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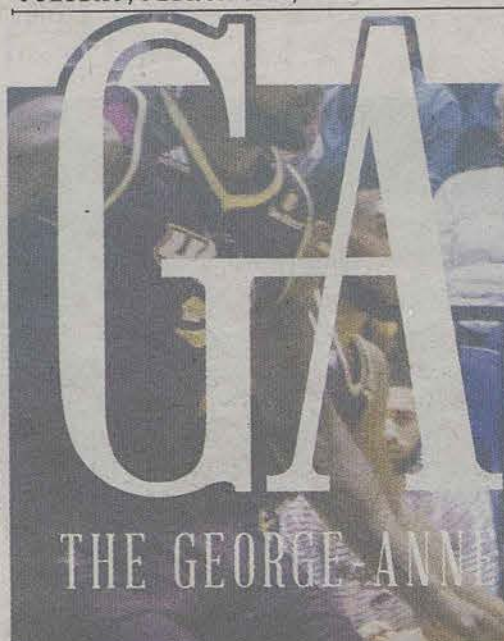


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FRESHMAN PHENOM IKE SMITH

*How the all-purpose forward
found his place as an Eagle*

PAGE 10

Students weigh in on the next university president

PAGE 3



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DIG IN

*Student
fees fund
sustainable
projects on
campus*

Page 4



© MADISON REYNOLDS

GROUNDHOG DAY

*The history
behind the hog*

Page 8

Tuesday



**High: 82°
Low: 64°**

Wednesday



**High: 78°
Low: 55°**

Thursday



**High: 59°
Low: 40°**

Friday



**High: 59°
Low: 33°**

Get your tissue boxes ready, because there may be a roller coaster of humidity and wind this week.

Weather Bar

TASERS COULD BE PERMITTED ON CAMPUS SOON

by Gabe Thomas

A bill allowing tasers and stun guns on college campuses is expected to be introduced in the Georgia House of Representatives within the next few days.

ValdostaToday is reporting that Rep. Buzz Brockway (R-Lawrenceville) proposed the bill as a compromise to a bill that was introduced that would allow students to carry handguns on campus.

Brockway told WXIA in Atlanta that tasers would be a good compromise because they are not as lethal as handguns are.

Other Georgia lawmakers expect this session to revive the discussion of allowing guns on campuses.



WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

by Johnny Lu

As a part of Campus Recreation and Intramurals' (CRI) program, Wheelchair Basketball started at the Recreation Activity Center (RAC) Thursday, Jan. 28, 2016.

Within the RAC, Intramural Sports has a wheelchair basketball league available to both disabled and non-disabled participants on Thursday evenings for a five-week season during the spring semester.

Considered one of the major disabled sports practiced, wheelchair basketball is described as basketball to be played by people in wheelchairs.

"It's positive to see disabled sports practiced and expanded among a college community," Taylor Anderson, RAC staff and computer science major, said. "The program became so popular here that our website even added a handbook and scheduling forms just for wheelchair basketball."

Years ago, the Multicultural Student Center and the Student Disability Resource Center even held a Wheelchair Basketball Demonstration to inform students of the sport.

International studies student Jessica Smith helped out with the event.

"Students and participants were welcomed to learn the rules of the game and then shoot for the goal while sitting in a chair," Smith said. "It's great to see how far the sport's come at Georgia Southern. These demonstration events are a great way to kick off each season's games."

Intramural Sports provides online rules and handbooks for their programs' sports such as wheelchair basketball, softball and bowling and offers information on how to get involved.

SPORTS SHORTS

-The men's tennis team lost to East Carolina on Friday 2-5, and to Winthrop on Saturday, 3-4.

-Women's tennis lost to SCAD on Saturday, 3-4.

-Also on Saturday, the women's basketball team lost against Arkansas State 54-77.

-Men's basketball evened the score by beating Arkansas State 71-66 on Saturday.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN RECEIVES GRANT FROM GENE HAAS FOUNDATION

by Brea Dupye

The Gene Haas Foundation donated to the Manufacturing Engineering Program at Georgia Southern University a grant for \$15,000 to assist students who hope to have a job in the manufacturing field. The number of scholarships that the money will create is still unknown.

The owner of the Haas Automation and co-owner of Stewart-Haas Racing, Gene Haas, created the foundation in the late 1990's to help his local California community and charities.

GSU is the only university in Georgia that allows students to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree with an emphasis in manufacturing engineering. The program officially launched in August 2015, in the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT) building.

"This donation is reassuring and it's a step in the right direction that shows there is still interest from the [manufacturing] sector in manufacturing engineering education," Spencer Harp, laboratory supervisor in CEIT, said.



REFLECTORGSU.COM by Julia Fechter



What's Your Favorite Eagles Song?

As we mourn the loss of Eagles guitarist Glenn Frey, let us remember the music that Frey and the Eagles contributed to American pop culture. The Eagles have had many hits over the years, with their unique blending of country and rock. What Eagles song do you enjoy the most?

Read the rest on reflectorgsu.com

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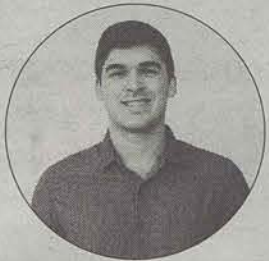
The Student Support Services (SSS) program provides comprehensive services to first-generation students, limited income students, and students with disabilities. The primary goal of SSS is to help transition, retain, and graduate college students.



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Exploring how the GSU president affects students



SKYLER BLACK

Black is a senior writing and linguistics major from Warner Robins Ga.

University presidents are meant to represent the university to the outside world and to the faculty, staff and students. The president has a multitude of roles as the leader of the university such as supervising the relationship between students and administration and representing the university in public affairs. The new Georgia Southern president is an interim president, who replaced Dr. Brooks Keel, Dr. Jean Bartels. Beginning this month, the university will begin looking for new presidential candidates to replace Bartels.

Keel was a president that was well known to the students on campus due to his many walks to Starbucks and selfies with pretty much everyone. Our campus loved him because of his engagement with the students. What most people don't know is how much more he did for this campus.

During his time here, Keel helped expand the undergraduate and graduate education and raised the profile of GSU athletically and academically.

Bartels has been a driving force in the Statesboro community for many years, but as interim president she does not have as much power as an actual president. It is hard to tell if Bartels would be a good president of the university because she's not eligible to apply for the permanent position according to the Board of Regents policy. The new president of GSU should be someone that has the ability to create conversations on campus as well as inform the members of the university of major changes.

GSU students, sadly, don't know much about what the president is able to accomplish in their position. There is a problem with communication when the majority of students have to guess what their president can do for their school.

