

Dublin schools preparing for accreditation review

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

A school accreditation agency will visit Dublin City Schools later this month for a review triggered by the district's financial crisis. Cognia, the organization that issues the system's accreditation, will send a team to Dublin on Feb. 23-25, during which time representatives will attend a school board meeting, interview individual board members and visit classrooms. "This monitoring review is because of the deficit that we're in," interim Superintendent Marcee

Pool told the City Board of Education at its meeting Monday night. "That's just part of what Cognia does. They come monitor things you have going on in your system." The school system had until Wednesday to submit all requested documentation. "We're uploading all of our documents and all of the things they're requesting," Pool said. Cognia contacted the schools in October about a then-approaching deadline for a "mid-cycle progress" required to keep its accreditation up-to-date. The agency noted in a letter to system officials that it was aware of the

district's deficit – initially estimated to exceed \$13 million by fiscal year's end – and that the Georgia Department of Education had placed the district on a "financial improvement plan." As a result, it required district officials to "include a formal update on progress toward meeting the financial directives issued by the Georgia Department of Education, supported by relevant evidence demonstrating a commitment to transparency and improvement in financial practices." At the same time, it also granted a temporary extension on outstanding invoice of \$8,400. Cog-



Dublin City Board of Education members review documents Monday night. The board voted to livestream future meetings/RODNEY MANLEY

nia is also waiving costs for the upcoming monitoring review. Also Monday, Pool told the board that property tax revenue has started to come in, which should allow the district to pay employees their "Lucky Loot" payments that have been withheld. The lump-sum portion of their salaries are usually paid in January.

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
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72ND ANNUAL DINNER: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HONORS LOCAL BUSINESSES, INDIVIDUALS

The Dublin-Laurens County Chamber of Commerce 72nd Annual Dinner Celebration, sponsored by Fairview Park Hospital (title sponsor) and Morris Bank (reception sponsor) was a wonderful evening spent honoring the Chamber Members and recognizing local businesses and their leaders. Congratulations to the winners: 2025 Ambassador of the Year - Tara Johnson, Owner Tara J. Salon & Hair Replacement Center; 2025 Small Business of the Year - Duncan Tire Co.; Large Business of the Year - Farmers Home Furniture, Corporate Office, Dublin; Willie Paulk 2025 Professional Businesswoman of the Year - Henrietta Williams, Dublin Chevrolet GMC; 2025 Businessman of the Year - Billy Frost, owner, Home Instead/SPECIAL PHOTOS, Satilya Rogers



City hires manager for Public Works reno

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The city's Public Works Department will get new home soon. The Dublin City Council recently approved Dublin Construction Co. as the construction manager for the renovation and repair of the city's Public Works Street Division facility. City Manager Josh Powell said the city bought a warehouse on Madison Street that used to be owned by Roche Farm & Garden. "We plan to renovate this facility and to use it for our street division and incorporate their office space as well as a shop and warehouse area for them," Powell said. "Dublin Construction was overwhelmingly recommended to be awarded the



Mayor Joshua Kight, City Council members and officials look at information on a screen during a recent council meeting/PAYTON TOWNS III

contract." Dublin Construction's overhead cost and monthly fee was expected to be shy of \$16,000 a month. The fee for services was expected to be 4 percent of the project. The city's street department is currently at the end of Washington Street, just past the Oconee Gym. The

city's Public Works Director Robert Petrie told Dublin Mayor Joshua Kight how difficult it is to get all of the equipment from the street department, from that facility, down Washington Street and through the Southside neighborhood, especially in the summer when children are outside playing.

"They have to safely move that heavy equipment through the neighborhood, plus it is inconvenient because it is not in the middle of town or accessible to a major highway," Kight said. "For years, we have been trying to plan for how to move the street department and other public works out of the Southside Neighborhood and into places that are more accessible to major roads and more centralized." For the 2024 SPLOST,

EMA chief: Thunderstorms are not to be underestimated

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Thunderstorms are common in Laurens County and should not be underestimated. Bill Laird, director of Laurens County Emergency Management Agency/E-911, said the spring time is the peak time for thunderstorm. During the last 12 months, Laurens County has had at least one thunderstorm every month, he said. "Thunderstorms are a threat that we can encounter year-round and at any time," Laird said. "With thunderstorms, not only do we have rainfall that can become heavy at times and cause flash flooding and even river and creek flooding." According to Ready Georgia, nearly 10 percent of thunderstorms are classified as severe, meaning they have winds that reach at least 58 mph, hail at least three-quarters of an inch or can even produce a tornado. "There is the potential for damaging winds, whether they are straight-line winds or downburst, that can cause trees to come down to cause power disruptions, road blockages and things like that," Laird said. "There

is also a potential for lightning. Thunderstorms pack a lot of hazards." This also includes hail and tornadoes. It is important for people to remember to tie down loose outdoor items before the storms and postpone outdoor activities. The typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of 30 minutes. According to the National Weather Service, on average, we can expect 45 to 55 days with thunderstorms each year in Georgia. Approximately 10 percent of all thunderstorms that occur in the U.S. are classified as severe. Here is some information to help you recognize severe weather, develop a plan, and be ready to act when threatening weather approaches: To prepare for a thunderstorm, people should do the following: • Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a severe thunderstorm. • Remember the 30/30 Lightning Safety Rule: Go indoors if, after seeing

SEVERE WEATHER
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CITY COUNCIL
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OBITUARIES



Robert "Kirk" Harrell

Robert “Kirk” Harrell, 67, beloved son of Evelyn Moore Harrell and the late Horace W. Harrell of Soperton passed away at home on Monday evening, Feb. 9, 2026.

Born in Soperton, he was the youngest of four children and only son. He graduated from Treutlen High School in 1977 and attended Swainsboro Tech where he took business classes. From an early age, he worked at the family business, Harrell’s IGA, continuing until his father’s death in 1992. He worked in manufacturing in Swainsboro and also at Tractor Supply before joining Wal-Mart in 2002 as a Sales Associate in the Hardware and Paint departments, retiring in 2023.

In his younger years, Kirk enjoyed fishing and riding horses and eventually had a farm where he raised and tended cows. He often took his great nieces and nephews to help him feed the cows. He was also a gun and knife enthusiast and had collected both for many years. More than anything Kirk had a servant’s heart, performing many acts of kindness and helping others including caring for his mother for over 30 years.

In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by his brothers-in-law, Darrell Stephens and Jerry Walden.

He leaves behind his three sisters, Phyllis Stephens, Janice Walden, and Marsha Mimbs (Eddy) all of Soperton, Ga.; three nieces, Phaedra McLendon (Bart), Brunswick, Ga., Desha LeDuc (Michael), Cumming, Ga., and Janica Peavey (Jordan), Statesboro, Ga., two nephews, Dustin Mimbs (Jamie), Canton, GA and Jarrett Walden (Erin), Statesboro, Ga., 13 great-nieces and great-nephews, several beloved cousins and his care family, Fonda Sutton, Sylvia Phillips, Stephanie Anderson and Martha Cohran.

Funeral services will

be conducted at 1 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 14, 2026, at Anchor of Hope Worship Center with Pastors Gilbert Posey, Milton Thomas, and Greg Ely officiating. Burial will follow at Westview Cemetery.

Serving as pallbearers will be Bart McLendon, Michael LeDuc, Jordan Peavey, Dustin Mimbs, Jarrett Walden, Will Garner, Parker Walden, Knox Peavey, and Pierce Walden. Honorary escort will include his great-nieces and great-nephews.

Kirk’s family will receive friends on Thursday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Anchor of Hope Worship Center, or friends and family may call at the residence of Phyllis Stephens,

If so desired, memorial contributions may be made in his memory to Anchor of Hope Worship Center, P.O. Box 45, Soperton, GA 30457.



Eola Carswell Taylor

Funeral services for Mrs. Eola Carswell Taylor, 71, of Wrightsville, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, at 1 p.m. at the Burnett Grove AME Church, 157 Hurst Road in Wrightsville. Reverend Daniel Thomas Jr., will deliver the eulogy. Interment will follow in the Mount Pleasant AME Church Cemetery.

