



FURKIDS ANIMAL RESCUE CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY
BRITTANY MERSFELDER
News Editor

On April 9 Furkids Animal Rescue and Shelter celebrated their 20th anniversary with a gathering of volunteers and supporters for a massive fundraising event. Founder, Sam Shelton, was able to put her compassion for animals to good use and started Furkids Rescue and Animal Shelter in 2002.

Furkids celebrated their 20th Anniversary with volunteers, veterinarians and many supporters. The night consisted of a meet and greet with “My Cat From Hell” show host on Animal Planet, Jackson Galaxy. Other activities included a dinner, a live auction and a silent auction.

“This is such a very special occasion,” said Shelton. “You know you have moments in your life and events that take place. The memories of those events stay ingrained in your mind. They’re forged memories and for me, tonight is going to be one of those memories I will always cherish.”

Shelton gave a speech at the anniversary event and spoke about the history of Furkids. She stated that it all started with

Photo: Brittany Mersfelder, *The West Georgian*
a mother cat and four little kittens in her backyard.

“Twenty years ago I found a mother cat in my backyard,” said Shelton. “That moment was a profound life changing moment for me. I answered the call and in doing so, I found my dream. Today, I get to live my dream.”

Starting as a small organization, Shelton later had to upgrade to a roomier spot to house all the cats and dogs.

“If I ever wanted a normal life again, I could not let my house be the shelter,” said Shelton. “Three years in, I have got to get a shelter. I knew I needed to have a shelter but not only for people to be able to see where their money is going but also for people to be hands on and get involved in the organization and be able to contribute. That was the first big step that we took.”

Furkids opened their first cat shelter in 2005. This not only created jobs but also created a space for people to volunteer and be able to share their time with an organization that truly cares about their mission. Shelton began running yard sales to raise mon-

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ey for her new nonprofit. This led to the opening of the thrift stores around the Atlanta area.

“We have opened four thrift stores,” said Shelton. “Without those thrift stores, they make up a third of our operating budget. We need a fifth location.”

In 2011, Furkids took over a dog rescue called Small Dog Rescue and has operated the shelter since.

At the live auction, Furkids raised around \$70,000 which directly supports the shelter to fund the care for the thousands of animals Furkids provide for each year.

“When I started at Perimeter Petsmart in February of 2002, I was the lone person starting an adoption center in PetsMart,” said Shelton. “I put a note on the door ‘help needed’ and help came in droves. All the wonderful volunteers and supporters came in droves. Thank goodness because we needed help and because you came, we were able to grow and accomplish great things.”

LIVING WEST



UWG'S ON CAMPUS HONEYBEE COLONY EXPANDS FOLLOWING ITS 10-YEAR LONG SUCCESS
AMANDA CLAY
Health Correspondent

Photo: Amanda Clay, *The West Georgian*

More than a decade ago, the biology department at UWG created a first of its kind beehive project—or apiary, on campus. The project was originally started by faculty to enrich the educational and research opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Following the success of the apiary, students in the UWG Biology program have recently expanded on the project by establishing two pollinator garden sites. Dr. Gregory Payne, Professor and Program Coordinator of Biology at UWG, said that the apiary was originally created informally following a beekeeping workshop. Both Dr. Payne and Dr. Joe Hendricks, a Biology Professor in the Department of Natural Sciences, were the original founders of the project.

“Dr. Hendricks had taken his family to a beekeeping workshop in Athens at the University of Georgia,” said Dr. Payne. “He was reflecting on his family’s experience and talking about how a UWG campus apiary could provide great educational and research opportunities for our students. At the time, it was pretty unique to have an apiary

on a campus where students could observe the colonies in action and get hands-on experience managing the bees.”

Bees are an especially important part of the ecosystem for all life forms, especially for humans. Animal pollinators, including bees, help maintain biodiversity and productivity of natural ecosystems and are now being considered as agricultural livestock, according to Dr. Hendricks.

“Albert Einstein stated that ‘If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live,’” said Dr. Hendricks. “More than 85% of flowering plants are “self-sterile” meaning that they must have an animal pollinator to reproduce. Out of the roughly 1,330 crop plants grown for food, beverage, fiber, spices, and medicines worldwide, approximately 1,000 are animal pollinated.”

“While there are many different animal pollinators, bees as a group are very effective pollinators,” continued Hendricks. “In the U.S. annual losses of about 40-45% of the managed honeybee colonies has become quite common during the past several years.”

There are many

factors that may contribute to honeybee colony losses and collapse. Dr. Hendricks says three of the most common causes of colony losses include uncontrolled infestations of the hive, queen issues and over-wintering starvation.

