MY HEART BELONGS TO SPARTA

The Sparta Ishmaelite

Wednesday November 4, 2026

EXPANSION APPROVED

By:Sandra Hernandez

The Hancock County Board of Commissioners approved a controversial expansion of the Heidelberg rock quarry on Thursday.

The quarry would be expanded to Shoals Road in Sparta, though the existing rock quarry has mined stone at the site for nearly 40 years.

Neighbors have said that they face problems from noise, dust, traffic and pollution. Now, commissioners have approved the expansion with a set of specific conditions — such as limits for traffic, blasting hours, water quality and more.

The Heidelberg company plans to expand the quarry by around 250 acres.

You can find the full list of conditions below:

A minimum 100-foot natural buffer will be provided on the east, west, and north property boundaries.

Hours of operations will be limited to certain times. Plant maintenance will be 24 hours, Monday through Saturday. Scale operation and truck load out will be from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Train load out will be from 6 a.m. to midnight Monday through Saturday.

Blasting activity will be limited to the hours between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

No activity by the Sparta Quarry shall be allowed on any of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve.

Prior to starting operations, well surveys will be done for existing groundwater wells within 5280 feet of current or future blasting activity.

If a nearby property owner sends a written notice that blasting activity has caused damage, then a Georgia-licensed Engineer will conduct an investigation.

The Heidelberg company will obtain an insurance policy for a minimum of $5 million that provides security to adjacent and nearby property owners against any loss.

Any damage to any portion of Shoals Road, which is a county road, shall be immediately repaired.



Moving His Legacy Forward

From : Javion James Clark Foundation

The Javion James Clark Foundation thanks every participant, sponsor, volunteer, and supporter who helped make our 5K special!

Whether you walked, ran, cheered, or gave, you helped us honor Javion's memory and keep his legacy moving forward.

A special thank-you to our sponsors:

- Horizon Motor Coach
- CJE Foundation
- Mind Is Unique Counseling Services
- Webster's Pharmacy
- Sandy's IGA
- Ace Hardware of Sparta
- VanKo Creations

Congratulations to our winners!

Female Winners

- Dawn Brake
- Zoya Smith
- Shakayla Warren

Male Winners

- Kayson McLeod
- CJ Allen
- Mark McLeod

We are grateful for the love and support shown to our family and foundation. Every step taken in Javion's honor means more than words can express.

Same place, same time next year! We can't wait to see familiar faces and welcome new ones.

Forever Seven –
A Legacy Without End.

"Security Threat Group Activity"

By Karen West, News Reporter



On Friday, October 30 at 7:15am Hancock State Prison inmate Devin Edwards, was found to be unresponsive in his shared cell. Hancock County EMC rushed him to Washington County Regional Hospital where, at 8:55am, he was declared dead. Hancock County Coroner Dontrelle Andrews confirmed that he appeared to have been involved in a recent physical altercation and that Edwards' body was at the GBI lab awaiting autopsy where the investigation is ongoing. Edwards, 36, was serving 30 years for drug trafficking.

This is the fifth spparent homicide this year at Hancock State Prison where 1052 inmates are currently housed in the high security facility.

This was also just one day after a lockdown of 25+ of Georgia's State Prisons for what the Georgia Department of Corrections is calling " Security Threat Group Activity".

What exactly is "Security Threat Group Activity"? Simply stated, Security Threat Group Activity is

Continued to page 4...

Leave a Legacy

By Karen West, News Reporter



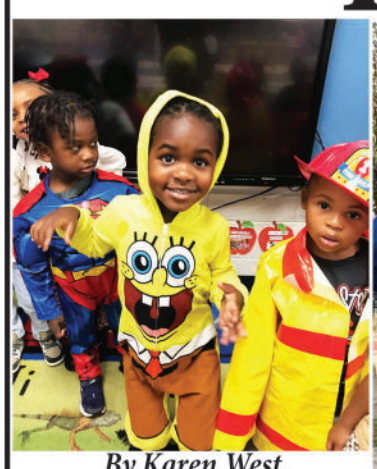
The City of Sparta (along with the Chamber and several other organizations) is moving forward on the little Pocket Park in Downtown Sparta and currently selling the bricks for the central pathway.

