

# Lanier County News

Covering Lanier & Northern Lowndes Counties

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"Serving our community and protecting our freedoms according to His Word since 1913"

Thursday, April 18, 2024 Lakeland, GA

## UPDATE: Possible Lanier County BOC Dead Animal Disposal Violations

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

LANIER COUNTY, Georgia – Two weeks ago, the Lanier County News published a story about its pursuit of information relating to the possible Lanier County Board Of Commissioners (BOC) Dead Animal Disposal Violations. Some information has been provided by the Lanier County BOC as follows in the timeline:

### TIMELINE:

**April 3** - Original LCN Open Records Request to the Lanier Board of Commissioners (with copy to Lanier Animal Control Officer) for:

1. Copy of law that allows Lanier County BOC to dump dead animals in open mass grave on county property

2. Copy of legal permission from the appropriate authority or landowner to allow for disposal of dead animals by burial, incineration or mass dumping of unwrapped bodies in the open on county or private land.

3. Copy of legal permission to mass dump dead animal bodies in wetlands.

4. Copy of statement from the Nashville Veterinarian Office (or other veterinarian) which documents the numbers of domesticated animals/dogs that have been euthanized since January 1, 2024 for the Lanier County Animal Control Department or other division of the Lanier County Board of Commissioners.

5. Copy of reports from Lanier County Animal Control Department about their shelter, placement and/or euthanization of animals in their care since January 1, 2024.

**April 3-4** – LCN receives “read” and “delivery”

receipts electronically from the Lanier County Board of Commissioners and the Lanier County Animal Control Department

**April 4** – LCN receives an official response from the Lanier County Board of Commissioners with a letter from the Lanier County Animal Control Department and an unofficial/unsigned statement from Branch’s Veterinary Clinic. LCBOC response states:

- Lanier County does not have a practice of dumping animals in an open grave.
- Lanier County does not have a practice of dumping animals on open land.
- Lanier County does not dump animals in wetlands.

• 4 & 5. See photos of letters.

**April 5** – LCN officially restates and emphasizes its original Open Records Request, since April 4 response was incomplete. Additionally, LCN requests: Add on to request of April 3 ... added on April 4:

6. Copy of bills from veterinarian and copies of county payments.

7. Copy of Lanier County Employee Handbook

8. Copy of Lanier County BOC Budget which covers 2024 for the Lanier County Animal Control Department (projected and actual expenditures).

**April 5-11** – LCN receives “read” and “delivery” receipts electronically from the Lanier County Board of

**For more see “Dead Animal Disposal” • PAGE 3**

To whom it may concern,

Lanier Co. has brought in 58 euthanasia’s since January 1, 2024. We have disposed of 33 of these pets.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at 229-686-3661.

Sincerely,

Malia Smith

Branch’s Veterinary Clinic

Lanier County Animal Control  
56 West Main Street Suite 9  
Lakeland, Ga 31635

Dear Ms. Moore,

In response to your Open Records Request, any dogs that have exceeded the allowable holding period are taken to Branch’s veterinary office in Nashville Ga where a veterinarian performs the euthanasia procedure. Once the dog has been determined deceased the dog is either kept at the veterinary office for the dog to be transported to the crematory place or the dog is transported to the Lanier County sand mill for the burial of each dog. I informed an employee that I had gone to that location and dropped the dogs off. At that time one of the employees has to leave the job that he is doing and to come out and bury the dogs in question. It is my understanding that that employee could be anywhere in the county and sometimes takes some time to get there.

It is with my understanding that the employee also has mentioned to me that with the gate being opened that residences have dropped off roadkill and other animals at that location. It’s also been brought to my attention that several employees at some point in time have to pick up deceased dogs in the county that has ended up on landowners’ property and that has started to decrease. After that is done, they are immediately buried by the first employee that is present.

Jessica Genas Sheber manger and animal control officer

## LPD Department recognized by local citizens for their courtesy

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

LAKELAND, Georgia – The April Lakeland City Council Meeting brought an unexpected appreciative effort by two area residents. Jon Moore and his mother, Carol, gave the Lakeland Police Department a “special thanks” to the Lakeland City Police Department for the “wonderful job you that you do each and every day,” said the Moores in both a letter and during their presentation to the Lakeland City Police Department. LPD Chief Michael Slusher and Officer Zachary Benka, who received a specially made framed art piece, appreciation card and a large bag of snacks for the entire LPD team, were on hand to receive the Moore’s appreciation.

