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Maj. Ryan Brewer, 14th Flying Training Wing director of innovation, helps Col. Derek Stuart, 14th Operations Group commander, use a virtual reality headset Oct. 19, 2018, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. Virtual reality headsets, 3D printers, tablets and laptops fill the Spark Cell for Columbus AFB personnel to use while they create and explore their ideas.

Below: Capt. Phillip Huebner, 37th Flying Training Squadron instructor pilot, speaks during the Spark Cell grand opening Oct. 19, 2018, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.

COURTESY PHOTO U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTOS | AIRMAN 1ST CLASS KEITH HOLCOMB

Spark Cell: Columbus AFB opens up creative space for innovators

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS KEITH HOLCOMB | 14TH FLYING TRAINING WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

COLUMBUS AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. (AFNS) -he 14th Flying

Training Wing's senior leadership and innovation team opened the Spark Cell's Innovation Lab Oct. 19, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi.

The room is open 24 hours a day on the second floor of building 926 for individuals to utilize equipment and work on projects. Spouses, civilians, active-duty personnel and anyone else with an idea to solve a problem is welcome to use the Spark Cell.

"This is your Spark Cell," to use the space effectively said Col. Samantha Weeks, 14th is learning how to program

FTW commander. "This is for all of (Columbus AFB) to put up problems and collaboratively come up with solutions. ... The chief of staff of the Air Force told us to think big, start small and scale fast and that's what the Spark Cell is here to help us do."

Maj. Ryan Brewer, 14th FTW director of innovation, was the lead on the creation of Spark Cell and said this is not a place for personal projects for the sake of it, but rather a place for personal and professional development to help the Air Force and the 14th FTW get better. An example of how to use the space effectively is learning how to program computer applications to create a solution to a problem.

JT Spithla Tenne

"The first rule is to strip your rank when you walk in," Brewer said. "We are trying to strip the barriers to solutions and success. We want an Airman to be able to walk up to a lieutenant colonel and say they have an idea that will change the world."

The Spark Cell has numerous tablets, laptops, TVs, microphones and whiteboards with programs ranging from photo editing software to computer programming applications to allow anyone with any skill set to set the framework for their innovative ideas.

In the future, the innovation

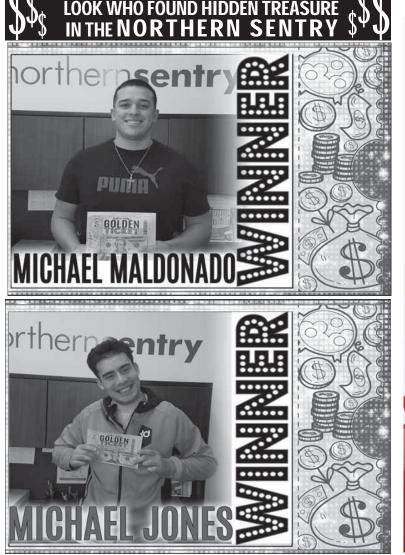
team plans to allow people to check out equipment overnight if needed. The Spark Cell is meant to give opportunities to connect with other innovators whenever and however possible.

"We came up with the idea of the 'Check Six' podcast," said Capt. Phillip Huebner, 37th Flying Training Squadron instructor pilot. "The style is more of a (tactics techniques and procedures) debrief compared to reading the procedures out of a book. Hopefully it will keep students engaged, teach them about things they might not know about, provide context for things when they step in the door, and allow them to know things farther down the line.'

The Check Six podcast is made in the Spark Cell itself with equipment available to all of Columbus AFB, showing there are no limits to one's creativity.

The innovation team said the vision of the podcast is to cover numerous topics from the ground up, to provide hours of information to students, and others who are interested, while they are out driving, working out or relaxing.

At the end of the day, the innovation team on Columbus AFB says the purpose of the Spark Cell is to cultivate ideas and connect with other innovators so Columbus AFB can create solutions for the betterment of the Air Force.







Holy Joe's Cafe del ivers free coffee for Airmen

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS DILLON J. AUDIT | 5TH BOMB WING PUBLIC AFFAIR

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. --The fresh smell of coffee floated through the office, filling the room with a warm blanket of freshness.

Winter can be intense in Minot, and this quick, warm, pick me up may just be what is needed to keep spirits high.

