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We are an authorized SNAP/EBT market.

County Commission OKs tax increase

By RODNEY MANLEY  
Staff Reporter

The Laurens County Commission approved a 31 percent property tax increase Tuesday, its first tax hike in more than 10 years.

Unswayed by the objections of a standing-room-only crowd, the commission voted to raise its millage rate to 7 mills, up from up from 5.49 mills. The tax increase will apply only to property taxes levied by the county commission and not those from county school board. The millage rate hike is expected to generate about \$3.5 million in additional taxes.

County officials contend the tax hike is overdue, and the money is needed to cover inflation and rising public safety costs. But to avoid an increase, the commission dipped into its healthy reserve fund to cover rising costs, spending more than \$4 million in reserves during the past three fiscal years to cover expenditures.

"That's not a sustainable business

COUNTY TAXES  
Continued on page 8



County Administrator Bryan Rogers gives a presentation Tuesday evening during the third and final public hearing on the tax increase/RODNEY MANLEY

City schools to ask state for more help  
District reports \$2.1 million general fund deficit in August

By RODNEY MANLEY  
Staff Reporter

The Dublin City Schools ended the month of August with a \$2.1 million general fund deficit and will face another cashflow shortfall next month.

Reports from the months of July and August were presented to the new City Board of Education at its first official meeting Monday night, providing an improved but still concerning snapshot of the district's finances. The system struggled through a yearlong financial crisis, surviving only through mid-year layoffs, spending cuts and monthly advances of its Quality Basic Education funding from the state.

August's report was better, as the district began the current fiscal year in July with a \$3.8 million deficit in its general fund. However, officials are bracing for a lean next few months, until local property taxes can be collected, which could mean seeking more help from the state.

"Are we going to have to

ask for advances on QBE funds to make our payroll in October?" board member D'Andrea King asked.

"Yes, we are," answered Chief Financial Officer Teresa Louder.

August's report includes \$5.3 million in liabilities, most of which is owed toward delinquent payments to the State Health Benefit Plan. The system is making monthly installments of almost \$300,000 to the state plan.

The latest financial reports are "alarming on paper," Louder admitted, but added that spending has been significantly reduced through financial controls that include finally requiring purchase orders before expenditures are approved. The district has spent about \$1 million less than at this time last year, she said.

"We could possibly clear our deficit this fiscal year, rather than 2028."

The new board also voted on July's financial report, but was careful to word the motion so as not to "ap-



Members of the Dublin City Board of Education listen to a report from Teresa Louder, the district's chief financial officer. Monday's was the first regular meeting for the new board members, who were sworn in at a work session last week/RODNEY MANLEY

prove" it. The report had been reviewed by the previous board, but never voted on, prior to its suspension and removal by the governor last month.

"We're signing off on something that was before this board," said board member Doug Eaves, who later made a motion to "acknowledge" that the current board received and reviewed the report.

"I just want to acknowledge it, rather than approve

it," he said.

**Improper paperwork delays vote on tax rate**

The school board has been expected to vote on advertising a millage rate, but tabled action until tax digest documents can be filed correctly. Interim School Superintendent Marcee Pool said county officials told her on Monday that consolidation sheets – a summary of taxable property in the city – did not include exemp-

tions.

Eaves suggested the board hold a called meeting on the millage rate, noting that waiting until the board meets next month could delay the tax collection process.

**2024 audit submitted to state**

Among the revelations from Dublin City's financial

**SCHOOL BOARD**  
Continued on page 8

Man arrested for fight with another driver in parking lot

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

A 47-year-old man was charged with disorderly conduct after he pulled into a local grocery store parking

lot and punched a man who passed him in traffic moments earlier.

According to a Dublin Police Department incident report, James Reuben Harrelson was arrested by an

officer after admitting to hitting the driver of another vehicle in the parking lot of Piggly Wiggly at 9:13 a.m. on Sept. 18.

Laurens County 911 received a call about two men

arguing in the store's parking lot over one's driving behavior. Both men were separated when officers arrived.

Harrelson said the other man was driving erratical-

ly, cut in front of him and started brake-checking him. Harrelson followed the vehicle to Piggly Wiggly and

FIGHT  
Continued on page 8

Smith's of Dublin celebrating 115th anniversary

By PAYTON TOWNS III  
Senior Reporter

Smith's Jewelry opened in 1911 the same year William Howard Taft was the president of the United States, Chevrolet entered the automobile market, the first Indianapolis 500 was

held, the RMS Olympic began her sea trials and the the hull of the RMS Titanic was launched in Belfast.

Smith's of Dublin, 130 W. Jackson St., was first mentioned as Smith's Jewelers appearing in the Sept. 22, 1911 edition of the then Dublin Courier-Herald Dispatch and Press. Current owner Natalie Young Curry does not know the exact date the business opened.

"The store started just as jewelry and added the table-top and gifts," Curry said. "We've been serving brides. I registered here as a bride and my mother-in-law registered here as a bride. We have been serving brides for generations to select their

china, as well as get their engagement and wedding rings."

They will be celebrating from 10 a.m to 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24.

"We will have giveaways, swag bags and obviously some celebration with mimosas and coffee and we'd love for people to come out," Curry said. "We are also celebrating Herend [collectibles], which is celebrating 200 years this year. They are hand-painted in Hungary, and they are known for their dinnerware and figurines. Each fall they select 10 stores nationwide



Natalie Young Curry stands outside Smith's of Dublin which is preparing to celebrate 115 years/PAYTON TOWNS III

SMITH'S  
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OBITUARIES



Loretta Brown Pope

Graveside memorial services for Loretta Brown Pope, 86 will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026, at Dublin Memorial Gardens.

Mrs. Pope was born Oct. 14, 1939, in Dublin, Georgia. She was the daughter of the late Roger Brown and Leagle Josephine Pullen Wilkins. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Jimmie Neal Pope; a son, Neal Pope; and a great-grandson, Shawn Glover. She was of the Baptist Faith. She was a self-employed hairdresser and homemaker. Mrs. Pope passed away Sunday, Sept. 20, 2026.

Mrs. Pope is survived by her son, Adam Pope; three daughters, Stephanie Pope Whittle, Amber Pope Loyd (Danny), and Summer Pope; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Stanley Funeral Homes and Crematory/Dublin Chapel has charge of funeral arrangements. To sign the Online Register Book please visit [www.stanleyfuneral-home.com](http://www.stanleyfuneral-home.com)



Jack Steven Val Lance

Funeral services for Mr. Jack Steven Val Lance will be held Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026 at 3 p.m. in the Chapel of Higgs Funeral Home in Soperton. Burial will be in the Harmony Baptist Church Cemetery in Treutlen County. Rev. Jason Corbett will officiate. Mr. Val Lance died Friday, Sept. 18, 2026.

Mr. Val Lance, 78, was the son of the late Roy Val Lance and Arietta Young Val Lance. He was born in Kalamazoo, Mich. on May 2, 1948. He received his Bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and was a United States Navy Veteran during the Vietnam War. He was a systems analysis computer programmer at Fort McPhearson in Atlanta for over 20 years. After retirement, he and his wife moved to the Gillis Springs community of Treutlen County in 2014 and were members of Journey Community Church in Vidalia. Jack loved to watch western movies and anything to do

with history, but he loved his family most of all.

Survivors include his wife of over 38 years, Lynda Reynolds Val Lance of Soperton; three brothers, C.T. (Barb) Val Lance of Constantine, MI, Bob Val Lance and Roy Young, both of Three Rivers, MI and all of his nieces/nephews, great nieces/nephews and great-great nieces/nephews.

Pallbearers will be Brad Kelley, Dakota Page, Nathan Chapman, Hugh Walker, Andy Simons and Matthew Corbett.

Visitation will begin at 2 p.m. at the funeral home prior to the service.

Higgs Funeral Home ([higgsfuneralhomeandflorist.com](http://higgsfuneralhomeandflorist.com) and [facebook.com](http://facebook.com)) of Soperton has charge of arrangements.



Saralyn Johnson Cooper

Saralyn Johnson Cooper, 92, of Macon, Georgia, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m., on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026, at Blue Springs Baptist Church, located at 1636 Minter Blue Springs Road, Rockledge, Georgia. Pastor Jim Allen will be officiating. The family will greet friends one hour prior to the service, and the burial will follow immediately after the service in the church cemetery.

Saralyn was born on Dec. 12, 1933, in Dublin, Georgia, to the late Andrew Dewey and Etta Olean Ricks Johnson. She worked in the banking industry all of her adult life and retired from Morris Bank in Dublin, Georgia at the age of 78. In retirement, she volunteered at the Lauren's Baptist Association for many years. Saralyn loved her family and enjoyed spending time with them. She will be greatly missed.

Saralyn is survived by her children, Jennifer Fromm of Macon, Georgia, Tim Cooper (Jill) of Cochran, Georgia, and Craig Cooper (Valerie) of Glenpool, Oklahoma; her nine grandchildren; her five great-grandchildren; and her two great-great-grandchildren.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Virgil P. Cooper.

The family wishes to give special thanks to her excellent caregiver, Elaine Vinson, and to Pine Pointe Hospice for their compassionate care, especially Lindsey, Claire, and Crystal.

Pallbearers will be Emerson Fromm, Drew Cooper, Tristan Cooper, Jake Fromm, Dylan Fromm, and Tyler Fromm.

Please visit [www.harts-mort.com](http://www.harts-mort.com) to express your condolences.

Hart's Mortuary at the Cupola, 6324 Peake Road, Macon, Georgia 31210, has charge of the arrangements.

ANNIVERSARIES

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Connie Faye Dollar Johnson

Connie Faye Dollar Johnson, 75, of Augusta, Georgia, passed away peacefully on Sept. 21, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. She was the beloved wife of the late Joseph Larry Johnson Sr. Connie was born Jan. 13, 1951, in Laurens County, Georgia, to the late Donald B. Dollar Sr. and Juanita Summerlin Dollar. She retired from Lackman Food Service and was a member of Woodlawn Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga.

Connie was a loving mother, grandmother, sister, friend and caretaker. She was best known for her cooking. She loved her family deeply, especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Connie was preceded in death by her sisters, Esther Tanner and Edna Foskey; brother, Donald B. Dollar Jr.; and stepdaughter, Emma Haynes.

She is survived by her daughters, Rhonda Myers (Donnie) of Dublin, Ga, and Catherine Alewine of Bluffton, S.C.; grandchildren Savanna Myers, Kimberly Howell (Page), Christian Alewine, Caleb Alewine, and Courtney Boan; stepson Joseph L. Johnson Jr., stepdaughter Connie Lynn Hill; sisters Patricia Gildon, Elizabeth Hedrick, and Donita Alexandra; brother Lester Dollar; six great-grandchildren, nine step-grandchildren, and three step-great-grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held Sept. 27, 2026, at 3 p.m. at Faith Christian Assembly, 1252 Snellbridge Rd., East Dublin, GA 31027. Interment will be held at a later date at Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville, Georgia.

Tommy Lee Gregory

Mr. Tommy Lee Gregory of Wrightsville, Georgia passed away on Sunday, September 20, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

[www.ServicesByDudley.com](http://www.ServicesByDudley.com).

