

In a flash: Heavy rains flood Dublin's streets

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Heavy rains hit Dublin and Laurens County on Sunday, bringing more water than expected in a short amount of time to cause major flooding and even some vehicle rescues.

From Saturday and Sunday, Dublin received as much as 7 inches of rain. Sunday's downpour was as Dublin Fire Chief Matthew Cutler described "the most water I've seen fall in Dublin at one time, if not ever."

"I think downtown saw the worst impact," he said.

The Ice House was flooded as well as the family life center and parking lot at First African Baptist Church. According to Cutler, they received calls from Highland Avenue and the

stream that runs through Stubbs Park was a river at one point.

"I think one of the bridges in Stubbs was turned sideways because there was so much water flowing through there at one point," Cutler said. "Prince Street had flooding and the area next to Hilburn Park we received a call about a yard that was flooded and Sunny Lane is always underwater when we get a lot of water."

Around 2:50 p.m., an emergency call went out for a vehicle trapped in water near the China Express.

"The vehicle was stalled and water was enough to disabled that car," Cutler said.

Cutler said there were two other incidents where people drove into the water and needed assistance

to get out. There was a car that went through the water when it was at its highest in front of the Dublin Police Department. They got stuck and an officer and tow truck employee had to get three children and two adults out, said Dublin Police Chief Keith Moon.

"Everyone was okay," he said. "Officers got out and blocked areas to keep people from running through the water as we waited for the water to get on into the river."

Moon and Cutler want drivers to remember not to cross flooded areas with running water.

"You don't know if the road is washed out or not," Moon said.



A car is stranded in floodwaters off Ga. 19 /SPECIAL PHOTO

FLOODING
Continued on page 7

City school board calls Sunday meeting to fill open teacher slots

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

The Dublin City Board of Education held a rare weekend meeting Sunday as it scrambled to fill teaching and other positions on the eve of the first of the new school year.

The board called the emergency meeting to approve seven new hires that included four full-time teachers and a substitute. It approved 13 new hires at a called meeting last week that included eight teachers and three paraprofessionals.

Students returned for the first day of school on Monday following a year of turmoil and turnover from the district's financial crisis. The district eliminated almost 46 jobs midyear, most of them teachers, to cut in half what had been projected as a \$13 million year-end deficit.

A big change for the new school term will be the move of the alternative school from Moore Street to the high school to make room for a new magnet school to

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued on page 7

De-escalation can help avoid having to 'stand your ground'

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The details of a tragic parking lot shooting in Florida made its way into a discussion recently by a shooting range instructor in Laurens County who stressed the importance of de-escalation.

Standing in front of church security team, Cpt. Sid Harrison with the Laurens County Sheriff's Office told the story of a woman and man getting into an argument in a Walmart parking lot in North Lauderdale, Fla., on June 30. This eventually led the woman to shoot and kill the man.

Harrison wrapped up his statements by informing the teams that all the unarmed

man needed to do was "walk away," and thus, de-escalate the situation.

The woman told police that she used self defense as she shot and killed him when he approached her after he had already walked away. The authorities continue to investigate the incident.

"You have a big male and a medium-size female and people will say that he should not have kept approaching her, and I agree," he said. "If you have the ability to retreat, you need to do that. And if he had done so, we would have never heard about this. There will probably be hundreds of arguments in store parking lots and we will never hear about many of them."



Laurens County sheriff's Capt. Sid Harrison instructs a church security team member on handling his firearm/PAYTON TOWNS III

No matter what happens legally to the woman, her and the victim's families' lives are changed forever.

"She has now taken a life and she is maybe ques-

tioning if she did the right thing," Harrison said. "The other family lost a loved one who was a veteran and he should have been somewhere fishing. But he's dead now. If there is noth-

ing else we convey here, we need to be more civil. We need to be more forgiving. If you will put your pride

GUN SAFETY
Continued on page 7

City joins call for vote on sales tax

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The Dublin City Council approved an intergovernmental agreement Friday with Laurens County and other municipalities to call a referendum on a floating local option sales tax, or FLOST, for property tax relief.

The agreement will allow a referendum for Laurens County voters to decide if they want to offset property taxes with a sales tax.

"The agreement sets out how the money from that sales tax would be split be-

SALES TAX
Continued on page 7

Stepping it up ...

New Dublin High band director bringing energy to halftime show

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Antonio Williams is no stranger to Dublin.

The new Dublin High School band director, who attended Southwest-Macon before graduating from Savannah State University in 2025, had friends from here and also made trips to the Emerald City to participate in some of the parades.

"I know the parade route like the back of my hand," said Williams, who primarily plays the saxophone. "When I drove through downtown I knew I had been here before."

He taught one year at Porter Elementary in Macon before hearing about the job opening when Marcus Rayner left at the end of the previous school year.

"I was surprised when I noticed the job was open," Williams said. "I was loving my job, but honestly, I wouldn't feel true to myself if I didn't go for what I really wanted to do and that was to be a high school band director. I knew the area and I always saw a the passion from the kids every time I

came here."

The Fighting Irish band will have approximately 70 students this year. Williams wants the crowd to see energy from the band.

"Our goal is to mainly support the school and the football team at the games," he said. "We want to hype up the crowd and the team. What we do and they do coincide together."

Williams got to know his students through a two-week band camp that went from July 13-24.

"We aren't too big and not too small," he said. "These two weeks are my introduction to who I am and how I operate. The quality is there. The kids want to learn and they want to be good. Band camp has been good, but hot. Overall, the kids have been learning the music."

The band will be bringing back some old classics, Williams said.

"We're thinking about doing some Michael Jackson songs," he said. "He has always been in style."

The Southwest Marching Band is known for its dancing halftime shows. At Dub-



New Dublin High School Band Director Antonio Williams instructs band members as they practice in the Shamrock Bowl/PAYTON TOWNS III

lin, Williams wants to open it up.

"I'm all about energy," he said. "Energy comes through music, but it is also about movement. I want the kids to enjoy themselves. When you are performing, whether it is music or dancing, the crowd feels it. That's the route I'm going. I want to keep the crowd entertained. I don't just want them to enjoy the band, I want them to feel what's go-



DUBLIN BAND
Continued on page 7

Members of the Dublin High marching band auxiliary practice a routine/PAYTON TOWNS III

INDEX

OBITUARIES 2
POLICE BEAT 3
EDITORIAL 4
TELL IT! 5
COMICS 4
KIDS' CORNER 8

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COMMUNITY NEWS

UGA interns perform day of service

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

The Dublin-Laurens Look Ahead Georgia intern cohort participated in a day of service on June 24. Students spent the morning organizing donation storage areas for Kid’s Cup, a community closet for foster and kinship families and other children in need. Students also volunteered with Keep Dublin-Laurens Beautiful and cleaned up rural roads in Dexter. In the afternoon, they helped residents with their weekly bingo game at Addington Place, an assisted living facility. The interns enjoyed rolling up their sleeves to give back to their hometown. The Look Ahead

Georgia program is an initiative of the Archway Partnership designed to create workforce pipelines for students in their hometowns. The Archway Partnership is one of eight University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach units serving communities across the state. Known for its innovative, award-winning approach to community engagement, Archway received the 2025 APLU Innovation & Economic Prosperity Award and has generated more than \$22.9 million in return on investment for Georgia communities over the past three years. Learn more at archwaypartnership.uga.edu.



OBITUARIES



Joann Graham Faulk

Graveside funeral services for Joann Graham Faulk, 83, will be held at 3:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2026 at Rentz City Cemetery with Rev. Tom Vann officiating.

Mrs. Faulk was born Dec. 14, 1942 in Dublin, Georgia; she was preceded in death by her parents, the late Greely Graham and Lonnie Faye Motes Graham, her brothers, Charles Graham and her sisters, Dianne Harper, Liz Watson, Reta Faye Wilson and Shirley Frost. She was of the Baptist faith and was retired from KFC as a cook. She passed away Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026.

She is survived by several nieces and nephews. Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com to sign the online memorial register.

Townsend Brothers Funeral Home has charge of the arrangements.

Pynolia Hill

Ms. Pynolia Hill of Macon, passed away on Saturday, August 1, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete but will be announced later.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.

Servicesbydudley.com.

Willie Lanier

Mrs. Willie Lanier of Dublin, passed away on Saturday, August 1, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete but will be announced later.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.

Servicesbydudley.com.

Ga 811 day reminder to call before you dig

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

"I've been digging here for years without a problem."

"I know where my utilities are - I was here when they were installed."

"I'm on a farm, so I don't need a dig ticket."

"I'm not digging very deep."

"These are some of the most common reasons people give for not contacting 811 before digging," says Megan Estes, Director of Corporate Communications at Georgia 811. "The reality is that every digging project is different. A locate request isn't a one-time permit - it's valid for one specific location, one specific type of work, and for only 30 days. If the location changes or the scope of the project changes, you'll need a new ticket. It's every dig, every time."

Georgia law requires anyone planning to dig to

contact Georgia 811 at least three business days before beginning work. After a ticket is submitted, Georgia 811 notifies the utility companies that may have underground facilities in the area. Those utility companies then send professional locators to mark the approximate location of their underground lines using paint, flags, or both.

