

# The Courier Herald

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026

COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM



Franklin Street has been reopened and the front of the J. Roy Rowland Federal Courthouse is looking good as new as crews finally have wrapped up work to repair the building from a May 2023 auto accident. The courthouse suffered major damage when the driver of a tractor-trailer rig fell asleep and crashed the 18-wheeler into the front steps.

Repairs included replacing lots of stucco and an entire pillar/RODNEY MANLEY

## Board takes next step for EL construction

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

The Laurens County Board of Education took the next step toward a new East Laurens Elementary School and athletic complex last week.

The Laurens County Board of Education authorized Superintendent O.J. Hall to enter into negotiations with Lentile Construction Co., which had been recommended by the board's committee. After this is completed, Hall would broker contracts between the Laurens County School District and the construction company. Board member Kathy Sweat abstained from the vote because of a family connection.

"I'm excited for the staff,

students and the community out there," Hall said. "They are definitely deserving of it. This project allows us to come full circle in a sense."

The Eastside will have a new East Laurens High School and athletic complex, along with a remodeled ELMS.

"This not only gives the elementary a new school, but the middle school its own athletic complex," Hall said. "That's important because it allows us to have practices more practically and efficiently. It allows us to have options when it comes to the fields."

The project will go in

SCHOOL BOARD

Continued on page 10

## I-16 pileups lead to fatal accident

Wrecks began in Laurens Co. with broken-down 18-wheeler

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

A 53-year-old Elko man died in a Macon hospital after he drove into the back of another vehicle when traffic had come to a stop because of three previous accidents – two of which involved vehicles hitting the same broken down 18-wheeler on the side of the road – on Interstate 16 early last Friday.

According to a Georgia State Patrol incident report, Walter Allen Pratt was driving a 2020 Kenworth Construction vehicle, traveling east in the right lane of I-16 around 8:45 a.m. Friday, Jan. 23. In front of him were a 2017 Chevrolet Silverado with a trailer, driven by Rene Cedano, 39, of Palmetto, a 2012 Freightliner, driven by Ronnie Oneal Hurst, 40, of Covington, and a 2015 Freightliner,

driven by Brandon Antonio Doles, 29, of Woodstock. These three vehicles had come to a stop in the right lane of I-16 East due to earlier wrecks on the road in Laurens County.

The Kenworth hit the 2015 Freightliner, causing it to strike the back of the 2012 Freightliner. This vehicle then hit the back of the 2017 Chevrolet Silverado. After hitting the 2015 Freightliner, Pratt's vehicle continued for another 66 feet to the paved edge where it overturned for 122 feet coming to an uncontrolled stop on the south shoulder of the interstate.

Pratt was transported to Navicent Health Hospital, where he died from injuries he received in the crash.

The 2015 Freightliner struck the 2012 Freightliner before rotating counterclockwise for 66 feet



The scene of the fatal wreck on Friday on I-16 East in Twiggs County/LANA DOMINY, Special Photo

before overturning on the cable barriers in the median. Doles was transported to Fairview Park Hospital in Dublin with suspected minor or visible injury.

The 2012 Freightliner

hit the Chevrolet and rotated counterclockwise for 62 feet before striking the cable barriers and then continued for 22 feet into the median before it came to an uncontrolled stop.

Hurst was transported to FPH with suspected minor or visible injuries.

After being struck, the Chevrolet continued straight for approximately 89 feet with its trailer over-

turning into the road for an uncontrolled final stop. Cedano and passenger were transported to FPH. Both were listed with possible in-

I-16 PILEUPS

Continued on page 10

## Local sorority leads event to feed, educate people in honor of MLK Jr.

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

A local sorority teamed up with other organizations to distribute meals and care bags as a way to remember the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

The local Alpha Kappa Alpha Tau Omicron Omega Chapter, St. Peter Baptist Church, 1K Women Strong (1KWS), students from Dublin High School and members from Recovery In Supportive Environment Utilizing Peers (RISEUP) spent Monday distributing meals and care bags at St. Peter Baptist Church.

"We are here celebrating MLK Day of service," said Letunya Walker, president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. "This is one of our big service projects for (the sorority), and we serve the



Letunya Walker, president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, speaks to a crowd gathered for soup, sandwiches and goodie bags last Monday at St. Peter's Baptist Church/PAYTON

TOWNS III

Laurens County and Dublin community."

The church opened at

11 a.m. Monday, though the event did not start until 12:30 p.m. The crowd was

able to eat all the soup and sandwiches they wanted.

"It is good for us to be able to provide the support that they need," Walker said. "That is what we're about – service to all mankind."

They targeted those who are in need, especially the homeless population in the community. The sorority

partnered with some of the local hotels where some of them are living and the homeless shelter, Walker said.

"The church gave away soup and sandwiches, and we are giving away blessing bags," Walker said. "Those have toiletries and non-perishable food items. We also have donations from the 1KWS have are given away hats, gloves, coats and blankets. They are receiving everything they need for this time of year."

Melissa McElman, RISEUP operation manager, was at the event to talk with people and hand out information, along with NARCAN, an overdose treatment.

"We are being supportive to the community," McElman said. "We let them know what kind of resources we have and we are letting them know what we do."

RISEUP likes to network with others.

"We didn't know about this sorority before this," McElman said. "We let them know what we do

just in case they run across someone who is on the street. They can tell them to go to RISEUP for help."

This was the first time the sorority has partnered with other organizations, Walker said.

"We have done the soup kitchen and clothing give-away and blessing bags 10 years or more," she said.

"This is a good way to help people in need and those who may just need a hot meal today or need any type of support. From what I understand, the homeless population in the Dublin area is increasing. We are trying to do whatever we can to help fill that void they may have, and offer any support that we can provide to help those individuals get back on their feet again."

The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority has been in existence for 118 years - founded on Jan. 15, 1908. The local chapter in Dublin was founded on Jan. 16, 1993.

The local chapter has been in existence for 33

MLK DAY

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1 section, 10 pages • Vol. 112, No. 13, Pub. No. 161860



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## OBITUARIES

**Linda Leach McCullars**

Linda Leach McCullars, 82, of Dublin, Georgia, passed away peacefully on January 22, 2026.

She was born on Feb. 14, 1943, to the late Jack and Mary Wilkes Leach. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her beloved husband, Charles J. McCullars, with whom she shared a lifetime of memories and love; her granddaughter, Susie McCullars; and sister and special caretaker, Jacquelyn Leach King of East Dublin. Her beloved cat, Rat Rat, also preceded her in death.

Linda's legacy continues through her loving sons, Jeff McCullars (Melanie) of Soperton and Mark McCullars (Sue) of Dublin. She was a proud and doting granny to her granddaughters, Angel Toler (Waylon) of East Dublin, Crystal Livingston (Jammie) of Dublin, as well as her grandson, Chad McCullars (Megan) of Dublin, and great-granddaughters, Bethany and Jessica Toler of East Dublin. Linda also leaves behind several nieces and nephews, as well as her special caregiver and friend, Sandra Lester, all of whom will miss her deeply.

A graduate of Dublin High School, Linda retired from a fulfilling career at Mohawk Industries, where she was known for her friendly demeanor and strong work ethic. She was also a valued member of the Northside Baptist Church.

Linda's interests were a reflection of her loving and friendly nature. She was an avid NASCAR fan, and her enthusiasm for the sport was infectious. Linda found joy in simple pleasures like working on crossword puzzles, playing bingo, and hunting for treasures at yard sales. She cherished the trips she took with her sister, creating memories that would last a lifetime.

Above all, Linda was a devoted wife, mother, granny, and sister. Her selfless nature was evident in the way she cared for her family and friends. She had a gift for making those around her feel loved and valued, and her presence was a source of comfort and happiness.

Graveside services were held at 11 a.m. at Northview Cemetery on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2025, with Mr. Dan King Sr., officiating.

The family would like to say a special thank you to the staff and nurses of Remarkable Hospice for their devotion, love, and care of their beloved granny.

The family gathered at the home of Chad and Megan McCullars.

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

## BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 27  
Justin Edwards  
Cathy Edwards  
Jamiya Wilcher

Jan. 28  
Angela Edwards  
Cecily Craft  
Marquis Austin

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**Deborah Brockus**

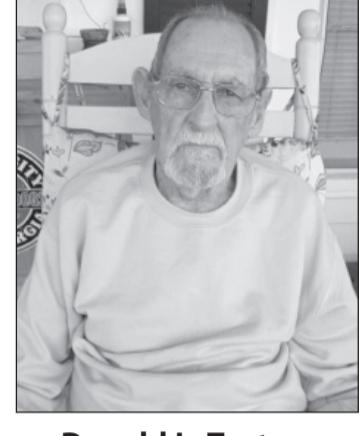
Deborah Joan Jennings Brockus, 71, of the Midway Community of Pulaski County, passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026, at her residence.