Eola worked at Crown Tex for 27 years and was known for her love of cooking, sewing, visiting nursing homes, giving gifts and most of all attending church. She was a sweet, loving, God-fearing woman who touched everyone she met.

Mrs. Taylor passed away peacefully on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026, surrounded by love and cherished memories.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Eunice Darrisaw; father, Hershel Stephen; and siblings Willie Darrisaw, Eddie Carswell, Sandra Pinkston, Jerry Dean Burnett Quinnie and Sheila Hudson. She was lovingly raised by her great-grandmother, Viola Carswell, and great-grandfather, Jim Carswell.

She leaves to cherish her memory her husband, Henry Taylor; children, Pamela Butler, Michael Tyrone Taylor (Tomekia), and Cyllinda Payne (devoted son-in-law Talley), bonus children, Lashan Burnett, Emilio Pinkston and Toshedia (Tyronne) Mills. grandchildren, Lakeshia Butler, Michael Tyquez Taylor, Ahmad Taylor, Destiny and Kelvion Johnson, Yikeria Cordy and Zion Payne; great-grandchildren, Jordyn king, Maycen and Makala Taylor; bonus granddaughters, Diamonds Wilcher, Jazmine Wesley and Passion Pinkston; sister, Robbie Williams, Leretha Darrisaw, Henrietta Lemon (David), brother Kenneth Taylor, Devoted sister-in-law, Deloris Darrisaw, Kathy and Annie Taylor, devoted brothers-in-law, Anthony Quinnie, Otis, Jimmy, W. L. and Joe

Taylor, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, neighbors and friends.

Please post your condolences online at Servicesby-Dudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.



Margaret Regina Brown Gay

Funeral services for Margaret Regina Brown Gay, 70, will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, in the Chan Stanley Memorial Chapel of Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory with interment to follow at Mt. Zion Baptist Church Cemetery. Rev. Rusty Brown, Rev. Billy Glosson and nephew Chad Sapp will officiate.

Regina was born on Dec. 3, 1955, in Dublin, Georgia. She was the daughter of the late Ralph Timothy Brown and Margaret Lamb Brown, and a member of Dublin First Christian Church. She was a retired medical assistant for Dublin Area Dermatology. Regina enjoyed working as a substitute teacher for the Laurens County School System after retirement. Regina loved baking cakes, cooking, and spending time with her beloved family, especially her grandchildren. She passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026, at her residence.

Regina is survived by her husband, Mike Gay; three sons, Chris Sapp, Brad Sapp (Misty) and Matt Sapp (Donna); two daughters, Amanda Gay and April Gay; brother, Ralph Brown Jr. (Connie); and four grandchildren, Jaden Sapp, Sydnee Sapp, Mattie Claire Sapp and Colbee Sapp.

Pallbearers will be Ben Gay, Greg Graham, Josh Crews, B.J. Dixon, Bruce Rozar and Michael Coleman.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026, at the funeral home.

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



Linda Hilliard Boyd

Linda Hilliard Boyd, 80, of Eastman, Ga., died Monday, Feb. 9, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 13, at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, with interment in Pleasant Church Cemetery.

Survived by her daughters – Angie Burch (Ed) and Donna Purvis (Stacey); grandchildren – Will, Jonathan, Ina Grace, and Isabelle; great-grandchildren – Lindsey and Raleigh; Brothers – Earl Hilliard (Jane), Wayne Hilliard (Wanda) and Stevie Hilliard (Theda).

The family will receive friends in Southerland Funeral Chapel from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12.



Wayne Howard

Funeral services for Mr. Wayne Howard, of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, at 3 p.m., at the Everlasting Gospel Non-denominational Church, 1300 South Jefferson Street in Dublin.

Mr. Wayne Howard was born on Friday, May 22, 1964, to the late Marcell Howard Sr., and Louise Denson Howard of Dublin. Mr. Howard was a 1982 graduate of West Laurens High School. He was a member of the Union Hill Baptist Church in Toombsboro, Georgia.

To know Wayne was to love him. He was gentle, loving, and caring. He had a heart of gold. He never met a stranger at any point in his life. He was always willing to be a helping hand where he could. He loved his kids and his entire family. He was employed by Hatcher Trucking of East Dublin. He remained in the trucking business for 41 years until his untimely death. Work was his life. His “18-wheeler” brought him peace. He was funny, loved to laugh, joke and be a father-figure to so many.

Mr. Howard passed away on Friday, Feb. 6, 2026. He was preceded in death by his son, Christopher Lamar Howard, his daughter, Camille Yvette Howard, his parents, Marcell Howard, Sr., and Louise Denson Howard and by a brother, Randy Jerome Howard.

Mr. Howard leaves to cherish his memories his daughter, Ericka P. (Dwayne) Howard of Dublin, Georgia, his son, Wayne Howard Jr., brothers, Marcell Howard Jr., of Washington, DC, and Glen Walter (Appsjewel) Howard of Dublin, Georgia, A brother and friend, Nathaniel Fordham, sisters, Slavan (Jerrell) Chapman of Macon, Georgia, Lakisha Raquel Howard of Dublin, Georgia, and Sharon Howard of Savannah, Georgia, a devoted friend, Jacqueline McLinton, a devoted friend and case manager, Briana O’Neal, and the host of grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends.

Please post your condolences online at Servicesby-Dudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.



Otis Derl Evans

Otis Derl Evans, 91, passed away peacefully on Feb. 9, 2026, in Toombsboro, Georgia. Born on Aug. 1, 1934, in Rentz, Georgia, he lived a full and meaningful life, marked by devotion to his family, service to his country, and a steadfast work ethic.

The son of the late William Otis Evans and Gladys Simmons Kyzer, Derl grew up understanding the value of hard work and the importance of community. His youth in the rolling landscapes of Georgia instilled in him a lifelong love for his home state. After serving honorably in the United States Army, Derl translated the discipline and skills he acquired into a successful career as a maintenance foreman for the St. Johns River Power Park in Jacksonville, Florida.

Derl was a man of faith, actively involved in his church, Oakdale Baptist, where he formed deep and lasting friendships. His love for the Georgia Bulldogs was more than a pastime; it was a passion he shared with everyone around him. Win or lose, Derl's enthusiasm for his team was infectious, and his loyalty never wavered.

His family was the cornerstone of his life. Derl was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Iva Dukes Evans, his grandson, Dustin Williams, and his parents. He is survived by his loving children, Debbie (Billy) Fullard, Gary Evans, and Diane Lightfoot. Derl's legacy continues through his cherished grandchildren, DeRon Johnson and April Gibbons, as well as several adoring great-grandchildren. Each of them will carry forward his spirit of resilience, kindness, and joy.

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

Townsend Brothers Funeral Home has charge of the arrangements.



Jack Foreman Jr.

Funeral services for Mr. Jack Foreman Jr., of Dublin, Georgia, will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the Mount Tilla Baptist Church, 2424 US Highway 441 in Irwinton, Georgia. Rev. Harold Banks will deliver the eulogy. Interment will follow in the Mount Tilla Baptist Church Cemetery.

Jack Foreman Jr., aka “Diamond,” was born on Wednesday, April 2, 1952, to Jack and Elizabeth Foreman. He joined Mount Tilla Baptist Church at the early age. He worked at Laurens County Public Works Camp for 47 years until retirement. Also in 2019, he worked at Laurens County Sanitation Center until his health failed. Jack was a humble and quiet person. He loved hunting and fishing, and gardening.

On Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026, Mr. Jack Foreman Jr., was called home to rest after a lengthy illness. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers, Willie B. Jones, April Foreman, Tobey Foreman, John Foreman, and his sisters, Sally Smith and Willie Mae Stanley.

He leaves to cherish his memories a devoted and loving wife of 55 years, Connie Foreman, children, Sonya Hall, Ron Smith, Elizabeth Foreman, Annedra (Frederick) Ford, of Dublin. Grandchildren, Tameika, Carlton, Kammy, Julius, Iyanla, and great-grandchild, Akira, and one sister Eva (Benjamin) Davis. sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law. Helen Jones, Delores (Willie) Rozier of Dublin. Mary Foreman of Wrightsville, Willie Frank, Amos, Tony Smith of Dublin, Robert Lee Clark of Lumber City, devoted nephew, Willie Rozier III, and devoted cousin-in-law. Keith Edwards, a devoted friend, Johnny Watkins and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Please post your condolences online at Servicesby-Dudley.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of East Dublin Zoning Board will hold a meeting on February 16, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the Terrie E Drew Council Chambers located at the East Dublin City Hall. The meeting will be held for the purpose of discussion and approval of the proposed rezoning application of AKS Holding aka Cherokee Block & Brick, located at 220 Savannah Avenue, East Dublin, GA from A-1 to M-1. All interested parties are invited to attend.

