

# The Courier Herald

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## Dublin schools dealing with mass exit of teachers Board chair says some teachers are re-applying, some positions will go unfilled

By RODNEY MANLEY  
Staff Reporter

Already searching for a new superintendent, the Dublin City School district has several other high-profile vacancies to fill after almost 30 resignations and an upper-level retirement so far this month.

The school board approved 20 resignations and three retirements Tuesday following a closed session

to discuss personnel.

However, district officials say the schools will be adequately staffed.

"We're not stressed about it," said Dublin City Board of Education Chairwoman Amanda Smith. "Some of those teachers are already reapplying."

Smith said the school board's delay in approving a new salary scale, as it sought to cut into a looming deficit, likely contributed

to the larger-than-usual exit.

"You can't fault them. The delay with the salary sheets and uncertainty of things kind of drove fear for some of them."

Despite cutting an estimated \$10 million in annual payroll since last August, when the district was found to be facing a \$13.4 million deficit by fiscal year's end, the system was still overstaffed in areas, Smith said.

Some of the vacant positions

will not filled, at least for now. For instance, Smith said, the agriculture teaching position will be one of the areas that could be revisited "as we have more interest and more funding."

"We have to ask what do our kids need. That's more money that could be spent on Tier I education."

Other positions will be classified differently to save money. The human resources position will no longer be considered a director's

position, but rather a coordinator or simply "human resources."

"We're looking at everything we can cut," said Smith.

Also last Tuesday, the board renewed the contracts of 18 teachers at Dublin Middle, Susie Dasher and Hillcrest. It renewed one on April 13 – a part-time contract for safety director Tim Chatman.

DUBLIN CITY  
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## Survival story ...

### Woman tells story of being advocate for her children

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

There was once a time when those looking at Dely Jamerson might think she had it all together. Looks, though, were deceiving.

Truthfully, she was handling the horror that a predator was abusing her children.

Jamerson, who lives in Laurens County, was the keynote speaker during the annual Stepping Stone Child Abuse Prevention Luncheon held at the Colemoor Estate on April 21.

In 2013, Jamerson and her husband at the time moved from California to Georgia with their four children. She left her family, friends and everything she knew because she believed they would build a better future for them.

"For a while, we felt like we were doing just that," Jamerson said. "In 2017, we bought our first home and land in a small community.



Dely Jamerson (center) was the keynote speaker for last week's annual Stepping Stone Child Abuse Prevention Luncheon/PAYTON TOWNS III

It felt safe. I felt like we had built something beautiful. But the life I thought I had built came crashing down when I discovered something unimaginable."

With a pause, Jamerson continued.

"I am the mother of two sexual abuse survivors," Jamerson said. "Their predator was my husband for nearly two decades. When people hear stories like this, their

focus rightfully goes to the victims. But what people rarely talk about is the impact this kind of trauma has on the caregiver. I was trying to hold everything together when the entire world feels like it is collapsing. It often felt like I had been thrown into the middle of the ocean without knowing how to swim and without a life jacket. We were just trying to survive."

Jamerson said there

were days when the pain was so much that she thought about ending her life.

"But when you are a mother, giving up is not an option," she said. "My children deserved justice. They deserved healing. They deserved peace. So, I kept fighting. I became their advocate."

She stayed connected with her faith and God. Jamerson tried to show them what resilience and

strength looks like and what it meant to keep going no matter what happened.

"This journey has not been easy," Jamerson said. "I knew I was standing in the aisle of a life-altering, traumatic event. I struggled deeply. What I came to understand through this process is things can be messy and

SURVIVOR  
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## Stepping Stone honors local students, law enforcement, DA officials

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

A local help group handed out awards to local students for their essays while also honoring a law enforcement officer and a victim's advocate with the local district attorney's office during its annual child abuse prevention luncheon.

Stepping Stone Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center, which began serving victims of child abuse and neglect in Laurens County in 1999, held the event at the Colemoor Estate.

"We have grown to serve 10 counties in the Dublin and Oconee Judicial Circuits," said Emily Brookshire, executive director at Stepping Stone. "Stepping Stone's work focuses on providing victims of sexual and physical abuse, sexual assault, neglect, witnesses to violent crimes and commercially sexually exploited children."



From left: Essay winners Garrick Hodges (ELHS), Kí'ara Johnson (WLHS), E'Maria Ransom-Scruggs (Dublin High) and Johnthe Allen (WLHS)/PAYTON TOWNS III

Kelly Canady talked about the Dublin Exchange Club's participation with Stepping Stone and its

prevention essay contest. Johnthe Allen, from West Laurens High School, was named the winner and

awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

"The goal of the essay contest is to encourage

students to take an interest in child abuse prevention," Canady said. "They do the necessary research to comprise a quality essay based on the theme presented by the child abuse prevention committee."

This year's theme was "The 'Dark Web' and Its Link to Child Exploitation: What Safeguards Do Parents and Youth Need to Know." The students had to write more than 550 words and cite proper references. The winning essay will be used in various publications in conjunction with the April Child Abuse campaign.

"This year we had 13 entries," Canady said.

Allen thanked Stepping Stones and the various agencies that help fight against child abuse.

"You are truly the hands and feet of Jesus," he said before reading his essay

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## Theater group working with patrons who bought fake 'Annie' tickets

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

Dublin Community Theatre's production of "Annie" was a hit.

Unfortunately, some patrons arrived to find out they had purchased tickets from somebody with no affiliation with the theater group.

"The sun came out tomorrow of what has been a wonderful production and really all the feedback we've heard has been exceptionally positive," said "Annie" director Glenda Berry, who is also the executive director of the Downtown Development Authority. "The negative has been that we have a situation that touches on one of the subplots in the show about someone taking advantage of others."

A few weeks ago, a woman called Theatre Dublin to confirm their seats. Berry could not find them on the theater's printout.

"We have never had this situation before," she said. "I just asked her how much did she pay for her ticket."

The woman responded by saying she paid \$66.

"I told her I was sorry, but it sounded like she was directed to a third-party site and you paid much more than we would charge," Berry said. "We put on our social media page that if they paid far above face value, to get in touch with us and we'll give them a complimentary ticket to one of our future shows just as a way to show our appreciation that you tried to support Dublin Community Theatre."

"You tried to see the show, and it's truly not your fault that somebody scammed you."

DCT shows cost \$20 or \$25. Some did show up Thursday night with scam tickets.

"We recognized there was an issue, and we quickly found some more seats for them," Berry said. "All of them had paid higher prices for their tickets. If people overpaid for their ticket to 'Annie,' we'll give them another ticket for another show."

For shows and prices at Theatre Dublin, people can call (478) 272-2560.

"This is something you don't want to happen," Berry said. "There has been a lot of hard work on this show and somebody else benefited from something they had nothing to do with."



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## Missing Dublin woman with dementia found safe

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

A 76-year-old Dublin woman who had gone missing Sunday morning was found early Monday.

According to Dublin Police Chief Keith Moon, Jacuqelyn Rozier was found in a bathroom at Dublin Con-

struction paint shop around 7 a.m. Monday.

"Miss Rozier has been found safe and will be transported to the hospital to be checked out," Moon said. "Thank you to all of you and to our community for your help."

Police said Rozier went missing

from South Jefferson Street and was last seen around 3 a.m. Sunday. The family discovered her missing between 7 to 7:30 a.m. She was last seen wearing a black dress, white shoes and a curly wig.

The family told police she has dementia and did not know the direction of travel or her destination.

# Pending cuts to Georgia Medicaid payments could affect children who need therapy

By TY TAGAMI  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Therapists who help children with disabilities learn how to hold a crayon, walk and talk say their services to low-income families could be sharply reduced by proposed Medicaid rate cuts.

The government is not directly reducing payments. But two of the three contractors who manage Medicaid for Georgia sent letters to therapists recently to alert them to pending 20% reductions.

Providers say they can either absorb the cuts or leave the Medicaid managed care organization networks of those two companies.

The cuts would reduce rates to what therapists were being paid a decade ago, said Ben Braxley, president of the Georgia chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association.

"I don't know any business who could roll the clock back that far and feel that they will be in a sustainable situation," he said.

CareSource, one of the managed care companies, sent letters in late March that said it was cutting reimbursements to 80% of the Medicaid fee schedule effective May 11.

The cut is "part of our broader effort to support sustainable program operations that ensure continued access to medically necessary services" by Medicaid recipients, said one letter reviewed by Capitol Beat.

A second company, Peach State Health Plan, sent letters in April with the same rate cut effective May 15.

Both companies said in responses to queries from Capitol Beat that their moves were intended to contain rising costs.

"These updates align with actions being taken by Medicaid programs nationwide to responsibly manage public resources as demand for these services grows," a statement from CareSource said.

Peach State said it was responsible for ensuring recipients get care "in an affordable way" and that the company was negotiating with providers.

"These conversations are ongoing and we are committed to ensuring uninterrupted access to care for our members," the company said.

The cuts follow news about inflated billing in other states.

The Wall Street Journal published several recent articles about excessive billing for autism therapy. In 2023, a provider in Indiana was charging \$1,600 an hour and getting paid \$640, according to the Journal. Federal investigators documented cases where therapy purportedly was performed while patients were

napping or watching videos, such as the 2013 film "The Smurfs 2," the publication reported.

Reported rates of autism in young children have risen rapidly over the past two decades, increasing pressure on Medicaid.

But the cutbacks contemplated by CareSource and Peach State would affect thousands of children who do not have autism but still require therapy to move, manage pain and perform daily tasks, such as getting dressed. The cuts would also affect children who need help learning to speak.

Only those with severe chronic conditions, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and spina bifida are unaffected. The state manages their care directly. Two years ago, state lawmakers increased reimbursement rates for providers who treat those children.

