

The Covington News

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021



TELLING T

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WELCH SIGNS WITH SHORTER

Piedmont Academy football standout signs with Rome university

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and stay informed on local issues at CovNews.com

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His Word

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Psalms 27:14, KJV

Sticking to state standards

Superintendent remains neutral amid critical race theory controversy

By TAYLOR BECK
tbeck@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — As more and more organizations come out in support or opposition of critical race theory being taught in schools, Newton County Schools Superintendent Samantha Fuhrey says her district would stick to its strategic plan based on state-mandated academic standards.



Samantha Fuhrey

Critical race theory, which has received much national attention in recent weeks, was first defined in 1994 as “a collection of critical stances against the existing legal order from a race-based point of view,” by Roy L. Brooks of the University of San Diego. Richard Delgado, co-founder of the theory, defined it in 2017 as “a collection of activists and schol-

ars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power.”

In a letter to the editor, The American Association of University Professors, the American Historical Association, the Association of American Colleges & Universities, and PEN America provided a joint statement in “firm opposition” to the legislation introduced in nearly two dozen states across the U.S. to oppose it.

“These efforts have taken varied shape in at least 20 states; but often the legislation aims to prohibit or impede the teaching and education of students concerning what are termed ‘divisive concepts,’” the letter stated in part. “These divisive concepts as defined in numerous bills are a litany of vague and indefinite buzzwords and phrases including, for example, ‘that any individual should feel or be made

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Tom Spigolon | The Covington News

Part of the City of Refuge Deliverance Ministries of Conyers entry in the Juneteenth parade walk on the Covington Square Saturday.

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

By TOM SPIGOLON
tspigolon@covnews.com

About 45 entries marched from Legion Field to the Covington Square and back again Saturday, June 19, during a parade to celebrate the newest

national holiday, Juneteenth.

A pageant and other events were at Legion Field throughout the day. Organizers were able to move events indoors after rainfall began.

Winners of the inaugural Miss

Juneteenth pageants included:

- Little Miss JuneTeenth, Michaila Bourne;
- Pre-Teen, Alexandra Redding;
- Jr. Miss, Chelsea Williams;
- Teen, Jade White.



Tom Spigolon | The Covington News

Young musicians making up the Juneteenth Community Band perform in the parade.



Tom Spigolon | The Covington News

A member of the Durden Ranch riding group waves on Mill Street at the start of the parade Saturday.

Plot owner unhappy with Oxford Historical Cemetery upkeep



By TOM SPIGOLON
tspigolon@covnews.com

OXFORD, Ga. — At least one person with relatives buried in the Oxford Historical Cemetery says he is fed up with the upkeep of the antebellum burial grounds despite a nonprofit tasked with maintaining it having hundreds of thousands in the bank.

But the nonprofit’s board chairman defends the crew that mows and trims around the sometime-ancient headstones in the cemetery.

The cemetery board also is bound by state law to maintain a fund and only use the interest from its investment for maintenance, the chair-

man said.

Norm Lewis’ wife, mother and father are buried in the 184-year-old cemetery, which makes Lewis a member of the nonprofit Oxford Historical Cemetery Foundation Inc. that maintains it.

He said “every time” he travels to the cemetery to visit his loved ones’ graves “there’s always an issue about maintenance.”

In a visit on Mother’s Day, he said the grass was eight to 10 inches high in spots.

The Loganville resident said information disclosed at a recent annual meeting showed the foundation had hundreds of thousands of dollars in the bank but was

only using the interest from the account to maintain the cemetery’s 9 acres which date to 1837.

Lewis said he believed those the foundation hired to cut the grass around the markers of various ages and styles had not taken enough care in avoiding the headstones with mowers.

He said something appeared to have struck and damaged the corners of some stone markers.

In one instance, someone or something had toppled the marker of Lewis’ great-great-great-grandfather, Dr. Alexander Means, who died

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NCSS announces Partner in Education of the Year

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Weather Forecast



Wednesday, June 23
High: 85° Low: 64°
• 30% chance of rain



Thursday, June 24
High: 83° Low: 64°
• 30% chance of rain

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NCSS announces Partner in Education of the Year

Newton County School System (NCSS) and the Newton County Chamber of Commerce are pleased to announce that Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.-Phi Omicron Zeta Chapter, is the 2021 NCSS Partner in Education of the Year! NCSS School Superintendent Samantha Fuhrey made the announcement at a special reception on Monday, June 21, at the Newton County Board of Education.

"We've seen many partners—mainly small businesses—have to close their doors either temporarily or permanently this year, and this has affected our schools," said Fuhrey. "Fortunately, we saw an increase in assistance from local organizations such as yours who stepped to the plate and went above and beyond to assist our schools."

In her partner of the year nomination letter, Newton High School Principal Shannon Buff noted Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's "unwavering partnership" and how their continuing support boosted the morale of both students and staff. In fact, Buff stated that



Special to The Covington News

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.-Phi Omicron Zeta Chapter, was recently named the 2021 NCSS Partner in Education of the Year.

the women of Zeta Phi Beta "had become part of the Newton High School family" through their various service projects.

"You began the school year by providing hot meals after practice and games to various athletic teams in partnership with Emanuel Community Church," said Fuhrey. "You also created hygiene bags for students. In September, you served Newton High School faculty and staff breakfast and provid-

ed goodie bags for all teachers, which included PPE, snacks, and gift cards. Needless to say, the staff were both surprised and appreciative."

In October, the organization invited students and parents to attend a college essay-writing workshop sponsored by the chapter. During the event, students were able to prepare their college essays for submission to various colleges and scholarship organizations.

"This was especially important to our students as so many were attending school virtually and felt overwhelmed by the college application process," Buff explained.

The group's support did not stop there. This

spring, the chapter continued their good work by replenishing the hygiene bags for Newton High School students. They also hosted two different teacher appreciation events to recognize the faculty and staff for their hard work. And finally, they ended the school year by providing a scholarship to a very deserving senior on Newton High School Honors Night.