Since 2006, Holy Joe's Café has been sending free coffee to U.S. military bases all around the world, which are distributed by installation chaplains.

"It's really all about meeting Airmen where they are," said Maj. Glen E. Harris, deputy wing chaplain. "It's coffee and community."

Team Minot received a shipment of 60 Keurig 2.0 machines and 439,488 K-Cups on Sept. 5.

The machines went out to all 15 Missile Alert Facilities, seven to each the 5th Mission Support Group and 5th Maintenance Group, five to 91st Operations Group, three to 5th Operations Group and more.

"These k-Cups are available for free to all members and families of Team Minot," said

Harris. "They can be used at work or at home."



Combat Raider 19-1 keeps for ces ready, lethal

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS THOMAS KAROL | 28TH BOMB WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS



ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. --

ircrew from all 8th Air Force bases flew over the Powder River Training Complex together for the first time during Combat Raider 19-1 on Oct. 16-18. They coordinated with joint tactical air controllers from the Royal Canadian Armed Forces and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, who helped coordinate simulated air strikes from the ground.

All three types of bombers – the B-1B Lancer, B-2 Spirit and B-52 Stratofortress – flew in the exercise. Through their participation in Combat Raider 19-1, the aircrew were able to become more proficient at providing aerial support to ground troops, and the JTACS were able to gain familiarity with the bombers and their capabilities.

"Combat Raider is an opportunity to integrate the



various assets that the joint force has into a one force presentation," said Lt. Col. Keith O'Halloran, the 28th Operations Support Squadron assistant director of operations. "We also train mission commanders in an environment similar to that which they would experience in various

the B-1 and its capabilities.

"WE ALSO TRAIN MISSION COMMANDERS IN AN ENVIRONMENT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH THEY WOULD EXPERIENCE IN VARIOUS THEATERS AROUND THE GLOBE.","

-LT. COL. KEITH O'HALLORAN, THE 28TH OPERATIONS SUPPORT SQUADRON ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

theaters around the globe." The exercise has hosted service members from other nations in previous iterations. Of the Canadian JTACS present this year, some had participated in the past. "This is my third time visiting South Dakota," said Capt. Chris Tymchuk, a JTAC troop commander assigned to the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, 1st Regiment. "This is valuable to the JTAC program within Canada. Combat Raider is important to us because bomber [ground support] is something Canadians don't get many chances to do. It's a lot different and helps us to be more effective.' As the largest dedicated military training space in the continental U.S., the Powder River Training Complex can accommodate a multitude of players during an exercise. Because of the expansive scope of Combat Raider 191, the exercise not only boasted bombers and JTACs, but also tankers from McConnell AFB, Kansas, and Robbins AFB, Georgia; the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma; and HH-60G Pave Hawks from the South Dakota Air

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO | AIRMAN 1ST CLASS

THOMAS KAROL

National Guard. There have been eight Combat Raider exercises in total. Combat Raider 19-1 is not the largest in terms of the number of aircraft, but in O'Halloran's words, it was "the most robust."

"This Combat Raider is one of 'firsts,"" O'Halloran stated. "We have highaltitude airspace

up to 51,000 feet. We also have the new Joint Threat Emitter System and GPS jamming."

The use of GPS jammers to disrupt operations represents a capability that U.S. adversaries already have. Playing this scenario during Combat Raider 19-1 provided aircrews the opportunity to train using RADAR, terrain association, and a map and a compass to determine their location. Chief Master Sgt. Adam Vizi, the 28th Bomb Wing command chief, explained that the training allowed aircrews to hone preexisting skills "so that we can fly, fight and win in any combative scenario." He added that the exercise also showcased the bombers' abilities to get in, strike the target and get out in any contested or degraded environment.