"One of the biggest misconceptions is that Georgia 811 locates underground utilities," Estes says. "Our role is to notify the affected utility companies. They are responsible for sending their locate technicians to mark their facilities."

Before breaking ground, those digging should verify that all notified utility companies have responded to the ticket. Using the ticket number, homeowners and contractors can check ticket responses online or through the Georgia 811 mobile app to confirm whether utilities have marked their lines.

The process is quick, easy, and completely free. Taking a few minutes to request a dig ticket before renting equipment or starting a project can help prevent service outages, costly repairs, injuries, and even fatalities.

Georgia 811 offers several convenient ways to submit a locate request. Homeowners and contractors can submit tickets online at www.Georgia811.com or simply dial 811, the national Call Before You Dig number.

As 811 Day (August 11) approaches, Georgia 811 reminds everyone that whether you're planting a tree, installing a mailbox, building a fence, or tackling a major construction project, one simple step can make all the difference:

Know what's below. Contact 811 before every dig, every time.

NOW HERE'S A TIP

* "I have a pair of pants I wear to garden in. The knees wore out, naturally, and I went to sew patches on the knees. I left the top of the patch open, and when needed I slip a piece of foam rubber in the knee. Magical knee pads!" -- R.E. in Oregon

* Are you great behind the lens of your camera and love animals? Consider donating your time to your local animal shelter as a pet photographer. Showing Mittens and Fido off to their best advantage can mean the difference in finding a forever home. Check with your local rescue organizations, too!

* To clean your tarnished silver jewelry, simply line a tray or shallow bowl with aluminum foil, lay the pieces on the foil and fill with a hot water and detergent solution (NOT bleach-containing). You may also use baking soda and hot water. Swish and allow the tarnish to transfer to the foil. Use a soft cloth to dry.

* Now is the time to tighten your cane-bottomed chairs. Flip the chair over, then soak the cane with hot water and allow it to dry fully in the sun.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

'Tumor seeding' rarely occurs during biopsies

By DR. KEITH ROACH
King Features

DEAR DR. ROACH: I read your recent column on prostate biopsies. I'm not a doctor, but I'd advise against them. My boyfriend got a biopsy in 2012, which I believe caused his cancer to spread beyond his prostate into his bones. He died three years later in 2015.

Think about this: A needle is inserted to extract cells so that they can be tested. When the needle is pulled out with its open end, and cancer is present, cells in the needle can then come out of the open end, causing cancer to spread throughout the prostate. It may be rare, but this is documented (called tumor seeding). -- B.S.

ANSWER: I must disagree with you in the strongest possible terms. A biopsy is an essential piece of information to know how to treat a patient. Over decades and tens of millions of biopsies, there have been 42 total cases of seeding that were reported worldwide from the needle tract. This extremely rare event shouldn't prevent a man from understanding what the best treatment of his prostate cancer will be. Other studies haven't shown an association between a biopsy and a subsequent spread of the disease.

I'm very sorry about your boyfriend, but given the slow growth rate of prostate cancer, it's likely your boyfriend had prostate cancer that spread to his bones years before the biopsy was done.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I read about a new weight-loss drug that is still in its clinical trials. It's called retatrutide, and it may have the ability to reduce body weight by as much as 28% over a relatively short period of time. What are some of the dangers of losing weight too quickly? -- B.G.

ANSWER: I also read the initial studies on retatrutide, and I'm very impressed with the results. The level of weight loss that was seen is in the range of what's expected with bariatric surgery. It acts similar to semaglutide (Wegovy) by stimulating the GLP-1 receptor, but like tirzepatide (Zepbound), it also stimulates the GIP receptor.

Unlike either of these drugs, it also acts on a third receptor called glucagon, and this combined action has shown remarkable results, with nearly two-thirds of study subjects no longer being classified as obese while on the drug.

You're wise to ask about the side effects of so much weight loss at one time. Regardless of the underlying reason for the weight loss, there's the potential for harm whether you lose weight through medications, surgery, or careful adherence to diet and exercise. Gallstones are common during rapid weight loss, and some experts use medication to prevent them.

Bone mass can also be lost by both men and women during weight loss. Making sure that a person gets enough protein and vitamin D can reduce this, and people who are at risk (such as those who had low bone mass to begin with) may be recommended medications to prevent the progression to osteoporosis.

We've seen loss of muscle mass with the existing GLP-1 drugs. To some extent, this is because a person no longer carts around so much weight. Regular exercise, especially weight lifting, and adequate protein intake can help reduce muscle loss as well.

When eating only a few amount of calories to lose weight, a person needs to be careful that they get all the micronutrients they need. I recommend working with a registered dietician or nutritionist to avoid deficiencies.

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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Dublin Police Department

- At 1:55 p.m. on July 24, an officer responded to Walmart on U.S. 80 West in regard to a shoplifting incident with a person concealing merchandise inside a trash can.

The officer met with an employee who identified Blake Willis, 24, who was detained in the loss prevention office. Willis had placed \$139.20 worth of unpaid merchandise inside a plastic trash can and attempted to leave the store without paying.

As he approached the exit, a Walmart greeter asked to see his receipt and looked inside the trash can. The unpaid merchandise was then discovered.

When asked what had occurred, Willis said that he had made a “stupid” decision. He was transported to the police department where he was fingerprinted and issued a citation for theft by shoplifting. All of the merchandise was recovered and remained in the possession of Walmart employees.

- Zorian Kjion McDonald, 25, was charged with driving while license suspended or revoked and a headlight violation around 9:18 p.m. on July 22.

An officer made a traffic stop on a black Honda Accord



POLICE BEAT...

for a driver’s side headlight being out. The officer met with the driver, McDonald, who told the officer he only had a picture of his drivers license. The information was run through GCIC to make sure his license was good, and it came back as suspended. This was confirmed by Laurens County 911.

McDonald admitted that his license was suspended. He was transported to the police department, fingerprinted and released.

Laurens County Sheriff’s Office

- A deputy responded to an accident with no injuries at the intersection of U.S. 441 South and Payne Road in

Rentz around 3:03 p.m. on July 14.

- A woman spoke with a deputy on July 14 about her mother being scammed on Ga. 29 South.

- A deputy responded to Strickland Boots in reference to fraud that occurred around 3:35 p.m. on July 15.

- A deputy responded to the sheriff’s office in reference to a walk-in on July 15 regarding an incident that happened on Shuman Lane on June 28.

- Someone entered a trailer on Dale Circle around 11:10 a.m. on July 17.

- A deputy responded to Shy Street in reference to a theft that happened around 6 p.m. on July 17.

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.

Student absenteeism a persistent problem, but Georgia is doing better than most states

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — When COVID-19 struck, schools closed, students “attended” from home, and too many got out of the habit of going to school when the doors reopened.

In 2022, nearly a quarter of Georgia’s students had absenteeism rates high enough to be considered “chronic” — nearly double the rate before the pandemic.

But new data show that the state is gradually recovering. More students are still missing school than before COVID-19, but the rate has been steadily falling, dropping to 17.7% during the 2025-26 school year.

That is nearly 2 percentage points lower than the prior year, which in turn was nearly 2 points lower than in 2023-24, the state data show. The rate remains more than 5 percentage points above the rates in the two years before the pandemic, but observers find Georgia’s trajectory to be promising, especially when many other states have found their absenteeism problems to be more stubborn.

The Georgia Department of Education released the new rates last week, well ahead of most other states, noted Nat Malkus, with the American Enterprise Institute.

“Perhaps even more impressively,” he wrote in an analysis published Thursday, “Georgia’s chronic absenteeism rate is declining steadily, bucking the national trend.”

During the 2024-25 school year, Georgia’s

chronic absenteeism rate was 19.5%, beating the estimated national average by more than 2 percentage points, according to the group FutureEd, whose numbers had Georgia among the third of the states with the lowest rates.

“We applaud the Georgia Department of Education’s early release of end-of-the-year attendance data, which shows an impressive fifth consecutive year of decreased chronic absence,” Hedy Chang, president and CEO of the group Attendance Works, said in a statement. “Georgia’s commitment to timely end-of-the-year data is a model for how states can make a difference.”

Some of that success came after lawmakers passed a law last year that required more coordinated and sustained efforts against absenteeism. Senate Bill 123 required that school districts with high rates create attendance review teams that engage parents.

State lawmakers tried to build on that this year with Senate Bill 513.

“If we do not have kids’ butts in seats, they are not going to learn,” Sen. RaShaun Kemp, D-Atlanta, said before the measure passed with just one vote against it in the Senate.

But the measure faced overwhelming opposition in the House due to some provisions seen as draconian, including loss of driving privileges. Many students who skip a lot of school need their licenses so they can get to jobs — not to mention to school, critics said.

Studies have shown that treating the problem with punishment does not work

well, said Matt Smith, the policy and research director for the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education.

