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The George-Anne

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GA
THE GEORGE-ANNE

Valentine's Day

*Tips, tricks and tradition.
Celebrating Valentines' Day at
Georgia Southern*

Hot for teacher

Uncovering Student/Teacher
relationships

Page 2

Calling all sweethearts

Places on campus to take your date

Page 5

Cut-out cards

Sure to warm any Eagle's heart

Page 8

KIP DROWN

Women's basketball improves
in new coach's first season

Page 9

LINDSAY TRUSCOTT

South African tennis player shines at GSU

Page 12

Thursday



High: 61°
Low: 44°

Friday



High: 65°
Low: 41°

Saturday



High: 56°
Low: 28°

Sunday



High: 49°
Low: 32°

It will be mostly sunny all weekend with some scattered clouds. The temperatures will be lower, but if you own an extra jacket it is a perfect weekend to walk around River Street with that special someone.

Weather Bar

CAN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACTUALLY DATE?

By Johnny Lu

From high school consent cases to crazy college busts, there is just as much controversy surrounding student-teacher scandals as drugs or violence.

The question is whether there's ever a point where it becomes acceptable for a college student to date a teacher. When it comes to the subject of love, some can argue that factors such as age or occupation should be unconditional.

Referring to the university's policy system and guidelines, Associate Dean of Students Kerry Greenstein, said that student-teacher relationships in college shouldn't be an issue as long as school professionalism and legalities aren't tampered with.

"It's only advised not to date your professor, it's not mandated," Greenstein said. "I don't see a problem as long as things such as grades and learning aren't affected in the relationship."

Different schools have different systems and policies. Some universities may allow students to engage with their class instructors outside of class while some encourage students only to see instructors who don't teach a class they are currently enrolled in as the university doesn't want personal, outside relations to affect grading and other class-related matters.

GSU's rival school Georgia State University, in fact, enforces a policy where instructors, including grad and teaching assistants, must only be in contact with current students through telephone, messaging and scheduled office visits in regards to academic-related matters.

"The topic can be argued endlessly, but at the end of the day, love is love," Ally Craig, freshman sociology major, said.



January - February

JAN 14 Unplugged
6:30 P.M. @ Williams Center MPR

JAN 29 Movie: Self/Less
6 & 8 P.M. @ Russell Union Theater

FEB 06 18th Annual Miss Georgia Southern University Pageant
6 P.M. @ Performing Arts Center (PAC)

FEB 11 Unplugged
6:30 P.M. @ Williams Center MPR

FEB 12 Movie: The Perfect Guy
6 & 8 P.M. @ Russell Union Theater

FEB 24 80's Skate Party
7 - 10 P.M. @ Williams Center MPR

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PERFECT GUY REVIEW

BY DJ FULLMER

2 Temper Tantrums out of 5

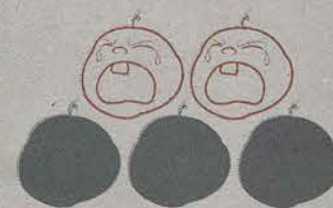


PHOTO COURTESY OF ROTTENTOMATOES.COM



Layout at
The George-Anne Valentine's Day Edition

© DJ Fullmer

Are our editors actually dateable? In the spirit of the romantic season, we've created a video showcasing if our editors have what it takes to be significant-other material.

Video at thegeorgeanne.com/multimedia

Puzzles

2-11-16

3

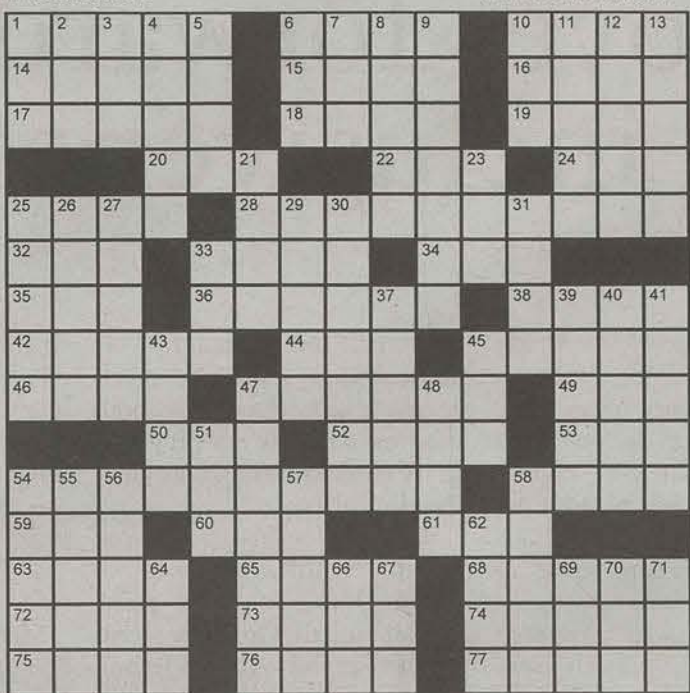
The George-Anne 2/11/16 Crossword

PuzzleJunction.com

Valentine's Day

Across

- 1 Lamp
- 6 "Holy Toledo!"
- 10 Skin problem
- 14 French farewell
- 15 Indian queen
- 16 Horse's motion
- 17 Whale finder
- 18 Hammett hound
- 19 Farm unit
- 20 Genetic initials
- 22 Mischievous one
- 24 Female lobster
- 25 Diplomat's forte
- 28 Valentine's Day gift
- 32 Eskimo knife
- 33 Burn slightly
- 34 Holiday quaff
- 35 Day break
- 36 Northern California city

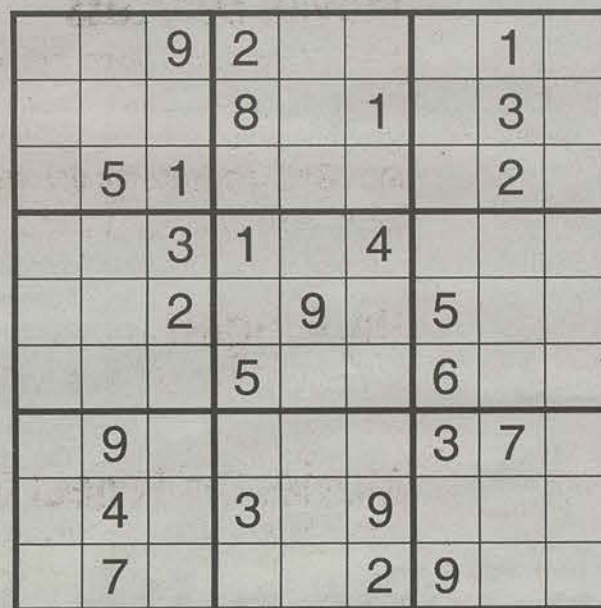
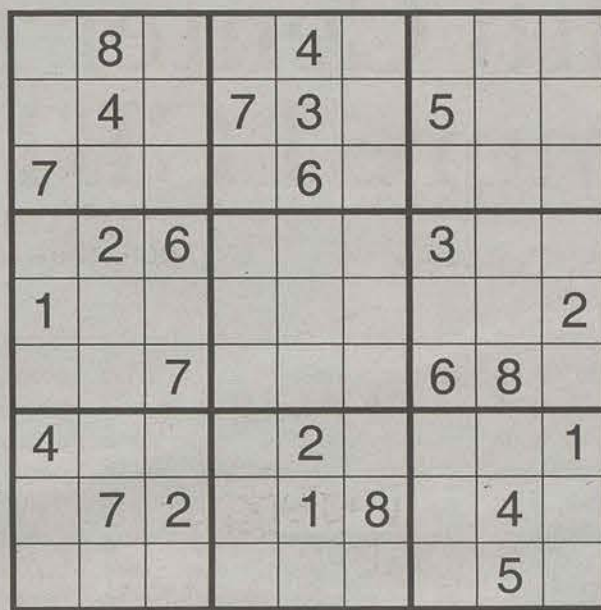


