

Zoning vs. data centers: With no land use laws, Laurens can't issue ban

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

Laurens County residents might one day have to choose between the lesser of two so-called evils – data centers or zoning.

Several residents turned out for Tuesday's County Commission meeting, continuing to call for a ban or at least a moratorium on data centers. But without a countywide zoning ordinance, unincorporated areas of the county are prime locations for data center companies – and there is not much officials can do to stop them.

"There is no zoning here in Laurens County because the people of Laurens County don't want it,"

said Commission Chairman Jimmy Rogers.

The commission attempted to pass a zoning ordinance in the 1990s but drew a massive public outcry that eventually killed the proposal. Rogers, who was not on the board at the time, compared those protests to the standing-room-only crowd that attended a recent commission meeting over data center rumors.

"It was like people are with data centers," Rogers said. "You'd fill this building up 10 times – they did not want people trying to tell them what to do with their property."

Resident Vonda Morton demanded the commission

adopt a ban on data centers. With almost 200 data centers either operating or planned in Georgia, another is not needed in Laurens County, she said. Morton argued that promises of tax relief and new jobs are not worth the water, light, air and noise pollution associated with the centers.

A federal grant application surfaced last month that mentioned the former Mohawk carpet plant as a possible location for a data center, stirring up community concern.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, a quasi-governmental planning agency, applied for funding to potentially test sites for en-



Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission executive director Brett Manning speaks to a large crowd of residents at last month's meeting of the Laurens County Commissioners. Residents turned out to voice concerns about the agency listing the old Mohawk carpet plant as a possible data center in a federal grant application/PAYTON TOWNS III, File

vironmental contamination. The Mohawk property was among them, and one of its identified uses suggested in the application was as a data center.

The grant application was denied.

County commissioners

assured the overflow crowd at last month's meeting that the county had no plans to bring a data center here. Morton said Tuesday that a data center ban would earn the commissioners more trust with the community.

"Your refusal to do so

makes us suspicious that there are already back-room deals in the works," said Morton.

Rogers promised to keep the public informed should a

COUNTY COMMISSION
Continued on page 9

Show of gratitude

Community feeds city employees as thanks for work during water crisis

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

It did not take long for Mike Cummings to know something had to be done to show appreciation to the city of Dublin's water department.

Cummings began putting a plan in motion after he saw the photos of the two city employees, chest-deep in water, trying to locate the leak on the pipe that broke on Joiner Street last Tuesday.

"This was wonderful," said Blake Soles, water construction superintendent for the city of Dublin. "I'm very thankful for our team, and everybody showing up and pulling together when it was needed the most. I'm very thankful that everybody sees it. It has been very appreciative. It was a hard time but the appreciation has been very nice."

Cummings is part of a supper club that meets every Friday. On Wednesday morning, when he saw the photographs on Facebook and knew their crew had been working all night to fix the water, he wanted to do something.

"I just called them and told



Event organizer Mike Cummings speaks to city Water Department workers before lunch is served/PAYTON TOWNS III

them we needed to do something," Cummings said. "Every single one of them said yes and to tell them what we needed to do."

Some departments in the city are not thought of until there is an emergency.

"As long as the water is running right, you don't think about it," Cummings said. "The minute it goes sideways, you think we've got a problem and wonder who is going to fix it. These guys stepped in and did what they do. We wanted them to know that their work and effort



Mayor Joshua Kight and City Councilwoman Tess Godfrey thanked employees for their hard work during a challenging situation/PAYTON TOWNS III

CITY LUNCH
Continued on page 9

Man dies from car fire injuries

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A 66-year-old Dublin man passed away in an Augusta hospital Wednesday, two weeks after he was pulled from a car fire outside of his home.

Richard Wells was pronounced dead at 7:40 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19, at the Augusta Burn Center, said Laurens County Coroner Richard Stanley.

The State Fire Marshal's Office, which was involved in investigating the fire, notified Dublin Fire Chief Matthew Cutler about Wells on Thursday.

"They came down on this case be-

cause we had a serious injury," Cutler said. "They ruled it was an accidental vehicle fire. The man was inside the vehicle sleeping and did not wake up."

On Aug. 4, the Dublin Fire Department received a call about a vehicle on fire on Sunny Lane around 7:39 p.m. The caller said the vehicle was parked between the house and a garage.

They said they also believed there was a man, later identified as Wells, still in the vehicle.

Two Dublin police officers found



Police found Richard Wells in this car after it caught fire/SPECIAL PHOTO

CAR FIRE DEATH
Continued on page 9

Two injured in Vinson Village shootings

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Local law enforcement has requested the Georgia Bureau of Investigation look into the shooting of two people in Vinson Village over the weekend.

According to a GBI press release, the Dublin Police Department asked the agency to assist the investigation of two men injured around 4:54 p.m. in the 500 block of Vinson Village. Officers responded

to find two men with gunshot wounds. Both were transported to regional hospitals for treatment.

One victim was in serious but stable condition,

SHOOTINGS
Continued on page 9

Enrollment up by 100 students in county

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The enrollment for Laurens County schools has increased by at least 100 students.

And that is a good issue to have, said Laurens County School Superintendent O.J. Hall.

"Once we get past the 10th day of school, we'll have a more accurate number," he said. "Some people will hear 100 more and think that's a lot. But if you look around the whole country, and especially in Georgia, enrollment is down. To be up 100 is a lot. That is more than our average, and in fact, we have been trending down in the last couple of years. It is a strong reverse in the opposite direction. It's a good problem to have. An increase enrollment offers increased opportunities."

Hall did not know how many of those students previously attended Dublin City Schools.

As for the first day of

COUNTY SCHOOLS
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Dublin man sentenced on firearm charges

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A Dublin man was among four people sentenced to federal prison after pleading guilty to various firearms charges in separate cases.

Antonio Lamar King, 41, of Dublin, was sentenced to 56 months in prison. He will also have to pay a \$1,500 fine followed by three years of supervised release after he pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. During an incident with the Dublin Police Department in May 2025, King was found to be in possession of a Smith and Wesson .40-caliber pistol. The sentences were imposed

GUN SENTENCINGS
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OBITUARIES



Rickey "Lee" Hall

A memorial service to honor the life of Rickey “Lee” Hall will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2026, at 6 p.m.. Location: Serenity Funeral Home of Dublin – 414 Telfair Street Dublin, Georgia 31021.

Ricky “Lee” Hall, 44, passed away on Aug. 14, 2026, leaving behind a family whose hearts will never be the same. To those who loved him, Lee wasn’t just a husband, father, son or brother — he was the steady, gentle presence that made life feel safer, brighter and fuller.

Lee was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Rayburn Brooks and Juanita Fowler Brooks; and his paternal grandparents, Luther Hall and Dora Mae Paige Hall Edge.

He is survived by his wife Alicia Hall; children, Jaymi Hall and Christopher Hall; mother Rebecca "Becky" Hall; father, Ricky Hall; sister, Tanya Hall Chalker (Federico) Figueroa; and his brothers, Timothy "Scotty" Peacock, Willie Hall, and Rayburn Peacock. Each of them carries a piece of his heart and will forever hold his memory close.

Lee had a way of showing love without needing many words — through his smile, his quiet strength, and the way he always showed up for the people he cared about. His absence leaves a space that cannot be filled, but his love remains in every person he touched.

Lee will be missed in ways that words can’t fully capture, but he will be remembered in every story shared, every tear shed, and every moment of love he gave so freely.

Donations are welcomed to support his children and help with unexpected expenses during this difficult time.

Serenity Funeral Home & Crematory Services has charge of arrangements.

Dennis Douglas

Dennis Douglas, age 71, of Eastman, Ga., died on Friday, August 21, 2026.

Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. Monday, Aug. 24, at Antioch #2 Baptist Church, with interment in Antioch Church Cemetery.

He is survived by his wife – Fran Douglas; Daughters – Jennifer Douglas and Crystal Bullock (Todd); four Grandchildren; Siblings – Deborah Laxton (Larry), Danny Douglas (Brenda), Cindy Screws (Donny), and Wayne Williams (Jeanine); several nieces and nephews.

The family received friends in Antioch #2 Baptist Church from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. Monday, Aug. 24.

Stokes-Southerland Funeral Home of Eastman has charge of arrangements.

BIRTHDAYS

Aug. 25
Alicia Morales

Georgia school district accused of illegally delaying enrollment of foster children

By ROSS WILLIAMS
Georgia Recorder

Muscogee is the only Georgia district to interpret the law this way, and the result is more than 30 students missing the first week of classes, including more than 20 with individualized education plans and special education designation. And the division says around 50 other students in foster care who had already enrolled could be at risk of being withdrawn from school if they are not enrolled by their case manager.

“After years of working through enrollment issues with Muscogee, this is the latest in a long line of efforts by Muscogee County School District to delay, defer, or refuse enrollment of children in foster care into their school system,” reads an Aug. 14 letter from DFCS attorney Dana Carroll to the Regional Education Service Agency overseeing the area and the Georgia Department of Education.

“This unlawful practice violates the rights of these students to be enrolled in school and delays their educational opportunities,” the letter continues.

The letter, which was obtained by the Georgia Recorder, was sent as the central Georgia school district is now three weeks into the new

school year.

In an emailed statement, Muscogee County Schools communications director Kimberly Wright said the district is not violating the law and did not receive a copy of the letter from DFCS.

“The suggestion that MCS D failed to enroll students who are eligible for enrollment is incorrect,” she wrote. “The District is working cooperatively with the Department of Family and Children Services on this issue to ensure that all required information is obtained for enrollment.”

“If DHS, the RESA, or any collaborating agency has any questions about the way in which MCS D is undertaking to follow the law regarding enrollment, MCS D is happy to discuss those issues,” she added.

Foster parents sometimes have difficulty enrolling children into a new school when they change locations, sometimes having to take days off work to deal with paperwork and logistics. Lawmakers attempted to ease that struggle with SB 431, which requires districts to enroll foster students within three school business days of receiving a completed enrollment form.

The bill’s sponsor, Marietta Republican Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, expressed disappointment.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Explaining the significance of Z- and T-scores in DEXA scans

By DR. KEITH ROACH
King Features

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a woman of 54 with somewhat limited mobility due to back pain. Perhaps for this reason, my primary care physician ordered a DEXA scan in 2023 and again in 2026. I was alarmed when the recent scan showed osteopenia in five of the six areas that were tested.

I thought the 2023 scan was normal, but when I revisited it, I saw that I had osteopenia then as well. But in the 2023 report, they had only looked for a Z-score of less than -2 as an indicator of a problem, whereas in 2026 they used the T-score.

Had I realized that I had osteopenia three years ago, I'd have started taking calcium (I get plenty in my diet and struggle with large pills) and weighed the risks of more vigorous exercise differently. (Perhaps I should be more willing to risk short-term flare-ups

in the pursuit of long-term bone health.)

I'm not sure if this reporting method is standard, but perhaps physicians and patients should look at the T-score for an indication of osteopenia if the radiologist doesn't do so. -- J.F.

ANSWER: There are three numbers I look for when reviewing a patient's bone density scans. (DEXA, or dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry, is the standard screening and diagnostic test for bone loss.)

The first is the T-score, which compares my patient to a person of the same sex at peak bone mass. A T-score of zero means the person who's being scanned has the peak bone mass of a healthy young adult. (It's very unusual to see a positive T-score.) If a person has peak bone density, their T-score will be zero. A T-score of -1.0 is one standard deviation below peak

bone mass; -1.1 to -2.4 is considered low bone mass or osteopenia; and -2.5 or less is considered osteoporosis.

