

High-speed chase leaves one dead, one hurt

By CAROLINE WEATHERSBY
GTLN

One person is dead and another is in custody following a crash during a high-speed chase in Treutlen County Friday morning. Officials say a vehicle fleeing Twiggs County deputies avoided various attempts to stop and shot at deputies' vehicles before overturning in Treutlen

County, killing a female passenger and severely injuring the driver.

According to a release by the Twiggs County Sheriff's Office, on March 6 at about 2 a.m., a deputy with the Twiggs County Sheriff's Office noticed a car parked at a closed gas station off of Sgoda Road. After running the car's plates, the deputy discovered that the vehicle did not have valid insurance

and began a traffic stop on the car, but after stopping briefly on the offramp, the suspect vehicle took off fleeing eastbound on I-16 at high speeds.

Additional patrol deputies and members of the Criminal Suppression Unit joined in on the pursuit moments later, when speeds were said to have reached approximately 130 mph. As the driver entered

into Laurens County, members of the Laurens County Sheriff's Office joined in on the chase.

At one point, law enforcement attempted to use spike strips to stop the vehicle, but the suspect avoided them and continued to flee.

Deputies made the decision to perform a PIT maneuver to end the pursuit safely; however, during the attempt someone in the

car began to fire multiple rounds at deputies' vehicles.

After entering into Treutlen County, the driver lost control of the vehicle, overturning after colliding with multiple trees.

The driver was ejected from the vehicle and, according to the release, sustained life-threatening injuries. The suspect was taken into custody and transported

to a local medical facility for treatment.

The female passenger was pronounced dead at the scene.

Officials with the Twiggs County Sheriff's Office say this remains an ongoing investigation with multiple agencies involved, including the sheriff's offices in Laurens and Treutlen counties and the Georgia State Patrol.

GONE TO THE DOGS: ST. PAWTRICK'S

Local fur babies got in on the St. Patrick's Festival fun over the weekend with the return of the St. Pawtrick's Pet Costume Contest. Hosted by Pitt's Toyota, the annual spectacular pits pets decked out in their greenest against each other in a variety of categories including: smallest dog; longest tail; and best costume. The fan (and pet) favorite event raises money for the local Humane Society/KYLE DOMINY



Election field set as qualifying ends

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Qualifying ended at noon Friday, setting the field for this May's primary election. While some know they will be in office for the next four years, others will be campaigning for a seat over the next two months.

Brenda Chain, incumbent Laurens County Commissioner District 1, will face challenger Carolyn McCune in the Democratic primary. Voters in District 1 only will be able to vote in this race, said Susan Rooks, election supervisor for the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration Office.

"I think I can facilitate the growth and progress a little bit better and better fit the needs of District 1 and the community," McCune said.

Chain wants to continue being there for the people in District 1 and continue doing the right thing.

"I feel good about qualifying and running this race," Chain said. "I feel like I've done a good job, but my job is not over. I am dependable, and I think the community knows what they will get if they vote me in for another term. I feel like I have experience, and

QUALIFYING
Continued on page 3

Laurens murder suspect arrested in Wrightsville

By DEIDRE LEDFORD
GTLN

A man wanted for murder in Laurens County was recently arrested in Wrightsville on unrelated charges.

On Feb. 14, Wrightsville police officer Logan Fahey was dispatched to a residence on State Street in reference to a black male wearing a ski mask, wielding a weapon. This was the only information dispatch was given by the caller.

Fahey arrived on scene in less than a minute and observed a male on the

front porch, but he did not see a weapon. The man was not wearing a mask, but he did have something around his neck. There was also a car parked at the residence.

The man walked inside when Fahey pulled up. Still unsure of the nature of the call, Fahey did not approach the house but stood behind his car door. During this time, he received word from dispatch that the caller was the resident of the house, but she was in Dublin with her daughter

MURDER SUSPECT
Continued on page 3

Local residents honored at Black History Festival Awards

Governor hopeful Thurmond delivers keynote speech

By PAYTON TOWNS III and HORACE AUSTIN
GTLN

There were some surprises and many thanks during the awards portion of the annual Dublin-Laurens County Black History Festival Community Committee Awards Banquet, while those in the audience also got to hear from one of the many politicians running in Democratic primary this fall.

Cheryl Banks-Hightower, the Rev. Winfred L. McCloud, Rictavious McCloud, Ja'Mya Tinsley, Jamaryon Chapman, Yakinni Martin, Barbara Martin, Jarvis Wilcher, Billy Boston and Rev. Cecil A. Moore Jr. were called up after Awards Committee Chairman Kerry L. Smith read a short bio on each award winner.

Hightower told the audience she had no idea that she was being honored with the 2026 Dedicatory Salute. She said she should have known something was going on with her family at the event.

"God has blessed me from a little dirt road in Bibb County all the way to a paved road here Dublin," Hightower said. "It took



Thurmond said the state and country must "get beyond the hyperpartisan politics" /HORACE AUSTIN

a whole lot of people to get me to this point. I couldn't have done anything without my parents and grandparents. ... I love being a prosecutor, because I love keeping the



AWARD WINNERS: (from left, sitting) Cheryl Banks-Hightower (Dedicatory Salute), Ja'Mya Tinsley (Youth of the Year), Yakinni Martin (Youth Achiever) and Barbara Martin (Woman of the Year). From left, standing: Jamaryon Chapman (Youth of the Year), Rev. Winfred L. McCloud (Humanitarian Award), Jarvis Wilcher (Man of the Year), Rev. Cecil A. Moore Jr. (Pastoral Excellence Award), Rictavious McCloud (Exceptional Achiever of the Year) and Billy Boston (Senior Citizen of the Year)/HORACE AUSTIN

streets safe for all of us. Thank you Dublin, Laurens County, for including me in your family."

Rev. McCloud received the Humanitarian Award.

"I am truly grateful to receive this honor," he said. "I am in awe. I want to thank those who touched my life, and those I have touched along the way. I also thank God, for without him, we can do nothing. May God continue to keep this committee and all of us working together for the purpose and the calling of Jesus Christ so that we can make a

difference in this town where we live."

Rictavious McCloud received the Exceptional Achiever of the Year award.

"I want to give all thanks and honor to God," he said. "He has truly done great things in my life. I know if he has brought me this far, he will certainly have me do amazing things in the future. I want to express my heart feelings for each of you who nominated me for this reward. Thank you

AWARDS BANQUET
Continued on page 3

INDEX

OBITUARIES	2	SPORTS	5-6
POLICE BEAT/TELL IT!	2	COMICS	7
EDITORIAL	4	KIDS' CORNER	8



OBITUARIES



Edwin Lee Higgs

Funeral services for Edwin Lee Higgs Jr., 52 will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at Shady Grove Baptist Church, with interment to follow in the church cemetery. Dr. Curt Lysaker and Mr. Cameron Ricks will officiate.

Mr. Higgs was born July 11, 1973, in Macon, Georgia. He was the son of the late Edwin Lee Higgs Sr. He moved to Laurens County when he was 7 years old, making it his home for the past 45 years. He was a retired self-employed general contractor. He was a devoted husband and father. Mr. Higgs passed away Friday, March 6, 2026, at his residence.

Mr. Higgs is survived by his wife, Carla Dollar Higgs of East Dublin; a mother, Debra "Debbie" Higgs of East Dublin; a son, Cameron Ricks (Margaret) of Dublin; two daughters, Nicole Ricks (Kyle Hamilton) of East Dublin and Hannah Pernorsek (Matic) of Zalec, Slovenia; two brothers, Jacob Higgs of East Dublin and Henry Higgs (Callie) of East Dublin; and 5 grandchildren, Ryleigh, Carleigh, Alle, Gage and Hayden.

Pallbearers will be Chris Dollar, Stan Dollar, Christopher Dollar, Allan Higgs, Richard Higgs, Steven Hodges, Billy Elliott and Randall Tucker.

The family received friends from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Monday, March 9, 2026, at the funeral home.

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



Emily Dianne Fennell

Emily Dianne Fennell, 66, passed away peacefully on Feb. 20, 2026. She was born on April 8, 1959, to the late Rev. Robert L. Fennell and Barbara T. Fennell.

Emily was a proud graduate of ELHS Class of 1976. She was a faithful member of Garden of Prayer - Adrian, Georgia and she loved praise and worship and served in surrounding churches. Her love for the Lord was evident in every aspect of her life. A born-again Christian, Emily dedicated her heart and voice to worship and ministry, blessing countless lives through her faith and testimony.