Now its time to Leave a Legacy for your family, a loved one, a person who you look up to, your organization, your church or club, a friend or favorite teacher, someone who has impacted you or the community - or both!

Engraved bricks are $50 each for up to four lines. For just $8 more, you can get a minature paperweight version of your memorial brick to give to the person you are honoring or as a keepsake for yourself. It makes a lasting and unique holiday gift! Hurry, space is limited!

Continued to page 4...

Triple Big Weekend



By Karen West, News Reporter





October 30th weekend was a "Triple Big Weekend- Halloween, Hancock Central High School Homecoming and Pinetree Festival.

People were showing up, and out, in costumes, giving and getting treats, meeting new friends, and catching up with old classmates, eating, eating, and more eating, dancing and singing, riding carnival rides, and generally having a good time.

The parade had just about everything anyone could ask for - there were drones flying overhead, shrill whistles blowing, colorful fans snapping open and shut, steppers and Shriners, cars and big trucks, politicians and marchers, masons and floats, horses and high steppers, lots of pink for breast cancer awareness, even a few golf carts weav-

Continued to page 4....



CHURCH NEWS

Hickory Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Inc
4933 Hickory Grove Church Road/Post Office Box 402 Sparta, Georgia 31087
www.hickorygrovembc.org Reverend Michael Curry, Pastor

Pre-Pastoral Revival

The Glenns Mary Baptist Church in Sparta, GA will be hosting a two-night Pre-Pastoral revival on November 5-6, 2026 at 7pm nightly.
The Rev. Brandy Bailey of the Jones Chapel AME Church will be the Guest Speaker Thursday night, and Dr. Nathaniel Snead, Jr. and the Macedonia Baptist Church will be the Guest Speaker on Friday Night.
We will culminate the celebration on Sunday, November 8th @ 2pm with our Pastor, the Rev, Kenneth Lester's 4th Pastoral Anniversary. Bishop W.J. McCalla and the Saint Galilee Baptist Church will be the special guest.
Everyone is invited to attend this joyous occasion.

Tabernacle Baptist Church Pastor Terry Boone
New St. Sparta, Ga. 706-833-8747

Shivers Grove Community Church
347 Shivers Grove Road Sparta, Ga. 31087

Services every 3rd Sunday Sunday School starts @ 11:00 AM
Church Worship @ 12:00 Noon
Reverend Marion Hargrove, Pastor Sister Mary Leslie, Secretary

ZEBULON COMMUNITY CHURCH
7266 BROWN CHAPEL RD. 31087
PASTOR BRO. BILLY CARROLL PHONE 706-829-4403
SERVICES EVERY SUNDAY 11:00--------SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00

AT THE CROSSROADS

By: EDWARD WILLIAMS - DEACON & Gideon

"Trust in the Lord with all of your life, and lean not on your own understanding, in all of your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path."---(Proverbs3;5-6) ---Life often brings us to the crossroads- moments when we must choose which direction to take. Some decisions are small, while other decisions may take us to the course of our future. At times we may stand uncertain, praying for wisdom, wondering what God wants us to do. Crossroads can feel overwhelming because we may make the wrong choice. Yet it is moments that our faith grows the most. Through the Bible, many people faced crossroads. Abraham stood at a crossroad when God called Him to leave his homeland and follower Him into the unknown. Moses faced a crossroad when he chose to obey God when he lead Israel out of Egypt. Peter stood at a crossroad when Jesus called him to leave his nets and become fishers of men. Each decision required trust, obedience, and faith in God's. direction. Cross often reveals what we trust most. Do we relied on our own decisions and understanding., or we willing to follow God even when the way is uncertain? God rarely shows us the entire journey at once. Instead, He ask us to trust Him one step at a time. Faith grows when we couture Walkin even without seeing the entire path ahead.

