

State: Dublin City Schools making progress but facing tough choices unless it can balance budget

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

Dublin City Schools must find a way to balance its budget without continuing to borrow advance funding from the state or it could be left with two options – temporarily combining operations with the Laurens County School District or consolidating the two systems altogether, the state's school superintendent says.

Facing what was once a projected \$13 million deficit by fiscal year's end, Dublin City is "tentatively on a path to eliminating its deficit" and repaying more than \$6 million owed to the State Health Benefit Plan, according to a letter

from Georgia School Superintendent Richards to city school officials on Friday.

"However, that path is entirely dependent upon continued forward funding of QBE beyond FY26," Woods said.

The Dublin district has borrowed almost \$3 million of next year's Quality Basic Education funding to meet payroll and other obligations in September and October, and has asked for another \$1 million for November, as well. The state superintendent has described the requests for future funding as "unprecedented."

The requests must be approved by Governor's Office of Planning

and Budget.

"It is essential the district understands that approval of forward funding is not guaranteed and is dependent upon state policies, revenues and the input of other state agencies," Woods wrote. "Given this, the district must embark upon an honest evaluation of its financial standing and consider its options for future solvency."

The letter lays out three possible options for the local school board:

Option 1: Achieve a balanced budget

"The district could continue to reduce spending levels, increase revenues and/or improve cash-

flow processes to ensure future balanced budgets. This would require the district to prepare a reserve balance that eliminates the district's dependence on advanced QBE funding," wrote Woods. "As I stated previously, district leadership should work to ensure the impact of these decisions does not fall disproportionately on teachers, school-level staff or taxpayers, who did not create this crisis."

Option 2: Conservatorship

"The district could enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Laurens County School District to temporarily combine operations. This

would allow Dublin City Schools, in agreement with the Laurens County School District, to further reduce administrative costs for a pre-determined amount of time until the district regains solvency and could reinstate full operations."

Option 3: Consolidation

"While consolidation decisions must be made by voters, Dublin City Schools could publicly support consolidation with the Laurens County School District," Woods wrote, noting that should the community choose to pursue

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GALA OF GRADITUDE: TEEN CHALLENGE HOLDS EVENT TO CELEBRATE NEW LIFE IN THE LORD

The Dublin Teen Challenge showed its gratitude during the group's latest gala at the First Baptist Church Family Life Center. Teen Challenge students and officials presented testimony, led worship and performed several skits about how God has taken them from a life of alcohol and drugs to depending on the Lord/PAYTON TOWNS III

County OKs tax break for \$50M YKK project

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

The Laurens County Commission approved a tax abatement Tuesday for YKK and its planned \$50 million renovation at its Dublin plant.

County Administrator Bryan Rogers described the project as a "modernization" of the YKK plant to include new technology and machinery and improvements to the heating-and-air conditioning system.

"It's more of a renovation, not an expansion," Rogers told the commission.

The abatement is included in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the company that's already been approved by the Dublin City Council, and has the backing of the Dublin-Laurens Development Authority.

Under the agreement, YKK would receive a five-year tax break on the improvements at the plant. The company would pay no taxes in the first year, then pay 20 percent in year 2. Taxes would increase by 20 percent each year, until reaching 100 percent in the sixth year.

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Local church planning to give out 500 Thanksgiving turkeys, meals

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A local church is planning to give away 500 Thanksgiving turkeys and meals, if not more, this Saturday.

Greater New Friendship Baptist Church will hold the event for the fourth time, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Old West Laurens Middle School, 879 Honeysuckle Road.

"I am coming up on my fourth anniversary as the pastor at Greater New Friendship and this type of ministry was on my heart to do something," said the Rev. Ernest Jones. "Each year we have been able to give out more. In 2022, we started by giving out 100 boxes. In 2023 we did 250,

and last year we did just a little over 400 boxes. This year we're going to be at 500 and maybe a little over. We started off holding this at the Farmers Market."

They needed more room to help with the traffic, so they moved it to the old middle school last year.

"It has gotten slightly bigger and better, and we have been able to give out more each year," Jones said. "We have had a bunch of community support from other churches, individuals and organizations."

On Friday, Jones said the community is welcome to help the church put the boxes together by meeting at the school at

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Habitat for Humanity to hold pre-sale of Daddy-Daughter Dance tickets

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

An early Christmas present will be available for purchase for an event that has been selling out of tickets early.

The Dublin-Laurens County Habitat for Humanity will have its only pre-Christmas sale for its 21st annual Daddy-Daughter Dance from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 6 at Pine Forest Methodist Church, 400 Woods Ave.

"This is the best day and

best time to get a ticket," said Habitat Executive Director Tracy Kinney.

Habitat can accept Venmo, PayPal, credit card, check or cash. Tickets are \$30.

"The money from this event goes to House No. 44," Kinney said. "We are currently working on House No. 43 and hope to be done with it and have the new homeowner in by the first of the year."

HABITAT DANCE
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New Daddy-Daughter Dance T-shirts, cups also will be for sale/PAYTON TOWNS III

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1 section, 10 pages • Vol. 111, No. 136, Pub. No. 161860



State commissioner announces plan to streamline Department of Labor

By KYLE DOMINY
Staff Reporter

Georgia Labor Commissioner Barbara Rivera Holmes has announced sweeping changes to the state Department of Labor to streamline access to unemployment benefits and connect workers to in-demand jobs.

"This is a new era - not just for labor, but for leadership," Rivera Holmes said in a release announcing the plan. "We're building a department that leads with clarity, delivers with precision and earns the public's trust every day. To-

gether, we are driving change by streamlining operations, modernizing systems and building a culture of transparency, responsiveness and results. We're redefining how government serves its people - and we're just getting started."

Much of the changes come in the form of updated computer systems, replacing the department decades old unemployment insurance platform. The new system, already starting to rollout, improves user experience and is designed to accelerate claims processing while reducing fraud.

Delays caused by the old claims

system, explained Rivera Holmes in a phone call further discussing the plan, led to a heavy call volume at department of labor centers across the state and a bottleneck of workers seeking benefits.

"We have begun the implementation and it's a play that will unfold as the months move on," the commissioner said. "That will eliminate some of the call center volume."

The department will also work to expand infrastructure to connect workers with in-demand, high paying job opportunities. These connections will come through partnerships is educational institutions,

local communities and employers.

Georgia releases an annual high demand career list, highlighting industries and jobs in growing sectors. The 2026 list has been released, but state law allows for a review and appeal time period. The list will become effective on Jan. 1.

In demand careers range from arts and entertainment to travel and logistics. The most in demand careers remain in healthcare and education.

"That looks like aligning job

LABOR DEPARTMENT
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OBITUARIES



Cassamary Redd

Funeral services for Ms. Cassamary Redd of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, at 11 a.m. at the Old West Laurens High School, 388 West Laurens School Road in Dublin. Interment will follow in the Dudley Memorial Cemetery.

Cassamary was born to her parentage, the late M.C. “Buddy” Kemp and “Honey” Redd Kemp, on July 20, 1955, in Dublin, Georgia. She received her formal education from Millville School and also matriculated at West Laurens High School. She worked at various places before she enlisted in the United States Army in 1980. Cassamary proudly served her country in the United States Army for 15 years, answering the call of duty with courage, honor and humility. Her service did not end when she laid down her uniform; instead, she carried that same discipline and dedication into her community, where she worked as a Deputy Sheriff at the Laurens County Sheriff’s Department for 19 years.

In every role, she was known for her steady presence, her fairness and her deep compassion for the people she encountered. Above all else, Cassamary was a servant of God. Her faith guided her footsteps, shaped her character and overflowed into every act of kindness she shared. She was a woman of prayer, purpose and quiet strength; always ready to lift someone’s spirit, offer a gentle word, or lend a helping hand. Cassamary loved her family deeply and wholeheartedly. Whether through big moments or simple everyday gestures, she made sure her love was felt; consistent, comforting, and unconditional.

Cassamary entered the loving arms of the Lord, Nov. 12, 2025, after a lifetime spent giving, uplifting, and serving others with unwavering strength and grace. Cassamary was preceded in death by her parents, her grandmother, Tommie Lee Redd, and her baby brother, Robert Kemp.

Cassamary leaves behind a legacy of her beloved daughter, Ieshia (Anthony) Redd-Austin, her grandchildren, whom she adored, Isaiah Redd, Ilyse Redd, Israel Austin and Imari Austin, her siblings, Willie (Cheryl) Redd, Linda Holliman, Terry (Stacey) Hill, Mattie Mason, Betty (Robert) Daniel, Michael (Luciana) Kemp, Jr., McKinley (DeWana) Kemp, & Debra Newkirk, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins,

friends, & loved ones, her “first baby” Nathaniel “Spanky” (Tiffany) Kemp, her best friends of 40 plus years, Yolonda Brown, Martha Ann (James) Brown and her godchildren, Matthew Palmer, Alvin Palmer, Erica Sabb, Bianca Brown, and James Brown Jr. Though her absence leaves an ache no words can ease, her life remains an example of what it means to serve God, country, and community with joy and devotion. We thank God for the precious gift of Cassamary’s life and take comfort in knowing she has found eternal rest in him.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com. The family is receiving friends daily through Friday, 5-9 PM at the home of Ramonica Kemp, 239 Werden Road in Dublin.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.



De'Vauoris Lewis

Funeral services for Mr. De'Vauoris Lewis of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, at 2 p.m. at the Church of Jesus at 1265 US Hwy 319 North in East Dublin. Bishop H. B. Turnley Jr. will deliver the eulogy. Interment will follow in the Church of Jesus Cemetery.

Mr. De'Vauoris Lewis was born on Monday, Dec. 17, 2007, to his parents, Felicia Lewis and Lavinskine Floyd. De'Vauoris Lewis, affectionately known as “Debo,” was loved by many. He loved to dance and to rap. He had a smile that would brighten your day.

He departed this life on Nov. 9, 2025. He was tragically taken away from us at the age of 17 years old. He was preceded in death by his grandmothers, Mamie Mason and Teleah Floyd, great-grandmother, Tresie Mae Lewis, brother, Logan Floyd, aunts, Angela Linder, Kwanna Floyd and Janice Coley, uncles, Elroy Floyd and Patrick Lewis.

De'Vauoris leaves to cherish his memories to his mother, Felicia Lewis, father Lavinskine Floyd (Sherilssa), grandfather, Elroy Rozier, great-grandmother, Annie Floyd, brothers, Jmarcus Ny’lege, Kobi, Dayton, Hunter, Major, Lagen and Chanze, sisters, Avanasia, Unique Khalil, Zoey and Lauryn, nieces Ja’Nhavi Lewis, J’viyun Wilbur, aunts, Julie Lewis, Marquita Floyd, uncles, Roderick Lewis, Jerome Mason, Tevin Tobridge, Chorrey Wells and Rashad Wells.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.

Catherine "Cathy" Mc-Tier Couey

Catherine “Cathy” Mc-Tier Couey passed away on Nov. 18, 2025, at her home, surrounded by her loving family.

Born in Laurens County, Georgia, on March 16, 1954, Cathy was the daughter of Buddy and Rachel McTier. She married the love of her life, Eddie Couey, in 1979, and together they shared 46 wonderful years. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Cathy was a devoted member of Dublin First Church of the Nazarene, where she served faithfully in the church choir. She retired from the Laurens County Commissioner’s Office after 20 years as the county manager’s office assistant, a role in which she was known for her dedication and kindness.