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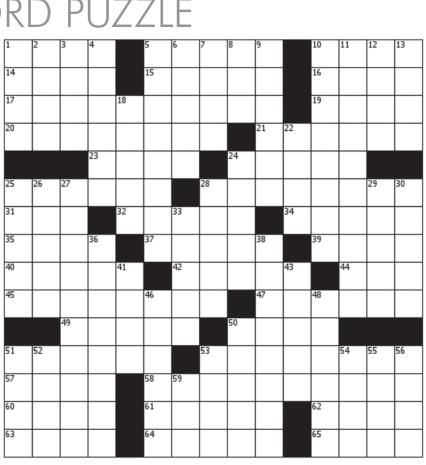
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THE LIGHTER SIDE

Ρl Across



57. Warning to a pedestrian



- 58. River obstructions
- 60. Having the required skills
- 61. Speck in the sea
- 62. Leave out 63. Rundgren of rock
- 64. Yukon carriers 65. New Jersey NBAers
- Down
- 1. Actor Rob
- 4. First-aid kit staple
 - 5. Approaches stealthily 6. Projection room stacks
 - 7. Nocturnal hunters
 - 8. Like early hours
 - 9. Scattered 10. Italian after-dinner
 - drink
 - **11**. Stereotypical
 - wedding figures
 - 12. Loads
- 18. Got wind of 22. Bank job units 24. '70s hot spot 25. Covenants 26. Outdo 27. Arkansas-based retailing nickname 28. "Positive thinking" advocate

12. Loads

13. Wine list options

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SUNDAY, NOV. 4 • 1500

A young girl is transported into a magical world of gingerbread soldiers and an army of mice.

52. Vagabond 29. Privileged group 53. "Everything must go" 30. Campaign poster event word 54. Arrived 33. Nancy Drew creator 36. Drew from a tank, as 55. Give off 56. Bygone fleet, briefly gas 59. Au pair's sch. course 38. Soldier's shoulder pieces 41. Alka-Seltzer sound 43. Like venerated statesmen 46. Perps' stories 48. "A Tale of Two Cities" city **50**. Played some jazz 51. "I beg your pardon?" MOVI





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Solution to last week's Crossword puzzle.

2. "Rubáiyát" poet 3. Gnawed veggie SUDOKU Solution to puzzle on page 10

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DINING, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

NORTHERN SENTRY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2018 5



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 lb. ground beef
- 2 c. shredded Mexican cheese blend, divided
- 1/2 c. panko bread crumbs
- 2 tbsp. freshly chopped pars-
- ley, plus more for garnish
- 2 cloves garlic, minced • 1 jalapeño, finely chopped
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. ground cumin Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 1 oz. (15-oz.) can crushed tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. chopped chipotle chiles
- in adobo sauce

INSTRUCTIONS:

In a medium bowl, combine ground beef, 1 cup of cheese, bread crumbs, parsley, garlic, jalapeño, egg, and cumin and season with salt and pepper. Mix until combined, then form into meatballs.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add meatballs in a single layer and sear 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

Add onion to skillet and cook, stirring, until soft, 5 minutes. Stir in crushed tomatoes and chipotle in adobo and bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and return meatballs to skillet. Cover and simmer until meatballs are cooked through, about 10 minutes.

Top with remaining 1 cup cheese, then cover with lid to let melt, about 2 minutes.

Garnish with parsley before serving.

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at the Farm

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Location: North Dakota State Fair Center 2005 Burdick Expy E, Minot,

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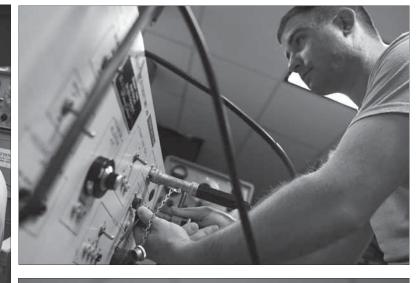


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Welcome Dr. Rym Lamrad



Rym Lamrad, MD

Palliative and Internal Medicine Specialist

Rym Lamrad, MD, focuses on the healthcare needs of adults and the medical needs of people with serious or life-limiting illnesses. She earned her medical doctorate from Saba University School of Medicine, the Netherlands-Antilles, and completed both her Internal Medicine residency and fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine at State University of New York at Buffalo.

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NORTHERN SENTRY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2018



AMANDA DUCHSHERER | DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

MINOT, N.D. – inot State University is hosting Preview Day for prospective students on Saturday, Nov. 3, with various events scheduled from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Attendees have the opportunity to listen to engaging speakers, attend a department fair and breakout sessions, visit one-on-one with faculty, meet current students, and register to win a \$500 tuition waiver.

