The Courier Herald

$1 | TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2025 | COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM



OFTC student William Fuller packs up his TOOLS awarded for air conditioning technology/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

OFTC honors 17 students with TOOLS

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Seventeen students from Oconee Fall Line Technical College were honored during the annual Tools for Outstanding Occupational Leadership Students (TOOLS) program held last week at the DuBose Porter Center.

This year's recipients were: William Fuller, air conditioning technology, Sarah Barlow, associates of science in nursing, Blake Clements, construction management, Courtney Brooks, diagnostic medical sonography, Grayson Maxwell, electrical control technology, Devonte Brown, industrial systems maintenance, Cole Gaultney, mechatronics technology, Lauren Hammock, medical assisting, Jennifer Timmons, medical assisting, Ashley Howell, practical nursing, Kailey Goolsby, radiologic technology, Zachary Floyd, radiologic technology, Brianna Ellison, respiratory care, Timoy Ellis, respiratory care, Cason Davis, welding & joining technology, Preston Robinson, welding & joining technology, and Nicholas Rowell, welding & joining technology.

Recipients were awarded program-specific tools that will help them in their careers so that once they graduate so they can seamlessly transition into the workforce without having to purchase the necessary on-the-job equipment or tools.

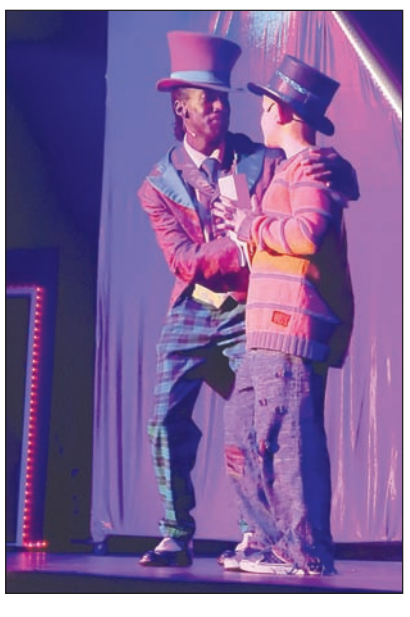
"This is our 26th TOOLS program at OFTC," said Michele Strickland, vice-president of academic affairs at OFTC. "We have 17 outstanding students who will receive the tools for their careers."

The program is sponsored by the Louie & Evelyn Livingston Family Foundation. Corporate donors were Morris Bank, OFTC Foundation, Inc., Fairview Park Hospital, WestRock, First Laurens Bank and Geo D Warthen Bank.

TOOLS
Continued on page 10

IT'S A WRAP: DUBLIN COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTS 'CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY'

The Dublin Community Theatre's production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" brought big crowds to Theatre Dublin during its three-day, four-show run over the weekend. Cast and crew had been working hard on the play for months, with the talent showing on the stage/**PAYTON TOWNS III**









Local Red Cross celebrates volunteers

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The local American Red Cross celebrated its volunteers Tuesday in its new location.

Peggy Bentz, community disaster program specialist, welcomed all of the volunteers to the celebration held at 1825 Veterans Blvd., Suite 6.

"I'm very happy to have each one of the volunteers here," Bentz said. "It's a blessing to have this in our new building, too. This is your home too. You guys are the life of us. We wouldn't make it without you. Every one of you need to be recognized."

Bentz talked about Genett Smith, Vallori Taylor, Paul Williams and Thomas Serensky. Williams found out later that he was not only nominated but would be named in a group of volunteers for the Exceptional Volunteer Service Award.

"I can't do it without them," Williams said. "This is all a team effort. They have to keep me straight."

Serensky has stepped up in the leadership role.

"He is making sure we get them trained up," Bentz said.

Taylor just returned from working at shelters in Indiana and Kentucky after they were hit by floods and tornados.

"She is in here four days a week and helps run the office," Bentz said.

Bentz calls Smith "momma."

"She keeps us straight," Bentz said. "She is there to help in any way. She helps with prayer or preparedness. She makes sure our community is aware of smoke alarms."

According to Bentz, 1,000 people were saved because of smoke alarms the Red Cross and its volunteers installed.

"Since the beginning of the fiscal year in July 2024, we have opened 725 fire or flood cases and we have helped 1,799 households," Bentz said, adding that the South Central Georgia Chapter has disbursed approximately $800,000 to clients throughout its 24 counties.

RED CROSS
Continued on page 10



Genett Smith (left) receives a 2025 award nominee certificate from Peggy Bentz/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

INDEX

OBITUARIES 2
50 YEARS AGO 5
EDITORIAL 3
TELL IT! 4
WEATHER 4
SPORTS 6-8
COMICS 9

1 section, 10 pages • Vol. 110, No. 49, Pub. No. 161860

7 36211 57521 0

Hospital employees 'Show Up' for Boys & Girls Club

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Volunteers from Fairview Park Hospital did more than show up for a local nonprofit. They showed out.

Approximately 30 Fairview Park Hospital employees donated more than $1,500 in food to help feed Boys & Girls Clubs of Laurens & Johnson Counties during the April 16 event. This snacks and drinks, which were bought, donated and sorted at the club, will help feed 105 children from now through the summer months.

As part of Hospital Corporation of America Healthcare's We Show Up campaign, the employees needed to go outside the hospital's walls to serve the community, said Liz Green, the hospital's director of marketing and communications.

"The purpose is 'we show up,' and HCA has set some really high standards in how our employees are involved, not only internally but in the community," Green said. "They ask that we volunteer and record our volunteer hours so that they can keep track with the impact we're having locally in our communities."

Fairview Park knows what its staff does when they hold food drives and other events to help the community. Green said it is important for the community to see their employees to help others.

"We Show Up is really an initiative for us all to go out into the community to have a visual and volunteer impact that shows the community that HCA and Fairview shows up for the community," Green said. "People may have seen us last week at Walmart in our We Show Up t-shirts. We went in all at the same time."

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
Continued on page 10



Fairview Park employees sort snacks at the Boys & Girls Club/**SPECIAL PHOTO**

OBITUARIES



Lemuel Lamar Cole Jr.

Mr. Lemuel Lamar Cole Jr., 82 joined his loving wife Carol in eternal rest on Thursday April 3, 2025 at his residence on Parks Rd Lincolnton Ga.

Lamar was born on Jan. 24, 1943 in Douglas Ga. to Lemuel Lamar Cole Sr. and Doris Brooks Cole. He is survived by his sister Betty Pearce (James) and his brother Arthur Brooks Cole, his daughters Deborah Torres (Rolando) and Michele Broadbrooks (Chip) and his grandchildren Alex Torres, Sam Torres, Jarrett Torres, Veronica Torres and Joshua Jones.

He is predeceased by his sister Beverly Ann Cole and his grandson Chase Cole Corrao. Lamar will be remembered for his "Carol stories," love for the great outdoors, his fishing and hunting stories and his sense of humor. The family will have a visitation only at Rees Funeral Home from 4 until 6 p.m. on Wednesday April 9, 2025. You may sign the family's online guestbook at: www.reesfuneralhome.net. Rees Funeral Home, 195 N Peachtree St., Lincolnton, GA 706-359-3222 would like to thank the Cole family for your trust and confidence to serve you during this difficult time.

Betty Jean Jones Weathersbee

Betty Jean Jones Weathersbee, age 82, of Chester, Ga., died on Thursday, April 24, 2025.

Funeral services were held at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 27, at Southerland Funeral Chapel, with interment in Pleasant Olive Cemetery.

Survived by her sons – James Weathersbee (Debbie), Thomas Weathersbee (Michelle) and Ed Weathersbee (Chelsea); grandchildren – Kelly, Michael, Raina, and Ellie; great-grandson – Montgomery; sister – Linda Roberson; brothers – Ernest Jones and Bobby Jones.

The family will receive friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. Sunday, April 27.

Stokes-Southerland Funeral Home of Eastman has charge of arrangements.



Amon Ke Vone Harvey

Funeral services for Mr. Amon Ke Vone Harvey, 21, of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Pinehill Christian Church, 2908 Fountain Road in Cadwell. Minister Deloris Quarterman will deliver the eulogy. Interment will follow in the church cemetery.

Amon Harvey, affectionately known as "Moody" to his family, was born in Sumter County, Georgia, to Paul Harvey Sr., and Melissa Harvey. Amon was known for his unwavering love of, and protection to, his family. He was a devoted father to his daughters. He loved his mother and siblings fiercely. If you have ever had a conversation with him, he could often be heard expressing his admiration for his dedicated father, his role model.

He attended the Laurens County Schools in Dublin, Georgia, and later attended the Sumter County Schools in Americus, Georgia. He had varied career endeavors including at a burial vault company, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and he served as a Special Events Assistant, just to name a few.

Mr. Harvey passed away on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. He was preceded in death by his children, Kayson, Carson, and A'laila Harvey; his grandfathers, Reverend Larry D. Harvey and O.Z. Coleman, his aunt, Jaqueline Coleman, and his uncle, Clarence Coleman.

He leaves to cherish his memories, two beautiful daughters, Alivia and Alaina Harvey, his parents, Paul (Cecile) Harvey Sr., of Dublin, Georgia, and Melissa Harvey of Americus, Georgia; nine siblings, Jamal, Victavious, Marcal and Ashley Welborn, Keyon and Aallyah Harvey, all of Americus, Georgia, and Paul, Jr., Tyre, and Larian Harvey, all of Dublin, Georgia. His beloved grandmothers, Virginia Harvey of Dublin, Georgia and Nellie Coleman of Americus, Georgia., uncles, Jarisus (Corvencia) Harvey of Dublin, Georgia, Otis Coleman, Jerome Coleman, Jeffery Coleman, Joseph Coleman and Tony Coleman all of Americus, Georgia, and Willie Coleman of Irving, Texas, aunts, Via (Kenneth) Evans of Dexter, Georgia; Aiicia (Brandon) Hayes and Teresa Coleman, both of Americus, Georgia, Melinda Coleman of Calhoun, Georgia; Gabrielle (Christopher) Coleman of Warner Robins, Georgia, LeAnn Dewberry, and Lisa Coney, both of Dublin, Georgia, three nieces, JaRiah Welborn, Mckenley Waymon, Kehlani Harvey and one nephew, Ashton Waymon; and a host of aunts and uncles, relatives and friends.

Please post your condolences online at Servicesby-Dudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.



Johnnie "Joni" H. Lawrence

Johnnie "Joni" H. Lawrence, a beacon of love and kindness, passed away peacefully on April 22, 2025, at the age of 89 in Dublin, Ga. Born on Sept. 5, 1935, in Macon, Ga., Joni was the cherished daughter of the late John and Margaret Tanner Horton. Her life was a testament to the power of faith, the warmth of family, and the joy of simple pleasures.

Joni was a graduate of Adrian High School in Adrian, Ga. After graduation, she dedicated her life to creating a loving home for her family and became a treasured member of the Pine Forest Methodist Church community in Dublin. Her unwavering faith and commitment to her church family were sources of strength and inspiration to all who knew her.

In her personal life, Joni was a devoted wife to her late husband, Don Lawrence, and a loving mother to her children and grandchildren. In addition to her parents and husband, she was predeceased by her beloved son-in-law, Fred Greene, her granddaughter, Kylie Greene, and her great-grandson, Benjamin "Ben" Greene.

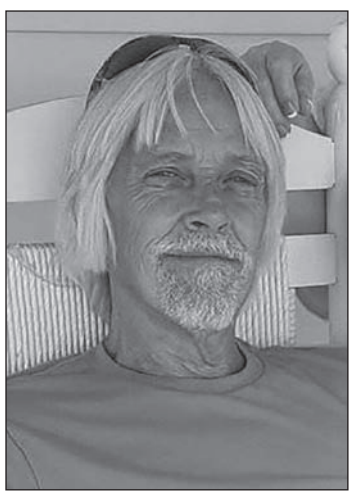
Her legacy of love continues through her son, David Lawrence (Maria) of Dublin, and her daughter, Terri Garijanian (Peter) of Locust Grove, Ga. Her grandchildren, Kessler Lawrence of Atlanta, Hill Lawrence of Dublin, and Landon Greene of Locust Grove, Ga., will forever cherish the memories of their doting "Noni". Joni also leaves behind several nieces and nephews.

Joni was an avid reader, and had a green thumb which was evident in the beautiful amaryllis bulbs she planted at each home she lived in, a tradition that brought beauty to her surroundings and joy to her heart. Joni's passion for the Georgia Bulldogs was unmatched; she was a die-hard fan who never missed a game, cheering on her team with enthusiasm and pride.

Her love extended beyond her human family to her grand-fur babies, Roux, Bowie, Cricket, Kiefer, and Luna. The affection between Joni and her furry companions was mutual, and their presence brought her immense happiness.