Indeed, using punishment to address misbehavior in general can aggravate the absenteeism problem by turning school into an unwelcoming environment, he said. Out-of-school suspension, one such “legacy” strategy, directly increases absenteeism.

Instead, Georgia schools are more often trying to address the underlying problems, he said. That started with more behavioral and mental health counseling.

But poor physical health can also rob students of their ability to focus, which can in turn lead them to misbehave, he said, so more schools are looking at that too.

“It could be something as simple as getting them hearing aids or glasses, getting them dental care,” he said.

Smith said the data the state education department has been releasing allows more people, including businesses and organizations in each community, to

help school districts identify commonalities among students who are missing a lot of school.

That enables the districts to focus their resources on those students, and it allows the community to help.

They have a reason to help. Research shows that absenteeism affects the whole classroom by bogging down teachers who must divide their students into different groups as they try to catch up the kids who have fallen behind, Smith said.

Georgia and other states still have a lot of work to do to get their absenteeism rates back to a manageable level, Malkus wrote in his analysis. But he added that Georgia is showing how progress is possible when it is seen as an urgent priority.

Many states take far longer than Georgia did to release their data from the prior school year, he wrote. “Indeed, there are some states — Minnesota and Texas among them — that still have not released data for the 2024–25 school year.”

Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:

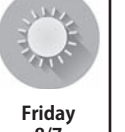
TUESDAY:
88°
Shifting clouds and sun; some chance of storms.
Sunrise: 6:48 a.m.

TUESDAY NIGHT:
72°
Partly cloudy and humid.
Sunset: 8:27 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:
92°
Rather cloudy with a couple of storms.
Sunrise: 6:48 a.m.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT:
71°
Cloudy.
Sunset: 8:26 p.m.

Thursday
8/6
HIGH/LOW
93/70
Times of clouds and sun.
Sunrise: 6:49 a.m.
Sunset: 8:26 p.m.

Friday
8/7
HIGH/LOW
92/71
Mostly sunny
Sunrise: 6:50 a.m.
Sunset: 8:25 p.m.

Saturday
8/8
HIGH/LOW
93/72
Partly sunny with a chance of spot storms.
Sunrise: 6:51 a.m.
Sunset: 8:24 p.m.

Sunday
8/9
HIGH/LOW
91/70
Watch for strong morning storms then clearing.
Sunrise: 7:51 a.m.
Sunset: 8:23 p.m.

Monday
8/10
HIGH/LOW
90/69
Mostly cloudy with afternoon rain.
Sunrise: 6:52 a.m.
Sunset: 8:22 p.m.

River levels...

Oconee (at Dublin) 3'

Ocmulgee (at Macon) 8.9'

Soperton hosts public hearing for federal disaster relief grant

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
GTLN

The city of Soperton hosted a public hearing on July 30 in the Soperton City Hall in regards to a community development block grant for disaster relief (CD-BG-DR).

“The funds are used to address infrastructure damage tied back to disasters to ensure communities can recover and maintain their essential services,” said Ginger Bruce of the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA), the organization the city is collaborating with for the grant application process. “So, it’s, ‘fix what’s wrong and prevent it from happening again.’”

According to Mayor John Koon, the city is seeking the grant for a \$1.1 million project to repair infrastructure in the city damaged by Hurricane Helene in 2024. In particular, the project aims to reduce flooding, patch road damage and pave dirt roads which are difficult to traverse after rainfall.

“We knew that we still had some areas that still

have not been fixed, and still are in need of repair or rehabilitation to be able to help what we are doing, and this fell right in line with what we wanted to do,” said Koon.

Bruce said the city’s application deadline will be Sept. 4, with decisions made on where to release funds in November. Funded projects must be aimed at helping low-income residents and must be completed within two years.

As part of the application process, Bruce conducted field surveys earlier in the day on Sumner Place, Cardinal Drive, Manning Street, Second Street and Ennis Circle. The survey and the public hearing were aimed to gather resident input regarding the project.

“You’re required to have a certain number of public hearings for people’s input — citizens input — people who may live in the area we’re targeting to come in and ask questions, or people who don’t, you know, just to get information,” said Koon.

Classifieds

Employment

WATER CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

The City of Dublin is accepting applications for an Equipment Operator in the Water Construction Department. This Team Member must have a positive attitude and initiative. The successful applicant duties will include performing skilled work in the operation of moderate to heavy equipment. Work involves the responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of moderately heavy or specialized equipment. This employee must be able to operate a diverse range of equipment which includes a variety of trucks and construction equipment. The operation of this equipment requires considerable manipulative skill and the ability to perform specialized tasks to which the equipment is assigned. Performs semi-skilled and some manual labor tasks in construction repair and maintenance of City water and sewer facilities. Work involves the performance of a variety of tasks in constructing, maintaining, and repairing water and sewer lines. This employee may supervise or act as a lead worker with a crew. Supervision is received from the Water Construction Superintendent who makes oral or written assignments and inspects work while in progress and upon completion. Applicant must pass a drug screen, have a high school diploma or GED and possess a minimum of a Georgia Commercial Driver’s License. Salary range for this position is \$42,463.67 – \$65,818.68 annually. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered. Applicants may apply online through our www.cityofdublin.org website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Yard/Estate Sales

Huge Estate Yard Sale: August 8th 7am- until. **114 Larsen Street East Dublin.** Everything must go! Come & Explore!

Real Estate

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Apt. for Rent - 806B S. Washington St., 2 BR, kitchen, LR & shower, inc. pest control. \$600 dep., \$600 mo. City gas heat & window ac, stove & refrigerator. Call 478-697-6817. Located in Southside in Dublin.



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Some tips for those addressing public officials in meetings

In any meeting held in Dublin, Laurens County, there comes a time when it is the public's turn to address the city council members, county commissioners or board members.

This is the opportunity for the public to present questions or concerns to their elected officials.

This was on display at a recent Laurens County Commission meeting where the topic for many in attendance was data centers. Some came prepared and talked for their allotted three minutes. Others stood at the podium and talked with passion about their feelings on the topic.

All of it was good input for the commissioners, which is what any elected official would ask for.

I have been covering meetings since 2001 and can recall times when the person talking from the podium did not use their

time wisely. When planning to speak at a meeting, one should call ahead and find out the rules for citizen's comments because they may be different for each group.

Majority of the meetings we cover allow three minutes for each person. Those three minutes go by fast, so it may be a good idea to skip some of the stuff that really does not pertain to the topic.

I have seen people take up two minutes to talk about where they went to school, where they grew up and who their parents were. When they finally get to the meat and potatoes though, the words "Your time is up," are spoken by the time keeper.

When speaking in front of any governing body, it's a good idea to come to the meeting with a prepared statement so that the citizen has the chance to say

MAN ABOUT TOWN...



By PAYTON TOWNS III

everything they want to say during their allotted time.

There have been times when I write a story or column when I have a specific amount of space to fill. If I go over that allotted space, I have to edit what I have written to get it to fit. When this happens, I cut out the stuff that does not pertain to what I am writing about. In other words, the fluff is

cut.

If one writes out their statement and sets a timer for three minutes, then they will know if they would be able to get out all of their comments in a timely manner.

Many want to ask questions and expect the members to answer. Majority of the meeting groups have a policy where they are not

going to respond. While the person at the podium knows what they are there to discuss, the elected leaders do not. Those who do ask questions of their leaders should receive a response from them at some point between that and the next meeting.

When it comes to addressing the board members, also make sure the topic is one they can actually do something about. I recall a meeting where a man got up to the podium and told the county commissioners that he wanted to address the Hillcrest Parkway construction project. The chairman informed him that they had no control over that because it was a city issue.

The man looked down for a second before replying, "I am prepared to talk about it so you will just have to hear what I have to say." Then he proceeded to grumble about the project for three minutes and sat

down. I never saw him talk to the city council about it.

Some members of the public have complained about not having enough time to speak. Three minutes is plenty. People can talk to their elected officials after the meeting. Shocking I know, but I have had no problem calling up and chatting about various issues with elected members from various groups.

I would also suggest not insulting them during statements made at the meetings.

It is okay to be passionate about a topic, but insulting the board members may not be the best way to go about it. As it is our right to ask questions, speak up on issues and hold our leaders accountable, we should do so in a respectful way.

Just remember, whatever they approve or pass, does not only affect us the public but them as well.

Putting God and this tiny rock called Earth into perspective

Sometimes I start these conversations not knowing where they are going to end.

This is one of those times. The subject today concerns current events, the universe and religion.

Now, you can see why I don't know where this is headed. Any one of the topics is complex enough in its own right without mixing them all together.

I think it began with the Artemis 2 lunar flyby of the far side of the moon last April, a total distance of about 695,000 miles and more than 230,000 miles from Earth. Staggering numbers almost beyond human comprehension.

That led me to a series called "How the Universe Works" that had originally aired on the Discovery Channel back in 2011. I found it on HBO Max last month.

When you look at the size and scope of the universe, the Artemis 2 trek

was like an inch to a million miles or more. This is a big and very complex universe. And this planet we call Earth amounts to one grain of sand on the beaches of St. Simons.

