

The Courier Herald

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Calls for answers, resignations at DCS board meeting

Public, some board members protest vote on Moore St./IGA

By **RODNEY MANLEY**
Staff Reporter

The overflow crowd at Monday night's Dublin City Board of Education meeting wanted answers. Some of the board members wanted resignations.

Stewing for months, public outcry about the district's financial crisis reached a boiling point over a recent decision to move alternative students out of Moore Street School to make way for a new magnet school. The new school would serve as a feeder program for the high school's distinguished international baccalaureate program and would replace the controversial Irish Gifted Academy. However, many in the crowd perceived it as another means of putting white, out-of-district students ahead of its predominantly black student population.

About 90 percent of Dublin City's students are black while almost half of the approximately 300 students at IGA, which serves grades K-8, are white.

Parents, residents and the board's three black members said Monday they were blindsided by last week's decision, which was made at called meeting April 21. Both the magnet school



A standing-room-only crowd attended Monday night's board meeting, most of them seeking answers last week's vote to move Dublin's alternative school to the high school campus to make way for a new magnet school at Moore Street/**RODNEY MANLEY**

and changes at Moore Street passed by 4-3 votes. Both items were discussed as having been recommended by state officials to address the district's financial crisis.

"I'm so disappointed in how we handled the meeting last week," said board member Kenny Walters. "Our leaders have failed us because they didn't get that information to us. ... A lot of my constituents, even my-

self, have said maybe they need to resign. Maybe they need to get someone else to do it."

Board member JoAnna Glover said she was "with Kenny on the recommendation to Miss Chairman Amanda (Smith), and (interim Superintendent) Marcee Pool. Something has to be done."

The board last week heard about a 15-minute

presentation detailing problems with the Irish Gifted Academy and why the IB magnet school would be a better option, if for no other reason than financially. The operational setup of the IGA was described as "confusing," with no true way of determining costs. The magnet school also would generate state funding for a principal and other positions that currently are paid locally.

Most of the more than half-dozen people who spoke during public comments Monday demanded to see all formal cost-cutting recommendations that came from the state. Board member John Bell said residents would not have been happy with suggestions for Moore Street School.

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued on page 8

25 apply to be Dublin's new superintendent

By **RODNEY MANLEY**
Staff Reporter

More than two dozen candidates have applied for the job of new superintendent of the cash-strapped Dublin City school district.

The superintendent search led by the Georgia School Board Association drew a total of 25 applicants, said school board Chairwoman Amanda Smith.

"We are super-excited about going forward," Smith said at Monday night's school board.

The GSBA is screening the applicants and checking references. After the interview process, finalists could be announced by the end of May.

The new leader will be tasked with turning around the struggling school system, which just months ago was projected to end of the current fiscal year with a \$13 million deficit. The new superintendent will replace Fred Williams, who stepped down to take an early retirement in September after the school district's financial troubles surfaced.

SUPERINTENDENT
Continued on page 8



Little ones with their parents will line up to get an up-close look at planes (above) and law enforcement vehicles (right) at the Wheels & Wings and Other Things, held by Kid's Cup, at the W.H. 'Bud' Barron Airport, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 9/**FILE PHOTOS**



Gears down, vehicles parked for annual Kid's Cup event

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

Planes, cars and rescue vehicles will be on display, but it will be a week later than originally planned.

The predicted weather

forecast pushed back Kid's Cup's annual Wheels & Wings and Other Things at the W.H. 'Bud' Barron Airport, 675 Airport Road. It will now be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 9. The event is free but do-

nations to benefit the organization will be taken near the entrance.

"We call this a fundraiser, friend-raiser," said

KID'S CUP
Continued on page 8

Spreading J.O.Y. – anonymous donor urges people to help clinic

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

The Jesus Others Yourself Clinic is seeking prayer and donations to help continue its mission of serving those in need while a woman with almost no connection to the community helped out.

The J.O.Y. Clinic's Day of Prayer and Giving will be on May 3. The clinic has invited all 49 churches in the Laurens Baptist Association, local businesses and individuals to pray for it and collect donations as well.

Rita Green, executive director at the J.O.Y. Clin-

ic, called this an invitation to join them in doing God's work.

"At the J.O.Y. Clinic, we live out this calling," she said. "We provide comprehensive, whole-person care to those who qualify; individuals who work, live in Laurens County, and whose household income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Every dollar raised on May 3 goes directly to keeping our doors open, covering essential medical and dental supplies, medications for our patients, and the three part-time staff positions that make it all possible. Without our community's

support, we cannot continue to provide this care."

People can take or mail donations to 410 Academy Ave. For 14 years, the clinic has served this community's working poor and vulnerable populations, Green said.

"What began with a generous donation of a dental practice from the family of Dr. Hayward J. Williams, local pastors, physicians, committed volunteers and a grant from the Georgia Baptist Health Care Ministry Foundation, has grown into a comprehensive health care ministry operating from two locations," Green said.

The J.O.Y. Clinic services include dental care, primary health care, vision care and spiritual care. The clinic's work is powered by 12 volunteers - administrative staff and healthcare providers alike, along with three paid part-time employees.

Recently, Green mentioned a woman, who works



The J.O.Y. Clinic medical sign outside the building on Academy Avenue. The clinic is asking churches, businesses and individuals for prayers and donations this Sunday/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

a similar clinic in the Atlanta area, who donated items and money. The woman's only tie to Dublin was that her fiancé, who passed away, grew up here.

"I am one of those people who likes to do things anonymously," said the woman. "I don't want the spotlight on me. I'm not out there to get

credit."

The woman informed Green that she would happily talk about what she did while focusing everything back to the clinic.

"I want awareness and visibility to be on all of the individuals, churches and organizations in Dublin, Laurens County who are

fighting the good fight," the woman said. "I have nothing but respect and appreciation for them. Whether you have a population of 10 or 10 million, it is one person at a time that you help."

The woman had a trip that took her through Dublin and she made a special trip to drop off items and a check.

"I'm familiar with the needs of helping those who don't have insurance and all of those sort of side things that go along with that," she said. "I saw their Amazon wishlist online and ordered some stuff."

The woman's only connection to the J.O.Y. Clinic was her late fiancé. She first came to the clinic in 2019. She is now doing similar work as a volunteer in a clinic in Atlanta.

"I have learned that the need is there for medical care and medical assessment for those who don't

J.O.Y.
Continued on page 8



INDEX

OBITUARIES	2
PIECES OF OUR PAST	3
DID YOU KNOW?	3
EDITORIAL	4
SPORTS	5,6
COMICS	7

OBITUARIES



Bobby Joe Cammack

Mr. Bobby Joe Cammack, 84, beloved husband of Joan Posey Cammack of Soperton, passed away early Monday morning, April 27, 2026 at Treutlen County Health and Rehabilitation Center.

Funeral services were conducted at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 in the Billy Williams Chapel of Sammons Funeral Home with Pastor Kerry Walker and Pastor Adam Tarver officiating.

Bobby was laid to rest in the Harmony Baptist Church Cemetery.

Please share a memory, leave a condolence message and sign the online guest register at www.sammonsfuneralhome.com.

Sammons Funeral Home, Since 1917

Anne Ruth Mullis

Mrs. Anne Ruth Mullis, 78, passed away on Saturday, April 25, 2026, in McRae Manor Nursing Home.

Mrs. Mullis was born on June 9, 1947, in Dublin, Georgia and was of the Baptist faith. She enjoyed fishing and spending time with her family. She was preceded in death by her parents, Earnest and Ruth Carroll Batchlor; her former husband, Hilbert Mullis; two sons, Gary Arthur Mullis and Eddie Lamar Mullis; and her brother, Herman Batchlor.

She is survived by her son, Greg Mullis of East Dublin; two sisters, Carol Brewer of Houston, Texas and Tina Greene; brother, Tom Batchlor of Waleska; and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

A private service will be held at a later date.

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



Herman Maddox

Herman Maddox, 78, of Eastman, Ga., passed away on Monday, April 27, 2026.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, April 30, at Southerland Funeral Chapel, with interment in Woodlawn Cemetery.

He is survived by his daughters - Carol Bond (Darryl) and Melinda Maddox; son - Allen Maddox (Tina); grandchildren - Wesley, Jacob, Ryan, Ike,

Democrats for governor pitch tax cuts, with more spending in some areas

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Tax cuts coexisted with higher spending on education and health care when Democrats running for governor laid out their positions this week.

At a debate hosted by the Atlanta Press Club and aired by Georgia Public Broadcasting on Monday, as early voters headed to the polls, several candidates said they would address affordability by changing Georgia taxes. Nearly all said they would update the formula that funds public schools. And nearly all said they would expand Medicaid, a move rejected by Republicans as too expensive.

The leading candidates also faced attacks by their competitors.

Jason Esteves, a former state senator and Atlanta school board chairman, attacked Keisha Lance Bottoms over public safety when she was mayor of Atlanta. He blamed her for the shoot-

ing death of Secorica Turner, 8, in 2020 amid protests.

State Rep. Derrick Jackson, D-Tyrone, assailed Esteves over his vote for pro-charter school legislation last year when he was in the Senate.

Olu Brown, a pastor, fired at Geoff Duncan, who switched from Republican to Democrat after serving as lieutenant governor, excoriating him for backing legislation against transgender people. Duncan also took withering attacks over his former position against abortion. He said he had pivoted on both issues as he transitioned away from the GOP.

Mike Thurmond, former state lawmaker and labor commissioner who also ran the DeKalb County school system and then the county government, railed against the state sales tax. He said he would cut it in half, calling it the most painful form of taxation for people with low incomes.

Bottoms defended her leadership of Atlanta

by saying she had raised police and firefighter pay while balancing the budget and building affordable housing.

Duncan said he could win the general election in November by rallying independent voters and “disgusted” Republicans. He pledged to have the most diverse cabinet of any governor in state history.

