

Dublin school board OKs new salary scale

Officials: New plan will save \$500,000 and help struggling district balance its budget in fiscal year 2027

By **RODNEY MANLEY**
Staff Reporter

The Dublin City Board of Education adopted revised pay scales Monday night that officials say will give the cash-strapped district a balanced budget for fiscal year 2027.

The board also previewed a proposed \$38 million budget that reflects a huge reduction in spending — about \$10 million — from last year, with about \$25 million earmarked for salaries. Under the plan, the system would end the FY27 with a \$664,000 surplus.

Job and salary cuts are already paying off. Board member Jeff Davis noted that in October 2025, the school system was paying almost \$2.8 million each month for salaries, but lowered that to \$2.3 million when positions were eliminated. Projecting that out 12 months, Davis said, the system will save about \$9.6 million annually.

"That's how far out of whack we were," Davis said.

The board approved a new salary schedule that adopts the state's pay scale, and it also approved a supplement schedule that reduces pay and extra days for leadership

positions.

"They were drastically reduced," Corbett said.

The highest supplement — for the head football coach position — now maxes out at \$15,000 and additional days at 20. The board also reduced 240-day employees to 230 days. However, the plan now includes no furlough days for teachers.

A salary schedule approved last month included eight reduction, or furlough, days for teachers and staff, which in part led state officials to pull back extra help it had been providing the district.

The new budget also earmarks \$3.3 million toward the district's debt to the State Health Benefit Plan. The school system's financial crisis first surfaced last August after the Georgia Department of Community Health alerted state education officials that Dublin City did not pay the health plan for the entirety of FY 2025 and also owed more than \$5 million in past-due payments. Officials also found the district also owed \$780,512 withheld from employees' pay but not sent to the Department of Community Health.

State education officials later

found other "operational deficiencies" that included the board not having completed an audit since 2021 and a projected \$13.4 million deficit by June 30. Audits have since been completed for 2022 and 2023, showing a pattern of overspending — and delaying the insurance payments.

A special audit requested by local lawmakers confirmed the root causes of the crisis — overhiring and overpaying employees, wasteful spending and lax oversight —

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
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'It is a mission'

Stepping Stone here to help abused children

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

The blue pinwheels spin quickly in the breeze. Though they look nice, there is a deeper reminder that in April they represent Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Stepping Stone Child Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center uses the pinwheels every April to bring awareness about the services provided by the agency.

"This also lets people know about the experience of survivors in our community and ways people can build community around them and help them heal," said Emily Brookshire, executive director at Stepping Stone. "We let people know about the services that are being done in the community to prevent these crimes as well as make sure the survivors have what they need to survive."

It began with the annual pinwheel gardens, a symbol of the healing and joy that all children should experience. These gardens are done throughout town and can be seen in various locations like the Market on Madison and TLC CASA.

"People can purchase their own pinwheel garden and put them up at their businesses or homes just to show their local support," Brookshire said. "This way people can see the town painted blue. As survivors are going about their lives, they can see the support from those around town. It is kind of special."

People can purchase the pinwheels by calling (478) 275-9010.

The fourth annual "Step in Our Shoes - Community Speak Out," will be held at 5:30 p.m. at Stepping Stone, 382 Woodland Trails Road. This is an open microphone event held on April 16.



Blue pinwheels are on display on the other side of the Market on Madison, bringing awareness to Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness Month/PAYTON TOWNS III

"Survivors, family members and friends can gather and people will share their testimony about child abuse or sexual assault and their healing journey," Brookshire said. "It's a great way for people to make connections with one another and realize that they are not alone in these experiences."

Just sharing and finding support can bring a lot of healing.

"What someone else has done to you should not bring shame onto you," Brookshire said. "A lot of our speakers are able to share that. Some of these people are not even our clients. This is for anyone who can come and share their journey and it may be the first time they have ever done that. It is really special. Feeling not so alone brings healing."

The other event for April is the Child Abuse Prevention Luncheon, held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 21 at The Colemoor Estate, 1827 Ga. Highway 19 South. This event is done in partnership of the Dublin Exchange Club and will feature a survivor speaker.

"I think she's going to be fabulous," Brookshire said. "People are always impacted by the survivor speaker."

Services at the Stepping Stone Dublin's office includes the following: fo-



Art displayed on the Stepping Stone walls is used to brighten the days of their young clients/PAYTON TOWNS III

rensic interviews; forensic medical examination (sexual and physical abuse); crisis line services; personal and legal advocacy for victims; counseling; psychosexual evaluations; support groups; parent education courses; multi-disciplinary team review of cases; and young scholar tutoring project.

The center assists abused children, adults and families while providing evaluation in a safe and caring environment. Stepping Stone provides victim advocacy, a 24/7 crisis hotline (478-595-8339), support services, training for

professionals, educational courses and civic organization presentations.

From March of 2025 to March of 2026, Stepping Stone did approximately 200 forensic interviews, around 65 forensic medical exams and 855 therapy services.

"We have been busy," Brookshire said. "There is a lot done that the community does not know about that goes on and happens for free."

Stepping Stone covers Laurens, Johnson, Twiggs, Treutlen, Bleckley, Treutlen, Wheeler, Telfair, Dodge and Pulaski coun-

ties.

"We are serving between 200 to 250 new clients annually," Brookshire said. "This is just children. I have seen an uptick of number cases that have finally been taken to trial or completed outside of a trial. People are finally getting the justice that they deserve."

She credits Dublin Circuit District Attorney Harold McLendon and Chief Assistant DA Kelly Weathers and their staff for this success.

STEPPING STONE
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Officials: Business fire was intentional

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

The fire that totaled a Dublin business was "intentionally set," investigators say.

Dublin Fire Chief Matthew Cutler said Wednesday that the blaze at the Middle Georgia Truck Parts, 2110 Academy Ave. Ext., has been ruled arson. The fire started around 12:18 a.m. Saturday, April 11.

DFD and the State Fire Marshal's Office continues to investigate the incident, but had seen enough evidence to suggest that it was deliberately set, he added.

Those who have information about this fire are encouraged to contact the tip line at 1-800-282-5804 where the Georgia Arson Control is offering a reward for any information that leads to the arrest and prosecution of this incident.

"People can give anonymous tips," Cutler said.

They may also contact him at (478) 277-5032 or the Dublin Police Department at (478) 277-5023.

No one was in the building when firefighters arrived and saw heavy smoke and flames. They set up the ladder truck because the fire had already broken through the roof.

Cutler said the building has been a lot of different businesses throughout the years. Many people remember the New Holland Tractor plant there.

Cutler was informed that the business was undergoing renovations.

"Once our local investigators were able to get in there and start its investigation, it was clear that something happened there that caused that fire that was not accidental in nature," the chief said.

The state fire marshal's office was notified, and evidence was gathered and photos made of the scene. The Laurens County Fire Department, Laurens County EMS and local law enforcement also assisted at the scene.

Cutler wanted the public to be aware that local residents recently received a monetary reward for a successful conviction of two fire cases in the area.

"The information received, no matter how small they think it may be, is helpful," he said.



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Green Acres Garden Club announces 'Garden Crawl' tour

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

The Green Acres Garden Club will feature their Garden Crawl through four different homes in Dublin and Hillcrest Elementary School.

Each home will offer unique opportunities to admire the creative garden landscapes displayed in historical as

well as newer constructed houses.

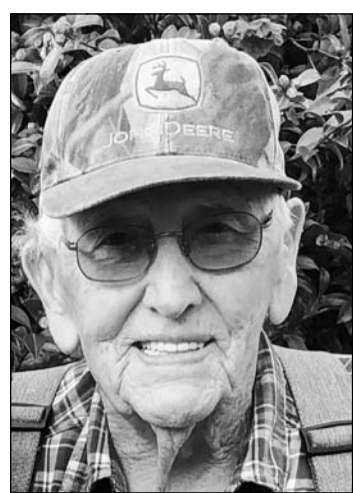
The tours will include the houses of Lee Ann and Billy Nash, Sherri and Dan McLeod, Kim and William Barham, Suzanne and Michael Dukes and Hillcrest Elementary School.

Tickets are \$20 and can be bought at Colleen's China and Collectibles and Merle Norman. Each member of

the garden club also will have tickets available.

All proceeds help sponsor college scholarships, the junior garden club at Hillcrest Elementary School and community beautification projects such as the Laurens County Courthouse and Lake Leisure behind the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center.

OBITUARIES



Ronald Harrington

Ronald Harrington, 92, of Dublin, Georgia, passed away on April 10, 2026, in Dublin, Georgia.

Born on Sept. 27, 1933, in Dublin, Georgia, Ronald lived a long and meaningful life marked by devotion to his family, service to his country, hard work and a deep appreciation for the simple joys that made life rich. He was the son of the late Ernest Harrington and Willie Belle Rawlins Harrington. He was also preceded in death by his beloved wife, Martha Jones Harrington, whose memory remained close to his heart throughout his life.

Ronald was a graduate of Cedar Grove High School and proudly served his country as a communications officer with the United States Marine Corps under Lt. General Chesty Puller. His sense of duty, discipline, and quiet strength were evident in all that he did. He retired from the Carl Vinson Veterans Administration as Chief of Office Operations. He was also a member of Jefferson Street Baptist Church.

A hardworking and respected member of his community, Ronald was the retired co-owner of Cedar Grove Market and a co-founder of AmiTy Propane. Through his work and business partnerships, he built lasting relationships and earned the respect of those who knew him. He approached his responsibilities with integrity and dedication, and he took pride in providing for his family and contributing to the community he called home.

Ronald was a devoted father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He is survived by his daughter, Ronda Hampton and her husband Butch and his son, Ron Harrington and his wife Sonya. He also leaves behind his grandchildren, April Hampton and Tony DeAnda, Jennifer Castorri and Christian, Ami Mack and Reggie, and Ty Harrington. His legacy continues through his great-grandchildren, Emma Castorri, Summer Castorri, Crew Castorri, Rad Castorri, Fox Castorri, and Eden Mack and his faithful companion and best friend, Bella. He cherished his family deeply and took great joy in their lives and accomplishments.

Those who knew Ronald will remember him as a kind and steady man with a warm presence and a strong sense of loyalty. He was an avid dirt track racing fan and enjoyed listening to music, pastimes that brought him happiness and reflected his appreciation for life's enduring pleasures. Whether spending time with family, following the races, or enjoying a favorite song, he found contentment in the moments that mattered most.

Graveside services were held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at Dublin Memorial Gardens with Mr. Butch Hampton officiating. Ronald's family will receive friends one hour prior to service time at the cemetery.

Tony DeAnda, Christian Castorri, Crew Castorri, Ron Harrington, Ty Harrington, and Reggie Mack will serve as pallbearers. Rad Castorri and Fox Castorri will serve as honorary escorts.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Lucky Dog Rescue Ranch 503 Adams Road Uvalda, GA 30473 or Marine Corps Toys for Tots.

The family extends a heartfelt thank you to his loyal caretakers, Sherrie Sellers and Julie Poole as well as to Georgia Hospice Care and Larsen Garrett.

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

Townsend Brothers Funeral Home has charge of the arrangements.



Ada Pearl Franklin Tanner

Ada Pearl Franklin Tanner was called home to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday, April 12, 2026.

