

# The Courier Herald

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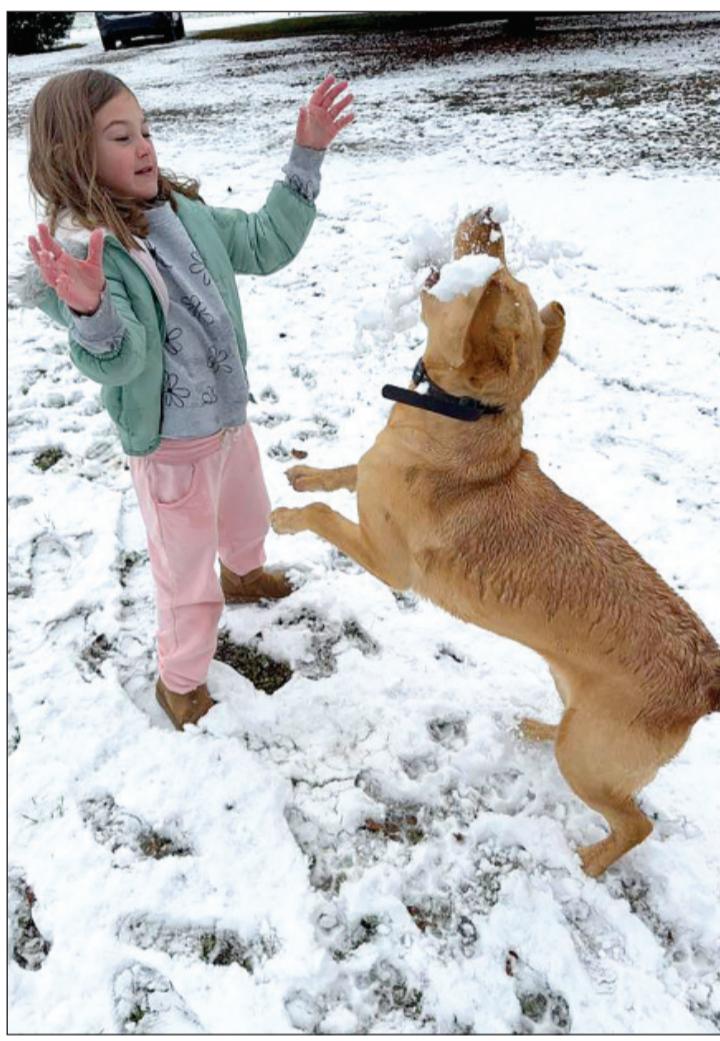
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026

COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM



## HAVING A (SNOW)BALL: MIDSTATE ENJOYS FLURRY OF WINTER FUN

Laurens County and Middle Georgia were in the sweet spot of a rare snowstorm in these parts on Sunday. Sleet turned to big, chunky flakes midmorning, dumping from 1 to 2 inches of snow across the county before the storm tapered off around lunch. As the sun came out and temperatures rose, most of the snow melted away by the end of the day. But locals still had ample opportunity to enjoy the brief snow day, as shown in these photos submitted by readers Erica Green, April Burney, Erin Smith Raley and Deanna Roberson. For more, see page 8/SPECIAL PHOTOS



## Council hires new city clerk

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

Dorothy Rozier broke into a big smile as she shook hands with Superior Court Chief Judge Jon Helton after she was sworn in as the city of Dublin's new city clerk.

The ceremony took place at the beginning of last Thursday's meeting, after the council approved Rozier by voting her into the position.

"Thank you mayor pro tempore, mayor and council for your trust and confidence," Rozier said. "I am honored to serve as the city clerk for the city of Dublin. I am looking forward to working with each of you in the new capacity. To my fellow appointees and colleagues, I look forward to collaborating as we serve our community. To my family and friends, thank you for being here. I thank you for your support. It means more than I can say. I'm honored by this opportunity and committed to the work ahead."

Mayor Pro Tem Bennie Jones began the meeting asking everyone to keep Dublin Mayor Joshua Kight and his family in prayers with the passing of his father, Billy Kight, who was also the Laurens County attorney.

Also, the council approved a contract with Foresite Group LLC to develop a comprehensive safety action plan for Safe Streets 4 All grant.

"We were notified that we were awarded this grant," said Dublin City Manager Josh Powell. "The Foresite Group was highly recommended and very well qualified to do this work for us."

Powell said the group has helped other communities develop safety plans. The purpose is to try to eliminate

**CITY COUNCIL**  
Continued on page 8



## 'MISSION POSSIBLE': ANNUAL MLK JR. PARADE IN DUBLIN

The annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade was held in downtown Dublin on Saturday, with marching bands, floats and other organizations participating. The theme for the parade was "Mission Possible II: Uniting a Nation. Building a Future. The Nonviolent Way" /HORACE AUSTIN



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1 section, 8 pages • Vol. 112,  
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## Stanley to continue oversight role on Georgia Coroner's Training Council

across the state.

"I am truly humbled and honored that Gov. Brian Kemp has reconsidered and recommended my reappointment to the Georgia Coroner's Training Council," Stanley said. "Serving in this role is a responsibility I do not take lightly."

"I remain committed to serving with integrity, accountability and respect for the citizens of Georgia, and I am thankful for the opportunity to continue this important work," Stanley said.

The reappointment al-

lows Stanley to continue working alongside other professionals to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of Georgia's death investigation system. The Georgia Coroner's Training Council plays a critical role in promoting professionalism, accountability and consistency in death investigations statewide.

Many may not realize that coroners and deputy coroners in Georgia must meet strict training and

**CORONER'S COUNCIL**  
Continued on page 8



The Coroner's Training Council: Chairman Richard N. Stanley III, Laurens County; Vice-Chairman Michael Fowler, Dougherty County; Janice Brown, Wilcox County; Mark Bowen, Richmond County; and Mark Cox, Lumpkin County/SPECIAL PHOTO

## OBITUARIES



## Grace Caneega Claxton

Grace Caneega Claxton, 90, passed away peacefully on the morning of Jan. 15, 2026 at Scott Health and Rehab in Scott, Georgia.

Grace was the fifth child born to Henry Brinson Caneega and Addie Crawford Caneega on April 8, 1935.

She grew up on their family farm in Johnson County, and graduated from Wrightsville High School. After graduation, she attended Wesleyan College in Macon Georgia, and later returned home to marry her childhood sweetheart, Lovett Lamar Claxton, whom she affectionately called "Sonny."

Grace was the director for the Johnson County Training Center in Wrightsville, Georgia, until she retired, and she also served on the District Mental Health Board. She was a lifelong member of Arline/Bethel Church, Wrightsville, Georgia, where she served on many church committees, and became the pianist for Arline/Bethel at the age of 10. She held that title for 66 years.

Grace had a love for music, and her children and grandchildren will always cherish the memories of gathering around her baby grand piano on Christmas Eve and singing Christmas carols as she played.

She also had a passion for art and gardening, and in her spare time you would find her painting or working in her flower garden. She loved to cook, and was very good at it. Her children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews always looked forward to her delicious Brunswick stew.

She held many talents and titles, but her greatest to her family was "Mama Grace." She was a devoted mother and grandmother, and always put her family first.

Grace is preceded in death by her parents Henry Brinson and Addie Crawford Caneega, her husband, Lovett Lamar Claxton, her brothers, H.B. Caneega, Mac Caneega, Lamar "Buddy" Caneega, her sisters, Billie Caneega Bogue and Betty Caneega Paul, and her great grandson Christopher Lane Claxton.

Grace is survived by her children, David Claxton (Deborah) Wrightsville, Ga., Artie Claxton (Freida), Wrightsville, Ga., Lisa Claxton Blanchard (Whit), Augusta, Ga., and Neil Claxton (Deanna) Wrightsville, Ga. Her grandchildren, Wendi Claxton, Clay Claxton (Vallya), Whitney Blanchard Conrad (Kyle), Katie Blanchard Fegert (Geordie), and Hayley Claxton Roberts (Jon), Jimmy Blanchard,

Scott Blanchard (Jenny) and Zachary Blanchard. Her great grandchildren, Tori Grubbs Seabury (Ben), Courtney Grubbs, Emily Thomas, George Fegert, Lily Fegert, Ginny Fegert, Vayda Laine Roberts, May Elizabeth Roberts, Isabelle Grace Conrad, Henry Lovett Conrad, Emily Blanchard, Vivienne Blanchard and Elode Blanchard. Her great-great grandchildren, Grace-lynn Bailey, Eli Seabury and Charlie Seabury. Her sisters-in-law Jeanette Caneega and Patsy Claxton, and many nieces and nephews.