That was a nod to rising costs, said Kimberly Oviedo, who provides therapy services in Acworth.

Her staff of 25 at Beyond Limits Pediatric Therapy Center serves about 500 children a week, she said. More than half are on Medicaid, so if she opts out of those companies' networks, many might have to find another provider.

"My heart doesn't want these kids to not have services, but I also have a business to run," Oviedo said.

If she accepts the rate cuts, she said, it could bankrupt her clinic, affecting her patients who are not on Medicaid.

The vast majority of Shalli Lewis' patients are on Medicaid. Her Word of Mouth Therapy clinic in Statesboro sees about 900 children enrolled with one of Georgia's three managed care organizations. She has 16 therapists, and their advanced degrees cost money to obtain. She faces a tough decision: if she leaves the networks, it could crush her business. But if she stays, the rate cuts would probably drive her younger therapists to employers that do not rely on Medicaid. They still have student loans to pay.

"We can't continue to take a cut on what was already bottom of the barrel rates when inflation is higher than what it's ever been," Lewis said.

She said her clinic is one of two within 50 miles. Their patients effectively have nowhere else to go.

If these therapists leave the networks, the Medicaid managed care contractors are still obliged to serve the children on their rosters. Their contracts with the state require it. Further, Medicaid requires that patients have access to providers within a certain time and distance.

If too many providers leave the networks, the companies could wind up paying even more for out-of-network rates.

"I think it's a poor gamble," Braxley said, "but I do think it's a gamble that they think that providers and businesses will accept."

Roland Behm, a health policy advocate, said the Medicaid management companies won't necessarily be in a tough spot even if many of their partnering practitioners head for the exits.

It basically falls on patients to enforce their rights to service, he said, and that can be difficult for someone who is unfamiliar with the system. There are rights to appeal, but people must know how to do it, and they must adhere to strict deadlines, said Behm, co-founder of the Georgia Mental Health Policy Partnership.

Behm said the state agency that contracts with the Medicaid management companies does not aggressively enforce so-called "network adequacy." He illustrated that with a description of the directories given to patients who need to find an in-network provider.

"If you would just start going through that and calling them, you would find that many of them, sometimes over half, are not in network," he said. "They're not taking new patients. They're not taking that in-

urance. They've retired. They've died."

A spokesperson for the responsible state agency, the Department of Community Health, said by email that the state was not involved with the decision by CareSource and Peach State to negotiate down rates with their providers.

"That being said, DCH is responsible for oversight of our managed care contracts and ensuring the adequacy of the provider networks each CMO develops," the statement said.

The agency will increase the frequency of monitoring provider networks "to ensure the plans meet network adequacy and each network supports Medicaid members' access to services," the statement said. "Should any CMO fail to meet network adequacy standards established in its contract, appropriate actions will be taken."

Beyond that, it's unclear what, if anything, the state might do.

"I don't think this is the last we've heard of this, and I know that a lot of legislators are getting calls about it," state Rep. Matthew Gambill, R-Cartersville, said last week.

Oviedo is one of his constituents, and she had called him for help.

Gambill said CareSource told him they were reacting to an increase in demand for pediatric therapy.

"I think it's just kind of overwhelmed the system," he said. "So they're looking at ways to try to manage that and unfortunately it's manifested in the way that it has."

## MOMENTS IN TIME

\* On May 11, 1659, the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law banning the celebration of Christmas, with a prohibition on "feasting and similar satanic practices" accompanied by a five-shilling penalty. Nearly 40 years earlier, the governor of the Plymouth Colony, in similar Scrooge-like spirit, had actually (and personally) confiscated toys.

\* On May 12, 1903, cameraman H.J. Miles filmed President Theodore Roosevelt as he rode in a parade in his honor. The resulting movie, later played on nickelodeons in arcades across the country, was unusual not just because Roosevelt was one of the first presidents to have an official activity recorded in that medium, but because his carriage was escorted by the Ninth U.S. Cavalry Regiment, an all-Black company.

\* On May 13, 1920, the Socialist Party nominated Eugene V. Debs as its candidate for president in the upcoming November election, notably undeterred by the fact that he happened to be serving a decade-long sentence at an Atlanta federal penitentiary.

\* On May 14, 1973, Skylab, America's first space station, was successfully launched into orbit around the earth. Eleven days later, astronauts Charles Conrad, Joseph Kerwin and Paul Weitz rendezvoused with the station, repaired a jammed solar panel and

conducted scientific experiments during their 28-day stay aboard it.

\* On May 15, 1982, the Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder duet "Ebony and Ivory" grabbed the coveted top spot on the Billboard Hot 100, holding it for seven weeks and eventually becoming the biggest hit record of McCartney's post-Beatles career.

\* On May 16, 1985, three scientists from the British Antarctic Survey announced, in the scientific journal "Nature," their detection of abnormally low levels of ozone over the South Pole. Within two years, 46 nations signed the Montreal Protocol, pledging to phase out substances known to cause ozone depletion.

\* On May 17, 2004, Marcia Kadish and Tanya McCloskey of Malden, Massachusetts, tied the knot at Cambridge City Hall in Massachusetts, becoming the first legally married same-sex partners in the United States. That same day, 77 similar couples wed across the state, while hundreds more applied for marriage licenses.

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**Director of Facility Maintenance**

The Dublin Housing Authority is accepting resumes for the full-time position of Director of Facility Maintenance. The successful applicant must demonstrate key skills in the area of people management, budgeting, with a strong demonstration in communication and trouble shooting. The desired applicant must have experience in multi-family apartment management, property management or manufacturing/healthcare/education/real estate or educational facility management. An associate's degree in Facilities Management, Engineering, HVAC, electrical of related field or in these classes are a desired plus. Must possess a valid Georgia's driver's license; submit to pre-employment as well as random drug testing, and a criminal background check. The starting salary for this position is \$30.00 per hour depending upon qualifications. Resumes may be addressed to Brenda B. Smith, Executive Director, Dublin Housing Authority, PO Box 36, Dublin, GA, 31040. They may also be received via email at [dhousing@dublinhousingauthority.net](mailto:dhousing@dublinhousingauthority.net). Deadline for submittal is May 15, 2026.

The Dublin Housing Authority is an equal opportunity employer.

**Housing Administrative Assistant**

The Dublin Housing Authority is accepting resumes for the full-time position of Housing Administrative Assistant. The successful applicant must possess superb communication and computer literacy skills. Must be able to multi-task with moderate supervision in all areas of the DHA departmental structure. The ability to prepare clear, concise reports is a plus in this position. The position also performs the centralized collection of all rental payments. Qualifications for the job include an associate's degree in a related work-related field or business training in secretarial sciences or three years' related experience in a money-handling environment is desirable. The starting salary for this position is \$17.50 per hour depending on qualifications. Resumes may be addressed to Brenda B. Smith, Executive Director, Dublin Housing Authority, PO Box 36, Dublin, GA, 31040. They may also be received via email to [dhousing@dublinhousingauthority.net](mailto:dhousing@dublinhousingauthority.net). Deadline for submittal is May 15, 2026.

The Dublin Housing Authority is an equal opportunity employer.

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Rev. Dr. Jerry Roe, Pastor

**Homecoming**  
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In Concert  
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**SURVIVOR**

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complicated. Sometimes it feels like you are walking through a storm without an umbrella.”

Some resources in the community were good while others were not.

“There were people who fought for my family when I felt like there was nothing left to give,” Jamerson said. “There were individuals who reminded me that I was not alone.”

There was time it felt like it took forever for help to come. When it did, Jamerson reached out for it. There were agencies that worked tirelessly to get her children back into her care.

“And yet, other agencies placed my son into the custody and grasp of the very predator I was trying to protect him from,” Jamerson said. “There were moments where my children’s predator would show up at my house and even relocat-

ed two minutes from my home. It’s difficult to protect yourself from a predator when you are unable to obtain a restraining order because the abuse you endured was not considered physical.”

Jamerson said the abuse was psychological and emotional. She said it was devastating. She felt alone. Over time, she has learned how to deal with them, though they have not completely disappear.

“I have made it my mission to stay in the light,” Jamerson said. “When you stay in the light, it grows. I stopped focusing on the storm and started learning how to dance in the rain. I learn how to advocate for my children and myself.”

She hopes her story can impact other victims and encourage them to find their voice and speak their truth. Despite the obstacles, they are still survivors.

“There are resources in the form of people, advocacy groups and

communities that want to help you rebuild and grow them to be the very best version of yourself,” Jamerson said. “It is my hope that my story will help people reclaim their power and their voice.”

She hopes to one day complete a book on her experience.

“No one deserves to be preyed upon,” Jamerson said. “No child should ever have to suffer in silence. My experience has taught me the power of never giving up.”

Organizations like Stepping Stone played a big part to Jamerson and her family. She reached out to the agency for help more than once.

“Not one single time was I turned away,” Jamerson said. “I was not judged. They connected my family with therapy, resources and guidances that became critical to our whole journey. Stepping Stone became the light for one of the darkest chapters of our lives.

They also helped me realize something important. I am not just a caregiver, I am a survivor too. I made a decision that I was going to spend the rest of my advocating for sexual assault survivors and their families.”

She knows how lonely it can be going through this alone. She used to believe her story was about bumps.

“Today, my story is about survival,” Jamerson said. “It’s about a mother who refused to give up. It’s about the power of people and organizations who stands beside families when they need it most. My children are survivors and today I stand here as a survivor too. Not just for my family, but for every survivor and caregiver who are still fighting their way back to the light. Healing is possible. Justice is worth fighting for and none of us should have to walk this journey alone.”