Cathy is survived by her husband, Eddie; her two daughters, Brooke (Bobby) Hancock of Berrien County and Rebekah Couey of Dublin; and her cherished grandsons, Brady and Bennett Hancock of Berrien County. She is also survived by her siblings, Glenda Burke, Tom (Marianne) McTier, and Debra (David) Nelson; her sister-in-law, Glenda Garnto; her brother-in-law, Brad Couey; and numerous nieces and nephews whom she loved as her own.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Remarkable Hospice for their compassionate care.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, Nov. 20. The family will receive friends from 10:30 until 11:30 a.m. at Stanley Funeral Home. A graveside service will follow at 12 p.m. at Memorial Gardens Cemetery, with Reverend Don Hicks officiating.

Moore’s Funeral Home in Milledgeville and Stanley Funeral Home in Dublin has charge of the arrangements.

Timothy D. Ashley

Mr. Timothy D. Ashley, 49, of Dudley, Georgia passed away Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025. Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced later. The family asks for continued prayers and comfort during their hour of bereavement.

Serenity Funeral Home - Dublin has charge of arrangements.

Frances Peacock Fountain

Frances Peacock Fountain passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2025.

Francis was born in Dodge County on Sept. 2, 1936, to Lydia Pearl Peacock and Romolus Peacock. She graduated from Dodge County High School in 1954.

Frances was a pillar of the Fountain family, working tirelessly beside her husband of 65 years on their farm. A woman of strength, she was just as likely to be found behind the wheel of a tractor as she was to be behind the handle of a frying pan. There was nary a day in the Fountain household that did not include a table sagging beneath the weight of plates of fried chicken or fried cube steak, peas, butterbeans and biscuits. Her famous coconut cake were perhaps the most sought-after cake south of the Mason-Dixon line, or at least the most sought-after cake at any cake auction.

As many hours as she spent in the kitchen, she spent double in her beloved sewing room. As far as her daughter and granddaughter are concerned, all the clothing designers in the world pale in comparison to Frances Fountain. She would be found in her sewing room early in the morning before making breakfast for her beloved husband. The steady sound of her sewing machine filled the Fountain household just as the scent of her fried squash.

Frances Fountain was a woman who loved me - her only granddaughter. For 18 Thanksgiving and Christmases, Frances Fountain stood beside a hot stove and watched me pull dumplings apart one by one and drop them into the pot of chicken she had prepared. Not once did she rush me - she surely had 50 more dishes to fix - or chide me that I was dropping dumplings on the floor - I absolutely was. She simply stood beside me, pulling up a stool for me when I was too small to reach the stove, and told me what a good job I was doing. She would tell me how the dumplings that I was "making" were going to be the best part of the meal. The meal that she would toil and sweat over.

Just as she stood beside me all those years as I cooked dumplings, she stood beside me in my life. She was a constant champi-

on for her granddaughter. A monument, a woman of unbending will made of pure iron with only soft words and steady encouragement for me. She was the steady hand holding tweezers to pluck cotton seek out of my tiny nose as I screamed, all the while ignoring that I was culprit of the cottonseed’s journey into my nose. She was the quiet shadow over my shoulder watching as I dug into the dirt of her flower bed and garden.

Frances Fountain will be missed dearly. She was a giant upon which the woman of Fountain lineage will stand tall upon for generations to come. And though they will try their best, her coconut cake and gentle soul can never be replicated.

Frances is survived by Randall Fountain, her husband of 65 years, her daughter Melody Fountain Coleman, son-in-law Buddy Coleman and Anna Frances Coleman, her loving granddaughter.



Dorothy Cason Wright

Funeral services for Mrs. Dorothy Cason Wright, of Wrightsville, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, at 3 p.m. at Ranger Grove Church of God in Christ, Ranger Grove Church Road in Wrightsville. Rev. Wilbur Cannon will deliver the eulogy. Interment will follow in Scott’s Cemetery.

Mrs. Wright was born on Thursday, July 14, 1955. She joined Ranger Grove at an early age. She graduated

from Johnson County High School in 1978. She worked at Buckey Industries, then at Nana’s Kitchen. Her favorite song is “God is a Good God.” Her hobbies included cooking, decorating, sewing, and doing make-up and hair.

Mrs. Wright passed away on Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025. She was preceded in death by her husband, Antonio Bruce Wright, her son Bradrick Wright, and her parents, Joe and Inez Cason.

She leaves cherished memories to her sons, Bryant Wright of Wrightsville, Jeremy Wright and Antonio Wright of Dublin, her sisters, Willie Jewell Wright of Atlanta, Jeannie Mitchell, Willene Gregory, Darlene (Gerald) Weaver, and Pearl Cason of Kansas City, and sisters-in-law Angela and Deanna Mae, a devoted friend, Mother Gladys Jordan and her grandchildren Zoey, Thomas, Bryant Wright, Jr, and Blake Wright.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.

TRIVIA

By FIFI RODRIGUEZ
King Features

1. HISTORY: Which country sold Alaska to the United States?
2. GEOGRAPHY: On which continent is the Sahara Desert?
3. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Who created The Muppets?
4. MUSIC: What was singer Milley Cyrus' alter ego when she starred in a Disney sitcom?
5. MATH: How many sides does a heptagon (sometimes called a septagon) have?

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POSTING DATE **NOVEMBER 17, 2025**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THUTHUY NGUYEN HAS SUBMITTED A REZONING APPLICATION FOR .38 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1521 RICE AVENUE, DUBLIN GEORGIA. REQUEST TO REZONE FROM R1 (SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL) TO P (PROFESSIONAL). PROPOSED USE IS A DAYCARE FACILITY.

THIS REQUEST WILL BE HEARD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD ON DECEMBER 9, 2025 AT 5:30 P. M. IN THE HENRY “BUD” HICKS JR MEMORIAL CHAMBERS. ALL INTERESTED PERSONS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS MEETING TO GIVE YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS REZONING REQUEST.

Sharon Eveland, City Planner

If you should have any questions, please call (478) 277-5070.

ANNIVERSARIES

Nov. 21
Stanley & Brandi Hanks

BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 20
Nikki Ball
Rosemary Kowtko

Nov. 21
Catherine Steele

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Thanksgiving Holiday Publishing Schedule for The Courier Herald

The Courier Herald will publish on Tuesday, Nov. 25, and a combined paper for Thursday, Nov 27, & Saturday, Nov 29.

Deadlines for the Thurs-Sat combo paper will be
Tuesday Nov. 25th at 9 am

The Courier Herald office WILL CLOSE AT NOON ON
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH AND WILL BE CLOSED
Thanksgiving Day and Friday Nov 28.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Dental Associates of Dublin
would like to announce the official retirement of
Dr. Robby Brinson!

As sad as we are to see him step away from our practice, we are just as happy to see him take well deserved time to spend with his family. He has dedicated over 35 years of his life to serving patients in middle Georgia and beyond. We have been so blessed to have had the opportunity to work alongside him, and we look forward to seeing him enjoy his retirement!



Congratulations Dr. Brinson!

OUR TAKE...



From left: Keith Griffin, Jim Green, Wayne Palmer and Leonard Ashford poise for a picture following a \$10,000 donation for a Fisher House at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center/PAYTON TOWNS III

A Fisher House at our VA will help veteran families

When an emergency occurs to a loved one, the last thing one wants to be bothered with is where they are going to stay and how are they going to eat. Those kind of questions are usually shoved to the back burner and are taken care of later.

The Carl Vinson VA Medical Center is in the middle of raising funds to help the family of veterans who are going through a dire situation have a place to stay where they do not have to be concerned with anything other than being with their loved one.

Recently, Air Force veterans Jim Green and Steve Petrie donated \$5,000 each to go to the construction of a Fisher House, which was approved in 2022, here at our VA. This \$10,000 will go a long ways toward the eventual construction of a Fisher House which has been described as a place that functions like a Ronald McDonald House.

According to Keith Griffin, VA center for development and civic engagement chief, once a facility is approved it usually takes three to four years before construction begins. Now is the time to raise the funds needed for this important facility. To donate or for more information, contact Griffin at (478) 272-1210, ext. 72439 or at keith.griffin@va.gov.

The VA is looking after many veterans who have played a role in protecting our country. Any donation, no matter how small or big, will allow us to help the families of those veterans who have paid a lot to watch over us and our country.

– Payton Towns III

YOUR TURN:

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

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.

- Meister Eckhart

DAILY SCRIPTURE

"Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there."

- Matthew 19: 13-15

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY

- Nov. 20, 2025 is...
- National Pay Back Your Parents Day
 - National Peanut Butter Fudge Day
 - National Absurdity Day
 - National Rural Health Day
 - Use Less Stuff Day
 - Great American Smokeout
 - Universal Children's Day

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



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

Dearth of economic development announcements signals caution



By CHARLIE HARPER

rea. Hyundai has not only re-committed to the project, but announced the go ahead for the next expansion phase of that project.

The magazine reports 171 new projects announced by August 1 of this year. Their 31 year average for that same period is 319 deals. On the surface, that looks like a major slowdown. It might be. It might also be noise.

This has been anything but an “average” year. In January, we inaugurated a new President. There was clearly a mandate for change, and the new administration wasted little time and spared few areas of prior policy.

Notably, incentives for electric vehicles and other “clean energy” were eliminated, with additional regulations repealed that would have essentially mandated. Automakers that were re-deploying capital based on Biden era rules and perks had to decide if there would still be a return on those new investments.

Then came “Liberation Day”, where punitively high tariffs were announced to force every manufacturer to re-evaluate their entire supply chains. While the long term goal has been to on-shore foreign made inputs and finished goods, we can definitely see a pause in some decision making as corporations assessed the quickly changing landscape.

Added to the sense of unease are a few closures, with International Paper in Georgia’s coastal region being the largest among them. This has implications not only for the region’s workforce, but for the entire supply chain of Georgia’s timber industry.

The flip side of this argument is that the data in this report is only for seven months. Given the changes in and from the new administration, it’s not surprising to see a little bit of a pause.

It’s also important to understand the perspective

that announcements are not what ultimately makes weekly paychecks. There’s still a backlog of projects previously announced creating jobs. The President has also announced deals with major trading partners for other countries to increase U.S. investments, with the South being the most competitive region for new businesses.

It will be interesting to revisit this number in the new year. Was there just a delay due to the uncertainty and changes in the business climate during the first half of the year? Do the agreements we’ve made since attract new projects? Are relaxed regulations and permanent extension of President Trump’s first term tax cuts a comfort to investors who were on the fence?

Economics lives on real data, but ultimately it’s about direction and perception. How voters feel about the economy once we start the new year will go a long way to decide primaries in the first half of next year, and ultimately the elections less than a year from now. What our businesses are telegraphing over the next few months will be a leading indicator of what those polls are going to show us in May and November.



The assault on rural hospitals is an assault on all

Recently, St. Mary’s Sacred Heart Hospital in Lavonia closed its labor and delivery unit.

For families in Northeast Georgia, this means the nearest maternity care may now be an hour’s drive away. For expectant mothers in labor, that can be the difference between life and death. Hospital administrators pointed to many factors behind the decision — shrinking rural populations, difficulty recruiting doctors and the outmigration of patients.

But the tipping point was unmistakable: the sweeping Medicaid cuts pushed through Congress in Trump’s terrible, tyrannical, no-good budget, which passed earlier this year. For a state where Medicaid covers nearly 60% of rural births, that’s a deadly blow.

One doesn’t often connect the dots between hospital closures and the end of democracy, but the signs here are unmistakable. In the 10 steps to authoritarianism, breaking the government so it doesn’t work is Step 4 — and blocking health care access is a clarification call.

