

**When we celebrate Black History Month we recognize, honor and acknowledge the contributions and achievements of those who went before us. Happy Black History Month.**  
- AFGE Local 987 Trustee/Treasurer  
**Jeanette McElhaney**

## AFGE E-Dues

### REMINDER:

Bargaining Unit Members will see an increased presence of AFGE representatives – Local and/or National – on Robins Air Force Base next week and in the coming month(s).

The purpose, according to AFGE National Organizer Jessica Dobles will be to help members to convert to E-Dues.

“We’ll have tables, laptops or tablets and a code we can just scan and pull up the page. If they’re not members, we’ll have benefits people there to do the same.”

She continued: “We built AFGE E-Dues, which collects membership dues through convenient bank draft or credit card payment, to guard against assaults on paycheck dues deduction. E-Dues puts union members in control of their dues dollars, not Agency management. We need to be proactive and stay ahead of the storm. We can’t afford to wait until it’s too late.

“There are moves underway to eliminate dues on the federal level. We need to be proactive and stay ahead of the storm. We can’t afford to wait until it’s too late.

“Your payment will be processed by one of the largest payment processors in the world, which is certified at the highest level of security for customers’ financial information.

“Just like now, you will have the opportunity to leave 30 days before your anniversary date of signing up with AFGE. You will need to alert your local president (or designated local AFGE official) in writing during that time so they can end your dues. You may also send notice to [EDues@afge.org](mailto:EDues@afge.org).”

## Volunteers are needed for the following committees:

**YOUNG  
Publicity  
Women and Fair Practices  
Constitution and Bylaws  
Retirees  
Veterans  
Sick and Welfare  
Membership  
Entertainment**

**Call Union Hall at 478-922-5758 and ask for Trustee/Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney for more information or to sign up.**

**Notice:** AFGE members. Please use the email address [enotices@afge.org](mailto:enotices@afge.org) when you receive EO notices from Management. This is to ensure that AFGE is consistently updated on the actions across all agencies. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Local 987 at 478-922-5758 or the District 5 office at 770-907-2055.



## Membership meeting

**Local 987 will have a “in-person” membership meeting Feb. 20 at 5 p.m. It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. As always, membership will be verified before admittance into the meeting. You can make updates to your contact information - address, phone, email - by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at [linda@afgelocal987.org](mailto:linda@afgelocal987.org) or Jeanette McElhaney at [jmac@afgelocal987.org](mailto:jmac@afgelocal987.org).**

**Hello brothers and sisters. I have a special message for you. That is: I’m proud of you. I’m proud of the work you do every day for the American people. And the message I have for you is this. Do not fall for the scam. Do not resign your job. Stay the course. Let’s get this work done. Stand strong. I’m with you. AFGE is with you and the entire AFL-CIO stands behind you. Thank you and I love you.**

- **Everett Kelley, AFGE National President**



**“They’re asking you to do a resignation. How can they pay me when you’re not funded in order to pay me? If there’s a reduction in force, then who will be the first people to go? The people who took the buyout. What happens if the base is not functioning, the city and the community of Houston County will not be functioning. Bibb County, any surrounding middle Georgia areas will be affected by this.”**



**Jeanette McElhaney**

**- AFGE Local 987 Trustee/Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney, in an interview with WMAZ last week**

## Frequently Asked Questions on OPM’s Deferred Resignation Program email

**By AFGE Leadership**

### 1. What is the Deferred Resignation Program?

The Deferred Resignation Program (“Program”) was introduced by an email sent to federal employees on January 28, 2025. Preceded by threats to modify and downsize the federal workforce, the Program purports to allow federal employees to submit a resignation letter that will become effective on

September 30, 2025.

In exchange, the Program claims that employees will be exempt from “Return to Office” requirements and will maintain their current compensation and benefits until the effective date of their resignation.

Employees should not take the Program at face value. The Program documentation, including the introductory email, an associated guidance memorandum issued by the Office

of Personnel Management (“OPM”) on Jan. 28, 2025, and OPM-issued FAQs are riddled with inconsistencies and uncertainties.

It is also unclear whether OPM has the legal authority to support the Program or its alleged benefits, and the eligibility criteria are vague.

### 2. Is the Program a buyout?

No, the Program is not buyout nor is it a Voluntary Separation

Incentive Payment (“VISIP”) program. Instead, it purports to offer employees the ability to submit a deferred resignation and claims employees that do so will continue to receive pay, while still possibly working, until September 30, 2025.

Notably, however, the Program contains no guarantee that an employee’s resignation will be accepted. Nor does the Program guarantee that

**See QUESTIONS, page 3**

## City of Warner Robins unveils future home of Vietnam Veterans Memorial



**Members of AFGE Local 987, pictured with Warner Robins Mayor LaRhonda Patrick (center), were on hand Jan. 17 for the City of Warner Robins’ land tribute ceremony for the future home of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. (Photo courtesy Houston Home Journal/Sandra Hernandez)**

**By SANDRA HERNANDEZ**  
HHJ Staff Writer  
[sandra@hhjonline.com](mailto:sandra@hhjonline.com)

The City of Warner Robins hosted a Vietnam Veterans Memorial Land Tribute on Friday, Jan. 17, marking the beginning of a new journey for the city and local veterans.

It had been a long wait for veterans to see a memorial honoring those who did not make it back home. Soon, they will finally have a place where everyone remembers their sacrifice.

The memorial will be on Vietnam Veterans Memorial Parkway, named in April of 2009. The event started with Mayor

LaRhonda Patrick welcoming attendees, saying the location will soon have a wall honoring the 1,584 Georgians who did not return home from the Vietnam War.

The memorial will be in two phases, the first an outdoor portion with statues and a memorial wall. The second phase will be the construction of a building.

Construction will start this year and, as of right now, the timeline is unsure. Patrick said a proposal request has been submitted, and the city will know a timeline in approximately 45 days.

