



STACEY ABRAMS PREPARES FOR THE 2022 ELECTION

SAMIRA BARNETT

Contributing Writer

As the 2022 election approaches, Stacey Abrams plans numerous changes in the hopes of winning the race for Governor of Georgia.

"I'm running for governor because I believe that we all deserve an opportunity to thrive," said Abrams, the 2022 election candidate. "When I say thrive, I mean returning us to the fundamentals that make success possible."

"That is investing in education, healthcare, housing and making sure you can make a living," Abrams continued. "We have to be willing to protect our families and have governors willing to protect our freedoms."

Healthcare is an essential part of her campaign as six hospitals have recently shut down within the year and 14 in the last decade. Over the last 10 years, Georgia has lost \$30 billion in funding for healthcare. Communities worry as healthcare costs go up and access goes down.

"As governor it is my intent to expand Medicaid," Abrams continued. "Medicaid will not only give half a million Georgians access to health insurance but reduce the cost for the rest of us."

Georgia also faces an issue in education wages. Many teachers are leaving due to burnout, with pay being the number one cause. The pay would increase from \$39,000 to \$50,000 as part of the Abrams campaign. This helps not only the teachers struggling financially but provides a better outcome for kids as more educators will be hired.

She also plans on restoring free technical college in Georgia for individuals who want to go directly from high school into college. Many college students struggle transitioning from college into the workforce. Abram's plans to decrease the hardship of the workforce by creating 20,000 appren-



Photo courtesy of Stacey Abrams

ticeships, using resources that have already been promised to Georgia.

Abrams is also addressing the State of Georgia's affordable housing crisis in her campaign.

She believes in giving people the opportunity to make a living for themselves. 43% of jobs in the state of Georgia are from small businesses. In order to fulfill her goal of people having a better living opportunity, she plans to create a \$10 million capital investment fund. This investment fund will provide businesses with access to the thousands of dollars to get a bank to write a loan, assisting women and people of color who are currently struggling.

"I also want to expand access to contracting," said Abrams. "The way we get to this new opportunity is making sure people have access to the education they need."

Healthcare, housing, education, economic security and freedom, including protecting women's rights and marriage equality all factor into her plan to improve the state of Georgia and the residents within.

"We need a governor that is willing to protect our freedom to survive," said Abrams. "That's the reason why I am running for governor, to restore the fundamentals, to improve and protect our freedoms, and to protect our families, with the work we are doing with this campaign I believe we will get it done."

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THE SOUL BEHIND THE CANVAS

CHRISTIAN JAMES-LATTORE

Contributing Writer

Mindy Su, a successful young tattoo artist based in Atlanta, Ga. discovered her passion for creating tattoos at a young age. Being a tattoo artist was a goal she set for herself in which she ultimately achieved by taking risk, networking, and understanding the true meaning behind the profession which allowed her career to see steady growth.

"I have always been a very art-related type of person," said Su. "I thought about going to college in high school but when I started to think about it realistically art majors tend to not make a lot of money. I didn't want to go to school and waste money."

Su knew she had an attachment to art but with college off the table there was a greater challenge in finding a high paying profession. Even with that being the case, Su still decided to pursue a path in the art world. Her drive to sell her own art was high.

"I didn't have anything that I could sell at the time

and that's when it came to me that I really like tattoos," said Su. "I always liked the way they looked on people and I even wanted some myself. I figured why not do it."

School is not required in the world of tattooing but in order to become a tattoo artist a person must go through an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are not easy to obtain but with the proper networking, an upcoming artist can gain a legitimate introduction into the job responsibilities of a tattoo artist.

"I was very oblivious to the whole process," said Su. "When I got into the apprenticeship I thought it would be a traditional shop where I would do a lot of miscellaneous work and not tattoo as much. Once I found someone who was willing to teach me everything I needed to know, the process of creating tattoos came to me pretty easily I would say."

