

The Courier Herald

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Dublin woman's 2023 drug charges dismissed

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

The case against a Dublin businesswoman was dismissed by a special prosecutor last month, almost three years after she was arrested on multiple drug related charges.

According to a Superior Court of Laurens County document, J. Scott Johnston, special assistant

district attorney, moved for, “an order of Nolle Prosequi” to be entered for Tiffany Rochelle Green, who had been charged with trafficking in marijuana, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of firearm during commission of a felony and possession of a scheduled II controlled substance in a 2023 drug case.

“These charges against her

were BS, pardon my french,” said Green’s attorney Tom Church. “She wasn’t even at the house on the days preceding the search. We felt strongly that there should be an update to let people know that her charges have been dropped.”



GREEN

The motion, which was granted by Gibbs Flanders Jr., Senior Superior Court Judge on Aug. 24., stated that “culpable co-defendants” entered a plea.

Green’s husband Tony and her son Raymond were also arrested in the case.

On July 5, 2023, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation served a search warrant on a house on Geneva Street and seized approx-

imately 25 pounds of marijuana, cocaine, multiple pills suspected to be a Schedule II Controlled Substance, money and multiple firearms with magazines and ammunition.

The case was turned over to a special prosecutor because Tiffany’s original trial lawyer was At-

DISMISSED
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Dublin Fire Chief Matthew Cutler reminded everyone of the timeline of events that happened on September 11, 2001. (Right) Members of the Dublin Fire Department Honor Guard present the colors toward the beginning of Thursday’s program at Oconee Fall Line Technical Center/PAYTON TOWNS III



OFTC remembers 9/11 25 years later

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

While members of the Dublin Fire Department raised the American flag, a trumpet played “Taps” in remembrance of the almost 3,000 people who were killed on September 11, 2001 - 25 years ago.

Students and officials at Oconee Fall Line Technical College held a program on Thursday to reflect on the survivors and honor the first responders who put themselves in danger to save others who for no fault of their own were placed in deadly situations after two planes hit the World Trade Center, one hit the Pentagon and another crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.

“We honor firefighters, first responders and civilians whose lives were changed by the events of 9/11,” said Adera Smith, who introduced the guest speaker, Dublin Fire Chief

Matthew Cutler.

Before Cutler began his presentation, he thanked trumpet player, Matthew Pack for playing and Liz Green for singing the National Anthem.

“They both did an awesome job,” Cutler said. “They gave me chill bumps.”

Cutler went through a timeline of the events that happened 25 years ago.

“On 9/11/2001, terrorist hijacked commercial airliners with specific targets in mind,” he said.

At 7:59 a.m., American Airline Flight 11 left the airport in Boston flying to L.A. About 15 minutes later, terrorist over took the plane and flew it into the North Tower of the WTC at 8:46 a.m.

At 8:14 a.m., United Airlines Flight 175 left Boston flying to L.A. Terrorist took the plane over 28 minutes later and flew it into the South Tower of the WTC at 9:03 a.m.

At 8:20 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77 left an



Members of the Dublin Fire Department Honor Guard salute the American flag while Matthew Pack plays “Taps”/PAYTON TOWNS III

9/11
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County board to keep millage rate at 14, resulting in a small tax increase

By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

Four members from the public heard the 30-minute presentation by Laurens County School Finance Director Mary McCollough where she said the board plans to leave the millage rate at 14, which will result in a 2.82 percent tax increase.

The first of three public hearings was held on Tuesday at the Laurens County Board of Education. The second hearing will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 17 with the third hearing set for 4 p.m. that day. The board is then expected to hold a called meeting to vote on the millage rate following the third hearing.

“The taxes are increasing because of the reassessment and because we didn’t roll all the way back to the rollback rate (of 13.616),” McCollough said. “There are two ways you can have a property tax increase. One is by the digest growing and the other by a reassessment

of existing properties and both of those occurred this year. Even though we are not increasing the millage rate, we are proposing a millage rate that is greater than the rollback rate. That is why it is considered an increase.”

The Laurens County Commissioners, which levies its own tax, has proposed to set its millage rate from 5.49 to 7.0. The commissioners’ first public hearing will be at 10 a.m. on Sept. 14. The final two will be on Sept. 22 at noon and then at 6 p.m. The commission will then meet at 6:30 p.m. to vote.

According to McCollough’s presentation, the gross digest for 2026 is \$1.6 billion, the less exemptions is \$290 million for a net digest of \$1.3 billion, which means one mill of taxes is worth \$1,323,854,402.

“The proposed tax increase we would receive this year is \$582,754,” Mc-

MILLAGE RATE
Continued on page 10



Laurens County board member Jarvis Wilcher receives information from finance director Mary McCollough during Tuesday’s meeting/PAYTON TOWNS III

Expungement workshop to help people clean records



Kelly Weathers, chief assistant District Attorney, left, and Dublin District Attorney Harold McLendon, right, are happy to be holding the Expungement Workshop next Saturday/PAYTON TOWNS III, file photo

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By **PAYTON TOWNS III**
Senior Reporter

The Dublin District Attorney’s Office will be offering people a chance to clean their record, open new doors and build their futures again.

The Expungement Workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19 at Oconee Gym, 525 Charles W. Manning Sr. Way. Dublin DA Harold McLendon said Kelly Weathers, Chief Assistant District Attorney, and Laray Avery, Post Arrest Redirection Director, both did something similar from a previous office.

“I thought it was a good idea and I believe it will be well received,” McLendon said.

Weathers said the workshop is for people who have been arrested in the past

and their case was dismissed, there is a restriction process that should be automatic. Every time somebody gets fingerprinted, it creates a cycle in their criminal history that stays there in the Georgia Crime Information Center.

“In 2013, the Georgia Legislature enacted a law that if you had a dismal or the statute of limitations had run out, your record in theory is supposed to restrict,” Weathers said. “Which means if you go to apply for a job, short of it being with the military or something that needs a security clearance, that should not be viewable by just your commercial employer.”

It should not be able to stop someone from getting a job. Weathers admitted that this has not been a perfect process.

“We get calls quite frequently from people who have applied for a job but they have this on their record,” she said. “When they do a background, all they see is you were arrested for a crime but they don’t know what happened with it. So this is for those who have been arrested in the past and the case got dismissed but it is still encumbering their ability to approve their station in life. It allows us to notify GCIC that this was a qualifying arrest and dismissal and they need to restrict it so that employers will not see it. Hopefully, they will have some privacy going forward and won’t be haunted by something that happened five or 10 years ago.”

RECORDS
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OBITUARIES



Gregory "Greg" Lamar Manley

Services for Gregory “Greg” Lamar Manley, 58, of Dublin, were held at 2:30 p.m. Friday at Liberty Church, 900 Hillcrest Pkwy. Visitation was held at the church from 12:30 p.m. until the service. Pastor Nate Dooley will officiate.

Interment followed the service at Pinehill Church, 725 Pinehill Road.

Greg was born Jan. 2, 1968, as the first baby in Laurens County that year after no births were recorded on New Year’s Day. He was the youngest of the five children of the late Sara and Earl Manley. Greg was a graduate of West Laurens High School, where he excelled at football and baseball. He attended Southern Polytechnic University and Georgia College & State University, where he tried out and made the baseball squads at both schools.

In high school Greg met the love of his life and wife of 34 years, Kellie Stokes. The couple have two children, son Landon and daughter Morgan, and just weeks ago celebrated the birth of their first grandchild, earning Greg a new title of “Papa G.”

Greg was a hard worker who built and operated a successful business, Manley Precast Inc. He loved his family deeply and was committed to his roles of provider and protector. Greg enjoyed playing golf, fishing, duck hunting and working the grill, especially at family gatherings. Greg and Kellie attended Liberty Church.

Greg passed away Tuesday night after a long but private fight against cancer. He was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, Steve Manley; his mother- and father-in-law, Sandra and Charles Stokes; and a nephew, Gordon Cartee III.

He is survived and missed by his wife, Kelle Stokes Manley of Dublin; son, Landon Kyle Manley of Dexter; daughter, Morgan Claire Whitaker (William) and grandson, Charles Gregory Whitaker of Dublin; brothers, Rodney Manley (Holly) of East Dublin and Russell Manley (Missy)

of Augusta; sister, Tammie Cartee (Gordon) of Madison; sisters-in-law, Karon Amerson (Toby) and Kim Thomas (Kevin); numerous nieces, nephews and great-nieces and -nephews; and a loyal friend group, “The White Truck Club.”

Pallbearers will be Aaron McDaniel, Eric Allen, Chris Woodard, Scott Mullis, Ashley Windham, Marshall Floyd, Ricky Mitchell, Chance Davis and Clay Lord.

Stanley Funeral Home & Crematory has charge of arrangements.



Linda H. Mallette

Linda H. Mallette, passed away on Sept. 4, 2026, in Dublin, Georgia, at the age of 82. Born on Oct. 5, 1943, in Wrightsville, Georgia, she was the daughter of the late WD and Orea Howell.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Jimmy Mallette, and by her parents, WD and Orea Howell. She is survived by her son, Mike Mallette and his wife Tracie, and her daughter, Jamie Moore and her husband Greg. She also leaves behind her cherished grandchildren, Cory Mallette, Cody Hart and his wife Mara, Tucker Hart and his wife Bethany, Ethan Hart, and Abby Mallette and great-grandson, JW Huff. Linda is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Linda was an active member of Dublin First Methodist Church for many years and worked as a Registered Nurse at Dublinair Nursing Home and Dublin VA Hospital.

In lieu of flowers, her family has requested memorial contributions to be made to Samaritan’s Purse (samaritanaspurse.org) or Dublin Laurens County Humane Society (lchs.org).

Graveside services were held at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026 at Dublin Memorial Gardens with Rev. Chip Bodi officiating.

Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial

register. Townsend Brothers Funeral Home had charge of the arrangements.



Nayfield Rivers

Funeral services for Mr. Nayfield Rivers will be held on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the C.D. Dudley Memorial Chapel in the Dudley Funeral Home, 617 East Jackson Street in Dublin.

