

# THE SKYLINE



Volume 62, Number 10

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## Salty Dogs Change Command



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Training Air Wing One Reserve Component known as “The Salty Dogs” held a change of command ceremony, April 26 at which CAPT Derek Ashlock retired from the U.S. Navy and was relieved by CDR Darby Gray. Ashlock served as the Reserve Component Commander and Deputy Commander since February 2022. Rear Adm. David J. Faehnle, Deputy Commander, Naval Air Force, Atlantic was the guest speaker for the ceremony.



Submitted photo

Virtual Clinical Counseling services launched by Fleet and Family Support Program is advancing mental health support for Sailors and families.

## Breaking barriers: Navy launches virtual clinical counseling services worldwide

By Naomi Wilkins  
Commander, Navy Installations Command

In an incredible initiative aimed at enhancing mental health support for Sailors and their families, Commander, Navy Installation Command's (CNIC) Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP) has launched Virtual Clinical Counseling services across the enterprise. Spearheading this effort is Dr. Rebecca Goodman, a Clinical Counseling Program Analyst with FFSP, dedicated to strengthening the services that have been rolling out for the last six months.

Recognizing the need for accessible and flexible counseling services, FFSP expanded its offerings, introducing virtual sessions to complement existing programs. The Virtual Clinical Counseling service is available for Sailors, their families and anyone who is eligible for FFSP services.

Like all in-person counseling services, Virtual Clinical Counseling is offered at no cost. “It’s a more widespread approach that ensures it’s available in all regions with the staff to support the service,” says Dr. Good-

man, who has overseen the seamless integration of these additional services, ensuring they are available to all who require support, regardless of their location or time zone.

With a vision to broaden access to care, the Navy has onboarded 30 remote clinical counselors, alongside dedicated schedulers, to facilitate these virtual sessions. “Our goal is to support access to care,” affirms Dr. Goodman. “As long as individuals have an internet connection and a private space, they can benefit from our services.”

Designed to address a variety of challenges and stressors, from marital issues to personal crises, Virtual Clinical Counseling services are confidential, short-term and solution-focused. Potential clients do not need a referral from their primary care or command to access Virtual Clinical Counseling, or any counseling service through FFSP. Each session begins with an initial assessment, allowing counselors to tailor their support to the individual’s needs, whether it is further counseling or referrals to specialized services.

● Virtual, page 2

## Navy offering big bucks to keep aviation officers in uniform

By Diana Stancy  
Military Times

The Navy is offering big money this year to retain its aviation officers.

More than \$200,000 is available to officers serving as aviation department heads this year — provided they agree to staying in uniform for up to seven more years.

Aviators selected for lieutenant commander are eligible for the bonuses, and must undergo consideration for department head during the Aviation Department Head Screen Board that is set to convene this spring.

Aviators who agree to an early commitment — which means submitting a contract prior to the publishing of Aviation Department Head Screen Board results — receive the largest bonuses of up to \$280,000, according to a new naval administrative message, or NAVADMIN.

“Our return on investment is the retention for continued Navy service of our aviation warfighters, with their invaluable, irreplaceable skillsets and leadership,” the NAVADMIN states.

Pilots from the strike fighter community could receive \$40,000 annually for early five or seven-year contracts — \$5,000 more than last year — or \$30,000 for standard three, five or seven-year commitments, as they were last year.

Meanwhile, the Navy is bumping up its bonus offer to naval flight officers from the strike fighter community from \$15,000 last year to \$25,000 this year for early five and seven-year contracts. Those who accept standard contracts are eligible for an annual \$20,000 bonus — double from last year.

Those in the helicopter mine countermeasure community, the helicopter sea combat community, and the helicopter maritime strike community are eligible for an annual bonus of \$30,000 annually if they sign on early for a five or seven-year commitment. That’s up \$5,000 from the rate they were offered last year.

These aviators who agree to a standard, three, five or seven-year commitment are also eligible for a \$25,000 annual bonus — up from the \$20,000 they were offered last year.

Pilots from electronic attack squadrons who sign an early, five or seven-year contract are eligible to receive an annual \$40,000 bonus — and increase from the \$35,000 they were offered last year.

Their naval flight officer counterparts are also eligible for a \$35,000 annual bonus for an early five or seven-year contract. That’s the same rate they were offered for the same time commitments last year. These aviators also may receive an annual \$30,000 bonus for standard three, five or seven-year contracts, as they were last year.