Obviously, my opinion is not the only one on this campus. The students on this campus need to have their opinions heard about the upcoming president. I interviewed multiple students on the campus about the next president of the university.

1. Do you know who our current president is?
2. Do you know what they have the authority to do?
3. What do you want from our next president?



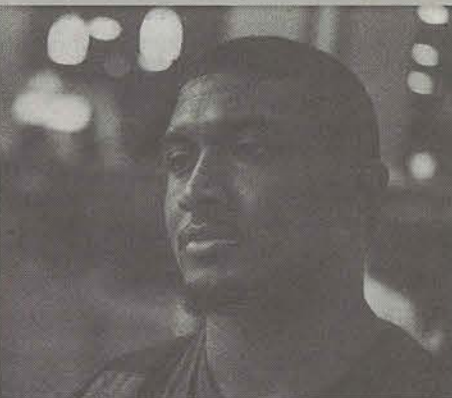
Blakeley Bowman, freshman, early childhood education



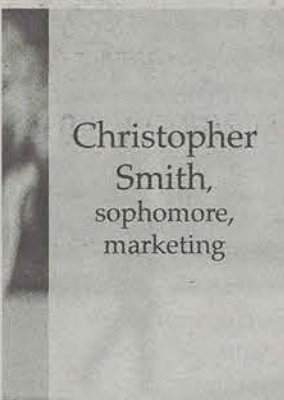
1. I don't know her name but I know who she is.
2. They kinda control the school system, I think, and set an example for kids and what our future should be like.
3. I think to boost up our community as a whole and our school community as a whole and really show us as one and bring more speakers and make it required that we go to them.



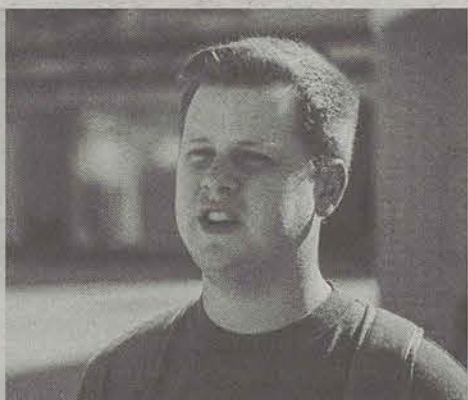
Jamal Freeman, junior, psychology



1. I don't know
2. I think they control the campus.
3. I want better food, unlimited weight room, like I feel like the RAC should be open all night and I think that if you are a Georgia Southern student, parking should be free. Cause I mean, this is our school, this is our home, and it should be free.



Christopher Smith, sophomore, marketing



1. Yes. Interim President Bartels
2. Not really. I guess that would come down to like promotional stuff, overseeing all the different departments and the budget. I don't really know what all they can do and what they can't do.
3. I'd say expand Georgia Southern. I think we try to stay too small when we can really capitalize and be a big university like Georgia or something like that. To put our name out there and become a bigger and better university.



Nick Cantrell, junior, information technology



1. Jean Bartels
2. I feel like they're probably like a figurehead. If something big happens with the school, they are there and their face is there and they do a lot of public relations. As far as decisions, I have no idea about that.
3. I think the sports have come along way with the whole transition to D1 (Division 1) and stuff like that. I feel like some academic things could be lifted and we need to focus more on the rigor and stuff like that of the school.

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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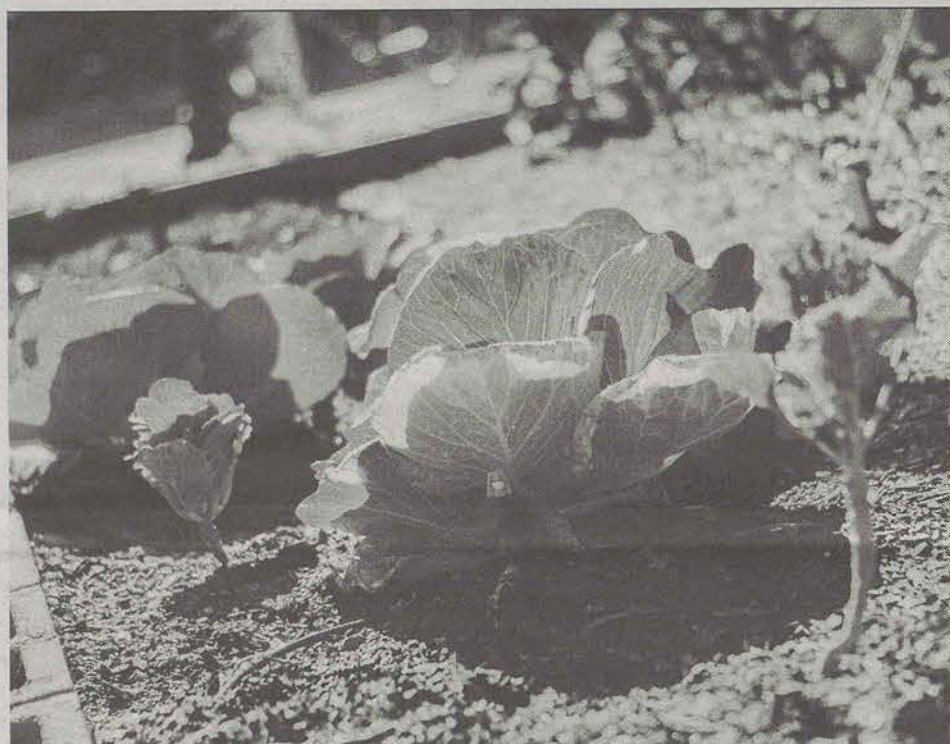
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Different types of plants are being grown at the campus garden. Students will be able to grow any plant of their choice this semester.



Kale is currently being grown in the beds of this garden. Kale is low in calories and has zero fat.

A water irrigation system helps maintain the garden. Student Sustainability Fees were used to fund the project.



GSU welcomes new campus community garden

BY TANDRA SMITH
The George-Anne staff

Georgia Southern University and the Center for Sustainability opened a new campus community garden last summer between the Herty Building and the Williams Center.

The garden was a project tasked to Scott Blair, a graduate assistant with the Center for Sustainability, who was able to build the garden with the help of student volunteers.

"Last May, I was tasked to create a program for the community. During the summer, we began to build [garden] beds with various groups of students. Environmental biology and dietetic students volunteered to help," Blair said.

There are six beds for students to grow various plants over the course of the semester. Kale, broccoli and chives are among the plants that are already planted in the beds, but these will be harvested before students begin to plant.

Some groups will also be able to grow tomatoes in the greenhouse or maintain the herb garden.

