

School chief candidate: Dublin teachers 'treated unfairly'

District officials dispute claims as unfounded

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

A candidate for state school superintendent has written the Dublin City Board of Education, criticizing the district's "deeply troubling" treatment of teachers during its current financial crisis.

Randell Trammel, who is challenging Superintendent Richard Woods next year's election, said he heard reports at a recent town hall meeting in Dublin that some teachers have been threatened with loss of their certification if they leave for another job.

"The suggestion or direct communication that educators may face loss of certification should they choose to leave midyear for employment in another district — especially under circumstances as extraordinary as these — is entirely unacceptable. Such threats are inappropriate, unprofessional and punitive. Teachers should never be coerced into remaining in a system that has failed to uphold its responsibilities to them," Trammel wrote.

"Many have endured salary reductions, cuts to paid working days

and even received their paychecks late — an indisputable breach of contract. These conditions place immense strain not only on teachers' professional lives but also on their personal financial stability. To hold them responsible for the consequences of administrative mismanagement is profoundly unjust."

Dublin City Schools officials were preparing a statement in response to Trammel's letter at press time Wednesday but disputed his claims as unfounded, noting that due to budget constraints the system actually is encouraging teachers to pursue opportunities if

offered.

Faced with a projected \$13 million deficit by fiscal year's end, Dublin City cut more than 50 positions, including about a dozen teachers, as part of its deficit reduction plan filed with the state, and has had to borrow from next year's state funding to meet payroll and other obligations for three consecutive months. The district also owes more than \$6 million to the State Health Benefit Plan after not paying employer contributions for more than a year. State officials looking into those overdue payments found other "operational deficiencies" that included the sys-

tem not having completed an audit since 2021.

A summary report from 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."

Trammel's letter says the district's "precarious situation" is one "of its own making."

"For this reason, I strongly urge you to refrain from any further punitive behavior, intimidation from

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
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Santa visits
Dudley to
share real
reason for
Christmas

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The siren could be easily heard as Santa Claus rode into Dudley on an old firetruck. Stepping out of the vehicle, Santa greeted everyone with a "Ho! Ho! Ho!" as he walked over to the sidewalk leading to Dylan Harrison Memorial Park to shake hands with children.

The city of Dudley's annual Christmas tree lighting was held like always, the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

"This is a night we always look forward to, kicking off the Christmas season here in Dudley. We have Santa Claus here who will help us light our Christmas tree in



Santa Claus talks and poses for photos with children during Dudley's tree-lighting ceremony /PAYTON TOWNS III

this park where we honor Dylan Harrison," said Dudley Mayor Jason Locke. "Once Santa pushed a button to turn on the lights, he had a special message for

the children and adults in the park. "There is no better place to be than Dudley, Georgia," he said. "It's cold down here, of course not as cold as

it is in the North Pole. We've been doing a lot of work and making a lot of presents." Santa sat in a tree to read

DUDLEY CHRISTMAS
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VA houses largest
number of homeless
veterans in 7 years

Carl Vinson helped house 260 locally

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER
HERALD

The Department of Veteran Affairs announced that it permanently housed 51,936 homeless veterans across the country in fiscal year 2025.

That number is 4,011 more veterans than VA housed last year. The nationwide numbers include 260 veterans permanently housed by the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center.

This is VA's best national performance since it began tracking the number of individual Veterans permanently housed instead of the total number of permanent housing placements, ensuring a more accurate count of the number of Veterans helped.

VA began using this new methodology in 2022, and when applied retroactively to 2019, the numbers look like this:

- 2019: 49,462 permanent housing placements/48,133 unique veterans housed
- 2020: 45,397/44,048
- 2021: 39,637/38,401
- 2022: 41,208/39,868
- 2023: 48,059/46,051
- 2024: 51,124/47,925
- 2025: 53,839/51,936

In May 2025, VA took bold action to reduce Veteran homelessness by launching its Getting Veterans Off the Street initiative, in which every VA health care system across the country hosted dedi-

VA HOMELESS
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Dublin Exchange Club honors businesses,
individuals for faithfully flying Old Glory

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The Dublin Exchange Club recently celebrated the American flag by honoring individuals and businesses who proudly fly Old Glory.

Exchange Club member Craig West read of the names and showed photos of houses and businesses where the American flag waves in Laurens and Johnson counties.

Sonny Wilkes, David and Donna Scott, Citizens Bank, Farmers Furniture, Southern Heritage BBQ and Midway Straw received plaques for their American flags.

"These people fly their flags daily in their yards or at their businesses," West said. "Today we would like to honor them for what they do for us each and every day."



Exchange Club member Craig West speaks during an American flag presentation/PAYTON TOWNS III

West asked William Sumner about the hay bales he displays as an American flag.

"It just seemed like there was a big void on Highway 319," said Sumner, who added that they



Members of the Dublin High School Honor Guard present the colors at the Dublin Exchange Club meeting/PAYTON TOWNS III

first did their display in 2019. "Back then, patriotism in the United States was not as great as it should be. We thought this would be a good thing to try. It was really a thing of happenstance."

The Dublin High School Honor Guard presented the colors at the beginning of the program. West

FLAG PROGRAM
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'Feed the hungry:' Local restaurant, church keep up Thanksgiving tradition

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

Paula's Fried Chicken and Holly Springs Baptist Church teamed up last week to continue a long-running tradition on Thanksgiving.

"We feed the hungry on Thanksgiving Day," said Eugene Smith, who owns and operates Paula's with his wife, Ellen.

The Smiths and the church served more than 500 plates of turkey and dressing, green beans, candied yams and cake, along with drinks. The annual feeding of the hungry began about 25 years ago, when Smith's mother, Pauline Smith, ran the restaurant in East Dublin.

Tony Gay, a loyal Paula's customer for three decades, heard of the Thanksgiving event about three years ago and decided to help out. He and his daughter, Kayton Brown, a teacher, gather a list of about 20 people in need and volunteer delivering the meals.

"I wanted to do something for people and help them out, the people who might not get a Thanksgiving lunch," he said.

Though not on the Thanksgiving menu, the restaurant's chicken is Gay's go-to whenever he's asked to bring meat to a family function.

"You talking about the best fried chicken you ever put in your mouth."



From left: Patricia Howell picks up plates from Curtis Gainey and Ellen and Eugene Smith at Paula's Fried Chicken on Thanksgiving morning/RODNEY MANLEY



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OBITUARIES



Rosemary Attebury Duvall

Funeral services for Mrs. Rosemary Attebury Duvall was held Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025 at 11 a.m. at Anchor of Hope in Soperton with Rev. Gilbert Posey and Brother Robbie Byrd officiating. Burial will be in the Carter's Chapel Cemetery. Mrs. Duvall died Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025.

Mrs. Duvall, 79, was the daughter of the late Gerald and Evelyn Pruitt Duvall. She was born in New Harmony, Ind. on Oct. 29, 1946, was a high school graduate and attended junior college in Illinois for a short time. Rosemary was a writer and had written a book of her hometown and early life in Kentucky. She wrote many poems, some of which were published in magazines and enjoyed by many. She was a volunteer at Scott Health & Rehab for several years where she made them laugh and cry with her stories, loved to share Christ with anyone she met and she also started one of the first Law Enforcement Support Groups in the state of Georgia which was located in Adrian, Ga. She was preceded in death by her husband, James; sister, Kathy and two brothers, Jerry and David.

Survivors include her two sons, Timothy Lee (Rachel) Duvall of Scott and Tobias as Duke Duvall of Phoenix, Ariz.; granddaughter, McKayla (Calvin) Lauderdale of DuQuoin, Ill. and three great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to your favorite charity in Honor of Mrs. Rosemary Duvall.

Higgs Funeral Home (higgsfuneralhomeandflorist.com and facebook) of Soperton has charge of arrangements.

Lynn "Neil" Mullis Jr.

Lynn "Neil" Mullis Jr., 75, passed away on Nov. 29, 2025. He was born on March 28, 1950, in Dublin, Georgia, to the late Lynn Neil Mullis and the late Patricia Bedingfield Mullis Boyer. He grew up in Rentz and later Dublin, where he formed many of the lifelong friendships and values that shaped him.

Neil is survived by his wife and love of his life for 54 years, Suzi Fletcher Mullis formerly of Indian Springs, Georgia; his daughter Nicole Rodriguez and her husband Darren of St. Simons Island; his son Spence Mullis and

wife Brandy; his grandson Beau Mullis and wife Taylor; and his granddaughter Nan Marie "Bebe" Mullis, all of Dublin. He is also survived by his sister, Marie Mullis Durrett and her husband, Dr. William Durrett of Aiken, South Carolina. Uncle Neil was also loved by several nieces and nephews.

Neil was raised in Pine Forest Methodist Church in Dublin and later became a member of St. Simons United Methodist. He worked hard and earned the rank of Eagle Scout with Troop 68. He graduated from Dublin High School in 1968, attended Middle Georgia College, and went on to earn a degree in Sociology from Georgia College in Milledgeville. He later completed graduate coursework at the University of Georgia (Go Dawgs!) and became a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Neil spent 34 years working for the State of Georgia's Department of Human Resources, Vocational Rehabilitation Services. During that time, he helped many individuals with disabilities find stable, long-term employment. He took great pride in that work and the people he served.

He loved his time on the family farm in Rentz, where he found joy in gardening, hunting, woodworking and capturing wildlife through his camera lens. He was preceded by his two faithful four-legged companions, Cissy and Remi, who rambled with him many years on the farm and in the woods. He loved kayaking the rivers of middle and southeast Georgia with his buddies who affectionately called themselves the Dodge County Navys.

St. Simons Island was another place close to his heart, a treasured retreat for his family. While living there in the early 1980s, he delighted in playing Santa each year, arriving by shrimp boat at the village pier to see the waiting children. Climbing the ladder from the boat was always part of the show, though especially challenging at low tide.

Neil was an active amateur HAM radio operator, known by his call sign N4S-SI. Through radio, he connected with people across the country and around the world, something he enjoyed in his later years.

Neil will be remembered for his steady, calming presence, his dedication to helping others, and the meaningful connections he built throughout his life. As a licensed professional counselor, he had a remarkable ability and a genuine willingness to guide, support and counsel those who turned to him, offering clarity, compassion, and comfort when it was needed most.