The Navy is also offering pilots from airborne command and control squadrons \$40,000 annually if they sign on early for five or seven more years of service — a boost of \$5,000 from last year — or \$30,000 annually for a standard contract of three, five or seven years of service just like last year.

The service is also offering naval flight officers from airborne command and control squadrons \$15,000 for agreeing early to five or seven more years of service, and \$10,000 for a standard contract of three, five or seven years of service. That’s the same deal they were offered last year.

Additionally, the Navy is offering pilots from fleet logistics and multi-mission squadrons \$5,000 more this year for an annual bonus of \$40,000 — if they agree early to a five or seven year contract. That goes down to \$30,000 if they take the standard three, five or seven-year options, just like last year’s bonus.

Applications for the bonuses end on Aug. 31.

# Class of 2024



Honoring the children and grandchildren of NAS Meridian personnel



*Sophie Rhianon Denton*

University of Southern Mississippi  
Grandparents: Barbara Watson & Charles Watson



*Stephen Grayson*

Russell Christian Academy  
Parents: Brad & Rhonda Grayson



*Madison Mosley*

West Lauderdale High School  
Parent: Syretta T. Smith



*Jermyia Jackson*

Northeast High School  
Parents: Jermane Jackson & Arnetra Evans



*Lyla Graham*

West Lauderdale High School  
Parents: Keith & Renee' Creel



*Katie Lank*

West Lauderdale High School  
Parents: Brendan & Kara Lank



*Damille Burnett*

Meridian Community College  
Parents: Bogan & Sheila Burnett



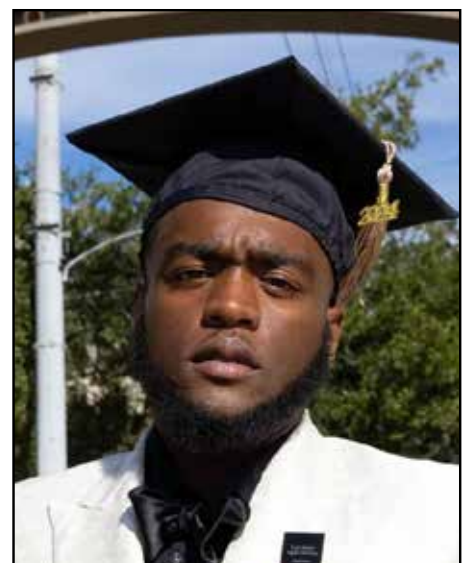
*Logan Duque*

Meridian Community College  
Parents: Sean & Kelly Duque



*Hailey Duque*

West Lauderdale High School  
Parents: Sean & Kelly Duque



*Dennis Heidelberg Jr.*

Xavier University in New Orleans  
Parents: Twaskie & Veldore Graham

# Local Happenings

## MAY

**18: BBQ Sale** starting at noon at the Fleet Reserve Association, HWY 39 Meridian. Call Heather at 601-604-4772.

**18: Screening of "Tribal"** at 4:30 p.m. at Meridian Community College's McCain Theater. This event is open to the public and free of charge. For information, visit [StrongerTogetherFoundation.org](https://StrongerTogetherFoundation.org)

**16-19: U.S. 11 Antique Alley** Enjoy the southern route along scenic US Highway 11 from Meridian, Mississippi, to Bristol, Virginia, for more than 500 miles of yard sales and antiques! Treasure hunt along the back roads on May 16 - 19, 2024, for our annual yard sale that includes thousands of vendors and over 30,000 attendees. Call 601-917-4096 or visit <https://www.msantiquealley.com/>

**24: Memorial Day Ceremony** from 10-11 a.m. at the East Mississippi Veterans Park adjacent to Meridian's historical Key Field. Call 601-480-0293.

**31: State Games of MS Opening Ceremonies** from 5-9 p.m. at City Hall. March with your team and show your team pride! Meet with real Olympians from the State of Mississippi who have competed all over the world! Call 601-482-0205.

# Area Happenings

## MAY

**17: Armed Forces Block Party** from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Sixth Street Museum District's African American Military History Museum at 305 East Sixth Street, Hattiesburg. Free to the public; call 601-450-1942.

