

COMMUNITY

## American Legion Post And Unit 515 Supports Annual NJROTC Area Championship

On Saturday March 12, 2016, American Legion Post and Unit 515 prepared and served food for 130 people (Instructors, Faculty, Parents and Support Staff) for the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Annual Area Championship.

There were 16 Teams, 920 Cadets, 62 Judges and 48 Instructors. This event was held at the Coffee Middle School.

The first place team was Nease High School from Ponte Vedra, FL; in second place Sprayberry High School from Marietta, GA and third place went to Terry Parker High School from Jacksonville, FL.

In April, these three teams will compete in National competition in Pensacola, FL.



Pictured above are Post 515 Commander Alfalene Walker; Unit 515 President Angela Lane; members of Unit 515 and NJROTC Boosters and volunteers preparing to serve.



Pictured above are Post and Unit 515 member; members of the NJROTC Boosters and volunteers serving as Instructors, Faculty, Parents and Support Staff took lunch breaks.



Pictured above everyone sits down to a delicious meal.

The following pictures are of teams in actual competition. Of special NOTE, the CHS NJROTC students hosted the event and did not compete.



## Coffee County Veterans Service Office

Coffee County Veterans can visit Del Parisella at the Veteran Service Office in Douglas at 70 Lockwood Dr. (GA Department of Labor Bldg). He provides information concerning eligibility for federal and or state benefits and filing claims for these benefits. The Douglas office is

open from 8 a. m. to 4:30 p. m., Monday through Friday. No appointment necessary, all veterans, widowed spouses of veterans are seen on a walk in basis. Veterans benefits are not awarded automatically, they must be applied for. For more information, please call 912 389-4898.

## Sam And Dave Trumpet Player To Be Prater Music Fest Guest Speaker

The 2016 Prater Music Festival – named in honor of late R&B singer and Ocilla native Dave Prater – will be held May 12-14.

This is the festival's second year. Organizers have expanded the celebration from two to three days. New this year is a community worship service and an appearance by Macon musician Newton Collier, a trumpet player in the original Sam and Dave band, who will be the keynote speaker during a tribute dinner.

"We're excited and happy that the Prater festival is returning to Ocilla for a second year," said Ocilla Mayor Matt Seale. "There are very few adults who haven't heard a Sam and Dave song over the years. Their music went global. We are extremely proud to be the birthplace of such a musical legend as Dave Prater."

Seale added: "In future years, we hope to add more events and musical groups on multiple stages. We want to attract visitors from far across the state and the region to Ocilla and Irwin County."

The 2016 Prater fest schedule includes:

- Tribute Dinner: 6 p.m. Thursday, May 12, at the Community House, 711 S. Irwin Ave. (Highway 90 at Highway 129). Former Sam and Dave band trumpet player will share his "Reflections on the road with Ocilla's own Dave Prater." The evening will also feature food from local restaurants and a silent auction of music memorabilia, gift certificates, baked goods and other items. Tickets are \$10 if purchased before May 10 and \$15 at the door. Proceeds from the event will go towards a scholarship fund for Irwin County High School students interested in pursuing musical careers.

- Street Party: A free block party on North Cherry Street between 4th and 5th streets kicks off from 6-9 p.m. Friday, May 13th. The Irwin County High School Choral Ensemble and band will perform. There will be music by the Live 5 Band.

- Worship service: A community worship service begins at 12 noon Saturday, May 14 at Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church, 207 E. 7th St. The Rev. George Vereen will be the guest speaker. Mt. Olive is the church where Prater grew up singing in the choir.

More information about the event can be found at [www.PraterMusicFest.com](http://www.PraterMusicFest.com) or on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/PraterMusicFest](http://www.facebook.com/PraterMusicFest)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/PraterMusicFest](http://www.twitter.com/PraterMusicFest)).

For out-of-town visitors, advance tickets can be purchased with a major credit card by calling Ocilla City Hall at 229-468-5141.