Su's instructor, Tino Hernandez, took her under his wing and taught Su how to tattoo at his Atlanta-based Green Vibe Art studio. He helped her perfect her craft while showing her the soul behind the art she was creating. Tattooing is more than making money and putting your drawing on a person.

"I appreciate how much more there is to do in this industry," said Su. "I didn't think I would have to market myself and be a social media person in order to get my body of work out there. Once again I thought I would just work at a shop and put my art on someone and that just be it."

While Su is still young in her career, she has gained success through the hundreds of tattoos she has completed so far and has deepened her connection with her craft.

"I love the beauty of making a human canvas where my clients are putting their souls on the outside of their bodies," said Su.



Photo courtesy of Mindy Su

LIVING WEST

**ANA FERNANDEZ:
BLACKWELL PRIZE
ARTIST AND URBAN
LANDSCAPE
NATURALIST**
JANNETTE EMMERICK

Feature Editor

Winner of UWG’s Blackwell Prize in Painting, Ana Fernandez drove from San Antonio, Texas to share her photo realistic art with Carrollton and Newnan community on Sept. 20 and 23.

With a BFA in Painting and Drawing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and a Masters of Painting from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), Fernandez has received many opportunities to showcase her art in several exhibitions over the years. Fernandez has received multiple awards including the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant.

“There’s a few other accolades that I’ve gotten that get you into shows and it just kind of snowballs,” says Fernandez, “Once you’re in one show, you get into others.”

Inspired by the world around her and utilizing photography, Fernandez recreates picturesque scenes in watercolor and frescoes among other mediums.

“The inspiration of the subject matter are just things I’m interested in. I used to draw cars for a long time; the convenience store, that’s where I used to go when I was a kid; landscapes,” says Fernandez. “Sometimes there’s a lot of thought behind what I’m painting, but really, it’s where I am. I’m gonna paint what’s around me.

Oftentimes, Fernandez uses several methods to trace, or project photos onto her canvas and outlines the general shapes before coloring them in. For frescos, or plastered mural-like works of art, Fernandez uses a technique called cartone, which originated in the Renaissance.

“What they would do is



Photo: Jannette Emmerick, *The West Georgian*

make their drawing first on paper and then they dust it with red dust on the back And then they put it on [the wall], so when you peel it off, you have a tracing,” says Fernandez. “That’s where the word cartoon comes from.”

“So when people say ‘you’re tracing it’ or whatever, that’s the way Michelangelo did it,” continues Fernandez.

For local artists like Fernandez, the tangible world at their fingertips lends the greatest information and inspiration, this leads to not just creating great art, but also immortalizing a memory or moment in time.

“People, places and things that are in my vicinity. Almost like a document, I want to document the area,” says Fernandez.

Much like history books or novels, art serves to document an instance in time no matter how mundane or seemingly unimportant. For Fernandez, she captures local businesses, restaurants and other sites especially within the Latino community and her own neighborhood which go through substantial change in short periods of time.

“Sometimes I think: ‘Why am I painting this? It’s always here?’” says Fernandez. “Then ten years later it’s gone or someone else has moved in and changed the business. I’ve been able to docu-

ment these places that are gone.

“Sometimes the families of those restaurants will ask if they can have a picture of it,” continues Fernandez. “Or they will say, ‘that’s my dad’s tire shop, he passed away five years ago, I would love a print’ or ‘thank you for seeing it and painting it.’”

Despite the temporality of an ever-changing city with updating technology and cycling businesses, Fernandez offers a permanent memory for posterity.

“Better than a photo. It’s almost like I’m writing something, but I’m writing what I see,” says Fernandez.

Fernandez compares her work to a naturalist in the science field, biologists or observers who go into the wilderness to paint or draw wildlife around them, capturing moments in nature.

“I go, ‘oh, I like this convenient store,’ I’m going to paint it like a landscape but I’m not living out in the wild, I’m living in a city, so I’m painting my landscape: my cityscape,” says Fernandez.

Fernandez’s work captures the man-made urban landscape in a way that reflects her roots and documents a glimpse into a world otherwise forgotten.

