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The Montgomery Monitor | The Soperton News | The Wheeler County Eagle

Vol. 138 No. 34

Vol. 112 No. 34

Vol. 103 No. 34

August 20, 2026



Montgomery County Attorney Ron Daniels reads nine pages of a land use ordinance during the Board of Commissioners' regular meeting on Aug. 10. The ordinance requires two readings before it can be passed into law/LOGAN REYNOLDS

MoCo Board of Commissioners move forward with land ordinance readings

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners voted to move forward with the readings of a land use ordinance on data centers during their regular meeting on Aug. 10 in Mount Vernon.

"This is not an invitation to data centers," said Commissioner Amie Vassey. "There is currently no alert system of any kind. If someone wanted to come and build a data center, we wouldn't know about it, and there'd be nothing we could do about it. So, the goal of this ordinance is to regulate that process so that there is a notification piece."

Vassey offered the motion to begin the reading, which passed unanimously.

All nine pages of the ordinance were read aloud by County Attorney Ron Daniels during the meeting. The ordinance requires two readings on separate meetings before it can be passed into law.

The ordinance lists definitions of the terms "data center" and "data center campus," and requires 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, host community information meetings for county residents, comply with buffer requirements for the construction, building 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, among other requirements.

The ordinance has been in the works since May, when the issue of data centers was first brought up by Commissioner Vassey. According to Vassey, the local tax assessor had been approached in January regarding a parcel which could be used to build a data center.

While no data center has begun construction, the board began workshopping the ordinance as a potential "alert system" in the event a company wished to build a data center in the county.

ORDINANCE
Continued on page 2

MoCo probate judge raises concerns over courthouse fire safety

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

Montgomery County Probate Judge Stacie Randolph spoke to the Board of Commissioners during their regular meeting on Aug. 10 about concerns of inadequate fire safety at the Montgomery County Courthouse.

"I have the same duty as anyone else in the community to bring awareness," said Randolph.

According to Randolph, the courthouse only has one fire safety system in place: A sprinkler system which will only activate once smoke gets "high enough and hot enough." Courthouse windows also cannot open, meaning staff would need to break the double-paned windows in the event exits were blocked. The courthouse also has no fire detection system to alert staff to

an ongoing fire.

"It appears that there is a lot of compartmentalization," said Randolph in her speech to the board. "It's as if we at the courthouse are left to take care of our own problems and needs without any help from the county."

Randolph's concerns stemmed from a basement fire in the courthouse on March 30 caused by a malfunctioning air conditioning unit. Randolph noticed the smoke coming from the building's ventilation system, which alerted her to the fire.

"The day of the fire was a very stressful and fearful day, as it brought awareness of just how vulnerable we are in times of disaster," said Randolph when addressing the board.

FIRE SAFETY
Continued on page 2



SNAPSHOTS: BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

The city of Alamo hosted a Back-to-School Bash event on Aug. 15 in the Alamo City Hall, alongside the Lowcountry Down Syndrome Society and the Department for Family and Child Services. Attendees could pick out a free backpack filled with school supplies and receive free food drinks from the city's food truck. For additional photos, see page 2/LOGAN REYNOLDS

Periodical — Mail Label

Treutlen Co. BOC approve funds for sheriff vehicle purchase



County Manager Joseph Glenn speaks to the Treutlen County BOC about the purchase of a new sheriff's car, renovations to the Treutlen County Courthouse and road repavements during the board's meeting on Aug. 3/LOGAN REYNOLDS

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners approved up to \$50,000 for the purchase of a new car for the local sheriff's office during their regular meeting on Aug. 3, despite the reservations of some commissioners.

"I got a phone call from the sheriff last week," said County Manager Joseph Glenn. "He desperately needs a car, another one."

According to Glenn, the car would be used by three new deputies to the sheriff's office, including two part-time officers working the weekends and one full-time officer. Glenn described the deputies as young and "gung-ho," with the new vehicle as a means of retaining them to the local force.

The sheriff's budget does not have sufficient funds for the purchase, so Sheriff Thomas Corbin reached out to Glenn.

Commissioner Rodney Meeks voiced concerns about purchasing a car for the sheriff's office, citing sightings of Treutlen County officers letting their cars run idle while working on interstates and construction zones, as well as trips to other cities and counties.

"It's hard to approve a new vehicle when we're putting that wear and tear on our own," said Meeks.

Other commissioners confirmed the issues had been reported for some time, although it was noted Treutlen officers pay for their own gasoline.

VEHICLE FUNDS
Continued on page 2



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ORDINANCE

Continued from page 1

“Currently, we have nothing at all to protect us, and we’re very vulnerable,” said Vassey during the board’s work session. “These companies know that. They could come in right now and do anything they want. This ordinance creates an alert system.”

Commissioner Leland Adams proposed a zoning board as an alternative to the ordinance, claiming the ordinance would only provide “hurdles” for companies to overcome rather than stopping data centers outright.

“Commissioner Adams is 1,000 percent correct,” said Daniels. “This will not stop a data center. The only way to do that would be to enact zoning.”

While Commissioner Vassey was not opposed to zoning, she maintained it would be unpopular with residents compared to a land use ordinance.

The board will have a second reading during their next regular meeting on Sept. 14. Chair Ginger Morris also requested printed copies of the ordinance be made available during the meeting for residents to review.

FIRE SAFETY

Continued from page 1

Since the fire, Randolph has spoken with multiple board members and has sent letters on the issue. However, the only change in regards to fire safety was the purchasing of fire blankets for the courthouse, a solution Randolph said she initially proposed as a joke.

“It just seemed like nothing was resonating,” said Randolph.

Randolph decided to speak during the board’s public comments so her concerns on the courthouse would be on the meeting minutes. During her speech, she criticized the lack of a fire safety plan and the lack of communication from the board.

“The fact that no one is concerned that, the day of the fire, everyone’s safety was contingent on my running through the hallway and yelling for others to exit the building, and that this practice is, apparently, our designated safety plan according to several of you that I’ve spoken to, is bewildering,” said Randolph.

Commissioner Amie Vassey did bring up the concerns on the courthouse’s fire safety during the board’s preceeding work session on Aug. 6. During that meeting, County Manager Heather Scott said smoke alarms could not be implemented due to insurance restrictions.

Implementing a fire alarm system would also be expensive, as Scott said the price to install a system would be approximately \$200,000. The Montgomery County Courthouse is also listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, which may impose extra limitations on potential fire safety solutions.

According to Randolph, she did not approach the board with ill-will or hostility, but rather out of a civic duty to bring awareness to the issue in the hopes it could be addressed. In addition to fire safety provisions, she hopes for greater communication from county leadership with the courthouse staff in the future.