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- 73 Kind of pool
- 74 Sensational
- 75 To be, in old Rome
- 76 Biblical plot
- 77 Clear the slate

Down

- 11 Marina sight
- 12 Rocks at the base of a cliff
- 13 Parenting challenges
- 21 Be in pain
- 23 Arafat's org.
- 25 Melodies
- 26 Texas shrine
- 27 Valentine's Day figure
- 29 Severe
- 30 Fancy flowers for Valentine's Day
- 31 Thickening agent
- 33 Metric units of length (Abbr.)
- 37 Chill-inducing
- 39 Valentine reminders
- 40 Outfit
- 41 Feasts
- 43 Yarn
- 45 Follower's suffix
- 47 Valentine posy
- 48 Nuisance
- 51 Compass pt.
- 54 Valentine's Day activity
- 55 Smells
- 56 After buffer and danger
- 57 Chose
- 58 It's about Valentine's Day
- 62 Competent
- 64 Be in hock
- 66 Till bill
- 67 Cygnet's mother
- 69 Lyricist
- 70 Family girl
- 71 Dutch city



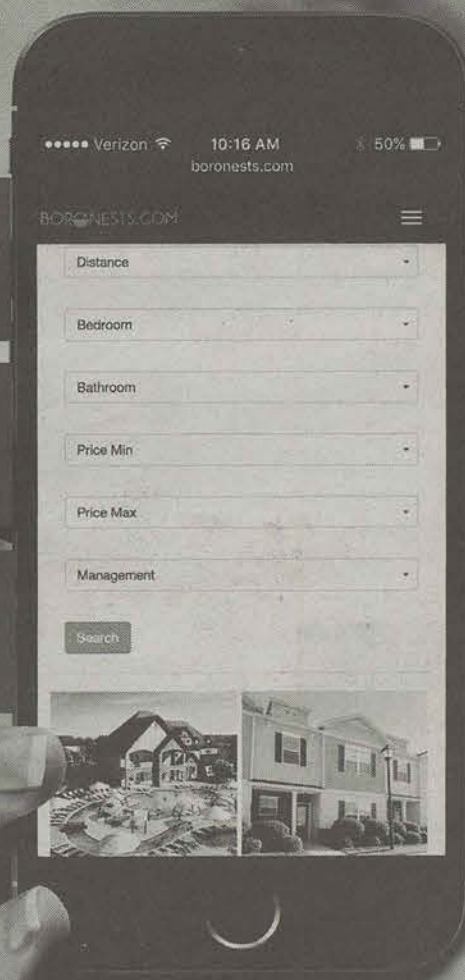
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Health Center moves forward with more LGBTQ inclusiveness

BY TANDRA SMITH AND BLAKELEY BARTEE

The George-Anne staff

Georgia Southern University's Health Center is currently in the process of becoming more inclusive to LGBTQ students on campus. The center has a plethora of plans that they hope to be able to complete before the Fall 2016 semester begins.

"[We will be] updating our intake form questions related to gender identity, developing a way to sensitively steer and direct LGBTQ patients to specific providers in Health Services, and continuing to increase our staff's comfort level and level of professionalism when interacting with all of our patients," Brian DeLoach PhD., Medical Director for GSU Student Health Services, said.

Along with the list above, the health center will be

identifying and developing referral sources for LGBTQ students who have needs that exceed the scope of a primary care student health center and establishing ways for transgender/transitioning patients, under the care of a private physician, to have some of their labs and medication administered at the center.

"Specialty care can be a challenge in a semi-rural area like Statesboro, especially for transgender or transitioning patients, because there are very few medical providers in our state and in the Southeast who are providing gender reassignment surgery and hormonal manipulation for transgender patients," DeLoach said.

The process of the center becoming more inclusive

did not begin recently. It has been an ongoing mission for several years, ever since a large portion of the staff participated in Safe Space training, a type of training designed to help individuals become more supportive of the LGBTQ community.

The issue was reignited lately when DeLoach was approached by a student with specific concerns regarding inclusiveness for a particular group.

"I was contacted several weeks ago by a student who expressed some concerns specifically related to our inclusiveness pertaining to transgender/transitioning individuals. I followed up with that student shortly after being contacted by them and the student and I were able to sit down and discuss those

concerns," DeLoach said. "The student and I plan to meet regularly over the next several months to review our progress as we work towards improving the clinical experience."

As the plans begin to roll out, the health center will be adding information on their website and the Online Student Health portal. In addition, the coordinator of Health Education and Promotion will be reaching out to various groups on campus like the Gay Straight Alliance to share the inclusiveness message. The center will also be working on a plan to include information for LGBTQ students about LGBTQ healthcare in their promotional information.

"I would say that Health Services is probably one of the most progressive and inclusive medical practices in our entire

region of the state, so we were all somewhat surprised to learn that we were not being perceived that way. I think what we need to work on are more [plans], which will improve how inclusive others view us as being," DeLoach said.

Many students feel like the health center should be more inclusive and even the entire community as a whole.

"I think the entire campus should be more inclusive of all things—race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.—and I personally think the health center should put their energy towards making health care more affordable for students, but better anywhere than nowhere," Carolyn Nixon, junior political science major, said.

Fall in love with Valentine's Day events at the campus Chick-fil-A

BY TANDRA SMITH
The George-Anne staff

The on-campus Chick-Fil-A restaurant will be doing a series of events on Friday, Feb. 12 for Valentine's Day.

The idea for Valentine's Day events began in February 2012, when the restaurant gave out over 500 carnations to students who visited the restaurant and who were going about their business while walking on campus.

Over the years, the events have varied from handing out candy to making heart shaped biscuits in the morning. This year, the events will be about the same.