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If you are interested: Email registrars@dlcga.com or call (478) 272-2841 to request a poll worker application be mailed to you.

Applications can be returned to the
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The John 3:16 game

Super Bowl LV is over. Football will return in the Dog Days of August. In the aftermath of the ubiquitous, grand hype, let us look back at one of the most remarkable NFL postseason games in history.

The day was Jan. 8, 2012. Starting a quarterback for the Denver Broncos was Tim Tebow, a former Florida Gator legend and Heisman Trophy winner. Exactly three years before, Tebow wrote “John 3:16” on his eye black, a reference to the scripture, “For God so loved the world that he gave his own begotten son.” The practice was banned by the NCAA, but Tebow’s resolve to spread the Gospel became his main mission. Tebow’s unparalleled faith drove him to lead his Gators to a national championship.

One of Tebow’s wide receivers was a young, super-talented Demaryius Thomas, a Georgia Tech All-American and top draft NFL choice, out of Montrose and West Laurens High School. The fleet-footed Thomas, in his sophomore NFL season, was just beginning to bloom as a star.

The Steelers jumped out to an early 6-0 lead with two field goals. Tebow and the Broncos roared back with a 20-point surge to lead 20-6 at halftime. Pittsburgh mounted a third-quarter comeback with a touchdown late in the third quarter.

Denver moved back out to a 10-point lead with an early, 4th-quarter three-pointer. The Steel City men knew it was a “now or never” moment. The men in black roared back with a field goal and a touchdown and a field goal to tie the score at 23 points each.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Which cartoon character was the first breakout star in early TV animation?

By JACK BAGLEY
GTLN

One of the coolest things about February, in my view, is the sheer number of things to celebrate. Few other months can boast of things like:

- Groundhog Day
- Lincoln’s Birthday
- Valentine’s Day
- Washington’s Birthday
- President’s Day

And the various other smaller, less-celebrated holidays that pepper the calendar as well. Seems like February, once (a long time ago) the last month of the year, more than makes up for that by having so many fun things in it!

Available in February - and every week - is trivia, right here in your favorite part of the newspaper. So let’s get to the fun right now! *Did you know ...*

... actors cannot fire the director of a movie and take it over themselves due to a 1976 film? That year, actor

OBITUARIES



Brian L. Yarbrough

Brian L. Yarbrough, age 67, of Dublin, passed away on February 8, 2026.

Mr. Yarbrough was born in Laurens County, Georgia, on May 18, 1958, to the late Emory Lee and Virginia Cliatt Yarbrough. He was a graduate of South Georgia Technical School and was the owner and operator of Pinehill Upholstery. Brian was also a member of the Sons of the Confederacy.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, Dennis Yarbrough and Gary Yarbrough.

He is survived by his nephew, Daniel Yarbrough (Jeana) of Rentz; sister-in-law, Linda Yarbrough of Rentz; great-nephews, Dayton and Grayson Yarbrough, and several cousins and extended family members.

Graveside services will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, at Dublin Memorial Gardens. Rev. Tom Vann will officiate.

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

PIECES OF OUR PAST



By SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.

Three minutes and 47 seconds elapsed. The score remained knotted at 23-23. In the first play of overtime, the Broncos lined up on their own 20-yard line. Thomas was lined up wide to the left. Eddie Royal lined up wide right and ran in motion toward the center of the field. Both running backs stayed back in an effort not to reveal an unlikely pass on first down.

At the snap, Thomas sprinted straight ahead for eight yards before turning at a 30-degree slant toward the middle of the field. Tebow threw a rocket, hitting Thomas in full stride. Thomas turned on the gas jets and flew toward the right sideline, moving further and further away from the Steeler defenders. Running as fast as he could, “Bay Bay”

— crunch down on anything including local crocodiles. (Now that’s what I call a snapping turtle.)

... the first broadcast crime drama to re-enact actual cases began airing in 1935? Gang Busters, which aired from 1935 to 1957 on radio, was based on “true crime” stories taken from authentic police case histories. Created by Phillips H. Lord (1902-1975), Gang Busters began with a dramatization of the story of gangster John Dillinger (1903-1934). The genre would grow on radio, spawning shows such as Tales of the Texas Rangers and Dragnet, before moving to television in the 1950s. (Just the facts.)

... zippers were named for the sound they make? When the zipper as we know it today was first invented in 1917, it was called a “hook-less fastener.” But in 1923, when the B.F. Goodrich Company installed them on boots, people began calling them “zippers” because of the sound they made when they were used. Addition-

al trivia note: zippers were developed from a patent by Whitcomb L. Judson (1843-1909) who called his invention the “clasp locker” and intended it for use on shoes and high boots. (A zippy idea nonetheless.)

... the first breakout character in animated television was Yogi Bear? In 1958, Yogi was a supporting character on The Huckleberry Hound Show, produced by Hanna-Barbera Productions. Yogi got his own show in 1961, quickly becoming the most popular Hanna-Barbera character ever. Created by William Hanna (1910-2001) and Joseph Barbera (1911-2006), Yogi was loosely based on Art Carney’s character in the television series The Honeymooners. Carney (1918-2003) played Ed Norton, and many of that character’s mannerisms and voice actions were included in the cartoon bear. Additional trivia note: Yogi Bear was named after the popular baseball star Lawrence “Yogi” Berra (1925-2015). The Yankee catcher

Thomas outran Ryan Munday and Ike Taylor to the corner of the end zone. Game over! Broncos win! Broncos win!

Denver’s Mile High Stadium fans erupted in a tumult. Thomas was running so fast that it took him more than 20 yards to come to a stop. Tim Tebow fell to his knees in grateful praise of God, an act that the NCAA and NFL could not ban. The game could be called the “Immaculate Reception II.” It was in December 1972, when Pittsburgh’s Franco Harris snared a bouncing ball and ran for the winning touchdown against the powerful Oakland Raiders.

The game has been dubbed the “John 3:16 Game.” The reference was not coined as a tribute to Tebow’s undying faith, but to a remarkable statistical result. When the statisticians made their final calculations, a fascinating pattern of three consecutive digits in five stats stood out. Was it a coincidence, an anomaly or an act of divine design?

Thomas, our local hero, brought about the quickest end (11 seconds) to a playoff game in NFL history. That day, Thomas averaged 51 yards per catch, setting a record for the second-highest total in a single game in NFL history with a minimum of four receptions. His 80-yard touchdown reception remains the longest scoring play in overtime in NFL postseason history.

Tebow accumulated 316 passing yards with an average of 31.6 yards per completion. The Steelers finished the game with a time of possession of 31 minutes and 6 seconds. The game’s tv ratings peaked between 8 and 8:15 p.m. Eastern Time with a rating of 31.6. Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger threw a second-quarter interception on 3rd-and-16.

wasn’t amused at the idea of having a cartoon character named after him, however. Berra filed a lawsuit against Hanna-Barbera for defamation of character due to the similarity of the name, but withdrew the suit before it was heard. (He was smarter than the average bear - uh, catcher.)

... all that caffeine that is taken out of decaf coffee goes somewhere else? Caffeine extracted from decaffeinated coffee beans is sold to soda makers and pharmaceutical companies. (Well, it has to go somewhere, doesn’t it?)

... sometimes animals are not great co-stars? For instance, the groundhog used in the production of the movie Groundhog Day bit star Bill Murray (born 1950) – twice. (No word on whether or not Murray bit back.)

... more than eight million U.S. families have an annual income of \$1 million or more? One source says that about 1,700 people in the United States become millionaires every day. So

why aren’t we awash in millionaires and their loot? Because almost that many drop below that value on a daily basis as well.

