

The Walton Tribune

WEDNESDAY February 15, 2023 // still only \$1

3 section, 20 pages plus inserts

The Word

“Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver — let him rescue the one in whom he delights!” Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.”

— Psalm 22:8-9

Deaths A7

Linda Reynolds Rice
Loganville

Walton Living Bridal Edition

February is the month of love and that includes weddings. Our new Walton Living magazine features all you need to know about planning your big day. Plus readers share what made their wedding day special. The all-color, 60-page magazine is included inside today’s edition.



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2021 Walton Tribune ADERS' CHOICE WINNER

‘UNSPOKEN’ plays to full house

Documentary focuses on race relations, closure from horrendous crime



Stephanie Calabrese holds a discussion on her documentary film ‘UNSPOKEN’ Saturday. Rapper Fish Scales speaks during the question and answer session.
Stephen Milligan photo | The Walton Tribune.

Stephen Milligan NEWS EDITOR

The theater was packed Saturday night as local filmmaker Stephanie Calabrese held the Walton County premiere of her documentary movie, “UNSPOKEN.”

The movie — an examination of race relations, divisions and opportunities for reconciliation in Walton County, tracing the history of the battle for civil rights in the area from the Moore’s Ford lynching in 1946 to today — made the rounds of film festivals last year but had two sold-out showings over the weekend at On Stage Playhouse in Monroe.

“UNSPOKEN” was written, directed, produced and edited by Calabrese, who shot the film with an iPhone camera.

With an original musical score by Kwame Brandt-Pierce, Calabrese said the film strives to enable viewers to become better community members by working together to solve problems society still faces.

“UNSPOKEN” won the Audience Choice Award for Documentary at the Macon Film Festival in August and the Documentary Features Special Jury Award at the

Rome International Film Festival in November. The film was also an Official Selection for the Morehouse College Human Rights Film Festival, Chargin Documentary Film Festival and Portland Film Festival in 2022. In 2023, the film has already been named an official selection for the Cinema on the Bayou Festival in Louisiana and upcoming Reedy Reels Film Festival in South Carolina.

On Saturday, where the audience included notable citizens such as Monroe Mayor John Howard and Walton County Board of Commissioners member Kirklyn Dixon, the film was warmly received, and Calabrese spoke afterwards in a question and answer session led by rapper Fish Scales of hip hop group Nappy Roots.

See **UNSPOKEN**» Page A3

BOC

County to rent more parking spaces

Extra spaces to be used during weekdays

Chris Bridges
MANAGING EDITOR

The Walton County Board of Commissioners voted at its February meeting to rent 10 parking spaces from Peters and Foster to allow additional parking for county employees.

The rent agreement will be a one-year lease for \$1,000 per month. The lease will be renewable each year.

Chairman David Thompson said the spaces will be used only during weekday, business hours. They will be available for the public on weekends and during special events in the downtown area.

The lease for the parking spaces will take effect April 1.

Walton BOC

Commissioners approve solid waste disposal fee increase

Rate hike to be effective starting March 10

Chris Bridges
MANAGING EDITOR

After searching for possible alternatives, the Walton County Board of Commissioners voted Feb. 7 to an increase in solid waste disposal fees.

The increases is due to the recent Waste Disposal Agreement with the City of Monroe.

Chairman David Thompson said Monroe notified him the price would see greenbag fees increase from \$1.50 per green bag to \$2 and that the cost per ton would increase from \$45 to \$65.

“I got prices from other area landfills and this is our best option,” Thompson said. “We are

going to catch flak either way.”

The board voted unanimously to the increase.

The changes will only impact those using the green bag program and the Keep Walton Beautiful Recycling Center for solid waste disposal.

The changes will not affect those who use private haulers. The new rates will into effect March 10.

The increase in revenue will be

used to offset any cost that Walton County Public Works incurs for solid waste disposal and help offer services that reflect the needs of customers, county officials said.

Green bags are available for purchase at local grocery and convenience stores.

Stores which offer the green bags are listed on the Public Works Sanitation website walton-countyga.gov/247/Sanitation.

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INSIDE

IN FOCUS

See the latest student news from Social Circle City Schools — C1



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UPSPOKEN: 78-minute film focuses on Moore's Ford lynching

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"The first and foremost reason I made this film was for our community," Calabrese said. "I struggled with it at first, because I didn't want to admit Monroe was still segregated. But I didn't know a lot about our history."

Calabrese said she interviewed 40 people for the film, from writers and journalists to local politicians and amateur historians, as well as many of the people who lived through Walton County's checkered history of race relations, integration efforts and the overall struggle for equal rights.

"There were so many stories," Calabrese said. "Each of those 40 interviews was around two hours long, so I had to really pick and choose the best parts to fit into my film."

The 78-minute movie covers decades over its running time, with the Moore's Ford lynching one of its central focal points, and the fight to unseal the grand jury testimony from that unsolved case was a major part of the film. As of today, federal courts have declined to release those records, but Calabrese said there's still hope to see those papers one day.

"There's still a chance the federal Cold Case Commission could release the grand jury testimony," Calabrese said.

"They're still in the early stages of coming together, but we hope they can help us reach some closure on this issue."

While the next screening of the film on Feb. 19 is already sold out, Calabrese hopes to reach more people.

Calabrese and Berry College Director of Diversity & Inclusion Haley Smith invite Walton County residents to register and attend a Feb. 25 Community Dialog Session from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Grace Monroe, located at 315 N Madison Ave. The session will offer a welcoming environment for par-



A large crowd was on hand at On Stage Community Theater in Monroe Saturday for the screening of Stephanie Calabrese's documentary film "UNSPOKEN." Stephen Milligan photo | The Walton Tribune

ticipants to share personal stories and experiences while exchanging perspectives inspired by the film. The session was created to allow residents to work together to improve race relations with an aim toward reconciliation and healing in the community.

And Calabrese is still touring her movie to various festivals and appearances, with its next schedule showing at the University of Georgia on April 13. She said it's vital to share the

stories in her film to find common ground for future reconciliation.

"I focused my lens on the racial divide in my own hometown because I did not

know and could not find this history," Calabrese said. "Understanding our past helps provide context for the issues we still face today to offer insight on ways to

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Up Next » A Community Dialog Session will be Saturday, Feb. 25, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Grace Monroe, Student Center Auditorium at 315 North Madison Avenue. Register at www.unspoken.film/communitydialog

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Covering Walton County Like the Sunshine Since 1900

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