The Z-score compares a person to the average score within their age group and sex. An older person might have a T-score in the osteopenia or even osteoporotic range, yet have a normal Z-score. The Z-score is most useful for alerting the clinician if a patient's bone density is lower than expected for their age.

A very low Z-score suggests a secondary reason for osteoporosis. This can include medications such as prednisone or anti-epilepsy drugs; celiac or other malabsorptive diseases; or hormonal conditions like excess thyroid hormone, hyperparathyroidism, or low sex hormones.

Finally, most DEXA scans now include the FRAX score, which is critical in communicating a

person's risk of fracture and deciding whether to start them on medication to prevent a fracture.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Your column on hemicrania continua sounds a lot like cluster headaches, which are often described as the most excruciating headache. Are they the same? -- W.M.

ANSWER: There are definite similarities between hemicrania continua and cluster headaches. Both affect one side of the face and are associated with eye tearing and nasal congestion. However, cluster headaches happen in clusters -- brief but intense pain that occurs multiple times, then disappears entirely for weeks, months or years. I've seen people literally bang their head into the wall during an episode.

Breathing 100% oxygen will often make the pain go away and is a useful diagnostic test.

Hemicrania continua is continuous. The pain is constant, although not usually as intense as with cluster headaches. The pain can wax and wane during the day but is never gone. Most people respond to indomethacin, but some people can't tolerate it. One reader wrote in that with a relatively new medication called galcanezumab-gnlm (Emgality), they truly got their life back.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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After years of oversight, Georgia's disability care system faces a new test

By **ELLIE FIVAS**
Georgia Recorder

The Justice Department has signaled that the federal government no longer plans to enforce a landmark court ruling that has shaped Georgia’s mental health and disability care system for nearly two decades, although the leader of the state agency responsible for disability services says nothing has changed in his mind.

A June memo from the U.S. Department of Justice argues that federal disability laws do not require states to provide community-based care to people with disabilities that limit their ability to do what the Americans with Disabilities Act considers “major life activities,” such as eating. These services allow many people with disabilities to live and receive care in their communities rather than be institutionalized in state hospitals.

The memo adds that the federal government doesn’t have the authority to oversee and monitor whether states are providing those services, despite requirements in the law. Disability advocates warn this could reduce pressure on states to fund and expand community-based services.

D’Arcy Robb, executive director of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, said she is worried a lack of federal oversight could deter progress in disability care reforms.

“We know that our state still has great needs that are not being met,” Robb said. “We anticipate we’re not going to have as much federal pressure, if any federal pressure, on integrating people (into the community) — and yet, Georgians want it.”

U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff, a Democrat who is up for reelection this year, pressed the Justice Department to rescind what he called a “shameful document” in a letter to then-acting Attorney General Todd Blanche.

Ossoff said the new interpretation of a longstanding court ruling could leave Georgians with disabilities vulnerable at a time when states are bracing for Medicaid cuts that were packed into the GOP’s tax break and spending bill last year.

“I am deeply concerned about recent reports of U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) efforts to undermine the scope and enforcement of rights for Americans with disabilities,” Ossoff wrote in the Aug. 6 letter.

Some advocates, though, said they remain hopeful that the DOJ’s opinion will not have the effect that others fear.

Devon Orland, litigation director at the Georgia Advocacy Office, said the federal memo challenges a legal precedent established in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, a 1999 Supreme Court decision. Orland emphasized the memo is a statement of the federal government’s position and does not overturn the law or legal precedent on its own. Orland’s organization, a private, nonprofit organization that advocates for people with disabilities and mental illness, is named as a party in federal litigation about disability rights in Georgia.

“My hope is that the statement of focus by the Department of Justice won’t change anything,” Orland said. “It doesn’t change the status of the law. We have decades of legal precedent since *Olmstead v. L.C.*”

In that case, the court ruled that unjustified institutionalization of people with disabilities can violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. *Olmstead v. L.C.* originated in Georgia, where plaintiffs Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson were involuntarily institu-

tionalized in a state hospital despite medical professionals clearing them to live in their communities while receiving care.

The federal government later entered into a 2010 agreement with Georgia, known as the *Olmstead* settlement, which required more options for Georgians with disabilities and mental illnesses to receive care in their communities.

A federal court released Georgia from the mental health portion of the *Olmstead* settlement in February. Now, only requirements related to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities remain to be addressed by the state.

Among the remaining provisions is improving statewide clinical oversight, maintaining a high-risk surveillance list and providing crisis services and medical professionals that serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Robb said it’s unclear to her whether the remaining parts of the settlement will be enforced at all.

The DOJ did not respond to the Recorder’s requests for comment on whether they intend to enforce the remaining parts of the settlement.

Commissioner Kevin Tanner, who oversees state behavioral health and disability services, told the Recorder during an August interview that the department remains committed to complying with the remaining parts of the *Olmstead* settlement agreement. He noted the state has committed over \$1 billion in funding to its disability and mental health care system over the past 16 years.

“I get up every day not worrying about the settlement agreement,” Tanner said. “When I became commissioner, I made it clear to the staff and to others that we were not going to focus on a settlement agreement. We were going to focus on building the best system of care. The settlement agreement will then take care of itself.”

Tanner said Georgians should not be worried about the apparent loss of federal oversight.

“They shouldn’t be concerned that the DOJ may not have oversight,” he said. “But we all should be concerned about these folks who did not ask for the situation they might find themselves in, and we all need to push to find better solutions.”

What’s at stake for Georgia’s disability care system

Before this summer’s DOJ opinion, the federal government routinely monitored states for compliance with community care requirements, according to Robb. When a state was found in violation of those requirements, the federal government could bring lawsuits to enforce them. Robb said the *Olmstead* settlement agreement between Georgia and the federal government is an example of this oversight.

Without federal oversight, Robb said state officials will be more responsible than ever in determining the future of disability services for Georgians. But she emphasized that Georgia’s advocacy community won’t go anywhere.

“The pressure may no longer be federal, but the pressure is going to be from the community,” Robb said.

Robb said a large part of community care for people with disabilities comes from two waiver programs. Waivers from New Option Waiver Program (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) allow some Georgians to receive

care in their homes through both Medicaid and state funding.

Tanner told the Recorder in August that more than 14,000 Georgians receive services through the waivers, but about 7,200 Georgians are still waiting for care on what the department calls its “planning list.” Robb said in July that more than 1,200 of those waiting urgently need further care.

When Gov. Brian Kemp signed the state budget in May, he signed off on funding for 100 NOW/COMP waivers but withheld \$9.3 million intended for hundreds of additional waivers as part of the \$300 million additional cuts to help pay for an income tax cut package that passed earlier this year. Kemp also announced a spending freeze in August, signaling a potentially tight year ahead for agency budgets.

Despite the spending freeze, Tanner said the department has made progress in building community crisis centers across the state and providing other essential resources. Additionally, he noted Georgia created the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission on its own, without a federal mandate, and the commission was a big driver behind a major mental health law that passed in 2022.

Robb said there is still a lot of need from people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that the department must address, even outside of baseline compliance with the *Olmstead* settlement. She added that people with disabilities vastly prefer community resources over treatment in an institution.

“I cannot think of a time when someone has said to me, ‘I want to live in an institution,’” she said. “People want to live in the community. Treatment professionals agree people can live in the community. We can support all developmental disabilities in the community — that’s broadly known.”

Commissioner says complete compliance is near, with new independent report planned for October

Tanner said he believes his department is currently in “substantial compliance” with most of the remaining parts of the settlement. But Tanner would not say which requirements have yet to be fully addressed. Instead, he said he thinks the department’s greatest challenge has been demonstrating how much progress has been made toward complete compliance since 2010.

“I think that we have substantially complied with most of the provisions of the settlement agreement,” he said. “We’re definitely heading toward the time that we will be out of the settlement agreement. I’m confident of that.”

Georgia’s compliance with the *Olmstead* settlement has been evaluated by Elizabeth Jones, a court-appointed independent reviewer, for over a decade. Jones has monitored Georgia’s behavioral health and disability care system and filed regular reports over the years.

During a phone call with the Recorder, Jones said she will file her next report in October and that it will focus on the remaining intellectual and developmental disability requirements.

No monitoring reports on the developmental disability provisions have been filed in federal court since September 2024, when Jones recommended scaling back active monitoring on some provisions. Her next report could provide an important snapshot of the state’s progress.

Jones said all parties involved in the settlement, including the state, continue to work toward compliance.

“Progress is being made on the remaining obligations, and there’s a commitment by the state to fulfill those obligations,” Jones said.

As an independent monitor, Jones was appointed by the federal court, not the state of Georgia. She declined to comment on how the memo from the federal government may impact the settlement or her work.

One requirement of the *Olmstead* settlement was establishing 22 Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams. The program provides 24/7 mobile services and crisis response to people across Georgia, each team serving between 75 and 100 people at a time.

Since January, though, the Recorder found the department has eliminated an ACT team that served 31 counties in north Georgia, most of them rural. Tanner attributed the cut to a lack of demand for resources and said the department redistributed the funding to other teams needing more support.

“They just don’t have the numbers to justify a full team where there’s not enough people being referred,” he said. “You don’t want to fund something just for the sake of funding it if the need is not there.”

The number of ACT teams was among the settlement requirements that the federal court stopped actively monitoring in 2024.

Next governor will shape future of disability care

State Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver, a Decatur Democrat, said she was disappointed by the federal memo and called it a “blatant disregard” of civil rights. Oliver, a practicing attorney and a lawmaker who has been influential on mental health issues, said the memo creates new uncertainty.

“It’s a direct message to the state that the Department of Justice is not going to enforce the civil rights of Georgia citizens,” Oliver said. “We cannot count on politicians, even on a good day, to always be mindful of the constitutional rights of the people they represent.”

Oliver said many lawmakers are committed to helping people with disabilities but it’s difficult to balance funding priorities. This year’s gubernatorial race could lead to policy changes across Georgia’s mental health and disability care system, she added.

In November, voters will choose between Republican Rick Jackson and Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms for Georgia governor. Whichever candidate wins will inherit a disability care system at a pivotal moment.

Garrison Douglas, a Jackson campaign spokesperson, told the Recorder that the Republican candidate hopes to focus on individualizing care for people with disabilities and mental health issues if elected. He did not directly address the DOJ memo.

“Georgia’s challenge is capacity, which means more providers, especially in rural communities, more beds for patients with severe mental illness, and real answers to the provider shortage through better pay, recruitment, training, and retention,” Douglas said in a statement.

The Bottoms campaign did not provide a comment to the Recorder for this story.

OFTC announces fall 2026 commencement speaker

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

SANDERSVILLE, GA (OFTC) – Oconee Fall Line Technical College (OFTC) will honor graduates during its fall 2026 Commencement and High School Equivalency (HSE) Graduation Ceremony at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24.

The ceremony will be held at the college’s North Campus in Sandersville at the Ben J. Tarbutton Business Development Center. Keisha Pooler will serve as guest speaker.

A native of Dublin, Pooler is an educator, author, inspirational speaker and spoken word artist with 30 years of experience in Georgia’s public education system. Throughout her career, she has served in a variety of leadership roles, including mentor to novice teachers, instructional coach, district instructional specialist and assistant principal. She



POOLER

currently serves as a Turn-around Reading Specialist for Atlanta Public Schools.

Pooler holds a bachelor’s degree in English Language and Literature from Morris Brown College, a master’s degree in Higher Education Administration from Troy State University and an Educational Specialist degree in Kennesaw State University.