**19: Taco Fest 2024** from 1-7 p.m. at the Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark, Sloss Music & Arts Festival, Birmingham. Visit <https://allevents.in/birmingham/birmingham-taco-fest-2024/200026189680622>

## JUNE

**7: The Rolling Stones** at 7:30 p.m. at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta. Visit <https://www.mercedesbenzstadium.com/events/rolling-stones-hackney-diamonds-tour>

## Junior enlisted to get 20% pay bump under House plan

House lawmakers' plans to overhaul military pay tables next year would result in a nearly 20% basic salary boost for troops ranked E-4 and below and a substantial bump for E-5s as well.

Under plans unveiled Monday, House Armed Services Committee members next week will consider language in their annual defense authorization bill draft that includes highly revised military pay tables designed to bring all junior enlisted pay to at least \$30,000 a year.

Currently, some young enlisted

service members can make as little as \$24,000 in basic pay, although that total does not include other compensation such as housing allowances and free health care.

But both Republicans and Democrats on the panel have expressed concerns that enlisted troops' low base pay make it difficult for military recruiters to woo young adults away from civilian careers, where a \$15-per-hour wage translates into just over \$30,000 a year in salary.

-- By Leo Shane III

[Read more, click here](#)

## Marine combat instructors can avoid recruiting or drill instructor duty

The Marine Corps has made the combat instructor job a special duty assignment once more, effectively allowing those instructors to sidestep the sometimes-dreaded recruiter or drill instructor jobs.

Each year, a portion of Marine noncommissioned officers are given special duty assignments, which take them out of their regular jobs for a few years to perform other duties on behalf of the Corps. Now, the combat instructor job, which entails training Marines in combat skills, counts as a special duty assignment.

"It's an extremely rewarding duty because you actually get to affect and

to teach the warfighting skills that all Marines learn through the entry-level training pipeline, and it's really critical for the operational readiness of the force," Gunnery Sgt. Tyler Stokes, the enlisted assignments monitor for the combat instructor community, said in a video the Marine Corps recently posted to LinkedIn.

Marines get plucked from their regular jobs and placed into special duty assignments through the annual Headquarters Marine Corps Special Duty Assignment Screening Team screening process ...

-- By Irene Loewenson

[Read more, click here](#)

## West's defense industrial base will outpace Russia's

It's easy for an autocratic regime like Russia to accelerate their defense industrial base at the expense of its economy to continue its war in Ukraine, along with help from Iran and North Korea, said Air Force Lt. Gen. Steven L. Basham.

Basham, deputy commander, U.S. European Command, spoke yesterday at the livestreamed Foundation for Defense of Democracies event, "Transatlantic Security After 75 Years of NATO."

The West's defense industrial base is also accelerating, he said.

"Make no mistake. It's picking up speed. It will continue to accelerate past

the capability of Russia. The time that is being spent by Russia inside Ukraine is also time that we have to get our industrial base to where it needs to be," Basham said.

"Russia, a country that used to pride [itself] as a defense exporter. [Now] they seem to be importing an awful lot of not only equipment, but also technology. And a lot of that technology is actually coming from China. The challenges that Russia faces in their own equipment, they're actually making up for by developing that relationship with China," he said.

-- By David Vergun, DOD News

[Read more, click here](#)

# Sale... Or

### BOATS/CAMPERS/TRAILERS

**21 foot - 2021 Jayco Travel Camper.** Like new; beige & walnut interior and mattress kept in original plastic. Selling to upgrade to larger size - Price is \$15,000 some accessories included. To view or request pics please contact: Gary 601-575-5062.

**2018 Mallard M185 Travel Trailer.** Sleeps 4 with 1 queen bed/2 bunks. Easy to tow at 3,575 lbs; only selling because military member is moving overseas. Great living quarters with lake view. Hooked up and ready to live in, including cables, hoses, plus the \$500 tow-

ing kit. Asking \$17,000. Call 360-434-3035.

### AUTOMOBILES, ETC.

**2018 Subaru Outback 2.5 limited,** 12k miles; Subaru safety features and warranties included. Asking \$29k. Call 601-480-5100.

**2017 Dodge Challenger,** grey with racing stripe. \$24k. Call 601-880-3237.

### HOMES/APARTMENTS

**New! For Rent:** 2BD/1BA home 12 miles from the base. Washer, dryer included with large deck in back. No pets; rent is \$800. Call 601-527-9921 or 601-938-9822.

