some serious studying done. The COBA building casts a shadow over the area in the afternoon and makes this spot comfortable to sit in even during on those swelteringly hot days.



Next is the outdoor art gallery near the **Center for Art and Theater** building. This spot has tall buildings surrounding it, allowing shadows to play through the area, and the curving benches are perfect for lying out and taking a nap in the shade. Give this spot a try if you ever are looking for a quiet place to do some thinking.



The last spot near the **Newton** building is more commonly stumbled across than the first two, but it's still a perfect place to study. The steps are large enough to bring several groups to study with and are a great place to take a break and set up a picnic while you study.

App Update: GoGoBot

BY IAN LEONARD
The George-Anne staff

GoGoBot is an app recently launched that allows users to share activities and events to attend in popular tourist locations.

The app allows its users to add and rate different activities and events that visitors can participate in when visiting a city or popular tourist attraction. For example, there is a page for the Great Barrier Reef for tourists visiting Sydney, Grant Park in Chicago and even The World of Coke in Atlanta.

Each of these activities and locations are rated in categories, based on the type of tourists it would apply to, such as family friendly, outdoors, arts, relaxation, business related and much more.

The app also offers users the chance to book flights and hotels, view local weather information and share these pages on multiple social

WEATHER BAR

Wednesday



High: 87°
Low: 63°

Thursday



High: 88°
Low: 64°

Friday



High: 88°
Low: 66°

WEATHER SQUIRREL



"THIS HUMIDITY IS MAKING ME NUTTY"

R REFLECTORGSU.COM

The Q&D of April 8, 2015

The quick and dirty of entertainment news and trends you need to know.

Sarah Silverman is Hollywood's new big feminist

Sarah Silverman has partnered with Levo League, a website for professional women, for their Ask4More campaign which aims to empower women to take charge in the workplace and ask for higher pay. Which has been said to be one of the main reasons why women don't get raises. Silverman shared her struggles in comedy and gender inequality with People magazine. "I'm all for women having to work harder to prove themselves at this juncture, if that's the way it is in the world. But if you work

a job, and a man is working the same job, you should be getting paid the same," said Silverman.

Full House is coming back?

Although Warner Bros. could not confirm a Full House reboot, which would be called "Fuller House," TV Line has reported the 13-episode series will be coming to Netflix soon.

The Internet is in a whirlwind about the news, confused it may be a late April Fool's prank. Netflix has not yet commented on the reboot, but we'll have our fingers crossed "Fuller House" isn't just another rumor.

Sports Shorts

- Men's Golf finished 9th out of 14 at the Mason Rudolph Championship in Nashville, Tennessee
- Women's Tennis lost to South Alabama Friday 0-7 and fell to Georgia State Saturday 2-5
- Baseball won two out of the three games in a series against Louisiana Lafayette. 2-1 Friday, 7-4 Saturday, and 1-5 Sunday
- Men's Tennis won 4-3 Friday against Louisiana Lafayette and lost 1-6 against UT Arlington Saturday
- Softball won in a double header Friday against Appalachian State 6-5 and 17-3, and another win against App State Saturday 11-6

Fast and Furious opens strong

Furious 7 made \$384 million worldwide this weekend, to put that into perspective, Captain America: The Winter Soldier's only made \$95 million on its April opening.

Most have contributed the film's success to loyal fans coming out to see Paul Walkers' final appearance. Universal now has to decide whether to continue the series without Walker or end the 14-year-franchise on its box office high.

For more content go to
ReflectorGSU.com

Come out to SpringFest today for the launch of the **Spring 2015 edition of Reflector Magazine**, Georgia Southern's premier student lifestyle magazine.

We will have free food, prizes and more at the Rotunda from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Get into the southern state of mind with us. After all, college isn't just a phase, it's a lifestyle.

THE GEORGE-ANNE & JOE



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4-7-15

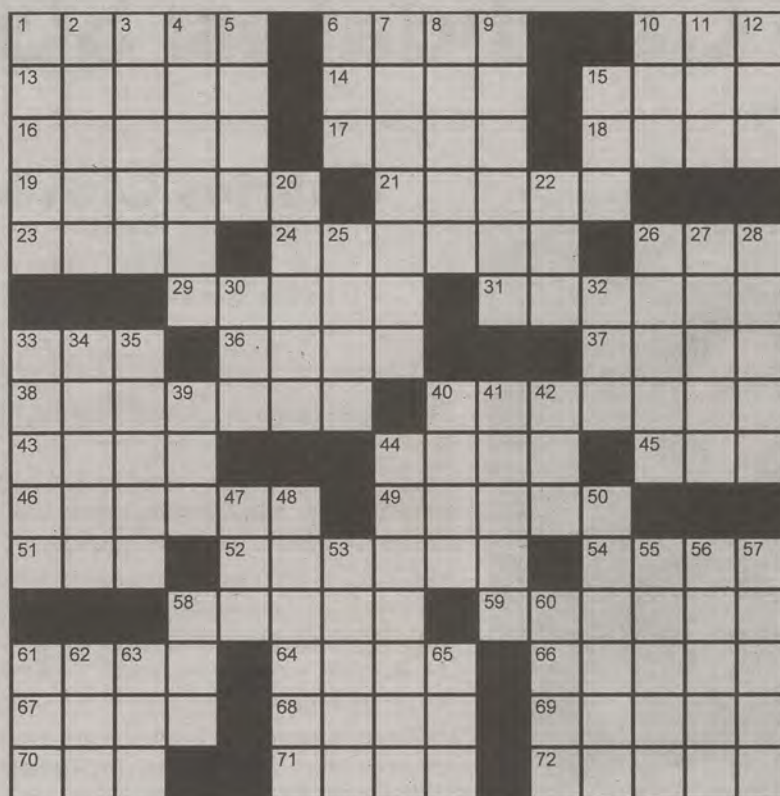
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CLASSIFIEDS