A memorial service will be held at a later date on St. Simons Island.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites those who wish to do so to consider a gift to St. Simons United Methodist Church, 624 Ocean Boulevard, St. Simons Island, GA 31522.

Serenity Funeral Home – Dublin has charge of arrangements.



Joyce Aileen Young Hedrick

Joyce Aileen Young Hedrick of Asheville, North Carolina passed away Nov. 24 at the age of 92. As a believer in Christ, she now lives restored with Him in heaven. Joyce was born in Lebanon, Indiana to Bertha Belle Burkle Young and Raymond C. Young. She was preceded in death by her parents, her siblings Stanley Young and Mary Beth Guard, grandson Jordan Hedrick and her loving husband of 68 years, Reginald Lee Hedrick. She is survived by her siblings Warren Young (Jean) of Cary, North Carolina and Carolyn Williams of Corydon, Indiana, four children and their spouses, Brian Hedrick (Mellonee) of Marietta, Georgia, Barbara Burril (Matthew) of Fletcher, North Carolina, Mark Hedrick (Beth) of Asheville, North Carolina and Scott Hedrick (Delaney) of Cooper City, Florida; 14 grandchildren and their spouses Michaela Avery (Pete), Aaron Hedrick, Luke Hedrick (Leah), Jacob Hedrick, Bridget Langley (Braden), Julie Bohannon (Charles), Laura Lee Rorabough (Jonathan), Valerie Mormando (Austin), Lauren Ware (Matt), Paige Wimmer (Trey), Blake Hedrick (Emily), Nicole Hedrick, Jenna Hedrick and Brooke Hedrick; and 16 great-grandchildren. Joyce lived her life in service to the Lord, her family and community, believing that "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" 1 Peter 4:10.

Joyce grew up in rural Indiana as the oldest of five children where she worked on the family farm, was an active member of 4-H Club and president of her Montmorenci High School class of 16 students! She completed her B.S. in Home Economics at Purdue University where she was a member of Phi Mu Sorority. After graduation and marriage to Reggie, she taught Home Economics and Physical Education in Indiana, Georgia and Florida, but she would say her true calling in life was to home, family, and community, retiring from teaching to stay home to raise their four children. Joyce enjoyed leading parenting classes and Friendship Bible Coffee groups. She and Reggie hosted many foreign exchange students and their families. She was a board member for Christian Women's Club and Pine Forest Methodist Church, where she sang in the choir and taught Sunday School classes. She served in

the Dublin Service League and as American Red Cross Bloodmobile Chairman. She was named Woman of the Year in 1985 and Civitan Club Citizen of the Year in 1988 in their hometown of Dublin, Georgia. After Reggie's retirement, they enjoyed travelling the country in their motorhome, attending RV rallies, and visiting friends and family in most of the contiguous United States. In between trips, she joyfully spent time as Mom and Meemom with her beloved children and grandchildren. She remained active in their home church and in various committees and clubs in their retirement communities of Lake Ashton in Lake Wales, Florida and Deerfield in Asheville, North Carolina.

The family would like to thank all the administrative, healthcare and support staff at Deerfield Retirement Community, St. Giles Chapel, and Four Seasons Hospice for their excellent, compassionate care of Joyce during the final years of her life. They treated her and us like family and we are grateful.

The Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, Jan. 17 at Arden Presbyterian Church in Arden, North Carolina. Visitation is at 3 p.m. and the service is at 4 p.m.. The service will be available by live stream by clicking on "Live Webcast" at <https://www.ardenpreschurch.com/> prior to the service time.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations in her memory be made to the following organizations:

Scalpel at the Cross, the Christian medical mission work in the Peruvian Amazon region of South America done by son Mark Hedrick.

<https://scalpelatthecross.org/donate/>

CRU, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Christian missions work for college students of granddaughter Michaela Hedrick Avery and Peter Avery.

<https://give.cru.org/0579533>

Employee Scholarship Fund at Deerfield Retirement Community (Joyce was a big advocate of this fund, serving on this committee while at Deerfield.)

<https://deerfieldwnc.org/charitable-foundation/#h-foundation-funds-amp-projects>

Johnnie Hilliard Rewis

Johnnie Hilliard Rewis, 67, of Milan, Ga., died Monday, Dec. 1, 2025.

A graveside service will be held at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3, at Sand Grove Baptist Church.

She is survived by her husband – Kenny” Rewis; sister – Willaree Hulett; brother-in-law – Herman Spires; nieces and nephews – Greg Evans (Cenith), Randy Evans (Linda), Paula Spires, Alexis Asbell (Bryan), David Hulett (Michelle), Michelle Floyd

(Brett), Danielle Smith and Nicole Hulett.

The family will receive friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 1 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 3.

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

Charlotte Norris Hilliard

Charlotte Norris Hilliard, 81, of Rhine, Ga., died Monday, Dec. 1, 2025.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 5, at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, with interment in Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Cemetery.

She is survived by her daughter – Norris Ann Hilliard Velasquez (Lee Roy); son – Henry Hilliard (Jessy); step-daughter – Carmen Hilliard Stuckey (Rocky); five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; sister-in-law – Javene Hilliard Presley.

The family will receive friends in Pleasant Grove Baptist Church from 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 5.

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



Ardell Wright Jr.

Funeral services for Mr. Ardell Wright Jr., of East Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Buckeye Baptist Church, 2176 New Buckeye Road in East Dublin.

Ardell Wright Jr., made his entrance into this world on Monday, Jan. 31, 1955, in Belle Glade, Florida, to the late Ardell Wright Sr. and the late Lullene Wright. He was the second child born to this union. Affectionately known as "Brother," Ardell was cherished by many family members and friends.

Ardell received his early education at B.D. Perry Elementary School in East Dublin, Georgia, and graduated from Johnson County High School in Wrightsville in 1973. He went on to continue his studies at Abraham Baldwin College in Tifton, Georgia. He was an industrious man who dedicated

30 years of service to BASF, previously known as Engelhard Corporation.

He began his Christian journey at an early age at Buckeye Baptist Church, where he faithfully served in numerous capacities, including on the Deacon Board, the Male Voices, the Usher Ministry, Vacation Bible School as a Teacher and as Sunday School Superintendent. He also attended the State GMBC Congress of Christian Education and the GMBC State Usher Conventions. Ardell loved music and will be remembered fondly for sharing music CDs with his church family and friends.

Deacon Wright leaves to cherish his memory his loving wife of 49 years, Dian Wallace Wright; his sons, Christopher Wright and Alexander Wright, both of Wrightsville, Georgia; his brother, Carror "C" Wright of Byron, Georgia; and his sister, Angel Wright of Wrightsville, Georgia.

He is also survived by extended family members: sisters Vandell (Darren) Rogers of Hahira, Georgia; Vanisha Wright of Atlanta, Georgia; Valentine Rogers of Perry, Georgia; and Mary Ann Wright of Tifton, Georgia; brothers Timothy (Amy) Wright of Jacksonville, Florida; James Wright of Griffin, Georgia; Ezekiel (Jerry) Wright of Valdosta, Georgia; Michael Wright of Tifton, Georgia; Ardell Wright III of Dixon, Tennessee; Charles Wright of Atlanta, Georgia; and Matthew Wright of Leesburg, Georgia.

He leaves behind beloved sisters-in-law, Atlean Wilcher, Adell Wallace, and Louise Wallace of Wrightsville, Georgia; Angele Wallace of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Phylis Wallace Tyson of Deerfield, Florida; and brothers-in-law, Johnnie David and Willie Frank Wallace of Meriden, Connecticut.

Ardell's memory will also be cherished by devoted nieces O'Sheta "Nikki" Harris of Fort Valley, Georgia, and Maresa Wright of Macon, Georgia; great-nephew Justin Harris of Fort Valley, Georgia, and great niece Logan Henderson of Macon, Georgia; and a host of other beloved relatives and friends.

Ardell Wright Jr. will forever be remembered for his faith, his service, his love for music and the warmth he shared with all who knew him.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin.

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OBITUARIES



Willie "Bud" Horne

Funeral services for Deacon Willie “Bud” Horne, of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at 11 a.m. at the Green Grove Baptist Church, 2418 U.S. 441 in Dublin. Rev. Dr. Carl A. Wardlaw will deliver the eulogy. Interment will take place at the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville, Georgia.

He was born to the parentage of the late Ice and Francis Horne in Irwinton, Georgia. Vines of his life were noted in Wilkin-son County with later years spent in Dublin, Georgia.

Willie was educated in Wilkinson County Public Schools. He entered the United States Army and received an honorable discharge. He retired from Carl Vinson VA Hospital. After retirement he worked for Dublin City Schools and Laurens County Board of Education as a bus driver.

He was a member of the Green Grove Baptist Church where he served as a Deacon under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Carl A. Wardlaw.

On Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025, God whispered in Wil- lie’s ear and said “you have fought a good fight, you have finished your course, come on home and rest my child.”

He was a loving father, brother, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle and friend. He touched many lives with much love and joy.

He was married to the

love of his life, Evelyn Mc-Clinton Horne, for 31 years.

He leaves to cherish his memories a son, Gary (Mar-quita) Horne or Macon, Georgia; daughters, Dr. Te-resa Horne Ayers (Dewey) of Atlanta, Georgia, Javeta Horne of Dublin, Geor- gia and Sonja Glover (Rev. Burnett) of Jeffersonville, Georgia; six grandchildren, Chequala Hill, Terez Den-son, Viani Denson, Tykeri- us McRae, Kemaury McRae, and Javiah McRae; five great-grandchildren; broth-er, John (Judith) Horne of Irwinton, Georgia; sisters, Lizzie Mae Pitts of Irwinton, Georgia, and Maggie Reeves (McArthur) of Milledgeville, Georgia; devoted special friend, Maetta Hughes of Dublin, Georgia; aunt, Sara Lee of Atlanta, Georgia; brother-in-law, Ricky (Lisa) Hudson of Dublin, Georgia, and a host of nieces, neph-ews, other relatives and friends.

Please post your con- dolences online at Servicesby-Dudley.com.

Services by Dudley Fu- neral Home of Dublin.



Tomeko Simone Denson

Funeral services for Tomeko Simone Denson of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, at the Saint Luke Bap- tist Church, 620 East Main Street in Dexter Georgia. Interment will follow in the Scotland City Cemetery.