**DUBLIN CITY**

Continued from page 1

Here are the resignations and retirements approved by the school board so far this month:

**April 21**

•Resignations: Antonio Tinsley, bus driver; Tanna Dobbs, Susie Dasher Elementary; Matt Starley, teacher, IGA; Brian Brown, teacher and head baseball coach, IGA; Pamela Woodward, teacher, IGA; Susan Landrum, teacher, Hillcrest Elementary; Nurka Holmes, teacher, Dublin Middle; Ross Tanner, teacher, Dublin Middle; Diana Bond, teacher, Dublin Middle; Donna Tydings, Dublin Middle; Matthew Pogue, teacher, Dublin Middle; Kimberly Rayner, teacher, Dublin Middle; Tyrone Gonder, counselor, Dublin Middle; Daryl O’Neal, teacher, Dublin Middle; Mark Donnell, teacher, Dublin High; Monique King, teacher, Dublin High; Jessica Lemon, counselor, Dublin High; Cynthia Scott, teacher, Dublin High; Anne Murphy, teacher, Dublin High; Marcus Rayner, teacher and band director Dublin High.

•Retirements: D’Andrea King, teacher, Susie Dasher; Becky Soles, teacher, IGA; Amy Duke, director of human resources

**April 13**

•Resignations: Matt Taylor, principal, IGA; Lantysa Smith, teacher, IGA; Seth Watts, teacher, Dublin Middle; Kari McDaniel, teacher, IGA; Jasmyn Mikel, academic coach, Susie Dasher; Michelle Mitchell, teacher and head girls basketball coach, Dublin High; Anclia Chisholm-Brooks, teacher, Hillcrest

•Retirements: Ella Belflower, teacher, IGA

**STEPPING STONE**

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to the audience. (Note: The entire essay can be found in today’s editorial section on page 4)

E’Maria Ransom-Scruggs, from Dublin High School, was named the winner of the Accepting the Challenge of Excellence award and received a \$1,000 scholarship. Garrick Hodges from East Laurens High School and Ki’ara Johnson of West Laurens High both received \$500 scholarships. The A.C.E. Award recognizes students who have made dramatic changes in their attitude and performance during their high school years and have overcome significant circumstances to beat the odds and are eligible for graduation.

“Recognition of a well-deserved youth has an impact on their future,” Canady said. “Each local high school can submit one nominee as their A.C.E. winning representative. Each one is deserving of this recognition.”

Ransom-Scruggs will represent the Dublin Exchange Club at the district level. She gave Dublin Exchange Club member Jeff Bruton permission to share a small summary of her life’s story. She and her siblings were put out of their home by her biological mother.

“She eventually entered the foster care system where she had to adapt to unfamiliar environments and learn independence at a young age,” Bruton said. “Foster care separated her from her siblings and took her to multiple homes and school systems.”

Eventually Ransom-Scruggs wound up in Dublin. Because of all the moves, she fell behind her peers in academics. She de-

scribed surviving sexual assault on multiple occasions.

“She said that the trauma she endured led to dark, dark moments in her life,” Bruton said. “She struggled with self-harm and at one point did not want to live anymore.”

This led to two psychiatric hospitalizations.

“Overcoming that chapter required courage, support and decision to believe that her life had value,” Bruton said. “Choosing to fight for herself was one of her greatest victories.”

When she was 12, she found the stability and family she had been seeking for several years when she was adopted by a couple who had no children. Ransom-Scruggs, who is now a senior, has maintained good grades and is set to graduate this May.

“My experiences do not define me,” she wrote. “My perseverance does. I’m resilient. I’m compassionate and determined to succeed.”

Ransom-Scruggs plans to attend Augusta University and become a social worker.

“I learned how life-changing it can be when someone listens, believes in you and reminds you that your life has value,” she wrote.

“I want to advocate for children in foster care and become the kind of social worker who will ensure children are protected, supported and seen. I want to be the steady adults I once needed. My goal is to strengthen my community by supporting its most vulnerable members. When children feel safe, and families feel supported, communities become stronger. Turning my pain into purpose will not only change my life but it will also allow me to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others

and help create a more passionate world.”

Brookshire hoped the essays about child abuse heard during the luncheon did leave the audience with a bad feeling.

“I hope these stories about incredible children and families will inspire you to do more, speak out and join this cause every day,” Brookshire said. “This work needs to be all of our mission and purpose. I hope these stories really spoke to your heart.”

Stepping awarded Ebony Blake, victim’s advocate with the Dublin District Attorney’s office, and Dublin Police Department Investigator Amelia Contreras with its community awards. Blake was described as someone who shows what it means to lead with compassion while she helps victims in and out of the courtroom.

Chief Assistant DA Kelly Weathers wrote up a statement about Blake. Weathers remembered first seeing Blake when she served as a grand juror in the Middle Judicial Circuit. Weathers saw her interactions and could tell a lot about Blake’s passion.

“When the opportunity later arose for her to join our office as a victim advocate, I was both hopeful and grateful that she was available and willing to accept the position,” Weathers wrote. “She has exceeded every expectation. When victims of crime feel overwhelmed, isolated or lost at sea, she has an uncanny ability to meet them where they are. She offers not only support but perspective, steady, thoughtful guidance that helps individuals gain a sense of control and dignity through some of the most difficult moments of their lives.”

Blake’s work strengthens

the justice process. Victims who feel seen, heard and supportive are more likely to remain patient with the process and develop trust needed to participate in the case.

“She encourages victims to confide, grow and seek out the tools and resources they need to heal and move forward,” Weathers wrote. “In doing so, she not only serves individuals but improves case outcomes and strengthens our ability to pursue justice. Simply put, Ebony Blake is an exceptional victim’s advocate. Her presences elevates every case she touches and her influence is felt not only by victims but by everyone.”

Stepping Stone said Contreras is committed to protecting survivors, dedicated to preventing child abuse and cared about victims receiving justice. Contreras has worked dozen of crimes against children, human trafficking and sexual assault cases in Dublin.

“Since beginning (in the Criminal Investigation Division) in 2024, she has dedicated herself to her discipline and has excelled,” wrote Dublin Police Chief Keith Moon. “I am happy that she is being recognized by Stepping Stone as a champion for those who need a voice.”

Brookshire also shared a few words saying, “Amelia is a pillar in the community. She works tirelessly to protect children and families. Works her cases with care, engages with team members without ego, shares her knowledge to the benefit of those who works with her and has an unbelievably generous spirit. Many of our cases involve young people, especially young women, and I am thankful that they have Investigator Contreras

as their hero and role model. She is most certainly one of mine.”

Brookshire shared that Stepping Stone provided 51 forensic medical exams, 240 forensic interviews of abused youth and 1,117 individual therapy services. They also continue to offer the following: parenting education courses, peer support groups, legal advocacy, expert testimony and providing protective orders. They also engage the community in education events, hosts a community pantry and free formula driver as well as hold a public health fair in the Dublin and Oconee Judicial Circuit. They also maintain a 24/7 crisis hotline (478-595-8339).

OUR TAKE...

# Be more like the sun than Rooster

As the story on the front-page shows, there are still Roosters in our world.

Rooster, for those who do not know, was a character in "Annie." He is Miss Hannigan's bad brother who comes up with a scam to try to trick Mr. Warbucks out of money. The only thing is his scam not only includes taking money from Warbucks by him and his girlfriend Lily pretending to be Annie's parents, but it also means making Annie "disappear."

Now, what did Annie do to them to deserve that? Nothing. It was a way to make a quick buck while little to no thought went toward Annie. Thankfully, the scam was stopped, and all the appropriate villains went to jail.

Last Thursday, Dublin Community Theatre had opening night for "Annie." There were a lot of tickets pre-sold. Many of those patrons were allowed to enter, purchase some food and drinks and sit down in the seats they had bought to watch and enjoy the show.

Some showed up to find out that not only did they not have a seat, but they had been scammed. Some Rooster – or Roosters – had apparently pulled their own, "buncho job" as the male villain says in the show.

These patrons bought seats three times the normal price of a seat for a DCT production (\$20 or \$25). As "Annie" director Glenda Berry said, someone else out there made money off something they did not put anything into. It is frustrating.

It is also a reminder that consumers must be on their toes when it comes to things like this because the Rooster's of the world will take even a small thing and use it for their advantage. And as with the many scams that we have heard about in the past, sometimes it is better to call the business you are buying from or talking with to verify it is legitimate.

The patrons for Thursday's show were able to come in and view the production, as well as get a chance to see a future DCT show at no charge. This would have been sadder if a relative traveled many miles to watch a loved one perform in the show only to be told they had been scam and there were not enough remaining seats to be allowed inside Theatre Dublin.

While this is an unfortunate situation, the sun has popped out and it is upon us to continue to shine on. As we saw in the character of Annie, who was filled with that optimistic spirit of seeing things better than they were, good will always conquer while those like Rooster will eventually be discovered for who they are, and dealt with.

– Payton Towns III

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"The man who has no imagination has no wings."

- Muhammed Ali

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them"

- Psalm 75:8 (KJV)

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

- April 28, 2026 is...
- Workers Memorial Day
- National Blueberry Pie Day
- Great Poetry Reading Day
- Biological Clock Day
- Pay it Forward Day

# The wrong way to spread mayo on a sandwich

Almost a year ago, my family was having breakfast in a hotel just a few miles from the Biltmore.

We had visited the famous mansion the day before and were preparing to make a trek back to Dublin. My brother's family had joined my wife and I since we were celebrating her birthday. She wanted to go to the Biltmore in the spring, and since she was turning half a century, we let her choose the destination.

While drinking my coffee, my niece looked at me and with a grin on her face, asked, "Hey Uncle P, what is this about your dad getting mad at you for using a spoon to put mayonnaise on a sandwich?" I looked at my brother and knew it was something he had mentioned to his children. How else did my 10-year-old niece know to ask me such a question?