The closure of a maternity ward is both a tragedy and a warning. Authoritarianism in the 21st century doesn’t often arrive with tanks in the street. As we’re seeing play out in America



today, it seeps into daily life when governments deliberately weaken the safety nets people rely on to survive.

This is part of the authoritarian playbook. First, gut public services. Then normalize inequality. Finally, convince communities that they are on their own. We’ve seen this in other countries: dismantling health care systems, stripping social supports and allowing infrastructure to crumble until despair becomes the norm. When people stop believing democracy can deliver the basics — like safe childbirth — they start believing autocracy might be worth a try.

But Georgia is on a fast track, aided by decades of failed health care policies and the refusal to expand Medicaid. As a direct result of this neglect, Georgia has already lost more than a dozen labor and delivery units in the past decade, not to mention our record number of hospital closures and

looming shutdowns.

Each time, the loss ripples beyond the maternity ward and beyond the redirected ambulance. Hospitals are often the largest employer in rural towns. These closures hollow out local economies, drive away families and accelerate the decline of our communities. That is not accidental; it is the predictable result of policies that privilege political ideology over the well-being of our neighbors.

What makes authoritarianism possible is the slow, grinding destruction of trust. Every time a pregnant woman is told her nearest hospital cannot help her, every time a community loses its only lifeline, our trust erodes further. Why vote when elected officials ignore your demand for safety and security?

The resilience of a democracy can be measured in its hospitals and classrooms, as much in its courthouses and statehouses. A

flourishing society makes care accessible — because dignity is not a luxury and health care is a right. When leaders choose instead to strip away the very systems that sustain life, giving the wealthy tax breaks that bankrupt health care for thousands, they are turning democracy on its head — making it smaller, crueler and more fragile.

If we want to fight against the authoritarian assault seeping into our lives, we must see the regular signs of assault — not military juntas or tanks but closed signs on hospitals in the wealthiest nation on earth and new mothers turned away because our political leaders cared more about donors than new Americans.

We must refuse to accept the scarcity that is being pushed upon us as normal. We must demand a government that sees rural mothers and babies as worthy of care and not as collateral damage.

Democracy lives — or dies — in places like Lavonia.

Stacey Abrams is a best-selling author, entrepreneur and host of the podcast “Assembly Required.” She previously served as minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives.

OBITUARIES



Rickey Edward Montford

Funeral services for Mr. Rickey Edward Montford 57, of East Dublin, Georgia, will be held at the graveside in the Laurens Memorial Gardens on Nov., Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Laurens Memorial Gardens, 416 Shannon Drive in East Dublin.

Rickey, affectionately known as “ET”, was born on Sunday, March 24,1968, in Dublin, Georgia, to Mrs. Oletha Montford-Johnson and Mr. Wille Paul Johnson.

Ricky “ET” was educated in Laurens County and was self-employed within the mobile home industry for many years. He was an inactive member of the Buckeye Baptist Church and was baptized at an early age.

Rickey passed away on Friday, Nov. 14, 2025. He was preceded in death by his father, Willie Paul Johnson, brother, Paul D. Johnson and stepson, Jimquez Smith.

He is survived by his wife, Nichole Montford of East Dublin, and his daughter, Rittney Montford, grandchildren, Railei Fuller and Zi’Keir Green, stepsons, Eddie Vickers Jr., Keyunta Golden, stepdaughters, Nikea Wright and Nykeja Golden; siblings, Tyrice Johnson of Dublin, Victoria (Jeff) Johnson of Jacksonville, Florida, Wactrickio (Hilary) Johnson of Dublin, Tomisty (Micheal) Allen of Atlanta, LeKeith Johnson of Dublin, Martina Johnson of Dublin, and Travis Johnson of Dublin, uncle, Clifford (Kim) Montford of Plainfield, New Jersey, and aunt, Rozina Montford of Dublin, a devoted niece, Tavoria Johnson, and cousin, Bruce Montford, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, family and friends.

Please post your condolences at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.



Pedro Whitley

Funeral services for Mr. Pedro Whitley of Wrightsville, Georgia, will be held on Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Dock Kemp School, 417 Crawford Road in Wrightsville.

Pedro Whitley was born on Monday, Aug. 26, 1946, in Wrightsville, Georgia, to his parents, Juanita Whitley Davis and Jasper Hunter. He was raised by Lizzie Whitley-Owens and Daniel Owens. He attended the Dock Kemp School in Wrightsville. He was employed with Engelhart Corporation for 30 years. His hobbies were playing cards and riding around Wrightsville. He had a great sense of humor, but most of all, he

loved to crack jokes. On Aug. 6, 1966, he was united in holy matrimony with Annie M. Brown. He departed this life on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2025. He was preceded in death by his brothers, David and Matthew Whitley, his sister, Pauline Davis, two grandsons, Kelvis Whitley and LePhillip Wright. He leaves to cherish his memories his wife, Annie M. Whitley, children Philip (Erica) Whitley, Sherrie Whitley, Lakesheia Wright, Lolanda Hawthorne, Antwornn (Shekita) Whitley, Jeremie (Shantarra) Whitley and Jeremiah Elbert, sisters, Polly Whitley, Carolyn Davis and Sandra (Kenneth) Morrison, brother, James Hunter, aunt, Geneva Hicks, uncle, Jonas (Emma) Whitley, sisters-in-law, Lilly Horne, Daisy Stewart, Annie B. Brown, Alisa (Glenn) Darrisaw and Arlene (Isaac) Bivins. The family is receiving friends at 1801 Buckeye Road in Tennille, Georgia. Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.

Katherine Dudley

Funeral services for Mrs. Katherine Dudley of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Global Emmanuel Global Ministries, 116 Pritchett Street in Dublin. Interment will follow in Dudley Memorial Cemetery.

Katherine Dudley was born on Monday, June 18, 1945, in Tennille Ga.to the parentage of Granis and Lannie Mae Jones. Katherine graduated from Mary Fleming High School. She retired from J.P. Stevens/Forstmann, Inc.

Katherine Dudley departed her life on Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025. She was preceded in death by her father, Granis Jones, mother, Lannie Mae Jones, Sister: Gladean Chatman, brothers, Granger Jones and Casey Edward Jones, grandchildren, Christopher Washington and Samaya Dupree.

She is survived by her children, James L. Dudley Jr., of Atlanta Georgia, Cynthia Dudley and Greg Dudley, and Rodney Dixon of Dublin, Georgia. In addition to her children, Katherine leaves to cherish her lifelong companion, Luther Haynes, her siblings, Vertis Kellem of Dublin, Georgia, Lareth (Johnny)Hubbard of Dublin, Georgia, Gloria (Joseph) McClendon of Dublin, Georgia; Superintendent Alton (Peggy) Jones of Dublin Georgia; Larry Jones of Dublin, Georgia, and Deborah Howard of Dublin, Georgia, and a host of grandchildren, great- grandchild, nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Please post your condolences at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.



John C. Conaway

Funeral services for Mr. John C. Conaway, of Glenwood, Georgia, will be held on Friday, Nov. 21, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Saint Paul AME Church, 141 MLK Avenue in Glenwood.

Mr. Conaway passed away on Tuesday, November 18, 2025.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin

Classifieds

Yard/Estate Sales

Yard Sale -- at Little House Self Storage, HWY 257 Fri & Sat. 50 % off excluding furniture.

The et cetera chronicles - vol. 121

NO HOLDS BARRED AT THE BAR - It was during the time when Judge Flanders was holding court at the Johnson County Courthouse on May 9, 1896. Mr. P.H. Rogers was giving his testimony when one A.O. Kennedy yelled out, “I say it’s true. You lie! Kennedy charged Rogers, who was still sitting on the witness stand. A full-blown ruckus commenced right there in front of the judge. Before the two combatants could be pulled apart, Kennedy took his pen-knife and slashed Roger’s jugular vein.

It just so happened that two doctors were attending the court session that day. They sprang from their seats and rushed to the aid of the dying man. Kennedy made his escape. By the end of the day, there were five doctors taking turns to help P.H. Rogers from bleeding to death. At the end of the day, Rogers was in critical, but stable, condition. Chicago Tribune, May 10, 1896.

WHERE THERE’S SMOKE THERE IS SOMETIMES NO FIRE - It was another quiet night in Wrightsville when an unbelievable turn of events began to unfold. Someone noticed what appeared to be smoke coming out of the spire on the top of the courthouse, located some 125 feet in the air. Several townsfolk rushed inside the courthouse and up a winding staircase to find the source of the smoke. Others grabbed buckets and hoses. When the investigators reached the top of the staircase, they were dumbfounded as to what they found. The smoke was not coming from any fire. What they saw was described as millions of gnats. Savannah Morning News, July 30, 1899.

MUSIC OF THE GHOSTS - Back in the year

PIECES OF OUR PAST



By SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.

1890, a ghostly tale was about to begin. A good crowd gathered for supper at the home of J.H. Hicks, just outside of Wrightsville. All of a sudden, the water in a pot was about to reach its boiling point. Then the sounds of music were heard. The guests made out the sounds of two popular tunes, “The Arkansas Traveler” and “The Devil’s Dream.” The guests kept asking themselves, “Why and how.” A Mr. Jordan began to hear the stings of a violin in another room. He walked toward the source of the music and examined the entire area. Although everyone heard the same things, no source was

ever found. St. Louis Globe Democrat, Oct. 24, 1890.

MEEKS HERO - Arthur Iverson Meeks was born in Kite, Ga., and grew up in neighboring Meeks, Georgia, in Johnson County. During World War II, as a member of General George Patton's Third Army, Meeks was awarded the Infantryman’s Badge, the French Medal of Honor, three Bronze Stars, and the prestigious Silver, the nation’s third-highest award for heroism and gallantry. He died in 2014 at the age of 96. Obituary, Lanier Funeral Home, Lakeland, Florida.

The Laurens County Library is looking for a full-time Library Assistant for the Children’s & Youth Services Department.

Some Saturday and evening hours required. Candidates must have at least a high school diploma or equivalent and be comfortable working with large groups of children. For more information, see the job description at: <https://ocrl.org/employment> .

Benefits include State Health Insurance, Flexible Benefits, Annual Leave, and enrollment in the Teachers’ Retirement System of Georgia. Please send a resume, cover letter, and three work-related references to the Director of the Oconee Regional Library System at PO Box 100, Dublin, GA 31040, or email them to employment@ocrl.org .

Georgia

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STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 11/16/25

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Lot 6 - 1.99 ac
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Call Sale Manager Greg Williamson
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OPENS: Wed, December 3rd @ 9:00 A.M.
BEGINS CLOSING: Thurs, December 4th @ 1:00 P.M.