“Reaching out and making any effort would make a great difference,” she said.

Pushing faith

By ALBERT WHITE

And Elijah said unto her, fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me therefore a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.

– 1 Kings 17:13-14

This woman found herself in a bad situation, one that she had no ability to control and really not much ability to alter. That is the case so many times for people everywhere. She had what she thought was a last portion. By all reality she was probably right. The prophet heard from God to go to her and that she would provide for the prophet, and in turn God would provide for her and the family.

There are instances that it is easy to step into faith, but there are some if we are honest, that it is challenging to have even a grain of faith as compared to the mustard seed size that would move our mountains. The prophet comes to the woman at the charge of God to meet her need. The challenge would first be to help the prophet when she herself needed help. I mean, she needed help. Faith work was the act of obedience to the request of the prophet. We look on from the outside, and we say "Just do it lady. God is going to meet your needs." Mind you, we are looking in from the outside. We don't feel the hunger pains nor do we feel the sorrow for the inability to provide for her kid. That changes the faith experience.

I am thankful that she believed the words of the prophet, and we all saw the hand of God do his bidding. The prophet was a faith pusher. We are called to be faith pushers, if I could use that term of phrase. We provoke people to believe God. We are not teaching them new principles of faith. We are simply pushing them to step out onto the limits of the word that they already know. When you need to act on your faith, it is probably not a great time to attempt to convince someone with new principles, but to provoke the faith that they already have. The trying part of faith, especially in a matter like this, you can't see future. You have to believe in it so much that you keep going back to the barrel. That you keep pouring out the oil expecting that the word of God is remaining in the barrel and the cruse. She did and God did too. I want to encourage you today to stand in your faith, if God has promised then he is faithful. I only desire to press you to receive what you already believe for.

Albert White is the pastor of Blocker's Chapel Church on Thompson Pond Rd. in Vidalia, Ga.

PASTOR'S VIEWPOINT

By CHARLES "BUDDY" WHATLEY

Jesus walked into his hometown synagogue and began to read from the scroll of Isaiah promising liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, and good news to the poor. Then he said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4.16-30)

A hometown boy, now a famous rabbi, comes home and is about to speak at their synagogue. "Is not this Joseph's son?" But minutes later want to throw him off the edge of a cliff. What in the world happened?

They wanted him to do the miracles they've heard about and tell them what they want to hear. But instead, he tells them a couple of stories from the Old Testament about all the hungry widows in Israel and how God sent Elijah to a Gentile widow in Zarephath in southern Lebanon between Sidon and Tyre. Then he reminds them about all the people in Israel with leprosy and how God healed Naaman the Syrian in their Jordan River. Naaman was upset because he had to wash in the Jewish Jordan River and the Jews were upset because God healed a Syrian commander!

The people in Nazareth wanted a Jewish God; instead, Jesus gave them the God who created the heavens and the earth and everything else. The people in Nazareth wanted a little God to help them with their problems; Jesus gave them a big God who created and set fire to the sun, hung the moon and the stars in the sky, and who created and loves everybody because he created them in his image. J. B. Phillips wrote the book on this, "Your God is Too Small!" Imagine a massive oak tree in the forest...

Did you know there is an underground fungal web that connects the trees in a forest? Botanists have discovered that our massive oak tree uses photosynthesized sugars to feed itself, but they use the underground fungal network to send energy out to the struggling young trees of every species on the edge of the forest.

The tragedy of Nazareth was they wanted a small, comfortable, tribal God rather than a wildly expansive and extravagant God who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The love of God doesn't mean we love Jesus; it means we love Judas!

Charles "Buddy" Whatley is a retired Methodist pastor serving the Dawson Street Methodist in Thomasville, Ga.

VEHICLE FUNDS

Continued from page 1

Meeks suggested if the county did approve the funds, the sheriff would need to look for a cheaper, gas-saving car.

Commissioner Joey Powell offered sympathy for both sides of the issue, citing his own 20 year law enforcement career and also acknowledging the concerns cited by Meeks.

Ultimately, Commissioner Thalia Gillis offered a motion to approve the funds, which passed unanimously. The funds will come out of the county's 2019 SPLOST account.

Glenn also requested the board approve LMIG funds for a repavement project for sections of Old Lewisville Rd, as well as the transfer of funds for a similar project from Cascade Circle to Muskogee Rd due to a "higher need."

"I'm not saying Cascade Circle is not going to be paved, but we're going to do that one as well," said Glenn.

Glenn also announced renovations to the Treutlen County Courthouse's courtroom, replacing the seating with church pews and giving defendants and plaintiffs more room. The renovations will serve as just one of several other improvements to the courthouse completed and in progress, including repairs to the clerk vault, repainted windows and upcoming bathroom and elevator renovations.

"It's very much going to look like a church," said Glenn.

The courtroom renovations will be scheduled around set court dates.

Commissioner Powell offered a

motion to approve the fund transfer, and Commissioner Gillis offered a motion to approve the funds for Old Lewisville Rd. Both motions passed unanimously.

The board also considered two applications for business licenses. Commissioner Meeks offered a motion to approve one – which passed unanimously – while the Board elected to table the other due to concerns over the company's stated address.

Commissioner Gillis offered a motion to approve a reappointment to the Treutlen County Development Authority, which passed unanimously.

The board also rescheduled their next regular board meeting to Sept. 3 at 6 p.m. to avoid a scheduling conflict with Labor Day.



Attendees were given the opportunity to select a free backpack filled with school supplies for the upcoming semester. Free snacks were available at the city's food truck/LOGAN REYNOLDS

SNAPSHOTS:
BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

The city of Alamo hosted a Back-to-School Bash event on Aug. 15/LOGAN REYNOLDS





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DID YOU KNOW...?

What fast food chain was first to have a drive-thru?

By JACK BAGLEY
Georgia Trust For Local News

It's hard to think about sometimes, but one year ago today I was recovering from a heart attack ... and I think I've made a pretty good recovery, all things considered. During my illness back then and the convalescence that followed, the one thing that never faltered was the trivia! I managed to have a column ready each week, regardless of circumstances. Not bad, eh? Here's this week's collection of nonsense for you to enjoy, and I hope you do!

Did you know...

... one soldier in World War II actually killed his enemies with a bow and arrow? British Lt. Col. John Malcolm Churchill (1906-1996), known as "Mad Jack," carried a broadsword and longbow throughout the Second World War. He used them, too, along with the bagpipes he also carried. After being released from a German POW camp following the Nazi surrender, Churchill was transferred to the Japanese theatre, where he arrived shortly after the atomic bombs were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On hearing word that the war had ended, Churchill said bitterly, "If it weren't for these bloody Yanks, we could've kept the war going another ten years!" (You just can't please some people, it seems.)