BIRTHDAYS

Sept. 24  
Toi Harrison  
Persephone Jones  
Karen Phillips  
Aveyus Randolph  
Taveyus Randolph  
Lucinda "Cindy" Sumner  
Noah Channing Ward

Sept. 25  
Chelsea Paige Evans  
Willa Jean Jones  
Jeremy Middlebrooks

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Public wifi coming to downtown Cochran

By CAROLINE WEATHERSBY  
GTLN

Public WiFi is coming to downtown Cochran in what one official called a "huge win for the community."

According to Cochran Downtown Development Authority Director Ken Land, five different entities in Cochran-Bleckley County have agreed to fund a collaboration with Middle Georgia State University to bring free, public wifi to the downtown area.

Project plans include deploying ten access points, each with a 150 foot radius, along Second Street with coverage spanning from Ash Street to Dykes Street.

Right now, downtown Cochran is as Land described, a "dead zone." The area offers zero public wifi options and extremely limited data access. Though some businesses downtown offer free internet for customers, many don't.

According to Land, this low internet access is a major force driving business away from downtown.

Less than one mile away, Middle Georgia State University is home to hundreds of young adults who need consistent access to the internet to complete their school work. Without reliable access, students will opt to stay on campus.

While in the dead zone, visitors also have a hard time accessing their digital wallets which negatively impacts business owners.

According to Land, this collaboration between the city, county and the college will work to bridge this gap and "make Wi-Fi downtown accessible" for everyone.

"This will provide the community access to the internet downtown, hopefully causing them to stay longer and shop longer," he said.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Starches should be a modest part of a mixed meal

By DR. KEITH ROACH  
King Features

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a 77-year-old man who's prediabetic. I was told by a longtime diabetic that sugar (candy, soda, cake, etc.) doesn't need to be avoided -- just carbohydrates such as pasta, potatoes, etc. I was surprised to hear this. Is it really true? -- Anon.

ANSWER: We often use terms like carbohydrates, starches and sugars imprecisely. Strictly speaking, sugars are small molecules (usually 5 or 6 carbon molecules long), like glucose or fructose, which are called monosaccharides. These can also be combined into a single molecule (a disaccharide), which -- in the case of glucose plus fructose -- is called sucrose (table sugar).

Long strands of sugars that are strung together are called polysaccharides. Starches are very long strands of glucose molecules, with anywhere from hundreds to tens of thousands of them in strings and branches. White rice and processed wheat flour (the primary ingredient in most pastas and many white breads) are largely comprised of starch.

Starch begins turning back into sugar before you even swallow it. An enzyme in saliva (amylase) breaks down the starch structure. White bread that's made from highly refined flour turns into sugar so rapidly that your blood sugar goes up nearly as fast from bread as it would from eating the same amount of sugar.

Starch and sugars are both carbohydrates, as is fiber, but fiber is indigestible to us. Fiber acts to slow

down absorption, reducing the "spike" in blood sugar that occurs with refined starch. However, most foods that we eat are combinations of two or three macronutrients (the sources of calories), which are carbohydrates, proteins and fats.

Protein and fat both slow down the absorption of carbohydrates, similarly to fiber. Whole wheat flour contains fiber and protein, which is why it is preferred to processed white flour and doesn't spike the blood sugar as quickly or as high. Most vegetables have lots of fiber, so even though they're mostly carbohydrates (with a little protein), they aren't treated by your body in the same way that starchy foods are.

Partially because of the slower absorption, people tend to feel more full with fewer calories when protein, fat and fiber are included. Even so, proportions matter. A diet of 80% rice, 10% protein and 10% fat isn't going to be optimal for any person, especially one with diabetes.

People with diabetes don't need to completely

avoid starches or even simple sugars. They're an important part of the diet, and as long as they form a modest proportion of a person's food intake and are consumed as part of a mixed meal, people shouldn't feel bad about eating them.

Many of my patients with diabetes use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM). By keeping track of what you eat, CGMs can give you immediate feedback on how food affects your blood sugar. Talk to your doctor about whether a CGM is right for you. People on insulin, people who have low blood sugar (especially if they don't notice it), and people who are changing their diet and exercise patterns are among those who might benefit from a CGM.

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

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*In Loving Memory*

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY  
of the passing of

**IDELLA M. Jackson**

JUNE 6, 1933  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

# William T. Smith: A man of many colors

Have you ever been blue? You might think that you have been blue before, but never in your most depressed moments have you ever been as blue as one Laurens County gentleman, who suffered from a rare medical malady known as argyria. This is the true story of William T. Smith, whose complexion was truly blue, not when he was holding his breath, but all of the time.

Argyria is a rare skin condition which results from lengthy contact with silver or the ingestion of silver salts as medicine. In the Nineteenth Century, the disease was manifested in men who worked in the mining and manufacture of silver. Working with photographic processing and electroplating of silverware also contributes to the presence of blue pigments in human skin. The average human body contains 1mg of silver. Victims of argyria have from four to five grams up to forty grams of silver in their bodies. Much more than that level will cause instantaneous death.

When William T. Smith was in his early teens, he began to suffer from the debilitating symptoms of epilepsy. In an effort to stem the burdens of his seizures, doctors prescribed excessive doses of silver nitrate, which stains the skin and can cause burns. Silver nitrate is commercially used to develop photographic images and to purify water. Medically, the compound is used to cauterize wounds, prevent bleeding and infection or even for the removal of warts. Millions of babies each year have diluted solutions of the darkening agent placed in their eyes to destroy bacteria and in some cases, to prevent blindness. It is only in cases where an individual has excessive amounts of the chemical that the effects of silver nitrate are pronounced. This was the result in the case of William Smith.

His physicians believed that the silver nitrate would be absorbed into William's brain and entire nervous system and would stop his seizures. An unexpected result followed. The silver nitrate was absorbed by the epidermal capillaries throughout his body. Generally, argyria manifests in the body in spots of black and blue on the skin. However, in Smith's case, his entire body was permeated with a bluish pigment. One reporter exclaimed that "it was as though he had been tattooed with India ink."

Smith appeared to those who had never seen him before as if he had been made blue by some artificial means.

Upon a more careful examination, it was apparent that the whites of his eyes were as blue as deep indigo. The inside of his mouth, which is pink in most humans, was the same color as his scalp, a cerulean blue. Most remarkable was the stark contrast between his blue skin and his bright red hair. In his older years, the effects of the silver poisoning were represented in the whitened tresses of his hair and the whiskers of his beard.

As Smith grew older, the effects of prolonged sunlight while working outside caused the azure blue skin on his face, hands, and neck to darken. Otherwise, his skin was firm and normal in all aspects. The skin under his fingernails, apparently filtered from the ultraviolet rays of the sun, was of the same color as the skin beneath his clothes.

William always hoped that his condition could be treated. One physician after another told him there was no hope. He visited and consulted with specialists in the country's finest medical colleges to seek a cure for his disease. No matter what experiments the doctors performed, nor any sums of money that William saved for a cure, nothing could restore his skin to its natural color.

One might think that the outward appearance of his black, blue and azure skin would be an indication of some underlying illness. That was not the case with William Smith. Smith was rarely inconvenienced by his coloration. Oh, people laughed at him and kidded him. Everywhere he went, he was the object of glaring stares, over-the-shoulder glances, and cruel smirks. What bothered William the most was the cruel nickname of "Blue Billy." William, a Confederate veteran, wanted no part of a name penned on Yankee soldiers during the war. While riding on a ferry boat at the Dublin ferry one day, a dapper young man asked Smith if he was the famous "Blue Billy." Smith irately answered, "Yes, that's what is left of me!" Still somewhat perturbed, Smith retorted, "What the devil do you want?" The embarrassed young man, whose skin turned a peculiar shade of red, was taken aback and slowly removed himself to the rear of the boat, where he cowered until the boat reached the bank of the Oconee River.

William Smith was probably the most well-known Georgian of his time to suffer from argyria. He was known by the pseudonym of "the Blue Georgian," one which he took



By **SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.**

no offense to. As he traveled about, he was able to restrain his anger as insensitive onlookers attempted to humiliate him. Fortunately, William never succumbed to being a freak in a side show, like the famous "Blue Man" of Barnum and Bailey's circus.

Actually, Smith was a somewhat successful businessman in Laurens County. Described as shrewd in his business skills, he worked as a livery stable keeper, huckster, farmer, and merchant. Because of his accomplishments in his business endeavors, some people sought out Mr. Smith as some sort of oracle to solve the mysteries of life. His early successes in business allowed the "Blue Georgian" to retire at a fairly young age so that he might enjoy the fruits of his sweat and toils. Though retired, Smith continued to engage in some business activities. In the fall of 1894, he formed a partnership with Captain Tom Smith for the warehousing and sale of cotton. The Smiths handled several thousand bales of cotton and made a handsome profit in the process. Smith was blessed with a fine wife and five pretty children. They were described as "as interesting a group as can be found in the town of Dublin."

William Smith was able to prevail over the tumult of his medical condition. He proved more than anyone else could ever prove that the color of his skin was not an indication of his fine character and keen business intellect. A more encouraging note of the consequences of his treatment for epilepsy was the calling into question of the risks of the treatment of the disease with silver nitrate.

## DIVA ON A DIME

### Chicken-apple sausage soup

By **PATTI DIAMOND**  
King Features

To welcome the season properly, I'm turning my attention to one of autumn's unsung kitchen heroes: chicken-apple sausage.

This versatile convenience balances rich, savory flavor with a subtle sweetness that feels right at home beside cabbage, onions, winter squash, sweet potatoes and, of course, more apples.

You can grill the links and tuck them into buns. Roast them whole with cabbage, onions and apples for a braised-style supper. Slice them onto a sheet pan with sweet potatoes, or saute slices and add toothpicks for an easy appetizer. Chicken-apple sausage travels happily from skillet to soup pot to party.

Its subtle sweetness pairs beautifully with mustard and cabbage, rosemary and potatoes, sage and squash, or garlic and white beans. That flexibility matters when the plan is less "follow a recipe" and more "please turn these groceries into dinner before we eat dry cereal over the sink."

Its greatest virtue is speed. Most chicken-apple sausage sold in supermarkets is already fully cooked, so check the package. With fully cooked sausage, you are browning and heating it rather than cooking raw meat. Once the accompanying vegetables are tender and the sausage is hot, dinner is ready. Anyone who has stared into the refrigerator at 5:47 p.m. will recognize this as a small kitchen miracle.

This week's soup puts our autumn overachiever to excellent use. Cannelini beans provide protein, fiber and creaminess without actual cream. Spinach brings color and vegetables to the proceedings. The apple echoes the sweetness in the sausage and softens into the savory broth.

The whole pot takes about 25 minutes and works equally well for lunch, dinner or the freezer. The timing assumes an average chopping pace.

Speedy choppers may finish sooner; slower choppers should allow a few extra minutes.

If you plan to freeze it, cool the soup promptly and portion it into freezer-safe containers.