Fernandez’s art can be viewed at her website at <https://anafernandez.com>.



Photo: Jannette Emmerick, *The West Georgian*



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LIVING WEST

THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA HOSTS THE 40TH ANNUAL “A DAY TO GIVE WEST”

SAMIRA BARNETT
Contributing Writer

Since 1982, the university’s annual giving day, “A Day to Give West”, has been celebrated with the Carrollton community and alumni. Each year, faculty, staff, and the community come together to support students of UWG. A Day is an opportunity to interact with donors and express gratitude for all the contributions made to the university.

“A Day to Give West” is divided into two parts each year, the alumni and community campaign, and the faculty and staff campaign.

The community co-chairs are made up of alumni and friends of UWG. One specific community co-chair is Bob Stone, who was a part of the very first “A Day to Give West” fundraiser back in 1982.

In 2021, UWG raised over \$1.1 million at the annual “A Day to Give West”.

“This is a way for the university community, Carrollton and the greater West Georgia region to come together to support current and future students,” said Jess Lassiter, the Director of Annual Giving.

“We send emails to alumni, alumni owned businesses and businesses in the West Georgia region,” said Lassiter. “We also call on our

faculty and staff to give to whatever area that they feel compelled to give.

“No university has a giving day quite like UWG,” Lassiter continued. “It is such a unique program that engages all of the West Georgia region.”

This is a special day not only for faculty but also for students to receive assistance with their university education.

“It is so humbling every year to get to thank all of our donors,” Lassiter said. “Also, to hear from students being helped due to the generosity of people giving through ‘A’ Day.

“There have been numerous students delivering speeches at various events that talk about the need for scholarships,” Lassiter continued. “I have had many students talk about the impact of giving back and how it has directly affected them and it is very moving.”

“A Day to Give West” benefits students in a variety of ways. It helps address both the students and campus

Image courtesy of UWG

needs by providing support with scholarships. This is an excellent way to make an impression on prospective students who have yet to enroll at the university.

“Our goal this year is to definitely beat last year,” Lassiter said. “We really wanted to see if we could get over the 1.2 mark.”

On the day of the event, colleagues from “A Day to Give West’s” campaign, as well as community volunteers, will travel through Carrollton and Newnan.

“We give out balloons every year, which has been a tradition since 1982,” said Lassiter. “We take balloons to businesses, homes, and individuals that have supported us throughout the campaign.”

This is a way for the university to show appreciation to the community. The balloons represent the individual’s support for the university as well as the university’s support for the community.

This year’s annual “A Day to Give West” will be held on Thursday, Oct. 20.

UWG HOSTS SERVICE DAY TO PREPARE CAMPUS FOR HOMECOMING

ANNA ROBERTS
Contributing Writer

The University of West Georgia Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion (CSII) hosted a Service Day on Sept. 23 in Love Valley to help prepare campus for Homecoming festivities.

Students gathered in Love Valley to participate in one of the many service opportunities taking place that day including campus cleanup, beautifying the Campus Center, working in the campus garden and writing letters to people in retirement homes or hospitalized patients.

“Our main focus today is campus cleanup,” said Khalis Thomas, Assistant Director of Student Life for the University of West Georgia. “We currently have some students decorat-

ing the windows at the campus center with paints, others are walking around campus picking up trash where they see it, and a third group is at the cam-

pus garden behind Arbor View to help maintain it. We want to beautify the campus before the influx of visitors this week!”

The campus garden is located behind Arbor View Apartments and West Commons dining hall. It is regularly maintained by the Garden Club and all of its produce goes directly to the dining halls on campus. By working in the garden, students also had a chance to take part in not only cleaning campus but providing food as well.

Students were also afforded the opportunity to write letters to people currently living in retirement homes or who have been hospitalized for an extended period of time. CSII provided all of the materials

and even information on why a simple card can do wonders to brighten someone’s day.

