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New library nears completion

BY TERRY RICHARDS

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valdostadailytimes.com; see 'LIBRARY NEARS COMPLETION'

VALDOSTA — Work on a new library building should be wrapped up next month, with a hoped-for opening in May, according to the library system chairman.

The new location, on Julia Drive, will replace South Georgia Regional Library's half-century old facility on Woodrow Wilson Drive, said Barry Barr, chairman of the South Georgia Regional Library System and the SGRL Foundation.

The cost of the new

facility is expected to be about \$5.5 million, which includes construction and real estate costs, Barr said. A substantial contribution from Willis L. "Wyn" Miller III aided with construction; the facility will be dedicated to him and the Willis L. Miller family.

The new building was once the Solstas Lab Partners site at 2906 Julia Drive. South Georgia Regional Library's Board of

Trustees has an agreement with South Georgia Medical Center for the hospital to purchase the current library site on Woodrow Wilson Drive, surrounded by SGMC facilities, when the library is finished relocating.

Barr said once construction ends in February, the library should need about two months to move

See Library on 11A



TERRY RICHARDS | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Barry Barr, chairman of South Georgia Regional Library System and SGRL Foundation, checks out the information resources section of the new library under construction on Julia Drive.



TERRY RICHARDS | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Construction of the new library on Julia Drive is expected to be finished next month.

LIBRARY: New building and the old building are almost the same size

materials to the new site.

The current Woodrow Wilson Drive building has a number of problems, he said.

"For one, it's surrounded by (the hospital), so there's inadequate parking and no room for expansion," Barr said. "For another, the heating and air-conditioning system is the one that was originally installed 50 years ago, and spare parts are no longer available."

The new building and the old building are almost the same size, but the new building has improved design and layout, Barr said. Input for the library's design came from across the community, including members of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce, Valdosta State University, the City of Valdosta, Lowndes County, First United Methodist Church, the Annette Howell Turner

Center for the Arts, the non-profit group Friends of the Library and the library system itself.

The new location will have teen and children's library sections, improved Internet speeds and facilities, meeting rooms and a cafe offering coffee and other drinks, he said.

Also in the works is an improved genealogical section, he said.

"People don't realize they can come down to the library and use Ancestry.com for free," Barr said.

Friends of the Library will also get a dedicated room in the new building near the front entrance. Currently, the group sells used books to aid the library out of a small room in the back of the Woodrow Wilson Drive location.

Barr said he hopes an outdoor amphitheater can be added later.

Friday, January 26, 2018

Amazing Grace

Valdosta latest stop
on musical odyssey

BY DEAN POLING

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VALDOSTA — The story of how playwright/composer Chris Smith created the musical "Amazing Grace" is almost as epic as the life of the man who composed the beloved hymn.

Almost.

The nationally touring production is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 30, to play Valdosta, as part of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series. The latest stop in the show's odyssey of being the brainchild of a police officer to Broadway lights and now a national tour.

"Amazing Grace" is based on the real-life story of John Newton (1725-1807).

Newton was a bad man. A slave trader who was heir to one of the largest slave-trade companies in the world. Yet, his life would be changed. The slave trader became a slave when his crew left him



STAN BAROUH

Princess Peyai (played by Shannan E. Johnson) and John Newton (Michael Burrell) in a scene from the musical 'Amazing Grace,' playing Tuesday, Jan. 30, as part of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series.

SHOWTIME

Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series presents the nationally touring musical "Amazing Grace."

When: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 30.

Where: Mathis City Auditorium, 2300 N. Ashley St.

An optional pre-show dinner is available in the multi-purpose room at 6 p.m. Tuesday.
Tickets, more information: Call the arts center, (229) 247-2787; or visit www.turnercenter.org, or 527 N. Patterson St.

See Grace on 11A

GRACE: For tickets, call (229) 247-2787

with a slave dealer in Africa.

Newton's father sent a sea captain to search for him. The captain rescued the younger Newton. On the trip back to England, the ship ran into a storm and began taking on water. Newton reportedly prayed for salvation. Prayer was a stranger to him. When the ship's cargo shifted, the holes were plugged and the ship was saved.

Newton was slowly transformed as Saul to Paul. In his later years, the one-time slaver became an anti-slavery advocate, a whistleblower on the atrocities of the slave trade. He also penned the beloved hymn "Amazing Grace."

Chris Smith was a full-time police officer when he first ran across the story of John Newton and "Amazing Grace."

In a telephone interview this week, Smith said he loves epic musicals such as "Les Miserables." He imagined a full Broadway musical of Newton's life.

Smith entered an 18-year struggle to make his imagined musical a reality on Broadway and now a national tour.

