

Report: Dublin schools cut \$3M off deficit

School district spent about \$5 million less than revenues received in fiscal year 2026

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

A preliminary audit report filed with the state shows the Dublin City Schools trimmed almost \$3 million off its general fund deficit to finish fiscal year 2026 about \$931,000 in the red.

Overall, the school district took in \$5 million more in total funds than it spent, according to the "unaudited statement of actual finan-

cial operations" approved by the local school board at a called meeting on Friday.

School districts deemed by the state Department of Audits & Accounts as high- or moderate-risk are required to publish the statements twice in their legal organ (in this case, Saturday's and Tuesday's editions of The Courier Herald) prior to undergoing an independent state audit. The requirement is part of a new law, inspired by Dub-

lin City's financial troubles, that gives the state more oversight over local school finances.

Dublin's statement actually paints a much sounder financial picture than had been predicted. Last fall, at the peak of its financial crisis, state officials projected Dublin City would end the year with a \$13.4 million deficit.

However, that projection included more than \$6 million owed to the State

Health Benefit Plan after the district went a year without paying into the plan. The system is making monthly payments on that debt and still owes over \$4 million, though that liability is not included in the audit statement.

According to that statement, the district took in almost \$45.9 million in total revenue and spent \$40.9 million, finishing with \$1.5 million left over. The general fund posted \$33.3 in rev-

enue and \$30.3 in expenditures.

Those year-end numbers have since new school year began. The monthly financial report from August showed a \$2.1 million general fund deficit, and more lean months are ahead until property taxes can be collected this winter. In the meantime, officials said they will need to ask the state for advances in monthly funding allotments to make payroll.

Still, Chief Financial Officer Teresa Louder told the school board last week that recently implemented financial controls have significantly cut back on spending.

The district has spent about \$1 million less than at this time last year, she said, adding that the district could possibly clear its deficit this fiscal year, rather than 2028 as currently projected in its deficit reduction plan.

Dizzy Dean, The King and other stories from 100 years at Fred Roberts Hotel

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The Fred Roberts Hotel turned 100 year old this year, and Dublin's town historian recently shared stories about how it came to be in the downtown area and the famous people who have stopped by throughout the years.

Scott Thompson was the guest speaker during the Downtown Development Authority's Coffee Break held in the lobby of the Fred Roberts Hotel at 306 Academy Ave.

From 1899 to the beginning of World War I, many people would travel to Dublin for two or three statewide conferences a year. That brought in 400 people, and all Dublin had at that time was one hotel.

"There was no way that many people, especially if they brought their wives or families, to stay," Thompson said. "There was an urgent need for hotels."

Something needed to be done and Dublin officials started planning a hotel in 1925. Thompson said construction began in 1926. The hotel was not officially open until February 2027.

"It was here in 1926," he said. "It just took it a while to get all of the rooms ready."

In 1926, a committee was appointed, led by Fred Roberts, a local car dealer. His grandfather was a former judge and politician, David Roberts.

"Fred took charge of the (hotel) project," Thompson said. "Just a few months later, Fred Roberts passed away."

Thompson said it was a first-class hotel when it opened. People remember waiters and bus boys to carry luggage. Then the Depression hit. Travel slowed down.

The St. Louis Cardinals made a trip to Dublin and spent the night at the Fred Roberts Hotel in late March of 1933 and in early April of 1935.

"While they were here, they had fun," Thompson said. "They went over to the school, which was located at what is now Dublin City Hall. Nine of those members of that team are in the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame."

One member was Dizzy Dean, who would finish with a 150-83 record with an earned run average (ERA) of 3.02 and 1,163 strikeouts.

In 1945, the first radio station began broadcasting in the Fred Roberts Hotel. In 1953, a young man from Tennessee was stranded here when his truck broke down.

"He didn't have any money, yet," Thompson said. "He saw Theatre Dublin and went over there to

see if he could perform to raise some money to get his truck. That man's name was Elvis Presley."

Eventually, Georgia Power came up with the idea to turn the hotel into senior housing. At the time, the recreation department was using it as a senior center.

"There were 30-something rooms here," Thompson said. "There were banks and many stores. People could walk to many of the stores."