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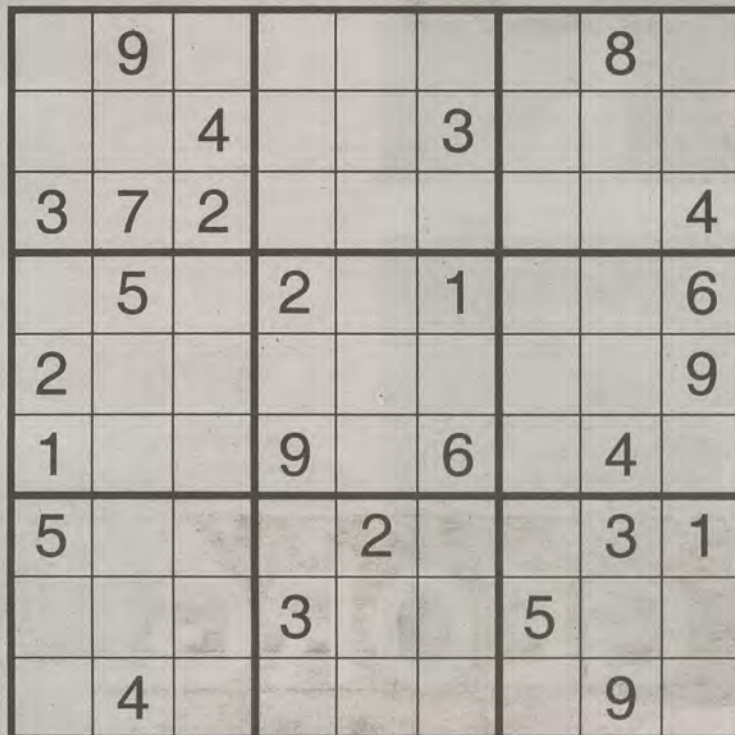
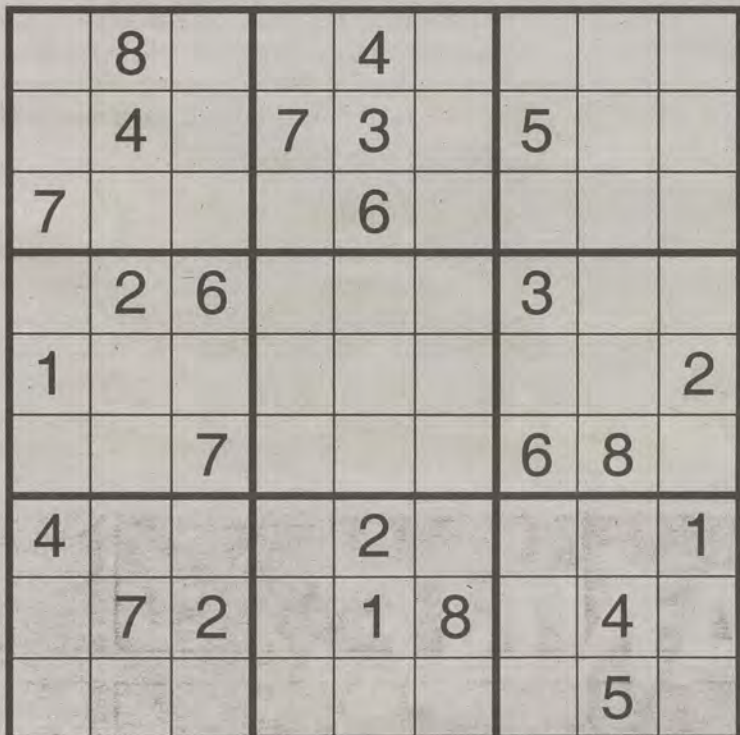
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STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

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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THURSDAY- 9:00AM - 9:00PM
FRIDAY- 9:00AM - 10:00PM
SATURDAY- 9:00AM - 10:00PM
SUNDAY- 9:00AM - 9:00PM

Meet the Candidates: SGA Exec Board

BY MACY HOLLOWAY
The George-Anne staff



Charles Glover

running for President

1st year graduate student

Masters of Counselor Education with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health

S.O.A.R.ing Together: A United Eagle Nation. This platform is what the Glover-Kidwell ticket stands confidently upon. S.O.A.R., which is an acronym for Service, Outreach, Accountability and Respect outlines four key categories that will help the student's voices be heard. Our main goal of the upcoming year is to reach out to more students and make them aware of the great services that SGA offers, including Shuttle Gus, funds allocation, Eagles for Eagles, free legal services and much more. The more participation we have from the students, the more we are able to accomplish what Georgia Southern students are seeking. We are here to represent YOU and amplify your voice to the Administration.

Kaitlin Kidwell

running for Executive Vice President

Junior, will be a Senior in the fall

political science major with a minor in Business

The Student Government Association serves as a liaison between the student body and the administration. We value respect within and outside of our organization as we utilize parliamentary procedure to maintain order to be as efficient as possible, as well as when dealing with the pressing issues and concerns that face students on a day to day basis. Currently, I serve as the VP of Finance and this year, I have ensured that the SGA is using student activity fees responsibly. By reallocating within our budget, the SGA has made strides this year to ensure that our budget is being used to directly impact the student body. I have a true passion for the SGA, and being Executive Vice President would allow me to continue to serve the students, grow the organization and achieve the goals the student body presents us.



Adam Clay

running for VP of Auxiliary Affairs

Junior (currently)

Logistics & Marketing with an emphasis in Sales

The Student Government Association, simply put, is the official means through which the student voice is heard. That being said, our number one goal has and will continue to be outreach. It is our responsibility to ensure that the 20,000+ members of the student body know who SGA is, what we offer, how to reach us and how we can help. In my role as Vice President of Academic Affairs during the 2014-2015 academic year, one of my primary responsibilities was to provide student input throughout the development phase of the Quality Enhancement Plan: Effective Writing. If re-elected, I will continue my work in regards to the QEP, as it is a vital academic initiative of our university. I will also continue to serve the students, bringing forth new ideas and strengthening the current effort to enhance the academic experiences of Georgia Southern students.



Errol Spence

running for VP of Academics

Senior (returning for graduate school)

Political Science

Student Government is here to serve the students. A main way that we support students is through the allocation of Student Activity Fees. These funds are available to individual students and organizations for events and conferences. Using this resource, we can help the students of Georgia Southern grow and learn from invaluable professional experiences. As Vice President of Finance, I will make sure that these funds are appropriated responsibly and effectively to these organizations and individuals. I will serve the students of Georgia Southern and make sure that they SOAR as eagles.