Smith is the rare, possibly unique, combination of having written the text and lyrics and composed the music for a Broadway show.

"I didn't know you weren't supposed to do all of it by yourself," Smith said. "I just made it up as I went along."

He doesn't read music. As a cop, he didn't know anyone on Broadway. Other than some plays in high school, he had no theatre connections. His wife and three children believed in him as he supported them as a police officer creating a musical.

He said he felt Newton's story was powerful. He created the show. As a youth

minister, he tried out various songs and concepts on his congregation.

The full show was first performed at a Pennsylvania church.

Smith found investors who believed in his show. Nine years into the creative process, investors convinced Smith to quit his police job, saying the job put him at risk which in turn risked their investment.

The show went on a national tour. Several dates would be scheduled for a major city with the hope of attracting interest in Broadway. With no word from Broadway producers, another city would be scheduled until Broadway called.

While Smith is now seeing the show travel nationwide, and he often visits performances such as the one in Muncie, Ind., at the time of this interview, he said he remains committed to theatre, youths and his faith through the Lights on Broadway ministry.

Smith said the show is about the power of redemption, the power of forgiveness.

At the end of each performance, the cast sings "Amazing Grace." Without prompting from the first show at the Pennsylvania church to Broadway and now on the road, audiences sing along.

"At the end of the show when the lights come up, people in the audience are hugging and crying," Smith said. "There's always some older men who you know have been dragged to the show by their wives and they're crying at the end of the show."

"It's a story of forgiveness. If this man who was a slave trader, who did all of these horrible things can find forgiveness, then we can, too. That's a powerful message."



STAN BAROUH

'Amazing Grace' focuses on John Newton, the slave trader who found redemption and composed the beloved hymn. The musical plays Tuesday, Jan. 30, as part of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts Presenter Series.

Guests to 'bite, sip' at Turner Center

BY AMANDA M. USHER

amanda.usher@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — Relish in the flavors of the upcoming Valdosta Food and Wine Classic.

Hosted by the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, the classic will be held 6-9 p.m., Feb. 22, at Turner Center, 527 N. Patterson St.

The elaborate event will bring together the tastes of local eateries Salty Snapper, Friends Grille and Bar, Covington's, Woodstack BBQ Tavern, Birdie's Market and more.

With 200 bites of food from 12 chefs and 40 various wines alongside micro-brews, cocktails and desserts, each of the expected 150 guests will be able to sample cuisine from each vendor, said Bill Shenton, center artistic director.

Cheryl Oliver, center executive director, said she believes what makes the Food and Wine Classic so unique is it not only highlights local restaurants, but it offers the experience of cuisine from caterers and chefs who don't own restaurants.

"It also pairs cuisine with a chance to taste wonderful beverages, and witness a mixology demonstration," she said. "All of the restaurants, caterers (and) chefs who participate will get to show off their culinary talents to an audience who appreciates fine cuisine."

Located at every table will be a donation bowl for people to vote for their preferred "bite and sip," according to organizers.

More specifically, guests will be able to vote in cash for best wine, best food and best beer. All awards will be presented at the end of the gathering, said Darby Boruff, administrative as-

sistant.

Though Boruff said helping to coordinate events is not part of her usual responsibilities at the Turner Center, she agreed to help due to her ties with many of the restaurant owners.

"We're trying to kind of focus on all of these vendors who've decided to help, so you can come to one place and kind of get an idea of all of them at once and just kind of centralize and promote each business," she said. "We're hoping that people walk out satisfied and with a better understanding of local, original restaurants."

General admission tickets are \$50, and proceeds will benefit the Center for the Arts Guild.

With an executive board of 20 women, CAG has hosted hundreds of events to raise thousands of dollars for Turner, Oliver

said.

Bridge luncheons, Gogh Green Upscale Art Resales and the Chair-ity Auction are some of the events that CAG has hosted in fundraising efforts, Oliver said.

The efforts have raised scholarship monies for adults and children, purchased equipment for the Turner Center's Chef's Kitchen and refurbished the art center's facilities, Oliver said.

Sponsorship tables can still be purchased for \$250 until the end of January, which include two tickets to the Food and Wine Classic, Boruff said.

Sponsors will have their logos promoted at the event, on social media and on the Turner Center website, she said.

To purchase tickets, to become a sponsor or to inquire about more information, call the Turner Center, (229) 247-2787.