The place was renovated in the 1990s. It became what it is now in the mid-2000s when the Nichols Co. came

FRED ROBERTS
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A print showing the Fred Roberts Hotel shortly after it opened in 1927/PAYTON TOWNS III



Town historian Scott Thompson shares the history of the Fred Roberts Hotel during a recent Coffee Break program held in the hotel lobby/PAYTON TOWNS III

Expungement workshop gives people 'hope'

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Dublin's district attorney wants justice. He also wants people whose cases have been dismissed to not have those charges show up on a criminal record, so that they can get a job to help support their family and improve the community's workforce.

DA Harold McLendon said as many as 100 people showed up at Oconee Gym for the first Expungement Workshop held on Sept. 19. Of those 100, 30 or more were excused because their cases did not originate for Laurens, Johnson, Treutlen and Twiggs counties. They also could not deal with any violent cases.

"This is a real good turnout," McLendon said. "I wasn't expecting this. Because so many responded, we may do more of these throughout the year. What we are working with is people's whose cases were dismissed but they are still pending on their records like something is going on with



Post Arrest Redirection Director Laray Avery and Assistant DA Gregory Oberly help people with their criminal histories/PAYTON TOWNS III

their case."

One person went to the DA's office and could not get a job because of a situation where his criminal record showed his past.

"We helped him, and he got a job," McLendon said. "He is now working and bringing home money he never had before. When this happened, we decided we needed to help some people who were entitled to receive some help. The DA's office represents the people of Georgia and that includes people who have been con-

victed. For those who have not done anything, or have been exonerated, should have a right to put them back where they were before things happened."

McLendon thanked Laray Avery, post arrest redirection director in the DA's office, and Dublin City Councilman Bennie Jones for putting together the Expungement Workshop. He was also pleased with his staff who gave up a Saturday to help

DA WORKSHOP
Continued on page 9

Man charged with \$5,000 in bank fraud

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A 32-year-old man already wanted for probation violation in Johnson County was arrested last week for his role in an alleged fraud at a local bank in the amount of more than \$5,000.

According to a Dublin Police Department incident report, Paul Devante Rozier was charged with three counts of deposit account fraud on Sept. 24. An officer responded to a local bank after its retail service manager had been advised to file a police report for the bank's losses due to a customer who had committed fraud.

The employee told an officer that a man had cashed and deposited checks, and the checks had come back as altered or fictitious, "refer to maker" and frozen/blocked account. The employee said the man had gone to both of the bank's locations.

The employee showed the officers copies of the checks that the man had allegedly cashed and deposited. One of the checks was in the amount of \$2,493.21. The employee said the man physically cashed the check and walked out with the money on Sept. 16. Another check in the amount of \$2,500 was deposited on Sept. 15. A third check in the amount of \$2,490 was deposited on Sept. 17, but it came back.

All of the checks had Rozier's name on them. The employee called Rozier multiple times but he did not answer. She called his place of employment and told Rozier he needed to clear this up, but he did not. She said the total amount of losses was \$5,479.18.

The officer investigated Rozier, and he was wanted in Johnson County. He then went to Rozier's job, arrested him and transported him to the Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

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OBITUARIES



Scott Charles Shepley

Heaven just got a little louder! Scott Charles Shepley entered eternal rest. Born on Dec. 16, 1966, Scott lived a life filled with adventure, family, laughter and plenty of unforgettable moments. Though he could sometimes come across as grumpy, those who knew him best understood that beneath that tough exterior was a man with a caring heart who was always willing to lend a helping hand when someone needed him.

Scott had a deep appreciation for the outdoors. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, finding peace and enjoyment in the time he spent outside. However, one of his greatest loves was his dogs. His love for animals, especially his dogs, was a special part of who he was and brought him tremendous happiness throughout his life.

Scott was a man who lived life on his own terms and created memories that will remain with his family and friends for years to come. He had a personality that could fill a room, and his presence was one that people will not soon forget. Whether he was sharing a story, giving someone a helping hand, enjoying time outdoors, or simply being himself, Scott had a way of leaving his mark on the lives of those around him.

Scott was a devoted father and grandfather. He leaves behind his beloved daughter, Abigale Shepley, and his cherished granddaughter, Scarlett Shepley, who brought a special kind of joy and love into his life. He is also survived by his mother, Jolene Angela Martin Shepley; his sister, Jaci Buttler; and his partner, Kelly Sveen.

He will also be lovingly remembered by his aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, extended family members, and countless friends whose lives he touched along the way.