Services were held on Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, at Arline Chapel Church, Wrightsville, Georgia, with Jeanette Caneega, Michael Caneega and Rev. Sammy Hall officiating. Visitation was from 12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. and the funeral will be held at 2 p.m. Burial will be held at Westview Cemetery, Wrightsville, Georgia.

Pallbearers will be Jim

Claxton, Tommy Logue, Ben Seabury, Geordie Fegert, Kyle Conrad, Michael Caneega, Carmen Caneega, Jon Roberts and Aiden Hall.

Honorary Pallbearers former clients and employees of The Johnson Training Center.

Special thanks to the staff at Scott Health and Rehab and to hospice for the special love and care shown to Grace and her family during this difficult time.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made in memory of Mrs. Claxton to Angels in Flight Recovery Center at 2041 West Elm Street, Wrightsville, GA 31096 and to Arline Chapel Church in C/O Susan Powell at 2040 Tuckers Grove Church Road, Wrightsville, GA 31096.

Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory/Wrightsville Chapel has charge of funeral arrangements. To sign the Online Register Book please visit [www.stanleyfuneral-home.com](http://www.stanleyfuneral-home.com)



## Willie Earl Ford

Funeral services for Willie Earl Ford, Sergeant First Class, aka "Cootney" and "Cooney", of Merrillville, Indiana, will be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026, at 12 p.m. at the Everlasting Gospel Non-Denominational Church, 1300 South Jefferson Street in Dublin. Interment will follow in the Dudley Memorial Cemetery.

Willie, the son of Johnnie Ford and Claudia Bell Rozier Ford, was born on Thursday, Feb. 10, 1955, in Dublin, Georgia.

He was raised by his grandparents, Pearlie May Bailey and Lenard (Lennon) Bailey. He attended Millville High School and became a student at the West Laurens High School after the integration of the school system in 1970. He was an outstanding athlete at West Laurens High School and graduated in 1973. After high school, he married Delores Watkins, and they had three children.

Soon after marriage, he joined the United States Army. He served from 1975 until 1996 for a total of 21

years and nine months. He attained the rank of Sergeant First Class (E7). He was awarded the Bronze Star medal for his efforts in Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia. His awards include the Army Commendation medal, Army Achievement medal, Army Good Conduct medal (seven awards), National Defense Service Medal, and Southwest Asia Service Medal with two bronze stars, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Non-commissioned Officer's professional Development ribbon with numeral 3, and other awards during his career.

Willie departed this life on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025, at his residence in Merrillville, Indiana. He was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, and sister, Doris (Pam) Moore Street, and adopted brother, John (Buster) Whipple.

Willie is survived by one daughter, Shantrell Ford of Columbus, Ga., sons, Troy Ford (Jennifer) of Richmond Hill, Ga., and Reginald Ford of Columbus, Ga., 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He is also survived by five brothers, Johnnie Ford of Dublin, Ga., Jimmy (Jean) Ford of Augusta, Ga., Calvin (Debra) Ford of Dublin, Ga., Todd Ford of Dublin, Ga., Otha Ford of Atlanta, Ga., and a host of nieces and nephews.

Please post your condolences online at [ServicesbyDudley.com](http://ServicesbyDudley.com).

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.

## Nell Conley Pollard

Nell Conley Pollard, 66, of Eastman, Ga., died on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2026.

A celebration of life service was held at 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17, at Southerland Funeral Chapel.

She is survived by her children - Linda Mathews (Jay), Pam Brinson and Daniel Kemp; grandchildren - Aggy Mathews; sisters - Linda Peacock (Larry Vail) and Katie Bozeman; brothers - Harris Conley (Dot), William "Cullen" Conley (Georgia Mae) and James Conley (Pat).

The family received friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17.

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

## Alexander Thomas "Alex" Dopson

Alexander Thomas "Alex" Dopson, 80, of Rhine, Ga., died Friday, Jan. 16, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 12 p.m. Monday, January 19, 2026, in Rhine Baptist Church, with interment in Bay Springs Cemetery.

He is survived by his wife - Gale Brophy Dopson; son - Karl Dopson (Mary); daughter - Keri Dopson Lancaster (Lee); six grandchildren; sister - Harriet Dopson Harrell; several nieces and nephews.

The family received friends in Rhine Baptist Church from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 19.

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

## James Morgan "Jimmy" Dowdy Jr.

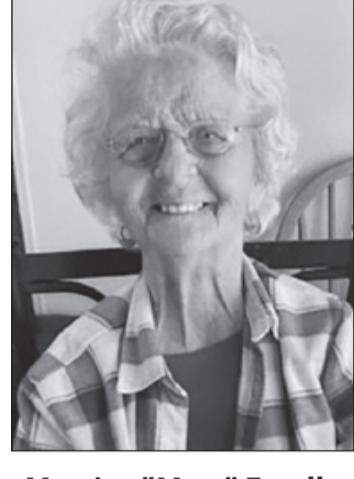
James Morgan "Jimmy" Dowdy Jr., 66, of Rhine, Ga., passed away on Friday, Jan. 16, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 20, at Hopewell Baptist Church, with interment in Hopewell Baptist Church Cemetery.

He is survived by his sisters - Jane D. Lann and Durlene Williams; several nieces and nephews; Aunts - Jannette Lann, Linda Collins, and Sarah "Bitsy" Jones; several first cousins.

The family will receive friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19.

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



## Myrtice "Myrt" Estelle Colley Young

Mrs. Myrtice "Myrt" Estelle Colley Young, 97, beloved wife of the late Ellie J. Young, of the Rockledge Community, passed away on Wednesday morning, Jan. 14, 2026 at Scott Health and Rehabilitation Center in Scott, Ga.

Born in Blackshear, Georgia, she was the second oldest of four children born to the late Gordon Franklin Colley and Ora Lee Cornelius Colley. She grew up in Blackshear and was a graduate of Pierce County High School. After high school she married Edward Elliott Altman with whom she had three children.

She had worked in the cafeteria within the Laurens County School System, the East Dublin Pharmacy and was a volunteer with Meals on Wheels. Her husband passed away in 1998. She later married Mr. Ellie J. Young, who passed away in 2012.

Mrs. Young had been a longtime member of Union Baptist Church and was presently the oldest living member.

In addition to her husbands, she is preceded in death by her daughter, Carol Altman Powell, a son, Paul Altman, daughter in law, Margaret Altman and siblings, Lewis Colley and Frances McCullars.

She leaves behind one son, Ronnie Altman, Magnolia, Texas, a sister, Shirley Fae Stalvey, Callahan, Fla., 10 grandchildren, many great grandchildren, one great-great-grand-daughter and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026 at the Union Baptist Church in the Rockledge Community with Pastors Barron Powell and Jordy Barwick officiating.

Mrs. Young will be laid to rest between her husband and daughter in the Thigpen Cemetery, Rockledge.

Serving as pallbearers will be: Ronnie Altman, Alan Altman, Rhys Altman, Joe Paul Altman, Rusty Branch and Sammy Young.

Her family received friends on Sunday, from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. at the church. Please share a memory, leave a condolence message and sign the online guest register at [www.sammonsfuneralhome.com](http://www.sammonsfuneralhome.com).

## Sammons Funeral Home, Family Owned and Operated Since 1917 912-529-4411 or 478-455-0671

## Victoria Michelle Smith

Victoria Michelle Smith, age 50, of Byron, Ga., died on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026.

A celebration of life service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 20, at Southerland Funeral Chapel.

She is survived by her daughter - Beth Ann Scott (Jalen); son - Trae Smith; granddaughter - Jaylah Scott; mother - Sheila Noles; sister - Tessia French (Chris); nephews - Marc French and Jason French;

and cousins - James Noles and David Noles.

The family will receive friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 10:30 a.m. - 11 a.m. Friday, Jan. 20.

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

## Debra Elaine Spires

Debra Elaine Spires, age 63, of Soperton, Ga., died on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, at Southerland Funeral Chapel, with interment in Lovely Grove Church Cemetery.

