

The Courier Herald

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026

COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM

School board faces decision on governor's bonus



Laurens County Finance Director Mary McCollough speaks to members of the school board about the FY27 budget during a recent meeting/PAYTON TOWNS III

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

More money is coming to some but not all Laurens County School employees, unless the board decides to make it happen.

Laurens County Finance Director Mary McCollough went over the amended budget items for fiscal year 2026 with the biggest news including information about Gov. Brian Kemp signing off on a bonus for school employees.

"This is what everybody is excited about," McCollough said. "The governor proposed this bonus for certified staff, custodians, bus drivers, nurses and nutrition workers."

This did not include

paraprofessionals, secretaries, bookkeepers, classified directors, therapists or maintenance personnel, she added.

"There are 157.5 employees who are not included to get that \$2,000 bonus," McCollough said. "If you choose to give them a \$2,000 bonus, as well, it will all have to be funded from local funds and will cost us a little over \$313,000."

School Superintendent O.J. Hall informed the board that the bonus would not go out until after the Legislature is finished in early April. "This would be an amendment to the FY26 budget because that was not in our budget because we didn't know that was coming down the pipe-

line," Hall said.

McCollough also spoke about the projections for the fiscal year 2027. Insurance was a big point that she brought out in her presentation.

"It continues to go up," Hall said. "It's a battle that we are all facing in school districts. We are not in this fight alone. Superintendents (around the state) talk about it a lot."

As for the FY27 Georgia budget, McCollough pointed out:

- Increase of \$258,904,718 for equalization grants.

- Increase of \$64,000 for custodian supplement

SCHOOL BOARD
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HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY: STORE LIFTS SPIRITS OF NURSING HOME RESIDENTS WITH BALLOONS

Residents at local nursing homes received red heart balloons Friday morning from the Family Dollar at 304 N. Jefferson St. Employees from Dublinair, Southland and Dublin Trails picked up the balloons and received help putting them into vehicles from members with the Dublin Youth Council/PAYTON TOWNS III



Woman dies after being struck by car

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A 66-year-old Dublin woman died after she was hit by a car while crossing the road Friday night in front of the Dublin Motel, near the intersection of North Jefferson Street and Hillcrest Parkway.

Deborah McClendon was pronounced dead in the Fairview Park Hospital Emergency Room at 11:37 p.m., said Laurens County Deputy Coroner Nathan Stanley.

According to a Georgia State Patrol report, McClendon stepped into the road in front of a red 1999 GMC Sierra. A witness told a trooper that the GMC had changed from the right to left lane and was proceeding to pass them.

The GMC hit the pedestrian with the left corner of its front bumper and left headlamp assembly. Area of impact was in the left northbound lane of the road. After impact, the GMC continued forward approximately 80 feet before coming to rest in the left northbound lane, facing north.

Stanley said McClendon died from multiple blunt force injuries due to a motor vehicle accident.

WINGS offers help with teen dating

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The month of February is known as the month of love, mostly because of Valentine's Day. It is also called Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, and this year, Women In Need of God's Shelter is focusing on ways to help teens recognize safety, respect and support before dating turns nasty.

Heather Mullis, executive director of the WINGS in Dublin, said they are offering training and outreach with the thought that, "Knowledge is power. Connection is safety. Prevention is possible." WINGS believes its training and outreach/education and awareness programs are important to preventing abuse before it starts.

"Our focus in February is on teenagers from middle school, high school and

some college," Mullis said. "Basically, it is for young people who are getting into relationships, and we want to make sure they understand what is healthy, unhealthy and abusive."

Mullis said the dating world for teenagers has changed. She admits it is tough to be teens.

"They don't have experience with relationships," she said. "There is social and peer pressure. They are more susceptible to what they see on TV and in movies and hear in songs that are not exactly promoting healthy relationships. They get into relationships and believe that because he is super jealous, that must mean he loves me or he wants to be with me all of the time so that must be true love. It's not. It's actually bordering on being abusive."

Most teens do not go to the right place for advice.

Some go to their friends or look it up on social media.

"It is hard for them to get help," Mullis said. "We have to be a role model for what a healthy relationship is. We have to have conversations with them when we see two people yelling in a store parking lot. We have to talk about things we see on TV shows that are not healthy. We have to be able to guide them so that they have good information as to what is healthy and not healthy."

WINGS tries to take these conversations to the school systems in order to bring it to the students' attention. They will also talk at churches or other organizations about this topic.

"Education is what it is all about," Mullis said. "For us, it is all about prevention.

TEEN DATING
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Severe Weather Awareness: EMA chief warns lightning is deadly from miles away

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

When people hear thunder, they can be sure lightning is in the area and they are in range of being struck.

Lightning is a deadly byproduct of thunderstorms, which are very common in Georgia, particularly in the spring and summer. Lightning kills an average of 55 people each year throughout the United States.

It occurs mostly during the warmer months of June through September. People have been known to have died from being struck by lightning, which can strike from several miles away.

"We have several lightning strikes, and people from all over the state are struck each year," said Bill Laird, director of Laurens County Emergency Management Agency/E-911. "If you see it, you are way too close. If you can hear thunder, the potential to be struck by lightning exists."

He advised people to remember the 30/30 rule.

"If you see a streak of lightning and you can't count to 30, that means the thunderstorm is close enough to you that you may be struck by lightning," Laird said. "If you hear thunder, stop what you are doing and find shelter."

Thunderstorms pop up quick, Laird said. Because of that, it's important to know when to seek shelter.

Here are tips on lightning safety:

Before Lightning Strikes

- Keep an eye on the sky. Look for darkening skies, flashes of light, or increasing

wind. Listen for the sound of thunder.

- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning. Go to safe shelter immediately.

- Monitor NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for the latest weather forecasts.

When a Storm Approaches

- Find shelter in a building or car. Keep car windows closed and avoid convertibles.

- Telephone lines and metal pipes can conduct electricity. Unplug appliances. Avoid using the telephone or any electrical appliances. (Leaving electric lights on, however, does not increase the chances of your home being struck by lightning.)

- Avoid taking a bath or shower, or running water for any purpose.

- Turn off the air conditioner. Power surges from lightning can overload the compressor, resulting in a costly repair job.

- Draw blinds and shades over windows. If windows break due to objects blown by the wind, the shades will help prevent glass from shattering into your home.

If Caught Outside

- If you are in the woods, take shelter under the shorter trees.

- If you are boating or swimming, get to land and find shelter immediately!

Protecting Yourself Outside

- Go to a low-lying, open place away from trees, poles, or metal objects. Make

SEVERE WEATHER
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OBITUARIES



Sylvia Ann Knight Pittman

Sylvia Ann Knight Pittman went to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. She was 91 years old. Sylvia's life was guided by her love for Jesus and she shared that love with everyone she met. She often said that her goal was to do something good for someone every day and doing so brought her much joy. Her life was a personification of the great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. She truly did that!

Sylvia was born on Jan. 17, 1935 in the Cedar Grove Community to her proud parents, Stella Hendrix Knight and Joseph Oscar Knight. She was the baby girl of the family. Sylvia is predeceased by her parents and 11 siblings, Earl, Jean, R.G., Essie, Mable, O.J., Lois, Ted, W.C., Mary, and Harold, as well as her husband of 53 years, George Washington Pittman, Jr., beloved grandson, Joseph Mullins and precious great-granddaughter, Molly Wallace Walke.

She attended Cedar Grove School and enjoyed cheerleading and playing basketball. She attended National Business College in Dublin, Georgia and graduated with a Secretarial Bookkeeping diploma. She worked as Payroll Clerk at Dublin Garment Company for several years before beginning a 20-year career in the General Motors car business having worked at Peacock Chevrolet, Jim Hammock Pontiac-Buick, and Pitts Pontiac-Buick. She later retired in April 2004 after 20 years of service with the State of Georgia working as a Case Manager at Heart of Georgia Technical College and Heart of Georgia RESA in Eastman. She loved working with students and took pride in guiding them to achieve their life goals.

Sylvia was a savvy businesswoman with a keen fashion sense. One would often see her adorned in gorgeous ensembles that let her inner beauty shine. She loved shopping, photography, a good meal, reading, and watching her beloved Atlanta Braves baseball or Georgia Bulldog football. However, what mattered most to her was sharing these experiences with her family. Her zest for life was unmatched! She was a loving and compassionate mother, grandmother, and a friend to all. Her family meant everything to her.

A faithful servant, she was a lifelong member of Union Springs Baptist Church where she has served in many capacities through the years including Church Clerk, Treasurer, Sunday School and Training Union Teacher, and other areas as needed. Her love for photography led her to create and maintain a church scrapbook of pictures, newspaper articles, and clippings related to the church family. She loved her church family! She had a genuine heart for people, always lending a hand whenever possible.

Left to cherish her memory are her two loving daughters, Donna Pittman of Dublin, and Renee (Alan) Heath of Tennille; grandchildren, Kris Mullins, Heather Gibson, Brandon

(Brittany) Veal, Lauren (Campbell) Walke, Spencer Heath, Macy (Joe) Whiting, and Christopher Heath, as well as 14 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews, and many special friends.

When asked what advice she would give, she quoted her favorite Proverbs scripture. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."

She spent her days loving and being loved. Her family was the cornerstone of her life and she cherished her role as the matriarch. She raised her family to trust in God and even in her trials, her faith never wavered. She built her life with a foundation of love that emanated from everything she touched. To be loved by Sylvia was a true blessing! Her beautiful life of boundless strength, selfless love, and amazing grace is a gift to those she leaves behind and she will be sorely missed.

A celebration of life service will be held at 12 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026, at Union Springs Baptist Church in Cedar Grove. The family will receive friends at 11 a.m. at the church prior to service. Interment will be at Union Springs Baptist Church Cemetery. Rev. Ray Harris and Rev. Ronnie Powell will officiate. Kris Mullins, Michael Pittman, Christopher Gibson, Christopher Heath, Campbell Walke and Jacob White will serve as pallbearers.

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



Ulysses Lee "Robert" Burns

Funeral services for Mr. Ulysses Lee, aka Robert Burns, of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026, at 1 p.m. in the C.D. Dudley Memorial Chapel at the Dudley Funeral Home, 617 East Jackson Street, Dublin. Rev. Dr. Christopher Watkins will officiate. Interment will follow in the Northview Cemetery. Viewing will take place at the funeral home on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 5 p.m. - 8 p.m..

Robert Burns was born on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 1953, in Savannah, Georgia, to the parentage of Ulysses Lee, Sr., and Susie Adams Lee. He was reared by his great uncle, Aleus Corbett, and great aunt, Doshia Moore Corbett. He was married to Theola Snell Burns.