Nayfield Rivers was born to the late Otha and Adna Rivers of Glenwood, Georgia. Early in life Nayfield joined Starlight Baptist Church in Glenwood where he was a devoted deacon, Sunday school teacher, grounds keeper and dedicated long-time member.

Nayfield was a successful entrepreneur logger for many years until the closing of Glenwood Lumber Yard and Wood Mill in the heart of Glenwood, Ga. downtown. He later became employed at Wheeler County Board of Education as a bus driver for 30 plus years and then he became a loving janitor/custodial employee. Before he would leave for work every morning, he would have coffee, grits and a fried egg and sometimes butter-me-not biscuits. He would cook this eight days a week.

On September 3, 2026, Nayfield gained his heavenly wings at Fairview Park Hospital in Dublin, Ga. to go be with his daughter who preceded him in death along with his two brothers and sister.

Nayfield leaves behind to cherish his memories two sons, Donnie (Marie) Rivers of South Carolina, and Edward Gillis of Glenwood; one daughter, Chris (Clarence) Stanley of Dublin; five grandchildren, Daisy, Nick, DJ, Addie and Kaneisha; two great grandchildren, Kaiser and Noah; four sisters, Georgia Mae (Robin) Clay, Katie Mae Kates, Gwendolyn Smith and Fraseline (Joe) Roberson; two brothers, Jewrell (Ida Mae) Rivers Sr., and Will Otis; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other family, and friends.

A special thank you to Dublinair Nursing Home &

Ga Supreme Court: Police power not a defense in damage to private property

By DR. KEITH ROACH
King Features

ATLANTA — The Georgia Constitution gives the state broad authority to exercise police power, but the state Supreme Court clarified the extent of that authority when it comes to private property rights.

In an opinion Wednesday, the state’s high court overturned lower courts that said the state had no obligation to compensate a farming company for crop loss caused by law enforcement activity.

The case stems from a drug-interdiction operation by the Governor’s Drug Suppression Task Force in the summer of 2021.

Three police helicopters and an airplane flew so close to legal hemp crops in Dahlonga that they destroyed two rows of plants.

The owner, Blue 42 Organics, is licensed to grow hemp in Georgia. As required, the company had logged the coordinates of its operations.

But that didn’t stop the police from flying near enough to the company’s crops for the aircraft’s rotor wash and prop wash to cause an estimated \$37,000 in damage.

The company sued, and the state Department of Public Safety convinced a trial court that it had no obligation to pay for the damage. The state argued that its use of police power made it “categorically ex-

empt” from the state constitutional prohibition on the taking of private property without “just and adequate” compensation.

The trial court dismissed the case, so the company appealed. Then, the Georgia Court of Appeals affirmed the dismissal.

When the state high court agreed to hear the case, the National Hemp Association filed a brief in support of Blue 42 Organics.

Hemp crops became legal after Congress passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. The Georgia Legislature followed with its own regulatory law.

The association said in its brief that the federal and state laws would be worthless if the Supreme Court allowed the state to inadvertently destroy hemp crops during what the brief described as “a routine aerial survey for marijuana” in the absence of an emergency.

“If state law enforcement agencies can destroy licensed hemp crops — without checking readily available licensing databases, without coordinating with the regulatory agency that issued the license, and without any obligation to compensate the farmer — then the federal-state regulatory framework that Congress and the Georgia General Assembly built is rendered meaningless,” the association’s brief said.

RELIGION DIGEST

The Rose Hill Baptist Church family cordially invites you to their homecoming on Sept. 13 at 1:30 p.m. with Fred Williams and Turkey Baptist Church in charge of services. Revival will be Sept. 14-16 at 7 p.m. with Pastor Waylon Knight of West Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in charge of service. Everyone is invited.

The First Rehoboth Baptist Association will hold a worship service on the second Sunday, Sept. 13 at 4 p.m. Pastor Ellis Carswell and Central Baptist Church will lead the service. Everyone is invited to attend.

NEWS DIGEST

The next regular meeting of the East Dublin mayor and council will be held at city hall in the Terrie E. Drew Council Chambers on Monday, Sept. 14 at 5:30 p.m. with pre-council beginning at 5 p.m. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Pledge to Flag
- Old business
- New business
- Recognition of citizens

The regular meeting of the board of commission-

ers of the Dublin Housing Authority will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 15 at 5 p.m. at the Verline Copenny Center located at 205 W. St. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Roll call of members
- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Recognition of guests/ presentations
- Approval of the regular minutes of Aug. 25
- Financial reports
- Check history reports
- TAR reports

- 90 day forecast
- Old business
- RAD update/city of Dublin response
- NSPIRE update
- Ring doorbell policy
- Security cameras discussion
- New business - DHA draft succession plan
- Executive director’s report
- Commissioners comments
- Adjournment

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the City of Dublin is initiating an amendment to the City’s Future Land Use Map in the Laurens County Joint Comprehensive Plan.

The public hearing for this amendment will be held in the Council Chambers of the Dublin City Hall in Dublin, Georgia on Tuesday, September 29, 2026 at 12:00 P.M.

All interested persons are invited to attend.

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LOCAL MATTERS



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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.

Job Announcement

The Laurens County Library is hiring for a 15-hour position in the Heritage Center at a starting salary of \$10/hr, with most Saturdays required. The successful candidate will be a detail-oriented, people-person with a warm, professional demeanor, strong customer service, and solid computer skills. Preference will be given to candidates with research experience. GED is required, with a college degree or equivalent work experience preferred. To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, and two employment references to Beverly Brown via email at <https://ocrl.org/employment> or by mail to PO Box 100, Dublin, GA 31040.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Hal M. Smith, JR. Has submitted a rezoning application for .47 acres, more or less, of property located at Parcel D04C 074, Dublin, Georgia. Request to rezone from P1 (Public) to P (Professional). Proposed use is a dental office.

Notice is hereby given that the City of Dublin is initiating rezoning of 1.11 acres, more or less, or property located at Parcel D04C 073 and 1.17 acres, more or less, or property located at D04C 075 Dublin, GA. Intent is to rezone from P1 (Public) to P (Professional). Current use is medical offices.

The Mayor and Council will hold the Public Hearings in the Council Chambers of the Dublin City Hall in Dublin, Georgia on Thursday, October 1, 2026 at 5:30 P.M.

All interested persons are invited to attend.



POSTING DATE SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT AN APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED BY CWC HOLDINGS, LLC FOR A 2.6 SQ FT REDUCTION TO THE MINIMUM DWELLING UNIT SIZE OF 550 SQ FT.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A VARIANCE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR PARCEL 101 033 DUBLIN, GA TO ALLOW A HEIGHT LIMIT VARIANCE OF 105.5 FEET FOR THE PURPOSES OF ERECTING A FIRE TRAINING TOWER.

A PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD SEPTEMBER 28, 2026 AT 5:30 P. M. IN THE HENRY “BUD” HICKS JR MEMORIAL CHAMBERS, LOCATED IN CITY HALL AT 100 S. CHURCH STREET IN DUBLIN GEORGIA AT WHICH TIME YOU MAY APPEAR IN PERSON, OR AND IN WRITING, BY AN AGENT OR BY AN ATTORNEY AND PRESENT ANY REASONS WHICH YOU MAY HAVE IN GRANTING OR DENYING THIS PETITION.

If you should have any questions, please call (478) 277-5070.

How to (not) to move a piano - a brief history

The City of Venice has a long, rich history of woodwork-ing.

Artisans of the region, nestled in northeastern Italy on the Adriatic Sea, are known the world over for their intri-cate hand-carved picture frames and, of course, gondolas. People travel from all around to sit in one of these famed crafts for a leisurely cruise through the city's equally fa-mous canals.

In 1981 engineer and pianist Paolo Fazioli put that Ve-netian craftsmanship toward piano making and launched his own line of high-quality, artisanal instruments. These extravagant grand and concert pianos are made slowly (no more than 150 are made each year) in a small factory near the city using only the finest woods and materials. The sound boards are crafted from red spruce cultivated in the Fiemme Valley. It's the same kind of lumber from the same region preferred by Antonio Stradivari, possibly the great-est stringed instrument maker the world has ever seen.

Fazioli pianos range from \$79,000 to the paltry sum of \$300,000. And are typically only used by world renowned pianists, who sometimes travel with their Faziolis to share their skill, passion and, not to mention, good taste in in-struments with audiences around the globe. One such per-former is Canadian virtuoso Angela Hewitt. She vows con-cert goes on both sides of the Atlantic accompanied by her custom-crafted, one-of-a-kind Fazioli grand piano.

Always a little flat



THE NEW
SOUTHERN
DAD

By KYLE DOMINY

At least she used to.
In 2020 a couple of butter fingered movers dropped her piano, valued at about \$194,000, after a recording session in Berlin. The force of the fall, and if you've ever watched the Three Stooges or Bug Bunny cartoons you know pianos

can be heavy, shattered the instrument's iron frame and split its casing. The piano was a total loss.

I hope she had good insurance.
About the time Fazioli was launching his piano line, multi-instrument manufacturer Yamaha, a much more consumer friendly brand, opened a piano building facility in Thomaston, Georgia. For about 25 years workers at the plant constructed upright and console pianos for a more pedestrian clientele - schools, churches and amateur mu-sicians.

One of these pianos was purchased by my parents. While it cost well below that of a Fazioli, it was bought on credit, so my brother and I could learn to play. After decades of use, the well-loved and cared for instrument was gifted to me.

With some mover's dollies, a pickup truck and a whole lot of elbow grease, my father and I recently managed to move the piano. From one house to the other, the entire operation went off without a hitch. We didn't drop it one single time.

Yamaha closed the Thomaston plant in 2007, and I'm rather pleased to have one of the Georgia-made pianos in my living room. A second generation is now learning to play on the same keyboard that I did.

It may not sound as rich or as clear as a Fazioli, but it certainly is music to my ears.

MOMENTS ...

* On Sept. 21, 1942, the U.S. B-29 Superfor-tress, the largest bomber used in the war by any nation, performed its debut flight in Seattle, Washington. The craft was capable of carrying loads nearly equal to its own weight at altitudes of 30,000 to 40,000 feet and featured the first ra-dar bombing system of any U.S. bomber.