"I chose Minot State because it was something different, and I wanted to be pushed outside of my comfort zone. At Preview Day, I hope to help students see the benefits of Minot State through my own experience," Carlton Mhangami, student panelist for Preview Day, said.

Mhangami will be part of the morning presentation, "Choosing your major," that begins at 10:30 a.m. Several other current students will join him, as well as Jynette Larshus, Minot State associate professor of sociology and political science, and Kim Tiedman, Minot State instructor of nursing, on the panel.

"One of my new favorite quotes is, 'Aim for the moon and if you miss you will hit the stars.' I think this applies to your next adventure as you move on to experience all that college has to offer,'' Tiedman said. "Minot State University has endless options and is a fantastic place for you to aim for the moon. The moon and the stars here at Minot State are pretty impressive and can change your adventure."

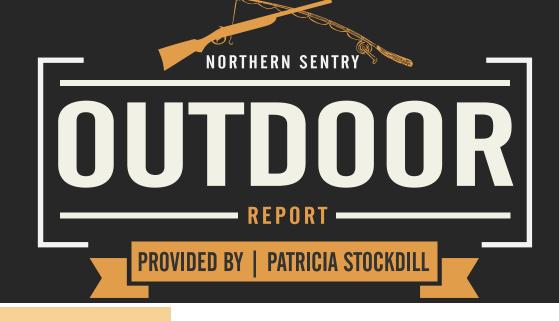
Following the presentation and a provided lunch, a department fair will feature student activity groups, of which there are over 60 on campus, and education tables for each major. Breakout sessions and campus tours will round out the day.

For a full schedule, or to register, visit MinotStateU.edu/ enroll/Events.



ABOUT MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY

Minot State University is a public university dedicated to excellence in education, scholarship, and community engagement achieved through rigorous academic experiences, active learning environments, commitment to public service, and a vibrant campus life.



Dates to Know:

• Nov. 2: Bighorn sheep season opens (lottery licenses).

• **Nov. 4:** Standard time change, daylight savings ended.

• Nov. 9: Deer gun season opens.

• Nov. 10: Bobcat season opens.



NUMBERS TO KNOW: • N.D. GAME AND FISH DEPT., MAIN BISMARCK OFFICE: (701) 328-6300, WEBSITE: (HTTP://GE.ND.GOV) • N.D. GAME AND FISH DEPT., RIVERDALE OFFICE: (701) 654-7475

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OUTDOOR NOTES:

*No baiting allowed on Fish & Wildlife Nat'I. Wildlife Refuges & Waterfowl Production Areas & Game & Fish Dept. Wildlife Mgmt. Areas.

<u>Fishing:</u>

Lake Sakakawea elevation, Oct. 30: 1,841.81 feet above mean sea level (MSL); 29,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) Garrison Dam average daily releases.

Devils Lake elevation: 1,441.14 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Stump Lake elevation: 1,449.19 MSL.

*N.D. Game & Fish Dept. game wardens: Missouri River continues producing success in the tailrace and down river. Best walleye success remains in the midsection of Lake Sakakawea. Little to no activity on Devils Lake and northcentral area lakes.

*Devils Lake, Ed's Bait Shop, Devils Lake: Limited activity.

*Devils Lake, Woodland Resort, Devils Lake: Little activity on Devils Lake.

*Lake Darling, Karma C-Store, Ruthville: Lots of perch success around Landing 2 and 3 from shore on Lake Darling with nice pike success around at Grano.

*Lake Metigoshe, Four Seasons, Bottineau: Not many anglers but those going are finding nice pike and walleye success.

*Lake Sakakawea/Lake Audubon, Cenex Bait & Tackle, Garrison: Most activity remains farther west from Deepwater Bay to the west on Lake Sakakawea. A few anglers working Douglas Bay and east of deTrobriand, weather permitting. Try jigs or Lindy rigs and minnows or jigging Raps.

*Lake Sakakawea/Lake Audubon, 6-Mile Bait & Tackle, Garrison: Limited activity on Lake Sakakawea, Lake Audubon, and the Missouri River with most people hunting rather than fishing.

*Lake Sakakawea/Missouri River, Scott's Bait & Tackle, Pick City: Missouri River remains fair to good for walleye in the chutes both but a little slower than from boats. Lake Sakakawea slow for salmon. Not much walleye activity.