An award-winning edu-

cator, Pooler was named the 2004-2005 Morrow High School Teacher of the Year by Clayton County Public Schools and has been recognized for her work as an educator and mentor. She has also shared her work as a speaker and spoken word artist at schools, universities and organizations throughout Georgia.

The commencement ceremony will celebrate the achievements of graduates from across the college’s academic programs, as well as HSE graduates completing an important educational milestone.

Tickets will be required for attendance. Graduates will receive information from the registrar regarding how and when to obtain tickets for guests. All guests must present a ticket for entry.

For more information about OFTC’s Fall 2026 Commencement Ceremony, visit OFTC.edu.

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East Dublin, Georgia

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- Time: 9:30 am
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- Deadline for Requests for Information (RFIs):** August 19, 2026

Bid Deadline: September 2, 2026, 1:00 pm

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Email: mchambers@garbuttconstruction.com

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Good to see examples on how to pull through tragedies

I do not know of anyone who likes waking up in the middle of the night to find out their water or power is not working. No one looks forward to that.

Basically, there is nothing one can do but say things they really don't mean as they reach for their phone to call the correct agency or business needed to fix said problem. The good news is that no matter what it is, we need to be patient and remember that dedicated people are on the job to fix the issue.

Lately, employees in the City of Dublin have had to face issues that were not of anyone's making. It started with the flash flood that took over parts of downtown on Sunday, Aug. 9. With no warning, heavy rain left big bodies of water in places you would never dream of seeing such a collection of liquid.

Thankfully, the city's infrastructure worked and within the hour the water was out of downtown and back in the river. People came together and worked to make the situation as good as it could be.

Then came this past week. When I woke up last Wednesday, I received an alert that the city of Dublin had a very significant wa-



MAN ABOUT TOWN...

By PAYTON TOWNS III

ter line break that began the night before. The water crews from the city were out the throughout the night and kept working until the problem was fixed the next morning.

For those living and working in the city, we had to boil water or use bottled water to drink or make coffee. Many, if not all of Dublin's restaurants, were closed Wednesday and most of Thursday because of this. According to co-workers, many stores were low on bottles of water, which was understandable.

This crisis also meant that Dublin City Schools and West Laurens Middle School, because of its use of city water, had to cancel for what turned out to be the next two days.

And if the water break wasn't enough, a downtown business fire happened on around 9 p.m. on Aug. 19. If this was a normal day, the Dublin Fire Department would have had no problem with having the necessary water needed to help put out the blaze at the Proline Commercial Services. Ever since Dublin Fire Chief Matthew Cutler was made aware of the water situation around 1 a.m., he began to put together an emergency plan involving the other agencies in and around the county should something happen.

He was glad to have that plan in place after the fire was reported. Firefighters from the DFD along with partnering agencies from Laurens County, East Dub-

lin, Allentown, Johnson State Prison, Wrightsville Fire and Dodge State Prison were able to work together to make sure the flames did not spread any further than it did.

None of these situations were pleasant, but the work and dedication all of these crews and people displayed showed why we have some of the best workers in our community.

When talking about the water main break during a community luncheon last week, Dublin Mayor Joshua Kight brought up the fact that it sometimes takes tragedies to bring people together. In a perfect world, everything would keep working and nothing bad would ever occur.

We live in a world where the next unbelievable situation cannot be foreseen, just like the situations we have had here recently.

Dublin has been in the news a lot lately and none of it was good. The best thing to remember is we are a community that knows how to rise up and come together when the going gets rough. We will not take the bad lying down, and we have the example of the city employees and citizens to thank for that.

TELL IT!



CALL 272-0375, EMAIL CHTELLIT@GMAIL.COM, OR TELL IT! AT COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM

The prize that you wanted so bad will not meet your expectations upon opening.

I was once young, now I am old. We seniors move a little slower. We don't hear as well, nor see as well, but please be a little bit more patient with us because the pain that you inflict on us will come back and hit you when you are old and walk in our shoes.

Why can't the commissioners require the employees at the court house and county offices to park in the two parking lots behind the insurance office and the muffler shop and free up the parking spots for shoppers and taxpayers that need to conduct business?

Do the young people that wear the bull rings in their nose have a clue what it means and the history behind them?

Restaurants, please turn down your music. I would like to share a meal with my guest without having to holler!

If someone would get a class action suit against the Dublin City Board of Education to roll back the tax increases I would gladly sign it and contribute. What they did to the taxpayer is criminal.

Sure people from out of town pay the sales tax but guess what, so do we on every single purchase we make. We need to start the Tea Party back up. Taxed Enough Already.

Progress comes to a community with having one government. Consolidate Dublin-Laurens County government and school systems to make this community stronger than ever. Contact your county commissioner.

Isn't it funny that the government owns all the deer when you hunt but not when one totals your vehicle? It's time for new leadership in Georgia. Remember this when you go to the polls and vote.

Our official state animal is the same animal that costs Georgians millions in insurance claims and the government is do-

ing nothing about it. It's time for change in Georgia at the state level. Go vote!

The grass needs cutting at Northwest Laurens Elementary. Can we use ESPLOST money to buy more lawnmowers?

I agree. Bring back the sheriff office social media!

The pros of flock cameras far outweigh the cons. At least it's catching bad cops. It's worth its weight in gold by doing that.

The yard sheriff must not drive up North Jefferson Street to go home. It's a shame what that road looks like with the grass and trash.

The submission concerning us living out of state, the truth is you are dealing with a 24/7/365 citizen who calls out the city leadership for their ineptness. Right under your nose.

A commentator here said that data centers "re-use water to generate their own power." What? Dear, data centers do not run off windmills.

If you read the article make sure you saw "cannot be used to lower school taxes." That is the one that got seniors and the rest of Dublin, so it might lower part of your taxes but it could not really put a dent in what you pay as the school tax goes up faster than the city or country tax. Better management might help lower school tax but they could collect a dime more and it won't eliminate any ones property tax. School tax is three times more than property tax and it is not even impacted so don't be disillusioned by the hype.

We pay enough property taxes and ESPLOST to where no child in the county schools should leave this county in nothing less than the pride of our fleet in school buses. 2025 or older is unacceptable

Does any of that 25 percent tax increase go to fixing Dublin's antique water system, or does it all go to the former DCS?



FIRMER GROUND: TEACHING TOMORROW'S CITIZENS

O the debt we owe to teachers, administrators, and support staff, and all who make education happen for our children year after year. Parents, of course, are our first teachers, and can do so much to support their children's learning experience at school. The rest of us have a role here, too, as encouragers and mentors.

Now is a good time to recall that a chief purpose of education is to prepare us to be citizens. And in so far as it serves to form character and teaches us to reason, every aspect of education contributes to this end. But there remains a serious gap today in education for citizenship. With the emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and the testing pressures that come with No Child Left Behind, subjects like Civics have been deemphasized. Moreover, folks who study these trends, tells us

that in today's polarized environment it's easier not to bother, and also that many teachers today feel unprepared. Not surprisingly, as a nation we are civically illiterate, not very knowledgeable about how our government was designed to work or about our history. This lack is detrimental for our nation.

But we can begin again and there are folks who are working at this effectively. There are good resources available for teachers and school systems. Just an initial internet search led me to The Sandra Day O'Connor Institute and then to the National Constitution Center's Civics Virtue Course, featuring "primary source readings, interpretive essays, and guided reflection activities designed to connect historical ideas, civics, character, and the common good." Among state and county system initiatives there is the Illinois Civics Hub/ Illinois Democracy

GUEST COLUMN

By STEVE BULLINGTON

Schools. They have staff in place committed to equipping teachers and fostering civics education. As they propose, "2026 marks a period of reflective patriotism in conjunction with America's 250th anniversary, it is also important to look ahead—considering how we equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for the future of our democracy."

It's important that educators not be cowed into not speaking about our political life because it is a hot topic. I suspect that our young people are eager to process what they're hearing about national and world affairs

To their credit, many of our schools already are actively promoting respect and kindness on campus. A next step would be for our school systems to adopt a policy of "institutional neutrality" regarding political opinions, while working to promote open and thoughtful dialogue. Also, we may recall here that knowledge and love tend to support each other. We are inclined to learn about what we love and to love what we learn about. Let learning flourish then and truth be honored that love may follow.

Because this is our 250th anniversary year and because of the brokenness we're experiencing in our life as a nation, this is a teachable moment. And again, I suspect that our young people are more ready than we realize to be taken seriously as citizens. For the sake of their development as persons and for the health of our nation, may we do so.

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

- John 16:33 (King James Version)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"Never go to bed mad. Stay up and fight."

- Phyllis Diller

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

- Aug. 25 2026 is...
- Kiss and Make Up Day
 - National Banana Split Day
 - National Secondhand Wardrobe Day
 - National Park Service Founders Day
 - National Whiskey Sour Day

YOUR TURN:

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

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS

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GEORGIA TRUST

— for Local News —

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Pam Burney/GENERAL MANAGER
Courtney Vessell/CIRCULATION MANAGER

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

Dublin Police Department

- Bobby Brent Roberson, 47, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and tag lights required around 12:32 a.m. on Aug. 3 on North Jefferson Street.

An officer was stationary when he saw a white Nissan 2014 SUV traveling north with non-functioning tag lights. The officer made a traffic stop and explained to the driver, identified as Roberson, the reason for pulling him over. Dispatch advised that Roberson was wanted for a probation violation out of Bulloch County and was arrested.

The officer asked the passenger to step out of the vehicle. The officer then asked Roberson for permission to search the vehicle, which he denied. The officer deployed K-9 Max for an open-air sniff around the vehicle. Max alerted and indicated on the front driver's side door. The officer began a probable cause search and found two clear plastic bags containing suspected meth within a cigarette carton that was on the driver's seat.

The officer read Roberson and the passenger their rights. Roberson admitted to the officer that the substance was his. Other officers on the scene searched Roberson and found an unopened hypodermic needle.

Roberson was transported to the Laurens County Law Enforcement Center. The officer relinquished the vehicle to a licensed driver who arrived on the scene. The substance tested positive for meth.

- On Aug. 5, at 8:30 p.m., an officer was patrolling Robert Street Apartments when he saw Jami Robinson, 20, on the property.

The officer recognized Robinson from a prior encounter and knew he had been issued an indefinite criminal tres-



pass warning from all Dublin Housing Authority on May 26, 2026. An officer made contact with Robinson and confirmed his identity. A GCIC inquiry revealed Robinson had an active probation violation warrant through the Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

Robinson was arrested without incident. He was transported to the sheriff's office and released to jail staff for booking.

- Zitayvian Floyd, 19, was charged with obstruction of law enforcement officers and possession of marijuana less than one ounce at the intersection of South Decatur Street and West Madison Street at 6:50 p.m. on Aug. 5.

Officers saw a person with active warrants in front of Dublin Construction Company, and identified him as Floyd. They attempted to make contact with Floyd and he ran away on foot and refused to stop.

Floyd was chased from South Decatur Street to the field beside the car wash located near South Truxton Street and East Jackson Street. He then stopped running, surrendered to officers, laid on the ground and complied with all lawful commands.

During the foot pursuit, officers aw Floyd remove and

discard a small plastic bag containing a green leafy substance suspected to be marijuana from his pocket. Floyd was transported to the Laurens County Jail.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- A deputy was dispatched to Quail Run in reference to fraud that happened around 5 a.m. on July 6.

- At 9:08 p.m. on Aug. 17, a deputy was dispatched to South Highway 19 in reference to an assault.