Born Jan. 14, 1930, in Deepstep, Georgia, she was the daughter of James Wade (J.W.) and Celia Hattaway Franklin, whom she loved very much. She grew up in the community of Harrison, Georgia alongside her best friend and sister, Edna, and her brother, Willie, whom she adored. The value of hard work, integrity, determination and faith that she learned during her early years carried her throughout the rest of her life. Pearl was baptized at Harrison Baptist Church and was a graduate of Harrison High School where she played basketball.

In the Spring of 1947 while Pearl was working with her father to rebuild a tractor motor, she met her future husband, U.S. Marine, Louis Harrison Tanner, who had just returned home from bravely fighting in World War II. Charmed by her grit and grace, they were married three months later on July 6, 1947. Together they lived on Tanner Hill in Wrightsville, Georgia and raised one daughter and three sons. Pearl loved farming and dairy farming where she worked side by side with her loving husband of 54 years. She later worked as a master seamstress and retired from Apparel Craft in Wrightsville. She served as president of the Wrightsville American Legion Ladies Auxiliary Club and was a lifelong member and faithful servant of Union Hill Baptist church.

Her family was her pride and joy. Pearl was a devoted and loving wife and mother. She cherished her role as "MaMa" to her 10 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 7 great-great grandchildren. In her 79 years living on Tanner Hill, she loved reading, gardening, watching her favorite baseball team, the Atlanta Braves, and cooking or baking for her friends and family. She especially found joy in making gifts that displayed her artistry in sewing, crocheting, and needlework, which she crafted intentionally for those closest to her.

Pearl has left a beautiful legacy of unwavering faith, resilient strength and determination. It was because of her daily walk and love for the Lord that her family will be blessed for generations to come.

She is survived by her four children: Louis Harrison Tanner II (Phyllis), Cecilia Jewel Tanner Flanders (late Ken Flanders), James Eugene Tanner (Susan), and Timothy Franklin Tanner (Bonnie), all of Wrightsville; and many beloved nieces and nephews and cousins.

Survivors also include

10 grandchildren: Shannon Tanner Blizzard (Donald) of Wrightsville; Louis Tanner III (Jennifer) of Grey, GA; Teddy Tanner (Jessie) of Macon, GA; Micheal Falk (Kristen) of Lawrenceville, GA; Jennifer Flanders Thigpen (Scott) of Newnan, GA; Jim Tanner (Krystal) of Wrightsville; Will Tanner (Nan) of Wrightsville; Wyn-die Tanner Oliver (Staten) of Shreveport, LA; Tift Tanner (Carmen) of Wrightsville, and Gina Tyson (Paul) of Scott, GA.

Great-Grandchildren (25) are: Hallie Blizzard Fenton (Jordan), Max Blizzard (Kaylee), Katie Tanner, Kelly Tanner, Lois Tanner, Shepherd Tanner, Gus Tanner, Houston Tanner, Lil' Teddy Tanner, Heidi Tanner, Sydney Falk, Grant Thigpen, Callie Thigpen, Caroline Thigpen, William Tanner, Harrison Tanner, Carter Tanner, Brianna Tanner, Sara Kate Tanner, Abigail Oliver, Cecilia Oliver, Baylor Tanner, Tanner Sheffield, Kristen Ritchey (Jordan), Kaley Astin (Boyd). Great-Great Grandchildren (7) are: Joey Fenton, Walker Ritchey, Everett Ritchey, Jordie Ritchey, Saylor Lindsey, Grant Lindsey, and Hadley Lindsey.

She was preceded in death by her parents James Wade and Celia Hattaway Franklin; her husband, Louis Harrison Tanner, Sr; her siblings, Edna Franklin Cullens and Willie James Franklin.

The family wishes to express their gratitude to Nightingales and Emmanuel County Nursing Home Staff and special thank you to Shannon Blizzard, Carmen Tanner, Dot Brantley and Mae Taylor.

Visitation will be held Wednesday, April 15, from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Stanley Funeral Home in Wrightsville. The funeral will be Thursday, April 16, at 2 p.m. at Union Hill Baptist Church in Wrightsville.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Union Hill Baptist Church, 1241 Gumlog Rd, Wrightsville, GA, 31096 or to Georgia Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, 9420 Blackshear Hwy SE, Baxley, GA 31513.

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



Darryl Godfrey

Celebration of life services for Mr. Darryl Godfrey will be held Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 1 p.m. Location: Byrd Hill Baptist Church 2430 Old Hawkinsville Road - Dudley. Pastor Warren Harris will serve as eulogist. Interment will follow at New Vision Baptist Church Cemetery - Dudley.

Darryl Godfrey was born Aug. 18, 1963, to the late Carlton and Georgia Mae Godfrey. He was a graduate of West Laurens High School.

Darryl was known to many as "G-Ball," he loved spending time with his family and friends while laughing and joking. One thing about him is that he never forgot family members' birthdays and you could always count

on a phone call from Darryl. He was preceded in death by his parents, Carlton and Georgia Mae Godfrey; and one brother, Tommy Lee Wiggins.

He leaves to cherish his memories his siblings, Bernice O'Neal, Carlton (Bernice) Godfrey, Walter Godfrey, Louise Godfrey, Rickey Godfrey, Danny Wiggins, Shelly Ann Mitchell, Dorothy Wiggins, Glenda Watkins, and the love of his life Ms. April Smith; aunts, Mary Knight, Essie Knight and Lavern Knight; uncle, James Knight and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives.

Public viewing will be held Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at the funeral home from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Serenity Funeral Home & Cremation Services - Dublin has charge of arrangements.



Tony Fulford

Funeral services for Tony Fulford, 62, will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 15, 2026, in the Chan Stanley Memorial Chapel with Rev. Chuck Simpson officiating. Burial will follow in Mt. Olive Church of the Nazarene Cemetery.

Mr. Fulford was born on July 30, 1963, in Macon, Georgia. He was the owner and operator of Fulford Roofing. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bill and Bernice Johnson Fulford; two sisters, Patsy Fulford and Bibbie Brooks, brother, Billy Fulford, and son, Jason Fulford. Mr. Fulford passed away on Sunday, April 12, 2026.

He is survived by his wife, Lou Fulford; son, Derack (Victoria) Fulford; sister, Peggy (Darvin) Williamson; brother-in-law, Donald Barwick; grandchildren, Anthony William Fulford, Kamber Grace Fulford, Jayden Renaye Fulford, Tyler Spigner, Caleb Spigner, Trevor Spigner, Colby Bailey, and Chandler Mullis; great-grandchildren, Colton Spigner and River Spigner; nieces and nephews, Melody (Doug) Truett, Allen (Beth) Williamson and Tyler (Ashley) Williamson; and so many other extended family members.

Pallbearers will Derack Fulford, Tyler Spigner, Colby Bailey and John Griffin.

The family received friends from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 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.



Sylvester Fielding

Mr. Sylvester Fielding, husband of Mrs. Della T. Fielding and resident of 907 Henderson Avenue, departed this life, April 14, 2026 in Fairview Park Hospital. Final rites are incomplete at this time, but will be announced later.

Arrangement entrusted to Wyche's Funeral Home. www.wychesfuneralhomeinc.com.

Democrat pushes abortion issue as he trails in polls

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A Georgia Democrat aiming to win the primary race for governor fired a broadside against a competitor Monday because of his previous support for a ban on abortion, one of the most contentious topics of the era and a galvanizing issue for many female voters.

Jason Esteves, who resigned from his state Senate seat in Atlanta last year to run for governor, said in an online event with reporters that if elected governor he would work to repeal Georgia's 2019 law banning abortion once fetal cardiac activity is detected, typically six weeks into a pregnancy.

The law penalizes doctors who disobey, leading to cases in which pregnant women were refused treatment.

"Republicans have made it less safe for people to have babies," Esteves said.

He did not say the name of one of his opponents in the primary, Geoff Duncan, who was a Republican and the Georgia lieutenant governor when that law passed.

Esteves, instead, let his former colleague in the Senate, Minority Whip Kim Jackson, D-Stone Mountain, target "Republicans like Duncan," who "passed Georgia's horrific abortion ban, which has led to the deaths of black women."

The sharpest attack came from Shanette Williams, whose daughter Amber Nicole Thurman, died after doctors, hesitant about the new law, delayed removing remnants of her fetus after she self-aborted with pills.

"The only thing I see when we talk about Geoff Duncan is him standing behind the governor of the state of Georgia, Governor Brian Kemp, as he signs the bill into law. I see Geoff Duncan smiling and clapping as if this was the right thing to do," Williams said. "How is it that you can run for governor after you were a part of murdering my child?"

Duncan said in a statement that he had reversed his views on abortion, saying part of his path of switching to the Democratic party "was understanding the devastating situations that women experience and doing the work to learn as much as I can to make it right. I was wrong to believe a room full of legislators knew more than millions of women."

He said that as governor he would try to overturn the abortion ban and issue an executive order clarifying that "doctors can practice medicine without fear

of persecution."

Although Duncan's primary opponents might want to disown him as a Democrat, some in the party have embraced him.

Rep. Michelle Au, D-Johns Creek, has publicly backed Duncan's campaign, saying Republicans privately admit to her that the abortion ban was a mistake but refuse to say it publicly.

To reverse the ban, a Democrat must win the governor's mansion, she said in a social media post Friday.

"Among my top priorities is repealing Georgia's six week abortion ban and finally expanding Medicaid in this state," wrote Au, a medical doctor. "We can't do any of that if we don't win. That's why I'm supporting Geoff."

Esteves had raised more campaign funding than any of the other Democrats in the race as of the last reporting period in February. He was just ahead of former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. He brought in double what Duncan did and three times as much as Michael Thurmond, a former DeKalb County CEO and school superintendent who won statewide races for labor commissioner three times starting in the late 1990s.

Yet Esteves has been trailing them in independent polls. He was so far back in a recent one, at 3.7%, that 11 Alive excluded him from a live debate scheduled for Wednesday among those other three.

Bottoms had a more than 20 percentage point lead over Duncan in the independent Emerson College Poll, and Duncan was a bit ahead of Thurmond.

The Esteves campaign pushed back, pointing to a poll last month, a few weeks after the independent one used by 11 Alive, that showed Esteves moving to second place with 14% but still behind Bottoms at 32%. It was paid for by a Democrat for Secretary of State. An Esteves campaign spokeswoman said she did not know why that candidate, Penny Brown Reynolds, paid for a gubernatorial poll. Before those two polls, a University of Georgia poll last fall had Esteves in fourth place with 3%.

Still, Esteves chose to target Duncan rather than Bottoms.

It was not the first time. During a televised gubernatorial forum at a Savannah church in January, Esteves criticized Duncan for his past support for the abortion ban.

Tharon Johnson, a Democratic strategist, said Esteves probably sees this line of attack as a way to boost his own name recognition at Duncan's expense.

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The et cetera chronicles - vol. 130

TALKING THROUGH OUR NOSES - Let's face it. Some people in the South talk through their noses. When the Town of Dublin was first laid out in the years from 1812 to 1820, the streets were named for heroes of the American Revolution and the War of 1812. There was Jackson (Andrew), Jefferson (Thomas), and Washington (George) streets. There is one major exception. In the second block west of the courthouse is a street originally named Lawrence. The southern end is still Lawrence. The northern end is partly Lawrence and Roosevelt (Franklin). The name of Lawrence most likely comes from a mispronunciation of Laurens, as in Laurens County. The county was named for Col. John Laurens of South Carolina. Col. Laurens was one of George Washington's most valuable aides, who worked closely with Benjamin Franklin and the French to bring a quick end to the Revolutionary War. Somewhere during the 1800s, "Laurens" Street became "Lawrence" Street. See what happens when you talk through your nose.