Esteves said he favored a property tax cut and would make commercial property owners pay what they owe.

Jackson said he would work to raise the minimum wage.

And Amanda Duffy, a self-described low-income Georgian, said she would change the state income tax from a flat 5.19% rate to an income-based bracket system like the federal government uses. She said she wanted the wealthy to pay a larger proportion of their income. She also said she would not accept full governor’s pay if elected.

Republicans for Georgia governor face off in debate

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The only major debate between Republican candidates for Georgia governor brimmed with personal attacks and appeals to President Donald Trump’s followers and offered less to guide voters on policy directions.

The debate hosted by the Atlanta Press Club and aired by Georgia Public Broadcasting took place Monday as Georgians started heading to the polls for early voting ahead of the May 19 primary.

The two leading candidates, Lt. Gov. Burt Jones and businessman Rick Jackson, pummeled each other over their campaign fundraising and personal ethics. Other candidates piled on.

Jones and Jackson praised Trump, as did Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

That left Attorney General Chris Carr to cut a trail toward the moderate voters that he said were a growing factor in elections. He pledged to promote literacy and affordable housing and spoke of mental health as a “root cause” of poverty, saying he would address it with a regional approach.

Jackson styled himself a self-made wealthy entrepreneur raised in a broken home, who went on to create a company worth billions that employs thousands. Jones introduced himself as a sixth generation Georgian and the only candidate on the sound set endorsed by Trump.

Raffensperger defended himself as several candidates raised concerns about the state’s voting system, which he oversees. He responded by blaming the Legislature and with disciplined pivots to attacks against Keisha Lance Bot-

toms, as if he had already won the primary and were debating her.

Bottoms, the former Atlanta mayor, is a leading gubernatorial contender on the Democratic side.

Four other lesser-known candidates struggled for airtime.

Clark Dean introduced himself as a Harvard-trained biomedical engineer and the only Eagle Scout on the set. He said he would use artificial intelligence to streamline Georgia government.

Gregg Kirkpatrick said he invented two dozen medical devices that generated jobs and profits while reducing the cost of health care. He said his business leadership had prepared him to govern.

Tom Williams said he worked 35 years at Robbins Air Force Base supporting the military with electronics and software.

And Ken Yasger said he enlisted in the Army Rangers, was deployed to Afghanistan, and was the only Republican gubernatorial candidate who had been shot at by the Taliban. Now a bartender on Tybee Island, he positioned himself as a man of the people, saying he chose to run for office after watching an elderly man with a walker come up short while trying to buy bread and a half dozen eggs.

Jones and Jackson have burned through millions of dollars lobbying attack advertisements at each other. Yasger asked Jones how he could possibly relate to normal people after spending that kind of money like that.

Jones responded that he would prefer not to have had to spend that money, saying he did not start the fight.

Late last year, a mysterious group paid for attack

ads against Jones, before Jackson started firing off his own attacks.

When the moderator asked Jackson point blank if he had been behind the anonymous group, Jackson said “absolutely not.”

Jones and Jackson would spend much of the debate firing volleys at each other over the source of their money. At one point, Jackson enlisted Carr, who said he would have launched an investigation into Jones’ activities if he himself were not a candidate.

Jones attacked Jackson on immigration, trying to put distance between Jackson and Trump.

“You claim to be tough on illegal deportation, but you’ve got illegals working in your backyard as we speak right now,” Jones said.

Jackson responded that he would deport “criminal illegals” as governor.

Jones pressed him: “You don’t have any illegals working for you right now? Or in the past?”

Jackson’s answer: “I don’t know.” He said he had hired thousands of people and had obeyed the law.

Jones closed by reminding viewers that Trump had endorsed him, saying it was because the president knew him and trusted him.

Earlier, Raffensperger had praised the president’s strategy for “reshoring” jobs, saying that as governor he would help retrain the next generation for jobs in advanced manufacturing. He also took another jab at Bottoms, saying she had allowed crime to go unchecked in Atlanta.

Jackson said that he was too wealthy to be bought by special interests, that he was a philanthropist and that he wanted to be governor so he could help people, like another wealthy man

who won office.

“President Trump’s business focus inspired me to run,” Jackson said. “Georgia needs business leadership, focus on results, not politics. I’ll be just like him, with a Southern tone.”

Carr appealed to moderate voters by saying that Democrats are not the enemy. They are merely an opponent to be defeated in

November.

“And let me tell you who’s not going to win. It’s not going to be the candidate that raises his or her hand and says, ‘I got the most money or I got one endorsement,’” he said, adding that the winner will be the Republican who appeals “to the ever-growing independent voter in this state.”

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.

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BIRTHDAYS

April 30

Camellia Horne

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A Heartfelt Thank-You

The family of the late Mrs. Gloria J. Axson wishes to express our love and gratitude for the outpouring of generosity, love, and support shown toward us during our time of bereavement. The food, cards, and prayers were blessings to us all.

A special thank-you to the Fairview Park Hospital Staff, Compassus Hospice Staff, Wyche’s Funeral Home & Staff and all who took very special care of our loved one.

May God Bless You All!

Marshall Axson & Family

The et cetera chronicles - vol. 131

WAR STORIES - John Brown Gordon came to Dublin to speak about his military experiences. The 66-year-old warrior knew full well what he was talking about. He was right there in the middle of the worst cataclysm to ever take place on the American continent. John Brown was actually the only person in the history of Georgia to serve as a governor, U.S. Senator and Major General (CSA). General Gordon served in all of the major battles of the Army of Northern Virginia under Gen. Robert E. Lee. Gordon led the last charge of the Civil War before the Confederate surrender at Appomattox. His subject, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," was presented to aid the newly established Christ Episcopal Church on March 31, 1898. Gen. Gordon returned to the area in 1900 to speak to those attending the Chautaugua in Wrightsville, Savannah Morning News, March 27, 1898, May 19, 1900.

THE RED BADGE OF WHISKEY - Nothing was more contentious in elections than the right of a man to buy whiskey, legal in Dublin and Laurens County. All through the 1880s and well into the 1890s, the prohibitionists sought to ban the sale of demon rum. When the anti-whiskey group was in control, there were outright bans or overburdening license fees. During one of those elections in October 1888, the drinkers sought to bribe a large group of men to vote for liquor. The promoters liquored up the men and placed bright, blood-red badges on them and handed them a matching ticket to show how they were supposed to vote. As the men were approaching the polling place, one yelled, "You temperance people are fighting the saloon keepers, we are fighting Jesus." Temperance won the election over drunkenness. Savannah Morning News, Oct. 9, 1888.

ANCIENT LADY - Emily Horn, of Laurens County, lived a long life. Born into slavery in 1786, Miss Emily, was a slave of the Yopp and Lee families. She died in 1898 at the ripe age of 111 years. Savannah News, Jan. 12, 1898.

THE WRATH OF MOTHER NATURE - Most of the time, Mother Nature is good to us. Other times, she is very, very bad to us. There was a time back in the spring of 1900, when nature caused a still pause for railroad workers outside of Dexter. Just about noon, J.R. Hightower's railroad workers were putting out crossties. All of a sudden the workers heard a roaring sound similar to a railroad train. The rumbling wasn't a tornado, a normal occurrence near Dexter in the spring. As the men looked around a tall pine disappeared into the ground. Then another pine sucked into the ground. Hightower, upon seeing the 24'x24' abyss, immediately knew what was happening. The whole event was nothing more than the creation of a lime sink, which are located in several places in the southwestern corner of Laurens County, where subterranean waters come close to the surface. Savannah Morning News, April 23, 1900

BEHOLD THE HYDRA - Jim Rice was out walking one day in Laurens County when he beheld a strange curiosity. Rice stooped down to examine what appeared to be a small eight-inch snake. Much to his amazement, Rice discovered that the snake had two heads, four eyes and two tongues, which fluttered simultaneously to warn Rice. Savannah Morning News, Sept. 14, 1891.

WHERE'S THE BEEF? - Bud Corder and Lucas Woodard were powerfully hungry so they grabbed their rifles and sought out a prime cow to kill for some beef for supper.

PIECES OF OUR PAST



By **SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.**

The two residents of Nameless, Ga., near Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, picked out a nice bull and shot it. The slightly stunned and much-annoyed bovine bolted toward the refuge of the woods. An eight-man posse caught up with their prey several times. More shots were fired, but the bull would still not fall. All day that Saturday and into Sunday morning, the chase was on. The hunters finally gave up their search for the beef, which went uneaten when the big cow disappeared in to swamp. Savannah Morning News, Oct. 10, 1899.

THE DAY REEDY SPRINGS WAS POMMELED - Hailstorms are not rare in Laurens County, but in mid-May of 1887, the most remarkable hailstorm struck the Reedy Springs Community of Laurens County with a vengeance. The young cotton and corn crops were destroyed when the accumulated hail measured a whopping seven inches. The damage to the cotton was so severe that most of the cotton farmers set out to replant to salvage their crops. The Savannah Morning News, May 21, 1887.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Was the execution of a British villain botched?

By **JACK BAGLEY**
GTLN

May day! May day!
No, I'm not signaling distress. I'm simply noting that this week we move on to the fifth month of the year, and the first day is - you guessed it - May day.

Later in the month we get Cinco de Mayo (5th), Mother's Day (10th), and Memorial Day (25th). Busy month, eh?

Of course, every week there's this silly trivia column thing that you find in the newspaper, so if the upcoming holiday events aren't exactly causing you to have tingles of excitement, perhaps the trivia will. I kind of hope so, anyway. Enjoy!