... the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize was 17? Malala Yousafazi (born 1997) was given the prize in 2014 for her work as a child activist and champion of the rights of girls to get an education. (And it was a well-deserved prize, in my view.)

... the first McDonald’s™ restaurant to operate outside the U.S. opened in 1967? It was in Richmond, Canada, and it opened June 3 of that year. There are more than 36,000 McDonald’s restaurants worldwide, according to company figures. (You can’t escape them.)

... some chicken wings have no wing meat? The U.S. Food and Drug Administration allows use of the term “wyngz” to denote a food product shaped like a wing or bite-sized appetizer that has no actual wing meat. The “wyngz” must, however, contain

SWLE fifth grader wins district spelling bee

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER
HERALD

The Georgia Association of Educators Spelling Bee Committee announced that Zachary Jett, fifth grade student at Southwest Laurens Elementary School, as the Laurens County District Spelling Bee winner. He will advance to compete in the GAE Region 7 Spelling Bee on Feb. 28 hosted at Clarke County Middle School in Athens.

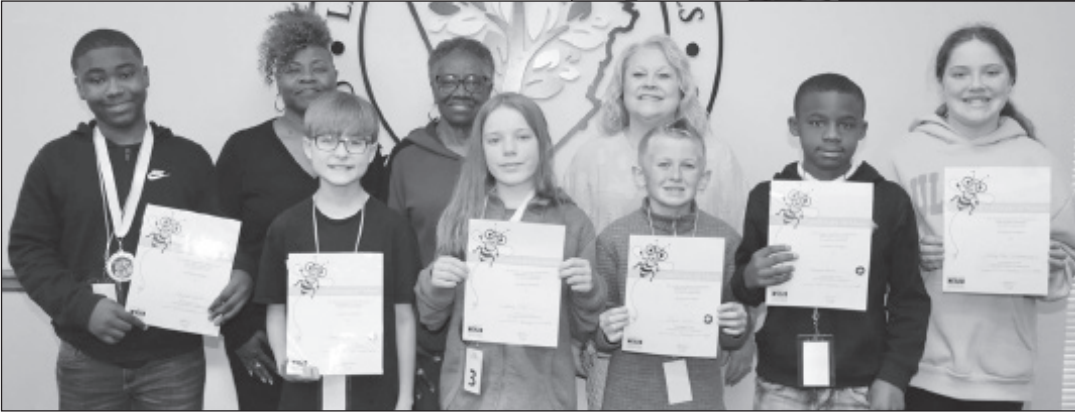
Runner-up Mycah Burke is a

seventh grader at East Laurens Middle School. Additional students and alternates were Trevorous Burch (East Laurens Elementary School), Truett McClain (West Laurens Middle School), Logan Womack (Northwest Laurens Elementary School) and Ivey Rae Williamson (NWLE).

Ina Cooper, Twila Ford and Tama Freeman were the Spelling Bee Judges. The District GAE Spelling Bee coordinators were Malissa Kinchen, Essence O’Ne-

al, Lanetha Johnson and Angela Brazeal, Laurens County GAE president.

Thanks to all students for representing their schools with excellence and pride. Thanks to the parents, advocates and judges whose support and dedication helped make this year’s Spelling Bee a success.





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OUR TAKE...



Hurricane Helene left some Laurens Countians without power for up to 10 days/RODNEY MANLEY

It's coming, so prepare now for severe weather

There's an old joke concerning someone complaining about the weather in Georgia. Stick around, they're told, it'll change in a few hours.

All jokes aside, the weather here can change in what might seem a flash, and get dangerous in a hurry, but storms – even the summer afternoon pop-up variety – usually come with enough advance warning that last-minute precautions can be made.

Still, there are some things better done in advance to prepare for truly severe weather, be it a hurricane's high winds, snowy sub-freezing conditions or a storm front with heavy rain and lightning. We've seen more than our fair share of all those elements in recent years, and experienced first-hand the havoc that rough weather can bring.

Hurricane Helene was a brutal reminder that we remain at mercy of the weather (it's called a force of nature for a reason). Local officials have taken steps to be even better prepared for the next emergency, with the new 911 center built to include a large room reserved for a command center. On a smaller scale, the county recently purchased five new flashing-message signs – the kind authorities need to alert traffic of a washed-out road or some other urgent warning.

In getting the word out during Severe Weather Awareness Week, Bill Laird, director of Laurens County Emergency Management Agency/E-911, stressed that every family or home have a plan for weather emergencies. He also offered some basic tips for getting started.

First, prepare for power outages by keeping on-hand a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food. It's also a good idea to have flashlights, fresh batteries and a first-aid kit, as well as some hand sanitizer and a fully charged cellphone.

More information on preparing for severe weather and other emergencies can be found on the Ready.gov website. Spring and summer are approaching, so severe weather season will be here soon. A few steps now will have you better prepared to ride out the next big storm.

– Rodney Manley

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"I can't die but once."

- Harriet Tubman

DAILY SCRIPTURE

"But he said unto her, 'Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

- Job 2:10

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY

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GEORGIA TRUST — for Local News —

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Pam Burney/GENERAL MANAGER
Courtney Vessell/CIRCULATION MANAGER

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

Are you still mad about that halftime show?

I prefer when starting one of these pieces to remind myself it's usually better to be subtle. I'd like the reader to think about why the piece was written, who might be the primary audience, and also leave a little something for those outside that circle. This isn't one of those pieces.

Today I'm talking directly to those who occupy the space to the right of the political center. We need to have a talk. And for some of you, "talk" means intervention.

Harsh? Sure. Necessary? I think so.

Don't worry, I come in peace.

I get it, mostly. You're frustrated. You lived through four years of open borders, and up to two years of closed schools. You had government working directly with big tech platforms to censor or deplatform you when you said things that turned out to be completely true.

You had media companies working directly with the last administration to bury stories that would be harmful to Democrats, all while advancing a narrative created in whole cloth by associates of Hillary Clinton about Russian collusion. Your activities during Covid were labeled in real time by these same organizations as "superspreader events" while the supposed government authority on contagions said protesting for BLM was more important than a virus for which we shut down the world economy.

You've seen how every institution can work against you. You're frustrated that even after winning a Presidential election by both the Constitutional requirement of the electoral college and the additional high bar of the popular vote – PLUS both chambers of Congress – that large parts of your agenda are stalled.

You're watching the same media and entertainment outlets who have worked against you for decades now pretend the last election didn't happen. They still treat you and anyone who agrees with you like you're a "deplorable".

They're the party of the

GEORGIA POLITICS



By CHARLIE HARPER

college educated - the elites and the experts. They don't just know more than you, they act like they are better than you.

They have an advantage that you need to understand and internalize if you want to do more than just complain, but to win again. Whether via news, entertainment, or algorithm, they have the ability to instantly set a narrative.

This means they have the ability to bait a trap. You need to quit eating their cheese.

You must first remember that no election is permanent. The next one matters too. They're not obsessing over 2020 anymore. When they do, it's just to feed you even more cheese.

What I'm saying here, bluntly, is you need to quit attending every fight to which you are invited. Sure, you have plenty from your side insisting you attend. What the right lacks in

strategy and focus it makes up for with grifters and paid influencers to ensure you stay "motivated".

This keeps "the base" engaged via outrage. It turns off the still right of center voters who just want to live their lives, have the government intrude on them as little as possible, and pay as little in taxes as they can while still having basic services delivered competently.

You may call those people "RINOs" or "squishes" but you need their votes. It's the base of a party that gives it a soul. It's the votes of the moderates who give you power. Forget this, and you can go back to whatever problems you lived through from 2021 until 2025 – but probably worse.

You may believe that the best way to fight is to not cede an inch on anything. Many do. And that's why we have too many singing along with the grifter cho-

rus about a half time show.

Meanwhile, you have a large voting block who voted against the crazy people who shut down their schools and opened our border now wondering if they've aligned with the wrong crazy people. And Republicans are doing nothing to indicate you were and are the serious option.

Midterm elections will be held in roughly 9 months. What happens then will determine if gains will be made on immigration enforcement, cutting regulations, reducing taxes, and getting widespread and rampant fraud under control. Every minute talking about halftime entertainment or a performative speech at an awards show is a missed opportunity to remind voters why they rejected a march toward socialism in the last election.