No services will be held at this time.

She is survived by her loving husband of 24 years – Wayne Brockus; daughter – Tanya Wynne; son – Shannon Wynne (Carrie); 6 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren; Sisters – Carol Mullis (A.T.) and Karen Cody; brothers – Johnny Jennings (Laverne), Jerry Jennings (Judy), and Stevie Jennings (Scotty).

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

[www.stokes-southerland.com](http://www.stokes-southerland.com)

**Donald L. Teston**

Memorial Services for Donald L. Teston, 80, will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026, in the Chan Stanley Memorial Chapel of Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory. Mr. Hank Stevenson and Mr. Brett Teston will officiate.

Mr. Teston was born Jan. 21, 1946, in Baxley, Georgia. He was the son of the late Albert Lee Teston and Nina Underwood Teston. He proudly served his country in the United States Army. He was a truck driver for Keith Pickle Trucking. He was a member of Battle Ground Church of God. Mr. Teston passed away Friday, Jan. 23, 2026, at Fairview Park Hospital.

Mr. Teston is survived by his wife, Marsha Carol Teston of East Dublin; 2 sons, Stacy Teston of Baxley and Kelly Teston of Baxley; 2 daughters, Melody Teston of Vidalia and Christy Teston of Dublin; 2 sisters, Merlene Teston of Baxley and Christine Teston of Baxley; and 7 grandchildren, Brett Teston, Gunner Teston, Austyn Teston, Sylas Teston, Raylee Farley, Jared Hall and Shine Teston.

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

**Corrin Selph Longsworth**

Corrin Selph Longsworth, 55, of McDonough, Ga., died on Friday, Jan. 23, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

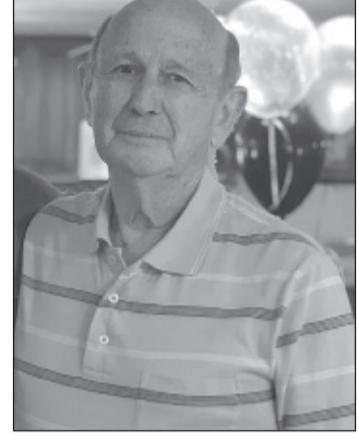
She is survived by her husband – David Longsworth; daughter – Hillary

Stokes (Thomas); sons – Jacob Longsworth and Madison Evans; 3 grandchildren; mother – Deborah Edge (Danny); sister – Cari Beasley (Bobby).

The family received friends in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 2 p.m.- 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25.

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

[www.stokes-southerland.com](http://www.stokes-southerland.com)

**James Herbert Hall**

Funeral services for James Herbert Hall, 84, will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026, at Liberty Grove Baptist Church with burial to follow in Westview Cemetery. Rev. Sammy Hall will officiate.

Mr. Hall was born on Feb. 21, 1941, in Wrightsville, Ga. He was a retired salesman for Flanders Auto. He was a member of Liberty Grove Baptist Church. He was preceded in death by his parents, Walter Manning and Bessie Hadden Hall; wife, Grace Virginia Davis Hall; sisters, Sara Oliver and Margie Cranford; and brothers, W.M. Hall, Lanier Hall, Shorty Hall and William Hall. Mr. Hall passed away on Saturday, January 24, 2026, at Fairview Park Hospital.

He is survived by his son, Jeff (Mitzi) Hall of Wrightsville; grandson, Clay (Krista) Hall of Wrightsville; 5 great grandchildren, Trae Hall, Blake Glenn, Charlie Hall, Avery Roberson and Grey Hall; 3 sisters, Carlene Smith of Wrightsville, Betty (Jimmy) Pitts of Dublin, Linda Strickland (Rondie) Warren of Dudley; and a brother, Bobby (Debra) Hall of Wrightsville.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026, at the funeral home.

Pallbearers will be Bruce Oliver, Brad Hall, Calvin Sturgis, Greg Smith, Keith Pitts, and Ryan Strickland.

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



Corrin Selph Longsworth, 55, of McDonough, Ga., died on Friday, Jan. 23, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

She is survived by her husband – David Longsworth; daughter – Hillary

**Leola Ellington**

Ms. Leola Ellington of Dudley, Ga. passed away on Monday, Jan. 26, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

[www.ServicesByDudley.com](http://www.ServicesByDudley.com)

**John E. Martin**

Mr. John E. Martin of Wrightsville, Ga. passed away on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

[www.ServicesByDudley.com](http://www.ServicesByDudley.com)

**STRANGE BUT TRUE**

By LUCIE WINBORNE

\* The living room set of "The Addams Family" TV series was actually pink.

\* About 1,350 potentially active volcanoes presently exist on Earth, with the majority of them found along a 25,000-mile-long, horseshoe-shaped ribbon bordering the Pacific Ocean that's commonly known as the "Ring of Fire."

\* Chopsticks in Asia are about 2,000 years older than forks in Europe.

\* The color red appears in nearly every shot of Stanley Kubrick's 1980 horror classic "The Shining."

\* Michelangelo only signed one piece of art, the "Madonna della Pietà," and that was supposedly because he overheard his work credited to a rival and sneaked back to include his name on the sash across the Virgin Mary's chest.

\* Philadelphia cream cheese doesn't hail from Philadelphia. It originated in New York.

\* People spend roughly 10% of their waking hours with their eyes closed. That's OK, we know you're just thinking.

\* No American president has been an only child.

\* In 1954, the mayor of the wine-growing town Chateauneuf-du-Pape in France issued a memorable decree that banned the "flying over, landing or taking off of flying saucers." It's unclear whether anyone ever considered how such an event should be handled should it defiantly occur.

\* Shaquille O'Neal missed 5,317 free throws over the course of his career.

\* Only three music companies are responsible for more than 80% of the music we listen to: Sony BMG, Warner Music Group and Universal Music Group.

\* Spiders, like humans, can have arachnophobia. Small wonder, since certain species regularly eat each other: for food, after mating and for other reasons scientists don't yet fully understand.

**Thought for the Day:**  
"You can make positive deposits in your own economy every day by reading and listening to powerful, positive, life-changing content and by associating with encouraging and hope-building people." -- Zig Ziglar

**Georgia House to operate minus one member following lawmaker's suspension**

tled.

Another member of the state House quickly resolved charges related to defrauding the same unemployment program.

Former Rep. Karen Bennett, D-Stone Mountain, pleaded guilty in the same federal court to making false statements to fraudulently obtain \$13,940 in federal emergency relief funds during the pandemic. Theodore S. Hertzberg, the U.S. District Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, announced Wednesday.

Kemp was required by the Georgia Constitution to assemble the review committee on Henderson's status.

On Jan. 8, he appointed three members. Two were Republicans: Attorney General Chris Carr and Rep. Jan Jones, R-Milton, the House speaker pro tem. The third was Sen. Harold Jones, II, D-Augusta, the Senate minority leader.

They issued their findings Thursday, the same day Kemp suspended Henderson.

Several other seats in the legislature remain open for a variety of reasons, but Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger has been scheduling special elections to fill them, with one for Bennett's vacated seat on March 10.

**NOW HERE'S A TIP**

By JOANN DERSON

\* This tip will change your life when peeling eggs: After you have hard-boiled your eggs, drain them and leave them in the pot. Put the lid on the pot and shake. Shake in all directions for up to a minute. The eggs practically slip right out of their shells. Just rinse and prep.

\* "I feed my kitty cat outside on the back porch, but she eats a little at a time, and whenever she took a break, the ants would be all over her food. Now I serve my little princess in a teacup and saucer I found at a thrift store. I put the food in the cup and then put a little water in the saucer. The teacup sits in the water on the saucer. The ants won't get the food ever, because they can't cross the water to get

to it. Kitty is very happy now that she can take her time."

-- O.W. in Arkansas

\* "To distinguish your keys, especially house keys that have similar stamps, simply paint the key head with different colors of nail polish. You could even add a very subtle dot of the matching polish on the key lock. Reapply as needed." -- S.L. in Oregon

\* Use a flat iron to iron your collar if it's rumpled. This also works to straighten out button holes that have crimped.