* On Sept. 22, 1776, Continental Army cap-tain Nathan Hale was executed by the British for spying. Disguised as a Dutch schoolmaster, he had sneaked behind Brit-ish lines on Long Island and successfully gathered information about British troop movements for the next several weeks but was captured while attempting to return to American-controlled ter-ritory.

* On Sept. 23, 2016, a small box containing half of author Truman Capote's cremated re-mains, which was part of the estate of his friend Joanne Carson (ex-wife of TV host Johnny Car-son), was auctioned in California, 32 years after his death. It received 12 bids and sold for \$43,750.

* On Sept. 25, 2015, a California judge ap-proved former Olympic athlete Caitlyn Jenner's request to legally change her name and gender designation.

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William Wilberforce: Christian abolitionist

William Wilberforce was born in Hull, England in 1759, into a respectable family.

His father died when Wilberforce was eight years old, and for the next two and a half years he went to live with his Christian aunt and uncle who had a strong and lasting influence on him. During the stay with his aunt and uncle he was introduced to Rev. John Newton, former slave boat captain, who after his con- version became a Christian minister in Olney, England and wrote Amazing Grace as his spiritual testimony.

Newton became a spir- itual father and mentor to Wilberforce.

Wilberforce did not take life nor his schooling seriously during his early life and even into his col- lege years. He cared more for gambling, partying and having fun. He was popular with his contemporaries as a playboy, but he did love music.

He would later regret this lack of seriousness during his younger days.

In 1786, a "Great Change" happened in Wil- berforce's life when, under conviction, he dedicated his life to Jesus Christ and to the practice of the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31)

Wilberforce devoted much time to reading the Bible, and soon felt led as a Christian to run for political office to help bring about changes in his country. He ran for office and won a seat in the House of Commons in the British Parliament.

In 1787, as a new mem- ber of Parliament, he con- centrated his efforts to the abolishment of the British slave trade and persevered in this mission for the next 20 years. In his diary, as a new member of the House of Commons, he stated two main objectives: 1. to end the slave trade, and 2. to re- form the manners and mor-

als of Great Britain.

He was bitterly opposed in these efforts, maligned and threatened, but he was encouraged by other Chris- tians and especially by Newton who simply told his younger friend to "stay the course."

In 1807, British slave trade was abolished ... thanks primarily to the ef- forts of Wilberforce.

He was called the "Her- cules of Abolition. (Note: It was 56 years later on Jan. 1, 1863, when slavery in America was abolished with Abraham Lincoln's "Eman- cipation Proclamation" and became the 13th Amend- ment to the U.S. Constitu- tion on Dec. 6, 1865, eight months after the end of the



By JACK
BROWN

U.S. Civil War on April 9, 1865.)

Following the abolition of slavery in Great Britain, Wilberforce then concen- trated his efforts to bring reform to the morals of his country. This sketch of this Christian statesman has fo- cused on his first objective, namely, to end the slave trade in Great Britain.

It isn't always easy when one is doing the will of God, for there will be opposition, but Wilberforce's persever- ance and faith for the cause of right was finally achieved. Wilberforce has left his mark on the world ... and a splendid mark at that.

May his kind increase!
Peace!

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The **Laurens County Board of Commissioners** has tentatively adopted a 2026 millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by **30.85%**.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the County Commissioner's Office, located at 117 East Jackson Street, Dublin, GA on **September 14, 2026 at 10 A.M.**

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at the Commissioner's Office, 117 East Jackson Street, Dublin, GA on **September 22nd at 12:00 P.M. and September 22nd at 6:00 P.M.**

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of **7.00 mills**, an increase of **1.502 mills**. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than **5.36 mills**. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of **\$200,000** is approximately **\$120.00** and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of **\$300,000** is approximately **\$180.00**.

NOTICE

The City of Montrose Council does hereby announce that the City of Montrose millage rate will be set at its Tuesday meeting, September 15, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 1090 First Street, Montrose, Georgia 31065. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. Sec 48-5-32, as amended, the Council hereby publishes the following presentation for the current year's tax digest and proposed levy.

In accordance with Georgia law, all taxable property shall be assessed at forty percent of its fair market value, which will be determined by the Tax Commissioner of Laurens County. The taxable property shall then be taxed by the City at a millage rate of **5 mills**. By way of an example:

The average home in Montrose, Georgia has a fair market value of \$200,000. The property owner of the \$200,000 home would pay \$400 in property taxes, as calculated below:

40% of said value is \$80,000. Considering the millage rate to be 5 mills, the property owner shall pay \$5 per \$1,000 taxable value:

\$80,000 x (5/1,000) = \$400.00 taxes owed.

All concerned citizens are invited to attend the three public hearings regarding this tax implementation, millage rate adoption, and the tax increase to be held at **1090 First Street, Montrose, Georgia 31065** on:

1. **Tuesday September 8, 2026 at 6:30 PM,**
2. **Saturday September 12, 2026 at 9:00 AM, and**
3. **Saturday, September 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM.**

All concerned citizens are invited to join these public meeting.

Please take further notice that the City of Montrose is hereby moving its regularly scheduled meeting on **Tuesday, September 8, 2026 from 7:00 PM to 6:00 PM.**

Please take further notice that the City of Montrose is hereby setting a specially set meeting to adopt the millage rate and tax levy implementation for **Tuesday September 15, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. at 1090 First Street, Montrose, Georgia 31065.**

City Council will render its final vote regarding the implementation of ad valorem property taxes and the proposed millage rate of 5 mils at 7:00 P.M. on September 15, 2026.

Moment of Inspiration

I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...” - Romans 1:16

Paul boldly declared that he was “not ashamed of the Gospel.” He understood that the Gospel was not merely a message—“it is the power of God unto salvation.”

We live in a world where standing for biblical truth may not always be popular. There may be times when people criticize our faith or tell us to keep our beliefs to ourselves. But Jesus has called us to be His witnesses.

We should never be ashamed to say we believe in Jesus, to carry His Word, to pray, or to tell others what Christ has done for us. The Gospel is still changing lives. The cross still represents God's love. Jesus still saves, and salvation is still available to “every one that believeth.”

Today, don't hide your faith. Stand for Christ. Speak His truth. Share the Gospel.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to never be ashamed of Jesus or His Gospel. Help me to stand faithfully for Your truth and boldly share the good news of salvation with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Dr. Curt Lysaker, Pastor Shady Grove Baptist Church, East Dublin, GA

Pastors if you would like to share a devotional please email to: advertisingtch@gmail.com



These merchants and The Courier Herald take pride in presenting this message and encourage you to attend the church of your choice.

Dublin Police Department

- Maurice O'Neal, 43, was charged with possession of marijuana at the intersection of East Johnson Street and North Franklin Street at 10:14 p.m. on Aug. 26.

An officer conducted a traffic stop on a gold 2014 Chevrolet Cruze after he saw the vehicle traveling east on East Johnson Street and fail to stop until after the stop sign, nearly going into the cross street of North Franklin Street. The officer had to brake heavily due to the belief that the driver was going to continue into the street.

The officer made contact with the driver, identified as O'Neal, While approaching the vehicle, the officer detected a strong odor of green marijuana emitting from the interior of the vehicle. O'Neal was instructed to exit the vehicle and step to the back trunk area. O'Neal said he did have some marijuana for personal use on him.

The officer asked the man to place it on the trunk of the vehicle. O'Neal reached into the front groin area of his blue jeans and retrieved one tan plastic bag containing loose marijuana. A probable cause search of the vehicle was conducted. No further contraband or illegal items were found inside the vehicle.

O'Neal was arrested and transported to the police de-



partment. He was fingerprinted and released on a summons.

- At 1:06 a.m. on Aug. 28, officers were at a traffic stop at the intersection of North Jefferson Street and East Mary Street. One of them had seen a vehicle fail to stop at a stop sign at that intersection.

The vehicle stopped in the parking lot of Bobby's Food Mart. The driver, identified as Sydney Roberts, 27, told them she had consumed a drink earlier in the night while at a restaurant. Following an investigation, Roberts received citations for driving under the influence and failure to stop at a stop sign. She was transported to the sheriff's office and released into the custody of the jail staff.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- A deputy responded to a trespass that happened on Honey Suckle Road at 1:35 p.m. on Aug. 25.

- A theft was reported at the intersection of Catlin Spur and Catlin Road at 8:57 a.m. on Aug. 25.

- Jimmy Stinson, 65, of East Dublin, was charged with discharge of firearm while under influence of alcohol, certain drugs or control at 6:48 p.m. on Earnest Stinson Road.

- Tanicka Lashae Coneway, 51, of Dudley, was charged with driving while license suspended or revoked, giving false name to officers and possession of methamphetamine at the intersection of Highway 80 West and Wayne Road at 10:08 p.m. on Aug. 20.

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.

FROM THE RECORD

Marriages: Jessica Taylor Renew to Kayla Sue Martin; Vanessa Mia Najera Corona to Brayen Kelion Jones; Briana Lynn Melton to Jacob Samuel Mathews; Gabriel Ira Kersey to Katelyn Eve Davis; Alexander Michael Jasso to Calie Breanna Beckham

Petition to Change Name: InRe: Brittany Kay Sealy

Paternity/Legitimation: Ralph Kendall Adcock v Leslie Leanne Warren

man Gear v Loyd Family Properties, LLC; Department of Transportation v Judy Coleman & Estate/Veratee Coleman

Contract: Forsythe Finance v Curtis Dixon; HS Financial Group v Shakeemiah Wright; Mariner Finance v Joseph White; JPMorgan Chase Bank v Michael Medina; Jefferson Capital Systems v Brandi Reynolds; U.S. Bank National Association v Kimberly Bracewell; OneMain Financial Group v Kwame J Phillips

Complaint for Divorce: Jacqueline McMiller v Jonathan McMiller

Divorce: Cathy Bainbridge v Phillip Bainbridge; Jessica Newton v Isaac Newton

Automobile Tort: Shalonda Daniels v Adriana Gilley & Lyft(GA.) Inc.

Affidavit of Garnishment: OneMain Financial v Joshua Lattimore & City of Dublin; Midland Credit v Heather Kemp & Easter Seals of Middle Georgia, Inc

Affidavit of Continuing Garnishment: LVNV Funding v. Kenneth Braun & SteelFab, Inc.