Cooper Largent

running for Vice President of Finance

Sophomore

Information Technology

The first word of "Student Government Association" is "Student," and that's who we always keep first in mind. SGA is a means to ask the tough questions and find out what our university is offering you as an individual. Our goal is to bring your opinions and ideas to the table and help them become actions. Accountability is key with these actions, making sure you receive the awareness and attention your idea deserves. I look forward to hearing how we can improve your time at Georgia Southern.

Photos courtesy of each individual candidate.

Page designed by Alex Smith

To contact the news editor, email ganewsed@georgiasouthern.edu

Know Your Rights

BY NADIA DREID
The George-Anne staff

What is freedom of speech?

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees Americans freedom of speech, stating that Congress should not make any law "abridging the freedom of speech."

The Supreme Court has expanded the term "speech" to refer to not only actual speech but symbolic actions as well, according to the U.S. Courts official website. Symbolic action is also referred to as freedom of expression.

In short, this means that the First Amendment protects Americans from government interference due to speech that is unpopular. For example, the Supreme Court ruled in 1990 that burning the American flag in protest is protected under free speech, as well "to use offensive words and phrases to convey political messages," according to the official website of the U.S. Courts.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, "The First Amendment prohibits restrictions based on the content of speech."

In short, it means that with a few exceptions, Americans have the right to say or write whatever they want.

What are the limits?

Freedom of speech is not without limits. According to the U.S. Courts website, the Supreme Court has ruled that Americans do not have the right to use speech "to incite actions that would harm others," "to make or distribute obscene materials" and "to burn draft cards in protest."

Also, publishing or publicly making false statements that could harm an individual's reputation could result in that person being sued for defamation.

The Supreme Court has also ruled that certain government-owned public areas that are traditionally used for public discourse are public forums and as such must be open to all forms of protected speech. Streets, sidewalks and parks are the three main public forums in the United States.

However, according to the First Amendment Center, government officials are allowed to limit the "time, place and manner" of free expression as long as the limits are "reasonable and nondiscriminatory."

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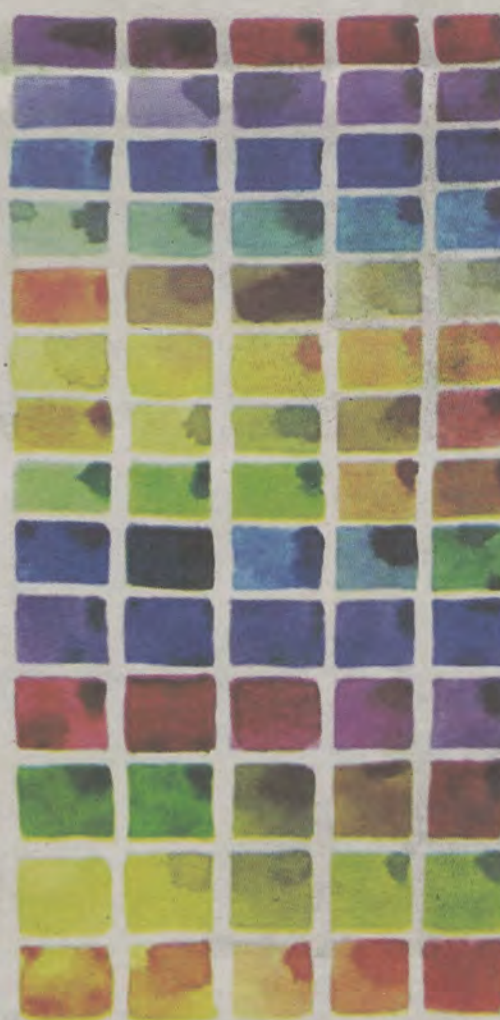


MISCELLANY

MISCELLANY SPRING 2015 LAUNCH PARTY

APRIL 14TH AT 6P.M.
CHOPS ON MAIN.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY'S
MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS. PUBLISHING
WRITING, PAINTING, SCULPTURES, FASHION,
PHOTOGRAPHY, AND MORE FROM STUDENTS,
STAFF, AND FACULTY



2015 Miscellany Cover

DON'T IGNORE THE FLAG

Sexual Assault Awareness campaign on campus

BY SADRINA SAMPSON
The George-Anne contributor

Georgia Southern University's Office of Health and Education, is holding a Red Flag campaign to bring public awareness to the GSU community about domestic violence and dating violence and some ways in which both can be prevented on college campuses.

This event will take place during the week of April 6 through April 9.

"This campaign is to bring awareness to the different types of abuse that anyone can experience," Lashanda Johnson, Assistant Director of Health Services and in charge of the first ever Red Flag event at GSU, said.

The Red Flag is a significant symbol of help. "If you see a friend that is in an abusive relationship or if someone notices you in

an abusive relationship that is a red flag," Johnson said. This event will allow people to become educated on others' situations and bring attention to possibly even their own.

Throughout the week there will be red flags planted in the grassy area in front of the Russell Union rotunda.

"This event is to bring awareness to many types of abuse that many never thought of and to help get ready for Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," Johnson said.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is an international event that asks men to walk in women's high-heeled shoes. This fun, educational event aims to raise awareness and encourage communication about gender relations and sexual violence. "We are hoping to make this a yearly event," Johnson said.

Types of abuse that will be discussed during the week

Physical and sexual abuse

- Forcing his/her partner to have sex or do sexual things
- Grabbing or pushing partner
- Throwing or breaking objects

Emotional Abuse and Victim Blaming

- Constantly finds fault with his/her partner
- Uses derogatory language to describe their partner
- Makes partner feel bad about their self

Stalking

- Sending frequent unwanted messages to someone, directly or through friends
- Harassing someone to the point of fear
- Repeatedly follows someone

Jealousy

- Gets angry when his/her partner spends time with other people
- Calling their partner over and over again

Isolation

- Persuades his/her partner to give up activities that her or she enjoys
- Makes all the decisions in the relationship
- Makes his/her partner "pay" for spending time with other people

This event is being held in the Russell Union Commons from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2015 Commencement speakers announced

BY NADIA DREID
The George-Anne staff

With graduation quickly approaching, the commencement speakers have officially been announced for each ceremony.