"This is an organic garden, so no pesticides, artificial fertilizer, like Miracle Gro, or herbicides. We

use our own compost for the plants," Blair said.

In order to get a bed, all you have to do is get a group of four or more people. These groups can include roommates, student organization members or teammates. As long as everybody in the group attends GSU, they are able to participate. Gardening experience is welcomed, but not necessary in order to get a garden bed.

At least one member of the group will also have to attend a bi-weekly workshop to learn about various gardening techniques and skills.

"[The garden] gives people an opportunity to grow food and learn what kinds of plants to grow during the year, how to compost, and so on. They start from scratch and go from farm to table," Lissa Legee, director of the Center for Sustainability, said.

Around harvest time, there will be a potluck celebration, in which students will harvest what they grew over the previous months and incorporate their produce into a dish that they will share with the other groups that also grew plants during that semester.

The celebration will take place during No Impact

Week, a week dedicated to environmental awareness, from April 10 through April 16.

"Students have been asking for eighteen years for their own garden on campus. This garden was created by the student sustainability fee and we're grateful that the students voted for it," Legee said.

The student sustainability fee was voted on back in 2012 and has funded various projects since then. The fee costs ten dollars each semester.

"[The fee] makes sense. I think most people want to contribute to making campus a little better. If our fees are going to a garden, they will most likely go to something else that we will never see," Kierra Wells, sophomore psychology major, said.

Feb. 5 is the last day to sign up to participate in the campus community garden and there are only two spots still remaining. To sign up, visit the Georgia Southern Sustainability website.

If you have any questions, you can contact the Center for Sustainability at cfs@georgiasouthern.edu.

New stomach flu strain spreads across the U.S.

BY BAILEY ADCOCK
The George-Anne staff

We have reached that time of year where it seems like everyone is getting sick. Whether it is a cold, a flu or some other illness, college campuses and dorms make it hard to avoid whatever bug is going around.

In 2015, doctors discovered a new strain of the stomach flu that is resistant to drugs and even more contagious than previous strains.

Norovirus, the actual name for the stomach flu, is extremely contagious and very few Americans are immune to it.

On Jan. 29, 390 people reported getting sick in a Norovirus outbreak from a suburban Kansas City dinner theater, according to ABC News.

While it is too soon to know if this illness is going to carry

on throughout 2016, there are some general facts that are important to know about the stomach flu and being sick on campus.

Contrary to its common name, the stomach flu is not prevented by the flu vaccine. However, students don't feel it will reach GSU.

"I don't think it will come here. If it does, it would be in isolated cases. I don't think it will be that serious," Alex Hollowell, junior business management major, said.

The norovirus is extremely contagious. The people who are at the greatest risk of contracting the norovirus are those who are old, young or are already sick.

"Last time I got the stomach flu, I was 16 and I'm pretty sure I got it from my brother. He was in day care at the time and they carry all kinds of diseases home," Melody

Rock, sophomore mechanical engineering major, said.

Like many illnesses, dehydration is a risk because of the overall loss of fluids through vomiting and diarrhea.

However, water alone is not the best option. You need to replenish the electrolytes that are dying within you.

"To anyone that has it, I suggest drinking a ton of water and juice," Rock said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is recommended that "sports drinks and other drinks without caffeine or alcohol can help with mild dehydration."

Noroviruses can stay on surfaces for days, proving to be a lot stronger than the typical virus.

If you are around someone that has had the flu, like your family members or

roommates, the best cleaning option is bleach. Other cleaning supplies may not be strong enough to kill the norovirus.

Another helpful hint for keeping clean around the norovirus is to not hand wash your dishes. Hand washing does not provide a strong enough clean and the norovirus can continue to live on the dishes.

Also, hand sanitizer is not a sufficient substitute for soap and water. To prevent yourself from contracting any germs, doctors suggest using warm water and soap.

Like with the cold virus and the normal flu, antibiotics will not help someone or prevent the spreading of the disease. If you are experiencing symptoms, call your doctor or health services whenever you notice blood in your vomit or feces.

The Mayo Clinic states that some symptoms of the norovirus include, vomiting, diarrhea, low-grade fever and muscle pain.

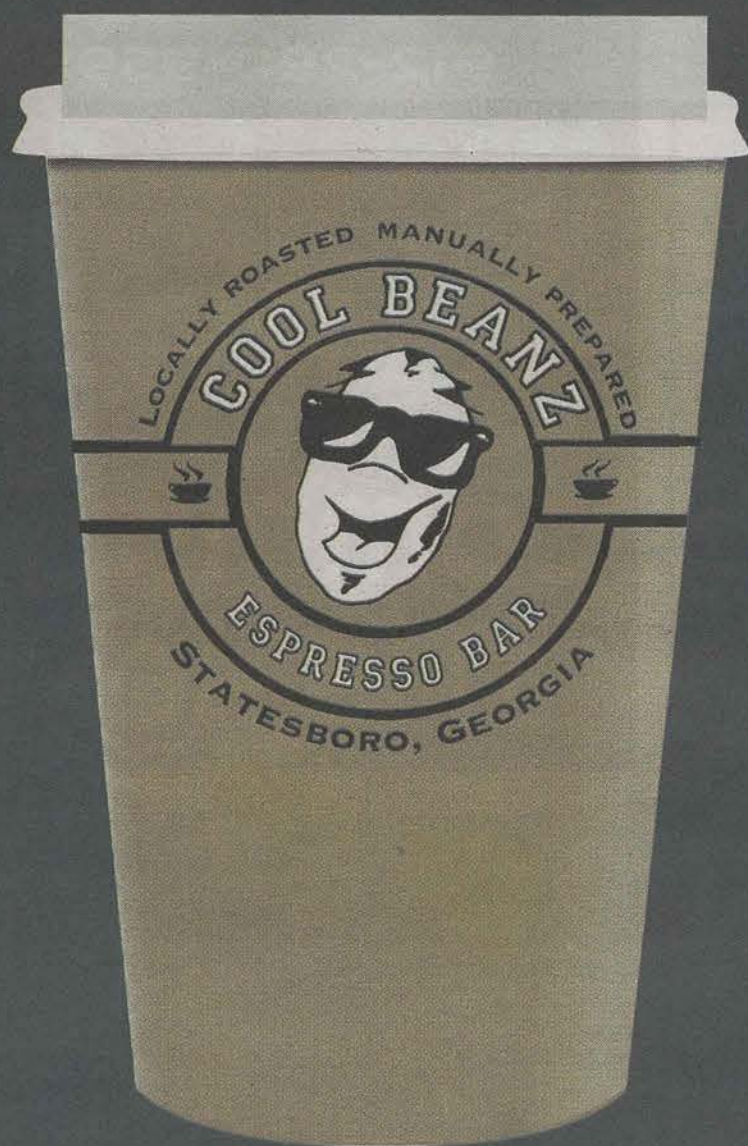
"In the simplest of terms, it was like my stomach rejected everything I tried to give it. It was awful," Rock said.