Tomeko Simone Mark- ia Denson was born on Wednesday, June 8, 1988, in Dublin, Georgia, to Ken-

dra Louise McRae Whipple and Christopher Lorenzo Denson. Loved and accept- ed by her father, Fred Whip- ple, Tomeko was baptized and she accepted Christ at an early age at the Free Gift Baptist Church where she sung in the choir. Tomeko was a very spiritual and re- ligious person. She graduat- ed from Dublin High School on May 22, 2006, where she was a cheerleader and softball player. She earned a scholarship through soft- ball to the College of Coast- al Georgia, attending from 2006 to 2009 and obtain- ing an Associate of Science. Degree. Following this, she attended Macon Technical College graduating in May. 2010 with the cosmetology license. Tomeko provided her cosmetology services at JCPenney Hair Salon from 2010 to 2014. She then be- gan her employment with GEICO Insurance Compa- ny. In 2019, she joined the United States Postal Service at the Jackson, Georgia, lo- cation.

On Jan. 24, 2021, she welcomed her son, Rush Wesley Maddox. And cher- ished her role as a nurturing mother. Tomeko contin- ued her career with USPS. Transferring to the Nash- ville, Tennessee location pri- or to her passing.

Tomeko was preceded in death by her grandpar- ents, Fred (Bessie) Whip- ple. George Richardson and Henry (Doretha) Denson.

Tomeko is survived by her son, Rush Wesley Mad- dox, her parents, Fred (Ken- dra) Whipple. Christopher (Chevone) Denson, her siblings, Tamir (Brittany) Whipple. Taesha Whipple, and Markus Denson, her grandparents. Velma Vick- ers. James (Gail) Vickers, her aunts, Tammie Rozier, Tammy Whipple, Moni- ca Vickers, Jackie Walker, Catherine Windom, Steph- anie Denson. Suprina Hen- ley, uncles. Chris McRae. Gino McRae, Telly McRae, Carl Whipple, Bruce Denson and Henry Denson, neph- ews, Cameron and Carsten Whipple, Avionne, O’Neal

and Caio Whipple, special aunt, Willie Mae Cooper, and a host of other great aunts, uncles and cousins.

Please post your con- dolences online at Servicesby- Dudley.com.

Services by Dudley Fu- neral Home of Dublin.



John Elton Dominy

John Elton Dominy, 84, passed away peacefully at his home on Dec. 1, 2025. He was born on Oct. 4, 1941, to Joseph Elton Dominy and Oretha Williamson Dominy, who preceded him in death. He was also preceded in death by his sister, Louise Green Pinkham.

John is survived by his devoted wife of 58 years, Linda Beacham Dominy; his daughter, Brandi (Bri- an) Barker of Chattanooga; and his treasured grandson, Jack Barker. His presence, kindness, and steady love will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

A lifelong resident of Dublin until moving to Chattanooga in 2020, John graduated from Dublin High School in 1959. He began his career with Cot- ton Producers shortly after graduation and later retired from Southern States after 48 dedicated years as a seed buyer. Throughout his long career, he formed lasting friendships and earned the respect of colleagues across the region.

John was a hardwork- ing and loving husband, fa- ther, and “Gdaddy.” He was a faithful member of Pine Forest Methodist Church.

Those who knew him well recognized his passion for maintaining a beauti- ful yard. He could often be found on weekends rid- ing his John Deere mower, picking up limbs or trim- ming shrubbery. His friend- ly nature meant he never met a stranger.

Funeral services will be held on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m. at Townsend Funeral Home with Reverend Brett Maddocks and Reverend Kim Dixon officiating. The family will receive friends from 1 to 2 p.m., prior to the service. Pallbearers will be Ted Green, Chad Green, Richard Green, Dr. Andy Williamson, Perry William- son and Dray Pope. Burial

will follow at Dublin Memo- rial Gardens.

John will be remem- bered for his devotion to family, his strong work ethic and the warmth he brought to everyone he met. His legacy of love and service will continue in the lives of those he cherished.

His family is truly grate- ful for his caregiver, Tiffany Burchard, and Gentiva Hos- pice.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Pine Forest Methodist Church.

Please visit [www. townsendfuneralhome.com](http://www.townsendfuneralhome.com) for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.

1925: This and that
By SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.

SOUVENIR HALF DOLLAR - General James A. Thomas, the commanding general of the United Confed- erate Veterans and a native of Dublin, was presented the fifth ever minted Stone Mountain commemorative half dollar coin in 1925. Berea Citizen, June 11, 1925.

RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY - It was said that there was once a spot five miles from where Laurens, Dodge, Tel- fair and Montgomery join, where it rained day and night. The 50-foot by 100-foot area, some 300 yards from Gum Swamp Creek, experienced a misty rain regardless of seasonal and weather changes. Atlanta Journal, May 22, 1925.

LOOK UP IN THE SKY! - In the early spring of 1925, Dubliners observed a new and interesting sight above the Radford Place north of Dublin at the intersection of pres- ent-day Claxton Dairy Road and Brookwood Drive. What they saw would become a normal method of agriculture for decades to come. A crop-dusting pilot came to Dublin to demonstrate his skills at eradicating plant bugs. Atlan- ta Journal April 4, 1925.

IT WAS SO HOT? - Well, it was so hot in the summer of 1925, one of the hottest and driest ever, that kernels of corn were popping in the fields. To prove his case, “Cap” Woodward brought in an ear of corn from the Shewmake place to the offices of the Dublin Courier Herald. One eighth of the kernels had already popped open, and the remainder were in the process of bursting wide open. Valdosta Times, Sept. 24, 1925.

TOP SECRETARY - In the early 20th Century, the po- sition of “Commercial Secretary” was held primarily by men. When Georgia’s commercial secretaries organized into a state-wide organization in 1925, they chose Dub- lin’s W.H. Proctor as the group’s first state president. Macon News, April 30, 1925.

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OUR TAKE...

Chronic absenteeism is a major problem facing schools

The quality of public education and whether or not our children are being prepared for the future is seemingly always up for debate. How schools are funded, and how tax dollars are spent, is usually in the forefront of these conversations, and with both local school systems asking taxpayers to hand over more money, and one system in financial turmoil, it's rightly so. While big bucks are shelled out for facilities, programs and other bells and whistles, teachers are usually left in the lurch doing the best they can for their students.

But all of the money in the world spent for the most modern, fully equipped classrooms and adequately compensated teachers don't mean anything if kids aren't sitting in desks, and the state of Georgia - along with Dublin, Laurens County - has a bit of a problem keeping kids in the classroom.

According to data from the Georgia Department of Education, 19.5 percent of students in Georgia missed 10 percent or more of enrolled school days in 2025. That trend is roughly the same in the Dublin City School System, with 19.6 percent of students missing that many days or more. In the larger Laurens County School System, more than 20 percent of students missed at least 10 percent of days.

Chronic absenteeism peaked during the Covid-19 pandemic, with Dublin seeing nearly half, 43.9 percent, and Laurens County seeing 22.7 percent of students missing at least a tenth of the year. On the surface this looks like a truancy or school-skipping problem, one that could be handled with tougher regulations and punishments, but not so, says Attendance Works, a national non-profit that tracks and combats chronic absenteeism. Many of these school absences are excused, and caused by legitimate illnesses or health-related issues. Others are the result of barriers like lack of reliable transportation and food insecurity, problems that are persistent in a geographically large, poor, rural area like ours. With school attendance records kept with a simple "present or absent," it's often hard to track the root causes of absenteeism.

With reading and math proficiency rates in a rut since the pandemic, it is no question that absenteeism is affecting classroom outcomes. The trends have gotten the attention of state lawmakers who convened a committee to study the issue. That group wrapped up late last month. Among suggested solutions to the problem were banning cell phones in high schools, and banning chronically absent students from playing sports or even obtaining a drivers license. The committee also scratched at the other reasons that cause students of miss class time, but those are harder to solve.

As lawmakers prepare for the next session of the General Assembly, we hope this issue doesn't get lost in the shuffle of the new year. We encourage our leaders promote education policy that puts students and teachers first, and outside the classroom expanded access to health care in rural areas and help eradicate food deserts.

Chronic absenteeism is a problem with many causes and the fix can only come with a wide-ranging approach.

— Kyle Dominy

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"If you never take risks, you'll never accomplish great things. Everybody dies, but not everyone has lived."

- C.S. Lewis

DAILY SCRIPTURE

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

- Galatians 1:11-12

Abrupt team changes are a great way to learn

College is where you go to learn a lot of things, and sometimes while there you also go to class. It's the life lessons that tend to stick with you most.

With that in mind, we're going to turn to the "sport" of college football as a backdrop for yet another illustration of how the world actually works. Coach Lane Kiffin has once again transitioned between programs in the most Kiffin way possible, quitting Ole Miss on the cusp of a serious playoff run and joining perhaps their most hated rival.

While officially that is their in-state rival in Starkville, it is LSU that keeps tweaking Ole Miss's basket of insecurities. Now they've stolen the "hot" head coach, branded Oxford a place you go as a stepping stone, and made the Ole Miss faithful question if they're really going to be able to maintain their program in an arms race that seems clear to elevate a select few to an uber-elite tier.

Here we have a clash between those who view college football based on nostalgia, tradition, part of an educational experience, funded by donations and those who continue to demonstrate that college football is a multi-billion dollar business. Those on the side of big business are running up the score like they were John Heisman coaching against Cumberland.

Protecting the façade of



By CHARLIE HARPER

amateur athletics, however, is part of the business model. Thus, those taking the bag and running still have to pretend that tradition, loyalty, and commitment are important. This demonstration is often served as a heavy handed dose of false piety.

Note Kiffin's comments shortly after winning the Egg Bowl last Friday. Despite the decision not only to leave having already been made – something that is now clear given that he had already lined up most of his coaching staff to abruptly leave with him – he noted that he was going to have to pray about it, as well as talk to two coaching legends, invoking Pete Carroll's relationship with his dad.

Heartwarming. For about 36 hours.

Kiffin's exit laid bare the realities of the new business

model. There was a bit of a standoff as he seemed to expect if not demand that he be allowed to continue to coach his current team while beginning recruiting efforts for his new team. Many of those recruits are likely currently wearing Ole Miss uniforms or have stated their intention to be in Oxford next fall.