"Your unwavering support for all of Newton High School's stakeholders has been nothing short of amazing," said Buff. "You stood in the gap at a time when other organizations were unable to provide the normal level of support. When Newton High School needed assistance, you were there to provide

whatever we asked."

"I can't thank you enough for your organization stepping up in a time when a lot of us didn't know what to do," said Debbie Harper, president of the Newton County Chamber of Commerce. "When Dr. Buff reached out to you, you knew exactly what to do. I appreciate that. The fact that I am a graduate of Newton High School makes it even more special. Your support for this school is truly amazing."

Upon accepting the award, Kathryn Williams, president of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.—Phi Omicron Zeta Chapter, addressed the assembled group and stated, "Dr. Buff, my sorority has four principles—scholar-

ship, service, sisterhood and finer womanhood.

While scholarship is the first principal... we pride ourselves on world-class service. Please know that we do this not for recognition; we do this because it is the right thing to do. My mom and dad always told me 'to those who much is given, much is expected.' And so we are very blessed and we are thankful that you allow us to use your school to help us facilitate the service that is so important to us."

Williams noted that the organization would continue their partnership with Newton High School and promised even greater things to come.

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For the 15th consecutive year, Caldwell & Cowan Funeral Home, Covington, has been named a recipient of the National Funeral Directors Association Pursuit of Excellence Award. This Award is presented by NFDA annually to firms that have demonstrated a commitment to raising the bar on funeral service excellence by adhering to strict ethical and professional standards and providing outstanding service to families and communities.

Congratulations to the Caldwell & Cowan Staff for this achievement!

NFDA NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION Pursuit of Excellence

City of Covington to host Development Town Hall June 30

By TAYLOR BECK
tbeck@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — From Town Center to Neely Farms, several projects centered on bringing new housing and retail options may be headed to Covington.

In order to achieve transparency, city leaders have decided to host a town hall event to go over these developments with residents and allow them to ask questions and voice concerns.

"A lot of people feel like they don't know about developments until they see the marquee sign going up," Community Development Director Trey Sanders said. "This is an opportunity for the communi-



File | Taylor Beck | The Covington News

City officials and developers break ground on a hotel at the Covington Town Center site in December 2020. The public will have the opportunity to learn more about this development, as well as others, June 30 during a Development Town Hall.

ty to hear about potential projects straight from the developer and give their input and opinion on what is being proposed. We are witnessing Covington's rapid growth and the goal is to keep the small town feel we are accustomed to while we manage the growth that is coming."

Sanders said the Development Town Hall would be held June 30 at 6 p.m. in the council room, located at 2116 Stallings St. SW. Aside from limitations set by the fire code, Sanders said there would be no restrictions on the number of people allowed to attend the event.

Several developers

are expected to attend, as well as city officials, to speak about ongoing projects within the city and provide as many details as they can.

To learn more about the event, Sanders may be emailed at tsanders@cityofcovington.org.

THE NEWS' FIRST RESPONDER OF THE WEEK



Sgt. Charles Cook

Cook has been serving the community in public safety sense 1994 as both a volunteer firefighter and a police officer. He has served in many different capacities and held many different titles over the years, but he is now a sergeant for Porterdale. He serves as Deacon at Bethlehem Baptist Tabernacle.

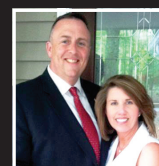
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Know someone who deserves this honor? Send your nominations for First Responder of the Week to us at news@covnews.com.



Special to The Covington News

A plot owner says something is damaging the historic headstones.

CEMETERY:

Continued from A1

in 1845, Lewis said. He said his extended family had pooled its resources and spent a “considerable” amount to hire a restoration expert to piece it back together. The family did not want to wait for the foundation to respond to a request to rebuild it because they were confident nothing would be done, Lewis said. “Spoke with a family member who said we also didn’t want to see Dr. Means’ stone just laying on the ground in total disarray not knowing if it would ever be fixed,” he said.

STANDARDS:

Continued from A1

to feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological or emotional distress on account of that individual’s race or sex.” “Knowledge of the past exists to serve the needs of the living,” another portion of the letter stated. “In the current context, this includes an honest reckoning with all aspects of that past. Americans of all ages deserve nothing less than a free and open exchange about history and the forces that shape our world today, an exchange that should take place inside the classroom as well as in the public realm generally. To ban the tools that enable those discussions is to deprive us all of the tools necessary for citizenship in the 21st century. A white-washed view of history cannot change what happened in the past. A free and open society depends on the unrestricted pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.” The letter was co-signed by several other organizations, which included the likes of ACPA-College Student Educators International, Coalition of Urban & Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Immigration Ethnic History Society, National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education and National Women's Studies Association. As of Monday, June 21,

Lewis said others feel the same way and apparently expressed their dissatisfaction to Oxford City Council members who discussed their concerns with Foundation member earlier this year. A city official did not return a call for comment by the paper’s deadline. The Oxford Cemetery is owned by the city of Oxford and was established in 1837 for residents of Oxford and those related to Emory College, according to information from the city. The Oxford Histori-

cal Cemetery Foundation Inc. was organized in 1965 as a nonprofit to support the city in maintaining the cemetery grounds at a time when the city was unable to do so financially, said Foundation board chairman John Burson. Membership in the Foundation is based on ownership of a cemetery lot or by donation. Burson said the cemetery board is bound by state law to maintain a fund — which Lewis said reportedly totals \$400,000 — and only use the interest from its investment for maintenance. Burson said the interest and an annual donation from the city are used to pay for the labor and supplies needed to do the work. He said he visits the cemetery “quite often” and has watched the two-person crew use a zero-turn mower and trimmer and be “mighty careful” in trimming around the memorials. “I never see her going too fast,” he said. “If they damaged something, I would feel safe to say they’d report it.” He said there was no evidence of any damage from mowers striking the stones. Burson also said he knew about the recent toppling incident but believed it could have been the work of vandals rather than a mower. He noted recent complaints have included grass not being cut in a timely manner — a practice Burson said was the result of having to wait on the 9 acres of grass to dry out during rainy weather before it could be mowed. Cemetery officials, including Burson and Foundation President Anderson Wright, have personal stakes in the maintenance of the cemetery because both have relatives buried there, Burson said. He said his 19-year-old son was buried there after an accidental shooting in 1968.