There is a good thing about the norovirus. It gets better on its own, and in a relatively short amount of time.

In case you have already contracted the disease, try to avoid interacting with anyone else.

Once you think that your symptoms have subsided, continue to avoid interactions for at least another day or two. You can continue to carry the norovirus even after you feel better.

For questions about the stomach flu, call Health Services or go to the CDC's website.



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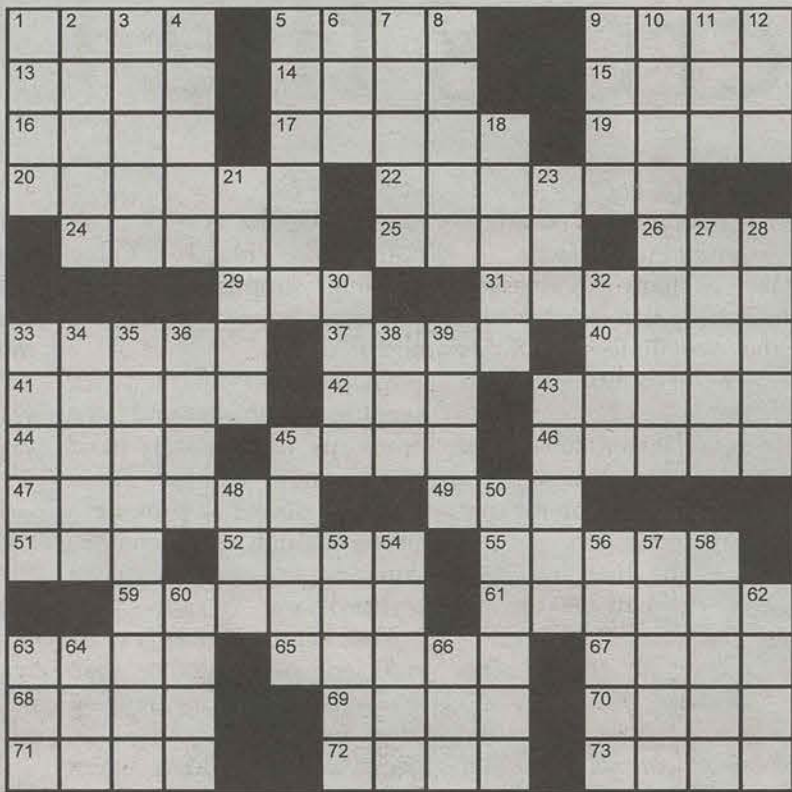
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The George-Anne 2/2/16 Crossword

PuzzleJunction.com

Across

- 1 Tolkien creatures
- 5 Insect stage
- 9 Face-off
- 13 Sulk
- 14 Formerly, once
- 15 Pitch-black
- 16 Wrinkly fruit
- 17 Bored
- 19 Foil's kin
- 20 Magnificent
- 22 Musically connected
- 24 Supporter of the arts?
- 25 Crèche trio
- 26 Popular cooking spray
- 29 Shriner's topper
- 31 Attraction
- 33 Browning's Ben Ezra, e.g.
- 37 Finito
- 40 Burn soother
- 41 "Snowy" bird
- 42 Beyond tipsy
- 43 "Halt!" to a salt
- 44 Donnybrook
- 45 Dalai _____
- 46 Skins
- 47 Mixture of soluble salts
- 49 Floral ring
- 51 Born
- 52 Dead against
- 55 Mission
- 59 Yield
- 61 Strike caller
- 63 Poker holding
- 65 Civilian clothes
- 67 Norse war god
- 68 Bell sound
- 69 Candidate's goal



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- 70 Lunkhead
- 71 Medea rode on it
- 72 "Iliad" city
- 73 Pianist Dame Myra

Down

- 1 Sonata, e.g.
- 2 Scalawag
- 3 Mea _____
- 4 Piggins
- 5 Little rock
- 6 Dot-com's address
- 7 Sacred hymn
- 8 Bewildered
- 9 Losing proposition?
- 10 Like some songs or people
- 11 Barely get, with "out"
- 12 Soapmaker's need
- 18 "The Collector" actress Samantha
- 21 Equip again
- 23 Be bedridden
- 27 Emerged
- 28 Track events
- 30 "J'accuse" author
- 32 Kind of lamp
- 33 Broadcasted again
- 34 Like a gymnast
- 35 Negotiating
- 36 Phi _____ Kappa
- 38 High spirits
- 39 List ender
- 43 Carrot family
- 45 Flax family
- 48 Back muscle, for short
- 50 Fairness
- 53 Believe in
- 54 Surmise
- 56 Period in history
- 57 Move crabwise
- 58 Some chamber groups
- 60 "Cogito, _____ sum"
- 62 Brings to a close
- 63 Bake sale org.
- 64 Ventilate
- 66 Way of the East

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Features

2-2-16

7

A TASTY TRIO

College Plaza brings flavors from around the world

BY ASHLEE GILLEY
The George-Anne staff

Many students go to the Zaxby's on Fair Road every week, but never pay attention to what's behind it.

There are three restaurants representing a variety of cultures in the strip mall behind Zaxby's. El Rinconcito, Coconut Thai and Sons Döner Kebab. They serve authentic Mexican, Thai and Greek food respectively.

If you're looking for alternative options to everyday fast food, these restaurants serve just that.

EL RINCONCITO



TASTE: Authentic Mexican, fresh ingredients

TIME: It took about ten minutes from ordering

PRICE: \$\$ About \$30 for two people.

ATMOSPHERE: Cozy, tvs mounted for entertainment, plenty of seating and the booths are a little worn from the many patrons that have visited

STAFF: Fast, friendly and knowledgeable

Good to know: This place is so legit that there is even an authentic Mexican grocery store next door. They also have a "serve yourself" chip and salsa bar, which is nice to snack on while waiting.

COCONUT THAI



TASTE: Authentic Thai, fresh ingredients

TIME: Took about 30 minutes from ordering

Price: \$\$ About \$35 for two people

ATMOSPHERE: Upscale, dimly lit, fresh flowers on the table, better for a date night or a celebration dinner, plenty of seating.

STAFF: Very friendly and very knowledgeable about the menu
Good to Know: As someone who is not a fan of spicy food, the knowledgeable staff helped find a dish that would work.

