

The Lincoln Journal



"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

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President of the Garden Club of Georgia Barbara Bourque (left) and Pine Needle Garden Club member Peggy Glover unveiled the Gold Star Memorial Marker on Thursday, April 1, at the Lincolnton Clubhouse.

Gold Star Memorial Marker pays tribute to families who lost loved ones in battle

A Gold Star Memorial Marker was dedicated in Lincoln County by the Azalea District and The Garden Club of Georgia in cooperation with the Pine Needle Garden Club of Lincolnton on Thursday, April 1.

The ceremony was held at the Lincolnton Clubhouse, where the marker is located.

The Lincolnton Clubhouse marker is the seventh Gold Star Marker in the State of Georgia, with others scheduled for dedication in the near future.

Welcoming those present at the dedication were Pine Needle Garden Club President Linda Joiner and member Diane Reese.

Reese welcomed the Gold Star Family members in the audience representing Lincolnton's fallen soldiers including James Kinlow, Leonard Stanley Scott Jr., Robert A. Thompson, Nathan Thomas, and Thomas Lane.

Also recognized were Lincoln County Commission Chairman Walker Norman, City of Lincolnton Mayor Henry Brown, City Councilman Alana Burke, Tax Commissioner Brenda Danner, and Lincoln County Development Authority Director John Stone, who were also present for the occasion.

President of the Garden Club of Georgia Barbara Bourque addressed the crowd saying, "We are so very proud of the Pine Needle Garden Club for choosing to honor our Gold Star Families with this beautiful memorial marker. It is a tribute to the families who have lost a loved one in battle and is a lasting reminder that it is not just the military personnel who serve, but also their families who make great sacrifices for our country. Gold Star Families know all too well the high cost of freedom and they have paid the ultimate price."

She went on to say, "Pine Needle Garden Club your patriotism is showing, it is shining brightly, and we love you for it. We commend all of the members of the club who worked hard to get this project underway and accomplished, and I know, Peggy Glover had a whole lot to do with it. We also appreciate finding such an appropriate place for the marker, where it is prominently displayed for all to see, and show their respect."

In conclusion Bourque said, "On behalf of the Garden Club of Georgia we thank our Gold Star families, military personnel, and veterans and their families. We are delighted that you could join us today for this celebration. We thank you for your service, we appreciate your sacrifice, you are loved, and honored."

Blue Star and Gold Star Memo-



Blue Star and Gold Star Memorial Family Marker Chairman with the Garden Club of Georgia Jan Thiese (right) presented certificates from the National Garden Club to Barbara Bourque (left) and Peggy Glover.



The Fort Gordon Color Guard was on hand Thursday to "present colors."

rial Family Marker Chairman with the Garden Club of Georgia Jan Thiese gave the history of the Blue and Gold Star Markers followed by the dedication.

"We are here today to honor our Gold Star Families whose loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country in the United States armed forces.

"The mission is to offer hope, honor, and healing through remembering their fallen heroes; by coming together, sharing their pain, and sorrow. To offer each other support and understanding, and to encourage families to continue to live, not just exist, as they navigate their lives in today's world.

"Let us remember the Gold Star Families whose children will never know their father or mother, aunt or uncle; or whose husband who will never hold their newborn child; the spouse who will never see their husband or wife again; and the parents who will never see their sons

and daughters again. We must remember.

"As we remember today, we dedicate this Gold Star Memorial Marker to honor all families whose loved one made the ultimate sacrifice defending the United States of America. It is with pride and appreciation that the National Garden Clubs, Inc. joins with the Pine Needle Garden Club, and the Garden Club of Georgia, to perpetuate this program with this marker, that stands as a symbol of honor, hope, and healing for all Gold Star Families," Thiese said.

A wreath of flowers was then placed in front of the marker following the unveiling.

Others taking part in the program were Rev. Randy Kanipe, pastor of Lincolnton United Methodist Church; the Fort Gordon Color Guard; Patriot Guard Riders; Jasper Dukes, who sang the National Anthem; and Ernie Guthrie, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

COVID-19 gathering restrictions set to roll back in Georgia today

By BEAU EVANS
Capital News Beat Service

Gov. Brian Kemp is rolling back restrictions on public gatherings and a shelter-in-place order for elderly-care facility residents that have been in place since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Set to take effect today, the rollback marks the broadest lifting of COVID-19 safety measures since the governor ended a statewide shelter-in-place order which was in place for about three weeks last April.

Going forward, restaurants, bars, and other popular social spots will no longer face limits on the number of patrons, according to one of several executive orders Kemp signed last week. Capacities in public spaces have been kept at 50 people or fewer for many months.

