

WEDDING GUIDE

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

SUNDAY

PREP HOOPS



Special bridal section is in today's edition.
B1-6

Get caught up on local hardwood action.
SPORTS, A8-9



The **GRIFFIN DAILY NEWS**

Tips on posting, responding to online ads

In response to recent double murder, GPD offers advice

BY THOMAS HOEFER
 STAFF WRITER
 THOMAS@GRIFFINDAILYNEWS.COM

An ad on Craigslist, in which Bud Runion sought to buy a 1966 Ford Mustang, would end up

costing him his life and that of his wife, June. The Cobb County couple was found dead Monday, shot in the head, after traveling to Telfair County four days earlier to

meet a man who pretended to have that vehicle. Ronnie Adrian Towns, 28, has since been arrested and charged with malice murder and armed robbery. "To my knowledge and experience, we have not experienced any such transactions in Griffin," said Lt. Michael Richardson with the Griffin Police Department.

Asked what people should do to avoid putting themselves in a dangerous situation when it comes to posting or responding to an ad online, Richardson advised to meet during the day in a very public place. "I would recommend the parking lot of a police station or fire station," he said. "Bad guys

don't like to do business in front of the cops." Another option, he added, could be the parking lot of a Walmart, close to the main building, because Walmart has lots of cameras installed that cover the lot.
SEE ONLINE/PAGE A3



THOMAS HOEFER/DAILY NEWS

University of Georgia President Jere Morehead spoke Thursday to the Rotary Club of Griffin. He offered Rotarians an update on UGA and especially its Griffin campus.

UGA president speaks to Rotary Club of Griffin

BY THOMAS HOEFER
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Dr. Tommy Hopkins, a member of Georgia's Board of Regents, couldn't have been happier when — after Michael Adams had announced his retirement — Jere Morehead threw his hat

in the ring to become the 22nd president of the University of Georgia. Morehead, whom Hopkins described as "unquestionably the best candidate we had," became UGA president in 2013, backed by the "tremendous

SEE ROTARY/PAGE A2

Georgia's Severe Weather Awareness Week is Feb. 1-7

STAFF REPORTS

The Spalding County Office of Homeland Security has announced that this week, Feb. 1-7, is Severe Weather Awareness Week in Georgia. The Georgia Emergency Management Agency supports the National Weather Service in observing Severe

Weather Awareness Week in Georgia. The goal of the weeklong observance is to encourage Georgians to practice emergency preparedness and response procedures for all types of severe weather events that occur in the state. Each day has a theme:
 • Sunday, Feb. 1 — Family Preparedness
 • Monday, Feb. 2 —

NOAA Weather Radios
 • Tuesday, Feb. 3 — Thunderstorm Safety
 • Wednesday, Feb. 4 — Tornado Safety and State-wide Tornado Drill
 • Thursday, Feb. 5 — Lightning Safety
 • Friday, Feb. 6 — Flood Safety
SEE WEATHER/PAGE A3

Deputy Fire Chief Polk honored for volunteer efforts

STAFF REPORTS

The Spalding County Fire Department announced that Deputy Chief Glenn Polk has received the Liberty Mutual Firemark Award for his volunteer efforts in educating the community on fire and emergency response, raising funds for those in need and coaching at a local school.

Polk held two CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training programs in 2014. This program is offered to the community free of charge due to a grant he wrote.

Polk has volunteered on a number of boards and committees within the community, including the Spalding County United Way, Spalding County Senior Center and the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

As a volunteer, Polk has provided expertise in emergency response, fire prevention and safety. "Polk can never say no to those who need him," the fire department said in a press release. "He is always there to assist in fund raising, grant writing and delivering meals to the hungry."

SEE POLK/PAGE A2



SPALDING COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Spalding County Fire Department announced that Deputy Chief Glenn Polk has received the Liberty Mutual Firemark Award for his volunteer efforts in educating the community on fire and emergency response, raising funds for those in need and coaching at the local school.

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Today's weather: Showers likely
56 **43**
 High Low

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OBITUARIES

Betty Camp Sexton

Died Jan. 21, 2015
former Griffin resident
Betty Camp Sexton, 80, of Fayetteville, Ga., formerly of Griffin, died Jan. 21, 2015, following complications due to a recent stroke. Mrs. Sexton, born in Gadsden, Ala., graduated from West Fulton High School in Atlanta. Mrs. Sexton served as secretary for the Fairburn and Flint River Baptist Associations, where her husband, the Rev. Dr. C. Sterling Sexton, was director of missions. Mrs. Sexton was a much beloved Sunday school teacher in many of the churches where she and her husband served, including First Baptist Griffin.