**CHICKEN SAUSAGE AND APPLE SOUP**  
*Yield: 4 servings*  
*Total time: 25 minutes*

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 fully cooked chicken-apple sausage links, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 1 apple, any variety, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 4 cups (32-ounce) chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 1/2 cups fresh spinach
- Sliced green onions, to garnish

Optional: Add 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper with the sausage and/or 1 cup finely diced sweet potato with the broth.

Warm the olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the sausage and apple. Cook, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes, until the sausage begins to brown.

Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Increase the heat to medium-high. Add the beans, broth, pepper and salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 8 minutes.

Stir in the spinach and simmer until wilted, about 2 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve immediately, topped with sliced green onions if desired.

This soup is warm, hearty and full of fall flavor. In other words, it announces autumn with much less effort than washing the musty smell out of all your sweaters or decorating the porch. Bon appetit!

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## DID YOU KNOW ...?

### Has the Army had a general officer with no military experience?

By **JACK BAGLEY**  
GTLN

Holy mackerel! Do you know what this Saturday is?

Yes, I know it's Saturday. Sheesh.

Seriously, though ... it's my birthday. Another trip around the Sun completed.

On Saturday, I will turn 68 years old ... and believe me, I feel every single day of those 68 years.

Happy birthday to me, I guess ... and I'm sure of happy trivia to you! Here's my gift. Enjoy it!

*Did you know ...*  
... who was credited as the narrator in the 1960s TV series Batman? Not mentioned in the credits, the narrator was identified as Desmond Doomsday. The only problem was, Desmond Doomsday did not exist. The name was a pseudonym for William Dozier (1908-1991), the producer of the show. Dozier had auditioned several voice actors for the part of the series narrator, but none of them met his approval ... so he did the job himself. (Holy multiple jobs, Batman!)

... what the collective word for a group of bullfinches is? It's called a bel-lowing. And if you don't know what bullfinches are, they're birds, and they sing ... a lot. (Loudly.)

... the creator of The Hunger Games once wrote for a children's television show? Suzanne Collins (born 1962) wrote the classic dystopian novel series beginning in 2008, and it was made into a series of blockbuster movies. But before Collins wrote that bleak outlook on the future, she was a writer for the Nickelodeon children's series Clarissa Explains It All. (Working on a kids' show can make one dystopian. I'm just saying.)

... Venus has rainbows? On the second planet from the Sun, such phenomena are called "glories" and are perfect concentric circles of colored rings. (There's no place for a pot of gold, it seems.)

... the disappearance of an Australian pilot has never been solved? On the evening of October 21, 1978, Fredrick Valentich (1958-

1978) was piloting his Cessna airplane on a 125-mile training flight over Bass Strait, south of Australia. During the flight, Valentich radioed that he he was being accompanied by an aircraft that was about a thousand feet above him. The mysterious aircraft had four bright lights and was moving at a very high rate of speed. It then approached his plane from the east, and at first Valentich thought another pilot was having fun with him. He then reported that the other aircraft was "orbiting" above him. Radar at area airports only registered Valentich's aircraft, not the bogey he was reporting. Valentich's last transmission was, "It's not an aircraft," and then a sound like a metallic scrape was heard. A search was mounted almost immediately, but no trace of Valentich or his Cessna were ever found. Was he kidnapped by a UFO? Did he crash into Bass Strait? No one knows. (Cue Rod Serling to step into the picture.)

... a man with no military experience whatsoever was appointed a three-star general during World War II? William S. Knudsen (1879-1948) was an executive at General Motors when the war broke out and the U.S. joined the effort in 1941. After meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945), Knudsen was appointed Chairman of the Office of Production Management to increase production of war material - and he did, tripling the number of tools and exponentially increasing the number of aircraft built. Knudsen's direction also astronomically increased the number of cargo and Navy ships. When he was appointed Director of Production under the Secretary of War, Knudsen was commissioned a lieutenant general in the Army - despite having never served before. He was later named Director of the Air Technical Service Command, and resigned his commission on June 1, 1945. To date, Knudsen holds the highest initial appointed rank ever in the history of the U.S. armed forces. Additional trivia note: Despite having no military background,



Did General William Knudsen earn his stars without any prior military experience?/SPECIAL PHOTO

Knudsen received the Distinguished Service Medal on two occasions during the war.

... the measurement known as the "yard" was based on the length of a king's arm? King Henry I of England (1068-1135) fixed the measurement of a yard as the distance between his nose and the thumb of his outstretched arm. This measurement was 36 inches. He then decreed that the measurement known as the foot would be 1/3 of this, or 12 inches. Historical side note: Had Henry's arm been six inches longer, a foot would be 14 inches, not 12. (I wonder if this is where "yardarm" came from?)

... the internal-combustion engine for automobiles was invented in 1885? Karl Benz (1844-1929) installed the engine in his first automobiles. The first cars by Benz had three wheels; later the engineer upgraded to four wheels. But Benz' automobile, while the first with an internal combustion engine, was not the first actual car. That distinction goes to some steam-powered contraptions designed in Britain in the late 1860s. (But I'm glad he invented it!)

... Hawaii has its own time zone? Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time operates two hours behind Pacific Standard Time, one hour behind Alaska Standard Time, and five hours behind Eastern Standard Time. Hawaii also does not observe Daylight Savings Time. (Smart!)

... the nearest galaxy to our own is getting closer every day? The Andromeda galaxy is currently about 2,500,000 light-years away and is moving toward our own galaxy, the Milky Way at a speed of 68 miles per second. Astronomers say that about four billion years from now, the two galaxies will "collide" - which sounds really bad but won't actually amount to all that much, as there is some serious distance between stars in each galaxy. The end result will be one massive galaxy comprising more than 1.5 trillion stars. (That will be impressive!)

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# Affordability meets the cost of government

We're less than a month out from statewide elections that will determine Georgia's leadership for the next four years. Regardless which party wins, there will be new people sworn in as governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. Those positions alone are enough to change the tone, tenor, and trajectory of the state before you factor in changes that will occur in the composition of the state legislature.

Candidates are mostly emphasizing what they will change. It's equally important to understand where they will be starting from.

Campaigns are fueled by vibes. Actual decisions made once winners are sworn in are rooted in data.

While the Tea Party has morphed into MAGA, the general sentiment of the right is that voters are Taxed Enough Already. The left, meanwhile, likes to promise unlimited spending for virtually any and every cause, if only "the billionaires" would pay for it.

The reality is that most of the tax burden at the state level falls to the broadest section of the middle class. There are pledges to cut taxes. Both income and property taxes are frequently mentioned. Both present real expenses to everyday Georgians.

"Affordability" is the new buzzword to discuss inflation, that was off limits from most major news sources as an issue during the 2024 campaign cycle. Now it's among the top issues.

Republicans want to point out that the rate of inflation was higher under President Biden. Democrats want voters to blame tariff policies and war with Iran as the reasons items cost more. There's evidence to support both side's claims.

These are macroeconom-



GEORGIA  
POLITICS

By CHARLIE HARPER

ic issues that bring voter angst into state elections. State leaders can't fix the national and international economic issues nor monetary climate. They are responsible, however, for setting state policies that maximize the local economy's potential, protect the quality of life, provide for a quality education, and provide for common infrastructure.

All of these responsibilities which fall to state and local leaders cost money. They too have "affordability" issues. Inflation causes the cost of government to go up too. The goods government must buy – from construction materials to build roads, equipment for offices, cars for the State Patrol, and generally all other items the state buys costs a lot more than it did a decade ago. Likewise, the salaries of those who work on behalf of us in government roles also increases with inflation to keep wages competitive.

Voters noticing that a pound of ground beef can cost \$9 or more are in no mood to be told the cost of government is also going up. They want tax cuts. That's natural.

It's also natural to be told that you're taxed too much. Even the party that wants to increase taxes won't tell their voters they want to tax

THEM more. They just say someone else will pay.

That's the rhetoric. The Urban Institute gives us a place to start a real discussion with some facts.

They compare all 50 states. They then combine all local and state government spending, and divide that by the state's population. The result is the amount each state pays per capita for government services. Their most current data is compiled through 2023's data.

In a prior report two years ago, Georgia was the state with the lowest cost of state and local government. The most current report shows spending increasing slightly faster than others, but Georgia still coming in with the 4th lowest cost per person, at \$9,960.

The three states that beat Georgia are Tennessee (\$9,221), Idaho (9,422), and Nevada (\$9,514). For comparison, other neighboring states in order of spending are Florida (\$10,484), Alabama (\$10,947), North Carolina (\$10,955), and South Carolina (11,121).

A state many wish Georgia could emulate on tax policy, Texas, spends \$10,777 per person. They fund this with oil extraction revenues Georgia doesn't have, and roughly double the proper-

ty taxes that Georgia's local governments have, but the state does not.

Two states often the deserved targets for fiscal derision rank 48th for California (\$17,527) and 49th for New York (\$18,450). The highest is somewhat of a structural anomaly, with Alaska having a very low population base over a very widely dispersed geography spending \$20,472, with much of their burden also offset by oil extraction fees rather than personally paid taxes.

So Georgia is almost as lean as any other state, and a lot more efficient than the worst. But again, notice this is state AND local spending. The state has actually been actively rolling back income tax rates. State gas taxes no longer rise with the price of gasoline. The state no longer collects property taxes.

Quite a few Georgians are noticing local governments advertising hearings on increasing property taxes. Many of these entities are promoting millage rate roll-backs, despite the fact that increased tax assessments are increasing revenues to local governments.

Much of what the state collects flows directly back to local governments. Education funds are chief among them, but many other programs have dedicated local government funding components. Legislators have grown tired of getting beaten up for the increasing cost of government, then watching local governments take their payouts and turn around and increase taxes through local assessments.

The takeaway here today is likely going to be friction in January. Georgia remains lean, but the costs relative to other states is going up. Legislators will assert the blame lies with local commissions, councils and school boards.

TELL IT!



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

**Regarding the comments** about not receiving the paper since the change. It's not The Courier Herald's fault. They get the papers to the post office. I agree it is frustrating especially after you've paid for your subscription and not getting a paper.

**An inept city/county government** in Baldwin county dug an \$18 million hole... the answer? Easy, raise property taxes 93%. An inept DCS lost \$20 million, answer? Hike city property taxes 25%. Laurens county government says everyone else is hiking taxes, so why don't we? Easy. Just take more money from taxpayers. See the common denominator here? Incompetent and/or corrupt local government. No accountability. No one goes to jail. Just pocket tens of millions, say you don't know what happened and hike taxes to take more money. Great scheme. No justice anywhere but a very successful scheme.

**Law enforcement or the DA** won't bring anyone to justice for the DCS robbery, or the county government for their property tax theft. The GBI couldn't find a criminal (in government office anyway) in a wet paper sack. Ask Baldwin county. But God will... "be sure your sin will find you out..." (Numbers) and "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7).

**Please vaccinate your kids.** Antivaxxers in

Laurens County are trying to enroll their kids into local daycares and schools. If you love your kids, make sure they are up to date for their own safety!

**Beware! I just received a text** saying we are confirming voter registration records, is this and stated my name? Came from a number starting with 814.

**The Courier Herald:** "The Laurens County Commission defended its proposed 31 percent property tax increase at the first of three public hearings, saying the county cannot afford to keep dipping into its reserves to cover rising operating costs..." Here's a radical idea, why doesn't the commission cut operating costs instead of raising taxes? That was DCS's problem. They kept raising but never cut.

