



SPECIAL PHOTO

Honoring military men, women

Waycross Police Chief Tommy Cox (far right) was the keynote speaker for a ceremony held at Memorial Park in downtown Waycross on Memorial Day, May 31. Cox recalled his service to the country and love for the military. A large wreath was placed in the center of the Memorial Wall. Walt Eddins, also a veteran, sang the "National Anthem" before a large gathering on hand to pay their respects to the nation's war heroes. Joining Cox for the wreath presentation were veterans: (left to right) Larry Baker, Merrill Tindall, Steve Strickland, Jerry Larisecy, Walter Millhorn and Charles Baker.



Fourth of July Celebration set

The annual July 4th Celebration will be held Sunday, July 4 beginning at 6 p.m., around Bit Tanner Field and Memorial Stadium. The program will have music, food and beverage trucks as well as the fireworks show starting at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Waycross Journal-Herald

\$1

'South Georgia's Greatest Newspaper'

PO Box 219 • Waycross, GA 31502 • 912-590-6268 • facebook.com/wjhnews/



Vol. 103, Edition 23

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

16 pages

Hearing set to decide fate of confederate statue

By RICK NOLTE
Staff Writer

A hearing on the lawsuit involving the future of the Confederate memorials in Phoenix Park in downtown Waycross will be held at 11 a.m. today (Wednesday, June 9), in the Superior Court of Ware County.

The proceeding on injunctive relief was originally scheduled for 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 2, but continued Tuesday, June 1, by Judge Dwayne H. Gillis at the request of Rick Currie, Waycross City Attorney. The city as well as City Commissioners Norman Davis, Marian Solomon-Gaines

and John Threat are named as defendants in the action brought by The Clement A. Evans Camp No. 64 Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Georgia Division of Sons of Confederate Veterans.

The commissioners were in the majority of a 3-2 vote by the commission on a resolution

March 2 requesting removal of the items in letters sent March 12 to five people and one organization with ownership interests in the the statue and Civil War-era cannon.

The Clement A. Evans Camp was among the parties to receive a letter from the city. The letters re-

quested an answer by May 1.

The suit, filed April 29, seeks monetary damages in an unspecified amount, a temporary restraining order as well as preliminary and permanent injunctions prohibiting the city from removing the memorials.

(see COURT, Page 16)

High-speed chase leads to head-on collision of patrol car

By MYRA THRIFT
Staff Writer

RABON — For the third time in a week, Brantley County law enforcement officials, along with the Georgia State Patrol, were involved in a high-speed chase.

This one took place Thursday evening, June 3, and ended when the driver crashed his vehicle head-on into a Brantley patrol car, then jumped out and fled on foot into a wooded area where he was captured by a state K-9 Unit, said Georgia State Patrol Post Commander Sgt. Chad Woods.

At the chase's end, a K-9 (see CHASE, Page 15)



SPECIAL PHOTO

Ware County Probate Judge Calvin Bennett administers the oath of office to Clarence Billups to become Chairman of the Ware County Board of Elections and Registration during a ceremony last week at the courthouse. Billups, a former Mayor of Waycross, replaces John Fluker, who resigned earlier this spring.

Billups new election chair

By RICK NOLTE
Staff Writer

Former Waycross Mayor Clarence Billups was sworn in Friday, June 3, as chairman of the Ware County Board of Elections and Registration.

Billups took the oath of office from Probate Judge Calvin Bennett following an appointment by Superior Court Judge Dwayne H. Gillis. Billups replaces John Fluker, who resigned earlier this year.

Gillis was charged with selecting a chairman after a 2-2 deadlock in voting between nominees Carley Hickox and Billups. Those two were joined by Larry Capps and Albert

Bussey as possible replacements to fill out Fluker's unexpired term that ends June 30, 2023, Supervisor of Elections Carlos Nelson said.

"I'm looking forward to serving as chair of the board," Billups said after being sworn in. "We have a very good working board, and our elections office is doing great work for the citizens of Ware County.

"Integrity, transparency and trust is what we'll continue to stand on."