Special to The Covington News

The 187-year-old cemetery contains a mix of old and recent memorials to its occupants, such as Joseph and Rebecca Stewart, at left.

cal Cemetery Foundation Inc. was organized in 1965 as a nonprofit to support the city in maintaining the cemetery grounds at a time when the city was unable to do so financially, said Foundation board chairman John Burson. Membership in the Foundation is based on ownership of a cemetery lot or by donation. Burson said the cemetery board is bound by state law to maintain a fund — which Lewis said reportedly totals \$400,000 — and only use the interest from its investment for maintenance.

resolution wasn’t a clearly defined ban on the teaching of critical race theory; however, it did serve as an endorsement of Gov. Brian Kemp’s opposing stance on the matter. In response to the recent controversy, Fuhrey neither spoke in opposition nor support of the teaching of CRT. Rather, she said Newton County Schools would simply “meet the needs of all students and fully implement the Georgia Standards of Excellence.” “The Newton County School System team is committed to working diligently to meet the needs of all students and fully implement the Georgia Standards of Excellence, which may be found on the Georgia Department of Education website,” she said in a statement to *The Covington News*. “The Newton County School System’s vision is that all students will be well-rounded and prepared for the future. To achieve our vision, we are laser-focused on actualizing our mission of providing educational excellence for all students. The school systems’ strategic plan, which was developed in partnership with students, parents, business and industry leaders, community leaders, and school system staff, provides the framework and direction for all of our efforts.” The district’s five-year strategic plan, which is dated 2018-2023, may be viewed at

https://newtoncountyschools.org/about_us/accountability/strategic_plan. Fuhrey did not disclose if the district’s board of education members or administration had discussed the teaching of critical race theory, or if there were plans to have a public discussion on the issue in the future. Board Chairwoman Abigail Coggin declined to comment on the issue. The Newton County Schools Board of Education met Tuesday, June 22, at 7 p.m., located at 2109 Newton Drive NE in Covington. The meeting may be viewed via Youtube.

Starting July 5, 2021, at 12:00 am, Covington Housing Authority will be accepting pre-applications for 0,1,2,3, 4, and 5 bedroom units until further notice. You must apply online. No hand-delivered hard copies, faxed, emailed, or mailed applications will be accepted. To apply, please go to www.covha.com and select apply for housing. Each family may only submit one pre-application, duplicates will not be accepted. Please note that we may suspend accepting applications at any time. **Applicant must be at least 18 years of age at the time of submission of the pre-application.** Selected applicants will be placed on the waiting list by date and time the application is received, weighed by order of preferences. **Request for reasonable accommodation:** Applicants requiring special accommodation may contact COVHA by phone (770)786-7739 or you may email ejones@covha.com. **This is an Equal Housing Opportunity open to all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin.** **The Covington Housing Authority provides safe, well-maintained, energy efficient, quality housing.** www.covha.com



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SPECIAL CALLED MEETING CITY OF MANSFIELD, GA

Notice is hereby given that on the 28 day of June 2021, at 7:00PM, the Mayor and Council of the City of Mansfield, GA will hold a Special Called Meeting in the Mansfield Community House, 3158 Hwy 11, Mansfield GA 30055. The purpose of this meeting is to adopt the FY2021 – 2022 Budget.

Tom Spigolon news editor

I hope children appreciate what dads do for them

My father, Silvio “Joe” Spigolon, has been gone more than 20 years now. I thought about him this week-end as I searched for old photos to memorialize him on Facebook.



I do this same thing every Father’s Day and Veterans Day and his birthday in what is, apparently, a modern, digital custom. I see all of my friends do the same thing.

My dad was a self-made man who used government money — from his service in the U.S. Marines — to earn his bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees in civil engineering.

He was the son of Italian immigrants who was born in Chicago. His parents owned and operated a grocery store on the city’s south side and lived behind the store.

People often think I’m making that up because it fits the movie stereotype of Italians from that era so well. But that’s the way it was.

He grew up in the same part of south Chicago where Pullman railroad cars were produced. A couple members of the 1980s rock band Styx are from the

same neighborhood, called Roseland, which was a heavily Italian area during the time my dad grew up. My father wanted more than running a grocery store, though, and he committed to serve in the military to earn his way through college.

He was assigned to a couple colleges and ended up at the University of Mississippi where there was not a lot of tolerance for anyone linked to a country the U.S. had technically fought in World War II.

Or whose name they couldn’t pronounce.

So a man who had grown up with a very ethnic name, and my mom, named their sons the most American names they could think of. But he just wanted us not to have to deal with fitting in to a culture that had not yet experienced the cultural diversity that became a regular part of the southern experience in the 1970s and beyond.

Everyone, if they’re lucky enough to have one like mine, should celebrate their fathers. They should celebrate the good things their fathers tried, or are trying, to do to give their children better lives than they had.

I know I do.

Tom Spigolon is news editor of The News. Reach him at tspigolon@covnews.com.

David Carroll columnist

War on rude people

I have declared war on rude people. Some may consider it an unwinnable war, but so far, I am pleased with the results. My world is small, making it easy to control.



We will never stamp out rude people. They have always walked among us, and they always will. Cave men were rude. The Bible has its share of rude characters. Read your history books, and you will find one on every page.

“The Andy Griffith Show” is known for its amiable sheriff, bumbling deputy, and cute kid. But even Mayberry had a rude visitor now and then. Remember Ernest T. Bass?

I haven’t been able to escape rudeness. I don’t try to attract it, but somehow it finds me. The polite TV personalities of my youth have been replaced by angry “cable news” screamers, obnoxious game show hosts (“You are the weakest link...goodbye!”), and bad-behaving “reality” stars.

