

## Remembering Sandra Combs, former Herald adviser

### CAMPUS CRIME

ALLIE CARSON

NEWS EDITOR

Oct. 25 | 9:39 p.m.

Patrol Officer Marcus Caskey, along with Patrol Officer Kevin Willis, were dispatched to the Living and Learning Community in reference to an unresponsive 22-year-old male.

The Jonesboro Fire Department (JFD) and Medic One Ambulance Service were also dispatched to the scene. Upon arrival, JFD personnel were attempting to locate the correct building. Willis assisted by directing them to the appropriate location. As they exited their patrol vehicles to make entry, Medic One Ambulance arrived on scene. Willis escorted JFD to the room while Caskey escorted the Medic One crew.

Upon entering the room, they observed a male subject lying on his back on the bed, breathing but unresponsive. The male was identified as the victim, who was a guest of the suspect, a resident of the room. The suspect was present in the room and was the caller who reported the incident to Jonesboro 911, which then notified UPD dispatch.

While JFD and Medic One personnel provided medical aid to the victim, officers obtained information from the suspect. The suspect said she believed the victim may have been under the influence of alcohol he consumed earlier at the home football game, and that this may have contributed to his medical emergency.

She said the victim did not have any known medical conditions that would typically cause unresponsiveness. Medic One personnel transported the victim to St. Bernard's Medical Center for further treatment.

A University Referral will be issued to the suspect for a residence hall violation, as her guest, the victim, was in violation of the University Alcohol Policy within her dorm room. The suspect is responsible for the actions of her guest.

Oct. 25 | 9:37 p.m.

Patrol Officer Kevin Willis was dispatched for an individual who wished to make a report regarding threats.

Upon arrival, Willis spoke with the victim, who stated he was at the homecoming football game earlier when a male identified as the suspect made threatening statements toward him related to a text exchange with the ex-girlfriend.

The victim told the backstory as follows: after he and his ex-girlfriend broke up, he texted her asking if she was talking about him. She became irate, came to his place of employment. The victim said that this incident led to his being terminated from his job. The victim told the female to stop calling or texting him, which the suspect did not accept; according to the victim, they have had problems since then.

The victim provided a voluntary statement and reported that during their encounter at the homecoming football game, the suspect engaged him in a verbal altercation and said, "I know

where you live, I know where your people are, you a bitch, you will die if you speak on me again." The victim asked that the incident be documented.

Willis said that if he experienced any further issues, he should return, and they would take additional reports. Willis asked the victim if the suspect was a current student. The victim said he did not believe the suspect was a student. Willis verified that the suspect was a former student.

Oct. 25 | 3:07 a.m.

Corporal Heidi Custodio was dispatched to the Living and Learning Communities in reference to a 911 call from Jonesboro Police Department of a female who had fallen off her scooter. Custodio was told by dispatch that the fire department and emergency medical services (EMS) were already en route. Upon arrival, Custodio made contact with the victim. She then showed Custodio the cut she had on her head.

She then gave her a trauma pad to apply pressure with. Once the fire department and EMS were on scene, they told the victim that she could go to the hospital, and she refused. At that time, EMS and the fire department said that she would be fine.

Oct. 24 | 5:40 p.m.

Officer Robert Kary was dispatched to the UPD dispatch window to take a report for an injured person related to an unleashed animal.

Upon arrival, Kary made contact with the injured party, identified as the victim, who said she was walking on the pathway between the Northpark Quads and Living and Learning Community buildings. A student, later identified as the suspect, was walking an unleashed dog along the same pathway.

The victim said that the dog began to bark and charge at her. The victim attempted to flee from the dog and fell forward, landing face-first on the walkway. The fall resulted in injuries to her legs, elbows, and to her breast piercings. The victim was subsequently transported to NEA Baptist Hospital for further medical treatment, specifically due to ongoing breast pain related to the fall.

Video surveillance was reviewed. The footage confirms the incident and shows the suspect walking an unleashed dog into North Park Quads Building 3 at approximately 1:16 p.m.. Further investigation revealed that the suspect's dog was not registered with the university.