Did you know ...
... the star of a classic monster movie had to be lied to in order for her to accept the role? While pre-production of 1933's iconic King Kong was underway, director Merian Cooper (1893-1973) convinced actress Fay Wray (1907-2004) to star in the film by promising her "the tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood." Wray was convinced she'd be paired with someone like Cary Grant (1904-1986) but when she arrived on the set, Cooper pointed to the giant ape and said it was the "tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood." (Well, he wasn't exactly wrong, you

know.)
... a popular children's literature character debuted under a different name in the United Kingdom? When the first book in the Curious George series by H.A. Rey (1898-1977) came out in the U.K. in 1941, the mischievous monkey was renamed Zozo. Why? Because it was felt there was a level of disrespect with the monkey sharing the name of the country's King, George VI (1895-1952). (I doubt His Majesty really would have minded.)

... the Viking Age lasted a bit over 275 years? Historians say the Viking Age - the period of time during which Scandinavian seafarers roamed the coastlines of Europe, plundering and conquering - began about 790 AD. It came to an end in 1066, when William I (1028-1087), Duke of Normandy, was crowned King of England. (I'm not sure why a French nobleman taking over England ended the Viking age, but there you are.)

... a liquid exists which can be breathed? Called perflourohexane, animals submerged in the liquid are able to survive without drowning. The liquid has sufficient oxygen in it for respiration to continue, but research is still going on concerning its use with humans beyond temporary "partial liquid ventilation." The liquid is used to treat

burn victims, whose lungs can be filled with perflourohexane while burned lung tissue heals. Pulmonary edema has been shown to be suppressed by the liquid, scientists say. (I think I saw that in a movie.)

... one of England's most celebrated bad men had his execution botched - but they went ahead with it anyway? Guy Fawkes (1570-1606) was sentenced to death for his role in the Gunpowder Plot, an attempt to blow up Parliament and assassinate King James I (1566-1625). Fawkes was, in fact, sentenced to be hung, drawn, and quartered - a particularly painful and messy way to die. But Fawkes got the last word, escaping from the guards and jumping from the gallows. He managed to break his neck on landing, but the executioners decided to do their jobs anyway. They couldn't do the hanging, of course, but they did do the drawing and quartering, cutting Fawkes' corpse into four pieces and sending them to the four corners of the kingdom as a warning not to do stuff like he did. (I guess it worked - it hasn't happened since.)

... alcohol was available by prescription during Prohibition? During the period from 1920-1933, the manufacture, sale or consumption of alcohol was forbidden under the terms of the Eighteenth Amendment to

the U.S. Constitution. But the U.S. Department of the Treasury authorized physicians to write prescriptions for "medicinal" alcohol. While Prohibition was the law of the land, doctors would advise their patients to take doses of booze to stave off a number of ailments, including cancer, indigestion, and depression. (Clever. Very, very clever.)

... a woman once claimed that her chicken laid eggs prophesying the end of the world? In 1806, Mary Bateman (1768-1809) of Yorkshire, England, who was a con artist of the first order, said her chicken laid eggs with words written on them telling of the coming

apocalypse. She charged people a penny to see the three eggs, but when the hen was taken away, no more message-laden eggs were laid. Turns out the hen laid normal eggs, Bateman would write the messages on the shells, and then stuff them back into the bird to be laid once again. Bateman would meet her end after being convicted of poisoning several people and being hanged. (Ugh.)

... a Major League Baseball pitcher has a record that may never be broken? Jon Garland (born 1979) was pitching for the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2009 when, on August 29, he defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers in

L.A. During that series, the Diamondbacks traded Garland to the Dodgers, and he was notified of the trade during a game. On September 3, the Dodgers started Garland against the Diamondbacks, and he pitched a win against his old teammates. Garland is thus the only pitcher in MLB history to win a game for one team and then win one for the team he defeated in the same week. (Sandy Koufax, eat your heart out.)

... poison oak is not oak? Nor is poison ivy a form of ivy. Both are members of the cashew family. (I'll stick to just plain cashews, if you don't mind.)

Now ... you know!

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OUR TAKE...



This will be the information for the photo above/SOME CHUMP ON THE END OF HIS ROPE

Stepping Stone steps up to help the most helpless

According to the Center for Disease Control, one in four girls and one of every 13 boys in the United States will experience child sex abuse.

If that's not jarring enough, the number of children suffering is even higher when factoring in other types of abuse and neglect.

We are certainly not immune here. Dublin's Stepping Stone Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center began helping victims of child abuse in 1999 and has grown to serve 10 counties over two judicial circuits.

The center was busy last year. Stepping Stone provided 51 forensic medical exams, 240 forensic interviews of abused youth and 1,117 individual therapy services.

The group also offers parenting courses and peer support groups, as well as legal advocacy, expert testimony and securing protective court orders.

Child abusers prey on the most helpless of our society. Poor children are more susceptible, suffering abuse and neglect at rates five times higher than children with a higher socioeconomic status.

Stepping Stone recently held its annual child abuse prevention luncheon where they traditionally honor public servants or volunteers for their efforts to help the cause. The group also honors the winners of a local student essay contest.

One of the winners shared how she survived the trauma and "dark, dark moments" of her childhood, and now plans to be social worker after college.

"I learned how life-changing it can be when someone listens, believes in you and reminds you that your life has value," wrote Dublin High student E'Maria Ransom-Scruggs.

We commend Stepping Stone for its work and for continuing to be an advocate and voice for children who otherwise might not have one.

— Rodney Manley

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"To be interesting, one has to provoke."

- Salvador Dali

DAILY SCRIPTURE

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land..."

- Isaiah 1:18-19

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY

April 30, 2026 is...

- National Raisin Day
- National Mr. Potato Head Day
- National Honesty Day
- National Animal Advocacy Day
- Bugs Bunny Day
- International Jazz Day

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



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— for Local News —

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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.

An undecided voter is not an uninformed voter

Early voting for Georgia's partisan primaries and judicial elections has begun. The polls that ask "If the election were held today" now matter, as the election is being held most days in person and each day by mail between now and May 19.

Many of the polls we've seen thus far show "undecided" is either winning or showing a strong placement in the top contests. Tens of millions have already been spent, and a lot of voters thus far are just shrugging.

Consultants will tell those who asked these may be "low propensity voters" who may not even show up at the ballot box. They will also suggest they'll break mostly in line with those who already have formed an opinion. What they will never say is that these voters haven't seen a message that engages them where they are, how they live and that addresses the problems they actually face in their daily lives.

Every credible campaign has a plan, and a message. They then devote their resources to amplifying that message. In primaries, that message is crafted to reach "the base". Those who consider themselves in that prized voter group know their value, and treat it somewhat like a negotiating position, and somewhat like a hostage situation.

During each election, "the base" has more and more demands of those who seek their votes. The result is that the hardcore mem-



By CHARLIE HARPER

bers of each party move the goal posts further and further from the middle.

"Undecided" shouldn't be interpreted as "uninformed," as the hard core partisans usually dismiss them as being. A voter who mistakenly tells an activist that they're undecided will usually get a bit of a condescending lecture on their candidate's talking points, as if the undecided voter just arrived here from Mars yesterday.

There's almost never a question prior to that such as "what do you know about the candidate or their positions?" They give no thought to ask "what concerns do you have about this race that would help you make up your mind?"

The folks who move the goal posts are so invested in the game that they've forgotten that the "normies" who eschew cable news and/or social media and just want to live their lives might have unaddressed concerns of their own. In addition

they may actually be turned off by much of the red meat rhetoric being served by the campaigns and their surrogates.

Undecided voters are often looking for something to vote FOR. This is complicated by today's default position of negative campaigning. One need to look no further than the Republican side of the Governor's race, where the top two contenders have spent tens of millions to tell us what a horrible person the other is.

Candidates need to be reminded that the public already has a low opinion of the political profession before the mudslinging even starts. A constant negative drumbeat that "the other guy is bad" just drags down the image for all, rather than elevating the accuser above the fray.

Then there's the "I'm going to change the way Washington (or Atlanta) works pitch. The Governor, as head of an executive branch, can actually do

that. Washington, however, is filled with Senators and Congressmen who promised to go up there and fix things. Literally no one who thinks this promise through believes someone with one of 100 votes or one of 435 votes is going to change the way Washington works as a freshman member. By the time they have enough seniority to do that, they'll more likely be part of the system than a conduit to changing it.

The "undecideds" have seen and heard all of this before. Meanwhile, the issues of the campaigns have become more focused on partisan fever dreams and their promises have become hyperbolic if not farcical. The premise that an undecided voter isn't paying attention needs to be turned on its head.

Many of my professional, working adjacent to politics friends are undecided on several of the major races. They're not undecided because they aren't paying attention. They're undecided because they are, and do not like what they see.

Many members of "the base" of each party will vote early. The race between now and May 19 is to convince and convert undecided voters. I suggest candidates and campaigns start listening to the citizens who aren't yet in their camps, rather than pretending another few million spent on what they're already doing will convince them.



Foster care tax credit: A new way to lend a hand

Dublin native Marcus Paul is one of those young people whose enthusiasm for the future is contagious.

A student at South Georgia Technical College, Paul speaks with confidence about his goal of helping keep commercial aircraft safe. He's learning how to frame, pressurize, and power airplanes—skills that could take him anywhere in the world.

"Commercial airlines must be worked on at the location where they are at, so when you are in aviation you can see the world," Paul said. "I would like to be able to work on planes in places like Japan, Europe and even Greenland."

But enrolling in such a specialized program was far from easy for this 21-year-old. Paul has no family to encourage him or help financially. He spent eight years in Georgia's foster care system and aged out without the support most young adults take for granted.

Thanks to Georgia's new \$30 million Foster Care Tax Credit program, Paul no longer has to work long hours at a local car wash to cover rent, groceries, car insurance or his phone bill. Through the nonprofit Fos-

tering Success Act (FSA), the tax credit is helping him meet basic needs so he can focus on his demanding coursework.

"Only five percent of the students who enroll in this aviation program pass," said Paul, now in his second semester. "The classes are so demanding since it is aircraft safety. But I passed all my classes so far since it requires a lot of studying."

