

Colin Firth



'Kings Speech'
rules early
batch of
awards, 3B

Advice, 2B
TV schedule, 3B
Comics, 4B

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Tuesday, Feb. 1

- American Red Cross blood drive** will be from 1 to 6 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 1400 Norwich St., Brunswick.
- "1920s Writers on Film Series,"** including films adapted from the writings of the contemporaries of F. Scott Fitzgerald, including Ernest Hemingway, Booth Tarkinton and Zora Neale Hurston, will be shown at 2 and 6:30 p.m. at the Brunswick Library, 208 Gloucester St., Brunswick, as part of "The Big Read 2011: Coastal Georgia Reads 'The Great Gatsby.'" Free. Details: 580-4939.
- Southeast Coastal Georgia Computer Club** will meet from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Ida Hilton Public Library, U.S. 17, Darien. There will be a presentation on "Backing Up Documents, Data, Photos, Music, Etc." Free to the public; novices are welcome and encouraged to attend. Details: 267-7613.

Wednesday, Feb. 2

- Pamela Bauer Mueller**, will discuss "Learning Georgia History Through the Novel Form" from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Jekyll Presbyterian Community Church, 475 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, as part of the church's winter seminar series. Free to the public. Details: 635-3008.
- American Red Cross blood drive** will be from 1 to 6 p.m. at Hoboken Baptist Church, 17 E. Main St., Hoboken.
- American Red Cross blood drive** will be from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Brunswick hospital of the Southeast Georgia Health System, 2415 Parkwood Road, Brunswick.
- Altamaha Riverkeeper** will host a membership drive and cocktail party from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at JMac's Restaurant, 407 Mallery St., St. Simons Island. Admission is \$25 per person and includes heavy hors d'oeuvres. A cash bar will be available. Details: 437-8164.

Thursday, Feb. 3

- Essentials of Nonprofit Financial Management,** a workshop sponsored by the Georgia Center for Nonprofits, will be from 1 to 4 p.m. at the St. Marys Economic Development Office, 400 Osborne St., St. Marys. Advance registration is required; no walk-ins permitted. The fee is \$90 for members; \$130 for non-members; scholarships are available. Details: 262-6503.
- Opening reception** for "Virtuosity," an exhibit of painting and pottery, will be from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Visual Arts Center, 529 Beachview Drive, St. Simons Island. The exhibit will continue from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays through Feb. 26.
- Opening reception** for Bob Fisher's wet-on-wet watercolors will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Brunswick Library, 208 Gloucester St., Brunswick. The exhibit will continue from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays and 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays through Feb. 28.
- Carolina Shag Lessons** will be from 7:15 to 8:45 p.m. Thursdays through Feb. 24 at the YWCA, 144 Scranton Connector, Brunswick. No partner is needed. Cost is \$40 per person for the series. Details: 267-9077.

Friday, Feb. 4

- Soup-er Bowl,** to benefit Relay for Life will be from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 3701 Glynn Ave., Brunswick. Numerous area restaurants will have soup selections available for sale. Sponsored by Heartland Hospice. Details: 571-1948.

Taking a glimpse at history

Golden Isles has its share of sites that honor black heritage

By MARY STARR
The Brunswick News

Gone are the farms and schoolhouses. Gone, too, are the rooming houses and barbecue restaurants.

The plantations that brought African slaves to St. Simons Island disappeared decades earlier in the ruins of war.

Now, with fewer than 500 blacks in an island population of about 13,000, the legacies of other generations on St. Simons Island live on at the beginning of Black History Month in churches with black congregations, cemeteries marked with dates before the arrival of freedom and the rich memories of people with stories that keep history alive.

Amy Roberts of the St. Simons African-American Heritage Coalition is an island resident who says the island has plenty of stories to tell.

"I was baptized in the Atlantic Ocean, just down from Neptune Park," Roberts said, adding that her church, Emanuel Baptist Church on Demere Road, held baptisms in the ocean for many years.

Emanuel was founded in 1890, and Roberts says members consider First African Baptist Church, on Frederica Road, the mother church. First African Baptist was founded in 1859.

At one time, St. Simons Island had three distinct black communities, Roberts said: South end, where she grew up; Jewtown, a community adjacent to St. Ignatius Episcopal Church that took its name from a Jewish merchant; and Harrington, on the north end.

South End was the hub, with taxi cab companies, boarding houses, farms, juke joints, barbecue restaurants and stores lining Demere and Arnold roads.

In the years immediately after World War II, visitors to the island often bought milk from London Murphy, a farmer on Demere Road. "He had a cab company, too, and would pick them up from the ferry," Roberts said.

The visitors used rooming houses as lodging for their maids, whom they would bring along on vacation. They didn't have room for them in their simple summer cottages.

This sometimes worked against the vacationing family.

"Some (maids) didn't want to leave, and Sea Island and the King and Prince were hiring at much more money than they were used to making," she said.

"Before St. Ignatius, (slaves) attended Christ Church at 3 p.m. on Sundays, after the regular service," Roberts said.

After the Civil War, Hamilton Plantation was the site of a sawmill, where slave descendants made good money as employees during the 1940s, Roberts said.

North on Frederica Road, toward the Harrington community, was Mr. Mighty Fine's store, long since gone.

"Black folk lived on both sides of Frederica Road back then," Roberts said. "There were neighborhoods like Black Bluff and Sandy Hill."