It was ironic that my brother and I had recently talked about this situation. So, I knew that my brother must have mentioned it to his kids – just like he told them about me throwing a stapler at him when we were little (You may recall that I wrote about this in last week's "Man About Town").

When it comes to sandwiches, my favorite meat placed in the middle is ham. Throw some mayonnaise on a piece of bread along with sliced cheese and tomato and it is time to chow down. I cannot recall any ham that I did not like to eat.

## MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

I like ham anyway you can slice it. Just not served with green eggs – or yellow eggs either.

My grandparents liked ham, too. In fact, my grandfather loved pork. It was not uncommon for him to cook a meatloaf, vegetables and some rolls, look at it, and pull out some sausage or ham to go along with it. I was fine with the meatloaf and sides, but I did add a slice of ham or a piece of sausage or two to my plate when it was time to eat.

My grandfather believed in keeping a ham in the freezer. If there was all of a sudden a shortage of ham, I believe we would have been okay at his house. We would go out to eat on a Saturday night in Macon and bring back leftovers. We would walk through the front door with our takeout bags and tell him we were full and could not eat another bite.

Without missing a beat, my grandfather would ask if we wanted anything else

to eat, and then shout back to grandma to, "get out the ham!"

One evening, I had just left my dad's room and just happened to cross paths with my grandfather in the kitchen. He said he was still hungry and wanted to know if I wanted him to cook up some ham for a sandwich. I said yes, and before I could say anything else, he was frying two pieces of ham that seemed to have appeared out of thin air.

I stood there in the kitchen and watched him cook the ham as it sizzled in the frying pan. He grabbed two paper towels, some bread and mayonnaise. He pulled the ham out of the frying pan and let it sit for just a little bit. Then he placed the bread on the paper towels, grabbed a nearby spoon and slathered some mayonnaise on his bread. He, then, put the spoon back in the mayonnaise jar.

Turning around to me he said, "Go ahead, sugar,

and fix it the way you want to." Well, since there was no cheese or tomato around, I decided to do just what my grandfather did. I pulled out two pieces of bread, and I went to grab the spoon and scooped up the mayonnaise.

As I lifted the spoon out of the jar, the door to my dad's room opened. I proceeded to move the spoon to the bread and slather it just like my grandfather had done only moments before. That is when I heard my dad scream out, "No!" By the time he had screamed that out, the spoon was already on the bread.

Oh, he was mad. I was ordered to put it down and come back to his room where he proceeded to inform me that a spoon was not used to spread mayonnaise on bread. That was what knives were for.

When it came to disagreements, or lectures with my dad, it was hard to win against him. In fact, it was better to just let him have his say, and the less you said, the sooner you could get back to whatever it was you were doing before.

Not long into his lecture, he finally asked, "Who in the world showed you that it was okay to use a spoon to do that?" I was glad he asked.

"Papa. In fact, he is in the front room right now eating the sandwich he made by using that same spoon to put mayonnaise on it."

That ended that discussion.

# The 'dark web' and its link to child exploitation ...

*Editor's note: This is the winning entry in the Exchange Club essay contest awarded during the Stepping Stone Child Abuse Prevention Luncheon*

By JOHNTE ALLEN

ferred to as CSAM. Compare that to numbers reported sixteen years prior in 2008, where there just over 100,000 reports, showing that there has been a drastic increase in the demand for this illegal material due to changes in technology, platforms where the material is exchanged, and the accessibility to it all. With this increase in demand, there comes a responsibility for parents and children when using the internet and to ensure safety.

These crimes can take many forms and various methods. Some images are self-produced by minors, being coerced and catfished by people who work to gain their trust and get them to send images or explicit material. Some criminals are friends of minors, trusted adults, or simply strangers they encounter online. All criminals also don't exploit minors just for their own sexual gratification but also to "sexort" minors and their family for money, or to just sell and distribute it on the net.

Once this content is produced, it is a slippery slope that can only get worse. If a predator has access to any connected devices such as phones, computers, or tablets, they have access to any wide range of victims and can and will try to exploit anyone they can find.

The effects that these predators have on their victims are detrimental to their mental health and emotional development, and no two survivors are affected in the same way. In 2023, there were twenty cases of suicide that were reported as a direct result of being taken advantage of and sextortion. Many survivors report cases of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and disassociation practices.

Not only can some survivors deal with disorders like these, but there can also be weighty ramifications on psychosexual and psychosocial development, ac-

ording to the CSA Centre. Psychosexual development refers to the psychological aspect of sexual impulse, and psychosocial development refers to the correlation between social factors and internal thought and behaviors.

These two combined can negatively impact relationships they try to form as well as their ability to externalize emotions. These situations have implications for the rest of their life as it is something that survivors must carry with them every day. Not only can they deal with PTSD and mental health issues, but also behaviors like substance abuse, issues with emotional and physical intimacy, parent-child relationships, as well as a lack of motivation and disillusionment with faith and religion.

The reason that no two survivors are affected the same way has to do with the factors of their abuse. Things like the duration of their period of abuse, number of incidents, their age at the time of their abuse, relationship with the abuser, and support from their parents and loved ones are not all but major factors in the impacts that abuse can have.

Because of this, it is important for children to take safe practices online as well as that their guardians take the appropriate steps to ensure that their child is safe. Today's generation of children spends an unprecedented amount of time online.

Online games and social media platforms offer access to anyone in the world, and predators can take advantage of this fact. Meanwhile, parents occupied by work and life are often unable to monitor their children's social interactions online, and research shows that nearly two-thirds of parents don't teach their children how to have safe practices online.

This puts children at greater risk for becoming victims of CSAM related crimes, and it is very important that parents educate their kids on how to be safe as well as the risks and

dangers that are possible.

There are a variety of things that parents can do to keep their child safe such as establishing screen time limits, using parental control software, and reviewing privacy settings. The main thing, however, is education. Parents must first educate themselves on how technology works, how predators take advantage, and then take the steps to educate their children in a manner that is age appropriate.

Clearly setting and communicating ground rules for them and establishing what is and what isn't okay to share or post, as well as establishing who they can and cannot communicate with is vital. Boundaries can be viewed negatively by children and for that reason parents must stress that it is not for punishment for safety.

As they grow and mature, these boundaries can be trusted to the discernment of teens and young adults to the discretion of parents, but it is still important to know who they are communicating with.

Outside of communication, there are tools that parents can use, however they may not be cognizant. According to Pew Research Center, only 39% of parents utilize built-in blocking, filtering, or monitoring tools that apps provide. Things like this can make a major difference in protecting potential victims of CSAM.

In conclusion, the real-world dark web isn't what we see on the big screen. It's darker, more twisted, yet far more inconspicuous than we know.

However, the danger doesn't lie in the web itself, but the conditions such as anonymity and access that it allows. There is a responsibility that lies with parents and youth alike to take measurements to ensure they are not exploited.

Parents must be informed, engaged, and work to ensure that their children are diligent and aware of the dangers as well as the factors that can ensure their own safety.

# The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



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# GEORGIA TRUST

— for Local News —

DuBose Porter/PUBLISHER EMERITUS  
Pam Burney/GENERAL MANAGER  
Courtney Vessell/CIRCULATION MANAGER

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

When you picture the dark web, what comes to mind is probably the Hollywood dramatized version of it. An underground world filled with masked super geniuses with high-concept computers and technology with scripted agendas of government takedowns, selling billions worth of stolen goods to the highest bidder, bribing those in power, stealing classified documents, and all of it in the guise of ones and zeroes.

However, the dark web that exists in the real world is much less flashy, and much messier, quieter, and far more disturbing than anything that Hollywood could afford to put on the silver screen. The dark web is an area of the internet, equated to about six percent of internet information, that can only be accessed through specially encrypted software such as TOR (called The Onion Router). Software like this works to make users anonymous, scrambling their data to make it unreadable and thereby untraceable.

Despite common misconceptions, it is not illegal to access the dark web. Though it may raise ethical concerns, it's sometimes used by journalists, researchers, and activists who seek to bypass censorship and obtain information without surveillance. Nevertheless, the dark web is known for its criminal use for a reason.

Used for trafficking, stealing and selling personal information, and sexual crimes, the dark web hosts more criminals each year than it is possible to calculate. However, one of the most unfathomable uses for the dark web is its use for sexual child crimes and abuse.

According to numbers reported by CyberTipline, in 2024 there were over 20 million reports of child sexual abuse material, re-

**Dublin Police Department**  
- Jermaine Christopher Denson, 34, was charged with citation for marijuana less than one ounce, possession of amphetamine and possession of heroin on East Madison Street around 1 a.m. on April 15.

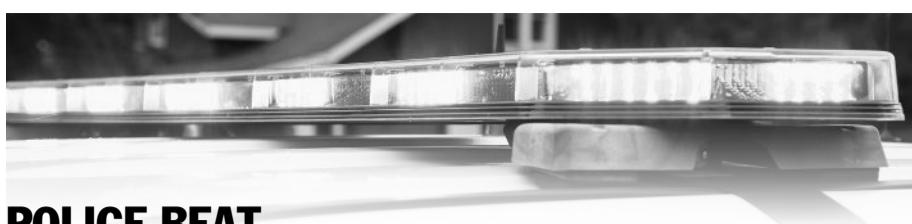
An officer was on patrol when he observed an individual on a bicycle in violation of OCGA, required mounted lights. The officer made a traffic stop at South Washington and made contact with the rider.

The officer could smell the odor of marijuana coming from Denson, and conducted a search on him, including his backpack.

Marijuana, a plastic bag with white rocks and another with multi colored pills were discovered. The bags were tested on scene by the officer, and they indicated a positive result for amphetamines and heroin.

Denson was arrested and transported to the LEC. He was released to jail staff with a citation for marijuana while warrants will be obtained for possession of the other narcotics.