- On Aug. 16 at 11:25 a.m., a deputy responded to a location on Old Sawmill Road in reference to a dispute. The deputy arrived on scene, activated his body camera and made contact with both parties involved.

- A deputy was dispatch to Old River lane in reference to a removal around 8:14 a.m. on Aug. 16. The deputy activated his body camera and made contact with the caller.

- Jaden Patrick Daniels, 24, of Savannah, was charged with possession of schedule IV drugs after a deputy stopped him in a Honda Civic for a traffic infraction on I-16 East at mile marker 48 around 5 p.m. on Aug. 14.

- On Aug. 13, at 10:15 a.m., a deputy responded to Mullis Street in reference to a scam.

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.



Mayor holds proclamation for National Recovery Month

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

Mayor Joshua Kight and representatives of Rise Up gathered during a recent proclamation signing recognizing the month of September as National Recovery Month.

Behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness and prevention of mental and/or substance use disorders works and with effective treatment, people will recover in our area and around the Nation.

The benefits of preventing and overcoming mental and/or substance use dis-

orders are significant and valuable to individuals, families, and the community at large.

People in recovery achieve healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally, and contribute in positive ways to their communities, but we must encourage relatives and friends of people with mental and/or substance use disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services.

To help more people experience and sustain long-

term recovery, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Clinton Foundation, the Georgia Council for Recovery, Mobilize Recovery, Serve You Rx, and the Georgia General Assembly Working Group on Addiction and Recovery, along with Mayor Kight and the Dublin City Council invite all residents of the State of Georgia to participate in National Recovery Month. Recovery is Real!



Friends find crowns, watch 'The Princess Bride' at Theatre Dublin

Classifieds

Employment

UTILITIES SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE OPERATOR

The City of Dublin is now accepting applications for a Water Treatment Plant Utilities Systems Maintenance Operator. This individual will perform skilled and technical work in the maintenance and operation of the City's Water Plant, Waste Treatment Plant, pumping stations and elevated storage tanks. This person will fill in as a plant operator as needed and perform emergency repairs during nights, weekends and holidays.

Applicants must possess a Class III Water and Wastewater Operators License, as issued by the State of Georgia or the ability to acquire the same within one year of employment. A valid Georgia driver's license is required.

Salary range is \$42,463.67 – \$65,818.68 annually based on experience and for an individual with both Water and Wastewater certification. Should you not have both Water and Wastewater Class III Certification, you will be paid according to your level of certification. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered. The successful applicant must pass a drug screen.

Applicants may apply online through our www.cityofdublin.org website until the position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

By LUCIE WINBORNE

* While screening around 2 million airline passengers per day, TSA officers are accustomed to confiscating items such as full water bottles and too-large toiletries,

but their more astonishing finds include grenades, cannonballs and even a samurai sword.

* The fear of vegetables is called "lachanophobia."

* Actor Daniel Craig, as a reward for playing James

Bond, can choose any Aston Martin from the factory for the rest of his life.

* Women lie more than men in their online dating profiles.

* Many quilts made by military soldiers were known as "convalescent quilts," since they made them while recuperating from wounds received in the line of duty.

* The word LEGO comes from the first two letters of the Danish words "leg" and "godt," or "play well."

Lynda Prymula and friends had fun watching "The Princess Bride" at Theatre Dublin on the evening of Aug. 21. Before the show, two in the group were able to find two of the 12 small golden crowns around downtown Dublin. Those who found a crown and brought it to the theater by showtime received a cash prize of \$20 or a ticket to a future concert or show/SPECIAL PHOTO submitted by Lynda Prymula

Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:

TUESDAY: 92° Times of clouds and sun with a thunderstorm in spots. Sunrise: 7:02 a.m.

TUESDAY NIGHT: 71° Some clouds. Sunset: 8:06 p.m.

WEDNESDAY: 89° Mostly cloudy and humid; a couple of heavy thunderstorms. Sunrise: 7:03 a.m.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT: 69° Mostly cloudy with a thunderstorm. Sunset: 8:05 p.m.

Thursday 8/27	Friday 8/28	Saturday 8/29	Sunday 8/30	Monday 8/31
HIGH/LOW 87/69	HIGH/LOW 85/69	HIGH/LOW 86/68	HIGH/LOW 89/69	HIGH/LOW 90/67
Mostly sunny and humid.	Mostly sunny.	Partly sunny with a chance of storms.	Storms later in the day.	Humid and cloudy.
Sunrise: 7:04 a.m. Sunset: 8:03 p.m.	Sunrise: 7:04 a.m. Sunset: 8:02 p.m.	Sunrise: 7:05 a.m. Sunset: 8:01 p.m.	Sunrise: 7:06 a.m. Sunset: 8:00 p.m.	Sunrise: 7:06 a.m. Sunset: 7:58 p.m.

River levels...

Oconee (at Dublin) 1.53'

Ocmulgee (at Macon) 4.55'

OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, August 30, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

660 Hatchee Ridge Road, Dublin GA 31021

Light refreshments will be served, and there will be a \$50 gift card drawing!

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70.4 Acres - GR Register Road off Snow Hill Church Rd
197 Acres - Etheridge Road East of Hwy 117
17.08 Acres - N. Franklin Street Near Dublin City Cemetery

2026 Timber Cruise Available On All Parcels

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JOHNSON COUNTY 32,
EAST LAURENS 15

Great Scott!

Four touchdowns/ pick for Jeremiah Scott as Trojans trample Falcons in 49th Border War

By RALPH JACKSON
Correspondent

Johnson County used a gritty ground game and a four-touchdown performance from Jeremiah Scott to open the season with a 32-15 road victory in the “Border War” versus East Laurens Friday night.

The Trojans rushed for 368 yards, piled up 455 yards of total offense and built an 18-0 half-time lead. Johnson County had three runners finish with at least 80 yards, and attempted just six passes all night.

“We wanted to play bully football,” Trojans head coach Don Norton said. “That’s what the kids wanted to do, and that’s what we did.”

Johnson County established that approach from its first possession, but it was the Trojan defense that had to make the game's first stand.

East Laurens took the opening kickoff into Johnson County territory, and drove as far as the 29 before being stopped on fourth down. JoCo responded with a seven-play, 71-yard touchdown drive without attempting a pass. Jacaden Webb, Jeremiah Taylor and Scott all carried the ball on the march, with Scott finishing it on an eight-yard touchdown run for a 6-0 lead.

The Falcons soon had an even better opportunity after Braedyn Evans returned a kickoff 67 yards to the Johnson County 15. East Laurens moved as close as the Trojan 6, but again came away empty when a fourth-down completion left the Falcons one yard short of a first down.

Johnson County made it 12-0 when quarterback Chance Wombles connected with Scott for a 40-yard touchdown.

The Trojans continued to pound the ground, with Scott breaking a 34-yard run early in the second quarter. The Trojans eventually drove inside the East Laurens 10 before consecutive penalties pushed them backward. Facing third-and-nine from the 16, Wombles found Scott for another touchdown to extend the Johnson County advantage to 18-0.

East Laurens threatened again before halftime, but



TEAM JEREMIAH: Jeremiahs were responsible for five of the seven touchdowns scored in Friday’s border war. JoCo’s Jeremiah Scott (above) had four of them on a pair of rushes and receptions (his second, above, late in the second quarter) that helped accumulate 186 yards. Teammate Jeremiah Taylor also ran for 94 on a team-high 16 carries. East Laurens’ Jeremiah Rozier (below) rushed for the final score of the night deep in the fourth/**ZACH DAWSON**



Scott made his presence felt on defense when he intercepted Sky Snead at the Johnson County 13.

The Falcons got another opportunity late in the half and again crossed midfield, but the JoCo defense stopped Snead short on fourth down as the half expired.

The numbers reflected the Trojans' first-half control. Johnson County went to the locker room with 278

BORDER WAR
Continued on page 7

BLECKLEY COUNTY 28, WEST LAURENS 3

Defense, rushing attack delivers upper hand for Royals over rebuilding Raiders

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

The contrast was readily apparent between an experienced, veteran team on the visiting side and the young, developing squad still piecing things together on the home one.

You could see comparable potential in the two local rivals who met for a 26th time to start the 2026 season at The SHU, but one was clearly a great deal closer to it, and some big things likely to come in the very near future, than the other at an earlier stage in its progression.

Bleckley County, led by a senior quarterback who was in command from start to finish and a defense that pbent, but didn't break, had the better team in Friday's matchup. West Laurens played decently, but not up to the level of a deep, polished opponent that capitalized when it could to grab the 28-3 victory.

The Royals' well-established lineup displayed confidence, consistency and composure throughout, while the Raiders' performance was comparatively clunky, and a little careless when it came to preventable errors.

None was unexpected for a group with a high percentage of first-time players getting acclimated to the varsity level, but an opening game against what might be the strongest team on their whole schedule gave those newcomers a much shorter runway than would be ideal.

"We did some things really good, but we made too many critical mistakes in certain situations that we're not going to be able to win any games with," said West Laurens head coach Kip Burdette. "We've gotta get better, and we know that."

The Raider defense – getting key plays from Jamari Blash, Braden Willis, Tripp Mascaro, Maxx Chafin, J.D. Hogan and Nicholas Hester along the way – came through as hoped with some third-down stops to keep Bleckley in check, and the game close until late, when touchdowns on the Royals' last two possessions put it away.



Bleckley's Willy Walters takes down Justin Blash after a completion in bounds with less than nine seconds to go in the second quarter. West Laurens successfully reached the sideline to stop the clock on every play it ran up to this point on a frenetic drive to the red zone, but with no timeouts, couldn't extend it to another as the half ended with a 14-3 deficit/DANNY SCARBORO

There were few busts or big plays. But BC, working on just 274 total yards, still fought its way down the field, and ground out the points with conversions on all four of its trips to the red zone.

"I felt like the physicality's there, but it's just a bunch of young guys getting their first taste of varsity, and that speed and how the game moves," Chafin said. "I feel like we've got the talent. We've just gotta take it day by day, trying to get better."

West Laurens' only shots came on back-to-back possessions late in the second quarter. The Raiders netted a field goal for their only points on the first chance, but ran out of time on the second that was shaping up to potentially get them back within a score before the half.

They would get no closer than that the rest of the night.

After allowing some intermittent gains before the half, the Royals offered little room to run inside, or advance on the screens to the perimeter that were a focus of a somewhat effective West Laurens passing attack.

Outside of double-digit pickups on the ground by Duggan Malone and Justin Blash, and a similar catch-and-run in an impromptu situation

by Jace Williams, the gains were minimal, and pretty much nonexistent in the second half as Bleckley began to tighten things down, and hits from defenders Octavius Tate, Jamir Thompson, Landry Nobles, Cody Register and others got more and more physical.

All except one of the Raiders' second-half possessions ended in a punt.

"We moved the ball at times really well, but what we've gotta do is we've gotta punch it in when we get in the red zone," Burdette said. "We moved it really well in between the 20s, and then got down there and didn't come up with any points about three times, and you look at that and it's the difference in the ballgame when they beat us 28-3."

Bleckley might have done more damage with its ground game than the highly-touted passing attack, which relied mostly situational strikes.

A 9-for-12 Brody Fleming delivered a few of them on his patented extended plays, scrambling for a first down after avoiding a sack on a short-lived opening drive that ended in the first of reciprocal punts.