Each year, more than 600 young people age out of Georgia's foster care system. Most end up in hourly wage jobs with limited opportunity for advancement. Many face homelessness, poverty or dependence on public assistance. Research from the United States Senate found that one-fifth of the prison population spent time in foster care, and 71 percent of young women leaving foster care become pregnant within the first year.

Pursuing a professional career was rarely possible—until now.

Under this new tax credit, Georgia taxpayers can redirect a portion of their state income taxes to support these youth, reducing their own tax burden whether they file individually, jointly, as sole proprietors or as



By HEIDI CARR

GUEST COLUMN

C corporations.

Since its inception, FSA has served 766 young adults with tax-credit funds, making it possible for them to attend college or technical school, enroll in apprenticeship programs, or obtain their GED.

The tax credit covers the kinds of expenses a parent would normally shoulder: healthcare, housing, school supplies, computers, transportation and even car repairs. Some students need major dental or medical care before they can focus on school. Others need help with textbooks, rent or reli-

able transportation to class. FSA also provides each student with a mentor—someone to encourage them and help them navigate adulthood.

Paul is exactly the kind of young person who deserves this chance. He knows what he wants to do with his life, and he is working hard to build a career that will allow him to repair aircraft across the globe.

This is what makes the Foster Care Tax Credit so powerful. It gives former foster youth a real path to independence and a way out of generational poverty—while giving taxpayers a meaningful way to reduce their state income taxes.

May is National Foster Care Month. There is no better time for Georgia taxpayers to take advantage of this opportunity to lower their tax burden and change the trajectory of a young person's life.

To apply for the tax credit, visit: <https://fostering-successact.org/start-the-process/tax-credit/>

Carr is executive director of Fostering Success Act, Inc., the largest nonprofit raising funds and serving youth through Georgia's foster care tax credit.

GHSA BASEBALL PLAYOFFS

Raiders dump hitting slump, thump Gilmer

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

West Laurens' recent struggles finding the big hits were very quickly no more last Friday as it dispensed with some late-season offensive woes, and the Gilmer Bobcats, in a first-round sweep.

The Raiders' misfortunes with runners in scoring position, most visible in a string of eight consecutive non-region losses to finish the regular season, finally ran their course as 16 hits played into multiple big innings over wins by finals of 11-1, and 6-3.

"It was definitely one of the best days we've ever had hitting-wise," said junior Cohen Cardwell, who scored a run and drove in three more with hits to key an opening statement in each game. "All the guys bought in and stayed back, and we actually had timely hits today. Everybody was just rolling, and it felt awesome."

What finally went right? West Laurens head coach Parker Gordon said he believes the solution was a matter of mentality more than mechanics, which some film study by he and his assistant coaches revealed to be as sound as ever for the multiple hitters who were having a rough time.

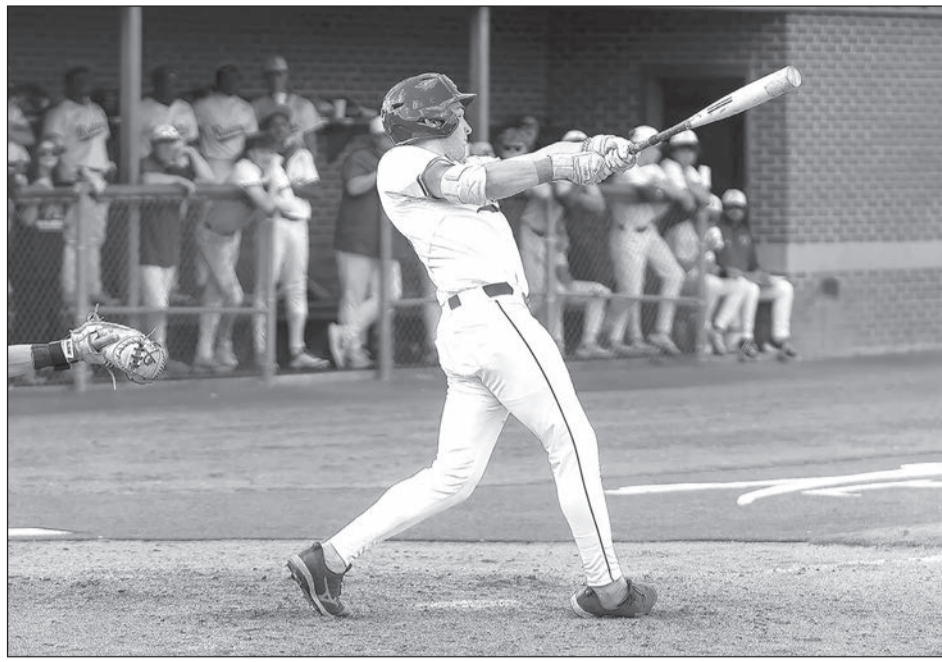
As it would turn out, the only thing needed for them to rediscover their confidence was some

extended time in the cages to reinforce trust in their swings.

"It felt like (it was just) hitting with the team this week," said sophomore Tripp Mascaro, who had two hits and RBIs in game 1. "We were with Coach (Trevor) Wood. He was working on our approach, getting our toes on the line, seeing balls in the cage, being on time, that kind of deal."

But a chance to do that, with only one scheduled day off between seven games in two jam-packed final weeks of the schedule, didn't come until the one-week layoff between the regular season and playoffs that the Raiders were able to make the most of.

"After this past week, I'm just sold on, the way our program is and our kids are, we have to have practice," Gordon said. "The five practices we were able to have, being able to work with these guys - we're so good at the fundamentals, at working hard and being up-tempo, and giving those guys the opportunities in intra-squads and the at-bats we give them for them to have the success out here - that's just something that we are. If we



KA-BLUEY: Buck Shepherd, whose walk-up music is the theme from popular animated kids series "Bluey," swung a stick of dynamite with two hits for four RBIs in Friday's games. He blasted two baseballs toward the fence in right with explosive swings in game 1. This one in the fourth inning needed a bit more TNT to get out, but he took one to smithereens in the second for a three-run homer to help the Raiders start their day with a bang/DANNY SCARBORO

have to start practicing more and playing less games, that's probably what we need to do."

West Laurens, which advances to the second round for the first time since 2024, out-hit Gilmer 8-4 in both games, the first ending with its last pair of runs in the bottom of the fifth inning.

The afternoon got off to a confident start as the Raiders scored seven, to drive away all of the demons, in the first two.

But they had to face them right from the get-go as Bobcat starter Jase McClure walked two and hit a man to load the bases with one out, presenting another of the golden opportunities they'd been haunted by.

This time, they came through

with two simple hits that created a major impact.

Cardwell delivered one RBI with a single to left (a second potential run got caught between third and home plate by shortstop Peyton Ocobock, who cut the ball off before it got far outside the infield and initiated a short rundown), then joined Buck Shepard in scoring on a single up the middle by Cason Pollock to make it an early 3-0 lead.

In the second, West Laurens added four more as Mascaro and J.J. Giles led off with singles, Kolby Clark was hit by a pitch and Grant Baker grounded into a fielder's choice that made it 4-0.

RAIDERS
Continued on page 6

Fortunes fall through in favorable innings as Falcons face tough fate at Fitzgerald

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Though Fitzgerald swept East Laurens - with wins by a run, and then 11 - in the teams' playoff doubleheader Friday, the Falcons didn't at all walk away feeling that their first-round opponent was a decidedly better team.

Similar to some other close games they lost against region opponents back in the regular season, it was a few extra hits, and one more out in the last of the seventh, that separated them from a chance to steal a game from the eighth overall seed.

But the opener got away in heart-breaking fashion, as the Purple Hurricane cashed in an error to walk off with the 2-1 victory, and its momentum snowballed into a 14-3 runaway to take the finale, and the series.

"It's hard to say this, especially when you lose, but I had a couple of coaches talk to me today and say they felt like we outplayed them," East Laurens head coach Vic Thigpen said Monday.

"They didn't hit us hard the first game... The second game, we just came out in the first two innings, they did a lot of small ball and we made a couple of mistakes, and got their momentum going. After that, they got hits here and there... But both teams were pretty close to evenly matched. We just didn't make the plays the second game."

Fitzgerald will move on to host ACE Charter in the round of 16, as the Falcons conclude their best season in almost a decade with a record of 16-15 (11-7 region 2-High A).

A 7-5 hit advantage in the first produced some great opportunities that mostly passed them by as five different innings ended with a man or more left in scoring position (and the bases loaded in two of them), but nothing to show.

Fitzgerald, in many of the same situations against Eastside starting pitcher Conner Lawrence, capitalized only once in the same time frame, taking advantage of an infield single and two passed balls for an unearned run in its half of the first.

The Falcons tied it up only in the nick of time as they faced their last chance against opposing hurler Brodie Singletary in the top of the seventh.

Lawrence doubled for his third hit to lead off, and Konner O'Neal (one of four others with base hits) was intentionally walked ahead of a two-out single by Grayson Edge that tied the score.

But a chance to do a bit more and take the lead, like each of those before, also slipped away as Singletary recorded a third out via ground ball to send it to the home half.

Lawrence (who struck out four, walked one and picked off a man) got his first two outs in a hurry. But the Hurricane's Caden Cowan extended the game with a single before advancing to third. And he'd score the winning run on a hard-hit ball to second that East couldn't get hold of in time for a throw to the plate.

"It's just one of those plays that's just unfortunate," Thigpen said.

Eight errors and 15 Fitzgerald hits helped sink the Falcons in the next game, three playing into the devastating setback that was Hurricane's five-run second inning (in which a two-run base hit by Brady Brown was the only true RBI).

Its lead, bolstered by a run via sac fly in the first and another error in the third, grew to seven before East Laurens could reach the scoreboard in the fourth. Another seven offset the Falcons' efforts to chip away down the stretch with single runs in three innings.

Six of the 14 were unearned for a quartet of pitchers that included Edge, Brody Kight, Jaxten Thomas and Jakeb Logue (which combined to strike out six and walk three).