"For breakfast, we will have heart shaped biscuits, made with specially designed cookie cutters. We will also have the Chick-Fil-A cow out in the

Russell Union and random places on campus, passing around candy," Bo Galvin, General Manager at Chick-Fil-A, said.

Galvin wanted to pass out flowers this year, but was unable to due to state regulations. Galvin enjoys having events like this, because he says there are not too many opportunities to do so.

"Our team members enjoy it. It gives [the restaurant] an opportunity to do something fun and different. If anything, it will remind at least one person to buy their significant other something for Valentine's Day," Galvin said.

In the future, the restaurant wants to continue to play up the event to attract even more people and be able to pass out even more candy.

However, there are some mixed feelings about Friday's events. Some students feel it isn't necessary.

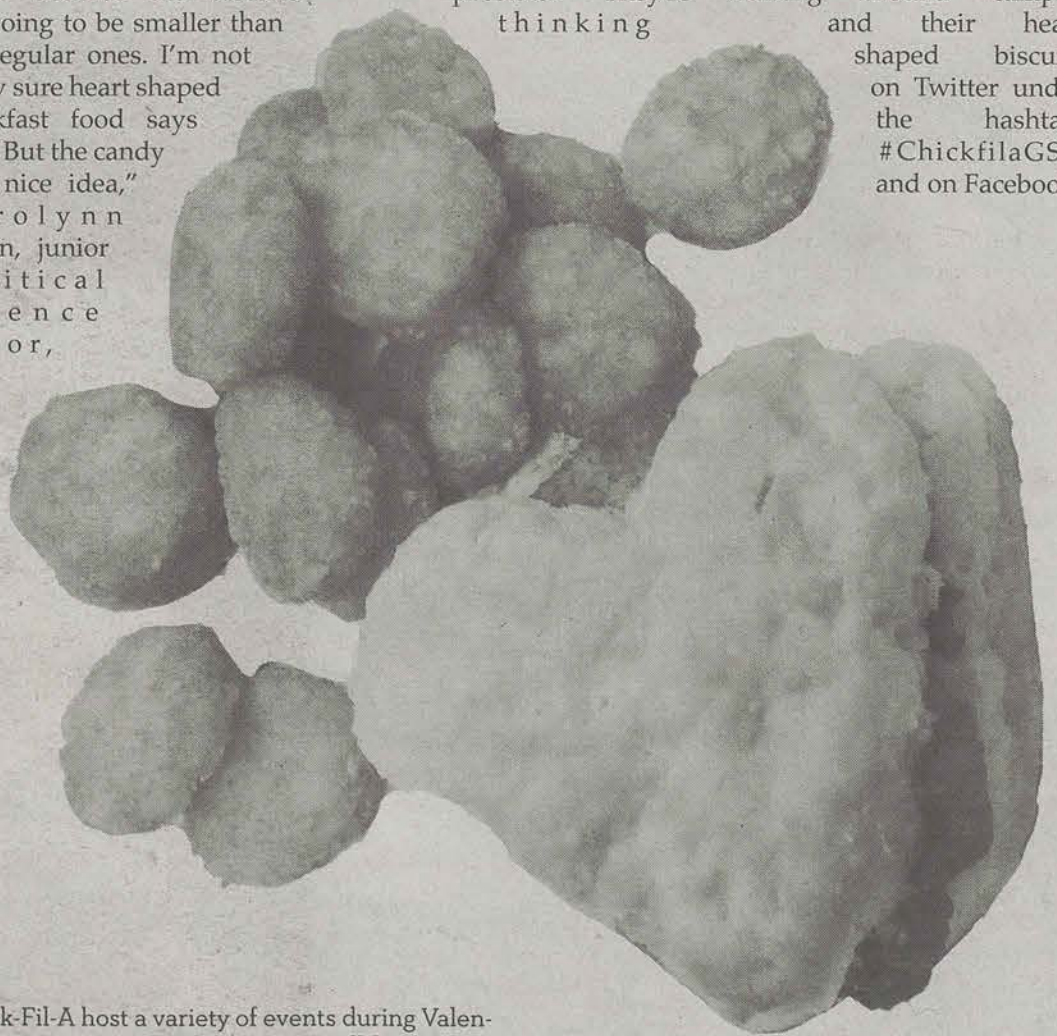
"I think it's a little bit of a waste because the biscuits are going to be smaller than the regular ones. I'm not really sure heart shaped breakfast food says love. But the candy is a nice idea," Carolyn Nixon, junior political science major, said.

However, other students feels that it's a great idea.

"I think that Chick-fil-A is awesome and they should pass out as much candy as possible. They're thinking

about us singles and showing us love," Ami Wagne, freshman biology major, said.

Galvin encourages students to post pictures of the cow walking around campus and their heart shaped biscuits on Twitter under the hashtag, #ChickfilaGSU and on Facebook.



Chick-Fil-A host a variety of events during Valentine's Day. Heart shaped biscuits will be sold on Feb. 12.

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Rekindle your love: GSU romantic traditions

A couple takes part in the Sweetheart Circle tradition. Sweetheart Circle is one of many romantic places on campus.

BY BAILEY ADCOCK
The George-Anne staff

Traditions run rampant here on the Georgia Southern campus. From Gus to Freedom's Flight to the Watermelon Cutting, GSU students, faculty and alumni have a wide variety of activities to take part in.

As Valentine's Day is fast approaching, romance is on everybody's mind. Our very own campus has plenty of romantic places and activities to take advantage of.

Sweetheart Circle is one of the most popular romantic traditions here at GSU. The circle got its name from what alumni used to call "Sweetheart Campus."

Alumni and current students alike visit Sweetheart Circle in hopes that the traditional walk around will provide them with some romantic luck in the future. The tradition states that three walks around guarantees that you and your sweetheart will be married.

"Going to Sweetheart Circle seems really romantic to me," Megan Fromme, sophomore special education major, said.

Lake Wells and Lake Ruby, named after President Guy H. Wells and his wife Ruby, are two more iconic romantic places on campus. President Wells served as the university's president from 1926 until 1934 and had the lakes put in during his presidency.

Not only do these two lakes have the romantic aspect, but together they also form the shape of the state of Georgia. The fountains in the lakes accurately represent Statesboro and Atlanta in relation to a map of Georgia.

There are plenty of options for things to do on a low-budget, while staying here on campus.

"My girlfriend and I have gone to feed the ducks before. It was romantic and we had a really good time," Austin Falk, sophomore hospitality management major, said.

While the Lakeside Dining Commons is not open on Sundays, thus eliminating the possibility of a romantic dinner along the lakes, Landrum is still open. After taking your stroll along the lakes, head over to Landrum for a cute, cafeteria-style dinner. For an extra kick of romance, grab some battery-powered candles and a rose or two to spruce up the tables.