Scott's life was fuller than most, and he lived it with a spirit that was uniquely his own. While his family and friends will deeply miss his presence, his stories, his personality, and even his occasional grumpiness, they can find comfort in knowing that his memory will continue to live on through the people who loved him.

He leaves behind a lifetime of memories and a legacy of love that will never be forgotten. Though he may no longer be here to share another story, cast another fishing line, head out on another hunting adventure, or spend time with the dogs he loved so dearly the memories he created will remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

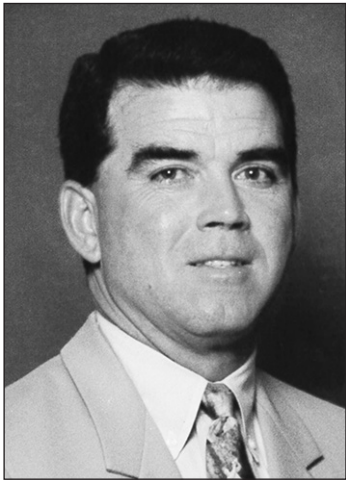
Serenity Funeral Home & Crematory Services of Dublin has charge of arrangements.

BIRTHDAYS

- Sept. 29

Kyra Jenkins
- Sept. 30

Ramonica "Shay" Davis
Donald Ringwood
Jimmy Taylor
Keith Washington



John C. Pitts Jr.

Graveside services for Mr. John C. Pitts Jr., 77, will be held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026, at Dublin Memorial Gardens with Rev. Robbie Passmore and Mr. Stanley Johnson officiating.

The family received friends on Monday, Sept. 28, from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. at Townsend Brothers Funeral Home.

Pallbearers will be Stanley Johnson, Scott Beasley, Jim Rainey, Gregg Crabb, Mike Cauley, Danny Moore, and Albin Watson. Honorary pallbearers will be employees and former employees of Pitts Toyota.

Mr. Pitts passed away on Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026, at Fairview Park Hospital.

Mr. Pitts was born on April 4, 1949, in Dublin, Georgia, to the late John C. Pitts Sr. and Minnie Woodard Pitts. He was a 1967 graduate of Dublin High School, where he was a standout member of the Fighting Irish football program during the 1960s. Wearing number 55, he played offensive center and earned All-State honors, establishing himself as one of the school's notable athletes of his era. Following high school, Mr. Pitts attended ABAC, and the University of Georgia, where he was a proud member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. He graduated from the School of Business Administration in August 1971.

Following college, Mr. Pitts continued the legacy established by his father in the local automobile industry, operating Pitts Toyota from their long-standing location in Dublin. He was also a dedicated, long-time member of the Dublin Rotary Club and Pine Forest Methodist Church.

An avid golfer throughout his life, Mr. Pitts loved spending time on the course at the Dublin Country Club. Personal health and fitness remained highly important to him, a reflection of the dedication and athletic discipline he maintained since his early playing days.

Survivors include his daughter, Angie Pitts Simpkins (Jake); his son, John C. Pitts III; his grandchildren, Cierra Carroll-Pitts, Julia Katherine Biles, Ella Parker Biles, Kenslee Pitts, and John C. Pitts IV; and his great-grandchild, Nova Harrelson. He is also survived by his brother, Jerry Pitts (Mary Linda); his sister, Katrina Pitts Forth; and his nephew, Chadwick E. Forth.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John C. Pitts Sr. and Minnie Woodard Pitts.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made in his memory to Pine Forest Methodist Church, Regency Southern Care Hospice Service, or charity of choice.

Townsend Brothers Funeral Home has charge of arrangements. Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.

Larry Smith

Mr. Larry Smith of Dublin, passed away on Saturday, September 26, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete but will be announced later.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin. www.Servicesbydudley.com



Charles Lindbergh Carswell

Funeral services for Mr. Charles Lindbergh Carswell will be held on Friday, Oct. 2, 2026 at 12 p.m. at the Mt. Tilla Baptist Church, 2424 US Highway 441 North in Irwinton. Interment will follow in the church cemetery.

Mr. Charles Lindbergh Carswell was born on May 20, 1930, in Laurens County, to the parentage of the late Ozzie and Cilla Carswell. At an early age he joined the Mt. Tilla Baptist Church, where he served faithfully until his health declined. He served over 50 years on the Usher Board.