Emily was most recently employed by Dublin Women's Clinic. Throughout her career, she also faithfully served at Dublin Medi-

cal Center, Department of Banking & Finance, Dublin Probation Office and Laurens County Clerk of Court Office. She was known for her strong work ethic, kindness and willingness to help others.

She was preceded in death by her father, Rev. Robert L. Fennell.

She left behind a legacy of love and devotion to her family. She is survived by her daughter, Erin (Chad) Bayles; son, Joshua Maddox; mother, Barbara Fennell Ussery; siblings, Vicky (Tony) Hinton, Sherri Braswell, Greg (Vonda) Fennell, Nancy Warnock, and Margie (Arnold) Warnock; cherished grandchildren, Chance (Madison) Davis, Harrison Bayles, and Hudson Maddox; and her precious great-grandchildren, Gunner Davis and Kash Davis.

Emily loved her family deeply and treasured every moment spent with them. Her life was a reflection of her unwavering faith, her servant's heart, and her joyful spirit. She will be remembered for her beautiful voice, her steadfast love for the Lord and the compassion she showed to everyone she met.

Her memory will forever live in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Celebration of life services for Emily Dianne Fennell were held on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026, at 2 p.m. Location - Lighthouse Church of God - 315 Dewey Warnock Road East Dublin, Georgia 31027.

Serenity Funeral Home - Dublin has charge of arrangements.

Lois L.C. Smith

Mrs. Lois L. C. Smith passed in Miami Gardens, Florida, Sunday, March 1, 2026. Final rites are incomplete at this time, but will be announced later. Arrangements entrusted to Wyche's Funeral Home.

www.wychesfuneralhomeinc.com.

Janie M. Fuller

Mrs. Janie M. Fuller, 97, and resident of Macon, Georgia passed March 7, 2026 at her residence. Final rites are incomplete at this time, but will be announced later. Arrangements entrusted to Wyche's Funeral Home.

www.wychesfuneralhomeinc.com.

AT THE LOCAL LIBRARY

Coloring, Crafting, & Coffee on Monday, March 16, from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in the auditorium. Take time to unwind and let your creativity flow. Bring your own craft or enjoy the library's adult coloring supplies. Coffee and tea provided.

Mechanics Monday on Monday, March 16, from 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. in the Learning Lab. Drop by your LEGO Technic lab every Monday. Build with LEGO gears, motors, and more! Learn coding, too. Ages 8-plus recommended.

Children's Storytime on Tuesday, March 17, at 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. in our Children's Center. Join us for our weekly storytime where little ones can enjoy stories, dancing and crafts.

Homeschool Hangout on Wednesday, March 18, from 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Dublin Police Department

- Tyshaun Rockell Crutchfield, 37, and Nike-sha Renee Cobb, 50, were both arrested around 9:14 p.m. on Feb. 21 at the intersection of East Johnson Street and North Jefferson Street.

An officer, who was assigned to the Crime Suppression Unit, was patrolling the area when he saw a white Acura passing the same area multiple times. The officer saw the woman drive away and made a turn without using a turn signal.

The officer conducted a traffic stop and made contact with the driver. The officer, who was on the passenger side of the vehicle, could not hear the driver due to the woman talking in a loud manner.

A K-9 later alerted to the driver's door of the vehicle and the front passenger door. During a search, multiple crystal-like substances along with a black scale with white powder residue was discovered.

Both were arrested for possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possession of marijuana less than an ounce and drug related objects.

- Neheem Mearidy, 17, was charged with possession of marijuana less than one ounce, around 2:12 p.m. on Feb. 25 at the intersection of Telfair Street and Grady Street.

An officer was patrolling the area when he saw a man



wearing a face mask riding a bicycle improperly on the road.

The officer had initially responded to that location due to a Ring doorbell alert reporting a man matching the bicyclist description in the backyard of a residence where he did not have permission to be.

The officer made contact with the man, who was identified as Mearidy. The officer could detect the distinct odor of unburnt marijuana emitting from the man. When asked, Mearidy said he did have marijuana on him.

He was arrested and transported to the police department where he was fingerprinted, issued a citation and released on summons.

- Patricia Jordan, 67, was charged with shoplifting at Dollar General on South Jefferson Street around 3:05 p.m. on Feb. 26.

An officer responded to the store and met with Jordan. The officer discovered that Jordan's criminal history showed three prior convictions of shoplifting. The store manager said the woman was down the laundry isle, stuffing laundry

detergent in her bag.

The woman took two containers of detergent in the amount of \$15, which was recovered. Video footage showed the woman concealing the two detergent.

Jordan was transported to the Laurens County Jail.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- Alysha Hughes, 38, of Acworth, and Jack Daniel Roesler, 23, of Calhoun, were charged with fleeing/attempting to elude a police officer for felony offense at the intersection of Highway 441 and Buie Road of Feb. 22.

- A deputy was dispatched to Lloyd Hester Road in reference to criminal trespass around 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 22.

- On Feb. 20, around 10:35 a.m., a deputy met with a woman at the sheriff's office to talk about a scam.

- A deputy responded to the sheriff's office on Feb. 19 in reference to a renter versus rentee dispute on Rex Miller Road around 8 a.m. the day before.

- Shots were fired around 5:40 p.m. on Feb. 20 on McCord Road.

- A burglary occurred on Lloyd Hester Road around 9:58 a.m. on Feb. 22.

- A deputy made a traffic stop on a red Chevrolet Tahoe in reference to a seatbelt violation at the intersection of the 441 bypass and Claxton Dairy Road. This led to the arrest of Terrence J. Smith, 42, who was charged with driving under the influence of drugs.

- On Feb. 24, around 1:30 p.m., a deputy met with man in reference to someone coming into his yard on Deerwood Circle.

- Wyman Walker, 49, was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol at the intersection of Highway 29 and Oakwood Drive around 10:52 p.m. on Feb. 20. A deputy made a traffic stop in a 2008 black Chevrolet Trailblazer due to his vehicle running a stop sign and failing to drive within a single lane.

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.

What ever happened to the Bank of Dudley's dog, Dudley?

The new St. Patrick's banners downtown look great!

Rob took my curly fries!

The best ways to keep the streets safer is to enforce the speed limits and quit wasting money on worthless roundabouts and buy more traffic lights.

If the current school board wants to show us they are different then have the solar panels removed. Don't lie to us and tell it can't be done. Where are the panels that were on the board office roof?



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NEWS DIGEST

THE LAURENS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION will hold a work session at 5 p.m. on March 10. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Pledge
- Approval of agenda
- Discussion:
- Salary schedules part 2 and coaching supplements
- Update board policy BCBI:

Public participation in board meetings

- Executive session
- Personnel
- Coaching assignments
- Adjourn

- Public participation in board meetings
- Consent agenda
- Audience participation
- Executive session - personnel
- Approval of personnel
- Approval of salary schedules part 2
- Approval of coaching supplements
- Approval of 2026-2027 coaching assignments
- Superintendent and board member comments
- Adjourn

THE LAURENS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on March 12. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Pledge
- Approval of agenda
- School/staff/student recog-

THE HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD will meet at 5:15 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18 in the Henry "Bud" Hicks Jr. Memorial Chamber.

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BIRTHDAYS

Mar. 10
Logan M. Smith
Tenecia Plummer
Smith

Art Night: Stress Ball on Thursday, March 19, from 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. in our Learning Lab. Teens are in-

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QUALIFYING

Continued from page 1

I have been so successful as being a commissioner.”

Kevin Tanner (District 5), along with Jimmy Rogers (District 4), will return for their third terms as commissioners.

“I’m just overwhelmed that everybody has given me this chance,” Tanner said. “I’m glad they are pleased in what we are doing for us not to have any opposition. Being a commissioner is tough sometimes, but we try to keep those taxes down. That’s our main goal. When I first went in, my main goal was the taxes and county employees. I think we have good quality people in every department, and we work good with our constitutional officers.”

Rogers believes his role as a commissioner is a calling.

“I am very humbled, blessed and thankful,” said Rogers. “I have had the opportunity to not have somebody run against me and the chance to go back in for another four years to serve the people of District 4 and Laurens County. God has put me there for a reason, and I am very blessed to serve.”

“We have very good people who live in our county and a lot of posi-

tive things are going on in our county to keep Laurens County strong. I am glad to be a part of it, and I am glad to be able to serve another term to hopefully keep Laurens County strong and find ways to keep it strong for many years to come.”