Survivors include four sons and daughters-in-law, Charles Sterling (Kathy) of Sevierville, Tenn.; David Michael (Patti) of Fayetteville, Ga.; Stephen Lawrence (Kathy) of Birmingham, Ala.; and retired Lt. Col. John Mark (Theresa) of Lawrenceville, Ga. Other survivors include siblings, Doris (Grady) Wigley of Augusta, Ga.; Bill Camp (Harriet) of Jefferson City, Mo.; Peggy Howard of Florence, Ala.; Judy Garcia (Tom) of Rockport, Texas; and Larry Camp of Tallahassee, Fla.; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; her brother-in-law, Tommy Durden of Griffin, Ga.; nieces, nephews and cousins.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Feb. 21, 2015, at Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.; visitation to follow at the church. Memorials requested to Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org) or Southside Baptist Church (Ninth St. and 11th Ave. So., Birmingham, AL 35255).

Mrs. Sara Messer

April 25, 1931—Jan. 30, 2015
Griffin resident
Mrs. Sara Geneva Bryant Messer, 83, of Griffin, formerly of Zebulon, passed away Jan. 30, 2015, at A.G. Rhodes Home at Wesley Woods in Atlanta. She was born in Live Oak, Fla., daughter of the late Joseph Bryant and Arrie Belle Drawdy Bryant. Mrs. Messer worked as a telephone supervisor for General Telephone Company for many years. She was a member of Carver Road Baptist Church and a former member of Mount Gilead Baptist Church, where for many years she faithfully cooked Wednesday evening meals. Mrs. Messer was a kind and loving person. She found great joy in helping and caring for others. Sara was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Mrs. Messer is survived by her husband of 64 years, Lloyd Messer; daughters and

sons-in-law, Cathy and Harold Balkcom of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Charlotte and Stan Arnold of Atlanta; grandchildren and their spouses, Jennifer Lane, Julie and Chris Gray, Neil Balkcom, Michael and Nour Davis, Chris Davis and Laura Sokoloskis, Grant Arnold, Jonathan Arnold, and Rebecca Arnold; brothers, James Bryant and Stanley Bryant; sister, Mary Bryant; six great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Friends may visit the family from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1 at the funeral home. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, Feb. 2 in the chapel of Moody-Daniel Funeral Home with the Rev. Jim Hardie and the Rev. Tom Summers officiating. Burial will follow in Moody Memorial Gardens.

Moody-Daniel Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



Mr. Charles C. Courtois

May 22, 1927 — Jan. 29, 2015
Griffin resident
Mr. Charles C. Courtois, Jr., age 87 of Griffin, passed away on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015 at Spalding Regional Hospital.

Mr. Courtois was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on May 22, 1927. He is preceded in death by his parents, Charles C. Courtois and Dolly Mae Courtois, a son Craig Courtois. He was a veteran of United States Army having served during World War II, was retired from Dundee Mills, a member of Foreign Legion, VFW Clayton County, Elk's Lodge. He loved flying planes and traveling.

He is survived by children, Bryan and Sandra Courtois, Chip and Lisa Courtois, Linda and Jim Murphy; daughter-in-law, Lynn Courtois; mother of his children, Elaine Courtois; grandchildren, Wes and Brittney Courtois, Johnathan Courtois, Gabriella Oviedo, Kate Courtois, Evan Courtois; great grandchildren, Owen Courtois and Maddox Courtois; close friend, Elsie Anderson.

A funeral service for Mr. Charles C. Courtois will be conducted on Monday, Febr. 2, 2015 at 2 p.m. in the Chapel of Conner-Westbury Funeral Home. Dr. Keith Wesley will officiate.

Please join the family in honoring the life of Charles C. Courtois by

visiting www.conner-westburyfuneralhome.com and posting your tributes and memories. Conner-Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 W. McIntosh Road, Griffin, is in charge of in arrangements.

Pat Jackson

April 5, 1949 — Jan. 29, 2015

Griffin resident

Pat Gilbert Jackson, age 65 of Griffin, passed away on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015 at Spalding Regional Hospital.

Pat was born in Griffin, Georgia, on April 5, 1949. She is preceded in death by her son, Robert Kessler "Kess" Jackson and her mother, June M. Gilbert. She was retired from Griffin Spalding County School System.

Survivors include her brother and sister-in-law, Ray and Valarie Gilbert; her father and step mother, Dwayne and Linda Gilbert; several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Visitation for Pat Jackson will be Sunday, Feb. 1, 2015 from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. at Conner-Westbury Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers Pat's request was to please make a contribution the Make-A-Wish, Georgia, 1775 The Exchange SE, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30339, 770-916-9474.