Complaint for Forfeiture: State of Georgia v Shedrick Dorsey & Heather Calhoun

Real Property: Her-

Other General Civil: State of Georgia v Alexandria Rena Vann

Liens: Latonya Smith to Lendmark Financial Services; Jason & Aubrey

Keyton, Jason Keyton to Internal Revenue Service; Danny B Cheeks, Andrea C Alligood, Raymond L Gault, Kevin & Julie Watson, Shannon W Roland, Sharon E Williams, Josh & Lindsey Knight, Janika K & Timothy B Harris, Kermit Cato, Brandon K Colson, Donald Gay, Willie A Henley, Robert Tate, Cornelius Z & Tamika L Hazley, Erica E Brazeal, Tawanna L Linder, Kenyota Paulk, John C & Sherika Carr, Danielle Tommie, Carol S Cox, Catrina Fordham, Kimberly L Smith, Jarisus Harvey, Russell Lowery, Gretta M Smith, Delois C Dudley, Paul B Hester, Melody J Carter, Danielle J & Jason D Stewart, Frederic L Floyd, Mallo ri B Thomas, Pope William, Louis C Chieves, Jameshia & Adiamond Hightower, Lisa & Timothy J Parrish, Natalie Williams, Phillip Harris, Robert & Jana T Shields, Mark Thomas, Ellis Lorge, James Burney, Penny C & Tony R Mullis, Donald Pittman, Myra K Johnson, Talisha McNear, Benny A Thomas, Donna Seeker, Jeremy & China Manley, Robert Sheilds, Tyronda M Reynolds, Charles L Brooks, Jose M Ramirez, Kashonna Stanley, Wilton

Sellers, Brandon Edmond, Winfred B Kellam, Donovan B Kight, Roger Edwards, Alex C Bell, Candy J Turbeville, Kayla A Smith, Randy B Horton, Tracy Tarpley, Justin Warnock, Brandon O Simmons, Willie T Gilbert, Larrie K Williams, Tavaris C Timmons, Rodrick Lowery, Oscar Lopez & Maira Lopez-Meija, Keith Isaac, Stanley R & Brandi S Thigpen, Rona R Bargie, Danielle Tommie, Jacqueline Christian, Tyrus Irwin, Jamie & Shawanda Pittman, Preston S Werneth, Katrina McMiller Mitchell to Georgia Department of Revenue

Security Deed: Joseph & Megan White to The State Bank of Cochran; Araina Reaves & Michael M Torbett to Georgia United Credit Union; Keith Laspencer & Kenyetta Sanders Northcutt to AgGeorgia Farm Credit; K&J Services LLC to First Laurens Bank x2; M&T Companies LLC to Citizens Bank of Laurens County; JRN Properties LLC to Bank of Dudley; Brandi Delacruz FKA Brandi Dominy Delacruz, Manuel to JPMorgan Chase Bank; Jeffrey Leon

Cramer Jr & Tyra Broxton Cramer to Rocket Mortgage LLC; Edith Jones to Mortgage Research Center, LLC DBA Veterans United Home Loans; Planet South Pluto Inc to Ground Floor Credit 1, LLC; Samuel Ryan Dixon/James Benjamin Lawhorn/Bryan Lee Hall to Georgia First Bank; Candice Ellison Freshour to American Internet Mortgage, Inc; Ricky B & Belinda B Stanley to Navy Federal Credit Union; Latasha Contrell Fordham to United States Department of Agriculture; Carolyn Denise Hines & Breanna Jean Silvers to The Geo D Warthen Bank; Meridian Properties LLC to Citizens Bank of Laurens County x3

Warranty Deed: Michael Jeffrey Newman to K&J Services, LLC; Erica Nicole Ceasar FKA Erica Anderson to Erica Nicole Ceasar & Earnest James Ceasar; Highpoint Investment Holdings, LLC to JRN Properties LLC; Jennifer H Claxton to Ashley Goff Garin & Alisia Goff Cosson; William Craig Tyre Jr AKA Pete William Craig Tyre

JR, Mary Ann Hogan AKA Mary Ann Tyre to William Craig "Pete" Tyre Jr Mary Ann Tyre, Trustees of Tyre Family Revocable Living Trust Dates Aug 28, 2026; Raydient LLC to Keith L & Kenyetta S Northcutt; Keith L & Kenyetta S Northcutt to Keith Laspencer & Kenyetta Sanders Northcutt; Ronnie Dixon to M&T Companies LLC; Donna Coleman to JRN Properties, LLC; Marla Loyd Roche & Daymon Loyd to LR Investment Properties LLC; Macey Cummings Sr to Teresa Faye Smith; Levie & Tara Adams Maddox to Jonathan Williams; Lewis Mathew & Michelle Marie Hardeman to Lewis Mathew & Michelle Marie Hardeman; American Tractor & Farm LLC to Edith Jones; Jonathan Williams to Planet South Pluto Inc; Bailee Kight & Emilie White to James B Lawhorn & Bryan L Hall/S. Ryan Dixon; Joanne Stanley to Chris Woodard; JRN Properties LLC to Latasha Contrell Forham; Bravo One, LLC to Meridian Properites, LLC

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The Courier Herald

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Leaders on their field: WL's NeSmith, EL's Thomas carry on tradition of local involvement with GHSA student council

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Jaxten Thomas and Tripp Ne-Smith, high school athletes in the same grade on opposite sides of the county, have been acquainted since their days as both teammates and competitors on the youth ball field in various sports growing up.

But the local juniors had never really connected until this summer, when a trip to Indianapolis, of all places, brought them together along with 26 peers from statewide at a national student leadership summit attended by newly selected members of the Georgia High School Association's Student Athlete Advisory Council.

The opportunity to meet and interact with others from across the country during the three-day event also served to build a new friendship between the two – Thomas who attends East Laurens, and NeSmith West Laurens – who didn't realize what all they had in common.

"I've always known of him, but we never really hung out and it was crazy because you're going to that national (conference), where there are people from all across the country, and this guy lives 20 minutes away and I don't know him any better than this guy from over here," Thomas said. "It was awesome getting to meet him, getting to know him."

In addition to serving as leaders on their teams and campuses, both are helping carry on what's becoming a tradition of Laurens County representation on the GHSA committee that each year selects some of the best from member schools around the state to form a panel charged with serving as a voice for fellow student-athletes in conversations at the state level, and by the same token, as a similar advocate for the organization and its ideals on the campuses where they study and compete.

Its larger purpose is to bring the brightest young minds in the state's athletic community together, and allow them to improve leadership skills, network with state officials and others of similar mind from their age groups, engage in community service opportunities and simply be thinking about ways their generation can shape the future of not only high school sports, but whatever parts of the world they're headed into as they take the first steps of a future career in high school and college.

"(I've enjoyed) just meeting everybody, making new friends," NeSmith said. "Everybody that I've met from all the way around the world... It helps you be more of a leader, because you can talk to people, be more outgoing."

Thomas and NeSmith are the fifth and sixth local delegates to take part in the program since it began in 2019.

"Laurens County probably has the largest number of people," said GHSA associate director Penny Pitts Mitchell, who founded and helps lead the student commission. "Gwinnett, those big schools, Gwinnett or Cherokee



West Laurens High School's Tripp NeSmith (left) and East Laurens High's Jaxten Thomas (right) during this past summer's NFHS Student Leadership Summit in Indianapolis, which both attended as part of the GHSA's Student Athlete Advisory Council/SPECIAL PHOTO

County, they've had two or three, but y'all have had six."

Previous representatives, two each from the respective schools, include East's Brandon McWilliams (2024-25), West's Abegayle NeSmith and East's Marquez Harris (both 2022-23 and 2023-24) and West's Ella Newsome (who was part of one of the first councils in 2020-21).

This is the third year that both a Falcon and Raider have been part of the statewide quorum.

"It's awesome," Thomas said. "I'm loving this opportunity. It's a great opportunity to make an impact on my community, on my state. I like being able to be the person my peers look to when they need some help or need some guidance or something, be a leader for them."

Selection, by a panel that reviews applications and essays, emphasizes school and extracurricular involvement, and community service among interested candidates, who must be at least a sophomore in class standing, participate on at least one athletic team and be a member of at least one school club or organization.

For NeSmith, the SAAC came highly recommended by his older sister, who along with East's Harris, was a member two different years from 2022 through 2024.

"I just wanted to be involved with stuff like that," he said.

Thomas, who applied once as a sophomore before being selected this year, had also heard good things from some of those past reps on the Eastside, and was encouraged to apply by McWilliams, who, along with East Laurens cheer coach Tina Hester, offered some valuable tips on his application.

He was already involved in some on-campus roles as part of a similar student athletic commit-

tee formed around his freshman year by ELHS administrators with a main goal of simply keeping in touch, but also helping its next generations of leaders realize their potential through team-building activities and special retreats.

"I'm trying to actually get that re-started. We used to come out and do meetings once a month or so. We'd talk about different issues. We would sit down and have pizza, and it would be just leaders within the different sports," he said. "I'd love to get that started again."

Both are football guys who, coincidentally, share the positions of linebacker and long-snapper. Their second sports are in the spring: NeSmith also plays tennis, and Thomas baseball.

The gridiron is where they've both seen the importance of quality leadership make a difference, and each are working to embody those ideals as they rise into positions of influence on their sidelines this fall.

"Whenever Coach says something, try to back him up on it whenever I can," Thomas said. "When we're doing a drill, I might show the guys how the drill's supposed to be done. It's just the little things. Making sure we're orderly, we're on the field on time."

NeSmith is one of several West Laurens upperclassmen who are taking up the mantle from several of the best to do it as members of a 2026 graduating class that spearheaded last year's historic season.

"They were just disciplined," he said. "Really disciplined. Everything the coaches said, they did to the best of their ability, 100 percent effort all the time. It just worked. That's why we went all the way."

Those contributions will be vital to both teams' success as the new season continues to unfold.

The Raiders, after falling to Bleckley County in their opener, were able to even their record in a come-from-behind rally to beat Dodge last Friday. Slowly but surely, the promise of this mostly new lineup is emerging as the many new faces get established and comfortable.