\* "To mark the end on a roll of tape, save your bread tabs. Stick it on the end and it will be ready and easy to start the next time you need tape. If it's a thick tape, you can use two clips -- one at either side of the tape. This way, it won't split on you." -- M.E. in Maryland

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## *Serving All Communities gives back to community*

Serving All Communities starts the New Year out by giving \$200 donations to three local nursing homes - Dublin Trails, Dublinair Nursing Rehab and Southland Nursing and Rehab on Jan. 5. Donations were presented to the directions of the nursing homes. Present were SAC President Rickey Brown and club members Bobbie Stuckey, Ethel Rozier and Curtis Gainey

/SPECIAL PHOTOS



## Tifara celebrates 20 years of operation

Tifara, located in the Dublin Mall, recently celebrated 20 years of operation. Patrons and customers received free food and gifts during the celebration. There were a lot of walk-in specials and many smiles and laughter shared on this occasion. Tiffany Green is the owner and operator of this establishment/SPECIAL PHOTOS

Dear Laurens County,

Since 1905, Bank of Dudley has been operating with the same name, the same charter, and the same mission. While other banks change ownership, direction, or identity, Bank of Dudley will not.

We believe in local people making local decisions for our customers and communities. We are proud of our deep roots, our long-standing relationships, and our commitment to being the kind of bank that knows you by name and understands your needs. That dedication to local banking and personalized service has guided us for more than a century, and it continues to guide us today.

Our goal is simple: to be the last bank you'll ever need. A bank you can trust today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

Thank you for trusting Bank of Dudley, a local bank then, now, and always.

Sincerely, *Sam Beall*



**BANK OF  
DUDLEY**

Local People. Local Decisions. Local Banking.

## OUR TAKE...



As this photo shows, Dublin-Laurens County has been known to have icy weather/FILE PHOTO

## Weather or not you like the forecast, be prepared

For anyone who paid attention to the weather forecast last week, you know that our area was at one time in the path of the winter storm. As the week progressed, the storm's projected path was predicted to hit north of Dublin and Laurens County.

Even then, the best advice from forecasters and local officials was to stay tuned to the weather predictions as the storm approached. We were told to prepare in case the storm path shifted, which the weather is prone of doing.

Just a few years ago, Hurricane Helene shifted to the right of its projected path. Dublin went from being on the right side of the storm to the middle. In that case, we knew the storm was going to hit us and began preparing days – if not a week – before it struck.

No one wants to go through one hour or more without power. Unfortunately with storms like the ones we have had in the past, it is a realistic possibility. Information about the weather and what to do to be prepared can be found on the Laurens County Emergency Management Agency website.

Beginning in February, the EMA will begin rolling out information pertaining to Severe Weather Preparedness Week. This will be a good time to soak this information in like a sponge and be ready the next time a major storm heads our way.

— Payton Towns III

### YOUR TURN:

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

### THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

*"The most delightful advantage of being bald - one can hear snowflakes."*

- R.G. Daniels

### DAILY SCRIPTURE...

*"Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit. The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground. Sing to the Lord with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp. He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills."*

- Psalm 147:5-8

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

Jan. 27, 2026 is...

- National Chocolate Cake Day
- National Geographic Day
- Thomas Crapper Day
- International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- World Breast Pumping Day

# The Courier Herald

## LOCAL MATTERS



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2024

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

Periodicals Postage Paid at Dublin, Georgia  
(USPS 161-860) - Published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

POSTMASTER: Send address change to:

The Courier Herald, 115 South Jefferson Street, Dublin, GA 31021

## GEORGIA TRUST

— for Local News —

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

# Finding the joy to overcome adversity

It is frustrating when things do not go our way. No one is ever ready for unexpected events that can easily derail our day, if we let them.

Go outside to crank up the car and nothing happens. Out of the blue the battery does not work and now you have to jump it off. And if that does not work, you know there is a more serious problem that has to be addressed. I have never seen anyone shout out, "Oh what a beautiful morning," when this occurs.

Walk over to the kitchen sink to retrieve some water for your pet and nothing comes out. That's an empty feeling.

Wake up in the middle of the night because you stomach hurts and you are being summoned to the porcelain throne in the bathroom and you cannot understand why because you did not feel bad before going to the bed. I'd rather be doing a prep for a colonoscopy than having a stomach virus. At least with the prep I know why my stomach is upset.

Pick up a phone that was working fine a few minutes ago, and the next thing you know the only call you can make is to 911. Or, have a storm come through - winter or hurricane - and too many nearby trees fall and take out the power.

I have had all of these scenarios happen to me during the last 24 months. They are never fun to deal with. There was certainly no joy dealing with these and other times like when my vehicle battery died without warning.

It is funny how my car can tell me that it is cold outside when the temperatures are around the freezing mark, and inform me that my tire pressure is low approximately two miles after I have pulled out of my driveway on the way to church or work.

These are all inconveniences, and no matter who we are, we will have to deal with one or more – sometimes at the same time.

Last week I wrote about

## MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

my phone breaking down and going three days without a phone that could receive or make calls. One person told me to enjoy it. They wished their phone would do something similar. And while there were frustrations, I knew a new phone was on its way.

The day after my phone was fixed, I had an issue with my car. Great! Got one thing fixed, and now it is something else that will cost to get corrected. Of course, I was not planning to put money into my car.

But like I have heard multiple times from superintendents or city or county officials at various meetings I have covered throughout the years, these unplanned things happen and we have

to deal with them.

I am reminded of how we should look at these challenges in James 1:2-4: "Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

It is hard to find yourself seeing the joy when things are not exactly going right. But our current circumstances are always changing. If it is bad, it will be right again at some time.

On Jan. 18, we woke up to news that snow would be hitting our area in a few hours. Before I knew it, our

front and back yards was full of that white stuff called snow. This continued until right about lunch time. For those who loved the snow, they got to see it fall nicely from the sky. For those who rather not see it - or don't care - the sun came out that afternoon and melted majority of that white stuff before the moon popped up.

For the last two weeks ends we had to be aware of the possibility of snow or ice. We've seen the predictions and came to a conclusion to what we needed to do to stay safe. And after the storm passes, hopefully, it was not as bad as advertised.

When Hurricane Helene barreled through our lovely state, it left a wide path of destruction. Where you lived determined how long the power was out. Many people had to rough it out, waiting for the electricity to return. Hardly any joy during that dismal period.

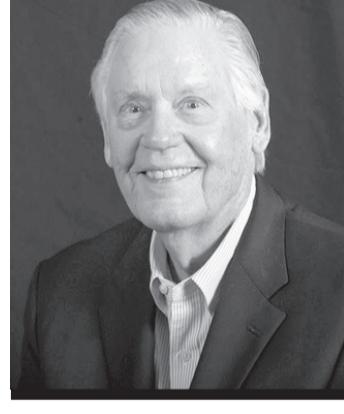
But the joy returned as soon as the hum of power came flowing through the house again, meaning life could slowly return to normal.

Bad things will happen. As long as we are breathing, thank the Lord above and try to find the joy.



“Here's Donnie!”

## The elephant in the room? It's our Okefenokee



By DICK YARBROUGH

She didn't even have the good grace to respond to calls and emails from you explaining her actions.

Then there is the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (insert oxymoron here), which received approximately 80,000 overwhelmingly negative comments during public comment periods and did nothing. More than a quarter million comments at state and federal levels have been received since the project was first proposed in 2018. Also overwhelmingly negative.

Let me pause at this point and say that state Sen. Steve Gooch, R-Dahlonega, opined that despite all the opposition to the mining proposal, "Those are decisions that shouldn't be made by political entities. Those are decisions that should be made by regulatory agencies." Really?

Gooch has announced he is running for Lt. Governor, which last time I looked, is a political entity. If and when he asks you for your vote, please ask him if he still feels that way. If so, why do we need him making decisions? Let's let unelected bureaucrats make all the decisions and he can busy himself cutting ribbons at Walmart grand openings.

After Twin Pines Minerals had crawled back into the hole from whence they came, Toledo Manufacturing, the largest remaining private landowner along the swamp's southeastern

boundary, had publicly solicited the Chemours Company, the world's biggest titanium mining company, to join forces. That's not likely anytime soon. It turns out that Chemours has announced it is laying off one-third of its workforce in Georgia due to a slump in titanium dioxide prices and a global glut of the stuff, thanks to the Chinese.

In addition, new research by scientists at the University of Georgia suggests that mining in or around the swamp could affect groundwater supplies relied on by millions of people.

Now that drilling for toothpaste whitener in our Okefenokee is not economically feasible and UGA scientists have research that it's an unwise thing to do ecologically, wouldn't this be a good time to stick a fork in the whole thing and pass the Okefenokee Protection Act? The answer is (a) yes and (b) don't hold your breath.

I suspect our intrepid public servants and their land baron pals will wait for market conditions to improve and then it will be déjà vu all over again. But if they think we are going away, they are mistaken. They may pretend there is no elephant in the room, but we know better.

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

**Dublin Police Department**

- Trenton J. Mims, 19, was charged with disorderly conduct at Fairview Park Hospital on Industrial Boulevard around 1:16 p.m. on Jan. 10.