Political figures, both local and national, have won many an election by being rude and insulting. That old saying about the cream rising to the top has been toppled by another one: nice guys finish last.

The trickle-down

effect, often used as an economic term, now defines our national behavior. If our leaders can curse in public, engage in name-calling, and lie without consequences, what’s going to stop the rest of us?

Social media isn’t the only culprit, but it’s a major contributor. It has encouraged people who wouldn’t dare insult someone to their face to do it from their keyboard. Some do it behind a fake identity, while others are boldly out in the open. Those are the ones who are shocked when they lose their friends, or even their jobs, after spewing hatred that can be viewed worldwide.

Fortunately, most social media sites offer the option of “unfollowing” a person who you might actually like, but you don’t want to see their political opinions and insults. You’re still their friend, but you don’t have to witness their online rudeness. I have found this to be very helpful.

If that person crosses a line that you cannot forgive, you can always unfriend them, or even ban them from seeing your posts and participating in your discussions. This is a last resort for me, but it has come in handy.

Unfortunately, not everyone’s mama said, “If you can’t say something nice, just don’t say anything at all.” I once posted a TV news story I had done on a child with

facial abnormalities, and how the child’s friends were helping in a fund-raising effort. My post included a photo of the child. Most of the responses were kind and thoughtful, except one. That person made an incredibly rude comment about the child’s appearance. That person may still be among us, but not in my world.

More recently, I was previewing my upcoming book. It was the day after President Joe Biden was inaugurated. I included his photo at a 2015 memorial honoring the five fallen servicemen who were killed in a terror attack in Chattanooga. I noted that “as of today, a total of 27 Presidents have visited our area before, during or after their presidency.” Most people responded with questions about the history I’m covering in the book, but one person decided to attack Biden. It was not intended to be a political post, and that person is now free to be rude on her own page, but never again on mine.

We see rudeness in the real world too. I’m not too picky about plumbers. If they show up on time and make water flow in the right direction, I’m a satisfied customer. Unless, they cross the rudeness line. Like the plumber whose truck was parked in my driveway while unclogging a drain. As I walked back from my mailbox, I saw his

bumper sticker. It was very offensive, and not something I would include in this column. I have no control over what he puts on his truck. I can, however keep it from being seen on my property.

“What about his freedom of speech?” someone is shouting right now. I’m all for that, just as I exercise my right to choose with whom I do business. Not all my friends agree with my political views, but those who can differ with me politely and respectfully will remain my friends. When the discourse becomes vulgar or disrespectful, you have lost me.

I’m no doctor, but it seems like eliminating negative influences is good for my health. It can be like Whack-a-Mole: you get rid of one, and another pops up. But it’s a war worth waging.

The older I get, the more I realize that every remaining smile is a gift. Removing rude people from my life gives me greater appreciation of those who make me smile.

David Carroll is a Chattanooga TV news anchor and radio host, and is online at ChattanoogaRadioTV.com. You may contact him at RadioTV2020@yahoo.com, or at 900 Whitehall Road, Chattanooga, TN 37405.

Your Letters to the Editor

Chairman’s P-card charges give reader ‘heartburn’

Dear Editor:

The adjective fiduciary means held and given in trust.

Each elected official in Newton County, in running for office, is accepting a fiduciary duty and enters into a trust and confidence with the voter which compels him/her to act solely on behalf of the constituency best interest which elected him/her. Even judges who are compelled (must) to follow the law are often swayed to act on the behalf of those who elected him.

We are becoming injured to either being ignorant of fraud/lavish spending or not caring when our caretakers forget and stick a toe over the line where money and rules/law are concerned. Often the toe becomes the entire body and if there is any justice left — hopefully jail time awaits them.

Recent revelations and data gathered on the use of credit cards by Newton officials — as well as around the state, indicate many have forgotten that not only is their salary paid

by the taxpayers, but their benefits as well.

Some of the charges made by the chair of the Newton County Commission, Marcello Banes, are very questionable and need a review by whoever has authorized these charges. They are not doing their job if allowed to stand!

I feel there is a direct correlation between the recent tax increases we all got kissed with and what I feel are over the top charges made by the chair and others and need an immediate repayment. *The Covington News* has given Mr. Banes space to answer charges from others about these charges and he failed miserably beyond telling us all the charges were legitimate and he met all obligations. Not in my opinion.

Mr. Banes must understand that legitimacy goes far beyond the letter of the rules and law, and there must be an avoidance of even a hint of an impropriety of not protecting the taxpayer’s money and personal enrichment. At this point we need

a watch dog on all the charges made by the credit card holders of the county (in fact I say have all the cards turned in immediately) who is not politically threatened by not only saying no but loving to say no. We taxpayers are sick of the cavalier attitude of those when elected thinking it is their money. There are many of Mr. Banes’ charges that give me heartburn, but the most obvious ones are having the county attorney wasting her time pursuing things like getting rid of the Confederate Statue on the Square, which has been there since 1906.

This seems to be Banes’ primary mission in life and he should pursue it with private money — not taxpayer money from those of us not wanting the statue removed or thinks he is already overpaid.

Also, since the distance to Savannah is only 226 miles and a trip I often make in four hours or less, I wonder why he chooses to fly when it takes that long to be seated on an aircraft leaving Atlanta.

Why not use his county provided car and the free gas provided by the county instead of the \$400 round trip on Delta?

And then the almost weekly car washes and lunches at Longhorn while he is in town. I also question that with current technology such as Skype why a business trip to Savannah is necessary anyway. I suppose we should be grateful that the Commission boondoggle destination “business” is not in Costa Rico or Hawaii.

Personally, I do not want any of the county officials buying anyone — and I mean anyone — a lunch or dinner on my dime. Play big shot on their own money!

There is a fine line between being gracious and bribery — thus the reason there are laws against public officials accepting or giving gifts. If we need our officials to court such business for the county in such a grandstanding fashion, we do not need the business

which usually wind up affecting the tax digest negatively anyway.