Managed honeybee colonies require a huge time commitment. Faculty and students at UWG put a large time and financial commitment into the apiary to keep the colonies healthy and productive.

“Honeybees require active management from the spring through the fall, and sometimes in the winter as well to control pests and maintain healthy colonies,” said Dr. Hendricks. “Routine checks are done to assess brood production, nectar and pollen storage, the presence of disease, and parasite loads are necessary.”

The decline of pollinators has substantial effects on crops responsible for feeding millions globally and ecologists are working overtime to maintain and increase animal pollinators for the sustainability of the planet. So next time you sit down to eat your next meal, just remember that one out of every three bites of food you eat depends on the honeybee.

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LIVING WEST



UNDERGRADUATE ARIAL HUTCHINSON CRITIQUES MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF HOMELESSNESS FOR UWG'S SCHOLAR'S DAY
JANNETTE EMMERICK
Feature Editor

The University of West Georgia hosted Scholar's Day on April 5 for undergraduate students to present their semester research after a two year hiatus.

Senior Sociology major Ariel Hutchinson presented "The Perception of Homelessness" at Scholar's Day panel "Social Barriers and Lived Experiences." Hutchinson researched how homelessness is portrayed in mainstream media through news, film, social media and how media impacts the representation to actual lived experience of homeless individuals.

"Oftentimes the films that we do have, the ones that people most know would probably be 'The Pursuit of Happiness' and 'The Blind Side,'" says Hutchinson. "Those are really endearing stories concerning two individuals that find themselves homeless and end up with a stroke of luck reaching some kind of success near the end of their story.

"But the problem with stories like that is that they are extremely rare," continued Hutchinson. "It creates a narrative that if a homeless person works hard enough they can dig themselves out of the hole of homelessness when in reality homelessness is not a personal issue, it's a social issue which means there are a myriad of social factors that go into

a person being homeless."

During Dr. Tiffany Parsons "Housing and Homelessness" class, Hutchinson found that income and health most often leads to homelessness where some individuals find themselves injured on the job, their parents become ill or find themselves in financial distress.

"[These individuals] just couldn't cover their bills anymore, and a lot of these were medical care bills," says Hutchinson. "I think these stories speak to the reality of homelessness in the sense that if you don't have a familial support system, or a support system in general and you run out of money, it can be extremely hard to maintain having a house."

These stories usually aren't the kind shown in film and news outlets usually politicize homelessness.

"Typically, conservative channels look at homelessness as a personal issue and liberal media usually look at homelessness as a social issue, but they also look at homelessness as a problem that will never be fixed," says Hutchinson.

Karen Rogers gave a presentation titled "Homeless Mental Health and Incarceration" and Gabrielle Williams presented "F.O.S.T.E.R (Family. Over. Systematic. Trauma. Eliminates. Recklessness)". Each subject

presented intersected with Hutchinson's, holistically portraying how one problem often feeds into another.

"[Williams] was saying many foster children end up homeless," says Hutchinson. "So I think that goes back to my point that if you don't have support, if you don't have a family member or friend who can look out for you and even allow you to stay on their couch, it's very easy to become homeless."

As Williams stated in her presentation, foster children who age out of the foster care system often end up impoverished, homeless or incarcerated which only feeds the statistics of Hutchinson's and Rogers' research.

"Homelessness is also people who live in their cars, who don't have permanent housing or people who couch surf," says Hutchinson. "The rate of college students who are homeless has actually gone up. Especially in California, because tuition is so expensive."

Hutchison plans to pursue law school after finishing this semester and plans to return as an alumni to present her research at a conference in November.

"Homelessness is a very intricate problem that won't be solved overnight but research lends a hand in better understanding homelessness.," says Hutchinson.

Photo: Jannette Emmerick, *The West Georgian*

LIVING WEST

UWG HOSTS
“TAKE BACK
THE NIGHT”
TAYLOR BLESSETT
Contributing Writer

“Take Back the Night” is a march that is held every year for students that would like to raise awareness of sexual violence and empower those that were affected. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and UWG is acknowledging this by holding the annual “Take Back the Night” march for students and faculty. This year the march will be led from the Oaks Amphitheater to the back of the Campus Center. Students are encouraged to participate and promote to end sexual assault. Ron King, the Assistant Director of Health Education, is the event leader

and encourages all students to come and feel empowered with Take Back the Night. “This event is to empower students to take back the night and to help put an end to sexual violence on college campuses,” says King. “Through this event, we aim to beat the statistic of one and four college women becoming a victim of sexual assault and one and six college men, as well.” Students should be aware when attending events like college parties or even walking around campus alone that there is a potential sexual assault could happen. It is encouraged that if someone sees something that they should say something. Sexual violence could come from someone the student knows and the importance of taking proper precautions to stay safe.