Dave Prater was half of the Grammy Award-winning singing duo Sam and Dave. Their rise to interna-



Sam and Dave perform live on the Ed Sullivan Show television show in December 1969.

tional stardom produced such hits "Soul Man," "Hold on, I'm Coming," "I Thank You," and "Soothe Me."

The 2015 celebration was held in February in honor of Black History Month after Councilman Reginald Miller proposed honoring Prater. Former mayor Horace Hudgins was a driving force behind organizing a planning committee with the Ocilla-Irwin Chamber of Commerce, signing up sponsors, getting proclamations and making the event happen.

The city erected signs on both ends of the two major state highways (129 and 32) declaring Ocilla the "Home of Dave Prater, Sam and Dave 'Soul Man,' 1997 Georgia Music Hall of Fame Inductee."

That event drew hundreds to downtown Ocilla and attracted positive media coverage for the region. This year, planning committee organizers moved the event to May to correspond with Prater's May 9th birthday and warmer weather for the street fest.

"We're excited about all the plans," said Prater's sister, Helen Deberry. "It will be a treat for us to hear Newton Collier talk about what it was like being on the road with Sam & Dave during the height of their careers."

Collier, now 71, was a young trumpet player when he met Sam Moore and Dave Prater in Augusta in 1965. He recounts his time spent with Dave during the early years as the group toured the country entertaining audiences. Collier recalls traveling in cramped station wagons and old tour buses during those early years. Prater had long legs and the two shared the space on the back seat – which faced backward – in an old Comet station wagon.

"He knew I was from Macon and he and I had a closeness about Georgia," Collier said.

Prater was born in Ocilla on May 9, 1937. He was one of 11 children born to Dave and Mary Prater and grew up picking cotton, tobacco and other crops on the farmlands in and around Ocilla. His siblings remember him singing as he worked in the fields and every Sunday in the choir at Mt. Olive A.M.E. He graduated from Ocilla

High and Industrial School in 1957 and moved to Miami shortly afterward.

He began singing in a gospel group called the Sensational Hummingbirds with older brother James "J.T." He got his big break in about 1962 when he met fellow Georgia native Sam Moore in Miami. Moore was hosting a talent night competition at the King of Hearts Club in the Liberty City section of Miami. Prater chose a Jackie Wilson song and by the end of the song, Moore, who was a Jackie Wilson fan, joined him on the stage sharing the microphone. The "Sam and Dave" duo was born.

Prater died at age 50 on April 9, 1988, in a car crash on Highway 32 in Sycamore while in route to his mother's house from Atlanta. Collier recalls seeing Prater a few days before his death after playing a Stax reunion show in Atlanta. The last words he recalls Prater saying after the show were: "I'll see y'll later, man... I'm going to see my mother."

Collier said he was back home in Boston, where he lived at that time, when he heard the news of Prater's death in the car crash. He thought it was a hoax at first, until he started to hear the news from other musicians. "I took it sort of hard. I thought about a lot of things we had done together."

The Prater tribute dinner tickets are \$10 if purchased before May 10 and \$15 at the door. Tickets are available for purchase at City Hall, 111 N. Irwin Ave., the Ocilla Irwin Chamber of Commerce, 620 S. Irwin Ave., and from Prater music festival planning committee members.

For out-of-town visitors, advance tickets can be purchased with a major credit card by calling Ocilla City Hall at 229-468-5141.

Several local businesses and individuals have already signed on as sponsors of the event. Those that give at least \$300 will be listed on banners and marketing materials, including the event website.

For more information about becoming a sponsor or participating in the 2016 Prater Music Festival, contact Kayla Wilson at 229-468-5141.



"We are always honored to partner with other organizations to provide a service to our community."

"This was a no brainer, because the CHS NJROTC often time supports us as we administer the Programs of the American Legion," stated Post 515 Commander, Alfalene Walker.

She went on to say, although not present, Mr. Louis Duncan and Jerome Loving

played a large part in the success of this event.

They were up before day preparing the grilled chicken, which receive rave reviews.

Gunner Woods commended all the teams and CHS NJROTC Cadets for their hard work.

She also extended a sincere appreciation to the CMS Staff for their support and use of their facility.