**For Rent:** 4 BD/2.5 BA home 3632 sq ft, just over

6 acres with workshop attached to 2-car carport. Owners will consider a lease of 12-36 months, and rent is negotiable the longer the term. Call (601) 517-1707 or (601) 517-1707.

**For Rent:** 3BD /2BA home near North Hills. Spacious yard, concrete patio for gatherings, home gym and covered car garage. Rent \$1,100 per month. Call Jeremy at 601-410-8555.

**For Rent:** 3 BD/1.5 BA home 15 minutes from NAS at 4814 36th Ave. New refrigerator and 2-year old AC & furnace. Call Terrence at 469-318-9769.

**For Rent:** 3 BD/1.5 BA with another room used

as a gym. All kitchen appliances included. Large backyard. Address 145 Skyland Drive, Meridian. About 25 minutes to Navy Base. \$900 per month, with \$900 deposit. Available Aug. 1. No pets. Call 601-490-0849.

**For Rent:** 3BD/2BD home near Causeyville Road. Furnished in quiet neighborhood. \$900 per month. 954-895-5485, 601-692-4048 or 606-571-0820.

**For Rent:** Water front home in Dalewood. Spacious two-story home facing the Lake; great for fishing and relaxing. Remodeled kitchen and new appliances. Rent is \$1,800; please call 813-406-9687.

**For Sale:** 3BD/2BA Home with 2,560 sq. ft. Sits on 1 & 1/2 lots on dead end with privacy woods on 3 sides. Asking \$180,000. Contact: lucindawnichols@gmail.com, call 601-527-7829 or 601-917-6145.

**For Sale By Owner:** 3BD/3BA brick home with sunroom, large fenced in yard. Convenient to shopping and base. \$139K. Call 601-513-3395 or 601-227-1870.

### MISCELLANEOUS

**For Sale:** Husqvarna RZ 4623 Zero Turn Mower. 46 inch cut. \$1250. Call 601-616-4242.

**Nanny or caregiver services.** Call Alice at 601-934-1866 or 601-679-

8112. Has installation access; can take children to school and pick up and available days, nights and weekends.

**Event Space for Rent:** Deer Creek Banquet Hall. 6000 sq. ft. indoor with 1600 sq. ft. outdoor spaces for rent for gatherings and events. Call Reginald at 251-455-1559.

To submit an item to the "Sale...Or" column, e-mail [adam.w.prince.civ@us.navy.mil](mailto:adam.w.prince.civ@us.navy.mil). Deadline is the Wednesday prior to publication.

Listings in the "Sale...Or" column are free for anyone who works at NAS Meridian. To include your announcement, email [adam.w.prince.civ@us.navy.mil](mailto:adam.w.prince.civ@us.navy.mil)

## Farewell CMC Johnson



Photo by Penny Randall

**CWO3 Rishard Winters, right, presents Command Master Chief Craig Johnson with a signed picture during a going away luncheon in the Admin building onboard NAS Meridian, May 3.**

### ● Virtual

“The response from both regions and counselors has been overwhelmingly positive,” says Dr. Goodman. “We’ve strived for a smooth process, ensuring individuals can easily connect with counselors whenever needed.”

To continue the service’s smooth rollout, the Navy plans to measure service utilization and gather client feedback responses. “We want to widen access to services and cater to cases where face-to-face sessions might be challenging,” explains Dr. Goodman.

When asked how she will measure overall success of the service, Dr. Goodman says, “Success will be widening access to the services and our ability to target some of the cases where it’s really difficult to make it to a face-to-face service. This is why so many folks are engaged. You call or you click, and you’re connected.”

To schedule an appointment with a Counselor, please call 1-855-205-6749. To apply for Remote Virtual Counselor positions available, please visit <https://recruiting.ultipro.com/ZEI1000ZEID/JobBoard/5966f8ea-2f33-46eaa96-f4f549ba84eb/OpportunityDetail?opportunityId=62f88fff-d623-463c-b26a-0a41dc3357f6>

## The MAX offers free admission to military families through Blue Star program

### From Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) will once again join museums nationwide in offering free admission to active-duty American military families during the 2024 Blue Star Museums program. This year’s initiative begins May 18, Armed Forces Day, and concludes on Sept. 2.