I would advise all who hold these charge cards never forget where their allegiance should lie — the taxpayers are fed up. And Mr. Banes, in the interest of honor, I suggest you repay all the frivolous charges that you

or others might even suspect are invalid. And while you are at it, you might want to read a biography on Harry Truman and his notions of pay and honor while in public service. He licked his own stamps.

*Felton Hudson
Covington*

The Covington News

Newton Newspapers Inc.

OWNER

Patrick Graham
pgraham@covnews.com

PUBLISHER and EDITOR

Taylor Beck
tbeck@covnews.com

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Cynthia Warren
cbwarren@covnews.com

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Amanda Ellington
aellington@covnews.com

NEWS EDITOR

Tom Spigolon
tspigolon@covnews.com

SPORTS EDITOR

Mason Wittner
mwwittner@covnews.com

LEGALS CLERK

Alicia Goolsby
agoolsby@covnews.com

Phone 770.787.6397 (NEWS) | Fax 770.786.6451
Online at covnews.com | email news@covnews.com

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U.S. Supreme Court upholds Affordable Care Act

By **DAVID WILLIAMS**
Capitol Beat Service

ATLANTA — The U.S. Supreme Court Thursday denied a bid by Georgia and 17 other Republican-led states to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

In a 7-2 ruling, the justices declared the two plaintiffs in the case had no legal standing to bring the suit because they could not show they had been harmed by the law.

While the suit was aimed at a portion of the law requiring Americans to buy health insurance, a Republican-controlled Congress repealed the tax penalty enforcing that provision back in 2017. Without the penalty, the plaintiffs could not claim they had suffered economic harm because of the law, the court ruled.

Thursday's decision marked the third time federal courts have upheld the Affordable Care Act, which

then-President Barack Obama steered through a Democratic Congress in 2010.

In 2012, the Supreme Court held the ACA constitutional but removed a provision in the law requiring states to expand their Medicaid programs. The ACA survived another Republican-backed effort to scuttle it in 2019 when an appellate court upheld Congress' decision to repeal the penalty but left the rest of the law intact.

President Joe Biden hailed the ruling as a major victory.

"It is a victory for more than 130 million Americans with pre-existing conditions and millions more who were in immediate danger of losing their health care in the midst of a once-in-a-century pandemic," Biden said in a prepared statement.

"After more than a decade of attacks on the Affordable Care Act through the Con-

gress and the courts, today's decision — the third major challenge to the law that the U.S. Supreme Court has rejected — it is time move forward and keep building on this landmark law."

During this year's ACA open enrollment period, 517,331 Georgians signed up for health coverage, 88% of whom received financial assistance to lower their premiums or other out-of-pocket costs, according to the nonprofit Georgians for a Healthy Future.

"We are hopeful this will be the last attempt to overturn the law that has provided quality, affordable coverage to hundreds of thousands of Georgians," said Whitney Griggs, a health policy analyst with the group.

The coalition of states that brought the suit, led by Texas, argued that Congress' repeal of the tax penalty should render the entire law

invalid.

"Our coalition felt strongly that the ACA was unconstitutional," Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr said following the ruling. "While we are disappointed that the court declined to weigh in on the merits of the case, we will respect the court's decision."

Justice Stephen Breyer, one of the court's three liberals, wrote the majority opinion. He was joined by fellow liberal justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

Also ruling with the majority were Chief Justice John Roberts, a conservative who has sometimes sided with the liberals in significant cases, and conservative justices Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Clarence Thomas.

The two dissenting votes came from conservative justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch.

Local attorney reelected to State Bar Board of Governors

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

Michael G. Geoffroy of MG Law in Covington has been reelected to serve on the Board of Governors of the 52,000-member State Bar of Georgia.

Geoffroy will continue to serve in the Alcovy Judicial Circuit Post 1 seat on the board, representing Newton and Walton counties.

He is a graduate of George Walton Academy, earned his law degree from the University of Georgia School of Law and was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia in 2001.

His law practice is focused on auto collisions, premises liability, wrongful death and catastrophic injury cases.

He is a past president of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia.

The Board of Governors is the 160-member policymaking authority of the State Bar, with representation from each of Georgia's judicial circuits.

Georgia's Supreme Court established the State Bar of Georgia in 1964 as the successor to the Georgia Bar Association, founded in 1884.

All lawyers licensed to practice in Georgia belong to the State Bar. Its members work together to strengthen the constitutional promise of justice for all, promote principles of duty and public service among Georgia's lawyers, and administer a strict code of legal ethics.



Special to The Covington News

Sammy Ozburn (third from right), chairman of the Board of Elders at Eastridge Church, presents \$1,000 TJ Hailey Memorial Scholarships to local students Sam Dage (fourth from right) and Chandler Dunning (third from left).

Eastridge Church awards 3 students TJ Hailey Memorial Scholarship

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

Eastridge Church recently announced the recipients of the 2021 TJ Hailey Memorial Scholarship. Samuel Jacob Dage, Chandler Scott Dunning, and Christian Van Nipper were awarded the \$1,000 scholarship on June 20 at Eastridge Church during Sunday morning services.

Dage is a student at Missouri University of Science and Technology, where he will return in the fall.

Dunning is a recent graduate of Jasper County High School, and he will be attending Point University this

fall.

Nipper is a recent graduate of Eastside High School, and he will be attending Mercer University this fall.

The Hailey family established the scholarship in memory of their son TJ, who lost his life in an automobile accident in 2003. The scholarship awards \$1,000 to graduating seniors or current college students whose families are members of Eastridge Church and is based on academic achievement and Godly moral character.

The scholarship has benefited 41 young men and women since it was established.



Special to The Covington News

Sammy Ozburn (left) presents Van Nipper a \$1,000 TJ Hailey Memorial Scholarship.

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COMING SOON

The Covington News

‘Pete the Cat’ StoryWalk strolls to Covington Square

By TAYLOR BECK
tbeck@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — In an effort to celebrate literacy and kick off this year’s “Tails and Tales” summer reading program, Newton County Library System recently announced a StoryWalk would be held at the Covington Square through July 31.