And that gets me to current events. As I write this, we are at war with Iran. Iran is at war with us and our allies. Israel is at war with Islamic terrorists. Russia and the Ukraine have been at war going on five years. There are civil wars in Sudan and Myanmar. Yemen and Haiti. According to data from the International Committee of the Red Cross, there are currently anywhere from 65 to 130 active armed conflicts globally. Peace on Earth? Forget about it. And we think that Earth is all there is? Forget that, too.

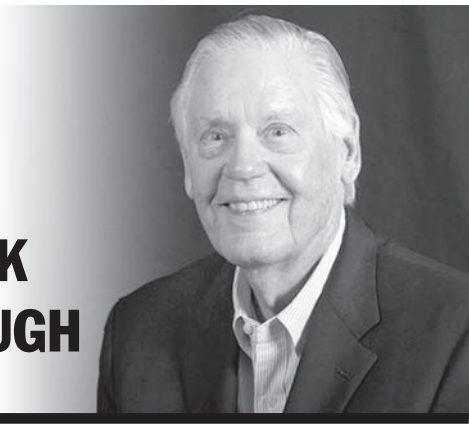
Our planet, which we seem hellbent on destroying, resides in a solar system that includes the Sun, eight planets, five dwarf planets, hundreds of moons, and

thousands of asteroids and comets. Our Solar System is located in a galaxy known as the Milky Way. In addition to the Solar System, the Milky Way is estimated to contain another 100 billion to 400 billion stars and at least that number of planets.

There's more. Scientists think there are at least two trillion galaxies from what they have been able to observe and the feeling is that there are even more yet to be seen. Several trillion galaxies with each containing hundreds of billions of stars? Maybe you can get your head around those numbers.

I can't. I can say that comparing our planet to a grain of sand on the beaches of St. Simons may be a gross understatement. What is not an understatement is that we are one tiny insignificant rock in a universe vast beyond our comprehension. And that brings me to religion.

By DICK YARBROUGH



I believe in God. If anything, the more I learn about the vastness of the universe, the more convinced I am of God's presence. It's called faith. I have it and I don't need to justify it to anyone. God is not a he or a she or an it, something we can define in human terms. In the Bible, God says, "I Am Who I Am." That pretty much sums it up for me. God is God.

For all my life, I have thought of God only in terms of this Earth. Heaven and Hell. Adam and Eve.

The Garden of Eden. Was that the work of God? Did God pick out Earth from all the untold multi-trillions of planets to create a walking and talking man? (And woman.) Or did life on this Earth form some 3.5 billion years ago through abiogenesis, a process in which life was created from non-living matter, as scientists maintain, and then evolved into who and what we are today?

The scientists interviewed on "How the Universe Works" surmised that there well could be other

forms of life somewhere in our galaxy or beyond. They just haven't found them yet. If so, did God put them there? Or was God a one-planet God? If so, why us? A bunch of fractious people who can't get along with each other?

I don't know the answers, but I am anxious to explore the questions. A small group of us with diverse backgrounds, including clergy, are planning to meet regularly and talk about all of this. I am convinced God approves of the discussions and is not threatened by our musings. God is I Am Who I Am and that's not going to change. We are the ones who need to change.

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

LETTER TO GEORGIA RESIDENTS

If you're reading the headlines, you may have noticed a seemingly nationwide crisis – the increased use of artificial intelligence and cloud storage by all of us is driving an electricity demand surge unlike anything in recent memory. Companies are racing to build data centers and, in state after state, the grid is not ready.

Electric rates are rising. Reliability is under pressure – residents of some states even live in fear of potential blackouts. Families and small businesses are absorbing costs that were never designed to land on them. New businesses are reevaluating where they build or operate because reliable power is not readily available in some markets.

As the CEO of the largest electric company in the state, serving millions of homes and businesses, I want to assure you that is NOT happening in Georgia.

At Georgia Power, we've built and maintained the infrastructure our state needs for more than 140 years.

From the beginning of the electric age, when lanterns gave way to electric lights, to the advent of air conditioning in the 1960s, to the internet boom of the 1990s, we know how to come together to face moments of rapid technological change and opportunity and keep Georgia moving in the right direction.

Working alongside the Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC) and state leaders, we've taken deliberate steps that position our state differently. We believe growth can be a benefit – not a burden – and we've planned accordingly.

As temperatures climb and families across Georgia adjust their thermostats this summer, I want our customers to know two things: the energy you need will be there, and we are working every day to keep it affordable.

In May, the PSC approved a plan that will deliver approximately \$285 million in annual savings for customers, or about \$50

in yearly savings for the typical residential household. That means the overall rate you are paying for electricity from Georgia Power is lower than it was this time last year – very few utilities can say the same.

Those savings build on other recent good news for customers: stable rates through 2028, along with more than \$100 in additional annual savings planned beginning in 2029. This isn't accidental. It reflects a deliberate strategy to manage Georgia's economic growth and rising electricity demand while keeping costs down for customers.

So, how are we able to deliver these benefits when other states are struggling? Because we have a system that allows us to plan, invest, and deliver—for today and for 20 years from today.

Years ago, we recognized that large energy users, like data centers, could reshape the demand for electricity. Working with the PSC, we put protections in place to ensure residential and small business customers wouldn't bear the cost of

that growth.

We created new rules and regulations that require them to pay for the infrastructure needed to serve them, commit to longer contract terms, minimum bills, termination payments, and financial security provisions.

Simply put: They pay more, so you pay less.

This rate-reducing load growth is also resulting in a stronger, more resilient power grid for you, and for future generations of Georgians. We're adding new power plants across the state, including natural gas, solar, and battery storage, as well as increasing the output of the country's largest generator of clean energy at Plant Vogtle. We're also building new transmission lines that serve as the backbone of our electric grid, reliably moving energy from power plants to the communities that depend on it.

This is what it looks like when growth is matched with preparation. Higher reliability and lower costs as we work to ensure that Georgia's success benefits the people who call this

state home.

At Georgia Power, our job is to make sure the infrastructure we build keeps pace with our state's bright future – and serves everyone. The families watching their bills every month. The small business owners who can't afford a reliability failure. The next generation of Georgians who deserve opportunity, stability, and a future in the state they

know and love.

Georgia Power is built for this moment. On behalf of thousands of employees working across the state, we are grateful and honored to serve you, your family, and your business.

Kim Greene
Chairman, President & CEO of Georgia Power

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"The First Amendment is often inconvenient. But that is beside the point. Inconvenience does not absolve the government of its obligation to tolerate speech."

- **Anothny Kennedy, U.S. Supreme Court**

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (King James Version)**

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

- Aug. 4, 2026 is...
- Single Working Woman's Day
 - Hooray for Kids Day
 - U.S. Coast Guard Day
 - National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
 - National Night Day

The Courier Herald

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



East Laurens teammates Abigail Holt (left) and Deanna Lowther (right) both celebrated their recent college signings, Holt to play softball at Georgia Southern's East Georgia campus and Lowther for basketball at Albany State, last week/SPECIAL PHOTOS, courtesy Laurens County School District

Golden opportunities: Falcons' Holt, Lowther sign with Georgia Southern-East, Albany State

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Two longtime East Laurens teammates, and recent graduates this past spring, signed last week to continue playing different sports at the next level. And both will be able to carry over a good bit of their existing athletic wardrobe to the new schools who share gold with their high school as a signature color.

Each will trade the black for a differing shade of blue, the Falcons' Abigail Holt the navy of the Golden Eagles representing Georgia Southern's new East Georgia campus, and for her softball teammate Deanna Lowther, the royal of the Albany State Golden Rams.

There was plenty of all the above to be seen at signing ceremonies last Wednesday and Thursday afternoons as the pair of players celebrated with family, teammates coaches and friends while looking ahead to their chance to put on the new colors, and also back at some high school playing careers over which both wore the old set with a great deal of pride.

Holt, an infielder, is headed to Swainsboro to continue playing softball, while Lowther goes to Albany with sure plans of playing basketball, and a potential opportunity to pick up softball as a second sport in the spring that, for now, remains TBD.

A comeback story...

A freak injury suffered early last fall claimed the senior season of Abigail Holt before it could even get going.

She'd fracture her ankle on a slide into second base during a matchup with Dublin at Southern Pines, only a handful of games into the schedule, in an unfortunate break that had her looking at the distinct possibility of never getting to play softball again.

Thankfully, that wasn't the end of the story, as a chance to continue arose just a ways down U.S. 80 at the former East Georgia State.

"I've been coaching Abigail since she was 7-8 years old, and she's never been injured before," said East Laurens softball and girls basketball head coach Danielle Lowther. "Her injury happening her senior year was kind of ironic, and kind of devastating, to me, too. Her being able to push through and still say, 'Hey I'm still going to go play softball somewhere.' We were praying, hoping that she would get that opportunity again. And she did. That's a good thing, it's joyful."

EGSC, following a recent merger, has transitioned from independent junior college to a satellite campus of Georgia Southern. For its athletic teams, which will be moving up to compete as a member of the NAIA, the shift has brought on a new mascot, the Golden Eagles,

and a new set of colors that combine their familiar gold with the flagship navy and white worn by sister teams in Statesboro.