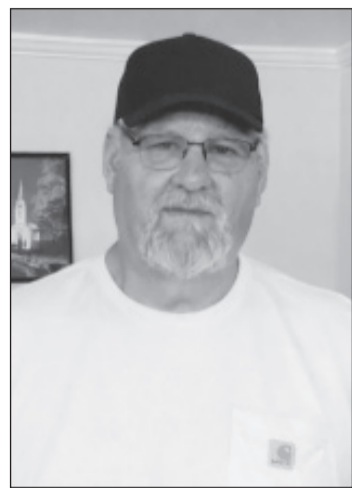
Robert Burns departed this life on Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026. He was preceded in death by his aforementioned parents, his wife, his great aunt and great uncle, three brothers, Melvin Bernard Lewis and James Jerome Lewis, and Henry Smith and by his grandmother, Ellen Corbett Talton.

He leaves to mourn his passing a loving and devoted companion of nine years, Sandy Reid of Dublin, Georgia, three devoted sisters, Cynthia (Wallace) Lemons, of Dublin, Ruby (Adolf) Taylor of Akron, Ohio, and Beulah (Billy) Singleton of Dublin, two brothers, William E. (Lillie) Smith and Roger Corbett, both of Dublin, and a stepdaughter, Karen (Freddie) Womble of Cochran, two bonus brothers, Calvin (Ann) McCloud and Freddie Blackshear, both of Dublin, three special granddaughters, La'Zoria Perry, Hailey Perry, and Za'Ny-

la Perry, all of Dublin, and the special nephew, Wallace "Walo" Lemons II, two nieces, Dr. Shonda Lemons-(Charles) Smith of Atlanta, and Walisa Lemons of Warner Robins and a host of other relatives and friends.

Please post your condolences at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.



Barry Glenn Price

Barry Glenn Price, 57, of Dublin, passed away peacefully on Feb. 11, 2026, at Savannah Memorial Hospital. Born on July 13, 1968, in Dublin, Ga., Barry was a man whose laughter and kindness left an indelible mark on all who knew him.

The son of the late Maxie E. Price, Barry was also preceded in death by his loving grandparents, James and Hazel Price, Clifford and Josie Rowland, and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Mary Colleen White. Barry's life was filled with the love of his surviving family members. His mother, Fay Rowland Price; his wife, Sharon Lee Price; his daughter, Jamie and her husband T.J. Costlow; his granddaughter, Bonnie Howell; and his grandson, Jensen Costlow, will all treasure his memory.

Barry was a proud graduate of Dublin High School and furthered his education at Swainsboro Technical College. His professional life was a testament to his work ethic and dedication. He spent over 30 years as a transport driver and was currently employed for Tri-National, Inc. Trucking Company. Barry's career took him across the highways of the 48 states, Canada, and Mexico, delivering freight with a sense of adventure and pride in his work.

Beyond his professional achievements, Barry was a man of many passions. As Bonnie's Poppy, Barry always encouraged Bonnie to pursue her ambition with diligence, enthusiasm, and integrity. He inherited a love for gardening from his grandfather, the late Mr. James E. Price, and cultivated his own garden with the same care and attention. Barry's culinary skills were well-known among his family and friends, as he often delighted them with his cooking. An avid outdoorsman, he found solace and joy in fishing and hunting, activities that allowed him to embrace the beauty of nature, and teaching German Shepherd Cane various commands.

As a member of the Baptist faith, he lived his beliefs through his actions, always extending a hand of friendship and embodying the values he held dear. Those who knew Barry would describe him as funny, friendly and adventurous. His humor brought light into every room, and his friendly demeanor ensured that he never met a stranger.

A private memorial service was held for Mr. Price on Sunday, Feb. 15, 2026, at Townsend Brothers Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Gideon's International.

Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.



Shirley Hall Dominy

Shirley Hall Dominy, a beacon of faith and love, was called home to the Lord on Feb. 14, 2026, at the age of 87. Born in Dublin on Oct. 10, 1938, Shirley's life was one of unwavering service to God, her family, and her community. Her early years in Dublin would set the stage for a life characterized by devotion, joy and the grace of a true Christian.

The beloved daughter of John Cohen Hall Sr. and Ethel Foskey Hall, both of whom predeceased her, Shirley was a nurturing presence to all who knew her. She was also reunited in eternal rest with her cherished sisters Ethel Lee Johnson, Charollette Register, and Bertie Faye Pryor, as well as her dear husband, Gary Dominy, and her step granddaughter, Kim Tyson. Their legacy of kindness continues through her remaining family, including her step-daughter Judy Elaine Holder (Larry), step-grandchildren Nicki Harrison (Rodney), Amanda Holder, Brittany Rowell (Bubba), her many step-great-grandchildren, her loving nieces and nephews, and her brother, J.C. Hall Jr. (Iris).

Shirley enriched the lives of others not only through her personal relationships but also through her professional endeavors. Her dedicated service at Piggly Wiggly in the meat department and at Kroger as a stocker earned her the respect and affection of colleagues and customers alike. At Bethesda Baptist Church, she was an active member of the Joy Club and took great pleasure in sharing God's word, embodying the teachings of her favorite Bible verse, John 3:16.

Her interests outside of work and the church brought additional joy to Shirley and the people around her. Shopping with friends, tending to her garden and inviting warmth into every interaction were Shirley's gifts to the world. They remember her as a loving, friendly, and faith-filled woman whose spirit was a light in the lives of those she touched.

Shirley lived out her days as a dedicated housewife, mother, grandmother, friend to many and faithful servant of God. Her impact on this world was profound, and as her community mourns her loss, they also celebrate the lasting impression of a life well-lived. Shirley Hall Dominy's legacy of love, friendship and unwavering faith will continue to be felt throughout the lives of those she cherished and the many others she inspired along her earthly journey.

Graveside services were held at 11 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 16, 2026 at Dublin Memorial Gardens.

In lieu of flowers dona-

tions may be made to Bethesda Baptist Church 2519 US Hwy 80, Dublin, GA 31021.

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

Townsend Brothers Funeral Home has charge of the arrangements.

Agnes Lee Spikes Cason

Funeral services for Dr. Agnes Lee Spikes Cason, of Dublin, Georgia, a beloved member of her community who was affectionately called "Red," will be held on Friday, Feb. 20, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the Springhill Missionary Baptist Church, 494 Evergreen Road in Dublin. Interment will follow in the church cemetery.

Agnes Lee Spikes was born on Wednesday, Feb. 20, 1946, in Laurens County, Georgia, to the parentage of Deacon Robert Spikes, Sr., and Annie Mae Spikes. Sister Agnes Lee Spikes graduated from Millville School in 1966, and in the same year, married her love, Harvey Lee Cason, Sr. She joined the Springhill Baptist Church at an early age under the leadership of Reverend C.P. Roberts, and she served as an usher for many years. Sister Cason also served at the New Fleming Baptist Church of Bartow, Georgia, as an usher and Youth Sunday School Teacher under the leadership of Dr. C. L. Cason. She loved to sing, especially old hymns out of the National Baptist Hymn Book and could "raise" them as well as a deacon!

Red was a hard worker and worked at Mohawk Industries, and was a substitute teacher, a bus driver, a licensed Master of Cosmetology, and was a professional caterer. She loved cooking big dinners, and she was constantly trying to feed any and everyone she met, especially during holidays. It brought her joy to see people eat and have a good time.

Dr. Cason, along with her husband, the late Dr. Rev. Harvey Lee Cason Sr., owned and operated Cason's Boutique Clothing Store and Cason's Unique Touch Salon in downtown Dublin.

Being guided by a deep desire to learn and serve the church, she pursued higher biblical education later in life. She earned her Biblical Studies Diploma, Bachelor of Christian Education, Master and Doctor of Christian Counseling and a Doctor of Theology from the Tripp Bible Institute in Marion, North Carolina; Master of Science in Christian Education and Doctor of Christian Counseling

Psychology from the Emmanuel Baptist University in Connelly Springs, North Carolina; and then a Master of Ministry from the Cason Theological Institute of Dublin, Georgia.

Dr. Cason served on the board of advisors for the Cason Theological Institute for 19 years, helping to advise and lead the seminary. Her academic journey reflected her dedication to spiritual growth in Christ Jesus, and she will be remembered for her Christian faith, many talents, down home cooking and a great natural determination.

Dr. Cason passed away on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, at her home. Dr. Cason was preceded in death by her parents, Deacon Robert Spikes, Sr., and Sister Annie Mae Miller Spikes Stanley; husband, Rev. Dr. Harvey Lee Cason; siblings, Annie Ruth, Robbie Nell, Rosa Mae, Bernita, and Robert Spikes; daughter, Angelia Yvonne Cason; granddaughter, Tieska Meara "Precious" Torrence, grandson, Baby Dixon and an aunt, Ruby Elington.

Dr. Cason is survived by her daughters, Angel (Arzie) Gordon of Sparks, Nevada, Denise C. (Michael) Council, Agnes Marie (Travis) Linder, Harvetta R. (Morris) Cason of Americus, Georgia; sons, Harvey Lee (Chiquana) Cason, Jr., Cedric Lee (Carol) Cason, all of Dublin, Georgia; sisters and brothers of the Stanley Family, sister-in-law, Betty Waters of East Dublin, Georgia; one god sister, Hortense (Thomas) Ray; close and faithful cousin, Johnny (Alberta) Sims of Macon, Georgia, and a host of grandchildren, nephews, nieces, cousins. She will be missed by these and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, February 19, 2026, 6-7 PM at the Dudley Funeral Home, 617 East Jackson Street in Dublin. Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.

ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 16
Steve & Geri Peters

BIRTHDAYS

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Kenny Reed
Carolyn Rozier
Tyler "TJ" Smith
Andrea Savitri White*

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Dublin is something - but what?

Dublin Courier Herald

What is a good slogan for Dublin?

Macon calls itself the Flag City.

Atlanta is the Dogwood City.

Warner Robins is the International City.

Soperton is the Million Pines City.

On and On - Dublin is something...but what is it?

The Courier Herald is seeking an appropriate, short (say five words), and catchy slogan for the city.

OBITUARIES

William Bruce Hinson

William Bruce Hinson, born in Cairo, Ga. on May 13, 1936, died in Dublin, Ga. on Jan. 23, 2026.

He graduated from Tift County High School. He attended college at the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) and transferred to the University of Georgia (UGA), where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in forestry. He worked for a few different companies in the forestry industry before opening his own business (Hinson Timberland Mgmt). He was very successful at his craft. He also served in the U.S. Army Reserve, where he became a sharpshooter.

He enjoyed outdoor activities such as hunting, boating and target shooting. His main passion was participating in all types of target shooting matches - pistol, rifle and shotgun. He was able to enjoy his hobby until very late in life.

Bruce was the perfect example of an honest, compassionate, and hard-working man. He led by example. He was a great son, brother, father, husband, uncle, cousin, grandfather, great-grandfather and a friend to many. He lived his life to the fullest. He took everything in stride and made the best of every situation. He also had a wonderful sense of humor that everyone around him cherished. He will be greatly missed.

Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, 2026, in the Chan Stanley Memorial Chapel of Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory. The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the funeral home.

Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory/Dublin Chapel has charge of arrangements. To sign the Online Register Book please visit www.stanleyfuneral-home.com.



Lorenza Alan Walker

Mr. Lorenza Alan Walker of Wrightsville, passed away on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete but will be announced later.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin servicesbydudley.com

Rosie Montford

Mrs. Rosie Montford of Dublin, passed away on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete but will be announced later.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home of Dublin. servicesbydudley.com.

A committee will be named to select the best, most appropriate, catchiest nickname.

To the one who submits the slogan selected, the Courier Herald will give the \$50. The slogan then becomes the property of the city and county.

To tell all who visit here, the slogan will be painted on the side of the building on South Jefferson Street which has been repainted (formerly Western Auto).

To give you time to think up a good slogan and submit it, the contest will be open until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 29.

BUSBEE IS ST. PAT'S SPEAKER

Governor George Busbee will be the speaker at the annual St. Patrick's Festival Luncheon on March 10 at the Dublin Country Club, according to Frances Lewis, Festival Dignitaries chairman.

Busbee is expected to address the 1:00 p.m. luncheon which draws a large crowd each year. Last year's speaker was U.S. Representative Bo Gin.

The luncheon will mark Busbee's second trip to Dublin as Governor, the first to the St. Patrick's Festival since taking office.

Last February, the Governor was one of the principal speakers at the statewide Sam Nunn's Appreciation Day here.

Final plans for Busbee's trip to Dublin to the Festival have not been announced, and it is not known if he will make any other appearances here.

RETAIL SALES NEAR \$170 MILLION HERE

Retail sales in the area about Laurens County and Dublin last year totaled almost \$170 million, according to information from the Division of Research of the School of Business of the University of Georgia.

Sales in all of the counties in the area set new records in 1975 with Laurens County leading the increase with approximately 9 percent increase in 1975 over 1974.

The total sales in Laurens County exceeded \$12,290,000, up from the \$114 million plus of 1974.

In December last year the sales here set a new monthly record as they topped \$12,491,000. The previous high had been in excess of \$11 million.

COMMISSIONERS IN BUDGET QUANDARY

The Laurens County Commissioners were literally scratching their heads this morning as they studied the preliminary report of the audit of the 1975 budget requests of the various departments of the county government.

Information, not yet confirmed, is that the county's operations last year were in the red. Complete information will be available when the audit is presented to the January Term Grand Jury for their approval and release.

This morning the Commissioners continued a day-long session they held last week in an effort to come to some sort of budget for 1976.

The problems stem from the fact that every department is asking increases in their 1976 budgets over 1975. The Commissioners are looking at the deficit for last year and the imminent possibility that income for

the county in 1976 will be even less than it was in 1975.

One thing they seemed to have established thus far: there is little hope that income can be made to match the requests for budgetary increases that have been made by the various departments in the county.

The budget, once completed, by the Commissioners, is to be presented to the Grand Jury. Any disagreements between the Commissioners and any of the departments are supposed to be settled by the Grand Jury.

At the present time the January term Grand Jury has been recessed subject to being recalled.

TAG SALES EXCEED 6,500

What is the most popular tag that as been bought thus far this year in Laurens County?

If you guessed "pickup truck," you would be right, according to information from the office of Tax Commissioner R.G. Neal. The report his office gives goes back to February 11th and gives the number of tags sold through that date.

The \$10.00 and \$15.00 automobile tags are the next most popular as motorists have bought the new red tags that will have to last for five years replacing the blue ones that have been on cars for the past five years.

The medium weight autos that have the \$10.00 tags have 1,219 new tags on them while the \$15.00 variety has 1,145 new tags.

Only one \$3.00 tag has been sold-that's for older models, 897 for cars carrying \$5.00 tags, and 805 for cars with \$7.50 tags.

In addition to the pickup truck tags, there have been 65 tags sold for trucks with \$10.00 tags, 99 for trucks with \$15.00 tags, 17 for trucks with \$30.00 tags, and 4 for trucks with \$30.00 Forest Products tags.

There have been 394 trailer tags of the \$5.00 variety sold and 88 for the \$10.00 trailers.

Seventy-one motorcycle tags have been sold, and 285 permits given.

The total number of tags sold in Laurens County thus far, February 17th, is 6,503.

HMM, WHAT SHOULD WE CALL HIM?

In a little over 14 months, Dublin has seen two city managers and two acting city managers.

Council is currently interviewing candidates to become the third city manager. Two candidates have been interviewed, and a third will be in town soon.

Now a new twist has been put on the job title:

A letter to the city from Georgia Power Company was addressed:

Mr. Jim Quinn
Temporary City Manager
Quinn is also a candidate for the full-time position.

STORE MUST PAY FINE, ETC.

Dublin City Council on Monday night issued a beer and wine license to a food store which has been charged with selling beer to minors, but the license had several strings attached.

Council asked the North Jefferson Street Zippy Mart to pay the fine for violating the city beer and wine ordinance, forfeit its 1976 license fee, and remove amusement machines from the store in order to get a

new license to sell packaged beer and wine.

Store operators were also warned that the next violation will result in the revocation of the license.

Later in the meeting, Council passed an ordinance forbidding amusement machines in stores with packaged beer and wine licenses. The two Zippy Mart locations in Dublin have the game machines in their buildings.

The motion to issue the license to the food store had the blessing of Police Chief Vernon DeLoach and the Council Licensing Committee.

Dr. Joel Radney was the only councilman voting against the license.

In other business, Council set a public hearing on March 1 on the Brookhaven assessment project.

The hearing set for Monday night was delayed because several driveway entrances would be added at the request of T.A. Curry.

A proposal by the acting city manager to buy 58 trash containers at \$13,900 was postponed until the Council could examine the containers.

Acting City Manager Jim Quinn announced that John Purdee has been selected as City Employee of the Month.

DUBLIN TEAMS DOWN BIBB TECH

Dublin's Irishettes repeated an earlier triumph over Bibb Tech at Macon last night, 43-38, before the Irish got revenge on the Wolverines for a one-point loss at Dublin recently with a one-point victory of their own, 63-62. The Dublin squads, plus the "B" boys team, go to Ft. Valley now for three games against Peach County.

The 1975-76 season comes to a close a week from tonight for the Dublin teams when they meet the Perry Panthers at the Dublin Gym.

Behind 19-18 at halftime, the Irishettes of Miss Joyce Brown spurred for 17 points while holding Bibb Tech to four to carry a 35-23 lead into the final period. They held their opponents at bay to win by five.

Sheila Cauley made 11 points for the Irishettes who showed a highly balanced attack. Gwen Harmon came through with nine points, Cindi Aaron and Angela Smith with eight each, and Brenda Davis with seven.

In the previous game, played at Dublin, the Irishettes had claimed a 52-51 victory.

The Dublin record is now 6-13.

The Irish had lost to the Wolverines, 70-69, at Dublin, and as the fourth quarter started with Bibb Tech in front, 48-43, it seemed that Dublin would be beaten again.

However, Coach Taylor Lovell's Irish fought back, tied the gam, then swapped the lead with the Wolverines several times until with 18 seconds to play

LOOKING BACK... 50 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 17, 1976



By HARRIETT CLAXTON

and behind by one point 62-61, the Irish started an offense.

With eight seconds remaining, Steve Edwards took the most difficult shot on the floor - a baseline jumper from the corner - and sank it, to give the Irish a 63-62 lead.

Bibb Tech rushed back down the court and put the ball up three times before the Irish claimed the rebound as time ran out.

Lorenzo Kates had his biggest night for the Irish, making nine of nine field goal attempts and two of four free throw attempts for 20 points.

Clint Lowther bombed the nets for 18 points and Edwards 16.

Oddly, Dublin committed only two fouls in the entire contest, one each by Kates and Edwards.

Ed White and Greg Rooks did another god job on the boards.

- Girls Line Up
- B. Davis 7
- Harmon 9
- Aaron 8
- Smith 8
- T. Davis
- Weaver
- Cauley 11
- Massey
- Allen
- Boys Line Up
- Lowther 18
- Kates 20
- White 4
- Edmond
- Edwards 16
- Rooks 1
- Uliano
- Beall
- Anderson 4
- Allen
- Roberts

TRINITY WINNERS OVER TABERNACLE

Trinity Christian's Crusaderettes and Crusaders were victorious over Tabernacle Christian in Atlanta, the girls winning by a 38-14 margin and the boys taking an overtime thriller, 45-44.

- Girls playing:
- Rhonda Wood 12 points
- Lydia Wilkes 8 points
- Tammy Howell 6 points
- Deanna Butler 6 points
- Edie Tindol 4 points
- Amelia Wilkes 2 points
- Mychelle Powell
- Boys playing:
- Al Parker 23 points
- Johnny Chappell 8 points
- Burt Evans 6 points
- Mike Tanner 5 points
- Brent Evans 2 points
- Joel Yancey 1 point

LITTLE MR. and MISS DUBLIN

Plans for the 1976 Little Mr. and Miss Dublin Pageant have been finalized.

The event, held annually during the Saint Patrick's Festival, is slated for Mon-

day, March 15, at 6:00 p.m. at the Dublin VA Center Auditorium.

The American Bicentennial will be featured at this year's event which will be called the Little George and Martha Washington Contest.

Boy and girl contestants are required to dress in a costume depicting the Revolutionary Period.

A trophy will be awarded to the winners, according to Mrs. Roy Sabine, Jr., Project Chairman.

The first 25 boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 8 and are residents of Laurens County registering by phone will be accepted as contestants.

Girl contestants should phone Mrs. Roy Sabine, Jr. at 676-3437.

Boy contestants should call Mrs. Stanley Register at 272-8336.

Registration fee is \$5.00 and will be paid at the formal registration.

The Dublin-Laurens Jaycees and Jaycettes are the sponsors for this annual event.

For more detailed information, call 676-329.

ENTRANTS FOR MISS COLLEEN PAGEANT

Girls, ages 9 through 12, are being sought for the Miss Colleen Pageant to be held on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, at the Dublin Mall.

The first 25 girls in this age group who have an 80 or above scholastic average will be selected by a panel of judges as contestants in the Mall-sponsored contest, according to Kim Walke.

An entry fee of \$10 is charged, and the contest is open to girls from the Middle Georgia area.

The winner will receive a \$50 savings bond and a trophy.

The first runner-up will get a \$25 bond and a trophy. To enter, contact Phil Grubb at Belk in the Mall.

For further information, contact Mrs. Walke at 272-8289 or 272-2131.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Mrs. Faye Rozier Chappell will be guest speaker for the morning worship service at the Washington Street Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 29th, at 11:00 a.m.

Mrs. Chappell is the daughter of Mrs. Marie Rozier, a public school teacher of Laurens County.

Faye attended the Laurens County public schools and Brewton Parker College. During her enrollment at Brewton Parker, she was fortunate to be able to visit the Holy Land.