StoryWalk is reportedly “a fun, educational activity” that takes a children’s story along a popular walking route around various communities to help promote and build interest in reading among children. StoryWalk was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, and developed in partnership

with Kellogg-Hubbard Library.

From June 1 to July 31, more than 15 businesses around the Square will each have a page of “Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes,” by Eric Litwin and James Dean, hanging in their front windows or doors for StoryWalk.

Children and adults may take part in the StoryWalk by starting at the Covington Branch Library, located at 7116 Floyd St., to pick up a map from the main desk or in the children’s area. From there, using the map, participants may go from business to business to read the pages and complete “early literacy prompts” coupled

with the story.

Participating businesses include Sherwood Flowers & Gifts, Kuter’s Cage, Mystic Grill, Newton County Courthouse, Mystic Falls Tours, Southern Roots Outfitters, Bread & Butter Bakery, Southern Heartland Art Gallery, Plain Nuts Catering & Deli, Rush Tees & Shirts, Your Pie, Fletcher’s Jewelry, Wildart, Scoops, @Local Coffee House and City Pharmacy.

Learn more about the county library system’s StoryWalk at newtonlibraries.org. Maps for the StoryWalk are also available to download and print on the system’s website.



Newton County Library System

Newton County Library System will hold a StoryWalk featuring “Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes” at the Covington Square through July 31.

Raffensperger launches new purge of Georgia voter rolls

By DAVID WILLIAMS
Capitol Beat Service

ATLANTA — Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger put 101,789 potential voters on notice Friday that they’re about to be purged from the state’s voter rolls.

Other than the regular monthly removals of voter files for felony convictions and death, this will be the first major cleaning up of the voter rolls since 2019. That purge sparked a legal challenge from Fair Fight Action, a

voting rights advocacy group founded by 2018 Democratic gubernatorial nominee Stacey Abrams.

Raffensperger, a Republican, described the upcoming purge as fulfilling his responsibility to update voter registration rolls periodically.

“Making sure Georgia’s voter rolls are up to date is key to ensuring the integrity of our elections,” Raffensperger said Friday. “That is why I fought and beat Stacey

Abrams in court in 2019 to remove nearly 300,000 obsolete voter files before the November [2020] election and will do so again this year. Bottom line, there is no legitimate reason to keep ineligible voters on the rolls.”

The 2019 purge pales in comparison to the purge then-Secretary of State Brian Kemp — now Georgia’s governor — conducted in 2017. A record 534,000 names were removed from the voter rolls that year.

Federal law prohibits removing voters from the rolls during general election years due to federal mandates before federal elections. After the 2020 election cycle ended, Raffensperger said he made it a priority to resume the process.

The voter files the secretary identified as obsolete include 67,286 files associated with a National Change of Address form submitted to the U.S. Postal Service, 34,227 voter files that had election mail

returned to sender, and 276 that have had no contact with elections officials for at least five years.

In each case, the individual has had no contact with Georgia election officials in any way — either directly or through the state Department of Driver Services — for two general elections.

Raffensperger’s office also removed 18,486 voter files of dead people based on information received from Georgia’s Office of

Vital Records and the Electronic Registration Information Center, an interstate partnership of 30 states and the District of Columbia focused on maintaining accurate voter rolls.

Georgians targeted for removal from the voter rolls will have a chance to stay on the list. Election officials plan to mail notification letters to people on the list for removal, giving them 40 days to respond.

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The Covington News

SPORTS

The Covington News

Prep Volleyball

Piedmont to field inaugural volleyball team

Matches lined up for GISA, non-GISA opponents — first game set for Aug. 26

By **CHRIS BRIDGES**
Correspondent

MONTICELLO, Ga. — Piedmont Academy will make athletic department history in August when it competes in its first-ever volleyball match.

Coach Lindsay Moore said there was a high level of interest in adding volleyball as a competitive sport at the school for the upcoming school year. “One of our students went so far as to put up a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the office,” Moore said. “I took the sheet to MC (Tyrell) and then she went to Mr. (Headmaster Clint) Welch and he was behind it.”

With this being the second year of the two-year scheduled contract, the Lady Cougars will not be in a region this fall. Moore has lined up matches with both GISA and non-GISA programs.

“We will have varsity and junior varsity matches,” Moore said. “Since this is such a new endeavor, we will only have two home matches. This will help us offset some costs. If everything goes well this season, we hope to sign contracts for the next two years.”

Moore will be assisted with the program by Ashleigh Kelly. “She handles the volleyball skills and I

oversee the workouts in the weight room,” Moore said.

Currently the Volley Cougars have 15 players. Only two of those players also participate in softball.

“There was some initial concern about having more crossover players,” Moore said. “We did not want to take away from the softball program, especially after winning a state championship last year. When volleyball and softball have events at the same time those two team members will play softball.”

The Volley Cougars are set to practice with Young Americans Christian and will also attend a camp at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro later this summer.

“What we want is to see growth from our first match to the last,” Moore said. “We are really thankful that Young Americans is allowing us to practice with them. I told the girls we are going to go all out on this. It won’t be done half-way.”

Volleyball is also something new for the team’s coach so Moore said she has been studying about the sport and watching matches online.

Piedmont will play its first match Aug. 26 at Jones County High School.

Prep Football

Welch signs with Shorter University



Special to The Covington News
Piedmont Academy’s Jackson Welch recently committed to extend his academic and football career at Shorter University in Rome, Ga. He’ll be joined by former teammates JT Webb and Trent Coots.

By **CHRIS BRIDGES**
Correspondent

MONTICELLO, Ga. — Jackson Welch has always shown how much of a team player he is. That attitude, along with his strong work ethic, has helped pave the way for Welch to continue his athletic and academic career at the next level.

The Piedmont Academy senior is set for his time after high school as he committed to play football for Shorter University in Rome recently.

“Jackson was a great team player for us,” said Will Johnson, who coached Welch in multiple sports. “At any other school he would have been a tight end but he moved to right tackle for

us simply to help our team.”