An officer responded to the hospital in reference to a disorderly person. Three women security officers said Mims was brought in the day before by law enforcement to be evaluated for a 10-13. The doctor signed a 10-13 order, and Sims was waiting to be moved to another facility to be evaluated.

During this waiting period, Mims got irritated because he did not have a TV or working bathroom. Security stated that he began to curse at them and called them names, making threats and damaging property. The officer met with Mims, who was calm and compliant. Staff said Mims was discharged from the hospital.

He was arrested and transported to the police department, where he was fingerprinted and released

on citation.

- An officer made a traffic stop on a silver Nissan Sentra for having a person riding on the back of the vehicle while on the road at the intersection of Outer Street and Academy Avenue around 8:57 a.m. on Jan. 11. The incident turned out to be a domestic dispute.

- Darius M. Anderson, 35, was charged with disorderly conduct at Hwashin on Emerald Pointe Road around 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 9.

Officers responded to the location in reference to a fight between two employees where one was reported to have a gun. An officer saw a large crowd near the front of the building but saw that no active fight was occurring.

An investigation led to Anderson's arrest. No weapons were found during the investigation.

- Dartasia Latrevona Cannon, 20, was charged with simple battery at Dairy Queen on East Jackson Street around 2:20 p.m. on Jan. 10.

A woman said she and her juvenile son were get-

**POLICE BEAT...**

ting food from the DQ at the drive-thru when her and an employee got into an argument over money and she was stuck by the drive-thru employee in the face. This happened after an argument about the change given back to the woman by the employee, who was identified as Cannon.

Cannon told the woman to leave several times and threw straws at her. The woman got out of her vehicle and knocked on the window. Cannon opened the window and hit the woman before she could get hit.

Video footage was shown to the officer. Cannon was arrested and transported to the sheriff's office where she was released to booking.

- A warrant was issued for Dondrae D'Shon Bailey, 24, who was charged with

criminal trespass and damage to property at Rise Up on Academy Avenue at 2:34 p.m. on Jan. 13. An officer responded to a report of property damage.

The officer met with a woman and other staff members. They reported that Bailey had punched a hole in the wall after becoming upset because he could not find his missing cellphone. The staff attempted to calm him down and have a conversation, but his agitation increased. He was instructed to leave the property and not return.

**Laurens County Sheriff's Office**

- Gerald Trayvon Horne, 31, was charged with convicted felon, possession of firearms at the intersection of South Jefferson Street

and East Madison Street around 10:22 a.m. on Jan. 2.

A deputy saw a man he believed had an outstanding warrant driving a black Toyota Camry. The deputy ran the tag and confirmed the owner, who had a suspended license and was wanted out of Laurens County Sheriff's Office for a felony probation violation.

The tag on the Camry also came back with a suspended registration.

- A deputy talked with a person via phone in reference to property damage to a house on St. Charles Drive in East Dublin around 9 a.m. on Dec. 28.

- On Dec. 31, around 7 p.m., a deputy responded to the Dollar General on U.S. 80 East in reference to a shoplifting.

- Gabriel Noah Veldboom, 28, of Waynesboro, was charged with possession of methamphetamine on I-16 at mile marker 55 around 11:36 p.m. on Dec. 31.

- A deputy responded to a location on Chuck Thompson Road in Cadwell

around 11:37 p.m. on Jan. 1 about a removal call.

- Damage occurred on a truck on Mace Cannon Road around 10:23 a.m. on Jan. 1.

- A deputy responded to the intersection of Buckeye Road and Ben Hall Lake Road to assist GSP around 9:03 p.m. on Jan. 3.

- A deputy talked with a person about a phone message in reference to fraud that happened on U.S. 441 South at 7:26 a.m. on Dec. 29.

*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 school board also said** if the SPLOST passed that seniors would not have to pay school taxes. But, that's not true because we've got our tax bill and it says we owe about 80 percent to the school. So, that was a big old bald story.

**Uncle Tell It master,** I have one of those jaw harps. Mine is a Snoopy harp. I used to play it, but now I have soft teeth. I had a toothache and it hurt me so bad I couldn't go to work. I went to the dentist and told him I wanted it pulled. He pulled it out and was fixing to throw it in the trash. I told him not to throw it away. He asked if I was going to pull it under the pillow for the tooth fairy. I told him I was going to get it home, put some syrup on it and throw it in the freezer and told him to see if it can hurt me now!

**This is Tell It man** reporting in. Tell It master talked about changing tires in the paper. This boy reporting on WMAZ in Monroe was on the side of the highway talking about the snow. He was stuck there because of a flat tire.

**This is to the Dublin Board of Education** for

the city of Dublin schools. You are hurting Dublin by raising taxes. You are hurting Dublin and the citizens. No one wants to move into Dublin and pay higher taxes. Also you have to be realistic that you owe the state Board of Education \$13 million and it is now probably \$14 million. You also owe the state retirement and health care. Quit trying to fool yourself. You must stop and move forward with consolidation with the county!

**How does the board** not see that we don't trust them - it has been said every way possible! Anybody that is old on the board should resign. We don't believe anything that comes out of your mouth.

**When is the city schools** going to build the new baseball training facility? Sports are the most important function of the school. It needs to be put up as soon as possible.

**Whoever thinks Fred Williams** and Dublin city school should sue for slander is a joke. Who are they gonna sue? The Courier Herald is printing the voice of the people. It's been harped on for a long

time and will continue to until the GBI investigation. Fred should have done his job and he wouldn't be getting slammed in the Tell It. Someone needs to be held accountable and responsible!

**Does Dublin City have a street sweeper** that goes around to the back areas on apartment complex's. It looks like a forest.

**Laurens County may be the only place** in America where the private Christian school has to leave the county wrestling championship early for fighting!

**Regardless with what** the GBI comes up with, if someone is charged for the taxpayers' money being stolen at the Dublin City Schools, the citizens of Dublin will never forget it. It will never be over!

**I'd like to know if** we are the list for putting the speed bumps up in The Villas off of 441 North. We'd like to have three, maybe one on each road.

**Please address sanitation trucks** securing their loads on Claxton Dairy Road. Trash regularly falls off and litters the roadway. Better tarping and load checks would keep the road cleaner and safer.

**Classifieds****Employment**

26-038

**COLLECTOR**

The City of Dublin is currently accepting applications for a Collector in our Sanitation Department. The Collector performs routine, unskilled heavy manual labor in the collection of refuse. Work involves the collection of trash, rubbish and debris and loading it into the collection vehicles. The tasks are usually arduous and normally are of a routine and repetitive nature, requiring the employee on occasion to operate the packer truck. Work is performed under the direct supervision of the Sanitation Supervisor and the Public Works Department.

Applicants must have a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and a valid Georgia Driver's license. The successful applicant must pass a drug screen. Salary is \$33,238.40 annually. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered.

Applicants may apply online through our [www.cityofdublin.org](http://www.cityofdublin.org) website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

January 24, 27, 29, 31, 2026

**Real Estate****For Rent/Lease**

Apt. for Rent - 808A S. Washington St., 2 BR, kitchen, LR & shower, inc. pest control. \$600 dep., \$600 mo. City gas heat & window ac, stove & refrigerator. Call 478-697-6817. Located in Southside in Dublin.

**Local church celebrates veterans**

Members of Mount Tilla Baptist Church celebrated their veterans during a recent worship service/SPECIAL PHOTO

**Season Closeouts**

**Furs Up To 70% OFF**

**New lightweight sheared mink and more**

**Modern, Lightweight, Everyday Wearable**

**Tuesday, Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>**

**11am - 4pm**

**All Fur Services Available**



**Restyle Your Fur**

**Talk to the experts**

**Your Classic old Fur can be Restyled to a Modern Fun Fur**

**Dublin's Fur Store**

**478-275-1972**

**2032-D Veterans Blvd**

**Dublin, GA 31021**

**Local 7-day Forecast:**

The next 48 hours:

**TUESDAY:** 48° Chilly with sunshine. Sunrise: 7:29 a.m.

**TUESDAY NIGHT:** 22° Clear and cold. Sunset: 6:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY DAY:** 52° Sunny to partly cloudy. Sunrise: 7:29 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT:** 29° Clouds breaking. Sunset: 6:01 p.m.

**Thursday** 1/29 HIGH/LOW 48/19 Breezy and chilly with plenty of sunshine. Sunrise: 7:28 a.m. Sunset: 6:02 p.m.

**Friday** 1/30 HIGH/LOW 45/21 Chilly with clouds and sun. Sunrise: 7:28 a.m. Sunset: 6:03 p.m.

**Saturday** 1/31 HIGH/LOW 46/27 Turning cloudy with a chance of rain in the afternoon. Sunrise: 7:27 a.m. Sunset: 6:04 p.m.