TAKE THIS YOU DAMNED SNAKES! - Mrs. James Wyatt, an old lady, lived four miles north of Dublin. Unfortunately, Mrs. Wyatt's yard was home to a menacing den of deadly moccasins. She didn't like the poisonous pit vipers. In fact, she hated them. So she grabbed a gun and a big stick and began a short war. At the end of the week, Mrs. Wyatt had slaughtered 21 of the terrifying creatures. Savannah Morning News, Aug. 7, 1895.

A MONUMENTAL MASS OF MOURNERS - They came by the thousands to mourn the remarkable life of Whitford S. Ramsay. He was their father, their friend, their past, their principal and teacher, their superintendent and their colonel. Ramsay had served Baptist churches in Dub-

lin for almost 40 years. Col. Ramsay led the first regiment to form in the early years of the Civil War. He created the current-day Laurens County School system. There were few people in the county who did not know or admire Rev. Ramsay. The funeral was held at the First Baptist Church, then a small wooden structure on the corner of North Church Street and Bellevue Avenue, on the present site of the church. Attendees estimated that 3,000 or more persons swarmed the block to pay their respects to the most beloved person of Laurens County in the 19th Century. Savannah Morning News, March 20, 1900. Nearly 2000 mourners gathered at the funeral of Col. C.S. Guyton, who died in 1884. Savannah Morning News, Aug. 21, 1884.

LONG LIVERS - It seems that most of the newspaper articles carrying stories of people living to be more than 100 years old in the 19th Century are about former slaves. This one is no exception. The local newspaper editor reported that Emily Linder was on the far side of 120 years of age and was still in relatively good health. Somewhere else in the county, there lived a white man called Patton Fullwood. Fullwood died in May of 1896. While on his deathbed, Fullwood told Rev. A.W. Locke that he was 130 years old. Savannah Morning News, May 28, 1896.

THIRTEEN DECADES AND COUNTING - Rachel Darley was a fixture in her community in the southeastern portion of Laurens County. Mrs. Darley came to town in mid-April 1896. Dublin wasn't created until Ms. Rachel was 36 years of age. She brought her daughter, who was seventy-eight. Turpentine dealer, W.C. Powell, had written proof of her advanced age. Savannah Morning News, April 24, 1896.



PIECES OF OUR PAST

By **SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.**

A BRIDGE TO EVERYWHERE - It took almost 85 years to accomplish. Finally, on July 22, 1891, a steel and concrete bridge was opened over the Oconee River at Dublin. After several failures because of swift water and election defeats, Judge John Duncan's dream was realized twelve days before his death. The monumental event was attended by several thousand persons. Before that day, people had to swim, wade or ferry across the river. It was the switch that ignited the meteoric rise of Dublin as a commercial center of Middle Georgia and the state as a whole. In a magnificent site, an estimated three thousand people crossed the bridge to the other side and back. Savannah Morning News, July 25, 1891.

FIRST FEDERAL FEMALES - Mrs. Guy Cochran and Mrs. Lloyd Alexander were the first women to serve on a Federal jury in Dublin. Macon Telegraph, Sept. 27, 1954.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

By **JACK BAGLEY**
GTLN

April moves along at its usual pace, and we are getting deeper into spring. Ah, isn't it wonderful?

Yes, actually, it is.

I hope your April is going as well as it can possibly go, and that the rest of the year is even better for you!

How about some trivia? Got some fresh stuff right here!

Did you know ...

... it's not hazardous to live near a nuclear power plant? Scientists estimate that you get five times as much radiation from sitting in front of your television that you would get if you lived next door to a nuclear power station. (Sitting in front of the power station would provide better entertainment than television.)

... almost 88% of the world's population lives in the Northern Hemisphere? (Which makes me wonder if the other 12% know something we don't.)

... a feat exists which has never been accomplished by a Major League Baseball player? I refer to the home run cycle. You may be familiar with a player hitting for the cycle - a single, double, triple and home run in one game. It's been done 350 times in MLB history. A natural cycle, hitting those four in order, is much rarer, having only taken place 14 times. But the one that's never been done is the home run cycle - a solo homer, a two-run shot, a three-run shot, and a grand slam, all in the same game. In fact, it's only happened twice in professional baseball, both in the minor leagues. (Batter up!)

... the first collegiate all-female baseball team was fielded in 1866? It was at Vassar College, an all-women's school at the time. (If they were the first, who did they play?)

... the first commercial product manufactured in North America was exported in 1608? It was a glass bottle blown in the Jamestown settlement. (Did it come with a deposit?)

... good ideas don't always pay off? Take, for instance, the White Bicycle Plan set forth in the city of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1965. The idea was to provide free public bicycles for anyone to use going from place to place. Within just one month, most of the bikes had either been stolen or dumped into canals. (They expected something different?)

... one of Hitler's top advisors was part American? Baldur von Schirach (1907-1974) served the Third Reich as leader of the Hitler Youth and later as Gauleiter (party leader) of Vienna. Von Schirach's background was very strange for a German leader - his father was a dual German-American citizen and his mother was fully American. In fact, von Schirach was a descendant on his mother's side of Arthur Middleton (1742-1787), a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Born in Berlin, von Schirach did not learn German until he was five years old, English being his first language. He first fell into the orbit of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) in the mid-1920s. Hitler made him Reichs-

jugendführer (Reich Youth Leader) in 1931, placing him at the head of the Hitler Youth organization. After he was drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1939, he served as an officer for two years, winning the Iron Cross 2nd Class. Following service, von Schirach was named Gauleiter of Vienna and oversaw the deportation of Jews from the city for the remainder of the war. Tried at Nuremberg on charges of crimes against humanity following the conflict, he was sentenced to 20 years in Spandau prison, and served every day of his sentence.

... jurors have unrealistic expectations of modern forensic science? That's because of television programs like CSI and NCIS. The shows, which are built around forensic science, often use convoluted explanations and somewhat dodgy technology not currently available to wrap up the cases in an hour ... which does not happen in the real world. (Duh.)

... Russia has its own version of an American situation comedy? A spinoff of It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, the show is set in a Moscow bar named Philadelphia, and it's called "В Москве всегда солнечно" (It's Always Sunny in Moscow). (Well, maybe it is, I don't know.)

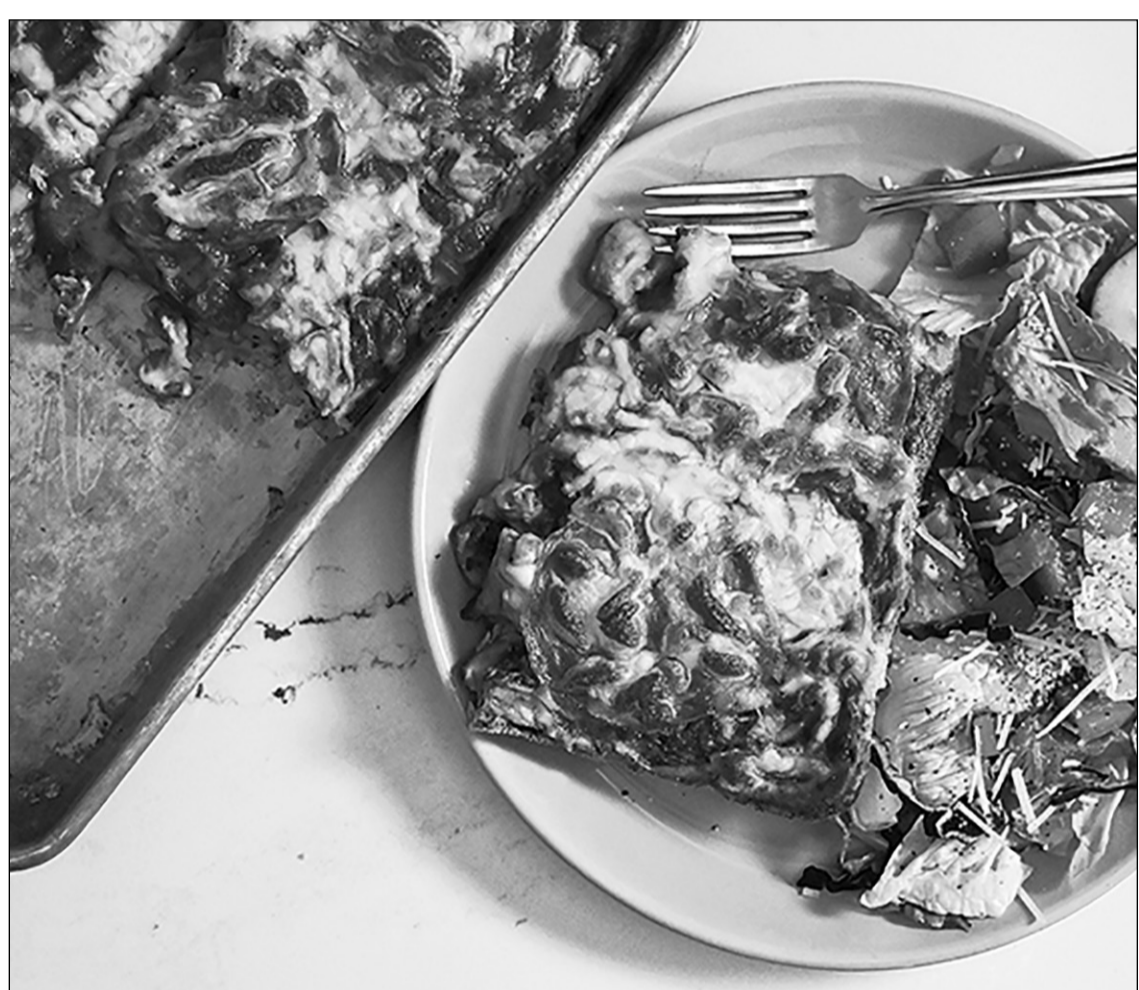
... the inventor of the motion picture camera is implicated in the disappearance of another inventor? Some of the earliest-ever motion picture scenes were filmed by Louis LePrince (1841-1890), a French artist who created and built his own movie camera. But LePrince mysteriously vanished in 1890, and credit for inventing the movie camera was claimed by Thomas Edison (1847-1931). Two years after LePrince's son Adolphe (1872-1901) appeared in a court case challenging Edison's claim, the younger LePrince was found dead. Modern historians give LePrince credit for taking the world's first motion picture footage. (Film at 11.)

... the longest average lifespan in the world can be found in a small European country? In the nation of Andorra, a tiny enclave between Spain and France, the average lifespan of the people is 83.5 years. (Ah, those lucky Andorrans!)

... two Olympic medalists shared their medals? In the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Japanese pole vaulters Shuhei Nishida (1910-1997) and Sueo Oe (1914-1941) tied for second place, but declined to compete against each other to break the tie. Olympic officials awarded Nishida the silver medal and Oe the bronze, but when the pair returned to Japan, they had their medals cut in half and joined the two parts together as "friendship" medals. (Now that's how you handle such things!)