*Lake Sakakawea, Scenic 23, New Town: Continued good walleye success in the Van Hook Arm and river area around New Town using jigs and minnows.

*Lake Sakakawea/northwest N.D. lakes, Scenic Sports, Williston: Nice fall walleye bite continues on the Missouri River by Williston using minnows. Some walleye activity around Lund's Landing on Lake Sakakawea.

*Lonetree WMA area lakes, Harvey: Several area lakes and the Sheyenne River producing a nice fall walleye bite.

*North-central/central N.D. lakes, Towner Hdwe. Hank, Towner: No new reports with little activity.

*Lake Darling, Upper Souris Nat'l. Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Foxholm: A few anglers continue shore-fishing from the landings with occasional success.

Hunting:

*Deer: A little more activity beginning in the northwest with cooler weather.

*Pheasants: Pockets of pheasants remain in some areas along the east end of Lake Sakakawea with young birds getting more coloration.

*Waterfowl: Good goose numbers along the eastern tier of the Missouri River System with nice Canada goose numbers and snow geese moving through the lake's midsection early in the week.

Some new birds moving into northwest N.D., including whitefronts and snow geese. Decent numbers of geese and ducks in east-central N.D. with most snow geese still north of N.D. Highway 200. Many of the snow geese are adults and harder to decoy. Good snow goose numbers in northcentral N.D. with OK success. Lonetree WMA area enjoying increasing numbers of waterfowl in the area. Fewer geese around Devils Lake, however. A lot of ducks



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during the day and at night from boats. Some trout and salmon mixed in. OK walleye success down river, as well. Try 3-swivels. Try casting crankbaits at night from shore along the rocks for walleye moved out of the north-central area but some divers and mallards still around.

* Not much waterfowl movement around Upper Souris NWR

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ESTATE CLAIM

Airman First Class Corey T. Eledge, stationed at Minot AFB, N.D., recently passed away. Anyone with a claim for or against his estate should step forward at this time by contacting 1st Lt Nicholas Chapman, reachable by telephone at (701) 723-6077, or by email at nicholas. chapman.3@us.af.mil.

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registering for the Fall 2018 term (16 Nov-24 Jan). You can enroll in classes for CCAF, classes towards Undergraduate degrees such as: AS/ BS Aeronautics, AS/BS Aviation Maintenance, AS/BS Technical Management and Graduate degrees: MS Aeronautics, MBA Aviation & MS Management. Please stop by the ERAU office, located inside the Minot AFB Education Center Bldg, Room 223 or email your registration request or any inquiries to minot@erau.edu. To apply to the University, please go to https:// worldwide.erau.edu/admissions/ apply/ and select Minot as the Campus location. Our course modalities include Eaglevision class onsite, online and Eaglevision home. If you have any questions, please call 701-727-9007.

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TODAY

- Barre, 0600, Fitness Center
- Torch Club Meeting, 1600-1700, Youth Center
- Friday Fun Members Buffet, 1630-1830, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Yoga, 1700, Fitness Center
- Keystone Meeting, 1700-1800, Youth Center • Club Members \$\$\$ Drawing, 1730-1830, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Zumba, 1800, Fitness Center
- Mixed Fun League, 1830, Rough Rider Lanes
- Karaoke Night, 2100-close, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Lights & Strikes Bowling, 2100-2400, Rough Rider Lanes

SATURDAY

- Zumba, 0900, Fitness Center
- Youth Bowling League, 1000, Rough Rider Lanes
- International Games Day, 1300, Base Library
- UFC Fight Night UFC 230: Cormier vs Lewis, prelims begin at 1900 and main card at 2100. Rockers Bar & Grill
- Bowl the Night Away with "Lights & Strikes", 2000-2400, Rough Rider Lanes

TUESDAY

- National Family Week continues at Youth Programs
- Registration begins for the November Wine & Paint Class at Arts & Crafts

- National Family Week continues at Youth Programs
- Circuit Training, 0600, Fitness Center
- TAP GPS Workshop, 0730-1630, held at the Education Center, hosted by A&FRC
- Club Member Benefit, 0900-2000, Rough Rider Lanes
- Story Time, 1030, Base Library
- Run 4 Fitness, 1145, Fitness Center
- Brown Bag Book Talks, 1200, Base Library
- Pre-Deployment/Remote Readiness Training, 1300-1400, A&FRC



