

## Across The Savannah

### What's the Big Rush?

By TOM POLAND  
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My back-road trips of late have been good but not as pleasant as they usually are. Too many people. They drive like madmen. They pass on hills. They cut me off. They force me to hit the brakes. They ride my bumper. They're a blur flying through small towns and past fine old homes. The list goes on. I hope it's temporary, a result of the season, and I believe it is. Out-of-state tags reveal tourists. "Get back to where you once belonged. Get back Jojo."

I need space. On a back road I drive like a 106-year-old man. I'm always seeking photos and stories at the edge of a field, in a tangle of smilax, in a pine thicket, by that wonderful orchard, behind that stately old church. Call me The Seeker. Seeking's hard to do with a car on my bumper so I developed a new driving habit: I pull over and let them rush on to whatever's so urgent. Good ride dance.

A few days ago I had no choice but to drive I-20. I didn't think the interstate could get worse but I was wrong. Construction's big cement barriers herded me into narrow high-speed canyons where disaster is a blown tire, broken water pump away—theirs or mine. But wait, there's more. They're also erecting big sound baffles for souls unlucky enough to live beside interstates. Now there's zero to see. Nothing. Meanwhile within the cement canyons people rush about like crazed animals destined for slaughter.



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What's the big rush? Why are so many people driving like bats out of that place that rhymes with bell?

Got to be the summer vacation spillover from car-crammed interstates. It's just the season I pray. Whatever its cause, I found an escape from drivers speeding along back roads: the back-back roads. I'll go to a road with far less traffic and then take a lesser road off it. Who cares where it goes? There's no traffic at all. Now I can look for old homes, forgotten cemeteries, beautiful old farms, abandoned trucks and tractors, and more. As I say in my talks, "On a back road, your blood pressure goes down, and your gas mileage goes up."

It's true and here's a case in point: the colorful house with its

greenish cheesecloth screen, red canna lily, and fine old brick fireplace pleased me very much. First it revived memories of Mom's canna lilies of my youth. The old house itself brought to mind shacks and tenant homes I saw back in the 1950s and 60s and a feature I wrote that led me into the world of books. And there was something special going on that you can't see. The entire time I photographed this house the lilt-ing, soothing call of a bobwhite brought back memories of my grandfather's farm. And those big rolls of hay? Memories of hauling hay fluttered up like birds from a field. I live in the city but the farm still lives in me. Back roads keep your youth alive. Try it and you'll see.

So, it comes down to choices. Which do you prefer? The scenic South or an interstate that's pretty much the same wherever you go? A clogged major highway or a lesser back road? Are you in that much of a mad rush to get from A to B?

Let's do the math. You can add a noisy dangerous interstate to your travels, or you can subtract stress and danger by taking a lesser road that adds tranquility and memories to your day. Seems to be a no-brainer, but someone will say, "Yeah I get it but I'm in a bit of a rush. I'm not out joy riding. I don't have all day to get where I'm going."

"Fine," I say. "Dash along on your joyless trip. If I see you in my rearview mirror, I'll look for a place to pull over."

#### Class of 76 to meet

The class of 1976 will have a brief meeting at the Dova Partidge Annex in the library on Sun., Aug. 1, at 5 p.m. All interested class members are encouraged to attend.

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## Baseball's Best

### Sandlot baseball was so much fun

By LAMAR GARRARD  
Baseball historian



If you are watching today's major league baseball games on television or listening on your radio and you are like me, sometimes you get statistics overload or maybe even second guessing burnout. To elaborate, television now sometimes tracks the trajectory of the ball off the hitter's bat and clocks bat speed and distance and any other stat they can think of to analyze the play ad infinitum. Could they not just say, "He hit the ball over the fence and it carried a long way?"

To a point, many broadcasters and announcers think it is their duty to key the fans in on what the next pitch the pitcher needs to throw, or even better, tell the fans what a player should have done on a certain play. Sometimes they get smarter than the manager when they suggest he left the pitcher in too long or the manager should have called for a pinch-hitter in a certain situation.

While putting on the mute button during much of this extrapolation, my brain is saying, why can't we just watch a simple game of baseball for nine innings without all the statisticians and strategy hyperbole blowing our minds, forcing us to drink another caffeine laden Mountain Dew!

Sandlot baseball days of the 40s, 50s and 60s called for a different set

of rules and game protocols. Boys in the neighborhood and sometimes a girl or two would take the old Sears model bat and a greatly used ball, and (if lucky, some would have gloves) head off to a vacant lot or field. In those days city streets were the Yankee Stadiums of many impromptu games. Willie Mays, the Giants Hall of Fame outfielder, is shown in photos playing stick ball in the streets in New York. Stick ball was played with a broom stick and a rubber ball or maybe a tennis ball. The rules were few and the stats unimportant.