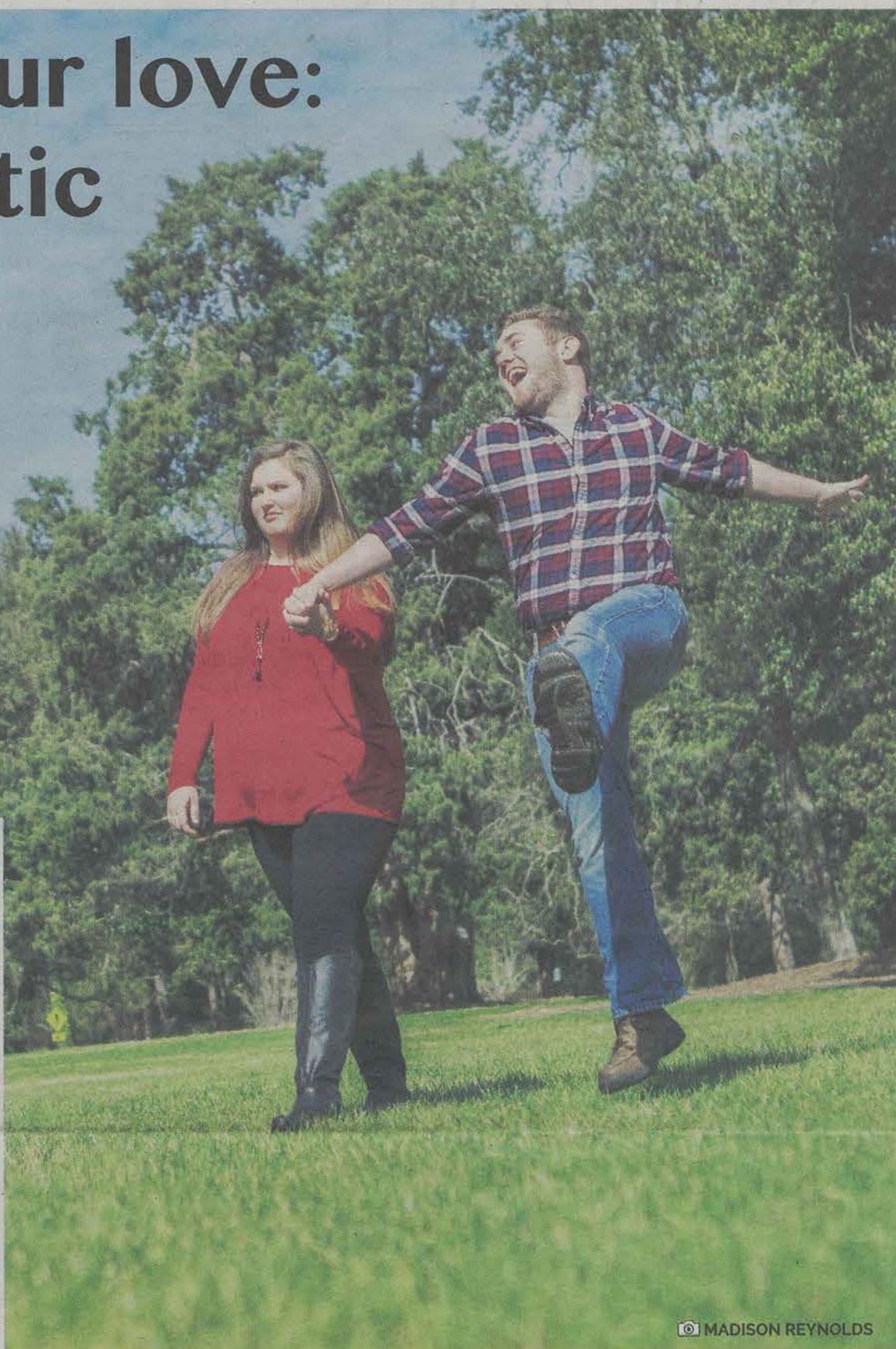
If you want to avoid the dining hall all together, fix up a nice and cheap picnic and take your special someone over to Sweetheart Circle. Make sure you grab a nice, comfy blanket and some shades, though, because Sunday is expected to be cool and sunny.

For those looking to be a bit more adventurous, a couple's trip to the RAC might be right choice.

"Rock climbing, the sauna, spotting each other at the weights, and racquetball... there are a lot of couple's things to do at the RAC," Wallace Avin, sophomore psychology major, said.

If you are in need of some last minute gifts, the University Store is open until 6 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Let the romance run rampant this Valentine's Day and keep your GSU pride in mind.



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Valentine's Day in one word



SKYLER BLACK

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

The tradition of buying shiny and tasty gifts for significant others and crushes has been around for years. Valentine's Day is a date where candles are purchased, flowers are gathered and chocolate is consumed at an alarming rate.

A large amount of people feel as though the date is simply a money grab for companies. Valentine's Day is much more than that to me. This day is made for people to show others what they mean to them. In high school, it was an excuse to give a special valentine to a pretty girl you wouldn't normally go for. Coming into college, the feeling surrounding the holiday is quite different. Students tend to think that to have a good

time on Valentine's Day you have to spend a large amount of money on the person, or people, you have feelings for. Understandingly, that can sway people away from wanting to even try dating. Mostly because as a college student, money is in short supply.

Our marketing and money focused society has created a holiday that is meant to represent love into another marketing ploy. According to US News, in 2014, \$17.3 billion was spent in retail spending. The amount of money spent on average is around \$140 per person. This is a ridiculous amount of money spent on a day that was created for a singular purpose which is to celebrate love.

This day is meant to share

our feelings in ways we would never do normally. I am a big fan of this date but I am a pretty biased, being in a relationship. Let me be clear, I do not believe that spending a large amount of money will affect the way that you feel for someone. But the idea behind the day, I fully agree with. Showing love for other human beings is something that should be done everyday.

Our campus is full of college students that feel strongly about this "love-dovey" holiday. I asked students what they think of when they hear the words 'Valentine's Day.'



Alysia Gustausen,
junior, sociology major

Candy



Amari Burry
freshman,
pre-nursing major

Couples



Sydnie Madison,
senior, multimedia
communication major

**Baby
making
season**



Tyler Levens,
senior, sport
management major

**Made-up
holiday**

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

LAST SECOND LOVE NOTES

Quick Valentine's Day cutouts for the Eagle you love

BY THE GEORGE-ANNE STAFF

Are you the fourth floor of the library? Because you leave me speechless.

To:
From:



Can I Tap-n-go?



To:
From:

The Gold Route won't be the only thing you're riding tonight.

To:
From:



Why hit the RAC when we can hit the sack?

To:
From:



Are you Erk Russell? Because I want to Get After That Ass.

To:
From:



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2/11 WEEKLY BUZZ 2/17

Keeping you in the know about Student Affairs and Enrollment Management events, designed with you in mind.