... who the first president to have cats as pets in the White House was? The first two cats ever kept as pets in the White House were the property of the 16th President, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865). Their names were Tabby and Dixie, and Lincoln once said Dixie was "smarter than my whole Cabinet." (Of course they were; cats are the smartest.)

... why hamburgers at Wendy's™ are square? Marketing, pure marketing. The company says that its founder, Dave Thomas (1932-2002) wanted customers of the fast-food restaurant to see the quality of the meat. So he ordered the square patties so the meat would extend beyond the round bun. (It made them tasty, too.)

... an actor known for his strait-laced performances was really something of a practical joker? Actor E.G. Marshall (1914-1998) built his reputation on portraying unflappable, businesslike, straight-as-an-arrow characters and ended up being somewhat typecast because he was so good at it. But behind the scenes, Marshall was a man to contend with on the humorous side. For instance, during the filming of the series The Bold Ones, Marshall played a no-nonsense doctor. But while he was wearing the surgical mask, he would often ad-lib profane jokes and non-sequiturs that would crack up the other cast members and require several re-takes. Additional trivia note: Marshall had a standard answer for anyone who asked what his initials stood for: "Everybody's Guess." In reality, Marshall was born Everett Grunz.

... the first fast-food chain to sell drive-through food was In-and-Out Burger™? In 1948, the facility in Baldwin Park, California, began operating with a two-way speaker system that let drivers come up to a speaker, order their food, and have it delivered to their cars. The first true drive-through as we know it today was a McDonald's™ in Sierra Vista, Arizona. On January 24, 1975, that restaurant opened the first drive-through and it was because of the nearby Army base, Fort Huachuca. Soldiers at the time were not allowed to leave their vehicles while wearing fatigue uniforms off base, so the restaurant met them half way – they set up a system where the soldiers (and everyone else) could order from their cars, drive around, and pick up their food. It caught on almost immediately and today, the fast-food establishment that doesn't have a drive-through is a rare sight indeed. (Convenience, taking care of that rumbling tummy ... what else could you want?)

... a casino worker is believed to have stolen half a million bucks from his employer? On September 22, 1992, employee Bill Brennan (born 1958) allegedly walked out of the Stardust Casino in Las Vegas with a bag of cash and casino chips worth \$500,000 ... and has not been seen since. Police searched Brennan's home and found books on identity change and moving overseas, but nothing has been seen or heard from Brennan since the theft. (And they say you can't get away with such things!)

... at one time in the not-too-distant past, cocaine was sold as an over-the-counter drug? Until 1914, anyone who wanted to could go into a pharmacy and buy a gram of cocaine for just a quarter (about eight dollars today). In fact, at the turn of the 20th Century (1900-1901), cocaine was one of America's best-selling over-the-counter pharmaceuticals. Only with the passage of the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act in 1914 was cocaine restricted to needing a doctor's prescription, and in 1922 the Jones-Miller Act put severe restrictions on the manufacture of the drug. (No comment.)

... only one person in history has visited the deepest point on Earth and outer space? Astronaut Kathryn Sullivan (born 1951) was the first American woman to walk in space, a feat she accomplished in 1984. She flew a total of three Space Shuttle missions and spent a total of 22 days four hours in space. Sullivan, a retired captain in the U.S. Navy, has also descended into the Mariana Trench, the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean, in 2020. She served as Assistant Secretary of Commerce in the administration of President Barack Obama (born 1961). (That's someone I would call well traveled.)

... a major automaker names many of its models after winds? Volkswagen uses German words for winds for most of its cars, such as the Passat (trade wind), Golf (gulf stream wind), Polo (polar wind), and Jetta (jet stream). (So that's how the wind blows.)

Now... you know!

A great couch for naps: Remembering my grandmother

THE NEW SOUTHERN DAD



By KYLE DOMINY

To be honest, the couch was ugly. It was a pale-colored number complete with a floral print. The blossoms adorning the upholstery were maroon, maybe pink. I've never been good at identifying colors.

It was the kind of sofa you would expect to find in the living room of your grandparent's house. It looked comfortable enough though, with its oversized cushions and abundance of throw pillows, but appearances can be deceiving. It sat terribly. The support was slap wore out and your rear end sank nearly to the floor when you attempted to settle in. Anyone trying to pay granny and grandpa a visit, quite frankly, looked ridiculous trying to hold a conversation from the recesses of this flowery sofa, their knees up at their chest.

No one volunteered to sit on the couch, it was left to those who entered the living quarters late and found all the other chairs claimed.

But the loathed piece of furniture was good for one thing - naps.

When I returned to my native Laurens County, roughly a dozen years ago this week, that couch was my refuge, a safe haven from the hectic world of fatherhood and family life and an asylum from adulthood.

Back then, as I was settling into my days of being a stay-at-home parent, I visited my grandparents as much as possible. I made the trek with my son, and later daughter, in tow for many reasons, but none more so than to get a free meal and a moment to relax, because as soon as the dishes were clear from the dinner table granny always offered up her childcare expertise and the sofa.

"Now you go take you a nap," she would say.

I always obliged and it was some of the best sleep I've ever gotten.

Naps at granny's house were never meant to last though. By 2:30, 3 o'clock the phone calls started coming, friends and relatives checking in and getting caught up on news and events.

"Guess who come to see me," granny would say in a near whisper to whomever was on the other end of the receiver. "Kyle and the babies."

Sometimes I could doze back off to sleep, other times I would lazily roll over on the cushions, peek to make sure the kids were OK and listen in to the conversations. When I finally rose from the couch, she would apologize for the phone waking me.

It was all right, I assured her. Later, as I herded my brood out the door, I'd never tell her goodbye. I'd tell her I loved her and that I'd see

her later.

Eventually, granny got a new sofa, a dual reclining faux leather piece. In my opinion, it was terrible for sleeping, albeit better for sitting on. But the days of afternoon naps gave way to driving kids to and from school, and returning to the workforce. The regular visits to my grandparents house transformed to weekly stop-ins and occasional lunches. I am happy to report that the kids remained regulars, so much so that granny's shopping list included their favorite grocery items.

My grandmother passed away on Aug. 6. Even as her strength failed and she was confined to what would become her deathbed, she assured me that the kids could stay with her anytime they needed to.

When I looked down at her in her coffin for the last time in this life, I didn't tell her goodbye. I told her that I loved her and I'd see her later.