**** Open on Valentine's Day per reservation ****

SONS DÖNER KEBAB



TASTE: Authentic Greek food with unique flavors and like ingredients lamb

TIME: Took about ten minutes from ordering to get our food

PRICE: \$ about \$17 for two people

ATMOSPHERE: Cozy, small business, hand painted art on the walls and limited seating. More of a take out place.

STAFF: Fast, friendly and know their menu.




GOOD TO KNOW: Right behind the counter are two large kebabs where the cook cuts the meat for the meals.

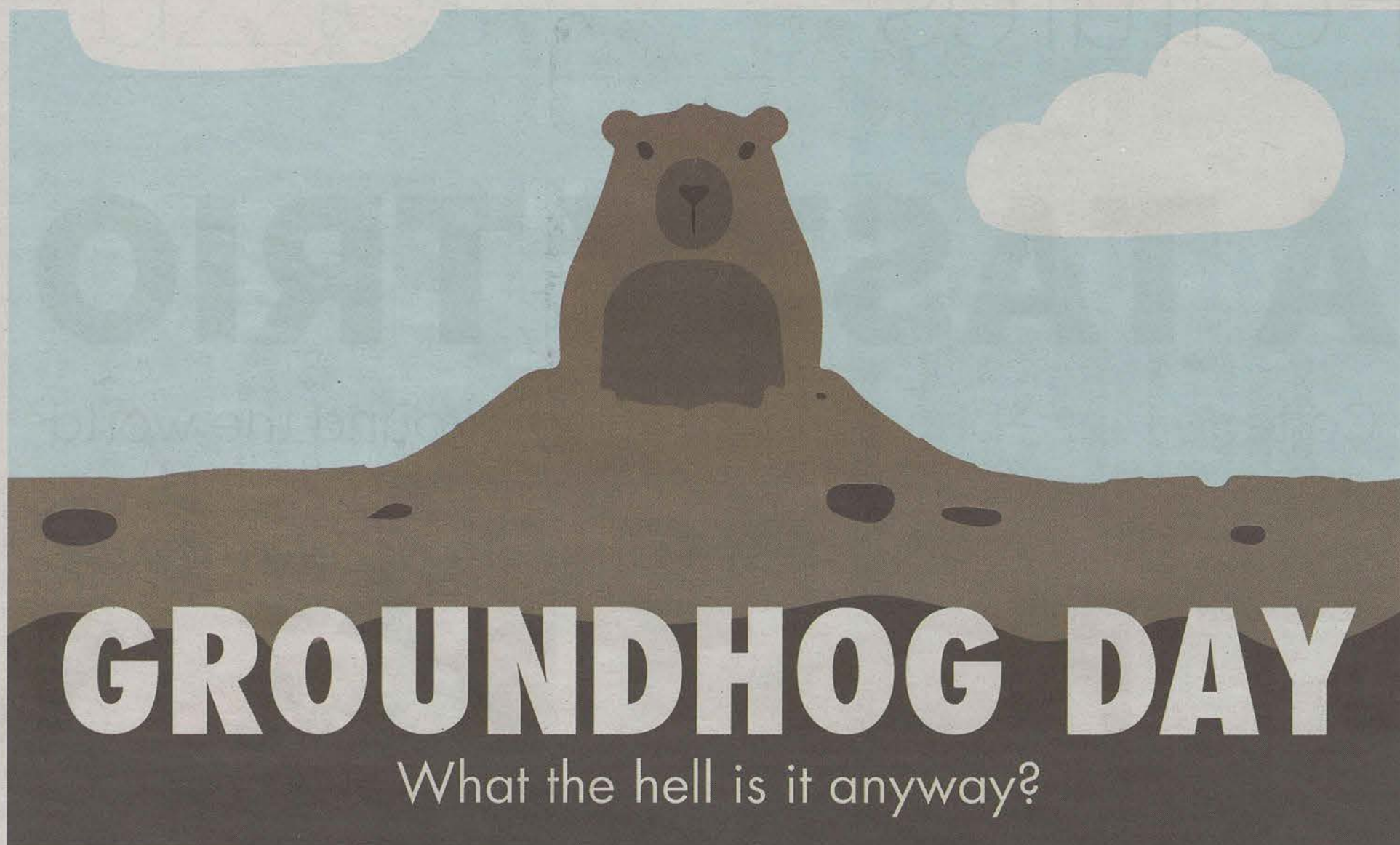
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BY ARAYA JACKSON
The George-Anne staff

The myths of animals awakening in certain seasons back in old ethnic cultures ties our present to the past, when nature actually influenced people's lives.

Today particularly, a little rodent known as a groundhog influences people all over the United States, and in other countries as well.

This holiday stemmed from the similar belief that

described Candlemas Day, which used to inhabit early cultures in Europe. Clergy would bless candles and distribute them to the people. The scripture of Candlemas Day read:

"If Candlemas be fair and bright, Come, Winter, have another flight; If Candlemas brings clouds and rain, Go winter, and come not again."

Sounds pretty spot on, minus old men and candles,

but now a rodent in a hole. My how the times have changed.

None the less, there's actually quite a lot that goes into this holiday, specifically in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, where the original holiday celebration takes place. This is where Punxsutawney Phil, the original groundhog, lives and either sees his shadow or not. Groundhog Day is a

whole day celebration there, with music, food, games and more. Not just something on television like it is for us here in Georgia.

There are so many myths and odd facts about the day, and groundhog Phil himself, here are some interesting ones to enjoy on this magical day:

1. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Groundhogs are the largest member of the squirrel family. They are also known as woodchucks. Punx. Phil is the only groundhog with a name as hefty as his, which in its entirety reads: Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators and Weather Prophet Extraordinaire. Sounds like the extreme introduction for Queen Daenerys Targaryen. Such royalty.

2. COPY CATS

Phil isn't the only animal humans listen to for the future weather forecast. Many states and countries have taken this holiday upon themselves and changed it to fit their specific region. In Lilburn, Georgia, we have General Beauregard Lee at Yellow River Game Ranch. Texas has Armadillo Day with Bee Cave Bob. Alaska has Marmot Day to represent their marmots and Alaskan culture. Quebec

has Fred and Nova Scotia has Scubenacadie Sam, both groundhogs.

3. IMMORTALITY?

Though these giant squirrels only live about six to eight months, according to the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club website (yes this is a thing), Phil gets seven extra years of life every summer when he drinks a "magical punch." If this year's Phil is the same one from back in 1886, maybe it's time he shares this special elixir of his.