**Those three public meetings** for the 30% tax hike by the county commission are only to satisfy state requirements. It's only a formality. What the public thinks or says doesn't matter. The commissioners will hold their three meetings and raise the taxes. The tax payers have zero recourse and no power over their tax rates or how it's spent.

**The last 3-4 paragraphs** of the county taxes article in Thursday's paper say what I have said from the start. They are doing this now in anticipation of the FLOST. Very deceitful. Reduce spending!

# Uncle missing in action in Vietnam is found elsewhere

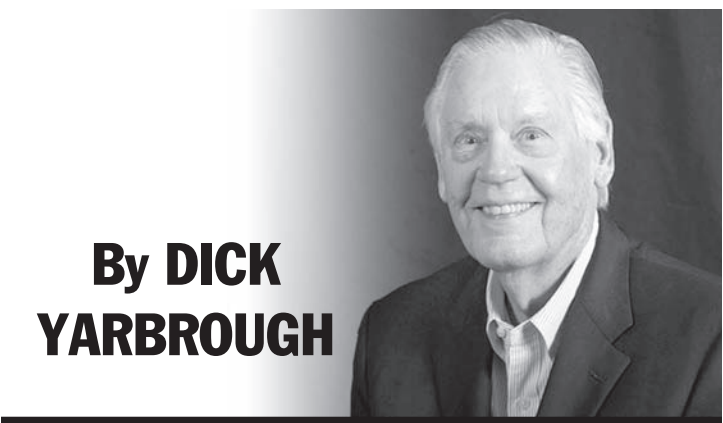
You have read my accounts of my fraternity brother at UGA, Pat Boggs, a Marine Corps pilot who went missing in action during the Vietnam War. One of my columns wondering what had happened to him made it to Monterey, California, where his brother-in-law, Ron Breuch, filled me in on the details. Maj. Boggs had been killed on a bombing mission in North Vietnam when his plane hit a karst, a limestone formation prominent on the coast. Total devastation. Nothing found but harnesses and a pistol.

Pat's niece, Aileen Wetzel, who never got to meet her uncle, recently went to Vietnam and visited the site where his plane had crashed. She shared her mystical and spiritual experience with me. I feel compelled to share it with you. It is about being lost and found. Here is her story:

"In my early 20s, a business trip took me to Washington, D.C. My mother asked me to visit the Vietnam Wall and bring home a pencil rubbing of her brother's name.

"As I started to walk the length of the black granite wall, my gaze lifted from the flowers and mementos left on the ground and the first name I read was Major Paschal G. Boggs, my Uncle Pat. I still can't explain it. It felt like a tap on the shoulder. A reminder: I'm here.

"When I decided to go to



By DICK  
YARBROUGH

Vietnam in August, I carried that experience with me. I believed that if I had felt him at the Wall, then surely I would feel him here.

"Eventually, I found myself on Ha Long Bay, a two-hour drive from Hanoi and a mere 8 kilometers from the crash site.

"As I stood on the boat, the water was calm beneath us, interrupted by those extraordinary limestone karsts rising almost impossibly from the sea — immense, ancient shapes. Some stood alone. Others appeared one behind another through the haze, fading into shades of gray until it was difficult to tell where the stone ended and the sky began.

"It was breathtaking. Somewhere above this water, Pat had flown. On his last mission, he would have looked down upon this same landscape. The thought stopped me.

"Nearly sixty years separated us, and yet for a moment we occupied the same

geography — the same sea, the same impossible limestone formations, perhaps even the same horizon.

"I tried to imagine what he had seen from the cockpit. Had he noticed the beauty beneath him? Had the karsts looked small from the air, scattered across the water like stones? Was the bay clear that night, or hidden beneath clouds? Did he know these would be among the last mountains, the last water, the last pieces of earth he would ever see?

"I watched the limestone cliffs pass slowly beside me. And I waited. I waited for what had happened before. For the coincidence. For the sudden certainty that something had shifted. For that familiar tap on my shoulder. I'm here.

"But nothing came. There was only the water, the mountains, the sky. And silence. What overwhelmed me on Ha Long Bay was not Pat's presence. It was his absence. He wasn't there.

"And there it was.

An epiphany that nearly knocked me to my knees. Maybe the dead do not stay where they die. Maybe they stay where they are loved.

"I thought about the Wall. I thought about Pat's name carved into the black granite. I thought about the hands that have touched those names. The flowers left beneath them. The photographs. The letters. The people who stand silently before more than fifty-eight thousand names searching for a loved one.

"And perhaps that is why I could feel Pat at the Wall but could not feel him in Ha Long Bay. Vietnam could show me the water he flew over. It could show me the mountains he saw. But it could not tell me where he went. Perhaps there was nothing of Pat left for me to find in Vietnam because he had not been left behind.

"As our boat moved quietly through Ha Long Bay, another limestone karst emerged through the haze. I looked up and a hawk, a Black Kite to be specific, was gliding effortlessly through the air. Mom passed away years ago, but she frequently comes to me in the form of a hawk. She was there. And maybe that was the tap on the shoulder I had traveled so far to find."

Maj. Pat Boggs is not in Vietnam. Once lost. He has been found. His spirit is here. He is at home, where he belongs. Well done, good and faithful servant.

## THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"Words are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools."

- Thomas Hobbes

## DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

- Psalm 40: 8

## EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

September 24, 2026 is...  
• National Horchata Day  
• National Punctuation Day  
• Heritage Day

## YOUR TURN:

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

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# GEORGIA TRUST

— for Local News —

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Courtney Vessell/CIRCULATION MANAGER

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

Dublin Police Department

-Tommy Bruce Shine, 17, was charged with two counts of possession of a firearm by a minor and obstruction of law enforcement officers at the intersection of North Jefferson Street and West Moore Street at 11:45 p.m. on Sept. 8.

An officer was patrolling the area when he saw a man who's physical appearance, clothing and build were consistent with an individual captured on video surveillance during an entered auto that occurred during the early morning hours.

The young man identified himself as Tommy Shine, and said he was going to meet a cousin who lived around Oconee. Shine was carrying a black book bag. While checking the book bag, the officer located an AR 15 style magazine. Shine said he was not armed, but the officer saw what looked like a shape of an object consistent with a concealed handgun.

When the officer asked for Shine to raise his shirt, Shine grabbed toward the area of his waistband and the officer saw a suspected handgun. Shine then ran away but was caught and arrested. A Glock 34 Gen 4 handgun was recovered from Shine's waistband.

- On Sept. 12 around 8:59 p.m. saw a gold Toyota Camry traveling on Telfair Street. The officer was familiar with the vehicle and believed the driver to be Darrell D. Robinson, 47.

The officer knew Robinson had previously had an active probation violation warrant through the police department. The Toyota was found traveling on Veterans Boulevard near Mall Road. Robinson was removed from the vehicle and arrested. During the investigation, officers detected the odor of marijuana coming from inside the vehicle and saw an open container.



POLICE BEAT...

During the search, officers found a camouflage bag on the floorboard of the vehicle. A colorful zippered bag containing approximately three grams of suspected marijuana inside the camouflage bag.

The man was transported to the sheriff's office and released to jail staff for booking. He was charged with possession of marijuana less than one ounce.

- On Sept 14 at 7:25 p.m., an officer responded to Fairview Park Hospital on Industrial Boulevard in reference to a removal.

The officer was advised that Nicholas Otto Carr, 32, was in the area of bed No. 6 on the emergency room side of the hospital. The officer found Carr in the hallway near his assigned room. He was yelling loudly and causing a disturbance in the hallway.

The officer tried to de-escalate the situation and made several attempts to talk with Carr, but the man was uncooperative and continued to yell and act in a hostile manner. The hospital staff advised the officer that Carr had previously been admitted to them for a mental health evaluation and had been released from the evaluation approximately three days before to this incident. Hospital staff also said no one had arrived to pick up Carr following his release and

the man began acting hostile toward the staff. Carr was transported to the sheriff's office where he was issued citation for disorderly conduct.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

-On Sept. 9 around 7 p.m., a deputy was dispatched to Pointe West Place in reference to an entered auto.

- Around 1 p.m. on Sept. 9, a deputy met with a person at the sheriff's office in reference to someone attempting to enter a truck on Main Marian Lane.

- Jesse Lee Toole, 34, of East Dublin was charged with possession of methamphetamine and first offender attempt to purchase firearm by convicted felon after a deputy went to Dollar Lane in Adrian in reference to serving a warrant. Toole was transported to the sheriff's office.

- A wallet was stolen on Bridgemill Drive around 3:30 p.m. on Sept. 9.

- On Sept. 9, at noon, a deputy was advised of a series of break-ins that occurred on East Jackson Street. The owner wanted it reported.

- A vehicle was damaged at the intersection of Dublin/Eastman Road and Mount Carmel Church in Dexter at 4:58 p.m. on Sept. 10.

*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.*



West Laurens announces homecoming court

It is homecoming week for West Laurens High School as the Raiders prepare to celebrate and name a new queen and king on Friday, Sept. 25. Those on the court are: seniors Madison Bonseigneur, Truett Bainbridge, Marleigh Johnson, Janile Browder, Zamorianna O’ Neal, Jalen Cordy, Marandon Timmons, Zach Robinson, Journee Washington, Jayden Starley, juniors Jenna Kate Bennett, Jaxson Lamb, Sydney Howard, Corey Washington, sophomores Victoria Jones, Jarek Giles, Marley McNeal, Bryson Morgan and freshmen McKenna Griffin, Cale Crawford, Colbee Sapp and Ivan Zhao / SPECIAL PHOTO

Statewide candidates to debate at Atlanta Press Club

By TY TAGAMI  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — In three weeks, early voters will start going to the polls ahead of the Nov. 3 general election. The first day of early voting, on Oct. 13, will also feature the final candidates in two days of debates co-ordinated by the Atlanta Press Club at Georgia Public Broadcasting's midtown Atlanta studios. Every statewide candidate will be there on Oct. 12 and 13, except one or two, including the headliner of the Republican ballot. Rick Jackson, the Repub-

lican who is asking voters to make him Georgia's next governor, has formally declined to attend, said Lauri Strauss, executive producer of the debate series. Fitz Johnson, a Republican running for Public Service Commission, the agency that regulates energy companies, has not confirmed or declined his attendance yet but has been communicating with organizers. "He's been responsive, but I just don't have a yes or no from him," Strauss said, adding that organizers hope Jackson changes his mind

and decides to attend. With Jackson's absence, the top matchup will be between Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff and the Republican who wants to unseat him, U.S. Rep. Mike Collins. Incendiary exchanges between the two are likely when they field journalists' questions and confront each other for an hour at 8 p.m. on Oct. 13 to close out the debate series. In recent but separate events, Ossoff has painted Collins as a white supremacist sympathizer while Collins has called Ossoff a communist who wants open

borders. The first debate, at 1:30 p.m. on Oct. 12, promises a fiery clash, as well.