Judge Dean Bucci, a Superior Court judge for the Paulding Judicial Circuit,

will be the speaker for the undergraduate ceremony held Saturday, May 9 at Paulson Stadium. Bucci was appointed by Governor Nathan Deal earlier this year, making him the first Hispanic Superior Court Judge in Georgia.

According to Gov. Deal's website, Bucci graduated from

Georgia Southern University with a degree in business administration and received his law degree from the University of Georgia.

Director of the Highlander Research and Education Center Pamela McMichael will speak at the commencement ceremony for graduate students held Friday, May 8 in Hanner Fieldhouse. Highlander "serves as a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the U.S. South," according to the organization's web page.

According to her company bio, McMichael was a national fellow for the Rockefeller Foundation leadership project and for eight years was co-director of Southerners on New Ground, an organization dedicated to being a "home for LGBTQ liberation across all lines of race, class, abilities, age, culture, gender and sexuality in the South."

The graduation commencement ceremony will be held Friday, May 8 at 1 p.m. in Hanner Fieldhouse.

The undergraduate ceremony will be held Saturday, May 9 at 9 a.m. in Paulson Stadium. Both ceremonies are open to anyone who wishes to attend.



Photo courtesy of georgiasouthern.edu



Photo courtesy of communityvoices.info

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GSPARKING

RANDOM ACTS OF POETRY

A CREATIVE COLLECTIVE



THE RULES OF RAP

1. NO DISCLAIMERS.

"You're expressing yourself. You're not making yourself any less, so why do the same with your art?" - Jalen Havior

2. NO BEEF.

"It's about coming together and understanding other people." - Stanley Thomas

3. SHOW RESPECT. BASICALLY, DON'T BE RUDE.

"But if you get turnt, like he said something hard like woooo! That's fine." - Stanley Thomas

RED WALL LOUNGE EVENT

April 29 at 7 p.m.
Russell Union Theater
\$2 admission*
*75% of proceeds go to
Boys & Girls Club. Donations
welcome.

BAKE SALE

(to raise money for the Red
Wall Lounge)
April 10 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Russell Union
Original & Chocolate

BY MICHELLE NORSWORTHY
The George-Anne staff

If you've ever been to UPB's Unplugged, there's a 99.99 percent chance you've heard of Random Acts of Poetry. Whether they're spitting bars or silencing the crowd with their spoken word, RAP members have performed at different events and venues both on and off-campus.

Finding its origin in a Campus Crossings apartment, RAP began as a group of close-knit creative minds, intent on helping each other get better with their skills.

"It was a couple of friends," Jalen Havior, current RAP President said. "So they started writing and hanging out, thinking 'Hey, we should make this into a group.'"

Havior joined RAP in April of 2011, one year after the group of friends first started meeting.

RAP grew from little more than a handful of individuals, to about 25, packed into the

apartment, Havior said. It was then, in the fall of 2011, that RAP moved to campus.

In the five or so years since RAP's inception, the group has grown to around 130 members. Though many of its members have graduated - like campus favorites Yani (Yani Mo) and Tavidée (OrfeoFame) - each year brings another group of talented individuals.

Although rap and spoken word have become signatures of RAP, the organization welcomes all artists.

"We do all types of creativity," Stanley Thomas, current RAP Vice President, said. "It's not just poetry, rap or spoken word. You can be an artist and want to showcase your artwork. We're not boxing people and saying 'Oh, it's just for these people.'"

In addition to its spoken word poets and rappers, RAP has boasted artists, dancers, photographers, singers and producers. Staying true to its roots, RAP continues to

foster growth in its artists.

"You can be great in whatever your lane is," Thomas said. "You may feel like you're in the same direction [with someone], 'cause a direction is huge, but a lane is specific. As long as you're in it, you can't take that away from yourself."

Through constructive critiques and RAP's built-in support system, members learn to memorize pieces for their performances. One of the biggest performances RAP puts on is the Red Wall Lounge.

THE RED WALL LOUNGE

The biggest RAP event of the semester, The Red Wall Lounge also found its beginning in the small Campus Crossings apartment several years ago. The event gets its name

from the red wall inside the apartment where RAP's founding members first held its meetings.

"It's like us remembering where we came from," Havior said. "It's a culminating event at the end of the semester... it's a big showcase."

RAP's next Red Wall Lounge will be Wednesday, April 29 at the Russell Union Theater. The event will begin at 7 p.m. and there is a \$2 admission fee. According to Thomas, at least 75 percent of the proceeds will go to Statesboro's Boys & Girls Club.

The Boys & Girls Club of Statesboro suffered a fire in February, damaging the teen center, Havior and Thomas said. The proceeds from this semester's Red Wall Lounge will go towards helping mend some of the damages.

"It's our poetry [and] music slam event. It's our biggest event of the semester," Micah Boone, RAP secretary, said. "We have people sign up to perform, the members

perform...and sometimes we have guest performers [who are] established."

Boone, who performs mostly hip-hop, is no stranger to the stage. Despite his experiences performing, Boone admits he's still nervous.

"We have an open-mic part near the end, and I had signed up for that," Boone said. "It was one of my first times performing; it was really nerve-racking to say the least."

Both Jalen Havior and Stanley Thomas also remember being scared for their first performances.

"Don't be scared of showing your works," Thomas said.

"It's your heart, you know?" Havior said. "You're expressing yourself, and you can never be lackluster expressing who you are... That's all we care about."

Making A Splash

Q&A with a water park guru

BY KATIE KIETH

The George-Anne contributor

You've all heard of it, and now it's time to actually dive in. Splash in the Boro is a prime Statesboro summer attraction, but what about it makes it so special? How does such a water park function? Jenna Campbell, the Aquatic Program Supervisor, reveals the inner workings of how this park plans for the upcoming summer season.

How do you prepare for opening week?

They start early when it comes to hiring. "Lifeguard training started back in February, other positions started 2 weeks ago ... orientation begins towards April," Campbell said. This preemptive planning makes it so everyone can have enough hours for training. Lifeguards are trained constantly and through levels, so they can pick out the most compatible person for the job.