“Through this event, we hope that students will develop healthier behaviors as it relates to sexual violence or any form of violence,” says King. “Our biggest turnout was in 2019 when around 500 students came out to support Take Back the Night, and it was a powerful experience. “It is important that we help support the survivors and end that stigma and culture of sexual violence,” continued King. “We want to show encouragement to those that were affected, and I would like to see someone say, ‘Those students at West Georgia are taking back the night and making their voices heard.’” Due to inclement weather on the original set date for the event, “Take Back the Night” will be rescheduled for a later date.



From the beginning of his career to the present day, Fox News host Tucker Carlson has displayed intolerance for diversity. His words include such as defaming one’s character, saying racist remarks and using homophobia as talking points for his show. The credibility of Carlson’s show has proven to be questionable and unreliable many times in the past, especially with one occurrence that had to be handled in court. According to a Business Insider article about the case, Fox News was sued for defamation of character by Karen McDougal in late Sept. 2020. Carlson had blatantly accused McDougal on his show, “Tucker Carlson Tonight”, for allegedly extorting former President Trump out of \$150,000 as payment for her to remain quiet about their previous affair. McDougal’s case was eventually resolved in Fox News’ favor on the premise that Carlson’s show is not taken seriously by its “reasonable viewers.” Carlson also has an infamous history of several incidents using prejudiced comments and racist remarks. According to an article from the network MSNBC, Carlson had commented on the most recent Supreme Court election of Ketanji Jackson, a black woman. On his show, Carlson claimed that Jackson would turn the nation into the African country, Rwanda. He further stated that

Jackson was ignorant of the law despite her eight years of experience as a federal district judge. According to a separate news article from the Guardian, Carlson claimed that Jackson was only nominated “because of how she looks.” In another instance, Carlson publicly supported the racist Great Replacement Theory. According to two articles from Media ITE and the Daily Beast, the theory assumes that the Democratic Party is attempting to replace white Americans with “Afghan refugees or dark-skinned immigrants.” Another major controversy of Carlson is his use of homophobia throughout his career. According to the news media site, Advocate, Carlson had gone on a 12-minute rant about United States Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. Buttigieg is one of the very few openly gay men in politics. Carlson constantly referred to Buttigieg as a child, belying Buttigieg’s credibility. “Joe Biden hired a kid,” Carlson stated on his show in late January 2022. “By contrast, who had never had a real job outside McKinsey and no grounding of any kind in physical reality,” Carlson is not only disrespectful to cis-gendered people but he disrespected the transgender community. According to an article from MediaMatters, Carlson had a trans woman come

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press onto his show but he had other plans in mind instead of listening and learning from her. “So I want to get exactly what this means; I’m a 47-year-old man, I think that’s pretty obvious,” said Carlson. “If I were to decide tomorrow if I were a 47-year-old woman, should I be allowed to go shower in a women’s locker room?” Carlson followed the remark by claiming that transgender people are faking their beliefs that they are trans. This interview was not only insensitive but it also encouraged transphobia in Carlson’s viewership. According to an Advocate News article, in another segment of his show, Carlson addressed the LGBTQ+ community’s new acronym, “LGGBDTTTTIQQAAP.” “The point is, we are all bullied, we’re all afraid to ask honest questions, like what is this,” Carlson said on his show. “I mean, this is all made up,” he continued. “Nobody asked anybody, and now it’s imposed on the rest of us.” Carlson’s irresponsible actions have wreaked havoc across a slew of communities. He has lost most of his credibility and uses his platform to spew hatred toward others. From giving out ignorant remarks about the LGBTQ community to trying to discredit a woman because of her race, Carlson has proved that he and his show should be removed from Fox News’ media network.