Patrick said the event was for those who never walked on Georgia soil again, their families, their loved ones and those who did return but did not receive the welcome

they deserved.

Patrick also recognized Bill Carey and Tom McClendon for being pioneers in the initiative, which started in 2011.

Carey is a member of the Veterans Issues Board and of the Romeos, a Vietnam veterans group. He thanked participating organizations for attending the event and believes it is time to give their brothers at rest at home.

Patrick also gave thanks to Michael Driggers, who donated five acres of land to the city. Driggers is a Vietnam Veteran and always wanted a place people could come and remember.

“It’s because of my heart for

**See UNVEILS, page 2**



The new Safety reporting app is here

SAFEREP

Welcome to the USAF main menu!  
Click on a button below for the type of report you would like to make:

Identify a hazard to Safety

Report a 'near-miss' (non-aviation)

Make an aviation safety report (ASAP - HATR - BASH - Unusual Occurrence or IRE)

Complete a Supervisor's Report of Mishap (CAC required)

New to SAFEREP?  
Click here to learn more about digital safety reporting

Download the app

The place to report hazards, errors and high-risk activities that could cause mishaps.

Graphic courtesy Air Force

# DAF Safety announces next generation safety reporting

By Air Force Safety Center  
Public Affairs

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. - The next iteration of digital safety reporting is here with the release of the new SAFEREP App. SAFEREP is the Department of the Air Force's only completely digital safety reporting tool supporting all disciplines and areas around base, with dedicated reporting features for workplace, traffic, industrial, flight, weapons, and space safety. Replacing the Airman Safety App, SAFEREP reflects a broader reporting capability that encompasses more functional areas and other military services.

SAFEREP will allow users to submit more than just hazards. Users from every career field will be able to voluntarily submit workplace and installation hazards, unintentional errors, and supervisor's mishap reporting. Aviation-specific reports are also available to aircrew and maintainers. SAFEREP will also break out the different operational disciplines to provide a clear distinction between avenues of reporting. All data is passed to the appropriate major command or down to the installation, and resources can be allocated to resolve issues.

"Anyone can use SAFEREP, regardless of rank, pay grade, uniformed or civilian status, or occupational specialty," said Jason Wollard, SAFEREP program manager. "If an Airman or Guardian thinks the issue could cause damage, injury, illness, result in a serious incident, or an accident, then they should use

the app to report the concern to their safety office. They should also let their supervisor know as soon as possible, especially if they were involved in an accident or were injured."

All SAFEREP users will be able to quickly and easily tell Safety about issues in the dorms, at work, or anywhere on base. Dangerous conditions, near misses, and cultural issues that could lead to an accident can all be reported using the App. Addressing these issues and learning from mistakes helps prevent injury and damage, while also creating a better work culture and environment.

Aircrew, including maintainers, aerial port workers, and airfield operations, can report hazards related to in-flight operations, maintenance operations, or issues on the ramp. Additionally, aviation-specific reporting options including Aviation Safety Action Program reports, and other required safety reports such as hazardous air traffic reports, wildlife strikes, unusual occurrence or in-flight emergency reports. Serious aviation hazards, near misses, and aviation ASAPs provided to SAFEREP are posted to the SAFEREP display to enable community-wide visibility on the issue.

"Safety professionals are experts in their work areas and know what 'right' looks like," said Wollard. "However, Safety can't be everywhere, all at once, all of the time. SAFEREP allows Airmen and Guardians to inform Safety about hazardous conditions or cultural issues that concern them."

Reporting in SAFEREP is simple. Users can either download the app or go to the SAFEREP website. Once there, users will select their service, the type of report being submitted, and then the app will guide users through the rest. Submissions to SAFEREP can also be made while TDY to report concerns to the local safety office. Users also have the option to submit a report anonymously.

"SAFEREP is the DAF's premiere safety digital reporting tool," said Maj. Gen. Sean Choquette, DAF chief of safety and AFSEC commander. "It empowers Airmen and Guardians to speak up about issues they see and mitigate risks before they cause a mishap. By preventing mishaps before they happen, we increase our readiness and create more lethal Air and Space Forces."

If users already have the Airman Safety App downloaded, they will not need to download a new app as SAFEREP will automatically update. If users are not online, or not connected to the internet, SAFEREP will store up to 100 draft reports until connected to the internet to complete the submission. Temporarily, the Airman Safety App website will redirect users to SAFEREP but the Airman Safety app will be fully discontinued at a later date.

For more information on how SAFEREP reporting works, go to <https://www.safety.af.mil/home/saferep>

To make a report, access the SAFEREP website at <https://saferep.safety.af.mil>, or download the SAFEREP App from your app store.

# Career Compass to assist civilian employees in unlocking career potential

By GRADY EPPERLY  
Grady Epperly

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. - The Air Force Sustainment Center Directorate of Manpower and Personnel has announced the launch of Career Compass, a new learning initiative aimed at providing professional development opportunities for all AFSC personnel.

Evolving from the previous HR-focused series, HR: In the Know, Career Compass is now a Total Force program that offers resources to support career growth for all roles and functions within AFSC.

The goal of Career Compass is to assist civilian personnel to expand their expertise, improve leadership skills, or potentially explore new career paths. Career Compass also offers webinars, panel discussions, and resource guides designed to fit the schedule and goals of personnel.

"The learning series aims to empower individuals by fostering personal and professional growth in a low-pressure, easily accessible environment," said Venita White, Workforce Development Program Sustainment lead. "Career Compass is kicking off with a dive into "The AI Frontier" exploring how artificial intelligence is revolutionizing the modern workforce and impacting the way we do business in today's workplace."