NEWS DIGEST

The Dublin-Laurens Land Bank board will meet at noon on Tuesday, Feb. 17 in the International board room at Dublin City Hall. The agenda follows:

- Meeting called to order
- Invocation
- Approval of Jan. 20, 2026 minutes and treasurer's report
- Welcome to new board

- members
- New business
- Old business
- Property updates
- Executive session
- Meeting adjourned

Fairfield
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OUR TAKE...



After a promise of "radical transparency" by the new leader of the city board of education, the once thin media kit has blossomed into a wealth of info/**KYLE DOMINY**

'Radical' has been right so far

We were promised "radical transparency" and so far the Dublin City Board of Education has made good on a vow to share more information with the public.

Yes, much work is still needed to get the embattled system back in the black. Officials have whittled a projected \$13 million deficit down to about \$5 million, and \$6 million is still owed to the state, among other obligations and lingering troubles, like the solar panels and possible damages in the lawsuits filed by fired teachers.

But we have to give credit where credit is due. New leadership at the school system, specifically interim superintendent Marcee Pool, board chair Amanda Smith and new board member Jeff Davis, have provided more information to The Courier Herald in recent weeks than the previous administration did in about a decade.

Once laughably thin media packets that contained next to nothing have blossomed into reports, proposals and balance sheets. Meetings that once had sparse agendas now include public discussions on how the district is spending money (most recently bids for an HVAC system).

We applaud this effort by current leadership and hope it is the first steps in the journey of the Dublin City Schools regaining the public's trust.

— Kyle Dominy

YOUR TURN:

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

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"No matter how flat you make a pancake, it always has two sides."

— Dr. Phil McGraw

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh."

— Romans 13:13-14 (NIV)

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

Feb. 17, 2026 is...

- Pancake Day
- National Cabbage Day
- National Cauliflower Day
- Random Acts of Kindness Day
- My Way Day
- World Human Spirit Day
- Mardi Gras

Appointment surprise brings back memories

While talking on the phone the other day I heard a beep and looked to see that the doctor's office was calling me.

My first thought was to ignore it. They will leave a message and it was more than likely an automated call to remind me of my appointment scheduled for the next week. It was 10 minutes after 5 p.m., and I knew their office closed at 5.

I told my friend to hang on and flipped to hear what the message was, and of course, it was an appointment reminder. But they did not have me scheduled for the next week. The message informed me that my appointment was later that week - in three days.

I just knew they were wrong. I looked at the calendar on my phone and saw where my appointment was scheduled for the next week, not in three days.

I went ahead and accepted what I believed was a new appointment day, thinking I'll go ahead and get it over with.

When I completed my conversation with my friend, I found the letter my doctor's office had sent me six months before and saw two dates and times. For one, I was right. I did have an appointment the next week. But just above it was the information about the appointment I was scheduled for in three days. The appointment for the next week was scheduled as a follow up.

So I was right and wrong. If it wasn't for that automated call, I would have missed my appointment and showed up for my followup.

Being aware of appointments for doctors, dentists - or in my line of work interviews for stories - are important to remember. When it comes to appointments, I usually like getting that first one of the day. That is what happened a few weeks ago with an eye exam.

Leading up to the appointment I received an email and text where I had to verify that I still planned to be there on the scheduled day. Then, a few days before the appointment, I received a voicemail telling me that

MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

I had to call the office and verbally inform them that I still planned to see them on that day at that time and if I did not call my appointment would be canceled.

I guess that is one way to make sure we will respond. Saying yes I plan to be there by my email and text was not good enough.

When it comes to appointments, I'm sure we've all had those that did not go very well. I remember an eye doctor appointment in Milledgeville where our insurance information was wrong. My wife, whose insurance I was on, accompanied me to this particular appointment and it turned out to be a good thing because they needed her to verify the information that somebody else had typed in wrong.

They went over the information and said that they had her son down on the sheet and gave her my name and birthdate. I busted out laughing and the employee looked at me like I was crazy.

"What so funny?" he replied.

"I'm not her son," I said. "That is what this sheet says," he added.

"It might say that but I'm her husband," I added.

"That is not what this sheet says," he continued.

"Well, mister big shot, first of all, you need to have your hearing checked because that piece of paper is not talking. Second, take a look at my wife's birthday date and mine. You will see that it shows that I am approximately two years older than her. Ergo, how in the world can I be her son if I'm

older than her?"

That was the reply I wanted to retort back with. Instead I just pointed out both of our birth dates and he finally saw the light and began to understand what we were talking about.

A few years ago, I was at a scheduled doctor appointment where I had to fast for blood work. I arrived early with my stomach growling. I checked in and sat in the waiting room.

A few minutes became 15 minutes, as I watched other people entered and join me in the waiting room. One by one their names were called - a few for the same doctor I was there to see. After one woman helped her mother in, and they were called back to my doctor before they had a chance to sit down, I asked what was the time for their appointment. They were almost 30 minutes after my scheduled appointment.

I went back to the front desk and enquired about why I was still in the waiting room after others had come and gone with a scheduled appointment after me. It turned out somebody had forgotten to inform my doctor that I was there - and on his computer - it showed that I was a no show.

Appointments for important meetings are good to arrange. But sometimes things happen that you do not have time to make an appointment. Like the time I bit into my fried chicken at school and somehow damaged one of my braces I had in my mouth in sixth grade. That was a phone call to my parents to decide who was going to stop what they

were doing and pick me up and rush me to the orthodontist.

Or the time I woke up sick to my stomach in the middle of the night and I couldn't keep anything down.

The evening before, my wife and I had gone to a friend's house after work in Milledgeville. When we got home we went to sleep. Somewhere between 2 or 3 a.m., I woke up with my stomach hurting.

I will not describe what happened when I went to the bathroom. I will just let you know that I was up for hours with a very upset stomach. I had never felt like that before.

The next morning my wife called the doctor's office and they informed her they were booked but I may be able to be worked in if she brought me after lunch. So we made our way into the doctor's office. Jill walked in fine. I was kind of lagging.

In my hand was a flimsy grocery bag. I brought it just in case I needed it. I sat down near the door that led back to the patient's room. My wife went up to the window and told them we were there and that I really needed to see a doctor. The lady behind the sliding glass window told her they would see what they could do and slid the window back.

But she did not slide it all the way. I could still hear her as she said, "That's the woman who called about her husband being sick but I told her we were full up with appointments."

I really did not care for her smart aleck tone. I decided I would say something and I wanted the lady to hear me. With all the strength I could muster, I looked at my wife and said, "I sure hope I can get this bag up to my mouth fast enough before it happens again!"

I never asked, but assumed that she heard me. Less than five seconds later, my name was called for me to go into the back for my unscheduled appointment.

It is always better to have an appointment, if not, have your spouse call ahead, and take a plastic bag.

Monk's Walk for Peace brings out the best

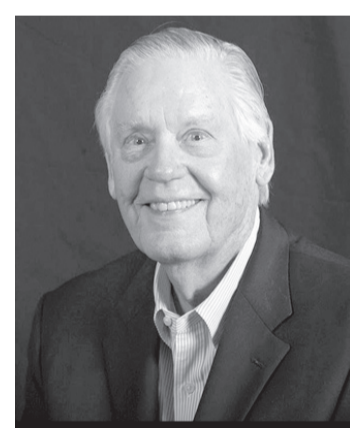
I'm trying to figure out why all the talk about Making America Great Again? America has been great since I've been here and I suspect it will be great when I'm gone. That is because it is made up of good people who do good things.

No one comes close to Americans in charitable giving. In 2024, U.S. charitable giving reached \$592.5 billion. The Charities Aid Foundation and Johns Hopkins report that Americans give about \$1,700 per person each year - more than three times the rate of other wealthy nations and up to 10 times the levels in France, Germany and Italy. That's great.

A report from Volunteer FDIP, a leading volunteer organization, showed that 77.34 million Americans volunteered in 2023, or 42 percent of the population. That's more than any other country. And that's great, too.

I bring this up because yelling at each other, name-calling, demeaning those with whom we disagree and being unwilling to listen to another point of view does not make America great. It divides us and there is nothing great about that. And that is not us. Or at least most of us. Yet sometimes, that seems to be all we see or read about ourselves.

While the ICE raids in Minneapolis were garner-



By DICK YARBROUGH

ing all the media attention - to Fox News, it was the greatest thing to happen since the discovery of fire; and to MSNBC, or whatever it calls itself these days, it was the end of civilization as we know it - a very simple event was taking place that focused on the good in us. A group of Buddhist monks set out single file in December on a 2,300-mile, 108-day pilgrimage from their temple in Fort Worth, Texas, to Washington, D.C. It was called a Walk for Peace and was intended to raise "awareness of peace, loving kindness and compassion" to a nation and a world badly in need of all of the above. Their walk took them through 10 states, including Georgia. They walked through the heat, the freezing cold and even endured one of the monks having to go through a leg amputation

after a driver crashed into the group in Texas. Still, they walked as thousands lined their route to cheer them on.

My daughter had her own personal experience during the monk's walk through Coweta County. She had just had foot surgery and was wearing a walking boot. As they passed her, the monk leading the group, without breaking stride, simply said, "May your foot heal quickly." She later told me, "I immediately felt his peace and his presence." So did a lot of other Americans.

One reporter described the reaction this way: "Construction workers silenced their power tools as they kept watch from the second-story office building across the street. I bowed my head and held my palms in prayer, along with the construction workers above me, the family with three kids beside me, and the older women wrapped in blankets. A police officer lowered his gaze."

A key figure in the Walk for Peace was Aloka, the "Peace Dog," a stray dog from India, who had been a part of an earlier peace walk in India and later became part of the U.S. pilgrimage. He had to undergo ligament surgery in South Carolina and was treated free of charge by a local veterinary clinic. The surgery was successful and Aloka rejoined the group in Charlotte. You

just can't keep a good peace dog down.

The monks' Walk for Peace also brought out the bigots - self-described Christians - to demonstrate against them and to rail about them on Facebook. Christians are about love, as in love thy neighbor. These people couldn't spell love if you spotted them the "o" and "v," let alone demonstrate it.

I would suggest the Bible-thumpers read Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Hint: It's the fifth, sixth and seventh Chapters of the Gospel of Matthew.) As I recall, He is the Prince of Peace and would not be happy to have his name evoked in condemnation of a group marching for peace. No wonder church attendance is down.

Was the march worth the effort? Yes and no. The pilgrimage drew huge crowds and - minus the bigots who, thankfully, were a minority - a tremendously positive response from Americans who think our country is great and just wish it could be kinder and gentler. Then we turn on the evening news and realize that we still have a long, long way to go.

You can reach Dick Yarbrough at dick@dickyarbrough.com or at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Georgia 31139.