- On April 16, around 12:53 a.m., an officer responded to Dewey Street in reference to a possible burglary in progress. Officers arrived



**POLICE BEAT...**

on scene and activated their body cameras.

Officers met with James Coombs, 39, who was kicking the door at that location. Officers detained Coombs by placing him into handcuffs and putting him into a patrol vehicle.

Officers made contact with another man who advised that he initially gave Coombs permission to come over, but then changed his mind once Coombs arrived. The man said Coombs began to kick the door and yelling, "You gonna let me in." The man placed his refrigerator against the door so Coombs could not enter the residence.

Coombs was arrested for criminal trespass and transported to the Laurens County Jail.

- Obed Diaz, 25, was charged with driving under the influence, driving while unlicensed and failure to maintain lane at the intersec-

tion of Bainbridge and East Gaines Street around 11:46 p.m. on April 14.

An officer stopped a 2003 Mitsubishi Montero Sport and the investigation led to Diaz's arrest.

**Laurens County Sheriff's Office**

- Around 5:21 a.m. on April 14, a deputy was dispatched to Deerwood Trail in reference to property damage.

- A theft occurred on Highway 19 between June 15, 2024 and April 8, 2026.

- A deputy met with a person at the sheriff's office in reference to a theft of mail on Wrecker Road between April 6 and 8.

- On April 11, around 9:30 p.m., a deputy responded to Veterans Boulevard in reference to a trespass.

- A theft happened on Mace Can-

non Road between April 8 and 11.

- Bryant Feagin II, 52, of Dublin, was charged with possession of marijuana and possession of firearm or knife during commission of or attempt to commit certain crimes at the intersection of the 441 Bypass and Highway 257.

On April 11, around 12:10 a.m., a deputy conducted a traffic stop on a white Infinity Q60 for failing to maintain lane. The traffic stop resulted in the discovery of suspected marijuana, suspected marijuana wax, suspected THC infused syrup and an unknown drug in the form of red capsule pills that tested presumptive for opiates on a mobile detect multi-drug test.

*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.*

**Classifieds**

**Employment**

**PUBLIC WORKS SERVICE TECHNICIAN I**

The City of Dublin is currently accepting applications for team members with positive attitudes and initiative. A Service Technician I in the Public Works Street Department is needed. Work involves the performance of a variety of tasks in constructing, maintaining and repairing water and sewer lines, streets, sidewalks, storm drains and related facilities. Applicants must have a valid Georgia driver's license, high school diploma or GED, and pass a drug screen. Starting salary is \$15.98 an hour. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered. Applicants may apply online through our [www.cityofdublin.org](http://www.cityofdublin.org) website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**WATER CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATOR**

The City of Dublin is accepting applications for an Equipment Operator in the Water Construction Department. This Team Member must have a positive attitude and initiative. The successful applicant duties will include performing skilled work in the operation of moderate to heavy equipment. Work involves the responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of moderately heavy or specialized equipment. This employee must be able to operate a diverse range of equipment which includes a variety of trucks and construction equipment. The operation of this equipment requires considerable manipulative skill and the ability to perform specialized tasks to which the equipment is assigned. Performs semi-skilled and some manual labor tasks in construction repair and maintenance of City water and sewer facilities. Work involves the performance of a variety of tasks in constructing, maintaining, and repairing water and sewer lines. This employee may supervise or act as a lead worker with a crew. Supervision is received from the Water Construction Superintendent who makes oral or written assignments and inspects work while in progress and upon completion. Applicant must pass a drug screen, have a high school diploma or GED and possess a minimum of a Georgia Class A Commercial Driver's License. Salary range for this position is \$38,705.37 - 59,993.33 annually. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered. Applicants may apply online through our [www.cityofdublin.org](http://www.cityofdublin.org) website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**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



**TELL IT!**

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**Ben Lanier presenting the** information for IGA is such a conflict of interest. We know the few on the board that want IGA in order to keep the top kids and his dad is one of them.

**Ben Lanier just gave the most honest** and transparent presentation I have heard in years from Dublin City. He seems to be the only one willing to deal in reality.

**Mr. Lanier said it was too** many kids to push back into schools - most of those aren't Dublin City kids so they will go back to county schools. You did not present real facts.

**Ben Lanier for super!** He gets it and gave such a real presentation. Thank you Ben for being honest and coming up with honest solutions.

**For all your Dublin City School** voters, y'all made your bed, now lie in it! The county people don't want consolidation because we don't want you messing up our system!

**So are IGA current families** grandfathered into new IB academy or will they have to meet the new "rigorous admission standards?" If you want to be transparent then everyone should have to reapply.

**The state superintendent has** requested that the Dublin City School Board shut the IGA down. So far, they have decided not to do that.

**Okay pit bull owners** in the Bush Lane area in East Dublin, there are some pit bulls running loose and killing neighborhood cats. If I find them on my property again, animal control are not going to do anything about it but I will. You need to keep your pets locked up.

**What are these boards running?** Learning centers or rearing centers? One of these days, the eye is going to fall out of the head and hit the ground like dice. And Liver Lips Louie is going to pick them up and start rolling them into the wall and start gambling.

**If Liver Lips Louie gets** through rolling them dice upon the wall, do you know what numbers are going to come up? Snake eyes.

**I don't know whose idea** it was to deliver the newspaper by U.S. mail, but we all know about the U.S. mail's delivery record. I guess, if you can't find your newspaper, you know it is in a tractor trailer in Palmetto, Ga.

**The best thing that could** happen is for the accreditation team to remove this board. It's not working and there are too many personal agendas.

**The magnet school is no different** from when we went it was called the accreditation class. These classes were held in the same building as regular school classes. Why shouldn't it be in the same building?

**Will Dublin City now ask** that the ESPLOST be used for a new magnet school rather than replace Hillcrest? I suggest one large enough for all elementary kids and use Susie Dasher for the magnet school. In the meantime, hopefully the city will not continue to waste money busing elementary kids to the school of their choice. Establish two districts and if a parents wants their kids to attend a different school, they should be responsible for transporting them. The board never seems to consider how their decisions impact bus transportation yet want to cut transportation costs.

**It looks like with all the changes** we are just moving the problem with the school system around the city. I hate to say it but the system is now just a large day care for kids during the day so parents don't have to deal with them, otherwise the scores would be a heck of a lot higher. Want to salvage the system go back to grade, middle school and high school instill discipline and get the parents to do their part not just claim race or privilege never had these issues back in the 50s and 60s. Teachers need to teach board members need to have a clue what they are doing and no indoctrination.

**When there is a major vote,** the Dublin BOE should have two called meetings. One for the presentation, and one a couple days later for the vote. Neither side asked for that but knew enough to vote?

**Former board member** Regina McRae has a lot to say at board meetings now. I wish she had spoken out more last year while she was vice chair of the board - so glad she finally found her voice!

**HERE'S A TIP**

By JOANN DERSON  
King Features

\* It's better to be a butterfly. Did you know, the more social you are, the better your health, researchers say.

\* Plastic grocery bags always come in handy. Try storing them in empty tissue boxes for the car or bathroom, or use an empty 12-pack soda box for more under your kitchen sink or in the garage.

\* "For foot cramps at bedtime, eat a banana in the evening. I think it is the potassium in the bananas, but it has had a good effect for me. And it can't hurt to get another serving of fruit per day, right?" -- L.I. in Missouri

\* "Another great use for baby powder (or corn starch): If you have a deck of cards that are stuck together, simply place them in a baggie and add a tablespoon of powder. Seal and shake, getting the dust in between the cards. When you remove the cards, shuffle them over a kitchen towel and they will be like brand new." -- R.D. in Texas

\* You can fill a mop bucket with a dustpan? Yes! Use the large end of the dustpan as a funnel from the faucet over the side of the sink, where your mop bucket is waiting to catch the waterfall. The handle acts as a spout.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembroke Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.  
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**IMPORTANT DELIVERY UPDATE**

*Dear Subscriber,*

We want to inform you of an upcoming change to your newspaper delivery service. Beginning Tuesday, May 5th, your newspaper will be delivered through the mail rather than by home delivery.

This adjustment allows us to continue providing reliable service while adapting to changes in our delivery operations. You can expect your newspaper to arrive via the postal service on a consistent schedule.

We appreciate your understanding and continued support. Please call our office before May 5th to verify your correct mailing address. If you have any questions or concerns about this change, please do not hesitate to contact our customer service team at 478-272-5522.

Thank you for being a valued subscriber.

*Sincerely,*

*The Courier Herald*

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# Raiders sweep 4-AAA T&F titles

## Dailey collects high points prize, one of a few dozen out of West, East, Dublin making way to sectionals

From STAFF REPORTS

West Laurens made an overwhelmingly strong showing at last Tuesday's 4-AAA track and field championships in Hephzibah, where both its teams claimed region titles and top distance runner Levi Dailey pulled off an impressive sweep of four events to become the boys high points winner.

The Raiders claimed gold medals, individual or team, in 11 events, and will have more than 20 athletes competing – in 19 solo events and seven relays – at Jefferson High School in this coming week-end's GHSA sectional event.

Dublin and East Laurens laced 'em up Monday at the region 2-High A meet, hosted by Bleckley County, and will combine to send a couple dozen back to Cochran – which will also be their sectional site – on Saturday to vie for a spot at state.

Each region's top four finishers, by event, qualify to advance to sectionals.

West Laurens' girls compiled 149 total points, and its boys 170, to outpace Baldwin on both sides of Tuesday's team standings.