FEBRUARY 11TH

● UPB Presents: UnPlugged Elements of Love

Time: Thursday, February 11th. 6:30 - 8:00pm

Location: Williams Center Multipurpose Room

The University Programming Board has changed the look of Thursday nights in the Boro! Our monthly UnPlugged series offers a relaxed, coffeehouse/lounge type environment for students to indulge in tasty treats and beverages while enjoying a variety of entertainment acts, provided by Georgia Southern's most talented. Faculty/staff/students, do you have a special talent that you'd like to share with the campus? This event is free and open to the public. Students, please bring your Eagle IDs. If you need assistance, related to access for this event, please email: upb@georgiasouthern.edu at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

Contact Information: UPB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

● SOLD Series Workshop - Confessions of a Depressed Comic

Time: Thursday, February 11th. 7:00 pm

Location: Russell Union Ballroom

Kevin Breel is a writer, comedian and social activist. He is a mental health activist that has been a part of millions of dollars of fundraising for suicide prevention and is one of the National Spokespeople for the prestigious Bell Let's Talk campaign. For more information, please see: <http://kevinbreel.com/>.

Contact Information: Kvannoord@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

FEBRUARY 12TH

● UPB Cinema: The Perfect Guy

Time: Friday, February 12th. 6:00 - 8:00pm

Location: Russell Union Theater

Looking for fun on a Friday night? Join the University Programming Board for their biweekly movie series. This event is free and open to the public. Students please bring your Eagle IDs. This movie will be shown twice tonight (6pm and 8pm). Concessions will be available for minimal cost. Cash sales only. If you need assistance, related to access for this event, please email UPB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu prior to the event.

Contact Information: UPB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

● Diversity Educator Recruitment

Do you want to create change and talk about diversity, inclusion, and fairness? Apply to become a Diversity Peer Educator TODAY! How do I apply? - If you are interested in becoming a Diversity Peer Educator we applications are now available at <http://tiny.cc/gsudp2>. Please submit your application and letter of reference by February 12, 2016!

Contact Information: John Nuosu at dpe@georgiasouthern.edu

FEBRUARY 16TH

● UPB: Mr. GSU Scholarship Pageant Informational Session

Time: Tuesday, February 16th, Wednesday, February 17th

& Thursday, February 18th 5:00 - 6:30 pm

Location: Russell Union 2052

Mr. GSU attends traditional and community events and represents the student body in all that he does. Anyone that is interested in participating, must attend at least one information session (no exceptions) and submit an application.

Application timeline:

Opens: Tuesday, 16 February at 6:00pm (via MyInvolvement)

Closes: Monday, 29 February at 5:00pm

Contact Information: UPB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

● MADD Victim Impact Panel

Time: Tuesday, February 16. 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Location: College of Engineering and Information Technology Building Auditorium

The Victim Impact Panel will share personal stories about how their lives have been permanently affected by an impaired driver.

Contact information: aodoffice@georgiasouthern.edu or 912-478-0108.

FEBRUARY 17TH

● SOLD Series Workshop - Maximizing Your Potential Presenter: Emmy Richards

Time: Wednesday, February 17th. 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Location: Nessmith-Lane Assembly Hall Room 1915

Maximizing your true potential is not easy! It takes time, dedication, and hard work. It also requires you to recognize the qualities and talents you possess that will promote success in your personal life and career. Through this presentation, participants will learn numerous strategies to harness their true potential and be successful in their personal and professional endeavors.

Contact information: Kristen Van Noord, Kvannoord@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

● Minority Advisement Program

The Multicultural Student Center is seeking MAP sponsors, MAPees, and MAP volunteers for the 2016-17 school year. Application deadline is February 29th. If you're interested please visit <http://tiny.cc/gsumap> to apply!

YOUR STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES AT WORK

The Weekly Buzz is sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

TAKEN VS. SINGLE

BY ARAYA JACKSON AND RICKY VEASLEY
The George-Anne staff

TAKEN

Valentine's Day is known for kisses, romance and cheesy gifts. There has to be at least one day a year that promotes PDA, right? If you and your special someone are looking for the right drinks, movies or music to complete your night, consider some of the following ideas.

MOVIES

♥ Sure, most guys don't like the typical Nicholas Sparks film that'll really put you in your feels, but it is Valentine's Day, and cheesy is easy. To find a compromise on a movie the two of you can enjoy, incorporate some humor in the selection, with movies like "When in Rome," "50 First Dates," "This Means War" or "Crazy Stupid Love." Now ladies get the benefit of cuddles and men will actually want to pay attention to the movie.

MUSIC

♥ The Weeknd radio on Pandora. Done.

♥ Okay, fine. Whether you're looking for playful music to cook dinner to, relaxing tunes to chat too or mood music for the end of your night, try making out a playlist together. Incorporate some of each of your favorite songs to set the scene, however you want it to be.

DRINKS

♥ If you and your significant other enjoy good conversation and bonding over refreshing drinks, go tasting! The bars, winery and Southern Growlers brewery are areas to taste-test different drinks, wines or specialty beers. Go and discover a possible new favorite drink, all while acquiring a friendly buzz.

SINGLE

If you plan on spending Valentine's Day alone this year, do not fret. There are a couple of things you can do to enjoy yourself. As RuPaul says "If you don't love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?"

MOVIES

♥ If you want a laugh, watch the movie "Friday." Pop some popcorn, invite your single friends over because it's Valentine's Day, ya'll don't have dates and ya'll ain't got 'ish to do.

♥ If you want action, watch the movie "Mr. and Mrs. Smith." After watching this, being single won't seem so bad. At least you don't have to worry about the person you love being an assassin with a hit out on you.

♥ If you want to cry, watch "The Notebook." Watching this will make you realize that love is inevitable.

MUSIC

♥ Bobby Womack- "If You Think You're Lonely Now" is bound to have you in your feelings.

♥ Destiny's Child- "Survivor" will make you realize that you don't need no one but yourself and that you will always survive.