NOW HERE'S A TIP

By JOANN DERSON

\* Spring bulbs need a few weeks in the ground to get established before the first of the frosts. If you're just getting around to planting your spring bulbs, here is a great garden design tip: Use kebab skewers to figure out the bulbs' placement in the garden.

\* "Place an ice cube (or chips) in carpet divots left behind by furniture legs. This will help the fibers "plump up," and the spot will disappear!" -- A.L. in Utah

\* Felt circles are great for putting under small appliances on the kitchen counter. They shift better,

but they don't scratch the countertops. You can find them at the hardware store, or make your own custom ones by cutting out what you need from a piece of felt and attaching it to the bottom of your appliance with double-stick tape or even a drop of glue!

\* Running a machine that isn't full not only wastes energy and water, it also wastes your money because you are paying to run more washes. Always fill the machine -- but remember not to overload it! This applies to both your dishwasher and your clothes washer.

Classifieds

Real Estate

For Rent/Lease

For Rent: 2 and 3 Bedroom. Located in East Dublin. No Pets! 478-272-8090

Miscellaneous for sale

U Pick Sweet Potatoes, \$10 per 5 gal. bucket, bring containers. Randy Deloach: 912-282-4300 day, 912-739-4124 night. 1026 Herman Lynn Rd, Claxton, GA.

NEWS DIGEST

The Town of Cadwell will hold a council meeting on Monday, Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. in the Cadwell Town Hall. The agenda follows:  
- Call meeting to order  
- Invocation  
- Approval of minutes  
- Approval of financial statement  
- Old business  
- New business  
- Comments  
- Acknowledge visitors  
- Adjourn

LOGIC AND ACCURACY  
NOTICE TO THE QUALIFIED  
ELECTORS OF LAURENS COUNTY, GA

Notice is hereby given pursuant to O.I.C.G.A. 21-2-379.6, beginning on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, Logic and Accuracy testing of the Ballot Marking Device (BMD) Voting System will be conducted at the Elections Warehouse located at 602 County Farm Rd. Dublin, GA and the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration, Laurens County Courthouse Annex Building, 117 East Jackson Street, Suite A, Dublin, GA commencing at 9:00 a.m. and continuing until all units have been tested and prepared for Election Day and Advanced and Early Voting for the November 3, 2026 General Election. This testing shall remain open to the public to observe and members of the public are entitled to be present during the preparation and testing of the BMD units. Advanced and Early Voting will be held in the office of the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration beginning Tuesday, October 13, 2026 through Friday, October 30, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Saturday Voting will be held October 17 and October 24, 2026 from 9:00 A.M. till 5:00 P.M. The last day to request an Absentee Ballot by mail will be Friday, October 23, 2026. This notice is given in accordance with the provisions and rules of the State Board of Elections.

ALL ELECTION DAY VOTING ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026 WILL BE HELD AT YOUR DESIGNATED POLLING PRECINCT.

This 22nd day of September, 2026.

Susan H. Rooks, Election Supervisor

ST. PATRICK'S FESTIVAL  
DUBLIN, GEORGIA

Got an event?  
MAKE IT PART OF THE FESTIVAL!

2027 FESTIVAL EVENT REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

Dublin-Laurens County's St. Patrick's Festival brings together 40+ events each year, hosted by local organizations, clubs, and businesses.

Have an event to add to the celebration?  
Submit your event to be part of the 2027 Festival season!

REGISTER BY OCTOBER 15, 2026

SCAN TO REGISTER

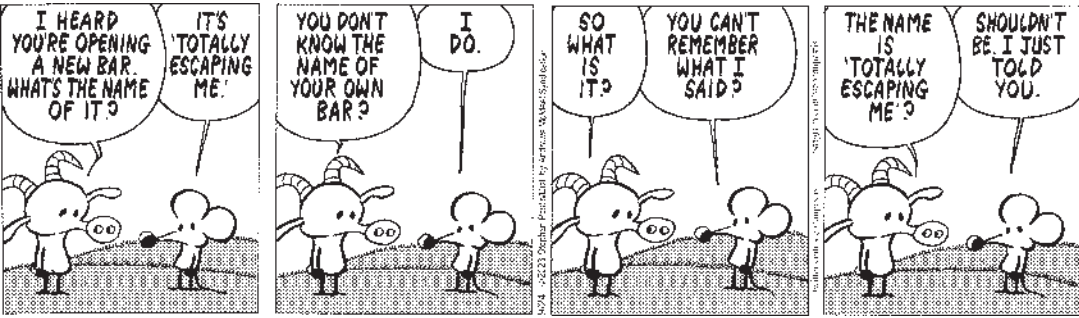
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Decorative elements: rainbow, shamrock, pot of gold

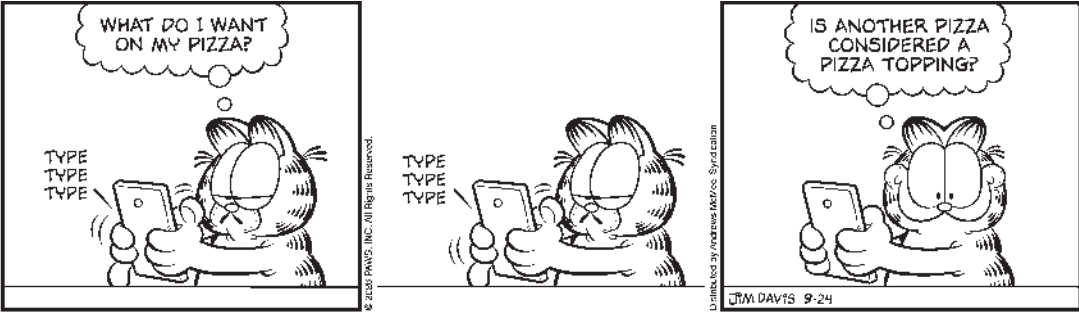
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



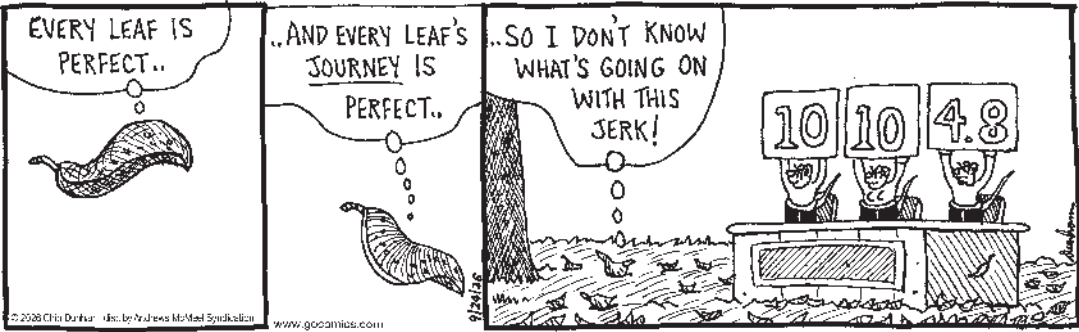
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



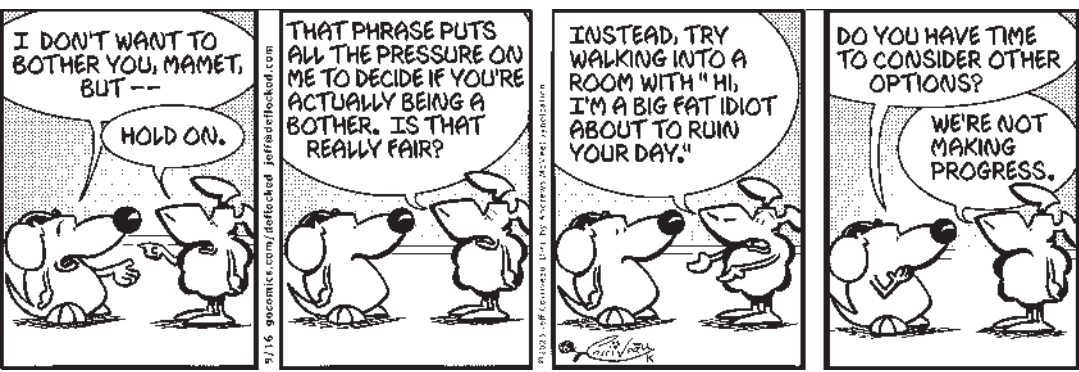
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BY CHIP DUNHAM