... ice applied to the back of the neck may stop a nosebleed? If you find yourself with a nosebleed, and it goes on for more than 15 minutes, try applying an ice pack to the back of your neck. The cold constricts the blood vessels which lead into the head and may reduce or even stop the bleeding from your nose. (Worth a try, anyway.)

Now ... you know!



DIVA ON A DIME

Sheet pan pizza frittata: A fast, frugal dinner

By **PATTI DIAMOND**
King Features

Is it pizza for breakfast or breakfast for dinner? It's part frittata, part pizza and all quick weeknight cooking.

This is one of those meals that solves a lot of problems. It's ready in about 30 minutes and works just as well for brunch or lunch as it does for dinner. It's naturally gluten-free, lower in carbs and far less expensive than take-out. And if you happen to have leftovers, you're in luck. A slice tucked into a piece of bread or wrapped up with a handful of greens makes a terrific next-day lunch. It's even surprisingly good cold or at room temperature -- perfect for those moments when you need something quick and relatively healthy.

What I love most about this recipe is how flexible it is. You can use just about any vegetables you have on hand. Mushrooms, onions and bell peppers are a great starting point, but zucchini, spinach or tomatoes work beautifully too. This is where those little bits and pieces in the fridge come together and become dinner.

SHEET PAN PIZZA FRITTATA SUPREME

Yield: 4 to 6 Servings
Total Time: 30 minutes

- 12 large eggs
- 1/3 cup half and half, cream or whole milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning, divided
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, divided
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

- 8 ounces mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 cup diced yellow onion
- 1/2 cup diced bell pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 cup pizza sauce (store-bought or recipe below)
- 8 slices pepperoni
- 1 cup (4 ounces) mozzarella cheese, shredded

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Lightly coat a quarter sheet pan (or a 9x13-inch baking dish) with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, cream or milk, 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper until well combined. Set aside.

Warm the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, onion and bell pepper along with the remaining Italian seasoning, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are softened and lightly browned, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Spread the cooked vegetables evenly over the prepared pan. Pour the egg mixture over the top and place in the oven. Bake for 9 to 10 minutes, or until the eggs are mostly set.

Remove the pan from the oven and switch the oven to broil. Spoon the pizza sauce over the eggs, then scatter the pepperoni and mozzarella on top. Return to the oven and broil for about 2 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly and the eggs are fully set.

Serve this with a quick salad and maybe a slice of warm

crusty bread, and you've got a complete meal that feels a little special without requiring much effort at all.

PETITE PORTION PIZZA SAUCE

Yield: About 3/4 cup
Prep Time: 20 minutes

- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon sugar

Line a fine-mesh strainer with a coffee filter (a paper towel works in a pinch) and set it over a bowl. Pour in the tomato sauce and let it drain for about 15 minutes, or until noticeably thickened.

Transfer the thickened sauce to a small bowl. Stir in the garlic powder, Italian seasoning and sugar until well combined. Use immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

A baking pan, a dozen eggs and a few simple odds and ends -- that's all it takes to turn what you have on hand into something perfectly delicious.

Lifestyle expert Patti Diamond is the penny-pinching, party-planning, recipe developer and content creator of the website Divas On A Dime -- Where Frugal, Meets Fabulous! Visit Patti at www.divasonadime.com and join the conversation on Facebook at [DivasOnADimeDotCom](https://www.facebook.com/DivasOnADimeDotCom). Email Patti at divapatti@divasonadime.com

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OUR TAKE...



The "America, The Beautiful: Celebrating 250 Years" will be held at Theatre Dublin at 7 p.m. on May 3/SPECIAL PHOTO

We should come together to celebrate America's 250th

While the big celebration of America's 250th birthday is still a few months away, local officials have planned a patriotic concert to kick start the festivities two months before July 4.

"America, The Beautiful: Celebrating 250 Years," will be held at 7 p.m. on Sunday, May 3 at Theatre Dublin. Approximately 115 members will form the Celebrate Community Choir, and there will be 50 children from the Northwest Laurens Elementary School Melody Makers, Southwest Laurens Elementary School chorus and the First Baptist Church children's choir. There will also be a wind symphony.

Planning for this event began a year ago with conversations between Jonathan Peacock and Michael Dukes. These conductors, along with David Wilson, have worked on a program that will include many of people's favorites.

This is a good way to bring our community together as we celebrate the freedoms God has granted us in our first 250 years, and we pray that he will continue to provide for us for many, many more.

So, grab your free tickets at Bubba's Tire Center, Citizens Bank on Hillcrest, First Baptist Church and Visit Dublin. Don your red, white and blue and let us honor our country during this special year.

— Payton Towns III

YOUR TURN:

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

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"I always arrive late at the office, but I make up for it by leaving early."

— Charles Lamb

DAILY SCRIPTURE

"I speak the truth in Christ - I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit - I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and promises."

— Romans 9:1-4

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY

April 16, 2026 is...

- National High Five Day
- National Healthcare Decisions Day
- Save The Elephant Day
- Selena Day
- National Librarian Day
- National Eggs Benedict Day

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



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

Georgians to decide court's tone next month

Georgians To Decide Court's Tone And Temperament Next Month

Any Georgian with a television, mailbox, telephone, or social media account is aware we have partisan primaries coming up. The ads for candidates who want to be the next Governor alone are inescapable.

We also have to select candidates for U.S. Senate, all Georgia's seats in the U.S. House, Lieutenant Governor, Quite a few state-wide offices, every seat in the Georgia legislature, and even more offices in counties across the state. We've got a lot going on in here.

Almost lost in the campaign drum beats are the races for positions within Georgia's judiciary. These contests are non-partisan. There are no primaries. We vote on who will preside over Georgia's courts on the same ballots when we vote for our parties' nominees. Those who wish to remain truly "independent" can even request a non-partisan ballot to only select from the Justices and Judges up for election this year.

These aren't nominees to appear on our November ballots. The May race for these positions is final.

Most Georgians are likely unaware these contests are even happening. There's little incentive to donate to campaigns, as the Judges and Justices aren't allowed to make many promises, and certainly can't promise to decide in favor of potential large donors. Their code of ethics, whether an incumbent or challenger, mostly limits them to saying they'll be fair and impartial, and telling you about their resume and background.

They don't attack each other. There are few soundbites for media to cover. The few dedicated political reporters left in the state are getting a steady supply of red meat zingers from the partisan contests. There's little reward for them to invest the time detailing the curriculum vitae of candidates that few Georgians have ever heard of, in election contests that won't generate clicks or ratings.

So what are Georgians



By CHARLIE HARPER

supposed to do when faced with these names in races they haven't researched and know almost nothing of the candidates? Unlike the default position for most voters in partisan contests, if in doubt vote for the incumbent.

For decades, Georgia has used a system that takes most of the partisan politics out of the selection of our Judges and Justices. When one resigns or retires — usually done mid-term to preserve this process — a Judicial Nominating Commission reviews qualifications of applicants and delivers a short list of candidates to the Governor, who chooses one and appoints them to fill the vacancy.

Our "election" of Judges and Justices is more of a ratification of this process rather than a selection. This is a system that has been

in place in Georgia for decades, long before parties switched power in the Governor's mansion a quarter century ago.

The concept worth protecting here is that there is a time and place for partisanship, and the voters get their say on that in November, when nominees from each party are decided by voters. Those elected then serve to write our laws with a partisan tilt in the legislature, and the executive branch administers the state's operations similarly.

Our courts, however, have to interpret the laws according to the constitutions of both the state and the country. For them to be fair and impartial, they almost must be non-partisan. It's the only way they can be a proper check and balance within a state that has been governed by one majority party controlling the other two branches at the same time for most of the state's existence.

There have been partisan attempts to change the courts a few times. Most notably, Republicans tried to unseat a few Justices as the party was taking statewide elective offices from the Democrats around the turn of the millennium.

Most if not all failed, and usually by a large margin. Despite the lack of general public awareness from traditional campaign channels, the legal community seems to have a way of policing these elections to motivate

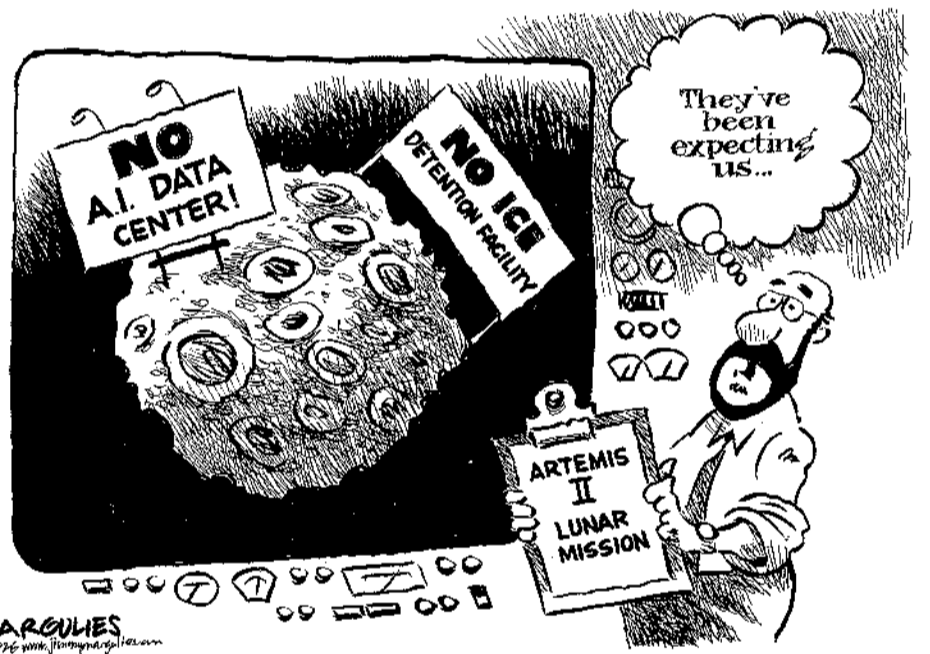
voters to preserve the system and keep partisanship out of these elections.

This year there are three challenges to those serving in our top courts. Two Justices on Georgia's Supreme Court and one for Georgia's Court of Appeals. At least one of the challengers has run state wide for a partisan office.

The best sign that partisanship isn't at play with the incumbents is the steering committee of Justice Charlie Bethel. Among the high profile and politically diverse names supporting his re-election are the Governor who appointed him, Nathan Deal, and Deal's 2014 Democratic challenger, former State Senator Jason Carter.

As a disclosure, Justice Bethel and I have a friendship that pre-dates his time on our highest court, and I've made a small donation to his campaign. I use him as an example of the three incumbents standing for re-election statewide — including fellow Supreme Court Justice Sarah Hawkins Warren and Appeals Court Judge Elizabeth Gobeil — as his committee embodies the entire point here.

There's a time and place for partisanship, and many of the names on his team are highly partisan. When it comes time to stand before a judge, however, justice must be colorblind. Those colors must include red and blue.



King cotton: Facts about our principal cash crop

Having grown up on a farm where our principal cash crop was cotton, I am always interested in what is going on in our state regarding the agriculture sector.

Agriculture is still Georgia's leading industry, but there are always challenges in crop production—most often brought about by the fickleness of the weather.