Matt Hatchett, incumbent state representative for District 155, qualified for his ninth term and has been representing this area for 16 years. Except for his first two times running for this seat, Hatchett has not faced opposition. He will face opposition in the Republican party against Cayce Cook. The winner of that race will face Democratic challenger Joe Powers in November.

The other contested local race will decide who fills the vacant seat for Ricky Harrison in the city of Dudley. Jennifer “Jenny” Taylor and Jay Powell qualified for this position. Rooks said only those living in the city of Dudley will be able to vote in this race.

“I had been thinking about getting involved and running for a little while,” Taylor said. “One of our council members resigned and I didn’t have to think about it very long. It was just a good opportunity to go ahead and get involved. We have gone to church at Dudley

Baptist for 15 years and we love the community and love the neighbors.”

Powell said he wants to make a difference in Dudley.

“There are few things in Dudley that I feel need to be addressed,” Powell said.

“The only way you can do that is by getting on the board.”

Because of no opposition, the Laurens County School Board already knows who will be in those seats.

“I’m excited,” said Kevin Malone, who represents county school District 4 for a third term. “I’m going back in unopposed for four more years, and I appreciate the trust that the community has in myself. I’m looking forward to the opportunity to work with Dr. Hall and the wonderful team that Laurens County has put together to help work alongside them for another four years.”

Jennifer “J.” Stone will be the new face on the board. She faced no opposition for the seat currently held by Kathy Sweat, who served three terms on the board. Earlier last week, Sweat announced that she would not be seeking a fourth term.

“She and I have been talking,” Stone said. “I had told her I would never run against her. She told me she couldn’t do it, but that she would help me anytime I needed to talk to her. She has been fantastic.”

Stone has been retired from teaching for two years and currently works for RESA. She is a literacy coach for RESA and remains involved in the new standards and what teachers must do.

“Obviously, I haven’t quite got it out of my system and I’m going back for more. The teachers that I have stayed in contact with were happy because they have someone on there who was in education and understands education.”

The primary will be held on Tuesday, May 19. Early voting for this election will go from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. from April 27 to May 15 at the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration Office, 117 E. Jackson St., Suite A. There will also be two early voting Saturday’s (May 2 and 9) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If there is a runoff from these races, it will be held on June 16, Rooks said. The highest votegetter in the county commissioner race and city of Dudley race will win the seat in May.

Two injured in shooting

STAFF REPORTS

Local law enforcement is investigating a shooting that sent two people to Fairview Park Hospital early Saturday morning.

According to Dublin Police Chief Keith Moon, officers responded to the area of Highland Avenue around 12:15 a.m. Saturday following a Flock Gun Shot Detection alert. Two people were discovered injured from the shooting.

They were treated and released from the hospital. It was determined that the incident happened at 109 Zenith Street.

The Dublin Police Department continues to actively investigate the incident and asks that anyone with additional information call (478) 277-5023 or Laurens County 911.

MURDER SUSPECT

Continued from page 1

and not at home. She had received a call from someone else advising her that this “masked man” had pulled a gun on the father of her (the homeowner’s) child when he pulled up at the residence. The child’s father immediately fled on foot, leaving his car in the yard with his keys and cell phone inside. He ran to a neighbor’s house and had them call the homeowner.

The man walked back out onto the porch and Fahey explained that someone had called the police to this residence. Fahey says the man, Lamontae Parks, 19, approached his patrol car and was acting strange, fidgeting and constantly looking over his shoulder. While the two were talking, a vehicle pulled up and four individuals, including the child’s father, got out.

As the child’s father approached, he and Parks began arguing. The child’s father stated that Parks had pulled a gun on him when he pulled up at the house. Parks complied with Fahey’s request to pat him down to check for a weapon. No weapon was found but as Fahey was speaking with him, Parks spun around and struck Fahey in the chest and ran. Fahey ran after him and deployed his taser before Parks could get back onto the porch of the residence. After he was detained, the keys and cell phone of the child’s father was found in Parks’ jacket pocket.

The homeowner arrived on scene and gave consent for the house to be searched to see if a weapon could be located. No weapon was found inside the residence. However, Parks was still charged with theft by taking, entering an auto and obstruction of an officer, all felony charges. Deputy Jose Soto transported Parks to the Law Enforcement Center.

As Fahey was processing the charges on Parks, it was discovered that he was wanted for a murder charge in Laurens County. Fahey contacted a Laurens County investigator who confirmed they had been looking for Parks and were about to call in the U.S. marshals to help locate him.

AWARDS BANQUET

Continued from page 1

for all of the opportunities you have given me to grow personally and as a servant. I have learned to think beyond myself to consider the needs of others.

“As I move forward, I promise to keep seeking growth and wisdom, leaning on the strong leadership on those who have guided me from the beginning until now.”

Smith said the Youth of the Year award came down to a tie. He announced Tinsley, a student from Dublin High School, as the first recipient.

“I’m really grateful for everyone who supports and believes in me,” Tinsley said. “As Miss Black Dublin 2024 second-runner up, and in the top 10 percent of my class as a senior, I am thankful for the opportunities to represent and serve in my community. Thank you to my family, mentors and my community for always pushing me. Most of all, I thank God for his grace and protection in keeping me grounded. Without him, none of this would be possible.”

Smith then called Chapman, student from East Laurens High School, as also receiving the Youth of the Year Award.

“This recognition means more to me than words can express,” Chapman said. “It represents not just my efforts but the love, support and trust of an entire community. I want to thank God for guiding my steps and giving me strength during challenges and blessing me with opportunities to grow. Without God none of this would be possible.”

He also thanked his family and mentors.

“This award is about con-

tinuing to make my community family proud,” Chapman said.

Yakinni Martin was called up to accept Young Achiever award.

“This is a honor that fills me with immense gratitude and pride,” she said. “To be recognized by my own community, by people who have shaped me, supported me and inspired me means more than I can express.”

Yakinni called the reward a full-circle moment as she recalled being a former Miss Black Dublin queen.

“You have shown me so much support and gratitude,” she said. “I want to thank God and those who nominated me. This reward is a reflection of the strength, resilience and brilliance of our community. I want to speak to our youth. You are our future. But they can only rise if they are invested in, encouraged and given spaces like this to work. Events like this matter. This Black History Festival matters. So counting pouring in. To young people, your dreams and presence are valued.”

Barbara Martin was brought up to accept the Woman of the Year award.

“I am truly speechless and truly honored,” she said. “I give everything to God. No matter the obstacles, I can achieve and I have achieved. I am just truly thankful for my family and my church family. I give everything in my whole life to be able to serve for the Lord. I can achieve and that is what I strive to do.”

Wilcher accepted the award for Man of the Year by singing “To God Be the Glory.”

“God is truly the author and illustrator of all things,” he said.

“I am truly honored to receive

this reward. I appreciate the love, guidance and the discipline my parents provided to my brother and I. To my village, which consists of my family, my extended family and church family, I truly thank you all for seeing in me what I sometimes did not see in myself. Though this award has my name on it, it is all of our awards. I am not who I am today without each and every one of you. Let us continue to uplift, serve and make a difference in our community.”

Boston thanked God for leading him on his journey, after he picked up the Senior Citizen of the Year.

“I am just trying to do something for somebody” Boston said. “I joined the military many years ago and I learned a couple of things. If you do what you are told to do, it will always come back to you. ... For me to be able to receive this award, I know it means that somebody was watching me. I just want to say thank you.”

Moore, who has shared 24 years with Brown Grove Baptist Church in East Dublin and Oak Grove Baptist Church in Washington County, said he was reminded that he was not there to preach.

“I want to thank this distinguished committee,” said Moore, before thanking his family and both church families. “We could not be here without those folks thinking enough of me to select me for this. This is not because of who I am, but because of the grace of God, I am that I am.”

Smith ended the award portion of the event by asking for a moment of silence to remember Lula Mack, a member of the committee who had recently

passed away.

Earlier in the event, Chapman received a \$1,500 from the Mother Ruby Dell Jefferson Scholarship.

“I’m truly grateful for this blessing,” Chapman said. “I thank God for guiding my path.”

Just before the awards were handed out, speaker Michael Thurmond, a candidate for governor, talked about growing up on a dead-end dirt road. Where he lived, he used an outhouse until he was 16. He said there were cotton fields all around.

Thurmond called Dublin a big city compared to where he grew up, which was near Athens.