COUCH THEATER



Drew Starkey, left, and Madelyn Cline star in "Outer Banks: Season 5"/Photo courtesy of MovieStillsDB

By DEMI TAVERAS
King Features

Toy Story 5 (PG)

The third-highest-grossing film of 2026 is officially available to rent on Aug. 18, after a box-office run of \$1.096 billion against its \$250 million cost. (Pixar needed the money back since this installment is also one of the most expensive animated films ever made!) Tom Hanks, Tim Allen and Joan Cusack, respectively, reprise their roles as iconic characters Woody, Buzz Lightyear and Jessie; meanwhile, Conan O'Brien ("If I had Legs I'd Kick You") joins the cast as Smarty Pants, a toy that assists with potty training, and Greta Lee ("Past Lives") enters the series as Lilypad "Lily," a frog-themed tablet. The film, which takes place two years after "Toy Story 4," follows our favorite group of toys and their latest debacles as electronics start to take over their playtime with their current owner, Bonnie! Fun fact: Scarlett Spears, who now voices Bonnie, also played Young Glinda in last year's "Wicked: For Good." (Amazon Prime Video)

Outer Banks: Season 5 (TV-MA)

The wait is almost over for the series finale of this hit 2020 series! Fans have followed these characters from the Outer Banks of North Carolina to the Bahamas, South America and Morocco, and they've even had to say "goodbye" to a much-beloved main character, Rudy Pankow's

JJ Maybank. Season 5 kicks off right after JJ's death with his friends drowning in grief, but the Pogues are still determined to track down JJ's killer, his biological father Chandler Groff (J. Anthony Crane), as well as the mythical artifact of the Blue Crown. The Pogues are still getting run out of their own town, and with no other people left to help them besides Sarah's deranged brother, Rafe (Drew Starkey), they embark on yet another unbelievable adventure full of close calls with death and spur-of-the-moment action! Look for all 10 episodes of season 5 to premiere on Aug. 20. (Netflix)

The Invite (R)

This comedy-drama film out now to rent is Olivia Wilde's third directorial feature film, following her 2022 psychological thriller "Don't Worry Darling." Wilde also stars in the film, with just three of her fellow actors rounding out the cast -- Seth Rogen ("The Studio"), Penelope Cruz ("The Bride!"), and Edward Norton ("A Complete Unknown"). "The Invite" takes place over the span of one night in a San Francisco apartment owned by married couple Joe (Rogen) and Angela (Wilde). To Joe's surprise and dismay, Angela has invited their noisy upstairs neighbors over for dinner. But when neighbors Pina (Cruz) and Hawk (Norton) arrive for dinner, the night takes quite an unexpected turn for Joe and Angela, as they receive an extremely alluring invite of their own. (Fandango at Home)

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Billboards

There is a stretch of Interstate 10 west from Jacksonville to the intersection with Interstate 75, a road I have seldom traveled until recently.

Returning to Athens after a stay in Ponte Vedra Beach, I needed to make a stop in Albany. I felt serene and refreshed on the first leg of the journey on I-10 where there were no billboards, no roadside trash—just assorted pine and oak trees and clean, clean roadsides.

Soon after segueing onto, I-75 and crossing the Georgia-Florida line, there were billboards galore. I have traveled I-75 for years and have always wondered why the legislature doesn't restrict their proliferation.

State law requires a distance of 500 yards between billboards. That's a little



LORAN SMITH

more than a football field and a half. When you are driving 75 mph it seems like there is a billboard every first down.

I asked out loud, "Why can't Georgia be like Florida," thinking of the colossal beauty of I-10 from Jacksonville to Interstate 75. Alas, when I got home and googled for answers, it turns out that the state with the most active billboard per-

mits is Florida with 32,162. Georgia ranks 17th with 12,360. What a shock. (It is worth nothing that Texas is ranked second behind Florida with 24,262 permits. But spread out over 268,596 square miles to Florida's 53,997 means that you can drive a lot of miles, especially in the panhandle, without seeing a single one.)

Perhaps Florida law, which requires 1,500 feet between billboards on interstates, makes it seem much less in Florida. But how is it that on I-10 from Jacksonville to the I-75 intersection, there are no billboards?

I have ridden highways in Alaska and Hawaii and have driven in Maine and Vermont where there are NO billboards allowed. Here's to the "Big 4, no billboards, no more." With the GPS apps on our car phones, we don't need billboards to help us find where

we will be sleeping or locating a restaurant for a meal.

In recent years, it has been a lot of fun making trips to Maine. There are villages throughout "The Pine Tree State" where you can find a place to sleep and eat without depending on highway-cluttering billboards to get you there.

Maine is a place that attracts artists. They are attracted to its northern lights and the picturesque and rugged landscapes. The coastlines are quietly seductive, and you find such a variety in Maine's shores, fishing villages with a slower pace of life. If you want to go inland, the forests offer painting opportunities, too.

You get addicted to Maine's overall beauty. Every time I am there, I am always thinking about why I don't come more often. Of course, it is such a euphoric

experience to fly into Boston and spend a long weekend taking in Boston's history, restaurants, and the Red Sox—then find your way via U. S. 1 into Maine.

The first trip there, when I realized there were no billboards, I was overwhelmed with my friends Buddy and Lucy Allen, who spend their winters in their hometown of Athens and their late spring, summer, and early fall in Maine. They can go grocery shopping, run to the hardware store, and visit a nearby town without ever seeing a billboard. How nice!

We have been fortunate to visit them at their address in Blue Hill, Maine, a town of fewer than 3,000 people but with abundant musicians and more authors per square foot than anywhere in Maine. And no billboards.

Buddy enjoys sailing, and with Blue Hill situated in the Penobscot Bay area, he is connected to Maine's rich maritime heritage, countless pristine islands, and the most charming of coastal villages.

Just think how nice it would be if visitors who travel in our state could see the farms and fields along I-75 instead of unsightly billboards, many of which are depilated and overgrown.

I remember driving to Florida before the coming of the interstate highways and there were the clever Burma Shave signs. There was humor and cleverness with their messages. They didn't overwhelm like today's billboards.

Georgia is a wonderful state, and it could be even more attractive if it were not for those contemptible billboards every first down.

How do I really know what is going on?

You're a voter. You're trying to figure out who is right. Perhaps who to vote for? Maybe you're just trying to figure out a complicated issue and aren't quite sure what to believe.

I get variations of these questions on a regular basis. People like me who are in the political and government affairs space have to know a little about everything, and ideally, a lot about something. We need to know who are the players on a specific issue that matter. Also ideally, we need to be able to cut through clutter and...how to say this nicely... "strategic hyperbole" to get to the root of problems.

This takes a lot of time and it helps to have some experience across election cycles and through leadership changes. Normal everyday Americans have neither. They don't just want shortcuts; they need them.