ANNETTE HOWELL
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FOR THE
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**Join us for a special gallery discussion with
featured artist Andrew Sabori
with guest Jim McSweeney from the U.S. National Archives
Monday, January 22, at 6pm
at the Turner Center for the Arts, 527 North Patterson Street**

Hear the fascinating story of how a chance encounter while touring Ellis Island led to artist Andrew Sabori passionately researching and recreating a WPA masterpiece mural. The current exhibit in Josette's Gallery consists of the reproduction of Edward Laning's 1935 mural, *The Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America*, accompanied by Sabori's series of portraits depicting famous American immigrants. The exhibit includes many noteworthy documents pertaining to US immigration during the early 20th century. The evening will also feature special guest Jim McSweeney, National Archives and Records Administration, Special Assistant - Office of Presidential Libraries, who will present information on the role of the U. S. National Archives and how its services can be utilized.



demonstrates your belief in the value of the arts to enrich the quality of life in our community, while providing good will and name recognition for your business. The elegant opening reception is an opportunity to entertain customers and network with business and civic leaders, art patrons and philanthropists. Please consider a sponsorship of this prestigious event.

No matter the size of your donation, we value your support for the Turner Center. As a token of our appreciation, your name or business name will be displayed for any amount of \$250 or more, and you will receive tickets to the opening gala.

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2017 - 2018 Season



Tuesday, January 30
at Mathis City Auditorium

Tickets & info: 229-247-2787
527 N. Patterson St. / turnercenter.org



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Saturday, January 20, 2018

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

Round of Applause

Here's another round of applause for individuals and organizations doing great things in the community.

Here's to the return of the arts season in full swing this week. Valdosta State University Art & Design opened the annual Valdosta National exhibit. Lowndes High School Off-Broadway presents the musical "The Scarlet Pimpernel" this weekend and next weekend. VSU Opera presents Aaron Copland's "The Tender Land" this weekend. Valdosta School of Ballet and VSU Theatre & Dance present the ballet "Sleeping Beauty" this weekend. Last week, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts opened a series of new exhibits. Great to have the arts season back, though it would have been nice if the shows could have been spread across a few weeks rather than crammed into one weekend.

Emmaus Road

Hawkins shares faith through art

BY DEAN POLING

dean.poling@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA – No pressure.

Artist Craig Hawkins drew a series of drawings live in front of a congregation of observers during Sunday sermons.

As he explained in a recent article in The Valdosta Daily Times, he made the charcoal drawings to accompany the sermons of Pastor Ken Webb of Christ's Fellowship Church.

The 44 drawings are the basis of "Emmaus Road" on exhibit at Price-Campbell Foundation Gallery and Margaret Mittiga Gallery at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

Hawkins has been a cornerstone of the Valdosta art scene for several years as both a working artist

and as part of the art faculty at Valdosta State University. He has also combined his art and faith in numerous works and exhibits.

For example, a past exhibit looked at the relationship of bread to the Bible.

"I've recently been researching bread in biblical contexts — the first temptation of Christ, the Last Supper, manna in the desert, the feeding of the 5,000, etc.," Hawkins said in a 2014 artistic statement for his "Bread" exhibit at the Mason Murer Fine Art Gallery. "This work revolves around the question of hunger and what bread can and cannot do. Bread can speak to abundance and the power to provide, but it's only temporary. It doesn't answer the supreme hunger of life, transcendence."

Hawkins' "Emmaus"

drawings are a visual treat for viewers at the arts center. But knowing how they were created adds to the appreciation and the ability to marvel all the more.

Hawkins said Webb would send the sermons to him ahead of time, and he would spend the week reflecting on the sermon.

Once Sunday approached, Hawkins would work to illustrate the sermon through his drawings during the service and would present it to the congregation following the sermon.

"I don't feel like there's a separation between who I am in Christ, as a Christian, in anything else that I do in life," he said, "and, so, ever since I became a Christian, since then I've wanted to incorporate both my art and my faith together."



One of the drawings of the 'Emmaus Road' series by artist Craig Hawkins.

GALLERY

Artist Craig Hawkins' "Emmaus Road" is on exhibit at the Price Campbell Foundation Gallery, Margaret Mittiga Gallery; along with the DrawProject, Sallie & Harmon Boyette Gallery; Andrew Sabori's "Coming to America: The Immigrant Experience," Josette's Gallery.

Where: The Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.

Run dates: Shows run through Feb. 22.

Gallery hours: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; closed Sundays and Mondays. Most opening receptions, however, are 5-7 p.m. Mondays on designated dates.

Admission: Free.

More information: Call (229) 247-2787 or visit www.turnercenter.org.

RON ZACCARI

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Thursday, January 18, 2018

Turner Center director resigning

BY KIMBERLY CANNON

kimberly.cannon@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — Following about 10 years of leadership, the executive director of the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts is resigning.

Cheryl Oliver took on the position of executive director in July 2008, four months after she was hired as interim director. She said she anticipates working at the Turner Center through April.