“One of the things I want to be is an inspiration for young kids today,” Thurmond said. “Maybe not growing up in rural Georgia, but growing up in tough neighborhood where they may not have all the financial resources that they need.”

Thurmond wants people to know that he plans to make sure rural Georgia has a seat at the table in Atlanta. He said that through faith in God, and belief in hard work, it is not where one comes from but where they are going that makes the difference.

“And I want to be that north star for this next generation coming behind you,” he said. “Politicians come, politicians go. God is still on the throne. I still believe in this nation. America has been and will always be the greatest nation on this earth. If we get beyond the hyper partisan politics and focus on what’s the best interest of Georgians ... I’m about standing in the gap, fighting for what’s right and believing that tomorrow can always be better than today.”

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Jeremi Hightower, PA-C

Rodney Johnson, MD

Madeleine Price, PA-C

CASTLE CONNOLLY TOP DOCTORS 2026

CASTLE CONNOLLY TOP DOCTORS 5 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

OUR TAKE...



Sylvania-based B&T's Food Fresh recently purchased the struggling East Dublin Food World/RODNEY MANLEY

Grocery store sale good for East Dublin, Laurens County

Laurens County is the third largest county, geographically speaking, in the state of Georgia. Driving from one end to the other is quite the trek, and some of our communities and pockets of population are not as easy to get to as others.

This means that some of our residents, often the ones facing the most challenges economically, have to travel some distance for access to food and groceries. In fact, according to Mercer University's Rural Health Innovation, nearly 20 percent of Laurens County's population has low access to food. That equates to about 9,400 people who struggle to have healthy, affordable groceries at home. The center's data shows that less than 10 percent of our population lives less than a mile from a large grocery store, while about 3 percent live more than 10 miles away from such a retailer.

This highlights the importance of maintaining existing grocery outlets and the benefit they serve to our community. Recently Sylvania-based B&T's Food Fresh purchased the struggling Food World store in East Dublin. The group has vowed to improve selection and prices, while being an active partner ensuring the area has access to quality food choices.

Their choice to save the store could end up being more than just a smart business deal, but an action that will keep Laurens County from becoming a bigger food desert.

- 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...

"Expect the unexpected in the kingdom of madness!"

- Macho Man Randy Savage

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

- Ecclesiastes 9:11 (KJV)

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

March 10, 2026 is...

- Organize you Home Office Day
- Salvation Army Day
- US Paper Money Day
- Pack Your Lunch Day
- Mario Day
- Landline Telephone Day
- International Bagpipe Day

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2024

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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.

Parking, traffic jams - my adventures in driving



By PAYTON TOWNS III

dy Jackson Locke walked up. He was there to film the event for TV35. We ended up sitting in the pine straw in front of the stage. There really wasn't much room between the crowd and the stage, so we took the space that was available.

While he stayed the entire show, I got some pictures and my wife and I made our way back to our car as we wanted to beat any possible traffic jam.

Speaking of traffic jams, that is something we do not have to be too concerned with here in our small town. We just have to maneuver our way through the small jams that happen Monday through Friday between 4 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. or so.

Some may know that downtown gets backed up during those times, and inevitably someone not paying attention to the traffic light will block an intersection.

While I understand that some may do this accidentally, it is infuriating to be waiting to take your turn and you watch someone - who has been at the white line waiting to see if traffic moves for them to advance - at the last second hit their accelerator just enough to get to the middle of the intersection and block it. This makes it where I cannot go straight, and by the time they clear the intersection, the light turns red and I'm stuck again.

Of course for real traffic jams, one only needs to go north two hours to Atlanta. There was a time when traffic in our capital city was not bumper-to-bumper at certain points of the day. Those are long gone.

Almost 12 years ago, my family had a reunion in Atlanta at my brother's house. The idea was for everyone to go to an Braves game that evening. Since it was just my wife and I in our vehicle, I figured we would ride with someone else to Turner Field.

I was wrong. We ended up transporting my mother

and niece, who was about eight at the time. Traffic picked up the closer we got to Turner Field. Traffic came to a crawl. I watched as a woman driving in a vehicle next to me forced her way into a small almost non-existent hole in front of me.

What made this worse was the backseat driving tips I was receiving from my mother.

"You just have to put your signal on and get over. They'll let you in."

My wife turned the radio down, because for some reason when traffic gets that congested, it is easier to focus without music.

Almost 10 years later we returned to the metro area go to a Zach Williams' concert near Kennesaw. Traffic had not improved any. Even around 11 p.m. when the show was over, we were still crawling back to our hotel.

My favorite time riding through Atlanta now is when somebody else is driving, or I am on a chartered bus. If I do have to travel through that city - or anywhere near it - I am so happy to return to our town and remember the words said in "The Wizard of Oz" by Dorothy, "There's no place like home."

IN THE SPIRIT OF FAIRNESS, HERE'S A REBUTTAL TO BOTH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS OVER THE STATE OF THE UNION...



KIRK ©2026 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE email: waltes@nork54@gmail.com

Toledo Manufacturing gives its side of mining issue

My columns opposing the mining for titanium dioxide on Trail Ridge near our Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge have drawn a heavy reader response. Almost all of it supporting a permanent ban on mining in the area.

I also have received a rebuttal, asserting I have gotten my facts wrong. This from Drew Jones, a Charlton County commissioner. It is in Charlton County wherein Trail Ridge is located. Jones is also the nephew-in-law of Joe Hopkins, president of Toledo Manufacturing, one of the leading opponents of a ban. Hopkins is Toledo's president. Drew Jones runs the company day to day.

Toledo Manufacturing owns 50,000 acres in Charlton County, making them one of the largest landowners in the county. Although he takes issue with the accusation, Joe Hopkins is seen by supporters of a ban on mining as having outsized political influence in the state and being the primary reason legislation to ban such mining on Trail Ridge has gone nowhere under the Gold Dome, despite bipartisan efforts to pass such a measure through several legislative sessions.

Mr. Jones asked to give Toledo Manufacturing's side of the story. I told him I would share his letter with you minus any snarky asides from me. You can make of his comments what you will. Here is the letter:

"Dear Mr. Dick Yarbrough: Your recent column concerning mining near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge contains several assertions and implications

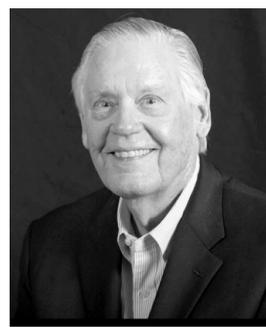
regarding Toledo Manufacturing Company that require correction.

"To be clear at the outset, Toledo Manufacturing never advocated for Twin Pines Minerals to receive a permit, nor did we support mining absent rigorous, independent scientific review. We have consistently advocated for objective, science-based decision-making carried out by qualified regulatory agencies, free from political pressure, whether that pressure seeks to force approval or impose a blanket prohibition without evidence. That distinction matters, and your column does not reflect it.

"Property ownership adjacent to a proposed project does not equate to support for that project. Our position has been that decisions of this magnitude should be based on transparent studies conducted by credentialed experts without ideological or financial bias, not on reflexive opposition, campaign rhetoric or pressure from interest groups on either side of the issue.

"You suggest that elected officials who advocate for regulatory review rather than legislative bans are acting in bad faith. We respectfully disagree. Complex hydrological and environmental questions should be resolved through empirical analysis and scientific review, not political litmus tests. Decisions made otherwise risk undermining public confidence and setting concerning precedents.

"Your column also references Toledo Manufacturing as having 'solicited' Chemours to mine the



By DICK YARBROUGH

area. This characterization is misleading. Any mention of Chemours has been purely hypothetical, in the context of public discussion about potential future land use, and not the pursuit of any project, partnership or mining proposal. Exploring theoretical possibilities is not the same as advocating for or advancing a mining operation.

"It is also important to recognize the broader context. Across our nation, forestland ownership is becoming increasingly unprofitable. Many owners earn less from timber today than they did 30 years ago, even without adjusting for inflation, while the costs of ownership have risen significantly. Private landowners continue to provide immense environmental benefits such as clean air, wildlife habitat, biodiversity and carbon sequestration while bearing the associated costs. We rarely see articles addressing this pressing issue, yet well-funded conservation groups and the

media could make it a top priority. What you have written about for years is a symptom of the problem, not the problem itself. The general public may be ignoring the economic realities of owning forestland. Without economic viability, these lands will eventually be converted to other uses, not out of greed, but out of necessity.