In hindsight, hiring Kiffin was a roll of the dice. He had a defined history of abrupt and aggravating exits. His dithering a few years ago on staying with Ole Miss – then getting a much bigger contract to stay – is seen as a distraction for another good year that came apart at the end. One could say they knew what they were getting into when he was chosen to be the one to elevate the program. A business decision, if you will.

The fake piety doesn't land just on the head of the coaches and schools who hire them. Sports journalists too are dragging out their fainting couches and doing their best pearl clutches. The very networks who have pumped billions into this "amateur" sport are doing their best to be shocked, SHOCKED!, that a brazen money grab for scarce elite coaching talent could take place.

If you look at the above scenarios, you can extrapolate these hard-earned life lessons from college into daily adult life. The parallels to politics are clear.

We have our teams. There's a lot of nostalgia in-

volved. We tell ourselves our team is the good guys; those hated rivals are backwards idiots who don't know how the world works and should apologize for even existing. Just seeing their jerseys makes us mad.

Yet deep down we know most of it is just business. The more we dig in to our side, the bigger the business grows. And of course, we have media and influencers doing their best to make sure we stay "engaged" – which means angry.

The major players make sure to play along with fake piety, too, so that we can continue to pretend. So many contemplations begin with "after much consideration and prayer" right before we are told that God wants the politicians to do what elevates them the highest and quickest.

But then, sometimes our coaches change teams, abruptly. Whether they do a 180 on an issue (see Ukraine and Israel), turn on the leader of their own party (see Green, Marjorie Taylor) or change parties altogether (see Duncan, Geoff), the fans too have to decide if they stay or if they go.

The hard lessons are the ones that stick with you. Sometimes they make you look inward, and make sure you're supporting the right team, for the right reasons. Other times they make you realize you got caught up in the desire to win, but lost what you were fighting for along the way.

The first step toward autocracy is already here

Here in Georgia, we have had a front-row seat to the erosion of democracy.

But it doesn't look like the movies or come with a cinematic moment of revelation. Instead, we are watching it unfold day by day in small non-events and headlines that fail to capture our attention for more than a few hours. Over time, we get so used to the chaos, the disruption and the brokenness that we adapt – like a distant alarm that becomes part of the background noise or that rut on the road that has never been fixed, so we learn to drive over it.

We know something is wrong; we know there's an issue that is causing harm – but we learn to accept it because that's just the way it is.

But it shouldn't be. In recent months, I've been talking a lot about the "10 Steps to Autocracy and Authoritarianism." This framework serves as a translator. The regime that's attacking our way of life wants us to feel overwhelmed by what's happening around us and to us. But the 10 Steps show how all of the pieces fit together. Over the next few weeks, I intend to use "Fine Print" to help us see how what's happening around us is actually happening to us.

The bottom line is that authoritarians follow a playbook. By naming their steps, we expose their strategy. And by exposing their strategy, we empower ourselves to see their intentions – and defeat them. The "10 Steps to Autocracy and Authoritarianism" give us the intellectual scaffolding to recognize the danger signals, to see how each action by those in power fits into a broader design, and ultimately to arm ourselves with the information and tools we need to reclaim democracy for the people.

Today we're talking about Step 1 – winning (usually the last) free and fair election. As always, I'd like to thank Kim Lane Scheppele, who researched this framework and allowed me to slightly editorialize it.

Across recent history and the world, most of the politicians who eventual-



ly dismantled democracy were at first chosen in free and fair elections. Citizens cast their ballots believing they were participating in the normal democratic process, and election monitors certified those contests as legitimate. But in many of these cases, the warning signs were visible long before Election Day. Aspirational autocrats often make it clear – through word or action – that they are not fully committed to democratic values and ideals and that the institutions by which people exercise their rights should be destroyed.

In Turkey, Erdogan won power in 2003 even after his party was banned and he was jailed for stoking religious hatred. In Venezuela, Chavez was elected in 1999 after trying to overthrow the elected government. In Hungary, Orban spent years attacking the legitimacy of elections he lost – and then rewrote the rules once he got back in power in 2010. And in Brazil, Bolsonaro openly praised Brazil's 20th-century military coup and dictatorship long before his 2018 win – and has now been convicted and sentenced to 27 years in prison for plotting and participating in his own coup plot.

Of course, not every freely elected leader becomes an autocrat and not all authoritarians advertise their intentions in advance. But would-be strongmen often send unmistakable signals before winning the election that ultimately allows them to move against democratic institutions.

While Donald Trump's election in 2016 may not have conformed to the classic trajectory of an autocrat, his behavior over the following years did. He refused to concede the 2020 election, incited support-

ers who violently attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and was ultimately indicted in both state and federal courts for plotting to overturn the election result. He tried to undermine the legitimacy of the judicial process by calling it a "witch hunt."

Now, within the first months of the second Trump administration, the pattern seen in places like Turkey, Venezuela, Hungary and Brazil has fully revealed itself in the United States.

So, you might be asking: what do we need to know?

Step 1 on the road to autocracy is that the erosion of democracy often begins with a legitimate election – even when warning signs are already flashing – which means we cannot wait until democratic systems are formally dismantled to push back. We must recognize these signals early, call them out clearly and organize before the next election. Failure to do so makes resistance exponentially harder.

We can't assume that because the election was legitimate, the resulting administration will be. As we've watched since January, an election cannot be used to justify the wanton cruelty and corruption that has marked every single day of this regime – like gutting health care or firing thousands of hardworking civil servants or the U.S. Coast Guard announcing that Swastikas and nooses are no longer hateful, shameful symbols.

We also have to stop accepting that bad politicians do bad things because "they won fair and square." A free and fair election is not a hall pass to tyranny. As long as we cling to treating this new American order as some-

thing we simply need to survive, we are missing the point.

Yes, Republicans won the election – and they brought with them Christian nationalists, tech bros who have your private data, masked secret police, and the military occupation of cities like Memphis and Portland. This isn't normal, so assuming the next election will fix it simply won't do. I'm not calling for panic – but we must pay attention right now.

Authoritarianism isn't coming to America. It's here. Our job is to accept where we are and to plot our way forward – starting today.

While some of us may understand the threats we face, the reality hasn't quite broken through for a lot of Georgians. That's by design. When everything feels out of whack, nothing feels completely wrong.

A few months ago, I spent time with a naturalized citizen here in Georgia who had escaped a South American dictatorship decades before. We'd worked together many times, so I knew a bit of her story. When I asked about how she felt given what was happening in America, she shrugged.

"I don't watch the news; it's too depressing," she said. "What's going on?"

I spent the next few minutes updating her on the immigration ruling that authorizes racial profiling and the pending cuts to the Affordable Care Act. She is an independent contractor who gets her health care on the marketplace, and she has two children who could be targeted by ICE despite their citizenship.

She had no idea – but she wanted to know more.

You can be part of how we build the resistance. Join us at 10stepscampaign.org. We've got work to do.

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. This column was originally published in her "Assembly Notes" Substack newsletter.

The Courier Herald

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I need to get filling out my shop local-opoly card! Thanks Chamber for the fun incentive to remind us to shop local!

Grossly incompetent mismanagement caused the Dublin City Schools financial catastrophe and the Dublin City Schools should be totally responsible for dealing with this mess. The Laurens County Schools do not want anything to do with dealing with this mess. If the county schools are forced to take over the Dublin City Schools then the first thing they should do is fire all the administrators, shut down all the schools and move the students to county schools.

The Nov. 20 Stacey Abrams' column about the assault on rural hospital is an assault on all. She mentioned a long list of terrible things that happen when a rural hospital closes. What I don't understand is Obamacare caused a lot of hospital closures. According to AI, 138 rural hospitals have closed since 2010 while 146 have closed or stopped provided inpa-

tient care between 2005 and 2023. I would like to know what her comments are on this research.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation should analyze the school situation. They have done a tremendous amount of damage to our community. Why would anyone want to come here to live and work, start a business or put their family in this situation. It's a crying shame.

The construction of the new island and crosswalk structure on West Jackson Street makes no sense. How are they going to have a parade down West Jackson Street with that in the middle of the road? Do the city planners really hate the downtown merchants that bad?

It would surely have been nice if the parade didn't happen right during the second half of the SEC championship. I remember the first time they did this it was to not get in the way of the SEC championship, but this year it doesn't work.

Too bad they didn't plan for this.

Dublin City Bus drivers to go on strike starting tomorrow over bus cuts!

For the first time, the Dublin City Board of Education's attorney's name was mentioned. If he wants a Merry Christmas, he needs to get his money upfront or he will become an accounts payable.

The Dublin City School board member Lanier said he personally committed to make sure whoever is guilty of this to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Is that the same as when he said he would personally call in the GBI and has not done that?

The three people that the Dublin City School is trying to get permission to hire, where the money has been given to pay their salary, I wonder if they are related to anybody in that school? Most of them are related one way or the other.

The two women who did not attend the board meeting on Monday should resign or be removed from the board. The actions speaks for the concerns they

NEWS DIGEST

The Laurens County Board of Elections and Registration will hold their regular monthly meeting on Monday, Dec. 8, at 5 p.m. in the board of elections and registration office of the Laurens County Courthouse Annex Building, located at 117 E. Jackson St., Suite A. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Roll call
- Recognition of visitors

- Minutes of previous meeting
- Old business: Discussion of office procedures; Revenue expenditures and outlay
- New business: Preparing for the 2026 election year
- Executive session

The city of Rentz will hold its next council meeting at 5 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 8 at city hall. The agen-

da follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Approval of November minutes
- Approval of financial statement
- Acknowledge visitors
- Old business
- New business
- Second reading of solar ordinance
- Comments
- Adjourn

DEWEY DECIMAL DIGEST

Food for Fines at the Laurens County Library from Monday, Dec. 1 to Friday, Dec. 12 at the Circulation desk. Any Laurens County Library patron with overdue fines can have \$1 waived for every canned food item they donate to our library. All food will be donated to a local food pantry. Restrictions apply.

Bingo For Books at the Laurens County Library on Monday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in our

auditorium. Enjoy a morning of bingo at the library. You could win books and more! Coffee and tea will be served.

Mechatronics Monday at the Laurens County Library on Monday, Dec. 8, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the learning lab. Drop by your LEGO Technic lab every Monday. Build with LEGO gears, motors, and more! Learn coding, too. Ages 8+ recommended.

Children's Storytime at the Laurens County Library on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. in our children's center. Join us for our weekly storytime where little ones can enjoy stories, dancing, and crafts.