Oliver said she realized her time to leave the art center was nearing about

a year ago, as she recognized that nothing lasts forever.

“While I think that what I’ve been able to give the center and what the center has been able to give me has been enriching beyond my imagination, I also realize that maybe it’s time for a change, for



CHERYL
OLIVER

See Resigning on 6A

RESIGNING: For more info, call 247-2787

me personally, and it will be good for the center," she said. "Always, I think, an infusion of new blood is a good thing for an organization: new energy, new vision."

After the Turner Center received the Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities in fall 2017, she said the statewide recognition cemented her decision that her time to resign was near, as she wanted to leave the center in the best shape possible.

She said she still has conflicted emotions regarding her departure. But she said she hopes to continue being involved in the Turner Center after she leaves.

"I can unequivocally say that it's been a gratifying, rewarding experience for me," she said.

During her tenure, she said she believes the staff and volunteers at the Turner Center have increased the level of service to the community and expanded the art center's outreach. She said the staff has worked to change the perception of the Turner Center as an elite place to an understanding the center is all inclusive.

"My primary objective back then was to open the doors of this art center to everyone and help people understand that it is a community art center, and it is for every segment of the population," Oliver said. "I think we have been really successful in achieving that goal."

She said most of her memories from the Turner Center involve the people she's met: the staff, volun-

teers, leaders on the board of directors and the children, particularly the Boys and Girls Club students.

"It is so rewarding to see the looks on those children's faces when they realize that we appreciate their efforts toward creating art, and then we realize the value of what we're giving them is the experience of creativity and creative expression," she said.

Through Oliver's time, she said the center relieved its debt following a debt-elimination campaign in 2013, and the center currently has an endowment fund of nearly \$1.5 million.

For the future executive director, Oliver said he or she will do more than just fill her shoes.

"The person who gains this position will bring their own shoes, and they'll make their own tracks," she said.

She said the future executive director will have signed on for a enriching experience.

"You will find in this place a creative outlet," she said as a message to whoever will take on her position. "You will find challenges. You will find friendships, and you will find experiences that will make your life more meaningful."

She said people interested in the executive director position have through Feb. 16 to submit their resume.

Visit turnercenter.org/career-opportunities/ to view information regarding the position.

The Turner Center is located at 527 N. Patterson St. and may be reached at (229) 247-2787.



WHAT

ARToberfest 2018: A celebration of our **City Center Arts District, Art Annex Renovation** and our **Regional Artists Community**.

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WHEN

October 6, 2018
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

WHERE

Turner Center for the Arts Campus
527 N. Patterson Street



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229-247-2787 / turnercenter.org

10/2015

Accountability

Airport unveils public artwork

VALDOSTA — The Valdosta Public Art Advisory Committee will meet noon Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

The meeting will take place in the airport conference room located in the airport's main terminal.

Following the business meeting, at 1 p.m., the PAAC will host a mural unveiling reception in the baggage claim area of the airport, committee members said.

The mural, painted by artist Ethan Abbott, features various iconic events and people within each letter of the word "Valdosta."

"It's the first major piece of public art at the Valdosta Regional Airport, and it will warmly welcome visitors and returning community members to the area when they retrieve their luggage," committee members said.

The PAAC, funded by the City of Valdosta, commissioned Abbott to paint the mural that celebrates life in the city.

He is Valdosta home-grown, a graduate of Wiregrass Georgia Technical College in graphic arts, a member of the regional artists community and his works can be seen in various restaurants, businesses and homes across the community.

"This is one of 15 public art pieces that

MORE INFO

Following the business meeting, at 1 p.m., the PAAC will host a mural unveiling reception in the baggage claim area of the airport.

has been placed within the City Central Arts District as well as other community locations for people's enjoyment and appreciation," said Bruce Smith, PAAC chair. "Our committee is pleased to unveil the mural at the airport, which will extend the warm South Georgia welcome that people have come to expect from Valdosta and that will also let our guests know that we are a thriving arts community. We invite the community to celebrate along with us at this Feb. 21 event."

The mural at the airport also features a hashtag — a user-generated social media tag which makes it possible for people to post and find similarly themed photos and content in one location using #ArtsValdosta.

The committee hopes people will be inspired to take a photo of themselves in front of the airport mural, as well as any other art locations in the community, and then post them to the social media site, members said.

Valdosta National 2018

VSU exhibit shows art from across U.S.

BY DEAN POLING

dean.poling@gafnews.com

VALDOSTA — The Valdosta National art exhibit has become one of the best annual art shows in Valdosta.