**Sunday** 2/1 HIGH/LOW 49/25 Periods of rain. Sunrise: 7:26 a.m. Sunset: 6:05 p.m.

**Monday** 2/2 HIGH/LOW 49/26 Abundant sunshine. Sunrise: 7:26 a.m. Sunset: 6:06 p.m.

**River levels...**

Oconee (at Dublin) ..... 3.38'

Ocmulgee (at Macon) ..... 6.36'

# Opening arguments in murder trial

DUBLIN COURIER  
-HERALD

By Doug Hall

Attorneys made their opening arguments this morning in the Cheryl S. Todd-Dessie X Woods trial before the jury of 11 women and one man.

It was the first time the case had come before a jury since Ronnie L. Horne, 35, was shot to death last June 16.

District Attorney Phil West gave the jury a preview of how the state expects to prove the two black women murdered and robbed Horne after he had picked them up hitchhiking.

Defense attorneys presented lengthy arguments before the jury claiming that Horne tried to take undue advantage of the women and was shot by Mrs. Woods in self-defense. Monday, before about fifty courtroom spectators and officials, tape recorded statements made by the two defendants were played.

The jury was not present. In the two rambling 20-minute admissions, Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Woods told about meeting Ronnie Horne, shooting him, and trying to make their way back to Atlanta.

Both women said repeatedly that they feared Horne was trying to kill them. They were also concerned that the man was going "to take us in the wood" and rape them.

Attorneys for the two women have repeatedly stated that Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Woods were defending themselves from sexual advances when Horne was shot twice in the head.

There has been little mention that the women were in fear of their lives.

Speaking rapidly and erratically, Mrs. Todd said Horne told them he was a "detective." He spoke with another "detective" through a "microphone," she said.

Earlier testimony showed the other "detective" was Raye Yawn, Horne's boss, who kept in touch with Horne over citizens band radios in their cars.

Mrs. Todd said that Horne took the two women down a "dark road." She said she jumped out of the car and ran down the road when Horne slowed down. Then she heard two shots and fell on the ground.

A moment later Mrs. Woods hollered out, "I killed him."

Both women said Horne talked "nasty" to them, but Mrs. Woods said he became friendly while Mrs. Todd said he began to talk "extremely nasty."

Mrs. Todd said Horne put his hands" on Mrs. Wood, but Mrs. Wood said the victim did not touch her.

Mrs. Wood told her story of what happened in the car when Horne was shot. "He went for the gun. I took the gun. We both went for the gun, you see. I saw what he was going to do. I grabbed the gun...took it out of the holster and I shot him."

After the man was shot, she went in his pocket and took out the "hit money" she said Horne was paid by the Glenville police to kill the two women. When they were arrested the next day, police found \$147 and a pistol believed to be Horne's.

Mrs. Todd and Mrs. Wood were jailed in Glenville on drunkenness charges several days before Horne's death. Both women claim Mrs. Todd was sick with "seizures" when arrested by police near Reidsville State Prison.

Mrs. Todd said the police "roughed" up the women. Mrs. Woods said a policeman scratched her across the breast during the arrest.

Judge James B. O'Connor was expected to rule today whether the taped statements could be admissible

in court.

Yesterday he ruled that the state had "clearly shown" that the statements were voluntarily made.

Laurens County Sheriff Investigator Buddy Daniels, Wheeler County Sheriff Maurice Johnson and GBI Agent Joe White testified that they complied with requirements of the Miranda decision in giving the defendants their constitutional rights at the time of the arrests. Waivers of counsel and other rights, signed by the two women, were entered as evidence.

## QUINN, ACTING CITY MANAGER

Jim Quinn, the city purchasing agent, has been designated Dublin's acting city manager on a "very, very temporary basis."

At the same time Council set up an interview for Saturday with a prospective city manager candidate. The applicant's name was not revealed.

Moving to "nip in the bud" ideas that Council would take the same course as it did when former City Manager Ron McLemore was appointed, Council put several limitations on the acting manager position.

Mayor Robert E. Cochran noted that some people might consider Quinn a part of the "old clique," but he emphasized that the appointment was "essential" and "very, very temporary."

Quinn was hired by McLemore and began working under a Federal Emergency Employment grant in October.

He has over 20 years experience in city government and is said to be a possible applicant for the full time manager's job.

Alderman Buddy Adams asked that Quinn not move into the city manager's office since that might affect "morale."

Council also stipulated that the acting manager not create any new jobs and that he inform Council of any city employees being dismissed.

## LAURENS RETAIL SALES OVER \$10 MILLION

Retail sales in Laurens County in November last year seem destined to set a new record for the county, having passed the \$10 million mark for the seventh time, according to information from the Division of Research College of Business Administration of the University of Georgia.

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a talk by Erskine Russell, Assistant Head Coach and Defensive Co-ordinator of the University of Georgia Bulldogs.

Allen Thomas, President of the Touchdown Club, introduced the speaker, who praised the 1975 Irish squad for their 7-3 record and challenged the 1976 squad to "win the State championship while Georgia becomes the National college champion."

He also pointed out the good work of the cheerleaders and the role they play in achieving a good football program.

Three factors determine the success of an athletic program:

Having good talent with desire, determination and intelligence.

Great loyalty and support from the hometown boosters.

Luck that comes your way as a result of hard work and a better than 100 percent effort.

Miss Pearl Whitlock was introduced, and she introduced the cheerleaders.

Also recognized was Cecil Pollock, Dublin High School Band Director.

## OUR MEN IN SERVICE

Ft. Benning, Georgia - Army Sergeant Archie B. Harville, Jr., whose parents live on Route 7, Dublin, Georgia, was promoted to his present rank while serving as a military policeman with the 139th Military Police Company at Ft. Benning, Georgia, December 10.

Sergeant Harville entered the Army in June 1974 and completed basic training at Ft. Dix, New Jersey.

A 1959 graduate of Dublin, Georgia, High School, he attended Middle Georgia College, Cochran, and Mercer University, Macon. Before entering the Army, he was employed as a policeman in Forest Park, Georgia.

His wife, Sergeant Joan H. Harville, is also stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Crete, Greece - Army Private First Class Artie B. Holmes, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Holmes, Route 1, Dublin, Georgia, recently took part in an annual service practice (ASP) on the Island of Crete near Greece.

Pvt. Holmes is a missile crewman in Battery C 1st Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery in Hanau, Germany.

Pfc. Holmes is a 1973 graduate of West Laurens High School.

## DUBLIN THESPIANS PLAN "ONE-ACTS"

Thespian Troupe 669 of Dublin High School will present "A Night of One-Acts" on Thursday, February 26, and Friday, February 27, in the Dublin Junior High School Auditorium.

The curtain time each night will be 8:00.

The three one-act plays to be presented are

"Theatre of the Soul"

"Sorry, Wrong Number"

"The Invisible Dragon"

The first play of the evening will be "Theatre of the Soul," which won first place in Region and State competition this year.

The cast will be:

Chuck Hall

Jon Taylor

Fred Byers

Timothy Hurd

John Kisalus

Claudia Bannister

Lisa Kisalus

Diane Hammock

Dee Hammond

The show will be directed by R. Lynn Woody.

"Sorry, Wrong Number"

will also be directed by R. Lynn Woody and is the story of an invalid woman, played by Taffy Porter, who, after getting a wrong number, overhears the plotting of a murder.

She slowly realizes she is to be the victim.

Others in the cast are:

Kathleen Amis

Angie Amis

Dorthea Williamson

Angela Graham

Calvin Jackson

Timothy Hurd

Craig Williamson

David Dixon

Mike Warren will direct.

"The Invisible Dragon," a children's theatre comedy.

Willie Pittman is the story teller with Ricky Hagler and Judy Griner playing the roles of King and Queen.

The princess, played by Lauren Hall, thinks everything is gloom until a handsome dragon hunter appears.

Then she is very happy, but the story teller, with the help of the stage manager,

Cathy Hess, must produce a dragon so the Prince, Rock Bussell, will remain in the kingdom.

Others in the cast will be Jeffery Lindsey, Charles Clements, David Ratledge, John Kibler, Betsy Frost, Alan James, Eddie Roberts, and Rhonda Hightower.

## LOOKING BACK...

### 50 YEARS AGO

JANUARY 27, 1976



By HARRIETT CLAXTON

from Georgia College in Milledgeville with an A.D. in Nursing.

Ricky is a graduate of Baldwin County High School and is presently attending Georgia College. He is also employed at J.P. Stevens in Milledgeville.

The wedding is planned for Sunday, March 21, 1976, at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church near Dexter followed by a reception in the home of the bride's parents.