Webinars include:

- AI in the Workplace**  
Presenter: Dr. Amanda Bullock, AI Lead, AFRL  
Date and time: Feb. 4, 1130 CST  
Teams webinar link: [https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/1/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting\\_2e32cecd7df465e-badaa045f3dc4728%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228331b18d-2d87-48ef-a35f-ac8818ebf-9b4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b5f08e1e-2302-4a5f-8dfa-92093917cd2a%22%7d](https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/1/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting_2e32cecd7df465e-badaa045f3dc4728%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228331b18d-2d87-48ef-a35f-ac8818ebf-9b4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b5f08e1e-2302-4a5f-8dfa-92093917cd2a%22%7d)

2. **Building Your Own Custom GPT**  
Presenter: Robert White, Deputy Senior Site Lead, HAFB, AFLCMC  
Date and time: March 12, 1100 CST  
Teams webinar link: [https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/1/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting\\_09a0b0fbdc634bc6ae61a9864c48f7ca%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228331b18d-2d87-48ef-a35f-ac8818ebf-9b4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b5f08e1e-2302-4a5f-8dfa-92093917cd2a%22%7d](https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/1/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting_09a0b0fbdc634bc6ae61a9864c48f7ca%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228331b18d-2d87-48ef-a35f-ac8818ebf-9b4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b5f08e1e-2302-4a5f-8dfa-92093917cd2a%22%7d)

3. **NIPR GPT Overview**  
Presenter: Dr. Amanda Bullock, AI Lead, AFRL  
Date and time: April 17, 1130 CST  
Teams webinar link: [https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/1/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting\\_4a18600cad5c450881710d3e471725f6%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228331b18d-2d87-48ef-a35f-ac8818ebf-9b4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b5f08e1e-2302-4a5f-8dfa-92093917cd2a%22%7d](https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/j/1/meetup-join/19%3adod%3ameeting_4a18600cad5c450881710d3e471725f6%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228331b18d-2d87-48ef-a35f-ac8818ebf-9b4%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22b5f08e1e-2302-4a5f-8dfa-92093917cd2a%22%7d)

"This is an opportunity to gain valuable insights from Subject Matter Experts and position yourself for success in today's rapidly evolving landscape," added White.

For questions and more information contact the Career Compass team at AFSC.DPD.Workflow@us.af.mil.

# How to recognize phony debt collection calls, texts

Debt collection scams can be one of the most frightening and persistent scam types. Victims often report that scammers harass them or their family members for weeks or even months, both at home and at work, trying to get them to pay a debt they don't even owe.

BBB receives numerous reports of con artists changing tactics just to get the information necessary to collect information or cash.



**Kelvin Collins**

In most cases, the alleged overdue loan doesn't even exist. Don't give in and pay the money you don't owe, otherwise, they'll call back for more.

## The "good cop" version:

An unsolicited call comes through from a debt collection agency. The caller claims there is an unpaid debt from long ago that is about to go to court. The person speaking is polite at first and appears to have your best interests at heart. They seem like they sincerely want to help you avoid the court date. To fix the situation, all you need to do is make a reasonable payment, perhaps even divided up into several installments.

No matter how kind the caller seems, don't fall for it. If you make the payment, the person you spoke to on the phone will take the money and disappear. Any future efforts to contact them will be in vain.

## Tips to spot this scam: Ask the debt collector to provide an official "validation notice" of the debt.

In the U.S. and most of Canada, debt collectors are required by law to provide this information in writing. The notice must include the amount of the debt, the name of the creditor, and a statement of your rights.

If the self-proclaimed collector won't provide the information, hang up.

**Ask for proof of the debt and of the agency calling.** If you do owe money and aren't sure if the caller is real, ask for their name, company, street address, and telephone number. Do not provide any bank account, credit card, or other personally identifiable information over the phone.

**See PHONY, page 3**

# Medal of Honor spotlight Marine Corps 1st Sgt. Jimmie Howard

By KATIE LANGE  
DoD News

Not a lot of people have the skill and demeanor to keep their counterparts focused during an overwhelming battle. However, Marine Corps 1st Sgt. Jimmie Earl Howard was a natural leader and managed to keep the majority of his platoon alive during a lopsided hours-long firefight in Vietnam. His courage and leadership earned him the Medal of Honor.



Photo courtesy defense.gov  
**Marine Corps 1st Sgt. Jimmie Howard**

Howard was born on July 27, 1929, in Burlington, Iowa, to Raymond and Edythe Howard. He had two brothers and a sister and enjoyed playing football while growing up, doing well enough at the sport to earn a spot on The Des Moines Register newspaper's All-State team in 1948.

After graduating from Burlington High School in 1949, Howard studied for a year at the University of Iowa before deciding to take his life in a different direction. In July 1950, he joined the Marine Corps, graduating from recruit training the following January.

Howard spent a year in San Diego as a drill instructor before completing advanced infantry training in February

1952. He was then ordered to Korea, where he served as a forward observer with the 1st Marine Division. During his deployment, he was wounded three times and earned the Silver Star.

He returned to U.S. soil in April 1953, then spent the next decade of his life serving in various capacities in the San Diego area. At some point, Howard married a woman named Theresa. They went on to have five daughters and a son.

By January 1965, Howard was a staff sergeant working as an instructor for a counterterrorism warfare course, just as U.S. involvement in Vietnam was escalating. In April 1966, the 37-year-old was sent to the

southeast Asian nation to be a platoon leader with Company C of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

On June 13, 1966, Howard's 18-man platoon was deep into enemy-controlled territory near Chu Lai, Vietnam, searching for enemy troops to call air and artillery strikes on from the top of Hill 488, which later became known as Howard's Hill. It was about 1,500 feet and dominated the terrain for miles, historians said.

There was no place to hide on Hill 488, and the enemy knew it. However, Howard's platoon still spent two days on the hill carrying out their mission without being bothered.

Shortly before midnight on June 16, that changed. A battalion-sized Vietcong force launched a vicious attack on Howard's platoon using small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire.

Their chances of survival didn't look good, but Howard jumped into action anyway, determined to defend his men, most of whom were only about 18 years old. He quickly organized the platoon into a tight perimeter defense and calmly moved from position to position to direct the fire of his young Marines. They continued to hold their ground for hours overnight during wave after wave of assaults.