“A lot of these people have been isolated due to COVID-19 and being extremely high risk,” said Omari Smart, student at the University of West Georgia. “This kind of isolation can cause feelings of isolation, anxiety and loneliness. We’re out here making cards for them to let them know that they are loved and that someone out there cares for them. We want them to know they are not alone in this fight!”

The UWG Service Day allowed students to give back to the campus that has given them so much. As campus continues to prepare for the upcoming Homecoming festivities, the student’s contributions can be seen all around campus and have truly helped set them up for success.

ENTERTAINMENT

FEATURED:
UPCOMING ARTIST,
ERIK ILOMAKAI
TELLS HIS STORY
BRITTANY MERSFELDER
Editor-in-Chief

Writing music is not a skill that everyone has. Rapping can even be a challenge for those who are not as well versed in the genre. With practice and perseverance, an artist can receive their fifteen minutes of fame. For local Carrollton artist, Erik Ilomakai, he is determined to make that happen for himself and for his family.

“[Writing music] is like an audio diary,” said Ilomakai. “It gives you the ability to express things you really just can’t put into words.”

Ilomakai has been writing music for many years under the pseudonym Illamak. He finds his inspiration from many different places; from sounds around him to other local artists in the Carrollton area.

“From the beginning, I could see how it connects with people and see how they are affected,” said Ilomakai. “That’s just what brought me into the constantly writing music and trying

to make better songs.”
For the time being, Ilomakai has focused his genre on primarily rap and soul music. He has begun to dabble in country music on the side.
“I’m a little afraid,” said Ilomakai. “I feel like I could do country because I have a deep voice. Sometimes I’ll be thinking I’m writing a rap song and my wife or someone else will be like ‘is that country?’ I have a little twang so that is something I am actively pursuing.”
As of right now, music is his side gig. Ilomakai currently works at the local Olive Garden as a service professional and chef. When he is not cooking a delicious Italian meal, he focuses on his song writing. He hopes one day to have his music hit the charts.
“I might imagine something and describe something that hasn’t happened yet [in a song] and it literally almost plays out identically,” said Ilomakai. “I kind of have an idea where things are going but just saying something that hasn’t happened yet; then it is literally playing out in almost

the same exact format that you wrote it.”
“There are 50 different methods [in song writing],” continued Ilomakai. “I’ll try to rhyme, I’ll try to carry more of a tune which I shouldn’t be doing. [I’ll take] inspiration from other songs. You hear their flow pattern, how they space their words, how to time your breaths. Every song I try to make is different. I don’t have a format where I stamp them out.”
Ilomakai has many other methods when it comes to writing songs. When not working on his own songs, Ilomakai partners with the local artists and bands in the area.
“I love collaborating with new artists, especially local; that’s my favorite,” said Ilomakai. “That’s where I like to get my inspiration from is working with someone else and seeing what we can build together.”
Locality is the biggest factor for this small town rapper. Ilomakai will be dropping a new single in the coming weeks. To listen to his music, you can find him on Spotify and YouTube as Illamak.

ENTERTAINMENT

GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD REVIEW

BRIANNA WELCH
Contributing Writer

Sir Elton John amazed the audience at the Mercedes Benz Stadium with his outstanding and unforgettable farewell performance on Sept. 22.

In January 2018, the 75-year-old British singer announced he would be retiring to pursue his family after decades of performing. Though his fans were generally supportive of his decision to spend retirement with loved ones, millions of supporters were still devastated by the news. Lucky for his fans, he did not disappoint. The Farewell Yellow Brick Road Tour is a formal goodbye to his adoring fans in which they can join him as he celebrates closing a major chapter in his life through his art.

His setlist contained 24 songs in total. He started off his show strong with the hit song “Bennie and the Jets,” which immediately got the audience to stand up and sing along. He finished the night off with his blockbuster, “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” as a final farewell to his devoted



Image courtesy of Universal Music Group

fans before exiting the stage. Other songs played include “Rocketman (I Think It’s Going to Be a Long, Long Time),” “I Guess That’s Why They Call It the Blues,” “Saturday Night’s Alright for Fighting,” “Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me” and many other hits.