How many people do you typically hire for each summer? What about during winter hours?

"We hire generally 250-300 staff total, 25-30 total for winter staff; 92-100 lifeguards, 60 concessions staff members, and about 50-20 employees for other sections." Summer is from May 16 to Labor Day on September 7, and the first week is a trial-and-error to see how things go; any adjustments to staff can be made during opening weekend. All summer staff get to go to a social at the start to get adjusted to knowing one another, and learn their work environment. To keep things alive and well throughout the summer, they have an Employee of the Week who "gets special treatment and benefits" to keep the incentives high.

How many visitors come on average to the park each summer?

"2100 people on any given day, though it can get more

crowded." There's a lazy river for when you want to stretch out and tube, and a water slide for when you want to turn up—what could be more exciting?

Are most of the people you hire from Georgia Southern? What's the appeal for students?

"We rely heavily on high school students, Bulloch county residents, and college students [for staff]." The park is determined to use local capital, so they are extremely flexible with hours work, and try to work with students' schedules as well as they can. They offer benefits to their workers as well: college students get a \$2 discount, and employees get free tickets while they're working. Sororities & fraternities can host parties, and rentals for clubs are growing in popularity.

The moral of this story: go try it out! If you're stuck

in Statesboro this summer, without a care in the world, get a pass to this park and try it out. With awesome prices and fine selection of rides (wave pool, lazy river, slides... oh my!) what's there to lose? Show your family the amazing part of the Boro—with a splash!



THE HAMPTONS
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NEWEST
COTTAGE-STYLE
COMMUNITY



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ENGAGE IN VOLUNTEER WEEK by joining the VIA Experience

BY MICHELLE PRATT

The George-Anne contributor

Engage in Volunteer Week by joining the VIA Experience.

National Volunteer Week, April 12 to April 18, 2015, is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out opportunities to be engaged in their communities.

As college students it is so important to volunteer in the community and statistics show that college students like us are normally the ones who do the most volunteer work.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics economic news release people with a bachelor's degree or higher make up about 39.9 percent of the people who volunteer in the U.S.

So how can you help out around Georgia Southern? A new program called the Volunteers in Action, VIA for short, is in their third semester at Georgia Southern

and is doing some pretty amazing things.

VIA is a program that "allows students to have a consistent relationship with a nonprofit agency for around 5-15 hours a week," said Wendy Denton, assistant director for Service-Learning in the Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement.

"The great thing about VIA is you get to customize your own job descriptions with the agencies we use," Denton said.

The VIA program really is set around what the community needs at that time, so it is forever changing.

Jamie Cromley, Lecturer in the Department of Community Health, requires her students in Community Health (PUBH) 3230 to complete a mini-VIA experience, which is about a total of 15 hours, for their service-learning requirement.

"The relationships you build within this program

provides students with many opportunities after they are finished," Cromley said.

As college students we know how hard and competitive applying for jobs can be. The VIA experience can give you the experience many careers are looking for.

"Every job opportunity is wanting a diploma, but they also want experience. With the VIA program you are able to get the experience in ways that many other applicants will not have," Cromley said.

Out of Mrs. Cromley's two semesters of doing the mini-VIA a total of 1,425 volunteer hours were achieved within her class.

Khyra Walker, senior Public Relations major, was a part of the VIA experience for four months of her junior year working as a marketing intern with the Statesboro-Bulloch County Breast Cancer Foundation.

"With being a student of

Georgia Southern University, comes experiencing Statesboro as a home," Walker said. "What better way to feel at home in Statesboro, than to take care of the people and places in your area?"

Volunteer Week is about helping your community and learning about the many opportunities that

can be found on and around campus.

"Take the chance to do something different and stray from the norm," Walker said.

You can learn more about the VIA Experience program and what opportunities are available by visiting: students.georgiasouthern.edu/LeadServe/via/



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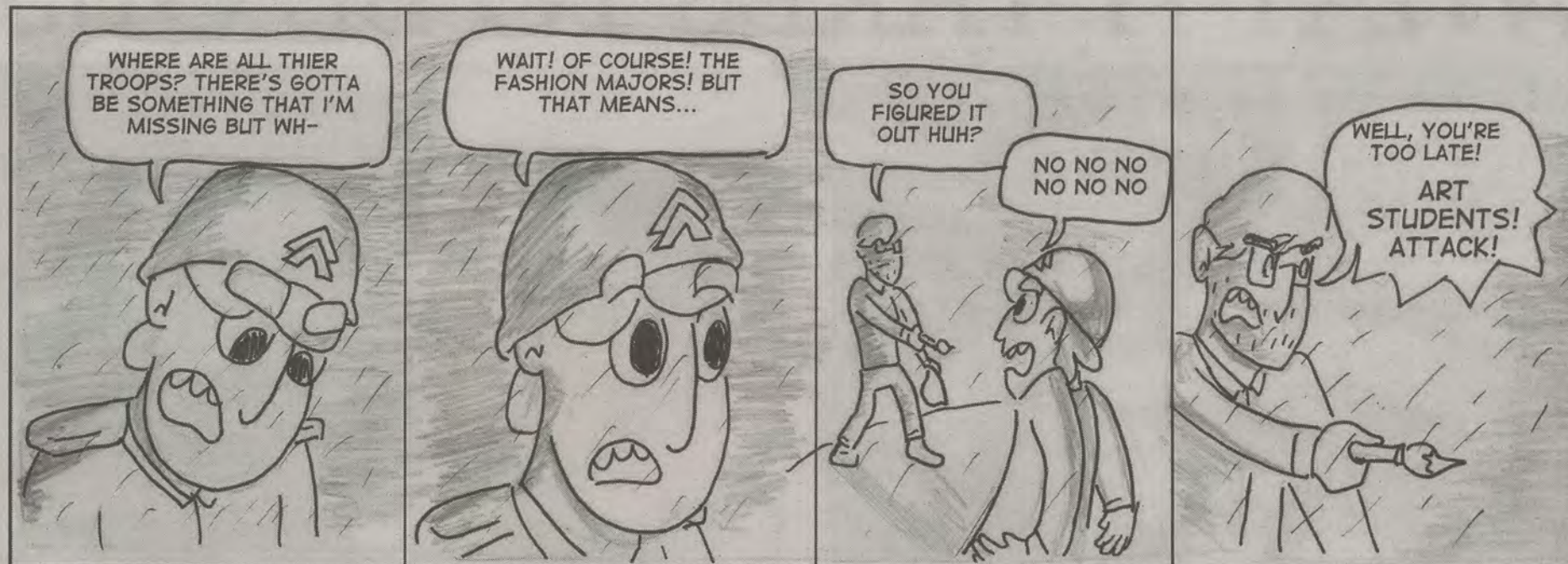
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A SONG OF SCIENCE AND ART PART 8: THE REVEAL BY: TOMMY MARTIN



Letter to the Editor

JAMES "MAJOR" WOODALL

Woodall is a senior political science major from Riverdale, Ga.

