

LAKELANDS WEATHER

Today

Partly sunny
High: 81
Low: 64
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Thursday

Rain possible
High: 76
Low: 66
Chance of precipitation: 30%

Friday

Rain, storms
High: 76
Low: 66
Chance of precipitation: 60%

Saturday

Storms possible
High: 75
Low: 66
Chance of precipitation: 60%

Sunday

Storms possible
High: 78
Low: 64
Chance of precipitation: 30%

Monday

Sunny
High: 79
Low: 66
Chance of precipitation: 0%

Lake levels (in feet)

Clarks Hill: 323.71
+/- full pool: -6.29
Greenwood: 438.73
+/- full pool: -1.27

Hartwell: 654.50
+/- full pool: -5.50
Keowee: 96.65
+/- full pool: -3.35

Marion: 75.16
+/- full pool: -1.64
Murray: 356.39
+/- full pool: -3.61

Russell: 474.73
+/- full pool: -0.27
Wateree: 97.64
+/- full pool: n/a

Meeting to focus on Ware Shoals dam repairs

Meeting place

The public meeting will take place at 8 Mill Street, Ware Shoals, at 4pm. For more information contact bross@wareshoalssc.gov.

From staff reports

A public meeting will take place at 4 p.m. today at Ware Shoals Town Hall, 8 Mill St. regarding the restoration of the Ware Shoals spillway, dam and head pond. The area has continued to run dry and residents are seeking answers. Patriot Hydro S&W will present information on a possible timeline for the project.

PUNCH

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was supposed to go back to the Pentagon. But I was putting it off because it was a hassle getting in and out. Little did I know what a hassle it would become the next day and from then on out,” Hunter said.

Hunter recalled how the day began on Sept. 11, 2001.

“I needed to meet with some people. I looked around and thought, where is everybody? All these military people were huddled in the conference room. I walked in there and saw everyone standing around watching the TV,” Hunter said.

The group watched the breaking news. An airliner had flown into the World Trade Center. Hunter said at the time everyone thought it was a tragic accident.

“Everybody assumed it was a small plane, as opposed to a civilian airliner. It just didn’t make sense. And while we’re standing around talking about it, here comes the other plane,” Hunter said.

It was then she knew something horrible was happening.

“At that moment, I knew exactly what was going on. I hightailed it out of the conference room, jumped on the phone landline, called my parents here in Greenwood. They hadn’t had the news on because it was early in the morning. I said, ‘turn on the TV. I put my hand over the phone and said, nobody’s saying it, but it’s terrorism, take it to the bank,’ Hunter said.

Hunter and the rest of the military personnel were still reeling from the attack in New York. Hunter recalls speaking with her boss on the phone shortly after the second plane hit.

“While I was on the phone with him, the plane hit the Pentagon, and I could hear it over the phone. I knew what had happened. It was kind of unmistakable, although at the time, I didn’t know if it was a bomb or another plane or what. But it was unmistakably loud and rumbling, and everything was shaking. And now I hear people in the back-



SUBMITTED

Retired Col. Laura McCravy Hunter and her husband, Kip Hunter. Kip was a fighter pilot, and is also a retired colonel.

9/11 memorial events

Retired Col. Laura McCracy Hunter will be a guest speaker at the Light’s on Main event on Sept. 14. The event goes from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and will include a color run, parade and wreath laying ceremony, live music, food trucks, and craft vendors. The event will also feature a tribute to the victims and first responders using emergency vehicles at 9:11p.m.

ground pandemonium,” Hunter said.

American Airlines Flight 77 was hijacked and crashed into the Pentagon, killing all 64 people on the plane and 125 people in the Pentagon, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Hunter said she saw thousands of civilian and military personal evacuating the Pentagon and surrounding areas.

“It looked like something out

of a third-rate disaster movie. People were pouring out of these buildings by the thousands. The sirens on 9/11, they went on. They never stopped. It was like this constant wailing of sirens. That is something that stuck out at me,” she said.

Hunter was able to get home that evening. On Sept. 12, her birthday, she headed back to the Pentagon.

“Probably the worst birth-

day of my life. ... No it was the worst birthday of my life. I would have been 42, I was a major at the time,” Hunter said.

She said she will never forget driving into work that morning.

“It was a gut punch. It was still burning. ... So what happened was the wood and insulation had caught on fire when the jet fuel spewed everywhere, and that just went all around the roof. A fire burned in the Pentagon for three days, and there were hot spots after a week. The firefighters had quite the job ahead of them, the Pentagon was like a maze,” Hunter said.

Ash covered every surface for months. Parts of the walls had burned away, exposing asbestos and toxic chemicals continued to burn and be released into the air. Hunter said she can still remember the horrid smell in the air.

“We couldn’t close the windows. So we’re getting all those toxic fumes, and I developed a chemical sensitivity that went on for years,” Hunter said.

Even though it’s been 23 years, Hunter said she remembers that day like it was yesterday.

“The Pentagon, which is the symbol of power protection. It’s your defense center, and it’s now been attacked, and it’s vulnerable. This was a new era. I think it shook us. No, I know it shook us,” Hunter said.

The U.S. Department of Defense states the Sept. 11 attacks were the deadliest terrorist attack in the nation’s history. Among the World Trade Center, The Pentagon and Shanks-ville, Pennsylvania, 2,996 people were killed and nearly 6,000 were injured.

Hunter said it’s imperative to never forget that day.

“Remembering 9/11 is about honoring those who died, remembering the stories of heroism, of which there were many, but also reminding ourselves that this cannot happen again, ever again,” Hunter said.

Contact Renee Ortiz at 864-943-5643. Follow her on X at: [IJReneeOrtiz](#)



RENEE ORTIZ | INDEX-JOURNAL

Chris Ann Sondels and her ex-husband, Alan, were married on Valentine’s Day in 1998. For the next three years Chris tagged alongside Alan as he worked as a truck driver. She’s visited all states and parts of Canada. The two were heading into New York when the United States was attacked Sept. 11, 2001.

REFLECTS

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Sept. 11, 2001, was another day on the road for the Sondels. The two were heading into New York from Pennsylvania.

Sondels said it was a normal day — until it wasn’t. They began hearing breaking news reports on the radio of a plane that crashed into the Twin Towers.

“I was very frightened, because I didn’t know if we were going to be safe, if something was going to happen to us. So we began listening to it on the radio,” Sondels said.

Shortly afterward, another report came in. A second plane had hit the second tower. The two decided to halt their trip to New York and pulled off at a nearby hotel.

When they turned on the TV, she said she was horrified to see the destruction of the

attack.

“You know, just it was horrible, because it just kept happening. More and more things kept happening. The planes crashed into the towers and then the Pentagon. We watched it on TV, and just saw everything that was going on. And I thought, who could be doing this? Why are they doing this?” Sondels said.

Sondels said she wasn’t the only person who had the same reaction to the violence.

“Everyone that day — everything kind of stopped that day, because everybody was in shock,” Sondels said.

Twenty-three years later, Sondels said the country is still in shock over what happened that day. She said the country united in a way like never before, and hopes that can continue.

Contact Renee Ortiz at 864-943-5643. Follow her on X at: [IJReneeOrtiz](#)

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