

Georgia Days... *Continued from page 9*

with a memorable, very romantic night out on February 14, Valentine's Day."

"In addition to fine dining and dancing, and the music of Johnny Mercer, political commentators James Carville and Mary Matalin - Washington's most captivating couple - will keynote the event with a talk entitled All's Fair in Love, War and Politics. The evening will also include Governor Sonny Perdue inducting the first new Georgia Trustees since 1749, part of an exciting new partnership between the GHS and the State of Georgia that will annually recognize in perpetuity selected Georgians who have made outstanding contributions to our state's history."

Born in downtown Savannah in 1909, young Johnny Mercer absorbed the rich musical culture of coastal Georgia. He spent time in his youth at the Pin Point Oyster Company on the Back River, later renamed Moon River, listening to songs in the Geechee dialect that would later

inspire his world-famous lyrics. He wrote his first song at age 15 and, without formal musical training, went on to pen over 1,000 songs; collaborate with such well-known musical talents as Hoagy Carmichael, Harold Arlen, Marvin Hamlisch, Bobby Darin, and Andre Previn; and win four Academy Awards®. As a co-founder of Capitol Records, he was instrumental in discovering and launching the careers of Nat "King" Cole, Stan Kenton and Peggy Lee, among others.

Johnny Mercer's music will be featured throughout the Georgia Days schedule. Less well known are his talents as an illustrator and painter, and the public is invited to view examples of his drawings and paintings, hear his music, and enjoy champagne and sweets at the Georgia Days Kickoff event, Pardon My Southern Accent: The Life and Legacy of Johnny Mercer in Word, Song, and Art, to be held February 3 at Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church on

Calhoun Square in downtown Savannah.

Georgia Days Kickoff Event, Pardon My Southern Accent: The Life and Legacy of Johnny Mercer in Word, Song, and Art, will be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2009.

In this family-friendly event, professional entertainer Jim Wann explores the life and contributions of Savannah's own Johnny Mercer by providing biographical information interspersed with musical selections from Mercer's extensive body of work, as well as personal reminiscences of Johnny collected from local Savannahians. A reception that will include a rare viewing of several of Mercer's original watercolors, as well as a display of Mercer's childhood art will continue the exploration of this multi-talented artist. Enjoy a live concert of the music of 2009 Historic Honoree Johnny Mercer.

Free and open to the public.

Check www.georgiahistory.com for the latest information.

H.E.A.T Provides \$1.02 Million to help Georgians Pay Heating Bills

ATLANTA (GA) - The Heating Energy Assistance Team (H.E.A.T.), Inc., an Atlanta-based nonprofit organization that provides energy assistance statewide to low-income Georgians, announced today that it has provided \$1,020,649 to the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) to assist qualified families who are unable to pay their heating bills.

"Georgia's low-income families live on extremely tight budgets; they often are forced to choose between buying food or medicine or heating their homes," said H.E.A.T. Board Chairman Chris Strippelhoff. "This donation will help reach the Georgia households in most need of emergency energy assistance this winter."

One Georgian's story Until January 2008, Woodstock resident Patrick Hlavaty was a full-time musician, playing and teaching piano and guitar. But a sudden diabetic seizure caused him to fall, leaving him unable to walk normally and no longer able to use his left hand to play musical instruments. He was forced to retire without enough resources to make ends meet. At the time of the seizure, "Mr. Pat," as he likes to be called, was the sole bread winner for his family. His wife was not able to work after having hip replacement surgery. Their only income

was a small teacher's pension and a limited amount of Social Security.

"I've been an independent person all my life," Hlavaty said. "I've always worked. But that one day forced me to depend on other people and organizations. It bothered the heck out of me."

Concerned about mounting energy bills, Hlavaty applied for energy assistance and received much-needed help to pay his heating bills. "I want to thank all contributors to H.E.A.T.," he says, "because without caring people like them, anyone in my situation would not know where to turn." Hopeful that surgery will help correct his condition, Hlavaty looks forward to playing music again in the future. "I want to be back at work and be self-sufficient again," he says.

Qualified families can get energy assistance H.E.A.T. funds are distributed by DHR through local community action agencies. Qualified families apply for assistance at the agency that serves their county. Households must meet established guidelines that include income eligibility. During the past 25 years, H.E.A.T. has distributed nearly \$17 million to approximately 82,000 families.

The recent H.E.A.T. donation will be an important addition to federal funds

available for energy assistance. "We appreciate this donation so much," said Mark Washington, assistant DHR commissioner, Division of Family and Children Services, "because we never have enough funds available to help the tremendous number of families in need. H.E.A.T. is an important part of addressing this problem."