The senior, off a record-breaking junior season, fired accurate passes for multiple third-down conversions later in the night... to Gage Harris on the early scoring drive, shortly before hitting him from 14 yards on the only passing touchdown later in the first quarter; to Jason McNulty right at the marker for a key move of the chains on the way to a second score late in the half; to Kelvin Sneed for a tiptoe catch in the fourth as they tacked on the first of back-to-back touchdowns that put the lead away.

But everything ran on a strong rushing foundation that averaged a strong six yards per carry on the alternating attempts of Zion Love and Kix Foskey, who combined for the last

RAIDERS
Continued on page 7

TRINITY 16, ROBERT TOOMBS 8

Four takeaways, Harris' second-half TDs help Crusaders conquer defending Class A champions

By JEREMY PAYNE
Correspondent

Trinity traveled to Lyons Friday night for its first road game of the season, and a battle of the Crusaders, against longtime rival Robert Toombs.

Weather delayed the start of the game for over an hour, and the wet conditions were a problem for both teams early on. However, the visiting Crusaders from Dublin were able to make some big plays late to come away with the 14-8 victory.

Robert Toombs took the ball to open the contest and moved the ball a bit before turning it over on downs after 23 yards on six plays.

Trinity took over and had a solid opening drive going, with a couple of first downs to get into RTCA territory. Unfortunately a procedure penalty, a fumbled snap and a sack derailed the drive to force a punt.

Robert Toombs again picked up a quick first down, but the Trinity defense came up with an interception a few plays later to get the ball back. The momentum was short-lived, as they would fumble it right back on their first offensive play.

Following the turnover, Trinity committed a face-mask penalty and an unsportsmanlike conduct foul on back-to-back plays to set the home Crusaders up with a first down at the 15. The defense would come up with a huge stop on downs on fourth and two to keep the game scoreless, and neither team would threaten the remainder of the half.

Trinity turned the ball over on downs on its first possession of the the sec-

ond half, but would force a Robert Toombs fumble two plays later to set up a big drive.

Trinity went 60 yards on 10 plays to finally get on the scoreboard. Will-J Harris capped the drive with a three yard touchdown run. Unfortunately, the point after was blocked and the score was 6-0.

Robert Toombs wasted no time answering, needing just two plays to cover 70 yards, as A.J. Jinks broke free for a 65-yard touchdown, and then ran in the two-point conversion to give the home team an 8-6 lead late in the third quarter.

Trinity would fumble it away on the first play of its ensuing possession, but the defense again came up big as it forced another turnover on downs to prevent any further damage.

The next Trinity possession ended in a punt, but it pinned Robert Toombs inside its own 20, and the defense forced a three and out to get the ball back at the 40 with under five minutes remaining in the contest.

With a clear sense of urgency, the offense went to work efficiently and effectively, and would need just five plays to reach the end zone as Harris ripped off a 15-yard run to put the visiting Crusaders back in top. He added a two point conversion run to make the score 14-6.

After taking the lead, the only concern was that Trinity had left too much time on the clock with a full three minutes remaining. Those fears were quickly alleviated

CRUSADERS
Continued on page 7

DUBLIN 32, JASPER COUNTY 0

Irish impress with three interceptions, productive second quarter on way to opening shutout

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Friday's season opener in Monticello had all the hallmarks of a workaday Dublin win on the road.

The Irish didn't blow the lid off, but left no doubt either as they soundly took care of the fall's first piece of business in a 32-0 shutout of Jasper County.

Offensively, there was little explosiveness, but a lot of efficiency running the football, and occasionally throwing it as well. For their defense, it was a customarily dominant showing complete with three interceptions (one a pick-six), the equivalent of two fourth-down stops and a blocked field goal that frustrated each of the Hurricanes' efforts at points on the other side.

As always, Dublin made the most of the first half's ending, and a possession to start the second, in a span of roughly 12 minutes around the break that contained all four of its offensive touchdowns.

For the Irish, just a typical night at the office.

They'll take a 1-0 record

back home Friday to play their Shamrock Bowl opener against long-lost rival Perry.

Trav Bostic scored touchdowns from separate sides of the ball for the first and last in the sequence of highlights.

He stepped free of some attempted tackles after clearing the line of scrimmage, and accelerated 41 yards to deliver the final offensive blow about five minutes out of halftime.

The opening haymaker came from the opposite hand, as the senior hauled back an interception for Dublin's first TD on just the third play from scrimmage, after plays for loss put Jasper County in a third and long on its first series.

Canes quarterback Wailer Sands rolled left, and was pressured all the way to the sideline before releasing an ill-advised throw off his back foot toward a receiver with Irish defenders in front and back. He didn't notice Bostic, waiting underneath, until Bostic pedaled back to steal the pass, and returned

IRISH
Continued on page 7

IRISH
Continued from page 6

it 35 yards for the early 6-o lead.

Kye Young would dive to pick another one on Jasper County's next play from scrimmage, as an off-balance heave strayed several yards toward the middle of the field, though nothing immediately resulted as Dublin's first turn on offense ended in a punt.

The Irish D flexed some more of its muscle up front after giving some ground later in the first quarter.

Ryland Yates' punt pinned the 'Canes in dreadful field position from their 5, though they found a spark on third down by fanning out three receivers to lighten up the middle, and Kemaryon Whidby hit a seam for 34 yards to nearly midfield. An extra 15 via facemask foul put it at the Dublin 40.

But the Irish, unfazed, recovered to force a punt. They brought five on the ensuing third down, and Sands, despite running his way out of a sack from Jaydon McRae, skipped a running throw incomplete.

They wouldn't surrender

another first down till the second half, as Blake Luecke opened Jasper County's next series with a tackle for major loss that led to a punt. The Hurricanes did most of the work to send things in reverse for their next quick three-and-out, which ended with a low snap, and a kneeling collection by their punter to give the ball over at a spot only six yards from the end zone.

A five-minute scoring drive to start the third quarter had Dublin in position to force a running clock in the fourth. But that possibility was put in danger as Jasper County got a big break, and a big play, as its next drive threatened a response.

A first down via pass interference got things moving. Then Jonterrious Robinson took one down to the 15 after a catch, and the 'Canes were suddenly knocking on the door.

The Irish once again dug their cleats in, and forced a field goal attempt that Kye Young ran off the edge and dove to block.

It was another massive stand, and the last big one the defense would need as

the fourth quarter ticked away quickly.

Jasper County's final drive did clear midfield on some slow progress, but was again cut short as JaKarian Jones undercut a receiver in a one-on-one matchup for the third interception of the night as time was set to expire.

Getting warmed up...

As you'd anticipate in game 1 of the regular season, it took a bit of time for Dublin to get things in gear on the offensive side.

But the Irish would find their stride early in the second quarter, and score three times before half to take a 25-o lead.

The opening drive of the first was going well for a series or two until a penalty got it off track, and a third-down sack forced a punt.

Dublin got to run only two plays before quarter's end on its next touch, but picked back up in the second to cover most of the field on a drive of more than five minutes.

The Irish spent most of it still waiting on a first big play, churning out a steady

3-8 per rush on the way to two easy first downs, and a third that required a third-and-short sneak by Yates, who got thrown back from the line on a first effort, but circled to his right for a second that moved the chains.

The first double-digit gain of the night followed as V.J. Bond shook his way past a linebacker, and leaked to the left for roughly 10 or 11 yards. He'd get tripped up on an ensuing speed sweep to likely save an earlier touchdown. But it didn't take long to punch it in as Matthew Batts kept balance on his way through the pile to score from 11 yards out.

Dublin opted to go for two here, after Jasper County blocked its earliest point-after try, but Yates' scramble was stopped a bit shy of the goal line to keep the score 12-o.

With 7:15 left in the half, the game snowballed in traditional fashion.

Two plays after a Jasper County punt to roughly midfield, Bond took a reverse handoff left, tiptoed the sideline and rolled in from 47.

There wasn't far to go upon the next takeover, and the Irish needed just one play to cover the few yards they had left as Jamarcus Knight swept in.

Mitchell, who pulled one left on the previous PAT, knocked this one home to make it 25-o.

Another Jasper punt left just 20 seconds on the clock, and with 60 yards to drive, Dublin settled for a simple draw play and called it a half.

The Irish narrowly recovered from a penalty deduction only a series into their next drive, but Yates completed a stop route to his receiver, and leaned for the first down on a fourth and short in his own territory.

The rest of the drive was smooth sailing, and Bostic's touchdown run came a matter of plays later.

Yates had another nice third-down completion off a roll that led to a big play to flip the field, but Dublin would be stopped on a fourth down with six minutes left to go, and denied any further chance to add on to the lead.

BORDER WAR
Continued from page 6

yards of offense compared with East Laurens' 63. The Trojans had 222 rushing yards and 14 first downs in the opening half, while the Falcons managed only 40 rushing yards and four first downs.

"We didn't play well enough in the first half, we really didn't," East Laurens head coach Jesse Hicks said. "We knew what they were going to do. There's really no secret about what Johnson County does. They did a good job of it in the first half. We didn't get enough stops in the first half, and then, of course, we couldn't move the ball the way we wanted to. We had a couple of good looks offensively, but we just weren't consistent enough offensively to do anything and keep the score decent."

Johnson County picked up where it left off after halftime. Webb scored on a 7-yard run in the third quarter to stretch the Trojan advantage to 24-o.

East Laurens finally broke through when Braedyn Evans scored on a 28-yard run in the third quarter. Major Floyd ran in the two-point conversion to cut the Johnson County lead to 24-8.

The Trojans responded with another methodical drive that carried into the fourth quarter. Johnson County continued to lean on its running game, converting key downs and steadily moving into Falcon territory. Scott eventually finished the drive with a 20-yard touchdown run, and Wombles connected with Daezon Devero on the two-point conversion to push the lead to 32-8.

The Falcons refused to go away.

Snead connected with Major Floyd for 17 yards on a third-and-10 and later broke a 29-yard run on another third-and-10. Dianco Murray added a 13-yard run before Jeremiah Rozier scored from six yards out. The kick was good, cutting the Johnson County lead to 32-15.

But East Laurens would not get the football back.

With the Falcons trying to force one final possession, Johnson County went back to the formula that had worked throughout the night. The Trojans kept the ball on the ground, and after East Laurens used a timeout, Johnson County faced fourth-and-one in Falcon territory. Taylor broke a 10-yard run for the first down, allowing the Trojans to run out the remaining time.

"I think our offensive line played well," Norton said. "We stayed in

the same set all night."

Scott finished at the center of a balanced Johnson County rushing attack. He carried 13 times for 128 yards and two touchdowns, while Taylor added 94 yards on 16 attempts. Webb rushed 12 times for 81 yards and a touchdown, Kelsey Waters added 47 yards on 10 carries and Zacorian Graddy had 18 yards on three attempts.

Wombles completed four of six passes for 87 yards and two touchdowns with one interception. Scott caught three passes for 58 yards and two touchdowns, giving him 186 yards from scrimmage and four offensive scores to go along with his interception on defense. Devero had Johnson County's other reception for 29 yards.

Snead led the East Laurens offense, completing nine of 18 passes for 76 yards with one interception and rushing eight times for 63 yards. Jabryan Bigham added 30 yards on four carries.

Johnson County finished with a 455-216 advantage in total offense and out-rushed East Laurens 368-140. The Trojans had 24 first downs to the Falcons' 14, converted seven of 11 third downs and both of their fourth-down attempts. East Laurens finished 0-for-3 on fourth down.

For the Trojan players, the victory was satisfying even if they saw plenty that could be improved.

"We came in and played how we were supposed to, made a few errors and were able to correct them," Johnson County center Matthew McCoy said. "We let up a little on defense and a little on offense, but were able to pull it through."