Not only do farmers pray for abundant rain, but they also need a consistency of showers throughout the growing season. In my time, I remember one year when heavy flooding took place, and we had to replant all the crops. Too much rain was unusual, but it was a good reminder that a farmer always must worry about the unexpected.

My father had an old radio that he listened to in early morning trying to get the weather report out of Memphis, Tennessee. He would smile broadly when he could decipher that the weather forecast was favorable.

We always worried about a hurricane coming up from Florida and raining on our cotton. We couldn't fathom the overt destruction that our state suffered in recent years with Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Helene.

Too much rain, which hurricanes brought about in its outer reaches, could damage and ruin a cotton crop before the harvest was complete. That was always a worry, but there was not any threat that trees would be

uprooted and roofs blown off houses.

When you ride down Highway 15 toward the Georgia coast, you still see piles of debris here and there with storm-ravaged tree stumps piled up in several places.

Often, what worries cotton farmers the most is drought conditions. Throughout the summer when long dry spells exist, all rural church services will contain prayers for rain.

With all the challenges, Georgia remains the second-largest cotton producer of cotton in the U.S. Texas is ranked number one. (Georgia has a land mass of 59,420 square miles while Texas has 268,596 square miles, making the Longhorn state about four and a half times larger.)

With far less acreage devoted to cotton, Georgia nonetheless has always been ranked among the top cotton producers in the country. The economic value of cotton production in our state is more than \$1.3 billion.

Internet research confirms that Georgia was the first colony to produce cotton commercially, which was in the Savannah area in 1734. With slave labor, cotton made many men rich.

While Georgia was not a slave state originally, the invention of the cotton gin, a godsend for plantation proprietors, fostered and expanded slavery in the state.

Even with cotton's immense value for plantation



By LORAN SMITH

owners, there was the arrival of the boll weevil around 1915. This dastardly insect ruined fortunes and brought about financial ruin and bankruptcies across the landscape.

My father had to drop out of school in the seventh grade to work full time on his father's farm to help him stave off foreclosure. Everybody suffered in one way or another.

I can remember that we heard Tex Ritter singing the boll weevil song on the radio about the blasted pest looking for a home. It graphically confirmed that this spiteful pest wreaked havoc in so many people's lives.

"The boll weevil got half the cotton,

"The merchant got the rest,

"Didn't leave the farmer's wife,

"But one old cotton dress,

"And it full o' holes, "It a full o' holes."

The song resonated with the farmers who realized that no matter what they did, there was no stopping this pest. However, there was something worse coming—The Great Depression.

Farmers had some success with insecticides, but that brought about other issues, leaving many desperate. Farmers could grow enough fruit and vegetables to feed their families, but there was not any money. Most everybody I knew drove every car.

If you had anything that was store bought, then you were a fortunate person. Most mothers became seamstresses out of necessity, making children's clothes out of flour and guano sacks.

Fast forward from those debilitating times and technology has gotten the boll weevil underfoot. The greatest of agricultural menaces is now eradicated. How great it is to put that reference into past tense.

You ride through the fields of south Georgia and you see cotton flourishing but no laborers with long sacks in the fields. Cotton harvesting is done by machines now.

If you had told me when I graduated from high school in the mid-fifties that in my lifetime, we would see the eradication of the boll weevil and that cotton would not be picked by hand, I would not have believed you.

Dublin Police Department

- On April 8, around 9:01 a.m., an officer was stationary on Hillcrest Parkway at North Jefferson Street monitoring eastbound traffic.

An officer saw a black Ford Fusion traveling at a high rate of speed and visually estimated the vehicle's speed to be approximately 55 mph in a posted 35 mph speed zone. An officer activated his ProLaser 4, which indicated a speed of 54 mph.

The driver, later identified by Demora Axson, 20, turned into the Roses parking lot. The officer followed and pulled into a parking space before activating his emergency equipment. The officer saw the displayed tag was a drive-out tag, which returned to a black 2014 Ford Fusion with an expi-



ration date of 2021 and was registered out of Richmond County.

Due to the discrepancy, the officer conducted a VIN check, which confirmed the vehicle as a black 2014 Ford Fusion with valid registration. Based on the investigation, it was believed that the dealership mistakenly placed the incorrect drive-out tag on the vehicle.

Axson was checked through GCIC, which revealed her driver's license was suspended due to fail-

ure to appear on prior traffic violation. Axson said she was unaware of the suspension but remained compliant throughout the encounter.

Axson was arrested and transported to the police department where she was fingerprinted and issued citations for driving while license suspended and speeding. She was also served with suspension paperwork.

- Crystal Young, 39, was charged schedule II con-

trolled substance and brake light and signal device requirements around 9:20 p.m. on April 5 on South Jefferson Street near Smith Street.

- Dontia Peacock, 29, was charged with theft by shoplifting at Walmart on Highway 80 West around 2:31 p.m. on April 8.

An officer responded to the store in reference to a shoplifting. The officer met with a loss prevention employee who showed surveillance video where Peacock repeatedly used a "skip scan" in an attempt to shoplift an assortment of items valued at \$192.86.

The officer arrested Peacock. She was issued a trespass notice and received a citation. She was fingerprinted and was released from the police department.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- Trant Markeith Stanley, 19, of Dublin, was charged with theft by receiving stolen property at the intersection of 441 South and Scotland Road around 1:09 a.m. on April 6. A deputy conducted a traffic stop on a Kia Optima for defective equipment.

- Property was damaged on Papermill Road around 5:13 p.m. on April 7.

- A deputy was dispatched to the city of Cadwell about an incident that happened at the intersection of Kelly Butler Road and Fountain Street around 2:44 p.m. on April 4.

- On April 7, around 4:21 p.m., a deputy responded to Highway 199 South at mile marker 5 regarding a vehicle that hit a tire.

- A deputy met with a woman at the law enforcement center in reference to making a report about an incident that happened on Dewey Warnock Road around 3 p.m. on April 6.

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.

You, yes, you know who I am talking about. Every day you drive across East Dublin in the passing lane the whole way until you get to the courthouse. Then, you want somebody to let you in, if you don't break in. You better be glad that isn't school at the lunch line, because somebody would poo on your head.

Everybody this day and time wants roundabouts like the Romans had amphitheaters.

Dublin-Laurens deserves one future, not divided priorities—consolidation unites our people, strengthens our voice and builds a community that works for everyone.

We already live, work and grow together—our government should reflect that



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unity and lead Dublin-Laurens forward as one.

In regard to the Dodge Chargers, they are called lead cars. The vehicle we should be looking at is the slow nondescript vehicle one to two lengths behind. The Chargers are running inference for those vehicles...while the Chargers are being pulled over, the drug vehicle is safely driving by. Same thing on the interstate - there will be one zipping by and sure enough the second car will be doing the limit and slides right by - Criminal Justice 101

To the person who keeps calling in about the Dodge Chargers, I guess they haven't notice that most of the cars that our law enforcement drives Dodge Chargers too. Maybe they need to call the sheriff's office, police office or state patrol? They might can tell you something about the Dodge Chargers.

My neighborhood is full of blue recycling cans that weren't emptied on Friday. We got confused about the schedule. Can we sign up to get a call from someone at the city to remind to put them out?

My children are gifted also, but I do not expect the taxpayers to pay for the Irish Gifted Academy to send my children there because I don't think they would get the education they would at a private school. If the gifted academy has that many children in it, there aren't that many gifted children around so it is a waste of taxpayers money. They should shut the gifted academy down, shut the city school down and consolidate with the county.

You citizens of Dublin you need to get your priorities straightened out, you want the county to pay your school dues because you can't afford them. You don't know how to make a move because you keep putting in the same board members. They have been there a long time but you want us to do something about it.

It seems as if a lot of callers don't realize a coaching supplement is not a supplement to a coaching salary. It is the only salary that coaches receive while coaching.

You need to tell these people to cut their grass, especially on South Jefferson Street. You are supposed to cut your grass into your own yard. You are not supposed to cut where the debris comes out into the road or someone else's yard.

I think it is suppose to be a state law that when you cut your grass, you need to keep it in your own yard and not into the road. The city of Dublin should abide by the rules. Keep it in your own yard and not somebody else's yard.

Every time I ride by the city board of education, I smile and snicker and think about that the next time city taxes come due I won't have to pay \$2,300 city school taxes because I'm 82. Hah, hah, hah!

Interesting that all of

NEWS DIGEST

The Dublin City Council will hold its pre-council meeting at 11 a.m. in the International Room of city hall this Thursday. That will be followed with a council meeting at noon in the Henry "Bud" Hicks Jr. Memorial Chamber. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation and Pledge to Flag
- Approval of April 2 city council meeting minutes
- Approval of bills over \$15,000
- Presentation regarding the Downtown Dublin Development Authority
- Presentation regarding the Visit Dublin GA

the Laurens County Schools policies are not the same for teachers. West Laurens High School pays for their teachers to wear jeans. Meaning, each teacher pays \$20 a month to wear jeans. This month, in the newsletter, it says the teachers are going to be given a discount. They can pay two for one in April and May, which is very considerate since it is a short month. It goes on to say that the money the teachers pay to wear their jeans will be the money used to pay for their teacher appreciation gift. Do the teachers and people who don't pay get a gift or are they appreciated? Just something to think about.

Y'all are doing a good job down there. Just keep up the good thing!

The person that called and said the supplement is the only pay the coaches get. They must have been out of the country for a while or on a trip to space. I suggest they look up the meaning of supplement in the dictionary.

Our county government officials need to follow the same path as the city by having reduced taxes by age group. Most of the senior county taxpayers are on a fixed income with only social security.

Take note from the "Field of Dreams" if you build it, they will come. You build a homeless shelter in Dublin, your homeless population will expand.

I want to know what kind of smoking is taking place in the car rider line at NWLE? Is it tobacco, vape or marijuana? What's the school system going to do about it?

Person after person spoke at the Dublin City board meeting about the community does not trust them nor are they being transparent. And yet nothing changes. The most arrogant group of people. Remove them all.

Dublin CWC hosts 'Melodies of Spring' luncheon

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

All ladies are cordially invited to the Dublin Country Club on Thursday, April 23, from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. to enjoy a fabulous buffet luncheon and a musical interlude at our "Melodies of Spring" luncheon.

The mood will be set by beautiful buffet music provided by pianist Brenda Holloway.

Vocalist Gwen Davis, of the famous singing Davis family, will be presenting a mini-concert of favorite songs. Gwen is the Executive Assistant and Board Administrator for the Museum of Aviation Foundation in Warner Robins, Ga. She has also been an Ambassador for the Dublin-Laurens Chamber of Commerce.

Guest speaker Ruth Rodriguez comes to us from



Gwen Davis will present a mini-concert for Dublin Christian Women's Connection/SPECIAL PHOTO

Ellabell, Ga. After a troubled childhood and rebellious teen years, she tells of the "2x4 Moments" that completely changed her life. She now brings hope

and happiness to others through her "Quilts of Love" ministry and by sharing her inspirational life story through her many speaking engagements.