The amount of space people will have to keep apart can also be reduced from six feet to at least three feet in movie theaters and 3.5 feet for restaurant and bar seating. Group fitness classes in gyms will have to keep exercisers at least six feet apart.

Shelter-in-place orders for residents in Georgia long-term care facilities, which have been in place since mid-March of 2020, will be lifted starting on April 8.

Kemp's latest order also bars local police officers from shutting down businesses that refuse to comply with the new scaled-back distancing and sanitization rules.

Additionally, the order allows state government employees and public-school teachers to take up to eight hours off of work without using vacation or sick time in order to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

Georgia's public health emergency, which allows Kemp to continue issuing executive orders on COVID-19, will be extended through the end of April.

The upcoming restrictions rollback comes as Georgia makes headway in vaccinating the state's

nearly 11 million residents after opening up eligibility to everyone in the state 16 years of age and older on March 25.

Nearly 3.8 million vaccines had been administered in Georgia as of the middle of last week, roughly 80 percent of the number of doses shipped by the federal government, according to state Department of Public Health data.

Georgians can pre-register for a vaccine appointment at myvaccinegeorgia.com even if they do not yet qualify under the governor's eligibility criteria. Once they qualify, they will be notified and scheduled for an appointment.

State officials have opened nine mass vaccination sites in Atlanta, Macon, Albany, Savannah, Colum-

bus, Waycross and Bartow, Washington and Habersham counties.

Kemp has long prioritized balancing COVID-19 restrictions with keeping businesses open in Georgia, touting the state's improved economy amid the pandemic compared to many places elsewhere in the U.S. Critics have slammed him for not taking more drastic steps to curb the virus' spread.

The governor has also faced backlash for not imposing a statewide mask mandate, as well as moving to block local governments like Atlanta and Savannah from adopting mask requirements earlier in the pandemic. President Joe Biden's administration has urged state officials to impose mask mandates.

Graves Mountain will open for 11 days with restrictions

The biannual Graves Mountain Rock Swap and Dig will go on this spring with a few adjustments to meet the guidelines set out by the CDC.

"On the upside, the event has been extended from three days to 11 days, April 23-May 3, to accommodate the 50-person limit allowed on the mountain per day. Only those with reservations will be admitted to dig. Twenty-five vendors will also be permitted, setting up six-feet apart and masks are required," Graves Mountain Caretaker and former miner Junior Norman said.

Considered a "scientific and geological wonder," Graves Mountain will be open to prospectors and interested onlookers from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. throughout the 11 days by reservation only.

Anyone interested in attending may call Melissa Norman at 706-401-3337 and reserve the day(s) they wish to collect.

Often called a mecca for rockhounds, Graves Mountain is one

of the most well-known collection sites in the State of Georgia, with an estimated 1,500-2,000 prospectors converging on the mountain at the previous dig.

The history of Graves Mountain dates back over 100 years, and with its unique geological formation it has been mined by a variety of nationally and globally recognized companies, including the predominant Tiffany and Co.

Recently, Graves Mountain was named among "Five of the Best Places to go Gem Hunting in the U.S." by smithsonian.com. Throughout the decades, several publications such as The Atlanta Journal Constitution, The Augusta Chronicle, and others have hailed the mountain for being just as rich in its history and folklore as it is mineral-dense.

Treasure hunters present at the spring dig can endeavor to unearth the minerals rutile, kyanite, lazulite, iridescent hematite, pyrophyllite, pyrite, ilmenite, fuchsite, bar-

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Johnny Wise (seated, left) signed a letter of intent with the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School on Tuesday, March 29, at Lincoln County High School. Present were (seated, right) his father John Wise, (back) Offensive Coordinator Coach Harrison Spurlock, and Head Coach and Athletic Director Lee Chomskis.

Wise signs to play for U.S. Navy Prep School

Johnny Wise is the latest Red Devil to sign a letter of intent to play football at the next level, as he will attend the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island.

"Johnny had an incredible senior season for Lincoln County High School," Red Devils Head Coach and Athletic Director Lee Chomskis said. "He led his team in tackles

while playing linebacker and also contributed on the offensive side of the ball with his incredible hands and running ability."

Wise was selected unanimously as Region 8A Defensive Player of the Year and was chosen Class A First Team All-State Linebacker by the GHSA Daily. "We are very proud of Johnny's accomplishments and are looking for great things in

the future," Chomskis added.

NAPS is the Navy's fourth oldest school; only the Naval Academy, Naval War College, and Naval Post Graduate School are older.

The mission of the Naval Academy Preparatory School is to enhance midshipman candidates' moral, mental, and physical foundations to prepare them for success at the U.S. Naval Academy.