East Laurens got a bit going in the fourth as Edge and Kight singled, and Sam Wynn brought in a run to make the score 7-1 on a ground ball.

But it was 10-1 before another got home in the sixth, and the Falcons got only one despite a chance to post a crook-

FALCONS
Continued on page 6

Irish can't close out 'Canes in deciding game

From STAFF REPORTS

Baseball is one of those sports where the difference in a game - or in this case a playoff series - is often one bounce of the ball.

Saturday's rubber game between Dublin and Jasper County hinged on a few of those at the end of throws to first base by either team.

And it was a tough one for the Irish, for a potential third out of the final inning, that narrowly got away, allowing the Hurricanes to score the two runs that ultimately won them the series.

Three quick outs in the bottom half clinched their 7-5 victory to advance in the GHSA state playoffs, and spoil Dublin's hopes of doing so in fairly gut-wrenching fashion.

The weekend's shifting wind blew each direction in games of the Friday doubleheader decided by the same 4-1 final score.

The Irish prevailed with it at their back in the opener, but found themselves running squarely against it as Jasper County split things up in game 2.

There were gusts of confidence early Saturday for each team, with the Canes enjoying a friendly first inning to jump in front 4-0. But a perfect storm struck for Dublin in a five-run fourth that reclaimed the brief lead.

Though the Hurricanes circled back to tie it in their next set of at-bats, the Irish han-



PIECING IT TOGETHER: Xavier Reese doesn't throw hard, but is tough to hit solidly, and Jasper County - forced to cobble together its offense against him - couldn't do enough on just four hits in game 1/HORACE AUSTIN

dled the late-game pressure with poise until the seventh-inning setback, at the worst possible moment, took all the wind out of their sails.

The Irish, with the bases clear, were an out from sending the game to the seventh, when they'd have a chance to win it.

But Justin Crowder managed to work a walk and get his foot inside the door of opportunity.

Mikey Harbin, next up, snatched a line

drive up the third base line that fit inside just as narrow a sliver, past the diving Ryland Yates and into the corner.

Crowder's pinch runner, however, was late to break on contact, and wasn't able to score from first, holding at third in a potential big break for Dublin if Morgan Davis - who'd used more than 100 pitches to battle his way in middle relief from the first inning - could bounce back and get the third out.

It came down to another of the game's several rollers to an exact perfect spot on the infield that was hit just softly enough by Jaxon Cohan to force the issue as Will Wallace hurried to field it and get off his best throw to first.

Jeff Davis had made an expert pick at first on the same ball for a lead-saving out to end the fifth, just after Jasper County had scored to even the game on a one-out grounder with runners at the corners.

This time, he couldn't quite secure it, as the ball bounded a few feet past, and both men easily scored to suddenly put the Hurricanes ahead by two.

Tal Duke came on to get a fly ball for the final out and hold the number there, but

IRISH
Continued on page 6

Tallulah Falls can't cool off Trinity's hot bats

By JEREMY PAYNE
Correspondent

Trinity played another non-region contest prior to the state playoffs with their final home game against Tallulah Falls over the weekend.

The Crusaders' hot offensive streak continued as they built a pair of solid leads, but ultimately had to hold on for a 12-10 win.

The visiting Indians got on the board first, putting two runners on with a single and a double, then scoring on a squeeze bunt to go up 1-0.

Trinity wasted no time answering as Asher Evans led off the bottom of the first with a double. Kolbi Grooms followed with a bunt single. The late throw got away from the first baseman, allowing Evans to score and Grooms to go to third and make it 1-1. Grooms would later score on an error to make it 2-1.



BOOM!: Trinity teammates leap in the air to greet Carter Lee (11) with the team's traditional home run celebration after he hit his second career grand slam in the third inning/CLAY REYNOLDS

Asher Evans singled again with one out in the second and Grooms would follow with a walk. Carter Lee, who had a huge day at the plate, came up next with an RBI double to

make it 3-1. Tayt Evans then continued his torrid stretch with another double to drive in a pair and make it 5-1 Crusaders.

Tallulah Falls would get back

into the game in the third by plating five runs. A bases-loaded walk would make the score 5-2. A single scored another run, then a two-run double tied the game at 5-5 and knocked Grooms out of the contest. A wild pitch later in the frame would give the Indians a 6-5 advantage.

The lead was short-lived at Trinity went right back to work in the home half of the third. Blake Sims led off with a single. Following an out, Luke Williams, who was making his first varsity start, worked a walk. Asher Evans came up next with an RBI single to tie the game back up at 6-6.

Grooms followed with a single to load the bases for Lee. The all-state performer came up huge with a grand slam to left to put Trinity back on top 10-6.

CRUSADERS
Continued on page 6

RAIDERS

Continued from page 5

Then Shepherd scorched a three-run bomb to right field.

"It felt pretty good," the freshman said of his first career home run. "When it came off the bat, I was about certain it was gone."

Mascaro cashed in two more McClure walks in the third with an RBI double into the left field corner to get the total to nine, against Gilmer's lone run on a two-out error in the top of the inning.

After a scoreless fourth, the Raiders put the game away by chasing McClure, with a leadoff single from Pollock and a fifth McClure walk worked by Nathan Hester that preceded a first pitching change, then his reliever Ocobock, who got two quick outs, but then walked J.D. Hogan to load the bases and place the winning run at second base.

Slade Holt took over, and got to throw only one pitch that got bopped up the middle for the walk-off by Clark, who also held Gilmer to four hits with one walk and four strikeouts on the mound.

"We went out last year early, so to come out here, set the tone like we did in the first game, and bring the momentum back in the second game, it means a lot," Clark said.

The offense was slower to unfold against Gilmer's game 2 starter Cooper Cochran. The senior left-hander threw a steady diet of tall curveballs that were mostly popped up and hit softly on the ground.

But West Laurens once again got some quick-hit offense as Hogan drew a walk to lead off. Clark's intended sacrifice bunt – part of a small-ball emphasis that ended up being a non-theme – turned into a hit when the ball rode all the way up the line, forcing Cochran to field it and attempt a tag that missed.

The tiebreaking RBIs came once



JUST LIKE THAT: Kolby Clark didn't waste any time ending game 1 as he knocked the first pitch of Gilmer reliever Slade Holt up the middle for two winning RBIs /DANNY SCARBORO



CARD TRICK: Second baseman Cohen Cardwell makes some defensive magic with this kneeling, sliding grab on a Gilmer pop fly in the sixth inning/DANNY SCARBORO

again from Cardwell on a single to grab the early lead, 2-0.

Not much developed from there until the fourth, when Hester drew a walk, and Giles singled to drive him in and make it 3-0.

West Laurens responded to Gilmer's first run in the fourth (on almost back-to-back doubles from Peyton Chancey and McCollum) with a Baker double that flew beyond reach of Chancey in center field to set up Shepherd for a fourth RBI of the series, and a 4-1 lead.

The Bobcats wouldn't go away, and scored twice to create a sticky situation for the Raiders in the bottom of the fifth.

Starting pitcher Brycen Milton, who was unhit until Gilmer's earlier breakthrough, walked three around an error, the last to bring in a run. Duggan Malone came on and issued a quick walk to do the same, making it a one-run game.

But a groundout to Cardwell busted up the bases-loaded jam, and preserved their one-run lead ahead of the sixth inning, which called for

another big response.

It came again from the bat of Clark, who followed a two-out Hogan walk with his third single, then advanced two bases on an errant throw to score on a wild pitch.

After Cochran and Zander Shute found grass with singles to open the sixth, Malone got six consecutive outs – three on strikes – to set the Bobcats down for good.

Cochran struck out two and walked three, with half the six runs earned, in seven innings.

"It feels great having two quality wins against a quality opponent that the whole team contributed to hitting-wise, it wasn't just a couple of people," Baker said. "We hit the ball at the right time and we had two great games today."

West Laurens had just one error in either game. One was a muffed throw at first base, the other a dropped pop fly in fair territory up the right field line, and both led to Gilmer runs.

A ball lost in the sun also got down behind the center fielder

Giles, but he recovered for some great catches of the running and diving variety that led to key outs.

"It was really difficult, but Coach Wood always gets us out here and we live on this quote that the sun was there before we were, so you gotta get your glove up there and find it, and I did," he said. "I couldn't find it that one time, but the rest, I got my glove up and I made some plays."

Hogan had some key grabs in left. But all four on the infield seemed to rise to the occasion as they took care of routine plays, and a few difficult ones.

Pollock made a running collection, and fired to a stretching Clark at first to rob a hit from the Bobcats early in game 2. Cardwell made a sliding, kneeling catch with his back turned to the evening sun for a major first out of the sixth.

"I'm proud of those guys defensively," Gordon said. "They've worked hard. And it's paying off for them right now."

West Laurens, for its second-round series starting Thursday in Dexter, will host 22nd seed Northwest Whitfield – a team that's also coming up with clutch hits when it counts.

The Bruins jacked eight home runs (two grand slams out of the four total by freshman Smith Browning) Friday in their sweep of No. 11 Heritage, a region rival they lost to twice out of three in the regular season.

So needless to say, the Raiders will once again need their bats to be at their best for a shot to beat them, and reach the state quarterfinals.

"I'm proud of the guys and the approaches they took today," Gordon said "They barreled up some baseballs, and there were some that should've been hits that were caught, and just couldn't find grass. I'm real happy about that, and I'm real happy about how we're going to look going into the second round."

SCOREBOARD

GIRLS SOCCER
Monday
Central Fellowship 6, Trinity 1
Tuesday
Heritage 2, West Laurens 1
BOYS SOCCER
Tuesday
CFCA 2, Trinity 1
BOYS TENNIS
Tuesday
WL 5, Spalding 0

PREP SCHEDULE

SOCCER
Wednesday
GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
Peach Co. at West Laurens (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
Wednesday
Richmond Academy at WL (girls)/3:30 p.m.
Thursday
GHSA Quarterfinals
Oconee Co. at WL/4 p.m.