This event is sponsored by the Dublin Christian Women's Connection. The cost of the event is \$21, inclusive. This includes soup, salad bar, meal, dessert, tea and gratuity. Reservations must be made by Monday, April 20 at 5:00 pm by calling Emily at 478-278-7829 or Jane at 478-595-2499. Our sincere appreciation goes to Middle Georgia Estate Planning: Warren Greer Law, LLC, for sponsoring our invitations.

Make your reservations and join us for this opportunity to enjoy wonderful music, marvelous food, and make new friends at our "Melodies of Spring" luncheon.

Don't let pain win! Conquer it!

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

Dublin After Five Women's Connection cordially invites all ladies to join us at the Dublin Country Club on Thursday, April 23, 2026, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for an evening filled with fellowship, music and inspiration.

Maci Brown, an ultrasound tech at Physicians Midwives of Macon, will be sharing her incredible voice with us. The talented Regina Rowe will be playing our buffet music.

We are excited to have as our special feature, John Martin, co-owner of Dublin Rehab Advantage & Sports Medicine, a physical and occupational therapy clinic. This clinic treats a wide range of conditions and uses advanced techniques like dry needling and Class IV laser therapy. John will



Ruth Rodriguez will be the feature speaker for Dublin After Five/SPECIAL PHOTO tell us about new technology that provides pain relief retreatment of soft tissues. The core purpose is for you to heal naturally so you can return to a pain free lifestyle. John will share some main causes of pain and how to deal with pain without surgery, medication or injections.

Ruth Rodriguez of Ellabell, Ga., will be our featured speaker and will be sharing her story of "My 2x4 Moments." Growing up, her home life lacked affection and encouragement.

As a teenager Ruth thought she knew it all and began a journey that brought her numerous heartaches. She will share how her "2x4 Moments" brought her into a personal relationship with Jesus.

Please call Dianne (478) 272-6341 or Marge (478) 875-3948 for reservations or cancellations by Tuesday, April 21. The buffet cost is \$21, inclusive, and requires a reservation.

We ask that you honor your reservation, cancel it, or give it to a friend. The printing of our invitations is a courtesy and generosity of Citizens Bank of Laurens Co.

Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:

	THURSDAY: 89°	Very warm with plenty of sun; caution advised if doing strenuous activities outside. Sunrise: 7:01 a.m.
	THURSDAY NIGHT: 57°	Clear. Sunset: 8:02 p.m.
	FRIDAY: 90°	Partly to mostly sunny and hot; caution advised if doing strenuous activities outside. Sunrise: 7:00 a.m.
	FRIDAY NIGHT: 58°	Mainly cloudy. Sunset: 8:03 p.m.

Saturday 4/18 HIGH/LOW 92/63 <small>Hot with sunshine and some clouds; caution advised if doing strenuous activities outside. Sunrise: 6:59 a.m. Sunset: 8:04 p.m.</small>	Sunday 4/19 HIGH/LOW 81/47 <small>Not as warm with more sun than clouds. Sunrise: 6:58 a.m. Sunset: 8:04 p.m.</small>	Monday 4/20 HIGH/LOW 79/48 <small>Sun through high clouds. Sunrise: 6:57 a.m. Sunset: 8:05 p.m.</small>	Tuesday 4/21 HIGH/LOW 80/54 <small>Times of sun and clouds. Sunrise: 6:56 a.m. Sunset: 8:06 p.m.</small>	Wednesday 4/22 HIGH/LOW 85/57 <small>Partly sunny. Sunrise: 6:55 a.m. Sunset: 8:06 p.m.</small>

River levels...
Oconee (at Dublin) 2.41'
Ocmulgee (at Macon) 6.99'

- Presentation regarding the Dublin-Laurens Land Bank Authority

- Discussion and action on resolution #26-20 to acknowledge a MOU with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for work on 441 street resurfacing

- Discussion and action on resolution #26-23 to accept and approve the terms of an agreement with regulatory compliance with JSI

- Discussion and action on declaration of surplus

- Discussion and action on board appointments

- Citizens comments

- Council comments

- Executive session if needed to discuss real estate, pending litigation or personnel

- Adjournment

The Historic Review Board will be meeting on Tuesday, April 21 at 5:15 p.m. in the Henry "Bud" Hicks Jr. Memorial Chamber located in city hall.

Classifieds

Yard/Estate Sales

Moving Sale: April 16th 8:30a - 4pm. 920 Jay Sue Nan Trail Dublin. Between Walmart and Dudley.

Real Estate

For Rent/Lease

Houses for Rent: 2 bedroom \$1,050/month and 2 bedroom \$725/month. No Animals; References required. 478-278-9012

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE BY STEPHAN PASTIS

A four-panel comic strip. In the first panel, a man says, "I HEAR YOU INVENTED A NEW CAR HORN." The pig replies, "YEAH, BECAUSE CARS CURRENTLY ONLY OFFER ONE FLAVOR OF HONK—LOUD. AND SOMETIMES YOU JUST WANT TO GIVE SOMEONE A GENTLE REMINDER." In the second panel, the man asks, "CAN I TRY IT?" The pig says, "SURE, JUST PUSH THE LITTLE BUTTON." In the third panel, the man pushes the button and says, "HIYA, FRIEND. THE LIGHT TURNED GREEN WHICH PERHAPS YOU DIDN'T NOTICE BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO CONSUMED BY LIFE'S MANY WORRIES. HOPE THINGS IMPROVE!" In the fourth panel, the man says, "A TAD LONG. WE BELIEVE KINDNESS TAKES TIME." The pig replies, "DO YOU OFFER A 'MOVE @HANSARD'?"

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A three-panel comic strip. In the first panel, Garfield says, "NOTHING I DO MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE." In the second panel, he says, "THERE YOU GO." In the third panel, he says, "THAT'S A GOOD REASON NOT TO DO ANYTHING."

OVERBOARD BY CHIP DUNHAM

A four-panel comic strip. In the first panel, a man says, "I THINK BACON TO INCREASE SPEED ON THE BASEPATH..". In the second panel, a dog says, "...IS AT LEAST AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME, HENRY." In the third panel, the man says, "YEAH, WHATEVER. TELL ME WHEN YOU FIND A REAL RULE!" In the fourth panel, the dog says, "OH, BELIEVE ME, I'M LOOKING."

DEFLOCKED BY JEFF CORRIVEAU

A four-panel comic strip. In the first panel, a man asks, "DIDN'T YOU SEE THIS SHOW ALREADY?" In the second panel, a dog replies, "PROBABLY, BUT I'M ALWAYS SCROLLING ON MY PHONE WHEN I WATCH TV, SO I REALLY HAVE NO CLUE WHAT I'VE ACTUALLY SEEN." In the third panel, the man asks, "THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST TURN OFF THE TV?" In the fourth panel, the dog replies, "WHAT???? AND MISS MY SHOWS???" The man says, "I THINK YOU'RE MISSING THE BIG PICTURE." The dog replies, "OOO, THANKS, I'LL WATCH THAT NEXT."

ZIGGY BY TOM WILSON

A two-panel comic strip. In the first panel, a man says, "I DEFINITELY DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THESE TEST RESULTS!!". In the second panel, a dog replies, "...THEY'RE PRINTED ON REALLY CHEAP PAPER!!".

PLUGGERS BY JEFF MACNELLY

A single-panel comic strip showing a man and a dog sitting on a couch. The man says, "Thanks to David Maack Racine, Wisconsin". The dog replies, "A plugger love seat".

Sister claims late Mother changed her estate plan in secret!



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

FORNIA

DEAR ABBY: My mother passed away recently. She suffered from dementia and was a cancer survivor, but she lived well into her 80s. It was difficult for me to witness her mental decline when I spoke to her on the phone or visited her occasionally in the nursing home. She lived near my sister, so my sister had a much closer relationship with her than I did.

Mom met with my sister and me several years ago to discuss her estate planning. Both of us were included as beneficiaries, as well as Mom's second husband. My sister has just informed me that, three years ago, Mom replaced the existing living trust with a new one making her the sole beneficiary. She smugly claimed that she was always there for Mother and that I was an absentee child.

I was stunned to learn this while still recovering from the loss of my mother. I contacted a trust attorney, who told me I could contest the new trust on the grounds that Mother had dementia when it was prepared and that my sister may have coerced her to make her the sole beneficiary.

If I pursue a lawsuit, it will undoubtedly drive a wedge between my family and my sister's family. On the other hand, doing nothing does not seem fair to my family. Please let me know what you think I should do. -- SON IN CALI-

Dancing wasn't just a fun activity, but I made a lot of friends, dated a couple of women and met my life's match. We have been married for 17 years now. If you don't know the dances, there are beginners' nights where you can learn. As a guy, I always had a numbers advantage because many women want partners to dance with. My advice would be to try it with no expectations. Abby, I hope this helps someone. -- STILL DANCIN' IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR STILL DANCIN': So do I because your message resonates with me. Years ago, I had a wonderful personal assistant, Olivia. She was born and raised in the great state of Texas and had a love of all things western. Looking to get into the dating scene, one weekend Olivia went solo to a square dance, and that's where she met an "angel" who volunteered to dance with unescorted ladies. Long story short, they were married two months later. I was her matron of honor.

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

Thursday, April 16, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES
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CREATIVE HAND EVALUATION

Both vulnerable, North deals

NORTH		EAST	
♠ K Q 6	♠ J 5	♠ K 9 7 5 2	♠ K 4
♥ J	♥ A 9 8 4 3	♥ Q 10 4 3	♥ A Q 6
♦ A J 9	♦ A 6	♦ Q 7 2	
♣ J 10 7 5 3 2	♣ K 6 4 3	♣ 10 8 5	
	♣ 9 8		

The bidding:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	1♥	2NT	Pass
3NT	All pass		

Opening lead: Ace of ♣

Australian expert Michael Courtney is one of the most colorful characters in a bridge world full of colorful characters. He was a protégé of the late Tim Sorens and is an avid rubber bridge player. If the stakes are too high for his wallet he will find a backer. He will not refuse

to play in the game. He lived for some years in London playing rubber bridge for very high stakes. He is also a successful tournament player in Australia. Courtney was South in today's deal. A one no trump bid at his first turn would have shown 8-11 points. He judged his hand to be too good for that bid so he made the game-forcing bid of two no trump. Why? He reasoned that his heart holding, sitting behind the heart bidder, might be worth the equivalent of ace-king fourth. He promoted his holding accordingly. Many, probably most experts would not agree with this evaluation, but Courtney and his partner reached a game missed by the other competitors. The cards were well placed for him - ace of spades, king of diamonds, and king of clubs all behaving well - and he had no trouble bringing home his contract with an overtrick.

Was this good judgment or good luck? You decide.

