



The Oconee Enterprise

50 CENTS • VOLUME 138 • NUMBER 28

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER OF Miss Vinnie, Happy Birthday

THURSDAY • 15 JULY 2021



Waste business is victorious

Watkinsville dismisses cases. Business, **B3**



BOC considers TSPLOST

Commissioners want a referendum. News, **A3**



NOHS AD recaps historic year

Dowis talks journey, Titan dominance. Sports, **B1**

Coming next week

We'll report on the Oconee Planning Commission.

Inside

TWO SECTIONS
12 PAGES
15 JULY 2021

- Business **B3**
- Classifieds **B5**
- Crime **A2**
- Crossword **B5**
- Forum **A4**
- Legals **B4**
- Lifestyles **A6**
- Obituaries **A5**
- Public Matters **B3**
- Sports **B1**

BBQ will help injured firefighter

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

As an Oconee volunteer firefighter, Spence Dalton doesn't just settle for one good deed per day. On any given day, he may respond to a fire, car accident or weather-related emergency—sometimes all three. On June 6, he was assisting with a fallen tree after a bad storm.

Just like law enforcement has blue lights, firefighters and first responders use red flashing lights to indicate they are working a scene. But that night, a drunk driver, who was caught and arrested, hit Dalton and left the scene.

Dalton suffered a broken pelvis, a torn labrum in his shoulder, a torn meniscus and a number of abrasions to his body and face. He was

stitched from his lip to his hairline, said his wife, Haley. And his nose, which was almost ripped off and broken in three places, was also stitched. With surgeries and physical therapy, it may take six months for recovery.

To help with expenses but also to raise awareness for the Georgia Move Over Law, which requires motorists to get out of the way of an emergency vehicle, friends have organized a community barbecue Saturday at 6 p.m. at Crowe Farms.



Dalton



Oconee firefighter Spence Dalton teaches his son, Finn, about the public service of firefighters. [Submitted photo]

The farm is located at 1445 Clotfelter Road. The barbecue dinner will cost \$10 per plate and is provided by Backdraft BBQ.

SEE FIREFIGHTER PAGE A5



North High Shoals Mayor Toby Bradberry was 51 years old at the time of this death. [File photo]

High Shoals mayor dies

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

Toby Bradberry, who has served as the mayor of North High Shoals since 2016, died Sunday at his home. Oconee Sheriff James Hale said Bradberry died of a gunshot wound but no foul play is suspected. Oconee Elections Director Rebecca Anglin said the mayor's seat was not up for election this year, and she is waiting to hear from an attorney on filling the vacancy.

"He had the community and his family at heart," said longtime town council member Violet Dawe. "I will remember him as a good mayor and a good person who helped the town and pushed us forward."

Bradberry was the second generation in his family to take the high office of North High Shoals. His father, Harry Bradberry, was elected in the 1970s. His mother, Elizabeth Bradberry, was the lead nurse at the Oconee Health Department.

Toby Bradberry graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in telecommunications and published self-help guides and other literary achievements throughout his career.

As mayor, Bradberry oversaw significant infrastructure projects, such as the construction of the new town hall and the installation of new playground equipment at the park.

He once told The Oconee Enterprise that he had memorized much of the town's charter and that he envisioned a community that celebrates its citizens' contributions. Several years ago, Bradberry penned a letter to the editor thanking citizens Johnny Highfill and his colleagues at H & S Lighting and Electrical for installing the town's Christmas lights at no charge.

"Toby was a very nice person who truly loved the town, its citizens and its history," said former clerk Carolyn Pritchett. "He really enjoyed the times when citizens would get together."

When he was elected, Bradberry told The Oconee Enterprise that a small town is an idealized version of life.

"It's such a nice, quiet little place," he said. "There are a diminishing number of places that still offer that."

Murder reward at \$50,000

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

The reward in the Elijah Wood murder case has been raised to \$50,000, according to Sheriff James Hale.

In a public statement, Hale explained that the funds come from the following sources: \$20,000 from the FBI, \$15,000 from RaceTrac, \$10,000 from the Oconee County BOC and \$5,000 from the Oconee Sheriff's Reward Fund.

On March 19, 23-year-old RaceTrac clerk Elijah Wood was fatally shot at the Macon Highway store around 1:30 a.m.

The suspect was dressed in all black, obscuring his or her hands with gloves and face with a mask. The suspect, whose gender and race has not been conclusively determined, wore yellow and black Battle Sport gloves and was armed with a pistol.

Based on the FBI's video analysis and measurements taken at the scene, the suspect is believed to be

between 5 feet 10 inches and 6 feet in height.

Hale said that prior to the murder, a vehicle is seen traveling on U.S. 441 south, turning right onto Hog Mountain Road, driving past the RaceTrac, turning right onto Welbrook Road and stopping for a period of time before driving away.

Make and model is unknown, but Hale believes the vehicle is connected to the crime.

"From the start of this investigation, the Oconee County Sheriff's Office has been assisted by the GBI, FBI, ATF, U.S. Marshals, D.A. investigators and numerous local law enforcement agencies," said Hale, adding that a certified criminal profiler has reviewed the case. "The case information has been shared through the law enforcement intelligence network in order to ensure all possible avenues and techniques of solving this crime are covered."

SEE MURDER CASE PAGE A2



The person who murdered Elijah Wood was cloaked in black at the time of the crime. [File photo]

Bogart Historical Museum re-opens

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

Before a gym was added to Bogart High School in the early 20th century, teenage basketball players would occasionally break a window while practicing in the auditorium. Those broken windows of the former school, which closed in the mid-1950s, can be seen in a photo on display at the Bogart Historical Museum.