All friends and relatives are cordially invited to attend.

## NO OPPOSITION FOR MAYOR

Foster C. Taylor will be the only candidate for Mayor in the January 28 city election while seven persons are running for five open council seats.

Taylor has been mayor of Rentz since he won a write-in vote last September to fill the unexpired term of C.L. Woodard.

Qualifying for the city election closed on Tuesday, January 13, with five incumbents entering the race:

Billy Wyatt, operator of Wyatt Sign Co.; Ralston L. Davidson, owner of a clothing store; M.L. Knight, an employee of Evans Cabinet Company; J. Calvin Fordham, operator of a septic tank business; Jack Lindsey, farmer; W.C. Etheridge, a county employee; Ann C. Colter, employee of Laurens Memorial Hospital.

Wyatt, Fordham, Knight, Davidson, and Etheridge make up the present City Council.

The new mayor and council will take office at the first town meeting in February.

## WEST LAURENS HONOR ROLL

The Honor Roll for West Laurens High School for the First Semester 1975-76 follows:

Tenth Grade

Luticia Clark

Judy Clements

Michael Coleman

Alfred Daniel

Jeana Floyd

*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.*

# County champs...

Three in-town rivals competed for the final time this regular season Thursday night as they convened for The Laurens County Championships at the Old West Laurens gym. The host Raiders took first place overall, with 238 points, followed by Dublin, with 156.5, and Trinity, with 19 (East Laurens was unable to compete). Individual champs by weight (shown at right, not in order) were West's Jarek Giles (106), Luke Shepard (113), Sebastian Rodriguez (120), Jayden Starley (132), Damien Cummings (138), John Howell (144), Jonathon McDonald (157), Braylen Robinson (165), Zorian Willis (175), Jayden Watkins (190) and Maxx Chafin (215), and Dublin's Keymontae Sanders (126), Dorian Carcamo (150) and Domimarkeyo Walden (285). Dublin, Trinity and West will all serve as hosts of region and area traditional championships set for this week and/or weekend/SPECIAL PHOTO



## MORE WRESTLING: MGMSAA CROWNS REGION CHAMPIONS

Before Thursday night's all-county meet, the mats at the O.W.L. belonged to area middle schoolers competing for top spots in the MGMSAA region championships. West Laurens, with 69 team points and 19 placers in the top three by weight, cruised to the overall title, with Swainsboro (34), Jeff Davis (32), Dodge County (19), East Laurens (13) and Dublin (1) in pursuit. Region champs were WLMS' Brody Faulk (70), Rhett Clanton (91), Bently Williams (98), Tyler Howell (106), Phillip Howell (120), Aden Lindsey (126), Carter Moore (144), Antoine Tuten (165) and Josiah Spencer (285), and ELMS' Liam Oliver (84). Below are scenes from several of Thursday's matches...



**SWOOPING IN:** West Laurens' Dracen Ussery pounces after taking Dublin's Andre Wright Jr. off-balance. He'd need only a few more seconds to complete the pin for a victory in the 215-pound round-robin/CLAY REYNOLDS



**WIN BY FAULK:** WLMS coach Noah Garnto reacts as Brody Faulk pins East Laurens' Sedrick Miller to nail down first place in the two-member 70-pound weight division. After winning their earlier bout by 1-0 decision, Faulk held off a strong bid by Miller (who led by five going to the last minute of regulation of this one) to force another rematch that would've been a winner-take-all/CLAY REYNOLDS



**TEAM PLAYERS:** These East Laurens Middle School wrestlers (left) stayed glued to the action from matside each time they had a teammate competing. The support had to be valuable for JaKobe Morris as rallied for this pin (right) in the third period to complete a comeback win over Swainsboro's Vincent Green, and get the group fired up/CLAY REYNOLDS



**FINAL COUNTDOWN:** West Laurens' Carter Moore salts away the last few seconds of his win, by 12-5 decision, over Dodge County's Terrance Brown – the first of his two-match run to take first at 144 lbs./CLAY REYNOLDS

## Cain leading charge for top-ranked Dawgs at Stegeman...

Christopher Blue Lonergan Cain, Georgia's 6-5 guard, functions with cagey stealth, cunning defensive acumen, and touch from the three-point line, along with competitive embers which seem to burn more intensely as the game goes on. His name is a mouthful, and he is often a handful in Southeastern Conference competition. He is only satisfied when his teammates raise clenched fists that confirm victory.

"Blue is part of his legal name," says Mike Mobley, men's basketball sports information director, one of the most competent members of the UGA Athletic Association staff. "His parents named him for the colors of his dad's alma mater, Duke University Blue Devils."

Lonergan is his mother's maiden name which reflects that the Cains are as family oriented as the Brady's and the Cleavers. A roll call reflects that they all have Division I pedigrees: Dad, Chris, played golf well enough at

Duke to reach the advanced stages of the ACC and NCAA championships. His mom, Myriah, is a member of the George Washington basketball Hall of Fame, and sister, Sophie, was a setter in volleyball at Appalachian State.

They all thrive on competition, and it was a red-letter day when Blue beat his dad on the golf course for the first time. On a family vacation to Scotland last summer, father and son took their clubs and introduced themselves to the famous courses where the Open championship is played each year. And some of the lesser-known courses that offer beauty, charm and challenge. They have a deep and abiding reverence for the environs of "Old Tom Morris."

They always try to take in the Masters in the spring, treating the tournament like a seasoned fisherman who casts from sunrise to sunset. They simply can't get enough of the game.

Lately, however, Blue has been helping Georgia

become substantial in SEC competition. His movement on the court is quick and deft. He gets in an opponent's face more often than Donald Trump. He plays much taller than his published height, and when he's on, he collects three pointers as adroitly as any 6-5 guard in the league.

When the competition under the basket is keenest, there are a lot of elbows and slings and arrows. Blue enjoys mixing it up and can hold his own. He can be the aggressor and he often makes salient and defining plays coming out of the end-

less scrums which take place on the court.

You might describe his enduring facial expression as being pensive, but he is never without passion and commitment. His anticipatory skills are consistently redeeming as he assesses opportunity and then moves with aplomb to the basket. Fade away, accurate arch, and the crowd is on its feet with a resounding crescendo.

A Catholic kid who grew up in Knoxville, Tenn., of all places, Blue was headed to Georgia Tech where Josh Pastner was the head coach,

but Pastner was fired before Blue enrolled. Disappointment segued into rapture. The entire Bulldog staff worked overtime to make him feel at home in Athens. He came, he looked, he stayed. He now feels that it was somewhat providential. "I couldn't be happier than I am here," he says. "This is a great place and the coaches are all outstanding. I love being a Bulldog."

He is helping UGA elevate its basketball program under the introspective Mike White who underscores the teaching element of his line of work. Blue and his teammates are athletic. They can make plays, they fight for the ball, and they uplift the sold-out crowds which have become commonplace.

It is like the line from, "Field of Dreams." "Build it and they will come." Put a selfless fivesome on the court, a compatible group proud to wear the "G" with a competitive underscoring of team effort and you have something that brings a col-

lection of Dawg mania proponents to Stegeman night after night.

"The Steg" is a cozy den of energy, moxie and verve. Occupants want to help their team gain the advantage, make it uncomfortable for visitors and help basketball resonate with the fan base, a long-suffering core that is now being fulfilled.

"I'm so glad that Mike White is leading the Dawgs back to prominence," said former coach Tubby Smith in town for the honoring of the Sweet Sixteen team of 1996. "He is a fine coach and his team is fun to watch." How 'bout that endorsement!

If White keeps recruiting players like Blue Cain, "The Steg" will continue to rock. The SEC, long known for its football prowess, can compete with the best at Dr. Naismith's game. You have missed something if you don't watch the basketball Dawgs raise a little "Cain" at "The Steg."



By LORAN  
SMITH

less scrums which take place on the court.

You might describe his enduring facial expression as being pensive, but he is never without passion and commitment. His anticipatory skills are consistently redeeming as he assesses opportunity and then moves with aplomb to the basket. Fade away, accurate arch, and the crowd is on its feet with a resounding crescendo.

A Catholic kid who grew up in Knoxville, Tenn., of all places, Blue was headed to Georgia Tech where Josh Pastner was the head coach,

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## SCOREBOARD

### GIRLS HOOPS

Friday

East Laurens 77, Dublin 49  
Hephzibah 65,  
West Laurens 58  
Trinity 57, Gatewood 47

Saturday

Dublin 57, Toombs Co. 46  
EL 49, WL 35

### BOYS HOOPS

Friday

EL 55, Dublin 30  
Hephzibah 86, WL 54  
Trinity 80, Gatewood 63

Saturday

EL 77, WL 62  
Toombs Co. 51, Dublin 50

## PREP

## SCHEDULE

### BASKETBALL

Tuesday

Harlem at WL/5 p.m.  
Dublin at Jefferson Co.  
EL at Washington Co.  
Windsor at Trinity 6 p.m.