According to Howard's Medal of Honor citation, his courage and firm leadership inspired and motivated the men around him to continuously repel the furious fire, despite how seemingly hopeless the situation was. At one point, when they ran out

**See HONOR, page 3**

**At another point, the fragments of an exploding enemy grenade lodged into Howard's back, wounding him severely and keeping him from moving his legs ... Instead, Howard dragged himself along the defensive perimeter ...**

THE UNION ADVOCATE

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Please submit articles, photos, etc to [don.moncrief@afge-local987.org](mailto:don.moncrief@afge-local987.org). For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.



## QUESTIONS

From page 1

an employee's whose resignation is accepted will receive the benefits that the Program pur-

ports to offer.

**3. If an employee chooses to accept the program, are they required to work during the deferred resignation period?**

They may be. OPM's statements are conflicting on this point. According to the OPM email and letter, employees will not be required to work in person but may be assigned remote work duties. The OPM FAQ page also suggests that employees will not be required to work except in "rare cases," without defining what constitutes "rare cases."

At the same time, the FAQs describe the deferred resignation period as a "nice vacation" and the Program states that employees may be placed on "paid administrative leave."

**4. Can an employee take another job during the**

deferred resignation period?

The FAQ states that the resignation letter does not explicitly prohibit outside employment. However, other existing policies, such as agency-specific regulations requiring prior authorization for outside work, are likely to apply.

**5. Are all federal employees eligible for the program?**

No. Employees in positions related to immigration enforcement and national security, as well as those in any positions specifically excluded by their employing agency, are not eligible. USPS employees and military personnel are also excluded. There is no guidance on how employees can confirm their eligibility or if their agency has specific exclusions.

**6. Will employees who opt-in be protected from termination before their resignation date?**

Nothing in the Program documentation purports to prohibit the termination or separation of an employee who accepts deferred resignation. While

the OPM email suggests that employees will maintain their compensation and benefits until the effective date of their resignation date, it does not explicitly state that employees are shielded from layoffs or other adverse actions before September 30, 2025. There is no guarantee that employees opting in to the Program will not be targeted for such actions.

The Program also does not indicate what may occur in the event of a lapse in congressional appropriations. At present, many agencies of the federal government are only funded through March 14, 2025.

**7. What happens if an agency requires an employee to continue working despite OPM's FAQ stating that continued work should be rare?**

While OPM's FAQ states that work will only be required in "rare cases," the program's details vary across the different OPM documents. If an agency insists on continued work, employees may not have a clear administrative remedy, as the

enforceability of the promises and statements in OPM's FAQ is uncertain.

**8. What legal recourse do employees have if the government does not honor the terms of deferred resignation?**

It is unclear what recourse, if any, employees might have if the government fails to honor the terms of their deferred resignation. There is no certainty that the statements made in the OPM Program documents will be legally enforceable. Even if the email and FAQ page are interpreted as an implied contract or offer, there is no guarantee that such a claim would be enforceable. For example, while each case will be fact-specific, resignation is generally considered to be a voluntary action. It is therefore unclear whether violations of the policy would be appealable to the Merit Systems Protection Board, through the grievance process, or any other forum.

**9. How can employees ensure the administration will follow through on the**

Program?

Given the inconsistencies between Program's various documents issued by OPM, as well as the ambiguous and conflicting language regarding work obligations and exclusions, there is no guarantee that the claims in the Program will be honored by the Government. The Program may also face legal challenges that could alter the terms of all or portions of the Program. Employees who opt-in to the Program will be at the mercy of the administrators of the Program, whose claims contain inconsistencies and lack stated legal underpinning.

**10. Is there an assurance that the promised continued salary will be funded?**

No. Nothing in the OPM documentation contains such an assurance. Moreover, because current appropriations for most civilian agencies are set to expire March 14, 2025, it is not guaranteed that agencies affected by the current appropriations bill will continue to have adequate funding for the promised salary

beyond the bill's expiration.

**11. What actions can Locals and Councils take to protect bargaining unit employees from the Program?**

Locals and councils may:

Consider filing requests for information under 5 U.S.C. § 7114(b)(4).

Consider filing a demand to bargain over the Program.

Consider grievances alleging the Program violates terms of their collective bargaining agreement or regulations (e.g. regulations concerning administrative leave).

Locals and councils may also have a basis for a grievance or unfair labor practice charge alleging, among other things, a bypass of the Union with respect to communications about the Program directly to employees.

*Please Note: This publication is for informational purposes only and does not guarantee any particular result in a specific case. The information provided is not, nor is it intended to be, a substitute for individualized legal or professional advice.*

## UNVEILS

From page 1

Vietnam Veterans that I feel like they should be recognized for the service that they gave. I'm proud to be in a community that's going to get the ball rolling and get this thing going. I'll be here often," he said.

Congressman Sanford Bishop was also at the event and has worked with Patrick over the past months to bring this memorial to the community.

Bishop said he was proud to support the memorial and said he will always ensure America provides the highest quality of care and benefits for veterans and their families. He also said he will always make sure their sacrifices are recognized and honored.

Bishop said a memorial is a place reminding people to stop and reflect, as well as to pay respect.

"The Vietnam Veterans Memorial will help preserve the legacy of our service members, the stories of their valor, the weight of their sacrifice and

the lessons we must draw for a better future," he said.

Bishop said projects like the memorial are personal to him because he remembers his childhood friend, Thaddeus Williams, who passed away while serving in the Army.

He then recognized McClendon with a certificate of special congressional recognition. McClendon spent a decade fighting for the memorial by challenging mayors and members of congress.

Representative Shaw Blackmon also spoke at the event and presented House

Resolution 17. The resolution honors those who were victims of Agent Orange. The memorial will pay homage of those victims since they are not currently recognized as victims of the Vietnam War.

