

# SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY NEWS

## 101 Year Old Veteran Receives Commendation From Army



Pictured L to R Alyce Dixon, Mary Crawford Ragland, and Gladys Schuster Carter

Alyce Dixon is 101 years old but you would never know it if you had the opportunity to sit down and talk to her. Last week Dixon, Gladys Schuster Carter, and Mary Crawford Ragland, all members of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, were honored by the U.S. Army's Freedom Team Salute program at a ceremony at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Dixon is the oldest surviving member of the Battalion.

The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion was the only all female African American Army unit to deploy to Europe during World War II.

The unit was composed of approximately 850 members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WACs).

They were tasked with sorting and distributing letters and packages to over 7 million Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Red Cross and civilian personnel all over Europe.

"I felt like I was doing something worthwhile for my country when I was in the Army with the 6888th in Europe," said Dixon. "We had to find the Soldiers, their units and route the mail to them. I enjoyed the Army and I met a lot of nice people when I served overseas. The Army taught me discipline and to stop and think before making a decision."

Dixon said the Battalion's trip from the

United States to Europe was very stressful because the boat they were on was sometimes followed by German submarines.

She said to avoid contact with the submarines, the boat had to make various diversionary turns which caused pots, pans and other objects to fall to the floor.

Major Charity Adams, who later was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and became the highest ranking African American female officer in the military, was the commander of the 6888th, and arrived with the unit in Birmingham, England in February, 1945. After completing their assignment in England, she and her unit were sent to Rouen, France and later to Paris. A few months after

World War II ended, the unit was sent back to the United States.

"They sent us to Ft. Dix New Jersey, gave us our discharge papers, and sent us home," said Mary Crawford Ragland, the clerk of the 6888th, who joined the Army at the age of 17 after finishing high school. "There were no parades, no welcomes, no nothing."

"Honoring the women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion with Commendations is long overdue," said the Army's Colonel David Griffith, Director of Freedom Team Salute. "These were strong women who faced prejudice in the United States but still managed to complete their mission, putting their Country ahead of their own trials. They did not have the luxury of working with automation equipment to help them organize, sort and distribute the millions of letters and packages that had accumulated in airplane hangars and other places in Europe. They are a true American story that needs to be told."

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## Hutchins Receives Eagle Rank



Wesley Hutchins

At a Court Of Honor Ceremony held on Sunday March 8, 2009, Wesley Hutchins received Scouting's highest rank, the Eagle Scout Award. Family, friends and scout officials were all in attendance to witness this event. The Eagle Scout Award represents many years of dedicated efforts of the scout, his parents and the leaders of his troop.

Only a small percentage of scouts make it to this point. During his journey from tenderfoot to eagle, Wesley earned a large number of merit badges and held several leadership positions including Historian, Librarian, Patrol Leader and Senior Patrol Leader.

Wesley had the opportunity to experience some of the ultimate scouting adventures

that took him to the Philmot Scout Ranch in New Mexico and on another occasion seven days hiking, camping and canoeing in the northern tier of Minnesota and Southern Canada.

Wesley also attended numerous summer camps in Barstow, SC; Boone, NC; Camp Rainey Mountain in Clayton, GA; Camp Comer in Alabama and Camp Blue Heron in Riceboro, GA. He participated in many community service projects and developed, led and completed a project of his own which benefited the Oatland Island Wildlife Education Center in Savannah.

This project consisted of building a new compost structure which is used for storing compost to fertilize the ground and educating student groups on how to make efficient and effective use of the soil.

Wesley who is presently a freshman at the University of Georgia is the son of Lawrence Hutchins, Jr. and Dr. Syllathea Prescott Wright. He is also the grandson of Mrs. Mamie Prescott and the late Mrs. Mildred J. Hutchins and the late Mr. Willie Prescott, Sr.

## AASU Hosts "Women, Grassroots and Change"

In observance of Women's History Month in March, Armstrong Atlantic State University will host a panel discussion, "Making it Happen: Women, Grassroots and Change," on Monday, March 30, at 4 p.m. in the Compass Point Clubhouse on the AASU campus, 11935 Abercorn Street. The event is free and the public is invited.

Serving as panelists will be representatives from several community organizations, including the Rape Crisis Center, Planned Parenthood, Safe Shelter, A Working Woman in Need, Sisters of Mercy and First City Network.

The discussion will open with a reading of Rebecca Walker's 1992 article, "Becoming the Third Wave." In 1996, Walker co-founded the Third Wave

Foundation to help build the next wave of the feminist movement. Her article illustrates the example of how one woman can let her voice be heard by standing up for herself and other women.