The four were interviewed April 16 with Hickox and Billups emerging as candidates to go before the board for a vote. The deadlock placed the issue in the hands of Gillis, who informed the board in a

letter dated April 30, that he'd selected Billups, Nelson said.

Billups had previously completed all paperwork with the Georgia Secretary of State's office for certification as the county chairman.

He will head a board that includes Republican representatives Danny Barlett and Mary Barnes and Democrat representatives Ludean Whitfield and Shawn Taylor. Whitfield is the Vice Chairman.

"John will be greatly missed," said Nelson, who added Fluker resigned to move to Atlanta to be closer to family members. "(Billups) will look out for the best interest of the voters."

New park approved in vicinity of Oak St.

By RICK NOLTE
Staff Writer

A new park is coming to the Oak Street area of Waycross following approval last week by the City Commission.

Commissioners approved an ordinance Tuesday, June 1, to turn parcels owned by the city at 845 and 847 Folks Street into a park that would contain walks, benches, trees and a variety of other vegetation. Dr. Yolanda Rivers addressed the commission last month about the possibility of turning the vacant lots into a park as part of the Oak Street community's efforts toward revitalization.

The measure was among four approved by the three commissioners present during the panel's first bi-monthly meeting of June. They also passed a pair of resolutions during the session that lasted fewer than 30 minutes.

Commissioners Henry Strickland, Diane Hopkins and (see PARK, Page 16)

Splash pad work to start later in June

By RICK NOLTE
Staff Writer

The construction contract has been signed and work expected to begin later this month on the splash pad project planned for Pernel Roberts Memorial Park.

City Engineering consultant Trey Gavin told city commissioners last week the \$155,000 recreational facility will meet their expectations despite being scaled back from its original version to bring it more in line with the project's \$130,000 target. It will have the anticipated interactive water features, including a lady bug mist hoop tunnel, sprinkling palm tree, tipping buckets, sprayers and bubblers on a (see SPLASH, Page 16)

Former sheriffs receive Liberty Awards

Ware's Royal, Charlton's Conner honored by Waycross Bar Association

By MYRA THRIFT
Staff Writer

Two beloved long-time law enforcement officers were honored Thursday night by the Waycross Bar Association with presentation of the coveted annual "Liberty Bell Award."

A banquet held at Okefenokee Golf and Country Club was well-attended by numerous court officials, friends and family members as Ware County's respected Sheriff Randy Royal, who died January 13, 2021, and retired Charlton County Sheriff Ernest "Dobie" Conner were recognized for their lifetimes of service to the citizens of Ware and Charlton counties, respectively.

Attorney Sarah Lewis, Assistant District Attorney with the Waycross



Royal



Conner

Judicial Circuit's District Attorney's Office and president of the Waycross Bar Association, welcomed the crowd and called on Judge Jeffrey Parker for the invocation prior to everyone enjoying a meal from the club's famous buffet.

District Attorney George Barnhill talked briefly about his association

with Royal and Conner.

"I got here in 1983 and met Randy and Dobie early on," Barnhill said. "Randy was a deputy and had to work Christmas Day."

Barnhill told of a case where the young deputy was sent to a home and found the door ajar.

When he knocked on the door, the door swung open and Royal was face to face with two women who'd been shot dead.

"That was Randy's first big crime," said Barnhill. "I sure wish he was still here with us."

Speaking of Conner, Barnhill said he went with then-DA Donnie Dixon to court in Charlton County, and they were finished early. Conner suggested they all go to lunch.

"I was squished up to Dobie. This (see AWARDS, Page 15)



Price: \$1 plus tax
Thank you for paying \$1 for this paper.

You can have the Journal-Herald delivered to your mailbox each week.

Subscriptions are \$45 in the county and \$50 outside the county.

Call 912-283-2244 to start your subscription today!

YOUR NAME COULD BE HERE

Index

Law enforcement	2
Obituaries	3-4
Religion/Family	6
Sports	8
Comics	11
Legals	12-14
Classifieds	14