"Readers deserve accurate reporting based on facts, not narratives constructed without input from those most directly involved. We encourage coverage that reflects evidence, transparency, and the evolving nature of scientific research. If current or future studies demonstrate that mining in or near the Okefenokee poses unacceptable risks, then permits should not be issued. That conclusion should rest on evidence, not presumption.

"Toledo Manufacturing remains committed to environmental stewardship, property rights, and the rule of law. Those principles are not mutually exclusive and presenting them as such does a disservice to an issue that deserves serious, thoughtful consideration. We hope this clarification reaches readers as broadly as your other columns."

Drew Jones
Toledo Manufacturing Company, Inc.
Folkston, Georgia

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

GHSB GIRLS BASKETBALL SEMIFINALS

To the 'ship...

Lady Falcons topple T'ville to secure spot in finals; Elbert Co. awaits Friday at Coliseum

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

FORT VALLEY – There was a lot to take in during the last few moments of East Laurens' semifinal victory Saturday night, as Thomasville finally conceded a late deficit that kept bouncing back to eight points despite its best efforts to gain any ground on a determined bunch of Lady Falcons over the second half.

The Fort Valley State arena, with its seats surrounding the court on all four sides, made for a panorama of sights and sounds as the Bulldogs – with their fate all but sealed by a first of back-to-back turnovers – backed off to allow East to dribble away most of the final time, bringing Falcon fans all over the building to their feet.

And though there were still 11 seconds to play when Deanna Lowther drew an ineffectual foul to get back to the line, they could already feel it.

Smiles were on the face of every East Laurens player and coach as head coach Danielle Lowther, after pausing near the baseline with a satisfied round of applause in reaction to the play, walked all the way back up the bench with a high five for all who were seated.

She bowed her head in a moment of thought, then glanced behind the bench where husband Dwayne, beaming with just as much pride, was standing with a fist pumped overhead. To the left was an enthusiastic student section and cheer squad, and across the gym the largest collection of Black and Gold in the building. And all were likewise soaking up every bit of the moment.

The pair of free throws missed, but it didn't much matter as Thomasville had a midcourt pass picked off seconds after returning the ball to play. That allowed a final Deanna Lowther basket with two seconds left to make it a 55-45 final score.

The buzzer sounded, and

the Lady Falcons were officially headed to their first state championship game in program history.

After the customary handshakes, East Laurens players were hard-pressed to keep their feet attached to the floor for longer than split seconds at a time.

The group ran immediately toward the end line where classmates were waiting to join the hooting, hollering and jumping up and down.

There was probably only one thing that could have made them more excited.

"This means no school on Friday, right?" one front-row student asked principal Keldrick Burke as he made his way to join the celebration.

He couldn't officially say yes. But working that out would seem mostly a foregone conclusion with the Lady Falcons scheduled to play No. 12 seed Elbert County for the state's top prize bright and early at 1 p.m. in the Macon Coliseum.

The conversation about how to make sure all of the Eastside can make it up there in support with Laurens County Schools Superintendent O.J. Hall, who was right behind him on his way to the tunnel, could wait until after both had a chance to catch up with the team and join in perhaps a half dozen different photo ops.

Amid all of it, you only had to read the facial expressions of Coach Lowther – who seemed just a little overcome with emotion – to get an idea of just how meaningful all of this was.

"I'm at a loss for words because it just feels so good," she said with a long pause. "Practicing since October, coming down to our last game next Friday. It's a good feeling."

The last time an East Laurens basketball team made it to the Coliseum was 2008, when the Falcon boys, led by head coach Jimmy Williams, finished state runner-up to Wesleyan.



A SIGHT TO BEHOLD: Danielle Lowther (foreground, right) got a moment to savor the winning feeling as a Thomasville foul with roughly 11 seconds to go created this short break in the action. The fifth-year East Laurens head coach was clearly a bit stirred as she looked up at the scoreboard and then around the arena where husband Dwayne (left) joined hundreds of other Falcon supporters in full ovation/CLAY REYNOLDS



GOING TO THE MAC: Lady Falcon players celebrate on the court just after the final buzzer of their semifinal win over Thomasville to advance to the first state championship game in program history. They will play Elbert County Friday afternoon in the Macon Coliseum/CLAY REYNOLDS

Their girls, before a groundbreaking 2025 season, had never reached a Final Four. This East Laurens team, building on last year's success despite losing three key seniors, has returned to win

the region 2-High A title again, and more games in the process of getting back, and further.

Now, there's only one piece of history left to make.

"It really does feel good, be-

ing the first, I think, to really go to a state championship," Coach Lowther said. "I'm just so happy for my girls."

This defense-dominated game was the type in which the Lady Falcons (27-4, 13-2 region 2-High A) have thrived all season, though it took a much different course than those during the first three rounds in which they were able to effectively press their opponents out of the building before halftime.

Rather than going all-out with the full-court heat, they were much more selective with when and how they confronted the ball out of a mixture of different defenses.

East Laurens spent most of the first half in a 2-2-1 zone look – closely related to the "diamond" that's been their recent standby in the opposing backcourt – before matching up man-to-man once within the key. Later, the press mostly came off, and with the exception of some occasional traps, the Lady Falcons retreated to half-court 1-3-1 and 1-2-2 zones before finishing the game back in their original man.

Though the results were a mixed bag the whole way, they were able to consistently reciprocate the pesky play of Thomasville that made the game so hard-fought.

"Our defense wasn't working," Coach Lowther said. "People weren't getting in spots and all the other stuff, so we had to figure

LADY FALCONS
Continued on page 6

BASEBALL ROUNDUP...

Crazy 8ths: Baker's walk-off wins Raiders' third-straight with Appling to end in extras

From STAFF REPORTS

The past three seasons, there's just been something about the recent baseball rivalry between West Laurens and Appling County that's consistently produced exciting games, and extra innings.

The teams, going back to a 2024 matchup in Baxley decided on an infamous walk-off infield fly, have needed eight of them to decide a winner in four of their last five meetings.

Thursday's in Dexter, to open another home-and-home here in 2026, became a third-straight following the two that exceeded regulation in last year's split. The Raiders once again evened their extra-inning record in the series as Grant Baker poked one through a hole at short in the bottom of eight to win the latest thriller 5-4.

The teams are scheduled play again at Baxley's "Graveyard" on April 13.

Cason Pollock sliced a single right up the middle to lead off the inning, and J.J. Giles – in some redemption after popping out on a sac bunt attempt earlier – got

one to slide all the way up the first base line to move him to second.

Luke Shepard took over as courtesy runner before back-to-back intentional walks loaded the bases for Baker with one out, and the senior went the other way for his first hit of the ballgame to push him home.

West Laurens was out-hit 8-7, but drew 11 walks that stretched out several key innings for Appling County pitchers Kaden Walls, who went four in the start, and Landon Anderson, who took the loss.

The visitors held the earliest lead, but the Raiders scored a run per the first three innings to tie and take two turns on top. Appling County answered Raider runs with ones of its own in both the fourth and fifth to tie with hits, followed by fielders choice RBIs.

But West Laurens starting pitcher Kolby Clark continued his solid work from recent starts, striking out seven with a nasty curveball before being relieved by Brycen Milton with one out in the seventh.

The progressively more

impressive freshman southpaw inherited Appling's fastest baserunner in Braye Brown at first, and before throwing a pitch, picked him into a rundown. Walls squibbed a two-strike single to keep the inning going, but it ended quickly enough on a ground ball. Milton came back to get all three swinging in the Pirates' eighth inning side.

Cohen Cardwell and Cason Pollock singled twice each.

Clark and Nathan Hester also added hits, with J.D. Hogan picking up an RBI via sacrifice fly.

The exciting victory, the Raiders' third in a row, took their record to 11-1 overall, after a makeup game in Augusta Wednesday got their region mark to 6-0.

Last week's pair of games followed three – two wins and a loss against some top statewide competition – the previous weekend at Emerson's Lakepoint Complex at the Georgia Dugout Club tournament.

RAIDERS
Continued on page 6



BISON-BOUND: Konner O'Neal made his commitment to play baseball at Southern Union State Community College during a ceremony Feb. 11/CLAY REYNOLDS

EL's O'Neal signs to play baseball at Alabama's Southern Union State CC

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

When you've got tools as a high school baseball prospect, there will always be a place to put them to work at the next level.

For East Laurens outfielder Konner O'Neal, that shot to prove himself playing college ball will come next year at Alabama's Southern Union State Community College.