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IRISH

Continued from page 5

there was nothing doing in Dublin's last chance at the plate, as a swinging strikeout, flyout and pop out to third brought the game to an end.

Game 3 didn't get off to an auspicious start as a walk-a-thon, along with two infield hits, helped Jasper County score its first four.

The Irish had little consistent luck against Cochran on the mound until a fourth inning that felt like a gotta-have-it moment.

And they responded with a rally to turn the game completely around.

Xavier Reese led off with a walk. Jeff Davis singled. Duke doubled to drive in one. A second run balked in before Wallace grounded home a third. Morgan Davis choked up on the bat and peppered a single to right, then scored as Lake reached on an error. Evans finished the huge inning with an RBI single for the 5-4 lead.

Jasper County's tying run in the fifth was ultimately the product of a Breyland Beasley double, though Dublin denied it a run to go back in front in either the fifth or sixth, when the bases were loaded ahead of a two-



'CANE, CANNED: Will Wallace nabs Jasper County's Jaxson Cochran at second base to turn a throw from catcher Bryceton Evans into an out in game 3/CLAY REYNOLDS

out ground ball that Wallace converted into a force-out at second.

Morgan's two-out infield hit, and steal of second base, gave the Irish a surefire shot to re-take the lead in their half of the same inning. But Wailer Sands made a terrific running catch of Bennett Lake's solidly-hit liner in the left center gap to rob him of an RBI.

Jeff hit his first career home run, a solo shot, in the fourth inning for one of four unanswered runs that built up Dublin's early lead in the first of Friday's twin bill.

Reese held the Hurricanes to only four hits, and a single run in an attempted seventh-inning rally. The senior finished up the day just north of 90 pitches with a line of one strikeout, one

walk and one hit batter.

Reese also contributed two hits for an RBI to lead the way at the plate. In addition to the aforementioned homer, Lake, Evans and Morgan Davis had the rest of Dublin's seven for the day.

Evans and Reese drove home runs in Dublin's two-run third to get an early foothold on the scoreboard. Morgan's RBI added a run of insurance in the sixth.

The Irish wouldn't ultimately need it, though Jasper County did threaten in the top of the seventh as Kayson Hobbs provided some late life with a lead-off double. Owen Houston followed with a single to put men at the corners, but Crowder would ground into a double play that cleaned

the bases – at the expense of a run Dublin could afford to give up – and put Jasper County back at square 1.

Next batter Tyler Ripley flew out to Duke in right field to end it in the next at-bat.

Game 2 followed a similar pattern, though favoring the other home team, as Jasper County scored once each in the first and second, then twice in the fourth.

Dublin once again had the higher hit total, with five against the Hurricanes' four, but couldn't get anything going until its last shot.

Wallace faded one into the right center gap for a leadoff hit, and Morgan Davis went to right with a single to score him, as the Irish laid the groundwork of a comeback. Evans would add a hit, but Davis became out No. 2 as he was waved aggressively around third on the play, and thrown out at the plate.

That, and a groundout by the next hitter, would spell the end of the night.

Yates went five, struck out four and walked six with three hits allowed in the Dublin start. Freshman Brayden Moore handled business despite a couple of walks, a double play and a

strikeout against one hit in the sixth to strand a couple, and keep the four-run gap where it was.

The Irish round out their season – a third-straight to reach the postseason – at 20-11 (14-4 region 2-High A).

Jasper County goes on the road to No. 2 seed Bre-men in the second round.

CRUSADERS

Continued from page 5

Lee doubled to lead off the fifth. He then advanced to third on a ground out, and scored when the throw got away to make it 11-6. Brayden Underwood followed with a solo homer, his second in as many games, to put Trinity up 12-6.

That score held until the seventh, when Talluah Falls tried to mount a rally.

A leadoff double followed by a pair of hit batters with one out loaded the bases. A fielder's choice plated a run to make it 12-7. After a walk, the Crusaders extended the game with a costly error to make it 12-8. Back-to-back singles would score two more and get the Indians to within 12-10, but a strikeout sealed the win.

Lee and Asher Evans had three hits each to lead the 14-hit attack. Grooms, Underwood and Tayt Evans had a pair apiece, while Sims and Jake Johnson also hit safely. Lee drove in six.

Asher Evans got the win on the mound in relief as he worked four scoreless innings. He allowed three hits, no walks and no runs, while striking out four.

Trinity (14-6 and No. 3 in the state power rankings) will close out its regular season this weekend with a road trip to visit Piedmont on Friday, and then play a rematch at Talluah Falls on Saturday.

FALCONS

Continued from page 5

ed number after a Kight single and Wynn's double for a second RBI.

Logan Gibson's single chased home the final run with two on following singles by Myles Burke and Konner O'Neal in the last of the seventh, but the bases were left loaded by a strikeout and groundout to fully close the book on their remote comeback chances.

Edge was 3-for-4 and Burke 2-of-3 to lead East's 10-hit effort.

Despite its tough ending, this spring will go down as a major milestone for the Falcons in a long rebuilding process that has returned them back to a position of relevance in their region.

In the year-end standings, East Laurens wound up just outside the league's top four, and splits in the season series with two of the teams inside it.

Thigpen points back to the leadership and experience of his five seniors

as a catalyst for the team's strong finish, with wins in 10 of its last 14 regular-season games, and the progress the program has made step-by-step each year since the majority of third- and fourth-year starters began playing in 2023 and 24.

"These seniors did everything we asked them to do," he said. "Hopefully, they left

a foundation where these younger kids saw how hard they worked, and it's going to carry over to the next few years."

What's next for the Falcons will fall to the up-and-coming core of freshmen and sophomores who

showed some exciting flashes as they began coming into their own this spring, with much of their best baseball still ahead.

"When I first got the job, I wanted us to get to the point where we can compete on a yearly basis for

the playoffs," Thigpen said. "This is two years in a row (we've made it). We had five seniors, but we are still a very young team, and as the season went along, we really got a lot better. Our pitching came around and our defense came around.

I think, now, the kids have a little confidence. We're trying to change the culture, but I think our kids are starting to really believe in what we're doing.

"The future looks bright for us."

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. Deadline for submittal is May 15, 2026.

The Dublin Housing Authority is an equal opportunity employer.

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. Deadline for submittal is May 15, 2026.

The Dublin Housing Authority is an equal opportunity employer.

Classifieds

Yard/Estate Sales

Moving Sale: Sat May 2nd 8a-12p. Furniture, appliances, kitchenware, clothing, lamps, 135 West Chester Circle.

Multi-family Yardsale: 1189 Graham Road E. Dublin. May 1st 1p-6p, May 2 8a-6p, May 3 1p-4p. Rain or Shine. Clothing, furniture, household goods, & more.

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

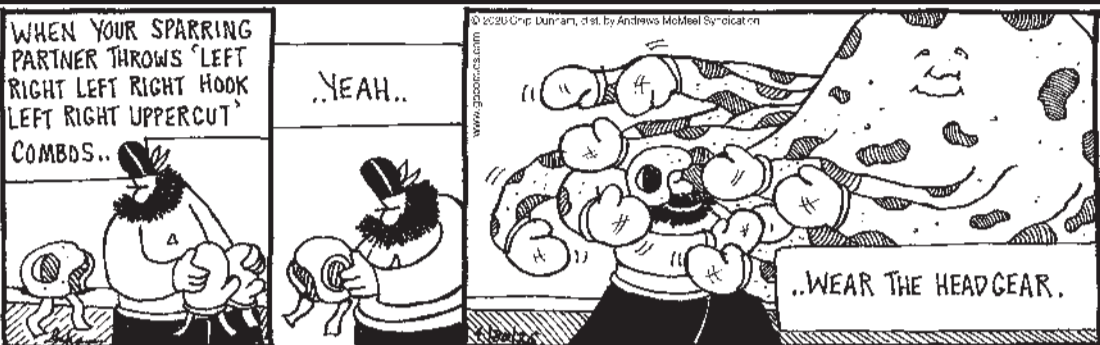
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



GARFIELD



OVERBOARD



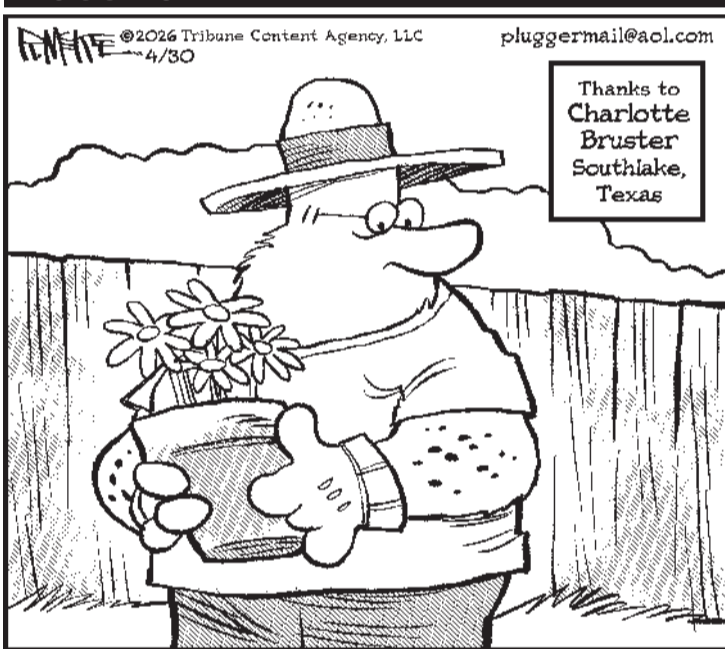
DEFLOCKED



ZIGGY



PLUGGERS



A plugger wishes all her brown spots would merge so she'd have a nice tan.

Three's a crowd when unexpected visit drags on!