After Friday's road trip to Cook, they were set to return home to begin a two-game home-stand against Monroe Area.

"There's a lot of new people on the defense and offense," NeSmith said. "We've just got to learn how to play an actual football game, because most of these people haven't really played a game yet, so we've just got to figure it out as we go."

East Laurens was off this past week, and regrouping after an 0-3 start in which its last two got away by a combined nine points after earlier leads. The Falcons will visit Metter for their non-region finale next Friday.

"I feel like we'll be able to pick some Ws up these next two or three weeks, and I feel like that'll get the ball rolling for us," Thomas said.

Mitchell, whose son is West Laurens head football coach Kip Burdette, is a retired teacher and coach who spent most of her career at Mary Persons High School. She joined the state association in 2015 after three years helping coordinate the spirit and dance teams at Mercer University, during the school's first few years re-establishing its football program.

She and co-founder Tanya Anderson were inspired to create the Student Athlete Advisory Council at the encouragement of NFHS leaders the first year that the GHSA gathered a group of student athletes to attend its annual conference.

"It's probably my favorite thing I do at that job," Mitchell said.

As with any new venture, it took some time for word about the program to spread and interest to build from around the state. But about eight years later, the service and involvement opportunity has become a highly sought-after privilege.

This past year, there were a total of 235 to apply.

"That first year, we just took anybody who applied," Mitchell said. "We tried to make a little council out of it. We've learned so much going forward."

The council has been expanded in size to 26 to include a slot for a male and female representative of each of the GHSA's eight classifications, plus 10 at-large.

Each summer's Indianapolis summit is one of the biggest and most important events the group takes part in.

The NFHS-sponsored conference, around in some form since the early 2000s, is an immersive experience including leadership training, service opportunities and more targeted to current issues and the experience of those in the fields of high school athletics and performing arts.

"There were 30-something states that brought their boards

to the summit, and we had two different countries, Canada and Honduras," Thomas said. "We learned about different things, listened to different speakers, met new people. It was a great thing. It was one of the greatest experiences."

The event, which took place this past year in July, is now effectively the kickoff for the SAAC's activities that run the course of the school year.

"GHSA pays for the flights and getting them there, and the NFHS pays for everything else, so it's a free trip for these kids," Mitchell said. "They get to go there and they do some community service there, work with special needs kids while there, a lot of things like that."

Watching many students hit the ground running at the event was confirmation that these leaders are some of the best out there. Thomas, NeSmith and others on the council, Mitchell observed, were in their element interacting with fellow attendees right from the jump.

"They are the cream of the crop across all the schools," she said.

By the end of it, NeSmith also stood up to speak in front of large groups at one point during the week's activities.

"It was great," NeSmith said. "As soon as you got there, we were just talking to everybody. You're not getting judged or anything, because you don't know anybody. So it's just like you talk to everybody, and stuff like that. It was great."

Opportunities to meet people from all over the country, and around the world, made it an eye-opening experience.

"It just shows you that everybody has the same goals and stuff, and you're not any different from people around the world," NeSmith said. "We met people from Canada and Honduras, and they're all the same. It's just cool."

The SAAC, through its years of existence, goes on to organize the GHSA's own state-level version of the conference as a resource for similar student leaders around Georgia.

It takes place each spring at the Macon Coliseum.

"We have a leadership conference in March, and these kids do the whole thing," Mitchell said. "They organize it. They come up with topics."

"All the schools get an invite," Thomas said. "They get to bring a few athletes from their school. We come and we all get together and we listen to different speakers and we talk about how to be a better leader, and things we can do to make an impact in our communities and our athletic departments."

The group plays a role in a number of other activities and outreach efforts over the course of the year, as it meets via zoom on a monthly basis, and gets together in-person once a semester.

Their gatherings are a forum through which certain concerns

GHSA
Continued on page 6

Recalling the Jack Harbaugh era at Western Kentucky...

Through the years, with a few stops made in foreign towns and communities, I learned that the respect for an American education was over the top with most everybody, especially the Europeans.

With the passing of time, I learned that it was not only the major universities that brought foreign influence to the campuses, but also the smaller schools—including Western Kentucky.

One appealing feature, of course, was the cost, and in WKU's case it has always had a beautiful campus. Bowling Green is a very pretty area of the Bluegrass State.

When it comes to sports, the Hilltoppers are best known for their basketball program. A few Athens' old timers will remember WKU coming to Athens for the re-

gional tournament in 1971. The Hilltoppers defeated Kentucky in the semi-finals, 107-83, and Ohio State in the finals, 81-78.

That was stiff competition for WKU, but they were keen on the opportunity to advance to the Final Four, which came about. They were led by 7-foot center and consensus All-American Jim McDaniels.

Years later, Jack Harbaugh, who had coached for Bo Schembechler at Michigan, coached Western Kentucky to the Division I-AA national championship in football.

Everybody knows that his sons, John and Jim, have enjoyed great success in the National Football League. John is the head coach of the New York Giants and Jim is the head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers.



By LORAN SMITH

Each has a former Bulldog on the roster, Ladd McConkey with the Chargers and Andrew Thomas with the Giants. The Harbaughs' sister, Joani, is married to Tom Crean, who spent time in Athens as the UGA head basketball coach.

I got to know Jack Harbaugh years ago when he was at Marquette and invited him to Athens to speak

to the Athens Touchdown Club. He stayed with us, and it was fun listening to his coaching stories, including the time he spent in Bowling Green.

He naturally had a lot of interesting stories about coaching at Michigan with Bo Schembechler, who was one of the most fundamental coaching enthusiasts ever in the business.

Running the football was the best route to victory in Bo's estimation, and he believed in running off tackle and using the run to set up timely passes—a fact which did not endear him to the Wolverine fan base.

He and Woody Hayes had some head-knocking games that were like two heavyweight fighters slug-ging it out for four quarters. When Bo retired from coaching, his record was just shy of 200 wins but won 13 Big Ten championships and made 10 trips to Pasadena at the time when the Rose Bowl participants were the champions of the Big Ten and the Pac 10 conferences.

Bo didn't fare too well in Pasadena, winning only twice, and the most astounding thing about his career is that he never won

a national championship.

When Western Kentucky faced a budget crisis soon after Jack Harbaugh became the coach, the school came very close to shutting down its football program. In fact, Coach Harbaugh was told not to hold spring practice in 1992. The players voted to assist with fund-raising, featuring a campaign to sell season tickets and solicit contributions. The community saved the football program.

Both of Harbaugh's sons, John and Jim, stepped in to assist with recruiting and scouting to assist their dad in the effort to save Western Kentucky University Hill-topper football.

The community's efforts were duly rewarded in 2002 when Coach Jack Harbaugh finally won the national championship.

SCOREBOARD

SOFTBALL
Wednesday
West Laurens 15,
Wilcox Co. 0

Thursday
Briarwood 8, Trinity 0
Long Co. 3, WL 2
Dodge Co. 10, Dublin 9
Vidalia 7, EL 5

PREP
SCHEDULE

FOOTBALL
Friday
Dublin at Washington Co.
Brentwood at Trinity
West Laurens at Cook
Johnson Co. at Wheeler Co.
Bleckley Co. at ECI
Fitzgerald at Dodge Co.
Lake Oconee Academy at
Twiggs Co.
Lanier Co. at Treutlen
Rutland at Wilkinson Co.
7:30 p.m.

SOFTBALL
Saturday
(at Georgia College)
WL vs. Mary Persons
/10 a.m.
WL vs. Jones Co./2 p.m.

Monday
Trinity at Edmund Burke
/4:30 p.m.
ECI at East Laurens/6 p.m.

Tuesday
EL at Dublin
Vidalia at WL/5 p.m.

Wednesday
Perry at WL/5 p.m.
Northside at Dublin
/5:30 p.m.

Thursday
WL at Liberty Co./5 p.m.
Dublin at Jefferson Co.
/5:30 p.m.
Trinity at Pinewood
Swainsboro at EL/6 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL
Tuesday
Long Co., WL at
New Hampstead/5 p.m.

Thursday
Windsor Forest, Liberty Co.
at WL/5 p.m.

FLAG FOOTBALL
Tuesday
EL at Treutlen/5 p.m.

Thursday
Telfair Co. at EL/5 p.m.

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GHSA
Continued from page 5

or needs can be brought to the attention of state decision-makers.

"It's fun to get their perspective, and sometimes we use that," Mitchell said.

That communication link works the other way as well, with these students serving as a first liaison for the GHSA on their campuses, where athletes' only knowledge of the organization can often be in games, where they see the GHSA logo on officials' uniforms.

"I didn't know as much about what the GHSA did until I was there," Mitchell said. "So we're trying to kind of give them an understanding of what the GHSA does."

Members also volunteer to help out at certain state championship events, help run the GHSA Instagram account and serve as the selection committee for a few annual contests, including one to present a small- and large-division student section of the year award.

"They watch those videos that are sent in and they vote on that," Mitchell said. "They do such a good job."

In the near future, the SAAC will also play a key part in helping the GHSA roll out a new sportsmanship initiative first pio-



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RACING THIS WEEK...



WINNER: SHELDON CREED

It took 138 races for Sheldon Creed to finally claim his first career O'Reilly Auto Parts Series victory at Atlanta this February. On Saturday night he earned his second trophy, and the timing couldn't be better with the Californian opening the nine-race Chase for the season championship with a visit to Victory Lane in the Fleetio 200 at Darlington Raceway.

Creed took the lead after his crew delivered a fast pit stop putting his No. 00 Haas Factory Team Chevrolet in front of the field for a restart with 49 laps remaining. The 2020 Truck Series champ took it from there and held the lead all the way to the checkered flag, crossing the finish line 2.961-seconds ahead of Hendrick Motorsports rookie Corey Day, who also turned in an impressive effort in the Chase opener.

Over his career, Creed has been especially good at the the famed 1.366-mile Darlington oval known as the track "Too Tough to Tame." His work Saturday was his seventh top-10 finish in nine Darlington starts. He was runner-up here in 2022 and earned two truck race wins here in 2021.

Four of the 12 Chase-eligible drivers finished among the top-five. Joe Gibbs Racing's Brent Crews was third – although not eligible for the driver's title, the finish was crucial as Crews' No. 19 JGR Toyota is running for the owner's championship.