Lindbergh received his education from the Laurens County School System. As a young adult he joined the United States Army and served for two years. After he left the army, one of his first jobs was working for Dudley Funeral Home, for the late Rev. Dudley, his wife and daughter. He was appointed to be their driver. He would also work at anything Rev. Dudley needed for him to do at the funeral home. He thoroughly enjoyed working for the Dudley family.

His next job was working at the Chalk Mine in Gordon, Ga until he got the job he wanted closer to home. That job was at the Carl Vinson Veteran Hospital where he served for over 30 years. Even though Lindbergh worked at the VA Hospital during the day, he started working in the evenings at The Knight Family Farm. He enjoyed planting and harvesting fruits and vegetables on the farm. After his retirement, Lindbergh enjoyed watching his cowboy shows, football games, and most of all, The Atlanta Braves.

Lindbergh passed away Sept. 23, 2026. He was preceded in death by his siblings, Grover and Harold Andrew Carswell, Louise White, Catherine Stuckey, Lizzie Thomas, Annie L. Brown; and longtime companion, Emma Knight.

Lindbergh is survived by his daughter, Annie R. Stuckey (Ulysses); granddaughters, Leslie Austin (Steve) and Maz Martin (Anthony); nephews, Lanier Stuckey (Patricia) and Alphonso Carswell (Janice); nieces, Jackie White, Kathy White, Lillian J. Stuckey, Saralyn Brown, Carolyn Mobley, and Helen Church; five great-grandchildren; 11 great-great-grandchildren; one brother-in-law, John Thomas; great nieces; great nephews; a host of cousins, other relatives and friends; and a special friend, Doretha Davis.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com.

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.

Sandra Patricia Anderson

Mrs. Sandra Patricia Anderson of Dublin, Georgia passed away on Sunday, September 27, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

www.ServicesByDudley.com



Leisa Murkerson Owens

Leisa Murkerson Owens, 63, passed away on Sept. 26, 2026. She was born on May 21, 1963, in Dublin, Georgia, and lived a life marked by love, devotion, and quiet strength. Known to many simply as Leisa, she will be remembered for the warmth she shared with others and for the deep care she gave to her family throughout her life.

Leisa was the beloved daughter of the late Edward "Nooks" Murkerson and Lydia Wood Murkerson. She was also preceded in death by her siblings, Sue M. Huntley, William Murkerson, Deborah Murkerson Fountain, and Jean Murkerson. Their memories remained close to her heart, and she carried the bonds of family with her always. She is survived by her children, Lindsay Owens and her husband Ryan Smiley of Midway, Georgia, and Caleb Owens and his wife Brittany of Dublin, Georgia. She was a proud grandmother to Evie Albritton, who brought great joy to her life. She is also survived by her sisters, Ann M. Avant and Judy Murkerson-Segura, along with several nieces and nephews who will cherish her memory.

Before becoming a mother, Leisa worked in the office at Forstman Warehouse, where she was known for her dependable nature and strong work ethic. She carried those same qualities into every part of her life. She enjoyed spending time at the lake, especially boating and fishing, and found peace in the simple pleasures of being outdoors. More than anything, she treasured time spent with her family. Her love for them was steadfast and unconditional, and she made sure they knew how deeply they were valued.

Leisa was a loving and thoughtful woman whose presence brought comfort to those around her. She had a gentle spirit and a caring heart, and she touched the lives of many through her kindness and sincerity. Her family was the center of her world, and she devoted herself to them with grace and loyalty. Those who knew her will remember her for the love she gave so freely and for the way she made others feel seen and cared for.

Leisa's family will receive friends on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2026, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at Townsend Brothers Funeral Home. Services will be held at 11 a.m., on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026 in the Mary Whitaker Townsend Memorial Chapel with Rev. Robbie Passmore officiating. Pallbearers will be Cristian Noguera, Shaun Browning, Craig Haywood, Rodney Rea, Don Murkerson, and Jacob Segura. Burial will follow in Snowhill

Baptist Church Cemetery. Townsend Brothers Funeral Home in Dublin, GA, is in charge of arrangements. Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.



Tawanda Patterson

Funeral services for Miss Tawanda Patterson will be held on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026 at 11 a.m. at the Greater New Drench Grove Baptist Church, 2144 Middleground Church Road in Eastman. Interment will follow in the church cemetery.