Mrs. Lawrence will be laid to rest beside her husband at Poplar Springs Church, in Adrian, Ga. in a private family graveside service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Joni's memory to Pine Forest Methodist Church, 400 Woods Ave., Dublin, Ga. 31021. Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.



Cary Bentz

Cary Bentz, 60, of Dublin, passed away on April 26, 2025.

Mr. Bentz was born in Chicago, Ill., on June 1, 1964, to the late Wallace and Joann Alberson Bentz. Cary was self-employed as a carpenter most of his life and was truly a "jack of all trades." He was loved by everyone and was always willing to lend a hand to anyone in need. Cary enjoyed fishing and spending time with his friends and family.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Brian Michel Bentz.

Left to cherish his memory is his devoted wife of 33 years, Peggy Foskey Bentz of Dublin; daughters, Brandi Farmer (Joseph) of Dublin, and Jessica Horton (William) of Dexter; son, Cory Bentz (Lisa) of Ludowici; nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

A funeral service celebrating his life will be held on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at 11 a.m. in the Mary Whitaker Townsend Memorial Chapel at Townsend Brothers Funeral Home. Burial will follow at Dublin Memorial Gardens. Kelvin Foskey will officiate. The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until service hour on Wednesday at the funeral home.

Pallbearers will be Cory Bentz, Ashley Endfinger, Dalton Persinger, Will Cooper, Granger Farmer and Ken Davis.

Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com to sign the online memorial register.

ANNIVERSARIES

April 29
Victor & Sharon Johnson

April 30
Randy & Ivey Wilkins

BIRTHDAYS

April 29
Kinsley Olivia Cooper
Rev. Earl Roach

April 30
Shannon Craft
Calvin Durham
Camellia Horne



By MICHAEL ROIZEN, M.D.

Older and stronger

Wouldn't it be great if as you got older your muscles got more and more resistant to damage? Well, listen up.

Research published in the Journal Aging and Physical Activity found that older adults don't experience greater muscle damage, soreness or function loss after exercise than younger exercisers do -- and in some instances, they have less damage! For example, creatine kinase levels, an indicator of muscle damage, were approximately 28% lower in older adults at 24 hours post-exercise than in younger folks. And muscle soreness, over several days post-workout, was consistently lower in older adults and muscle function was the same, young or old. As a result, the researchers suggest older adults may not need extended periods of recovery after exercise, allowing them to work out more frequently and more intensely, leading to better long-term health.

Another study in the same journal found that getting regular exercise when you're older also fights off mental fatigue, by reducing stress, improving sleep, lifting your mood, and boosting cognitive function. That's because exercise turns on genes that make new, better-functioning proteins. And additional research advocates combining Brain Endurance Training (BET), which involves systematic repetition of fatiguing cognitive tasks, with exercises like doing a 5-minute rhythmic handgrip using as much force as possible to boost your fitness both physically and mentally.

So, exercise your options for a stronger, healthier you! You'll have more health-boosting proteins running around in you helping you stay younger longer. And get all the support you need from the free newsletter at LongevityPlaybook.com.

ALMANAC

Today is the 119th day of 2025 and the 41st day of spring.

TODAY'S HISTORY: In 1429, 17-year-old Joan of Arc led French forces in relieving the besieged city of Orleans, France.

In 1945, the Dachau concentration camp in Germany was liberated by U.S. troops.

In 1992, riots broke out in Los Angeles after four police officers were acquitted of using excessive force during the arrest of motorist Rodney King.

In 2011, Great Britain's Prince William and Kate Middleton were married in London.

TODAY'S FACT: Daniel Day-Lewis is the only actor in history to win the Academy Award for best actor in a leading role three times.

Lee Fagins

Mr. Lee Fagins of Dublin, Georgia passed away Saturday, April 26 , 2025. Funeral arrangements are in complete at this time.

www.ServicesByDudley.com

Michael Carey

Mr. Michael Carey of Dublin, Georgia passed away Friday, April 25, 2025. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at the time.

www.servicesbydudley.com

Bryant Smith

Mr. Bryant Smith of Dublin, Georgia passed away Sunday, April 27 , 2025. Funeral arrangements are in complete at this time.

www.servicesbydudley.com

MICKLER
WOOD FLOORS & SANDING
Est. 1999
Free Estimates | Demolition | Repairs
Installation | Sanding & Refinishing
478.998-3035

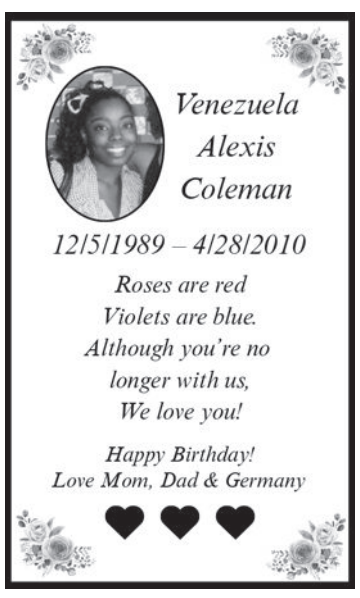
In Search of Pinestraw Fields
Top Dollar Pay
Southeast Pinestraw
Call Lee (478) 290-9187

JOHNSON
Tree & Stump Removal
Tree Removal • Stump Grinding
Bobcat Service • Lot Clearing
- INSURED -
478-275-8003 Home
478-279-1709 Truck

EXODUS TRAVEL COMPANY
A full service travel agency
EXODUS TRAVEL
WITH ASHLYN WILLIAMSON
(478) 357-2180 | exodustravel.co | 213 Five Points Way Dublin, GA 31021

MR. APPLIANCE
SPEEDY EXPERT SERVICE
a neighborly company
Locally Owned and Operated Franchise
Calling Mr. Appliance® Ensures:
A solid quote before the work begins - no surprises
Prompt, efficient attention
Never an overtime charge - We charge by the job, not by the hour
Our "Leave No Trace" clean-up commitment
All work & parts guaranteed
Courteous & skilled in-home service professionals
478.309.5961 MrAppliance.com

Social Security Disability Help
Experienced and Specialized Legal Representation
• Specializes in Social Security Disability Law
• Previously Worked for Social Security Disability
• No Fee unless you are granted Disability Benefits
• Successfully Represents Clients at Disability Hearings
• Files Disability Appeals at all Levels
Attorney Brian Arnold
ARNOLD & ARNOLD
www.GeorgiaDisabilityLaw.com
1607A Rice Ave. Dublin, GA 31021 478-272-2300
111 E. Cherry St. Cochran, GA 31014 478-934-4561
544 Mulberry St., Ste. 619 Macon, GA 31201 478-745-9644
Call 1-478-272-2300 for FREE CASE EVALUATION



OUR TAKE



Participants pray for "family" at last year's National Day of Prayer event/PAYTON TOWNS III

The power of prayer

For thousands of years people have turned to prayer in times of trouble and need or to simply seek peace or to draw closer to some higher power.

The healing properties of prayer are well-documented, but scientists struggle to explain why. Prayer, or meditation, has been credited with clinical gains in everything from reducing blood pressure and heart rate to boosting levels of melatonin and serotonin.

For believers, prayer holds much power beyond this physical realm and into the spiritual. The poet Alfred Lord Tennyson once wrote: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," meaning that prayer can bring about outcomes in our lives and our world that we might not perceive innitially or even comprehend.

The Apostle Paul wrote that we should pray without ceasing, suggesting a constant and personal communication with God, but the Bible also tells us that where two or more are gathered in Jesus' name, He will be there also.

The local National Day of Prayer Task Force will host its annual gathering this Thursday, at noon and at 7 p.m., at the Market on Madison. The task force has identified seven themes – or areas of our lives and country – that it wants participants to pray for: church, family, education, business, military, media and the government.

Roger Walden, president of the Dublin-Laurens County National Day of Prayer Task Force, is encouraging believers from all denominations to attend. "When Christians are united in prayer, we can accomplish a lot more than just individually," Walden told The Courier Herald last week.

Prayer alone might not bring about the changes we seek – the Bible also tells us that faith without works is dead – but we believe it is an excellent place to start.

- Rodney Manley

YOUR TURN:

Share your opinion on current events, or topics covered in The Courier Herald by emailing us: tchnewsreporter@gmail.com

DAILY SCRIPTURE

"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skinhas been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

- Job 19:25-27

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"Do. Or do not. There is no try."

- Yoda in "The Empire Strikes Back"

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY

April 29, 2025 is...

- National Shrimp Scampi Day
- National Zipper Day
- National Peace Rose Day
- International Dance Day
- World Wish Day
- Viral Video Day

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS

Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2024

COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM

Phone: (478) 272-5522 • Fax: (478) 272-2189

115 S. Jefferson St., Dublin, GA 31021-5146

Office hours are 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays

GET IN TOUCH

News: tchnewsreporter@gmail.com
Subscription: tchcirculation@gmail.com
Advertising: advertisingtch@gmail.com
Sports: tchsports77@gmail.com
Obituaries: tchobits77@gmail.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES Print: $12.50/month Digital: $10.50/month

Periodicals Postage Paid at Dublin, Georgia
(USPS 161-860) - Published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
POSTMASTER: Send address change to:
The Courier Herald, 115 South Jefferson Street, Dublin, GA 31021

GEORGIA TRUST — for Local News —

DuBose Porter/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Pam Burney/GENERAL MANAGER
Caleb Slinkard/EXECUTIVE EDITOR

This newspaper is committed to the idea that the press should tell the truth without prejudice and spread knowledge without malicious intent.

With you, may the force be

MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

This column began a long time ago, in a movie theater far, far away.

I do not know which movie theater it was, but what I do remember was the energy and excitement my brother and I shared after we saw the classic movie "Star Wars." We did not know then that what we saw was episode four of a six-part saga. A lot of that had to do with the movie's creator George Lucas who added the title "A New Hope" when "Star Wars" was re-released in 1981, almost a year after "The Empire Strikes Back" (Episode V) was originally released.

I could not help but like Luke Skywalker, Chewbacca and the droid R2-D2 and daydream about taking adventures with Han Solo in the Millennium Falcon.

My brother and I wanted anything and everything to do with "Star Wars" from toys, clothes and other items related to this blockbuster. When it came to toys we had just about all of the action figures, and ships like the Millennium Falcon, X-wing, TIE fighter, land speeder, snow speeder and games related to "Star Wars."

From the time "Star Wars" came out through "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi" (Episode VI) in 1983, we had many things connected to "Star Wars." We even had an alarm clock with R2-D2 and C-3PO. R2-D2 would wake us up by doing his beeps and C-3PO would tell you that we needed to get up or "this little rebel is going to be late." The droid would finish by reminding us to set the clock so that they could wake us up again the next day.

I remember being excited to see "The Empire Strikes Back" when it first came out. I just knew Luke was going to get payback on Darth Vader for what he did in the first movie. Well, that did not happen. In fact, Vader wound up telling Luke one of the biggest twist probably in movie history. Now, for those who by now have not seen this 1981 classic, I will not spoil it, but I do recall shouting out, "He's a liar" in the theater. I remember my mom calming me down, especially after that movie ended on a cliffhanger.

That of course set up "Return of the Jedi." I was ready to see it, but in another way, sad because it was going to be the end of this trilogy and storytelling. There was a time when Lucas did not think he was going to go back and make Episodes I, II and III. So when the credits started to roll for "Return of the Jedi," some believed that was it for "Star Wars" in 1983.

For the next 14 years, we got to watch these "Star Wars" films on tape and then DVD. There were all types of books based on the popular movie series. Through those years there was little to no news about the first three episodes or anything else related to the galaxy "far, far away."

Then, in the late 1990s, news came out that Lucas had added some scenes and made some changes in the original movies. And while some of them did not make sense (Greedo firing first and Han Solo walking on Jabba the Hutt's tail) it was good to see the original three "Star Wars" movies back on the big screen. Then bigger news came out that Lucas was in fact going back to do Episode I, II and III.

The "Star Wars" excitement returned. Even though "The Phantom Menace" (Episode I) "Attack of the Clones" (Episode II) and "Revenge of the Sith" (Episode III) were not as good as the original three, it was still good to see the lightsaber duels (especially in "The Phantom Menace"). And once again, when the credits began to roll for Episode III, I thought that was all for "Star Wars."

That was until Lucas sold Lucasfilm to Disney in 2012, and it was announced that new films were being made, along with some stand alone films and TV shows. You better believe I was back at the theater to see "The Force Awakens" (Episode VII) "The Last Jedi" (Episode VIII) and "The Rise of Skywalker" (Episode IX). There were also the stand alone movies of "Rouge One" and "Solo" mixed in with the newer trilogy. By the time Episode IX's credits started to roll, I knew this was not the last time "Star Wars" would be on the big screen.