Our news media used to fill this role. Local newspapers still fill this gap for most issues which originate and can be solved close to home. I'm thankful to continue to be afforded space where you are reading this.

These outlets are struggling, though it's worth paying attention to the efforts of the Georgia Trust for Local News, which now operates many of the papers where this can be read. A newer rescue operation just began with Chattanooga's paper in Tennessee which covers the extreme NW corner of Georgia. A couple of local entrepreneurs who have expertise in trade publications purchased the Times Free Press, cut out a couple of layers of management, but have stated the focus is to replace syndicated reporting from the New York Times and AP with locally generated and focused content.

When searching for answers to the original questions, I continue to advocate to start local. Understand your community first. Know your community leaders. Some have elected titles. Many do not. But if you want to be part of the solution, you first need to know the people in your area who understand what the problems are AND are working with fellow citizens and the elected officials and bureaucracies at higher levels to solve them.

The next step is to ask yourself if your consumption of news is for information or entertainment. Be honest.

Too many get all of their information from one or two sources. The TV channel never changes from FoxNews or MSNow. The radio dial is set to AM talk or NPR.

If you consider yourself well informed but watch or listen to programming with which you always agree, you're not being educated. You're being indoctrinated while you're being entertained.

A related trap too many fall into is to latch onto one person who loudly picks fights with political entities with whom you disagree. Way too many people see the battle they've long want waged, and then believe the person picking said fight is an honest person or broker.

One of the most recent examples of this fallacy can be seen in Northwest Georgia, where many believed Marjorie Taylor Greene should be anointed the "True Conservative" crown and/or the person best suited to lead the MAGA efforts in a post-Trump Republican party. She's now called for President Trump's removal from office and has said she's no longer a Republican.

Meanwhile, the news networks who were happy to point out every



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

logic cul de sac she entered as they ridiculed her for being the point person for everything they felt was wrong with America and the GOP are now happy to promote her "expert" opinions. The producers of The View can't book her often enough.

The point here is that you can't outsource your opinions to one person, nor can you ever fully write off someone with whom you disagree. Politics is weird, and sometimes even the person you think is "the worst" today may be a vote in odd circumstances you need tomorrow. It's worse when the person you truly believed in becomes a shill for the other side.

The lesson here that should work for most people is to diversify your news consumption and to whom you pay attention. You need to read and listen to sources with which you disagree. You need to ask yourself where they may be right, or be able to articulate clearly why they are wrong. This helps you remain cognitively engaged while avoiding the trap of consuming news as entertainment.

It also helps if you find someone you respect but often or at least sometimes disagree. You need both parties (or a non-partisan) represented here. Understand what a politician's red lines are, and on what subjects they hold as dogma.

Never blindly follow anyone who is just for 110% of what the party line is today. These are the people who will always be for what is popular but often hide when it is time to do what is right.

All of this takes a bit of work, on an ongoing basis. Operating a Republic isn't easy, but protecting our constitutional rights should be worth the effort.

The alternative is outsourcing the machinery that makes America unique and awesome. The consequences of what can go wrong if we set our governance to autopilot are too dear for us to let that happen.

Here are some thoughts on love and loving well

A change of pace today. I am going to give politics and those who practice it the week off. They aren't going anywhere and I am tired of them and their blather. Instead, let's talk about love. Love? Yes, love.

Dr. Bill Burch, my spiritual guide and Preacher Extraordinaire, whose efforts to save my sorry soul have been commendable but remain a work in progress, recently broached the subject in his weekly post.

He said, "Life is judged by a simple question, 'Did I love well?' At the end of each day as we drift off to sleep, we ask, 'Did I love well today?' At the end of our lives as we drift off to death, we ask, 'Did I love well?'" How do we respond to that? As we drift off to sleep, do we say, "I'm going to bed mad and I'm going to wake up mad all day." Or, as we drift off to death, do we say, "I wonder if all that stuff I got mad about over the years was really that important?"

My mother had an iron-clad rule about love. The last words she and my dad spoke before going to sleep at night were, "I love you." Nothing after that. If either were to pass away during the night, the other would remember the last thing they ever said to each other.

We sometimes toss the term around like a Frisbee. We love certain TV shows. We love weekends. We love football. We love cooking out. As for me, I love banana pudding, the University of Georgia and anything Ray Charles Robinson, of

Albany, Georgia, has ever sung, especially "Georgia on my Mind."

But love is deeper than that. In the famous passage in 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says that love is patient and kind, not jealous or proud or selfish or easily angered. That is real love.

Speaking of love, it is mentioned 574 times in the New International Version of the Bible. Those of us who identify ourselves as being of the Christian faith would do well to read closely, including Christ's admonition to love others as you love yourself. Easy to say. Hard to do. According to my mail, some self-proclaimed Christians are still at the eye-for-an-eye stage.

The author and theologian C. S. Lewis identified



DICK YARBROUGH

four types kinds of love: Romantic, Affectionate, Friendship and Unconditional, or Agape. Some other sources slice love up into seven parts, including ego, or self-love, a trait most commonly exhibited by our intrepid public servants in

Washington and elsewhere. (Oops! I think I said no politics today. My bad.)

I didn't always treat the subject as seriously as I should. It was my very first class in college at what was then Georgia State College, now Georgia State University, in Atlanta. Fall quarter. Freshman English. 8 a.m. An environment begging for some levity.

Somehow the subject was love although to this day, I'm still not sure how love fit in among conjugating verbs and present participles. Frankly, I didn't love either one, especially at 8 o'clock in the morning.

The professor said love could not be simply defined. I said yes it could and belted out "Love is a Many Splendored Thing." The