Last year, more than 1,700 museums participated in the Blue Star program, a broad collaboration that includes the National Endowment for the Arts, the Blue Star Families support organization and the U.S. Department of Defense.

The MAX welcomed nearly 400 people through the program previously and its staff is eager to see more military families – from across Mississippi and beyond – enjoy the museum’s exhibits and programs.

“The MAX is pleased to serve as an important cultural resource for military families associated with NAS Meridian, the Air National Guard 186th Air Refueling Group and other military installations in the region,” said MAX President and CEO Penny Kemp. “The Blue Star effort strengthens our connections with the military community and we hope to see strong interest this year.”

The Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Vivek Murthy, recently noted that exposure to the arts is vital to a “third dimension” of wellness – in addition to physical and mental health – that “has to do with our heart

and soul: the part of us that feels inspiration, that feels joy, the part of us that feels deep love for another human being ... I believe that the arts are a very, very powerful resource when it comes to nourishing the health of the spirit.”

The Blue Star program offers one way for The MAX to show appreciation to military service members, who provide a critical source of volunteer support for the non-profit during major events such as the spring Sipp & Savor festival.

The MAX is reaching out to military bases around the region, encouraging fun trips to Meridian. Elsewhere in the state, participating museums include the Eudora Welty House and Garden and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson and the Walter Anderson Museum of Art in Ocean Springs. More program details are available at [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](https://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).

The free admission program is available for those currently serving in the United States military—Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force, members of the Reserves, National Guard, U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, as well as up to five family members. Qualified members must show a Geneva Convention common access card (CAC), DD Form 1173 ID card (dependent ID), DD Form 1173-1 ID card or the Next Generation Uniformed Services (Real) ID card for entrance into a participating Blue Star Museum.



## Crusty Nose or Royalty? The Duke & Duchess of Prom

“Oh, Mom,” my daughter Anna crooned after her Junior Prom. “It was so romantic!” She floated off to her room, her head swimming with fresh memories. During my teen years, I’d learned that whether prom was romantic, silly, boring, or awkward, it always leaves an indelible mark.

My Junior Prom was in the spring of 1983. A disappointing first kiss the year before hadn’t quelled my optimistic teenage belief that I’d soon meet the boy of my dreams.

But three weeks before Junior Prom, I was still dateless. In desperation, I threw a note with my address on it out the team bus window during an away track meet, in hopes that an athletic stud would write to me. A few days later I received a letter from a pitiful

geek who’d fished my note out of a mud puddle on his way to the library.

The following week, a boy in my science class with a seemingly perpetual sinus infection followed me to my locker. Speaking nasally through a chapped red nose and a full set of metal braces, he asked, “Woodyu go wid me do da prom?”

Caught off guard, I stuttered, “Uh, I might be going with someone else, I’m not sure ... I’ll let you know....”

I’d lied. Unless I wanted photos of me and Mr. Crusty-Nose arm in arm under the balloon arch, I needed a plan and fast.

I thought of my football player friend -- well, actually, he was the water boy who played lineman if the team was hopelessly losing during the fourth quarter. A likable, husky kid with a jolly disposition, the team had nicknamed him “The Duke.” He seemed the perfect candidate to be my prom date – not popular enough to reject me, and free of excess nasal mucus.

I cornered The Duke after school and proposed that we go to the prom “as friends.”

“Excellent!” he responded with a smile.

The next day, I broke the news to Mr.

Crusty-Nose. I felt like schmuck lying to him, but good thing I did, because the next girl he asked became his wife and they’re still married to this day. I guess you could say, he owes me.

My cousin and I swapped dresses – I gave her the violet taffeta monstrosity I’d worn the previous year, and she gave me her pink lace number that wasn’t much better.

The Duke showed up in a thoughtfully coordinated rental tux – a mauve poly blend with matching velour cuffs and collar, a ruffled shirt, and an enormous mauve bow tie. He offered me a substantial wrist corsage with pink carnations and baby’s breath, and I adorned his wide lapel with a white rose. Although there was no romance in our arrangement, we felt like a million bucks and were ready for fun.

We sat with The Duke’s intimidating football player friends at dinner. I was glad to have the Duke as my buffer. Halfway through the cordon bleu, one rowdy boy suddenly pointed and shouted, “Hey, it’s The Duke and The Duchess!” Laughter erupted. I swallowed my chicken and faked a smile, unsure if I was being accepted or mocked.