DEAR ABBY: My partner recently allowed a friend to stay in our home without telling me in advance. My partner knows unannounced guests deeply affect my mental well-being and sense of safety. We had agreed I would be given at least two weeks' notice for any visitors. That did not happen because the guest was going through a difficult time.

While I have compassion and tried my best to be flexible, I also recognize that our home is not a healing center or a place to bring chaos. What I was told would be a short stay turned into an open-ended one, and my peace was severely disrupted. Shared spaces were left messy, personal belongings spread throughout the house, decor rearranged and boundaries ignored. The guest even began moving items from a van into our home!

When we all tried to calmly discuss a departure, the guest talked over me, attempted to analyze me and wanted us to work around their schedule rather than respect our home and needs. When they suggested staying in the van outside and coming inside only at certain times, I finally said, "I want our home back," and made it clear that this arrangement would not work for me.

What hurts me most is feeling unsupported by my



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

partner. This situation has created tension, and I'm left wondering how we can repair the damage and restore peace in our relationship and, more important, our home. -- HOME INVASION IN COLORADO

DEAR HOME INVASION: I understand why you justifiably felt invaded. You and your partner view your home differently. You need quiet and solitude, while your partner is more outgoing. The relationship is repairable if you can talk and reestablish your basic ground rules. Can you do that to the satisfaction of both of you? If this was a one-time thing, let it go. However, if it happens regularly, you may need to rethink the relationship and make different living arrangements.

DEAR ABBY: I was in a relationship with my daughter's father for 11 years. From the beginning, he lied, manipulated and cheated. My family was aware of it. When I finally had had enough and left, my family decided to maintain a relationship with him (dinners, parties, camping, holidays). He is not a good person. I poured my heart out to let them know how badly what they were doing was hurting me.

That was six years ago, and they are all still going strong. My family and I have not spoken in five years. My heart is broken. It can never be repaired; the damage is done. I no longer want a relationship with them. My heart still hurts, and I don't know how to get beyond that pain. Can you help? -- SUFFERING IN NEW YORK

DEAR SUFFERING: I am sorry for the pain you continue to experience because of your shattered family. I wish I could make it dissipate, but the person you need to consult (and by this, I mean talk to) would be a licensed psychotherapist. While your pain may not disappear overnight, it may lessen considerably if you do.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips.

Thursday, April 30, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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BOURKE BRILLIANCY

Both vulnerable, South deals

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

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠*	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	All pass		

*Double negative, 0-3 points

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

Australia's Tim Bourke creates very interesting bridge deals, and he makes them available for us to share with our readers. Today's deal is an example. The North hand is about as bad a bridge hand as we will

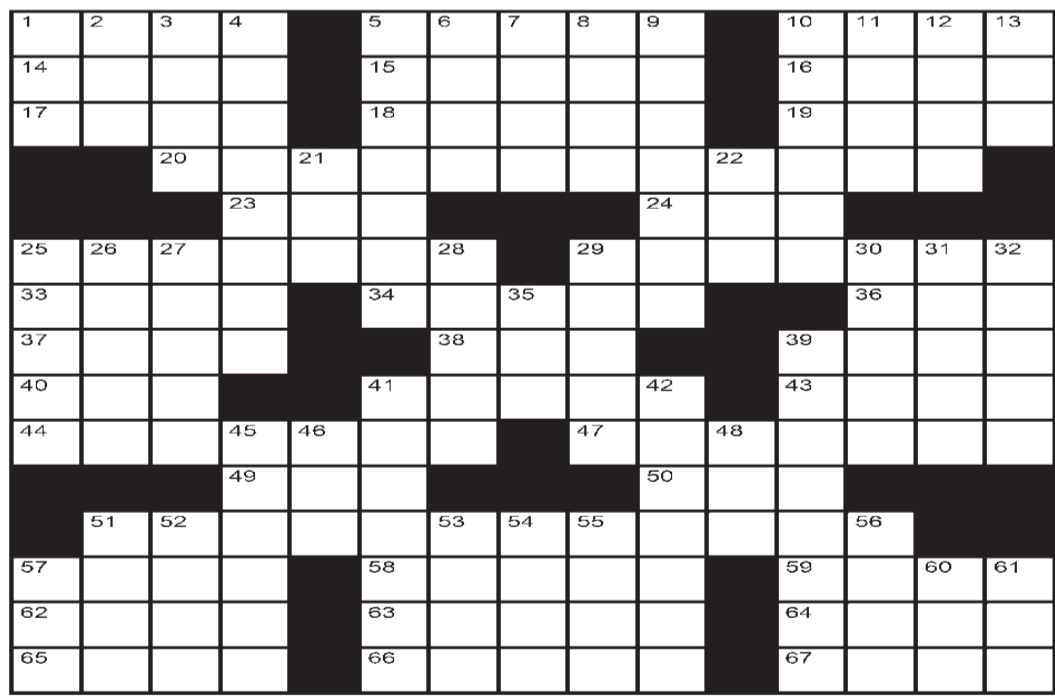
ever see, but the South hand is too powerful to stop short of game. West starts with two high spades. South ruffing the second. The contract is cold if the trumps split 3-2. South can cash two high hearts and give up a diamond, conceding a trump trick to the defense. But what if one opponent holds four trumps to the queen? South is in danger of getting tapped out by repeated spade plays and he would lose trump control.

Bourke suggests that South can guard against this by leading the jack of hearts from his hand at trick three. The defense will win and lead another spade, ruffed by South. South's next play, complementing his play in the heart suit, is to lead the jack of diamonds from his hand! Should the defense win and play a fourth round of spades, South can ruff with dummy's remaining trump. He can then come to his hand with a club and draw the rest of the trumps to make his contract. This line is close to fool proof, running into trouble only with extremely bad splits.

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

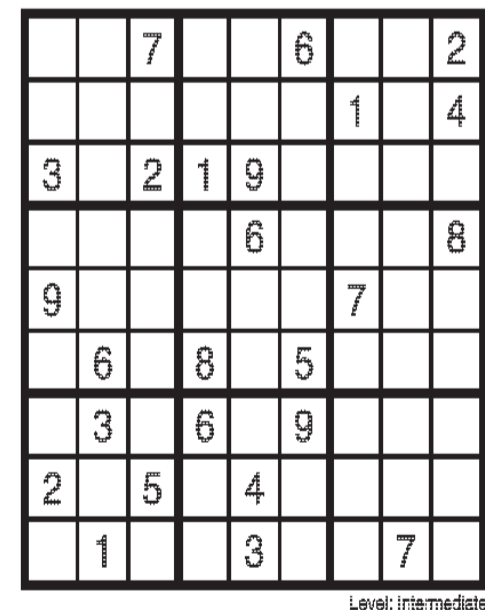
THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- Go out on a _____
 - Design details, for short
 - Walk very slowly
 - Dastardly
 - Fortune-telling deck
 - Reside
 - Chromosome part
 - Yogurt-based dip
 - "You said it!"
 - Quarterback's mistake
 - Perish
 - Ignited
 - Sentimental keepsake
 - Winter, spring, and fall
 - Finished
 - Smelling _____
 - Fish eggs
 - "___ do this thing!"
 - Make a knot
 - Bread with a pocket
 - Prefix meaning "three"
 - Rolling car part
 - Agitate
 - Mollusks eaten raw
 - Bemoans
 - Actress Gardner
 - "No ___" (Spanish "no more")
 - TV host's cuing device
 - Most beloved, for short
 - School essay
 - Director Ephron
 - Not closed
 - Wipe chalk from
 - Dressed (in)
 - Have a lease
 - Cause to be late
 - Shade trees
- DOWN**
- Chicken piece
 - "___ seen worse"
 - Pint-sized
 - Milkshake makers
 - City thoroughfares
 - TV host Jack
 - Actor Dane or Bana
 - Dove's enclosure
 - Bent fasteners
 - Braids
 - Prom rental, for short
 - Baking appliance
 - ___ of thieves
 - Baking pan
 - Actress Mowry
 - Very, in music
 - ___ man for himself
 - Canadian of mixed ancestry
 - Vows
 - Alloy in knife-making
 - "Hunter" constellation
 - Shout in tag: 2 wds.
 - Securely closes
 - Falsehood
 - Self-assurance
 - Finished filming
 - Jawless fish
 - Natural gift
 - Adam's mate
 - Wrestling surface
 - Masking _____
 - Opposite of odd
 - Hard to find
 - Iridescent gem
 - Flat-topped landform
 - Bun
 - Tit ___ tat
 - Hit head-on
 - TV spots



- Created by Stella Zawistowski 11/4/25
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SUDOKU



Fun By The Numbers

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

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

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

ANSWER: 382M5N9

SUPERINTENDENT
Continued from page 1

Curriculum director Marcee Pool has stepped in as interim superintendent but plans to return to her former job once a hire is made.

"Mrs. Pool has done a wonderful job," Smith said. "I don't think anyone else would have jumped into this."

The school system is expected to end the fiscal year with a cash surplus, although it still owes about \$5 million in overdue payments to the State Health Benefit Plan.

The school board went in-house for its hiring of Williams, who took office in 2015 with the district in similarly dire financial straits. He inherited a multi-million dollar deficit and, with the aid of COVID funds, managed to get the system out of the red briefly in 2021, but left with it in even worse shape.

State officials contacted the Dublin district in August after learning the system owed \$5.6 million to the State Health Benefit Plan after not paying in contributions for the entire fiscal year 2025. After a closer look at the finances, state School Superintendent Richard Woods declared the district on a "path to insolvency" with a \$13.4 million projected deficit.

A subsequent special examination by the state Department of Audits and Accounts, requested by local lawmakers, confirmed the root causes – overhiring and overpaying employees, wasteful spending and lax oversight – but also identified specific concerns ranging from late tax payments to the IRS, "abnormally" high credit card spending and unwarranted travel and expenditures.