Since Lucas sold his studio to Disney, we have been introduced to Grogu and Din Djarin in "The Mandalorian," and caught up with and met other characters in the shows "Obi-Wan Kenobi," "The Book of Boba Fett," "Andor," "Ahsoka," "The Acolyte" and "Skeleton Crew." They also have cartoons like "The Clone Wars," "Rebels," "Tales of the Jedi" and "The Bad Batch."

Now granted, not every movie or show has been great. I will still take them because even these movies and shows are way better than the "Star Wars Holiday Special" in 1978. I remember watching it when it came out and never saw it again. There is a reason for that - it was pretty bad.

That being said, there is no way that more "Star Wars" material - movies or shows - can be bad. I say bring them on. And just this week, the second season of "Andor" begun. Even in a show like this, which leads up to the movie "Rouge One," it is good to see how the characters became who they are, even if that's not the way we thought or liked for it to happen.

So much has come our way since those first notes of John Williams' "Star Wars" theme hit our ears in 1977 and the scroll rolled up the screen. We have been introduced to different worlds and sci-fi adventures. And according to Disney, more is on the way like "The Mandalorian and Grogu" (scheduled for release in May 2026) and the recently announced "Star Wars: Starfighter" for 2027.

With May the 4th coming up, it is time for "Star Wars" fans to sit back and enjoy our favorite movies and shows from the galaxy far, far away. May the force - of fourth - be with you!

Paul Cramer sought to make Athens a destination



By LORAN SMITH

Paul Cramer, a native of Clifton Park, N.Y., arrived in Athens in 1995, to finish building The Classic Center and start a convention hub and theater business from scratch.

It wasn't long before he realized that what he and his family were experiencing in Athens was an amazing community for visitors and residence alike. However, he did get an offer back in his home state which turned his head—at least initially.

When he discussed the opportunity with his wife, Stacey, she was very plain-spoken and informed Paul that he could return to the Empire State but she was staying in the Empire State of the South. It turned out that Stacey's influence became an inspiration for him and the family.

"We had never lived in a college town, and we realized just how much Athens-Clarke had to offer. There were big time sports at the University of Georgia which had a glowing academic reputation, there were two great hospitals, there was an art, music, and cultural influence and a prestigious country club with a layout designed by the famous architect Dondald Ross. Athens' location was spectacular, less than an hour to the North Georgia Mountains, and an hour and a half to the largest international airport in the world, and only a short ride to the coast.

One of the first passionate advocates of Athens to welcome him to town was the late E. H. Culpepper, a "Damn Good Dawg," and lawyer who appreciated, early on, Paul's creative vision for the community. The two of them established a rapport and friendship right away. "E. H. saw what Athens meant not only to Northeast Georgia but also to the entire state," Paul says.

When he arrived, the first phase of The Classic Center was getting underway, making Paul realize that big things could happen for the city and region. Focused on fulfilling the mission of serving the region as a civic, cultural and social center while maximizing the economic impact of tourism, Paul and The Classic Center Authority Board expanded The Classic Center four different times, each time bringing new and larger groups to Athens.

The board challenged Paul and his staff to maximize the impact which led to a study about the arena. In addition to conventions and concerts, the arena would bring in various sporting competitions. Paul wanted to complement the Athens sports scene—not compete with the UGA teams—and sensed that ice hockey would be appealing to the community.

He had learned the game in his hometown with pick-up games on the Mohawk River when it froze over in winter and knew that an upscale arena would no only enhance the sport but would provide conference and convention opportunity for the city.

The "Ice Dawgs" were a hit, but Paul had greater plans in mind. Simply fast forward and you have the Athens Rock Lobsters competing in Akins Ford Arena which seats 5,500 with a max capacity of 8,500. The arena was designed to host a variety of events from concerts to sports tournaments to trade shows. It is spanking new, clean, kempt, and refreshing. It provides a wholesome atmosphere and environment for families.

Paul is a man who is always thinking about how to improve downtown Athens and remains open to ideas. He has always sought to connect with the right support groups and people. Casual conversation with Brad Akins of Akins Ford in nearby Winder evolved into a partnership that has "look beyond the horizon" implications.

"Brad's business is certainly regional and his business footprint is expanding," Paul says. "He is community oriented with an emphasis on good relationships in business with an underscoring of seeing his communities prosper. He is a great partner for us."

The arena and the convention center improved an area which was the site of the old rail center and abandoned warehouses which made it a busy business hub in its day. Now the site hosts over 700 events a year and drives $90 million in economic impact. Drive by the convention center and the Akins Ford Arena and you will likely flash a thumbs up. It makes you proud to see how The Classic Center Authority has transformed this old rail yard into a vibrant place for the community to enjoy.

The Classic Center Authority in 2014 formulated the plan for development of the building and got underway with a $34 million grant from SPLOST. Bond funding was needed as growth was experienced. Savvy marketing by The Classic Center team has enabled the authority to meet all due bills, making continued solvency a high priority.

There is a study committee evaluating future development, working to bring about a connection between Akins Ford Arena and the convention center with the attractive greenway in the area and the Oconee River.

"It can be like what the battery has become with the Atlanta Braves being its centerpiece. There will be shops, restaurants, and game attractions—a retail and sports entertainment core, all connected to the river," Paul says.

With smooth and laid-back sales and promotional style, Paul Cramer can get more done over a meal and hockey game than some executives can get done in half dozen hard driving caucuses.

His team suggested that the new hockey ownership should solicit community input to obtain a name for the new hockey team. Spinning from Athens' rich music history, the name Rock Lobsters was suggested, and when the B-52's endorsed it, the name took off. It soon had over 9,000 votes from the community which confirmed that Paul and the Rock Lobster Hockey team had hit the jackpot.

From the moment he became entrenched into the daily function of the Classic City, Paul Cramer sought to make the Classic City a destination for tourism and entertainment and give downtown Athens an uptown image and reputation. I'd say he has succeeded.

Tell It!

Call 272-0375, email chtellit@gmail.com, or Tell It! at CourierHeraldToday.com

For the Tell It! master and all involved, when I call in and I use profanity, it's not aimed at you at all. It's my emotions over take me for I have feelings for things, that is and being honest and truthful. You have the power of pencil which is more powerful than any sword. Don't ever forget that. Always be true to your heart and soul and yourself to do the right thing. I'm asking you to forgive me for my profanity. I'm just human and I'm a sinner.

Glad to hear that Clifford Garnto is retiring from the county school system. I think that means that's the last of the Bill Rowe people in the county school system. Now for the rest of the representatives on the county school board to retire so we'll be a lot better off.

Congratulations to East Laurens High Baseball team for making it to playoffs. We are so proud of how you represent us.

Mr. Towns man, that article about your pickup, boy you are after my own heart. When your old lady stared you right in the side of your head, my head hurt too. It's like Joe Diffie said, "There is something women like about a pickup man."

New report finds huge increase in cybercrime

By DAVE WILLIAMS
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA - Cybercrime is on the rise in Georgia and around the country.

Georgia ranked 11th in internet-related complaints last year, up from 13th in 2023, according to the FBI's newly released Internet Crime Report 2024. The potential losses of $420 million represented a 40% increase between 2023 and last year.

Nationally, internet crime complaints rose to 859,532 in 2024, with related losses topping $16.6 billion up by 33% over the previous year.

The top three cybercrimes nationwide measured by the number of complaints reported, were phishing/spoofing, extortion, and personal data breaches. However, losses related to cryptocurrency far exceeded any other category.

"While the top threats facing Georgia and the nation from cyber criminals and fraudsters continue to evolve, their main goal remains stealing your hard-earned money," said Paul Brown, special agent in charge at the Atlanta FBI office. "The cornerstone of the FBI's mission remains to protect American citizens."

Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:

TUESDAY
85°
Beautiful with clouds and sunshine.
Sunrise: 6:47 a.m.

TUESDAY NIGHT:
62°
Mainly clear and humid.
Sunset: 8:11 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:
89°
Warm with clouds and sun.
Sunrise: 6:46 a.m.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT:
63°
Partly cloudy.
Sunset: 8:12 p.m.

Thursday 5/1	Friday 5/2	Saturday 5/3	Saturday 5/4	Sunday 5/5
HIGH/LOW	HIGH/LOW	HIGH/LOW	HIGH/LOW	HIGH/LOW
88/60	85/62	83/58	88/62	83/60
Mostly cloudy, warm and less humid.	Clouds and breaks of sun.	Intervals of clouds and sunshine.	Mainly cloudy.	Rather cloudy with occasional rain.
Sunrise: 6:45 a.m. Sunset: 8:13 p.m.	Sunrise: 6:44 a.m. Sunset: 8:14 p.m.	Sunrise: 6:43 a.m. Sunset: 8:14 p.m.	Sunrise: 6:42 a.m. Sunset: 8:15 p.m.	Sunrise: 6:41 a.m. Sunset: 8:16 p.m.

River levels...
Oconee (at Dublin) ..... 4.57'
Ocmulgee (at Macon) ..... 3.25'

WRIGHT WAY REAL ESTATE SERVICES, LLC.

Donna W. Harmon

WRIGHT WAY REAL ESTATE SERVICES, LLC.

NOW
ACCEPTING
NEW CLIENTS

35 Years of Customer Service Experience

Seller Services Offered:
- In-Person Consultation
- Professional Marketing and Advertising of Your Home
  - Social Media Presence
  - Weekly Listing Snapshot
  - Globel Marketing
- Professional Photography

Buyer Services Offered:
- In-Person Consultation
- Assist in Securing Financing
- Serving Dublin/Laurens County and Surrounding Areas
- Out of State Referral Services Offered



For Your Real Estate Needs, Call and Let Donna Get It Done The *Wright Way*
478-998-9730 | donnawharmon128@gmail.com

ARE YOU TIRED OF NAGGING NECK PAIN AND HEADACHES THAT JUST WON'T QUIT?

DO YOU EXPERIENCE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- STIFFNESS AND SORENESS LIMITING YOUR MOVEMENT?
- HEADACHES THAT START IN YOUR NECK?
- DIFFICULTY GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP?
- DIFFICULTY LOOKING UP, TURNING YOUR HEAD?
- PAIN THAT IS RADIATING DOWN YOUR ARM?

TRY OUR FREE NECK PAIN AND HEADACHE WORKSHOP!

Our Neck Pain & Headache Relief Workshop will teach you the science-backed strategies to conquer your pain and get back to living life to the fullest.

MAY 8 AT 6:30 PM
911 HILLCREST PARKWAY
DUBLIN, GEORGIA 31021

rehab advantage & sports medicine
Where the real advantage is in the results

MEET OUR SPECIALISTS!



JASON MATHEW
DPT

TRAINED IN
Rocktape
McKenzie Method
Spinal Manipulation
Blood Flow Restriction
Integrative Dry Needling
Functional Movement Screen



JOHN MARTIN
CO-OWNER REHAB ADVANTAGE

TRAINED IN
Master of Physical Therapy (MPT)
Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC)
Vestibular Rehabilitation
Integrative Dry Needling

If you'd like to sign up or have any questions, please call our Dublin office at (478) 275-1800.

Aide charged in nursing home fires

A nurses aide at Groveland Convalescent Center has been charged with setting three fires at the nursing home since March 25, Dublin police said.

Jack Wilbur Bryant, 32, of Route 3, Dublin was charged with three counts of arson in connection with fires that broke out in the nursing home laundry, on March 23 and March 31, and an April 7 fire in the activities room of one wing.

City Detective F.M. Burch reported that no one was injured in any of the fires although 28 patients were evacuated from their smoke-filled wing during the April 7 fire.

Center administraator Bob Dougherty described Bryant as a normal employee and stated, "We had really no problems with his work."

Bryant was placed on suspension after being questioned by police in the fires and was fired when three warrants were issued charging him with arson.

"Arson was not suspected until after the second fire," Dougherty said. "We assumed that the first fire was an electrical fire," he said, and "the second fire appeared to start in some clothes."

State fire marshals were called in to investigate each fire, as is customary in nursing home fires.

Doughtery said that police had a suspect in mind after the second fire but decided to wait and see if anythig more conclusive developed.

The third fire in the solarium of B Wing did minor damage. One wall was scorched, but the building sprinkler system put the fire out before it spread into the nearby adjoining wing containing 28 patients. "There was quite a bit of smoke damage," Dougherty said, "but patients were back in their rooms that night."

Dougherty said that police told him the fires were definitely arson after the third fire.

Uniformed and plainclothed policemen staked out the nursing home after the third fire to watch patients and employees in an effort to discover the arsonist, F.M. Burch, city detective, said. He added that Bryant took a polygraph test in Douglas on Monday, but Burch would not divulge the results.

All three fires started during the early morning hours:

March 25 at 4:14 a.m.

March 31 at 3:00 a.m.

April 7 at 2:00 a.m.

Bryant worked the 11:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. shift as a nurses' aide, according to Burch.