The door for Holt to join them swung open thanks to some relationships formed on the travel ball circuit with some of the program's other incoming recruits who helped get her in touch with head coach Matt Gillespie.

"He was like, as soon as you are ready to play, you can come and I can see you play," Holt said. "I went, he talked to me, we kept talking I reached out. It just played out well."

Holt carried a .259 career batting average with 61 runs driven in, and a fielding percentage of 85, over her four years with East Laurens coinciding with what has been easily the school's best run of success since launching into fastpitch softball, including nearly 90 wins, two region championships and a first-ever appearance at the state tournament in Columbus back in 2024.

Looking back, she's proud to have been a part of those teams who helped build a tradition of excellence for the program that seems like it'll have some staying power in the years ahead.

"It means a lot, it's special, because I know how hard it is for everybody including myself," Holt said. "Everyone worked together, the coaches are great. We just have really good staff, it'll definitely leave us a good

memory to look back on."

Decisions, decisions...

For most mutli-sport high school athletes, recruiting provides a pretty clear-cut indication of which one offers them the most collegiate potential.

But there wasn't nearly as obvious a direction as Deanna Lowther – an all-region caliber performer on four different East Laurens athletic teams – tried to figure out which athletic discipline suited her best at the next level.

There was little question that basketball and softball were her best two sports, but the potential of offers to play either one at her chosen destination led to some indecision as she mulled options over the past year.

"I'm glad she's able to do what she really wants to do, and to see what she accomplishes in college," her mother, Coach Lowther said. "Like I told her, I think she was a little hesitant about telling us what she wants to do... I told her, look, I coach both sports, so it doesn't matter. I love both of them."

Deanna had, from the beginning of her senior year, locked in on Albany State as the place she wanted to go to school.

"I went down there a couple of times, and it just felt like home," she said.

But pulling the trigger on a commitment to play softball – originally the only sport in which the Golden

Rams were recruiting her – just didn't quite feel right as she also held out hope that an opportunity to pursue basketball might emerge later in the season.

Turns out, it would, following the Lady Falcons' run at the state hoops championship, and Lowther's MVP performance at the Coliseum.

"We went down there on a couple of different visits for softball, and she never could make up her mind. She never would say," Coach Lowther said. "I kind of figured she wanted to do something different, and she went down there and got an opportunity to try out for their basketball team, and (Albany State head coach Todd Triplett) liked her too."

Deanna would jump at the offer almost as soon as it came in earlier this summer, making clear that basketball was the sport she really wanted to play in college.

Doubling up in softball may still be a possibility, although an arrangement to potentially play both is something that she's working on hammering out, and not a guarantee.

But Deanna said she is eager to get started on the new journey, and meet the new folks she'll have as classmates and teammates, this fall.

The end of her East Laurens career closes out a high school scrapbook filled with accolades across the many sports, but some clippings of history in the two main

PREP SCHEDULE

SOFTBALL Monday Treutlen at Dublin /5:30 p.m.
Tuesday Dublin at Rutland/5 p.m. Gateway at Trinity /5:30 p.m.
Thursday Dublin at Howard East Laurens at Perry /5:30 p.m.
Friday West Laurens at Vidalia /6 p.m.
Saturday (at Patriots Park, Harlem) EL vs. Franklin Co./11 a.m. EL vs. Tri-Cities/3 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL Tuesday WL at Veterans/ vs. Colquitt Co./5 p.m.

Thursday WL at Mary Persons/ Stratford/5 p.m.
--

FOOTBALL (scrimmages) Friday Baldwin at EL Dublin at Jeff Davis Mary Persons at WL Johnson Co. at Treutlen Bleckley Co. at Hawkinsville Wilkinson Co. at Stratford GMC at Montgomery Co. George Walton at Brentwood
--

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ones that included multiple trophies, most notably the Falcons' first-ever team state title on the hardwood this past March when she closed out her career as the school's all-time career rebounds leader, with over 1,100, and only about 13 shy of the 1,000 point club as well.

In the end, she won't treasure the championships nearly as much as the camaraderie shared with her family and teammates over those four years.

"Really, the bond I connected and made with everybody here, that's what I will miss the most," Deanna said.

Softball outlook: Pitching, defense will put East Laurens back in thick of region race; offense will have to get it over the hump

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Editor's note: Look for more local softball season preview stories in upcoming editions, and online at courierheraldtoday.com/sports.

Over the last couple seasons, the guard has slowly changed hands from one generation to the next on the East Laurens softball field.

But the Falcons have continued to rely on many of the same things that have consistently made them a team to beat, and region contender.

Behind seasons of 20-plus wins that have been clockwork since 2023 are some trends of strong pitching and defense that figure to continue for East this fall, though it will have some new key characters taking over as faces of the program.

"We've got a different core group," said head coach Danielle Lowther, whose team is set to open the regular season this Thursday.

Though there's a lot for this new squad that's still coming along, the often-dominant work of rising senior DeAndrea Lowther in the circle, and some pretty consistent glove work in the field behind her, are once again strengths that the Falcons will be able to hang their hats on.

"This summer, it's kind of shown us that we have some things we have to work on. But I think we're going to be OK," Lowther said. "We went and played at Southern Pines, the scrimmages Coach (Mike) Thomp-

son has every year, and we looked OK at times. Overall, we've got a couple of young girls I think are going to be able to help us."

Last year's team, which posted 22 wins and was narrowly edged by ACE Charter in its bid for a region 3-peat, took the brunt of the turnover after the loss of a decent number of longtime leaders who graduated, and largely handled it with flying colors.

Most of the younger players who debuted now enter 2026 as experienced fixtures in a lineup that will basically have only one new addition in the field – at the hot corner as a backfill for Deanna Lowther.

Jordan Kimsey, one of multiple freshmen who were part of a competition for the open job this summer, was East's expected starter at third going into the first week of action.

While a second graduate in Abigail Holt also played shortstop, her season-ending injury pretty early on last fall got the changeover at that position taken care of a season ahead of time, as Jayden Foskey stepped in and held it down for the rest of the year.

The young group, also featuring ninth graders in Olivea Jackson, Amiya O'Neal, Avery Smith and Layla Rogers who held their own in the field and at the plate, had its occasional issues with errors that sprung up in some key games, but bounced back more often than not.

After a haunting miscue helped ACE walk off with a tiebreaking run

to clinch first place in the second game of the teams' region series, the Falcons faced some similar adversity in the troublesome sixth innings of their three-game first round playoff series against Swainsboro. That, they would survive in order to advance and reach the round of 16.

In all, East gave up only 58 total runs, an average of less than two per game. The gloves and experience the Falcons have returning will give them a good shot of building on that mark this year.

"We've got a solid defense coming back," Coach Lowther said.

Their undisputed strength will be the senior battery of DeAndrea Lowther, in the circle, and Reagan Sasser, behind the plate, whose chemistry goes back to "since they were playing Little League, and even before then," Coach Lowther said.

DeAndrea, who leads with a rocket fastball, has mown her way to a 19-10 record and a 1.91 ERA as an ace of the staff since her sophomore year, fanning more than 200 hitters (a career-best 145 in just over 100 innings last fall).

She'll once again have a case for best hurler in the region, though realignment will bring in some top-notch competition as Vidalia and Tori Polke, with whom she plays travel ball, join the mix.

The new league, now labeled 2-AA, got smaller as much of a former Macon contingent – with the exception of ACE – was bumped up to AAA, but likely became one of the

classification's toughest, as softball goes, with the incorporation of the Indians and Swainsboro.

Each have some strong recent tradition, and a good bit of history matching up with East Laurens whether, in the Tigers' case, as a former region rival and postseason foe last year, or Vidalia's, as perennial non-region opponents who've had some exciting battles (2025's both heartbreaking losses for the Falcons that came in extra innings).

Macon's Gryphons, who have built as strong a program as any mentioned here, and Bleckley County, which has been right there in the conversation each of the last three years, will make it a pretty wide-open race, and a table that should be difficult for any team to run.

Everybody's got strong pitching. Who can scratch out the hits and the runs needed to rise above the rest?

That will be the key question for a Falcon ballclub that graduated both its best two bats from a 2025 team that relied a lot more on timely hits than the big bashes that a lineup heavier on power and speed used to achieve a roughly identical scoring average the year before.

"I think we'll be in the same boat... in regards to hitting. We've just got to manufacture runs some type of way," Coach Lowther said. "We're working on that day by day, but I think we're probably going to be one of the top three teams in the region."