While the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts' Spring Into Art is the premier exhibit to showcase local and regional artists, Valdosta State University Art's Valdosta National has become the region's premier showcase of art from across the nation.

Granted, anyone nationwide can enter the open Spring Into Art, and anyone local can enter the juried Valdosta National, and occasionally the lines do cross, the Valdosta National allows

area art patrons the opportunity to see distant artists' styles and themes.

The show opening Tuesday will be VSU's 30th annual juried art show open to artists nationwide.

Julie Bowland, VSU Fine Arts Gallery director, said 520 works were submitted this year.

From the hundreds of entries, 66 artworks representing 54 artists from 26 states were selected for the show, she said.

Linda Hall of Tallahassee, Fla., was the person making the choices.

She is a "multimedia artist that is inspired by the natural world and the human condition," according to information provided by VSU Art and Design Depart-

ment.

Hall earned a master's of fine arts from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and periodically serves as an adjunct professor at Florida State University. Working in watercolor and three-dimensional soft sculpture, Hall's works have been exhibited in group and solo shows in regional and national and international publications and venues.

"Her work has been featured on various music CD covers, in an issue of New American Paintings and in online publications of Oxford American and Beautiful Decay," according to VSU.

Winners will be announced during the reception Tuesday evening.



Art by Dean Allison.

GALLERY

What: Valdosta State University Art presents the Valdosta National 2018.

Where: Dedo-Maranville Fine Arts Gallery, VSU Fine Arts Building, corner of Oak and Brookwood.

When: The exhibit runs from Jan. 16 through Feb. 2.

Reception: A free, public opening reception is scheduled for 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16.

Gallery hours: 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Fridays.

More information: Contact Julie Bowland, gallery director, (229) 333.5835, or email jabowlan@valdosta.edu.



Art by Daphne Cuadrado-Andino.



Art by Linda Barone.



Art by Jenna Lynch.

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—First Amendment

OUR POINT OF VIEW

Round of Applause

Here's another round of applause for individuals and organizations doing great things in the community.

A sense of ease has overcome members of the Valdosta Fire Department with the implementation of newly passed House Bill 146. Effective Jan. 1, HB 146 "requires all legally organized fire departments in Georgia to offer certain cancer benefits to firefighters," according to Valdosta city documents. Both full-time and part-time employees who serve 12 consecutive months for fire departments are eligible to receive a lump sum of \$25,000 if diagnosed with cancer, according to city documents. The amount can decrease "depending on the severity of the cancer." Volunteers also benefit from the new state law.

Biblical stories were told and the lives of immigrants were depicted Monday during the gallery reception at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts. The community gathered at the swanky affair to examine the works of painter and illustrator Craig Hawkins and muralist Andrew Sabori. Both artists were introduced to guests during the reception, and their pieces will hang in the center until Feb. 22 for the public to view. "Emmaus Road," created by Hawkins, is a series of 44 charcoal drawings the artist paired with the sermons of Pastor Ken Webb of Christ's Fellowship Church. "On average, they took about 45 minutes to draw," he said. "At their longest, they took maybe an hour and a half to two hours." Hawkins said Webb would send the sermons to him ahead of time, and he would spend the week reflecting on the sermon. Once Sunday approached, Hawkins would work to illustrate the sermon through his drawings during the service and would present it to the congregation following the sermon.

The Guardian Bank human resources team of Margie Blanton and Shea Zeigler spearheaded a winter wardrobe drive and presented the items to Salvation Army Lt. Tasha Thomas last week. The items included 98 coats, 10 scarves, 18 pairs of socks, hoods and gloves.

More than 30 years ago, Ruth Kimball Council called a group of community leaders together to organize the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Association. Saturday night, that association recognized and celebrated Council's commitment and service for the association and community at the 33rd annual Founders' Banquet in the James H. Rainwater Conference Center. "It wasn't that hard to do," Council said. "It was something I thought needed to be done, and hopefully, after I'm gone, it will continue and keep the dream of a better future alive." The association awarded Council the "A Candle In The Dark" award. The event kicks off the new year by honoring founders of the association such as Council. Council was a teacher, curriculum director and school principal for the Valdosta City School system. She won system "Teacher of the Year" and state runner-up during her 30 year career.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy

All letters must include the writer's name, address, telephone number and signature for verification purposes. Only the writer's name and city of residence will be published. We encourage letter writers to state their case clearly and use 300 words or less as a general guideline to meet space requirements. Letters may be edited or rejected based on inappropriate or libelous content, but we believe in a robust public dialogue representing diverse points of view. Letters must not address personal matters.