Damages in the three fires included the appliances in the laundry, patients' clothes, linen, and small losses to the building. A "pure guess" of the loss is $34,000, Dougherty stated.

Bryant is being held in the Laurens County Jail.

Burch and Wilburn Askew of the state fire marshal's office investigated.

RENTZ MAN SHOT TO DEATH

A Laurens County man died on Friday night en route to an Augusta hospital following a shooting incident at a rural service station here, Sgt. Yates Ware of the sheriff department said.

Dead on arrival at 10:45 P.M. in Augusta was Monroe Jones, Jr., described by Ware as being in his late thirties. He was a resident of the Rentz community.

Authorities are holding Ray Warren, station employee, in connection with the death, Ware said.

Jones was shot in the side under the right arm, Coroner Jimmy Allen said. The bullet, traveling downward, came to rest in the lower left side.

Jones was hit from very close range in an apparent struggle. A 38 calibre pistol was used. Jones was found lying near the station gas pumps.

According to the sergeant, Jones arrived with several others at Dominey's Gulf Service Station on U.S. 441 South around 6:30 P.M. Warren, 39 of Dexter, was at the station with his wife at the time, authorities said.

Persons were questioned late into the night regarding the shooting, and an autopsy will be performed this afternoon by a state crime lab physician to determine other details.

Investigatng were Ware and Jimmy Rogers and Phillip Coney.

Funeral srvices will be held on Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Bay Springs Free Will Baptist Church near Plainfield, with burial in the church cemetery. The Rev. Bud Hall will oficiate, and Townsend Funeral Home will direct arrangements.

Native of Dodge County, Jones was a member of the Baptist faith and was employed by Barwick Furniture Company. His survivors are his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Jones, Jr. of Rentz; two sisters, Mrs. Carolyn Thomas of Rentz and Mrs. Mary Youmans of Green Cove, Florida; and a daughter, Kathy Jones of Rentz.

Pallbearers will include Hollis and Gerald Smith, Johnnie and Junior Jones, Carroll and Darrell Butler.

CITY COUNCIL WILL FOOT WATER LINE BILL

Setting a new policy, Dublin City Council agreed to purchase and install 550 feet of 8-inch trunk, or primary, water line to serve an area being developed off Claxton Dairy Road. In the past, the developer has borne this cost.

Acting City Manager Ron McLemore said that the line will eventually provide a looping of water services, water coming from two directions in the area from Moore Street north.

Mayor Robert E.Cochran called the new policy "a step in the right direction for the city and the developers in the City of Dublin."

The water line, costing approximately $4,000, will serve the proposed Village Circle apartment complex in the vacant area bounded by Claxton Dairy Road and Hillcrest Street.

Alderman John Reed Deamer abstained from voting. He explained, "I feel like we need to make policy before we make a decision." His remark obviousy alluded to a meeting between the Council and developers several days ago in which a gentlemen's agreement to provide the trunk line was given by Council.

In other business, the Council, on a motion by Alderman ALbert Franks, sent a proposal for public officials' liability insurance to the city's insurance advisory committee with instructions that priority be given to local insurance agents and that at least three bids be taken if no local concern can handle the insurance.

Acting Manager McLemore proposed that the insurance would cover mistakes, errors in judgement, negligence, or miss ion by any elected or appointed persons in city government.

Franks stated," I am for this, but I don't want to buy insurance twice."

He added that the insurance committee could decide if the city is already covered by similar policies.

In Council comments, Franks asked for a yield sign at Woods and Woodrow street and a four way stop at Roberson and Woodrow.

Alderman Ed Martin urged all Dublin residents to take part in the upcoming American Cancer Society drive.

CERTIFICATES AWARDED TO SUPERVISORS

Upon their completion of the training course, "Introducion to Supervision," Harold O. Duncan, Dublin VA Center Director, presented certificates to eight new supervisors.

This course was designed to provide the new supervisors with a basic foundation in the principles and practices of supervision. The instructors were James D. Caffey, Charles C. Toole, and Owen R. Sweeten.

Receiving the certificates from Director Duncan were Yvonne P. Burton, Nan T. Miller, Betty G. Proctor, Daisy R. Coleman, Bobbie L. Uliano, Frances M. Spivey, and Frank R. Davis.

BOARD OF HEALTH SEEKS GRANT

The Laurens County Board of Health has made application for a National Institute of Mental Health Construction grant.

If approved, the Laurens County Board of Health would receive a total of $321,876 in Federal Funds for the construction of a Comprehensive Community Mental Health Building.

The building would be located in Dublin and serve the South Central Health District of Bleckley, Dodge, Laurens, Montgomery, Pulaski, Telfair, Treutlen, Wheeler, and Wilcox counties.

The grant application was prepared by the staff of the South Central Mental Health Clinic, with assistance from the Clinic's Advisory Board and other interested citizens. It was presented to the Department of Human Resources Division of Mental Health for review and received approval in January.

On April 21, the staff of the Mental Health Clinic will travel to the Regional office of Health, Education, and Welfare in Atlanta for a final review.

Eddie Roland, Mental Health Director, commented, "Approval of our application will be a major step toward improving and upgrading mental health services for the citizens of the area. The construction of the Center will provide area residents with a greater opportunity of receiving services and treatment in their home community. The facility will provide for expansion of programs as partial hospitalization which should reduce the need for residents to be hospitalized at Central Georgia Regional Hospital and other psychiatric facilities."

The present target date for completion of the proposed Comprehensive Community Mental Health Building is September 1, 1976, with occupancy around September 15th.

The construction of this facility along with other mental health improvements will be contingent upon final approval coming from the Regional Office of Health, Education, and Welfare.

DEAN RUSK AT PARNASSUS CLUB

An almost capacity crowd attended the Parnassus Club's annual open meeting on Saturday night in the Social Hall of the Frst United Methodist Church to hear former Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

Rusk served as U.S. Secretary of State during the administrations of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. Prior to that, he had served as an Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations and Far Eastern affairs and was President of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1952-60.

LOOKING BACK... 50 YEARS AGO

MARCH 24, 1975



By HARRIETT CLAXTON

He was very much a part of the events of the "Cold War" and its affect on U.S. diplomacy during the period which included the Cuban Missile Crisis.

A Cherokee County native, he is now a professor of International Law at the University of Georgia.

Introduced by Mrs. Frances Powell, Program Chaiarman of the Club, he shared experiences not only with the two Presidents as their Secretary of State but also with President Harry Truman as Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs and for Far Eastern Affairs, pointing out that President Truman knew more about American Presidents than any other and had a keen insight into the office of the Presidency.

Of Presidenat Kennedy, he had praise for his intellect and wit and his ability to absorb tremendous amounts of knowledge.

He also observed that President Johnson was far more intellectual than many people think and said that he drove himself unmercifully as he did those who were associated with him. He stressed tht the main resason Johnson did not seek re-election was his health.

The theme of the year's study of the Parnassus Club has been "Great U.S. Presidents" as a prelude to the Bicentenial Celebration beginning in 1976, and Dean Rusk's visit was a most fitting one.

The First Baptist Church Choir, under the direction of Bowman Barr, rendered several patriotic numbers.

Parnassus Club President Mrs. W.H. Champion stated that Dean Rusk shared with her after the meeting that he was flying to Washington early Sunday morning as a possible character witness for former Treasurer Secretary John Connally, now on trial in Washington on alleged bribery charges.

RENTZ NEWS

The April meeting of the Rentz Frendship Club was held at the Baptist church annnex with Mrs. George Bedingfield and Mrs. Ruth Grizzard serving as hostesses.

The meeting opened with the singing of "We All Like to Get Together." This was followed by a devotional by Mrs. Lillian Branscomb, closing with the "The Lord's Prayer" said in unison. President Mrs. Odessa Grinstead held a short business session with Mrs. Zula Bracewell giving a Treasurer's Report.

Classifieds

Employment

GREENSMAN

The City of Dublin is accepting applications for a Greensman. This is a full-time position and applicant must be available to work on Saturday and Sunday. This individual will operate on light motorized equipment and trucks in order to maintain the golf course. Applicant will perform semi-skilled grounds construction and maintenance work. Work is performed under the direction of the Greens Superintendent.

Starting salary is $30,971.20 annually and includes an extensive fringe benefit package. Successful applicant must pass a drug screen and have a valid Georgia Driver's license.

Applicants may apply online through our www.cityofdublin.org website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE TECHNICIAN I

The City of Dublin is currently accepting applications for team members with positive attitudes and initiative. A Service Technician I in the Public Works Street Department is needed. Work involves the performance of a variety of tasks in constructing, maintaining and repairing water and sewer lines, streets, sidewalks, storm drains and related facilities. Applicants must have a valid Georgia driver's license, high school diploma or GED, and pass a drug screen.

Starting salary is $15.36 an hour. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered.

Applicants may apply online through our www.cityofdublin.org website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Miscellaneous For Sale

For Sale: Stove $200.00. Dryer $200.00. Good condition. Call or text 478-278-9334.

Real Estate

For Rent/Lease

For Rent - Apartment, 2BR, LR, Kitchen with stove & Refrigerator, window ac, city gas heat, $600/mo & $600 deposit at 806A S. Washington St, Call Jerry Davis at 478-697-6817

FREE

Vidalia Onions

IT'S VIDALIA ONION TIME!

When you subscribe or renew your subscription between May 1st - May 31st, 2025 to the Courier Herald for 3 months or more.

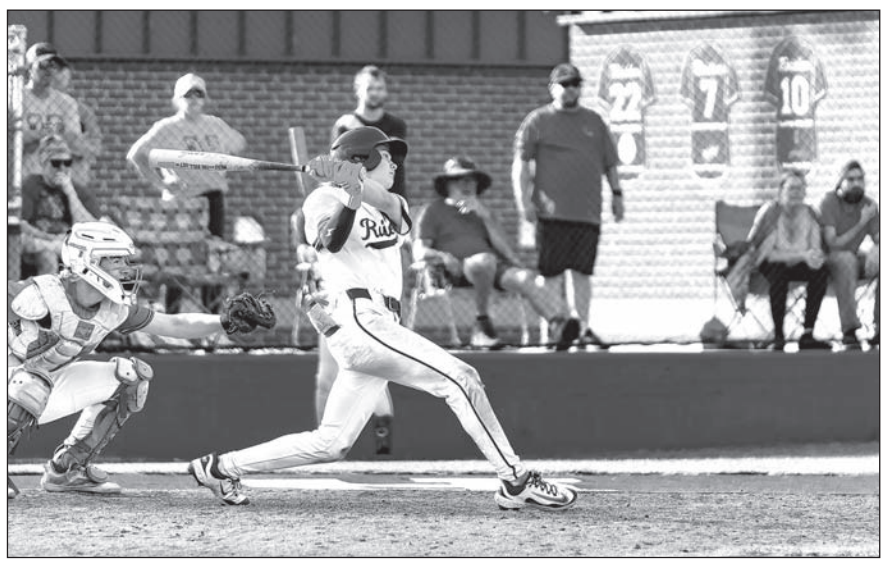
Call 478-272-5522 or stop by our office to renew or start a new subscription.



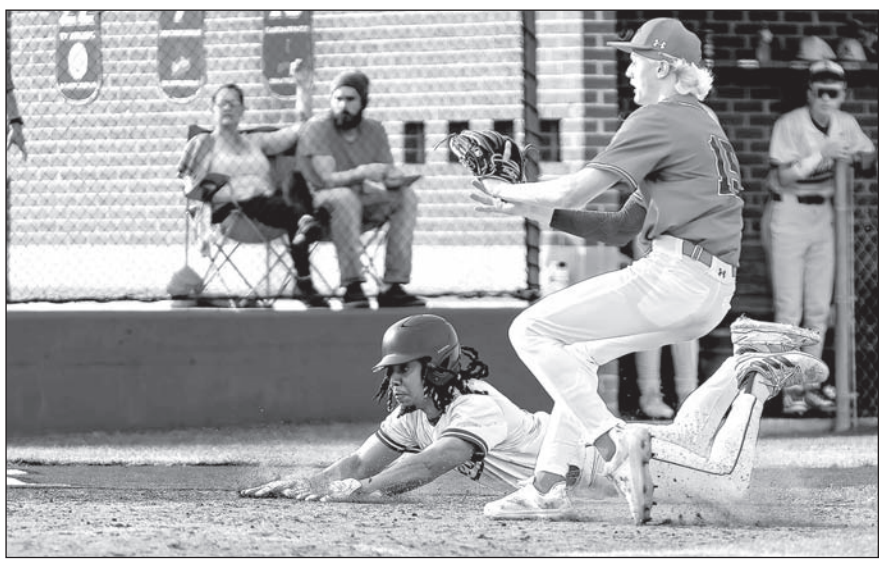
Expires May 31, 2025

Raiders can't fend off Dragons in dramatic duel

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor



HOGAN'S HEROICS: Raider leadoff man J.D. Hogan curled a triple into left-center field to lead off Friday's first game and help West Laurens score the first of its five unanswered runs in a hurry. Later, he'd provide a similar spark with this line drive to the same gap for an RBI single to bring home the first of his team's six to re-take the lead in the sixth. Hogan would also glove a deep fly ball from Steven Tavares for a game-ending final out in the seventh/DANNY SCARBORO



LUCKY SEVENTH: A wild first pitch from reliever Boone Horn (15, right), who was freshly into the game, provided a big break for the Raiders as Jordan Hall scooted in from third to score and tie game 1 at 7 a handful of at-bats after Hogan's (at left). West Laurens created the rest of the inning's strokes of good fortune with base hits – all coming after a second out – to drive home four additional runs, and grab back the lead/DANNY SCARBORO

In baseball, the goal is to hit it where they ain't.