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

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- Acid neutralizer
 - Loses color
 - Extreme anger
 - Actor Wilson
 - Wipe chalk from
 - Bad deeds
 - Defeat in a game
 - Russian currency unit
 - Catholic service
 - 1985 Stallone film
 - Penne or rigatoni
 - "Pretty Woman" star: 2 wds.
 - Come out of the
 - Terror
 - Go on a tirade
 - Mortgage quote
 - Holistic fitness discipline
 - Dollar bill
 - Established fact
 - Burst
 - Annoyance
 - steven
 - Mosaic part
 - Residence
 - Alternative to drapes
 - Part of a swimmer's IM
 - School vacation
 - Garlicky spread
 - Whitewater craft
 - Smell awful
 - Shrub
 - "— my dead body!"
 - Popular dating app
 - Japan's continent
 - Had on
 - Go in
 - Musical silence

Created by Stella Zawistowski 10/28/25

8 Subject for bilingual people: Abbr.

9 Notice

10 Wed again

11 Sailor's "stop!"

12 Main points

13 Actress Pataky

21 Pub drink

22 Sweet (garden flower)

23 Actress Rashida

24 Frequently

25 "I've doing fine"

26 Farmer's product

27 Country road

30 Entrhall

31 Broad street: Abbr.

33 Give your two cents

34 First-place medal

35 Imitates

37 Precious stones

40 Globe (London attraction)

42 Tropical watering hole: 2 wds.

44 Durable wood

45 Negotiator

46 Texter's "haha": Abbr.

47 "Below Deck" network

48 Allude (to)

49 Canonized person

50 Color slightly

51 Forehead

54 "— Loves You" (Beatles song)

55 Element #50

57 Draw upon

58 Gal in the family

59 Boater or fedora

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!

Level: intermediate

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

ANSWER:

SOCCER ROUNDUP...

Closing in: Hephzibah sweep puts Raider boys less than win away from region title

Tough losses for EL, Dublin in first games back from break; Trinity sweeps RTCA, Covenant

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

In order to go ahead and lock down the region 4-AAA championship, the West Laurens boys needed Richmond Academy to defeat Aquinas as they added another routine victory to their unbeaten season in a return from spring break Tuesday night at The SHU.

That business, as best the Raiders could tell, was still unfinished as they did a little scoreboard-watching while leaving the field following an 11-1 thrashing of Hephzibah to complete a senior night sweep, with eyes on their regular-season finale against the Irish Thursday in Augusta.

"We want to see what's going on with the Aquinas game," said Raiders head coach Nate Smith. "But that doesn't mean we're not wanting to beat Aquinas, because we owe them something at their house if we can."

There was good reason that updates were hard to come by, as the Irish and Musketeers battled through regulation and two over-times with no score, before a penalty kick shootout gave Aquinas a win critical to its continuing region title chances, which will now hinge on the outcome of Thursday's showdown with West, postponed from mid-March by weather, that won't be a winner-take-all.

The Raiders (18-0, 13-0 region 4-AAA), who defeated Aquinas 3-1 at home earlier in the season, own enough tiebreakers that they can afford to lose by the same margin, and potentially a larger one, and still emerge as region champ.

But with a chance to complete a perfect regular season and clinch outright with a victory, not to mention settling a score from last year (when the Irish handed them a 5-0 shutout for their first loss of 2025) that makes this the final stop on their revenge tour, have ample motivation not to leave things up to the variables outside their control.

Tuesday's home finale, in which West Laurens picked up right where it left off before spring break to score 11 goals (giving up just one via PK late in the second half) in 71 minutes, was the type of locked-in performance that confirms it's going to be one of the teams to beat when the state playoffs begin next week.

The Raiders, who maintain the only perfect record in AAA, topped the classification's GHSA Post Season Ratings as of late Tuesday night, and opened the week ranked No. 5 in the state coach's poll.

"I think winning is a learned behavior, and this team just knows how to win," Smith said. "They just grind at practice. They take it seri-



EARLY, AND OFTEN: Kristin Ivey shoots and scores for the first of the Lady Raiders' 10 goals just a few minutes into Tuesday afternoon's match/CLAY REYNOLDS



A LITTLE TOO MUCH AIR: Several Falcons and Canes contend for this high ball in the box that turned into a great shot for East Laurens to break Tuesday's shutout with 13 minutes left, but the corner kick was a little too tall for anyone to get ahold of, and sailed over the top and wide, allowing Fitzgerald to remain up 4-0/ZACH DAWSON

ously. And I think just knowing how to win a close game is something that they've learned in the offseason when they play club, and it has just carried over tremendously."

The Westside boys held a 6-0 lead through a half, but carried their momentum through the match's 30-ish remaining minutes as many of their top starters checked out of the game, or sat back in more defensive roles.

Payton Everly, Alex Derochie and Clark Nelson were among the scorers credited with adding to the lead as it grew as large as 9-0 before Hephzibah snuck one in from the line off a whistle with around 20 minutes left.

Two more, both off of odd deflections on a corner kick then a true own-goal bumped home inadvertently by a defender for the clincher with just above nine minutes left, ended the match early.

The Raiders won't start looking ahead to their postseason draw until after Thursday's match, in which they'll have a nice sized chip on their shoulder.

And though he's convinced this team has what it takes, Smith is taking nothing for granted when it comes to their potential for a run.

"Long gone are the times when the 1 seed plays the 4 seed and beats them 10-0 and has an early exit, out of the game. Those don't happen anymore," he said. "I've said since they put in the power rankings, and I wasn't 100 percent sure if it was a good thing or not, but you are going to play quality opponents all



WATCH IT!: Chase Dudley cranes for a look as the West Laurens corner kick of Clark Nelson rebounded just inside the top right angle of the goal frame off a deflection by Hephzibah's keeper to make the Raiders' lead 9-1 with 24 minutes to go in the match/CLAY REYNOLDS



GETTING EVEN: The Lady Falcons' Amari Kellam prepares to stick one past Fitzgerald's keeper on a late-first half shot that leveled Tuesday's count at a goal apiece/ZACH DAWSON

the time. I'm hoping that we'll finish strong and have home-field advantage. But the 32 seed, from what I've been seeing, has not really been looking all that easy.

"We can hang our hat on maybe being No. 1 in the state for a little bit, but it doesn't mean that you're going to get a cakewalk in the first round."

The West Laurens girls (12-7, 9-4 in region) collected their 10-1 win over Hephzibah Tuesday on an abbreviated timetable, with a flurry of early goals putting things away quite quickly.

Though their season has seen some ups and downs, the Lady Raiders have played strong soccer against a lot of good opponents.

Smith looks ahead to Thursday's matchup, against a Lady Irish squad his team only slightly got the best of earlier this spring, as a preview of the level of postseason competition they'll face in the opening round – likely on the road, though a step or two up in power rankings (from a spot presently at 20th, and third in the region) might permit them a chance to also host next week.

"It has been more of a grind for them," he said. "We have been trying to put in a specific style of play, and we've held their feet to the fire. And so they're learning and they're getting better, but it just hasn't been consistent enough. But I'm proud of the season they've put together. They've had some really big wins. Going to Aquinas will really set the tone for us going into the playoffs, and I'm really looking forward to that."

In the rest of the county's early-week soccer action, East Laurens and Dublin were both swept by non-region opponents, the Falcons by Fitzgerald at home and Irish against Vidalia on the road.

The Eastside girls were edged 3-1 as the Purple Hurricane scored twice in a four-minute span late in the second half.

Amari Kellam, though, helped

them capitalize on a situation with numbers just above the box as a trio of gold jerseys refused to give up despite having the ball knocked out of their control a couple of times with about three minutes left in the opening half.

Kellam finally had one set up favorably, and knocked one home to even the score at a goal each going to the break.

But Fitzgerald kept the Lady Falcons (8-9, 5-3 region 2-High A) off the board from there, and scored twice in a row just under the 15 minute mark to pull it out.

The Hurricane, a 5-0 winner in the boys' match, had two goals in the first eight minutes before East Laurens (9-7, 4-3 region) stabilized things defensively.

The Falcons were 94 seconds from getting that 2-0 deficit to the half when Fitzgerald struck on a long header via cross from the corner, and went up by three just before intermission.

The Canes added a goal early and late in the second half to expand its lead to the final margin.

East Laurens (whose girls are 43rd and boys 32nd in the current Class A PSRs, both squarely in line to make the playoffs) will travel to play Vidalia in its final matches of the regular season Thursday.

Dublin journeyed to take on the Indians Tuesday at Buck Cravey Field, and was held scoreless in both stanzas of the sweep. The Lady Irish (4-11, 2-5 region 2-High A, PSR 58 fell by a count of 3-0. The Dublin boys (3-9, 1-5 region, PSR 53) were defeated 5-0.

Both teams are scheduled to close out region play at ACE Charter on Thursday in Macon.

Trinity's teams added four wins in their post-spring break returns to action Monday and Tuesday, with road wins at Robert Toombs and Covenant.

The Lady Crusaders (11-1, 9-0 region) were led by a hat trick from

SCOREBOARD

BASEBALL
Monday
Appling Co. 6,
West Laurens 0

Tuesday
Dublin 2, Dodge Co. 0
East Laurens 21,
Northeast Macon 7
Trinity 5, CGAA 2
West Laurens 20, Baldwin 0

GIRLS SOCCER
Monday
Trinity 4, Robert Toombs 1

Tuesday
Fitzgerald 3, EL 1
Trinity 10, Covenant 0
Vidalia 3, Dublin 0
WL 10, Hephzibah 1

BOYS SOCCER
Monday
Trinity 7, Robert Toombs 2

Tuesday
Fitzgerald 5, EL 0
Trinity 10, Covenant 0
Vidalia 2, Dublin 0
WL 11, Hephzibah 1

PREP SCHEDULE

BASEBALL
Wednesday
Montgomery Co. at
East Laurens
West Laurens at Pinewood
/6 p.m.

Thursday
CGAA at Trinity
WL at Baldwin/5 p.m.
GMC at Dublin/5:30 p.m.

Friday
Dublin at Dodge Co.
/5:30 p.m.
Northeast Macon at EL
/6 p.m.

SOCCER
Thursday
EL at Vidalia/5 p.m.
Dublin at ACE Charter
WL at Aquinas/5:30 p.m.

Friday
Trinity at
Central Fellowship/5 p.m.

TENNIS
Thursday
WL at Region 4-AAA
Tournament (Augusta)
/10:30 a.m.

GOLF
Thursday
Trinity at Region 6-AA
Tournament (Dublin CC)
/10 a.m.
Veterans and Vidalia at
WL/3:30 p.m.

CONTACT US:
Email sports information to
tchsports77@gmail.com, or
call (478) 272-5522, ext. 110



DRAWING IT TO A CLOSE: Alex Derochie scores on a laser-guided shot from distance that made it a 10-1 West Laurens lead, and hastened Tuesday's ending with a little more than 12 minutes left to play/CLAY REYNOLDS

Addie Kendrick as they prevailed 4-1 Monday in Lyons. Maeson Brantley added the fourth goal, and Ava Hobbs and Maddy George chalked up assists.

Another hat trick by Kendrick (who also had a pair of assists), plus one by Brinley Vinson, headlined a 10-0 shutout of the Rams Tuesday in Macon. Abby Gillis added two scores, and Bristol Batchelor and Chloe Rozier one each to the count, while George was also credited with four assists in the tally.

The Crusader boys (8-2-1, 7-0 region) won 7-2 at RTCA, and 10-0 at Covenant. They were led Monday night by the three goals of Brooks Barrs.

Jagger George and Josh Mosley added two each for Trinity's seven, while Parker Smith provided two assists. Both Austin Caraway and Hudson Shirley saw time in goal, and they combined for five saves.

No details were available at press time from Tuesday's match at Covenant.

Both Trinity clubs will return to action Friday at Central Fellowship.