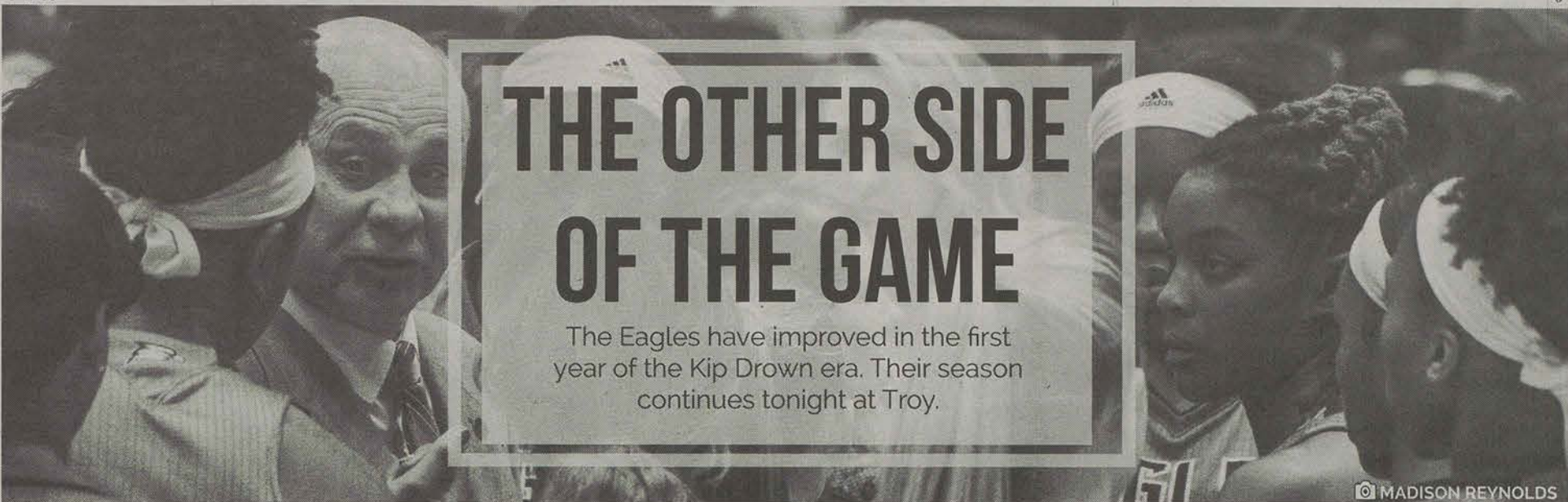
♥ Taylor Swift - "Begin Again" makes you realize that you can do better and that love takes time.

DRINKS

♥ Binge drink some soda because the money you save from not having a date will be aplenty.

♥ Open some champagne and treat yourself to peace and happiness.

♥ Drink some sweet tea because your friends are going to tell you all about their dates over the weekend.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GAME

The Eagles have improved in the first year of the Kip Drown era. Their season continues tonight at Troy.

© MADISON REYNOLDS

Kip Drown coaches his team during a break in the action. Drown is 7-14 in his first season at the helm.

BY KEITH SMILEY
The George-Anne staff

Taking over a program with a losing record as head coach isn't exactly what some would describe as a dream job.

As a former division-two head coach with over 20 years of experience, Kip Drown knew this prior to accepting the position.

The culture around this campus is what attracted Kip Drown. It surely wasn't the 5-24 record from last season. It was the passion, the success of football and other programs

had at GSU.

"I told my wife Gina, I just don't see any reason in the world that we can't be successful in women's basketball," Drown said.

This was the mindset he had right after his visit to Statesboro with his wife. He was ready for the challenge. He was already known across division-two play for resurrecting programs.

The 2015-2016 season wasn't just about a fresh start for Drown, but for a young team, with only two seniors on the ball club. Learning a new system isn't an easy task for any college player and the women's program was looking for leadership.

Drown's focus wasn't to win a championship necessarily but to gain the trust of the locker room first.

"Kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," Drown said.

Drown gave no promise of a complete turnaround of last season but a goal to make everyone play better. Before he can get the team to play for him he had to get to know them. Giggles turned to laughter, something that has been rarely done the last couple years from the ball club.

A team gathering filled with bonding over a game of Family Feud changed everything. From the moment of Drown's first win as a division one

coach against Savannah State, he knew this year was going to be fun.

"This has been one of the most enjoyable years I had. I really enjoy coaching this group," Drown said.

With only eight games left and sitting near the bottom of the Sun Belt division, the outside world would view this season as a failure for Drown. The fans that have been watching the Eagles play this season can see that Drown's first year has been one of change.

The Eagles have already won more games than last season and still have more games to go. There is a new feeling when watching the

women's basketball team, you see effort and the spirit to win. He has earned the trust of his players and plans to keep improving.

"There is always a trust level you have to develop with your new team when you come in as a new coach," Drown said.

This season, Drown's first, hasn't been successful record-wise, but it hasn't been a failure. The Eagles are still only one game back from being eighth place in the conference. Knowing Drown, he has plans to secure the last spot for the tournament.

GSU will be facing Troy tonight at 6:15 p.m.

MIKE HUGHES PROVIDES STEADY PRESENCE IN SOPHOMORE SEASON

Hughes is third on the team in scoring with 11.5 points per game this season. The Eagles return to the court tonight at Troy.

Hughes looks for an open teammate. He leads the team in steals with 47.

BY MARQUS WILLIAMS
The George-Anne staff

Five, four, three two, one and just like that the crowd at George M. Holmes Center in Boone, SC fell in shock as Georgia Southern beat the App State Mountaineers in the closing seconds.

The player who shot the game winner: sophomore Mike Hughes. The six-foot-three guard from Winston-Salem, N.C. hit the game-tying three point shot while being

fouled by a defender to set up the game-winning free throw for the win. The play ended up at No. 2 on SportsCenter's Top 10.

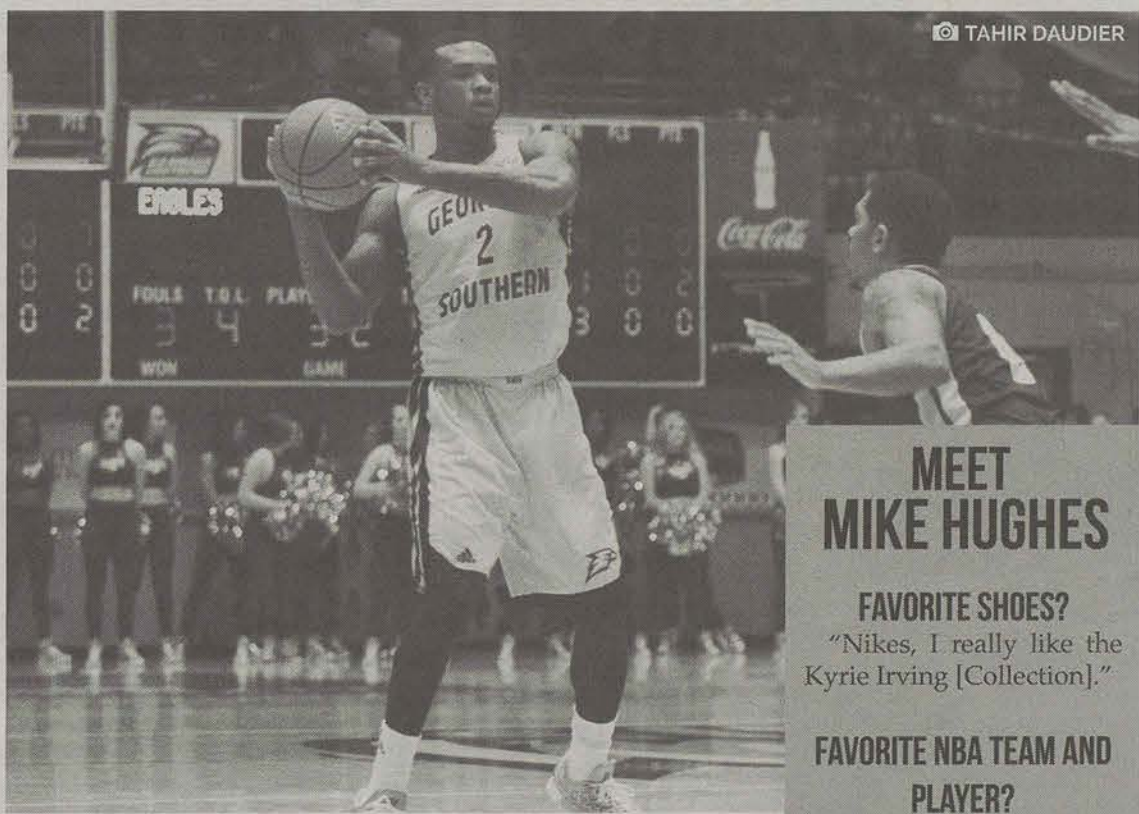
The stats from his freshman season to now have shown his improvement and consistency at GSU. In his freshman season he averaged 7.6 points, 4.9 rebounds and 2.3 assists per game with a senior heavy team. This season, those averages have jumped to 13.6 points, 4.5 rebounds and 1.6 assists per game. He