Jefferson took a slightly different tack against West Laurens in the weekend's first-round GHSA playoff series: Hit it where they cain't... can't get to it, that is.

The spots varied – three of them over the fence on home runs, and a handful more in the outfield – but a majority of the Dragons' 30 hits over three games, and each of the ones that made the biggest difference in their victories to clinch it, were to places on or near the infield where Raider defenders couldn't make it in time.

A little bit of power and a lot of short game helped Jefferson respond to an 11-10 Westside win in the first of Friday's doubleheader with an 11-1 result to split things up Friday night. The Dragons edged by in Saturday afternoon's rubber match, 4-3, to clinch their spot in the second round and deny the Raiders' hopes of a third-straight trip.

Jefferson will play a rematch with its own region champion, No. 5 overall seed Oconee County, next Thursday.

A pair of solo bombs by South Georgia signee Steven Tavares, one to open the Dragons' game 3 scoring and a second to tie the score in the top of the fifth, were critical components of their come-from-behind effort to take the series on Saturday.

But the manner in which they scored the ultimate winning run in the sixth inning had to feel like deja vu all over again in the home dugout.

West Laurens, overall, had made the best of the squib contact that had eaten it up in a seven-run third inning when Friday's game 2 went south. But the Raiders got into a small bind despite staying on top of another ball to no-man's land as Jefferson threatened to untie the 3-3 game after Christopher Thomas' two-out double.

Logan Woodruff, re-entering to run for his pinch hitter, took off on contact for third as Rett Hemphill chopped one out Nathan Hester at short, but too deep for a play at first for a potential inning-ending out.

RAIDERS
Continued on page 8

Irish run out by red-hot Rams

By JOE WHITFIELD
For The Albany Herald



INTO A BUZZSAW: C.J. Stubbs topples Worth County shortstop Drake Jones, and dislodges the ball to get in safely on this steal of second in game 1. Dublin bounced back to grab an early lead after getting knocked down and shut out in the opener, but overall took the brunt of Friday's collision with the 15th-seeded Rams/JOE WHITFIELD, for The Albany Herald

SYLVESTER — The Worth County Rams are moving on to the second round of the GHSA Class A state playoffs after sweeping the Dublin Fighting Irish in a doubleheader Friday at Pope Park.

The Rams blanked Dublin 10-0 in game 1 and followed up with a 16-6 victory in game 2. Behind dominant pitching, clutch hitting, and a relentless offensive attack, Worth County made a statement in its postseason opener.

Game 1 started as a classic pitcher's duel between Worth County senior Caden Emerson and Dublin's Xavier Reese. Both worked efficiently through the first few innings, with the Rams holding a narrow 1-0 lead after the first.

But with two outs in the fourth, the game turned sharply in Worth County's favor.

Logan Fox reached on a single, and Brady Weaver followed on an error. After two quick strikeouts, Carson Cervantes came through with a clutch two-out single to left and advanced to second on another Dublin miscue. Avery Kilcrease followed with a two-run single to center, and Drake Jones reached on the third error of the inning.

Luke Rogers then delivered an RBI single to right, and when Emerson's grounder was mishandled, two more runs crossed the plate, capping a six-run outburst.

The Rams added three more in the fifth, and Emerson himself ended the game with a single to center that invoked the run rule.

While Dublin cycled through three pitchers (Bennett Lake and Wesley Maddox each toting the baton for a portion of the fifth), Emerson remained dominant. The senior right-hander tossed a five-inning one-hitter, allowing just one walk and striking out three in a postseason gem.

Reese gave up eight runs (five earned) on nine hits, walked three and struck out five. Lake and Maddox combined to allow two on a hit and a pair of walks.

C.J. Stubbs singled for the only Irish hit.

A Rams error opened the door for Dublin to jump out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning of game 2.

Stubbs singled and stole second, then scored on a dropped third strike as Reese drew an errant throw to first from catcher Brady Weaver.

Jeff Davis singled to center to make it 2-0, and scored a third Irish run on a Will Wallace RBI, though he'd be thrown out at second looking to stretch the base hit into a double.

But the Worth County offense quickly overwhelmed the Fighting Irish.

The Rams, scoring two in the top of the next inning, wouldn't take back the lead until striking for three in the third. But their bats would pile up 15 hits, including home runs from Weaver and Hayden Short. Weaver, Short, and Luke Rogers each drove in three runs.

Rogers also doubled and tripled, while Cervantes continued his hot day with three more hits and two RBIs.

Kilcrease earned the win, pitching six innings and allowing six runs on six hits. He walked four and struck out five.

Dublin got a run back in the third, and was sparked again by an infield single from Stubbs, though he was pegged on a fielder's choice as Reese reached base on a first out.

Tyrese Robinson worked a walk, and Davis followed with an RBI single that cut the Worth County lead to 5-4.

But the one-out rally was stopped before it could get going as the Rams turned a double play to end the inning.

They'd chalk up six more and

IRISH
Continued on page 7

Falcons come up with key hits, but big RBIs elusive at Bleckley in flustering first-rounder

From STAFF REPORTS

The scoring chances were there for East Laurens Friday in a rematch with region 2-High A champion Bleckley County to open the state playoffs, but the Falcons – despite making a lot of noise at the plate early in the afternoon – couldn't find ways to get their baserunners home.

They were able to muster only a run each to counter the Royals' double-digit tide of offense, which rolled in as expected after East Laurens struck in the first inning of game 1 to take a very early lead.

But Bleckley would bat home 11 unanswered runs to claim the opener in just five innings, and buried the Falcons under 12 before allowing its only other late in a 14-1 victory to close out the sweep in the same length of time.

The Royals, who extend their winning streak to eight games, are set to host Fitzgerald Thursday in the second round. East Laurens finishes its season with a final mark of 12-16 (9-9 region 2-High A).

FALCONS
Continued on page 7

SOCCER ROUNDUP...

Dublin, East, West come up empty in first-round battles

Trinity boys drop battle at Bulloch Saturday to wrap up regular season

From STAFF REPORTS



GOOD HANDS: West Laurens keeper Clyde Warren with a tip save on one of his multiple stops to keep the Chestatee lead to just a goal between the Eagles' first score early, and second much later in the first half/DANNY SCARBORO



END GOAL: East Laurens' Matt Brantley scores with a mere 43 seconds to play in Friday's first-round match at Fitzgerald. The goal cut the Canes' lead to 3-1, but they'd answer right back before the whistle to set the final count at 4-1/RODNEY MANLEY

Laurens County's boys soccer teams struck out in their Friday trio of playoff matches, to leave the East Laurens girls as the Heart of Georgia's only team still alive in the GHSA tournament.

The Lady Falcons are due to welcome Armuchee to the Eastside Thursday for a 5 p.m. kickoff as they seek out a berth in the state quarterfinals for the third-consecutive season.

East's boys, striking in the last of their 80 minutes Friday evening at Fitzgerald, came away with the only goal scored by any of the three teams, but also wound up on the wrong side of their second-half battle in a 4-1 loss.

The remainder, a home fixture for West Laurens against Gainesville's Chestatee Eagles and a trip for Dublin to battle Lamar County, were mostly one-sided.

The Raiders, falling 5-0, and the Irish, by a final of 6-0, were both mostly overwhelmed in shutouts.

Trinity's boys soccer team squeezed in some non-region GIAA regular-season action Saturday morning, and was defeated 3-1 by Bulloch to conclude its regular-season schedule. The Crusader girls will do the same in a home match against David Emanuel Monday at Cleve Warnock Field.

Matt Brantley's right-footed shot from the fringe of the 18-foot box, after receiving a long ball and dribbling between two de-

SOCCER
Continued on page 7

Crusaders complete rainout, blank Mustangs after restart to enter final week of regular season on back-to-back wins

By JEREMY PAYNE
Correspondent

The Trinity Crusaders continued their ramp-up for the state playoffs by completing a rained-out matchup with CGAA from earlier in the week on Saturday morning.

The game was picked up with a 2-1 Trinity lead in the top of the third, and the Crusaders ended up winning 5-1.

The Mustangs, on Tuesday, had taken an early lead in the first on a double by Anderson Bloodworth and a single by Hudson Strange to go up 1-0.

Trinity got on the board in the second to tie it up. Carter Lee reached on an error and Nathan Sumner followed with a single. A couple batters later, Lee would score on a groundout by Carson Shepherd to make it 1-1.

Ben Helton and Asher Evans both walked with one out in the third. Braden Underwood would then double home a run to make it 2-1 just before the rains came.

When the game picked up back up, Lee promptly made it 3-1 with another RBI groundout.

That score would hold until two were out in the fifth. Sumner, who had a huge day at the plate, would double to keep the frame alive. Tripp Mascaro followed with a double of his own to make it 4-1. Shepherd came up next with another two out hit to make it 5-1.

Neither team could muster much offense the rest of the game, and the Crusaders held on for the win.

Sumner was a perfect 4-for-4 at the plate. Mascaro, Shepherd, Helton, Lee and Underwood also hit safely.

Kolbi Grooms earned the win with the complete-game victory. The junior scattered seven hits over his seven innings. He also struck out seven and didn't walk a batter.

He is now 6-1 on the season with a 1.71 ERA.

Trinity is set to host Citizens Christian in its home finale on Monday. The Crusaders (17-4, 5-2 region) close out Tuesday on the road at Edmund Burke.

SOCCER

Continued from page 6

fenders, broke the long East Laurens silence and made the score 3-1 with just 43 seconds left on the game clock.

Fitzgerald, however, insisted on the last word, and responded with a quick score to set the final.

It was anybody's match through halftime, as both clubs battled – and Eastside goalkeeper Carson Smith contributing his usual showcase of spectacular saves to keep the Purple Hurricane off the board – to a scoreless tie after 40.

The deadlock remained until the Falcons' shorthanded defense broke down around the 25-minute mark of the second half, when Fitzgerald created some numbers in the box out of a fast-break situation, and capitalized for the first time to get on the board.

Subsequent goals followed at the 19- and 13-minute marks to stretch the Canes' lead out of reach, although at least three of Smith's patented MLS-level plays in goal over a late stretch kept it from widening to 6-0.

East finishes its season with a record of 7-9 (5-3 region 2-High A).

West Laurens (15-4, 13-3 region 4-AAA) couldn't match the elite downfield speed of Chestatee in a number of open-field situations that forced the issue fairly early on in their match Friday night at the SHU.

Three early goals, almost all unfolding in the blink of an eye, had the Eagles on top 3-0 by halftime.

Chestatee struck in a hurry, scoring like a bolt of lightning with only seven minutes gone as midfieler Andre Sanchez got ahold of a ball and rolled it ahead to a sprinting Edwin Rodriguez. He outran everybody, and timed his shot perfectly to avoid a desperate deflection effort by goalkeeper Clyde Warren, and it was 1-0.

Warren and his back line successfully warded off a handful of Chestatee chances to get the 1-0 game inside the 20-minute mark. But the Eagles scored their second goal in another flash after taking control of a boot from the box and rushing it down the left sideline.

Denny Zamudio sprinted it to the left side of the box, and slid it across for Rodriguez to knock in for a second time.

West Laurens had its best set of chances at an answer on some set pieces late in the half, but everything was knocked away.

The Eagles flipped the field off the last of those for one of back-to-back near-misses, on a tip-save by Warren. But their next trip down had the Raiders outflanked again off an unexpected possession change.

Isaiah Diaz was blazing toward the goal unopposed, as Warren came out and blocked an initial shot. But the ball bounced back off of Diaz, then toward a wide open goal where he circled back to clean it up on the left edge, and make the score 3-0.

A left-footed shot by Zamudio gave Chestatee its fourth goal just above 20 minutes left in the second half. Diaz took advantage of a mishandled ball the Raiders were attempting to recycle, and crammed it in for the visitors' last with 12 minutes to play.

Lamar County, led by a hat trick by Caleb Miller, scored four times in the first half to get Dublin (6-8, 3-5 region 2-High A) down pretty early.