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



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

GIAA 2-AA TOURNAMENT

Brentwood better in 2-AA finals rematch with Trinity

Crusader boys lock up playoff spot with win over Windsor for consolation

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

SANDERSVILLE – Scrapy defense and some savvy adjustments helped the Trinity girls overcome a dreadful start, but on a night like Friday's when their shots just weren't falling, there was only going to be so much they could do to change a losing cause in the region 2-AA title game.

Brentwood, with some strong momentum and a home crowd at its back, drastically out-performed the Lady Crusaders to win 60-45 and claim the league championship for a second-straight season.

The Eagles' duo of senior forwards – Cadence English exploding for a team-high 27 points and Bailey Barron chipping in another 11 – were at their best in a final ride at home before the upcoming state tournament (in which a first-round bye, guaranteed win or lose, ensures the rest of their

games from here will be played on neutral courts). Both, with the added efforts of Camryn Hancock (nine points) and Callie Jones (seven), contributed significantly to the field goal shooting percentage of 45 that summed up the can't-miss performance.

Trinity, in contrast, shot a clip of only 31 from the floor and was just 1-for-17 from outside. And if those numbers weren't enough, a rebounding deficit of 47-21 did more to prove that this just wasn't the Lady Crusaders' night.

"We came out, I feel like, a little timid," head coach Lacey Shepherd said. "We played really hard (Thursday, in a 57-33 semifinal win over Gatewood), and we needed to bring that same intensity, but couldn't seem to quite find it right off the bat. We've just gotta be able to execute a little bit better."

BATTLE OF THE B's: Trinity's Brinley Vinson (21) goes up for a third-quarter basket against Brentwood center Bailey Barron (5). Their matchup over four quarters was a focal point of Friday's region title game, in which the Lady Eagles had few answers for Vinson's play in the post, though the Lady Crusaders had just as much of an issue on the other end keeping Barron off the glass

/CLAY REYNOLDS

Defense, however, was a bright spot that kept their chances in the game alive until late in the second half, despite a first quarter that got off to as bad a start as possible.

Brentwood collected multiple baskets and offensive rebounds as Trinity's Brinley Vinson and Madie-Grace Alligood both picked up their first fouls within 95 seconds.

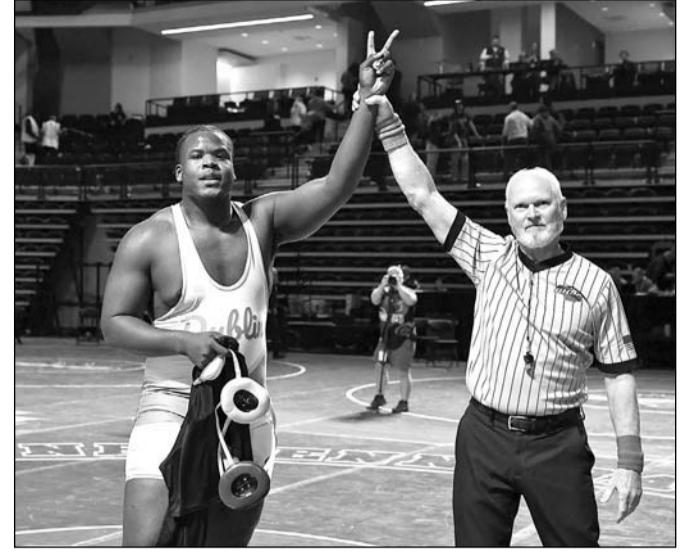
The Lady Crusaders, still searching out some non-existent offensive rhythm with a Vinson 3-point play representing their only scoring, were in danger of getting wiped out of the game as Brentwood grabbed a 17-3 lead only four minutes later.

And without any baskets to aid in setting up pressure, the Lady Crusaders were going to have to create some momentum for themselves defensively to reverse the slow spiral.

Fortunately, they did, as Maddy George and Vinson combined on a 4-0 run for a spark to finish the quarter with a deficit of only 19-8.

Trinity's solid D continued to take hold, and take the ball away a good bit, in the second quarter. But Brentwood – when it wasn't being hassled into turnovers – only slightly cooled down, and the Lady Crusaders still couldn't shake their

CRUSADERS
Continued on page 6



DUBLIN UP: Domimarkeyo Walden joined the ranks of two-time state champions with his win in Thursday night's 285-pound finals/JASON HALCOMBE, Dublin City Schools

D-fending champion...

Walden repeats, five others medal in Morrow at GHSA championships

From STAFF REPORTS

Dublin's Domimarkeyo "D-Man" Walden is now a back-to-back state wrestling champion.

The Irish junior completed his second-straight run to the top of the heavyweight category at the GHSA state traditional tournament last week, defeating ECI's Jordan Handsom by 6-2 decision in the final to capture a 100th career victory and wrap up his 2025-26 season with a once-beaten record in 32 matches.

Walden was one of two Irish wrestlers to reach a title bout in Thursday's action at the Clayton County Convention Center. The other was 120-pounder Quinton Lovett, who rode a streak of three pins to the finals, but fell to Gordon Lee three-time champ Noah Brown.

Four other local finalists wrestled back into spots among the top six. West Laurens' Jarek Giles (106) and Jayden Watkins (190) were defeated in consolation matches, and the Raiders' Sebastian Rodriguez (120) won his fifth-place match. Cayson Wadley (138) finished sixth as a lone East Laurens wrestler to reach the podium.

See upcoming additions for further coverage and more photos.

2-High A fast-break: Shorthanded Lady Falcons fall two points shy of Northeast; Another one eludes Irish boys in OT at Central

From STAFF REPORTS

Three sets of 2-High A basketball games in Macon Friday night put the midstate's last load of regular-season hay in the barn, and helped finalize the seeding for this coming week's region tournament, set to be hosted by Washington County after its girls clinched the top spot in the bracket outright with a win at ACE.

Here's a look at how East Laurens and Dublin fared in the finales, and their resulting tournament draw...

Northeast Macon 61, East Laurens girls 59

The Lady Falcons were down to only eight players, and out a couple of starters, after receiving news from the GHSA of suspen-

sions for five players involved in the altercation that broke out at the end of their home win over Central Tuesday night. Despite the shorthanded squad, they were right in it most of the way, and up by two at the half before a 20-9 third quarter by Northeast flipped the game on its head.

East, which was 13-of-32 at the foul line, never truly got back in it, as deficits of 4-5 lingered until a free-throw putback by Deanna Lowther with a few seconds to go cut the final number to two.

Zahmaria Robinson, with 25 points and 12 rebounds, and Lowther, scoring 20 and boarding 21, both had double-doubles.

Though the question was made moot by a 49-34 WACO win at ACE, Friday's loss ended any long shot that remained of the

Lady Falcons (21-4, 11-2 region 2-High A) overtaking the Lady Hawks in first and hosting the region tournament. They will still advance directly to the semifinals as the No. 2 team when the final two rounds are held next week in Sandersville.

East Laurens boys 91, Northeast Macon 51

After a run to build up a 10-point lead by the half, the Falcons (20-5, 10-3 region) broke free with 29 against Northeast's 15 in the third, and cruised to a third victory in a row to keep alive their shot at also reaching into the 2-High A boys' top two. Dodge County helped them out by dropping a 41-40 heartbreaker to Bleckley Friday that will re-es-

tablish a tie between the teams for second behind ironclad No. 1 Southwest Macon.

Central Macon 42, Dublin girls 34

Friday's unpleasant third quarter turned a one-point lead at the half into a gap of 12 that, given the low-scoring nature of the whole night, was going to be too wide to bridge for the Lady Irish (11-14, 5-8 region 2-High A) in the final eight minutes. Though Dublin's fortunes improved on the offensive end, the closest it would be able to get in the chase was the final eight points.

Central 55, Dublin boys 48

Two key free throw misses by the Chargers left a crack in the

door as Dublin trailed three with a few seconds to go. Chris Dixon went the length to drain a 3-point rattler on the run as time expired, tying the game at 46 and forcing overtime. But the Irish (4-20, 0-13 region) would be blanked after answering an early Central bucket.

Dixon finished the night with 20 as the Green and Gold's leading scorer. QuanTavis Lovett double-doubled with 13 points, 14 rebounds and a couple of blocked shots.

Next...

Preliminary round games in both region 2-High A and 4-AAA tournaments commence Monday

HOOPS
Continued on page 6

SOCCER ROUNDUP...

Boys' comeback win a bright spot of EL's tough opening week Raiders' teams get off to unbeaten start; Irish impressive in debuts at Treutlen, H'ville

From STAFF REPORTS

Soccer season got off to a running start last week as Dublin, East Laurens and West Laurens teams took the field for their first regular-season matches.

Boys squads from each chalked up opening wins Tuesday night, while West followed up an early region sweep with another as it returned home on Thursday to remain undefeated.

The East Laurens boys scored three goals in the second half, and each in a hurry on some quick-hitting sprints downfield that caught the opposing back line flat-footed, to win a 3-2 thriller with Swainsboro in their Tuesday debut – what



IN A DOGFIGHT: A Toombs defender looks to cut in on East Laurens' Kamari LaGroon on a physical challenge for the ball during Thursday's home matches/ZACH DAWSON

would be the only victory out of the Falcons' four home matches for the week.

East's boys trailed 1-0 at the half, but Jesus Orduna-Lopez converted to tie things up in the first min-

ute of the second half as the field flipped with a Falcon 2-on-1.

Defenses battled from there until Swainsboro's De'Avion Rountree found goal for what the Tigers

figured would be a decisive score with eight minutes to go. East had other plans, pulling another fast one off the ensuing kick to answer in a matter of seconds as Kamari LaGroon dribbled

it all the way down and fit in an equalizer from the left side to make it 2-2.

The Falcons would go up not a minute later as Lerrri Lopez took a shot off a corner kick, and got one to bounce in off the keeper's hands for the 3-2 winner, and their defense held with a little over six minutes to go.

Swainsboro got five goals from Gracie Beneteau and three from Bre McClen-don to run away with the girls' match. The Lady Tigers gave up an own goal, off an inadvertent deflection in the box, to put East Laurens on the board first. But from there it was eight unanswered scores from

the visitors before a second shot found the back for the Lady Falcons on a 20-yard left-footer from Maggie Foskey with roughly 25 minutes to play in the second half.

Toombs County won big as guest for both of East's home matches Thursday. Freshman Kanijah Toby's hat trick helped lift the Lady Dogs to the win by a count of 9-1. Sayria Willis scored the Falcons' only goal with 10 minutes to play before halftime.

Oswaldo Tinoco scored twice for the Toombs boys in their 5-1 victory.

East Laurens will go on the road to challenge

SOCCER
Continued on page 6

SOCCER

Continued from page 5

Wheeler County in its next matches on Thursday.

West Laurens started its season on the road with two big wins over Westside Augusta.