Letters should be submitted to: Letter to the Editor, The Valdosta Daily Times, P.O. Box 968, Valdosta, GA 31603; or emailed to: valdostadailytimes.editorial@gafnews.com



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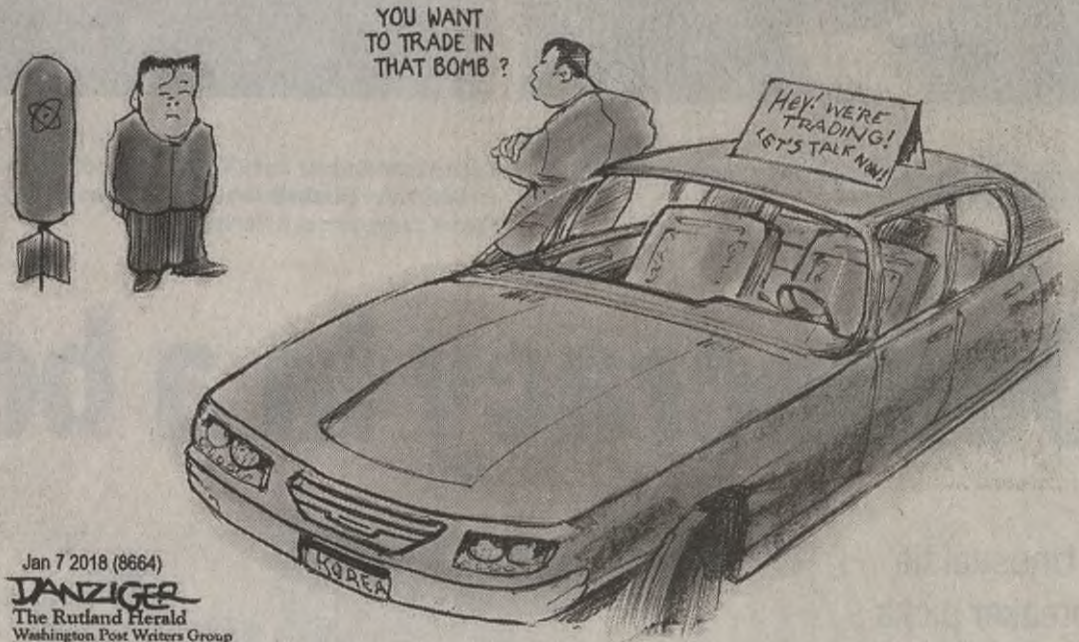
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The Valdosta Daily Times editorial board is facilitated by Editor Jim Zachary and includes Jeff Masters, Dean Poling, Kristin Patten, Dan Friedman and Derrek Vaughn, along with community members S. Andrew Ostapski, Floyd Rose, Celine Gladwin and Claire Walton. "Our Point of View" is formed by the editorial board.

Celebrating Community • Reporting Facts
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North and South Korea Talking



Jan 7 2018 (8664)
DANZIGER
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THEIR POINT OF VIEW

Advice to a great-grandson...

Dear Cameron Charles Yarbrough:
It is that time of year again when I attempt to pass along a little of what I have experienced over my long life in hopes there will be a nugget or two that you may find helpful as you make your own journey through life. If memory serves me correctly, I began this annual exercise when your dad was about your age.

You represent the next generation in our family and that carries with it important responsibilities, including protecting our family's good name and reputation. Handle with care.

One way you do that is with your decision-making. You won't always make the right decision, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. In that regard, trust your gut. Your mind will allow you to rationalize a potentially poor decision, but not your gut. Deep down inside, you will know whether something is right or wrong. Listen before you leap.

Don't be afraid to make a mistake. Some of our best learning experiences come not from our successes but from our failures. They keep us humble and remind us we are human. Just try not to make the same mistake over and over again.

It is nice to be popular, but it is better to be respected for who you are and what you stand for. Don't let people drag you down to their level. Try to bring them up to yours. Don't compromise your principles or your beliefs.

Feel good about yourself (and you should because a lot of people love you), but don't get cocky. The

world has a way of knocking the stuffing out of us when we think we know it all. There is no redeeming value in being a braggart and a blowhard. That is a telltale sign of insecurity. If you are good at what you do, people will recognize that. You don't have to tell them.

That goes for class, as well. We can't always define it, but we know it when we see it. Maybe it is how we carry ourselves or how we deal with people or a self-assurance that radiates a quiet confidence. Money can't buy class. You either have it or you don't. It is a worthy goal to be considered by others as a class individual.

Speaking of goals, have one. Have several. Some can be career goals and some can be personal. Have something to aim for that gives your life purpose and meaning. Don't live a drab life in a drab world.