Chase drivers JR Motorsports' drivers Sammy Smith and Richard Childress Racing's Austin Hill were fourth and fifth in their Chevrolets.

Regular season champion, JR Motorsports' Justin Allgaier led a race best 60 of the 147 laps and ran among the top-five all night. But his No. 7 Chevrolet hit the wall with 23 laps remaining while he was trying to rally from fourth. He had to nurse the car home in the closing laps and ultimately finished 17th, snapping a 10-race streak of top-10 finishes at the track.

The finish at a track where he's won four times cut his lead atop the championship standings from 35 points going into the race to only seven points ahead of Creed with eight races remaining to crown the champ.

Allgaier, a series-best six-race winner this season, had held a massive 229-point advantage in the standings before the points were reset for this nine-race Chase run to the championship.

Viking Motorsports' driver Anthony Alfredo finished sixth followed by Chase drivers JGR's Taylor Gray and Creed's teammate Sam Mayer. South Carolina native Jeremy Clements, who is not championship-eligible, finished ninth for his fourth top-10 of the year.

Chase driver Brandon Jones rounded out the top-10. Other title-eligible drivers Parker Retzlaff and Rajah Caruth were 21st and 26th, respectively.

It was a particularly eventful night for Caruth, who is competing for his first series championship. He rallied from being two laps down early in the race. But the same fuel pick-up issue that set him back early in the race reappeared with seven laps remaining and forced him to pit in those closing laps.

COOK OUT SOUTHERN 500
Christopher Bell's 1.038-second win over JGR teammate Ty Gibbs at the historic 1.366-mile Darlington Raceway in the 2026 Cup Series Chase opener was a strong statement for Bell's championship run. The victory vaults him from sixth place to second place in the championship standings.



Christopher Bell, driver of the #20 Mobil 1 Toyota, takes the checkered flag to win the Cup Series Cook Out Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway on Sunday. (James Gilbert/Getty)

Bell cooks up a savory Playoff win at Darlington

DARLINGTON, S.C. – Christopher Bell snapped a 33-race winless streak, claiming his first victory of the year in Sunday night's Cook Out Southern 500, coming after a record-breaking mark of seven runner-up efforts on the season. And the timing of his trophy hoist could not have been better for the perpetual championship contender.

Bell's 1.038-second win in the Joe Gibbs Racing No. 20 Toyota over JGR teammate Ty Gibbs at the historic 1.366-mile Darlington (S.C.) Raceway in the 2026 Cup Series Chase opener was a strong statement for Bell's championship run.

The victory vaults him from sixth place to second place in the championship standings, now only 12 points behind another JGR teammate, the regular season champion Denny Hamlin with nine races left to decide who hoists the big trophy.

"It's been too long, oh my gosh man," said a grinning Bell, who took the checkered flag and proudly bowed to the packed and rowdy Darlington grandstands in honor of his former teammate, the late Kyle Busch.

"I'm just so, so, so proud of all these guys, all these guys they deserve it more than anyone," he said of his team. "This has been a long time coming. And Darlington has been one I've always wanted to win since I got into the sport. It's the ultimate driver's track."

Not only did Bell end that winless streak, but the showing was a big boost to his spirit considering this season he's had to overcome a broken wrist suffered in June during a crash at Michigan. Bell raced as the injury was healing this summer and now that perseverance and unwavering belief in himself and team has put himself in position to vie for the 2026 championship.

Sunday's win in one of the premier events on the Cup Series schedule was not only rewarding in the moment, but a motivation going forward. And Bell's victory marks the first time since 2019 that the JGR operation has scored wins by all four of its drivers.

"We can win any week, it just hadn't happened yet," Bell said. "When I was sitting in the infield care center at Michigan, I thought my season would be over. But we're still in it, baby. We're still in it."

The 31-year old Oklahoman led 46 laps on the night, but ultimately took the lead for good getting around reigning series champion Kyle Larson with 12 laps remaining in the 367-lap race. Larson led a race best 99 laps, but was among four cars

that did not pit for fresh tires following an eight-minute red flag stoppage period for rain with 24 laps remaining.

Bell restarted fifth – his crew getting him out first among those that did take fresh tires on the pit sequence – and he wasted no time moving forward. He was on Larson's bumper two laps after that green flag restart and made the winning move low on Larson with 12 laps to go – in the closing laps holding off four other championship-eligible drivers including Gibbs, polesitter 23XI Racing's Tyler Reddick, Team Penske's Ryan Blaney and Larson who managed a top-five showing despite being at a tire deficit.

Larson, who is riding a 56-race winless streak now, said after the race that he did not doubt the call to stay on track during that final caution instead of taking fresh tires.

Wood Brothers Racing's Josh Berry was the only non-Chase driver among the top-10 finishers, his seventh place effort marking his sixth consecutive top-10 finish – the longest such streak for a Wood Brothers driver since NASCAR Hall of Famer, the late David Pearson in 1977. 23XI Racing's Bubba Wallace, Team Penske's Joey Logano were eighth and ninth.

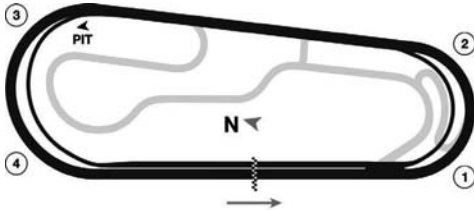
Last week's Daytona regular season finale winner, Roush Fenway Keselowski's Ryan Preece, rallied to a 10th place finish even after a slow pit sequence during the Stage 1 pit break that necessitated an extra pit stop and dropped to 28th in the running order.

The regular season champion and a five-time Darlington winner, Denny Hamlin finished 18th which was actually a huge rebound after a series of bad luck events mid-race hijacked the title favorite's trophy chances. Timely strategy calls and subsequent caution periods helped him get back on the lead lap – important in salvaging that top-20 position that keeps him atop the standings.

Other Chase-eligible drivers included Carson Hocevar, who finished 11th, Austin Cindric and Chase Elliott, who finished 13th and 14th. Chris Buescher and Daniel Suarez were 20th and 21st. Hendrick Motorsports' William Byron was 37th among the 38-car field, his No. 24 Chevrolet suffering an engine problem 48 laps shy of the flag.

Beyond Hamlin and Bell in the championship standings, Blaney is third now, 16 points off Hamlin. Reddick, who claimed the Stage 1 win, is 24 points back and Briscoe is 37 off his teammate's pace.

PLAYOFF 2: ENJOY ILLINOIS 300

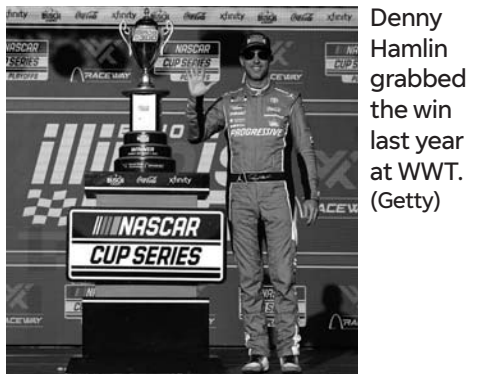


World Wide Technology Raceway
3 p.m. ET Sunday, USA

- **Location:** 700 Raceway Boulevard, Madison, Illinois, in the St. Louis metropolitan area
- **Surface:** Asphalt
- **Course:** 1.25-mile paved oval
- **Turns 1 & 2 banking:** 11 degrees
- **Turns 3 & 4 banking:** 9 degrees
- **Race distance:** 300 miles
- **Laps:** 240; Stage 1: 45; Stage 2: 95; Final Stage: 100
- **First race:** 2022
- **Of note:** Country band Old Dominion and hip-hop legend Busta Rhymes will headline the fifth annual Confluence Music Festival when the event returns as part of NASCAR Weekend at World Wide Technology Raceway. The event will feature more than 30 national and local acts, including Rhymes, Ying Yang Twins and a special guest, who will perform prior to the O'Reilly Auto Parts Series Chase race on Saturday. Old Dominion, will perform as part of the Enjoy Illinois 300 Chase event on Sunday.



Denny Hamlin grabbed the win last year at WWT. (Getty)



2026 CUP SERIES STANDINGS			
Top 30 w/ Playoff 16 as of Sept. 6			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 D. Hamlin Toyota	2135	16 W. Byron Chevrolet	2021
2 C. Bell Toyota	2123	17 S. v Gisbergen Chevy	616
3 R. Blaney Ford	2119	18 B. Keselowski Ford	557
4 T. Reddick Toyota	2111	19 M. McDowell Chevrolet	537
5 C. Briscoe Toyota	2098	20 R. Chastain Chevrolet	528
6 T. Gibbs Toyota	2096	21 E. Jones Toyota	520
7 K. Larson Chevrolet	2086	22 T. Gilliland Ford	489
8 C. Elliott Chevrolet	2063	23 AJ Allmendinger Chevy	478
9 J. Logano Ford	2063	24 Z. Smith Ford	467
10 D. Wallace Jr. Toyota	2054	25 J. Berry Ford	448
11 C. Buescher Ford	2047	26 A. Dillon Chevrolet	443
12 C. Hocevar Chevrolet	2046	27 R. Stenhouse Chevrolet	432
13 D. Suarez Chevrolet	2041	28 J. Nemechek Toyota	431
14 A. Cindric Ford	2033	29 A. Bowman Chevrolet	416
15 R. Preece Ford	2031	30 R. Herbst Toyota	409

2026 O'REILLY AUTO PARTS STANDINGS			
Top 20 w/ Playoff 12 as of Sept. 5			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Justin Allgaier #7	2135	11 Taylor Gray #54	2056
2 Sheldon Creed #00	2128	12 Rajah Caruth #88	2031
3 Carson Kvatil #1	2116	13 Brent Crews #19	634
4 Austin Hill #21	2099	14 William Sawalich #18	608
5 Corey Day #17	2089	15 Ryan Sieg #39	588
6 Jesse Love #2	2087	16 Anthony Alfredo #96	559
7 Sammy Smith #8	2080	17 Brennan Poole #44	473
8 Brandon Jones #20	2077	18 Dean Thompson #26	454
9 Sam Mayer #41	2069	19 Harrison Burton #24	417
10 Parker Retzlaff #99	2057	20 Jeremy Clements #51	416