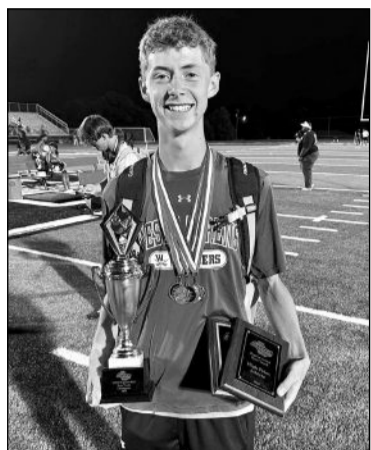
Great all-around performances by multiple Raider athletes also put a handful in the running for the coveted high-points award – Sophie Kavuri and Rylee Howard finishing second and third in the girls' overall count.

Dailey dominated his competition in three individual races and joined three others for a history-making run at gold in the 4x800 meter relay.

The senior won by more than a second each in the 800 (which he was running for the first time ever) and 1600-meter dashes, and had more than 30 seconds to spare in the 3200.

Nathan Larson, Stephen Odum and Nolan Locke joined him in blazing past a school record with a time of 8:53.76 in the 4x8.

The Lady Raiders' relay squad of Armoni Anderson, Mirandon Timmons, Jahalee Snead and Miranda Surrey also claimed the region title in the ultra-competitive 4x1. Westside runners tag-teamed



**THE DAILEY SHOW:** West Laurens' Levi Dailey put on a spectacular display at last week's 4-AAA championship meet, earning first-place titles in the 800, 1600 and 3200M events, and 4x800 relay, on his way to the overall high points win/SPECIAL PHOTO

their way to qualifying finishes in each of the five other relay events they were entered (the boys 4x4 the only exception) on the day.

Highlights from the 2-High A championship meet included a repeat by East Laurens' Caleb Jackson, who defended both his 2025 titles in the throws as one of three Falcons, out of nine total sectional qualifiers, who perched at the top of podiums.

It was a strong day for Dublin's relay teams, of which two out of the five who advanced finished runner-up. The Irish also had seven individuals punch their ticket to the next stage of competition.

In the team standings, the East Laurens girls finished third overall with 101 points, just ahead of Dublin with 67. The Irish, with 65, were just ahead of the Falcons, with 40, in the boys team count.

Here are all of last week's champions and qualifiers:

### West Laurens Champs:

- Levi Dailey (2:09.05), 800-meter dash; (4:48.68), 1600-meter dash; (10:55.17), 3200-meter
- Justin Blash (39.75), 300-meter hurdles
- Bryson Campbell (10-0), pole vault
- Leroy Mack (49-2.5), dis-



# Drafted: Height goes to 49ers in third round

Dublin's Romello Height got the call of a lifetime Friday night as the San Francisco 49ers selected him 70th overall, in the third round of the NFL Draft. Height, shown pursuing Brooks County's Ni'tavion Burrus during the 2019 state championship game, was an all-state defensive end his junior and senior high school seasons, the latter a consensus AA defensive player of the year selection for an Irish team that won it all. The All-Big 12 edge recorded nine sacks, 10 tackles for loss and a pair of forced fumbles to help lead Texas Tech to a conference title and College Football Playoff bid this past fall, after stops at Auburn, USC and Georgia Tech earlier in his career. More coverage to come in upcoming editions and at [courierheraldtoday.com/sports/HORACE\\_AUSTIN\\_File](http://courierheraldtoday.com/sports/HORACE_AUSTIN_File)



**GREEN AND SILVER:** The Dublin girls 4x200 relay team of Ny'Jeria Anderson, Kamryn Andrews, Kayleigh Rozier, and Khalil Maddox (left) and boys 4x800 squad of Curtis Harvey, Malik Isaac, Gabe Carcamo, and Nehemiah Snell raced to second-place finishes Monday in Cochran/SPECIAL PHOTO, courtesy Dublin City Schools



- cus
- Rylee Howard (14:20.09), 3200-meter dash
  - Sophie Kavuri (7-0), pole vault
  - Leah Wells (102-2), discus

### Other qualifiers:

- Sebastian Rodriguez – fourth, 400-meter
- Nathan Larson – runner-up, 1600-meter
- Justin Blash – third, 110-meter hurdles
- Juvon Hill – runner-up, triple jump
- Joshua Brown – runner-up, pole vault
- Kelsey Ashley – third, pole vault
- Evan Holmes – runner-up, discus
- Brooklyn Jackson – third, 100-meter; third,

- 200-meter
- London Williams – third, 400-meter
- Armoni Anderson – fourth, 400-meter
- Rylee Howard – fourth, 800-meter; runner-up, 1600-meter
- Sophie Kavuri – fourth, 1600-meter; runner-up, 3200-meter
- Lovely Cross – third, high jump
- Sydney Howard – fourth, triple jump
- Jerniya Mack – fourth, discus; third, shot put

### Relays:

- Boys 4x100 – runner-up
- Boys 4x200 – third
- Boys 4x800 – champion (8:53.76)
- Girls 4x100 – champion (49.43)
- Girls 4x200 – runner-up
- Girls 4x400 – third
- Girls 4x800 – fourth

### East Laurens Champs:

- Caleb Jackson (153-8), discus; (49-3.5), shot put
- Kalise Williams (17.27), 100-meter hurdles; (50.13), 300-meter hurdles
- Deanna Lowther (102-10), discus

### Other qualifiers:

- Major Floyd – third, 300-meter hurdles
- Garyunna Mitchell – fourth, 100-meter; third,



**BACK FOR ANOTHER SHOT:** East Laurens' Caleb Jackson defended his 2025 region title in both shot put (above) and discus last week, earning a chance to return to state, where he was top four in each event last year/SPECIAL PHOTO

- 200-meter
- Kimora Dudley – third, 400-meter
- Zahmaria Robinson – fourth, high jump
- Quean Washington – fourth, discus
- Deanna Lowther – fourth, shot put

### Relays:

- Girls 4x100 – fourth
- Girls 4x400 – third
- Girls 4x800 – fourth

### Dublin Qualifiers:

- Vicente Bond – runner-up, 100-meter; third, 200-meter
- Major Morton – third, discus

## SCOREBOARD

### BASEBALL

Friday

- Dublin 4, Jasper Co. 1
- Jasper Co. 4, Dublin 1
- Fitzgerald 2, East Laurens 1
- Fitzgerald 14, EL 4
- West Laurens 11, Gilmer 1
- WL 6, Gilmer 3

Saturday

- Jasper Co. 7, Dublin 5
- Trinity 12, Tallulah Falls 10

## PREP SCHEDULE

### SOCCER

Monday

- Central Fellowship at Trinity/5 p.m.

Tuesday

- GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
- Heritage (Ringgold) at West Laurens (girls) /5:30 p.m.

Wednesday

- GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
- Peach Co. at WL (boys) /6 p.m.

### BASEBALL

Thursday

- GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
- Northwest Whitfield at West Laurens (doubleheader)/3 p.m.

Friday

- Trinity at Piedmont/4 p.m.

- GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
- Northwest Whitfield at WL (Game 3, if necessary) /4 p.m.

Saturday

- Trinity at Tallulah Falls /2 p.m.

### TENNIS

- GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
- Tuesday
- Spalding at WL (boys) /3:30 p.m.

Wednesday

- Richmond Academy at WL (girls)/3:30 p.m.

### GOLF

Monday

- Trinity at GIAA State Tournaments
- (Boys: Eatonton; Girls: Hawkinsville)

Tuesday

- WL at GHSA Area Tournament (Georgia Southern GC Statesboro)

- Domimarkeyo Walden – third, shot put
- Jaymi Kate McLendon – fourth, 800-meter
- Khalil Maddox – third, 100-meter hurdles
- Taylor Turnley – runner-up, high jump
- Jordan Renfro – third, shot put

### Relays:

- Boys 4x100 – third
- Boys 4x200 – fourth
- Boys 4x800 – runner-up (Curtis Harvey, Malik Isaac, Gabe Carcamo and Nehemiah Snell)
- Girls 4x200 – runner-up (Ny'Jeria Anderson, Kamryn Andrews, Kayleigh Rozier, Maddox)
- Girls 4x800 – third (McLendon, Colleen Tyner, Renfro and Janiya Freeman)



**BRINGING HOME THE HARDWARE:** West Laurens track and field teams show off their haul of trophies and medals after last week's strong performance, good for region titles by both girls and boys, at the 4-AAA championships in Hephzibah/SPECIAL PHOTO

# WL moves on; Dublin, EL fall in first round of tennis playoffs

From STAFF REPORTS

West Laurens' region championship tennis teams swept their first-round foes last week to advance in the GHSA state playoffs, while the county's three remaining post-season qualifiers each fell as they opened the tournament on the road.

The Raiders won their back-to-back matches Wednesday, the boys 5-0 over Dougherty and girls 4-1 against West Hall.

East Laurens' girls traveled to Rome to play Armuchee on Tues-

day, and were defeated 5-0. The Falcon boys lost at Swainsboro 3-0 on Wednesday. Dublin's boys were shut out 3-0 at Fannin County.

West's squads will be back on their home courts for second rounders this week, the boys on Tuesday as they welcome Spalding and the girls Wednesday in a rematch with region 4-AAA rival Richmond Academy.

The Lady Raiders (16-8, 10-0 region) won all but their first singles match in Wednesday's opener, with West Hall's Lindsay Joseph edging Brook Collins 6-3 and 6-4

for the visitors' only break point.

The No. 2 singles match also got a little tight, but was straightforward for Elynn Alligood after a tiebreak win to claim the first set 7-6. She cruised 6-1 in the second to complete the victory over E.C. Kohler.

It was all Augusta Rodgers on the third line, as she won straight sets 6-2 and 6-3 against Alise Gendreau.

Both doubles matches went as smoothly, with Anna O'Neal and Hannah Wells taking care of Alivia Gravitt and Annayi Lopez 6-0 and

6-2, and Laney Shields and Jaelynn Walker winning both sets 6-1 and 6-2 over Isabella Ramos and Maria Rosales Alvarez.