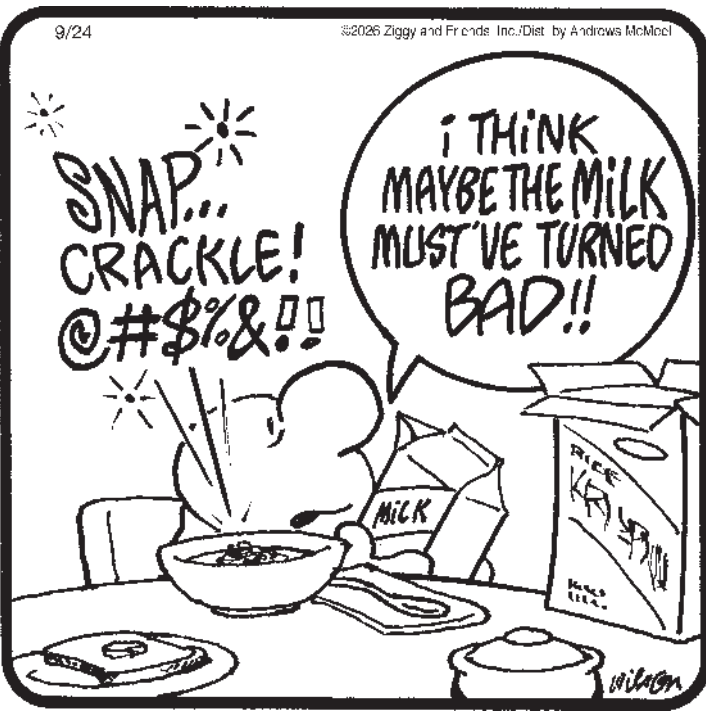
DEFLOCKED

BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



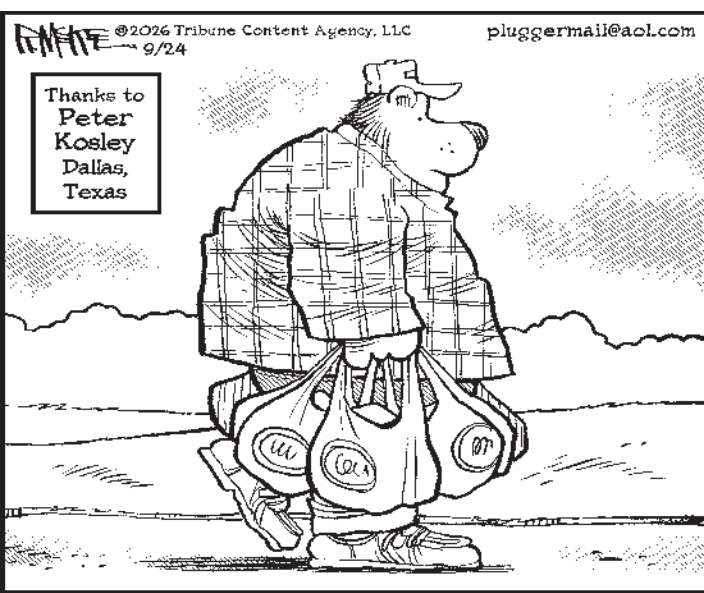
ZIGGY

BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS

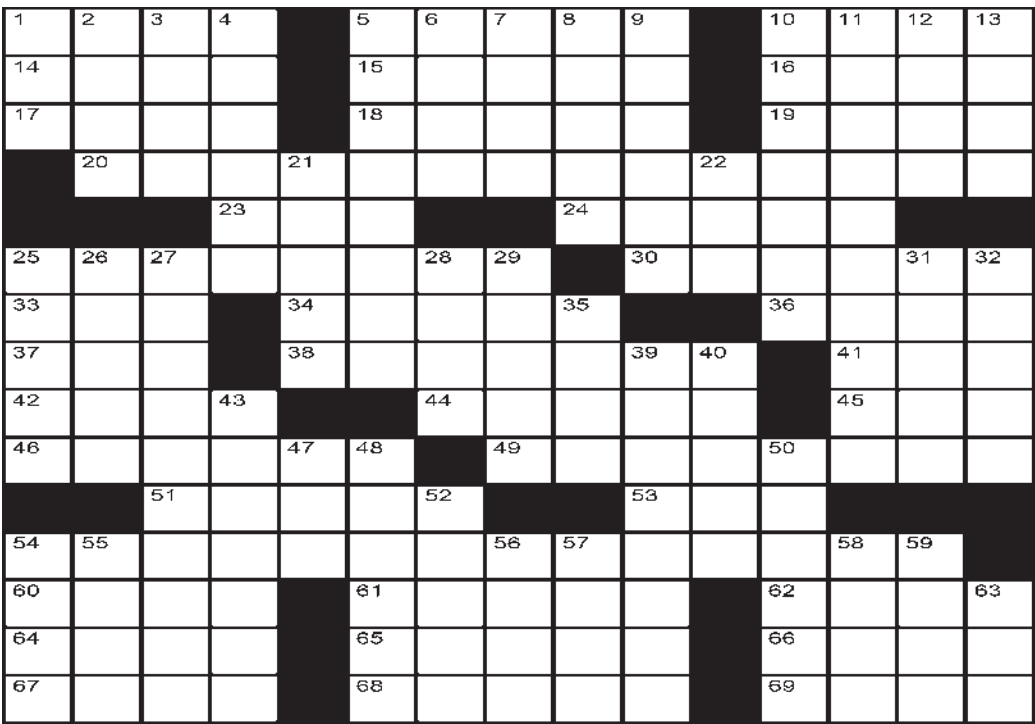
BY JEFF MACNELLY



A plugger remembers when two paper sacks held all his groceries; now it takes 10 plastic bags to hold the same amount.

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- Ballet skirt
  - Serious film
  - Government IDs: Abbr.
  - Right away: Abbr.
  - Green area in the desert
  - Not locked
  - Silicon Valley sector
  - Pirates' drinks
  - Opera song
  - "The Theory of Everything" scientist: 2 wds.
  - Language related to Thai
  - Promotional connection: 2 wds.
  - Hearing membranes
  - Pants measurement
  - Ingested
  - "Let me repeat": 2 wds.
  - Moral \_\_\_ area
  - "Notorious" justice: Abbr.
  - Gem's place
  - Resistance unit
  - Indian flatbread
  - Private teacher
  - Actor Chaney
  - Overuse injury
  - Religious stories
  - Jumps in a pool
  - Hamm of soccer
  - Olympic second-placer: 2 wds.
  - \_\_\_ fixe
  - Pitted mushroom
  - Statutes
  - Verb with "thou"
  - Sans-serif font
  - Wicked
  - If not
  - Singer Kravitz
  - Naysay



Created by Stella Zawistowski

- DOWN**
- Bit of body art
  - Employs
  - Social grace
  - Supported
  - Canine's shelter
  - Very uncommon
  - "For unto us \_\_\_ is given": 2 wds.
  - Power
  - Violently attack
  - Immersing
  - Vietnamese snack: 2 wds.
  - German "no"
  - Sudden problem
  - France's capital
  - Little
  - Deserves
  - Turn at the plate
  - Despite everything
  - Actor Bomer
  - Ab exercise
  - Chevy SUV
  - Church songs



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- Dancer von Teese
- As a rule
- "Holy" cup
- Artlessness
- "\_\_\_ been there"
- "Garfield" kitten
- Left abruptly
- Campfire treat
- "Whose \_\_\_ are you on?"
- Worshiped one
- Actress Moran
- College official
- Rescue
- Small bed size
- Cunning

Irresponsible daughter can't get it together

DEAR ABBY: I am a widow who lost my husband 15 years ago. When my husband died, we had a daughter and one grandson. My daughter, a single mom, later had another son.

I have my own business and have worked hard these many years to help support my daughter, who is financially irresponsible. She has been evicted four times in the past 10 years, had two cars repossessed and can't seem to keep a job for even a year. I am at my wits' end. I need to stop helping her financially because it's affecting my financial and mental health. She doesn't have a job and can't get her own place, so I feel I have no choice but to let her move in with me. I want to put a limit on how long she can stay. What should I do? -- SUBJUGATED IN TEXAS

DEAR SUBJUGATED: Do not allow your daughter to move in with you. If she does, you will never get rid of her. Give her a certain amount of money for shelter and make it plain that she must use it to find a place to live (if only temporarily). Because it's the last handout she'll receive, she must get a job to support herself and her children. Then let her live the life she has chosen for herself. If you don't, you will be your dysfunctional daughter's prisoner until the day you die.

\*\*\*\*



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: Throughout my professional career, I was a quality assurance engineer with the task of analysis and corrective actions. If something broke or an error was made (for example, a worker's hand getting caught in a machine), I'd try to identify a fix so it wouldn't happen again. I am now retired and still tend to approach things with the same attitude.

I often get frustrated when someone makes an error and there's no corrective action, admission that a mistake was made or even a small apology. I recently discovered an error on my financial accounts and asked the bank how this was overlooked even after I had pointed out the error prior to the account being processed. Abby, I was completely ignored and nev-

er received any feedback. What's the best way to ask someone for an explanation concerning what actions were taken to ensure the error does not happen again? -- KEEN ON QUALITY

DEAR KEEN ON QUALITY: In your line of work, safety was the top priority. You developed a zero-tolerance attitude toward errors because it was literally a matter of life and limb. Outside that environment, however, you may find it helpful to remember that the stakes are not nearly so high.

No permanent harm came of the bank error. You are right that it would be best if the bank reviewed its procedures to avoid future errors, but that's their job, not yours. Having corrected the error in a timely fashion, the bank owes you no further explanation. Trust that, in the future, they will do their best to improve without your help (but always check your statements).

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren. For nearly four decades, Jeanne Phillips penned this column, which was founded in 1956 by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 270135, Kansas City, MO 64127. (EDITORS: If you have editorial questions, please contact Clint Hooker, [clint.hooker@andrewsmcmeel.com](mailto:clint.hooker@andrewsmcmeel.com).)

Thursday, September 24, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES  
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BEAUTIFUL DEFENSE

North-South vulnerable, South deals

|              |            |  |  |
|--------------|------------|--|--|
| <b>NORTH</b> |            |  |  |
| ♠            | K 9 8      |  |  |
| ♥            | A J 10 9 5 |  |  |
| ♦            | 9 7 5      |  |  |
| ♣            | 8 5        |  |  |
| <b>WEST</b>  |            |  |  |
| ♠            | 6 3 2      |  |  |
| ♥            | 8 6        |  |  |
| ♦            | Q 8 4      |  |  |
| ♣            | K J 7 3 2  |  |  |
| <b>EAST</b>  |            |  |  |
| ♠            | Q J 10 7   |  |  |
| ♥            | K Q 7 2    |  |  |
| ♦            | 3 2        |  |  |
| ♣            | A Q 9      |  |  |
| <b>SOUTH</b> |            |  |  |
| ♠            | A 5 4      |  |  |
| ♥            | 4 3        |  |  |
| ♦            | A K J 10 6 |  |  |
| ♣            | 10 6 4     |  |  |

The bidding:  
SOUTH: 1NT  
WEST: Pass  
NORTH: 26<sup>th</sup>  
EAST: Pass  
\*12-14 points  
\*\*\*Transfer to hearts

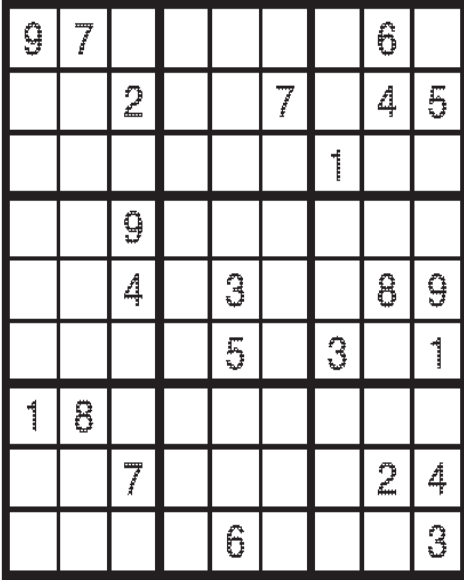
Opening lead: Three of ♣

Today's deal is from a pairs competition in New Zealand. East was New Zealander Anthony Ker. A one no trump opening bid shows 15-17 points most often in North American tournaments, but the weak no trump, 12-14 points, has a big following in some other countries. A weak-no-trump opening and a

transfer made South the declarer in two hearts. West led his fourth best club and Ker, East, made his first good decision when he played the queen from his hand. This would cost nothing if declarer had the king. When the queen held the trick, Ker knew that West had the king. Ker made his second good decision when he shifted to a diamond at trick two rather than a safe spade. Declarer took his ace and led a heart to dummy's jack and Ker's queen. Ker continued with another diamond, South winning with the king. Declarer led a heart to dummy's 10, losing to Ker's king, and Ker led the nine of clubs to his partner's jack. West cashed his queen of diamonds on which Ker discarded his ace of clubs! A club lead from West now promoted Ker's seven of trumps into the setting trick. This was a very pretty defense. South could have made his contract by taking the diamond finesse, but that would take the risk of losing an unnecessary diamond ruff. South's play was reasonable.

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

SUDOKU



Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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

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

ANSWER

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL OUTLOOK

Battle of No. 5 Dublin, No. 3 Bleckley Co. is biggest of big tickets in week of high-stakes region openers

By CLAY REYNOLDS  
Sports Editor

In the seasons that Dublin and Bleckley County have shared a region, neither has ever won it without beating the other.

It's hard to envision things will be much different as the No. 5 Irish (3-1) and No. 3 Royals (4-0) col-

lide for the 21st time in Cochran Friday night.

Both statewide contenders will have half their season still to go following this region 2-AA debut, though the first game could be every bit as pivotal in the title race as if it were a winner-take-all played in week 10.

That will be the Heart of Georgia's only ranked-

on-ranked battle of week 6, though there will be similar stakes pretty much across the board as a majority of the area kicks off league play.