The Lady Raiders rattled off one goal after another to compile 10 in their half of an opening shutout. Landry Hall assisted the opening goal by Marley Yearwood. Malone Poole scored the second off a touch line pass from Selah Lanton. Poole hit a free kick to make it 3-0. Lanton and Kristin Ivey had a pair of scores each to run the score to 7-0 at half-time.

Poole completed a hat trick from the top of the box early in the second half. Ivey did the same by knocking in a cross from Jenna Edwards. Saussy chalked up another assist with the setup of a shot into the side netting for Hall to end the match by a score of 10-0.

Jiya Patel and K.K. Wilson led the back line, and Madelyn Lamb the shutout in goal.

The West Laurens boys allowed a single goal, via second-half free kick, for the only defensive blemish in a 9-1 win.

Freshman Graham Rozar had the assist on all three goals by the West Laurens boys in Tuesday's opening half, with Dalton Oxford, Payton Everly and Bryson Morgan converting to put the Raiders up 3-0.



WHEN IT RAYNES, IT POURS: Toombs County kept putting shots in – this one by Rayne Sears (13) – to pad its lead down the stretch of Thursday's second half/**ZACH DAWSON**

Oxford got them going in the second with back-to-back goals off the assists of Clark Nelson and Bryson Morgan to complete a hat trick.

Jack Yearwood scored twice in a row from there – his hard-hit second strike leaving the Westside keeper trying to find the ball as it knuckled into the far side netting – for goals six and seven.

Truett Bainbridge crossed to Alex Derochie for an upper-90 shot to bring the score to 8-1, and Jaxson Lamb set up the header of Joe Powell for the final goal.

R.T. Gilder kept Westside off the board for 60 minutes in his keeping

debut.

The Raider girls shut out Howard 7-0, while the boys earned a hard-fought 2-1 victory as both teams returned to the SHU for the first of a two-match homestand Thursday. They continue it with a couple of potentially pivotal matches against Harlem Tuesday night.

Dublin's teams split up for their season debuts Tuesday night, its girls facing Treutlen in Soperton and boys traveling to Hawkinsville.

The Lady Irish were shut out 2-0, though their defense – led by the double-digit steals of Jaymi Kate McLendon and Bianca Edmond,

and the eight saves (one to deny a penalty kick) by keeper Lizzie Brantley had eight saves – shined in the first outing of the spring.

Maya Brinson scored both Treutlen goals.

Urick Andrews had four of the five strikes for the Irish boys in the reverse, a 5-0 win. Jashum Carswell added the fifth to seal things out, with Keyshawn Haynes and keeper Conner Rozier – in his first career shutout – anchoring the defensive effort.

Dublin's squads will reunite on the road to open region play Tuesday night at Jefferson County.



I'VE GOT THIS ONE COVERED: Goalkeeper Cristofer Vasquez-Aquino gets ahold of a Toombs shot with this diving save for the Falcon boys/**ZACH DAWSON**

CRUSADERS

Continued from page 5

tough luck going the other way, making little progress on reducing the lead as several golden chances from the field and at the line went unconverted.

Second fouls for both Barron and English to exceed the quarterly team limit around 1:34 left kept things trending in a good direction, but Trinity still couldn't do much with the opportunity, mustering a 4-0 run to briefly make it an eight-point game before English tipped a shot back at the buzzer to get the Eagles into the half up 29-19.

The Lady Crusaders played their best stretch of offensive and defensive basketball out of the half on a three-minute streak that cut the lead down to three, and signaled they might finally have a ballgame on their hands.

Vinson went in strong on the first possession to draw Barron's third foul, then scored six of the next eight points as Trinity dialed up its aggressiveness to get some much-needed stops, and force more turnovers.

"I think we just challenged the girls, we felt like in the first half, each team member was waiting for somebody else to step up and do it, and we just challenged them that everybody's gotta give the most effort when they're on the court to work together well as a team," Shepherd said.

But the momentum just as quickly swung back Brentwood's direction, as another Trinity drought hit near the two-minute mark, and Barron completed a 3-point play from the post to get the Eagles back in a 38-31 lead. English finished up the tide-turning sequence with a shot at the buzzer to answer a Crusader basket, and make it a 41-33 score going to the fourth.

Finding the basket, for Trinity, remained like pulling teeth in the early part of the last eight minutes.

Brentwood didn't rush to put it away, but pulled back into a 12-point lead on a singlehanded 4-0 English run about halfway through.

Trinity cut it back to 10, but failed to convert another great opening off a steal as Vinson missed a contested layup, then committed

her fourth foul going after the rebound. Chloe Rozier nailed a gotta-have 3 a few possessions later, but English answered it with one of her own (she knocked down four for the night) coming back to get the lead back to 10, and a 7-0 Eagle run continued with a bank-in by Barron and a driving basket by Jones before the two-minute mark that provided the nails.

Vinson led the Lady Crusaders with 23 points.

Brentwood's confidence in this latest chapter of a multi-season rivalry, between teams and their talented senior classes who give you a great sense there can be a different outcome any time they play, once again followed trends tied to home-court advantage in the series that held true this regular season, and last, with fairly decisive wins by either team in their respective buildings before at least one neutral-site matchup in the region tournament and/or playoffs.

This Eagle victory – in a second rematch of the year that was as much a foregone conclusion as the team's fourth in the Final Four last season – evened the post-season series since 2024 to 2-2.

The two teams, who will be the top two seeds in the AA state playoffs would have a shot to reunite for one more epic battle in the state championship game if history repeats. Trinity, with a full expectation that that moment of redemption will come later this month, left the floor Friday already focused on what that'll take.

"We've gotta make sure we finish," Shepherd said, explaining that rediscovering that rhythm on offense is likely the only thing keeping her team from its best basketball. "We've got everything we need if we can put it all together on the right night."

For the moment, the Trinity girls will have a few days off as they enter the tournament with a first-round bye, and await the winner between seventh seed Windsor and 10th seed Heritage in the quarterfinals this coming Friday at Tattnell Square.

"We just honestly need a little bit of rest, and then we've just gotta go back to executing and working de-



DRIVING HOME THE DAGGER: Jagger George knocks down a floating 12-footer in the short corner, after getting the ball via handoff screen from Jude Evans, to finish converting a Windsor technical foul into the four-point swing that got the Crusaders' lead up to 12 with only a few minutes to go in the fourth quarter of their win to claim third place/**CLAY REYNOLDS**

fensively, working on our shots," Shepherd said. "I felt like our shots didn't really fall tonight. And when they don't, we've got to pick it up and make up for that on the defensive end."

'We felt like we needed that one'...

There's no way of knowing if Friday's consolation game actually amounted to a do-or-die proposition. But Trinity's boys, with the fate of their season potentially in the balance from a spot on the bubble in the power rankings, weren't about to leave it to chance.

The Crusaders closed out Windsor 56-43 to all but nail down a berth in the AA state tournament, which they'll enter as the 11th seed of 12, and open on the road at No. 6 Southland Wednesday.

"We felt like we needed that one to get into the playoffs," Trinity head coach Dr. John Williams said.

A battle with late-season attrition had taken a steep toll on the Crusaders since early January, as a pile of struggles including multiple injuries, had them on a four-game losing streak (including a 30-point semifinal loss to Central Fellowship) as several chances to bolster their standing went by the boards prior to a potential last shot on Friday.

Jagger George scored 23 points, and Kolbi Grooms and Will Foskey chipped in 14 each, to lead the strong finish.

"The first game with them, Jag had 47, and he had his way with them," Williams said. "They adjusted some things in that second game. He saw three bodies every time he got the ball, so we were looking at high ball screens to try to free him up a little bit more. We were trying to bring their big guy out a little bit more to create a little more space. We were also looking at bringing him off some more off-ball screens as well. We used some dribble handoffs to kind of open up some driving lanes."

"We felt like if we could get some one-on-ones, we felt like we could take 'em off the dribble. When we were driving, we were looking for the defense to collapse and hit our shooters too, and Kolbi knocked some big shots down for us in doing that. We were happy to get some driving lanes open and get some good ball screens tonight."

Things were virtually even in the first half, and Trinity held a lead of only one when the game hit a turning point midway through the third quarter.

Grooms hit multiple free

throws and a 3-pointer in the 10-0 run to take over control, before the Crusaders ended the third quarter with a 46-39 advantage.

They were up eight with 4:34 to go when a Windsor technical foul gave Trinity free throws and possession for a chance to put it away. George knocked down both shots, then a 12-foot fade-away off the handoff screen of Jude Evans to make it 53-41.

The rest of the scoring was limited, but Trinity added three and gave up only two more to coast through the finish.

Windsor, whose leading scorers were Landon Swain with 12 and Luke Lasak with 11, was outrun 29-18 in the second half.

Williams was proud of the resilient performance by a Crusader team that likely has more players than not limited by one injury or another.

George was banged up. So was reserve center Alston Bryan, who had sprained an ankle during practice earlier in the week, but was able to play in both tournament games.

"He's been a dog out there for us working through that," Williams said. Evans, lost for most of January and February with a fractured hand, also made his return as a welcome addition to the backcourt.

"He had two practices before we played yesterday," Williams said. "His hand, we're having to tape it. We're getting that hand better. We're continuing to work on his ball skills. He was working at a high level before he got injured. He was really really looking good. He knows the game so well, sees the court, plays great defense, handles the ball well. We're continuing to work with him and improve him in all areas."

Getting healthy enough to play with confidence is the biggest key as the Crusaders look ahead to a draw in the playoffs that will be tough, but not impossible.

"Teams 5-12 are fairly even, and you've got 1-4 that's cream of the crop, just head and shoulders above everybody," Williams said. "But we're hopeful if we can get in there, we're hopeful to make a run and see what we can do."

HOOPS

Continued from page 5

night on various campuses, with host sites that are based on the upper seeds in either the girls (in the case of the first) or boys brackets (as for the second).

The eighth-seeded West Lau-

rens boys will visit Hephzibah at 7:30 p.m., while the Lady Raiders await the winner between No. 8 Harlem and No. 5 Aquinas on Tuesday at Westside-Augusta.

Dublin's seventh-seeded girls will host No. 10 Jefferson County Monday at 5, before the 10th seed Irish boys (hosting as a coincidence

of their identical placement in the draw) battle No. 7 Bleckley County on the Jaroy Stuckey Court.

East's girls, seeded No. 2, will not play until Friday's 4 p.m. semifinal in Sandersville. The Falcon boys, with a double bye as the third seed, will travel to Central Macon for their play-in game Wednesday,

against whichever team advances between the sixth-seeded Chargers, and Monday's Bleckley/Dublin winner.

To keep track of all of this week's results, updated nightly, and complete brackets, check out our Region Tournament Central online at courierheraldtoday.com/region.