My memory takes me back to the days when the game was much simpler and computers were just a dream and not the main force driving today's professional baseball and even high school and college ball.

Summer, a half-century ago, called for blue jeans and no shirt as the uniform and bare feet as the Nike of the day. Just give us an open lot or empty street and we were off to play our hearts out, day after day, week after week, all summer until school bells beckoned us back right after Labor Day. We had only two or three bats to choose from and sometimes our baseballs were so worn that we taped them together with black tape. Our equipment was whatever we could put together

among the kids on the block.

Not knowing any better, we just enjoyed playing and practicing and the competition that came along with it all. We learned how to win and lose and how to enjoy the sport that America called its pastime. Nothing was more fun at the time than sandlot baseball.



#### Lincoln County School System Breakfast Menu

- **Mon., Aug. 2 - Fri., Aug. 6**
- Monday - No School
- Tuesday - No School
- Wednesday - No School
- Thursday - First day of school!

Cereal bar or Poptart, Elf Grahams, fruit.

● Friday - Sausage biscuit, fruit. All breakfast menus include choice of milk or 100% fruit juice. Entrée option: cereal bowl or cereal bar with graham crackers. Menus subject to change due to availability.



#### Lincoln County Elementary School Lunch Menu

- **Mon., Aug. 2 - Fri., Aug. 6**
- Monday - No School
- Tuesday - No School
- Wednesday - No School
- Thursday - Cheeseburger, lettuce and tomato, potato chips, green beans, sliced peaches.

● Friday - Crispy chicken sandwich, lettuce and tomato, oven fries, raw veggies w/dip, rosy applesauce.

All meals include a choice of milk and 100% fruit juice. Alternative entrée choice: pizza or peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Menus subject to change due to availability.

#### Lincoln County Middle/High School Lunch Menu

- **Mon., Aug. 2 - Fri., Aug. 6**
- Monday - No School
- Tuesday - No School
- Wednesday - No School
- Thursday - Cheeseburger, lettuce and tomato, potato chips, green beans, sliced peaches.

● Friday - Crispy chicken sandwich, lettuce and tomato, oven fries, raw veggies w/dip, rosy applesauce.

All meals include a choice of milk, 100% fruit juice and other fruit choices are offered daily. Alternative entrée choice: pizza, peanut butter and jelly sandwich, or chef salad. Menus subject to change due to availability.

### EYE NEWS: Did you know?

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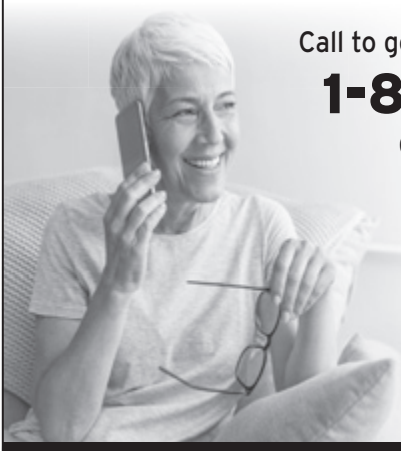
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### NOTICE OF ELECTION

The City of Lincolnton will be holding an election on November 2, 2021, for the office of Mayor, Council Post 4 and Council Post 5. Dates for qualifying will be August 16 – August 18, 2021, at City Hall from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day. The qualifying fee is \$120.00 for the office of Mayor and \$72.00 for the office of Council. The term of office is four (4) years; January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2025.

To qualify to run for office, a person must be a registered voter of the City of Lincolnton and have been a resident of the City for twelve (12) months immediately preceding the election. (City Charter, Article 11, Section 2.11).

The last day to register to vote in this election will be October 4, 2021.



#### Volunteers prepare for the planting of the Pioneer Day greens

For decades Buddy Hawes, has grown the greens Pioneer Day visitors love to eat. He has plowed, fertilized, raked, planted, watered daily, weeded, and then called for the pickers when the greens were at peak flavor and tenderness. But Buddy recently decided it was time to hand off this labor of love to the younger set. The Historical Society, knowing what a tradition the picked, washed, seasoned, cooked and served greens are on Pioneer Day assembled a team of experts to try to replace Buddy's Hawes' one man expertise. As you can see, Buddy is keeping close watch on the new "experts," shown (l-r) Buddy Hawes; Nelson Brooks, bovine ordure disseminator; Kevin Beggs, donated Beggs Best Black to plow into the patch; Donna Anderson, Pine Needle Garden Club, Robyn Stewart, Lincoln County Extension Agent. Not shown Wayne Beggs, planter designer and restoration expert. Mark your calendars, Pioneer Day is November 20.