Sometimes the hardest crossroad involves surrender. We may know what we want, but God may be leading us somewhere different. His plans, however, are always better than anything we could choose ourselves; God sees the future is fully known by Him clearly while we only see the present moment. What feels uncertain to us. At every crossroads, prayer is essential. When God sincerely through his word and prayer, His promises to guide us. His peace often becomes the confirmation that we are walking in the right direction. Even if the path is difficult, God walks beside those who trust Him. Perhaps today you are standing at a crossroads in your life. You may be facing decisions about family, work, ministry, health, or your spiritual journey, remember this; you do not walk alone. God is faithful to direct the hearths of those who seek Him.

Explaining The Memory Verse

"Be Faithful People"

Lesson Text: Numbers 25:10-13; 1 Samuel 2:30-36; Background Scripture: 1 Samuel 2

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE
"I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind" (1 Samuel 2:35).
God wants His children to be faithful to Him and obey Him. Faithfulness and honor (respect) is very important to God. It's one way that we can show how much we love Him.

PRAYER
Dear God, our heavenly Father, thank You for loving us and for giving us parents and guardians to help us grow up to love and honor You! Help us to be faithful in the things we do day by day, so that we can honor and serve You throughout our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

References: Minister Minnie Harmon-Boone (DDiv, ECE,AH) HB: NIV, ESV
Author/Jesus Is All Ministries
Golden Universal Outreach Ministries Email-goldenenterprises59@gmail. com
Phone Number-706-833-8747

LOCAL MATTERS

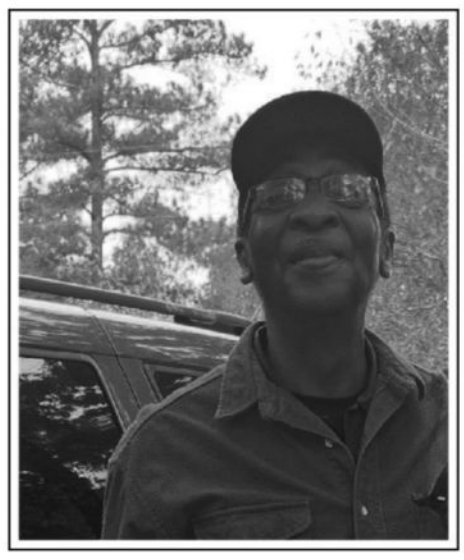
Send your Community News/Events to :
KAREN WEST
westkaren286@gmail.com or to sandersvillep@gmail.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND MEMORIAM

for our beloved Brother

Carl Raymond Baker

who passed on Monday,
October 12, 2026.





We will remember the family gatherings,
the good times, his own quiet spirit.
May his spirit be in peaceful rest.

Love, Sisters and Brother

"THEY" is YOU and ME!

Have you noticed that people seem to have gotten in the habit of looking at something that they don't like - like a dilapitated building or an overgrown lot and saying -

"THEY should do something about that! "

Let's STOP saying that!

Instead, try saying-

"What can I do to make this better?"

The first statement is passive and takes no responsibility to take action with a solution. The second statement rethinks the same situation but takes on the responsibility to actively make a positive difference. It looks for and acts on finding and following through on a positive solution, instead of just complaining.

And its achievable because there is always SOMETHING - BIG OR SMALL- that each and every single one of us can do to make our community just a little bit better - for a few seconds or for a lifetime.

It only takes one person, one act of kindness, one action to move forward to get the ball rolling. Need some examples?