Between now and then, you'll have a the finest charcuterie boards of obfuscation offered to you. You can refuse to accept the free cheese.

If you want to fight every fight "so that the other side doesn't win", you're agreeing to play their game, by their rules. Decide now if you want to use the time between now and the next election to complain or to make a difference.

If you just insist on staying mad, prepare also to be disappointed come November.



Here's to good health and a lot of good food

Okay, it looks like I may live to fight another day. I just got a clean bill of health from my latest checkup at the request of my insurance company. All systems are go. Physically, all the numbers were good. Mentally, I was required to draw a clock with the hands at 10 o'clock and given three words to remember and recite back later. Not exactly Mensa stuff but I aced it. Thank goodness it wasn't trigonometry, or we might not be having this conversation.

I am grateful to have made it this far and assuming I don't step in front of a bus or forget to pull the ripcord should I go skydiving, I intend to keep on living to the hilt.

I have walked this earth a long time. My older brother even longer. We agree that we inherited parents with good genes. Both lived into their 80s. There may be other reasons, as well. I would cite clean living as one, but then God might zap me with a bolt of lightning for telling such a whopper and that would shoot my chances of a long life. Of course, my brother could make such a claim and get away with it. God always did like my brother better.

The fact that my ticker is ticking away and my arteries aren't clogged up with fat is somewhat of a wonder, given my fondness for all foods Southern. It's the way I grew up. My momma was

By DICK YARBROUGH



the quintessential Southern cook, meaning that in our house, lard was one of the basic food groups. She fried everything – steak, pork, chicken, okra, green tomatoes – to a crisp. If it got in the skillet, it was going to get itself fried. Even the cornbread got a dose of lard. Oh, and no need for saltshakers. Momma salted the food as it was frying.

I read somewhere that lard, a polite name for pig fat, is making a culinary comeback and is not considered as unhealthy as it once was thought to be, if used in moderation. Using lard in moderation was not an option in Momma's kitchen. And somehow, we seem to have survived the experience.

It may be because we always had sweet tea with our supper. (A note to émigrés from above the Mason-You-Know-What Line: In the South, we don't eat dinner in the evening. We eat supper.) Sweet tea, another spe-

cialty of my mother's creation. With spoonfuls of tea in a pitcher, filled with boiling water and a tablespoon inside the pitcher to keep it from shattering, Momma would pour in a heaping cup of sugar. What better way to wash down copious amounts of fried chicken, fried okra, fried green tomatoes and cornbread than with sweet tea loaded with lots of refined sugar. No wonder my brother and I enjoy good health. Southern cooking is the secret.

When I began to court the young lady destined to become The Beloved Woman Who Shared My Name, on occasion I would be invited to her house for Sunday dinner. (A note to émigrés from above the Mason-You-Know-What Line: In the South, we eat dinner at lunch.)

Her mother was from Scotland and grew up in New Jersey and as much as I would come to love my future mother-in-law and

to thank God for allowing me to marry well above my paygrade, it wasn't because of the Sunday dinners. To call the meals bland would be kind. Everything was boiled, broiled or baked. I don't think I ever saw a tub of lard there. I learned that you were expected to season to your own taste and sweet tea wasn't even an option. A novel concept for this Southern boy.

Truth in advertising requires me to confess that over the years of our marriage I adapted and learned to season my food to my taste and even managed to consume unsweet tea, although I missed Momma's sweet tea. I still do.

Shakespeare observed that the past is prologue. That phrase has a lot of interpretations. I take it to mean that things can be even better going forward. At least, that's my intention. It starts with a good health report, garnished with good memories and an appreciation that every day is a gift not to be wasted.

In the meantime, it's back to work. There are columns to be written and reactions to be received. I can't do it without you. Here's to your good health. Salud!

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

Dublin Police Department

- Anthony Jones, 44, was charged with possession of amphetamine and probation violation for finger-printable charge, around 9:06 a.m. on Jan. 30 at JAG Probation on Bellevue Avenue.

An officer was dispatched to the location for a person with a warrant for probation violation. The officer met with an employee before arresting Jones after verifying his warrant through GCIC/NCIC and obtained a copy of the warrant from JAG.

Price was transported to the Laurens County Law Enforcement Center. During the booking process, the officer saw a plastic bag protruding out of the rolled brim of Jone's beanie. A crystal-like substance was discovered inside the bag.

The substance was test-

ed, which indicated a positive reaction for cocaine.

- On Jan. 31, around 12:11 a.m., officers responded to Applebees on Veterans Boulevard in reference to a man at the location who was refusing to leave.

Officers met with employees at the restaurant who said Eobrious Hooks, a customer, was refusing to leave. An employee said Hooks had been making inappropriate comments toward the staff.

Officer talked with Hooks and advised him to leave the location. Hooks left the building while being escorted by officers, but he refused to leave the property.

Hooks was told that if he did not leave the premises, he would be arrested. He continued to refuse to leave and was arrested.

Hooks was transported to the Laurens County Jail.

- Reginald Brown, 43,



was charged with criminal trespass at the Dublin Housing Authority on Hudson Street around 8:23 p.m. on Jan. 30.

While officers were responding, they were advised about Brown being at that location. They already knew he was barred from all Dublin Housing Authority properties. When they arrived, they were told that Brown had ran into a nearby wooded area. An officer was familiar with a cut-through path and conducted a search of the area, finding Brown as he left the wood line between two streets.

Brown was arrested.

When asked why he was on DHA property, he admitted that he had been there. Brown had been barred from all DHA properties until July 14, 2034. He was transported to the sheriff's office and released to jail staff for booking.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- A woman talked with a deputy about someone walking around her house and opening a window on Caldwell Lane around midnight on Jan. 20.

- Two juveniles were arrested and charged with entering automobile and theft by taking on Master Circle

on Jan. 20. A deputy met with a man who said his handgun was missing from his green Toyota Tundra truck. The man mentioned that several neighbors had called him about someone entering cars in the area. The man said he left his vehicle unlocked and his firearm was lying on the driver's side floorboard. Nothing else was missing from the vehicle.

- Two juveniles were charged with entering automobiles on Ben Hogan Drive on Jan. 19.

- Two juveniles were charged with entering automobiles on Champion Drive on Jan. 19. A deputy responded to that area in reference of a stolen gun.

- On Jan. 16, a deputy responded to the sheriff's office in response to a walk in around 1:50 p.m.

- A citizen wanted to speak with a deputy about an incident that had hap-

pened around 6 p.m. on Jan. 18.

- Kenneth Marshall Lake, 67, of East Dublin, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. A deputy conducted a traffic stop on a white Ford F-150 on East Jackson Street around 11:15 p.m. on Jan. 18.

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

Georgia lawmakers say they are ready to pay to improve literacy teaching in schools

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Another Georgia legislative initiative this year seeks to build on prior efforts to increase the reading and writing performance of young students.

"We must teach our children to read," Rep. Chris Erwin, R-Homer, chairman of

the House Education committee, said Monday about the new initiative. "We must have the belief that all of our children can read on grade level."

Erwin is the chief co-sponsor of House Bill 1193, which is backed by leaders in both the House and Senate. The Senate

even has its own version of essentially the same bill.

The Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026 would require sweeping changes, from mandatory curriculum and teacher training to routine testing and state-funded tutoring for children. The legislation also would encourage but not require

kindergarten attendance. Students who skipped kindergarten and then failed a literacy test would have to start in kindergarten even if they were old enough for first grade.

One of the most far-reaching proposals would amend the state education funding formula. The legislation would send state money to every school district to hire a classroom literacy coach in each school that has kindergarten through third grade classrooms. (K-3 schools with fewer than 200 students would only get a part-time coach though.)

at the start of this year's legislative session that literacy was among his top agenda items this year, a position he reiterated last week. He said the state was prepared to pay for classroom reinforcements.

"How many Georgians would be leading happy, healthy, fulfilling lives if they had only been able to read?" he asked at a news conference.

it makes my heart happy as a citizen."

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I hope someone nominated Fred Williams for the 50th annual Black Festival Citizen of the Year award. I think its very deserving along with a banner for Black History month downtown.