The suspect was contacted and was told of the university's regulations regarding animal control, specifically the requirements for dogs to be on a leash and registered with the university to be kept in the dormitory.

The suspect was informed she would receive a university referral for the infractions of having an unregistered animal and allowing the dog to be unleashed on campus property.

#### HERALD NEWS

##### STAFF REPORT

School of Media and Journalism students lost a beloved professor and adviser when Sandra Combs, a former associate professor of multimedia journalism, died last week.

Combs came to Arkansas State University as an associate professor in 2008, after teaching at Michigan State University and Wayne State University. She retired from the faculty of the School of Media and Journalism in April 2025, where she also served as adviser to *The Herald*, the student newspaper, during her 17-year career at A-State.

Former Herald Editor-in-Chief Rachel Rudd said she benefited from Combs's mentoring for several years.

"It's hard to put into words how Ms. Combs has impacted me," Rudd said. "But the memory that's been replaying in my mind these past few days is one from when I'd just been told I was going to be hired as the editor of Jonesboro Right Now. I was driving home and called her to tell her the news, and I remember her being so excited and proud. These past few days, it's the excitement in her voice. That's stuck with me."

Combs impacted students professionally and personally.

Laila Casiano, 2025 A-State graduate, said she fondly remembers how Combs always made time for her, even when she first joined the newspaper staff.

"I would be so nervous to just hang out in the Herald office and she would keep me company, talking about the news or how my semester has been for far," Casiano said. "She was always interested in hearing about my personal and academic life."

In addition to advising The



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA COMBS' FACEBOOK PAGE

Sandra Combs, holding up a "wolves up" gesture in *The Herald* office. Combs served as the previous Herald adviser during her 17-year career at A-State.

Herald, Combs served as co-advisor for the Arkansas State Association of Black Journalists chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). A-State is home to the only recognized NABJ student chapter in the state.

The NABJ said Combs was a dedicated storyteller, educator and mentor. They also said she embodied the spirit of excellence, service and community.

Combs was also a proud supporter of the Red Wolves women's basketball team

and could often be seen courtside at home games.

Active in several professional organizations and university committees, Combs was a Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication Fellow and was recognized by the Craighead County NAACP with its Unsung Hero award. Her professional memberships also included the National College Media Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Association

for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

A native of Orlando, Combs completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Florida and her master's degree at Michigan State University.

The visitation will take place from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., Friday, at Woodard Funeral Services in Jonesboro. The funeral is scheduled for 10 a.m., Saturday, at First Baptist Church on Kitchen Street, also in Jonesboro.

## Furry 5K raises funds, awareness for autism

AHTZIRY ZUÑIGA

STAFF WRITER

The College of Agriculture, College of Veterinary Medicine and pre-vet club hosted the fifth annual Furry 5K fundraising event Saturday, raising funds and awareness with the Ag For Autism non-profit allegiance in Jonesboro.

Participants from Arkansas State University and the Jonesboro community brought their pets to the event, which started with a pet-welcoming expedition. Hand-painted signs and guides were posted all throughout the university campus for the event's pathway, as runners and walkers alike made their way to the finish line.

One aim of the Furry 5K is to raise money for the pre-professional pre-vet club on campus. The event was free for participants, but t-shirts, dog treats and pup-cups made by the club's members

were sold during the event for club funding. Mickey Latour, dean of the College of Agriculture said the event has evolved throughout the years.

"When we first started doing the activity, we were just doing it for fun, we didn't collect any money," Latour said. "Two, three years ago, we partnered with Ag For Autism, so now it's not only to come and have fun with bringing your dog and going for a walk, but it's to create awareness about autism as well."

Abby Cooper, a sophomore Animal Science, pre-vet major from Glenrose, Arkansas, and president of the pre-vet Club, said she hopes the event brightened everyone's day.

"Our furry friends are our besties, so we hope to just bring each other together and have a fun day," Cooper said.

CONTINUED:  
FURRY 5K, 4A



Photo by Ahtziry Zuñiga | Staff Writer

Furry 5K attendee walks the campus trail during the event with his dog, Borealis.