- Pick up trash on your morning walk like Pat Miller
- Plant a community garden like Vonda Garrison
- Repair and paint an empty storefront like Jamie Baggett
- Open a much needed community coffee house like Leslie Letson
- Share pictures of good things happening in your community on social media like Frank Edwards
- Buy a child an ice cream when they least expect it like Beth Webster
- Volunteer your time and expertise to your local government like Julie Lawson
- Paint inspirational murals like DREAM Streets Sparta (get permission first!)
- Open your building up to community events and



Karen West,
News Reporter

Markets like Filip Velimirovich
- Start an organization to give citizens a voice- than use that voice to make a difference and get accountability for your community like Kim Sanders
- Lend your expertise to local property owners to help preserve their historical buildings like Dip Polatty
- Arrrange displays in empty storefronts to bring them to life like Pam Haskins
- Work with your community to turn a vacant lot into a Pocket Park like Leanne Ruff
- Donate warm coats to people who need them in a pop up shop like Mary Bigelow
- Be vocal at local government meetings with problems AND solutions like Della Smith
- Be a teller of stories and local history like Sherard Kennedy
- Write a social media blog relating what makes our community special like Kathy Ransom
- Donate children's books to Our Little Really Free Libraries like Kellie Stephenson
- Volunteer and share good experiences like Maria Rodriguez
- Start a nonprofit that works hard for, and with, our youth like Telly Boone
- Organize an event to honor someone special and uplift the community like James Clark
- Create an event center that shares fun events with the entire community, not just once a year, but all year long like Connie and Josie Williams
- Help our kids prepare for life by offering mentoring, experiences, and guidence like Randie Grey
- Become a vendor at our local Market and share your many talents like Clifford Porter

You are not alone, no matter what your focus is, your level of expertise, or how much, or little, you want to share - other people in the community feel the same way and are waiting for someone like YOU to get things started. Folks are waiting for someone to speak up with simple, achievable solutions and the desire, drive, and follow through to accomplish them. They are looking for that small spark of inspiration - be the spark!

So WHAT can YOU do to help make our community a better place for us all?

You have more power to change the future of your small town than you probably realize, and most of that power is hiding in the ordinary decisions made every week.

Continued to page 4....

HANCOCK COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

H26-049
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
HANCOCK COUNTY
All creditors of the estate of Willie Mae Nelson, deceased, late of Hancock County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law; and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This 6th of October, 2026.
Philemon Nelson Jr
Administrator for the Estate
435 Pumping Station Road
Sparta, GA 31087
October 14, 21, 28, November 4, 2026

H26-050
DEBTORS AND CREDITORS NOTICE
GEORGIA, HANCOCK COUNTY.
All creditors of the Estate of Earnest W. Batchelor, Jr., deceased, late of Hancock County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned, according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This 7th day of October, 2026.
_/s/ Mitzi L. Batchelor_____
Mitzi L. Batchelor, Executrix of the Estate of Earnest W. Batchelor, Jr.
P.O. Box 190
Sparta, GA 31087
October 14, 21, 28, November 4, 2026

H26-051
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
IN RE: ESTATE OF PRESTON E. ELLIOTT, SR., DECEASED
All creditors of the Estate of Preston E. Elliott, Sr., late of Hancock County, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned representative of the estate according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned representative of the Estate.
This the 20th day of October, 2026.
Preston E. Elliott, Jr., as Executor
270 Falls Crossing Covington, GA 30016
By: Adams, Jordan & Herrington, PC
October 28, November 4, 11, 18, 2026

PETITION TO BE APPOINTED

H26-054
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF HANCOCK COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF CALVIN CHATMAN, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. E-26-066
NOTICE
To Whom It May Concern:
DEANTA S. CHATMAN have petitioned to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of CALVIN CHATMAN deceased, of said County. All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted by filing an objection.
All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before NOVEMBER 30, 2026.
In addition, all objections must be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk. Filing fees must be tendered with your objection unless you qualify to file as an indigent party.
Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.
Sabrina M. Lamar
Judge of the Probate Court
Jasmine J. Stokes
Deputy Clerk of the Probate Court
12630 Broad Street, Sparta, GA 31087
706-444-5343
November 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026

PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE

H26-053
SUPERIOR COURT OF HANCOCK COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
Civil Action Filing No. 2026-SU-CV-099
NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME
GEORGIA, Hancock County
Notice is hereby given that Princess Curry, the undersigned, filed his petition to the Superior Court of Hancock, County, Georgia on the 22nd day of October 2026, praying for a name change from Princess Curry to Princess Copeland. Notice is hereby given pursuant to law to any interested or affected party to appear in said Court and to file objections to such name change. Objections must be filed with said Court within 30 days of the filing of said petition.
This 22nd day of October 2026. /s/Princess Curry
Petitioner
October 28, November 4, 11, 18, 2026

NOTICE TO FORECLOSE RIGHT OF REDEMPTION

H26-052
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE OF RIGHT TO REDEEM
[REF. O.C.G.A., Section 48-4-5 et seq.; 48-4-45 & 48-4-46]
TO:
ALVESTER ALLEN and his Unknown Heirs at Law
EDITH ALLEN and her Unknown Heirs at Law
MICHAEL ALLEN
RANDY ALLEN
JOANETTE ALLEN
Occupant 111 MAYFIELD CHURCH LN, Hancock County, Georgia.
RE: FORECLOSURE OF EQUITY OF REDEMPTION FOR TAX SALE DEED (REF. O.C.G.A. § 48-4-45, 46)
Take notice that:
The right to redeem the following described property, to wit will expire and be forever foreclosed and barred as of five o'clock (5 p.m.) on December 10, 2026, or 30 days after legal service of the Notice pursuant to OCGA 48-4-45 et seq., whichever date is later:
ALL THAT TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND LYING AND BEING IN THE 112TH GMD OF HANCOCK COUNTY, GEORGIA, IN THE VILLAGE OF MAYFIELD, CONTAINING 2.63 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, AS SHOWN ON THE PLAT OF SURVEY MADE BY T. LARRY RACHELS, R.L.S. #1730, DATED OCTOBER 21, 1981, AND RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 11, PAGE 62, OFFICE OF HANCOCK COUNTY CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT, THE METES, BOUNDS, COURSES, AND DISTANCES OF SAID PLAT BEING INCORPORATED HEREIN BY SPECIFIC REFERENCES FOR A MORE COMPLETE DESCRIPTION.
That property known as 111 MAYFIELD CHURCH LN, according to the present system of numbering homes and having tax parcel identification number 249016.
The tax deed to which this notice relates is dated December 5, 2023, and is recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Hancock County, Georgia in Deed Book 606 Page 63.
The property may be redeemed on or before the time and date stated above by payment of the redemption price as fixed and provided by law to the undersigned at the following address:
RAYAN GRANT
c/o John Ayoub Esq.
Ayoub, Mansour & Bryant, LLC
675 Seminole Avenue, Suite 301
Atlanta, Georgia 30307
404.892.2599
Please be governed accordingly.
October 28, November 4, 11, 18, 2026

STAY INFORMED!

*** All legal notices are required to be e-mailed each week prior to run date by 12 PM on Friday's. Email to**

brittany@courier-heraldtoday.com

Hancock County Sheriff Department

It's the time of the year for scams.
Citizen of Hancock County, Ga.
If anyone or anybody calls you and asks you to transfer money from your banking account to another bank account that you are not using or not aware of please don't transfer money to anyone.
In today's world, scammers are using telephone numbers that you may be familiar. They may give you a person's name that sounds familiar, if you are not sure of the call please hang up.
So many people have lost all of their life savings from one call by transferring money to a scammer. They will have your bank account, your name, your birthday, home address and other personal information.
We have had so many citizens who have been affected by this and it is critical that you don't play victim to these scams.
These scammers are using local business numbers and family members' numbers to trick you out of your money.
Please do not give your name, date of birth, social security number, home address, banking account, and credit card information to anyone who you are not familiar with by email or telephone.