"We slipped a little bit," Trojan lineman Jeffrey Dupree said. "But overall, we came back and we fought even harder."

Norton was happy to leave a rival's field with a victory, particularly on a hot night that tested both teams.

"I'm very excited. Ain't nothing like winning a rivalry game," Norton said. "East Laurens has got amazing athletes. I'm just proud to come over here and get a win at their place. It's always tough. They didn't quit, and I'm real proud of our kids. They didn't quit. It was hot. Cramping."

Johnson County will return home next week to face Warren County, while East Laurens will travel to Southeast Bulloch.

"We swallow it and we get ready to do it again," Hicks said. "We've got a 24-hour rule. We've got Southeast Bulloch."

RAIDERS
Continued from page 6

three touchdowns.

Love, with the lead of 144 yards, scored from five late in the second, then two early in the fourth.

Foskey, with 41 in support, finished off a closing drive from a similar distance away.

"No doubt, they're a good football team," Burdette said. "Hats off to them."

Still putting things together...

The Raiders, in the early going this season, will be mixing and matching in several places to find out which of a number of potential contributors make up their best possible rotation on both sides.

The offensive group was much more set at this point than the D, where on top of continuing to do some shuffling (particularly up front), they had a few important players out.

"We were probably light 4-5 people on defense," Burdette said.

The Raiders bowed up to force punts on more Bleckley possessions than not, but couldn't sustain much progress with the ball when they got it back. Penalties were an inhibiting factor on several drives that either stalled, or never got going.

Their first of the night made it near midfield on a 30-yard gain by Justin Blash, but soon punted after a holding call and another procedure foul on the next series were too much to overcome.

A second was shaping up

nicely on a Malone scramble that aided in reaching Bleckley territory for the first time, but a false start forced the Raiders to abort plans of trying for a fourth-and-short on the return from the quarter.

Chafin and Co. keyed a quick three-and-out to get it back near the same spot in plus territory thanks to a shanked punt. This time, Hogan kept the ball on a third-down conversion, and Justin Blash carried it to reach the red zone. The chance at a game-tying touchdown didn't pan out, but Malone salvaged three with a 29-yard field goal to make it a 7-3 ballgame.

The second Bleckley scoring drive immediately followed, as the Royals covered 51 yards on a short field after an ill-fated onside kick attempt.

West Laurens used the last of its timeouts defensively just before Love's touchdown to put Bleckley up 14-3, leaving none for what turned into the best-looking drive of the night with only a minute to play before the half.

What for most would've been a cut your losses and go to the half proposition turned into a fast-paced sprint into scoring range.

Malone used bubble screens to Braylen Robinson and Zeke Floyd, plus a dump-down on a lengthy play to Williams for the biggest gainer, to get just inside the Royals' 30.



Bleckley County D-tackle Cody Register trips up a scrambling Duggan Malone from behind to prevent a potential run at a first down in the opening quarter/DANNY SCARBORO

But the next snap, with only nine seconds left, produced a completion in bounds, and there wasn't enough time to line up and spike it for one more play.

Bleckley took the 11-point lead to halftime, and the Raiders a little regret over a major missed opportunity.

"We've gotta get some sevens out of that, and not threes," Burdette said of both scoring chances.

But for at least another quarter, it was still shaping up as a classic West Laurens-Bleckley season opener... with the Raiders down, but hanging around on the edge of striking distance in anticipation of a late opening.

The game-swinging play to spark a comeback chance, down 14-3, never really emerged in the third, though there were two close candidates on key third downs from fairly deep in West Laurens territory.

After one three-and-out, a Bleckley roughing the kicker penalty offered a free first down, but that led to

a punt just after a cross of midfield.

Later, there was a rare instance of two turnovers in one play, as a Malone pass floated to midfield for a Sneed interception, but he had the ball knocked loose mid-return on a collision with Brayden Baldwin.

West Laurens took back over, but had to punt again a few plays later, as Marty Beck stuffed a key third-and-five on the first play of the fourth quarter.

Bleckley wasted little more time in shutting the door as it rattled off a 69-yard scoring drive, buoyed by a 15-yard penalty, a tilting Sneed catch along the home sideline and a second Love touchdown carry.

West Laurens came up empty on a fourth down during its next drive to give it back near midfield with five minutes left, and Love broke loose on a run that nearly scored, if not for another of the night's multiple touchdown-saving tackles by Jamari Blash.

The Raider D stiffened

to go out fighting, and got the goal-to-go series to a fourth down from the two with about three minutes left, but Foskey survived some low contact to tumble in on the run and set the final at 28-3.

The Raiders left their debut with a laundry list of things to work on, at the top of it cutting out penalties and improving consistency on offense.

"We got a couple of breaks in the second half and we didn't take advantage of them," Burdette said. "We've gotta do better. A false start on a fourth down. Probably could've managed a two-minute drill a little bit better. There were so many mistakes that pop off that are things that we've survived the last couple years that we've gotta learn how to do again. Lot of new faces in different positions, but we've gotta get better."

The good news: They get an extra week to work on everything before having to worry about their next game, with a bye coming up this Friday before the start of a two-game road trip at Dodge County Sept. 4.

"That's going to be real big for us, I feel like," Chafin said. "We've got a bunch of things to work on, communication, executing calls, missed assignments, stuff like that, it just goes back to we've got a bunch of young guys, new faces. Once we get going, I feel like it's a lot to look forward to."

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL
Friday
Bleckley Co. 28, West Laurens 3
Dublin 32, Jasper Co. 3
Johnson Co. 32, East Laurens 15
Trinity 14, Robert Toombs 8
ACE Charter 45, Wilkinson Co. 14
Baldwin 47, Washington Co. 20
Bulloch 36, Brentwood 33
Claxton 20, Twiggs Co. 7
Montgomery Co. 22, Telfair Co. 15
Treutlen 36, Bryan Co. 7

Saturday
Wheeler Co. 40, Portal 7

SOFTBALL
Saturday
Westfield 4, EL 2
FPD 6, EL 0

PREP
SCHEDULE

SOFTBALL
Monday
Jefferson Co. at Dublin
/5:30 p.m.

Tuesday
Houston Co. at West Laurens
Stratford at Trinity/5 p.m.
Dublin at Bleckley Co.
East Laurens at ACE Charter
/5:30 p.m.

Wednesday
EL at ECI
Rutland at Dublin
WL at Telfair Co./5:30 p.m.

Thursday
Trinity at Gatewood/4 p.m.
Liberty Co. at WL/5 p.m.
Vidalia at Dublin/5:30 p.m.
Dodge Co. at EL/6 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL
Tuesday
Toombs Co., Peach Co. at WL/5 p.m.

Thursday
Lamar Co., Mary Persons at WL/5 p.m.

Saturday
WL at Crisp Co. tournament
/8 a.m.

FOOTBALL
Friday
Perry at Dublin
EL at Southeast Bulloch
Edmund Burke at Trinity
Warren Co. at Johnson Co.
ACE at Washington Co.
Dodge Co. at Lamar Co.
Cook at Bleckley Co.
Gatewood at Brentwood
Twiggs Co. at Central,
Talbotton
Wilkinson Co. at Greene Co.
Wheeler Co. at Montgomery Co./7:30 p.m.

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

CRUSADERS
Continued from page 6

as Elijah Maddocks recovered a fumble on the ensuing kickoff. Trinity picked up the first downs to ice the game and come away with a hard-fought 14-8 win over the defending GIAA class A champions.

After struggling to find much rhythm in the first half, the offense really got it going down the stretch. Trinity would outgain RTCA 286 yards to 190, and had 16 first downs, against just five.

Quarterback Jude Evans had a big night with his legs, running 14 times for 107 yards. He also completed six of 13 passes, but for only 26 yards. Harris had 15 carries for 92 yards and both scores. Tayt Evans finished with 61 yards on just eight attempts as the Crusaders racked up 260 yards on the ground. Jinks had 180 yards on 17 carries for RTCA.

Trinity will be back home against Edmund Burke on Friday.

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

I THINK THE KEY TO A STRONG FRIENDSHIP IS TRUST. CAN I TRUST YOU?

OF COURSE.

GOOR. I STOLE YOUR WALLET.

BUT DON'T TELL ANYONE. I'D HATE FOR PEOPLE TO THINK I'M A THIEF.

OUR FRIENDSHIP GROWS STRONGER EVERY DAY.

BY STEPHAN PASTIS

GARFIELD

AH!

SLURP

WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING?

THAT'S REFRESHING!

MELTED CHEESE

YEW

BY JIM DAVIS

OVERBOARD

WE'RE THINKING OF CHANGING OUR LOOK, RAY!

NO KIDDING!

YEAH, WE'RE TIRED OF GREEN!

WE'RE THINKING OF TRYING SOME ORANGES, YELLOWS AND BROWNS!!

WHAT'S EVERYBODY TALKING ABOUT, RAY?

OH, NOTHING YOU'RE GOING TO BE HAPPY HEARING, NATE.

BY CHIP DUNHAM

DEFLOCKED

HEY, YOU DUMB COWS, I JUST FOUND OUT THAT --

WAIT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

JUST ENJOYING A NICE, FRESH GLASS OF MILK.

WHY, IS SOMETHING WRONG?

WELL, BUT HOW DID YOU... WHERE DID YOU GET.....

AND THEN CAME THE SCENE I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SCRUB FROM MY BRAIN.

BY JEFF CORRIVEAU

ZIGGY

SORRY, SIR, BUT YOUR WARRANTY EXPIRED WHILE WE HAD YOU ON HOLD!!

BY TOM WILSON

PLUGGERS

Thanks to Al Batt Hartland, Minnesota

YOU MATCH.

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED!

BY JEFF MACNELLY

Bitter ex cuts father off from daughters

DEAR ABBY: After nearly 18 years of marriage, I left my wife. Our daughters were 10 and 12. We had married quickly, and only later did I realize how deeply judgmental her "born-again" beliefs were -- so much so that she gradually cut off my entire side of the family. I tried for years to reason with her, to no avail, and we divorced. What I never anticipated was losing my children as well.

In the years that followed, I sent cards, letters and messages -- most went unanswered. I was told, "The girls don't want to see you," yet I was never given the chance to hear that directly from them. Over time, I came to realize I was a victim of parental alienation -- something I never would have imagined from someone who professed strong Christian values.

More than 35 years have passed since I left that marriage, and I have had no meaningful contact with my daughters since. I am not without fault, and I own my mistakes, but the pain of lost years -- and lost connection -- remains. I write for others who may see themselves here: Please don't let years pass in silence. Talk. Listen. Apologize. Seek understanding before distance becomes permanent. -- MR. KALAMAZOO



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR MR. KALAMAZOO: You have my sympathy for the years of pain and separation you've endured. Your story shows the importance of seeking partial custody or visitation rights as part of a divorce settlement. Your ex-wife would have had a much harder time cutting you off from your daughters if you'd had a court-mandated right to spend time with them. What's done is done. You must allow yourself to accept it and live your life.

DEAR ABBY: I am feeling uncomfortable with what has become a steady stream of requests on social media for charitable contributions on friends' birthdays. My husband and I carefully budget our annual charitable contributions, and we try to be as generous as possible, but we cannot

possibly respond to all of these requests and still fund our own preferences.

Would it be rude to post a comment saying, "Although this is not one of our charitable priorities, we wish you a happy birthday!"? My best friend says it would be better not to respond at all, but that feels a bit rude. What do you think? -- UNHAPPY BIRTHDAYS IN MONTANA

DEAR UNHAPPY: Do not state that the charity the person has chosen is low on your list of priorities. Acknowledge the occasion by posting warm wishes for the birthday to be a special one. Period.