Friday

Dublin at Wheeler Co.  
Jefferson Co. at EL  
Trinity at  
Central Fellowship/6 p.m.

### CONTACT US:

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

# NWLE releases second nine weeks honor roll

## SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

J.T. Dean, principal of Northwest Laurens Elementary, announces honor roll for the second nine weeks.

Third Grade: Griggs Bennett, Walker Brantley, Barrett Brinson, Mar'Kia Brown, Ella Cady, Andie Cannon, Raelynn Carter, Peighton Carter, Joanna Chen, Caroline Collins, Lylah Jane Crews, Laurynn

Daniels, Addison David, Conne Davis, Charlotte Doran, Josiah Duckworth, Eli Figureoa, Raelynn Green, Skylar Green, Anna Hardin, Ava Hart, Kolbie Jo Holmes, Anna Horne, Cohen Keiser, Claire Knight, Charlie Lewis, Latroy Lewis, Arjo Manalo, Wylder Michelsen, Emmie Moorman, Savannah Mullis, Nova Ne-Smith, Ryker Newby, Kendall Olson, Kennedy Olson, Isabella Patungan, Elizabeth Phillips, Arianna Reyes,

Hadley Rowland, Kaden Smith, Ace Stephans, Evelyn Stover, Alaina Toney, Chatzen Willhouse, Ruger Willhouse and Audrey Williams.

Fourth Grade: Desean Adams, Cambree Anderson, Paul Ballard, Lane Bradshaw, Nickolai Brantley, Jonathan Campos, Emma Cernin, Troy Clanton, Huck Crawford, Ryder Crawford, Kennedy Daniel, Claire Dean, Cutler Dobbins, Lydia Edwards, Abe

Flanders, Daniel Francis, Addison Garrett, Landon Graham, Holden Graham, Kamille Graham, Prince Green, Henry He, Ashton Jenkins, Lottie Ladson, Olivia Mathew, Calah Mathis, Violet McCorkle, JP Mimbs, Logan Moore, Jonah Ne-Smith, William Newsome, Noah O'Neal, Owen Osburn, Olivia Powell, Jaiden Ricks, Kaylee Roberson, Kerah Shannon, Weston Smith, Noah Studstill, Amaara Swint, Anna Kate Webb,

Isaiah Wells, Immi Williamson, Logan Womack and Tyler Wood.

Fifth Grade: RJ Auten, Norah Best, Raylen Chance, Madison Chapman, Aubrey Clark, Kate Collins, Cecily Craft, Ryder Dowdy, Jansen Finley, Morgan Green, Promise Green, Mya Hall, Tanna Rae Herring, Tanner Sagie Holmes, Edan Howard, Sarina Jiang, Skylar King, Witt Ladson, Ford Lawhorn, Brooklyn Leigh, Chloe Loftin, Cora Moor-

man, Joe Morris, Aarav Patel, Jax Patel, Shlok Patel, Bent Patisaul, Camilla Poole, Andrew Pritchett, Jacie Shepard, Aerolynn Sikes, Thomas Taylor, Lincoln Tevez, Chander Thomas, Ian Thomas, Malcolm Vickers, Karson Weathington, Mason Wilcox, Hilton Wilkes, Trindon Williams, Ivey Rae Williamson, Carter Willis, Eli Wright, Marshall Wynne, Angelina Xiong and Sophia Yanken.

## ELES announced honor roll for second quarter

## SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

East Laurens Elementary announces its honor roll for the second quarter of the 2025-26 school year.

### 5th Grade Honor Roll

Melissa Barber, Justin Bennett Jr., Jayce Bryant, Fisher Brown, Karson Brooks, Trevorous Burch, Mattie Bullard, Branch Carter, Colby Chavis, Olivia Clements, Kaleia Coleman, Kennidee Dice, Lyric Edmond, Lawson Fountain, Tyrese Floyd, McKinley Foskey, Josiah Fuller, Maggie Garrett, Landon Green, Luke Green, Kamryn Haggans, Gregorrianna Hamilton, Laney Henry, Ryleigh Hobbs, Lexi Howell, Finn Johnson, Roshoun Jenkins, Ka'Liah Locke, Bryan Lopez Secundo, Alayna Mayo, Kailey McClendon, Hayden Morgan, Selena Newsome, Angel Orduna, Brayden Palmer, Abram Pope, Bentley Perez, Ace Rak, Jagger Rozier, Madelyn Scott, Khyson Snead, Isaiah Smith, Riley Smith, Demarion Smith, Thomas Soles, Logan Stanley, Ethan Stanley, Holleigh Suggs, Jeremy Tyson, Ariana Vasquez, Kris Washington, Cayden White

### 4th Grade Honor Roll

Joshua Anderson, Summerlyn Anderson, Kevin Lopez Argueta, Thompson Bass, Markese Bell, Gavyn Brazil, Lillie Brown, Mackenzie Brown, Rylan Browning, Kysen Burke, Journei Butler, Addison Carter, Myer Carter, Carter Cobb, Jayleigh Crabb, Megan Crosslin, Chase Cuyler, Scarlett Dixon, Christopher Edge, Luke Edge, Olivia Edge, Bentley Felice, Easton Lamp, Mason Fulghum, Daniel Franks, Antonio Givens, Maddie Graham, Reed Greenway, Jackson Hergert, Abby Haskins, Paul Hazley Jr., Tevin Hightower, Lyric Holt, A'miyah Horne, Adrián Ochoa Johnson, Dillon Jones, Eli Jones, Janelle Lewis, Knowledge Mack, Kinsley Wilcher



## Mount Tilla Baptist donates to WINGS

The Mount Tilla Baptist Church and the Ladies of Excellence donated to WINGS recently/SPECIAL PHOTO

## VA held graduation for EVAL class

## SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

The Carl Vinson VA Medical Center has announced the Sept. 30 graduation of its 2025 Emerging VA Leaders leadership development class.

Dublin VA's EVAL class prepares aspiring leaders for advanced positions of responsibility in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. VA sponsors leadership development classes like EVAL to ensure seamless transitions from one generation of VA managers to the next and to underscore the philosophy of responsible stewardship of governmental resources and its commitment to serve veterans.

The 2025 EVAL class, which began training in January, included an interdisciplinary group of twelve VA employees, and involved a 9-month training regimen that covered subjects as diverse as management and leadership principles, systems improvement, financial oversight, emotional intelligence, and public speaking, with the guiding ideals being superior customer service and veter-



Members of the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center announced its recent graduation of Emerging VA Leaders leadership development class/SPECIAL PHOTO

eran-centered care. Participation in the EVAL program also includes matching class members with experienced VA managers as mentors who coach participants in career enhancement.

According to Employee Education Services supervisor Wayne Nesmith, the curriculum is designed to prepare program participants for the future and to empower them in their current duties.

"The goal of our EVAL class is to develop current and future VA leaders who

will promote our ideals by incorporating them into their management practices.

Planning for VA's future has

to be a continual process so that we can ensure that we are providing veterans the best possible health care and leadership training helps us to do that," Nesmith said.

Addressing the philosophy behind the program, Nesmith challenged graduates to ask themselves a question.

"Is the world better off for what I am doing? Specifically, are my veterans' lives better for what I'm doing?"

2025 EVAL graduates include Kelsey Bryant, Raynard Churchwell, Sequonah Coleman, Zackary Fordham, Decarla Jones, Joseph Lang III, Rocky Ryals, Liz Schradler, Shenelldaa Williams, Ken-

netris Wright, Kylie Wright, and Latha Yatabe.

Interim medical center director Lenearo Ashford, who attended the graduation and listened to proj-

ect presentations from the participants as part of their training, was enthusiastic about the chance to ensure capable future leadership for the medical center and that the class emphasized customer service as its focus.

"Now go forth and use what you learned. Anywhere you go, these skills will be beneficial, and we certainly hope that you continue to use them for the benefit of our veterans," Ashford said.

## One Day: Dublin's Civil Rights Experience

A reader's theatre honoring Hub Dudley, young MLK, and Civil Rights leaders.

A community history event open to visitors and locals of all ages and backgrounds.