One of my goals is to inspire you to greatness. There is nothing wrong with being ordinary, but there is something noble about great achievement. Someone has to be the scientist who makes a discovery that will change the world. Someone has to be a statesman who brings peace in our time. Someone has to be an innovator, an inventor, a philanthropist, a scholar, an artist, a builder, a composer. Why not you? Don't let small minds deter you from being the best you can be. Dream big dreams. Dare to be great.



DICK YARBROUGH

And work. Work hard. Your great-grandfather was not always the smartest guy in the building or the most talented or the best-connected, but I have yet to meet the person who could outwork me. I was usually the first one in the office and the last one out and in that time, I tried to learn something that would make me a better person and a more valuable employee. I suggest you do the same thing.

But don't lose perspective. Enjoy life. Laugh a lot. Make good friends. Be a good friend. Don't gossip. Don't take yourself too seriously. Believe in God. Hug those you love. Don't grind over things that happened yesterday. Yesterday is over and done with. And don't lose sleep over tomorrow. We aren't even guaranteed a tomorrow. Live in this day and live it to the best of your abilities.

I doubt I will live long enough to see how you turn out but I have high hopes. At 9 years of age, it is obvious that you have all the right stuff. You are doing gangbusters in school and in the Cub Scouts. You are active in your church. You have the makings of a pretty good golfer, thanks to your grandfather. And what you can't build with Legos hasn't been invented yet.

But, most of all, Cameron Charles Yarbrough, you love me and I love you. May that never change. Happy New Year.
PA

You can reach Dick Yarbrough at dick@dickyarbrough.com; at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Georgia 31139 or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dickyarb.

When my faith is a quart low

There are a couple of commercials on television where they use the "faith fall" to make their point. Well actually I don't think they make a point with this gimmick, but it does get one's attention for a few seconds.

If you don't know, a "faith fall" is where someone stands on a table with his back to a group of people, hopefully his friends. He crosses his hands over his chest and falls backwards. And they are supposed to catch him.

Well, being a long time in the newspaper business, I would not do that. I've stepped on too many toes along the way, and I don't have the kind of faith that would convince me to do this. Now I do have faith, but not in this regard.

For instance, I have faith that we have enough sane minds in Washington that we won't push a button on North Korea in pre-emptive posturing. I also have faith in our defense systems that if the little man with the big ego should fire one of his Roman candles in our direction, our devices would intercept it, hopefully just off the coast of North Korea. Now in some instances, I just "hope." I think there's a difference between "hope" and "faith."

Now the "faith fall" has been around for quite some time. I remember as a kid this thing was used at church youth revivals to illustrate Christian faith. I never

volunteered. I guess my faith was a quart low at that point. And besides, I saw too many times where someone tied a slip knot in the Tarzan vine down at the swimming hole.

I've seen this device and others used in workshops and seminars through the years. I detest workshops and seminars where professional "motivators" are brought in to apply a bunch of kids' games. Mostly their aim is to promote "teamwork." Look, I'm an adult. Just give me the information I need in plain English, and I can go with it. Wine and dine me if you want to, but hold the "role playing."

Once I was at a weeklong workshop in Phoenix, Ariz. This troupe of professional "motivators" had us doing all sorts of silly stuff. At one point we were to stand up from our tables and try to step on each others' feet. More than a hundred of us were stomping around in that meeting hall. A stranger would have thought he was at an exterminators' convention, and we were exploring the best ways to kill a roach. I'm so glad a video of that moment never went public. And apparently no one had an ingrown toenail.

I've just never been impressed



DWAIN WALDEN

with gimmickry. I prefer life straight up and to the point.

Now don't get me wrong, I like to have a good time. Like I said, wine me and dine me if you want to, but save the antics.

Now back to that "faith fall" thing. I've seen performers at concerts do a similar gimmick. They would do a swan dive off the stage into the arms of their fans. Now my guess is, they had a couple of strong stage hands in that mix, just in case. If I were standing near the stage and a body came flying "spread eagle" at me, I'm not really sure I would try to catch it or just run out of the way. And if I feel that way, I'm sure there are others with those same mixed feelings. Better pay those stage hands really well!