HEAD COACH: Danielle Lowther (eighth season)

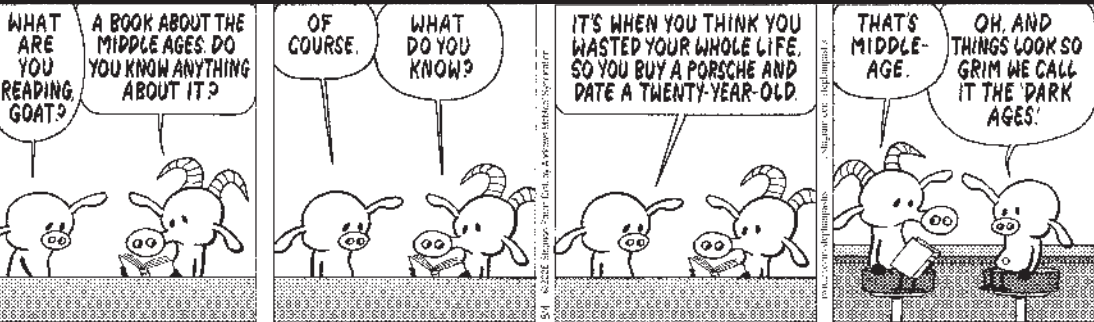
2024: 22-8 (16-2 region)
FINISH: GHSA Playoffs, second round (lost to Bacon Co.)

KEY LOSSES: IF/P Deanna Lowther (Albany State); IF Abigail Holt (Georgia Southern-East Georgia)

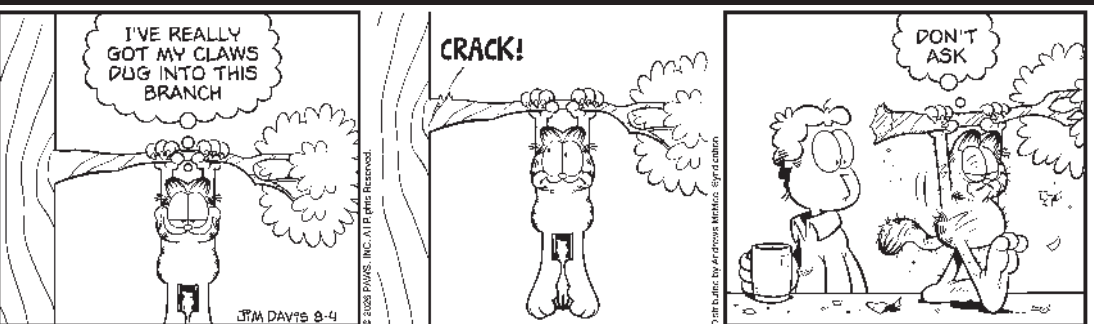
FALCONS TO WATCH:
P/IF DeAndrea Lowther, Sr.; C Reagan Sasser, Sr.; OF Olivea Jackson, So.; IF Jayden Foskey, Sr.; OF Brynne Moody, Sr.; OF Avery Smith, So.; IF Amiya O'Neal, So.; IF Layla Rogers, So.; IF Jordan Kimsey, Fr.

THE UPSIDES: Assertive ace pitching; reliable defense
KEY CONCERN: Producing pivotal hits/runs

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



GARFIELD



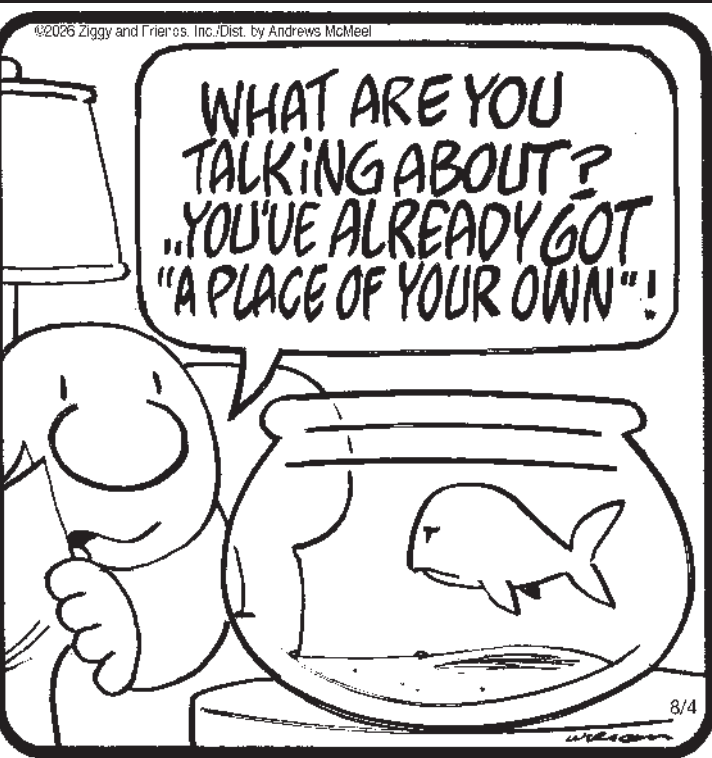
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Pluggers are trusted secret keepers, letting them go in one ear and out the other.

Couple's relationship teeters above oblivion

DEAR ABBY: I am in a relationship with my hot-and-cold fiancé. I caught him cheating after we moved in together. He had been courting someone at work. I eventually forgave him. That was five years ago. In the time since, he has changed completely -- for the worse.

He doesn't take me out, shows me no affection and rarely talks to me about anything except the bills. On top of that, we don't make love anymore. Is it because he got caught, or could he be cheating again? Either way, it doesn't matter. I've started to cheat, too. I don't care anymore. Should I kick him out and start over, or give it another chance? -- FRUSTRATED IN THE SOUTH

DEAR FRUSTRATED: Let's review the things you have (and haven't) said in your letter. You allowed a man who cheated on you from the time he moved in to continue living with you. Since then, he doesn't take you out, shows you no affection and is no longer inclined to make love with you. The reason isn't because you caught him cheating. It's because he isn't in love with you!

Whether he's seeing other women is no longer relevant because you aren't faithful to him either. Why you would give this relationship another chance is



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

beyond me. Not once in your letter did you say you love him. It's time to end it. Then do what you can to heal from this sorry experience (including consulting a licensed counselor if one is available) and move on with your life.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I just had our first child. He is less than 3 months old. We live close to our family and get together often. My sister and her husband have two sons, 3 and 1. They are constantly sick. My sister and her husband have a history of downplaying their illnesses so that they don't miss out on family events. They always show up, and even before we had a child, it made us uncomfortable. Now that we have a vulnerable baby, it's become not only reckless but dangerous.

When their kids arrive sick, they cough all over everything, and they are never encouraged to wash their hands or cover their mouths when they do it. How do we express our concern to my sister and her husband without sounding like overbearing parents? -- CONCERNED NEW MOTHER

DEAR MOTHER: Congratulations on your new baby! Infants under 6 months old are prone to severe complications from colds and other viruses, so you need to do more than "express your concern." Stop letting sick people near your new son.

If the gathering is at someone's home, designate a "baby room" where people with coughs and sneezes are not allowed, and everyone must wash up before entering. Take turns with your husband sitting with the baby in the safe space, or even hire a (healthy) sitter to stay in the room with your son. If people tease you or call you overbearing, so be it. Your baby, your rules.

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

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES
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The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 1NT Pass
3♦ Pass 4♠ Pass
4NT Pass 5♠ Pass
6♣ All pass
*2 key cards, among the 4 aces and the king of spades, plus the queen of spades

Opening lead: King of ♣

Today's deal is from a local duplicate game. Four spades would be the highest scoring game contract, but diamonds would be much better

for a slam. It is hard to play in diamonds with a spade fit and most of the field played in four spades. The pairs who bid to slam all played in spades, usually going down one. They won the opening club lead and drew trumps in three rounds. They tried for a twelfth trick in hearts by leading to either the queen or the 10. Neither worked and the contract failed.

The one successful declarer stopped after two rounds of trumps. He left the last trump outstanding and started to run his diamonds. West ruffed the third diamond and tried to cash a club trick. South ruffed and cashed his last diamond. He then cashed the ace of hearts and ruffed a heart in dummy. The nine of diamonds provided a discard for his last heart and he made his slam. Had West never ruffed, South would have cashed all four of his diamonds and led a spade to dummy. He could then discard a heart on a diamond. He would still lose a heart trick but the slam would be his. Well done!