DEAR ABBY: My daughter is 19 and has a job. She has had a friend since fifth grade. They went six months without talking, but now they're friends again. My daughter offers to buy her stuff, but I feel it's not fair of the friend to accept. She works, too, but she doesn't have enough money for any activities other than lunch. I want to stay out of it, but it bothers me. What should I do? -- PROUD MOM IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR MOM: Stay out of it. If the arrangement becomes so out of balance that it begins to bother your daughter, she will deal with it without your involvement. If she wants your advice, she'll ask for it.

Monday, August 24, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

AKQJ10632♥3♦AQ6♣KJ

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
Pass Pass 2♥ ?
What call would you make?

A - Simple rule: When their jump is weak, your jump is strong. If their jump is strong, your jump is weak. A 3S bid would show this hand with a six-card spade suit. The seventh spade makes this hand better than that. Bid 4S.

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

AKQ84♥J764♦AKQ10♠7

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
2♠ ? Pass ?
*Weak - six spades, 6-11 points
What call would you make?

A - You certainly want to be in game, and slam is possible. 2NT asks partner if he has a minimum or maximum. He re-bids his suit with a minimum and anything else with a max. Bid 2NT. You will settle for game if he shows a minimum. Think about a slam if he shows a max.

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

AQ75♥Q5♦KQ97♣AQ109

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
INT Pass 2♥ ? Pass ?
*Transfer to hearts
What call would you make?

A - When partner makes a transfer

bid, don't even think about not accepting it. The worse your hand is for partner's suit, the more important it is to accept it. Bid 2H.

Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

AKQJ732♥10♦K6♣AJ32

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass
2♥ ? Pass ?
What call would you make?

A - Slam was in the air when partner opened the bidding, but nothing good has happened since. Give him one more chance to support spades. Bid 3C.

Q 5 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

AA♥AQ7542♥963♣J92

As dealer, what call would you make?

A - This hand is a sound 1H opening bid in any position. Bid 1H.

Q 6 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

AKQJ9♥KQ4♦K1095♣K2

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
INT ? Pass 2♥ ? Pass ?
*Transfer to spades
What call would you make?

A - When partner transfers, any call you make besides a simple acceptance shows a hand that loves his suit. Bid 3S. That shows a hand with four-card support that revalues to perhaps more than promised by the 1NT opening.

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS

1 Fraudulent trick

5 Donkey's sound

9 "Nonsense!"

14 17th state to join the Union

15 Make over

16 By yourself

17 July 1 celebration: 2 wds.

19 Intimidate

20 Young cat

21 Expresses grief

23 Mormon church: Abbr.

25 Mythical tale

28 Spotify creation

32 Buzzing insect

33 Cafeteria-meal holder

34 Old Peruvian empire

35 Car's loud signal

36 Gets bigger

37 Genetic material: Abbr.

38 Highways, e.g.

39 Subway rodents

40 Coors product

41 911 responders: Abbr.

42 Glacier's makeup

43 Puts in order

45 Gloomy

48 Holder of groceries

49 Performed horribly

52 Got an acceptable grade

57 Doing great on

59 Vessel that whistles

61 Fencing move

62 Actress Garr

63 Freedom from suffering

64 Allowed by the rules

65 "You said it!"

66 Food ___ (kitchen job)
- DOWN

1 Foot covering

2 Spiced tea

3 "___ No Sunshine"

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17				18						19				
20							21		22					
				23		24			25				26	27
			28	29				30	31				32	
	33							34					35	
36								37			38			
39						40					41			
42						43				44				
45				46	47				48					
			49				50	51		52		53	54	55
57	58						59	60						
61							62				63			
64							65					66		

- Created by Stella Zawistowski
- 4 Trench around a castle

5 ___ Alexander (cocktail)

6 Blushing

7 Actor Driver

8 Toy on a string

9 San Diego MLB player

10 Informal language

11 Homes on the water

12 Author Patchett

13 Soaking

18 Makes late

22 Sephora competitor

24 Mini burger

26 Geeky people

27 Family rooms

28 Raising a fuss

29 Statutes

30 ___ city

31 Egyptian amulet

33 Actress Bingham

35 "___ on the Range"

36 Layout of some city streets

A	C	U	R	A		O	F	F		S	P	E	C	K
P	E	N	A	L		B	O	O		M	A	C	O	N
H	A	P	P	Y		H	O	U	R		O	R	A	T
I	S	I	T		E	E	E	L		C	O	A	R	S
D	E	N	O	T	E				B	A	T	S		
				R	O	L	E		U	P	H	O	L	D
P	O	S	S	E	S	I	O	N		L	O	O	K	
A	K	A			S	T	Y			P	O	I		
T	R	I	P		L	A	T	E		C	O	M	E	R
H	A	L	L	W	A	Y			D	A	N	A		
							E	A	T	S		D	E	N
T	H	R	A	S	H		A	D	D		D	I	V	A
H	O	I	S	T		P	L	A	Y		D	A	T	E
E	M	C	E	E		H	O	W		S	T	A	R	S
N	E	E	D	S		D	O	N		L	E	N	T	O

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- 38 Bob Marley's genre

40 Refuse to proceed

44 Lap covering for a meal

46 Japanese comic book

47 Heavenly being

50 Singer James

51 Consider

53 Staircase part

54 Constellation part

55 Otherwise

56 Profound

57 ___ or nothing

58 Pool stick

60 Exist

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

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

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

ANSWER:

COUNTY SCHOOLS

Continued from page 1

school on Aug. 11, Hall was pleased with how it went. “You could tell the student body missed each other,” Hall said. “You could even tell the adults missed them too and there was excitement in the air as I went from school to school that day.”

East Laurens and West Laurens high schools were preparing for the opening of football season after both schools began softball and cross country that first week.

“It was a fast and furious first week,” Hall said. “Kids started back on Tuesday and then we had a fast pitch softball game between each other and everything was back in action.”

First readings on new policies

School board members on Aug. 13 heard a first reading on rules prohibiting the use of electronic devices by students.

“They can’t use their personal technology during the day,” Hall said. “This had to be implemented by 2028. Most of us in Georgia went ahead and took care of that this year.”

Laurens County schools began the current year with



Laurens County School Superintendent O.J. Hall says the increase in enrollment is a good issue to have/PAYTON TOWNS, File

this rule.

The board also heard policies about employee leaves and absences, competitive interscholastic activities, school admissions, equal educational opportunities, graduation requirements and promotion and retention.

“These are policies that came out of the past legislative sessions,” Hall said. “These are policies we have to approved.”

These policies will be up for approval at the next scheduled school board

meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Sept. 10.

New hires

The board approved the following: Lauri Brown (teacher at WLHS), Madaline Carter (parapro at ELP), Sara Gore (food nutrition assistant at SWLE), Kentra Guyton (teacher at ELHS), Katherine O’Neal (parapro at Heartland Academy), James Pope (maintenance department at Laurens County Schools), Lashannon Ray (food nutrition assistant at

WLMS) and Hayley Roberts (parapro at ELP).

Resignations

The board approved the following: Mike Albanese (maintenance department at Laurens County Schools), Kyle Caputo (maintenance department at Laurens County Schools), Ariyonna Jones (parapro at WLHS), Karla Mulls (parapro at ELP), Chad Odom (teacher at WLHS), Eva Young (parapro at ELP) and June Young (bus driver at Laurens County Schools).

COUNTY COMMISSION

Continued from page 1

data center ever try to locate here.

“We’re not trying to hide anything,” he said. “Right now we’re going to let it stand like it is. If somebody comes in and starts talking about it, you’re going to know about it.”

Another resident, Joe Powers, asked the commission to consider a six-month moratorium on data centers.

“This will give us time to decide what we may want, what guidelines we can put in place, if we are faced with the decision of putting a data center here,” said Powers, who is running for state representative in November.

Brittany Howard also asked for a ban or moratorium, citing the biblical account of God giving man dominion over nature as a responsibility still expected of us today.

“That didn’t mean using it all up and throwing it away,” she said. “It means to be good stewards.”

Counties without zoning cannot ban data centers, but they can consider specific ordinances to restrict or regulate their external impacts, such as noise level or water usage.

Neighboring Montgomery County is considering a land use ordinance for data centers that would serve as an “alert system” should a data center company look to locate there.

The ordinance would require companies looking to build a data center to purchase a business license, pay an application fee of \$10,000 for each data center, apply for a special use permit and host community information meetings for county residents.

Companies also would have to comply with buffer requirements for the construction, build fencing, regulate noise levels, provide the county with an environmental impact analysis, swear under oath to not seek tax abatements and remain subject to a five-person review board comprised of residents.

SHOOTINGS

Continued from page 1

while the other was in serious condition. The investigation continues.

After the investigation is completed, it will be turned over for review to the Dublin Judicial Circuit District Attorney’s Office.

Anyone with information can contact the GBI

Regional Investigative Office in Eastman at (478) 374-6988, or the Dublin Police Department Crime Stoppers at (478) 275-0803. Anonymous tips may also be submitted by calling 1-800-597-TIPS (8477), online through the GBI Tip Line, or by downloading the See Something, Send Something mobile app.

CAR FIRE DEATH

Continued from page 1

the man unresponsive in the driver’s seat and were able to remove him from the car. When firefighters arrived, some quickly put out the flames while others helped EMS with Wells. The man initially went to Fairview Park Hospital before being transported to the Augusta Burn Center.

“We were hopeful he was going to be able to survive,” Cutler said. “They gave him a chance.”

Cutler said Wells suffered smoke inhalation and some burns. Officials de-

termined that fire started in the engine compartment and was working its way into the passenger’s compartment when the fire was discovered.

A nearby camera showed Wells arriving home around 5:30 p.m. They do not believe he ever got out of the car, remaining in it until the officers removed him.

“At some point, something happened that made him not responsive enough to get out of the car when it caught on fire,” Cutler said. “It doesn’t appear that the fire was intentional, but the cause of the fire is still undetermined.”

GUN SENTENCINGS

Continued from page 1

in U.S. District Court and announced by Margaret E. “Meg” Heap, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia.

“These defendants demonstrated a blatant disregard for federal law in possessing these firearms,” Heap said. “With our law enforcement partners, we will continue our work to hold accountable those who illegally possess guns and threaten the safety of our communities.”

There is no parole in the federal system. Under federal law, it is prohibited for previously convicted felons to possess firearms or ammunition.

Others sentenced were:

- Ryan Lee Borders, 38, of Baxley was sentenced to 130 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. He pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. A Georgia State Patrol trooper found him in possession of a Beretta 9 mm pistol during a traffic stop in May of 2024.
- Charles K. Carceller, 63, of Jackson, was sentenced to 42 months in prison. He also received a \$1,500 fine followed by three years of supervised release after he pleaded guilty to possession of an unregistered firearm. Carceller was in possession of multiple firearms and accessories, including a silencer, that

were not registered with the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record in July of 2022 in Chatham County.

- Yusef Rashad Butler, 32, of Port Wentworth, was sentenced to 30 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. He pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. He was found in possession of a HS Produkt Hellecat, 9 mm pistol during a traffic stop by a GSP trooper in Chatham County in August of 2025.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Georgia State Patrol, Dublin Police Department, Savannah Police Department and local law enforcement agencies assisted in these investigations. They were prosecuted for the United States by Southern District of Georgia Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kelsey L. Scanlon, Joshua Kyle Davis, Henry W. Syms Jr., Tara M. Lyons, Makeia R. Jones and Jennifer J. Kirkland.