She is survived by her companion - Tony Brown; daughters - Kelly Wright (Paul) and Nikki Wright; Grandchildren - Keri Lynn Warren, Austin Williams (Ellie), and SaNyah Spires; Sister - Karen Spires (Max Owens).

The family will receive friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 22.

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

## Senate bill would hold down school property tax

By MARK NIESSE  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Tax increases on Georgia homeowners could be limited to the inflation rate — including taxes for education after most school systems decided against capping property tax hikes last year.

The state Senate's Republican majority introduced a bill this week that would require all school systems to limit property tax increases that occur because of rising home values.

About 71 percent of Georgia's 180 school systems voted last year to reject the cap, as allowed by state law. This year's bill would change that law and prevent school systems from opting out of the cap.

If approved, the legislation would save homeowners money — and reduce funding for public education in some areas. School systems would lose the ability to tax property on values that rose higher than the inflation rate in the previous year.

"The majority of people in Georgia aren't seeing the relief that was promised because they're continuing to see double-digit tax increases," said state Sen. Chuck Hufstetler, R-Rome, the lead sponsor of Senate Bill 382. "People have seen huge property tax increases, and we need to limit it to the rate of inflation. We all need to live within our means."

While no one likes paying higher taxes, schools would pay the price, said John Zauner, executive director of the Georgia School Superintendents Association.

Education expenses would continue to rise with inflation, but school systems would receive less money from property taxes.

"I'm sympathetic. I pay taxes and they're always going up," Zauner said. "But that's the only choice local districts have. They don't have any other options."

Under a state law and constitutional amendment approved by voters in 2024, home property assessments are capped at the inflation rate for the previous year. By holding down increases in property values, property tax hikes are also limited because they're based on the assessed value of a home and the property tax rate.

Besides school systems, the proposed bill would also affect city and county governments that also opted out of the tax cap. About 29 percent of city and county governments voted against capping their property tax values last year, according to records from the secretary of state's office.

Lt. Gov. Burt Jones said the property tax bill is a priority for this year's legislative session.

"As part of our ongoing efforts to keep costs low and put more money back in Georgians' pockets, this legislation will limit increases in home values for property taxes year to year and require more accountability and transparency in our local taxation procedures," Jones said.

The property tax limit is one of several tax proposals being debated at the Capitol.

Senate Republicans also want to gradually eliminate income taxes, while House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, suggested he favors ending homestead property taxes.

Gov. Brian Kemp said in his State of the State Address on Thursday he wants to give tax rebates averaging \$250 per taxpayer, as well as reducing the state income tax rate by one-fifth of a percentage point, to 4.99 percent.

## BIRTHDAYS

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Larita Rhodes  
Annie Rozar

Jan. 21  
Greg Barwick

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# Jury pool complete in murder case

Dublin Courier-Herald

By Doug Hall  
Hawkinsville

The final step in jury selection begins Monday in the Cheryl S. Todd-Dessie X Woods murder-robbery trial of Ronnie L. Horne of Laurens County when the defense and prosecution strike a jury from 44 prospective jurors chosen during a long week of qualifying.

If the striking process is speedy and a motion to suppress evidence is decided, attorneys may begin their opening arguments on Monday.

Friday, after five days of questioning, a pool of jurors was completed that includes

5 black males  
19 white males  
11 black females  
9 white females.

Twelve jurors and one alternate will be selected from among the pool of qualified prospective jurors.

Defense attorneys will be allowed 20 strikes.

The prosecution will get ten strikes.

Oconee Superior Court Judge James B. O'Connor is expected to hear a motion on Monday by the defense seeking to keep statements made by the defendants out of evidence.

The defense will contend that those statements given at the time of the women's arrests were made involuntarily.

The defendants are charged with murdering and robbing Ronnie L. Horne, 35, of Route 1, Rentz. The shooting took place on June 16 near Mt. Vernon after Horne picked up the two women who were hitching a ride from Reidsville to Atlanta.

The defense says Horne was shot twice in the head when he attempted to make sexual advances toward the women.

In jury qualifying proceedings, defense attorneys emphasized questions concerning the possible racial and sexual prejudices of prospective jurors. Yesterday of 17 prospective jurors who had been qualified for service five were disqualified.

Those disqualified included:

a black woman who broke down on examination and said she had a sick husband to care for white man who said he felt the defendants would have to testify in their own defense

a white man who had foamed unreasonable opinions about the case

a white man who had business conflicts

a white woman who could find no one to care for her small children

One woman who had been ruled qualified earlier in the week asked to be excused because she also had small children at home. She was excused.

O'Connor is expected to relax a gag order once the final jury is selected. The restraint on comments to newsmen by parties in the trial has been in effect throughout the jury selection process and has prevented interviews with attorneys and defendants relating to the case.

Mrs. Woods is represented by Randy Bacote, an Atlanta lawyer who defended Marcus Wayne Chenault, the convicted killer of Mr. Martin Luther King, Sr.

Mrs. Todd is represented by Mary Joyce Johnson, a member of the Lawyer Project, and Millard Farmer, a wealthy Newnan, Georgia, native, who has established an indigent defense league in Atlanta. Johnson is expected to be lead counsel for Mrs. Todd.

For the State, District Attorney Phillip R. West of Eastman will be joined by special prosecutor Leon Green of Dublin and Bob

Sparks, Assistant District Attorney, of Atlanta.

The two women were indicted in Wheeler County, where the alleged crimes took place. The trial was moved to Pulaski County because the judge felt the two could not get a fair trial in Wheeler County due to extensive publicity surrounding the case.

Jurors selected for the pool are under firm orders from the judge not to discuss the case with anyone to be exposed to any news accounts of the case.

The 12-man jury, when selected, will be sequestered for the duration of the trial. They will be housed in an Eastman hotel which will be guarded by two complements of law officers.

The trial is expected to last several weeks.

## DHS TROUPE TAKES STATE TITLE AGAIN

For the second straight year, Dublin High School's widely acclaimed Thespian Troupe 669 has been judged best in the State Class AA one act play competition.

This honor came to the Dublin troupe on Saturday at Cedar Shoals High School in Athens where the state competition was held.

Performing the difficult and abstract one-act "Theatre of the Soul," Troupe 669 topped the runner-up, Swainsboro, for first place.

Woodward Academy and Therrell High, both of Atlanta, came in third and fourth.

Last year's entry by Dublin, "Darkness Falls on Laughter" also won first place in the state.

Dublin's top showing is the fourth state championship in drama for the troupe under the direction of R. Lynn Woody.

The cast of the play follows:

### "Theatre of the Soul":

Chuck Hall  
Jon Taylor  
Fred Byers  
John Kisalus  
Timothy Heard

Dee Hammond  
Claudia Bannister  
Lisa Kisalus  
Dianne Hammock

No individual awards are given in State competition.

Chuck Hall won Best Actor in Region competition in December.

Dianne Hammock won Best Actress Award in Region.

The crew for this winning one-act was:

Cathy Hess

Dorrie Joiner

Betsy Frost

Alan James

David Dixon

Mark Tarpley

Bill McMillan

Ricky Hagler

The Dublin group will compete with four other Georgia high school theatre groups for the right to represent the state at the Southeastern Theatrical Conference in Memphis later this year.

This competition will be held in Dublin.

## COMMISSIONERS MULL AMBULANCE SERVICE

Laurens County Commissioners this morning were faced with the problem of whether or not to provide an ambulance service.

Community Ambulance Service, represented by Leon May, made it clear that he was ready to give up the contract with the county for the ambulance service. He insisted that with the subsidy paid by the county he has operated in the red. Richard Stanley of Stanley and Sons Funeral Home, who also operates an ambulance service, also stated that some arrangements other than those used in the past would be necessary for him to be interested in operating the service for the county.

The matter was left open, since there were no bids for the service offered the

commissioners with Community Ambulance Service agreeing to continue the service for one more month.

Plans are being made to investigate ambulance operations in other counties to see if a plan can be worked out.

May has insisted that too many runs had been made to Augusta from Laurens County, with patients declaring that the county paid the bills and hence they owed the ambulance service nothing.

The Commissioners also expressed the idea that the present tax setup of the county would not stand a major increase in the costs of the service. Even a referendum on a tax increase for ambulance service was discussed, but no plans were made to call such a vote on the matter.