The Moore’s effort resulted from the LPD’s response to an E911 call that Carol Moore made on Friday, January 19th. Jon was one of a group of Seniors, who left about 5:00 a.m. on a special trip and returned after midnight. About three hours prior to the return of Jon and other LCHS Seniors on the trip, Moore severely pulled a hamstring muscle and found herself unable to walk. Her ability to be able to get in the Moore family vehicle and pick Jon up just after midnight was completely negated.

In an effort to solve the problem of getting Jon home, at last resort Carol called the Tri-county E911 number and explained

her problem and the fact that the return of the students to LCHS would be delayed after a long day because Jon needed a ride home. The Tri-county E911 staff explained that it was possible to get courtesy help and set about doing it.

Shortly after the LCHS bus arrived, a Lakeland City Police Officer called to find out how to locate Jon. The officer helped the Moore family by returning Jon safely to their home that night.

Often the community associates law enforcement activities with law bending and breaking. Moore stated, “We are so appreciative of the efforts of our Lakeland City Police Department! We appreciated your invaluable help. We’ve encountered your concerned officers a number of times, though this was the first time we had the opportunity to have such a personal courtesy given. It kept Lanier County School staff from staying late and trying to figure out to solve the problem after an 18 hour day with the Lanier County High School Seniors! Thank you! It is a joy for us to receive our police department’s help!”

Jon publishes a weekly cartoon called “Jon the Scout” in the Lanier County News. He created the character when he was 16 years old and has faithfully published a new cartoon weekly for



L-R: Officer Zachary Benka, Jon Moore, Carol Moore and LPD Chief Michael Slusher

almost 4 years.

Jon commemorated the experience with a special cartoon which was published in the Lanier County News Online edition. “My mother and I framed it and hope that

the Lakeland Police Officers and staff will hang it in the LPD department, remember me and the Moore family’s sincere appreciation,” said Jon Moore.

## Berrien County Jail Escapee Back in Jail

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

BERRIEN COUNTY, Georgia – On Thursday, April 11th, Emory “Star” Gibson (49) of Nashville escaped from the Berrien County Jail. Within a few hours and with multi-agency assistance, Berrien County Sheriff’s Office (BCSO) has again arrested Gibson and returned him to the jail. According to BCSO Sheriff Ray Paulk, the multi-agency help included the Georgia State Patrol, the Nashville Police Department, the Department of Community Supervision, the Georgia Department of Corrections K-9 Unit, the Georgia State Fire Marshal as well as the Berrien County Sheriff’s Department.

BCSO Sheriff Paulk has shared that last Thursday, Gibson had just returned to the Berrien County Jail from court about noon. Emory “Star” Gibson received a sentence of 10 years, because of a probation revocation on Family Violence charges.

Once in the jail, an officer removed Gibson’s handcuffs and shackles as he was being processed for lockdown. During his processing, Gibson noticed a jail work detail of inmates, who were exiting the jail. He managed to walk out with those inmates, making himself appear as one of the work detail members.

Sheriff Paulk states that when Gibson got outside with the inmate group, he abandoned them by running into a wooded area just north of the Berrien County Jail.

“A perimeter was set up and a State K9 Unit was called in for tracking as well as GSP Aviation Unit,” said Sheriff Ray Paulk. “The Nashville Police Department, the Georgia State Patrol, the Department of Community Supervision, and the Georgia State Fire Marshal were available and also joined the search.”

“Gibson took off his jumpsuit and was last seen shirtless and, possibly, just in boxer shorts. Around 11 p.m. that night, members of the Berrien County Sheriff’s Office, the Nashville Police Department, the Georgia Department of Corrections K-9 Unit, and the Georgia State Patrol apprehended Gibson. They located him in a shop behind a residence on River Road in Tygart Park,” said Paulk.

Sheriff Paulk thanks our Berrien E911 Center and Berrien County citizens in this area for all their cooperation, which largely led to Gibson’s capture. Those people alerted E911 when they found Gibson hiding in a building where he obtained the clothing he was wearing at the time he was arrested.

Public records indicate that Emory “Star” Gibson has been convicted on a number of charges over the last thirty (30) years.

In addition to his 10 year sentence on Domestic Violence, Gibson has now been charged with Burglary - 2nd Degree (felony), Theft by taking – misdemeanor,



and Escape (felony) since he returned to Berrien County Jail.