Patrick said on the wall there will be many names' veterans will know, it will be the names of those they served alongside and tried to protect during the war. The wall will also have the name of Patrick's great uncle, and she plans to teach her son about the war. She said the memorial will represent something

many have fought without ceasing to see in the city.

"We've been working so hard as a team, staying focused on each phase as each year comes in. This is the year of execution for the city of Warner Robins," she said. "You can finally see the things we said we're going to do and see something physical to show you that we meant what we said and we're doing it. So, being able to show everyone that the things we could happen, did happen, it's what really warms me up the most."

## HONOR

From page 2

of grenades, Howard encouraged the Marines to throw rocks at the enemy, exhibiting imagination and resourcefulness in their defense.

At another point, the fragments of an exploding enemy grenade lodged into Howard's back, wounding him severely and keeping him from moving his legs. However, he refused to be given morphine, historians said, because he knew its effects would make him drowsy and therefore ineffective.

Instead, Howard dragged himself along the defensive

perimeter to distribute his ammunition to the rest of his men, all while maintaining radio contact to direct air strikes on the enemy with uncanny accuracy.

By the time dawn came around, five Marines had died and everyone else was wounded — but Howard's platoon still held Hill 488.

When evacuation helicopters made it to the area, Howard initially warned them away. He wanted to make the landing zone as secure as possible, so he first called for more air strikes, which he directed along with his platoon's own fire onto enemy positions. Only afterward did they finally evacuate.

Howard's leadership and bravery were key to preventing his entire platoon from being killed. Despite the casualties they did suffer, his men still managed to eliminate about 200 combatants during the 12-hour fight.

Howard was transferred back to the U.S. and assigned to a training unit in San Diego. On Aug. 21, 1967, shortly after being promoted to gunnery sergeant, he received the Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson during a ceremony at the White House. His wife and six children were able to attend, as were his mother and stepfather.

Howard remained in the

Marine Corps for another decade before retiring in 1977. He and his family decided to remain in San Diego, where he went to work as a civilian for the Department of Veterans Affairs. He also volunteered to coach various youth sports in the community, including as an assistant coach for the Point Loma High School football team.

Howard died in his home on Nov. 12, 1993. He is buried in Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego.

In his honor, the Arleigh-Burke class destroyer USS Howard was commissioned in October 2001. The ship currently serves in the U.S. 7th Fleet in the Indo-Pacific region.



• On Feb. 10, 1957, Laura Ingalls Wilder — author of the best-selling "Little House" series of books based on her childhood on the American frontier, which later inspired a popular TV series starring Melissa Gilbert as the young Laura and Michael Landon as her father, Charles — died at age 90 in Mansfield, Missouri.

• On Feb. 11, 1878, the first organization for recreational cyclists, called the Boston Bicycle Club, was formed. The club organized rides ranging from tri-cycle races to 100-mile trips, and less than 20 years after its founding, more than 100 similar clubs had formed in Massachusetts as middle-class participation in cycling increased in popularity.

• On Feb. 12, 1947, French fashion designer Christian Dior launched his first collection, which he dubbed the "New Look." While some appreciated its exaggerated femininity as a departure from the more drab and boxy stylings of wartime austerity, others still living with rationing derided it as wasteful, and fellow French designer Coco Chanel declared that "Dior doesn't dress women. He upholsters them!"

• On Feb. 13, 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt, who had just won re-election, gave a speech to the New York City Republican Club about the state of American race relations and his plan for improving them. However, it was not until President Lyndon Johnson passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964 that government efforts to correct racial bias were actually set into law.

• On Feb. 14, ca. 270 A.D., Valentine, a priest in Rome, was beheaded for the crime of continuing to marry young lovers in defiance of Emperor Claudius, who had banned all engagements and weddings in the city due to his belief that Roman men were unwilling to enlist in the military because of their strong attachment to their wives and families.

• On Feb. 15, 1968, Henry Lewis was chosen over more than 150 other candidates as the first Black conductor of a major U.S. orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony.



By Lucie Winborne

• There is a Guinness World Record for "most matchsticks extinguished with the tongue."

• Jimi Hendrix served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's elite 101st Airborne division, though an ankle injury allowed him to leave the service with a welcomed honorable discharge after one year of the three he'd signed up for.

• Medical students in 18th-century Scotland could pay their tuition fees in corpses.

• A statement in the end credits of the movie "Frozen" claims that Disney does not support the consumption of boogers.

• After Playboy founder Hugh Hefner funded some research in the 1980s that identified a subspecies of rabbit living in the Florida Keys, it was named for him: sylvilagus palustris hefneri.

• An IKEA in the Netherlands had to cancel its one-euro breakfast special because it attracted too many customers and caused highway traffic jams.

• Thomas Edison invented the tattoo pen.

• Rolex replaced, without charge, all the watches that had been seized by the Germans from shot-down Allied pilots during World War II.

• In its lifetime, the International Space Station will be hit by 100,000 meteoroids.

• During the Columbine High School massacre in 1999, two 20-pound propane bombs that were planted in the cafeteria failed to detonate. If they had, it is estimated that up to 488 students would have been seriously injured or killed.

• Every year, Iceland gets wider by 2 centimeters.

• The U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal, has guidelines on what to do if you should stumble across a yeti (and no, we are not talking about the cup!).

\*\*\*

**Thought for the Day:** "In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit." — Albert Schweitzer

## PHONY

From page 2

the phone.

If the collector is legitimate, they should have details on the accounts in question.

**Stay calm.** Debt collectors are not allowed to harass people even if they do owe money.

**Protect yourself:**

**Just hang up.** If you don't have any outstanding loans, hang up. Don't press any numbers or speak to an "agent."

**Never provide payment to someone you don't know.** If you're being urgently asked to provide payment over the phone to someone you don't know, hang up. Scammers often ask for payment through wire transfer, prepaid gift cards, or digital wallet apps. Take these as red flags for a scam.