“Each of these sentences reflects our dedication to reducing gun violence and enhancing public safety,” said ATF Assistant Special Agent in Charge Brian Graves. “The collaboration between the ATF and local law enforcement agencies is vital in our fight against illegal firearms possession, and we will not waver in our efforts to protect our communities from those who choose to ignore the law.”



Crews who worked the water main break were honored with a luncheon by men from the community Friday at the Farmers Market/PAYTON TOWNS III

CITY LUNCH

Continued from page 1

did not go unnoticed.”

Holy Smokes Barbecue and Catering, Southern Heritage Bar-B-Que and Williamson’s Bakery also helped with the meal. After lunch, the crews also received a \$50 gift card from Piggly Wiggly.

“You know how much all of us at the city appreciate what you do,” said Dublin Mayor Joshua Kight, who attended Friday’s luncheon with City Manager Josh Powell and City Councilwoman Tess

Godfrey. “Sometimes it is good to hear from the public. This is community members showing appreciation. (Cummings) said that sometimes out of tragedy you can find some good things. What we have seen this week is how much the community appreciates what you are doing. If they did not appreciate it before, they do now.”

Around 8 p.m. on Aug. 18, the city was informed about a broken 16-inch water main near the intersection of Joiner Street and Marcus Street. Once arriving at the scene, Soles knew

it was going to be a complex situation. They were able to mobilize and get to work pretty fast. Workers began digging and were able to repair it.

“We have a great group of guys,” Soles said. “There is an on-call rotation where people have to be called out, but in a case like this we needed more than who was scheduled to be on call that night. Everybody came together. Everybody has a job, everybody knows their job and it is very humbling and great that we have guys willing to do that.”

Soles also appreciates

the city employees from other departments who helped out or aided during this situation.

“Yes we did the digging and handled the repair, but we had good support from the police, fire department, public works, street department and others helped,” he said. “We had been out there all night, and we were tired. They came out and asked what did we need. I got that from the beginning all the way to the end. That meant a lot.”



Volunteers serve lunch to City of Dublin water department workers/PAYTON TOWNS III



KIDS' CORNER

Vol. 025 | Join Herald the Hound every Tuesday on Kids' Corner from The Courier Herald

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CHAMBER
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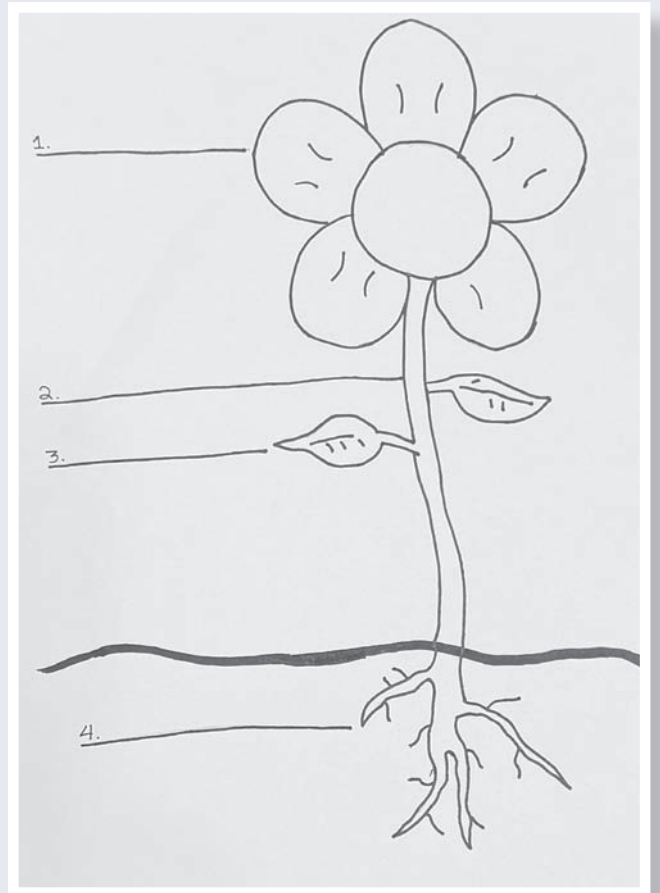
Herald visits Ms. Mullis' ag class at SWLE

Herald the Hound has started making his rounds to schools across Dublin-Laurens County. His first stop was a visit to Ms. Tara Mullis' agriculture class at South West Laurens Elementary School. The kids are already hard at work learning about different types of plants and animals; the places they call home; and the things they need to survive.



WORKSHEET OF THE WEEK

Label the parts of a plant:



"I let my feet spend as little time on the ground as possible."
— Jesse Owens

Puzzles4Kids

by Helene Hovanec

CRISSCROSS – 26 VERBS

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

ASK
CRY
EAT
GET
HUM
RUN

4 Letters

COOK
DRAW
GASP
HELP
PLAY
READ
STOP
TEST
WAIT
YAWN

5 Letters

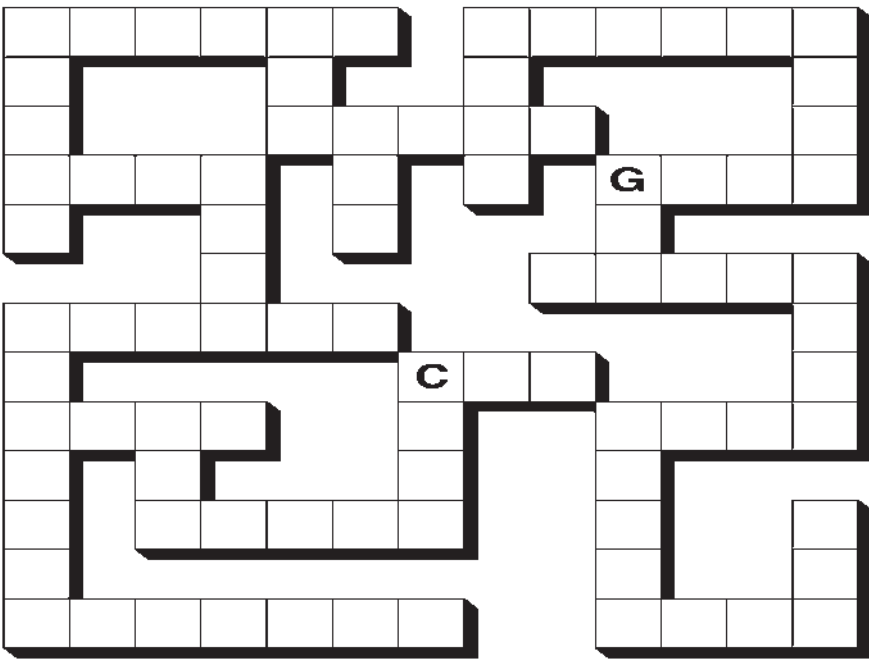
KNOCK
LEARN
START
THROW
WORRY

6 Letters

ANSWER
LISTEN
SPLASH

7 Letters

APPLAUD
DISCUSS



Fun Fact

Roughly 270 million people play soccer worldwide (about 4% of the world's population), and billions of people support it as fans. More than 200 of the world's countries have organized leagues, amateur clubs, and casual recreational matches regularly.

Source:
www.britannica.com

MINI SUDOKU

		2	1	
1	3			
			5	
5		1	2	4
3				2

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

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ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS

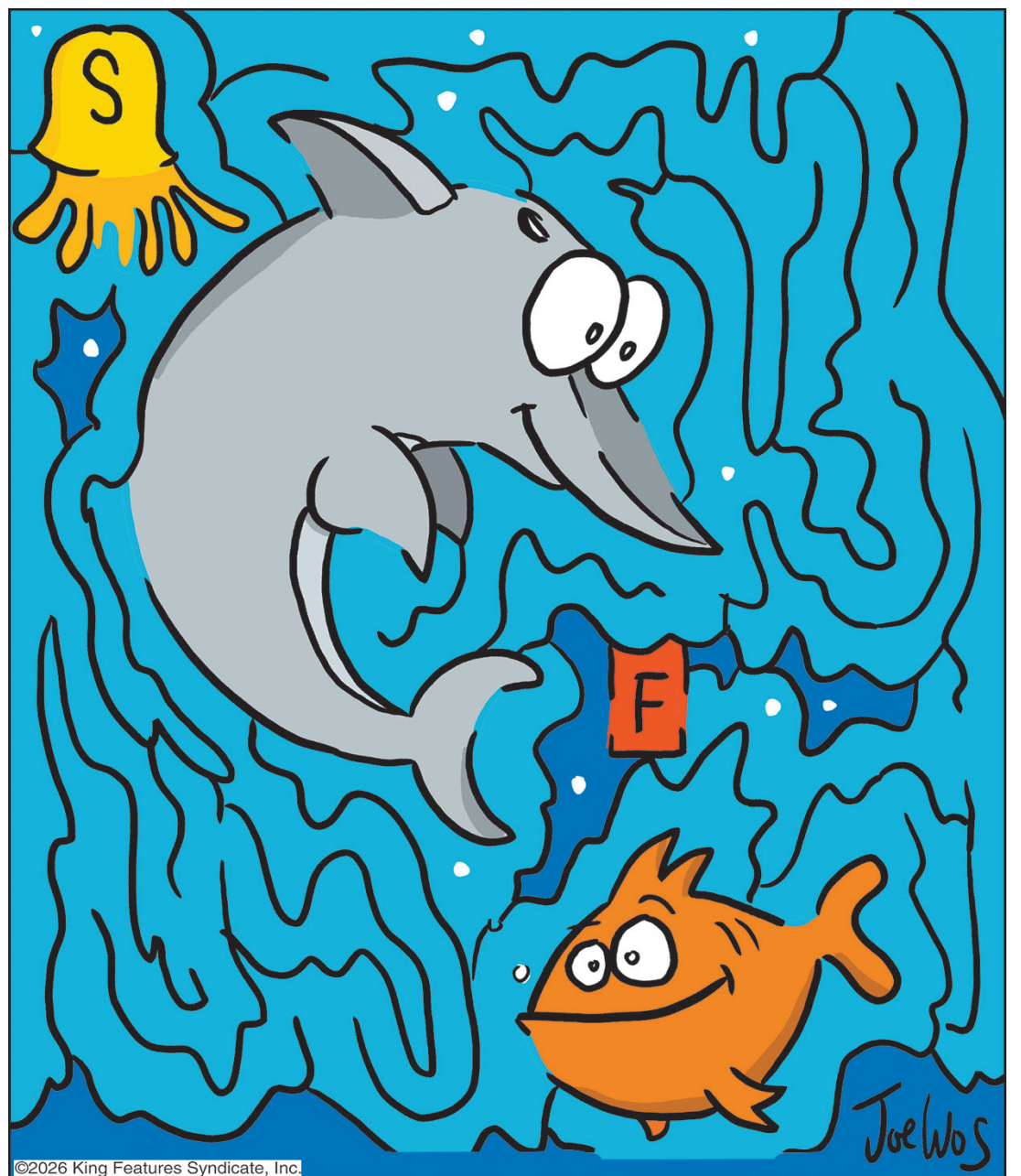
6	5	2	1	4	3
4	1	3	6	2	5
2	4	6	5	3	1
5	3	1	2	6	4
3	6	5	4	1	2
1	2	4	3	5	6

Puzzles4Kids Answer

LISTEN	SPLASH	EAT	THROW	START	CRY	WAIT	READ	UP	GASP	STOP	THROW	WORRY	DISCUSS
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TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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



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