See Website for Complete Terms of the Auction



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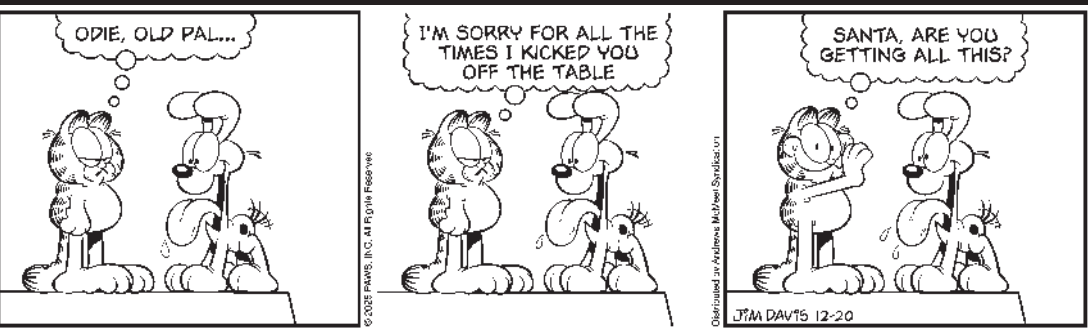
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



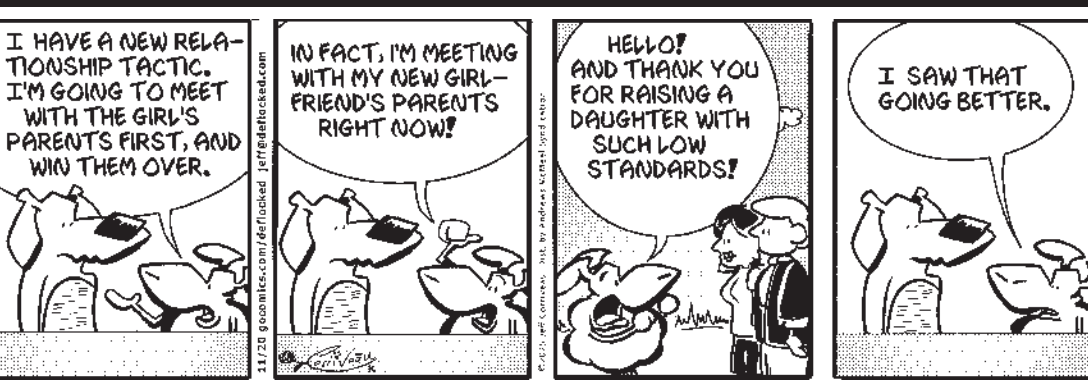
OVERBOARD

BY CHIP DUNHAM



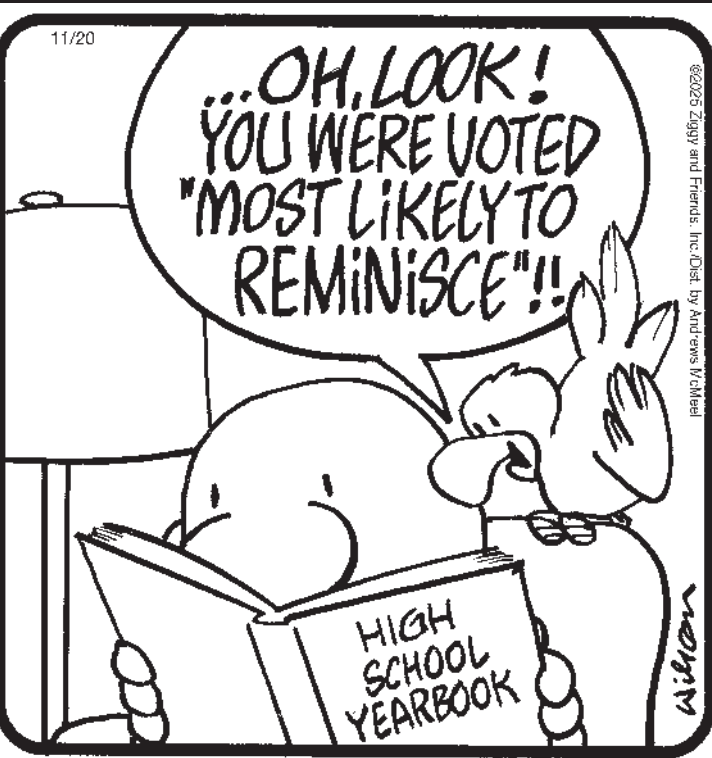
DEFLOCKED

BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



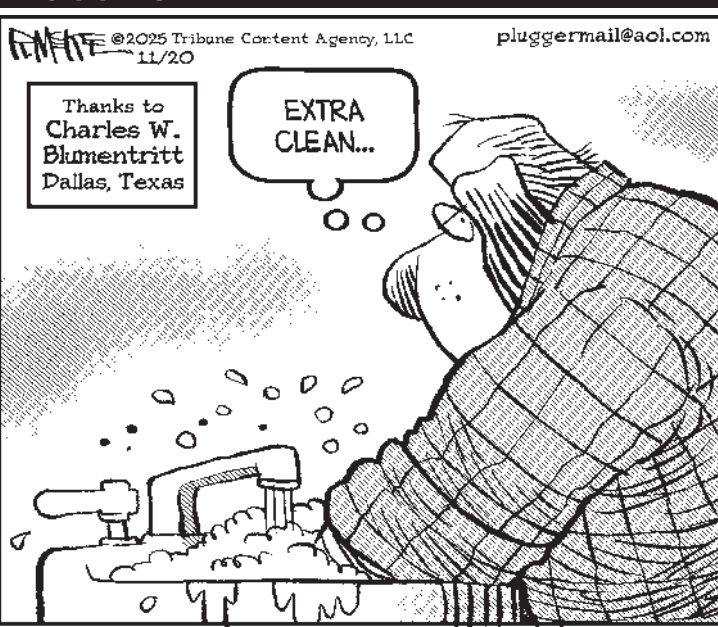
ZIGGY

BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS

BY JEFF MACNELLY



A plugger is germ-free because he can't remember if he washed his hands, so he washes them again.

Rambunctious children causing a ruckus for neighbor!

DEAR ABBY: I recently bought a first-floor condo because I am an older woman with a knee disability. Otherwise, I would have purchased a unit on the second floor of this two-story condo complex. I am only here part time because my husband is not ready for retirement.

The owner above me has two children who jump off the kitchen counter onto the floor multiple times a night as late as 10 p.m. It causes everything in my kitchen cabinets to rattle. I have spoken with the property manager. He's willing to send them violation notices which would eventually include fines. I haven't taken him up on it because, since I am a part-time resident, I'm concerned about retaliation such as broken windows or vandalism to my car in the parking lot. Of course, that neighbor would be the prime suspect, but I would have no proof.

I can't afford a more expensive community. My husband and I did knock on her door in a congenial manner one day to introduce ourselves as new neighbors. She did not give us the time of day. What would you do if you were me? -- FEELS THE NOISE DOWN SOUTH

DEAR FEELS THE NOISE: I would knock on the woman's door, explain the



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

problem and politely ask her to instruct her children not to jump off the kitchen counter after 6 p.m. because the crashing noise prevents me from enjoying my apartment. If she didn't cooperate, I'd have another talk with the manager. If the warnings and fines didn't work, I'd contact Child Protective Services, because what those kids are doing is dangerous and their parent is unwilling to supervise them.

DEAR ABBY: I have been happily married to my husband for 35 years. My mother-in-law just drafted her will and is passing her entire estate to him, with it being split equally among our three adult kids if he were to pass away before her. She was asked to name a beneficiary if all four of them predecease her. (I know it would be extremely unlikely.) My MIL has no oth-

er living relatives -- no parents, siblings, husband, cousins, etc.

She named a friend and neighbor rather than me as the beneficiary of her estate in this event. This neighbor lives next door to her and drives her to the grocery store, bank and doctor appointments, since my MIL does not drive and we live 3 1/2 hours away.

I thought she and I have always had a good relationship. My husband and I send flowers and cards on her birthday and Mother's Day. I select thoughtful gifts for her at Christmas. I have always treated her with kindness, respect and gentleness. I am helpful when she has health issues. I assist her in the kitchen with dishes, etc. I have always treated her son well. Am I petty, unreasonable or immature for having negative feelings about not being mentioned in her will? -- HURT IN COLORADO

DEAR HURT: Not at all. You're human. It does appear to be a glaring omission, and under these circumstances, your reaction is understandable. What does your husband feel about what his mother did? Perhaps he should speak to her and ask if she forgot she has a daughter-in-law when she made her will.

Thursday, November 20, 2025

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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WHY DRAW TRUMPS?

Both vulnerable, South deals

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A 7 3		♠ Q 6	
♥ K 10 8 6 3		♥ A 9 4	
♦ Void		♦ Q 7 6 2	
♣ A K Q 5 3		♣ J 10 4 2	
WEST		SOUTH	
♠ 8 4 2		♠ K J 10 9 5	
♥ Q J 7 5 2		♥ Void	
♦ 10 8		♦ A K J 9 5 4 3	
♣ 9 8 6		♣ 7	

The bidding:			
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
6♠	All pass	5♣	Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♥

The actual auction in today's deal was too complex and artificial for a bridge column. It included many relay bids and step responses, which would have taken two or three columns to explain. We offer the much simpler

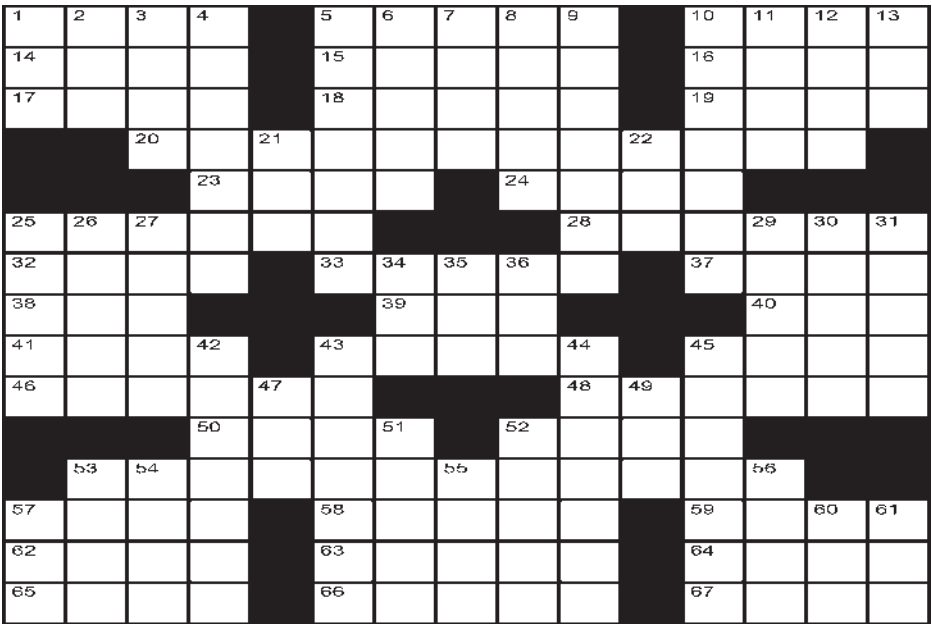
auction above. No need to thank us. South was Swedish expert Fredric Wrang, who has been a competitor on the international scene for many years.

Wrang played low from dummy on the opening heart lead and ruffed in hand. He cashed the ace and king of diamonds, discarding a heart and a club from dummy. He led a low diamond and ruffed in dummy with the three when West discarded a club. It would not have helped West to ruff. Wrang cashed dummy's ace and king of clubs, discarding a diamond. A heart ruff was followed by a diamond ruff with the seven of spades. Wrang ruffed another heart in his hand and ruffed a diamond with dummy's ace of spades. Wrang then led dummy's queen of clubs and discarded his remaining diamond. West ruffed, but in this two-card ending, with West on lead, Wrang had to score both the king and the jack of spades regardless of who held the queen of trumps. Beautifully played!

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' responses sent to Tribune Content Agency, LLC, 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, TX 75001.)