Please contact your county commissioner to express your concern in consolidating the county and city government. Let's create the best opportunity for all citizens.

worse. It's unbelievable that someone could make such a mess of a school system that once was so elite.

Can we get the pipe with a hole in it replaced on the dirt part of Chappell Mill Road? The pipe bandit.

Can we get a street name sign for Mathis Road at Highway 80? The sign bandit.

Happy Valentine's Day. Be my Valentine and cleanup around your back door.

has not taken action to help address or cancel the solar contract at Dublin City Schools. The contract reportedly requires payments of approximately \$25,000 per month for 30 years, totaling \$9,000,000 millions of taxpayer dollars. This obligation continues despite concerns about non-performance and despite provisions allowing cancellation for nonperformance and non-appropriation of funds—protections intended to safeguard public entities from costly, ineffective agreements.

Rep. Hatchett has emphasized fiscal responsibility and accountability. Given that stance, it is reasonable for citizens to ask why no meaningful guidance or assistance has been offered to help Dublin City Schools exit a contract that appears to no longer serve the public interest.

The wholistic approach is necessary because teaching and learning to read is difficult work, said Erwin, a retired school superintendent. "So it's got to be planned; it's got to be precise."

The Legislature has not yet published a cost associated with the initiative.

But House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, said

Before the vote, several parents commented favorably, including Jeremy Hendrix from Gwinnett County, who said he was "pleasantly surprised" by the legislation.

"It is amazing what you are doing and especially in this political climate where we can see everybody get behind one cart and push in the same direction," he said. "I really appreciate that and

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In my company, you can't buy a pack of paper without a requisition, documents, receipts and invoices. Every penny must be explained and have a paper trail. How did the city schools have no procedures?

The city is delusional. You still have a deficit, have to pay back 6 million, will get no more advancements ... and you think you are "doing great" and don't need the states help.

This is to the county commissioner around JJ Road, Rentz Road and Baker Church Road. He needs to get out of and look at these wells in the middle of these roads. If you can't fix them, how about putting curbs around them? Thanks!


I am writing to ask State Rep. Matt Hatchett why he

Whoever is doing the puzzle, tell them to step up and see what they are printing. This is not readable. Please step it up and do better!

I disagree with running a Stacey Abram's column. All that is, is publicity for her when she runs for governor next time.


Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:




THURSDAY:
68°

Partly sunny and nice.
Sunrise: 7:18 a.m.




THURSDAY NIGHT:
35°

Mainly clear.
Sunset: 6:15 p.m.




FRIDAY:
67°

Intervals of clouds and sunshine with a shower possible.
Sunrise: 7:17 a.m.




FRIDAY NIGHT:
38°


Partly cloudy.
Sunset: 6:16 p.m.




Saturday 2/14
HIGH/LOW
70/50
Mainly cloudy with rain and a thunderstorm possible in the afternoon.
Sunrise: 7:16 a.m.
Sunset: 6:17 p.m.




Sunday 2/15
HIGH/LOW
67/48
Rain and a thunderstorm.
Sunrise: 7:15 a.m.
Sunset: 6:17 p.m.



Monday 2/16
HIGH/LOW
67/41
Plenty of sunshine.
Sunrise: 7:14 a.m.
Sunset: 6:18 p.m.



Tuesday 2/17
HIGH/LOW
73/47
Sunny to partly cloudy and warm.
Sunrise: 7:13 a.m.
Sunset: 6:19 p.m.



Wednesday 2/18
HIGH/LOW
76/51
Cloudy and warm.
Sunrise: 7:12 a.m.
Sunset: 6:20 p.m.

River levels...
Oconee (at Dublin) 3.35'
Ocmulgee (at Macon) 6.38'


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Crusaders close season with Brentwood split

By JEREMY PAYNE
Correspondent

The Trinity hoops teams completed their regular season Friday against Brentwood in front of a packed house.

The girls fell way behind early against the No. 1 team in GIAA's class AA, but stormed back for a 61-54 win. The boys could not complete the same feat as they fell to the Eagles 74-50.

When the Lady Crusaders and Lady Eagles met in Sandersville a couple of weeks ago, Trinity was beaten soundly. That looked like it may happen again early on in this one.

The Lady Crusaders struggled with Brentwood's pressure early on and couldn't buy a basket as they fell behind 20-5 after one quarter.

They were able to right the ship in a big way in the second quarter on both ends of the court.

Offensively, they exploded for 24 points, and defensively, they held Brentwood to just four as they took a 29-24 lead at the half.

The third quarter was fairly evenly matched, and Trinity still held a slight lead at 42-40 at the end.

The fourth saw Brentwood tie the game on a couple of occasions, and even take another brief lead at one point.

But a barrage of 3-pointers would eventually propel Trinity to the big win.

M.G. Alligood drained the first one to put Trinity



WORSE THAN BONKERS: The crowd and student section go berserk after Brinley Vinson hit the last of three fourth-quarter 3s that effectively clinched Friday's comeback victory for the Lady Crusaders/**CLAY REYNOLDS**

on top for good. A few possessions later, Chloe Rozier knocked down a triple following an offensive rebound to extend the lead. Brinley Vinson would provide the dagger with a huge 3 at the end of the shot clock, and Trinity would hold onto its seven-point lead.

Vinson and Maddy George scored 18 each to lead the way and Rozier added 15. Trinity hit nine 3-pointers in the contest.

Cadence English paced Brentwood with 18. Bailey Barron had 14 and Kaylee Rizner added 11.

Between games, the teams celebrated senior night. Alligood, Rozier, Vinson and Addie Kendrick were all honored for the girls, while Will Foskey, Hayden Bowles, Kolbi Grooms, Carter Lee and Alston Bryan were recog-

nized for the boys.

The Crusaders were hoping the excitement in the building would help them get off to a fast start against the much more athletic Eagle squad.

Unfortunately, that didn't happen as Trinity came out of the gate cold and fell behind 22-8 after a quarter.

The Crusaders finally got some momentum going in the second, as a pair of old-fashioned 3-point plays from Jagger George followed by 3-balls from Lee and Bowles got the deficit all the way down to six.

The turning point in the game came with around three minutes left in the period, after Foskey was called for a questionable foul that resulted in a Brentwood 3-point play.

It was not the first con-

troversial call of the night, and tempers flared, resulting in a technical foul. After all the free throws were made, the Eagles drained a 3 on the ensuing possession to push an eight-point advantage back up to 16.

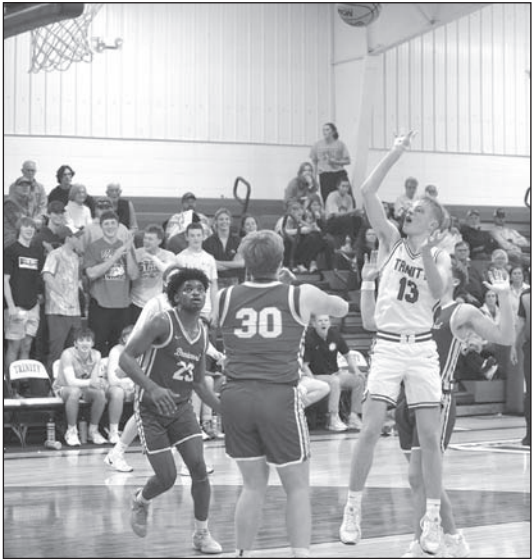
Jones Sheppard would hit another 3 at the buzzer to make the halftime score 42-24.

Trinity went cold from outside again in the third as they managed just 10. The Eagles scored 17 to extend their lead to 59-34 headed to the fourth.

The Crusaders finally outscored the Eagles in the fourth 16-15, but it was too little, too late.

George led all scorers with 19, and Foskey added 13.

Zylon Andrews had 18, Baylor Cobb 17, Jaelen



FOSKEY FLOATER: Will Foskey scores on a tear-drop during Friday's fourth quarter /**CLAY REYNOLDS**

Johnson 14, Tristan Robinson 12 and Sheppard 11 as all five Eagle starters reached double digits.

At halftime of the boys' contest, Trinity honored all the 1,000-point scorers in school history. There are 18 girls and 17 boys who have accomplished the feat, and nearly 20 were in attendance for the recognition.