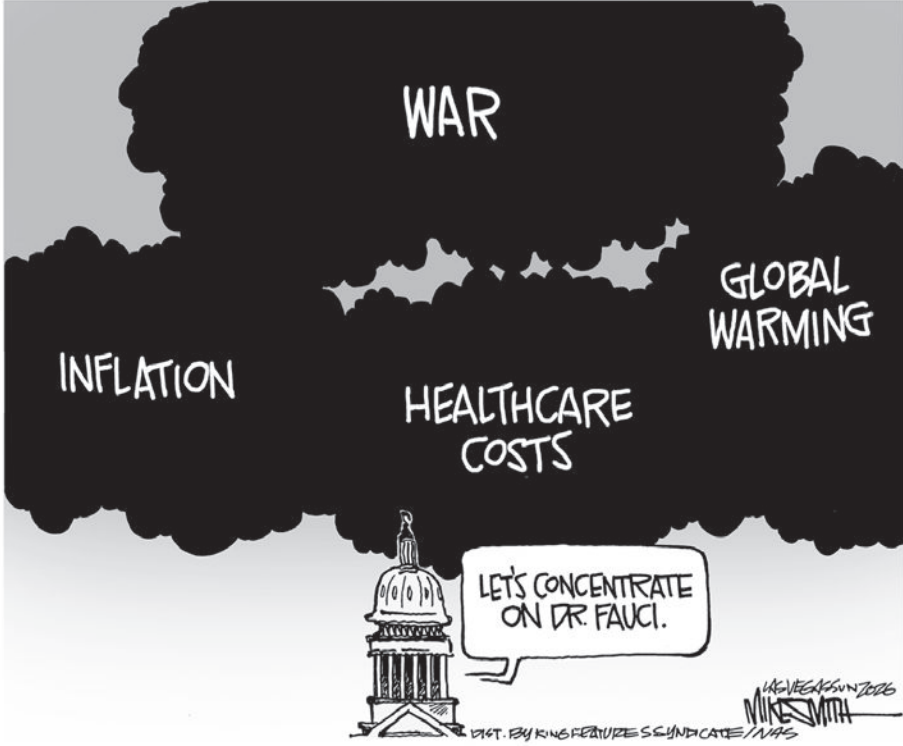
class thought it was hilarious. I did, too. Not surprisingly, the professor was not amused and I was asked to gather my belongings and leave.

Great. One week in school and I am about to be out of school and trying to explain to my parents that, unlike my strait-laced brother who had sailed through college, I didn't last a month. Fortunately, a little humility on my part and a lot of forgiveness on the professor's part and I was allowed back in and decided to stick to conjugated verbs and participles, past and present, and leave the jokes

to the professionals.

So here I am all these years later back on the subject of love. Wiser and more mature than the jokester in freshman English. And more serious. Today I am wrestling with the questions proposed by Dr. Burch. Did I love well today? If not, why not?

Composers Hal David and Burt Bacharach wrote, "What the world needs now is love, sweet love. Not just for some, but for everyone." I agree. We need to focus on loving well. After all, "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing." And I love that we have had this conversation.



Tri-County Connector

Published every Wednesday
by the Georgia Trust for Local News

DuBose Porter, Publisher Emeritus
Pam Burney, General Manager
Kyle Dominy, Weekly Managing Editor
Logan Reynolds, Staff Reporter

The Official Legal Organ of
The Montgomery Monitor
Mt. Vernon, GA 60445 - (USPS 362-220)
tricoconnector@gmail.com

Periodicals postage paid at the Mt. Vernon, GA Post Office
and at additional mailing offices.

The Soperton News
Soperton, GA 30457 - (USPS 501-500)
tricoconnector@gmail.com
Periodicals postage paid at the Soperton, GA Post Office
and at additional mailing offices.

The Wheeler Co. Eagle
Alamo, GA 30457 - (361-220)
tricoconnector@gmail.com
Periodicals postage paid at the Alamo, GA Post Office
and at additional mailing offices.

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BPCU dedicates Strickland Jr. Nursing Education Building

SPECIAL TO THE TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

Brewton-Parker Christian University (BPCU) celebrated a historic milestone on Monday, August 3, with the dedication of the George W. Strickland, Jr. Nursing Education Building, marking the culmination of years of vision, planning, and collaboration to expand healthcare education in southeast Georgia.

The dedication ceremony brought together university leadership, local and state officials, donors, faculty, staff, students, and community members to celebrate the collaborative effort that made both the BPCU School of Nursing and its new expansion possible. The state-of-the-art facility will serve BPCU nursing students beginning with the 2026–2027 academic year.

Officials included in the program were Mrs. Ginger Morris, Chair of the Montgomery County Commission, Joey Fountain, Mayor of Mount Vernon, and Dr. Andrew Young, Field Representative of Senator Raphael Warnock, who provided the needed congressional approval for a sought grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA).

"We are grateful for the wonderful partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce EDA, the George W. Strickland, Jr. Foundation, and our county, city, and state officials and the many others who were willing to give the resources so that BPCU could have such a quality facility that is fully equipped and fully funded," said Dr. Steve Echols, President of BPCU. Echols further noted that the facility will greatly expand the capacity of the university to provide much-needed nursing graduates for the region.

During the ceremony, Dr. Debbi Bryarly, Dean of the School of Nursing, gave a brief history of the program since it was first proposed in 2018. Following a long process that included the presentation of a feasibility study to the Georgia Board of Nursing, the program received initial Georgia Nursing Board approval in 2021 and approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in 2022. As a result, BPCU welcomed its inaugural class in the fall of 2022. In 2024, the program earned national accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The first graduating class achieved a 100 percent



Dr. Steve Echols, President of Brewton-Parker Christian University, addresses guests gathered for the dedication of the George W. Strickland, Jr. Nursing Education Building /SPECIAL PHOTO

first-time pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The following year, the Georgia Board of Nursing officially affirmed BPCU as a fully approved nursing school. This fall, the university is anticipating as many as 84 students majoring in nursing from the freshman through senior classes.

The George W. Strickland, Jr. Nursing Education Building represents an investment not only in BPCU but also in the future of healthcare throughout Georgia and the surrounding region. Purposefully designed to prepare the next generation of nurses, the facility features modern classrooms, advanced simulation laboratories, collaborative learning spaces, faculty offices, and hands-on clinical training environments that mirror today's healthcare settings. As the demand for qualified nurses continues to grow, the School of Nursing is equipping graduates to enter the workforce with the knowledge, technical skills, and Christ-centered compassion needed to provide exceptional patient care.

The building is named in honor of George W. "Jack" Strickland, Jr., a highly esteemed businessman, veteran, and philanthropist whose legacy of servant leadership continues to impact lives across Georgia.

After purchasing Evans Concrete Products in 1948, Strickland transformed the company with exponential growth while earning widespread respect for his dedication to his employees and his community. His generosity lives on through the George W. Strickland, Jr. Foundation, whose unanimous support has been a great blessing to BPCU over a number of years and helped make the new nursing education facility possible.

Representing the George W. Strickland, Jr. Foundation at the ceremony were

board members Mr. Tommy Strickland, retired Chief Executive Officer of Evans Concrete, and Mrs. Sharon DeLoach, current Vice President of Evans Concrete. Both noted that they felt that Mr. George W. Strickland, Jr. would have been very pleased with the building and its potential to serve the community and region, which was a central purpose in his establishment of the Foundation. By naming the building in his honor, President Echols noted that "Brewton-Parker Christian University recognizes a man whose vision and commitment to serving others will inspire generations of nursing students to provide the best possible care reflecting Christ-like compassion."