The West Laurens boys (16-8, 10-0 region 4-AAA) faced little pressure in any of their five matches. Charlie Barfield played No. 1 singles and defeated Javien Butts 6-1, 6-1. Cam Spires swept Coleman Hill 6-0, 6-3. It was 12-up, 12-down for Bryce Payne against Eric Willis on the third singles court.

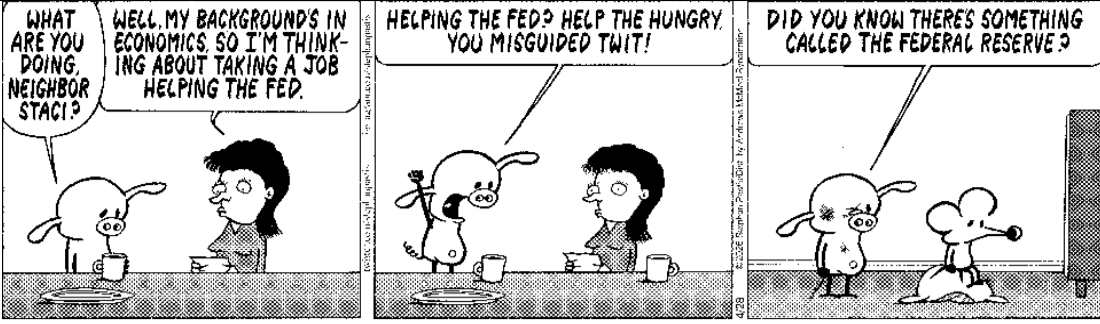
In doubles, Cullen Christian and Aiden Payne took straight sets by 6-1 scores against Daiveon Da-

vis and Trevon Williams. Matthew Gibbs and Jax Crawford topped Garrison Sanders and Brealan Jackson 6-0 and 6-1.

Little went the way of the Dublin boys Thursday in Blue Ridge, though the trip – which included a stop to hike to the top of Amicalola Falls earlier in the day – was a memorable experience as the Irish took some time to enjoy the scenery.

No details besides final scores of East's matches at Swainsboro and Armuchee were available at press time.

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



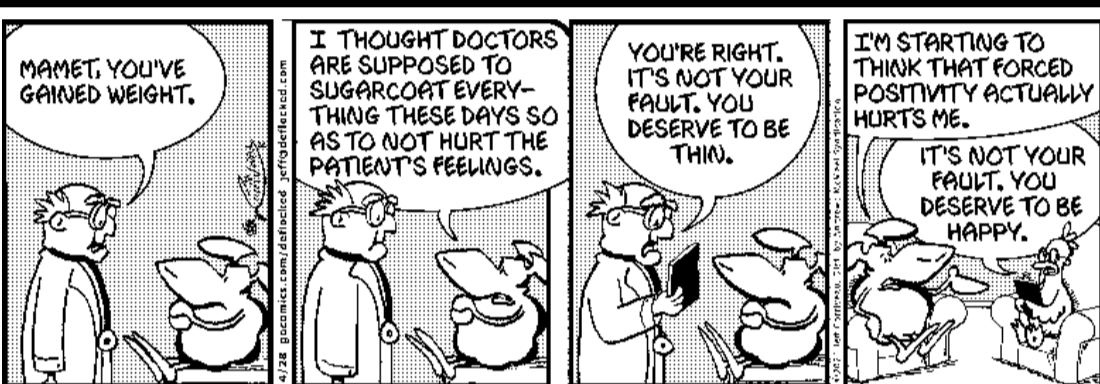
GARFIELD



OVERBOARD



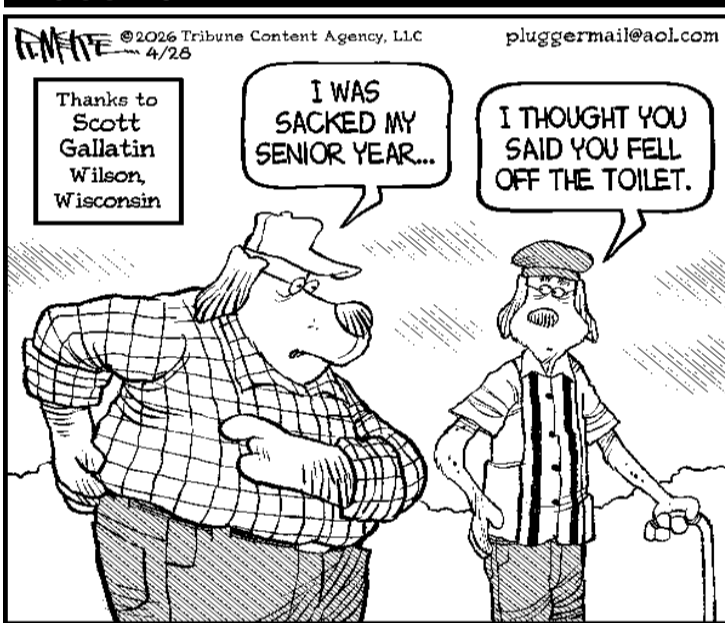
DEFLOCKED



ZIGGY



PLUGGERS



A plugger uses "old football injury" to describe what's wrong with him because the truth is too embarrassing.

God's calling, but man lets it go to voicemail!

DEAR ABBY: I'm 43, and I have been married and divorced three times. I have three adult children and a 13-year-old. My last divorce was final a few weeks ago. I was sure she was The One. Now she now wants to give us nine months and see if we are going to reconcile.



then her tone shifted, and she did thank me for my concern. I retreated to my office slightly embarrassed.

Abby, did I commit a faux pas by inquiring into her private grief journey? I didn't think asking how a therapy group meeting went would cross that line, but I guess it did. -- CARING, NOT PRYING IN OHIO

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

you can serve a religious community besides joining the priesthood. (Ask your friend.)

I am confused. Years ago, before I married the first time, I thought I was called to be a Catholic priest, but I didn't listen. A couple of months ago, a good friend who is a priest gave a homily: "Have we ignored God's call for us in our lives?" I feel I have done just that.

My third ex-wife wants me to wait to see what will come of us. I honestly know the right answer. But, at the same time, I want to do what I want, not what God wants me to do. I know the way He wants me to go, but I still want to do things my way. Any advice would be sincerely appreciated. -- FINDING A PATH IN TENNESSEE

DEAR ABBY: Recently, the husband of a co-worker I'll call "Tammy" died from cancer. After she came back to work a week or two ago, I learned she took a day off to attend a grief counseling group, and I thought, "Good for her!" Our office is like a big family.

When I saw her, I asked her how the grief counseling went and if it helped. I said it to show I care about her; I didn't necessarily want details. Tammy looked at me deadpan and said, "Did you really just ask me that?" I knew then that I had overstepped, but I'm not sure how. I responded, "I'm sorry. Is that not appropriate to ask?" She responded "No." But

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.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

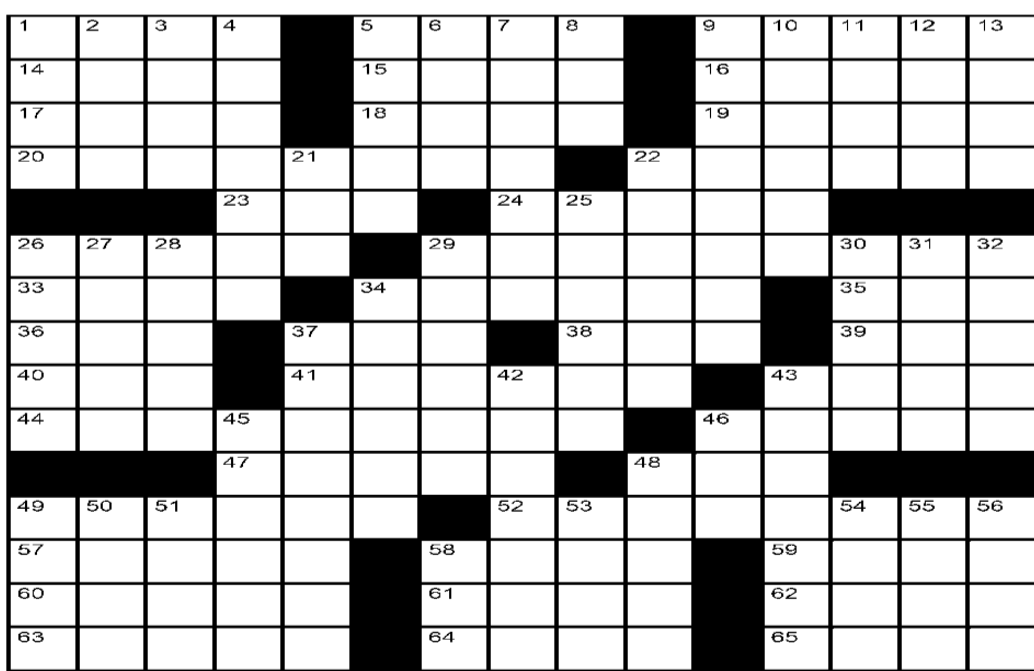
WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

- Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠AK93♥AQ93♦J106♣J2
- WEST NORTH EAST 1♣ Pass 1♦ ? What action would you take? A - It is sometimes correct to raise partner's major suit with only three-card support. Good trump quality and a ruffing value are keys telling you when to do it. Bid 2S.
- Q 2 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠KJ4♥86♦AK653♣QJ7
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST 1♣ Pass 1♠ ? What is your re-bid? A - With exciting distribution and two decent suits, this hand is worth opening at the one level. Bid 1H.
- Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠7♥AJ9862♦KQ54♣83
- You are the dealer. Pass, one heart or two hearts? A - It is tempting to jump to 3C but overcome the temptation and settle for 2C. This hand is not quite worth a jump rebid.
- Q 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠J♥K85♦QJ5♣AKJ1075
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST 1♣ Pass 1♠ ? What is your re-bid? A - Partner may have opened light in third seat. Do not punish his enterprise by jumping to the three level. If you play the Drury Convention, where a 2C bid shows 10-plus points and a fit, now is the time to use it. If not, settle for the conservative 2S.
- Q 5 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠A52♥1096♦Q104♣A942
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST Pass Pass 1♠ ? What bid would you make? A - The choice is between 1H and 2NT. We like the idea of telling partner our exact strength and that our hand is balanced. Open 2NT.
- Q 6 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold: ♠AKJ♥AKQ64♦64♣K74
- You are the dealer. What is your opening bid? A - Double. This hand would routinely open 1NT, but don't make that bid now. You don't have a stopper in either of their suits and you are 4-4 in the unbid suits. Double is perfect.