Brentwood will play host to this week's region 2-AA tournament, and the Crusaders' opening games will come back-to-back in the semifinal round Thursday afternoon, as both their teams avoided the do-or-die play-in game Tuesday night.

The girls (seeded second) will play Gatewood at 3 p.m., and the boys (from the No. 3 draw) take on Central Fellowship at 4:30.

SCOREBOARD

GIRLS HOOPS
Tuesday
East Laurens 41, Central 38
Cross Creek 39, WL 15
Bleckley Co. 48, WL 38

BOYS HOOPS
Tuesday
EL 75, Central 63
Cross Creek 103, WL 40
Bleckley Co. 44, Dublin 39

BASEBALL
Monday
Johnson Co. 22, EL 6

Tuesday
Dublin 3, Toombs Co. 1
WL 10, Aquinas 1

GIRLS SOCCER
Tuesday
Swainsboro 11, EL 2
Treutlen 2, Dublin 0
WL 10, Westside Augusta 0

BOYS SOCCER
Tuesday
Dublin 5, Hawkinsville 0
EL 3, Swainsboro 2
WL 9, Westside 1

PREP SCHEDULE

BASKETBALL
Thursday
GIAA 2-AA Tournament (at Brentwood)
Trinity (girls) vs. Gatewood /3 p.m.
Trinity (boys) vs. Central Fellowship/4:30 p.m.

Friday
Dublin at Central Macon
EL at Northeast Macon /6 p.m.

BASEBALL
Thursday
WL at Aquinas/5:30 p.m.
Dublin at Johnson Co. /6 p.m.

Friday
Bacon Co. at EL (doubleheader)/4 p.m.
Swainsboro at Dublin /6 p.m.

SOCCER
Wednesday
Dublin (girls) at Northeast Macon/5:30 p.m.

Thursday
Howard at WL
Toombs Co. at EL/5 p.m.

Reverse splits for Irish over back-to-back set with Dodge, ECI; Falcons sweep Raiders in rematches

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

In a high school basketball game, it's rare to see several possessions in a row go off exactly how you drew them up, much less the last few that close out a game with the lead.

For Dublin's girls basketball team, those went precisely to plan Friday night as the Lady Irish came up with the plays they needed to put away Dodge County in a big region win, 43-42.

"It was just some last-second plays that I drew up," said Dublin head coach Michelle Mitchell. "I told them to execute it, take care of the ball and run the shot clock down, and that's what we did."

The tight game would hinge on the home team's final four or five possessions, as Dublin pulled back in front after a four-point run by the Squaws eliminated the last bit of a lead it had held for most of the night.

Dodge equalized the score at 38 with a pair of Paige Ingram free throws with 2:25 left.

The Lady Irish survived a turnover on the ensuing inbound, and came back down to regain the lead on a mid-range jump shot by Khalil Maddox.

They got a quick stop, and with the luxury of two timeouts, convened on the sidelines to plan out both the next two possessions, on which Keasia Jackson, Kylee Spikes and ultimately Zoey Bell would combine to avoid a turnover, and dribble the clock down to just inside 40 seconds, at which point Bell split a pair of free throws to make it a 41-38 lead.

The Squaws answered on the other end with an A'Marya Mann putback cut the difference back to one with 19 to play.

But Dublin once again took advantage of a timeout, after advancing the ball halfway, and some great work by Mitchell on the dry-erase clipboard.

Coming back from out of



BASKET BY DESIGN: Dublin's sideline out of bounds play worked perfectly as Khalil Maddox (left) came off a screen, and took the ball straight to the basket for a layup to increase a one-point Lady Irish lead to three with about 16 seconds left in Friday's fourth quarter. Head coach Michelle Mitchell and assistant Asa Chapman (right) exchanged high fives after the play, then a steal, forced Dodge County to begin fouling/**CLAY REYNOLDS**

bounds, Bell set a screen to free up Maddox for a catch and run to the basket. Her up-and-under move took care of a lone Dodge defender in Camille Orange, and a successful layup had the Lady Irish back on top by three.

Jackson stole the return inbound pass for good measure, but nothing came of her trip to the line. The Squaws' Kamiya Smith won a race to the other basket to lay one in and once again get the visitors within a point, but only .1 seconds remained as their head coach Casandra Hamilton called time.

Dublin's streak of perfect end-game execution continued as Jackson – needing to merely rule out the remote chance of a Dodge tip on the play-in pass – hurled it over half court to get rid of the remaining time.

The satisfaction on the face of Mitchell, and those along the Lady Irish bench, was unmistakable as each of the final looks played out seamlessly to seal a senior-night win that has some fairly significant seeding implications for the upcoming region tournament.

With two games to go, there's now a healthy possibility that the Dublin girls (currently in seventh with a record of 11-12 overall, and 5-6 region 2-High A) could

work their way into the top six, and thereby skip the earliest round of next week's tournament where the need for a third win to reach the weekend semifinals makes chances of a potential run at a playoff spot much more remote.

Despite some fluctuations in confidence and success for this young team over an up-and-down season, those chances and a sense of late-season "momentum" are starting to feel a lot more real around the Lady Irish program as things have come together over the last handful of games.

And Mitchell saw a lot of what they've been working on to bring their play up to that level pay off in Friday's last few moments.

"(We're) coming into practice focused, getting shots up and really locking in our defense," she said. "We're trying to finish strong and get ready for (the region tournament) and the state playoffs."

Maddox led Dublin in scoring with 17 points. Jackson and Jordan Renfroe added about a dozen rebounds apiece and Jamiya Tinsley contributed six blocked shots to the team effort.

Though their fortunes would improve in a non-region home game the follow-

ing afternoon, the Dublin boys (4-18, 0-11 region) struggled in Friday's second game as their fruitless search for a league win continued in a 57-31 loss.

It was a puzzling night on the offensive end, where 3-pointers were falling at double the rate (the Irish were 6-of-13 from deep, with Jaydon McRae sinking four for all of his team-leading 12 points) of 2s that were hard to come by (at a rate of only 3-for-13).

And that only limited success was mostly concentrated to the fourth quarter, which contained Dublin's only double-digit set of points.

The Irish had only four in the first, and six each in the second and third, getting doubled up in all three as Dodge grew its lead up to 16 by the half, and 29 through three frames.

Dublin was also out-rebounded 38-18.

Kyler Johnson scored 15 points, and J.T. Northcutt added 10, to lead the way for the Indians.

ECI 54, Dublin girls 53

Down 53-52, the Lady Dogs broke pressure and went the length of the court in the final five seconds and change to steal a second-straight win from Dublin in overtime.

Senaria Hillman located Tatiana Smith on the left wing with a spinning pass for the winning 3-pointer that swished just after the buzzer.

Maddox had 22 points and Jordan Renfroe added a double-double of 15 points and 11 rebounds. Keasia Jackson led the lady Irish with 15 boards.

Dublin boys 75, ECI 45

Kam Stanley (17), JaKarian Jones (13) and QuanTavis Lovett (13) had the top totals out of 12 Irish players who got in on the productive night in a rebound win to salvage Saturday's split.

West Laurens girls 37, Richmond Academy 32

The Lady Raiders averaged a lead of roughly 10 through the five-minute mark of the fourth quarter, when ARC made its move and mounted a late threat with a 9-2 run to make it a four-point game with just under two minutes remaining.

West Laurens only about broke even the rest of the way, but came up with single free throws on consecutive trips by Maddie Ridgway (who led the squad with 14 points) and Brooklyn Jackson, along with a couple of stops, to seal out the win.

Richmond Academy 44, West Laurens boys 40

The Raiders, who had only three to answer ARC's 15 in the first six minutes of action, overcame their really slow start with some lockdown defense in the second and third quarters.

They'd outscore the Muskies by four in each, then start the fourth with eight unanswered to take a momentary lead before the home team awoke from its nearly seven-minute offensive drought.

Regrettably, that's when one for the visitors kicked in, and West Laurens was held to just one more basket in the last four, and ARC would score eight of the fi-

nal 10 to finish in front.

East Laurens girls 57, West Laurens 23

The Lady Falcons, led by Zahmaria Robinson's 18 points, nine rebounds and four steals, held a pretty decisive upper hand the whole way, but turned the corner as they scored 16 to double their point total, and gave up only three to open a 21-point halftime lead, in the dominant second quarter.