There are very few people who really leave a lasting impact and legacy on a place as big as Georgia Southern University, but Christopher Pugh has done just that. From being one of the greatest advisors on this campus for multiple organizations, to being the director of the Minority Advisement Program, he has literally saved hundreds of lives. The idea of having to continue here at GSU without our pillar of strength is unfathomable and to have been notified

of his termination, without explanation of reason to all those that he advised, mentored, and affected, is unbearable.

"Big Chris", as he is commonly called by his students, embodies every characteristic of what it means to be an Eagle. He has soared above all expectations and standards that we as a campus community has set for him. Too many instances where the only person who advocated in the best interests of the student body was Big Chris. Most of us never really had our own parents to turn to, but when we came here he was the first person to believe in us and show us that we were able to be successful here and to lead our lives though love and faith. So to remove such a notable figure

here in Eagle Nation is not only unwise, but destructive.

GSU has sold us on the idea that Eagle Nation is a family, as we should be. But in the words from a very familiar program, "Ohana means family, and family means no one gets left behind." In this situation, students are being left behind. This is no longer a matter of confidentiality, but rather a situation of utmost importance and urgency. If students really are the number one priority here at this institution, administration will see to it that he will be reinstated immediately. We want to believe in the goodness and beauty of this institution. Please don't take that opportunity away from us.

As a reminder, The George-Anne accepts Letters to the Editor and opinions columns from all of Georgia Southern's campus. If you would like to have a Letter to the Editor or an opinions column run in the paper please submit them by Sunday to run in Tuesday's paper or Tuesday to run in Thursday's paper to letters@georgiasouthern.edu.

The George-Anne welcomes letters to the editor and appropriate guest columns. All copy submitted should be 350 words or fewer, typed, and sent via email in Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx) format to letters@georgiasouthern.edu. All submissions must be signed and include phone number for verification. GSU students should include their academic major, year and hometown. The editors reserve the right to reject any submission and edit submissions for length. Opinions expressed herein are those of the Board of Opinions, or columnists themselves and DO NOT necessarily reflect those of the faculty, staff, or administration of GSU, the Student Media Advisory, Student Media or the University System of Georgia.

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BY LAYNE SALIBA
The George-Anne staff

The majority of people do not know his true identity. They only know him by one name – Gus.

Gus is the mascot at Georgia Southern University, seen at all sporting events, special occasions and sometimes just walking around campus greeting students. However, there is a person inside that suit and that person has a story.

There are only two people in the world that have the opportunity to wear that big eagle head and those enormous yellow talons. Two people that may have the most spirit and dedication to the university than anyone else. And one of them just lucked into the job.

"Typically, people have to try out to become Gus, but I got lucky. I started mascotting when I was a freshman in high school. So, I had four years of experience and I knew someone who knew Gus whenever I got to Georgia Southern," Gus said.

It all started back in the late 1980s as a mascot

that resembled more of an overfed chicken known as The Eagle. However, Georgia Southern's Homecoming of 1997 brought along some changes. The student body chose to rename the mascot. The name they chose? Gus. Along with the name change, the university wanted to give their new mascot a healthier, more fit look. Therefore, they purchased a muscle suit and Gus was reborn.

"The suit smells like Hanner. So it's got that weird smell to it. And obviously I'm wearing tights. So as soon as I put those on, I automatically feel less manly right off the bat. And then there's the big feet and the muscle suit that take a while to get used to," Gus said. "The muscle suit is by far the most constricting thing. As far as vision goes, it's fine, but I don't have any peripherals. So I can't see anything right below me. I've gotten pretty good at being aware of what's around me and everything but it's still not perfect."

Wearing the suit and becoming acclimated to it is difficult. Add in the rules and restrictions like not being able

to talk while in the suit and keeping it a secret makes for a tough job in and of itself. However, all of these things are completely worth it to Gus. It is a small price to pay considering the reward that comes from it.

"It is a paid job so I do make some money. I get t-shirts pretty much anytime I want. I get to meet other cool mascots from other schools and I get to go a lot of cool places – all paid for," Gus said. "Most of all though, I get to see a lot of people smile. Even when people are having a bad day, just walking up and giving them a high five or something, you get to see their face light up. So that's probably the biggest perk. I love that."

Even with those exciting things, being Gus is not an easy job. Imagine having to be the life of the party at a football game, even when the team is losing. That is why Gus does what he does though. He gets to be there to lift the spirits of the fans and the team. From beginning to end, Gus is there.

Being energetic the entire game is not easy either. It

is difficult, even as a fan. But think about wearing a 10-pound suit in the heat of a Statesboro afternoon football game at the same time. It gets even harder. However, keeping that energy is a key role that Gus plays.

"As soon as energy dies down, people can tell and Gus just becomes another guy on the field. Whereas if Gus has this constant energy, he's more than just some dude in an eagle suit. That's what makes Gus," Gus said.

Many people think that Gus is crazy. Friends and family even occasionally make fun of him for getting paid minimum wage to do all of these tasks while dancing around in an eagle suit. However, Gus does not see it that way. He sees it as an opportunity to experience life in a way that not many other people will ever get the chance.

He is the guy that runs the flag out before all of the players at football games. He leads the echoing chants that ring throughout the stadium. He gets unlimited access to see behind the scenes of all sporting events

and gets to do it all with people that make the job fun.