BUILD! at the Laurens County Library on Wednesday, Dec. 10, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in our children's center. For teens to toddlers, it's our weekly LEGO® and Duplo® building event!

Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:

THURSDAY:
56°
Mainly cloudy with a little rain in the afternoon.
Sunrise: 7:18 a.m.

THURSDAY NIGHT:
43°
Overcast with a brief shower or two late.
Sunset: 5:25 p.m.

FRIDAY:
49°
Chilly with occasional rain; there can be ponding on roadways.
Sunrise: 7:19 a.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT:
44°
Rain.
Sunset: 5:25 p.m.

Saturday 12/6
HIGH/LOW
53/42
A brief morning shower or two; otherwise, cloudy.
Sunrise: 7:20 a.m.
Sunset: 5:25 p.m.

Sunday 12/7
HIGH/LOW
65/36
Times of clouds and sun.
Sunrise: 7:20 a.m.
Sunset: 5:25 p.m.

Monday 12/8
HIGH/LOW
61/31
Mostly sunny.
Sunrise: 7:21 a.m.
Sunset: 5:25 p.m.

Tuesday 12/9
HIGH/LOW
62/36
After a cloudy start, sun returns.
Sunrise: 7:22 a.m.
Sunset: 5:25 p.m.

Wednesday 12/10
HIGH/LOW
61/41
Plenty of sunshine.
Sunrise: 7:23 a.m.
Sunset: 5:26 p.m.

River levels...
Oconee (at Dublin) 2.73'
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Dublin Police Department

- Patrick Hess, 59, was charged with scheduled I or II controlled substance, possession and use of drug related objects and crossing state/county guard lines with weapons, intoxicants, or drugs at 9:07 a.m. on Oct. 28.

An officer responded to Northview Avenue on a tip of people at that location, which is abandoned.

The officer saw a bicycle at the back of the location and a man exiting the shed. The man, who was later identified as Hess, got on the bicycle. The officer talked with Hess, who said he was visiting someone at the shed.

Another officer arrived and talked with Hess while the original officer on the scene looked inside the shed, which had chairs, beer cans and food.

It appeared someone had been living inside the shed. The officer did not see anyone else inside. The officer was advised that Hess was

wanted through two different agencies.

At one point, Hess tried to get on his bike, but an officer was able to put their hands on him.

Hess was transported to the sheriff's office detention center. Officers found a sock around the man's belt that contained a glass pipe with burnt marks, a small clear container that contained a crystalline substance. The total weight of all of the crystalline substances totaled to 2.0 grams.

The crystalline substance tested positive for methamphetamine.

- Tiara Tranae Betty Downing, 26, was charged with driving while license suspended or revoked at the intersection of South Decatur and East Garner Street around 7:22 p.m. on Oct. 31.

An investigation led to Downing's arrest.

- On Oct. 27, around 8:23 a.m., an officer was traveling on 441 South and saw a black Toyota Camry traveling in the same direction with no lights on.



POLICE BEAT...

The driver was identified as Xavier Phillips, 25, after a traffic stop was conducted on Southern Pines Road.

Phillips informed the officer that he was not sure about the status of his license. The officer was able to detect a strong odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle.

Phillips' license came back as suspended for failure to appear. After placing Phillips under arrest, the officer searched the car and discovered a grinder and a bong used for smoking marijuana.

Phillips was transported to the police department where he received three citations for headlight requirements, driving while license suspended and possession of drug paraphernalia.

- Around 9:30 a.m. on Oct. 27, an officer was dispatched to Cracker Barrel on Travel Center Boulevard in reference to a fight in progress. Both parties had separated when the officer arrived.

- Tycorian Kenshun Collins, 20, was charged with public indecency at Dublinear on Industrial Boulevard around 9:22 a.m. on Nov. 5 in response to a man exposing himself in a silver car in the parking lot.

An officer responded and talked with Collins who said he was waiting for his moth-

er who worked at the business.

He told the officer that he was changing his clothes. A witness, who parked next to his car, said Collins had exposed himself. He later admitted to have been watching what he called "a little" porn.

Collins was also barred from the location. He was transported to the police department where he was finger printed and cited.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- On Nov. 14, around 3:38 p.m., a deputy met with a woman at the sheriff's office in reference to harassment from an incident that happened on Coleman Avenue in East Dublin.

- On Nov. 17, a deputy was dispatched to Rockdale Circle in reference to making a report.

- A deputy talked with a woman in reference to a harassment that happened on Deer Creek Trail around 9:44 a.m. on Nov. 17.

- A deputy spoke with a woman about a civil issue involving her trucking company around 3:35 p.m. on Nov. 17.

- Charles Frank Foley, 23, with charged with driving under the influence. On Nov. 18, around 6 p.m., a deputy responded to State Route 338 in Dudley in reference to a vehicle in the ditch.

- A deputy responded to the theft of an automobile around 9:09 a.m. on Nov. 14 on Pond Road.

Editor's note: This information is public record and was taken from reports of local law enforcement agencies. These reports do not reflect guilt or innocence. An "arrest" does not always indicate incarceration. Readers are cautioned that people may have similar names. Police Beat does not identify minor children, victims of sexual assault, suicide attempts or medical conditions. Cases dismissed do not appear if the newspaper is notified before deadline.

Woman's Study Club takes a look at 'Whistler's Mother'

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

The Woman's Study Club met Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2025 at the Laurens County Library.

Vice president Mrs. Martin Christian called the meeting to order, greeted guests and honorary members, and moved through the order of club business for the day.

She thanked hostess Mrs. Walden Payne for her beautiful fall flowers. Mrs. Robert Thigpen introduced the speaker of the day, Mrs. Jack Heidler, who presented her program on James Whistler's "Whistler's Mother."

James McNeil Whistler's painting, "Whistler's Mother" is actually titled "Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1." The painting is a portrait of his mother, Anna Whistler. It is one of the most recognized paintings in the world and is the most important American artwork residing outside the United States.

James McNeill Whistler was born in 1834 in Lowell, Massachusetts. At the age of 21, he moved to Paris to pursue the life of a bohemian artist and a few years later went to London.

Whistler was a dandy, sporting dark curls and a white streak on top that he would sometimes tie with a ribbon.

He wore a monocle and a

top hat and usually carried a walking stick in public. He was carefree and sharp tongued, but privately very diligent in his art studio. He loved entertaining and exchanging witticisms with friends like Oscar Wilde. His home was a social hub of London at that time.

Whistler's mother, Anna, joined her son in London in 1863 and lived with him until 1875.

Anna assumed command of the household, acted as hostess for his entertaining and took over an unofficial role managing her son's career. In the summer of 1871, Whistler's intended model was indisposed.

Impatient to begin working, he asked his mother to pose for him. He soon found that at her age 67, she could not stand for that long so he had her sit. It took him about three months to complete the picture of his mother.

Whistler and his mother were very close, and a portrait was well deserved, but he was exasperated by the sentimental responses to the painting.

To the artist, the painting demonstrated his theories concerning the use of color and the absence of color. He was a leader in the aesthetic movement "art for art's sake."

He had begun to call his paintings by musical terms, arrangement, harmony, symphony or nocturne, and wanted them to emulate the aesthetic qualities of music. When Anna Whistler died in 1881, there had only been two public exhibitions of the famous portrait of her.

Whistler sold the portrait of his mother to the French government, knowing that it would be transferred to the Louvre after his death, which he insisted was the highest honor an artist could receive.

A French critic observed the painting appealed to connoisseurs praising the harmony of the grays and blacks and the crowd seeing the pathos of the old lady sitting in a simple pose. To people everywhere she became a symbol of enduring strength, dignity and perseverance.

James McNeill Whistler created over 550 oil paintings and many etchings, pastels and other artworks in his lifetime but "Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1," or "Whistler's Mother," remains his most well-known painting.



Check presented for Mrs. Claus Reads event

Janet Smith presents a \$500 check from PEO Chapter BR to Oconee Fall Line Technical College to support the school's Mrs. Claus Reads event. The December 3 children's program will be part of the 19th annual Festival of Trees at the DuBose Porter Center on the Dublin campus. Mrs. Claus will read Christmas stories to some 600 kindergarten children from Laurens County and Dublin school systems and Trinity Christian School. Each child will receive a book to take home at the end of the program. Pictured from left: Kim David, OFCT vice president for economic development, Janet Smith, PEO, and Steve Knight, manager of OFTC conference centers/SPECIAL PHOTO

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IT'S TIME TO SEND IN YOUR SANTA LETTERS!

tchsanta@gmail.com

SANTA

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.

From the kitchen: Dublin Pickleball members compete widely in busy month of November



FEELING 22: Eva Martin, competing alongside Maria Sasser at a recent tournament, elevated her 2025 gold medal count to 22 with wins in the month of November/SPECIAL PHOTO

By LAURA CARTER
Dublin Pickleball Association submission

Dublin Pickleball Association members were busy last month, winning awards in four fundraising tournaments and playing in the DPA's 2025 fall league.

Several members played well in the Families 4 Families "There's No Place Like Home" Pickleball Palooza on November 15 at Rhythm & Rally Sports & Events in Macon, Georgia.

Proceeds from this tournament went to Families 4 Families, which works to provide Christian foster families to children in need across Georgia, and a support network for the birth family, the children and the foster families that unite them in growth and healthy relationships.

Their goal is to raise enough this year to open 10 new foster homes. Vetting and opening a home costs around \$5,000.

Supporting one child for a year is around \$2,500. Families 4 Families hopes this tournament raised awareness that foster care can be done right, and through mentorship, can serve as a pivotal blessing that helps to strengthen the whole family.

Winners included the following...

Chap Cranford (Cochran) and partner Clem Bell (Macon) won bronze in Men's Doubles Skill 3.5 / Age 14 to 29

Eva Martin (East Dublin) and partner Maria Sasser (Vidalia) won silver in Women's Doubles 3.5, all ages and bronze in 3.0/3.5 combined, all ages.

Rose Cannon (Dublin) and partner Laura Carter won bronze in Women's Doubles 3.0, 50-plus.

Dianne Harrison (Dublin) and partner Kenny Jimenez (Georgia) won bronze in Mixed Doubles 3.5, 14-39.

Eva Martin won her 21st and Chap

Cranford won his ninth gold medal of the year while playing mixed doubles together in 3.5, all ages.