Miss. Tawanda Patterson was born on Wednesday, July 27, 1977 in Dublin, Ga to the parentage of the late Ms. Luetariel Turner Patterson and Mr. Roy Donald Jarrett. She attended Drench Grove Baptist Church at an early age and she had gift for singing and she loved her kids and family. She attended Dublin High School in Dublin, Ga. She was employed at Scott's BBQ in Cochran, Ga where she loved to cook until God revealed his master plan and called her home.

Miss Patterson departed this life of Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2026. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ms. Luetariel Turner and Mr. Roy Donald Jarrett; son, Master Royal Patterson; siblings, Willie Lee Patterson, Tommy Lee Patterson, Jr., Charles Patterson, Barbara Ann Patterson, Rosie Marie Patterson, twins - Mary and Martha Patterson; grandparents, Willie Turner Sr., and Adel Newsome Turner, Saul and Ola Bell Newsome, Mr. Frank Jarrett and Katherine Crocker Jarrett Northern; aunts, Gloria Jean Jarrett, Geraldine Freeman, Patricia Ann Jarrett Baker (Jessie); and uncle, Arthur "Toby" Jones.

Miss Patterson's laugh, love, and memories will be cherished forever by all who knew her. She leaves to mourn her children, Royal Patterson of Dublin, Chicago Patterson, and Nicolas Patterson both of Atlanta, Justin Patterson and only daughter, Chelsie Anderson both of Dublin; siblings, Donald O'Neal Jarrett of Douglasville, Anpwon Donnell Jarrett of Palm Beach, Fla., twins - Darren Turner of Macon, and Evangelist

Teresa (Dwayne) Jackson of Atlanta, Lydia Holliman, Karen Patterson, Keith (Barbara) Patterson, Demetrius Patterson, Sharon Patterson all of Dublin, James L. Patterson of Atlanta; aunts and uncles, Pearline (Willie) Gilbert, Mae Bell (Earl) Tribbett, Joseph Johnson, Sam Turner, Willie D. Johnson, Ella Lee Way, Emma Lou Mosses; devoted friend, Adolph Walker Jr.; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.

MOMENTS

* On Oct. 12, 1990, South Dakota became the first state to rename Columbus Day "Native American Day," in honor of the initial inhabitants of the Americas. Two years later, the city of Berkeley, California, would be the first to call it "Indigenous Peoples' Day."

* On Oct. 13, 1925, groundbreaking stand-up comedian Lenny Bruce, whose freewheeling and profanity-laced routines on taboo topics notably attacked societal conventions and occasionally resulted in arrests, was born in Mineola, New York.

* On Oct. 14, 1892, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" by Arthur Conan Doyle was published. The book was the first collection of Holmes stories, which had been published in magazines since 1887. Its titular detective was partly inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell, whom Conan Doyle had met at the University of Edinburgh when he studied medicine there.

* On Oct. 15, 2024, researchers announced seven new species of tree frogs in Madagascar whose high-pitched whistling calls were reminiscent of sound effects from the sci-fi series "Star Trek," prompting the monikers Kirk, Picard, Sisko, Janeway, Archer, Burnham and Pike.

* On Oct. 16, 1906, German shoemaker Wilhelm Voight, who already had a long criminal record, embarrassed the German army by impersonating an officer and leading an entire squad of soldiers to the town of Kopenik, where they helped him steal 4,000 marks from the mayor's office.

* On Oct. 18, 1963, Félícette, a Parisian stray cat, had the honor of becoming the first (and to date the only) cat to visit outer space. The black-and-white feline's journey lasted 98 miles and a grand total of 13 minutes before her capsule safely parachuted back to Earth.

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Alamo City Council begins application for ICE grant

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
GTLN

The Alamo City Council considered pursuing a grant offered by the federal Immigration Customs Enforcement for the Alamo Police Department during their monthly meeting on Sept. 21 in the Alamo City Hall.

The grant, made available through ICE and the Department of Justice, provides a \$3 billion dollar fund to be divided between successful applicant law enforcement agencies. Under the grant, Alamo police officers would undergo ICE training and receive limited ICE authority, according to City Attorney Perry Avery.

“Those officers would remain city employees, and the city retains control of their regular police duties, but when exercising delegated immigration authority, they would be under the direction of ICE at that point for specific tasks that they may come in to do,” said Avery.

According to Alamo Police Chief Roy Adams, local police officers would be federally obligated to assist in local ICE operations regardless, so the grant would allow the city to receive funds from the process.