Both May and Stanley complained that more often than not, they were compelled to remain at the hospital here for up to four and five hours before patients would be accepted and taken off their hands. They also said that they were asked to carry patients from one part of the hospital to another, thus adding to the costs of salaries, etc. to the service.

In other matters, the Commissioners agreed for First District Commissioner Tal Fuqua to remain Chairman for the first four months of 1976. After that time, Third District Commissioner Robert Beacham will serve for four months with Second District Commissioner Herbert Fordham serving the last four months. This usual procedure has been to rotate the chairmanship among the three commissioners on a yearly basis with each one serving as chairman for two of the four years of their term.

At noon today, the Commissioners were offering for sale what land had been declared surplus.

Joe Rutland made a bid of \$10,000 for the old County Building (old Post Office). His was the only bid received, and it was accepted subject to confirmation of the county commissioners.

The other piece of property that was auctioned at noon today was the old landfill site near Rentz. John Lowery bid \$2,790 for this site, subject to confirmation by the County Commissioners.

The sale was conducted by County Attorney H. Dale Thompson after the property had been advertised for sale.

## CITY MANAGER RESIGNS

By Doug Hall

Ron McLemore ended seven months as City Manager of Dublin with a short letter of resignation to the Mayor and Council.

McLemore's employment with the city was terminated on Monday night, but he will be paid through March 5 - an agreement reached between the City Manager and the Council.

Now the hunt begins for a new city manager.

"We had several resumes in the last go-round that we thought we could get in touch with," Mayor Robert E. Cochran said this morning.

Plus, the mayor says that several aldermen have suggested possible candidates for the job.

On the question of an acting city manager, Cochran doubted the city would "go to the extent of appointing someone as an acting city manager.

"But," he explained, "We may want someone as the number two man."

The Mayor met with city department heads this morning to discuss the situation.

A meeting of Council to

decide what course to take in replacing McLemore will be held later this week.

McLemore's letter to the mayor and council was succinct and business-like:

"I am submitting my resignation from the position of City Manager of the City of Dublin to be effective March 5, 1976.

"In doing so, I am requesting direct payment for three weeks unused annual leave and direct payment of \$1,500 in retirement pay as agreed upon by the city at the time of my appointment.

"I have enjoyed working with my fellow employees and am thankful for the many friends that my family and I have made in Dublin during my term of employment."

He gave no reason for this move. But since the November 3 city election, his tenure as city manager has been on shaky ground. In the election a slate of aldermen not considered favorable to the city manager's policies was elected.

All seven aldermen voted to accept McLemore's resignation.

McLemore has worked with the city for two years, first as Administrative Assistant, then Acting City Manager. He became the city's chief executive officer on May 19, 1975, replacing former City Manager Jack Crane.

During his tenure in Dublin, the Columbus, Georgia, native installed one of the most progressive firemen training program in the South, landed two sizeable Community Development grants, instituted an effective reorganization of the badly aligned sanitation department, and sought to improve the city's financial management.

But he was beset by opposition from a 4-3 Council which hung precariously in his favor.

Then, in the November

**LOOKING BACK...**  
**50 YEARS AGO**  
**JANUARY 20, 1976**



By HARRIETT CLAXTON

city election, one of McLemore's supporters on Council, Roy Banks, chose not to seek reelection and two, John Reed Deamer and Louis Alexander, were defeated.

## E. DUBLIN COUNCIL TO MEET CITIZENS

A called meeting of the East Dublin City Council and citizens for Tuesday night at 7:30 was announced today by Mayor E.A. Page.

The meeting was called after a group of citizens met earlier and asked for a meeting with the Council to present a petition that they had prepared.

The petition asks the Mayor and Council to return a new pickup truck that was authorized at the Council meeting, rescind the garbage fee ordinance, and reduce the salaries of three city firemen that were raised when the Council by a three to two vote overrode Mayor Page's veto of the raises granted earlier.

The petition also asks that the city reduce city spending.

Mayor Page told the group asking for the meeting that he would call the meeting with the understanding that it will be conducted in an orderly fashion.

Rumors for the past several days have been that a recall petition calling for a recall election is being circulated in East Dublin, but nothing could be learned definitely about such plans.

Mayor Page said this morning that he had been advised by legal authorities

that while a Georgia law was passed for recall elections, it had been declared unconstitutional by the courts.

Thus, whatever plans may have been made for such a petition were squelched with the information as to the fate of the recall provision law.

It was also pointed out that the provisions that made possible a recall election which ousted three County Commissioners in Douglas County, Georgia, were in a local law that applied only to that county.

## PHILLIP COLEMAN IS STAR STUDENT

West Laurens High School student Phillip Coleman has been named STAR student at West Laurens and for the Laurens County School System for the 1975-76 school year.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Coleman.

Each year the high school senior who is in the upper 10 percent of his class and who scores highest on the Scholastic Aptitude Test is awarded this honor.

The Georgia Chamber of Commerce sponsors the STAR student awards in Georgia.

Phillip has maintained an A average throughout high school and has served his school and community.

He is presently serving as President of the Beta Club and of the 4-H Club and is a District 4-H Club Officer, serving on the Board of Directors for the Central District.

## OPEN AUDITIONS DUBLIN COMMUNITY THEATRE

**JANUARY 24, 2026 - Theatre Dublin**

9:00 am to 12:00 pm Girls - Ages 7 to 12

1:00 to 3:00 pm Adults - Age 18 & up

Have you always wanted to be on stage and never tried? Here's your chance!

To audition, plan to arrive by either 9:00 AM or 1:00 PM based on audition time (youth or adult).

Be prepared to sing one minute of a song, preferably Broadway, mainly a song that shows off your voice. It can be a cappella (without music) or use a cell phone for back track.

For youth girls only, please bring a current 4 x 6 photo.

For questions, contact  
478-272-2560 or glenda@dtdublin.com.

**Performance Dates**  
**April 23-25, 2026**

## OUR TAKE...



County Attorney Billy Kight at a County Commission meeting last June/GARRETT BARBER, File Photo

### Kight was a friend to Laurens Co.

Billy Kight leaves some large shoes to fill. Kight, who passed away Jan. 9 after unexpectedly falling ill, served as county attorney for Laurens County for three decades, but he will be missed for more than his legal expertise.

As commissioners came on and off the board of the years, Kight was a steady force for the county. He was more than a lawyer on retainer. He showed up every day.

With an unassuming and humble nature, Kight never tried to show off his intelligence, even though he usually was the smartest guy in the room. That's not to say he was shy about speaking up for what's right – whether it was calling out the commission for conducting too much "other business" or cleverly putting a condescending visiting attorney in his place during a meeting.

The sharp-witted Kight could also use humor to bring levity to uncomfortable situations or to get his point across. Last year, when he believed commissioners might not be enthusiastic enough with their recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, Kight started off the pledge at several meetings with such earnest that the commissioners – and audience – had to join in.

Kight was more than a lawyer. He was a friend to county employees and officials, and a friend to the county. And Laurens County is a better place for it.

— Rodney Manley

### YOUR TURN:

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

### THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"My favorite winter activity is going back inside."

- Unknown

### DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

- John 16:33

### EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

Jan. 20, 2026 is...

- National Coffee Break Day
- Penguin Awareness Day
- National Cheese Lovers Day
- National DJ Day
- Take a Walk Outdoors Day
- National Buttercrunch Day
- International Day of Acceptance

## The Courier Herald

### LOCAL MATTERS



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2024

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## GEORGIA TRUST

for Local News

DuBose Porter/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Pam Burney/GENERAL MANAGER  
Courtney Vessel/CIRCULATION MANAGER

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

## Everything is bad - my phone is not working

The message on my phone did not make sense. It said I no longer had a SIM card.

After turning it off, resetting it and turning the airplane mode on and off several times, I handed it over to my wife. She tried some of that and more, and it started back working. But, from what she had seen on the website, my phone may need to be replaced, so we went ahead and ordered a new one.

My phone worked through the next morning – which was Sunday (Jan. 11) – and then it popped up with that message of having no SIM card. Thankfully, my new phone was delivered the next day. Once again, I handed it over to my wife (she is the IT person at our house) and she worked on getting everything transferred over from my old phone to the new, while I took her phone and went to cover Christian comedian Mickey Bell's talk at Celebrate Recovery.