9 November

- National Family Week continues at Youth Programs
- Barre, 0600, Fitness Center
- TAP GPS Workshop, 0730-1630, held at the Education Center, hosted by A&FRC
- Ace in the Hole Tournament, 1130, Fitness Center • Torch Club Meeting, 1600-1700, Youth Center
- Friday Fun Members Buffet, 1630-1830, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Yoga, 1700, Fitness Center
- Keystone Meeting, 1700-1800, Youth Center
- Club Members \$\$\$ Drawing, 1730-1830, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Zumba, 1800, Fitness Center
- Mixed Fun League, 1830, Rough Rider Lanes
- #WEOWNFRIDAY & Operation Night Hoops, 2000, Youth Center
- Karaoke Night, 2000-close, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Lights & Strikes Bowling, 2100-2400, Rough Rider Lanes

- Run 4 Fitness, 0600, Fitness Center
- TAP GPS Workshop, 0730-1630, held at the Education Center, hosted by A&FRC
- Barre, 0915, Fitness Center
- Game Day, 1000-1930, Base Library
- Fit to Fight, 1700, Fitness Center
- Family Fun Night, 1700-2100, Rough Riders Pizza
- Zumba, 1830, Fitness Center

WEDNESDAY

SUNDAY

- NFL Sunday Ticket Football Frenzy & NFL Shop Gift Card Giveaway, 1130-1800, Rockers Bar & Gril
- Family Zumba, 1400, Fitness Center
- Yoga, 1500, Fitness Center

- 4-H Club, 1600-1700, Youth Center
 - Mug Club Special, 1600-1800, Rockers Bar & Grill
 - Digital Literacy Club, 1630-1730, Youth Center
 - Boss & Buddy \$1 off Draft Special, 1630-1830, Rockers Bar & Grill
 - Members Wind Down Wednesday Buffet, 1630-1830, Rockers Bar & Grill
 - Squadron Extramural League, 1730, Rough Rider Lanes
 - Yoga, 1830, Fitness Center

THURSDAY

- National Family Week continues at Youth Programs
- Tactical Fit Express, 0600, Fitness Center
- TAP GPS Workshop, 0730-1630, held at the Education Center, hosted by A&FRC Barre, 0915, Fitness Center
- Fit to Fight, 1130, Fitness Center
- Reintegration Briefing, 1300-1400, A&FRC
- Fitness Hour, 1600-1700, Youth Center
- Fit to Fight, 1700, Fitness Center
- Members 2 for 1 Appetizers, 1700-1900, Rockers Bar & Grill
- Olympic Weight Lifting, 1730, Fitness Center
- Mentalist Jim Karol, FREE Show, doors open 1730 and showtime 1800, Jimmy Doolittle Center
- Craft Club, 1800, Base Library
- Zumba, 1800, Fitness Center
- NFL Thursday Night Football Frenzy, 1900, Rockers Bar & Grill

10 November

- Just Pull It! Deadlift Competition, 0900, Fitness Center
- Zumba, 0900, Fitness Center
- Barre, 1000, Fitness Center
- Youth Bowling League, 1000, Rough Rider Lanes
- Veterans Day Bowling Special, 1400-2000, Rough Rider Lanes
- Turkey Bingo, 1500, Youth Center
- Bowl the Night Away with "Lights & Strikes", 2000-2400, Rough Rider Lanes
- Country Night, 2100-0100, Rockers Bar & Grill

Rough Riders Pizza Special November Special – Garlic Chicken Pizza

A delicious base of garlic butter sauce topped with mozzarella cheese, chicken, mushrooms, broccoli, and black olives. Small: \$11 Med: \$15 Large: \$17- Members receive \$2 off any pizza Try it on a Panino! \$8.25 meal – includes side & drink

The B-Fifty Brew Drink Special

November Drink of the Month – Toasted Marshmallow Latte

A delightful beverage with white chocolate mocha sauce, caramel syrup, and whole milk. Topped with whipped cream and a drizzle of caramel. Try it hot or iced!