Please join the family in honoring the life of Pat Jackson by visiting www.conner-westburyfuneralhome.com and posting your tributes and memories. Conner-Westbury Funeral Home, 1891 West McIntosh Road, Griffin, GA is in charge of arrangements.

Pat was born in Griffin, Georgia, on April 5, 1949. She is preceded in death by her son, Robert Kessler "Kess" Jackson and her mother, June M. Gilbert. She was retired from Griffin Spalding County School System.

DEATH NOTICES

Mr. S.A. Jennings died Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015. Funeral arrangements will be announced. Miller's Family Mortuary Inc. is in charge of arrangements. 770-228-4077.

Mr. Robert Vinson Thomas, 45, of 170 Walker Mill Rd., Griffin, passed Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2015 at Spalding Regional Hospital. Memorial service for Mr. Thomas will be held at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015 from Church at the Crossing, 681 N. Expressway, Griffin. Pastor Ron Brooks will officiate. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to www.gofundme.com/vinniethomas. Family and friends are asked to assemble at the church at 10:45 a.m. Sympathetic service rendered by McDowell's Funeral Home, Inc. 305 N. Hill St. www.mcdowellfuneralhome.org.

Mr. James Willie Collier, 80, of 930 W. Broad St., Griffin, passed Saturday, Jan. 31, 2015 at the Riverdale Center in Riverdale, GA. Funeral arrangements will be announced at a later date by McDowell's Funeral Home, In., 305 N. Hill St.

SPCO: Be on the look out

STAFF REPORTS

The Spalding County Sheriff's Office is seeking the public's help in locating three wanted subjects.

There are outstanding warrants out for the arrest of the three subjects identified as Dajahmere La'Daveon Hall, 19; Michael Shawn Tanksley, 30; and Marcus Shane Peek, 34.

Hall has warrants for aggravated assault, aggravated battery, both felonies, and criminal damage to property in the second degree. He is described as a black male, 5 feet 5 inches tall, weighing 140 pounds, with a last known address of

125 Willis Way, Griffin.

Tanksley has an outstanding warrant for forgery in the 4th degree, a misdemeanor. He is described as a white male, 6-1, 180 pounds, with a last known address of 81 Moreland Ave., Griffin.

Peek has an outstanding warrant for violation of probation, and also has active warrants in Lamar County. He is described as a white male, 5-6, 175 pounds,



Marcus Shane Peek



Dajahmere La'Daveon Hall



Michael Shawn Tanksley

with a last known address of 336 David Elder Road, Griffin.

Anyone who knows the location of any of these subjects is asked to call the Spalding County Sheriff's Office at 770-467-4283 or Deputy Bowlden for information on Hall at 770-468-7114, Deputy Chadwick at 678-972-7244 with information on Tanksley or Peek, or Sgt. Peavy at 770-294-6945 with information on Peek.

ROTARY

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

support from all the regents and the alumni throughout the state."

On Thursday, Morehead spoke before the Rotary Club of Griffin after visiting the UGA-Griffin Campus to meet with faculty, staff and students. His last trip to Griffin came in October, he said, for the groundbreaking ceremony of the local campus' Food Product Innovation and Commercialization Center.

"That project is a perfect of what we love so much about Griffin," said Morehead, pointing to the collaboration of UGA, the state and the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority in making the project happen.

Morehead also pointed to a new Turfgrass facility in Griffin for which plans are underway and construction is expected to begin later this year. And then there's yet another project coming to town soon.

"UGA has decided to bring a Archway Partnership to this community," he said, explaining that this partnership is a community engagement platform created to address self-identified community priorities and examine those pressing issues.

"We anticipate that this partnership will officially go underway on July 1, 2015," Morehead said. "The University of Georgia plays a critically important role to this community, and it's a role we are proud to play."

As for academics, he said that UGA this past fall enrolled its most academically qualified group of students in its history while celebrating its highest graduation rate ever at 85 percent. That includes the Griffin campus, which Morehead praised as a magnificent educational opportunity, though acknowledging that bringing students to the local campus is a story "we've got to do a better job of telling."

"There are no plans to build residential facilities at the UGA Griffin Campus," he added.

POLK

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

The Liberty Mutual Firemark Award is pre-

sented annually to hundreds of firefighters throughout the country who best represent their communities through courageous acts and

who best demonstrate

the firefighter's selfless spirit.

"Please join us in congratulating Deputy Chief Polk for his service to our community," the fire department asked.