Picture Everything
MEDIA LLC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Picture Everything Media LLC Launches with a Mission to Capture Moments, Inspire Dreams, and Build Relationships

New media business combines professional photography, aerial imagery, and personal service to help people see the possibilities in every picture.

SPARTA, GA — October 23, 2026 — Picture Everything Media LLC is pleased to announce the launch of a media business built on a simple belief: every picture should tell a story, create value, or make someone's day a little brighter.

Founded by Julie Lawson, Picture Everything Media LLC offers photography and aerial imaging services with a personal touch. As an FAA-Certified sUAS Pilot, photographer, and editor, Julie brings together technical expertise and a genuine love for people to create images that do more than capture a scene—they capture a moment, a possibility, and a dream.

For Julie, photography is about more than taking a picture. It's about helping a homeowner present their home as they take the next step toward their dreams, and prospective buyers to see beyond the walls and windows to envision the home they could build there.

Picture Everything Media LLC also provides photography for corporate events, celebrations, and other meaningful occasions. Whether photographing a home, a special event, or a milestone, Julie believes every session should be a fun, comfortable, and memorable experience. At the heart of the business is a commitment to building relationships, delivering exceptional customer service, and treating every client as more than just another appointment on the calendar.

This new venture is also deeply personal. After years of building a career in the corporate world, Julie is pursuing her dream of independence and putting her faith to the test. Her husband is working alongside her as a partner in this journey, bringing a team approach to the business and sharing in the excitement of building something meaningful together.

> *"This is about more than starting a business," Lawson explains. "It is about having the courage to pursue a dream, trusting God with the outcome, and using the gifts we have been given to serve others."*

Picture Everything Media LLC looks forward to serving homeowners, real estate professionals, families, businesses, and individuals throughout the surrounding community.

PICTURE EVERYTHING MEDIA LLC INVITES THE COMMUNITY TO CONNECT

Picture Everything Media LLC welcomes opportunities to connect with local media, real estate professionals, community organizations, and businesses interested in sharing stories that inspire, celebrate milestones, and showcase the people and places that make our communities special.

Media outlets are invited to share this announcement, schedule an interview with founder Julie Lawson, or feature Picture Everything Media LLC in an upcoming business spotlight. Real estate professionals, homeowners, and community members are encouraged to reach out to discuss how professional

THE GEORGIAN
The Sandersville Progress & The Sparta Ishmaelite
Covering Washington & Hancock Counties
Legal Organ of Washington & Hancock County

In County: $38 **Out of County:$45** **Out of State (GA): $55**

First Name: _____ Last Name:_____

Or Business Name:_____

_____

Address:_____

_____

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal Subscription

☐ Change Of Address

You can mail this form to

The Georgian 118 East Haynes St. Sandersville GA 31082

to get your personal subscription started !



"THEY" is YOU and ME!

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The answer is - EVERY THING!

NEED A FEW MORE IDEAS?

- Shop and buy LOCAL
-Smile and say "hello" to those you meet
- Walk or ride your bike instead of driving - slow down, observe, and be accessible
- Leave positive reviews for local businesses on social media
- Volunteer at the Senior Center
- Walk dogs and play at the animal shelter
- Fill a Little Really Free Library with childrens books
- Record, video, or write up the stories and memories from our elders - living history is invaluable, priceless, and too quickly gone.
- Help elderly neighbors with yard work, grocery shopping, or just visit with them
- Plant a tree
- Become a local volunteer firefighter
- Support our small local businesses by buying from them on a regular basis
- Pull weeds in public spaces
- Attend local meetings and stay informed- City Council, County Commissioners, Board of Education, Economic Development, HPC, Planning and Zoning, Board of Elections, Historical Society, Book Club, PTO,...
- Make a video about things you love in our community and share it.
- Take your meetings in a local resturaunt or coffee house like Gracie Mae's or the Merc.
- Volunteer to teach, tutor, read, do a workshop
- Be a good neighbor and ambassador for your community.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?