Across the state in Suwanee, DPA players also won medals in the inaugural Planet Pickle Fall Classic benefitting the Happy Hitters of North Atlanta, a pickleball team participating in the Special Olympics of Georgia. Southern Pickleball sponsored the tournament Nov. 15-16.

Winners were...

Paula Baker (Dublin) and partner Maria Woodard (Dexter) won gold in Women's Doubles 2.5, 50-plus

Paula Baker and partner Dave Cranford (Cochran) won silver in Mixed Doubles 2.5, 16-plus

Lindsay Shuman (Dublin) and Rajiv Villait (Georgia) won gold in Mixed

PICKLEBALL
Continued on page 8

SEMIFINAL OUTLOOK: RAIDERS TAKE ON TOP SEED WITH EYES ON SPOT IN FINALS, MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM

With 13 wins down, **No. 7 West Laurens** (13-0, 8-0 region 4-AAA) has just two games left in a postseason journey that's closing in on a chance at winning it all. The Raiders find themselves just one victory away from the state finals, as they go on the road Friday to square off with the top seed, **No. 3 Jefferson** (12-1, 5-0 region 8-AAA).

This will be their first trip into the Dragons' lair — Jefferson Memorial Stadium — since a visit in the second round of the 2016 playoffs. The game was a mixed bag, as the West Laurens defense held 2015 state offensive player of the year Colby Wood to just 93 yards and two touchdowns. But the Raiders, working with just 135 total yards of their own, got nothing going on offense and committed four turnovers (one a little questionable as punt returner Caleb Christian was hit early on a fair catch just before Jefferson opened the first-half scoring).

This year's Dragons, who are four-time defending region champs, graduated the vast majority of their roster from a state runner-up team in 2024. Despite also losing the best of its few returnees, Clemson-commit Max Brown, to a knee injury in September, Jefferson improved on its overall record, with a lone loss coming to AAAA champ North Oconee in September.

A picture of ground-and-pound football, the Dragons' offense spends most of its time in looks resembling the I-formation, with an M.O. of running the ball straight ahead behind one or multiple lead blockers, and a massive offensive line. Their speed, what you'd probably describe as "deceptive," rates below crisp technique and physicality on the list of strengths, though hard runners in freshman C.J. Hays and senior Darren Pinkard along with a serviceable QB in senior Colton Grant, make them very effective at playing any style of football needed to attack a defense.

Jefferson's numbers (about 6.2 yards per carry and 313 a game) don't blow you away, but add up to just south of 35 points per game, and a victory margin of three touchdowns thanks to its steady control of possession and rate of third-down conversions. Top tacklers Pinkard and Eli Primm, along with Jacob and Dylan Berardinelli, lead a disciplined defense in tackles.

The Dragons, who present a relatively even matchup when you average things out across the board athletically, win less with their talent than they do with consistency. And a habit of not making critical mistakes is usually the reason this well-coached bunch comes out on top of close games.

That's why their quarterfinal performance, marked by some uncharacteristic issues out of the gate as Cairo jumped out to a 21-0 lead (though it proved to be a no-sweat 47-28 win), was as much an anomaly as that of West Laurens, which survived 11 penalties and three near-turnovers to beat Jenkins. Both will have to have a cleaner performance, as the more mistake-free team out of the two is likely to be the one that wins.

For the Raiders, a crucial factor will be the health of Ty Cummings, who left last week's fourth quarter with an ankle injury. The senior is expected to be ready to play, but his ability to do so with his usual explosiveness and confidence in and out of cuts will be an important question mark.

If West's top rusher is anywhere near his top form, he'll be a major matchup issue for a Jefferson defense that will have to repeatedly be in the right spots and complete tackles, or pay the price.

For the Raiders, command of the line of scrimmage (going both ways, but especially from a heavy front the Dragons held their own against vs.



ONE WIN AWAY: A poster hung outside the West Laurens weight room this week reminds players and coaches that a state title game berth will be up for grabs Friday as they travel to top seed Jefferson for their first semifinal game ever/CLAY REYNOLDS

OUTLOOK
Continued on page 8

MIDSTATE FOOTBALL ROUNDUP...

Special teams snafus spoil Bulldogs' semifinal chances

Too many 'Pit' falls for Northeast at Toombs

From STAFF REPORTS

Clinch Co. 27, Wheeler Co. 22

Deciding factor: The Bulldogs held more than their own in this hard-fought battle at the line of scrimmage, but made some critical mistakes they could ill-afford against the state's second-ranked team as they gave up possession on two different kickoffs that got away. The first led to a second of two unanswered Clinch County touchdowns before Wheeler's offense saw the field. A second deep in the fourth quarter cost them a chance to answer after the Panthers drove to re-take the lead with two minutes left to go. Alvin Ricks scored every point on the Bulldogs' side of the scoreboard, and combined with Jah Dinkins and Justin Culver (both with more than 50 rushing yards each) to make their unorthodox ground attack a consistent challenge for the Clinch defense to line up to and stop. But Panthers' quarterback Traviian Miller shined just as brightly in the duel of stars, rushing for three touchdowns and hitting a triple-covered Jakyri Posley on a surgical throw for his fourth.

Pivotal moment: Neither team had a stop until late in the second quarter, when a tackle for loss by Wheeler County's Isaiah Williams forced the game's first punt after a trade of five consecutive touchdowns in the early going. Clinch County reciprocated on a fourth-down hold just ahead of halftime, and the tone was set for a defense-dominated second half, which began with another trade of stops, then a time-consuming, 91-yard Bulldog scoring drive as Ricks busted in from a yard and dove for two to take a 22-21 lead. Miller coughed up the ball at the plus-25 as Clinch drove for a chance to answer, and Lane Connell made the recovery to put Wheeler County in business. The Bulldogs ran a little clock and punched it into Clinch territory before a punt that pinned the Panthers inside their 5. But Clinch came up with a 95-yard drive, hinging on a Miller scramble to pick up a key fourth and 10



ICE-BREAKER: Northeast linebacker Tayvon Shivers (35) is knocked out of bounds after an interception that the Raiders leveraged into their first touchdown early in the fourth quarter, briefly thawing out some chilly offensive fortunes against Toombs' stone cold defense. But the Bulldogs quickly put the big freeze back on, and iced their lead with two more touchdowns later in the quarter/JASON VORHEES, the Macon Melody

from its 25 then his 59-yard completion to Kamarion Johnson, to go ahead... once again on a Miller keeper with 2:04 to go. Wheeler wouldn't get the ball back, as the deep squib kick got lost between two potential returners, the Panthers recovered and proceeded to kneel out the clock.

Game ball: Ricks rushed 22 times for 163 yards, and the Bulldogs' three touchdowns, in the final act of his remarkable four-year career.

Toombs Co. 24, Northeast Macon 6: The Raiders came up short in a second-straight postseason matchup with Toombs (this a rematch of their loss in last year's state title game), due in part to 16 penalties that exacerbated an already rough night offensively. Several red zone stops and an interception by Tayvon Shivers kept the Bulldogs from running away with it, but Northeast's offense — gaining only 199 total yards — could never get much started on its lowest-scoring night in four years. "Bam" Glover was held to 10 completions for 112, and picked

off by Nick Carroll and Brandon Stephens for the game's only other turnovers. Jacory Sherman threw to Kortnei Williams on a trick play for the Raiders' lone touchdown early in the fourth quarter to briefly make it a single-score game, just after Toombs County's Justin Powell scored the game's first touchdown, and his first of three rushing on 30 carries for 183 yards. The Bulldogs, before that, were ahead by a halftime count of 3-0 by virtue of an Alex Otero field goal, but rattled off two more Powell touchdowns in the fourth to put the game away. Hayden Roy assembled a line of nine tackles, two for loss and a sack to lead the Toombs defense. The Bulldogs will visit Heard County in the semifinals.

Heard Co. 39, Fitzgerald 38: Mack Googe hit his second field goal of the night, a 25-yard chip shot, for the win as time expired in a back-and-forth slugfest of big plays. The Braves scored the

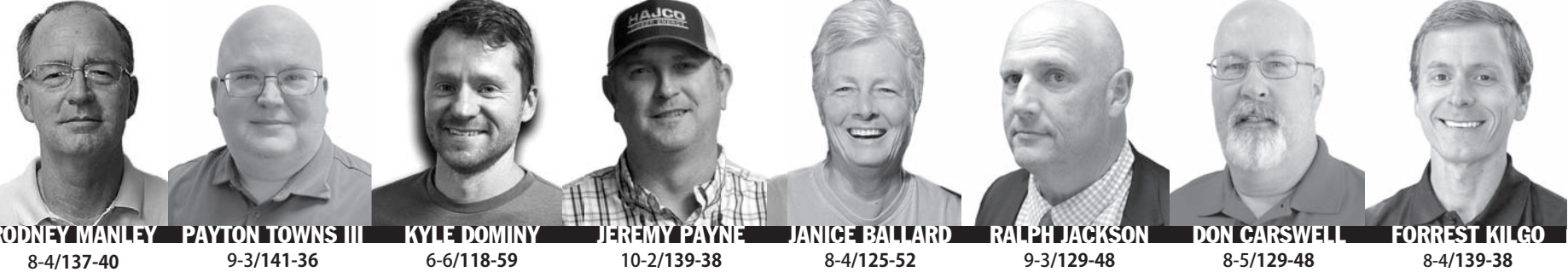
ROUNDUP
Continued on page 8



THE PANE...
Last week/OVERALL

THIS WEEK'S MATCHUPS...