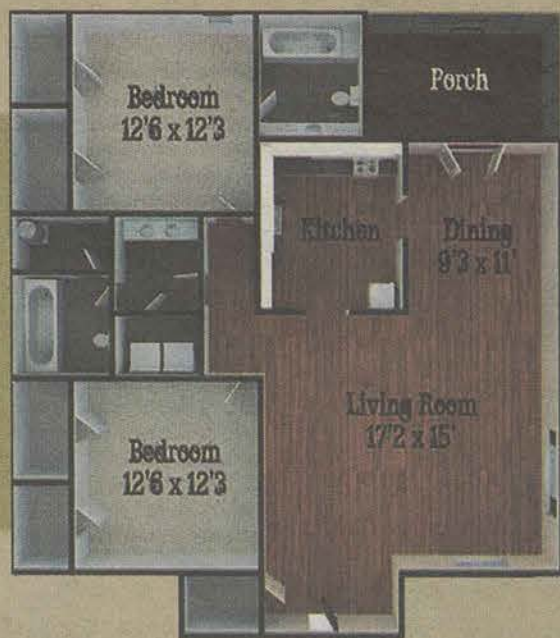
4. SQUAD

Have you ever actually watched the event and noticed all the old dudes in top hats? These gentlemen are referred to as Phil's "Inner Circle." They are the top of the fan club, including the president, vice president and treasurer. They plan the events and care for the groundhog. Wow, what a job.

5. SCIENCE DUDE

According to the HuffPost Green, Feb. 2 falls right at the half point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Basically saying that this is the middle point of winter, and there's always going to be around six more weeks of winter, regardless if Phil gets scared of his shadow or not. Sorry to rain on your parade guys. Cheers to more cold days in the Boro!

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HUMANE SOCIETY OF STATESBORO HELPS LOCAL ANIMALS

BY ASHLEE GILLEY
The George-Anne staff

Being passionate about something can cause people to do some pretty drastic things. Like signing a note saying you'll personally pay a bank if you can't raise the funds to pay off a new building.

This is exactly what five members of the Statesboro and Bulloch County Humane Society did when they decided the county needed its own animal shelter.

The Humane Society of Statesboro and Bulloch County was created in 1981 by a local Catholic priest and a couple of animal lovers, and to this day remains a nonprofit organization made up of volunteers.

Many of the volunteers juggle both their daily lives as well as their rescue work. "I have a part-time job, so I have more time to devote to the humane society than many of our members," Carrie Mitchell, past society president, said.

When asked about her day to day duties, Mitchell said she assists the current president, answer phones, handle calls related to the cat rescue, coordinates transports to no kill shelters with the Atlanta Humane Society and in the past she has even coordinated the dog rescue.

The Society has two annual events. A silent auction in June and a 'Raise the Woof' comedy show in November which helps to raise money for the Humane Society of Statesboro and Bulloch County. They have at least two adoption events at Petco every month. The proceeds from their thrift shop, ReTails, benefits their spay and neuter program, The \$20 Fix.

The \$20 Fix works with the Spay Neuter Alliance and Clinic (SNAC) to help provide low cost options to the community. Students are among the many who can benefit from The \$20 Fix, as well as low income families and others who adopt from the county animal shelter.

"I personally liked the SNAC program. It was well done work and they made it

easy as long as you had your own ducks in a row," Emily Kingsmill, senior exercise science major, said.

The number of animals in their care varies from around 25 to 50, but has been over 60 before. They managed to either rescue or transport over 400 animals to no-kill shelters in 2015.

Since the Humane Society of Statesboro and Bulloch County doesn't have its own building, they house their animals in foster homes, and they keep some of their cats at Petco so people can see them. The pets are also posted on Petfinder and the society's Facebook page.

"For anyone who wants to get involved, we love and need new members. We have monthly meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at St. Matthew's Catholic Church," Mitchell said. They are mostly informational and consist of current and future goals so it is a good place for newcomers.

Any skill can be useful to the society. Connie Mabry is the volunteer in charge of thank you notes and writes anywhere from 250 to 300 cards a year.

"I've been able to improve my calligraphy this way and the creative aspect really is enjoyable too," Mabry said.

A few other things the Humane Society of Statesboro and Bulloch County does is take last chance animals from the shelters where they would have otherwise been put to sleep. Volunteers help with rehoming pets, educating people on the importance of spaying and neutering their animals and even feeding pets in need.

If you are interested in volunteering, want to adopt or are curious about the society's programs, this information and more can be found at www.statesborohumane.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY

PET PREVIEW

NAME: King

BREED: Pitbull Mix

GENDER: Neutered Male

BIO: King is a sweet, playful boy who is full of energy. He gets along well with cats, other dogs and people. He is currently living in a foster home and in the process of being trained. He is fully vetted and microchipped.

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Ike Smith has been a key player for the Eagles this season. He is second on the team in scoring with 12.5 points per

IKE SMITH MAKES HIS IMPACT ON THE COURT

Despite being a freshman, Smith has put together a strong season for the Eagles. He is part of the youngest team in college basketball.

BY MARQUS WILLIAMS
The George-Anne staff

His name is Ike Smith, a freshman guard for Georgia Southern from Gainesville, FL. He's the type of guy that plays with a chip on his shoulder and loves to compete and get better every day. Smith is a key player for the Eagles as he averages 12.4 points and 4.9 rebounds per game. He's third on the team in scoring and second in rebounds, but the stats can't explain who he is.

This is a guy who didn't play basketball as his first sport, but happened to fall heavily into the sport after getting injured playing football in sixth grade. He used to shoot with his friends on the court where they noticed he was pretty good, which led him to the life of playing basketball for the AAU Florida Elite, Gainesville High, and now the Georgia Southern Eagles.

Many fans see him as one of the key players on the Eagles team on their journey through the Sun Belt but he doesn't think into all that. "I really don't have a role, coach just puts the ball in my hands and I do what he tells me. My main focus is trying to

get better on defense, as is the team's main focus," Ike said, about his views as a player in their system. He's an unselfish guy on the court as he doesn't see himself as having that "key" role on the court but rather a player that does what's best for the team and seeks improvement to better himself.

Though he is an athlete, he's also a student first. Ike's transition as a student athlete has been good in his eyes. "It's kind of tough being a freshman and everybody's always on to you, trying to teach you but it's pretty good, I like it," said Ike on his first year at Georgia Southern. He chose the Eagles because his cousin, Willie Powers, used to go to Georgia Southern and he used to tell him stories about how much he loved GSU. When Ike finally came to visit he saw a bunch of things he liked and his relationship with the coaches was a strong one that ultimately led him to Eagle Nation.

As a freshman, there will be more to see from Ike as he progresses in his basketball career. His hard work and attitude will be his strongest attributes to build upon.

FAVORITE HYPE SONG BEFORE A GAME?