When I returned home, the phone was in the midst of transferring everything. Since it was getting late, we left my old and new phone alone as the data went from one to the next.

On Tuesday morning, I picked up my new phone and everything seemed good. Just before my wife left to go to work, I tried to place a call to her phone just knowing it would work. Imagine my surprise when I got the message that my new phone did not have a SIM card.

Long story short, it turned out that we had to remove the SIM card out of the old phone and place it in the new phone. My replacement phone did not come with the necessary object, which was a small little pin needed to push the button and eject the card, to get the job done. Once we were able to complete that task – and when I say we I really mean the nice woman

### MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

at the cellphone store – my new phone sprang to life and I started receiving all of the text messages that I had been missing since Sunday.

When something like this happens, it seems like our day, or days, are ruined. We depend on our phones so much today.

It is funny how much we depend on our cellphones. I remember when my wife – girlfriend at the time – bought her first cell phone. The late 1990s model came in a bag, and you might have needed to pull the antennae to get a signal. At the time, I did not see the need to have a cellphone in the car. Usually, we were together and we did not need two. This was also the time when there were more "phones"

and not devices where you could play games, watch shows or read your email.

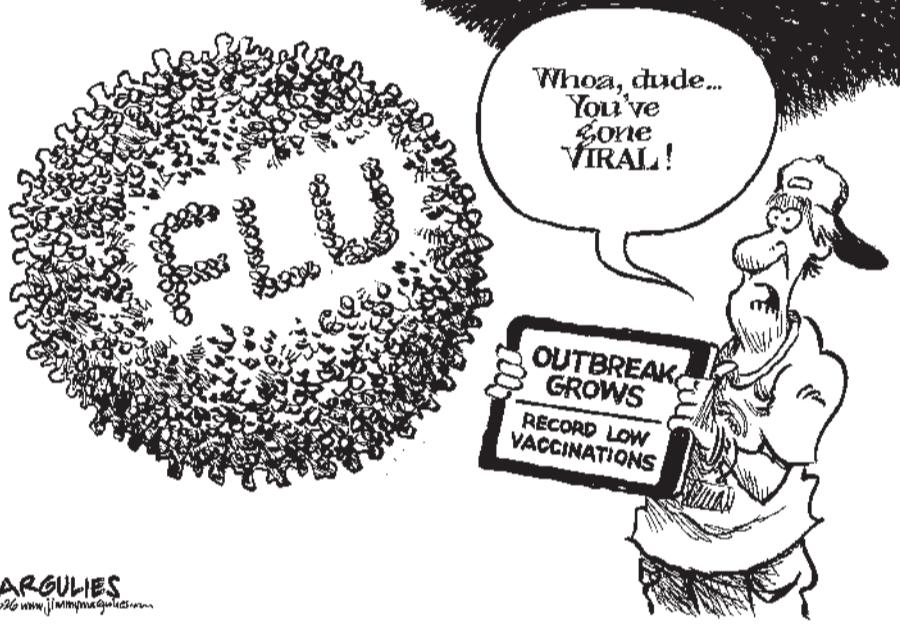
One Sunday night we were at her parents' house on Lake Sinclair. We left their house for me to return Jill to her college dorm before I returned home. About a mile from her parent's house, Jill started to not feel well. We turned around and I took her back since we were a good 10 to 15 miles from the college. She decided to stay there, so I brought her bag cellphone back to the house and I jumped into the car to return home.

In order to get home, I had to go down about a 10-mile stretch of road where there is basically nothing until you get back into the

Milledgeville city limits. As I was driving down this road when all of a sudden my car started sputtering and slowing down. I pulled the blue 1971 Chevrolet Nova completely off the side of the road. This old vehicle's gas gauge had recently stopped working, so we kept up with the mileage on a small notepad. Apparently, I had done the math wrong and was completely out of gas.

It was almost 10 p.m. on a Sunday night on a road that hardly had any traffic on it. So I started walking. Eventually, I was able to get a ride from a nice young man who was able to take me to my preacher's house at the end of the road. The next day, I went into a business and bought my first cellphone.

When my phone messed up the other day, I had to keep going. If something had happened, I would have been able to call 911. But that was it. Some may recall last Wednesday when Verizon had issues. Friends, who did not know about my situation during the previous days, made the statement that I did not know how it felt not to be able to call or text someone. If they only knew.



## Some observations to share with three great-grandsons

Dear Henry, Noah and Samuel Knox Wansley:

It looks like it is your turn to receive some unsolicited advice from an old man who has been dispensing it since your daddy and his cousins were about your age. That has been a long time. I'm not sure how much of it they found helpful, but I hope some of it stuck. Much of what I have to say to you comes from my own life experiences – good and bad.

Some of this may be a little premature, since you three range from shedding baby teeth to learning to read, but I thought I should share my thoughts while I am still able to do so. I hope you will at least put this note away and use it as a reference in the years ahead.

One thing that has changed dramatically in the years since I began this exercise is that the world in which you live has gotten infinitely more complicated, thanks to rapid advances in technology. Technology is a double-edged sword. There is much good to be derived from it. In your lifetime, you may witness cures to diseases unimaginable in my lifetime. Tours to faraway planets. Driverless automo-

biles that can fly. And who knows what else?

There is also a dark side to technology. Misinformation can be spread at the speed of light. People can accuse, insult, slander and malign with complete anonymity. Our electrical grid, our telephone network, our financial and defense systems are vulnerable to bad actors around the world. And there is the question of artificial intelligence and its impact on the future.

It is striking that none of this was a subject for discussion in my previous annual letters to your dad and his cousins. That is how much things have changed in such a short period of time. And yet much has not changed. The basics are still the basics, although given the above premise, applying them will be a challenge for you at times.

Fortunately, you three boys live in a stable environment with two loving parents. Consider yourselves blessed. Your parents are working hard to raise you right. Love them and appreciate them even when you may disagree with them. And, on occasion, you surely will. Being a parent is not an easy job. I know that firsthand.

Thanks to generations of forebears, you have inherited a good name. Do nothing to besmirch it by some careless thought or deed. Whenever it is spoken, read or written, make sure it will make your family proud.

Be a friend to everyone but pick your friends carefully. Don't try to be popular. Be yourself. There will be those who will try to drag you down to their level. By setting a good example, hopefully you can bring them up to yours.

Never say anything you don't mean so you won't give anyone any reason not to trust your word. That is another way of saying don't lie. In my long years on this earth, I can't remember a lie that was beneficial to anyone.

Go to bed each night satisfied you did your very best that day, whether it was in the classroom, on the soccer field or when no one was looking. These days only come one at a time. We have no guarantees there will be a tomorrow. Be your best with every day you are given.

Life doesn't offer shortcuts so don't go looking for them. Deal with life as it comes. There will be days of disappointment and times

of frustration. We have all experienced them. You will, too. Stay strong. Be confident. Try to keep things in perspective. This, too, shall pass.

There is a God. I believe that with all my heart and you should, too. God is not Protestant or Catholic, Jewish or Muslim. God is God. Too many people try to justify their prejudices and narrow-mindedness by invoking the name of God. Ignore them. They are bigots. And when you have doubts – as you surely will – just look at the magnificent symmetry of the universe. This stuff didn't just happen. Believe. Believe in God.

There is a pretty good chance I won't be around to see you reach adulthood, but I am confident that even with all the challenges you will face, this will be a better world because you are in it. Thank you for letting me share these thoughts with you. Now, go forward and do good.

Love,  
Pa

You can reach Dick Yarbrough at [dick@dickyarbrough.com](mailto:dick@dickyarbrough.com) or at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Georgia 31139.

### TO THE EDITOR ...

Dear letter to the editor,

I appreciate the information this paper provides. I chose not to spend a lot of time being informed on politics and articles like this are helpful: Jan. 6, 2026, "Georgia gets nearly \$219 million for rural health care. This will

bolster health care in 126 rural counties, under a program established by President Donald Trump's signature budget reconciliation bill passed in July." Hopefully this is a sign that according to Stacey Abrams, "Trump's terrible, tyrannical, no good budget,"

a sign that there is more to the story and that there is some good after all. Opinions are easy to state; it takes a lot more work to find the facts and connect them to reality.