**Reach out to your loan providers to verify the information.** If you currently have loans taken out and aren't sure if the caller is real, call the banks or loan companies on your own and verify if what the caller states is true. Be sure to look up their customer service phone numbers on your own and never use a phone number that a potential scammer is using or provides

you with.

**Check your credit report.** In the US, check with one of the three national credit reporting companies (Equifax, TransUnion, Experian). This will help determine if there are outstanding debts or if there is suspicious activity.

**Place a fraud alert on your credit report.** If the scammer has personal information, place a fraud alert with the three

national credit reporting companies.

Remember that while most debt collection agencies are legitimate, there may be times when a scammer is phishing for information. For more information on how to avoid this scheme, visit BBB.org/AvoidScams. If you've been targeted by a debt collection scam, be sure to report it to BBB.org/ScamTracker.



Even in winter, there are plenty of things you can do to prepare for the busy spring ahead:

- Clean your patio or deck.
- Keep your gutters cleared out.
- Check any coverings, stakes, supports and ties that might have become damaged.
- Start researching and getting quotes for your biggest upcoming projects.
- Inspect and reinforce any fences and boundaries to ensure they are secure.
- Provide bird feeders, both hanging and ground feeders, filled with a variety of seeds, nuts, and suet. — Brenda Weaver

Source: hortlands.co.uk



# JOIN AFGE IN 4 EASY STEPS

## STEP 1:

Go to [www.joinafge.org](http://www.joinafge.org)



## STEP 2:

Select your Agency and Local Number



## STEP 3:

Fill out the one-page membership form and click "Join"

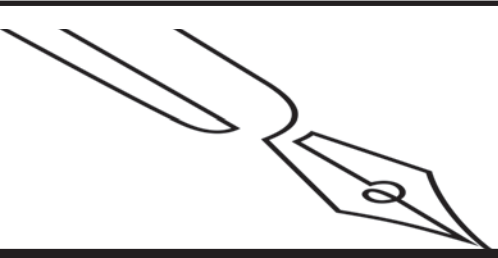


## STEP 4:

If you're a new member, select a rebate campaign and fill out the brief form (local participation may vary)







# Just for

## King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Pickle holders

5 Klutz

8 Pre-weekend yell

12 Layered cookie

13 School org.

14 Nozzle site

15 Complaint

16 Mahal pre-ceder

17 Memory method

18 Jungle trek

20 Apple product

22 "Lunch break is over!"

26 Sports bar fixture

29 "Mangia!"

30 Avril follower

31 Marsh plant

32 "Blue Bloods" ainer

33 Nov. honorees

34 401(k) alternative

35 Notable time

36 Trig terms

37 Consecutive

40 Puerto —

41 Small apes

45 Help a hood

47 Fanatic

49 Aswan's river

50 Roster

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51 Compass dir.

52 Radiate

53 — -bitty

54 Carried out

55 Lushes

DOWN

1 Want-ad listings

2 Region

3 Coral formation

4 Sleeper

5 Eye-related

6 One-time link

7 Tex-Mex wraps

8 Toss

9 Favorable sign

10 Follower (Suff.)

11 Service charge

19 Squealer

21 Soup cooker

23 Skewered entree

24 Assess

25 Smooch

26 Chicago paper, briefly

27 Actress Farmiga

28 "American Idol" host Ryan

32 Sang softly

33 Minnesota footballers

35 Catchall abbr.

36 Learning ctr.

38 Poker pot

39 Played a part

42 Actor O'Shea

43 Conspiracy

44 Stitches

45 Boxing legend

46 Morsel

48 Numerical prefix

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Hal Foster's  
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

Prince Valiant®

THE ISLAND QUEEN AND THE SKJALDDIS HAVE ENTERED THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND THAT SEAS WARM MOONLIGHT SOFTENS EVEN THE HARDEST WARRIOR.

YEATES

WHILE VAL AND ALETA REVEAL WITH GUNBAR, VALETA AND KAREN GIGGLE OVER THE THOUGHT OF ROMANCE WITH HANDSOME HARALDR ON THE SKJALDDIS...

...AND NATHAN SITS WITH BUKOTA, CAREFULLY OBSERVING HIS COMPANION. THE ABSABAN HAS BEEN PLAYING A GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE THIS ENTIRE VOYAGE, PATIENTLY WAITING TO CONFIRM HIS SUSPICIONS ABOUT KAREN'S GUARDS.

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TONIGHT, IT SEEMS, THE GAME IS ENDING. WITH ALL SEEMINGLY DISTRACTED, BOGRAM AND GURVAN DO SOMETHING UNIQUE: THEY SEPARATE FOR THE FIRST TIME. NATHAN TURNS TO BUKOTA — BUT THE AFRICAN IS ALREADY GONE.

11/24/13

©2013

MOMENTS LATER, IN THE PRESUMED-DESERTED BELOW DECK, GURVAN REACHES FOR THE DOOR TO THE PASSENGERS' CHAMBERS. WHEN A QUIET VOICE SIFTS THROUGH THE SHADOWS: "I EXPECTED AS MUCH, YOU WERE WARNED. AND NOW, YOU WILL PAY THE PRICE FOR BETRAYING YOUR MISTRESS..."

NEXT: The lure

FLASH GORDON

SHARK CITY.

BY MY READINGS, THESE WALLS ARE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.

DID THE SHARKS BUILD THIS SUBMERISBLE CITY, I WONDER?

OR MERELY DISCOVER IT?

WE FIND FLASH AND THUN IN BATTLE WITH THE SHARK MEN -- TWO AGAINST TWENTY.

IN THE CHAOS, GENERAL TAHL ESCAPES BY MEANS OF KIRAN SPATIAL MAGIC.

THANKFULLY, WE STILL HAVE THE CODEX.

BOK AND I EMPLOY AN AIR-PRESSURE EQUALIZER TO, AH... ...EVEN THOSE ODDS.

WHAT A SATISFYING WAY TO RENEW OUR ACQUAINTANCE.