East Laurens (1-3) needs its first win last Friday to spark a midseason run as it hosts another of the region's top teams. The Falcons will put their open-field speed

against the open-field size of No. 10 Swainsboro in search of a second-straight.

Trinity (2-3) will once again vie to level its record on the road as it takes on rival Gatewood (2-3), in search of its third win in four tries against the Gators, after winning both the teams' regular-season matchups since coach Bruce

Lane took over in 2024.

New region 3-AAAA rivals West Laurens (1-3) and Southeast Bulloch (2-2) reunite for the first time since their home-and-home during the Demaryius Thomas era in 2004 and '05 (both defensive struggles went the direction of the Raiders).

Others of Friday's top

area games include a 31st meeting of bitter rivals Twiggs County (1-3) and Wilkinson County (1-3) at Bud Dupree Stadium, where the Cobras (losers of nine-straight in the series) will try to defeat the Warriors for the first time since their current head coach Ashley Harden's last season in 2016.

Two teams who thrive in low-scoring ballgames will try to grind out a key first region 4-AAA win on "The Battlefield," where Washington County (1-3) visits Westside Augusta (2-2).

No. 7 Treutlen (4-0) will also be back at Bobby Driggers Stadium trying to avoid tripping up against an always-pesky Telfair County (2-2) off the high of last week's massive victory over Montgomery County.

In the rest of the area's week 6 schedule, new No. 1 Johnson County (4-0) goes for a fifth-straight win at Glascock County (1-3), Brentwood (4-2) welcomes winless Pinewood (0-5) in its home finale and Montgomery County (3-1) looks to bounce back at Atkinson County (0-4).

WEEK 5: HOW THE REST OF THE AREA FARED...

By CLAY REYNOLDS  
Sports Editor

Treutlen 21, Montgomery Co. 7

Zan Stokes caught two Major Morton touchdown passes, and intercepted another on defense to help the Vikings down the previously unbeaten Eagles, and also take over their spot in the top 10. Their connection early in the third quarter made Treutlen first on the scoreboard, after defenses dominated a stalemate first half. MoCo's only touchdown, on a pass from Rilynn Dees to Kam Henderson, followed to tied the game at 7. The Vikings missed a field goal with one possession early in the fourth, but Stokes' interception and return inside the 10 set up Peanut Tobler's next-play touchdown run to go back in front. Morton, who was 4-of-9 for 106 yards passing, found Stokes, whose three receptions and five carries accounted for 90 all-purpose yards, for the final score. The Eagles were held to 175 yards total offense, and committed three turnovers.

Brentwood 42, Lake Oconee Academy 0

Everybody got to touch the football, as 12 rushers, five receivers and three passers all got a piece of the action, and the Eagles' 392 yards of offense, in Greensboro. Tristan Robinson threw the only touchdown pass of 46 yards to Brayden Tyson, had another rushing on 80 yards from scrimmage and a third on one of three punt returns for a total 109. Baylor Cobb, Jackson Bragg and Jacob Hooks rushed for Brentwood's remaining TDs. Hooks led the defense with eight tackles, and Kaiden Morris forced and recovered a fumble.

Dodge Co. 55, Dooly Co. 12

Though their recent pattern of missed opportunities in the red zone continued on three more empty scoring chances, the Indians were still the overwhelmingly better team in the matchup. Kain Mincey was 15-of-22 passing for 120 yards and two touchdowns. Jeremiah Burns rushed and caught a pass for a score. Jordan Spady had two rushing TDs. Jordan Johnson carried 14 times for 81 yards and another. Amaury Fountain scored on a rush and a pick-six. Jauriel Bray added an interception. Special teams was as much a setback as it was a boost for Dooly County, which gave over possession on muffs of three different Dodge kickoffs, though the Bobcats' Kayvon Felton also returned two others for touchdowns. Their offense, held to 85 total yards, was nonexistent.



Major Morton lifts up a long one for Zan Stokes. The Treutlen QB and receiver connected three times, twice for touchdowns, in Friday's victory at Montgomery County to continue their team's perfect start/LOGAN REYNOLDS, GTLN

Taylor Co. 53, Wheeler Co. 19

The Bulldogs were on the wrong end of a 450-plus yard night from the No. 4-ranked team in class A, led by a collection of playmakers, in their third-straight loss. Taylor County's Leland Holder threw for 241 and three touchdowns, Kendarius Richardson caught two of them, on 132 yards receiving. Kobe Henry scored once on 124 yards rushing. Wheeler County fell into a multi-touchdown hole early thanks to a blocked punt return, which went along with the Vikings' offensive big plays, but it was able to keep up the scoring pace thanks to 385 total yards. Joseph Moore threw for 150 and a couple of touchdowns, both to J.J. Woodard, whose five grabs totaled 125). Malik Madison had the other TD, on a team-high 75 rushing yards. John Miller carried for 65.

Howard 49, Baldwin 43

The Huskies led 35-8 at halftime, but only narrowly survived a second-half surge from the Braves, who outscored them 35-14 the rest of the way to the house. Howard's Zavion Deshazier was 14-of-20 for 325 and seven touchdowns. Six went to Tayshawn Poole on an unbelievable nine-catch, 249-yard night. The FSU commit also had seven total tackles on defense. Dre Christian had the other, one of only a pair of grabs for 42 that proved critical in holding off the Baldwin comeback for the Huskies' first victory over a top-10 team since 2015, according to Georgia High School Football Daily. The Braves' Kamden Patterson was likewise spectacular on the

other side of the quarterback duel, throwing for his own personal best in touchdown passes with six on a line of 28-for-34 and 311 yards. Jerliondous Armstrong, Justin Burton, Bryan Goddard, Jacob Hester and Jerrick Carswell all had at least one touchdown catch, and 40 or more receiving yards. Tavares Hooks carried 14 times for 101.

Jeff Davis 36, McIntosh Co. Academy 7

The Jackets rolled up 353 yards total offense, and held McIntosh to just 130. Mark Durden threw two touchdown passes. Kobe Hill rushed for the three others.

Toombs Co. 76, Beach 7

The Toombs defense scored four times for a considerable share of its 11 total touchdowns in a biggest win to date. Deon Moore, Kareem Palmer and Jayden Greene intercepted Beach passes, and Alex Scott, Jayce Pittman and Hayden Bullard recovered fumbles. Palmer, Greene, Scott and Pittman each returned theirs for TDs. Donterrius Mincey carried eight times for 230 yards – the bulk of the team's 317 rushing – and four scores. Joseph Owens was 7-of-12 for 112 with two more touchdowns, both to Nick Carroll. M.J. Burton had seven total tackles and three for loss. Scott, Zaylen Davis and Zay Walton had sacks.

Peach Co. 63, Upson-Lee 3

The Trojans contributed another to Friday's spread of 50-plus point performances, though their first-stringers retired after scor-

ing 42 in the opening half with the help of touchdowns on two runs by Ashton Barton, another by Zion Ellison and a Caiden Ivory pass to Cameron Barth. Kamorious Smith blocked a punt and returned a pick-six. Peach County held Upson-Lee to just 166 total yards.

Westlake 61, Houston Co. 51

The Bears were edged in a second-straight shootout, despite jumping out to an early 14-0 lead. Westlake scored all its points after the first quarter, as Cannon Robinson threw for five touchdowns on 345 yards and rushed for two on 64. Jacob Jackson ran for 239 and Christian Womack for 103. Roscoe Hayes led receivers with seven grabs for 147. The Lions had 751 yards of offense. HoCo's Ryan Maxwell countered with 31 completions for 350 passing yards and four touchdowns. Austin Stinson ran for three scores on 36 carries for 21. Jeffery Thomas had 13 catches for 145 and two. Messiah Holliday added four catches for 104 and one touchdown. An interception by Quintay Boykin was the game's only turnover.

Edmund Burke 24, Mount de Sales 3

Noah Hickman's 20 rushing attempts ground out 133 yards as the Spartans used several long drives to milk the clock. Two early ones came up empty, but a third to close the first half netted a game-tying field goal before Hickman scored the first and last in a string of three unanswered touchdowns out of halftime. The Cavs, whose Benjamin Burney was a near-perfect 9-for-10 with 125 yards passing in the first half, was held without a second-half first down until the last of Edmund Burke's damage was done with a little more than seven minutes left.

Other week 5 scores...

Stratford 49, Westfield 14  
John Milledge 21, Brookstone 10  
Macon Co. 33, Hawkinsville 12  
Fitzgerald 25, Worth Co. 20  
Veterans 21, Sumter Co. 15  
ECI 44, Jenkins Co. 20  
Callaway 57, Southwest Macon 20  
Jefferson Co. 42, Josey 6  
Jones Co. 49, Locust Grove 14  
Lamar Co. 55, Central Macon 10  
Mary Persons 38, Westside 2  
Ola 35, Perry 19  
Pike Co. 19, Rutland 13  
Tattnall Sq. 42, Crawford Co. 13  
Warner Robins 69, Union G. 29  
Bulloch 56, Robert Toombs 0  
Frederica 22, FPD 13  
Gatewood 30, Riverside Military 6  
Thomas Jefferson 35, Rock Springs Christian 28  
Windsor 32, Westminster-Aug. 7  
Veterans 21, Sumter Co. 15

SCOREBOARD

**SOFTBALL**  
**Tuesday**  
West Laurens 9, Southeast Bulloch 1  
Bleckley Co. at Dublin  
ACE Charter at East Laurens /PPD, rain

**FLAG FOOTBALL**  
**Tuesday**  
Fitzgerald 20, EL 6

PREP SCHEDULE

**SOFTBALL**  
**Thursday**  
Briarwood at Trinity /4:30 p.m.  
WL at Harlem/5 p.m.  
EL at Dodge Co./5:30 p.m.  
Dublin at Vidalia/6 p.m.

**FLAG FOOTBALL**  
**Thursday**  
WL, Glenn Hills, ARC at Harlem/5:30 p.m.

**FOOTBALL**  
**Friday**  
Dublin at Bleckley Co.  
Southeast Bulloch at WL  
Swainsboro at EL  
Trinity at Gatewood  
Johnson Co. at Glascock Co.  
Montgomery Co. at Atkinson Co.  
Pinewood at Brentwood  
Telfair Co. at Treutlen  
Twiggs Co. at Wilkinson Co.  
Washington Co. at Westside Augusta /7:30 p.m.