JUST DO IT!

Triple Big Weekend

...continued from page 1

ing in and out of the parade. But one thing was noticably missing, and sevetal people commented on the lack,- both on facebook and in person - the marching bands.Hopefully they will make it into next years parades.

But when all was said and done, the big crowd gave this years Pinetree Festival and other big events going on, a thumbs up!

Leave a Legacy

...continued from page 1

NOVEMBER 8TH IS DEADLINE FOR ORDERS

Return this form and your $50.00 check/cash to:

Leanne Ruff, Grants Coordinator

Checks payable to: CITY OF SPARTA

12912 BROAD STREET | SPARTA, GA 31087

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Amount Paid: _____

12912 Broad Street | Sparta, GA 31087 **Thank you for your support!**

SPARTA-HANCOCK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUY-A-BRICK FOR OUR NEW POCKET PARK!

SPARTA-HANCOCK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



The **Sparta Hancock Chamber of Commerce**, along with the **City of Sparta**, is sponsoring a "Buy-A-Brick" program to help support the construction of our new pocket park located at 12776 Broad Street. You can purchase a brick and choose your own engraving to be a permanent marker in the pocket park.

SUGGESTED ENGRAVINGS INCLUDE:

Individual Names: JOHN SMITH

Family Names with Identified Members: THE SMITH FAMILY / JOHN, JANE, JUNIOR

In Memory: IN MEMORY OF MY DAD / JOHN SMITH

Name with City/County Title: JOHN SMITH / PASTOR SPARTA BAPTIST



ONE BRICK **4" X 8" BRICK** $50

up to 4 lines of engraving and up to 21 characters per line

PLEASE ENGRAVE MY BRICK AS FOLLOWS:

Any keyboard character, symbol, number or space is considered one character. Please do not include emojis. All text is centered and capitalized unless otherwise noted. All inscriptions are subject to review.

"Security Threat Group Activity"

...continued from page 1

violent gang activity. Gangs are organizations capable of "instigating severe facility violence and cross prison co-ordination" of a wide variety of illegal criminal activities.

The lockdown came as a result of a gang related altercation at Hayes State Prison that sent 3 inmates to the hospital just days prior. Officials say that the wide range lockdown was implemented out of "an abundance of caution" regarding possible gang retaliation.

The caution did not help Devin Edwards, who, according to several sources both inside and outside the prison was known to be a gang member of the Ghostface Gangsters.

The Georgia Department of Corrections does not publicly publish comprehensive rosters of gang members within their facilities, but the gangs are readily known to operate in the state prison facilities. Most people have heard of the Bloods and the Crips - notorious gangs with street origins and farreaching criminal activities, but there are others - including the Gangster Disciples and the Black Disciples - all four are known to inhabit Hancock State Prison. In the last few years, there is also a relatively new gang - the Ghostface Gangsters (GG) that have numerous members amongst the Hancock State Prison population - and their numbers are growing.

While identified loosely as a white supremecy group, the Ghostface Gangsters' primary motivation is not segration or race supremcy, but organized crime and financial profit while operating within the Georgia State Prison system where they originated. Both Federal and State law enforcement cite the gang as organizing collaborations with the Bloods and Gangster Disciples to facilitate drug trafficing both inside and outside Georgia's State Prisons.

The organization is highly organized and strictly structured, using a military type hierarchy with generals, captains , and soldiers who utilize contraband cellphones to organize and manage their extensive drug operations. Methamphetamine and fetanyl distribution, orchestrating illicit almost daily "drone drops" , phone scams, identity theft, along with very violent recruitment, enforcement, and disciplinary tactics are all a part of their standard operating procedures. With the overwhelmingly high prison population and the extremely low number of correctional officers, the Ghostface Gangsters pretty much have the "run of the place" in the many prisons where they choose to operate.