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' responses sent in care of this paper.)

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS
- 1 Story
- 5 Apple desktop computers
- 9 British wastelands
- 14 "...go brag!"
- 15 Coin in Croatia
- 16 The Taj Mahal's country
- 17 Not fake
- 18 Remnant of a ticket
- 19 Having little money
- 20 26.2-mile race
- 22 Untidy areas
- 23 Siegfried and ...
- 24 Boring task
- 26 Ship's freight
- 29 Fictional person
- 33 Reed instrument
- 34 Venmo alternative
- 35 Chopping tool
- 36 Daily journal
- 37 ... Diego, California
- 38 "Thx" counterpart: Abbr.
- 39 Fruit-filled dessert
- 40 Broad street: Abbr.
- 41 Colored eye parts
- 43 Satan's domain
- 44 The "happy hormone"
- 46 Garden tubes
- 47 Unclothed sculptures
- 48 Oxygen or nitrogen
- 49 Instant ...
- 52 Members of a board
- 57 Anticipate
- 58 Defeat in a game
- 59 Author Jennifer
- 60 Tubular pasta
- 61 All up in ...
- 62 Not great, not bad
- 63 Trapped, in a way
- 64 TV sports award
- 65 One-pot meal



Created by Stella Zawistowski

11/3/25

- 2 Locale
- 3 Perjurer
- 4 Make bigger
- 5 Like fishnets
- 6 Prefix with "pilot"
- 7 Type of peanut butter
- 8 Cry loudly
- 9 Some micronutrients
- 10 "Hang on!": 2 wds.
- 11 Poems of praise
- 12 Taxi trip
- 13 Utters
- 21 "That's ... much!"
- 22 Fable endings
- 25 Occur
- 26 Brown, fizzy drinks
- 27 ... and beyond
- 28 Tennis legend Federer
- 29 Pointed tooth
- 30 Audiocassettes
- 31 Banishment
- 32 Spools of film
- 34 Satirical spoof
- 37 Positioned

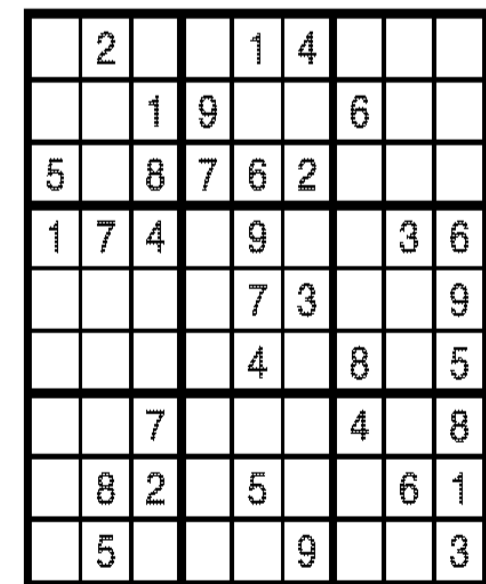


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11/3/25

- 42 Convent residents
- 43 Maker of twinkies
- 45 Connected to the Internet
- 46 Possesses
- 48 Full of courage
- 49 Fully absorbed
- 50 Water jug
- 51 Window section
- 53 Highway entrance
- 54 Show-biz quartet: Abbr.
- 55 Simplify
- 56 Winter precipitation
- 58 Modern pet name

SUDOKU

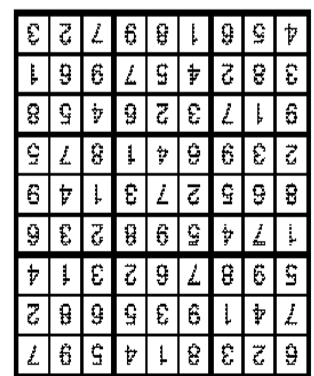


Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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



ANSWER:



# KIDS' CORNER

Vol. 009 | A fun page for kids from The Courier Herald

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

## Class of the week: Mrs. Aubrey Whittington's class at NWLE

Herald the Hound and The Courier Herald team paid another visit to Northwest Laurens Elementary School with a stop in Mrs. Whittington's second grade class. The students talked about robots before hearing "Robo-Sauce," a book about a boy who uses a special recipe to turn everything, including the book, into machines. Afterward they dove into another edition of newspaper to learn about different types of writing. Herald is taking this week off, while students take the Georgia Milestones and other end-of-year tests but will be back out soon to help wrap up the school year.



HERALD'S ART GALLERY

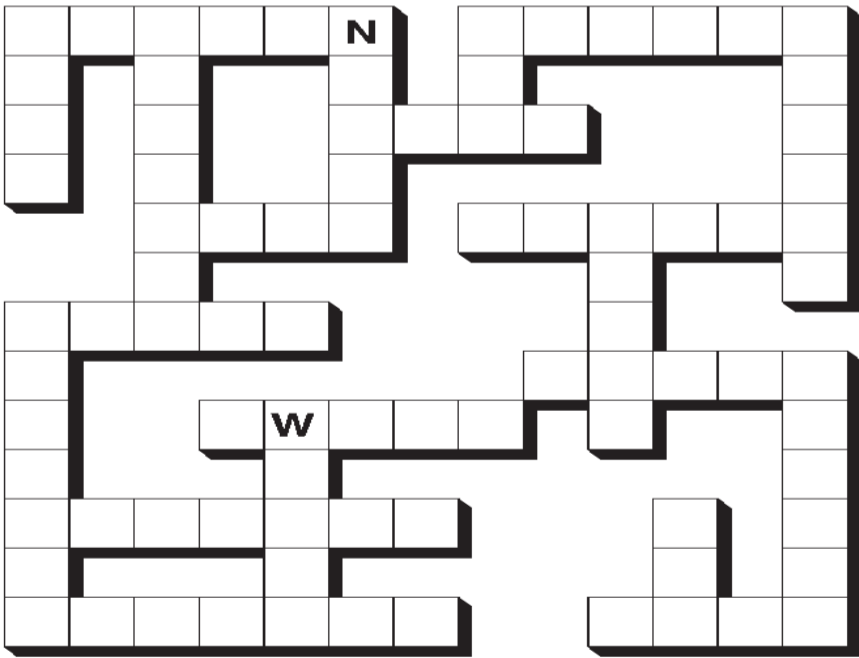
### Puzzles4Kids

by Helene Hovanec

#### CRISSCROSS – "ON" WORDS

Each word will fit into one spot in the grid. Use the starting letters as a guide and fit each word into its spot. All words will be used, so cross off each one after you put it into the grid.

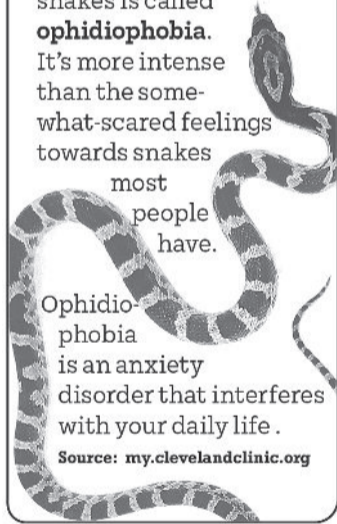
- 3 Letters  
ONE  
WON
- 4 Letters  
CONE  
LONG  
NEON  
NOON
- 5 Letters  
DEMON  
MASON  
MONEY  
NYLON  
SWOON  
WRONG
- 6 Letters  
CRAYON  
KIMONO  
NATION  
REASON  
WONDER
- 7 Letters  
ALMONDS  
ECONOMY  
MONKEYS  
SPONGES



### Fun Fact

Having an extreme, overwhelming fear of snakes is called **ophidiophobia**. It's more intense than the somewhat-scared feelings towards snakes most people have.

Ophidiophobia is an anxiety disorder that interferes with your daily life.  
Source: my.clevelandclinic.org



This week's featured artist is NWLE third-grade student Andie, whose dog treat doodles had Herald licking the page. The book worm was a great touch too! Keep the pictures coming and you may see them in future editions!

### MINI SUDOKU

	4	3	1
			2
2			4
	3		
	5	3	1
		6	

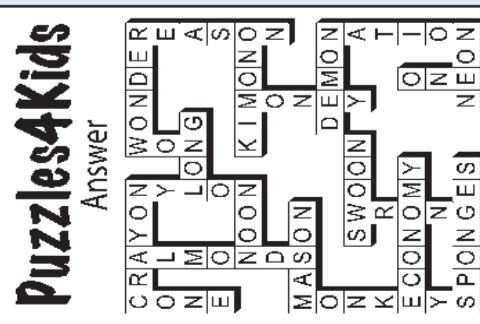
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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### ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS

5	4	2	3	6	1
3	6	1	4	2	5
2	1	5	6	3	4
6	3	4	1	5	2
4	5	3	2	1	6
1	2	6	5	4	3



### TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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



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Joe Wos