NEXT RACE: NU WAY 225 Powered by Bobcat, Sauced by Blues Hog, WWT, 7:30 p.m. ET Saturday, CW

2026 CRAFTSMAN TRUCK STANDINGS			
Top 20 w/ Playoff 10 as of August 22			
Rank/Driver	Points	Rank/Driver	Points
1 Layne Riggs #34	2100	11 Stewart Friesen #52	408
2 Kade Honeycutt #112075	2128	12 Jake Garcia #98	404
3 Chandler Smith #382065	2128	13 Brenden Queen #12	364
4 Christian Eckes #912060	2060	14 A. Perez De Lara #44	355
5 Gio Ruggiero #172055	2055	15 Justin Haley #16	352
6 Ty Majeski #882050	2050	16 Tanner Gray #15	351
7 Grant Enfinger #92045	2045	17 Corey Heim #5	346
8 Daniel Hemric #192040	2040	18 Dawson Sutton #27	283
9 Ben Rhodes #992035	2035	19 Cole Butcher #13	268
10 Tyler Ankrum #182030	2030	20 Mini Tyrrrell #14	255

NEXT RACE: UNOH 250, Bristol Motor Speedway, 8 p.m. ET Thursday, Sept. 17, FS1

SOUTHERN WINNER QUOTE

"It's been too long, oh my gosh man. I'm just so, so, so proud of all these guys, all these guys they deserve it more than anyone. This has been a long time coming. And Darlington has been one I've always wanted to win since I got into the sport. It's the ultimate driver's track."

— Christopher Bell, who grabbed his first Cup win of the season in Sunday's second Playoff race, at Darlington



Christopher Bell in Victory Lane Sunday at Darlington. MEG OLIPHANT/GETTY

neered by leaders in Texas. And amid an officials shortage, and the rise of unsporting incidents statewide, there's never been a greater need to do everything possible to encourage players, coaches and fans to be intentional about prioritizing class over the competitive-ness.

"These kids were introduced to it at our last meeting, and they're going to be instrumental in helping us decide which way we need

to go in a lot of these things, and how we're going to implement this across the state," Mitchell said.

The SAAC has plenty of alumni who have gone on to do big things, including many to go into education and become college athletes and coaches.

At least a couple have become part of nationwide student athlete leadership boards representing some major universities.

Mitchell is consistent-

ly amazed at the caliber of dreams and ambitions held by the students who come through the program.

"I think most of them don't think they're going to play ball at the next level, or know that that's maybe not what they want to do professionally, but I think they are so much more broad-thinking than I had ever thought about being, about the things they want to do," she said. "When they all share their thoughts, it's

just amazing to me. I did not think like that as a kid."

The experience has left her encouraged about this state and country's next generation. She remains convinced of the importance of high school sports in their training and development, and the value of this investment in helping those future leaders become their best starting in high school.

"They're already independently just doing all

kinds of things on their own, but I hope that this is going to be a way to help develop and find different ways to make them successful, maybe broaden their thinking," Mitchell said. "Of course, this looks great on a college application, to have been a member of this and been selected out of a large number of kids to serve. It just gives them some opportunities to see other places to serve."



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

Relative's Gift Came With Strings Attached

DEAR ABBY: About 15 years ago, my nephew gave me a birthday gift of a baseball bat signed by a top player. I love baseball, so it was a lovely gift. After I thanked him, he said, "When my son is older, I would like you to give it to him." We have been estranged now for at least 10 years because his spouse dislikes our family for some reason.

Am I obligated to find a way to get the bat back to him? Looking at their Facebook over the years, I see no signs that there is any interest in baseball in this son or their family. I am in my later years and have been trying to downsize and pass on some of my things. I would rather pass it on to a grandchild of mine who loves and currently plays baseball and would treasure it. -- DOWNSIZING BASEBALL FAN

DEAR FAN: This family has chosen to cut ties with you. They cannot reasonably expect you to track down a grandnephew with whom you have no relationship. In fact, it was crass of your nephew to put a stipulation on the gift in the first place. Pass the bat to the grandchild you know and love.

DEAR ABBY: I've been married for 20 years. My in-laws and I have had a decent relationship. My husband, our three teenage children and I have been living with them for 10 years. It was rough at first, but things got better.

My in-laws received and spent three cushy inheritances (close to \$3.5 million) over the last 22 years. They also maxed out a reverse mortgage within the past two years. Abby, they have not one dime of it left!

Things started to go downhill about four years ago. My husband and I have bailed them out financially too many times to count. We're not financially struggling, but our nest egg (that we worked hard for and was to go toward buying our own home) is nearly gone. The in-laws have slid back into their old ways again -- not paying bills, not cleaning up after themselves, not helping with household chores, neglecting their health, etc.

My in-laws gave us their powers of attorney for health and finance a few months ago. They agreed to allow us to help them get organized, make a budget, clean up their house, make appointments and hold them accountable. They invariably play the victim and complain when we try to discuss things. Over the past eight months, I've had two breakdowns. This is affecting my mental and physical health. My kids want nothing to do with their grandparents. I'm not perfect, but I do have self-respect. Please help! -- ON EDGE IN WASHINGTON

DEAR ON EDGE: It's time to recognize that your in-laws may have a problem that you and your husband are not equipped to handle. That you now have their powers of attorney may (or may not) save all of you. For everyone's sake, stop enabling them and enlist the help of a licensed financial counselor to help straighten out this mess. Go online and look for an accredited or certified credit counselor affiliated with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (nfcc.org.). Their "slide back into their old ways" may have a medical explanation, which means your in-laws need to be evaluated medically and neurologically. Please don't wait.

SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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

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

ANSWER:

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTHOFF



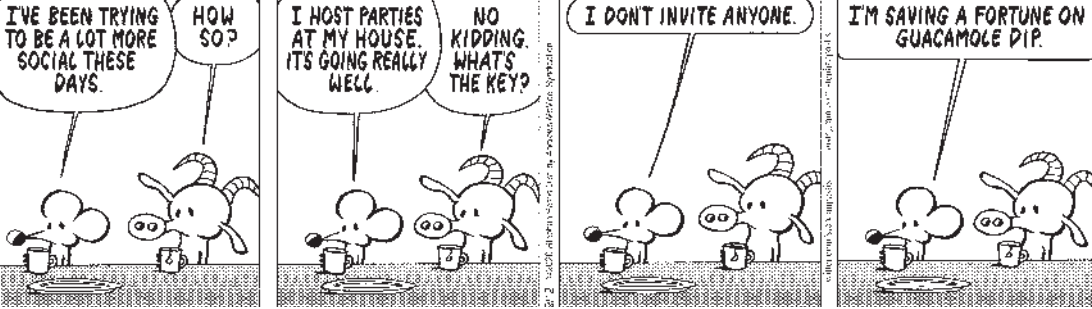
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Hand is moved. 2. Paper on desk is missing. 3. Desk is not as wide. 4. Window is not as wide. 5. The is different. 6. Blinds are higher.

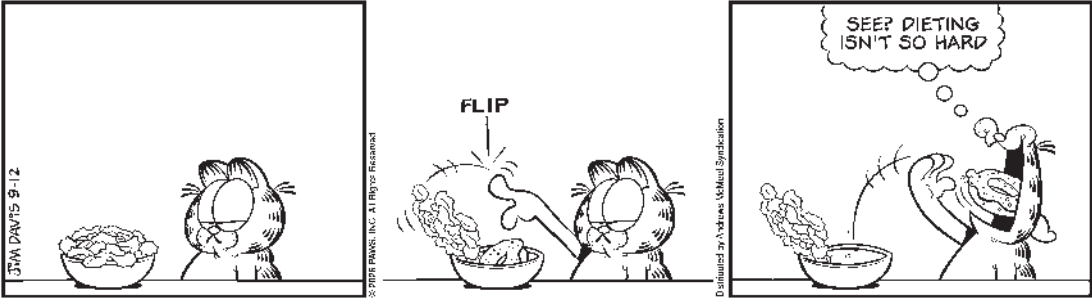
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEVE PASTIS



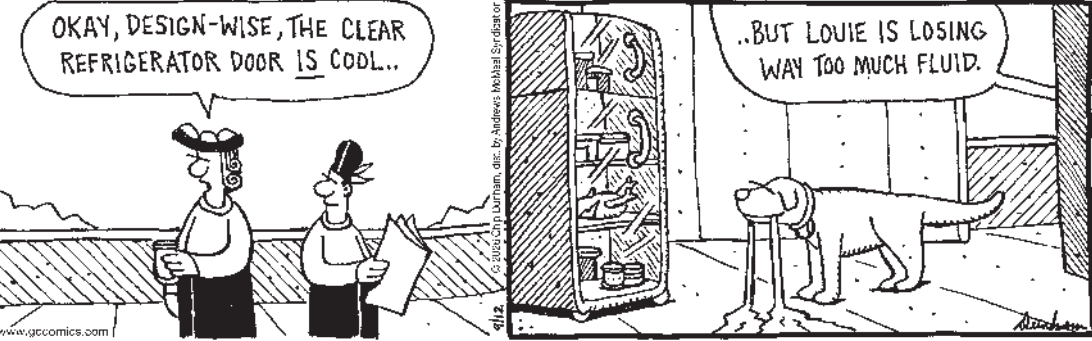
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



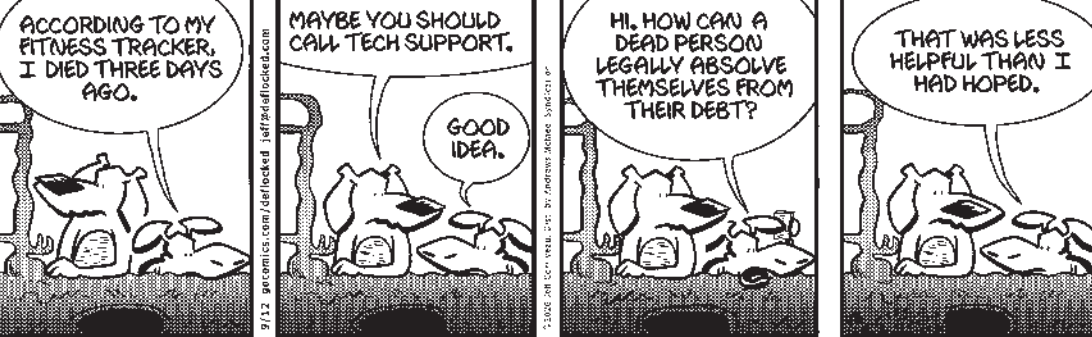
OVERBOARD

BY CHIP DUNHAM



DEFLOCKED

BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



Not so heavenly!