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

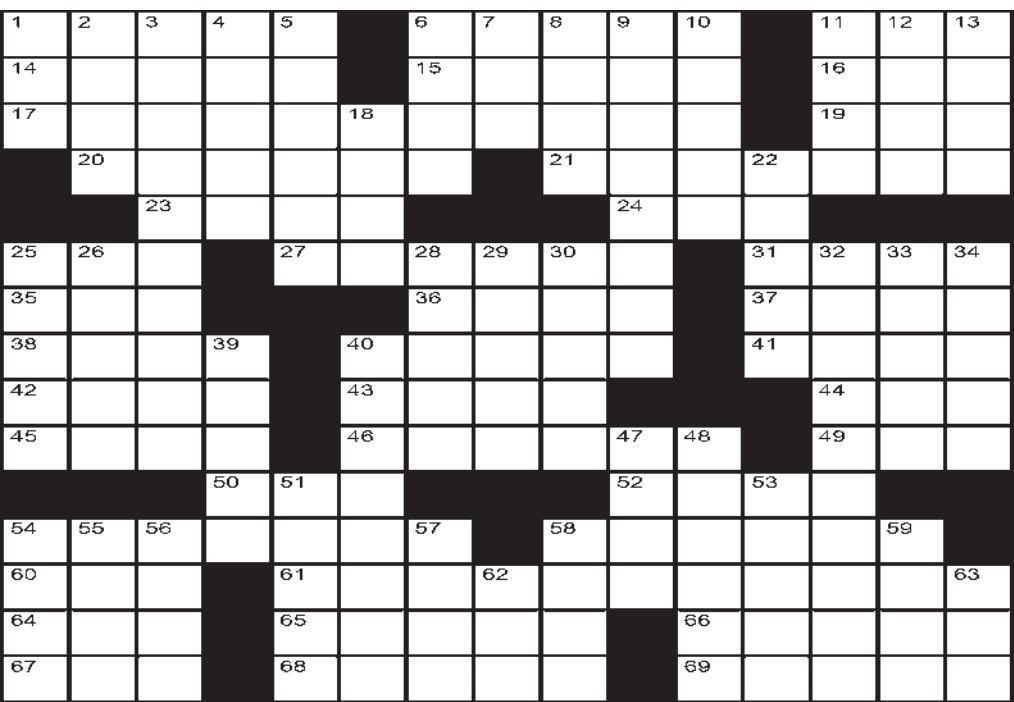
THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

- Director Frank
- Hunters' devices
- "What's up, ___?"
- English horn relatives
- Composer Purcell
- Fast-running bird
- Box-office success
- Ignited
- Clears data from
- Wine and ___
- Saliva
- Small battery size
- AOL, e.g.: Abbr.
- Tyler Reddick's group: Abbr.
- Gush like a volcano
- "What have we here?"
- Walk through water
- Rip
- Creepy-crawly creature
- Shy and nervous
- Cornstarch brand
- "Before" prefix
- "___ what you mean": 2 wds.
- Ballpoint tool
- Wasp's home
- Nevertheless
- Rowing machine, for short
- Boring routine
- Boot from office
- Total nonsense
- Amateur
- "Why ___ you mad?"
- Diplomas and licenses, e.g.
- Vast quantity
- Unleash on: 2 wds.
- Opposite of exit
- Owned
- Polishes text
- Accomplishments

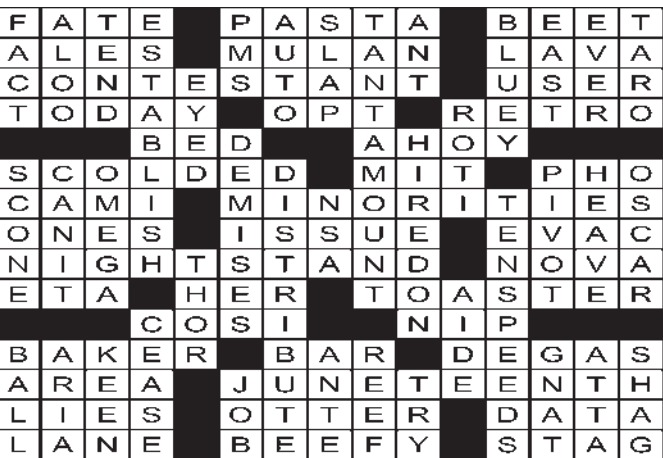
DOWN

- Corn on the ___
- Well-qualified



Created by Stella Zawistowski

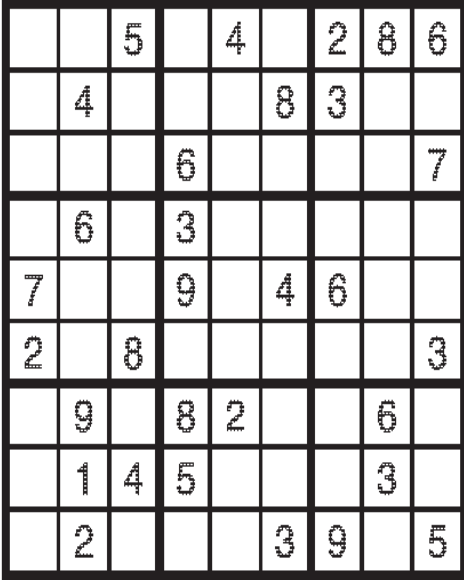
- Sore losers: 2 wds.
- Summary
- Invites over: 2 wds.
- Ergo
- Low-___ graphics
- "Carpenter" insects
- Equipped in advance
- Aleppo's land
- Sandwich shop
- Leave out
- Uses scissors
- Second Greek letter
- Worshipper of Jah
- Des Moines native
- Gave off light
- "Nothing but net" sound
- Carved jewelry piece
- French farewell
- Carry out, as a crime
- Enthusiastic



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- Incorrect
- Subway in Paris
- Laughed nervously
- Thug
- Tried to catch
- Cousin's dad
- Backbone
- Hit hard
- Neighborhood
- Guide and direct
- Cooler brand
- Tennis barriers
- TV type: Abbr.
- "Who ___?" (Saints cheer)
- Graduating class: Abbr.

SUDOKU



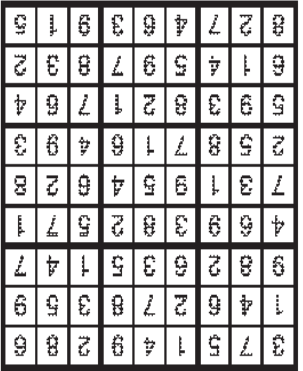
Fun By The Numbers

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

Level: 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!



ANSWER:

GUN SAFETY

Continued from page 1

and ego to the side, and realize that this is not worth the stress, much less using deadly force against another human being.”

Harrison stressed that if another person has a gun, it is time to leave.

“No one in their right mind continues to approach somebody who is hostile and is bearing a firearm,” Harrison said. “Just leave. It is hot, people are upset and patience is thin. I don’t care who you are, many of the people you encounter are either in a big storm or about to come into a storm. You don’t know. Be careful around people. When you pull a gun out you change the entire environment.”

Most of the time, people get upset about something only to realize after cooling down that it was not worth getting upset about in the first place.

Harrison said people



Instructor Sid Harrison gives pointers during a class at the shooting range/PAYTON TOWNS III

should not want to get into conflicts, and can walk away. When it comes to Stand Your Ground Laws in Georgia, there are parameters for the use of deadly force.

“A lot of people think that if you get mad at me, I can shoot you and stand my ground,” Harrison said. “No! Anybody in their right mind does not want to have to shoot somebody. If some-

one is outside and beating on the door with a gun in his hand, standing your ground means I don’t have to retreat, and I am in fear of my life.”

Harrison believes people

misinterpret the stand your ground law.

“Someone is beating a person and has a gun to their head,” Harrison said. “That’s not good. Reasonably, I should stop that person from being shot down or receiving great bodily harm. I’m not saying someone gets hit in the nose and you can use deadly force. We don’t have to let somebody else die before us. We can use deadly force to stop armed robberies, rapes and murders.”

Laurens County Sheriff Larry Dean selected Harrison to be the range instructor for the free training sessions. Harrison instructs many of the local church safety teams and anyone who wants to learn about shooting safety.

The range is located on Holmes Drive, which is on the left off Nathaniel Drive just after passing East Dublin Seafood. After turning right, the shooting range

is on the left going down a slight hill. It is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and from 8 a.m. to noon on the first Saturday of every month.

“People have taken advantage of this and they should,” Harrison said. “They bring their gun and ammo, and I’ve got everything else they need here.”

No appointment is necessary. The main purpose of the range is giving people a chance to learn the basics.

“We’ve had several people show up here and they find out that they have been shooting wrong their whole life,” Harrison said. “I’d rather them come here at least once and learn how to shoot correctly. Being armed means you should train and shoot every month. If you don’t shoot every month, you’re not ready. If you are carrying for safety, you will want to be ready.”

FLOODING

Continued from page 1

Cutler agreed.

“If you see water going over a roadway, and you live here and have never seen that before, don’t go through it,” he said. “I have never seen water come across Highway 19 in front of the police department like it did (Sunday). We’ve had a lot of rain come through with hurricanes in the past, but it was spread out over time. Sunday it was all at once.”

Drone footage showed a flooded area around the police department and into the William’s Body Shop property.

“Looking at that footage, they had property and cars under water,” Cutler said. “That water was flowing behind South Washington and it was like a river coming across there. Thankfully, there were no injuries that I am aware of and no one was injured. I know there was some people who were unable to get out of their houses, but it wasn’t a situation

where they needed to get out to safety. They were able to shelter in place until the water receded.”

This was not a major storm. It was predicted as a typical summer rain that brought more than expected in a short amount of time.

Dublin City Manager Josh Powell did not know how much rain fell and was reaching out to various city departments to find out. He said the storm water infrastructure held up.

“Within 45 minutes to a hour, all of the water was subsided and gone,” he said. “I took a picture around the Farmers Market that was flooded, and within the hour, the water was gone. It just took time to get through the pipes.”

Powell knew the area was going to get some rain. He did not expect that much in a short period of time.