SCOREBOARD

GIRLS HOOPS

Friday
Brentwood 60, Trinity 45
Central Macon 42, Dublin 34
Northeast Macon 61, East Laurens 59

BOYS HOOPS

Friday
Central 55, Dublin 48
EL 91, Northeast 51
Trinity 56, Windsor 43

BASEBALL

Friday
Dublin 3, Swainsboro 1
EL 7, Bacon Co. 5
Bacon Co. 19, EL 1

PREP SCHEDULE

BASKETBALL

Friday
Dublin at Central Macon
East Laurens at Northeast Macon/6 p.m.

Monday

4-AAA Tournament
West Laurens (boys) at Hephzibah/7:30 p.m.

2-High A Tournament

Jefferson Co. at Dublin (girls)/5 p.m.
Bleckley Co. at Dublin (boys)/6:30 p.m.

Tuesday

4-AAA Tournament
WL (girls) vs. Aquinas or Harlem (at Westside)/6 p.m.

Wednesday

GIAA Playoffs, round 1
Trinity (boys) at Southland /6 p.m.

Friday

GIAA Quarterfinals (at Tattnell Square)
Trinity (girls) vs. Windsor or Heritage/6 p.m.

BASEBALL

Monday

EL at Johnson Co.
WL at Veterans/6 p.m.

Tuesday

Richmond Academy at WL /5:30 p.m.
Dublin at EL/6 p.m.

Thursday

Toombs Co. at Dublin /5:30 p.m.

Friday

WL at ARC/5:30 p.m.
EL at Dublin/6 p.m.

SOCCER

Tuesday

Dublin at Jefferson Co. /5:30 p.m.

Thursday

EL at Wheeler Co./5 p.m.

Classifieds

Employment

MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

The City of Dublin is accepting applications for a Supervisor of the Mechanical Maintenance Department. This employee Supervises and participates in servicing and maintenance of a variety of automotive and industrial equipment. Work involves the supervision of mechanics and automotive service workers engaged in the servicing of automotive and industrial equipment. The position is responsible for managing the maintenance shop including the scheduling of incoming work and determining how work should be done within established policies and procedures. Work is performed under the direction of the Public Works Director. Applicants must have a valid Georgia commercial drivers license, high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and will be required to furnish own tools. Successful applicant must pass a drug screen. Salary range is from \$48,864.00 - \$75,740.00 and will be based on experience. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered. Applicants may apply online through our www.cityofdublin.org website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Real Estate

Land For Sale

4- 25+ ACRE Tracts on hwy 80 East, Adrian GA: 2 parcels with pond. 2 parcels with pecan orchard and pasture. Abundant Deer & Turkey: \$225,500. Brokers welcome 478-957-9734 owner

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



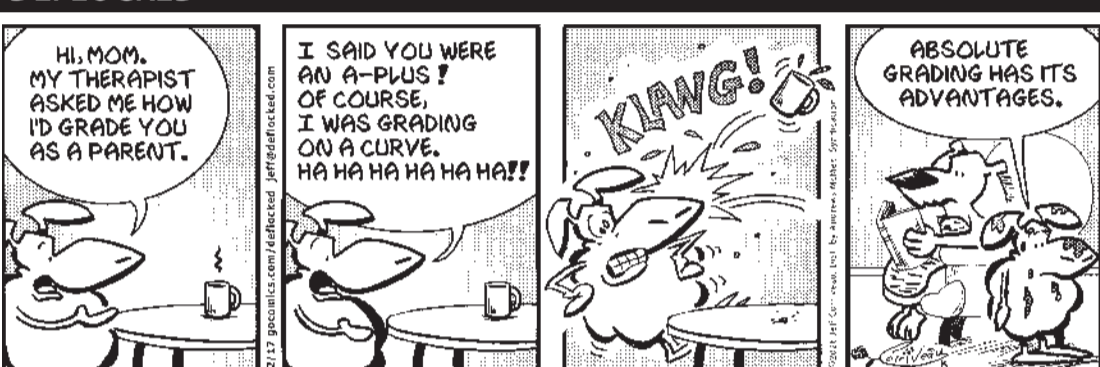
GARFIELD



OVERBOARD



DEFLOCKED



ZIGGY



PLUGGERS



A pluggers' luck fails when he turns his ankle trying to avoid the cracks in the sidewalk.

Spouse's world turned upside down with pair of Revelations

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I (both male) have been together for 28 years. The last few years have been less than romantic, but we remain close and in love (or so I thought).

A few days ago, he called me from work (I'm retired) crying so hard I could hardly understand him. I rushed to his office, and he told me he had just learned from his doctor that he has AIDS. He then confessed that he'd had an affair with a contractor at his place of employment. He said it happened years ago when we were going through a rough patch, and swore it was the only time he had strayed.

I am awaiting the results of my HIV test, heartbroken and crushed. What now? I'm so hurt; I don't know if I should stay or go. -- CRUSHED IN FLORIDA

DEAR CRUSHED: Your first order of business should be to ensure you and your husband are getting the best medical advice and treatment possible. A diagnosis of HIV-positive does not necessarily mean the disease will progress to full-blown AIDS because with the advances in medication, it can be held in check. Whether you should stay with your husband or leave is a question that should be tabled until you are less traumatized and thinking rationally.

DEAR ABBY: Two of my children are planning weddings two months apart next



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

son is offering it. Should your parents' degree of infirmity prevent them from attending both celebrations, the decision about which they will attend should be theirs. Even if they can't be there in person for both, these days many weddings are livestreamed, and photos and videos can be shared on social media.

TO MY ASIAN READERS WHO CELEBRATE THE LUNAR NEW YEAR: The Lunar New Year begins today. This is the Year of the Horse. According to Asian culture, individuals born in the year of the horse are dynamic, charming and adventurous. They thrive in settings that are bustling with activity and are often seen as natural leaders and motivators. A healthy, happy and prosperous New Year to you all. Tally-ho! -- LOVE, ABBY

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

DEAR CHALLENGED: I do have one suggestion: STEP BACK! It should not be your responsibility to orchestrate who will attend which wedding. Invitations should be sent to everyone. After that, I'm sure conversations will ensue. If financial help is needed, your

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

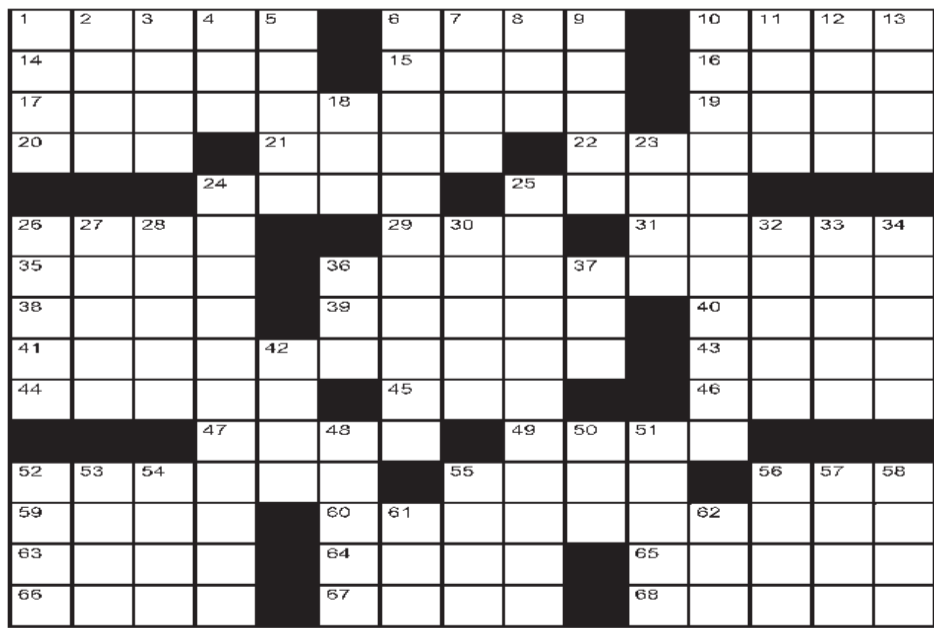
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

- Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠ A J 5 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ A K 10 9 5 ♣ A J
- Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠ Q 8 6 ♥ 10 9 7 6 3 ♦ K 10 6 ♣ 6 5
- Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠ Q 9 8 7 5 4 ♥ 7 2 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 9 7 6
- Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠ A K 6 ♥ A 6 5 2 ♦ K 8 5 ♣ 9 7 5
- Q 5 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠ Q 10 7 ♥ Q J 6 5 ♦ K 10 6 3 ♣ 7 4
- Q 6 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠ K 7 ♥ A 10 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ K Q 9 8 5 3

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS
 - 1 Sound of a water balloon breaking
 - 6 School dance
 - 10 Gentle touches
 - 14 Fight ___ and nail
 - 15 Bring on staff
 - 16 Fairy-tale monster
 - 17 Fruity autumn drink: 2 wds.
 - 19 Person under 20
 - 20 Golf ball support
 - 21 Tomcat or bull
 - 22 Provoked
 - 24 Actress Moore
 - 25 Penny
 - 26 Acid neutralizer
 - 29 ___-K (early education)
 - 31 Brown sodas
 - 35 "___ girl!"
 - 36 Light and airy dessert: 2 wds.
 - 38 Part of an udder
 - 39 Piebald horse
 - 40 Throw forcefully
 - 41 Imperious
 - 43 Beloved star
 - 44 Comedian Carell
 - 45 Bunny's prominent feature
 - 46 Writes
 - 47 Bachelor of ___
 - 49 Baseball hats
 - 52 Elk's horn
 - 55 Make dirty
 - 56 Cleaning cloth
 - 59 Negotiation goal
 - 60 Rack up
 - 63 Go out with
 - 64 2025, for example
 - 65 Fortune-telling deck
 - 66 Remain
 - 67 Do a pre-wash chore
 - 68 Unlocks
- DOWN
 - 1 Right away, in the OR
 - 2 Catholic leader
 - 3 Easy run
 - 4 Georgia's capital: Abbr.
 - 5 Unifying idea
 - 6 Country where Tagalog is spoken
 - 7 Take the bus
 - 8 Mined resource
 - 9 Blend into traffic
 - 10 Lay's snacks: 2 wds.
 - 11 Matured
 - 12 Fir or yew
 - 13 Put in the mail
 - 18 Video device, for short
 - 23 Some time ago
 - 24 Dry California area: 2 wds.
 - 25 Jump ball location: 2 wds.
 - 26 Tub soaks
 - 27 Face-planted: 2 wds.
 - 28 Theater area
 - 30 MMA fighter
 - 32 Rousey
 - 32 Magna cum ___
 - 33 Ohio city
 - 34 Auctions off
 - 36 Place to get a facial
 - 37 "In ___ we trust"
 - 42 "You are ___"
 - 48 Cafeteria carriers
 - 50 Intent
 - 51 Disney dog
 - 52 Contributes
 - 53 In apple-pie order
 - 54 "Bye-bye!"
 - 55 Mark for life
 - 56 Hard to find
 - 57 Lots: 2 wds.
 - 58 Obtains
 - 61 Business leader: Abbr.
 - 62 Once around a track

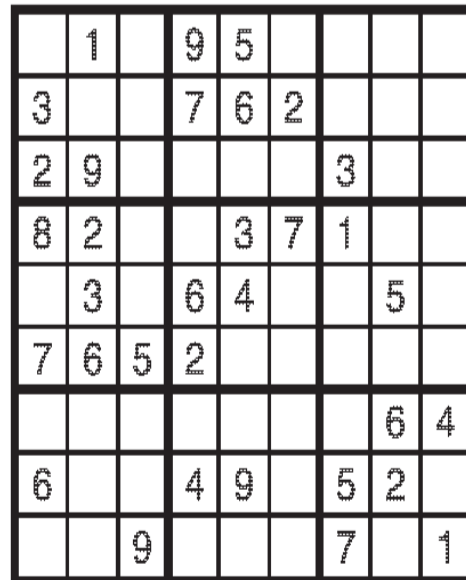


Created by Stella Zawistowski



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SUDOKU

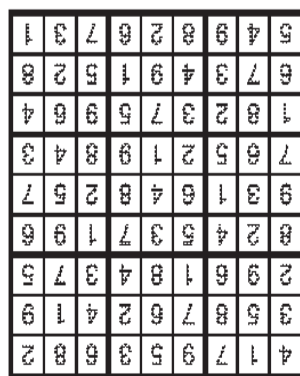


Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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



ANSWER:

Are You Aware of Lightning Safety?