WE QUICKLY GATHER THE CAPTIVE LION ROYAL FAMILY INTO OUR MODIFIED GRYOSHIPS... ...AND MAKE OUR OWN ESCAPE.

THERE IS MUCH FLASH NEEDS TO KNOW.

DAN SCHROBE 1-19-25

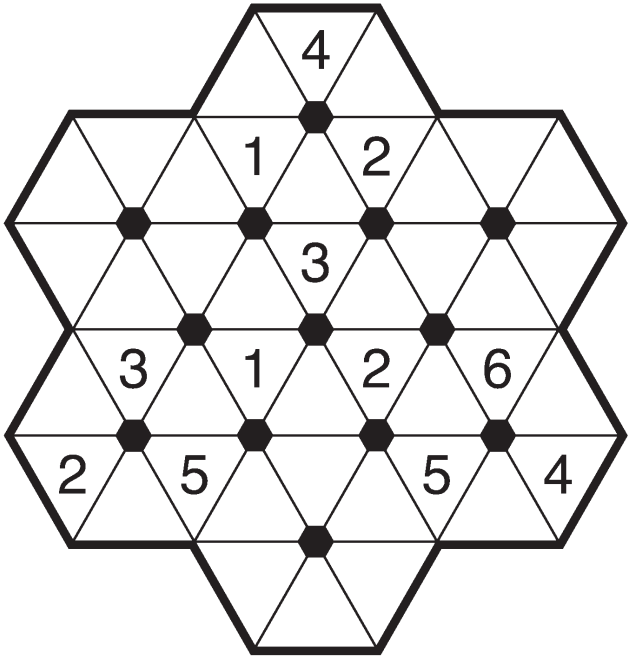
FOR NOW... IT'S ENOUGH JUST TO SEE HIM.

NEXT: TOGETHER IN THE SUN

## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.



**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦♦

♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦ Difficult

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## Americanisms



“Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.”  
— Margaret Mead

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### Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



STICKELERS (sic).

by Terry Stickels

Based on Molly's statement below, can you determine her age?

“Right now my age is five times what it will be in five years, minus five times what it was five years ago.”

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Molly is 50 years old.

Stickelers Answer

## Weekly SUDOKU

3			8	7				1
9	5	8						7
2		1	5	9	3			
		4					6	
1	6	2		5	8			3
						2		
6			2			5		
	2				5		3	8
			3	8	6			

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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2	7	4	9	8	3	6	1	5
8	3	9	5	1	6	7	2	4
6	1	5	7	4	2	3	8	9
4	8	2	1	3	9	5	6	7
3	6	7	8	5	4	2	9	1
5	9	1	6	2	7	4	3	8
9	4	8	3	6	5	1	7	2
7	2	3	4	9	1	8	5	6
1	5	6	2	7	8	6	4	3

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU



# fun

## Amber Waves

HEY, DAD, I HAD A NIGHTMARE. CAN I SLEEP IN YOUR BED TONIGHT?

GREAT, WHEN THE KID SLEEPS IN OUR BED I NEVER GET ANY SLEEP.

I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ROOM. I DON'T HAVE NEAR ENOUGH BLANKETS.

I DON'T HAVE ANY PLASTIC SHEETS ON THIS BED.

OOOPS

by Dave T. Phipps

## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

HAMONICA

BREAD MAYO

YOU NEED TO GET DOWN TO THE BEACH IN A HURRY! SEA HAG IS UP TO SOMETHING!

BLAST THAT HAG! ERY SINGLE TIME!

IT'S LIKE SHE KNOWS WHEN I'M FINALLY GITTNK SOME "THE" TIME!

BARNEY GOOGLE AND SNUFFY SMITH

TA-DAAA !!

WIF ALL THIS TRAVELIN' I'M THINKIN' I SHOULD GIT SOME INSURANCE !!

HUH ?! YA DON'T EVEN HAVE A CAR, LUKEY !!

NOT CAR-- LIFE !!

WELL, SHORE...

THAR'S EASIER WAYS...

T'GIT OVER THAR...

BUT THIS...

IS WAY MORE FUN !!

BAM!!

2-4

POPEYE

YOU NEED TO GET DOWN TO THE BEACH IN A HURRY! SEA HAG IS UP TO SOMETHING!

BLAST IT ALL, SEA HAG!

WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?!

OH, Y'KNOW, SEASONAL DEPRESSION, WORK STRESS...

YOU'RE TOO LATE, YOU CYCLOPOTIC CHUM! RAT! I'VE COMPLETED THE RITUAL!

NEXT THING YA KNOW, SHE'S RAISING AN ANCIENT EVIL.

GOONTHULHU!

YES! FEAR, MORTALS! GOONTHULHU WALKS AND I AM HIS--

WHAM

TRANSLATION: "JUST FIVE MORE EONS."

GOONTHULHU!

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

YOU SHOULDN'T ADD THIS YEAR TO YOUR AGE.

WHY NOT?

YOU NEVER USED IT.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

TIGER

TIGER

TIGER

TIGER

TIGER

TIGER

TIGER

TIGER

Sponsor this page. Call 478-733-9772.

GRIN & BEAR IT

What's this about you refusing to be released into my custody?"

GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

LUF

♥ENTRUE

♥ARNLE

♥ERSE

♥ELTSMA

TWE

♥AFEC

OFDOR

♥NSO

♥NOTDEA

♥CESLA

♥EWRA

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE ). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked ( ♥ ) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART ). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

FEAR KNOT

answer

As homework, I'm supposed to read this book by writer Dahl in one day. Time to hit the Road!

GO FIGURE!

10 = 5 × 6 + 2

11 = 6 + 4 + 1

12 = 8 + 3 - 7

answers

Go Figure!