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued from page 8

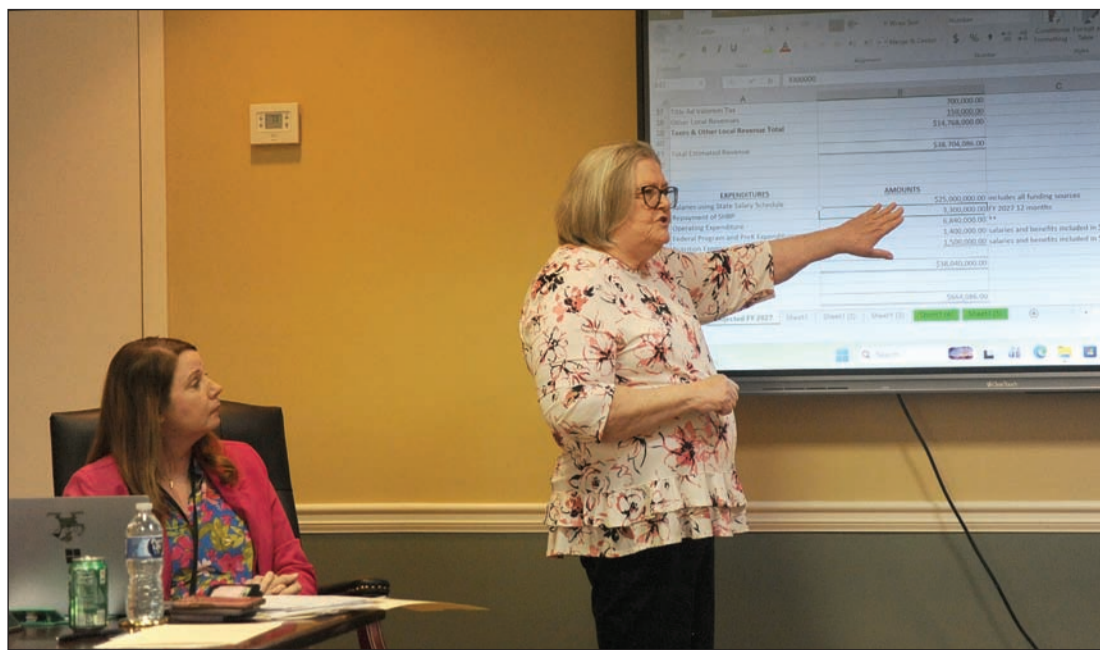
while also identifying specific concerns ranging from late tax payments to the IRS to "abnormally" high credit card spending and unwarranted travel and expenditures. The special audit also pointed to instances of family members traveling on out-of-town leadership retreats at the system's expense and undocumented payments to a local florist.

That led Dublin Circuit District Attorney Harold McLendon to formally request the Georgia Bureau of Investigation conduct a criminal investigation in the district's finances.

Board Chairwoman Amanda Smith said the district is working hard to reverse "years of mismanagement."

"As everyone knows, based on audit findings, the last two financial officers hid from the board the true financial condition of our school district and instead provided the board with false information that we were on solid ground with regard to our finances," Smith said. "In the four months I have served in a leadership role, there has been an expectation that these deeply rooted problems could be corrected immediately. That is not realistic and, more importantly, it is not responsible. We are focused on fixing these issues the right way – through accountability, structure and long-term solutions."

The tentative budget is exactly that, especially considering the state is



Interim Chief Financial Officer Betty Corbitt explains the draft of the 2027 budget to the large crowd at Monday's meeting/RODNEY MANLEY

recommending Dublin City eliminate its Irish Gifted Academy, as well as Moore Street, an alternative school for grades 6-12.

Former school board member Regina McRae, one of about a half-dozen concerned citizens who addressed the board, questioned the drafting of a budget before the futures of IGA and Moore Street are decided.

"They put the cart before the horse because, to me, you could have had a better budget if you decide what programs you're going to keep first," McRae said after the meeting.

Following an executive session, the board approved a list of personnel moves that included the resignation of IGA principal Matt Taylor.

The new salary scales and proposed balanced budget certainly show sig-

nificant progress, but will it be enough to get the district back in the state's good graces? Last month, state Superintendent Richard Woods informed the district that he was withdrawing extra staff and support the state had been providing to help the system navigate the financial crisis, citing a "misalignment of priorities." His decision came the day after the local board had approved a earlier version of supplements and salary schedules that state officials said did not cut costs enough.

By scrapping last month's plan and switching to the state salary schedule, the district will save an additional \$500,000, said interim Chief Financial Officer Betty Corbitt.

Smith and other board members expressed appreciation to the state for its help, but they also assigned

some of the blame there, as well.

"It is clear that the full extent of these problems only became evident once there was direct involvement inside our system," Smith said. "These conditions developed over time, and it is important to acknowledge that they were allowed to persist for years, even by the state."

Longtime board member John Bell took exception to Woods informing the board by strongly worded letter that he was withdrawing the extra help.

"I was not happy at all about that letter. All they had to do was make a phone call, and we could have straightened that out right there," Bell said.

Smith also provided an update on the GBI's investigation for the large crowd attending Monday's meeting. "I am aware that they

continue to request information and are actively completing their work. As soon as any official information is provided to me, I will ensure that it is communicated appropriately."

The salary schedule was approved unanimously, while the supplement scale passed 6-1, with JoAnna Glover voting no.

"I don't think that it's fair. It's too high," Glover said later.

Several residents who spoke to the board encouraged it to embrace a proposed community task force to keep the public involved and informed. Several board members seemed receptive to the idea.

"If you have any ideas, we appreciate it," said board member Kenny Walters. "We've had the chief of police down here, the sheriff's been down here, the [district attorney] has been down here. We got the GBI down here now. If y'all can find out something they could not find out, please let us know."

Several residents also urged the board to keep the public better informed.

"This is not a moment for quiet leadership," said Alfred Wheeler. "This is a moment that requires boldness. This is a moment that requires transparency. This is a moment that requires accountability."

The board held a budget workshop prior to Monday evening's meeting. During both, Corbitt provided detailed breakdowns on the tentative budget and the salary and supplement scales. Supplements, she said, were

"reduced drastically."

Corbitt also pointed out that the state salary schedule often underfunds positions. For example, the state salary schedule funds just one school nurse for the district at \$57,000.

"That does not fund one nurse," Corbitt said. "They never fully fund anything. ... They're just giving you a percentage."

Salary costs, as with every school system, is by far the budget's largest expenditure category. A large chunk of that goes to the State Health Benefit Plan, an at annual cost of \$24,336 per employee.

"We pay more for benefits than salary for some employees," Corbitt said.

A significant change will be the elimination of "Lucky Loot," a one-time lump salary payment made to employees each January.

"There will never be another Lucky Loot. If I hear about Lucky Loot, I will come see you," Corbitt joked.

Board member James Lanier, at his first meeting since having open heart surgery, said during the workshop that the proposed budget from Corbitt "was much better than we've ever presented in the past."

"Before it was a bunch of smoke and mirrors, and that's what got us into this mess," Lanier said.

Also Monday, the board voted to hire a permanent chief financial officer, Teresa Seeley, currently the controller for the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System. She is set to begin May 18.

STEPPING STONE
Continued from page 1

"They are truly dedicated to this," Brookshire said. "Harold has incredible investigators. They are making sure these cases are well put together."

But the interviews do begin at Stepping Stone.

"It takes a very special skill set to be able to interview the kids, get them comfortable and actually get a good statement from them," McLendon said. "They are excellent in being able to do that. They have a counseling program for those kids who have gone through those traumatic experiences."

And while the stories they hear from the victims are heartbreaking and tough, there is something empowering about the job.

"This isn't just a job for most of us," Brookshire said. "It is a mission. We have a purpose. I feel like I am living my purpose when I am here. We hear these stories and I know then that we can help. How these

children are at first, they are different when they leave. There has to be somebody here to help these children. We can help others and we have a lot of things that we can do to help and serve the families."

McLendon knows those working at Stepping Stone are, "extremely busy."

"They have a tough job, and without this particular agency, we just would not be able to do our job," he said. "We are blessed to have this world-class people who have a passion for what they are doing. Most people wouldn't be able to do that on a regular basis without it effecting them emotionally and not being able to do the job. These people are thoroughbreds."

Stepping Stone is still around for the victims when their trials are completed.

"The healing process can go on for years," Brookshire said. "We want to make sure people are still connected to good services."

When children walk into

Stepping Stone, they see a welcoming environment with toys and bright colors or friendly cartoon characters on the walls.

"They get the feeling that this is a safe place to come and be yourself and be cared for," Brookshire said. "We want them to see that law enforcement, the DAs office and we are here working for them."

People are nervous about coming forward when they have been abused. Brookshire wants people to know that Stepping Stone, law enforcement and the DA's office works well together.

"When an offender goes away, it keeps future children and families safe," she said. "It also provides justice for others. It also shows that this community does not tolerate this type of crime here. Hopefully, they see this, and are more inclined to come forward knowing that they will take care of me. When they see such positive outcomes, it really changes the tide."



Toys and stuffed animals help children and young people who have been through a traumatic experience/PAYTON TOWNS III

Georgia university system increases tuition

By TY TAGAMI
Senior Reporter

ATLANTA — Tuition will rise 1% for Georgia students attending one of the state's public colleges or universities, the state Board of Regents decided Tuesday.

The regents also increased tuition 3% for out-of-state students attending one of the University System of Georgia campuses.

"With enrollment at record levels, we're focused on limiting new financial hurdles and delivering real value on every campus," Chancellor Sonny Perdue said in a statement. "Today's decision reinforces that commitment."

Tuition covers only a portion of instructional costs, with the state paying for 57%, according to the university system. It said students pay, on average, less in tuition now than in 2017 when adjusted for inflation.

The system also said the Georgia General Assembly's new budget for fiscal year 2027 includes a \$34.2 million "reduction" in enrollment-driven state funding. The budget, which awaits the signature of Gov. Brian Kemp, increased the state funding for teaching to \$3.5 billion, up nearly \$229.5 million from the budget approved last year.

The Senate initially

sought to roll that back by \$123.5 million, but settled on a \$34.2 million reduction in negotiations with the state House.

The Senate's reduction was aimed at online courses, which leaders in that chamber said should cost the state less than in-person classes.

Sen. Blake Tillery, R-Vidalia, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said on the Senate floor on April 2 that the Senate's move had been framed publicly as a cut-back.

"Only in government can more money next year than this year be called a cut," he said.

POSSUM Hollow 2.0
Dexter, Ga

Friday, April 17
Southern Gospel Sing 6:00-9:00
Free Admission!
Featuring The Generations, Dexter Baptist Praise Choir, In One Accord, and The Rowe Family

Saturday, April 18
Arts & Crafts Festival
Food Trucks & Live Music
Car & Tractor Show, Kid Activity Korner
\$5 Admission Ages 5 & Up

Possum Hollow Ballfield & Park
202 W Main St, Dexter, Georgia

Do I Qualify to be a Foster Parent?

Do I have to be married, rich or have any particular religion to qualify as a foster parent? These are some of the common questions asked by those individuals interested in fostering. The answer is "No". You do not have to be married, you must be able to support your own family, but you certainly do not have to be rich, nor have a particular religious belief to foster. If you are one of the individuals wanting answers to your question, please call Anna Stone at 478-275-6747. Open your heart to a child in need of a home and a little happiness.

"Be A Foster Parent"