Even before he became a student-athlete at Piedmont, Welch was looking to the future.

“I was prepared for this opportunity in many ways,” the senior said. “I was a part of a successful football program in Alabama. The coaches and my teammates taught me a lot over there and a lot of the stuff they taught me I still use today. When I came over to Piedmont I was injured. I had to take it all in and just get better and stronger every day.”

Once he returned to the field, Welch was an impact player for the Cougars.

“My teammates and coaches at Piedmont helped me and taught me how to be a leader and how

to be a better person,” he said. “As for my college selection, I had three places I was deciding from. Shorter felt like the best fit for me because the coaches they have are such great men and are outstanding football coaches. I had some guys at Shorter I knew as well and it felt like the perfect fit for me.”

Welch will join former Piedmont players JT Webb and Trent Coots as part of the Shorter University football program.

“It is great to see him have a chance to play at the next level,” Johnson said. “He is going to be able to play at a premier program.”

College Track & Field

Three Bulldogs qualify for Tokyo Olympics

By **MASON WITTNER**
mwittner@covnews.com

A trio of current and former Georgia Bulldogs locked up spots on Team USA for the Tokyo Olympics at the U.S. Olympic Track & Field Trials at Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore., on Sunday.

Former Bulldog Keturah Orji set a new meet record in the triple jump at 47 feet, 7.5

inches. The leap won her the U.S. Title and punched her ticket to the Olympics. After competing in the 2016 Summer Games in Rio, where she earned a fourth-place finish, the eight-time NCAA champion will be aiming for the top spot this summer.

Orji will be joined by Georgia sophomore Jasmine Moore, who

qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with a third-place finish in the triple jump (46-5.25), and former Georgia All-American Garrett Scantling, who set personal bests in four of the 10 decathlon events en route to capturing the U.S. title.

Former Newton Ram speeder Elija Godwin, a junior, was also in action for the Bull-

dogs this weekend. He earned a top-six finish in the trial semifinals to advance to Sunday’s 400-meter final, where he ran a 44.94 — the third-fastest among collegiate sprinters in the race — and finished sixth overall.

The Olympic Games are scheduled to take place July 23-Aug. 8 in Tokyo.

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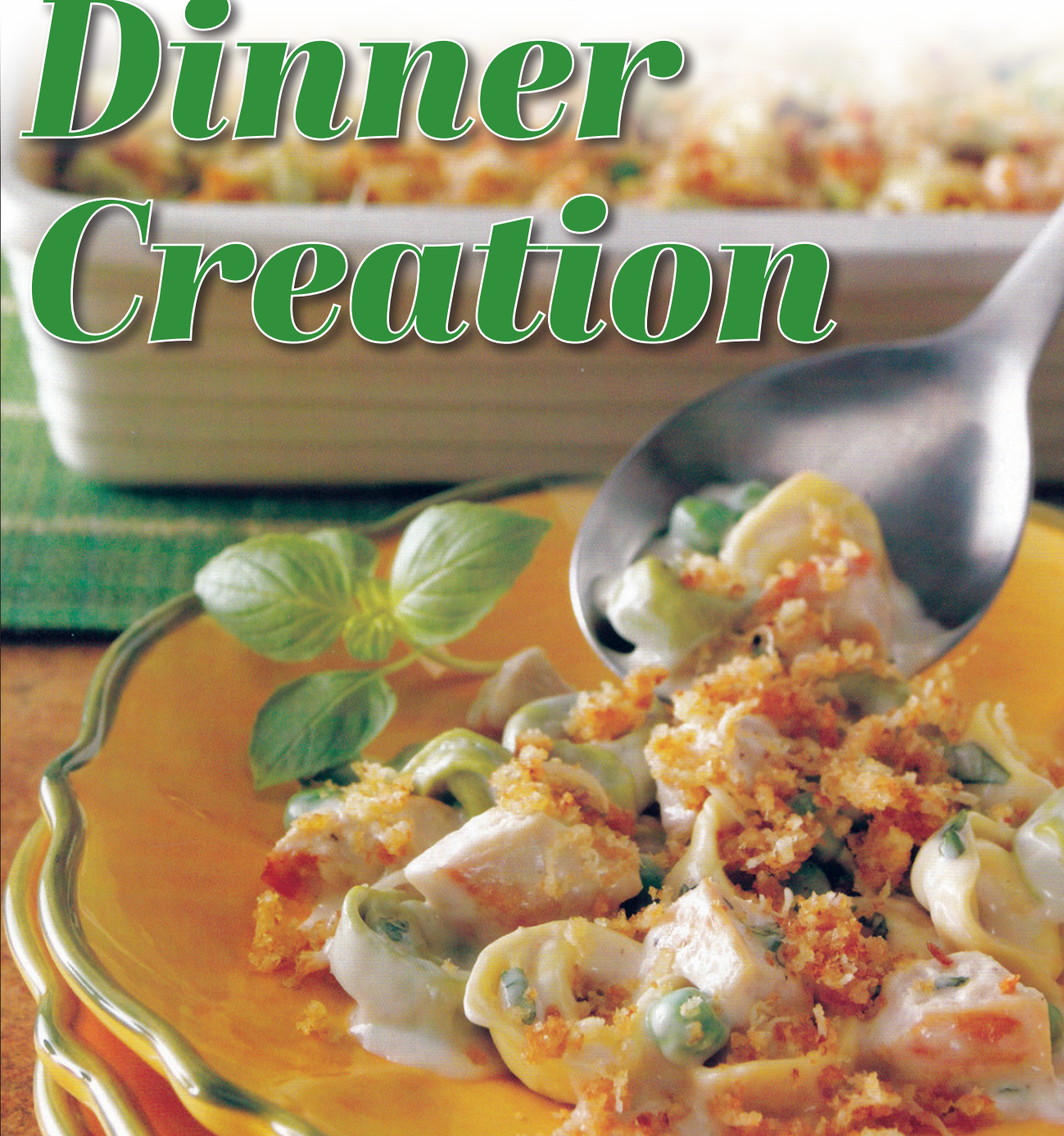
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FOOD

The Covington News

Dive into dairy with a

Cheesy Dinner Creation



Metro Creative Service

Cheeses in particular can make meals more rich and more flavorful, so much so that they can be truly addictive.