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- GIs who've seen action
 - Bit of fabric
 - Odds and ends
 - Farmland product
 - Crescent moon, e.g.
 - Smell horrible
 - Seldom seen
 - Hoist up
 - Provocative
 - Yellowstone or Yosemite: 2 wds.
 - Baseball scores
 - Throw, in modern slang
 - "My turn!": 2 wds.
 - Complained loudly
 - Reimbursed
 - Corporate department
 - Bat's home
 - Movie theater chain
 - The "G" in LGBTQ
 - "Do you have two fives for a ___?"
 - Opposite of shallow
 - Learn the ___
 - Dryer fuzz
 - Took big steps
 - Contaminates
 - Musical ending
 - Tirade
 - Scary tales: 2 wds.
 - Weight increase
 - Alaskan native
 - Long-tailed rodents
 - As well
 - Copy and ___
 - City north of Des Moines
 - Overtake
 - Go into
 - Low in fat
- DOWN**
- DVD precursor: Abbr.
 - Important time span
 - Ripped
 - Used a harpoon
 - Very fast races
 - Situation with no order
 - April forecast
 - Evaluate for purity
 - Kitchen tools
 - Unpredictable
 - Close by
 - Pack of cards
 - Chicago's WNBA team
 - Formal suit, for short
 - "The Princess and the ___"
 - Apple tablets
 - Playwright David
 - More pleasant
 - Caesar's language
 - Major happening
 - Finger dings
 - Long, long ___
 - Spot for a napkin
 - Look over
 - Pennsylvania resort area
 - Bureaucratic hassle: 2 wds.
 - Appetizer
 - Not figurative
 - Two, in Spanish
 - Singer
 - DiFranco
 - Lion of Narnia
 - Way to travel
 - Fancy party
 - Snake's sound
 - Exam
 - Identical
 - Empty space
 - Brown or green beverage
 - Government ID: Abbr.

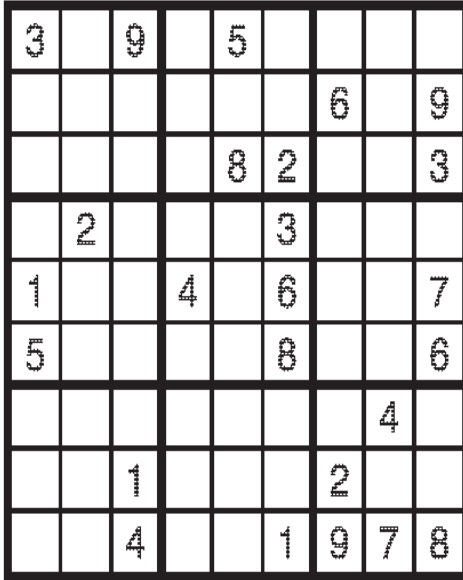


Created by Stella Zawistowski



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SUDOKU



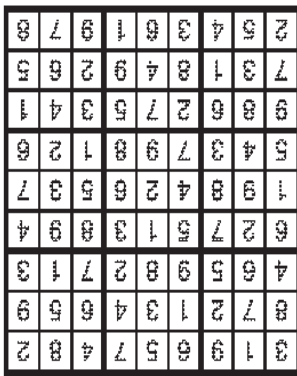
Fun By The Numbers

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!

Level: Intermediate

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:

The master’s trio to perform holiday concert at ladies’ luncheon

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

All ladies are invited to the Dublin Country Club on Thursday, Dec. 4, from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. for an unforgettable holiday treat! Take time in the hustle and bustle of this wonderful season to enjoy a delicious buffet luncheon and a delightful concert.

The musical entertainment will begin as talented pianist Brenda Holloway sets the holiday mood.

We are thrilled to welcome to Dublin The Master’s Trio to perform a mini-concert of beloved seasonal songs and perennial favorites. The trio consists of Wayne and Cindy Hilliard from Rhine, Ga. and Peggy Fauscett from Hawkinsville, Ga.

Wayne is a retired Postmaster for the U.S. Postal Service and Cindy is a retired teacher. Peggy, who is now retired, was Clerk of Superior Court in Pulaski County, Ga. They love to

sing and carry on the tradition of shaped note singing. This is a holiday gift you will not want to miss.

Guest speaker Glenda Smith comes to us from Snellville, Ga. She is a former Computer Programmer and Systems Analyst, and consultant to several large Atlanta corporations. Glenda challenges ladies to move on from past hurts.

Mission Impossible? She shares how it is possible to get past the past when it’s past overdue. Glenda delivers her story with humor and brings a message filled with hope and truth.

This event is sponsored by the Dublin Christian Women’s Connection. The cost is \$21 inclusive. Reservations must be made by Monday, Dec. 1, at 5 p.m., by calling Jane at (478) 595-2499.

Call a friend, make your reservations, and join us for this delightful holiday event.



The Master’s Trio will perform a mini-concert of Christmas songs and perennial favorites /SPECIAL PHOTO

Dublin After Five Women’s Connection Christmas program

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

Dublin After Five Women’s Connection cordially invites all ladies and gentlemen to join us at the Dublin Country Club on Thursday, Dec. 4, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for an evening filled with fellowship, music and inspiration.

There is music in the air and music all around us. Chase and Natalie Boatright will elevate your Christmas spirit by sharing their amazing singing talents. Chase is the chorus and drama direc-

tor at West Laurens High school and Natalie is the choir director and music appreciation teacher at West Laurens Middle School.

Elaine Brantley, widely known as Maxi, the Preacher’s Wife, will be bringing a program of Christmas cheer and laughter filled with her hilarious sense of humor as Maxi. Elaine is the author of several books and makes beautiful Christmas crafts that will be available for purchase that evening. The talented Regina Rowe will be playing our buffet music.

Glenda Smith, a native of Georgia, a real Southern belle and Georgia peach will be speaking on the topic “Mission Impossible.” She discovered how to “get past the past, when it’s past overdue.” Her desperate and hopeless childhood led to many changes in her life. Glenda not only overcame a difficult childhood but she overcame a battle with cancer. Glenda delivers her message in overcoming adversity with humor and brings a message filled with hope and truth.

Please call Dianne (478) 272-6341 or Marge (478) 875-3948 for reservations or cancellations by Tuesday, Dec. 2. The buffet cost is

\$21 inclusive, and requires a reservation. We ask that you honor your reservation, cancel it, or give it to a friend. The printing of our

invitations is a courtesy and generosity of Century 21 Durden & Kornegay Realty, Inc.



TELL IT!

CALL 272-0375, EMAIL CHTELLIT@GMAIL.COM, OR TELL IT! AT COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM

The Dublin City School chairman doesn’t take responsibility for what he and the board passed through the Dublin City Schools. He wants to blame it all on the county commissioner who said he should resign, the Dublin City and the development authority. They had nothing to do with Dublin City Schools. It’s up to the board members to try to straighten it out. This all should be referred up to Mr. Woods, the state school superintendent, so that he knows the Dublin City Schools has still not learned their lesson.

The Dublin City Schools board chairman has the audacity to blame the city and county for the system problems. Absolutely disgusting. Where are the sweeping reforms? Transparency? Accountability we were promised? Where is the \$13 million? Why hasn’t anyone from the central office except Fred been fired? You could have fired them instead of teachers. Congratulations. You’ve destroyed

DCS, your tax base, your voter confidence, the city’s quality of life, any chance of investment or growth for the city.

Quotes from Kenny Waters makes you wonder how he passed grammar courses and he is on the school board. I hear one member never had a job before being on the board. Maybe that is part of the problem.

The only forces working against Dublin City Mr. Walter’s are you and a board that made this mess! How dare you blame others - you had to let teachers go because you overspent. Quit blaming others.

Mr. Walters, your comments only make people more mad and no one feels sorry for you. I can’t believe you are blaming others. You should grow up and model taking responsibility.

Mr. Walters is acting like a true narcissist. Playing the victim, zero responsibility,

blaming others. Every comment he makes gives a “not me” vibe and no one believes you. What a joke.

The board chair sounds ridiculous when he speaks. The other board members must be so embarrassed. He acts like he is a victim rather than the students and staff. You are no leader.

Is the board chair incapable of keeping his mouth shut? Just take responsibility and fix it.

Mr. Walters, you can point fingers at others all you want, but the fact is it happened on your watch along with your other council sidekicks. All need to resign.

NEWS DIGEST


The Dublin City Council will hold its pre-council at 11 a.m. followed by its regular council at noon. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation and Pledge to Flag
- Special presentation
- Approval of Nov. 6 city council meeting minutes
- Approval of bills over \$15,000
- Approval of purchases over \$15,000
- Report from Laurens County Board of Elections and registration on certified election results from Nov. 4 city election
- Discussion and action on ordinance #25-10 to amend appendix A “zoning” to provide comprehensive regulations for the safe and orderly development of recreational vehicle parks
- First reading of ordinance #25-17 to rezone parcel D-10c 169 to R-1 (single family residential) to P (professional)
- First reading of ordinance #25-18 establishing administrative variances

- First reading of ordinance #25-19 to revise zoning changes regarding area, yard, height requirements and R-5 development standards
- Discussions and action on resolution #25-56 to establish a schedule of fees
- Discussions and action on resolution #25-58 Tefra approval
- Discussions and action on resolution #25-60 to authorize a contract for Springdale Park improvements with Dublin Construction Company
- Discussions and action on board appointments
- Citizens comments
- Council comments
- Executive session if needed to discuss real estate, pending litigation or personnel
- Adjournment

The Downtown Development Authority will have its next meeting at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 21 on the sixth floor of the Skyscraper.






Dublin Christmas Parade

Sponsored by the Exchange Club of Dublin

Saturday, December 6, 2025



Check out our Facebook page, Dublin Exchange Club for more information!

All entries must be decorated with a Christmas Theme and well Lighted.

The parade will begin at 6:00 P.M. Line-up starts at 4:30 P.M.

Entry Fee: \$100 – Check or Cash Only Deadline for Entry: November 14, 2025

Before November 21, 2025, late applications will be considered with an entry fee of \$150

No entries will be accepted after November 21, 2025 – NO EXCEPTIONS

Entry Name: _____

Primary Contact Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature of Primary Contact: _____

By signing above entrant and all participants within your group agree to hold the Exchange Club of Dublin harmless from any loss or injury resulting from participation in the Christmas Parade and follow all rules and regulations of the City of Dublin for Parades. See Parade Rules at the following website: www.cityofdublin.org/business/permits-and-licenses

Please select your type of entry (Circle One):

Float (Truck and Trailer); Car (2 Cars Per Entry); Motorcycle or Bike (6 Per Entry); Walking (30 Per Entry)

Do you want your entry to be judged (circle one): YES or NO

If yes, please select your category (circle one): Church or Organization or Commercial/Business

1st Place - \$75 2nd Place - \$50 3rd Place - \$25

- Entry forms must be received with valid payment and be properly filled out to be considered for entry.
- We will contact you on the week of the parade with your line-up number.
- Please be sure that your entry can maintain a steady pace through the entire parade route.
- Per City Ordinance, Horses must be bagged while inside the city limits and during the Parade.
- Due to safety requirements, please do not throw any items, including candy, from floats, vehicles, or while walking during the parade.
- Floats will not be allowed to unload passengers until they reach the Christ Chapel parking lot.
- It is the desire of the Exchange Club of Dublin to have only one Santa Clause participate in the Parade. The Santa Float will be at the end of the Parade.
- The Christmas Parade is a family event. The Exchange Club of Dublin reserves the right to refuse or remove any participant that we deem inappropriate for this event.
- If the Parade is cancelled, refunds will not be given.
- Make checks for Christmas Parade Entry payable to:

Exchange Club of Dublin Christmas Parade

P.O. Box 381

Dublin, GA 31040

For more information, please contact us at 478-697-2866 (Michael Edge)

Entry forms & payment can be dropped off at 702 East Jackson Street, Dublin, GA (Middle Georgia Mechanical)

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“Johnnie O Monday”	Nov 24th
“Duck Head Tuesday”	Nov 25th
“Onward Reserve Wednesday”	Nov 26th
“David Donahue Friday”	Nov 28th
“Pattern Sport Coat Saturday”	Nov 29th
“Alan Paine Monday”	Dec 1st

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PLAYOFF OUTLOOK: TOUGH MATCHUPS FOR MIDSTATE QUARTERFINAL HOPEFULS; BRENTWOOD LOOKS TO GO BACK-TO-BACK IN GIAA FINAL

Spots in the GHSA quarterfinals, and the GIAA's AA state title, will be up for grabs as the Heart of Georgia heads into the thick of postseason football Friday and Saturday.