Ailanthus altissima, known as Chinese sumac or Tree-of-Heaven, is native to China. In the late 1700s, it was brought to the U.S. as an attractive, fast-growing ornamental tree. Since then it has spread throughout North America and displaced many native species. Dense thickets of it entrench fields and forests, destroy habitats and crowd agricultural fields and roadsides.

It regrows vigorously even when thought to be removed, and it is tolerant of poor soil and drought.

— Brenda Weaver

Sources:
www.invasive.org
www.nature.org
www.lewisginter.org

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THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

- One who shares top billing
- Encoding system
- Tempt
- Intensely unfriendly
- Dig further down
- "Forrest Gump" star: 2 wds.
- "The Pitt" actress Briones
- Recover, as lost money
- Definite article
- River of Egypt
- Movements of air
- Informal discussion
- Painter's primer
- Take to the slopes
- Makes a buzzing sound
- Three-part race, for short
- Very old
- Smile or laugh, for example
- "All ready": 2 wds.
- Buyers' counterparts
- Fit for the occasion
- Tightly closes
- Intention
- Private's superior, for short
- ___ and hearty
- Makes reference to
- Get better
- Friend, in French
- Descend from a horse
- ___-Atlantic region
- In error
- Add bubbles to
- Changed
- Person to follow
- Like Russian dolls
- Goes inside

DOWN

- Giving up
- Baby's garment
- Pilfers
- Payment to a waiter
- Laptop brand
- Keep subscribing
- Free tickets
- "Sorta"
- School support group: Abbr.
- Suggestive phrase: 2 wds.
- Indiana city
- Puts back to zero
- Illusionist Harry
- Toy truck maker
- Not trans
- Actress Getty
- Fast-running cat
- Spoken exams
- Smoke threads
- ___-cream cone
- Nashville group: Abbr.
- Practical people

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

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Saturday, September 12, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

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

♠ K Q ♡ A 8 7 4 3 ♦ Q 7 6 5 ♣ 9 6

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
10 Pass 10 Pass

1♠ Pass ?
What call would you make?

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

♠ K J 7 3 ♡ 10 9 5 ♦ A ♣ K 9 4 3 2

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
Pass Pass Pass 10

?
What call would you make?

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

♠ A J 10 5 ♡ 8 7 5 ♦ A 4 ♣ A K Q 6

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 10 Pass

?
What call would you make?

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

♠ A 9 2 ♡ K 6 4 ♦ A K J 10 3 ♣ A 5

As dealer, what call would you make?

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

♠ Q 3 ♡ A J 10 7 6 3 2 ♦ Q 8 ♣ K 5

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
10 2♠* 3NT Pass

*Six spades, 5-10 points
What call would you make?

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

♠ A 5 ♡ 5 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ A K Q 9 8 6 4

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ 1♠ Db1* Pass

*Negative - values with no clear bid
What call would you make?

Look for answers on Monday.

DISMISSED

Continued from page 1

torney Harold McLendon, who went on to be elected as the Dublin Judicial Circuit District Attorney in 2024. When that happened, a special prosecutor was appointed. Church said they had filed motions and were ready for trial.

“This was not a situation where we had worked out

a deal (with prosecutors) to get a dismissal,” he said. “They dismissed it. We had a bunch of great motions that I thought may have resulted in a dismissal. I think she would have gotten acquitted at the trial. This dismissal was well earned, because there was no evidence against her. She never should have been charged in the first place.”

RECORDS

Continued from page 1

This workshop is only good for those living in Laurens, Johnson, Treutlen and Twiggs counties.

“People don’t know how much you know until they know how much you care,” Avery said. “I feel like it’s our duty to put them back into the shape we found them without being convicted felons.”

Holding this event at the gym was believed to be a good place.

“That’s a lot less threatening than having them

come to the courthouse,” Avery said. “Plus, we’re looking to have a lot of people attend.”

Everyone will need to bring a current criminal history on them.

“We want to make sure it is a fresh criminal history,” said McLendon, adding that it needs to be have been a report done between Sept. 4 and 18.

“People can go to the sheriff’s office or the city police department,” Avery said.

The cost for a criminal history is normally \$25.

MILLAGE RATE

Continued from page 1

Collough said. “If we were to roll all the way back to the rollback rate, we would have received about \$74,000. So, what we’re asking for is an increase of about \$508,000. That is a 3.25 percent increase over last year.”

The county charges 2.5 percent on all of the collections for processing the millage rate. The county school board’s fee for 2026 is estimated to be around \$463,349. This will be deducted before the school board receives their money from the county.

The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$200,000 is approximately \$30.72. That’s a little more than a \$2.56 per month increase to your escrow account.

If the board rolled back 13.616, there would have been a zero net increase in terms of taxes given the evaluation of the properties or new properties in the county, said LCBOE chair-

man Tony Johnson.

“We are proposing to keep it at 14 mills,” he said. “We have rolled back the millage rate since 2021 when it was at 14.6. We have rolled it back every year.”

If the LCBOE rolls it back to 13.616, the county school system would have collected \$74,000 more in property tax than they did last year, McCollough said. The proposed amount will allow the LCBOE to collect about \$500,000 more. Laurens County Superintendent O.J. Hall added that if they rolled it back to 13.616, and receive the \$74,000 more, it would not have allowed the county to keep up with inflation.

“We would have run into a situation where we would have to raise (the millage rate) if we went with a net gain of zero,” he said.

In another slide, McCollough pointed out that the gross digest had grown from \$965,686 in 2020 to \$1,614,621,398 in 2026. The exemptions went from

\$95,547,092 in 2020 to \$290,766,996 in 2026. The net digest went from \$879,139,825 in 2020 to \$1,566,677,263 in 2026.

“Some of the increase in our digest can be contributed to the increase in property values that have been experienced in this county,” McCollough said.

The median sale price in Laurens County increased from \$130,000 in 2020 to \$237,000 in 2026. The median listing price per square foot has increased from \$82 in 2020 to \$136 in 2026.

McCollough pointed out that the following exemptions are offered by the state and counties:

- Standard homestead exemption (4,560 people take advantage of this)
- Individuals 65 years of age and older may claim a \$4,000 exemption from their county taxes (10 people have taken advantage of this)
- Individuals 62 years of age and older may claim additional exemption for

educational purposes (89 people are taking advantage of this)

- Floating inflation-proof exemption (1,213 are people taking advantage)
- Disabled veteran or surviving spouse (309 are taking advantage)
- Surviving spouse of U.S. service member (2 people have received this)
- Surviving spouse of peace officer or firefighter (1 person has qualified for this)

When it comes to what the school system is going to do with the funds, McCollough said the following has gone up since 2020: insurance (by 111 percent), sheriff resource officer contract (135 percent), fuel (77 percent), maintenance supplies (59 percent) and electricity (37 percent).

Hall said they are working with the state officials and the governor’s office to put on the ballot that anyone 80 years or older be exempt from school taxes.

9/11

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airport in Virginia heading to L.A. Thirty-one minutes into the flight, terrorists took over the plane and flew it into the west side of the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m.

At 8:42 a.m., United Airlines Flight 93 took off from New Jersey flying to San Francisco and terrorist took it over 46 minutes later. At 9:59 a.m., the South Tower, which was hit second that day, collapsed.

“That was about the time that the passengers of Flight 93 discovered the hijackers’ plan and fought until it crashed into a field in Pennsylvania at 10:03 a.m.,” Cutler said. “This flight was likely intended to strike the White House. Heroes on that flight sprung into action, sacrificing their own lives to take this flight down.”



Students at Oconee Fall Line Technical College participate in its annual September 11 program Thursday morning/PAYTON TOWNS III

The North Tower collapsed around 10:28 a.m.

“Seventy-five fire stations responded to the Twin Towers incident,” Cutler said. “To put that into perspective, Dublin, East Dublin and Laurens County has 21 fire stations, and they sent 75. Each of the 75 that responded, lost at least one member on 9/11. Some lost all.”

In all, 121 fire engines, 62 ladder trucks responded, 27 chief officers responded. For the first time in more than 30 years, the New York Fire Department issued a total recall of all personnel to respond to the site.

Cutler mentioned James 4:14: “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.”

“I assure you, those

3,000 people had no idea that that would be last day,” Cutler said. “We all take for granted that our plans will work out, and most times they do. But what if today is all you have? Have you shown love, compassion and forgiveness? We should all strive to live each day as if it is our last and make sure the ones important to us know that they are loved. A quote I read this week said, “The best way to

honor the people we lost on 9/11 is to be the people we were on 9/12.”

On Sept. 12, people swore to “Never Forget,” we flew our American flags and political party lines disappeared, he said.

“We cared for our fellow Americans and we held the ones responsible accountable for their actions,” Cutler said. “We took measures to ensure that this would never happen again. Every state in the United States sent people to help in the recovery efforts.”

But the death toll from the 9/11 attacks continues to rise. As of Sept. 11, 2025, the FDNY updated the number of firefighters who have died from 9/11 to 400, bringing the death toll for first responders to 743.

The longer Cutler has led in similar programs each year, the more people

he meets who were either young children or not born when the attacks happened in 2001.

“We must keep the memory alive, and continue to remember the ones who made the ultimate sacrifice,” Cutler said.

Pam Dunn, official at OFTC, said it was important to remember those who died and those who rushed toward danger.

“Even though this tragedy happened in the past, it still teaches us a vital lesson today,” Dunn said. “In the dark days after 9/11, people everywhere set aside their differences to support proper and care for one another. As we return to our campus routine, let’s keep that spirit alive by choosing kindness, looking out for each other and strengthening our community.”

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