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

news@covnews.com

There's no denying the appeal of dairy in home cooking. Dairy helps make foods silky, creamy and more satisfying. Cheeses in particular can make meals more rich and more flavorful, so much so that they can be truly addictive.

Layering cheesy goodness can set any meal apart. That's just what happens with "Cheesy Chicken Tortellini Bake" from "The Pampered Chef® Stoneware Inspirations" (The Pampered Chef® Ltd.) by The Pampered Chef® Test Kitchens. Freshly cooked chicken and homemade tortellini can be used for this comforting casserole,

but cubed, pre-cooked chicken and refrigerated tortellini also works.

Cheesy Chicken Tortellini Bake

Serves 6

Pasta mixture:
1/2 cup chopped onion
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 garlic clove, pressed
1 jar (16 ounces) white Alfredo pasta sauce
2 packages (9 ounces each) refrigerated cheese-filled regular or spinach tortellini
1 1/2 cups cubed cooked chicken
1 cup milk
1 cup water
1 cup frozen peas
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

2 tablespoons snipped fresh basil leaves or 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves

Crumb topping:
1 ounce grated fresh Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
1 cup fresh bread crumbs

Directions:
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. For pasta mixture, chop onion. In a 4-quart casserole, heat oil over medium-high heat; add onion and garlic pressed with a garlic press. Cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until onion is tender. Stir in pasta sauce, milk, water, peas, and black pepper. Heat until

mixture just comes to a boil; remove from heat. Stir basil into pasta mixture.

Meanwhile, for crumb topping, grate Parmesan cheese. Place butter in a small microwave-safe dish, microwave on high 30-45 seconds or until melted. Stir in bread crumbs and cheese; mix well.

Spoon pasta mixture into a baking dish; sprinkle with crumb topping. Bake 15-20 minutes or until edges are bubbly and topping is golden brown.

Tip: Alfredo sauce in a jar can be found in the pasta sauce section of the supermarket. Do not substitute refrigerated Alfredo sauce; it may separate and curdle during baking.



Metro Creative Service

Tempura is a delicate dish of batter-fried seafood or vegetables. The light and crispy coating on the food gives it a distinguishable and hard-to-resist flavor.

Crispy tempura a treat to try at home

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

news@covnews.com

In Japanese cooking, tempura is a delicate dish of batter-fried seafood or vegetables. The light and crispy coating on the food gives it a distinguishable and hard-to-resist flavor. Tempura is often served as an appetizer or side dish.

Even though it has a Japanese name and has been enjoyed in that country for centuries, tempura actually has European origins. Food historians say that tempura can be traced back to the influence of Portuguese merchants and missionaries who arrived in Japan in the 16th century.

Almost anything can be added to a tempura batter. However, in this recipe for "Fruit Tomato Tempura" from Takashi Sugimoto and Marcia Iwatate's "Shunju New Japanese Cuisine" (Tuttle), a sweet variety of tomato known as a fruit tomato is used. The fruit tomato is a recently developed tomato hybrid that has a reduced water content and a great level of sweetness. The fruit tomato is smaller and firmer than most tomatoes. Overcooking fruit tomatoes will increase their acidity, so they should be deep-fried quickly.

Fruit Tomato Tempura

Serves 4

2 eggs
1/2 cup ice water
1 cup all-purpose flour, sifted and refrigerated

erated
12 fresh basil leaves, roughly torn (plus extra whole to garnish)
Vegetable oil
4 fruit tomatoes, substitute with small, firm vine-ripened tomatoes
1/3 cup fresh cream
1 1/3 ounces hard cheese, such as Gouda
1/3 ounce blue cheese such as Roquefort (use only white part)
4 pinches natural sea salt

Directions:

Beat the eggs and ice water in a bowl, then add the flour and torn basil. Stir briefly with thick chopsticks. Do not mix to a smooth batter as tempura batter should always contain lumps of flour.

Pour vegetable oil in a saucepan until it reaches 6 inches in depth. Heat to 374 degrees.

Dip a whole, unpeeled tomato in the batter and deep-fry for 1 1/2 minutes; overcooking the tomato causes it to become acidic. Make sure that you maintain the temperature of the oil at 374 degrees. Remove the tomato with a slotted spoon and drain on a rack. Repeat with remaining tomatoes.

Melt the cream and two kinds of cheese in a microwave oven or over low heat. Season with natural sea salt. Spread the cheese cream sauce on a plate, place the fried tomato in the middle and garnish with whole basil leaves.



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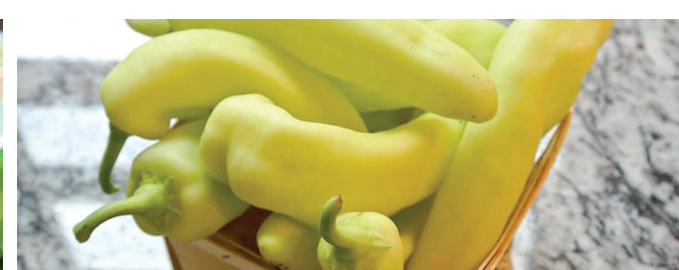
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**Aberdeen
Bacon**
\$2.99



5 Ounce
**Mahatma
Rice**
59¢

Store Hours: 7 Days 8am-10pm • No Rainchecks

This Ad Good Wednesday, June 23rd thru Tuesday, June 29th, 2021

We Accept EBT Cards, Debit Cards and Credit Cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express & Discover).

WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CORRECT ANY TYPOGRAPHICAL OR PICTORIAL ERRORS. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES. NONE SOLD TO DEALERS.

**Wed
23**

**Thur
24**

**Fri
25**

**Sat
26**

**Sun
27**

**Mon
28**

**Tues
29**