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: Q equals R

RY SIUGLIQO, N'U YJXXIYGT HI

QGRT HSNY MIIO ME LQNHGQ

TRSZ NA IAG TRE. HNUG HI

SNH HSG QIRZT!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Can is reversed. 3. Sandwich is V-neck. 4. Hair is different. 5. Frame is different. 6. Shirt has a



# Kick Off a Winning Game Day with Guac

## Touchdown-worthy apps to amp up the crowd

FAMILY FEATURES

The best watch parties have two things in common: good food and good company to root for your team with. Kick off your football feast with appetizers made with a game day favorite: avocados.

With nearly 2.5 billion pounds of avocados imported from Mexico annually, based on Hass Avocado Board Volume Data, the Big Game is the No. 1 occasion where avocados and guacamole are served and prepared. In fact, approximately 250 million pounds of avocados are imported in the weeks leading up to the Big Game, according to “Produce Blue Book” – that’s enough avocados to go down and back the length of a standard professional football field more than 400,000 times.

Just as the first quarter sets the tone for the game, apps are your first opportunity to build excitement and get your guests cheering. Because

it’s not game day without guac, start the party by mashing up a bowl of Championship Guac – a real craving crusher made with creamy, delicious Avocados From Mexico and crispy bacon – to sack hunger.

Take your viewing party to a whole new flavor level with Gronkamole. This all-star dip features shredded chicken, blue cheese, Buffalo sauce and the same flare that football great and Avocados From Mexico partner Rob Gronkowski played the game with, so you know it’s ready to tackle every chip, cracker and veggie thrown its way.

These innovative spins on game day guacamole score big when made with fresh avocados, a nutrient-dense fruit everybody can cheer for. They taste good, are good for you and bring the good times on game day.

Find more touchdown-worthy eats, from dips and appetizers to main courses and desserts that are always good at BigGameGuac.com.



### Championship Guac

Servings: 10

- 5 Avocados From Mexico, peeled and pitted
- 1 lemon, juice only
- 1/2 cup white onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 pound bacon, fried
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- tortilla chips, for serving (optional)
- crackers, for serving (optional)

To prepare avocado: In a bowl, use fork to mash the avocados and lemon juice until creamy. Then add the onion, tomatoes and cilantro.

To prepare bacon: Cut the bacon into squares then place it in a hot skillet over medium heat and cook 15 minutes, or until golden. Transfer to a plate to drain excess fat and let cool.

To prepare guacamole: Add the bacon, garlic powder, salt and pepper, to taste, to the guacamole; mix well.

To serve, put guacamole in bowl and serve with tortilla chips or crackers, if desired.

### Gronkamole

Avocados From Mexico partner Rob Gronkowski’s favorite guacamole recipe

Servings: 4

- 2 Avocados From Mexico
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 3/4 cup chicken breast, cooked and shredded
- 1/4 cup blue cheese, crumbled
- 3 tablespoons Buffalo sauce
- salt, to taste
- corn chips, for serving (optional)
- carrot sticks, for serving (optional)

In a small bowl, mash avocados and stir in lemon juice.

Add chicken, blue cheese and Buffalo sauce to guacamole mixture. Add salt, to taste.

Serve with corn chips or carrot sticks, if desired.



# Savory Favorites to Make St. Patrick’s Day Special

## Hearty recipes for celebrating from the comfort of home

FAMILY FEATURES

While some St. Patrick’s Day celebrations call for green beer and large gatherings, you may instead opt for a cozy evening at home with comforting foods and close friends. Whether your shamrock spirit leads you out for a local parade or you’re more of a stay-at-home leprechaun, there is one tradition all can agree on: delicious Irish food.

If a quieter night cooking at home is up your alley, you’re in luck. You can put a meal worthy of gold on the table with these festive Irish favorites from “Cookin’ Savvy.”

A hearty home-cooked meal loaded with flavor and sure to fill you with cheer, Irish Beef and Beer Pot Pie is made piping hot to warm up any St. Patrick’s Day party. Full of hashbrowns, carrots, peas and beef, it’s a twist on tradition served with puff pastry topping the tasty stew. A cup of your favorite stout beer, of course, will come in handy for deglazing the skillet to ensure you enjoy every bit of beefy flavor.

Perfect for serving as a sweet complement to coffee or tea, or all on its own as a nightcap nibble, Irish Sweet Soda Bread comes together in a snap so you can let it bake while enjoying the main course. Offering an easy way to participate in the festivities, it might just become a household favorite to be savored year-round.

Make your home a St. Patrick’s Day haven with these hearty recipes then discover more celebratory meal ideas from “Cookin’ Savvy” by visiting Culinary.net.



Find more recipes from Cookin’ Savvy



### Irish Sweet Soda Bread

Recipe courtesy of “Cookin’ Savvy”

Servings: 4-6

- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 4 cups self-rising flour
- 1 cup currants
- 2 tablespoons sanding sugar (optional)
- coffee or tea, for serving (optional)

Heat oven to 375 F.

Mix melted butter and sugar then add buttermilk. Mix in flour and currants.

Flour hands and counter. Add sanding sugar to dough, if desired, and knead into ball.

Grease small Dutch oven or pie plate and bake 40 minutes. Serve with coffee or tea, if desired, or as a dessert.

**Substitutions:** Raisins can be used in place of currants.

### Irish Beef and Beer Pot Pie

Recipe courtesy of “Cookin’ Savvy”

Servings: 4-6

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 cup stout beer
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato puree
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 bag (28 ounces) hashbrowns with peppers and onions
- 1 can (14 ounces) carrots, drained
- 1 can (14 ounces) peas, drained
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 sheet puff pastry, thawed
- 1 egg

Heat oven to 400 F.

In large skillet or Dutch oven, brown ground beef; drain and set aside.

Over medium heat, deglaze skillet with beer and whisk in flour. After thickening, whisk in tomato puree and add Worcestershire sauce. Mix in ground beef, garlic powder and beef broth. Add hashbrowns, carrots and peas. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Simmer 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Place puff pastry sheet on cookie sheet. Beat egg and brush over pastry. Bake 10 minutes. Place hot puff pastry on top of beef mixture and serve.