Georgia has seen a sharp increase in the number and populations of gangs in the last decade, both on the streets and in the prisons, while they continue to spread their operations through middle and rural Georgia, particularly in drug trafficking and counterfeiting.

The Ghostface Gangsters gang has been the focus of several multi- agency, Federally led RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization) investigations and indictments in an attempt to break up the prison directed networks.

Recently (June 2026), Ghostface Gangster highranking leader, Donald Jason Miles was sentenced to 30 years in a Federal penitentiary for operating a major drug network while incarcerated in Valdosta State Prison. Not only did they supply drugs to other Georgia State Prisons, but distributed the Mexican sourced drugs throughout Atlanta and Middle Georgia communities primarily, while taking in billions of dollars- all while being incarcerated in a Georgia State Prison, serving time for other criminal activities. Using inmates (many who purposely get arrested to fill needed spots in the prison organizations), street level conspirators, co-ordinated drone drops to bypass perimeter security, - the organization seeks to flood the prisons with methamphedimines , marijuana, and other drugs.

One of the reasons that gangs have become so successful in the criminal activities and the day to day operations of the prisons themselves, is the severe staffing shortages of 50%, to as high as 80%, in our state prisons.

It is no secret in the Georgia Department of Corrections that gangs exert tremendous control over daily prison life - illegal cellphones, contraband, bed assignments, scheduling and/or denying shower times, and controlling the distribution of food, both from the kitchens and the commissaries. Gangs are selling bedspace, forcing other prisoners to sleep on floors or in common areas, if they or their families won't pay exorbidant "bed fees". Extorting family members to pay for "protection" charging already cash strapped families whose main breadwinner is behind bars, $500 or more a month (sometimes even weekly) for the priviledge of breathing while in prison.

Using violence to collect debts stemming from selling cellphones, food , and drugs, as well as "special favors" is standard operating procedure for the gangs in Georgia State Prisons, and the Ghostface Gangsters are emerging as one of the most vicious.

The sheer size of the prisons makes it, at best, difficult for a rapidly dwindling staff to oversee and management.

The Federal Department of Justice sets the standard for staff to inmate ratio at 3 to 4.5 inmates to a single staff member. With 1052 inmates, Hancock State Prison should have approximately 350 staff members.

Hancock State Prison has just 215 staff members on payroll, presently.

That 215 staff payroll includes the warden, deputy wardens, special assistants, administrative clerks, maintenance workers, facility operators, instructors, counselors, food prep, medical staff - and less than 50 correctional officers.

Less than 50 correctional officers to guard well over 1000 high security inmates - all day, all night, every day, 365 days a year, through 3 shifts a day, holidays, weekends, sick days - EVERY DAY.

Less than 50 officers to guard 1000 inmates.

THE MOST SEVERE PROBLEM OUR PRISONS FACE IS A LACK OF STAFFING, PARTICULARLY CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS.

But as one officer, who wished to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation said,

"Getting the public to care is an uphill battle".

"Security Threat Group Activity" will continue to grow, continue to be responsible for more lockdowns, continue to require more state funds being allocated, continue to cost taxpayers money, continue to be a source of concern for citizens, continue to threaten our safety, continue to pile up more homicides, continue to breed and grow more criminal activity, continue to break down the entire system- until we can adequately staff the facilities that are designated to contain and guard us from these "Security Threat Groups."

The only real thing standing between our community and the "Security Threat Groups" occupying the Hancock State Prison in Downtown Sparta is less than 50 Corrections Officers, if you feel that is enough, do nothing. If that number gives you pause, contact your local governments, state representatives and senators, officals, Federal Senators and Representatives and our new governor. Its been 2 years since the Federal Department of Justice report on the inadequacies of the Georgia Department of Corrections and the State Prisons that they run. What, if anything, has been done about it? And what, if anything are we going to accept?

LOCAL MATTERS