Plies- Rich Carlton

BEST BASKETBALL MEMORY?

"Going to the state finals against Miami Northern. It helped me grow a long way and the experience was something I'll never forget."

COLLEGE LIFE LESSON?

"TIME MANAGEMENT."

BEST COLLEGE EXPERIENCE SO FAR?

"Going to Costa Rica over the summer most definitely. Being able to get out of the country to play basketball and experience that was great."

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS?

"Get a degree. Also be a pro, whether it's in the NBA or overseas either one is fine with me."

LEADER OF THE PACK

Rebecca Parker has helped lead the distance team for the Eagles this season. She and the rest of the team will race again on Feb. 12 at the Samford Invite & Multi.

BY DERIK WUCHTE
The George-Anne staff

With two meets under their belt, the rack and field team is on the path to a big season. The Eagles have found themselves with a handful of top-five finishes, and a number of their players have been performing well across the board.

Sophomore Rebecca Parker, one of the top runners in cross country last season, has been running in the 5000-meter, the 3000-meter and the one-mile this spring. Two weeks ago, she and some of her teammates set records for Georgia Southern distance running indoors. The season is still young, but the team has shown a lot of potential so far.

"I think it's going to be great seeing all of our training come together," Parker said. "Most of our training is a build-up from the summer for track season."

Parker placed second in the 5000 at the Wake Forest Invitational. This past weekend, at Clemson, SC, she raced in the 3000 and the one-mile. She earned top eight and top 12 finishes, respectively.

As a distance runner on the track team, Parker routinely goes through a different process than her other teammates. She and the other distance runners have been putting in a lot of time in order to improve themselves. Distance hasn't always been one of Southern's highest points, so it's a gradual process for it to earn recognition.

"Our 5K on Saturday, we really tried hard to work together. It was our first 5K on a track," Parker said. "We were really nervous. But we worked together and we all did really well."

On that Saturday, Parker mentioned, she, junior Bianka Loza and junior Ashton Lord earned top six finishes in the Wake Forest Invitational. Those three have been the lead distance runners this spring. Parker did not race in the 5000m at Clemson, but her two teammates did. They managed to both earn top eight places this weekend.

"It's going to be great to see how we keep working together, running the times and competing at conference," Parker said. "Right now, we're

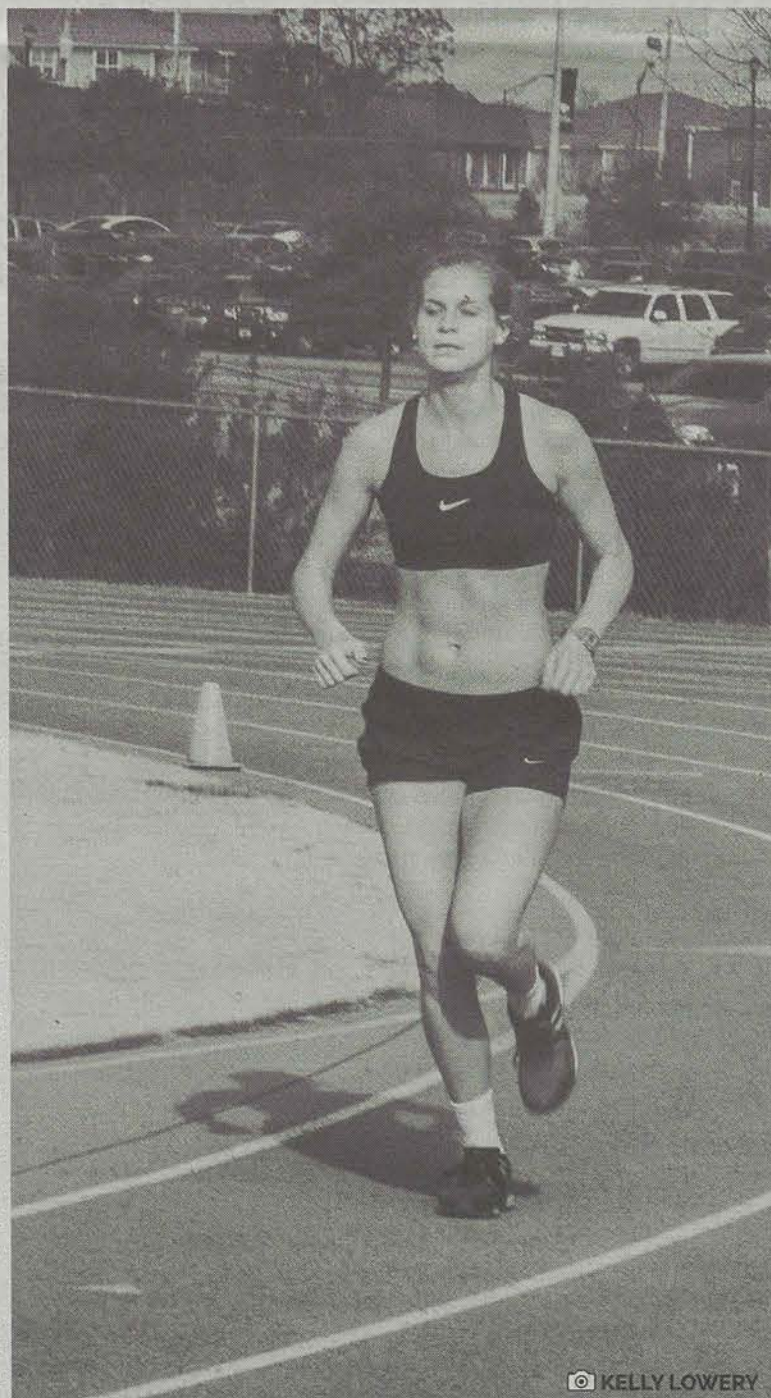
all ranked to run at conference."

The team has a lot of meets scheduled before the Sun Belt Outdoor Championship in May. It is only two weeks before the Sun Belt Indoor Championship, however. That leaves the Samford Stand Alone Multi in two weeks being the only competition before that weekend hits.

The goals are set high for the team, but they are practical. It comes down to training and staying on top of their game. GSU knows not to take a day off and the team knows to keep going hard.

"Definitely do everything at practice: weights, recovery; 100%. Anything. Even just a sore muscle," Parker said. "If coach says cooldown, you do your cooldown. If he says 200 at whatever pace, run that pace. Everything to a tee. It's definitely going to make a difference. That's how track and field is. It's everything to a tee. Very serious."

"We're looking great. Definitely a lot better than last year," Parker said. "We're looking well in the conference too. I'm very excited. I think we'll do well this year."