When the DJ began playing and

electric lights flashed on taffeta gowns, I shook off the joke’s sting and hit the dance floor. The Duke requested his favorite song, “You Dropped the Bomb On Me” by The Gap Band, and we danced a mauve streak.

Later, our group crashed for the night in the basement rumpus room of our friend’s house. We all changed into sweats, and stuffed those itchy corsages into our duffle bags. Her parents took our car keys and let us drink a little beer. Two couples ducked into the hallway to make out, but most of us just talked and horsed around into the wee hours of the night.

The Duke and I didn’t go on any starlit walks or hold hands.

He remained a gentleman, and I was grateful to him for making it a fun night. I might’ve sacrificed the romance that all teenage girls dream about, but not everyone gets to be The Prom King and Queen.

Some of us have to settle for being The Duke and Duchess.

Lisa Smith Molinari’s self syndicated columns appear on her blog, [www.themeatandpotatoesofflife.com](http://www.themeatandpotatoesofflife.com) and she recently co-authored *Stories Around the Table: Laughter, Wisdom, and Strength in Military Life* Follow [Lisa@MolinariWrites](mailto:Lisa@MolinariWrites).

### COLUMN



Molinari

## The Skyline ~ Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss.

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SAPR Civilian Victim Assistance: 601-486-3122  
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SAFE Helpline: 877-995-5247  
Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255  
Military OneSource: 800-342-9647  
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EAP (NAF Civilian): 800-932-0034  
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# DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT

**REGISTRATION:**  
MAY 27-JUNE 21

**TEAM MEETING:**  
JUNE 20 AT 1500

**GAMES BEGIN:**  
JUNE 24 AT 1730

**SCAN THE QR CODE  
OR CALL  
(601) 679-2367  
FOR MORE INFO.**







**DRIVING RANGE**  
CALL (601) 679-2526




## BATTLE OF MIDWAY COMMEMORATIVE EVENT

*June 8th @ 1700 @ Aquatics Center*

**COME OUT TO ENJOY THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY  
COMMEMORATIVE EVENT AT THE POOL!**

- TETHERED HOT AIR BALLOON RIDES FROM 1700-1900!  
(WEATHER MAY PREVENT HOT AIR BALLOON RIDES).
- A SPECIAL SHOWING OF THE MOVIE, MIDWAY, AT DUSK!
- FREE HAMBURGERS, HOTDOGS, AND WATER  
WILL BE AVAILABLE WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

**\*PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS OR  
COOLERS TO THE EVENT\***




**TICKETS & TRAVEL**  
CALL (601) 679-2526



### Sip & Spin

May 21 at 5 p.m.



*Scan for details*



*Outdoor Arts & Crafts:*  
**DIY FLUID BEARS!**

May 28 • 1900 • Liberty Center

JOIN US TO OUTSIDE AT THE LIBERTY CENTER  
PAVILION TO MAKE FLUID BEARS.

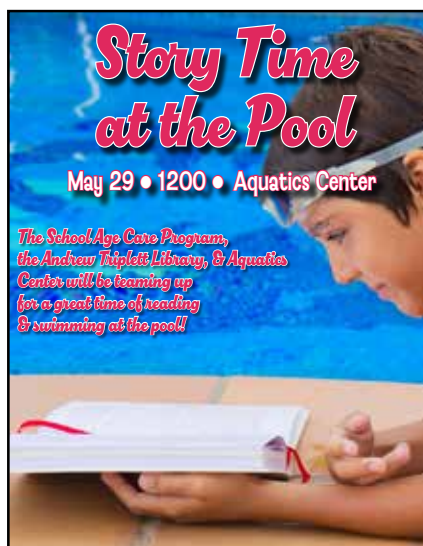


**ALL MATERIALS WILL  
BE PROVIDED WHILE  
SUPPLIES LAST.**

### Story Time at the Pool

May 29 • 1200 • Aquatics Center

*The School Age Care Program,  
the Andrew Triplett Library, & Aquatics  
Center will be teaming up  
for a great time of reading  
& swimming at the pool!*



### Drive-In Movie

MAY 31 • 1945 • FIELD BY BUILDING 216



**VRMERI**