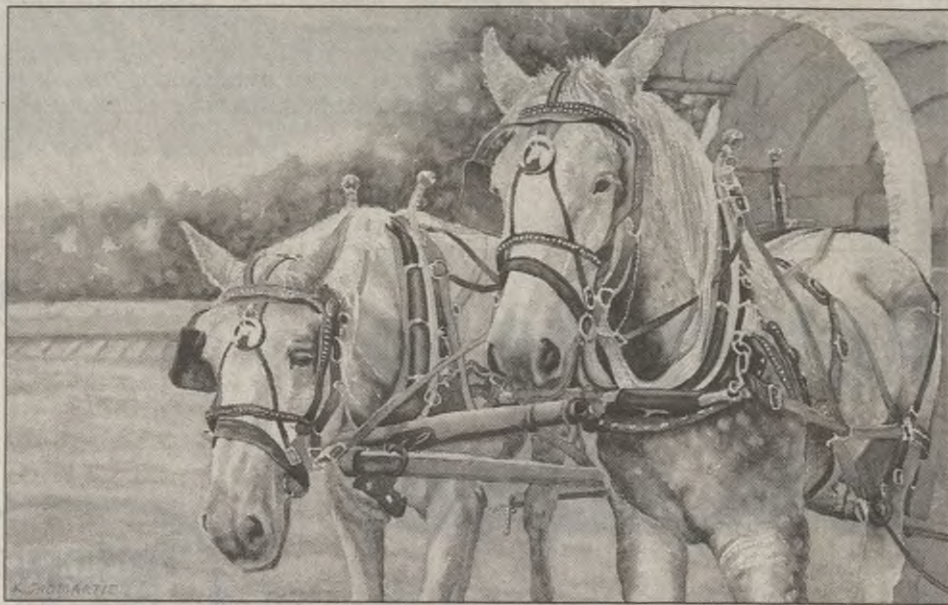
I'm not sure why a performer would do this in the first place. Maybe it's a distraction from the fact that he was singing in the key of "G" and the band was playing in the key of "C." I dunno.

While some people have a bucket list of things they want to do before their journey's end, I have a list of things I won't do. They include the "faith fall," being in a male beauty pageant and never again being in a dunking booth. (Though I did make that event a lot of money.)

Dwain Walden is editor/publisher of The Moultrie Observer. 985-4545. Email: dwain.walden@gafnews.com



'Perseverance,' artist Darby Boruff.



'A Long Haul,' artist Kay Cromartie.

Calendar marks a year in art

BY DEAN POLING

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VALDOSTA — Colson Printing Calendar 2018 is available.

It features works from 13 local and regional artists selected from entries in the 2017 Spring Into Art show at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

Colson has been making art selections for its calendar during the annual Spring Into Art exhibits for several years. In addition to the show's awarding prizes, being chosen for the calendar has become a prestigious honor for participating artists.

Calendar judges selected 13 works for the calendar, one for the cover and one for each month.

Some of the artists' names and styles will be



'The World of Dance,' artist Suzanna Winton.

familiar to area art patrons because the artists are either from here or have participated in numerous local shows.

The calendar also features works from out-of-town artists who participate in Spring Into Art.

The calendar is an exquisite collection and a

fine representation of the two-dimensional art, both paintings and photographs, that appeared in the Spring Into Art show.

The 2018 Colson Calendar is available at Colson Printing Company and the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson St.



'Lady Sings the Blues,' artist Rosemary Ferguson.

EMPTY STOCKING FUND

The Empty Stocking Fund has collected \$41,097.50 so far this holiday season. Recent donors include:

- Chuck & Susan Steel
- Caryn Chitty

To donate to the Empty Stocking Fund, send contributions to:
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New shows open at arts center

BY DEAN POLING
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VALDOSTA - Several new exhibits welcome the new year at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts this week.

Drawproject 2018 is one of the new exhibits. The annual event includes an auction for the various drawings exhibited. The majority of the drawings are created by area artists.

Money raised during the bidding goes to art student scholarships sponsored by Valdosta State University Art & Design and the arts center. Drawproject will be on exhibit in the Sallie & Harmon Boyette Gallery.

Artist Craig Hawkins presents his religious and spiritually inspired drawings in the exhibit "Emmaus Road" in the

Price-Campbell Foundation Gallery and Margaret Mittiga Gallery.

Artist Andrew Sabori presents "Coming to America: The Immigrant Experience" in Josette's Gallery.

Art Explorations displays youth art in the Roberta George Children's Gallery.

The shows open with a free, public reception, 5-7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at the arts center, 527 N. Patterson St.

The shows run Jan. 8 through Feb. 22. Sabori will present an artist and "National Archives presentation, 6 p.m., Jan. 22.

Gallery hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; closed Sundays and Mondays, with exception of opening receptions. Admission: Free. More information: Call (229) 247-2787; or visit www.turnercenter.org.



FILE PHOTO: DEAN POLING | THE VALDOSTA DAILY TIMES

Andrew Sabori, seen in this file photo shot in Lakeland, presents 'Coming to America,' an exhibit at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.



The annual Drawproject returns Monday to the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts. The drawing here is by artist Brad Finson.



Artist Craig Hawkins presents the exhibit, 'Emmaus Road.'

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