Dr. Beverly Robinson, recently retired Vice President of BPCU, was the writer and coordinator of the grant to the EDA, which became a major component in providing the funds for the construction of the building. Dr. Robinson expressed, "The George W. Strickland, Jr. Nursing Education Building is a beau-



From left: Dr. Steve Echols, President of Brewton-Parker Christian University; Mr. Tommy Strickland, Board Member of the George W. Strickland Jr. Foundation; and Mrs. Sharon DeLoach, Board Member of the George W. Strickland Jr. Foundation, stands outside the newly dedicated George W. Strickland Jr. Nursing Education Building/SPECIAL PHOTO

tiful reminder of what can be accomplished when people come together around a shared vision. We are grateful that the EDA considered this project to be of such benefit to the community and region to be worthy of this significant grant. We are deeply grateful to the many individual donors, the George W. Strickland, Jr. Foundation, our elected officials, healthcare partners, university trustees, faculty, staff, and the many friends of Brewton-Parker Christian University who believed in this dream. Their investment is not only in a building, but in the lives of future nurses who will go on to serve their communities with excellence, compassion, and Christ-like care."

The dedication of the George W. Strickland, Jr. Nursing Education Building marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for

BPCU. As students begin classes in the new facility during the 2026–2027 academic year, they will receive an education that integrates academic excellence, clinical experience, Christian faith, and servant leadership. In the years ahead, the new facility will provide for the continued growth of the School of Nursing that exhibits BPCU's commitment to Christian service.

Brewton-Parker Christian University is the only accredited four-year Christian university south of Macon and north of Jacksonville, FL. As a comprehensive Georgia Baptist institution, Brewton-Parker Christian University offers liberal arts and professional programs in a learning community grounded in shared Christian values. Through the application of biblical truth in scholarship and a co-curricular focus on char-

acter, servant leadership, and cultural engagement, the university strives to provide a transformational experience that equips the whole student for lifelong learning and service in Christ.

Visit Brewton-Parker Christian University online at www.bpcu.edu.

Legals

Treutlen Co. Legals

S26-042
ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLE AD- VERTISEMENT NOTICE:
You are hereby, in accordance with OCGA 40-11-19 (A) 2, that petitions were filed in the Magistrate Court of Treutlen County to foreclose liens for all amounts owed. If the lien is foreclosed, a court shall order the sale of the vehicle to satisfy the debt. The vehicle is currently located at: 2B's Towing, LLC Yard located at 5420 GA HWY 29 Soperton, GA. (478) 455-0293 Anyone with an ownership interest in this vehicle should contact the business above.

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Year: 2012
Make: CHEVROLET
Model: CRUZE

VIN: 1G6DP567X50127413
Year: 2005
Make: CADILLAC
Model: CTS

VIN: 1FTYR44U82PA22366
Year: 2002
Make: FORD
Model: RANGER

VIN: 5NMS64AJ7MH365173
Year: 2021
Make: HYUNDAI
Model: SANTA FE

VIN: 4T1BF1BK4DU258831
Year: 2013
Make: TOYOTA
Model: CAMRY

August 20, 27, 2026

S26-040
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF TREUTLEN
RE: Estate of Billy Jack Morgan
All debtors or creditors of the Estate of Billy Jack Morgan, deceased, late of Treutlen County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are to be required to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 30th day of July, 2026.
Sherry Morgan Ricks, Executor 61 6150 GA Hwy 199
Soperton, GA 30457
August 13, 20, 27, September 3, 2026

S26-039
Notice to Debtors and Creditors
All creditors of the estate of Corinthians Tywon Green late of Treutlen County, deceased, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment. This 24th day of July, 2026
Name: Mary Magelne McLendon
Title: Administrator
Address: 113 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Soperton GA 30457
August 6, 13, 20, 27, 2026

S26-041
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF TREUTLEN COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
ERIC T. DAVIS, Plaintiff,
v.
BRANDON SMITH, Defendant.
C.A. NO. 26-CI-0036
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION
To: Brandon Smith
By order of the Court for Service of Publication dated July 1, 2026, you are hereby notified that on June 1, 2026, Plaintiff, Eric T. Davis filed suit against you with a Complaint for Custody and/or Visitation. You are required to file with the Clerk of Superior Court and to serve upon Plaintiff's attorney, Courtney Joiner Anderson, C. Joiner Anderson Law, P.C., P.O. Box 1488, Lyons, GA 30436, an answer in writing within sixty (60) days of August 15, 2026.
Witness the Honorable William, D. Taylor, III, Judge of the Superior Court of Treutlen County.
This 11th day of August, 2026.
Courtney Joiner Anderson
Attorney for Plaintiff
Signed as Officer of the Court
August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026