His performance consisted of virtual visuals of former concerts, old photos of him and his friends, random backstage footage from the 70s, clips from his biopic starring Taron Edgerton “Rocketman” and a pre-recorded video of Dua Lipa singing along to her part of their duet “Cold Heart.”

He was truly a phenomenal performer that knew how to get the crowd engaged and sing along. One of my favorite parts of the night was whenever he began to sing one of my favor-

ites “Crocodile Rock” since he allowed the audience to sing the iconic “la, la, la” portion after the chorus for him. While I enjoyed every song, “I’m Still Standing” and “Saturday Night’s Alright for Fighting” were my absolute favorite performances because they are my favorite songs of his.

I adored the energy of the crowd since they were all hardcore fans, some of whom dressed up in Elton’s most archetypal outfits. The loyal Elton fans made the experience much more enjoyable and memorable.

Long-time Elton John fans are saddened by the news of him retiring for good. We can still appreciate his legacy by listening to all of our favorites by him and I hope he flourishes alongside his family.

IMAGINE FESTIVAL KICKS OFF FESTIVAL SEASON FOR GEORGIANS

ALANNA KING
News Editor

Imagine Music Festival opened its gates last weekend after a two-year hiatus. This electronic dance music (EDM) festival was held in Rome, Ga. from Sept. 15-18 and opened camping as early as Sept. 14. Georgia’s biggest EDM festival featured a stacked lineup with a diverse cast of dubstep, house, trance and melodic artists.

Attendees came from all over the country and even the world to experience the festival. Many opted to camp in tents, with cars, or RVs within steps of the festival gates. Imagine hosted four stages. Oceania and Amazonia were the two mainstages, Disco Inferno played house artists and many local Atlanta DJs played at Aeria.

There was entertainment at every turn with a silent disco raging until 6 a.m. daily, a stage to greet you at the gates at Shakedown Street, a daily pool party featuring A-list DJs like Adventure Club and tech-house legend Kaskade. A stage at the campgrounds let campers get up close and personal with DJs playing a second time after the main stages closed for the night. There were other activities like river tubing, arm marbling and bracelet making.

The weekend got a head start on Thursday with Seven Lions DJing the pre-party. Friday was stacked with heavy dubstep artists such as Blunts & Blondes, LEVEL UP, Liquid Stranger, Subtronics and Excision who all threw down at their sets.

Saturday offered groovy sets such as LSDREAM, Esseks and Kaskade to close out the night. Sunday featured a house-head’s dream setlist of Dombresky, Sidepiece and Dom Dolla while Illenium gave guests all the sappy, melodic vibes necessary to end the festival on a good note.

Imagine’s inaugural stay at its Kingston Down’s venue was not without bumps in the road. On Thursday, it was discovered that the water supply was contaminated and free water stations were shut off to attendees until Saturday. With sunny skies and temperatures soaring into the 90s, this forced everyone to purchase bottled water inside the festival that cost four dollars a bottle. When the stations opened, they were few and far between. By Sunday night, the stations began to run out of water. At festivals, reliable water for all should be imperative and this was not the case at Imagine.

Imagine also let down many attendees who were unable to use preloaded money on their wristbands. When purchasing a wristband for festival entry online, there was an option to preload money for use inside the festival for anything from merchandise to food and beverages. However, this money

was never loaded onto the wristbands even though the payment was spent and confirmed. The only remedy Imagine suggested for this was to contact your credit card company and dispute the payment.

Despite the challenges and the heat, the crowd was full of peace, love, unity and respect (PLUR) the entire weekend. Attendees could be seen trading bracelets, making friends, dancing with strangers and spreading good vibes to the very end of the fest. Each set had high energy and people were excited to be alive and enjoy the music.

Imagine Festival began in 2014 as a two-day event in downtown Atlanta and is now a complete camping festival drawing attendees from all over the world. I can’t wait to see where this festival goes next.



Photo: Alanna King, The West Georgian