The Falcon senior, who's shown some worthy and projectable hitting, defensive and baserunning talent in four years as a starter, signed with the Bison on Feb. 11.

"It's great," O'Neal said. "I always dreamed of it as a kid. I always told my mom and them that I was going to play ball at the next level."

His 2026 season is already off to a solid start. Through seven games as of last week, O'Neal's seven hits and three RBIs were good for a .368 batting average, in the continuation of some career-long production that's helped carry the East Laurens lineup since he broke in as a freshman.

Numbers in the books since his sophomore season in 2024 have his all-time average at .456, with 10 home runs and 44 men driven in, plus 21 stolen bases.

Though O'Neal's ability has made him a leader for the Falcons on the field since the moment he first stepped on, his experience has more recently turned him into a "vocal" one who's respected around the clubhouse.

O'NEAL
Continued on page 6

SCOREBOARD

GIRLS HOOPS

Saturday
East Laurens 55,
Thomasville 45

BASEBALL

Friday
Dublin 9, Washington Co. 8
EL 18, Central Macon 1
Trinity 10, David Emanuel 0

GIRLS SOCCER

Friday
WL at ACE Charter
(no score reported)

BOYS SOCCER

Friday
WL 2, ACE Charter 0

**PREP
SCHEDULE**

BASKETBALL

Friday
GHSA Finals
(Macon Coliseum)
East Laurens (girls) vs.
Elbert Co./1 p.m.

BASEBALL

Monday
Johnson Co. at Dublin
/5:30 p.m.

Tuesday

West Laurens at Westside
Augusta/5:30 p.m.
EL at Dodge Co.
Gatewood at Trinity/6 p.m.

Wednesday

Dublin at Jefferson Co.
(doubleheader)/4 p.m.

Thursday

Morgan Co. at WL/5:30 p.m.

Friday

Westside at WL/5:30 p.m.
Dodge Co. at EL
Trinity at Gatewood/6 p.m.

SOCCER

Monday
FPCA at Trinity/4 p.m.

Tuesday

Aquinas at WL
Dodge Co. at Dublin
Robert Toombs at Trinity
Washington Co. at EL/5
p.m.

Thursday

Bulloch at Trinity
(boys)/4:30 p.m.
Windsor at Trinity
(girls)/6:30 p.m.

Friday

Dublin at EL
Westside Augusta at WL/5
p.m.

TENNIS

Tuesday
WL at Richmond
Academy/4 p.m.

Thursday

CCA at Trinity/3:30 p.m.
Hephzibah at WL/4 p.m.

Friday

Trinity at Gatewood
/3:30 p.m.

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LADY FALCONS

Continued from page 5

something else out. We've been practicing different defenses, because we knew we were going to get against a team that was going to be prepared for our defense, and we just kind of mixed it up, wanted to throw them off a little bit, and then try to go back to what we were used to."

Though some big 3-point shots by Jameria Bing (who scored 12, and 10 in the second half) were a major part of East's second-half advantage, what once again carried the day in the grinding matchup was the production and rebounding of Deanna Lowther and Garyunna Mitchell inside.

Lowther scored 20 and pulled 13 boards for a double-double. Mitchell added six points, all in the second half, and led the way on the glass with 19 re's out of the team's 45.

The pair did battle with a couple of comparable forces in the Thomasville front court: 6-foot forwards Harmony Bryant (the Bulldogs' top scorer with 24 points) and Ma'khia Banks (whose total was only two, but had an important impact on defense and the glass).

Some strong post moves, soft touch around the basket and a great sense for backdoor cutting opportunities made Bryant the biggest mismatch.

As for the guards, East's Zahmaria Robinson, with 10, DeAndrea Lowther, adding four, and Alasia Wiggins, sinking a key first-half triple, also chipped in on the offensive end. Thomasville's other two averaging double-figures on the season — sophomore Jayla Brooks and freshman Justyce Cole — challenged with their open-court speed to score 10 apiece, but never caught fire.

The rims and sight lines seemed a bit unfriendly for both teams as shooters adjusted to the depth of field in the college gym. Neither appeared more uncomfortable than a stretch of the second quarter when the game's offense ground squarely to a halt, and the teams seemed to mostly idle in place until the Bulldogs put together a closing run to cut what was a 10-point deficit down to only two, 23-21, by the break.

But while the Lady Falcons' top shooters eventually got a feel — finding their stroke amid a key run in both the first and second halves — Thomasville's never got anything consistent going in their mid-to-long range game.

An 8-point dead heat preceded East's big breakout for 10 unanswered points between the end of the first quarter and start of the second. Deanna Lowther completed a 3-point play and Wiggins bookended a stop in the middle with her 3 for a six-point edge after one. Coming back, DeAndrea Lowther hit back-to-back jumpers to stretch the lead



'BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!': Jameria Bing brought the heavy artillery with three really long 3-pointers in Saturday's second half. Eastside students and cheerleaders were right on cue with their customary sound effect as this one put the Lady Falcons up by 11 in the third quarter/CLAY REYNOLDS



OUTREACH EFFORT: Garyunna Mitchell climbs above a couple of contenders, including her own tough-to-outjump teammate Deanna Lowther, for a second-half board that was one of a team-high 19 in Saturday's game/CLAY REYNOLDS

to 18-8 before confidence deteriorated.

It didn't return immediately, as Zahmaria Robinson hit some bad luck with two guzzlers involved in her 1-for-3 sequence on a trier in a row to start the third.

But East Laurens eventually punched its way through the deadlock with the second of those major swells starting with a Mitchell second-chance bucket around the five-minute mark, and a big Bing 3 to take its lead to 34-23.

Bryant, scoring early from the low post, had Thomasville's only bucket in the first six minutes of the second half. But she'd singlehand a 4-0 run to break the drought just after the lead had made it back to double digits.

Bing answered right back with another triple — this one from steps beyond college range — to swell the lead back to nine.

Brooks hit Thomasville's only 3 with seven seconds to go, and the Bulldogs capitalized on an East Laurens turnover-turned-foul by splitting a pair of free throws to set themselves up for a run at it in the fourth quarter, down 35-30 as two Falcon free throws failed just before the buzzer.

But East Laurens opened the fourth on a 5-0 run, powered by Bing and Robinson, to re-establish control and get the 'Dogs playing catch-up the rest of the way.

The Lady Falcons ultimately outscored them 32-24 in the second half.

"It was just the extra effort, the extra heart, the extra hustle that kind of got us a lead, got us putbacks every now and then, a steal every now and then. Jameria hit couple of big 3s at key points in the game. Deanna got some rebounds and putbacks and Gary came out and got more aggressive and had more energy," Coach Lowther said. "It was just a collective team effort in regards to just trying to finish the drill."

Thomasville's Cole and Bryant combined for six field goals that were just enough to remain within striking distance. But the Bulldogs mostly broke even



HOME STRETCHES: Zahmaria Robinson (left) and Deanna Lowther (right) extend for shot attempts in the last minute that helped the Lady Falcons put away their late lead. Robinson finished after a foul to get it to eight and earn an and-one opportunity, and Lowther drew another for a couple more at the line as Thomasville's comeback hopes dwindled with the remaining time/CLAY REYNOLDS



until reaching a now-or-never moment with roughly three minutes to go.

Neither team had blinked in an exchange of two field goals each — East's from Lowther and Mitchell — to set the lead at 44-34.

But after getting a critical stop, the Lady Falcons hit a momentary lull.

They were a second late clearing midcourt against the Thomasville press, and turned it over with a 10-second violation. Dueling turnovers followed, and Cole scored back-to-back Bulldog baskets around an official timeout to clean up after someone in the stands accidentally tossed a drink onto the floor.

Thomasville took a timeout to regroup after cutting the number to a manageable six, 44-38, but paid the price for respecting another Bing 3 from way out at the top of the key that hit bottom to undo most of its progress.

The score was 47-38, and then a free throw competition commenced.

Thomasville's Bryant got one to cut the number back to eight. Mitchell responded with two on the other end, and it was 49-39.

After that, the Bulldogs embarked on another 4-0 run as Brooks and Cole both split traps to get them within six again, 49-43. And another timeout was called with 1:44.

East Laurens didn't lose

its focus.

The Lady Falcons tried an ambitious pass or two on a possession whose goal was to work the clock, and narrowly avoided a turnover or two to get it in the hands of Robinson for a shot against contact with 1:18. This time, she got the roll and the whistle.