Margaret Fagre  
Dublin, Ga.

**Dublin Police Department**

- Amaya Ochelle Flanders, 25, was charged with disorderly conduct at the intersection of Lily Street and New Street around 2:07 a.m. on Dec. 28.

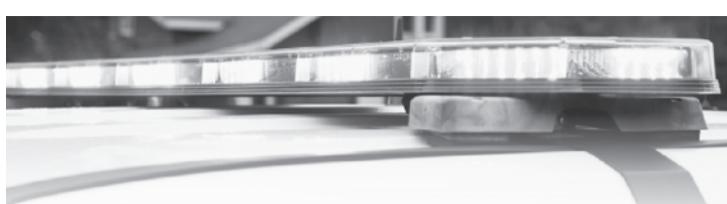
An officer was dispatched to the location about a gunshot wound. While on scene, officers were working on the victim who was shot. An officer saw two women arguing and fussing with each other. Officers on the scene got in between the two and were able to separate them while others continued working with the victim.

While waiting for a detective, a officer saw Flanders walk up to another woman and push her to the side of her head. Flanders started fussing with

the other woman saying it was her fault the victim was shot. The officer grabbed Flanders and arrested her. She was transported to the sheriff's office and released to jail staff.

- On Dec. 26, around 11:43 p.m., an officer was patrolling the area of Vinson Village and observed a dark-colored Kia run the stop sign at the intersection of West Mary Street and Calhoun Street. The officer made a traffic stop and identified the driver as Julianne Nicole Pittman, 45. She told the officer her license was taken for a driving under the influence charge she received in East Dublin by Georgia State Patrol.

Her license was suspended for DUI and there was no permit on file. Pittman was

**POLICE BEAT...**

arrested and transported to the police department. She was fingerprinted and released on two citations.

- Brittanie Kristine Bell, 27, was pulled over in a white Nissan Frontier during a traffic stop because of a seat belt violation on MLK Jr. Drive at Hudson Street.

Bell's information was run through the officer mobile and it came back to be suspended due to DUI with a permit that expired on Oct. 23, 2025. She was arrested, transported to the

police department and fingerprinted.

- At 2:32 p.m. on Jan. 1, officers witnessed a seat belt violation in a vehicle heading west on Veterans Boulevard at Hillcrest Parkway.

The vehicle was stopped on Industrial Boulevard at Fairview Park Hospital. Officers met with the driver, Christopher Boston. He told them he did not have a license. The officers ran Boston's identification card through dispatch and it came back suspended due to failure to appear. The tag

was run through dispatch it returned as registration cancelled and no insurance.

**Laurens County Sheriff's Office**

- Deputies responded to a domestic call that turned out to be a civil issue on Ben Hall Lake Drive around 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 6.

- Cameron Esley Smith, 26, of Atlanta was charged with DUI alcohol when he was pulled over in a black Volkswagen Jetta on I-16 at mile post 39 around 11:06 a.m. on Jan. 6.

- A deputy met with a woman at the sheriff's office about an incident that happened between Jan. 5 and 6 on Rentz Dexter Road.

- On Jan. 2, a deputy met a man at the sheriff's office in reference to checking the

serial numbers on a firearm.

- A man talked with a deputy on Jan. 2 at the sheriff's office about vehicle damage that happened the day before on Ga. 29 South.

*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.*



**The incompetent clown responsible** for the solar panel debacle needs to be sued to compensate the city for losses of \$300k a year through 2037 plus past expenditures made as a result of this circus. Then indicted for mismanagement and stupidity. Fred Williams and the board are responsible for these things. The taxpayers were robbed for the DCS to party.

**We need to sue the Dublin City school board** and recover the stolen funds and prosecute them for embezzlement/theft by conversion. Let's see if the DA will prosecute or look the other way.

**Two CFOs under Fred** and no one knew \$13 million was gone? Do they think we're stupid? Yes they do. Two PR specialists? To praise Fred in the media I assume. Two Maintenance directors? Can the board not count and wonder why Dublin City School needed two of everything? This isn't Noah's ark.

**The solution for Dublin City Schools** is easy. Take Fred's retirement funds and the board's money until the debt is paid. Then prosecute them. The taxpayers will have no confidence in city government until somebody reimburses and then goes to jail.

**We appreciate the Laurens County Board of Education** trying to show appreciation to teachers with a \$1,200 bonus. But, when we got our checks today, we ended up with around \$600. We were taxed over half of the money. It would have been more economically feasible to just return to us teachers who pay taxes what we paid in taxes, 100 percent from our property and our homes, and we would have gotten more money back and not taxed on the little bit of money that we received.

**If you want to know some of the bad things** that happened under Superintendent Fred Williams' administration at Dublin City Schools, look under the special report on Dublin City Schools, January 2026 with

the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. How could the superintendent and the board of education get by for so long with all that they have done?

**The previous Dublin City school superintendent's office** had a license to steal, and the board of education did not do one thing about it.

**I do not see where the interim superintendent** could make a decision about any schools part that she was part of also. She had to of known what was going on. Also, the anonymous donor, if it is who everybody saying it is, there are two board members who should be disqualified and taken off of the board.

**I wonder if the coaches have to clock out** from their teaching jobs to coach. I also wonder how a coach can be a full-time coach and drive a school bus, because that is the main time they practice.

**Waste and abuse of public funds**, according to the state audit. I feel these findings, along with several more questionable actions about Fred and the board, should be enough evidence for the GBI and local law enforcement to step in and make charges against Fred and the board.

**That Mr. Bagley, I caught** your mess up on the article about Michael J. Fox being born in 1981. I'm sure he was born in the early 1960s because he was doing "Family Ties" around 1981. I read your article all of the time though buddy.

**I need to correct Stacy Abrams** and other people who say we live in a democracy. We live in a republic.

**According to the Georgia Department of Audit and Accounts**, the state auditor has laid out that the Dublin City Schools has robbed the taxpayers of Dublin and also the COVID relief fund that was suppose to be for COVID. Somebody, somewhere, should be punished.

**When it comes to the credit card debt** for the

DCS, on the flowers, who ever made that debt, needs to pay it back. The excessive credit card expense should be paid back. There is no reason for the taxpayers to have to pay for their uncontrollable expense.

**What more do officials have to see** how the Dublin City Schools have been robbing people on taxes? The Georgia Department of Audits and Account spells it out plainly. We need to consolidate the schools and help get rid of the board? Then, 10 years later, maybe come back with the city schools. At this point, nobody, absolutely nobody, trusts the Dublin City Schools because of the bad activities they have had.

**How many of these extra DCS employees**, the 2 CFO's, the 2 PR employees were Fred's family or friends? How was that slush fund Lucky Loot allocated or approved? DCS is done. Thanks Fred. He profits from the collapse. Stop those retirement funds and prosecute.

**Dublin City Schools recklessly** spent our hard earned money on flowers and trip – not surprised! If federal COVID funds used for this, that's fraud and will earn you a trip to prison. We want our money back too!

**If my memory serves** me correctly, several years ago, a young man who went to school at East Laurens made a perfect score of 1600 on his SAT. I would consider that a gifted young man in regular school.

**With the many illegal four-wheel vehicles and golf carts** being driven on our neighborhood streets and some highways, let's add one more problem to this: electric bicycles. We are seeing more of them lately and they are being used by underage drivers with no regard for their speed nor safety equipment. Today we were passed by a young girl riding one wearing a hoodie and ear phones, and at what might be considered a high rate of speed. She was headed for a high-traffic intersection. Come on Dublin Police Department, let's take care of these problems

before something really bad happens.

**Can someone confirm** the LCBOE has spent over \$2 million on bonuses in two years?

**There is so much trash everywhere!** Can we have a city clean up day where we all pitch in to make Dublin beautiful again?

**The newly paved driveway** into the Evergreen trash dump is so nice! Can we get one at the airport site as well? The buried containers are a pleasure to dump your construction debris in to there.

**The special state audit team has reported** what they found that is the cause of the problems of the Dublin City School System. It is very clear that Fred and the board are totally responsible for waste, abuse, paying for family member's trips, paying bills without an invoice, paying late fees and also the solar panels that does not work. The list goes on and on. This is enough evidence for the GBI and law enforcement to step in and hold these folks responsible.

**Regardless of who the city schools chairman** is, if the donor is who everyone says it is, it is a conflict of interest on two board members if not three. That should not happen.