“If ICE comes in here with some warrants and stuff, we[re] going to do that anyway without the grant,” said Adams. “We’ve got to help them, so why not get paid to do it?”

The funds could be used to hire or rehire police personnel, fund training and maintaining and acquiring equipment.

If the council opted to pursue the grant, they would enter into the third and final round of applications, as the first two rounds have already closed. The city would be required to produce “basically a proposal for what you’re going to do with these funds,” according to Avery.

“There’s a lot that would go into this,” said Avery.

According to Adams, the Wheeler County Sheriff’s Department is also pursuing funds and training from the grant.

Council Member Dondrea Geter offered a motion to apply for the grant, which passed unanimously.

During the meeting, Council Member Laura Brownley drew the names of four residents in a raffle, giving away security cameras to the winners. The camera giveaway serves as part of the city’s push for more cameras in the Alamo area, coinciding with the police department’s desire to install more Flock Security cameras.

In addition to raffling away the cameras, Brownley said the winners could receive Police Chief Adam’s assistance in installing the cameras at their homes.

“Any help for them helps me out too,” said Adams.

City Manager Jeffery Floyd presented the council with quotes for the purchase of a new pump for the city’s wastewater treatment facilities. These pumps remain submerged in what Floyd described as “sludge” around the clock.

The council had previously voted to have the pump rebuilt in July after a lightning strike damaged the unit. However, when the pump was removed by Southeastern Environmental employees, it was deemed unsalvageable.

Instead, Southeastern provided the city with “three different prices for three different pumps,” depending on the warranties added. The city also received quotes for rental pumps from a different company, though Floyd was not interested in those quotes.

The council selected a pump with a five year warranty for \$22,897, which Floyd believed would last longer than five years. Council Member Steve Jones offered a motion to purchase the pump, which passed unanimously.

Floyd also presented a quote for the replacement of the scaling system on two city wells. The original system, which allows for level control in the wells, was installed in 2014 when a new well tank was built.

According to Floyd, the company which submitted the \$22,480 quote, J.K. Duren, is “basically the only company in the state of Georgia that does this.”

“I’ve talked to six or seven cities in the local area, and

J.K. Duren is the one that does them,” said Floyd.

Council Member Brownley offered a motion to purchase the new system, which passed unanimously.

Floyd confirmed the remodeling process for the old city hall would begin within the upcoming weeks, though could not provide a specific date from the contractors.

“As soon as I get a date, I’ll let everybody know,” said Floyd.

Upon the completion of the renovations, the council voted to use the building for a “test drive” of a new farmers market, following a motion from Council Member Brownley. The motion also included explorations of guidelines and other necessities needed to run a farmer’s market.

Council Member Patricia Woodard offered a motion to set the city’s official trunk-or-treat event on Oct. 29 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the local walking track, which passed unanimously. She also offered a motion to raise the spending limit for the mayor from \$500 per year, which passed unanimously.

Council Member Geoffrey Villegas offered a motion to approve a revised contract with Alapha Animal Control Shelter, which passed unanimously.

Floyd also presented the council with a second quote for the city’s flower garden from Civil Irrigation for \$16,321.47, alongside a previous quote from Paul’s Landscaping for \$18,365. The project would involve the companies planting flowers and installing an irrigation system, with Floyd describing the offerings from both companies as “the same identical things.”

“It’s something we talked about, just trying to make the downtown area look better,” said Floyd.

However, Floyd and the council expressed concerns with installing plants during the fall, instead deciding to wait and reapproach the bidding companies in the spring.

The council also approved a letter of support for a new nonprofit founded by Cameron Wooten to support local small businesses.

Thune says GOP still spending to support Collins campaign

By **TY TAGAMI**
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Republican leaders rallied behind U.S. Rep. Mike Collins and his bid to unseat U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff Friday, after a news report that the GOP was moving money to other states to support candidates thought to be more competitive.

“I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t think that we can win the state of Georgia,” U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune said.

Politico reported Wednesday that anonymous sources who had been briefed by the leader of the National Republican Senatorial Committee had said the top Republican super PAC was shifting its focus from Georgia.

But Thune, R-S.D., said there had been “significant investment” made to encourage voter turnout for Collins and that the fund had been the biggest spender to date on that effort.