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Georgia

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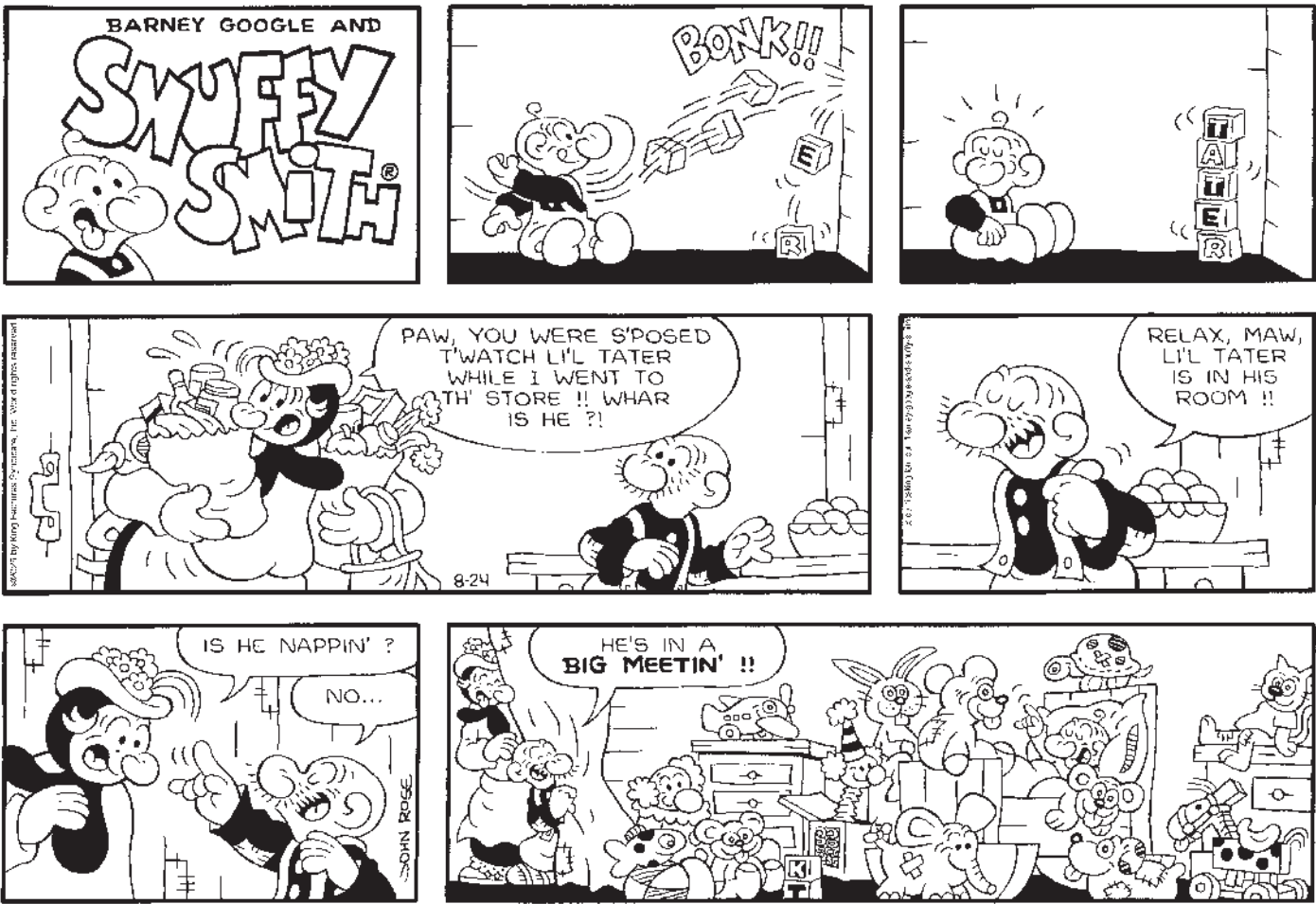
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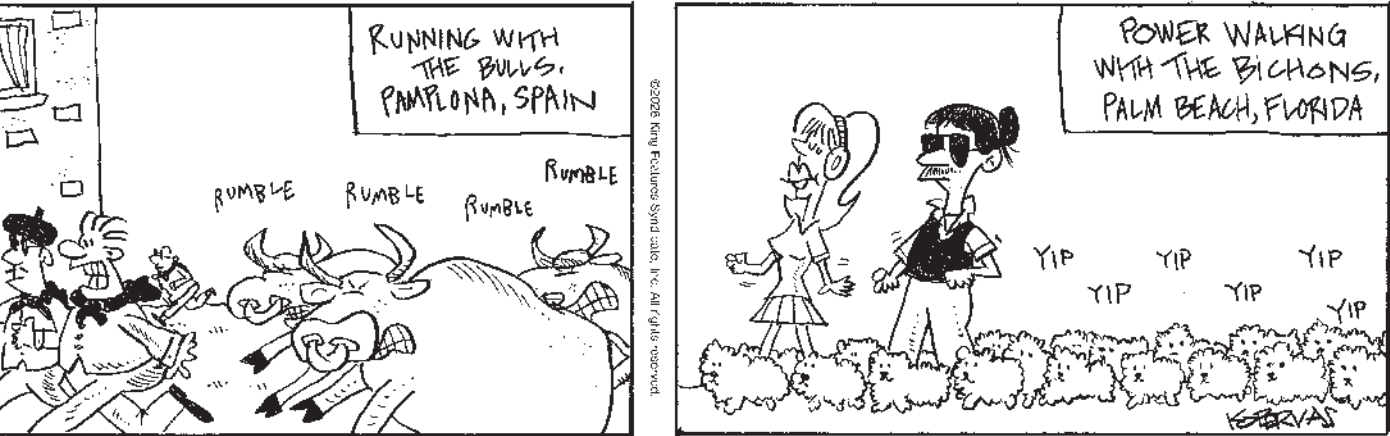
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The Spats



Out on a Limb



"This dates back to one of the early Antiques Roadshows!"

King Crossword

Answers

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

MAGIC MAZE

Answers

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Layer

4 Radiant

9 Soup legume

12 Dubai's coun-try, for short

13 Kin of "Presto!"

14 Online chats, briefly

15 Keyboard piece for two

17 Impose

18 Pained sounds

19 Nobel-winning Mother

21 "Hooray!"

24 Story lines

25 Hollywood's Gabor

26 Genetic stuff

28 Nasser's suc-cessor

31 Stinging insect

33 Pop

35 Arias for one

36 Animal's nose

38 Mexican Mrs.

40 Teeny

41 "Phooey!"

43 Disney exec Michael

45 1912 Olympic legend

47 MGM motto start

48 Tease

49 Teen's for-malwear

54 Under the weather

55 Perfume compound

56 To and —

57 Flamenco cheer

58 Belittle

59 Box office buys, slangily

DOWN

1 Young dog

2 Chou En- —

3 Pro vote

4 Acknowled-ged

5 Blessing

6 Actress Lucy

7 "Get Here" singer Adams

8 Tends the lawn

9 Stops talking

10 Flightless birds

11 Hammett pooch

16 M-Q connec-tion

20 Some HDTVs

21 Evergreen trees

22 Nobelist Pavlov

23 Latin ballroom dance

27 Small batter-ies

29 Sheltered

30 Wedding cake layer

32 Kitten's sound

34 Visionary

37 Designated clothesline

42 Succinct

44 Lith., once

45 Small combo

50 Non-Rx

51 Newt

52 — Lanka

53 Boston squad, for short

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MAGIC MAZE • MEASURED WORDS

K P N K I F C A X V S Q O L J
H E C A F X V D R A Y E N I V
T R S P N O L J I H L R F D B
M Y M X V **FOOTAGE** F T R
P I I O M K H T N A M T O O F
I C L I N C H Y W R G E O E D
B Z E E N X A W A E U M T T R
Q O N I A R L D J I A I H E G
F D C C D G R I N C H R O A R
Y X W V T A E N O T S E L I M
S D R A Y L A H R P O P D N L

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: A FIELD OF GRAPEVINES

Cinch	Foothold	Halyard	Perimeter
Clinch	Footman	Lanyard	Smile
Diameter	Footwear	Mileage	Yardarm
Footage	Grinch	Milestone	

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND. WHEN IT COMES TO TEAM BUILDING YOU ARE NOT THE COACH BUT MORE A BACKUP WATERBOY.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is raised. 2. Poster is smaller. 3. Weight is missing. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Line in sidewalk is moved. 6. Leg is moved.

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