"My favorite event was the first time I did a Georgia Southern football game. I mean, right there at the beginning with Freedom's flight and then Gus runs the flag and he goes to the center of the field and everyone starts chanting. I mean, obviously you've got your nerves going. But when you're out there, all you hear is the roar of the crowd and it's intense," Gus said.

Gus cannot tell people that he got to do that though. It is a secret that must be kept. Even if someone does find out, his identity has to be concealed. Revealing this would destroy the character, and fans would begin to see Gus as the person he is instead of Georgia Southern's mascot.

"I love the energy and the fact that every time the school mascot walks into the room, people smile. So getting the chance to put on the suit and go out there and make people smile and be around that constant energy is really exciting and I really like it," Gus said.

EAGLES SWEEP THE MOUNTAINEERS

BY ROBERT GEORGE
The George-Anne staff

Both Georgia Southern and Appalachian State softball came into this past weekend ranked at the bottom of the Sun Belt. Both have struggled in their move to the new conference. But, the Eagles put in a strong performance and came away with their first sweep in conference play.

GAME 1 (W 6-5)

The Eagles jumped out to an early 1-0 lead, but errors allowed the Mountaineers to tie the game. The teams matched each other's scoring for the rest of the game, and the score was tied 3-3 entering the final inning.

Sophomore Morgan Robinson led off the seventh with a single, followed by a two-run bomb from junior AJ Hamilton that gave the Eagles a 5-3 lead. But, the Mountaineers tied the game up again in the bottom of the inning with a two-run blast of their own.

In the eighth, sophomore Taylor Rodgers led off with a single, and then senior Kaitlyn Johnson stroked a double off the fence to score Rodgers. Freshman Heather Felt worked a three-up, three-down final inning to seal the win.

Felt allowed just five hits

and five runs, only two of which were earned. She struck out four batters and picked up her first win in the Sun Belt.

"We battled back in the first game and got past some errors in the field," head coach Annie Smith said. "We got some key hits up and down the lineup and Heather (Felt) pitched a great game."

GAME 2 (W 17-3)

The Eagles offense continued to swing a hot bat in the second game, as the team racked up 17 runs in the shortened five-inning game.

The Eagles jumped out to a 1-0 lead in the first, and added four more in the second. They were held scoreless in the third, but came back and scored another five runs in the fourth.

The Mountaineers finally broke through in the bottom of the inning, scoring three runs. That was all they had, and the Eagles added seven more runs in the final two innings of the shortened game.

"We came out in the second game and did a great job at the plate," Coach Smith said. "We talk a lot about winning every inning, and we did that."

GAME 3 (W 11-6)

Lexi Allen had a big day at the plate, going 3-3 with two home runs, three runs scored

and six RBIs. She hit her fourth and fifth homers of the season to lead the Eagles hot offense.

Everything clicked this weekend for the Eagles. The offense was on fire, the pitching was solid and the defense did enough to keep the lead when the Eagles got it.

"I'm really happy for the team, they've been working really hard and it is good to see them rewarded with a win," Coach Smith said.

The Eagles will have a quick turnaround as they prepare to travel to Florida to take on the Jacksonville Dolphins in a doubleheader on Wednesday.

The Dolphins are 21-19 on the season, including a 4-5 record in the Athletic Sun Conference. They are led by junior Victoria Brown, who happens to be their best hitter and best pitcher, something relatively uncommon at the college level. She is hitting .367 with eight home runs and 29 RBIs. On the mound, she sports a 14-12 record to go along with a 2.65 ERA and 95 strikeouts on the season.

The Eagles will look to build on their win streak and use the momentum from this past weekend to carry them through the week.

First pitch on Wednesday is at 5 p.m., and can be seen on ESPN3.



CHRISTIAN TRUBILLION THE GEORGE-ANNE

Sophomore Emily Snider, freshman Alesha Mann and freshman Rowan McGuire (left to right) are all underclassmen that are continuing to improve for the Eagles in the outfield.

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GSU rider makes it to Nationals



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAM MCCARTHY
In this competition, all the riders have to perform on a horse at random. They do not get the luxury of riding their own horse.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAM MCCARTHY
Allison Gilbert is a sophomore information systems major from Buford, Ga.

BY KATIE TOLBERT
The George-Anne staff

There are over 8,000 riders and over 350 schools that are a part of the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA). But, sophomore Allison Gilbert is one out of just 16 to make it to the 2015 National Championship.

"Nationals is comprised of the entire nation. It's the top of the top. She will be competing with the 16 best riders in her class around the country," William McCarthy, team treasurer, said.

With the help of the Georgia Southern Equestrian Team, Gilbert did so well during her competitions that she got an automatic bid into nationals. To make it to that level, riders over the course of the year have to build up points at local shows to make it to the Regional Finals.

"Starting out during the year, we usually practice twice a week, and once regionals and zone happened, I ride here about four times a week. Sometimes I ride two horses a day," Gilbert said.

GSU is in a region that also includes schools like Clemson, College of Charleston and Lander University. Gilbert made it to Regionals and placed first overall, which then continued

her up to the Zone Finals. At this competition, the top two riders will make it to Nationals, and Gilbert earned that spot with a second place finish.

At Nationals, Gilbert will be competing in the walk/trot division. The skills showcased in this competition are things that the riders prepare for all year, but what is almost impossible to plan for is the horse a rider gets.

Unlike usual horse shows, riders have to select a horse at random each show with only a basic description of the horse. There is no comfort between the rider and the horse, just the skills the rider can show off with the horse.

"You have to be able to ride a huge amount of horses. You obviously have to practice anything from a little pony to a big warm blood," Gilbert said.

As soon as Gilbert gets her horse, she will immediately go into the ring and will have to walk around in a group while getting asked to show different skills. She will have to show rising trot, sitting trot, to ride at the walk and reverse directions around the ring. The judges will be looking for Gilbert's position in the saddle as well as how well she can handle an unfamiliar horse.

"She's a really good rider. Every time she has gone to another competition she seems kind of nervous, and then she gets in there and kills it. She is a very capable rider and our coach thinks she could potentially place at nationals, which would be a really big deal," McCarthy said.

“I would love to win first, that's definitely the goal.”