West Laurens at Jefferson
Toombs Co. at Heard Co.
Marist at Benedictine
North Gwinnett at Carrollton
Roswell at Thomas Co. Central
Buford at Valdosta
LaGrange at Sandy Creek
Pepperell at Worth Co.
Gainesville at Langston Hughes
Georgia vs. Alabama
Indiana vs. Ohio State
BYU vs. Texas Tech



West Laurens Toombs Co. Benedictine Carrollton Thomas Co. Central Buford Sandy Creek Worth Co. Langston Hughes Georgia Ohio State Texas Tech	West Laurens Toombs Co. Marist Carrollton Thomas Co. Central Buford Sandy Creek Worth Co. Langston Hughes Georgia Ohio State Texas Tech	West Laurens Heard Co. Marist Carrollton Roswell Buford LaGrange Worth Co. Langston Hughes Georgia Ohio State Texas Tech	Jefferson Toombs Co. Benedictine Carrollton Thomas Co. Central Buford Sandy Creek Worth Co. Langston Hughes Georgia Ohio State Texas Tech	West Laurens Heard Co. Benedictine Carrollton Thomas Co. Central Buford Sandy Creek Worth Co. Langston Hughes Georgia Indiana Texas Tech	Jefferson Toombs Co. Marist Carrollton Thomas Co. Central Buford Sandy Creek Worth Co. Gainesville Georgia Indiana Texas Tech	Picks not submitted by press time.	West Laurens Toombs Co. Benedictine Carrollton Thomas Co. Central Buford Sandy Creek Worth Co. Langston Hughes Alabama Indiana Texas Tech
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ROUNDUP

Continued from page 7

first 17 and the last 10 points of the night, in a hot start and finish that bookended a commanding stretch of football by a slow-starting Fitzgerald that outscored Heard County 38-12 in the time between. The Hurricane picked off quarterback Ethan Tisdale twice, once on a pick-six by Daniel Harris for a second of back-to-back scores that got it right back in the game just before halftime. Then Latavius Devine, who carried 14 times for 141 rushing yards, hit a crease for a 77-yard touchdown run out of halftime to give the visitors their first lead. Scores went back and forth from there, with Fitzgerald up nine as Tisdale hit Zaiden Moreland in the back right corner

for a touchdown and point to cut the lead to two. Then Heard County, after a punt, went 75 yards from inside its own 15 to set up Googe's final kick. Tisdale was 18-of-30 for 272 and three touchdowns, and joined Darience Coleman with 100 yards each rushing, and a combined three touchdowns. Moreland had eight catches for 114. Fitzgerald's Matthew Cowan threw for 112 yards and a score, but Vic Copeland was limited to just 45 total yards. Max Lasseter (13, two for loss) led four Braves with double-digit tackles.

Bowdon 49, Jenkins Co. 22: The Red Devils scored six touchdowns in the first 18 minutes to put this one away very early. Their Joshua Hopkins was

13-of-16 passing for 194 yards and five touchdowns, four to Kaiden Prothro, who had five catches for 67, plus an interception and a fumble recovery on defense. Mykah Patterson had four receptions for 73, and Joshua Chandler carried 16 times for 121 yards. Jenkins County put up a few numbers once Bowdon's foot was removed from the gas, starting with a 46-yard Justin Wright touchdown pass to Marquavious Roberson. But the War Eagles' usually wild and free ground attack was limited to only 157 yards. The three-time defending state champs will go on the road to battle Clinch County Friday.

Lincoln Co. 52, Brooks Co. 16: The Red Devils' unbeaten streak

(barely challenged since Elbert County's seven-point brush in early September) rolled on in a 13th consecutive game. Kelby Glaze led rushers with 11 carries for 110 yards and a pair of touchdowns, though seven others took the Lincoln County team total to 335 and six scores (Mekhi Wade also had two). Jeremiah Wynn and Aiden Jones had three sacks apiece. Glaze recovered a fumble and Jones forced two. Damari Baynard had 16 carries for 135 as Brooks County's only positive gainer on the ground. Sacks pinned Junior Burrus for rushing losses of 65, but the Trojan QB was 18-of-25 for 252 through the air. Top target Trae Stevenson had eight catches for 147 and a rushing touchdown.

Early Co. 27, Screven Co. 20: K.J. Lindsey and Kobe Lingo intercepted passes on each side of the Bobcats' 46-yard drive to solidify their lead (Devonis Lee's 34-yard rushing touchdown stretching a 21-20 edge via missed extra point to seven) with about three minutes to go in the fourth quarter, and Early County picked up a first down to run out the clock on its first quarterfinal win since 2006, when a 15-6 loss in the dome that sent top-ranked Charlton County to Dublin for the state title game. Lee and Evan Grist, who also threw a 47-yard touchdown pass to Jimmy Jones, both rushed for triple digits. Screven County was led offensively by A.B. Hilton's 21 carries for 143 yards.

SCOREBOARD

GIRLS HOOPS
Tuesday
Baldwin 60,
West Laurens 30
Wheeler Co. 42, Dublin 40
Stratford 63, Trinity 35

BOYS HOOPS
Monday
Trinity 71,
Thomas Jefferson 52

Tuesday
Baldwin 86, WL 28
Wheeler Co. 67, Dublin 59
Trinity 51, Stratford 35

PREP
SCHEDULE

BASKETBALL
Wednesday
East Laurens at
Johnson Co./6 p.m.

Thursday
Westside Augusta at
West Laurens/5 p.m.

Friday
FPD at Trinity/6 p.m.
Tattnall Co. at EL/7 p.m.

Saturday
EL vs. Hancock Central
(at Baldwin)/2 p.m.
Wilkinson Co. at Dublin
/4:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL
Friday
GHS A State Semifinals
WL at Jefferson/7:30 p.m.

PICKLEBALL

Continued from page 7

Doubles 3.0, 16 to 49. Sandy Souza (Dublin) and Chap Cranford won bronze in Mixed Doubles 3.5, 16 to 49. The Dublin Pickleball Association wrapped up its 2025 fall league November 18 with a fantastic finish. Forty competitors battled it out every Tuesday for six action-packed weeks. The league champions are Ana Lopez and Chap Cranford.

DPA players performed well at Southern Pickleball's fourth annual It Takes Guts – Gastric Cancer Foundation pickleball tournament, played over three days, November 21-23 at the Rome Indoor Tennis Courts in Rome, Ga.

Local winners included... Lindsay Shuman won silver in Women's Singles 3.0, 35 to 49. Maria Woodard won gold in Women's Singles 2.5, 60 to 69. Paula Baker won silver in Women's Singles 2.5, 50 to 59. Rose Cannon and Dacy Cape (Cochran) won silver in Women's Doubles 3.0, 5



Left: DPA fall league champions Ana Lopez and Chap Cranford. Right: Tena Wheeler and Terry Kennedy, Judy Speer and Scheryl Ryan, Laura Carter and Stacey Davis medaled in women's doubles in Milledgeville/SPECIAL PHOTOS



to 34. Lindsay Shuman and Sandy Souza won silver in Women's Doubles 3.0, 35 to 49. Paula Baker and Maria Woodard won silver in Women's Doubles 2.5, 44 to 59. Eva Martin and Jennifer Cross (Acworth) won gold in Women's Doubles 4.0, 60 to 69. Lindsay Shuman and Rajiv Villait won silver in

Mixed Doubles 3.0, 35 to 49. Chap Cranford and Sandy Sousa won bronze in Mixed Doubles 3.5, 5 to 34. Eva Martin and Scott Raines (Cartersville) won gold in Mixed Doubles 3.5, 65-plus (Eva's 22nd gold medal in 2025!) On November 22nd, four DPA players also turned up on the new courts in Milledgeville to play in the fourth annual Christmas Fundraiser hosted by the Exchange

Club of Milledgeville. Proceeds and donated gifts benefited the Exchange Club and the Baldwin County DFCS Children in care. Winners were... Stacey Davis (Dublin) and partner Laura Carter won bronze in Women's Doubles 2.5, 50-plus. Kim Bracewell and Dana Gibbs both of Dublin won silver in Women's Doubles 3.5, 50-plus

OUTLOOK

Continued from page 7

Cairo a week back) and the clutch passing of Cason Pollock — who'll relish the chance to play on the old stomping grounds of father Jody, a former Jefferson quarterback — will be key in assembling and sustaining the drives needed to win. Of all potential X factors, look for the hard-nosed running of still undenied short-yardage specialist Shannon Adkins — who is likely to see a few additional carries in relief of the banged-up Cummings — to be the biggest potential edge for West Laurens in the fight for a few key extra yards after contact that may decide this test of which team wants it a little bit more.

— Clay Reynolds

GEORGIA
BLOOD AND CANCER



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

HEY, SIR! I'M LOST AND NEED DIRECTIONS HOME.

TAKE NAPA STREET TO SECOND STREET AND MAKE A LEFT.

HEY, SIR! I'M LOST IN LIFE AND NEED A DIRECTION.

YOU'RE REALLY ABUSING THE TECHNOLOGY.

WORTH A TRY.

GARFIELD

GARFIELD, I'M BACK!

I GOT A CASE OF THAT DIET CAT FOOD!

I KNEW I SHOULDN'T LET YOU GO TO THE STORE UNSUPERVISED!

OVERBOARD

WE HAVE A STRANGE RELATIONSHIP WITH THESE GUYS. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WELL, WE'RE DROPPING OFF PRESENTS..

..BUT WE'RE STILL STEALING THEIR SAFE.

HEY, WHO SAYS REGULAR BUSINESS HAS TO STOP JUST BECAUSE IT'S THE HOLIDAYS?

DEFLOCKED

LISTEN, MAMET, I GET THAT IT'S CHRISTMAS AND TIMES ARE TOUGH, SO I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I DON'T EXPECT A GIFT.

REALLY?? OH, WHAT A RELIEF! I WAS ABOUT TO FAKE MY OWN DEATH AND HIDE OUT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY UNTIL YOU MOVED ON, GOT MARRIED AND STARTED A FAMILY!

IS THIS ONE OF THOSE "GIRL SAYS ONE THING BUT REALLY MEANS SOMETHING ELSE" THINGS?

ZIGGY

TRAVEL AGENCY

HOW MUCH TO VISIT ONE OF THE OTHER COMIC STRIPS?

HAWAII

LAUNOON

PLUGGERS

YIPPEE!

Thanks to Neal Schneider San Diego, California

You're a plugger if you're secretly delighted when a social event is canceled.

Argumentative, abusive brother alienates family!

DEAR ABBY: I have a brother who is very opinionated and in my face any time I don't agree with him. It doesn't matter what the subject is; he thinks he's the only one who knows anything about it. He is not educated, but he thinks he's smarter than everyone else, even educated people.

He won't let me get a word in while he's yelling and screaming in my face. He resorts to name-calling, telling me I'm wrong and calling me stupid. Later, he sends emails and texts trying to prove to me why I am wrong. I think he is abusive and has a mental disorder. He has accomplished nothing in his life.