An example of women making a difference in Savannah is illustrated in A Working Woman in Need organization, founded on the ideas and dreams of one single woman, Sarahlyn Argrow, who will participate in the discussion.

Topics of discussion will include the historical highlights of each of the organizations, common obstacles faced and the importance of grassroots organizations to empower women in our community.

"In giving some perspective about the organizations and the challenges they

face, we want to highlight the fact that many grassroots organizations were founded and are sustained by the hard work and commitment of a very small number of women," said Laura Cahill, event organizer and graduate assistant in AASU's Gender and Women's Studies program.

"Making it Happen" will illustrate the power of women-led grassroots organizations that can drive change in the Savannah community. A reception will follow immediately after the discussion.

The event is sponsored by AASU's Gender and Women's Studies program. For more information contact Laura Cahill at gwst.gwst@armstrong.edu, or 912.531.8326.

## County Awarded Funds for Shelter Programs

Chatham County has been awarded federal funds under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. Chatham County will receive \$165,157 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in this area.

The funds will be distributed in 2009 (Phase 27) to the qualifying organizations selected by the Local Board. The United Way of the Coastal Empire serves as the administrator of the Local Board.

The selection was made by a National Board made up of affiliates of national voluntary organizations chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The Board was charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

Under the terms of the

National Board, local governmental or private voluntary organizations chosen to receive funds must: (1) be non-profit, (2) have an accounting system and conduct an annual audit, (3) practice nondiscrimination, (4) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and (5) if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board.

The Local Emergency Food and Shelter Board for Chatham County distributed \$119,140 in 2008 with 16 area non-profit organization participating. These organizations were responsible for providing nights of shelter, meals, emergency utility assistance and bills paid for rent/mortgages in 2008.

A Local Board made up of representatives from local emergency services agencies,

United Way of the Coastal Empire, City and County governments, Catholic Charities, American Red Cross, Jewish Federation, the Salvation Army, other organizations and community volunteers will determine how the funds are to be distributed among emergency food and shelter programs run by local service organizations. The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds available under this phase of the program. Qualifying organizations are urged to apply.

For more information on the program may be obtained by contacting Richard Edwards at the United Way office at 651-7727 or at redwards@uwcc.org.

Application for funding deadline is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2009.

### Happy Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs.

Walter B. Simmons

Mr. and Mrs. Walter B. Simmons, Sr., will observe their 61st wedding anniversary. They were married in Atlanta, Georgia on March 22nd, 1948. They are the parents of Walter B. Simmons, Jr. (Leetta), ISG. Ronald J. Simmons, Retired,



(Cynthia) and Sandra S. Fuller, (Charles). They have eight grand children and five great-grand children.

Walter and Mary, are retired Savannah - Chatham County Public School Educators. They faithfully serve St. James A. M. E. Church as members and officers, while participating with various church organizations. They are also very active in Religious, educational, fraternal, social and civic organizations locally, state wide and nationally.

## March is Red Cross Month

Join fellow Americans in recognizing March as Red Cross Month. Since 1943, every President of the United States has proclaimed March as "American Red Cross Month" to recognize the humanitarian accomplishments of the Red Cross organization.

Every year thousands of people receive life-saving blood transfusions as a result of the blood collected by the American Red Cross from volunteer donors across the country.

You can help make a difference in the lives of area patients by donating blood as soon as possible in honor of Red Cross Month.

Each person who presents to donate at a

Red Cross drive in March may enter a drawing to win one of two pairs of Delta Air Lines domestic tickets.

Saving lives by donating blood or platelets is a wonderful feeling, and now just by taking the time to give the "Gift of Life," two lucky donors could be on their way to a vacation in the sun.

The Red Cross Southern Blood Services Region provides life-saving blood to more than 120 hospitals and must have 1,200 people give blood and platelets each weekday to meet hospital demand.

Accident victims as well as patients with cancer, sickle cell disease, blood disorders and other ill-

nesses receive life-saving transfusions every day.

There is no substitute for blood and volunteer donors are the only source.

Blood can be safely donated every 56 days. Platelets can be given safely every two weeks, up to 24 times a year. Most healthy people age 17 and older, or 16 with parental consent, who weigh at least 110 pounds, are eligible to donate blood and platelets.

For more information or to schedule an appointment to donate at this drive, please call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (448-3543) or visit [www.redcross-blood.org](http://www.redcross-blood.org).