**CONTACT US:**  
Email sports information to tchsports77@gmail.com, or call (478) 272-5522, ext. 110



|                                  |                             |                                |                          |                            |                             |                             |                            |                            |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| THE PANE...<br>Last week/OVERALL | RODNEY MANLEY<br>10-2/44-16 | PAYTON TOWNS III<br>10-2/40-20 | KYLE DOMINY<br>8-4/33-27 | JEREMY PAYNE<br>10-2/45-15 | JANICE BALLARD<br>9-3/40-20 | RALPH JACKSON<br>10-2/39-21 | DON CARSWELL<br>12-0/47-13 | FORREST KILGO<br>9-3/41-19 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| <b>THIS WEEK'S MATCHUPS...</b>  |
| Dublin at Bleckley Co.          |
| Trinity at Gatewood             |
| SE Bulloch at West Laurens      |
| Swainsboro at East Laurens      |
| Twiggs Co. at Wilkinson Co.     |
| Washington Co. at Westside Aug. |
| Stratford at FPD                |
| Jeff Davis at Fitzgerald        |
| Troup at Mary Persons           |
| Peach Co. at Spalding           |
| Pierce Co. at Toombs Co.        |
| ACE Charter at Vidalia          |

|                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bleckley Co.<br>Gatewood<br>West Laurens<br>Swainsboro<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>WACO<br>Stratford<br>Jeff Davis<br>Troup<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>Vidalia | Bleckley Co.<br>Trinity<br>West Laurens<br>Swainsboro<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>Westside<br>Stratford<br>Jeff Davis<br>Mary Persons<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>ACE | Dublin<br>Trinity<br>West Laurens<br>East Laurens<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>Westside<br>Stratford<br>Fitzgerald<br>Troup<br>Spalding<br>Toombs Co.<br>ACE | Bleckley Co.<br>Trinity<br>West Laurens<br>Swainsboro<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>WACO<br>FPD<br>Fitzgerald<br>Troup<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>ACE | Bleckley Co.<br>Gatewood<br>West Laurens<br>East Laurens<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>Westside<br>Stratford<br>Fitzgerald<br>Troup<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>ACE | Dublin<br>Gatewood<br>West Laurens<br>Swainsboro<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>Westside<br>Stratford<br>Fitzgerald<br>Troup<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>ACE | Bleckley Co.<br>Gatewood<br>West Laurens<br>Swainsboro<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>Westside<br>Stratford<br>Fitzgerald<br>Troup<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>Vidalia | Bleckley Co.<br>Gatewood<br>West Laurens<br>Swainsboro<br>Wilkinson Co.<br>Westside<br>Stratford<br>Jeff Davis<br>Troup<br>Peach Co.<br>Toombs Co.<br>ACE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

COUNTY TAXES

Continued from page 1

policy. You can't continue to do that," County Administrator Bryan Rogers told the crowd. "We run through about \$3 million in operating expenditures in a month."

What it means for your taxes

The commission's proposed rate hike will cost the owner of a home with a taxable value of \$200,000 an additional \$120 a year. The county school board, which levies its own tax, approved a 2.8 percent hike. However, because it taxes at a rate (14 mills) that's more than twice that of the county, that small increase would raise school taxes on the same home by about \$31.

Combined, that means those county homeowners would pay about \$150 more in new taxes each year.

Several residents said they already are struggling

to make ends meet and cannot afford the tax increase. However, one resident, Rufus Hill, noted the commission's increase is only \$10 a month.

"That's just a drop in the bucket," Hill said.

The county has a policy of keeping about six months of operating expenses in reserve, about \$18 million, which is about where the fund currently stands.

"I don't want to raise taxes," Commissioner Kevin Tanner said, "but I don't want to cut services either."

Public safety is expensive

Rogers told the crowd that the county is averaging about \$1 million a year in inflationary costs. He highlighted several of the major increases, including \$1 million for health insurance, \$849,000 for the sheriff's department and about \$241,000 each for EMS and 911.

With 825 square miles to cover, providing public

safety services is challenging, especially with diesel prices at an all-time high and gasoline above \$4 per gallon.

"We're taking it on the chin right now with fuel costs," Rogers said.

Rogers also outlined efforts over the past 10 years to increase police presence in rural areas, quicken emergency response times and better access to emergency medical care. The county has added a fifth round-the-clock staffed ambulance, with another staffed truck on standby. It also created 15 fire/medic positions who can get the scene and provide care until an ambulance arrives.

"We now have six departments in the county staffed 24/7 with these cross-trained employees," Rogers said.

The sheriff's department budget is by far the largest in the county. Rogers explained some of the increased costs there have

been raising deputy and jailer pay to be competitive with other agencies.

Aside from salaries, one of the largest expenses has been inmate medical care. In 2023, inmate medical costs totaled almost \$400,000. For fiscal year 2026, the county paid almost \$1 million for inmate healthcare.

"If they have a heart attack when they are in there, we have to pay for it. If they have a kidney transplant, we have to pay for it.," Rogers said. "As a manager, I'm seeing a whole lot more money going out as there is coming in."

FLOST could cut taxes

The tax increase comes just more than a month before county voters will decide a referendum on a new Floating Option Sales Tax that could offset the proposed tax increase.

The additional penny sales tax would lower property tax rates across the

county and its seven municipalities. Revenue from the tax would go directly, dollar-for-dollar, toward lowering area property taxes for homeowners, businesses and farms.

If the FLOST passes, it could take effect in January, and county officials expect the money collected over the final six months of fiscal year 2027, which ends in July, to essentially offset the tax increase.

With the first six months of collections, the millage could be lowered by 1.7 mills, county officials say. A full year of the tax revenue could cut the current rate, reducing it 3.5 mills.

"It comes off of your property tax bills. It's not that we're trying to double-dip," Mathis said at the hearing.

Commissioner Brenda Chain said the commission cannot keep dipping into its emergency fund.

"If we keep taking money out, we're going to bankrupt

Laurens County, and I'm not going to do that," Chain said.

"Y'all gonna bankrupt us, too!," someone shouted from the back of the room.

At 7 mills, the tax rate in Laurens County will remain the lowest within 150 miles. Despite criticism for it, Rogers said it's fair and appropriate to compare the county's tax rate and provided services with those in neighboring counties.

"You've got to look at your peers. We are proud of where our millage rate is at and the level of service we're providing."

The commissioners adjourned the hour-long public hearing before reconvening for a meeting to approve the tax increase. By then, all four commissioners in attendance – Trae Kemp was absent – had made their positions clear.

"Well, I'm voting my commissioner out!" one woman shouted while leaving.

SCHOOL BOARD

Continued from page 1

crisis was that the district had not completed an annual audit since 2021. Pool reported Monday that the 2024 audit has been submitted to the state and is undergoing suggested revisions.

"Hopefully we'll be getting that back soon," Pool said. "We have started the FY25 audit. That is in progress now."

The deadline to submit an annual audit to the state is Dec. 31. "I'm not sure we're going to make that because we were behind," Pool said.

Going 'old school' after ransomware attack

An apparent cyberattack in Sept. 16, described as an "outage" and "networking issues" by district officials,

succeeded in knocking the district out of the digital age but failed to compromise any personal information of students or staffers, Pool told the board.

"Our student and staff information is held in the cloud and not any of our servers."

Pool said officials hoped to be back online by Wednesday. In the meantime, teachers continued to go "old school," including "regular, good instruction using some worksheets," she said.

The school district notified teachers, students and parents of the incident.

"There is some misinformation out there," said board chairman David Westerfield.

Online reports say the ransomware group Eclipse claimed responsibility for the cyberat-

tack.

Sorority chapter stepping up, adopting more schools

One of the Dublin City's more faithful community supporters is taking its partnership up several notches.

Dublin's Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Tau Omicron Omega Chapter has been a longtime sponsor of Susie Dasher Elementary School. Now the sorority wants to also adopt Hillcrest Elementary, Dublin Middle and Dublin High.

The sorority's Letunya Walker said the group wanted to offer more support considering the "challenges" the system is facing.

"It is during this time that our partnership, our support, our encouragement matter the most," Walker told the school board.

As a show of apprecia-



Members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Tau Omicron Omega Chapter, pose for a photo with the school board and Superintendent Marcee Pool/RODNEY MANLEY

tion, the sorority plans to give every teacher and staffer at the four schools a bag

with gift cards from various merchants.

"We want to hand-deliv-

er gift bags to everyone who works in those four school buildings," Walker said.

SMITH'S

Continued from page 1

and they get to have this exhibition."

And Smith's of Dublin was one of those 10 stores.

"Herend collectors know that the bunnies come in blue, pink and green, but in the fall, they do an exhibition which has limited edition colors," Curry said. "For the collectors who love Herend, they get really excited about it because this is something that not everybody will see. For me, this is a really big honor to be selected and most of them are in major markets."

After 5 p.m. this Thursday, these will go online and anybody nationwide can go

online and shop.

Curry said the original store was located across the street from the store's current location but closer to the Laurens County Courthouse. The original store was open by William Smith.

In 1922, Dan Cullen Fischer owned the store at 205 S. Jefferson St., changing the name to Fischer's. A newspaper ad on auG. 21, 1930 promoted the store moving to its current location on West Jackson Street. He died in 1931.

Benjamin Smith, who went by Jack, and Ruby McCord Bixler Clark, bought Fischer's in 1932 and changed the name back to Smith's. Ralph and Eliza-

beth Attaway bought it in 1969.

Jack and Jackie Ellington bought the store in 1984. Jackie retired and sold the store to Curry in 2015, who did a complete renovation at 130 W. Jackson St.

"This is a good milestone," Curry said. "What I am really proud of is that I am one of the four women owners (of Smith's). It is a honor to get to carry on this legacy because we have served the community for a long time. I am really grateful for the support from the community because you don't see many businesses like us anymore. We're lucky that we get to keep doing this."

FIGHT

Continued from page 1

confronted the driver.

Harrelson said he punched the other vehicle's window and then slapped the man when he exited his vehicle. Harrelson had bloody knuckles and the man had a knot on the back left side of his head.

Because of Harrelson's admission, an officer arrested him. Police then talked with the other man who said he passed Harrelson as they were traveling in the same

direction. The man did not know there was an issue until he saw Harrelson flashing his headlights at him.

The man continued to Piggly Wiggly, where Harrelson pulled up on the right side of his vehicle. The man said Harrelson approached the passenger's side of his vehicle and started saying something. The man told the officer that he did not respond and Harrelson started pushing the front passenger side window of his vehicle.

The man then backed out

of the parking space in an attempt to leave, at which time Harrelson followed and kicked the driver's side of his vehicle. The man got out of his vehicle and both exchanged words. That is when Harrelson punched him in the side of the head.

The man said that he grabbed Harrelson to try to stop the assault, but he continued to be hit. Employees helped separate the men until an officer arrived.

The man later told an officer that he did not want to press charges on Harrelson.

Man killed in 1-vehicle crash

STAFF REPORTS

A 59-year-old Dexter man died following a one-vehicle crash that happened around 3:47 p.m. on Sept. 11.

According to a Georgia State Patrol accident report, Scott Shepley was traveling west in a 2006 gold Ford F-250 on Rentz-Dexter Road close to Blankenship Road and was attempting to negotiate a left-hand curve

at a high rate of speed.

The Ford was reportedly traveling too fast to negotiate the curve and left the roadway on the north shoulder. The truck traveled for approximately 297 feet while rotating counter clockwise. It re-entered the road, went about 34 feet before beginning to overturn. It traveled approximately 63 feet, while overturning before exiting the roadway

onto the south shoulder.

The truck went 36 feet on the south shoulder before coming to an uncontrolled final stop in the upright position facing south.

The report stated that the driver was unrestrained and ejected from the truck when it overturned. He was found in the road.

Shepley was taken to Fairview Park Hospital where he later passed away.

**SEND US your best pictures of Hunting, Fishing and the outdoors and you may be included in our October 10th Edition of**

**Porter's**  
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