

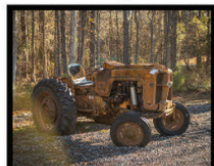
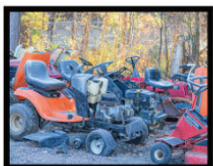


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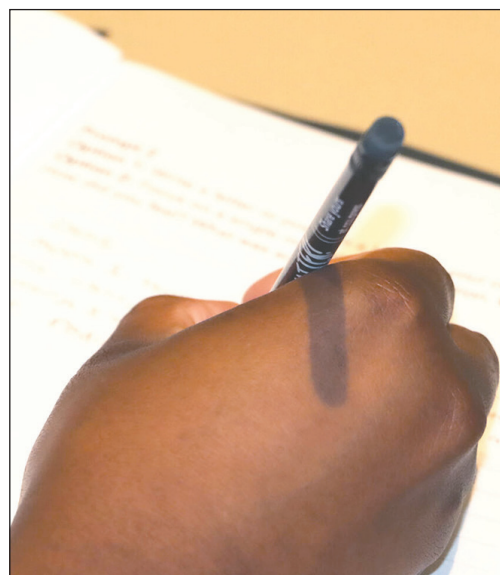
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'It was a gut punch'

Retired colonel
recounts 9/11
Pentagon attack

By RENEE ORTIZ
rortiz@indexjournal.com

As Col. Laura McCravy Hunter, (Ret.) thought back on her long military career, a few memories have stayed with her over the years.

Hunter retired from the Air Force in 2012. She began Officer Candidate School in 1985.

One of these moments includes when she and her husband, Kip, were stationed in Germany.

"We'd been there three weeks when the Berlin Wall fell," Hunter said.

Another memory was when Hunter, state Rep. John McCravy's sister, began working at the Pentagon.

"When I got there, I was a captain. I worked in the personnel arenas, so we're talking mobilization, personnel policy," Hunter said. "Pentagon runs the show for all the services. I was privy to so many interesting developments, exposed to a lot of very high level discussions. I met so many people, I was briefing the secretary of the Air Force on a regular basis. That was incredible."

In the early '90s, she was working in the basement area of the Pentagon, when she moved to Rosslyn for a new position. In September 2001, Hunter was working on transitioning back to the Pentagon building.

"I had just accepted another job back in the building. So I had gone over to Rosslyn, to my former place, the job that I was transitioning out of, and I

See **PUNCH**, page 8A



TOP: Col. Laura McCravy Hunter retired from the Air Force in 2012. **INSET:** American Airlines Flight 77 was hijacked and was 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.



RENEE ORTIZ | INDEX-JOURNAL

Chris Ann Sondels flips through a scrapbook of postcards she collected with her ex-husband. Her husband was a truck driver, so she traveled to every state and parts of Canada for three years with him.

'Everything stopped that day'

Ninety Six woman
reflects on 9/11

By RENEE ORTIZ
rortiz@indexjournal.com

Chris Ann Sondels was born in McCormick in 1965. She grew up in the community, and when she was older, began working with the elderly in the area.

In 1997 she met Alan Sondels, who was a truck driver. The two married the next year and soon after the topic of jobs came up between the two. It was then that she decided she was going to try something new.

"We got married on Feb. 14 in 1998. At that time, he was driving a truck. So I said, well, I just go on the road with you. I mean, it sounded interesting to go to different places, see different things," she said.

And travel she did. For the next four years, the Sondels drove across the United States and parts of Canada. As they traveled, she collected postcards from every place they visited. Her collection of postcards fills up an entire scrapbook.

As she flipped through the book, postcards from Colorado, California, Dollywood, Virginia and many other places could be seen. And her favorite place?

"Iowa was my favorite place to go. I like the Iowa 80 truck stop. It was more like a mall than a truck stop, because it had everything. It had a store, had restaurants, place to shop, place to get your hair done, the whole package," Sondels said.

See **REFLECTS**, page 8A

Here 4 a Reason promotes positive mental health



SUBMITTED

Each fall, Greenwood nonprofit, Here 4 a Reason sponsors a 5k race. Runners and walkers of all ages are invited to join in efforts to break stigmas and address mental health, while racing in memory of loved ones.

By ST. CLAIRE DONAGHY
sdonaghy@indexjournal.com

"You good, bruh?"

This question, posed on the back of a Kelly Green T-shirt, worn by Greenwood's Sally Montgomery, recently caught the attention of a woman in an office.

Beneath the screen-printed question on the back of the shirt is: 988 Suicide Hotline.

The shirt is from local nonprofit, Here4aReason, or H4AR for short, dedicated to suicide

prevention and mental wellness.

September marks suicide prevention awareness month. And, H4AR has ways you can help.

H4AR was begun by an elementary school teacher, now school counselor, and mother of three, Beth Justesen of Greenwood. Her husband, Tad, died by suicide in 2017.

Beth and her 17-year-old daughter, Liza, spoke with the Index-Journal about the growth, purpose and reach of the Here 4

See **MENTAL**, page 7A

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