The Trojans – whose Asier Di Toro, Axel Garcia and Kaden Wilson also got on the score sheet – put in a pair of shots each within four-minute spans after the12th and 33rd minutes of the opening stanza, and got their second-half set in similar fashion, about five minutes apart, in the last 10.

Trinity's boys equalized Saturday's match going to halftime, as Jagger George put a free kick under a wall of leaping Gators to tie things at 1 late in the first half.

But the Crusaders were shut out by two unanswered Bulloch goals in the final 40.

Trinity (6-6, 3-1 region 6-AA) now awaits its seeding for next month's GIAA state playoffs.

– Staff Reporter Rodney Manley contributed to this roundup.



COAST GUARD: East Laurens keeper Carson Smith kept it clear for the Falcons beneath Fitzgerald's end zone palm trees in a scoreless first half, although the 'Canes were able to ride a mid-second half swell to three of their four goals to take control of Friday's match. This batting save denied a high shot between their second and third/RODNEY MANLEY



A FEW GOOD CHANCES: West Laurens came up empty on a handful of opportunities to score a potential goal off a series of set pieces late in the first half. On this one, Judd Walker went high to play a free-kick cross with the head, but Eagle goalkeeper Jan Maldonado was there just a bit sooner, and showed off the wingspan with a right-handed deflection to knock the ball away/DANNY SCARBORO

IRISH

Continued from page 6

chase Irish starting pitcher Ryland Yates from the game in the top of the fourth, as Morgan Davis took over to complete the game. The pair of hurlers combined to walk six and strike out one.

The Irish, batting to lead the bottom of the inning, could shrink the seven-run deficit only to six, but Yates helped out with a double to follow the leadoff walk of Wallace. Morgan Davis delivered the RBI on a groundout.

Dublin was an additional run from forcing a seventh inning down 16-5 in the sixth, but could score only once as Yates walked to lead off and advanced on another Morgan Davis groundout.

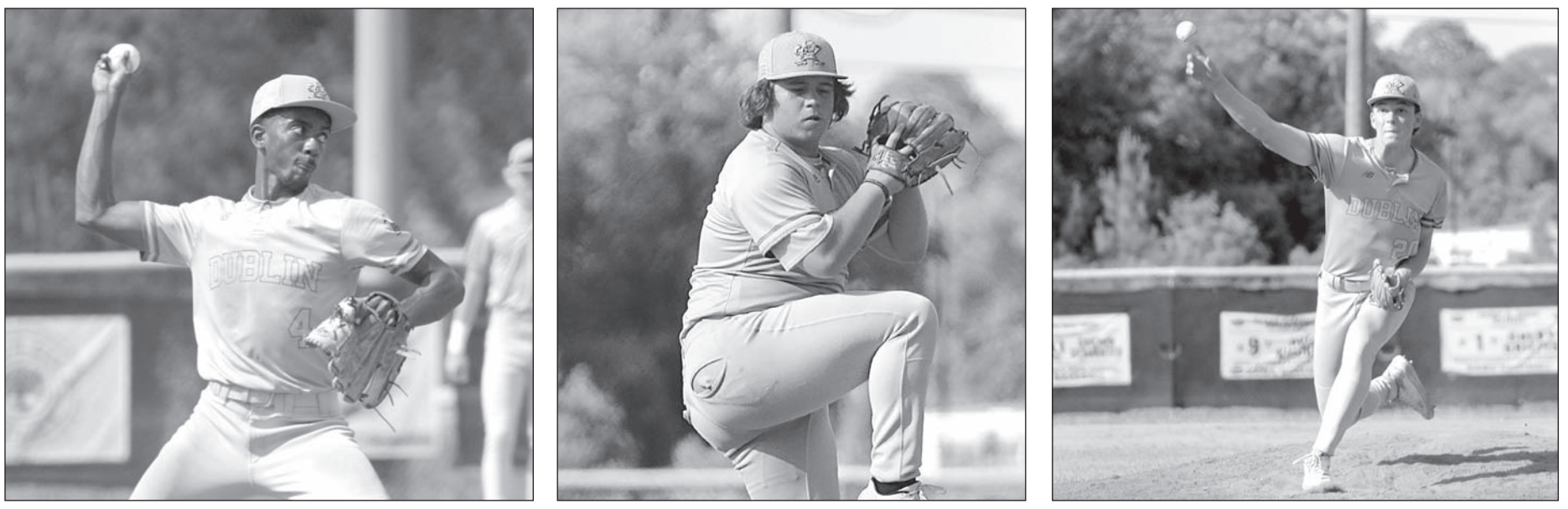
He made it in on the two-out single of Stubbs, good for his third hit of the game and fourth of the day. But a fielder's choice in the next at-bat ended the game.

Jeff Davis added two hits, and RBIs for Dublin. Yates, Wallace and Robinson had one each

Dublin finishes its first 20-win campaign since 2009 with a record of 20-11 (14-4 region 2-High A).

Worth County turns its focus to region rival Jeff Davis in the second round. The Yellow Jackets (28-4) swept Dodge County in their opening-round series and defeated the Rams three times during the regular season.

– Sports staff of The Courier Herald contributed to this report



DUBLIN DEALERS: Xavier Reese (left), Wesley Maddox (center) and Bennett Lake (right) each got a piece of the pitching action for Dublin in game 1/JOE WHITFIELD, for The Albany Herald

FALCONS

Continued from page 6

By the end of game 1, East Laurens had just one less hit than Bleckley's nine.

But after an RBI by Rylan Harden to score the first-inning run, the Falcons were 0-for the rest of the game with men in scoring position.

Konner O'Neal, who worked a full count and walked to get aboard, would be the only one to redeem a ticket back across the plate, as Landon Ayers singled up the middle and Harden busted one through the left side to drive him in.

But none of their ample other opportunities would come to fruition against Bleckley ace Breagan Cravey, who would go on to strike out four, walk four and leave each of East's nine remaining runners on base.

The Royals ultimately ran away with it, responding for one to tie and then breaking the game open with eight runs in their half of the third leading up to a two-run Walker Boat-right home run to walk off the run-rule win in the bottom of the fifth.

East Laurens would, however, enjoy its 1-0 lead for a full inning and a half, as starting pitcher Jakeb Logue got flyouts to bookend a couple of free passes in the first to keep Bleckley from getting on the board.

The Royals finally equalized in the second as Brady Brannon beat out an infield single, and scored on an error after Jay Johnson pushed one up the gut for an ensuing base hit to move him along. But a force out at third after the fact ended the inning with the score tied at 1.

Bleckley's breakout in the third began with an error, a four-pitch walk of Cravey and a single by Gavin Cole. Things started to spiral after Clayton Beck's base hit drove in the go-ahead run.

After a first out via infield fly, Brady Brannon bashed a bases-loaded double to score three and stretch the lead to 5-1. He'd score on an RBI by Johnson, then Josh Dillard singled on the infield and Boatright drew a walk to reload the sacks for Fleming, who also cleaned them off with a double to make it 9-1.

Cade Oliver took over on the mound for a scoreless fourth inning, and struck out Dillard to get within two of forcing the game to the sixth with the winning run up after a walk of Johnson to lead off the fifth.

Boatright took his first pitch out to left for the game-winner.

Ayers, Oliver, Harden, O'Neal, Kaden Mimbs, Logan Gibson and Nollan Scott had a hit each to compose the multiple Falcon threats in innings 2-5.

Gibson doubled and advanced to third with one out in the second, but Cravey got a strikeout and lineout to prevent the trouble.

Mimbs beat a throw to first to reach in the third, and Ayers added his second hit of the day to put them at first and second in the third. The pair were stranded on a flyout and lineout.

Scott added a hit to the walk of Oliver to get them to the corners in the fourth, with nothing else doing.

Mimbs walked and O'Neal doubled to put two in position with nobody out in the fifth, but a pop fly and back-to-back strikeouts followed to leave East Laurens with nothing to show.

Bleckley had eight hits, for nine runs (seven earned) against Logue, who walked three and struck out one. Oliver threw two innings of one-hit ball, giving up only the final two, with one walk and strikeout.

The error-free Royals had all they needed after four innings, but tacked on a couple more for good measure in the fifth before recording three final outs to put the game 2 win in the books.

Beck would keep the Falcons' hit parade much shorter in a complete-gamer that logged 11 strikeouts, and a single walk.

Just O'Neal, Harden, Wynn and Gibson had knocks, and Wynn's – a triple – was all that went for extra bases.

Harden and O'Neal, once again, combined to get the lone East Laurens run on the board in the fourth.

But the Falcons were already down a dozen runs when O'Neal ran out an infield single to get on, stole second and dashed home on Harden's hit up the middle.

Beck, driving in two on a pair of hits, joined Boatright and Yourn, each with three on three, in the lead of the Bleckley lineup, whose biggest innings were a six-run second and four-run fourth.

Lawrence took the brunt of the early scoring in a two-inning start, charged with five earned runs out of the total eight, with three walks and one strikeout.

Ayers followed in relief for an inning and change, surrendering three hits and four unearned runs, striking out and walking one each.

Grayson Edge pitched the final inning and two thirds, giving up two runs (one earned) with a strikeout and no walks.





ROARING INTO THE LEAD: Kolby Clark (left) and Cason Pollock (center, on his way out of the box, and at right, upon landing at second base) let out some screams after their back-to-back hits drove in two runs apiece, and put West Laurens up 11-7 heading to the final inning of its game 1 win. J.D. Hogan and Jayden Stanley (below) got in on the bedlam back at home plate after scoring on Clark's single to right for the initial set of go-ahead RBIs in the rally, which was the Raiders' loudest statement in the weekend's exchange of back-and-forth noise between two emotional dugouts/**DANNY SCARBORO**

RAIDERS

Continued from page 6




Woodruff, craftily, hung out just long enough on his turn around third to create some hesitation before breaking for the plate. Hester's throw, which appeared to be in plenty of time for a play, wasn't quick enough to get him as the runner dove across the dish to make it 4-3 Jefferson.

West Laurens, in both the preceding inning and its two remaining turns at bat, had ample opportunities to answer.

The Raiders (17-12, 14-2 region 4-AAA) advanced a runner or more to scoring position in the fourth, fifth and sixth... before a last shot in the seventh came down to a desperate two-out single by Cason Pollock, who beat out a close play at first to extend the game.

But Jefferson's Candler Cain would convert a simple grounder hit his way at second to record the final out on the next swing.

J.J. Giles and Grant Baker juxtaposed singles to lead off the fourth, but two fly balls and a grounder negated the chance to add insurance to a then 3-2 lead.

After Tavares' game-tying blast in the fifth, West threatened again as it got two men on for free, one hit by a pitch and the other intentionally walked. Kolby Clark moved both runners up on a sacrifice bunt, but a popout and a looking strikeout again closed the door before a shot to score.

In the sixth, Baker drew a walk, and Duggan Malone slapped a one-out single to a soft spot behind first. But an infield fly and a groundout promptly stranded the pair.

The Raiders, who were limited to five hits in the game, left a total of seven men on base.

Matt Earon – who went down as the winning pitcher in both Jefferson victories – exhausted his pitch allowance in relief of Kade Seabolt before giving way to Cody Britt for the majority of the sixth and seventh. The pair of pitchers combined to keep the Raiders scoreless on five hits, with a pair of walks and strikeouts.

West's only three runs came against the starter in an explosive start to the first inning that involved singles by Cohen Cardwell, Parker Bryant and J.J. Giles, along with an error, hit-batter and passed ball to stake the home team to an early 3-0 advantage.

Bryant and Giles both finished with a pair of hits, and one RBI.

Malone returned after a two-part Game 1 appearance to open Saturday's matchup. He struck out one, and walked two, giving up a single Jefferson hit and run on the Tavares homer, in one complete trip through the order. Cardwell finished the game in relief, allowing four Jefferson hits, walking three and fanning one.

Only two of the remaining three runs were earned, as Jefferson struck for the two to tie and go-ahead one-by-one in consecutive innings.

The Raiders, who used their daily highlight catch by J.D. Hogan in center field to strand two in the third, threw a lid on the subsequent innings after Jefferson had picked up the singular run.

The Dragons got their second to make it 3-2 on a wild pitch, following the single of Jackson Sims.

Tavares, who was 2-for-2 with the homers and intentionally walked both his other times up, wrapped the series going 6-of-9 with seven runs driven in.

His other three hits scored nearly half the Dragons' 11 runs in game 2, and every one of them that didn't fall in their big third inning, which was helped along by his single to plate one of seven.

The big Friday night began with a double to put Jefferson up 2-0 after the first, and ended with a two-RBI single to walk off the run-rule decision in the bottom of five.

A lot of the rest of Jefferson's third-inning offense was the familiar bump-and-run.