And though the extra point was no good, East's lead was back to eight, 51-43.

Bryant hit a turning basket to respond. But once again, the Lady Falcons mirrored the score on another time-consuming possession, as Deanna Lowther found a blind spot in the Thomasville D, got the ball and drew a foul to reach the line.

She knocked down both free throws to return the lead to eight, and Thomasville didn't score again.

East Laurens took its time enjoying the celebration in the hallway before eventually moving to the locker room, packing up and heading for the bus.

But Coach Lowther's mind went straight back to business as soon as the interviews and photo ops were complete.

The scouting work on Elbert County (22-8, 7-5 region 8-High A) would begin almost as soon as they pulled back into the East Laurens High School parking lot later that night.

"We've still got work to

do," Coach Lowther said. "I'm fixing to go request film when I get in the gym."

Classifieds

Employment

SANITATION SUPERINTENDENT
The City of Dublin is accepting applications for a Sanitation Superintendent. The candidate will perform responsible supervisory and administrative work in planning and directing refuse collection and disposal for the City's sanitation operations. Work involves planning, organizing, training, and supervising employees engaged in refuse collection, hauling and disposal. Responsible for organizing work crews to prescribed schedules and assuring that all routes are covered adequately. Work involves the supervision of a number of crews who are engaged in laboring and equipment operation and entails extensive public contact, often under trying circumstances that require considerable tact and diplomacy. Work is performed under the general direction of the Public Works Director and is reviewed largely through conversation, inspection of operating records and evaluation of public comments. Applicants must have a valid Georgia commercial drivers license, high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and four (4) years of related work experience in supervising laboring crews and sanitation organizations and operations. Successful applicant must pass a drug screen. Salary range is from \$54,904.31 - \$85,101.69 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.

PART-TIME RANGER

The City of Dublin has an opening for a team member with a positive attitude and initiative. A part-time Ranger for the River-view Golf Course is needed. Patrols the golf course property; performs lining up, cleaning, gassing and storage of golf carts; and maintains the driving range, e.g., picking up balls, cleaning them and returning, along with baskets, to the Pro Shop. Serves as a public relations person on the course. Work is performed under the direction of the Golf Course Superintendent. Applicants must have a valid driver's license. The successful applicant must pass a drug screen. Starting salary is \$13.52 an hour. Applicants must be available to work on Saturday and Sunday. 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

For Rent/Lease

For Rent: 2 Bedroom House. Located on Nathaniel Drive in E. Dublin. \$1,500/month. \$1,500/deposit. 478-304-1386

For Rent: 3 Bedroom House in E. Dublin. \$950/month. \$900/deposit. No Pets. 478-304-1386

Houses for Rent: 2 bedroom \$1,050/month and 2 bedroom \$725/month. No Animals; References required

O'NEAL

Continued from page 5

"He's always led by example. You couldn't have asked for any harder worker as a player," Falcons head coach Vic Thigpen said. "He's been working for three years now. Everything he's got, he deserves."

Southern Union State's athletic complex is housed on its main campus in Wadley, Alabama, though the school also has satellite locations in both Opelika and Valley — none of the three more than a half-hour drive over the Georgia line from LaGrange.

O'Neal first got connected with the school via social media during his process of sending off highlights, and Bison head coach Tucker Willard was one who replied with interest.

He hopes to springboard the opportunity into a chance to play a higher level of ball down the road.

"I'm looking forward to just getting out there and competing, and taking it on higher," O'Neal said, "doing my two years there and continue on."

What he's shown throughout high school, if he continues to develop it, should be highly recruitable.

And Thigpen believes it's not just demonstrated ability to hit the ball hard, and far, but some equally attractive speed, arm strength and physical upside that have the opportunity to open some more doors in the future.

"He's got the speed and the size," he said. "His best days are ahead of him."

RAIDERS

Continued from page 5

WL 4, Franklin Co. 3

Clark's 11 strikeouts, more courtesy of a fast-ball-breaking ball combo that caught some eyes around the facility, were the headline of a massive first win to open up the Friday, Feb. 27 portion of the GDC event.

He also walked four, but held Franklin County to only three hits in a complete-game effort, nailing down the win after a tying and go-ahead run hit the board for the Raiders on the RBIs of Pollock and Cardwell in the bottom of the sixth.

Clark walked the lead-off man, but came back to get the next looking on strikes, then popped out and grounded out the next

two for the final outs.

Alexander 11, WL 4

The Douglasville-based Cougars hit up a storm... piling up 17 knocks against two different West Laurens hurlers on the morning side of Saturday's twin bill.

The Raiders had a healthy 10 themselves, and scored the game's first three runs, but just couldn't keep up after the floodgates opened in the third inning. They countered with only one as Alexander rattled off its entire total (five runs unearned) in the last five, with Matthew Westbrook and Ethan Williams coming up with three hits apiece.

WL 9, Heard Co. 6

The Raiders out-hit the Braves 9-5 in their Satur-

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



GARFIELD



OVERBOARD



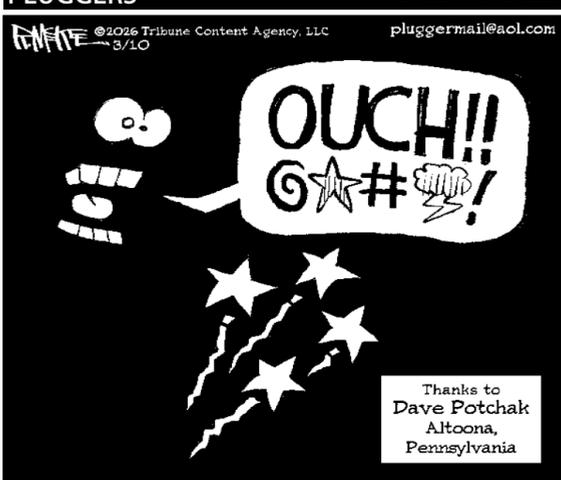
DEFLOCKED



ZIGGY



PLUGGERS



A pluggger won't find a dropped nail or tack until he steps on it at night in his bare feet.

Observer thinks woman is lying about medical condition!

DEAR ABBY: I have an acquaintance, "Tina," who I believe is fraudulently using her GoFundMe fundraising webpage. A close friend of hers set it up a few years ago to assist with medical bills related to a rare form of cancer that will never fully go away. When the page began, Tina was soliciting donations on Facebook and sending text messages to remind everyone to donate. Later on, when she and her husband went out of town for surgery, they posted about it as if it were a vacation.

Recently, she has had some legal bills for an unrelated matter, and a year after her last medical donation, she received a hefty donation that matched the amount of her legal bills. I suspect the person who donated the money was duped into believing Tina had another large medical bill, but she used that donation for her legal expenses.

On top of this, Tina has opened a new fundraising page with a sob story about her cancer returning and being hospitalized about a week before that request. Abby, I know full well Tina was healthy as an ox at the time, was not in the hospital and probably set this up to create a smokescreen to protect her malicious intentions. Now I keep wondering if I should report it, or if I'm better off minding



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

my own business. -- NOT ADDING UP IN FLORIDA

DEAR NOT ADDING UP: If you sincerely think Tina has been abusing her GoFundMe page, report it. The process is not difficult. There is a notification button at the bottom of the page that can be pushed to alert its "Fraud Squad" that something shady might be going on.

DEAR ABBY: I've been married to the same man for nearly 50 years. We raised a sweet family, had successful careers and never strayed from each other. For the last 20-plus years, I've had little or no desire for sex. I understand it medically as well as emotionally, but Hubby doesn't get it at all. He thinks we should be like we were back

in the '70s and '80s. I'm happy for senior couples who engage in healthy sexual relationships. I am just no longer into it and, honestly, also not interested in taking medication to "enhance" me. What's wrong with a man taking something to "unenforce" himself? I know the biblical duty God gave for procreation, hence 100-year-old men fathering children with young women. The balance has never been BALANCED.

Yes, I had a hysterectomy 20 years ago. After that, I lost all interest, yet Hubby still had needs. Some are met; many are not. It is now a BIG issue. I'd like to sail peacefully through the next 10 years, if I have that long. I'd like him to find happiness, too. Is it crazy to divorce over such an age-old need for a man? -- HAPPY THIS WAY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR HAPPY: "Castrating" your husband is not the answer. If you two can agree on an arrangement that will benefit both of you, it would be emotionally and financially far less disruptive than a divorce.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ K 3 2 ♠ Q J 10 7 ♠ 6 5 3 2 ♠ 7

As dealer, what call would you make?
A - This looks like a weak two-bid to us. Open 2H. In the unlikely event you become dummy, put this hand down proudly.