Auto Hobby September Specials November 1-15

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MONDAY

- National Family Week begins at Youth Programs
- Tactical Fit Express, 0600, Fitness Center
- TAP GPS Workshop, 0730-1630, held at the Education Center, hosted by A&FRC
- Reintegration Briefing, 1300-1400, A&FRC
- Digital Literacy Club, 1630-1730, Youth Center
- Zumba, 1730, Fitness Center
- Battle Rig Fitness, 1800, Fitness Center
- Knitting Club, 1800, Base Library
- Craft Club, 1800, Base Library
- Key Spouse Monthly Meeting, 1800-1930, held at the PDC, hosted by A&FRC
- Yoga, 1830, Fitness Center

Wright-Patterson AFB mother, physician tellsstoryof heartbreakingloss

AMY ROLLINS | SKYWRIGHTER STAFF

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (AFNS) r. Laura Sidari is speaking out because her family suffered a horrendous loss last Christmas Day.

The Air Force psychiatrist at the Wright-Patterson Medical Center on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and her husband, Dr. Anthony Sidari, a rheumatologist, lost their 4-year-old son, Leon, to complications of influenza. He passed away at a medical facility elsewhere from bacterial pneumonia following the flu, two days following onset of symptoms on Dec. 23.

Although the Sidari family had vaccinated for the flu in prior seasons, Leon died prior to receiving his flu shot that season, Sidari said. He had been scheduled to be vaccinated Jan. 3.

"Last year, if I had seen a story like my own, I would have prioritized the flu shot differently," she said. "As a physician, even I was unaware of the significant risk that the flu posed to my healthy child. Through reaching out to others, including other physician parents, I have discovered that I am not alone in that misconception.'

"Leon's story places a name and a face - a beautiful and loved and special human being – behind the numbers that are often buried in databases and scattered across headlines," Sidari said. "As difficult as it is for me as a mother, I share Leon's story so that someday other families may not have to. As I have devastatingly learned through Leon, flu-related complications are often aggressive and difficult to treat."

Healthy children may be more at risk for suffering a flu-related death. Research of flu-related deaths provides evidence for the flu shot providing a 65 percent reduction in risk for flu-related mortality in healthy children, and a 41 percent reduction in mortality risk for children with pre-existing medical issues. Approximately 80 percent of children who pass away each season from flu-related complications did not have their flu shot that season.

'Being healthy is a risk factor for rapid death," Sidari said. "I didn't even know that as a physician. Compared to other pediatric populations, they die more quickly."

As of Oct. 6, there have been more than 180 children lost to the 2017-2018 influenza season, according to online information published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Many of these children



died before reaching the hospital. Sidari is quick to point out that she is speaking only from her perspective as a mother - not a pediatric specialist - who made sure her children received every vaccination recommended. After Leon's death, she tried to learn as much as she could about influenza in the hope that the Sidari family's then 2-year-old son, Tristan, and 7-week-old son, Cameron, would not also pass away.

"I really wanted to understand the likelihood that we were going to lose our other children," she said. "That's how I found this information."

The mother, with the full support of her husband, now wants to dispel the common misconception that good health affords protection against the flu, and the entire Sidari family received flu shots at the Wright-Patterson Medical Center immunization clinic the first week of October.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC recommend



the flu shot for everyone older than the age of 6 months with few medical exceptions.

The Sidari family faces this holiday season without their first-born, who loved Christmas. His mother remembers him as good big brother who was kind and sensitive, loved cats and gave compliments. Small things are what mattered to him.

"Nothing prepares you as a parent for coming home and having to unwrap Christmas presents for a child who never can," she said. "As parents, there are many

demands on our time and energy, particularly around the holidays," Sidari said. "The flu shot can too easily and understandably slip through the cracks due to busy schedules.

"In my experience, it is worth prioritizing this time of the year. This is a necessary appointment. Bringing awareness to the flu shot will not bring Leon back. I do, however, believe in the healing power of connecting with

others," she said.

She also encourages people to explore multiple options if flu shots are unavailable through their usual source.

"It is my hope that Leon's story can help save lives," Sidari said. "Especially for children like Leon, I encourage other families to consider making the flu shot a priority, this season and every season. It's the best way of reducing risk we have. #FluShotsForLeon.



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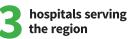
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