This is the point from which teams receive no guarantees with the luxury of home field, against overwhelmingly evenly-matched competition of opponents whose rank and seeding matters much less than the quality of their performance over the next four quarters. But once again, a majority of the area's teams in action — four of the five who are not playing at a neutral site — get some home turf to defend, and the valuable backing of some in-town fans as they each vie for the coveted opportunity to continue practicing through Thanksgiving.

The inverse-seeded matchup of **No. 9 Dublin** (9-2, 8-1 region 2-High A) and **No. 8 Fitzgerald** (8-3, 5-1 region 1-High A) will bring a special one-night fall session of the Southeast Wing-T Clinic to the Shamrock Bowl, as two of the offense's most faithful practitioners — 24th year Irish head coach Roger Holmes' with his patented under-center version matching wits against longtime North Georgia vet Wesley Tankersley and a shotgun-based variant that are both new this year to the Purple Hurricane — each take a seat across the second-round chessboard.

If all other things even out, this matchup promises to hinge on which group can draw 'em up, block 'em up and wrap 'em up a little better than the other. Since a comparison of the talented backfields, solid lines of scrimmage and surly defenses gives no definitive indication of an edge for either side, look to many of the little things in the details that often either shine, or rear their ugly head, at this point in the fall as a deciding factor.

For two run-heavy teams in a game that's expected to move quickly, the clock and field position battle both represent significant factors that each would do well to find a way to swing. Red zone efficiency, and which team makes more of a likely limited set of opportunities to get points on the board, along with kicking game execution (a sneaky killer deep in the playoffs) are trends that will more than likely favor the team that comes out a winner.

In the SHU, it's a battle of Blue Bloods between **West Laurens** (11-0, 8-0 region 4-AAA) and **Oconee County** (7-4, 3-2 region 8-AAA), and one that feels kind of similar to the Raiders' last second-round home game back in 2019, in which they won an upper hand on the Warriors' next door neighbor North Oconee and its highly rated QB Bubba Chandler (now a Pittsburgh Pirate) to gain a berth in the state quarters.

Stylistic similarities between the opponents from separate seasons are few, though this Oconee County squad — known for a more surgical style of offense than big-play explosiveness — has the same type of scrappiness about it, and the level of tradition and playoff experience as a program that you can't overlook at this stage of the game... as higher seed Northwest Whitfield learned in a loss via last-second field goal last Friday.

The Warriors, whose offense emphasizes the speed of running back Caiden Wood, an uncanny link between quarterback Brody Hannah and tight end Mason Hall and an overwhelming variety of creative motion and formations, will be keenly aware of the need to out-scheme and out-execute the Raiders, with a roster that appears unlikely to gain an upper hand on skill and strength alone.

A lot will depend on how well the West Laurens defense — and its recently dominant front group led by Maxx Chafin, Ethan Cason-Guyton, Shannon Adkins, Leroy Mack and Hunter Castellaw — is able to sniff out runs and rush a passer in Hannah who is not as dangerous outside the pocket as many of the more nightmarish QBs they've faced. But Oconee, which isn't shy about using screens to keep defenses on their toes, will have some tricks up its sleeve that might give the Raiders a hard time getting off the field on third downs.

But that brings us to Ty Cummings, who promises to have a lot to say about the trajectory of this game in how early and often he's able to locate creases for the big runs that are likely to once again be the home team's ace in the hole.

The **No. 4 Johnson County** Trojans (11-0, 5-0 region 5-Low A) are out to advance to the final eight for a first time since 2022 as they play their 12th game of the fall on Herschel Walker Field. To do it, they'll have to survive a run-in with a South Georgia superpower in **No. 5 Brooks County** that's barely above .500 (at 6-5, and 4-1 region 2-Low A), but comes in as well-tested as always off of matchups with ranked teams in six out of 10 regular-season ballgames.

Longtime head coach Maurice Freeman has moved on, but "Bring that Hammer" remains the Trojans' calling card under new head coach Josh McFather who's kept true to the program's physical M.O. This particular Brooks County squad doesn't have the firepower of its most loaded teams of late, but makes its living with the type of bruising defense it'll experience against a Trojan bunch that's been known for the exact same thing this year.

JoCo needs to establish its steady run game as well and as early as it has all season in order to gain an upper hand in the evenly matched battle that will be very much up for grabs. But if its defense can wrap up on tackles, force some turnovers

OUTLOOK
Continued on page 9



A PACK OF HUNGRY DAWGS: Wheeler County defenders Lane Connell (45), Sencear Marks (1), Jaden Bridges and Laith Davis (33) stack up a Manchester runner on a tackle during Friday's first-round win/LOGAN REYNOLDS, GTLN

Bulldogs, Bleckley, Brentwood put away challengers to advance Playoff runs end for Dodge, Wilco, Treutlen

From STAFF REPORTS

Wheeler Co. 55, Manchester 20

Deciding factor: The Bulldogs had some fireworks of both the literal and figurative type as they exploded, in predictable fashion, for over 300 rushing yards to streak into the second round. The actual kind they shot between their eight touchdowns and postgame to celebrate a first playoff victory since the late 1990s. Alvin Ricks ran for 120 and a couple of touchdowns on 11 carries. Justin Culver scored three times on 12 for 75. Reco Wooten was 3-of-5 passing for 42 yards, and added a 21-yard touchdown to Jacorion Woodard.

Pivotal moment: The teams traded a touchdown each in quarter 1, but the Bulldogs would dominate the scoring by a count of 42-7 between the second and third, that lone set of points coming as Manchester took the lead with its second early in the second period. Wheeler County quickly tied the game with a touchdown and two-point conversion to get back on track. Then went back up with scores on a rush, and Reco Wooten pass, in the last few minutes before the half. A fourth unanswered touchdown, of several more to come, ended its quick drive out of halftime to stretch the lead to 34-14.

Game ball: While both of the above provided all their usual star power on consistent carries, Wheeler County's most explosive ball-carrier was likely Malik Madison, who had nothing but big plays on three carries for 87 yards, two of them touchdowns.

Next: The Bulldogs will host Warren County in search of their first-ever berth in the state quarterfinals Friday.

Brentwood 42, Briarwood 14

Deciding factor: The Eagles wore Briarwood down on the ground, out-rushing the Bucs 323 yards to 67, as they slowly chiseled open a competitive game to clinch a state championship berth for the second-straight season. The teams' passing numbers were comparable, but a heavy Brentwood rush led by Austin and Wyatt Albright took a definite toll on Briarwood's Cutler Fleming, who completed a strong 16 of his 26 for 136 yards and rushed for 54, but was pressured into too many off-balance throws or sacks by the end of the night. He found

MIDSTATE FOOTBALL ROUNDUP...

Banks DeMore 12 times for 95 yards, and twice for touchdowns. The sophomore came down with the first one on a fourth-down shot into double coverage, and scored to tie the game at 7 midway through a possession-dominated first half. But the Bucs would be kept out of the end zone until the last of Brentwood's points were on the board in the fourth quarter. Baylor Cobb was a stellar 6-of-11 for 130 yards passing, and ran for another 89 on six carries, accounting for two touchdowns in each phase. Jones Sheppard (seven carries for 92) and Tristan Robinson (13 for 75) led the Eagles on the ground.

Pivotal moment: Brentwood pulled away after leading only 21-7 at the half. The Eagles forced a punt on Briarwood's opening possession of the third quarter, and marched 85 yards for a score — as Cobb ran a gauntlet of arm tackles on a 10-yard keeper — to effectively bust it open. But two more unanswered rushing touchdowns, courtesy of Robinson and Sheppard, served as the clinchers.

Game ball: Williams paced the Eagles in all-purpose yardage with 187, rushing for 62 and scoring a pair of touchdowns on his six receptions for 125. The senior also recorded two total tackles.

Next: Brentwood will face Southwest Georgia at 3 p.m. Saturday in a rematch of the 2024 state title game at Mercer's Five Star Stadium

Bleckley Co. 26, Jeff Davis 7

Deciding factor: Jason Balthrope and Tug Pasby, with eight total tackles each, and Josh Stanley and Isaiah Simeton, contributing seven apiece, led a dominant defensive performance that left no doubt in the Royals' sixth-consecutive first round win. Jeff Davis was held to only 150 total yards — just shy of 40 on the ground — with 76 coming on their lone big play: a Mark Durden completion to Jai-den West for the Jackets' only touchdown in the second quarter. Jeff Davis put up just as good a fight in the defensive struggle, but got too far down too early as Bleckley's Zion Love, Kix Foskey and Isaiah Simeton all punched in rushing touchdowns to redeem lengthy drives in the first half. Brody Fleming was 13-of-23

passing for 156 yards, and rushed for a fourth touchdown to cash in a Simeton fumble recovery in the third. Tate and Gage Harris had four receptions for around 50 yards each.

Pivotal moment: Bleckley forced the Jackets to run it for mostly small chunks of change, which took them nowhere on two first-quarter drives resulting in punts. Bleckley drove 81 yards to open the scoring on its first chance. A potential momentum-swing went for naught as the Jackets' Durden picked off a Fleming pass three yards from a second Bleckley TD on the next. But they had to kick it away once more, and the Royals drove right back to go ahead 12-0. Durden's big-hitter narrowed the lead to 12-7 without much time to go in the half. But BC again answered to go up 19-7 at the half. Jeff Davis came up with a desperately needed stop at its own 25 coming out of the half, but turned it right back over as Josh Stanley forced the fumble that led to another Royal TD. A Balthrope sack set back the next series en route to a turnover on downs, and the Royals atoned for a fumble of their own with a K'marion McClinton sack leading to another fourth-down stop moments later.

Game ball: Love, in his first game back since an injury in August, rushed for 172 yards and a score on 16 carries.

Next: The Royals will visit No. 3 seed and unbeaten Worth County in the second round.

Mt. Zion 20, Treutlen 7

Deciding factor: Ebbs and flows of field position tipped the scales for the Eagles in an offensive dead heat that had an even number — roughly 205 yards — on either side of the ledger. Treutlen spent a similar amount of the first half in plus territory, but was stopped on two drives near scoring range during the opening quarter, and had time run out on a promising drive that got to the same point just before the half. Mt. Zion cashed short fields for touchdowns late in the first and early in the second for scores to build up its 14-0 lead at the break, then put together a statement drive of about 70 yards coming back out to stretch it to three

ROUNDUP
Continued on page 9



THE PANE... Last week/OVERALL	RODNEY MANLEY 11-1/129-36	PAYTON TOWNS III 10-2/132-33	KYLE DOMINY 11-1/112-53	JEREMY PAYNE 12-0/129-36	JANICE BALLARD 12-0/117-48	RALPH JACKSON 9-3/120-45	DON CARSWELL 11-1/122-43	FORREST KILGO 12-0/131-34
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THIS WEEK'S MATCHUPS...