ENTERTAINMENT



“WEST SIDE STORY” DOES IT BETTER SIXTY YEARS LATER
ALANNA KING
Contributing Writer

Remakes of “Romeo and Juliet” have captured audiences time and time again. In its modern-day New York City version, “West Side Story”, has managed to do that twice. In 1961, the film adapted from a musical format and garnered much success, winning ten Oscars and being the second highest grossing film that year. The Steven Spielberg directed remake received similar praise after its December release, with seven Oscar nominations and one win. “West Side Story” released on Disney + in March, allowing many access to this beautiful film. The remake matched the original film in quality of the storyline. There were few deviants from the original plot, hammering in the same themes of gentrification, gang violence and racism as the original. The musical numbers were all equally as compelling as the original, with each actor being talented vocalists. The costume design was outstanding and earned the movie an Oscar nomination for Best Achievement in Costume Design. The colors were symbolic and represented the themes of the movie. The differences in the films are minor but speak to how American culture has changed since the original’s release. In the original, Doc’s male character is replaced by Valentina who is Tony’s boss and confidant throughout the film. She is played by Rita Moreno who played Anita in the original film. It’s hard to imagine a 1961 audience accepting Doc’s character as a female. Another triumph for the remake is that all Latinx characters are played by Puerto Rican actors, unlike the original which casted white actors for many Latinx roles. The remake features Spanish dialogue between the Latinx characters and many Puerto Rican references rather than the white-washed original. The remake gives the Latinx storyline the justice it deserves, whereas the original used Puerto Ricans to tell a white story. A few of the musical numbers were moved around, giving them new context and allowing for the plot to expand. There was more character development in the remake, allowing the audience to truly get to know each character. The audience learned more about Chino’s character, Anita, Bernardo and Maria’s family dynamic, and the gripes between the Jets and the Sharks were all fleshed out for the audience more so than the original. While many film franchise remakes tend to be less successful than their original, “West Side Story ’21” did just as good and better than the original. The film represents a beautiful part of American culture and it is great to see that it has been improved for this current generation.

Photo Courtesy of Disney+



OZARK'S FINAL INSTALLMENT: SEASON 4
TAYLOR BLESSETT
Contributing Writer

The Netflix original hit show “Ozark” is releasing the final half of season four. Starring Jason Bateman and the famous, “Inventing Anna” leading actress, Julia Garner, “Ozark” tells the story of a businessman caught up in the schemes of his money hungry partner. Marty Byrde is a fast-talking businessman that is loyal to his cheating wife, Wendy and making a conscious home for his two children, Charlotte and Jonah. The show starts off with the viewers having a glimpse of his lifestyle in comparison to his partner, Bruce, who lives a much wealthier life, later revealing that he, along with a few others, stole eight million dollars in the span of 3 years from the cartel. Although Byrde is completely oblivious to the crooked side of business and Del Rio’s murderous temper, Byrde proposes to pay back the eight million dollars Bruce stole. By doing this, Byrde decides to liquidate his own personal assets and moves to the Ozarks in central Missouri to launder 500 million dollars to keep his family alive. In order to save his family from the cartel and his partner’s fate the businessman, Byrde makes a steady deal to launder 500 million dollars in five years, but in order to successfully do this, Marty must show the cartel leader that he can produce eight million dollars’ worth of clean money first. Throughout the series, Byrde runs into multiple problems. This includes confronting his wife about cheating when he sees a video of his wife and her lover and dealing with a portion of his 8 million dollars being stolen by the Ozark locals, the Langmores. Byrde encounters the FBI as they visit the Ozarks to question him about the disappearance of his late partner, Bruce and his wife, Linda along with the others that were killed by Del. The audience can expect an emotional roller-coaster while waiting for Byrde and his family to make it through the mess that his partner places upon him as they fight for their lives and steer clear of legal issues. The creators of the show, Bill Dubuque and Mark Williams intended for this show to be a crime drama series. Jason Bateman, the actor that plays Byrde, serves as a director and executive producer for the series. “Ozark” has been named one of the seven best new shows on Netflix as of April 2022 by Collider as the season 4 serves as the final installment for the series. The final half of the season was released in March and the final episodes will be released on April 29.

Photo Courtesy of Netflix

SPORTS

WOLVES SOFTBALL SWEEP BY RIVAL VALDOSTA STATE

TREVOR GONZALES

Contributing Writer



Photo Courtesy of UWG Athletics

The UWG Wolves softball team had one of their biggest tests of the season in a weekend series against their rival Valdosta State.

The teams played a doubleheader on April 9 and concluded the series on April 10.

The fourth ranked Blazers would sweep UWG, winning 6-5 and 14-6 on Saturday then 12-1 on Sunday afternoon.

Valdosta State jumped out to an early 2-0 in Game 1 after scoring two runs in the top of the first inning. They added another run in the fourth to take a 3-0 lead.

UWG would get on the board in the bottom of the fourth inning with a home run to center field by freshman catcher Emma Bailey. The Blazers would immediately respond with three runs of their own in the top of the fifth inning giving them a 6-1 lead.

Center fielder Hannah Scarbrough would hit a home run to right field in the bottom half of the fifth to make it a 6-2 ballgame.