Allison Gilbert
GSU Equestrian team rider

"I would love to win first, that's definitely the goal, to place first and be the first champion ever for the Georgia Southern Equestrian Team. But, I'd be happy just to place at all," Gilbert said.

Gilbert will head to Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts on April 30 to begin the competition. The GSU Equestrian Team currently has 25 members and is open to all full time students at GSU.

Eagles get first road series win in Sun Belt

BY COLIN RITSICK
The George-Anne staff

Georgia Southern baseball won its first Sun Belt series away from home over the weekend as the Eagles took two out of three games from the defending Sun Belt Champs, Louisiana-Lafayette, at M.L. "Tigue" Moore Field.

Friday GS 2, ULL 1

Friday night starter Evan Challenger gave up a solo homerun on the first pitch he threw to 2B Stefan Trosclair. After that, Challenger was almost untouchable. He

pitched 7.0 innings and allowed only two batters to get on base en route to his third win of the season. Challenger struck out nine Ragin' Cajuns, a season high for the ace, and gave up two hits. He leads the Sun Belt in ERA.

LHP Jason Richman closed the game, out pitching two near-perfect innings to earn his second save of the year.

Both runs scored by the Eagles came on sacrifice bunts. OF Hunter Thomas laid down a sac bunt in the first inning to score DH Kody Adams to make it a 1-0 game early. ULL tied it up in the bottom half with Sinclair's solo shot,

and then nothing but good pitching happened until the eighth inning.

SS Dalton Busby laid down a sac bunt that scored the winning run in the eighth and gave the Eagles the tight victory.

Saturday GS 7, ULL 4

The Ragin' Cajuns took a 4-2 lead in the bottom of the fifth inning thanks to a three-run frame. Georgia Southern answered right back with four-run sixth inning.

C Chase Griffin and Busby both hit two-run home runs in the top of the sixth to give the Eagles a 6-4 lead they would

not relinquish. Thomas joined the party in the eighth inning with a solo shot to add a little insurance.

Despite giving up four runs, RHP Tripp Sheppard pitched a good game and earned his third win this season. He threw 6.0 innings, gave up four runs (two earned) on six hits and struck out one batter.

RHP Ryan Frederick made his return to action from a hamstring injury that has kept him out since March 17. He faced three batters and struck out one. RHP Chris Brown struck out two batters in the ninth inning as he earned his seventh save of the year.

Sunday ULL 5, GS 1

The Eagles were looking to sweep its first series since they rattled off two in a row over UGA and App State a month ago.

ULL led 2-1 after the third inning, but the Ragin' Cajuns put up three runs in the fifth to take a 5-1 lead. No one would score again.

The Eagles lone run came from a fielder's choice off the bat of Griffin that scored OF Logan Baldwin.

Football kicks off first scrimmage



KATIE TOLBERT THE GEORGE-ANNE
A lot of young Eagles got playing time on Saturday in place of usual starters.

BY HAYDEN BOUDREAUX
The George-Anne staff

There is less than five months remaining before the Eagle football team heads to Morgantown to take on the West Virginia Mountaineers in their first game of the season. The team is in full preparation mode, having their first full pads scrimmage on Saturday.

After a short group period and individual position practices, the offense and the defense split into white and blue jerseys and took separate sides of the field. First up would be the starters, or the "ones," on offense going against the starters on defense until they could not score or make a first down. Then, the next group on the depth chart would take over. Several players sat out of the scrimmage, most notably star running backs Matt Brieda and L.A. Ramsby, so some of the younger guys could get a chance to get some playing time.

The team has been practicing together for less than two weeks and look to remain a solid team moving forward. After all, the story of the day was the new faces that graced Paulson Stadium, including a possible new backfield tandem.

Stepping in for Brieda and Ramsby was redshirt freshman Thomas Banks and sophomore Chaz Thornton. Both backs rotated in with the starting groups and saw the majority of the reps Saturday. Banks is a hard runner with deceptive speed and held blocks well. Thornton also ran hard between the tackles but had an explosiveness that he was itching to let loose.

"Chaz Thornton and Thomas Banks, I like those guys. They are hard runners and hard workers," junior quarterback Kevin Ellison said.

In examining the overall takeaways from the first scrimmage, one of the most important notes is that the practice was full speed but very minimal contact was allowed, with whistles blowing at almost the instant contact was made. This is done more than just to preserve their health; the coaches are looking at how the players respond to a game like situation, how they are using their techniques and not so much on how hard they can hit in

the first scrimmage.

"We're no where close to where we were last year, but we are working towards it at practice every day. We are working with this new offensive line to try and get those younger guys ready and prepared to play with the big dogs," Ellison said.

The offense looked similar to last year, with all three quarterbacks tossing more passes than fans would be accustomed to seeing but many sailed off target, giving the offense something to work on moving forward.

"I thought it was a good day. [There was] a lot of energy out here, guys flying around and making plays," senior safety Matt Dobson said.

With Ellison and Favian Upshaw taking two thirds of the reps under center, that left room for another new face, redshirt freshman Monteo Garrett, to make his first appearance. He originally rotated in with the third string, but towards the end of practice the coaches had him switch from his red quarterback jersey to a white jersey and both teams were now allowed full contact.

"It was a great experience. It was probably my first time getting real licks since my senior year of high school, and I got to see the flow of college football and how fast the game is," Garrett said.

Overall, Garrett held his own for most of the morning. He nailed most of his reads and ran hard through the play. While there were some errant passes, the young guy showed poise when he dropped back into the pocket and made few to no noticeable mental errors.

The entire scrimmage lasted about 90 minutes, and coaches will certainly have a lot of film to look over. While the team struggled in some areas, they appear to be weeks ahead of where they were at this point last year. If the Eagles can come out and replicate their success on the field from last season, that will certainly keep the Statesboro faithful happy.

The season may be months away, but fans are encouraged to come out for the annual Blue-White Spring game at Paulson Stadium on Saturday, April 18 at 1 p.m.



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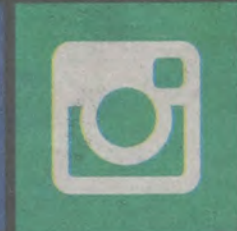
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