Residents also enjoyed a lively scene on South Harrington Road.

In addition to Harrington School, which Roberts attended, there was a skating



Harrington School



First African Baptist Church



Nick Nichols/The Brunswick News photos

LaVerne Cooper sits on the wall of Risley Early College Academy in Brunswick, where she went to school when it was still Risley Middle School.



Hamilton Plantation Slave Cabins



Selden Park

rink, several small stores, a place that held fish fries every Friday night and a juke joint at the end of the road, near Village Creek Landing.

"First African Baptist used to baptize people in Village Creek," she said.

The Harrington community was populated by many workers who were electricians, carpenters and plumbers. Other men worked as hunting and fishing guides for wealthy out-of-town visitors.

Although younger people have moved away to pursue careers elsewhere, Roberts

says there is an amazing continuity in the black communities today. "If you read the history of First African Baptist, you'll see some of the same names that are still here," she said.

Lifelong Brunswick resident LaVerne Cooper echoes many of Roberts' sentiments.

A graduate of Risley High School, in its "new" building, which is now home to the Risley Early College Academy, Cooper recalls the atmosphere in the revered school as family-like.

As much as she loved school, getting to the school on Albany Street from her home in Dixville, on the mainland, was not easy.

Buses were not available to black students, and Cooper and her friends walked past Glynn Middle School and Glynn Academy to get to their school.

But she has fond memories of growing up in Brunswick.

"Dixville was poor, but didn't have the bad name it does now," she said. "If my mother had a key to the house, I never saw it - we didn't lock our doors."

Small stores and active churches populated the street corners in the Brunswick of Cooper's youth.

Several thriving black-owned businesses were found along Albany Street, which was also the neighborhood that housed the only movie theater during the segregation era that admitted blacks, The Roxy.

"It was the only one for us," Cooper said.

Selden Park was the center of her life as a child and teenager. With its gym, athletic fields and the only swimming pool open to blacks during the period, it was always abuzz with activity.

She recalls teen dances and swim lessons fondly.

"If it wasn't in the Risley gym, it was at Selden Park," Cooper said. "It was the center of black life here for a very long time."

Event highlights black history

As part of Black History Month, three groups on St. Simons Island - Cassina Garden Club, St. Simons African-American Heritage Coalition and Friends of the Harrington School - will jointly host an event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 11.

From 10 a.m. to noon, the tabby slave cabins the garden club maintains at Gascoigne Bluff, adjacent to Epworth by the Sea, on St. Simons Island, will be open for tours. An African American choir will perform at 10:30 a.m.

From 1 to 3 p.m., the grounds of the former Harrington School, on South Harrington Road, St. Simons Island, will

be open for tours. Alumni of the school will be on hand to answer questions about the school and the restoration efforts. The Brunswick Shouters will perform at 2 p.m. at the school grounds.

"It's a good way to highlight some of the black history we have on the island, and to raise awareness about the restoration efforts under way for the Harrington School," said Beverly Nash, president of Cassina Garden Club.

All of the programs are free, with donations accepted to help Friends of Harrington School pay for restoration of the abandoned all-black school.

Author shares insight in historical research

By LINDSEY ADKISON
The Brunswick News

When Pamela Bauer Mueller moved to Jekyll Island, she became entranced with the location and its history.

And being a writer, it wasn't long before that fascination made its way into her literary works.

Of course, before she could begin, Bauer Mueller, a native of the Pacific Northwest, had to do some serious research.

"I was surprised at the actual Southern history, written by Southerners. Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, we didn't receive this in-depth information," she said. "Since we didn't have players in the game, I grew up learning little about this enormously rich history. Now I cannot absorb it fast enough."

Bauer Mueller has immersed herself in studying the history. She has written 10 books during the past eight years, with several based on local lore. Among those are "Neptune's Honor,"



The Brunswick News/File

Local author Pamela Bauer Mueller will host a seminar on her historical research.

about the loyal St. Simons Island slave Neptune Small, and "An Angry Drum Echoed," about an American Indian woman.

Most recently, Bauer Mueller wrote a novel about the Jekyll

Island Club Hotel, entitled "Splendid Isolation."

Through her research she has found many surprising facts. One of the most interesting things she discovered was the

Listen to history

Pamela Bauer Mueller will discuss "Learning Georgia History Through the Novel Form" from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday at Jekyll Presbyterian Community Church, 475 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, as part of the church's winter seminar series. It's free.

breadth of hospitality shown by Southerners.

"In both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, I couldn't believe that doctors and women in makeshift hospitals treated both their own soldiers and enemy soldiers ... sometimes on different floors," she said.

"And they would also feed both sides enormous meals, even after enemy soldiers commandeered their homes."

Bauer Mueller pored over novels and historical data to help her understand the history of the area.

"Of course, I read the Eugenia Price historical novels (set on St. Simons Island) and some others that were similar, but I looked for valid historical information, which I found through historical societies, theses by doctorate students and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in South Carolina," she said.

Bauer Mueller will share some of her research at a seminar, "Learning Georgia History Through the Novel Form," Wednesday at Jekyll Presbyterian Community Church, 475 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island. It's part of the church's winter seminar series.

"This is the fourth year Jekyll Island (Presbyterian) has offered these seminars in February, when so many snowbirds are here, and longing for information and history of the glorious past," she said.

"I will discuss the research, the motivation for these stories, the fact that readers love to learn history through the novel form, over the dry history book."