**Now that the carpet has been swept** and the audit has been done, how is it after years of mismanagement only the current board is criticized. What happened during the Ledbetter and Chairman Bell years?

can you harp on two subjects forever, Dublin City School and Fred Williams. Fred Williams should sue for slander. There is so much to be told in this city.

**Love thy neighbor** as God loved us by giving his only begotten son for the sins of the world. His grace and mercy are what is keeping the world together today. Pray unceasingly!

**Local 7-day Forecast:**

**The next 48 hours:**

**TUESDAY:** 50°  
Sunny. Sunrise: 7:33 a.m.

**TUESDAY NIGHT:** 20°  
Mainly clear and quite cold. Sunset: 5:53 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY DAY:** 57°  
Partly sunny. Sunrise: 7:32 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT:** 34°  
Clouds breaking. Sunset: 5:54 p.m.

Thursday 1/22 HIGH/LOW 58/35 Considerable clouds. Sunrise: 7:32 a.m. Sunset: 5:55 p.m.	Friday 1/23 HIGH/LOW 67/49 Sun through high clouds. Sunrise: 7:31 a.m. Sunset: 5:56 p.m.	Saturday 1/24 HIGH/LOW 68/46 Plenty of sunshine. Sunrise: 7:32 a.m. Sunset: 5:55 p.m.	Sunday 1/25 HIGH/LOW 62/35 Morning rain; otherwise, considerable cloudiness. Sunrise: 7:32 a.m. Sunset: 5:54 p.m.	Monday 1/26 HIGH/LOW 59/40 Periods of rain. Sunrise: 7:32 a.m. Sunset: 5:55 p.m.
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River levels... Oconee (at Dublin) ..... 2.98' Ocmulgee (at Macon) ..... 6.35'

*The Courier Herald cordially invites you to a reception in honor of*

**Harriett Claxton**

**Thursday, January 29th**  
**2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**  
**@ the Dublin Carnegie**  
**311 Academy Ave.**

*Join us and celebrate her lifelong contributions to the community and the legacy of 50 Years Ago and 85 Years Ago.*

**NEWS DIGEST**

The Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority will hold its next board meeting at the McGrath Keen Conference Center at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 20. The agenda follows:

- Welcome and call to order

- Invocation

- Recognition of special guests
- Approval of agenda
- Approval of minutes:
- Development Authority Board meeting on Dec. 17, 2025
- Treasurer's report
- Administrative items
- President's report
- a. Economic develop-

# From the kitchen: 22 DPA players medal at Southern Pickleball Championships

## Dozens of local players in top 15 of final 2025 rankings

By LAURA CARTER  
Dublin Pickleball Association

The Southern Pickleball Championships were held between Dec. 31 and Jan. 4 at Macon's Rhythm & Rally event center.

The Dublin Pickleball Association (DPA) had 17 members among the 1,059 competitors who qualified by medaling in a Southern Pickleball-sanctioned tournament in 2025.

Players from 27 states battled it out for the honor of reaching the winner's circle. Locals who made the podium include:

- Maria Woodard (Dexter) and Teresa Johnson (Dudley) – gold in women's doubles skill 2.5, ages 50+, 60+, 70+ combined and gold in women's doubles 2.5, age 60+

- Margaret Giammetta (Cochran) and Robin Hamsley (Cochran) – bronze in women's doubles 2.5, age 60+

- Eva Martin (East Dublin) and Nancy Owens (Macon) – gold in women's doubles 3.5, age 70+ and bronze in women's doubles 3.5 and 4.0 combined, ages 60+ and 70+ combined

- Dawn Howerton (East Dublin) and Berry Newberry (Eatonton) – silver in women's doubles 3.5, age 60+

- Kim Bracewell (Dublin) and Katherine Wade (Cochran) – bronze in women's doubles 3.5, age 60+

- Shanna Dupree (Cochran) and Myranda McDaniel (Hawkinsville) – silver in women's doubles 3.5, age 16+

- Caroline Thrower (Cochran) and Liza Klyachkin (Macon) – gold in women's doubles 5.0, age 16+

- Laura Carter (Sandersville) – gold in women's singles 2.5, ages 35+, 50+, 60+ combined and gold in women's singles 2.5, age 60+

- Eva Martin (East Dublin) – bronze in women's singles 4.0, age 70+

- Chap Cranford (Cochran) and Parker Cutts (Athens) – bronze in men's doubles skill 3.5, age 16-34

- Shawn Luque (Dublin) and Brad Bowen (Moultrie) – gold in men's doubles skill 4.5, age 50+



Local medalists from the Southern Pickleball Championships in Macon Dec. 31-Jan. 4 included Marcia Dixon and Ron Lazar (top left); Dawn Howerton and Berry Newberry (top middle); Teresa Johnson and Maria Woodard (top right); and Jody Hoffman, Susan Wood, Eva Martin and Nancy Owens (bottom left). Bottom right: Mariya Chuykova, of Atlanta, and Dublin's Lindsay Shuman won gold (women's doubles 3.0/35-49) at the Dill Dinkers' Winter Warmup in Atlanta Jan. 10/SPECIAL PHOTOS, submitted by Dublin Pickleball Association

- Marcia Dixon (Dublin) and Ron Lazar (Macon) – bronze in mixed doubles 3.0, age 70+

January 5 Southern Pickleball released its 2025 player rankings, and DPA members were among the top in several categories.

The groupings are by skill, gender, age and state. The states include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Congratulations to the following players:

#### All categories combined

1. Lindsay Shuman
2. Eva Martin
3. Sandy Souza

#### All skill levels, 01-17, all states

1. Chap Cranford

#### All skill levels, 35-49, all states

1. Lindsay Shuman

#### All skill levels, 50-59, all states

1. Sandy Souza
2. Paula Baker

#### All skill levels, 60-69, all states

5. Dawn Howerton
8. Susan Curtis
9. Maria Woodard

#### All skill levels, 70+, all states

1. Eva Martin



#### 4.0 women all ages

2. Eva Martin in all states
1. Eva Martin in Georgia

#### 3.5 women all ages

8. Eva Martin in all states
5. Eva Martin in Georgia

#### 3.0 women all ages

1. Lindsay Shuman in all states and Georgia
3. Sandy Souza in all states
2. Sandy Souza in Georgia
8. Dawn Howerton in all states
7. Dawn Howerton in Georgia

#### 2.5 women all ages

2. Maria Woodard in all states and Georgia
3. Paula Baker in all states and Georgia
5. Susan Curtis in all states and Georgia
8. Teresa Johnson in all states and Georgia
10. Rose Cannon in all states and Georgia

#### 3.5 Men all ages, all states

9. Chap Cranford in all states
8. Chap Cranford in Georgia

9. Chap Cranford in all states
8. Chap Cranford in Georgia

14. Eva Martin in all states
1. Eva Martin in Georgia



Players making the top 15 in their skill and age brackets include:

- Eva Martin - No. 3 female in 4.5/70+ in all states and No. 2 in Georgia
- Eva Martin - No. 1 female in 4.0/70+ in all states and Georgia
- Eva Martin - No. 2 female in 3.5/70+ in all states and Georgia
- Shelley Baumann - No. 11 female in 4.0/50-59 in Georgia
- Shelley Baumann - No. 7 female in 3.5/50-59 in Georgia
- Chap Cranford - No. 3 male in 4.0/01-17 in all states and No. 2 in Georgia
- Chap Cranford - No. 1 male in 3.5/01-17 in all states and Georgia
- Chap Cranford - No. 4 male in 3.0/01-17 in all states and Georgia
- Kim Bracewell - No. 9 female in 3.5/60-69 in Georgia
- Dianne Harrison - No. 11 female in 3.5/60-69 in Georgia
- Dianne Harrison - No. 14 female in 3.0/50-59 in all states and No. 12 in Georgia
- Dianne Harrison - No. 3 female in 2.5/50-59 in all states and Georgia
- Lindsay Shuman - No. 1 female in 3.0/35-49 in all states and Georgia
- Joey Wilson - No. 14 male in 3.5/60-69 in Georgia
- Phil Parker - No. 5 male in 3.5/50-59 in all states and No. 3 in Georgia
- Marcia Dixon - No. 8 female in 3.0/70+ in all states and No. 5 in Georgia
- Ann Christian - No. 11 female in 3.0/70+ in Georgia
- Dawn Howerton - No. 3 female in 3.0/60-69 in all states and Georgia
- Will Rajnay - No. 13 male in 3.0/60-69 in Georgia
- Sandy Souza - No. 1 female in 3.0/50-59 in all states and Georgia
- Paula Baker - No. 7 female in 3.0/50-59 in all states and No. 6 in Georgia
- Paula Baker - No. 1 female in 2.5/50-59 in all states and Georgia
- Rose Cannon - No. 14 female in 3.0/50-59 in all states and No. 12 in Georgia
- Rose Cannon - No. 3 female in 2.5/50-59 in all states and Georgia
- Lindsay Shuman - No. 1 female in 3.0/35-49 in all states and Georgia
- Isaac Wilson - No. 13 male in 3.0/0-17 in Georgia
- Maria Woodard - No. 2 female in 2.5/60-69 in all states and Georgia
- Susan Curtis - No. 3 female in 2.5/60-69 in all states and Georgia
- Teresa Johnson - No. 4 female in 2.5/60-69 in all states and Georgia
- Laura Carter - No. 5 female in 2.5/60-69 in all states and Georgia
- Wendy Brantley - No. 13 female in 2.5/60-69 in all states and Georgia
- Horace Austin - No. 14 in 2.5/60-69 in Georgia
- Kim Thompson - No. 8 female in 2.5/50-59 in all states and Georgia
- Jordan Wilson - No. 15 male in 2.5/35-49 in Georgia

Kirby Smart's locker room, culture at heart of Bulldogs' success...

ished.

The Kirby Smart plan has seen the Bulldogs make the playoffs four out of the last five years. How many communities across the country – and how many fan bases – can realistically see such expectations become reality? Kirby keeps making that happen.

He keeps sending worthy talent to the NFL each spring, but finds a way to win and get into the playoffs where one of the reasons to advance to the ultimate game is good health make coaching a greater challenge today than ever. How much more success would the Bulldog offense have achieved had Drew Bobo played at full strength through the playoffs? How much more effective would the offense have been if there were a durable, stud running back like a Todd Gurley in the backfield, for example?

The Georgia senior class posted a record of 51-6 and since 2021, UGA leads all FBS schools with a record of 65-7. Ole Miss, a team that came close to reaching the final game, has for decades yearned for yesteryear – the glory days of Coach John Vaught – to return.



By LORAN SMITH

Seasoned observers have noted that it would be difficult with the population base of the state of Mississippi. Lane Kiffin was able to pull it off by going to the portal and bringing in abundant talent, highlighted by a remarkable athlete at quarterback, Trinidad Chambliss.

Among the teams in the College Football Playoff, Georgia had the fewest transfers starting (10 percent) while Ole Miss had the most (66.3 percent). Many seasoned observers suggest that plan will not work, long term, and you see how long it took Kiffin to jump ship – going to LSU which has a much greater recruiting base with far less in state competition than Ole Miss. Something that is peculiarly significant with Indi-

ana, the favorite to win the national title, is that the average age of their roster is 23. Kids entering college at age 18 and graduating on time usually get their cap and gown at by their 22nd birthday. Those extra years of seasoning make a great difference in competition. Georgia's average of its 2025 roster was roughly 20.5.

The postgame locker room scene in New Orleans was one which revealed that Georgia's most recent team had the right stuff. There were a lot of tears, much hugging and feeling as the players said their goodbyes, knowing they likely will never be together again as a group. It was a sincere and compassionate expression of brotherly love.

Nobody was discussing about the draft or NIL pos-

sibilities but how much they enjoyed and appreciated their teammates and their time together in Athens.

The culture the head coach has brought about has resulted in sustained success, but it is very tough to win a championship, especially in today's college football world, where there is no stability when he comes to roster development.

There are more talented athletes out there than ever before and while many of them greatly appreciate the institutions with which they affiliate, today's process fosters alignment with the highest bidder.

Have you thought about the predicament which Kirby Smart has brought about? He does such a good job with player development, many players come to Athens and get the benefit of the Georgia system and then move on to where the grass is greener (more money). Kirby simply will not let money spoil the locker room.

The Georgia training regimen is so good that every year the Bulldogs lose a significant portion of their roster to the National Football League. (For the next Super Bowl, Georgia will, for the 25th straight year, have

a player on one of the rosters). How 'bout that streak, which is likely to continue.

It is tough when you train a kid for the NFL and lose a portion of your roster every year when August comes around, but losing players who can move on for any reason certainly makes college football recruiting an inequitable process.

Then when judges get in on the act, directing that a school grant an extra year of eligibility, which happened last fall, you wonder if there will ever be any sanity with college football again.

For the fans who are being called on to support the program, to the extreme, puts more pressure on the coaches to win big. If the championships are not there, then the donors are not going to be there.

As a Georgia alumnus, I am overjoyed with what Kirby Smart has been able to accomplish in Athens. It is the best job in history. It is also the best record of any collegiate program in the state historically.

No coach works harder or smarter. He has two primary interests: his family and coaching the Georgia football team. No coach has ever given his alma mater more energy and effort.

## SCOREBOARD

### GIRLS HOOPS

Friday

Brentwood 65, Trinity 43

East Laurens 56, Dodge Co. 34

Washington Co. 77, Dublin 50

West Laurens 45, Howard 32

### Saturday

EL 73, Treutlen 24

Dublin at Johnson Co. (no score reported)

### BOYS HOOPS

Friday

Brentwood 64, Trinity 33

EL 54, Dodge Co. 47

WACO 61, Dublin 33

Howard def. WL (no score reported)

### Saturday

EL 90, Treutlen 41

Johnson Co. 70, Dublin 57

## PREP SCHEDULE

### BASKETBALL

Tuesday

Central Fellowship at Trinity

Dublin at Dodge Co.

East Laurens at Brentwood

West Laurens at Aquinas /6 p.m.

### Friday

Hephzibah at WL/5 p.m.

Dublin at EL

Gatewood at Trinity/6 p.m.

### Saturday

EL at WL

Trinity at Robert Toombs /4 p.m.

• Isaac Wilson - No. 13 male in 3.0/0-17 in Georgia

• Maria Woodard - No. 2 female in 2.5/60-69 in all states and Georgia



## SNAPSHOTS IN THE SNOW: MORE READER PHOTOS

CITY COUNCIL  
Continued from page 1

and reduce pedestrian and bicycle incidents and deaths.

"They will be coming in and looking at everything from our city ordinances, policies, road construction, development and regulations that we have in place," Powell said. "They'll make recommendations and will come up with a plan that we can actually do in the future when it comes to safety."

They will take this plan and use it to apply for implementation funds as they may become available in the future.

"I'm very excited to get started on this," Powell said.

City Councilwoman Tess Godfrey announced that new councilman Brandon Chain will be on that particular board.

"We look forward to hearing what he brings back to us," she said.

Powell added that the public will be engaged in this process as well.

In other business, the city council:

- Approved the purchase of a new pump for the trickling filter at the wastewater treatment plant from Xylem Water Solutions USA Inc. in the amount of \$23,105.95.

- Approved a Visin Zero Safety Action Plan. Powell said they want to have a plan in place by the beginning of June.

- Approved the terms and conditions for the Dublin Police Department to apply for the Governor's Office of Highway Safety Highway Enforcement of Aggressive Traffic Grant for 2027. If awarded, the grant period would begin in October of 2026.

- Approved items as declaration of surplus that will be sold on GovDeals or for scrap.

CORONER'S COUNCIL  
Continued from page 1

certification requirements before they are authorized to serve. The council is responsible for overseeing those standards and disciplinary actions for all coroners and deputy coroners in the State of Georgia.

The council is made up of five elected coroners, a licensed physician and the superintendent of the Law Enforcement Operations and Investigations Section, or a designated representative. Together, the group establishes training policies, certification standards and continuing education requirements for coroners throughout Georgia.

The five Coroner Council members are Chairman Richard N. Stanley III, Laurens County; Vice-Chairman Michael Fowler, Dougherty County; Janice Brown, Wilcox County; Mark Bowen, Richmond County; and Mark Cox, Lumpkin County.

# FEBRUARY 7, 2026 10AM-4PM



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