“That really caused the issues for everybody,” he said. “We had good staff in place to respond and help as best as they could. The



A photograph shot from a drone camera shows the flooding around a body shop off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard /SPECIAL PHOTO

infrastructure held out and drained everything out to the river like we hoped it would. It just couldn’t handle quite so much rain so fast. That was the only downfall.”

By 6 p.m. Sunday, all of the roads were back open,

Cutler said.

“We just had a lot of rain at one time,” he said. “I would be fine not seeing anything like that again.”

The city also had a big water leak on Bellevue across from the Dublin Post Office near a fire hydrant,

Powell said. City employees were out until after midnight working on that issue.

Powell rode around to look at some areas that had history of flooding. He took pictures and asked for the public to send him pictures or videos.

“Although the city may not be able to deal or help with every situation, we may be able to use those pictures or videos to help build a case for a good grant application to get some funds to help deal with some issues,” Powell said.

DUBLIN SCHOOLS

Continued from page 1

feed the district’s international baccalaureate program. The magnet school replaces the controversial Irish Gifted Academy.

Personnel moves approved by the school board last week and on Sunday include:

- New hires: Karla Mullis, teacher, IA; Denise Warren, teacher, IA; Suzanne Arnold, paraprofessional, IA; Jasmine Jefferson, administrative assistant, IA; Rose Campbell, teacher, IA; Ayla Williams, paraprofessional; Nakia Singleton, paraprofessional, Hillcrest; Charles Moore, teacher, DMS; Angela Prosser, teacher, DMS; Ann Shumans, teacher, DMS; Marie Hatchett, bus driver, all; Felicia Charles, teacher, Susie Dasher Elementary, SDE; Keinon Dunham, teacher, DMS; Eva Young, first grade teacher, Irish Academy; Jestine Evans, counselor, Hillcrest; Jeffrey Puckett, teacher (49 percent), WIN Academy; Linda Ussery, teacher (49 percent), Hillcrest; Carolyn Rozier, bookkeeper (49 percent), Dublin Middle; Shanessa Corbett, SPED paraprofessional, DMS; Tama Freeman, teacher, DHS

- Resignations: Pamela Irby, teacher, Hillcrest Elementary; Dmitra Veal, teacher, Dublin Middle School; Ella Jordan, paraprofessional, Irish Academy; Bruce Howard, mental health coordinator

- Substitutes: Shantilla Baker, food service sub; Shannon Roberts, substitute teacher, all locations.



Members of the Dublin High band march in step during a practice in the Shamrock Bowl/PAYTON TOWNS III

DUBLIN BAND

Continued from page 1

ing on.”

As for this year, there will be no drum major on the field. Williams is using this year as a new introduction.

“I feel like this is going to be a new Dublin Fighting Irish Band,” he said. “It would have been too much trying to add in a drum major with all that we have going on. Maybe next year.”

SALES TAX

Continued from page 1

tween the county and the cities with 100 percent of the funds to be used to replace property taxes,” said Dublin Mayor Joshua Kight.

The special meeting by the city, and the other municipalities who have also set up meetings for early this week, had to be done by a certain time to give enough notice to call the election in November, said Dublin City Manager Josh Powell.

According to Kight, the city and county agreed to cap the amount of increase and asset values for homeowners. Because of this, the law gives the local governments the option of letting the voters decide on a pen-

ny sales tax to reduce the tax burden.

“The current project is that an extra penny sales tax under this FLOST would generate about \$13.5 million per year countywide,” Kight said. “That money would be used to reduce dollar for dollar property taxes. The bottom line is, this is property tax relief.”

Kight said the benefit of the FLOST is having the sales tax collected by people who are traveling through the county and city.

“I would say the sales tax doesn’t make sense for all communities, but a community like Dublin has people stopping at the interstate and coming into town from other places,” the mayor

said. “It makes a lot of sense for us because you are replacing your personal property tax dollars with sales tax dollars from people who are from all over the state.”

An interstate highway is a big help, he added.

“Look at the amount of people who travel from all over the country and through Georgia who travel down I-16 and will stop at our restaurants and hotels,” Kight said. “Collecting an extra penny of sales tax from them and using it to reduce property taxes for the people who live here and own property here is just a good deal.”

The county commissioners are scheduled to meet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday.

SUMMER SALE!

Discounts on your favorite items-
The more you buy, the more you save!

Buy **1** item SAVE **20%**

Buy **2** items SAVE **25%** off each

Buy **3** items SAVE **30%** off each

Buy **4** items SAVE **35%** off each

Buy **5** items SAVE **40%** off each

Buy **6** items SAVE **45%** off each

Buy **7** or more items and SAVE **50%**



Not valid on New Fall arrivals, prior purchases, and gift cards. Sale items will count toward total item count at the lowest marked price unless the item total awards a lower percentage off.

Please pay with cash or check during this promo. Card fees will apply!

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Sizes 2P-18. Shop the largest collection of specialty ladies apparel in Middle Georgia.



1

Gather the ingredients and get a grown-up to preheat the oven to 350 degrees.



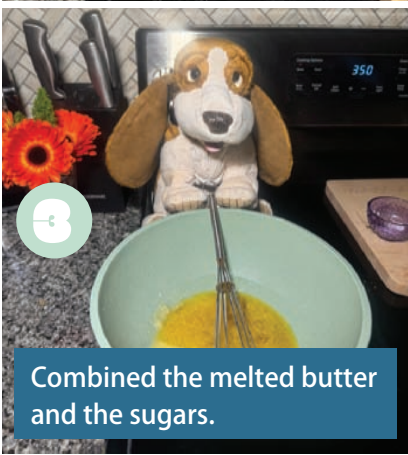
2

Microwave butter for 40 seconds.



3

Combined the melted butter and the sugars.



4

Stir in vanilla extract and the egg.



5

Add flour, baking soda, and salt.



6

Stir in the chocolate chips.



Celebrate Chocolate Chip Cookie Day with Herald's world famous recipe

Chocolate can be dangerous for dogs. This sweet treat has a chemical compound that, though harmless to people, is difficult for a dog's body to process, but that's not going to stop Herald the Hound from celebrating Chocolate Chip Cookie Day (he'll just have to make a plain cookie for himself).

People have enjoyed cacao, the plant chocolate is derived from for thousands of years. The civilizations of South America consumed chocolate as a thick, bitter drink. Spanish explorers took cacao to Europe, where they added milk and sugar to the concoction. British candy company J. Fry & Sons is credited for making the first chocolate molded candy bar in 1847.

Meanwhile, cookies have been enjoyed by people since the 7th Century B.C. The world's first cookies were baked in Persia (modern day Iran), as sugar became a common commodity. Through wars and the moving of people (the Persians once had a massive empire) cookies made their way to Europe. Dutch settlers brought koekje - the Dutch word for "little cake" that would later be translated to cookie - to the English colony of New York in the 1620s.

The first American cookie recipe was released in 1796 by Amelia Simmons. It was a simple baked good made of flour, butter, milk and sugar that had a shelf life of three weeks.

It was not until much later that someone would think of adding chocolate to cookies. Though recipes appeared as early as the 1920s the chocolate chip cookie was popularized by Ruth Wakefield in 1938, who, along with her husband, ran the Toll House Inn in Whitman, Massachusetts. Wakefield prepared all the food served in the hotel, and the business became a famous spot for a home-cooked meal, especially the desserts (mainly the chocolate chip cookies).

The recipe became world famous after the release of the "Toll House Tried and True Recipes" cook book. Candy company Nestle acquired the rights to print the recipe on its products in exchange for a life-time supply of chocolate.

Happy Chocolate Chip Cookie Day from Herald the Hound and his friends at the Courier Herald!

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Happy Chocolate Chip Cookie Day from Herald the Hound and his friends at the Courier Herald!

7

Place cookies on a cookie sheet and get a grown-up to bake for 7-10 minutes.



Herald's Famous Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar packed
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Instructions

- 1.) Preheat the oven to 350 F.
- 2.) Microwave butter for 40 seconds.
- 3.) In a large bowl, mix butter with the sugars.
- 4.) Stir in vanilla and egg.
- 5.) Add the flour, baking soda and salt.
- 6.) 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 7.) Mix dough until just combined. Dough should be soft and a little sticky.
- 8.) Stir in chocolate chips.
- 9.) Scoop out tablespoons of dough and place two inches apart on baking sheet.
- 10.) Bake for 7-10 minutes, or until cookies are set. They will be puffy. Let them cool.
- 11.) Enjoy!





THERE'S HERALD!



In case you are still scratching your head trying to figure out where Herald the Hound was last week, here's the answer: He was at the fountain in the plaza next to downtown's Theatre Dublin. It's a great place to sit down and take a break, and make a wish if you have any spare change in your pocket.

MINI SUDOKU

					4
6	3				
4			6		
					3
5		6			
				2	

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

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ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

Puzzles4Kids Answer

SPiral	PAIRS	L	SHEDS	B	SWARE
DASHES	A	PILOTS	SCOUR	ALONG	POSIES
COURSE	E	BROWSE	GALLON	COBRAS	MARGIN
		BUSHEL	CASPER	SQUEAK	



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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