Parker has grown as a runner in her sophomore season. She and the rest of the Eagles will race again on Feb. 12.

Tomorrow is National Signing Day for college football. It is a day when college programs around the country finalize their recruiting classes and high school athletes make their final commitments for where they will play for the next four years. The Eagles have had quite the successful off-season, so before the big day let's look at what we know so far.

1. LEADING THE SUN BELT

The Eagles are entering their third year in the Sun Belt, and already they are off to a good start in 2016. Currently, Georgia Southern has 23 commitments, with seven of them being ranked by ESPN and is ranked as the 72nd best recruiting class in the FBS according to rivals.com.

Other notable schools in the Sun Belt have lagged behind, including defending champion Arkansas State with two 3-star commits, App State with six and Georgia State with one. While all of the previously mentioned schools have picked up two and three star recruits, one thing sets the Eagles apart from the rest of the pack.

2. EAGLES LAND FIRST FOUR-STAR RECRUIT (FROM UGA)

One of the biggest takeaways from the off-season is the commitment of 4-star wide receiver Darion Anderson from Warner Robins. Anderson is the first ever recruit for the Eagles to be signed from ESPN's top 300 recruits and had quite the interesting start to 2016. In late December, he was committed to the University of Georgia but then de-committed, opening the door for the Eagles to swoop in and pick up the highly touted receiver. This is a testament to the recruiting abilities of the coaches and program of Georgia Southern.

3. NEW COACHES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The departure of former head coach Willie Fritz definitely raised question marks among Eagle fans. With a large portion of the coaching staff moving to new schools, recruiting could have been greatly affected by the exodus. Instead, credit should be given to athletic director Tom Kleinlein and head coach Tyson Summers for bringing in several high school coaches, which resulted in them of bringing several of their former players with them to join the #Swoop16 signing class.

4. A PASSING FUTURE?

When looking at the list of commitments so far, which has adopted the name #Swoop16 on Twitter, a few things will jump out to Eagle fans. In addition to the four-star receiver Anderson, the Eagles have picked up a three-star and a two-star wide receiver along with a three star tight end that could all make a difference in the passing game quickly. This points towards the idea of the Eagles putting the ball in the air more as both quarterbacks Kevin Ellison and Favian Upshaw are entering their final years with the team. With the passing game looking to improve things still look good for the Eagle offense.

5. THE GEORGIA POWER COMPANY

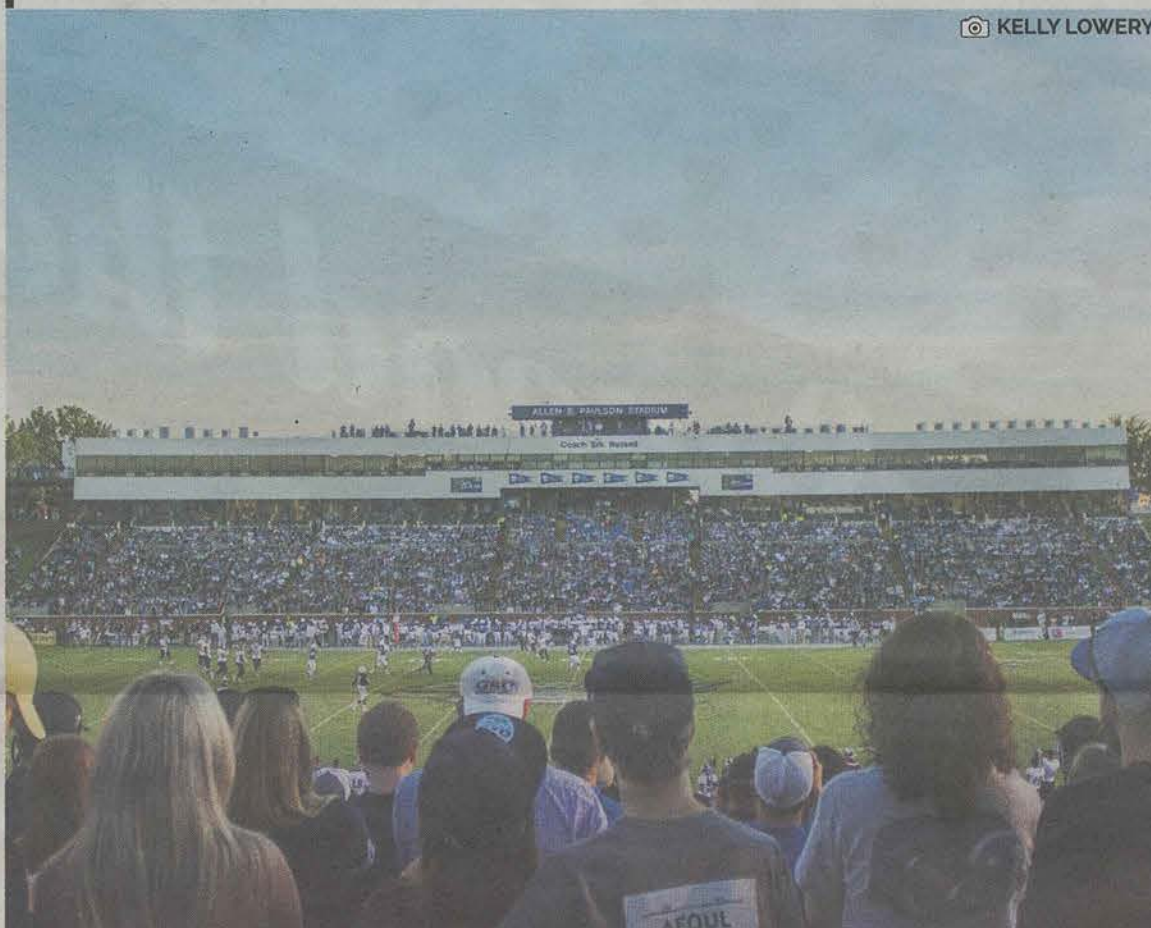
For those of us who still love the run game, the future remains bright for the Eagle option game. Amid the host of strong defensive recruits and receivers, the staff has brought in more heavy hitters for the running game. Two three-star running backs will enter the #Swoop16 class along side a pair of three-star offensive lineman from South Carolina. The Eagle backfield is stacked for the next three years or so, and the offensive line is maturing with every passing minute, but these recruits will all make their mark on Eagle football before their four years are up.

SIGNING DAY: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

Tyson Summers is putting the final touches on his first recruiting class at Georgia Southern. We count down five things to know heading into the big day.

BY HAYDEN BOUDREAUX
The George-Anne staff

The Eagles are trying to secure the top recruiting class in the Sun Belt. They finished their 2015 campaign with a 9-4 record.



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