Fitzgerald at Dublin
Oconee Co. at West Laurens
Brooks Co. at Johnson Co.
Warren Co. at Wheeler Co.
Bleckley Co. at Worth Co.
Brentwood vs. Southwest Georgia
Robert Toombs vs. Edmund Burke
JMA vs. Deerfield-Windsor
Peach Co. at Jenkins
Thomasville at Toombs Co.
Warner Robins at Cartersville
Houston Co. at Rome

Dublin West Laurens Johnson Co. Wheeler Co. Worth Co. Brentwood Edmund Burke John Milledge Peach Co. Toombs Co. Cartersville Rome	Dublin West Laurens Johnson Co. Wheeler Co. Worth Co. Brentwood Edmund Burke John Milledge Peach Co. Toombs Co. Cartersville Rome	Fitzgerald West Laurens Brooks Co. Wheeler Co. Bleckley Co. Brentwood Edmund Burke John Milledge Jenkins Toombs Co. Cartersville Houston Co.	Dublin West Laurens Brooks Co. Wheeler Co. Bleckley Co. Brentwood Edmund Burke John Milledge Peach Co. Toombs Co. Cartersville Houston Co.	Dublin West Laurens Johnson Co. Wheeler Co. Bleckley Co. Brentwood Edmund Burke Deerfield-Windsor Peach Co. Toombs Co. Cartersville Houston Co.	Dublin West Laurens Johnson Co. Wheeler Co. Worth Co. Brentwood Robert Toombs John Milledge Peach Co. Toombs Co. Cartersville Houston Co.	Dublin West Laurens Johnson Co. Wheeler Co. Worth Co. Brentwood Edmund Burke Deerfield-Windsor Peach Co. Toombs Co. Cartersville Houston Co.	Dublin West Laurens Johnson Co. Wheeler Co. Worth Co. Brentwood Robert Toombs John Milledge Jenkins Toombs Co. Cartersville Houston Co.
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ROUNDUP

Continued from page 8

scores, and put the game out of the Vikings' reach. Quarterback Knox Israel, who accounted for 147 total yards on five completions and 12 carries, had the majority of double-digit gainers sprinkled among mostly small plays going both directions, and all three of Mt. Zion's touchdowns. Treutlen's only score came late in the third after the Eagles gave over possession in Viking territory. The 65-yard resulting drive concluded with a single-yard carry by Peanut Tobler. Kavion Peebles was 4-of-10 passing for 54 yards and added 24 yards rushing.

Pivotal moment: Treutlen got stuffed on a fourth down dive at the Mt. Zion 17, then punted with bigger yardage to go in a similar spot on the back-to-back missed opportunities that loomed large from the first quarter. The situational pendulum swung swiftly back the other way after Mt. Zion's Israel hit Jordan Smith on a big completion from about midfield to the Viking 2 that set up the game's first touchdown. Treutlen's return man, on the ensuing kick, got caught at his 12 to paint the visitors into a corner on a series that went backwards, and ended at the start of quarter 2 with a punt well short of midfield. Caleb Houston's return to the 29 put the Eagles back in business, and Israel hit a crease from 19 yards to double up their lead.

Game ball: Tobler rushed 13 times for 86 of the Vikings' 152 yards on the ground.

Rabun Co. 56, Dodge Co. 21

Deciding factor: Mistakes and missed opportunities piled up on the Indians in a game they had their shots in. Sequences including all of the above – three turnovers being no small detail – were behind the multi-score swings that turned a deadlock into a 28-14 Rabun County lead at the half, then anybody's game into a mild beatdown for the Wildcats over the rest of their extended 42-0 run, coming in a matter of just a few minutes between the late third and early fourth quarters. Dodge defensive busts played into several of the big-play explosions involving Rabun's

Ty Truelove, who was 8-of-13 passing for 183 yards, and receiver Reed Lafevers, who caught both his touchdowns on three receptions for 120. Lake Evans, carrying 17 times for 65, and Reid Giles combined for five rushing scores, at least a couple on impressive second efforts after broken tackles. The Indians, with 342 total yards and 198 passing on a 16-of-32, two-touchdown night for Kain Mincey, were well-equipped to hold their own in the mini-shootouts that unfolded between defensive stands, but couldn't hit enough of the same after a handful came on two early scoring drives, both culminating with touchdown catches by Jauriel Bray, who made four grabs for 79 before going down with a first-half injury.

Pivotal moment: Things turned significantly as Dodge tried to punt the ball away from its own territory early in the second quarter of the 14-each game. JaKaden Fruster blocked and returned the kick for a Wildcat touchdown. The Indians fumbled early in their next series, and Rabun County cashed it in on a Giles touchdown for a two-score lead at the half. Reciprocal punts led to the Wildcats' second breakthrough late in the third, after a third Dodge County kick from its own end zone that set up a short field for another Giles TD that stretched the lead to 21 to all but seal it.

Game ball: Jamal Smith carried 10 times for 86 of Dodge County's 144 yards on the ground, and the last of its touchdowns with the game well out of reach in the fourth. He added three receptions to get his all-purpose total to a team-leading 110.

Jenkins Co. 38, Wilkinson Co. 27: The War Eagles scored twice in the last of the second quarter to break a tie of 14s, and take a 29-14 lead to halftime. Wilco was playing catch-up the rest of the way, and cut the Jenkins County margin to seven, then four with second-half touchdowns before a last by the visitors deep in the fourth to put the game away.

Houston Co. 59, Creekview 14: Friday's brawl of Bears was pretty one-sided, as Houston



REVERSE THRUST: Stratford's Jett Johnston tries to juke out George Walton players on the return of an interception in the first half of the Eagles' 33-6 win to glide into the state title game/DONN RODENROTH, for the Macon Melody

County's pack mauled the Grizzlies to take their streak of first-round wins since 2021 to four. Ryan Maxwell threw 15 completions for 257 yards and three touchdowns two of them to M.J. Mathis, who had five receptions for 135. Colin Anderson rushed for 85 yards and two touchdowns on seven carries. Scoring additional rushing touchdowns were Javien Durham, Austin Stinson and Westen Ard, who also had a sack and fumble recovery on defense. HoCo will visit Rome in round 2.

Warner Robins 28, Eastside 14: Dontay Stubbs carried for 122 yards on 23 attempts, but Jaden Hill capped off three drives with touchdowns to push the Demons past their first-round challenger. A handful of key stops, along with turnovers in the form of a fumble and interceptions by Carmello Canion and Darius Shine Jr. along the way, helped Robins hang onto no less than a touchdown of its early lead. Lakevious Bryant was 13-of-23 passing for 194 yards and a score. The Demons go to Cartersville in the second round.

North Oconee 31, Perry 15: The Panthers' season ended at the hands of the defending state champions, who had it in hand most of the way after jumping out to a 21-0 lead. Perry collected some points just before the break after a short punt yielded great field position. But North Oconee blocked a punt and hit a field goal before Harrison Faulkner threw his second touchdown pass of the game to put 10 more on the board in the time between that and the Panthers' only other score in the last minute of the game. The Titans, set to take on M.L. King in round 2, have now won 26 games in a row.

Peach Co. 53, Cherokee Bluff 28: Ashton Barton is likely the area's only running back with a top gear to rival that of West Laurens' Ty Cummings, and showed it off on several breakaway touchdown runs that helped

the Trojans score all of their points before halftime. His 12 carries for 253 yards went along with four touchdowns on 154 passing by a 10-for-12 Samuel Sands. Cameron Cherry, Brisco Freeman and Josh Reis combined for the touchdown receptions. Bluff's Cooper Dean threw 12 completions for 258 for two touchdowns and Malcolm Millsap had five grabs for 176, but that production was mostly against Peach reserves after the Bears were limited to just a pair of field goals in the opening half. The Trojans are a step closer to a potential head-to-head duel between the electric backs in the quarterfinals, though they'll have to go through unbeaten No. 5 seed Jenkins in a highly billed second-round clash to get there.

Stratford 33, George Walton 6: M a d d o x Whitehad had three sacks, while Jett Johnston, Travis Dugger and Josh Butts intercepted passes to anchor a dominant performance by the Eagles' defense, which held George Walton to a modest 109 passing yards on four completions for quarterback A.J. Dillard (and a lone touchdown to Samuel Elvington in the third), and just 99 rushing. Stratford scored on its first three possessions, and rolled the rest of the way to an easy victory to reach the GIAA championship game for the first time since 2022. Tucker Johnston threw eight completions for 104 yards, and rushed for 28 and a touchdown. Aaron Jefferson had two scores on 15 carries for 69, and Ja'Lon Smith another on four for 36. Jett Johnston led Stratford receivers with four catches for 65 yards. They'll play for a first championship since 2004 Saturday in a rematch of a 41-14 regular-season win over Brookstone at Mercer.

Brookstone 13, FPD 0: The Vikings' late-season magic ran out against a Brookstone defense that forced two turnovers, on interceptions by Colton Jordan and Frankie Bickerstaff,

and limited FPD's banged-up offense to just 165 total yards on 10 Cash walker completions and 31 carries between a trio of rushers. Jordan had 10 tackles and two for loss. Broughton Branch touchdown passes to Jason Kelly and Sammie Laboy helped the Cougars scrape out the defensive struggle's only points on a mere 230 total.

John Milledge 35, Frederica 7: Bryce McDonel caught a touchdown pass and returned a pick for six to lead the Trojans' rout to clinch a seventh state finals berth in eight years. Lewis Cheney threw for 139 yards and two touchdowns – targeting Bryce McDonel and Asa Wall (six receptions for 106) – and scored on a keeper. Wall had a rushing touchdown on one of nine carries for 96, though Javaris Hurt led JMA in carries with 16 for 90. Malek Dors-ey added two interceptions. The Trojans will battle Deerfield-Windsor in Friday's portion of state championship weekend.

Fitzgerald 42, ACE Charter 9: The Gryphons jumped out to a 9-0 lead on a Bryson Vincent rushing touchdown, followed by a Henry Carter field goal, but were overrun once Fitzgerald hit its stride. The Purple Hurricane stormed to 244 yards on the ground, 97 and three touchdowns the responsibility of Latavis Devine, to book a spot in the round of 16, and a date with Dublin in the Shamrock Bowl. Vic Copeland stayed scoreless rushing on seven for 82, but did catch an 80-yard pass from Matthew Cowan for a TD to start the surge early in the second quarter. Daniel Harris rushed for another to put Fitzgerald in the lead going to half. Howard Jackson, who joined Eduan Carter and Zavion Nolton with interceptions, returned his pick for one of its four unanswered touchdowns in the second half. ACE's Ace Hatcher was 16-of-30 for 139 yards.

Northeast 41, Fannin Co. 0: The Raiders held Fannin County to just 109 total yards, picking off passes via Jaiden Center, Kourtnei Williams and Maurice Wilson for three of their four takeaways, in an authoritative shutout. Bam Glover – back at quarterback in place of an injured Jordan Wiggins – threw six completions for 131 yards and two touchdowns to Tavares Tinsley, and rushed for another on 53. Williams rushed for 100 and a touchdown on seven carries and caught two passes for 54. Northeast collides with playoff rival Swainsboro in the second round.