First African Baptist Church | February 7th, 2026 | 10 AM

Tickets are \$8 plus fees.  
Online advance tickets only



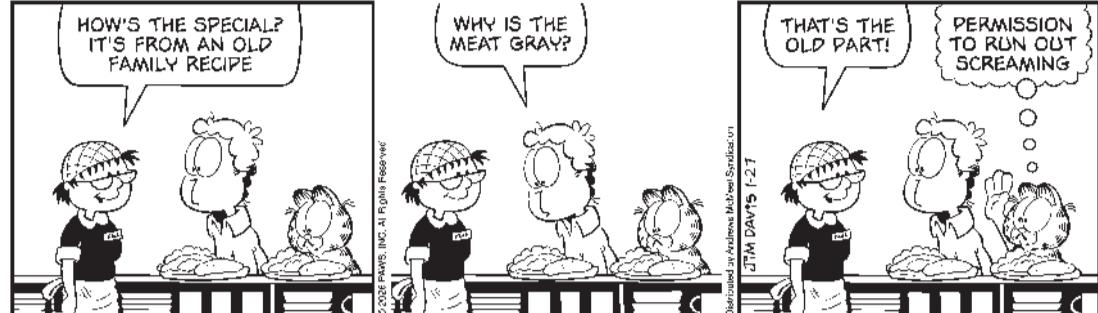
Scan for Tickets | More Info at VisitDublinGA.org

## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



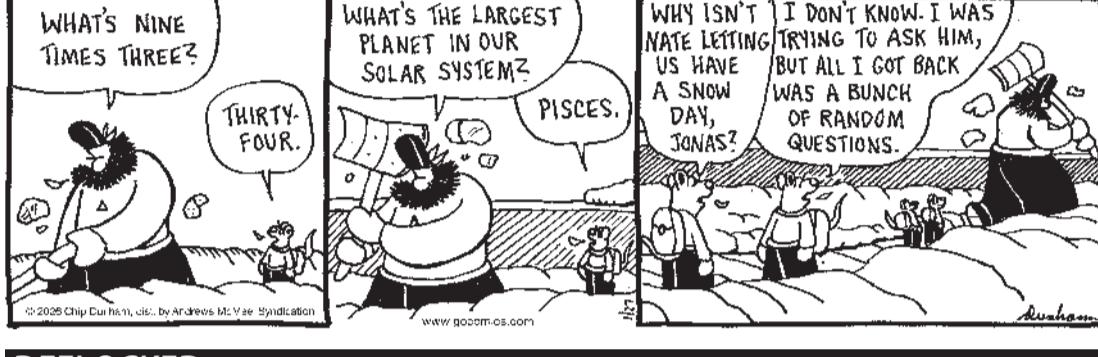
BY STEPHAN PASTIS

## GARFIELD



BY JIM DAVIS

## OVERBOARD



BY CHIP DUNHAM

## DEFLOCKED



BY JEFF CORRIVEAU

## ZIGGY



BY TOM WILSON

## PLUGGERS



BY JEFF MACNELLY

## Partner paying more to support man's grandsons!



DEAR SPIRALING: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your fiance. When someone dies by suicide, survivors are often shocked and traumatized. You didn't mention if your fiance suffered from depression, job loss, a physical ailment or some other condition that may have caused him to act out. If he was abusive to you, you did the RIGHT thing by moving out. This is nothing to feel guilty for.

I'm glad you are receiving counseling. Many survivors have been helped by talking things through with a licensed psychotherapist. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, established in 1987, lists worldwide suicide bereavement support groups as a public service to loss survivors. It can be accessed at [afsp.org](http://afsp.org). Please don't wait to reach out.

## DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

it Counseling is a reliable resource. Because these monthly financial disagreements could erode your relationship, please consider couples counseling in order to work out a plan that is fair for all parties concerned.

Because Gabe earns more money than I do, I have tried talking to him about the cost. I feel he should pay a higher percentage. Each time, I give him the monthly amount that I spent. He then goes through it with a fine-tooth comb and pays only what he thinks he should pay for. We argue about it every single month. It's driving me nuts, and the upfront costs are breaking me. Please advise. -- PAYING MORE THAN ENOUGH

P

DEAR PAYING: That Gabe earns more than you do should have been taken into consideration at the time you began living with him and his grandsons. Financial counseling might help you to determine what such an adjustment would mean in terms of dollars. The National Foundation for Cred-

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**SCHOOL BOARD**  
 Continued from page 1

phases. Once the elementary school is completed, and the staff and students are in the new building, the old ELE school will be demolished. This will make a way for the new ELMS athletic complex.

"Our facilities that we currently have for the middle school are very old," Hall said. "I think that is obvious. This allows us to be more in compliance of handicap accessibility and things of that nature. The middle school has been having to share and that has created problems with practice times and causes some kids to get home later. Now, we have to try to schedule games accordingly. Trying to schedule all of that can get very tricky. We won't have to worry about that in the future."

Later in the meeting, Janelle Butler, who had been serving as the district's federal program director, was named as the new associate superintendent of elementary curriculum and instruction. She will take this new position on July 1. James Lawhorn, who is currently serving in that position,

will move over to associate superintendent for secondary education curriculum and instruction on July 1.

"It is good to be able to start this transition and put our team together," Hall said. "We want to move forward and keep up the great work and build upon the good work that has already been done, especially in our curriculum and construction area."

In other business, the board:

- Approved list A of the Laurens County Schools personnel recommendations for certified staff members and administration for the FY 2026-2027 school year. A list B was approved for certified staff members. Board member Kevin Malone abstained from voting on this list because of family connections.

- Approved the retirements of Laura Cook and Carol Milton (both teachers at Northwest Laurens Elementary).

- Approved the resignations of Austin Powell, paraprofessional at West Laurens Middle School and Laura Coleman and Paulette Sellers, both food nutrition assistant at WLMS.



Members of the Laurens County Board of Education held a called meeting Thursday to approve a contractor for construction on the Eastside. From left: Superintendent O.J. Hall, board members Kevin Malone, Tony Johnson (chairman), Kenny Payne (vice-chairman), Kathy Sweat and Jarvis Wilcher/PAYTON TOWNS III



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, 1,000 Strong Women, RISEUP and members of the Dublin High School FBLA helped to put on the event/PAYTON TOWNS III

**MLK DAY**

Continued from page 1

years, helping and serving in all capacities whether it is advocating for social justice or uplifting our local community," Walker said.

"We also have enhanced our environ-

ment. We do something around building our economic wealth as well. We educate people about savings accounts and how to manage their money, especially in a time like this with the way the economy is the way it is. As a sorority, we are happy to be able to offer and bless the people in Dublin we these kinds of services."

**I-16 PILEUPS**

Continued from page 1

juries or complaints.

The first of what turned out to be four overall wrecks began around 5:30 a.m. Friday when a 2017 Toyota Corolla, driven by Lasonya Laquin Edmond, 39, of Rentz was heading east on I-16 in the right lane near mile marker 37.

A 2016 Freightliner Cascadia, driven by Mohamed Ahmed Ali, 31, of Eagan, Minnesota had broken down and parked on the right shoulder of the road out of the travel lanes. The Toyota failed to maintain lane, crossed the right fog line and collided with the trailer of the Freightliner. The Toyota eventually came to an uncontrolled final rest in the median.

Edmond was transported to FPH with suspected minor or visible injuries.

Ali told GSP that his vehicle experienced fuel/engine failure around 11:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 22, which was why it was parked on the shoulder of the road with its emergency flashers on. He also deployed reflective triangles in the road behind his vehicle.

The second wreck occurred hours later at the same crash site.

Around 7:49 a.m., a 2016 Mack, driven by James Gerald Futch, 76, of Pembroke,

approached the Ali's vehicle and also failed to maintain lane, hitting the broken down Freightliner. After the Mack continued to hit the left side of the vehicle, it struck several small trees before hitting a fence. Futch was not taken for treatment.

Around 8:05 a.m., three more vehicles were involved in a wreck after traffic began backing up due to the first two crashes.

Joseph Ryan Chajkowski, 45, of Stone Mountain, was traveling east in a 2023 Ford F-150. Donnavon Shane Edmond, 49, of Forsyth, was driving a 2019 Ford Transit and Justin Deon Hill, 45, of Montrrose, was traveling in a 2018 Kenworth. Both Edmond and Hill were slowing to a stop because of the previous wrecks.

Chajkowski said he looked down for just a second to grab his coffee when his vehicle began to auto-brake. He looked up in time to see his vehicle striking the back of the Ford Transit.

Hill told a trooper that he began to slow down in the left lane due to a crash ahead of him. He was almost completely stopped when he heard a crash behind him and then felt the impact from the Ford Transit.

Chajkowski and Hill were not injured while Edmond was transported to FPH and listed with a suspected minor or visible injuries.

# FEBRUARY 7, 2026 10AM-4PM



MIDDLEGEALITFEST.COM

NORTH HOUSTON SPORTS COMPLEX  
900 NORTH HOUSTON ROAD  
WARNER ROBINS, GA 31088