has developed a strong all-around game that has given the Eagles a steady presence on the court. It's his ability to consistently play at a high level that is invaluable.

Hughes described himself as a humbled, well-mannered individual who has a cool, calm demeanor both on and off the court. In big-game situations he is not afraid to be the one to take a last second shot and always believes there's a way to win when down in a game. In post-

game press conferences, he's the one that takes more of the responsibility when answering the tough questions after a loss. His leadership qualities have been shown throughout the season as he is one of the more experienced players on the team.

His competitive nature as a player is evident from the way he aggressively drives to the basket, hits the boards for rebounds and tries to get his teammates heavily involved on both ends of the floor.



© TAHIR DAUDIER

MEET MIKE HUGHES

FAVORITE SHOES?

"Nikes, I really like the Kyrie Irving [Collection]."

FAVORITE NBA TEAM AND PLAYER?

"I don't have a favorite basketball team but my favorite player is D-Wade (Dwayne Wade)."

BEST 3 POINT SHOOTER?

"I don't know, I'm pretty competitive, but Jake and Tookie are probably our two best shooters."

BEST DUNKER?

"That'll be Devince for sure."



© BRANDON WARNOCK

The Eagles kick off the 2016 season tonight in the Bulldog Kickoff Classic. They play Mississippi State at 6:30 p.m.

Georgia Southern softball starts season tonight

The Eagles kick off 2016 action tonight against Mississippi State. The young team will look to get off to a good start in the season opener.

BY ROBERT GEORGE
The George-Anne staff

The Georgia Southern University softball team will play its opening game of the 2016 season tonight at 6:30 p.m. against Mississippi State in the Bulldog Kickoff Classic.

The Eagles are returning to the diamond after a 2015 campaign where they finished 12-39 overall and 4-20 in the Sun Belt. They are returning five of their top six offensive players and a pair of sophomore pitchers who made a combined 56 appearances as freshmen last season. Fifth-year head coach Annie Smith is excited about starting the season after a strong fall and good spring practice.

"We've had a very good fall, a good offseason," Smith said. "The team has worked very hard. Made a lot of records in the weight room and they came back (from the break) in shape, so we were able to continue to work hard in the practice time we've had."

This year's team has one lone senior in catcher, A.J. Hamilton. Hamilton started 51 games last season and tied the team-high for home runs with six. Her experience behind the plate could be crucial for the Eagles this season.

She will once again be catching for Kierra Camp and Heather Felt. Camp threw 127 innings and Felt tossed 86 innings as freshmen last season. Coach Smith said that experience will help the young pitchers in 2016.

"It's immensely important," Smith said. "We're gonna give them the ball and they have to get out there and go after it."

Another important player will be junior outfielder Taylor Rodgers. Rodgers was recently named to the Sun

Belt Preseason All-Conference team after going .345 at the plate and collecting 49 hits in just 39 appearances last season, both of which were team-highs. She will likely hit at the top of the lineup for the Eagles and should get on base often for her teammates behind her.

GSU will compete in five non-conference tournaments in the first half of the schedule. They will also travel to Athens to take on the University of Georgia in the annual contest between the two schools.

In addition to the tough non-conference slate, the Eagles will once again have to navigate a difficult Sun Belt schedule, something Coach Smith is excited about.

"It's a tough league. We're in a 5 RPI league. The SoCon was a 14 RPI league. ULL is gonna be solid. They'll probably end up in the top 10. South Alabama is solid. Everyone really is solid. There is no weekend off, and that's exciting. That's why we play this game," Smith said.

These non-conference tournaments are a time for Coach Smith and the rest of the staff to evaluate the team and tinker with some of the lineups and looks. It also can be an indicator of what kind of team they'll have heading into conference play.

"You wanna see how we work together, what are the best lineups going to be, how does everybody fit in, what are their roles gonna be," Smith said. "You're doing a lot of different things trying to nail those things down."

The Eagles will play five games in the Bulldog Kickoff Classic beginning tonight. They'll take on Tennessee Tech, Alabama A&M and Houston after the opening game against Mississippi State. First pitch is at 6:30 p.m.