SCOREBOARD

GIRLS HOOPS
Tuesday
Stratford 61, Trinity 42

BOYS HOOPS
Tuesday
Stratford at Trinity/PPD

PREP
SCHEDULE

FOOTBALL
Friday
GHSAA Playoffs, Round 2
Brooks Co. at Johnson Co. /7 p.m.
Fitzgerald at Dublin
Oconee Co. at West Laurens
Warren Co. at Wheeler Co.
Bleckley Co. at Worth Co. /7:30 p.m.

Saturday
GIAA Final (at Mercer)
Brentwood vs. Southwest Georgia/3 p.m.

BASKETBALL
Thursday
Trinity vs. CCA (at Fullington, boys early) /5 p.m.
West Laurens at Claxton (scrimmage)/6 p.m.

Friday
Trinity vs. Frederica (at Fullington)/6:30 p.m.

Saturday
WL (girls) at Vidalia/5 p.m.
WL vs. Toombs Co. (at Jeff Davis)/11:30 a.m.

Hawkinsville 24, Tri- on 21: The difference-making points for the Red Devils, in the final tally, came back in the first quarter as they added a 25-yard Felipe Taylor field goal to one of reciprocal touchdowns. That kept them in front despite a Trion answer to each of their subsequent scores, to cut a 10-point lead back to three. But the Bulldogs' last was with too little time left, and Hawkinsville covered an onside kick before running out the clock. Niem Blair rushed for 96 yards and a touchdown on 22 carries. Martin McDonald and Sebastian Clark also had a little more than 50 and a touchdown each. Blair and Amos Manning came down with interceptions. The Red Devils go on the road to face title-contending Lincoln County in the second round.

Other area finals...
Swainsboro 40, Bacon Co. 21
Bowdon 42, Wilcox Co. 7
SGA 42, Southland 7
Morgan Co. 29, Westside 8
ECI 63, GMC 7
Deerfield-Windsor 26, Westfield 14
Toombs Co. 50, Temple 6

OUTLOOK

Continued from page 8

and accumulate enough third-down stops, the Trojan should come to like their chances of holding off a stiff second-round challenge.

A longtime road playoff warrior in **Bleckley County** (9-2, 7-2 region 2-High A) will look to pull off another in its long line of second-round upsets at **No. 1 Worth County** (11-0, 6-0 region 1-High A).

The Rams, who are scoring 44 points a game and giving up only 10, are as stacked a team as there is in the bracket. Their prolific duo of 2,000-yard passer Lyndon Worthy and near 1,000-yard rusher Kaden Chester will present the biggest test faced so far by the Royals' defense, which flexed its muscle against a Jeff Davis attack that was rendered mostly ineffective in last week's first round.

Bleckley, thanks to the return of tailback Zyion Love, now have a newfound and largely unscouted rushing dimension to its offense that the Worth County D will have to respect. The added element likely puts the Royals in position to do more in the matchup than they would if their chances were solely in the hands of Brody Fleming and its passing attack.

But big plays will remain at a premium on both sides, and the Royals — as high-powered as they've been — still likely don't stand a chance of outlasting the Rams if the scoring total threatens to hit the 70s. Which defense can make some plays to break serve?

No. 6 Wheeler County (11-0, 6-0 region 4-Low A) may be in line to roll as it takes aim at a well-coached **Warren County** team (6-5, 3-1 region 8-Low A) that's matched up with some top competition, but remains 0-4 for the fall against ranked opponents.

The Screamin' Devils, who outlasted Mitchell County in overtime to earn last week's first-round win, may be fortunate to have reached this point with a team seeming to lack the type of depth that's needed to go much further.

The Bulldogs should be on track for another sizable home victory to reach the quarterfinals for the first time ever.

The weekend concludes at 3 p.m. Saturday afternoon with **Brentwood** (11-1, 5-0 district 4) and **Southwest Georgia Academy** (9-3, 3-0 district 3) running back their 2024 showdown from Statesboro at Macon's Five Star Stadium.

The Eagles, who wore SGA down 28-6 to win that one, are largely the same team, while the Warriors, experiencing some greater offseason turnover, have fared about as well this season with a no-frills style of smashmouth football that's proved them the worthiest of foes in AA to a Brentwood team that's now playing to its own standard, rather than that of any particular opponent.

SGA's chances will hinge entirely on gaining clearance against the Eagles' suffocating that, to now, has only been challenged by teams with a significant passing dimension to their attack.

If Brentwood can make big plays to build a multi-score lead a matter of when, rather than if, in the first half... they may have a shot to exceed their margin from last fall.

— Clay Reynolds



DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued from page 1

consolidation, the process is outlined in the Georgia Constitution and in state code. "Both state law and the Georgia Constitution do not articulate or include any role for (Georgia Department of Education) in this process – it would unfold at the local level."

Woods also made it clear that the GaDOE is not endorsing or recommending any specific option.

"These decisions are entirely within the purview of the local school district and community, and cannot legally be made by our agency. State law, while clear about the agency's role in providing support and guidance, currently does not allow GaDOE to make financial decisions on behalf of local school systems. ...

"In fairness to teachers, staff, and families who need to begin planning for the next school year, we urge you to provide transparency regarding which of the above options you are planning to pursue prior to the deadline for teachers to sign contracts for the 2026- 27 school year."

Dublin City Schools' financial troubles came to light in late August after the Department of Community

Health, which administers the state health plan, alerted Woods and his office that the district had not paid its employer contributions for the entire fiscal year 2025. State officials looking into those overdue payments found other "operational deficiencies" that included the system not having completed an audit since 2021.

A summary report last month the state Department of Education blamed the district's financial crisis on "financial mismanagement, lack of fundamental financial knowledge and processes, and a culture of excess related to programs and personnel." It also said the system used emergency COVID funds to "mask the district's underlying financial/budgetary issues."

School system finance director Chad McDaniel resigned in late August, and Superintendent Fred Williams also stepped down, taking an early retirement in October. Woods' letter expressed appreciation for interim Dublin School Superintendent Marcee Pool's "responsiveness, collaboration and willingness" to work with state education officials to ensure "stability for the students, teachers and staff of Dublin City Schools."

Woods' letter included

updates on corrective actions taken by the district as part of its Financial Improvement Plan filed with the state. School officials issued a news release highlighting "meaningful progress" made by the district by completing multiple required tasks, including:

- Recording all outstanding liabilities in the district's general ledger
- Responding in full to auditor requests for the FY23 audit
- Submitting required Certified/Classified Personnel Information (CPI) data.

However, it also mentioned several as yet unfilled tasks – including approving an amended FY 26 budget that incorporates all enacted deficit-reduction measures and new federal grant awards, and reconciling State Health Benefit Plan employee and employer deductions for FY25 and FY26. Both tasks have not been completed because necessary human resources documentation has not yet been submitted.

The district has proposed SHBP repayment plan and, if accepted by the Georgia Department of Community Health, will begin repayments in February 2026 and be paid full by January 2028.

In the meantime, the

district is awaiting approval from the Office of Planning and Budget on behalf on its request for \$1,005,826.10 in advance state funding for November. Woods' letter reminded the school district that the advance payments are from the Dublin City Schools' future earnings through the QBE formula.

"The district is not receiving extra funds from the state and will not receive its full QBE allotment for the coming year as it will have already collected those funds. Dublin City Schools must prepare its future budgets accordingly to mitigate continued cash flow issues.

"Moving forward, the district must continue to identify where financial improvements can be made to ensure a balanced budget in FY27, and develop a plan to address its current property tax collection schedule. With that said, at no time are continued QBE advances guaranteed, and the district should plan for the future accordingly."

As part of its deficit reduction plan, the Dublin district cut more than 50 positions, including more than a dozen teachers. Two of them have sued the school board, claiming breach of contract.

COUNTY COMMISSION
Continued from page 1

"This would only be on the renovated part of the plant," Rogers said.

Commissioner Trae Kemp called the tax abatement for a \$50 million investment a "no-brainer," and the board passed the measure unanimously.

The commission also gave final approval to its proposed millage rate of 5.498, which was rolled back enough to avoid a tax increase due to growth in the county digest, the taxable value of property in Laurens County.

The commissioners also approved the millage rate levied by the county Board of Education, set at 14.0, which was rolled back but not enough to avoid a tax increase. That means county property owners will be taxed at a total of 19.498 mills. The combined millage rate a year ago was 19.944.

In other business, the commission:

- Approved a delivery method for the senior citizens center renovation. Because the county received a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant, the project will have to meet various federal guidelines, so the commission voted to use a contractor to handle it.
- Approved spending about \$56,000 for a new fire alarm system at the county jail. Rogers described the current system as "very old and very outdated." Officials had hoped to delay the purchase until the next fiscal year. "As you all know, the jail is a huge liability for us, and we don't need to play with fire out there, no pun intended," Rogers said,
- Approved new Emergency Medical Service rates to account for upcoming increases in Medicaid and Medicare rates.
- Declared old handheld radios, which are no longer in use, as surplus equipment. Surrounding counties that still use the radios have expressed interest in them, and the commissioners voted to authorize Emergency Management Agency Director Bill Laird to give away the old radios to the counties "as he sees fit."
- "Most of them probably won't make a good boat anchor," Commissioner Gerard Mathis joked.
- Renewed all existing alcoholic beverage licenses for 2026.

HABITAT DANCE
Continued from page 1

The dance will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

on Friday, Feb. 13, in the DuBose Porter Center on the campus of Oconee Fall Line Technical College.

"It shows the girls how they should be treated on a date," Kinney said. "We've had them come in with a

diaper bag. A lot of the dads try to start a tradition, so they are bringing them anywhere between an infant up to 18 years old."

Kinney said they will also be selling shirts for \$20 and cups for \$25.

"This is new merchandise we are adding," she said. "We will be pre-selling those. An order form will be at the church on Dec. 6."

For more information about the dance or for businesses interested in being a sponsor, call the Dublin-Laurens Habitat for Humanity at (478) 275-1818.

THANKSGIVING MEALS
Continued from page 1

around 5 p.m.

"It was such a beautiful thing to see everyone come together and put everything but the turkey in the boxes the day before," he said. "The community can come and help. We had six different churches and youth have the opportunity to get service hours. We had organizations, individuals from young children to the elderly helping. For me, that is heaven on earth. It was good to see so many folks come together. If people want to come – we love sweat equity – they can come on and help."

People will receive a box that will include a turkey and the sides.

"They will have to take it home and prepare it, but it will be enough for them to prepare a meal for their family," Jones said. "Right now, we will be distributing 500 boxes. If we get a little extra money, we may go a little bit over. But it's a drive-through, and we are giving one box per family. We want to serve as many families as possible."



Daddies and daughters hit enjoy the 2025 dance/PAYTON TOWNS III

LABOR DEPARTMENT
Continued from page 1

training and skills training with high demand jobs," Rivera Holmes said.

Changes also include a plain-language overhaul to department of labor information, making available resources and department processes easier to understand.

Still in her first year helping the labor department, the changes stem from traveling the state and talking to workers and employers. Rivera Holmes, appointed commissioner by Gov. Brian Kemp, was sworn April 4.

"During my statewide tour, I've heard from parents waiting weeks for unem-

ployed checks. From small business owners struggling to find skilled worker. From Georgians who felt like government had forgotten them," Rivera Holmes said in the release. "That's exactly why we're taking decisive action to deliver the level of service every Georgian deserves - efficient, responsive and built to last."

IT'S TIME TO SEND IN YOUR SANTA LETTERS!

tchsanta@gmail.com



Deadline to submit Santa Letters:
Dec 8th, by 5 pm.
ALL SANTA LETTERS MUST BE EMAILED TO
tchsanta@gmail.com
Letters will print in the Christmas Eve edition.



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