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ K Q 9 7 ♠ A 9 7 ♠ K Q 10 6 ♠ 9 6

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 1♠ Pass

What call would you make?
A - This hand is worth 15-16 points in support of spades. Bid 3S.

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ A J 8 ♠ 4 ♠ 7 6 3 ♠ A Q 10 9 7 5

Right-hand opponent opens 3H. What call would you make?
A - Overcall at the four level with only 11 points? With this suit, you bet! Bid 4C.

Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ 8 7 ♠ A K 7 5 ♠ 5 4 ♠ A K 8 6 4

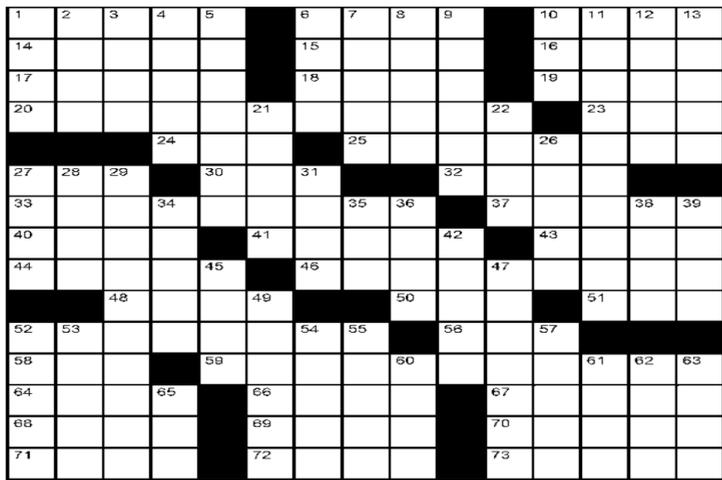
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 1♣ Pass

What call would you make?
A - Most experts today play this sequence as non-forcing. Discuss with partner whether or not this sequence is forcing. Pass if it isn't and bid 2S if it is.

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' responses sent in care of this newspaper or to Tribune Content Agency, I.L.C., 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, TX 75001.)

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- 1 Macaroni or rotini
 - 6 Beauty store chain
 - 10 Inquires
 - 14 Constellation with a belt
 - 15 Wrapped Indian garment
 - 16 ___ & Chandon
 - 17 Incite to act: 2 wds.
 - 18 Incite to action
 - 19 Happy cat's sound
 - 20 Ham-and-turkey sandwich: 2 wds.
 - 23 Three: Prefix
 - 24 "Told ya!"
 - 25 "We Built This City" band
 - 27 "News Hour" network
 - 30 Ad-___ (wing it)
 - 32 Openly stare
 - 33 Salon's aerosol product
 - 37 Sierra ___ (African country)
 - 40 Thin coin
 - 41 Epic tales
 - 43 Field of study
 - 44 Sloppy snow
 - 46 Wizards
 - 48 Falsehoods
 - 50 TV room
 - 51 To the rear, nautically
 - 52 Bank offices
 - 56 Capture
 - 58 Mob informant
 - 59 Fitness items for swinging
 - 64 Death notice
 - 66 Vientiane's land
 - 67 Andes animal
 - 68 Symphony woodwind
 - 69 Singer McCann
 - 70 Walter ___ Disney
 - 71 Dig for ore
 - 72 Narrow cut
 - 73 Second chances
- DOWN**
- 1 Maya Angelou work
 - 2 Mythical ship
 - 3 The "S" in ASL
 - 4 Molar, e.g.
 - 5 Toughens, as steel
 - 6 Cold war foe: Abbr.
 - 7 ___ lazuli
 - 8 Have faith in
 - 9 Apple tracking device
 - 10 Sound booster
 - 11 Seoul's country: 2 wds.
 - 12 Gymnast Strug
 - 13 Get naked
 - 21 ___ and dip
 - 22 Taken by mouth
 - 26 Curse
 - 27 Advanced degrees: Abbr.
 - 28 Scoop out water
 - 29 Imitative representation
 - 31 Some underwear
 - 34 Pine secretion
 - 35 In the past
 - 36 Lawn
 - 38 Foam dart maker
 - 39 Toward sunrise
 - 42 Part of a play
 - 45 "What the ___?"
 - 47 Codependent type
 - 49 Tacos' outsides
 - 52 Sweeping tool
 - 53 Synagogue leader
 - 54 Amazon's business
 - 55 Vodka brand
 - 57 ___ of the ball
 - 60 Future JD's exam: Abbr.
 - 61 ___ to rest
 - 62 "Hahaha!": Abbr.
 - 63 Impertinence
 - 65 Golf-ball support



Created by Stella Zawistowski 10/9/25

OFFERS ACTS PRO
PARCEL THAIRAW
ETOILE TILE INN
REGGIE JACKSON
ADS STU STICKS
CHOP DIEGO TEA
RUBY EVE BOLT
EMS STINT ANTS
PATINA STEED
ENAMEL LAX DAM
COTTAGE CHEESE
GELTIDE HALLOW
AYE ENDE ELAINE
YES DESK SENSED

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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!

	1	3	4					
	2	4		1	9		8	
				2	6			
	3	4			6	2		
1			6	7				4
6	4			8	9	1	3	
						7		
		8		3	7		4	
4	7		5	6			8	

Level: Beginner

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!

9	8	3	2	9	7	4	7	4
5	9	8	1	3	7	2	4	6
6	4	7	8	9	4	7	4	6
6	4	7	2	2	8	8	1	9
1	5	2	6	7	3	8	9	4
8	3	9	4	5	1	6	2	7
7	8	5	9	2	6	4	1	3
3	2	4	7	1	5	9	6	8
9	1	6	3	4	8	5	7	2

ANSWER:



KIDS' CORNER

Vol. 002 | A fun page for kids from The Courier Herald

Brought to you by Dublin-Laurens County
Dublin-Laurens County
**CHAMBER
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Class of the week: Mrs. Watson's 2nd graders at East Laurens Primary

Herald the Hound made his first stop visiting students around Dublin-Laurens County, dropping in to see students at Mrs. Kristin Watson's second grade class at East Laurens Primary School. The students were read a story by Courier Herald staff member Kyle Dominy, who shared one of his favorite books, "Stuck" by Oliver Jeffers, before learning about the newspaper and how it serves the community. The kids asked great questions and are excited to be featured in this week's Kids' Corner /**CONNIE ADAMS**



Reading the newspaper, and books too, helps improve language skills and general knowledge. Mrs. Watson's class proved to be great readers.



Engaging in a puzzle also helps boost brain function, and Mrs. Watson's second graders made short work of last week's games.

Fun Fact

The comet **31/ATLAS** is traveling through our solar system at a staggering 130,000 miles per hour, which is the highest velocity ever recorded for a solar system visitor. The gravitational "slingshot" effect (from stars and nebulae the comet passes) gives it added momentum, increasing its speed. No one knows where it has come from.

Sources: science.nasa.gov
www.scientificamerican.com

Puzzles4Kids by Helene Hovanec

WORD FUN

Study the two words on each line to find the ONE letter in the left column that is NOT in the word in the right column. Write the extra letter on the blank space. Then read DOWN to answer this riddle:

WHAT KIND OF SPIDER DO YOU SEE ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY?

DIPPER	___	PRIDE	PEARLS	___	SPARE
SATURN	___	RUNTS	VIDEOS	___	DIVES
TASTED	___	STATE	SONNET	___	NOTES
HOWLED	___	WHOLE	DAGGER	___	GRADE
FAIRLY	___	FRAIL	ALERTS	___	RATES
			ARCHIE	___	CHAIR
			SINGLE	___	LINES
			STARCH	___	CHART

MINI SUDOKU

		2		5
		5	2	
	5			3
				4
5				3
1	3			2

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS	1	6	2	4	3	5
	5	4	3	1	6	2
	3	2	6	5	1	4
	2	5	1	3	4	6
	4	1	5	6	2	3
	6	3	4	2	5	1

Puzzles4Kids ANSWER	P	R	D	L	L	L	L
	A	A	D	O	O	O	O
	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
	G	G	G	G	G	G	G



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Joe Wos

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Teachers, do you want us to visit your classroom next? Students, do you have artwork, poems or stories you want to submit for possible publication? Email us at read@courierheraldtoday.com.