SAFEST

Go indoors and stay inside until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.



SAFE

Take Shelter in a hard-topped vehicle.



UNSAFE

Do not take shelter under a tree, on a hilltop, or in an open field.



If you cannot get indoors, or in a vehicle, go to the lowest area nearby and make yourself as small a target as possible.

Ready, Georgia

SEVERE WEATHER
Continued from page 1

sure the place you pick is not subject to flooding.

- Be a very small target! Squat low to the ground. Place your hands on your knees with your head between them. Make yourself the smallest target possible.
- Do not lie flat on the ground. This will make you a larger target!

After the Storm Passes

- Stay away from storm-damaged areas.
- Listen to the radio or television for information and instructions.

If Someone is Struck by Lightning

- People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge and can be handled safely.
- Call for help. Get someone to dial 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number.
- The injured person has received an electrical shock and may be burned, both where they were struck and where the electricity left their body. Check for burns in both places. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight.

- Give first aid. If breathing has stopped, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, look and care for other possible injuries. Learn first aid and CPR by taking an American Red Cross first-aid and CPR course; call your local Red Cross chapter for class schedules and fees.

For more information, contact Laurens County EMA at 478-277-2911 or visit these websites: www.ready.ga.gov, www.srh.noaa.gov/ffc/ or www.gema.ga.gov.

Georgia lawmakers support measure to let pharmacists provide HIV prevention meds

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — People who worry about exposure to the HIV virus may soon be able to walk into a Georgia pharmacy and buy preventative medicines.

Bipartisan legislation that would allow pharmacists to order and dispense or inject preventative HIV drugs passed the Georgia House by a wide margin Thursday.

Seven Republicans opposed the measure, which was authored by a Republican.

Sen. Chuck Hufstetler, R-Rome, who has a master's degree in medical science, said he introduced the measure for a simple reason.

"I'm in healthcare, I do anesthesia, and I look at the data, and the data says this is far, far more cost effective to prevent it than to treat it, as many things are in medicine," he said.

The South had the highest infection rate in the country, with 49% of the

new cases in 2022, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Gay and bisexual men accounted for 67% of new infections and 86% of diagnoses among all men, the CDC reported.

Metro Atlanta was a hotspot, with more than 50 new diagnosed cases per 100,000 people in 2023, about twice the state average, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health.

Senate Bill 195 would authorize pharmacists to order and then dispense or inject a 30- to 90-day supply of preexposure drugs and to do the same with a 30-day supply of postexposure drugs.

The Human Rights Campaign, which advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people, said it was encouraged to see the legislation moving. "Increasing access to HIV and AIDS care and prevention by empowering pharmacists will save lives," the

group's Georgia director, Bentley Hudgins, said in a statement.

Senate Bill 195 passed the House 155-7. It now returns to the Senate, where it passed unanimously last year. It must go back there due to amendments by the House that Hufstetler did not oppose. He said he would ask his colleagues in the Senate to agree to the changes, so the bill could go to the desk of Gov. Brian Kemp.

Should it become law, the State Board of Pharmacy would have until Jan. 1 to approve the training that pharmacists would need before they could offer the HIV prophylactic drugs.

Hufstetler said that if the measure becomes law, it could reduce misery and the need for costly medical care.

"This medicine, at about \$26, is far cheaper than the cost of treating somebody with an HIV infection, which would be about \$420,000 to \$1 million — and obviously an improved quality of life," he said.

COUCH THEATER ...

By DEMI TAVERAS
King Features

"Hamnet" (PG-13) -- This historical tragedy film stars two powerhouse actors in the drama genre, Jessie Buckley ("Wicked Little Letters") and Paul Mescal ("Gladiator II"). Mescal and Buckley respectively play William Shakespeare and Agnes Hathaway, with the film recounting the story of their relationship as William becomes a successful playwright. William and Agnes marry quickly, with kids following shortly, including twins named Hamnet and Judith. But with the bubonic plague spreading its deadliness throughout Europe, it's a matter of time until someone catches the disease. And when the disease catches Hamnet at 11 years old, his poor parents are left to cope with the tragedy of his death. Chloe Zhao ("Nomadland") directs this Oscar-nominat-

ed film that is out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Secret Agent" (R) -- You might know Wagner Moura from his portrayal as Pablo Escobar in "Narcos" or his role in "Civil War," but his role in this political thriller is what got him a Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Motion Picture (Drama) a month ago. Taking place in 1977 during the Brazilian dictatorship, the film picks up as professor and single father Armando (Moura) returns to his hometown of Recife, Brazil, hoping to reconnect with his son, Fernando, and find some semblance of peace. However, Armando shortly finds out that because of a previous political scuffle with a business executive, a contract killing for him has been ordered, leaving him with very few options and a murky, unknown future. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms" (TV-MA) -- Fans of George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" franchise should be quite happy to receive a third TV-series adaptation based on Martin's immersive books. This new prequel series takes place 90 years before "Game of Thrones" and about 70-80 years after "House of the Dragon." Starring Peter Claffey ("Bad Sisters") and Dexter Sol Ansell ("The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes"), the series follows a lowborn hedge knight named Ser Duncan the Tall (aka Dunk) and his squire, Ageon "Egg" Targaryen. The odd duo wanders throughout Westeros, naturally getting themselves into trouble and into some great adventures indeed. The first four episodes are out now to stream. The remaining two will premiere during the last two Sundays of February. (HBO Max)

SCHOOL BOARD
Continued from page 1

grants.

- \$25 million to replace 270 school buses.
- No change to school safety grants allotment.
- \$1.3million increase in mental health support grants.

Laurens County received two new buses this year and is expecting to get at least one bus next year.

Later in the meeting, the board approved the FY 27 certified administrators. Hall mentioned that Reed Waldrep, principal at West Laurens Middle School, will retire in August, while Garrett Cannon will go from being principal at East Laurens Middle School to the same position at WLMS. Brandi Purser, principal at East Laurens Primary School, was promoted to the director of federal programs and assessment.

"We will have a vacancy in both (schools) that we hope to fill at the next regular scheduled board meeting," Hall said.

In other meeting news, the board:

- Approved the retirement of Ed Mullis, parapro at East Laurens Primary.
- Approved the transfer of Sheila McDonald, teacher from East Laurens High School to ELP.
- Approved the new hires of Kevin Daniel, bus shop at Laurens County Schools, and Corey Dudley, paraprofessional at Laurens County Alternative School.
- Approved the FY 27 contract of Clifton Walker as a teacher at West Laurens High School.
- Approved the change of duties of Ashley Johns, parapro at East Laurens Elementary.
- Approved the following resignations: Karl Austin, bus driver at Laurens County Schools, Gabe Gay, teacher at WLHS, Sharita Jenkins, parapro at ELE, Laura Thomas, teacher at WLMS, Taylor Weinholt, teacher at Northwest Laurens Elementary, and Antwann Wiggins, bus driver at Laurens County Schools.
- Recognized WLMS for receiving the Clean School Award.
- Recognized NWLE for having its art on display in the board room.

TEEN DATING
Continued from page 1

"We really do not want to see these teenagers come in to our shelter or need a protective order. We have unfortunately seen a lot. We have talked with middle and high schoolers who have told us what is going on. We've had to help high schoolers get protective orders against their abuser."

Anyone needing information about the presentations can call WINGS at (478) 272-5880. For those needing help, they can call the Help Line at (478) 272-8000. People can also email Mullis at hmullis@wingsdublin.org and find more information at www.wingsdublin.org

"We'll talk to parents who are concerned with their child's relationship," Mullis said.

"We'll be glad to help them through it and confirm if it is unhealthy and if there are some services that are needed. Majority of parents do not realize that teen dating violence is an issue. I want to get that out there to let them know that this is going on and it's going on in our school systems and they need to know what to look for. They can show that they are concerned by what they see and they just really want to protect their children."

AT THE LOCAL LIBRARY ...

Classic Movie Monday at the Laurens County Library on Monday, February 23rd, from 10:00am - 12:00pm in the Auditorium. Join us for a 1960's classic romantic comedy about a charismatic girl from high society and an unrealized writer. Rated G, 1 hr. & 55 min. Coffee, tea, and popcorn will be served. For movie title, please visit: ocrl.org/lc-event

Mechatronics Monday at the Laurens County Library on Monday, February 23rd, from 3:30pm - 4:30pm in the Learning Lab. Drop by your LEGO Technic lab every Monday. Build with LEGO gears, motors, and more! Learn coding, too. Ages 8+ recommended.

Children's Storytime at the Laurens County Library on Tuesday, February

24th, at 10:30am & 5:30pm in our Children's Center. Join us for our weekly storytime where little ones can enjoy stories, dancing, and crafts.

BUILD! at the Laurens County Library on Wednesday, February 25th, from 4:00pm - 5:30pm in our Children's Center. For teens to toddlers, it's our weekly LEGO® and Duplo® building event!

St. Patrick's Used Book Sale Begins at the Laurens County Library on Saturday, February 28th, from 10:00am - 2:00pm in the Reading Room. Don't miss the opening day of our annual St. Patrick's Used Book Sale! Hardcover & DVDS/BLU-RAYS are \$1.00 and everything else is 50¢. For quicker service, please bring cash. Small bills preferred.

Legacy Readers Theatre presents ...

IN PURSUIT OF TRUTH:

— A Hand Is On the Gate —

An enriching experience of Poetry, Story, Dance and Song



Saturday, February 21, 2026 @ 5:00pm

Dublin Middle School

1501 N Jefferson St
Dublin, GA 31021