The audit also pointed to instances of family members traveling on out-of-

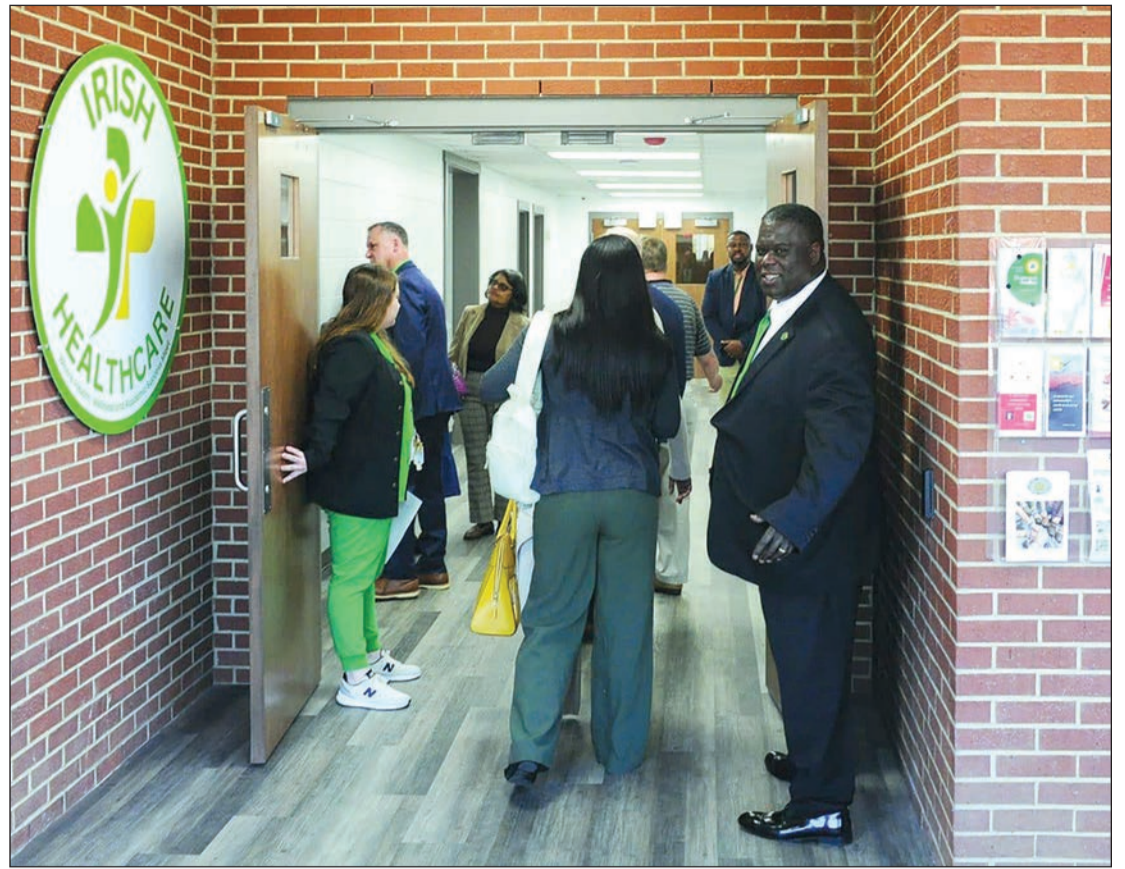
town leadership retreats at the system's expense and undocumented payments to a local florist.

The school board voted earlier this month 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.

The position has been filled by consultants and interim chief financial officer Betty Corbitt since former director Chad McDaniel resigned in late August.

McDaniel had served as the school system's technology director before moving to its finance department in 2022, then taking over as finance director following Christi Thublin's retirement in 2024.

However, records show that Thublin continued to work for the system for at least another year as a consultant.



Former Dublin School Superintendent Fred Williams welcomes visitors to the Irish Healthcare clinic during its grand opening in February 2025. Williams stepped down to take an early retirement in the midst of the district's financial crisis last fall/RODNEY MANLEY

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued from page 8

"You know what the state wanted us to do with Moore Street by this past December?" Bell asked. "They were wanting it completely shut down and put in a trailer or a room or something at the high school. There wasn't going to be any more Moore Street. Mrs. Poole and Mrs. Smith worked and worked with the state to get that changed where we would still have Moore Street."

Bell said he also was unaware of last week's proposals until they were presented at the called meeting but still voted for them.

"I knew nothing about what was going to be on the agenda – I knew nothing about any of that – but I thoroughly support what we voted for."

Officials have sought to highlight the differences between the IGA and proposed magnet school, but

Bell, who had already asked the crowd to quiet down once, caused a stir when describing the new school as "just changing the name" of the Irish Gifted Academy.

"Excuse me! I'm talking. You have no right to talk while I'm talking," Bell said, at one point asking for one of the uniformed police officers on hand to step into the crowded board room.

"Don't talk. I'm trying to tell you the truth. If you don't want to know the truth, if you don't want to hear the truth, you can keep it up with the rumors and everything else."

Earlier in the meeting, parent Alfred Wheeler said the Moore Street/magnet school decision was "introduced at the last minute to save IGA."

"The lack of transparency is causing concern, confusion and anxiety in the community," Wheeler said.

Wheeler and others

asked that the board reconsider last week's actions. Former board member Regina McRae and several other speakers also requested that all documented cost-cutting recommendations from the state be made public.

Selena Anderson, a mother of an Irish Gifted Academy student, said some parents are "thinking about changing schools, myself included." She questioned the timing of the magnet school proposal and the fact that parents were uninformed.

"The votes of the majority of the board does not reflect the majority of the students," she said.

Anderson and others also mentioned concerns about the district having recently been downgraded to the lowest level of accreditation. The downgrade is the final step before losing accreditation and requires a formal hearing before the

state Board of Education on whether to recommend that the school board's members be suspended and replaced by the governor.

"The uncertainty is causing real fear," Anderson said.

Longtime board member Peggy Johnson expressed disappointment that she was not provided information prior to last week's votes and that more board members did speak up about it. She had asked that the board delay the decision.

"I'm tired of all the nonsense. We are adults. ...We need to come together and make sure what happened last meeting does not happen again," Johnson said.

She also noted that the state and Cognia, the district's accreditation agency, have raised concerns about some decisions made as the

school system attempted to cut costs and climb out of what had been projected as a \$13.4 million deficit by fiscal year's end.

"We're going to have to do better or we're going to have to change leadership," Johnson said.

She also addressed the seriousness of the district being "one step away from losing accreditation."

"We, as a board and superintendent, have no more excuses. If we can't do it, I'd be the first to say they ought to remove us."

Smith said she expects the board will have "some hard conversations coming up about doing better." However, she has no plans to resign or step back as chairwoman.

"I don't think anyone can question my love for the children because it would be

really easy to throw in the towel right now. It would have been easy to throw in the towel when the state told me all of the concerns, when they told all of us (the board) of all of the concerns. My concern is what would come next."

Smith said the district is preparing an action plan to address concerns and directives in the Cognia accreditation review.

"We knew it was going to be bad because the state had already been in here showing us some things," said Smith. "We didn't want it to be smoke and mirrors. We wanted it to be all out in the public because you can't correct it if it's not out in the public. We will talk about the state recommendations and other ways we can communicate with the community."

KID'S CUP
Continued from page 1

Robyn Thomas, director of Kid's Cup, who added that Tina Meeks is the chairperson for this year's event. "Last year was my first year and the weather was absolutely perfect. We could not have ordered a better day. We are praying for good weather this year. May is known as Foster Care Awareness Month. When it was held last year for the first time in May, we decided it would be good to love on the foster family and we would just hold it then."

Pilots will park their planes on the runway, allowing crowds to have the opportunity to talk with pilots. The fire department,

police department, forestry department, an ambulance and other vehicles with different equipment will be on display.

A bouncy house, slide and food vendor trucks will be on display.

"We are sending fliers home in all the systems for kids kindergarten through 8th grades," Thomas said. "The sponsors will have a tent there. All of the tents will have a kid-friendly activity for them to do."

Kid's Cup, which is a non-profit organization, is a community closet serving children living in foster care and in kinship placements. All of the donations from this event help Kid's Cup, which allows families to shop at no cost by referral

and appointment.

"We take referrals from different agencies," Thomas said. "We then contact the guardian and set up a shopping appointment."

They offer a cheerful boutique-style space for families to shop while experiencing the love of Jesus and making new connections. During their first visit, the child will receive a Bible, blanket and pillow. They will receive a food voucher depending on their age.

"Each child will receive 14 pieces of clothing, which is about a week's worth of clothing," Thomas said. "That will include brand new socks and underwear."

For more information about Kid's Cup, call (478) 290-8871.

"It's expensive."

Then there are healthy food options. The woman said the cost of food for some people is tough. She said many depend on food banks for their meals.

"It is good for the clinics to have those resources," she said. "It's an area that the community should be aware of. Healthier options are a big thing."

The woman knows there are many people in Dublin who are doing, "God's work."

"They may be operating on a lean budget, but more often than not, I've seen people get out and spread the word," the woman said. "I think a lot of people want to help, and a lot of people need help. The people there in Dublin are kind. I know things are tough. Let's talk about it and see if we can come together and help the helpers who have their noses down to the grindstone. It's important."

J.O.Y.

Continued from page 1

have healthy insurance and can't afford to purchase it," she said. "We always have people who are in different stages of illness and wellness and they have a need there."

The most important need seems to be dental care. The woman said it and vision care, especially for children, are big.

"If the kids can't see, they can't learn," she said.

NEWS DIGEST

The Laurens County Board of Elections and Registration will hold their regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 4 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Elections and Registration Office of the Laurens County Courthouse Annex building located at 117 E. Jackson St.,

Suite A in Dublin. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Roll call
- Recognition of visitors
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Old business
- Discussion of office

procedures

- Revenue expenditures and outlay
- New business
- On going May 19, 2026 general primary
- Preparing for November General
- Executive session

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