Alasia Wiggins added 12 and Garyunna Mitchell eight to the scoring count for East Laurens, which improved to 20-3 (10-1 region 2-High A). Mitchell and Deanna Lowther had eight each of the team's 40 boards.

Ridgway paced the Lady Raiders (12-11, 9-6 region 4-AAA) in a second-straight outing with 11 points.

East Laurens boys 65, West Laurens 45

The teams traded some runs, but the Falcons', whose first was a 7-0 streak from the opening tip, were larger and more frequent.

East, converting at its usual efficiency from close to the basket and without much aid from the 3-ball (Zion Dixon had the only successful try of the team's seven from outside), would outscore the Raiders by exactly five in every quarter.

Dixon had 15 points and six rebounds, Kelvion King scored 10 and Major Floyd grabbed seven boards to lead the way for the Black and Gold, which is now 18-5 (8-3 region).

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued from page 1

"We have received enough tax revenue to pay the Lucky Loot in February," Pool said. "It's not a bonus. This is money that is owed to them."

The school system has managed to cut the projected \$13.4 million deficit by more than half. However, since September it has had to borrow its remaining monthly allotments of this year's state funding to make ends meet, so the district must rely on local property taxes to fund the final four months of the school term.

In addition to money, the state has provided manpower in the form of financial consultants and

other experts who have worked with school officials on finances. The district had been without a finance director since Chad McDaniel's resignation in August, but last week the board hired two of the state consultants on a part-time, contracted basis — one to serve as chief financial officer until that position can be filled.

Betty Corbitt, who retired as finance director from Jeff Davis County after 18 years and worked five years with the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, will step into the finance director role.

"She's going to be filling in the gap from now until we find a CFO," Pool said in introducing Corbitt.

"I'm really glad to be here, and

we're going to do whatever we can to help this district get in a better financial position," Corbitt said.

Corbitt and the other hired consultant, Joyce Davis, "come as a team," Pool said. Davis will provide support in finances and in human resources.

She also lives in Jeff Davis County, where she was CTAE director for 20 years and director of federal programs for 15.

"They were here working with the (Georgia) DOE to get things cleaned up," Pool said.

In other business, the school board:

- Voted to livestream its meetings on Facebook and YouTube.

Newly elected member Jeff Davis asked at the board's previous

meeting that it consider the move, but it was not on Monday's agenda. "We need to allow the public to see what we're doing," said Davis. "There needs to be a sense of urgency about that."

Following an executive session, the board voted to amend the agenda to include a vote on livestreaming, and the measure passed 7-0.

- Approved a bid of \$109,500 from Middle Georgia Mechanical to replace 10 water-source heat pumps at Dublin High School. The existing units are more than 16 years old, are difficult to find replacement parts for and use expensive, outdated refrigerant, plant operations director Andy Wright told the school board.

"They're obsolete," Wright said. "You can stop throwing money away on something that does not work."

Middle Georgia was the lowest of four bids and the only area business to submit a proposal.

"I would rather we go with a local vendor," said board member James Lanier.

Pool said the units will be purchased from the ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) account, which she said currently has a balance of about \$2.8 million.

Proceeds from the penny sales tax can be used for capital projects, such as buildings and equipment, but cannot be used for operating expenses.

CITY COUNCIL
Continued from page 1

the city council approved a \$1.5 million for the street department. Kight said the city likes to bring in the construction manager earlier in the process so they can work with the architect and design team to find ways to reduce costs. In the past, governments would have an architect design the project and the lowest bidder would get the design.

"We've found that if you bring in the contractor ahead of time, they can actually get the design to a point where they can actually find cost savings and it won't cost the public as much money," Kight said. "Our engineering department and financial people have enjoyed or liked using this construction manager-type process. The overall goal is to get public works and the street department moved to a better location, where there is going to be less impact on the neighborhood where families live," Kight said. "Also, while doing that, we're going to do it as cost effectively as we can."

Earlier in the meeting, the council approved an agreement with Flock Group Inc. for new live cameras.

"A couple of years ago, the council approved a contract with Flock for some pan, tilt and zoom cameras," Powell said. "They needed to be powered electrically by direct connection to the power source on Georgia Power poles throughout town."

There were some difficulties between Georgia Power and Flock. Dublin Police Chief Keith Moon worked out a deal with Flock to provide solar-powered cameras.

"They are not pan, tilt

and zoom, but they do serve a good purpose for the police department as far as criminal investigations go," Powell said. "They have been strategically placed around town. In fact, they have been in place since July 1."

This will be paid for with opioid settlement money.

"There has been a lot of litigation involving opioids, both the manufacturers and distributors of opioids throughout the United States," Powell said. "There have been class action lawsuits that have been filled regarding those. There has been a number of them, and we have participated in a number of those and are receiving payments from those lawsuits."

The money received goes toward combating criminal activity that may be associated with opioids and its effect on the community.

"These cameras will fit in that criteria," Powell said.

In other meeting news, the council:

- Approved a metal storm drain to be replaced by Total Earth Services LLC, in the amount of \$42,771. A corrugated metal storm drain failed on Regency Circle. Sinkholes have developed in one of the yard's due to the pipe failure. It will be replaced with ADS plastic pipe under Regency Circle.
- "The street department has gone out and serviced it a number of times," Powell said. "The entire line needs to be replaced."
- This will be paid for out of the 2006 SPLOST, Powell said.
- Approved the purchase of 2025 Chevrolet for the DPD's Crime Suppression Unit from Hardy Chevrolet. The cost will be \$38,005 along with equipment worth \$4,073.80.
- Greg Chapman, part-

ner with Nichols, Cauley & Associates, LLC, the city's accounting firm, presented the FY 2025 report on their finances for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Chapman informed council members that they had a "clean opinion."

"I think that it is important that for 37 years in a row, that the city of Dublin has achieved a certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting," Kight said. "Hopefully, we'll get it again this year. We go above the minimum standards required by law to provide additional financial reporting to the public. We thank our staff for all of the good work you do."

- Heard the first reading of an ordinance that would require the rezoning of 22.52 acres of property from a neighborhood business to a high density residential development.

"This is a piece of property off of Woodlawn Drive and almost directly across from Woodlawn Apartments," Powell said. "That lot was cleared and it is planned to have a more dense residential development there. We are working with the developer on that."

The second reading will be held during the city council's next meeting, which will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 19.

- Approved a resolution to adopt an amendment to the future land use map of the Laurens County Joint Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2050. This reflects the upcoming rezoning request on Woodlawn Drive. Also, areas adjacent to Rowe Street and Telfair Street needed to be updated.
- Approved five items to be added to the declaration of surplus. These items will be sold on GovDeals.

Have You Heard About Severe Thunderstorm Safety?

When you hear the words "Severe Thunderstorm" in the forecast, be ready for more than just heavy rain and lightning.

Severe Thunderstorms Can Bring:

HAIL

STRONG WIND GUSTS

HEAVY RAIN

FLASH FLOODS

TORNADOES

LIGHTNING

Learn These Terms:

Severe Thunderstorm Watch:
Conditions are favorable for Thunderstorms. Be prepared to move indoors.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning:
A Thunderstorm is imminent or occurring. Take shelter NOW!

SEVERE WEATHER
Continued from page 1

lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.

What you should do if a thunderstorm is likely in your area:

- Postpone outdoor activities.
- Get inside a home, building, or hard top automobile (not a convertible). Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer there than outside.
- Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide no protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.

- Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safe to use.
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Use your battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio for updates from local officials.

Avoid the following:

- Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
- Hilltops, open fields, the beach or a boat on the water.
- Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.

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.

Shop and dine in Downtown Dublin & we'll spread some love your way!

Spend at least \$25 between Feb 8 and 14 at any Downtown Dublin business, & be entered into our drawing of \$1,000 total in cash prizes & giveaways.

Just send a photo of your receipt to info@dtddublin.com. Winners announced Feb 16 on Downtown Dublin's Facebook page.

Stop by Jackson Plaza between 5:00 to 8:00 pm on Valentine's Day & take a free photo at the 360 Photo Booth!

Happy Valentine's from Downtown Dublin!

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