Long-time Bogart resident Janet Luke said her father was one of the star players in the early 20th century, and she too graduated from Bogart High School.

"They always had a good basketball team," said Luke.

On display at the museum are trophies from that time period, as well as a Bogart High School class ring. A number of families have loaned artifacts and personal treasures to the city and historical society.

The museum is inside the Bogart Historical Agricultural Center on East Thompson Street. This building was originally constructed in the late 1930s as the agriculture and home-economics departments of Bogart High School. The town held a grand opening of the Historic Agricultural Center in 2015.

The museum, which was temporarily closed during COVID-19, re-opened this summer. It's open the fourth Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., as well as private tours on select dates. To make a reservation for a private tour, contact Patricia Greene at (770) 725-7204 or Maggie Collins at (706) 207-8825.

Curator Patricia Greene is a

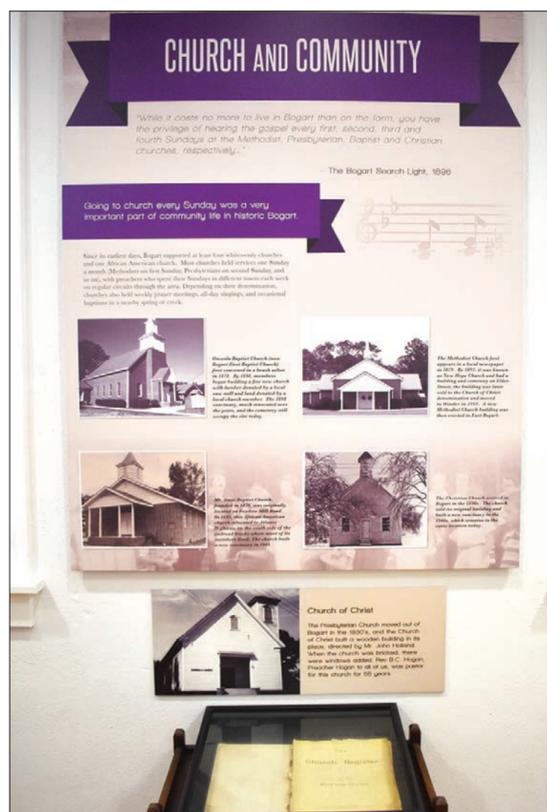
fifth generation resident of Bogart who loves to share its rich history. The town was founded in 1869 and was originally named for Osceola, a Creek-Seminole Indian. In 1892, the town was renamed Bogart in honor of a railroad agent. In the 1880s, Bogart was flourishing with blacksmiths, distillers, cotton gins and carpenters.

On loan at the museum is a

church directory circa 1890s from Bogart United Methodist Church as well as an old church organ by the Patat family.

The town was incorporated in 1905, and the building that once housed the Bank of Bogart is still standing today, said Greene. The original post office is also part of Bogart's identity in present day.

SEE HISTORY MUSEUM PAGE A3



In addition to a written history of Bogart's churches, the museum also has a church directory on loan that dates back to the 1890s. [Photo by Michael Prochaska]

MAIN STREET REPORTER

By Vinnie Williams

Editor's note: Vinnie Williams, longtime publisher of The Oconee Enterprise, died Jan. 17, 2020 at the age of 99 and a half. When Williams became editor in 1981, she published a weekly column that appeared on the front page for many years before taking space inside the paper. In honor of what would have been her 101st birthday on July 16, we are republishing a Main Street column she wrote Feb. 18, 1982.

WHY GOD MADE CATS:

As anyone knows, there are many reasons for keeping cats, such as when your editor comes for lunch the first time and the Persian, as ever, leaps to the kitchen counter.

The editor asks, "Do you allow your cat on the counter?"

"No," you say and brush the cat down. Where upon the Persian, giving you a reproachful look, wheels and springs back up.



That's one reason for keeping a cat. Another is when you begin feeding a stray black and white tom-cat that has drifted onto your farm. Mostly he stays his distance. One Sunday morning, attired for church, you and your husband step to the pasture fence. On your leg, you feel a warm wetness. The cat has drifted over and warned the world, and your husband, that you are his.

And then there is the shaded golden Persian who is introduced, futilely, to pedigreed Persian males, object: kittens. She snubs them. One day, she slips through the door, and five minutes later has taken up with a ratty tatty grey tom. Two months later, she produces a litter of kittens, all adorable, all resembling daddy.

There is the frightened black kitten born with three legs. A friend prevails upon you: "Take him. He can't run or climb and won't get into all the mischief a normal cat does."

Tripod-legs out-runs, out-jumps and out-terrors anything on four legs. Instead of Danny Boy, the name you give him sentimentally after those hurt Irish children, his name is properly Lucifer or Scratch.

Anyone who enjoys seeing people discomfited should have a cat. A cat will unerringly seek out the one person in a room allergic to or disliking it. It will snub the extended twinkling fingers and coos of "Here, kitty." God loved the contrary, so He made cats.

Varsity chooses Oconee

BY MICHAEL PROCHASKA

This week, The Varsity released a public statement announcing a Parkway Boulevard store in Oconee County.

Epps Bridge Centre developer Frank Bishop of The Bishop Company said the exact location has not yet been determined. While Bishop's firm has acquired property from the Gordy family, The Varsity owners still own some parcels too. "We have had some conversations with them," said Bishop. "They are trying to figure out where they want to go in the Epps Bridge corridor."

Bishop, who is also still in talks with Costco, said he believes The Varsity will do well in the area. The Varsity also plans a location in Bethlehem.

This issue was mailed Wednesday, July 14, from Watkinsville and Athens, GA. Please inform your post office if it arrives late.