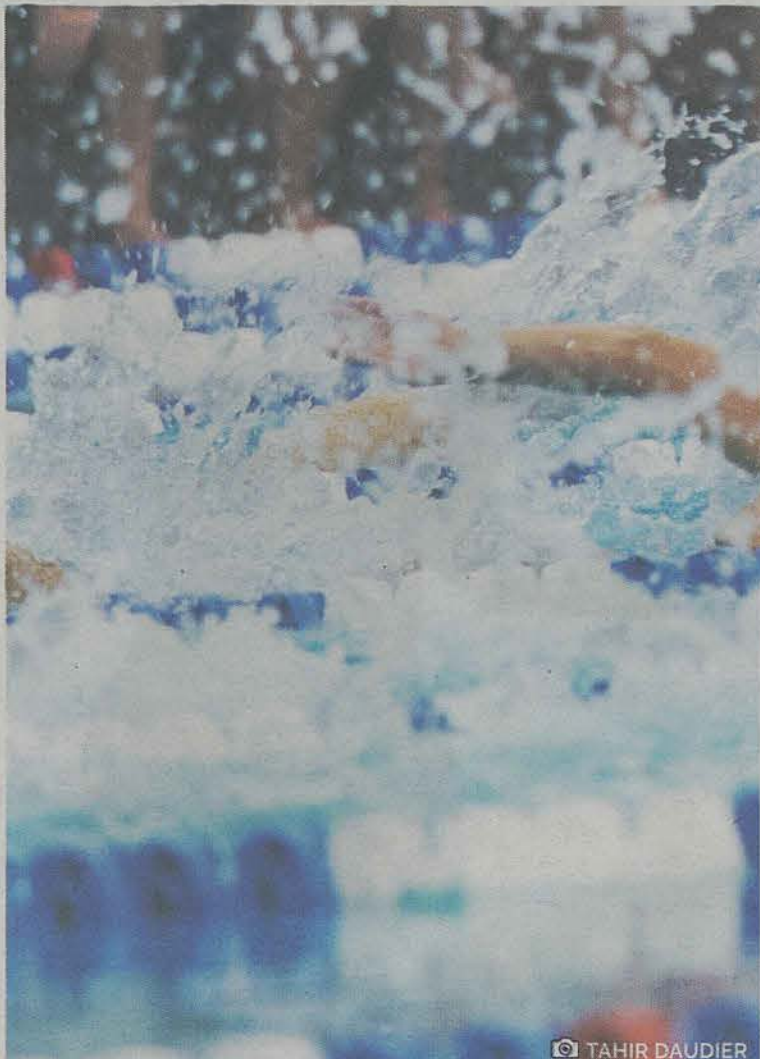
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TAHIR DAUDIER

The Eagles finished the 2015-2016 season with a 5-2 overall record and 4-0 in conference. They have just one meet left on the schedule.

BY KEVIN KENEELY
The George-Anne staff

Senior swimmer Kylee Parsons and diver Emma Weisel are both competing in their final meet with the team next week at the conference tournament in Athens, Ga.

Coming into Georgia Southern these two girls had no idea who the other was. Parsons is from Akron, Pa. and Weisel is from Lawrenceville, Ga. but swimming and diving has made them closer than ever.

Every time Parsons gets in the pool, Weisel is always on the sideline cheering her on and calling her "Killer", a nickname only Weisel would call her.

The role of a leader or someone the younger athletes can look up to is vital in all sports, and both Parsons and Weisel seem to have a good understanding of what it means to be a leader.

"Coming in my freshman year I looked up to the older girls. And now having the tables turned and I'm the upperclassmen. I try to be there for Hannah (freshman diver) like the older girls were there for me my freshman year," Weisel said. "I try to take a lot of the pressure off her; make sure she's enjoying the experience. I also try to be really happy during practice because it's easier to get through the hard days when you have someone to laugh."

"I guess just being positive and not letting them see how nervous I am or how if I'm not 100 percent ready," Parsons said. "Just letting them know that we have been training all year and the hard work is in so we are going to do well no matter what."

Both of these girls talked about a few moments that stood out in their careers.

"I don't if there is one particular moment that stands out above the others," Weisel said. "But what really made these past four years amazing were the teammates. Having the other divers there to pick you up when you're down and to join in on the celebration of the great moments was the best. Having those people surround you who are there for you and support you in any situation is priceless."

"I think last year at conference when I went a 1:49 in the 200 Free for the first time," Parsons said. "It was the first day of conference so I wasn't expecting it until the third day, so that was pretty exciting."

Both of these girls realize that soon they will have to move on from Georgia Southern and the memories they miss most.

"I think it will be my teammates, just how they made the experience worth it, they will be the thing I miss the most. Divers and swimmers, all of them have each made an impact on me and my career and they are such a great group of girls that I will miss dearly," Weisel said.

"Just to be able to hang out with my team, go to the pool if its nice out and just hang out and do whatever," Parsons said.

They are both still trying to figure out what exactly they are going to do once their swimming careers are over, but they both plan on going home and looking for work this summer.

The team travels to Athens Feb. 17-20 to compete in the CCSA Swimming and Diving Championships.

Seniors reflect on time at Georgia Southern

Kylee Parsons and Emma Weisel are two seniors preparing to compete in their last meet at GSU. They shared some of their experiences and memories in the program.

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Truscott settles in to life at Georgia Southern

Lindsay Truscott is one of six international students on the women's tennis team. They will play again this weekend in Montgomery, Ala.



© KELLY LOWERY

Truscott gears up for a volley. She and the rest of the Eagles will play again this weekend in Montgomery, Ala.

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BY DERIK WUCHTE
The George-Anne staff

Freshman Lindsay Truscott is from Centurion, South Africa. She arrived during spring this season with freshman Emilia Bujan from Argentina. Truscott has been playing in the No. 3 spot for the team.

She clinched her first career win against South Carolina State three weeks ago. She lost a close match to the Savannah College of Art and Design two weeks ago, but bounced back with a win last week to Presbyterian, moving her spring record to 2-1.

Eight players compose the roster for women's tennis now. Of those eight, six are international players.

Truscott looked around at a few different colleges before deciding on Georgia Southern University. But once she knew this was the place, it was settled. She wanted to be an Eagle.

"I know I wanted to play college sports," Truscott said. "I emailed a few coaches to see which coaches had scholarships available. When I got to speak to Coach Michelle, it was a sealed deal. I really like Coach Michelle. I also like this college town vibe that's going on. It's sort of what pulled me to Georgia Southern."

Truscott's first ever college matches took place three weeks ago. She played in one doubles match with senior Francisca Norregaard and one singles match. The doubles match resulted in a defeat, but Truscott was able to find success in singles. She defeated Andjela Vasic of South Carolina State by a score of 6-1, 6-2.

This being her first college victory, Truscott felt overwhelmed. The team would go on to win the meet 5-2, making Truscott's day even better.

"I was ecstatic, to be very honest," Truscott said. "It's difficult to explain. It was very nerve-racking as you start. But after, it's a sigh of relief. I think it's something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. My first college win."

There has only been one month since Truscott joined the team. She is on a team composed of four freshmen and the rest being juniors and seniors. They have been accompanying her through the transition of being in America, something she has been thankful for.

"They're really nice girls," Truscott said. "I like all of them a lot. They've been so welcoming and making me feel at home, especially the times I've been homesick. We train really hard. It's nice because we push each other and make sure each one achieves what we want to achieve for the day."

Women's tennis last season was very goal-oriented. They had a lot of objectives in mind as the season went on. This year, the team is different, but still focused. They are still looking ahead, but they will be looking for the perfect mix before the Sun Belt Championship hits in April.

"I want to give my best for the team and do what's best for the team. I'm going to play for Georgia Southern and hopefully it goes well," Truscott said. "Every goal for my match is to play better than my match before and to just give my all. That's hopefully what I can achieve."

The team is 2-1 now. They will be taking on Alabama State this Friday, Feb. 12 in Montgomery, Ala. That will be preceded by Jacksonville State and Kennesaw State that following Saturday and Sunday. Their next home match will be on Feb. 19.