UWG would begin to mount a comeback in the bottom of the sixth. Kristyn Nix scored a run in the bottom of the sixth after an error by Valdosta State allowed Alley Taylor to reach sec-

ond base. It would then be sophomore R.J Janke blasting a two-run home run in left-center field bringing the game to 6-5.

That would be the end of the rally in Game 1 as Valdosta State would take the first game of the afternoon, 6-5.

Sophomore Macy Ann McKnight pitched all seven innings for UWG, allowing six hits, six earned runs with four strikeouts, and three walks.

Game 2 was underway as Valdosta State got off to scoring the first run with a home run in the second inning. The Wolves would respond with three runs of their own in the bottom half of the second.

Senior Maddie Gorsuch hit a two-run shot to left field, bringing in Jacie Arrington. Kristyn Nix would also hit a home run to center field to give the Wolves an early 3-1 lead.

The lead did not last long for the Wolves as Valdosta State batted around and scored eight runs in the top of the third inning making it a 9-3 game.

The Wolves answered in the bottom of the fourth inning after a three-run home run to center field by R.J Janke, her second homer of the series. The 9-6 deficit was the closest the Wolves could make it as the Blazers

knocked in five more runs in the top of the fifth en route to a 14-6 victory.

Kaley Dowdy made the start for UWG in Game 2. She pitched 2.2 innings, allowing four hits, seven earned runs, two strikeouts, and five walks.

Emma Worley would come on in relief in the third inning. After two innings pitched, Worley gave up eight hits, seven earned runs and two walks.

On a chilly Sunday afternoon, Game 3 of the weekend series was underway. The Wolves would take the early lead in the second inning after a solo home run by Jacie Arrington. That would be the only run scored by UWG on Sunday, surrendering three runs in the third, eight runs in the fourth, and one more run in the fifth to give the Blazers a 12-1 victory and a weekend sweep of their rivals.

The Wolves fall to 11-24 (4-16 GulfSouthConference) on the season and are currently on a nine game losing streak.

They face a road trip on April 12 with a doubleheader at Georgia Southwestern and April 15-16 at Alabama Huntsville before returning for a five game home stand on April 20, 23 and 24 versus Columbus State and Mississippi College.

UWG SPORTS GET A NEW APP FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

EMMA WORLEY

Contributing Writer

To better promote University of West Georgia athletes and their teams, UWG and the Gulf South Conference have partnered with a social media influencer software called “INFLCR”.

Jared Boggus, Assistant Sports Information Director, met with three sports teams in the fall to soft launch the program and it will be used for all UWG sports teams beginning the fall 2022 and start of the 2023 season.

This new program not only allows the UWG Athletics to share content, but the athletes to share through their personal accounts. The amount of followers each athlete has combined equals to be more than the UWG Athletics page has, meaning the content all the athletes post is reaching a larger audience.

“The goal of the INFLCR is to assist student-athletes in marketing themselves as a student and an athlete,” said Boggus. This helps the student-athletes create a social media presence and following that could

help them both while in college and their professional lives after college.”

“It also creates a symbolic relationship between our department and the student-athletes,” continues Boggus. “Through INFLCR, we provide student-athletes with their photos and other assets they need to market themselves which reaches more people than we can reach through the department’s social media channels.”

When new photos from team events are taken, they are put into the software and it runs facial recognition to tag the specific athlete. This photo can be seen by the athlete through “my media” under “explore more content”. From there they can link it with their Twitter or Instagram.

“The new INFLCR software will be a vital asset as it will allow us to deliver content directly to our student-athletes, so they can better market themselves, which in turn helps us better market their respective teams,” said Boggus. “Improved marketing ultimately puts that team in front of more eyes and more people which in turn increases attendance, revenue and support for those teams.”

Boggus explained the new software to the teams who are cur-

rently using it as a trial for next season. New photos are added after each home event, unless a team specifically has hired a photographer to travel with them.

This new program is opening up a new world for the athletes. Currently they rely on a staff member that manages their sports social media page to post content.

Each team manages their social media pages differently but INFLCR gives each athlete the equal opportunity to market themselves and their team. Currently certain teams have hired members to be on their staff to promote their athletes and those who don’t rely on the department staff to post on the main account. This has given the idea that some teams are promoted more than others on purpose but this is not the case since some have hired staff to manage their own promotion.

INFLCR is going to allow better exposure for the athletes and each team will begin to equally be promoted. The goal of the app is so that athletes can “tell their story” and UWG is now giving their athletes this ability by implementing this app through each athletics program.