Private citizens and natural gas companies made the financial contributions to H.E.A.T. that resulted in the \$1.02 million distribution. Georgia Natural Gas, SCANA Energy, AGI Resources, Gas South, MXenergy, Stream Energy, Infinite Energy, and Blossman Gas all participated. In addition, some of the funds were provided to H.E.A.T. by the Georgia Public Service Commission. About H.E.A.T.

Established in 1983, H.E.A.T. began as a program of Atlanta Gas Light Company. With the deregulation of Georgia's natural gas industry, H.E.A.T. became a separate 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization in May 2000. The organization helps address the energy needs of low-income Georgians by joining forces with concerned citizens, businesses and state and local governments. For more information about H.E.A.T., or to donate online, go to www.heatga.org.

AASU to Host African American Read-In February 13

Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU) will host a session of the 2009 National African American Read-In, on February 13, from noon to 3 p.m. in Fine Arts Hall 206, on the AASU campus, 11930 Abercorn Street. The event is free and the public is invited.

AASU students, faculty, and staff will read from selected works by various African American authors, such as Langston Hughes and Barack Obama, as well as Caribbean, Cuban, and

Jamaican writers. The event will include a reproduction of a scene from Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun," and a dramatic reading of Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman." Music and a narrative by Kalenda Eaton, AASU's assistant professor of African American literature, will weave the pieces together.

This year marks the 20th anniversary that the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has sponsored the African American

Read-In, dedicated to the discussion and reading of books by African American writers with the goal to make the celebration of African American literacy a traditional part of Black History Month. For this year only, the NCTE has extended the read-in for the entire month of February.

Across the nation, schools, churches, libraries and community organizations will host similar events in support of the read-in, which

See AASU, page 16

Sports With Walter Moore

Tigers Rally Past Talladega

Savannah State out-scored Talladega 11-3 in overtime as the Tigers won 78-70 on January 12 in Tiger Arena. Talladega led 67-59 lead with 1:06 remaining in the game before SSU scored the final eight points to force overtime. Jovonni Shuler and Tracy Rankins had 13 each for the Tigers while Rashad Hassan added 12 and Pat Hardy chipped in 10. Talladega's 7-1 center Jerel Davis had 19 points and 10 blocks. SSU fell to 9-9 on the season with a 86-76 loss at Longwood on Jan. 17. SSU trailed by four with less than two minutes left but the Lancers finished the game with a 9-3 run. Anthony Jones tied his career-high with 21 points for SSU. Rankins scored 12 and Shuler had 11 points.

SSU Women Lose

The Savannah State women's basketball team traveled to Athens on January 15 and came back with a 74-28 loss from the Bulldogs. UGA jumped out to a 27-8 lead and led 43-12 at the half. The Bulldogs had a 11-1 run late in the game and held SSU without a field goal the final 3:30. Crissa Jackson had eight points for the Lady Tigers (3-14). Charleston Southern defeated SSU on Jan. 13 on Charleston, 74-43. CSU led 19-4 in the early going and 41-21 at the half. The Bucs stretched their lead to 40 with just under six minutes left. Raven Fields led SSU with 12 points, five blocks and four rebounds.

NC A&T Hires Football Coach

North Carolina A&T State University has hired Alonzo Lee Sr. as their new head football coach. Lee comes to A&T after spending three seasons as Morgan State's defensive coordinator. Lee is no stranger to Aggie football where he once served as the assistant head coach. He served as A&T's defensive coordinator and linebackers coach during the 2003-05 seasons. Prior to coaching at A&T, Lee also served as an assistant at Howard, Florida A&M and Hampton. He won his first MEAC championship as an assistant head coach at



Walter Moore

Howard in 1987. Florida A&M won three MEAC titles during Lee's tenure (1990, 1995, 1996), and Hampton won two (1997, 1998) under the defensive leadership of Lee.

Former Tuskegee Coach Dies

James (Jim) Martin, Sr. passed away January 14 in Huntsville, AL. Martin, who graduated from Alabama A&M in 1966 and played running back for legendary coach Louis Crews, served as the A&M athletics director from 1997 to 2005 and helped

usher the Bulldogs through the transition from NCAA Division II to Division I and entry into the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC). Beginning in 1970, Martin coached football and baseball at Tuskegee. As head baseball coach, Martin guided the Golden Tigers to 10 SIAC championships in 18 years, placing three pitchers in the major leagues. After 13 years as an assistant football coach at Tuskegee, Martin was given the head job in 1983. He compiled a 44-42-2 record over nine years, winning two SIAC championships. In 1988, Martin made his entry into athletic administration as the Director of Athletics at Tuskegee. He also served as the athletics director at South Carolina State (1993-95) and Long Island (1995-97) before returning to his alma mater. Martin is survived by his wife Joyce, and three adult children, Jay (James, Jr.), Jennifer, and Joy. Jay currently serves as the head baseball coach and assistant football coach at Alabama A&M.

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