My husband and I have careers. If I try to remain quiet around my brother, he starts aggravating me to get a reaction. He has alienated my family. No one wants to be around him. What's the best way to shut him down to make whatever time we have to spend together more civil? -- SMART SIS IN MISSISSIPPI



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I recently asked a friend to cat-sit while I was out of town for a few days. We agreed she would stop by daily to feed my kitty, refresh her water and spend a little time with her. When I returned, I noticed several signs that she hadn't been coming by every day -- food bowls untouched, litter box fuller than it should've been, and a very lonely (and vocal) cat.

I haven't confronted my friend yet, but I'm hurt and disappointed. I trusted her with my pet's care. I would have made other arrangements had I known she couldn't commit. I don't want to jump to conclusions, but I also feel I can't just brush this off. How do I approach this conversation without blowing it out of proportion or damaging the friendship, while still addressing that this wasn't OK? -- CAT LADY IN

MICHIGAN

DEAR CAT LADY: One can only wonder what else this friend is irresponsible about. However, I do not endorse "taking her to the woodshed." In the future, when you plan to travel, make other arrangements for the care of your cat. This person was less than purr-fect.

DEAR ABBY: I have always wanted to do some exotic travel. I'm retired now, but my wife has medical issues. She can still drive, shop, etc., but international travel would be too much for her.

I don't mind traveling alone, and I have saved up enough with such trips in mind. I don't want to be selfish, but I want to see parts of the world I have yet to see. What's fair? -- FUTURE TRAVELER IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR TRAVELER: Fortunately, your wife is still somewhat independent and could manage in your absence. What is "fair" would be for you to discuss this with her and negotiate an agreement that's acceptable to both of you. If your wife would like to travel a bit, perhaps you could split your savings between short domestic excursions with her and solo trips abroad.

Thursday, December 4, 2025

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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RARE END POSITION

East-West vulnerable, South deals

NORTH

♠ A K 8 4 2

♥ K J 10 5 2

♦ A 5

♣ 7

WEST

♠ Void

♥ Q 7 6 4 3

♦ 7 6

♣ K Q J 10 8 4

EAST

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♦ Q J 10 9 8 3

♣ 3 2

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 9 6 5

♥ A

♦ K 4 2

♣ A 9 6 5

The bidding:

SOUTH

1♠

5♠

6♦

7♠

WEST

4♣

Pass

Pass

All pass

NORTH

4NT

5NT

6♥

Pass

EAST

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

Opening lead: King of ♣

Mill. He won the opening club lead and led a spade to dummy's ace, learning of the 3-0 split. The grand would have been cold had the trumps split 2-1, as Mill could have ruffed three minor suit cards in dummy. A 4-3 heart split would be enough, so Mill tried to set up a long heart. He led a heart to his ace, a diamond to dummy's ace, and cashed the king of hearts discarding a club from hand. East discarded a diamond on the next heart, dashing that plan. Mill ruffed, cashed the king of diamonds and ruffed a diamond. He led a spade to his 10, leaving this position:

NORTH

♠ K 8

♥ J 10

♦ Void

♣ Void

WEST

♠ Void

♥ Q 7

♦ Void

♣ Q J

EAST

♠ J

♥ Void

♦ Q J 10

♣ Void

SOUTH

♠ Q 9

♥ Void

♦ Void

♣ 9 6

Mill led the queen of spades and West couldn't handle it. A heart discard and Mill would overtake the queen and ruff a heart. A club discard instead and Mill would retain the lead and ruff a club. A beauty!

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- ___ of expertise
 - Reside
 - Very talkative
 - ___ platter (Hawaiian appetizers)
 - Make revisions to
 - Belly button type
 - Radiate
 - "Golly!"
 - Tailless amphibians
 - "Peanuts" character: 2 wds.
 - Artist Yoko
 - More loyal
 - Overhead compartment bag
 - President or prime minister
 - High cards
 - Iron or tin
 - By yourself
 - Steal from
 - ___ Lanka
 - Road in Rome
 - Food, informally
 - Bee's attack
 - Obtains
 - At a discount: 2 wds.
 - Prepare for printing
 - Taboo actions
 - Every ___ for himself
 - Showboating person
 - Get back together
 - Unconscious state
 - Fishing poles
 - Venice waterway
 - Tavern drinks
 - "The very ___!"
 - Pretentiously cultured
 - Have a lease
 - Penny

- DOWN**
- Tailless primate
 - Mojito liquor

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

14 15 16

17 18 19

20 21 22

23 24

25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36 37

38 39 40

41 42 43 44 45

46 47 48 49

50 51 52 53

54 55 56 57

58 59 60 61 62

63 64 65

66 67 68

Created by Stella Zawistowski

- Large-scale tale
- Writers of books
- Space at a premium on airlines
- Admired one
- Stop by
- Old anesthetic
- Get out of jail: 2 wds.
- Northern Lights phenomena
- Stash away
- Omen
- "Sure!"
- One or more
- Chicago NBA player
- Goods in a hold
- Future oak
- Puzzle with pictures
- Place for chicks
- Anti-war activists
- Top-class
- Cook over a fire
- Ironman race, for short

M A C S T R A C K W E P T

E C H O A A R O N O V E R

N A I L P R I M I R A C E

I C E C R E A M S U N D A E

M O O I H S E N D

R A I N B O W T E S T

I T D T H A T S R I G H T

D O O R I C I P O O R

E N L I G H T E N S B O O

B L U E G A G G I F T

O O H U S N G E L

F L Y M E T O T H E M O O N

T I P I L I E U T A R E A

E V E N E S T E E T E A R

N E S T S E E Y A S O R T

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- "___ Misbehavin"
- Yellow-peeled fruits
- Put in the mail
- Simone Biles, e.g.
- No-name
- Sad and isolated
- Knee protector
- Film award
- Shoulder wrap
- Equipment
- Littlest in a litter
- "You said it!"
- Took the train
- TV brand
- Lion's home
- Rode the bench

SUDOKU

2 7 1 6 3

6 5 9 2

4 6 3

5 1 3

4 2

8 6 5

3 9 6 5

4

8 5 7

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!

3 7 1 5 2 8 6 9 4

8 6 9 7 4 6 3 5 1

5 4 9 7 6 4 5 2 8

6 2 5 9 7 8 1 3 4

4 6 7 2 5 8 3 9 1

5 2 1 6 8 3 5 7 4

1 9 4 2 6 8 9 3 5 7

8 5 3 9 7 4 2 1 8

2 7 8 5 3 1 4 6 9

ANSWER:

VA HOMELESS
Continued from page 1

cated outreach surge events to locate unsheltered veterans and offer them immediate access to housing programs, health care, behavioral health services and VA benefits. Getting Veterans Off the Street helped move 25,065 unsheltered veterans to interim (emergency and transition) or permanent housing.

“This is life-changing and in many cases life-saving work,” said Dublin VA Director Chandra Miller. “We are proud of the progress Carl Vinson VA Medical Center is making to get veterans off the streets and are redoubling our efforts to continue this momentum moving forward.”

These efforts complement President Trump’s May executive order to establish a National Center for Warrior Independence for Homeless Veterans on the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center campus. The National Center for Warrior Independence for Homeless Veterans aims to provide housing and support for up to 6,000 homeless Veterans from across the nation by 2028.

Every day, VA staff and community partners across the country help Veterans find permanent housing – such as apartments or houses to rent or own – often with subsidies to help make the housing more affordable. In some cases, VA teams and partners help veterans end their homelessness by reuniting them with family and friends.

Visit [VA.gov/homeless](https://www.va.gov/homeless) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs supporting homeless veterans.

For more information, contact Frank Jordan at Frank.Jordan2@va.gov or 478-272-1210 Ext. 74404.

DUDLEY CHRISTMAS
Continued from page 1

the Christmas story from Luke, chapter 2. He asked for the children to come closer so that it would be easier to hear him.

“Sometimes people think the best part of Christmas is me – Santa Claus,” he said. “But really, the best part of Christmas is Jesus. I want you to know there is no better story that we have than the story of Jesus Christ. As we lit this Christmas tree, people will ride by this park at night and see these lights on this tree. Jesus said you are the light of the world. He said, ‘Let your light shine bright.’”

After that, the children lined up to talk with Santa. Santa plans to come back on at 6:45 p.m., Monday, Dec. 22 in Dudley before delivering presents.



Mayor Jason Locke shines a light for Santa to read the Christmas story/PAYTON TOWNS III

FLAG PROGRAM
Continued from page 1

said most countries have troubles within 200 years after they began.

“I’m proud to be an American,” he said.

Dublin Exchange Club President Will Jarrard went over the history of the American flag.

“The colors and designs of the flag tell the story of our rich history, our unwavering spirit and relentless pursuit of freedom that binds us all together,” he said. “The 13 stripes represent the original colonies and the 50 stars represents the 50 sovereign states that join as one nation under God. It is a banner that has witness our finest hours, from the field of Valley Forge to the surface of the moon. It stands as a silent symbol of the ideas of justice, freedom and democracy that we hold so dear.”



Exchange Club member Craig West shows photos of people and businesses honored for displaying or celebrating the American flag/PAYTON TOWNS III

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued from page 1

the Human Resources department, or actions that cultivate an atmosphere of fear, retaliation or retribution. Educators must feel respected and valued – not threatened – as they navigate the fallout of decisions beyond their control.

“It must be clearly acknowledged: the teachers did not create this crisis. Leadership did. And the consequences of that leadership failure continue to be felt most acutely by students, educators and the broader community. Dublin’s teachers have shown extraordinary commitment despite untenable conditions. They deserve transparency, support and professional respect – not coercion.”

Trammell was critical during his recent Dublin visit of Woods’ and the state Department of Education’s handling of the district’s situation, specifically allowing the school board to go four years without completing an audit. He pointed the finger again in his letter.

“While I fully recognize that the challenges facing the district are large, complex and the result of failures at multiple levels – including a lack of timely intervention by the local administration, Georgia Department of Education, and the state school superintendent – I cannot overlook the ways in which educators have been unfairly burdened and, in some cases, threatened.”

Trammell’s letter was addressed to interim Superintendent Marcee Pool and the city school board, and copies sent to local legislators and the heads of three teacher organizations.

CITY OF WARNER ROBINS

2025 CHRISTMAS PARADE

We Believe

WR

SATURDAY
12.06.2025

10:00 AM

PARADE ROUTE:
N. DAVIS DR TO WATSON BLVD