The Dragons, initially, followed up a bleeder through the infield off the bat of Hemphill with hits on back-to-back bunts. In between the two, they swiped home on a double steal with runners at the corners, and ran an identical play in the next at-bat to draw a second West Laurens throw.

This time, the Raiders cut it off correctly, but the return throw home took off and flew away.

The back-to-back runs pumped the Jefferson lead 4-1, and the Dragons made it 5-1 directly on a rolling Tavares single. Next, Ryan Reed bumped a high bounder over everybody's head at third for another bargain-basket single.

West Laurens got an adventurous first out on the sac bunt of Sims, but then plunked Daniel Coker to fill 'em up for Dylan Verdi, who doubled to score all three.

After a walk, Waldrep was brought on in relief of the starter Clark, and got a quick second out on a ground ball. Cain punched through one more to score a ninth, though run No. 10 was gunned out at the plate on a great throw by Giles to get the Raiders out of the inning.

Their fourth was comparatively uneventful. But Jefferson made good on its chance to end the game early with the singles of Verdi, Hemphill and Tavares in the bottom of the fifth.

The Raiders were mostly foiled in their efforts to shake the confidence of Earon, whose stuff of limited potency was pristinely located in five innings of three-hit ball, with just two walks and four strikeouts.

Giles got the first hit against him, and advanced to score on Baker's sacrifice fly for the only West Laurens run of the game during the third inning. The Raiders' only other hits from Baker and Bryant came late in the game.

Jefferson compiled 12 hits total on the duo of Clark, who walked one and struck out three, and Waldrep, who fanned two and walked one.

By far the high point in the series was the roller-coaster ride in the opening game, which began in similar fashion to Saturday's, with the Raiders jumping right on the Dragons' starting pitcher – in Friday's case, Clemson-committed ace Eston Simpson.

Though the potential MLB draft pick would settle in to toss three scoreless innings in the middle of his start, the first and last trips through the West Laurens order were marked by some location issues, and hard-hit balls.

In the first, J.D. Hogan spun one into the left center gap beyond Hemphill's reach for a leadoff triple, and Cardwell delivered an immediate fly ball to score him.

Pollock singled to lead off the second, and would score on catcher's interference as the Dragons went home for a force play with the bases loaded after a walk and Hester bunt single.

Hogan drew a bases-loaded walk, and a ball got away as Cardwell extended the inning by running out a double play on a fielder's choice, as two scored to make it 5-0.

But the Dragons (who would out-hit West Laurens 11-6 in the game) came roaring back, and turned the tide with two quick runs in the third inning, both originating with walks. A wild pitch scored one, and Cain's double the second, before Bryant struck out back-to-back hitters to end the inning.

He'd make fairly quick work of Jefferson in innings 1 and 2, on his way to fanning 12 batters and walking only three for the day.

Bryant punched out the side in order to turn Jefferson away empty-handed after three singles (one on a sac bunt try) loaded 'em up in the fourth.

But the Dragons would finally chase home the three tying runs as his outing came to an end in the fifth.

Eli Primm and Tavares singled, and Reed walked – the first scoring on a throw – before back-to-back RBIs from Sims and Coker tied the game.

Malone came on in relief and struck out Dylan Verdi to end the inning with the score still even.

But things came a bit undone on four walks – a last to push home Jefferson's go-ahead run – in the six as the freshman made a brief exit in favor of Waldrep, who surrendered an RBI single to Sims that made it 7-5 Dragons, but nothing more after inducing a popout to retire the side.

West Laurens intrepidly came back to regain the lead in the sixth, bringing 10 to the plate to score six.

The Raiders first got to Simpson as Giles reached on an infield single, and Jordan Hall drew his 12th hit-by-pitch of the season with one out.

Simpson got his second out, but gave up another left-field gapper to Hogan that cut the Jefferson lead to 7-6. And a subsequent walk prompted his departure with just over 100 pitches thrown.

The first offering by new pitcher Boone Horn wilded out, and the Raiders scored to tie the game.

Tayt Evans, up next, was intentionally walked as Clark and Pollock both smashed hits for a pair of RBIs. Clark took one opposite field to right; Pollock drilled one down the left field line, and it was suddenly 11-7 Raiders.

The lead was far from safe. Malone came back on to pitch, and had to grind his way through a tough seventh inning.

Verdi reached on an error to lead off, but Woodruff went down swinging for a first out. Hemphill singled, but Cain lined out to get within an out of the finish line.

That's when Primm got ahold of a ball and drove it out for a three-run homer.

Just as suddenly, it was a 1-run game.

Tavares, to that point just 1-for-3, had not yet put his mark on the series. But he gave his best effort at a game-tying blast that died in the glove of a backpedaling Hogan a few steps shy of the 364-foot sign in center field on a dangerously deep fly for the final out.

Malone walked four, struck out two, and gave up three hits. Waldrep went on the hook for only one.

The two hits each of Hogan, Clark, Pollock and Giles led West Laurens at the plate in Friday's action. Tavares and Cain, with four apiece, took the top spot in the doubleheader for Jefferson. Hemphill, Primm and Sims had three, and Reed and Coker two each.




RIDE, OR DIE: Jefferson's Steven Tavares (left) took the last pitch of Duggan Malone (right) on a wild one to the deepest part of the park with this do-or-die swing at the end of game 1. He would end up going yard twice in Jefferson's come-from-behind effort to tie game 3 on Saturday, and almost got a first home run of the series sooner as the Dragons staged a much more desperate rally to do the same with two outs in the seventh of the opener. Teammate Eli Primm blasted a three-run shot in the preceding at-bat to eliminate most in the Raiders' cushion of four, and Tavares followed with this well-hit fly to center field. But J.D. Hogan had room, and made the catch to get a final out, as Malone recorded a save in the nailbiting finish/**DANNY SCARBORO**

SCOREBOARD

BASEBALL
Friday
Bleckley Co. 11,
East Laurens 1
Bleckley Co. 14, EL 1
West Laurens 11,
Jefferson 10
Jefferson 11, WL 1
Worth Co. 10, Dublin 0
Worth Co. 16, Dublin 6

Saturday
Jefferson 4, WL 3
Trinity 5, CGAA 1

BOYS SOCCER
Friday
Chestatee 5, WL 0
Fitzgerald 4, EL 1
Lamar Co. 6, Dublin 0

Saturday
Bulloch 3, Trinity 1

PREP SCHEDULE

BASEBALL
Monday
CCA at Trinity/**5 p.m.**

Tuesday
Trinity at Edmund Burke
/4:30 p.m.

SOCCER
Monday
David Emanuel at
Trinity (girls)/**5 p.m.**

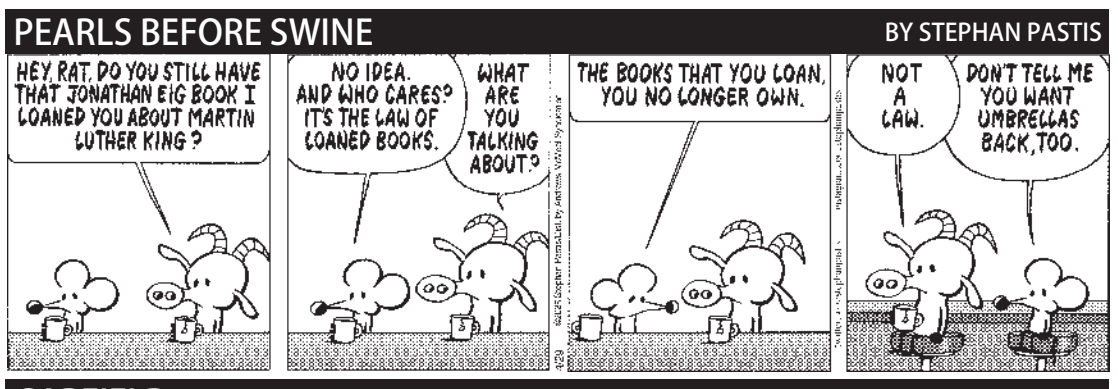
Thursday
GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
Armuchee at EL (girls)
/5 p.m.

TENNIS
Monday
GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
Pickens at WL (girls)
/3:15 p.m.

Tuesday
GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
Heritage (Ringgold) at
WL (boys)/**3:15 p.m.**

CONTACT US:
Email sports information to tchsports77@gmail.com, or call (478) 272-5522, ext. 403

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE — BY STEPHAN PASTIS



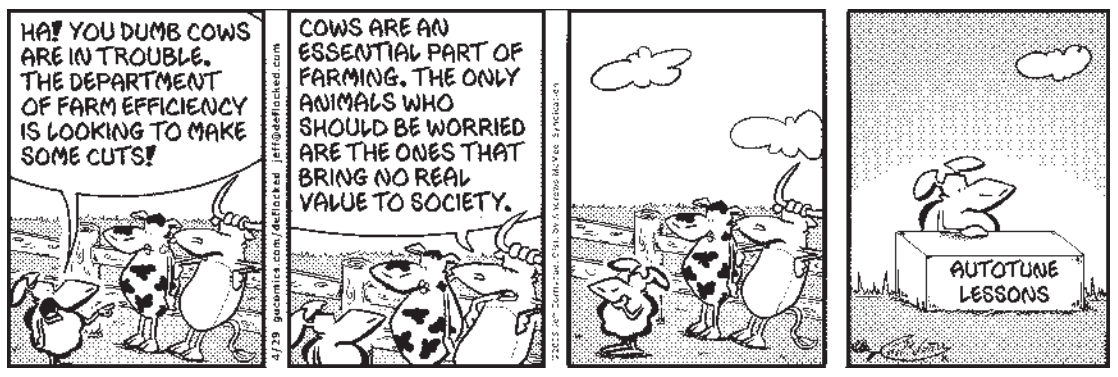
GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



OVERBOARD — BY CHIP DUNHAM



DEFLOCKED — BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



ZIGGY — BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS — BY JEFF MACNELLY



To a plugger, traveling abroad means driving to an adjacent state.

Grandparents fear for toddler's safety in unsanitary home!



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: Our son and his girlfriend had our first grandchild 18 months ago. We helped them move out of their rental house before the baby was born and buy a cute little house, which we made sure was in good shape before they moved in. (They had ruined the rental property with a couple of cats they had and their refusal to clean it at all.) We told them they had to keep the new house clean for themselves as well as our new grandson.

The new house is now disgustingly filthy and filled with trash and the smell of cat urine. We watch our grandson several times a week, even keeping him overnight. We don't ask them for anything, and they don't offer. We feel he's better off staying with us rather than in their nasty house.

We have gone over several times to help clean their place and purchased many items to help them keep the place cleaner, to no avail. We are at our wits' end. We don't want to involve children's protective services, but we don't know what we can do to get them to understand the gravity of this situation. What do you suggest? -- CAREFUL GRANDPA IN OHIO

DEAR GRANDPA: By now it should be clear to you that your son and his girlfriend have no intention of keeping their house clean, even for the baby's sake. As I see it, you have three choices: Turn a blind eye to what is happening and do nothing, hire a cleaning crew once or twice a month to do what they are unwilling to do, or contact child protective services because the home is a danger to your grandchild. Please let me know what you decide.

DEAR ABBY: I am the only daughter in a family with four brothers. My family treats me like I don't exist. My father constantly hurts my feelings intentionally. When I express how he (and the others) make me feel, I am ignored. It hurts deeply knowing my father doesn't even like me. It feels like knives in my heart and my back.

I have been dealing with this for 44 years. I am sad all the time. I don't trust anyone because of the lies and hate I get from my family. I have done nothing to deserve this treatment. All I do is exist. My husband and I are both ill, but we receive no compassion. I can't afford a psychologist. If I could, I would go to one. My heart aches for someone in my family to care about me. How can I make this pain go away? -- FAULTED FOR BEING HERE

DEAR FAULTED: I am sorry for your pain. You may be able to get the help you need by contacting your county health department and asking about low-cost counseling services, or by reaching out to the nearest college or university that has a department of psychology and asking if any of their graduate students could see you (under supervision). I cannot fix your family -- no one can. But that doesn't mean you can't strengthen yourself, which is what you may need to do in order to stop hurting and find your indignation.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

©2025 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A K 10 8 7 5 3 ♡ Q 8 ◇ Q J 3 ♣ Q

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - Hands with good 7-card suits are worth more than their point count. Bid 3S.

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ 10 ♡ 9 6 4 ◇ A 10 9 8 6 5 3 ♣ A 10

Partner opens 1C and right-hand opponent bids 1S. What call would you make?

A - Another hand worth more than its point count. Bid 2D.

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A K 10 9 ♡ A 3 ◇ A K 4 ♣ A 9 7 3

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1♡	Dbl	Pass	2◇
2♡	Dbl	Pass	Pass
3♣	?		

What call would you make?

A - They will make 3C every now and then, but what can you do? Double, and lead a trump if this ends the auction.

Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Q 10 ♡ Q 10 ◇ A 8 6 ♣ A J 9 8 6 5

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	1♡	1♠	2♡
?			

What call would you make?

A - The queen of hearts might be wasted, but we are not letting them play at the 2-level. Bid 3C.

Q 5 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Q 2 ♡ 9 7 5 ◇ A K Q 6 5 ♣ A Q 7

Right-hand opponent opens 1C. What call would you make?

A - This would be too strong to open 1NT, but an overcall should be more flexible. Bid 1NT. Don't worry about the unstopped suits.

Q 6 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

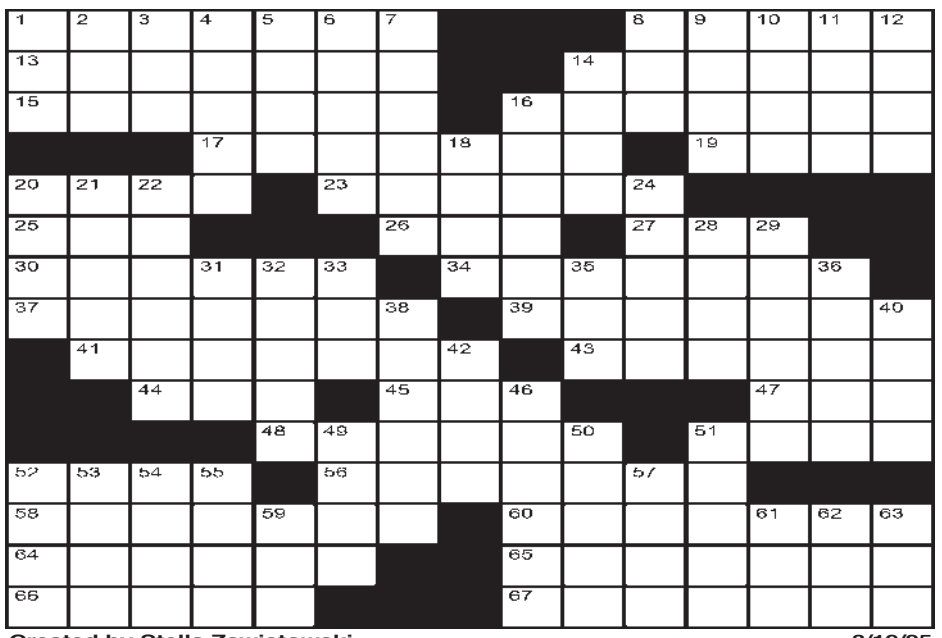
♠ K Q J 6 3 ♡ 6 ◇ A Q 4 3 ♣ Q 8 6

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2◇	Pass	2NT	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - Generally speaking, opener should accept all game invitations when he has 14 points. Bid 3C on the way to 3NT. Partner might have long clubs and weakish hearts.

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski



Created by Stella Zawistowski — 3/19/25

ACROSS

1 Car recording device: 2 wds.
8 Furniture for sitting
13 Shakespeare tragedy
14 Raspy
15 Butcher's knife
16 Interpret wrongly
17 Rosie the __
19 Sandwich spread
20 Floating platform
23 Privileged people
25 Get older
26 "We'll __ about that"
27 A couple
30 Edge of a page
34 Rulers' realms
37 Of crucial importance
39 Baby toys
41 With no layovers
43 Dwell
44 __ Speedwagon
45 Rowing tool
47 Casual "no"
48 Korean side dish: 2 wds.
51 Strong desires
52 Hairstyle that might hold a pick
56 Entourage
58 Settled in advance
60 Eighth planet from the sun
64 Comic strip parts
65 Best possible
66 Pebble or rock
67 Journalist John

DOWN

1 "What's up, __?"
2 Georgia's capital: Abbr.
3 Feminine pronoun
4 Valentine symbol
5 156, in Roman numerals
6 Naproxen brand
7 Edible mushrooms
8 Trig function: Abbr.
9 Do damage to
10 Square footage
11 "By Jove!": 2 wds.
12 Mulligan
14 Charter
16 Part of a celestial shower
18 Laced, as shoes
20 Skate park feature
21 Once more
22 Zeal
24 Ohio or Florida
28 "I'm at my __ end!"
29 Using the Internet
31 Disappeared
32 "No worries": 2 wds.
33 DC ballplayer, for short
35 Scratch or dent
36 Four-door car
38 Was imminent
40 Uses needle and thread
42 Diplomatic agreement
46 Horned zoo animals, for short
49 Colored eye part
50 Bungling
51 Sightings in the Himalayas
52 Smartphone programs
53 Greek campus group
54 Nevada city
55 Candid
57 Until: 2 wds.
59 Bitter beer
61 Speech hesitations
62 Scottish "no"
63 Right-angle shape

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

C	O	B	■	A	L	S	O	■	M	I	S	L	E	D
A	R	I	■	S	I	N	S	■	O	C	T	A	V	E
L	A	N	■	S	A	I	L	■	B	E	A	N	I	E
F	L	O	W	E	R	P	O	T	■	■	Y	E	L	P
■	■	C	A	R	S	■	■	R	A	S	H	■	■	■
T	A	U	N	T	■	N	A	I	L	T	E	C	H	S
E	L	L	■	■	G	E	L	■	L	A	R	I	A	T
S	T	A	T	U	E	O	F	L	I	B	E	R	T	Y
S	O	R	E	S	T	■	R	A	N	■	■	C	E	L
A	S	S	E	M	B	L	E	D	■	A	M	U	S	E
■	■	■	N	A	Y	S	■	■	B	R	A	S	■	■
A	S	I	A	■	■	U	N	T	A	I	N	T	E	D
L	E	N	G	T	H	■	E	A	T	S	■	E	V	E
M	E	T	E	O	R	■	A	C	H	E	■	N	E	W
S	N	O	R	T	S	■	T	O	S	S	■	T	R	Y

©2025 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved. 3/19/25

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER:

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



Fairview volunteers at the Boys & Girls Club/**SPECIAL PHOTO**

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Continued from page 1

They took off from work and volunteered as an organization. They purchased pre-packaged snacks and drinks, which can be a big strain on a non-profit to feed that many.

"When we reached out to them they said they could really use our help in providing food for the kids while they're here," Green said.

The volunteers loaded them up for the items and took them out to the club located in Dudley. The volunteers unloaded the items and inventoried them.

When the children arrived, the volunteers organized an Easter Egg hunt and then they offered a craft opportunity for them.

"At the end of the day, each person volunteers just over five hours," Green said. "It was really touching. They were thankful we chose them. We saw a need there. Our goal was to touch an organization that deals with shelter food and clothing. They offer the kids a safe place after school and they also provide food throughout that time.

"Although our goal was to go out and make an impact on the community and be seen as someone who is invested, it turned out to be way more of a blessing for our staff to be able to go out and actually be involved in the Boys and Girls Club and see what they do every day," she added. "They are touching more than 100 lives every day and we are just glad to be a small part of it.

"We consider ourselves one of the premier partners in Dublin because we always try to see the needs and then respond to them. I think anyone of our leaders would be willing to say that there is no other community than we would want to serve than Dublin, Laurens County and the surrounding communities that we serve and care for each day."



OFTC Tool recipients, instructors, staff and TOOLS sponsors and donors gather for a photo following Wednesday's event/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

TOOLS

Continued from page 1

Kathryn Willcox, chairman of the board of trustees for the OFTC Foundation, said they are pleased to offer the TOOLS program.

"It's my personal favorite," she said. "Without the sponsors and donors we wouldn't be able to do this. It makes a big difference in the student's lives and in our community."

Each student had an instructor nominate them for their award. The instructors were called on to talk about their students. Fuller, who was nominated by Bradley Huckabee but was not able to be at Wednesday's event, was described by an instructor as being someone who demonstrated many qualities. Fuller, from Eastman, planned to continue working at his current position before going out on his own.

Barlow, was nominated by Kelly McAdams, who also was not able to take the podium. Barlow, from Dublin, was described as someone who had a deep desire to care for others and will make a good addition to the nursing world.

Bill Adams nominated Clements, from Rentz.

"Blake basically does everything that needs to be done without being asked," Adams said. "Blake helped other students learn. We tell students that they will always be training others."

Jennifer Eiland talked about Brooks, from Soperton, the student she nominated.

"(Brooks) was running down the wrong path," Eiland said. "She had to gain everyone's trust. She was pregnant when she arrived at OFTC. She took it one step at a time and ended up mentoring others. She has overcome and persevered."

Maxwell, from Louisville, was nominated by Mark Stewart.

"Grayson has a great attitude," Stewart said. "He's great in class. He's got a bright future ahead of him."

Brown, from East Dublin, and Gaultney, from Dexter, were nominated Ryan Scarborough.

"They both represent the value of OFTC," Scarborough said. "They'll be good in the field and they've been a joy to teach."

Brenda Gurr nominated Hammock, from Dexter.

"(Hammock) didn't know what she wanted to do," Gurr said. "When I think about Lauren I think of someone with a really kind heart. ... My wish for you is to continue to deal with a mean world with your acts of kindness. I hope you continue to be the person you are."

Gurr also nominated Timmons, from East Dublin.

"(Jennifer) was really shy and she is small in stature, but she makes up with that with her personality," the instructor said. "She took the time to take care of everyone else. She is an asset to the medical field. (Jennifer), you know you make a difference in the lives of others. Don't change."

Scott Gray went to the podium to talk about the student he nominated, Howell, from Milan.

"Ashley followed her grandmother into nursing," Gray said. "She is very few who have made it through nursing school with straight A's."

McKensey Bray nominated Floyd, from Danville, and Goolsby, from Dublin.

"Zachary consistently demonstrated his academic responsibilities," Bray said. "He has a willingness to assist his classmates. The TOOLS awards will provide him with the tools he needs. His hard work and perseverance will lead him through his career."

Bray said Goolsby demonstrated an outstanding work ethic and passion for learning.

"She has a willingness to go above and beyond," the instructor said. "She has remained focused on her goals. The TOOLS will provide her with financial support for her profession and she will continue to excel in her career."

Natalie Smith talked about Ellison, from Sandersville.

"She is passionate about helping other people," Smith said. "She worked hard in the classroom and clinic. She deserves these awards for her hard work and dedication."

Ellis, from Dublin, was nominated by Kelley Braxton.

"Timoy wanted to help others and serve the community while making a decent living to support his family," Braxton said. "He has worked hard and mostly never complained. Timoy has showed excellent leadership throughout the program."

Jeff Partridge was called on to talk about Davis, from Warrenton.

"I know students have benefited greatly from (the TOOLS program)," Partridge said. "Carson is a rare student you don't hear anything out him because he is so quiet but busy. He has a great work ethic and he has a very bright future for whoever employer he works for."

Tony Simmons followed by talking about his nominee, Robinson, from Warthen.

"Preston's work ethics were the first thing I noticed about him," Simmons said. "He liked to work and he did it very well. He worked diligently to develop his welding skills and he was eager to learn."

Simmons also thanked OFTC and the foundation for the TOOLS program.



The Red Cross thanked its volunteers for their service during a challenging 2024 /**PAYTON TOWNS III**

RED CROSS

Continued from page 1

Bentz and volunteers watched an awards presentation that began with Alicia Doherty, regional chief executive officer, thanking the volunteers for all of their hard work this past year.

"We couldn't have done this without our volunteers," Doherty said. "Volunteers dedicated hundreds and thousands of hours for the Red Cross last year. We couldn't do what we do without you."

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp and Sen. Jon Ossoff spoke by video message to the volunteers who were watching the same video feed throughout the state.

"We have recovered and survived some of Georgia's most intense storms," Ossoff said. "I am always here as your partner."

Added Kemp: "We couldn't have made it through the challenging days last year without the volunteers."

After the Zoom was completed, Bentz told the group that she wanted to recognize each one of the volunteers.

"We're a team," she said. "It takes each and every one of us."

Dublin
Cooking Show & Expo 2025
A Courier Herald event



It's back!
August 21 at 6:00 PM
DuBose Porter Center
Oconee Fall Line Technical College
560 Pinehill Rd, Dublin, Georgia
For more information, contact Connie Adams at (478) 279-3034.

SPONSORED BY
Farmer's State Bank
The Exchange
Salty Halo
Dublin Square
Pitts Toyota
Fairfield
Smile Doctor
Colleen's China
Georgia Hospice
Southern Printing
Home2 Suites
Harts Design
Artistic Smiles of Dublin
Dexter Pecan Company
Beth Hooks Designs

• VIP EXPERIENCE
• VENDOR BOOTHS AVAILABLE
• GIFT BAG STUFFERS
• GIVEAWAYS

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
VIP TICKETS $75
GENERAL TICKETS $30

Stepping Stone
Together, we can help our children
United Way