Thune, speaking with Collins at the Cross Creek Cafe in Atlanta, also dismissed Democrats’ long-running attacks against Collins over his reported connections to white supremacists.

“In any campaign there are a lot of allegations, and a lot of them turn out to be unfounded,” Thune said, adding that Ossoff’s focus on the issue was a “desperate attack” to draw attention away from his own voting record.

News outlets have reported that a former Collins chief of staff tried to use his position to get a Holocaust denier released from prison, that a former Collins staffer posted a swastika and shared an image of himself in what appeared to be a Ku Klux Klan robe, and that Collins’ son-in-law, who lives on Collins’ property, has repeatedly made social media posts that promoted white nationalism and antisemitism, sometimes with Nazi imagery.

For weeks, Ossoff has been hammering Collins over those reports. Ossoff routinely brings them up in interviews, pivoting back to the issue when answering nearly every question.

In a virtual press briefing Thursday, Ossoff responded to a reporter’s query about whether Collins had a winning strategy by running with President Donald Trump rather than distancing himself from the president like some Republican candidates in other states.

Ossoff said Collins had voted to support Trump’s war in Iran, his tariffs, and policies that he said had made health insurance premiums unaffordable.

“He is Donald Trump’s puppet, and we will be sure to remind voters of that over the next 40 days,” Ossoff said, before pivoting back to his criticism of Collins’ associations: “In addition to being Donald Trump’s puppet, Congressman Mike Collins is a known bigot with extensive ties to white nationalism and neo-Nazi ideology.”

In early August, Collins addressed the is-

sue by saying no one speaks for him, including his son-in-law, who Collins said had no role in his campaign. Collins also said he did not “believe or support those views” and that he condemned antisemitism and racism.

Before he and Thune talked with reporters Friday, they both attended a fundraiser for Collins Thursday.

Democrats welcomed Thune to Georgia by sending a vehicle with a billboard to roll around Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

“Thune: Denounce Collins’ neo-Nazi ties,” the billboard said.

The war with Iran is one reason Republicans elsewhere have backed away from Trump. The related rise in fuel prices have been hitting voters in the pocketbook, particularly the rise in diesel prices. Farmers use diesel to run equipment, and trucks use it to deliver produce to market.

The price increases have been hitting agricultural areas that have been strongholds for Trump. Many Republican candidates reportedly see the increases as an election problem while many Democratic candidates, Ossoff included, see a political opportunity.

“We need to end this war. And it’s a war that Donald Trump and Mike Collins lied us into,” Ossoff said.

They were lying that Iran’s nuclear program posed an imminent threat, he said. “And now Georgians are paying the price.”

Collins said Friday that he backs Trump and the attacks on Iran.

“I support the administration’s efforts to make sure that Iran never has a nuclear weapon,” Collins said. “I’ve got seven grandkids. The last thing we need to do is hand them an Iran with a nuclear weapon.”

Collins pushed back against Ossoff, blaming rising costs on the senator’s support for the policies of former President Joe Biden.

State Republican Party Chairman Josh McKoon reinforced Thune’s message about ongoing support for Collins.

“I think there’s been a lot of loose talk — as there often is around this time of year — about reshuffling of funds and priorities,” McKoon said. “But it doesn’t get any better than having the Senate majority leader in your state, in this city, letting people know he’s 100% in support of Mike Collins.”

McKoon, talking outside the cafe where Collins and Thune had just spoken with reporters, said Republicans were committed to executing the same “battle plan” they used to put Trump back in the White House in 2024.

“We’ve got hundreds of thousands of voters that voted for Donald Trump in 2024 that have never voted in a midterm election,” McKoon said. “And at the Georgia Republican Party, we are laser-focused on getting those people off the couch and in the voting booth. If we turn those people out, we’re going to win these elections.”

Soperton buys 'skeeter sprayer'

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
GTLN

The Soperton City Council approved the purchase of new security cameras and a mosquito sprayer during their monthly meeting on Sept. 21 in the Soperton City Hall, adding both items to their agenda following work session discussion.

First, the council considered two options for the purchase of a “skeeter sprayer, for lack of a better, more politically correct term,” said Council Member Andrew Simons who led the meeting in the mayor’s absence.

The two options were presented by Antwon McClendon of the city’s public works department. The two machines differed primarily in size, with one requiring a truck to transport and operate, while the other would fit on the department’s golf cart. The size difference was also reflected in the price,

with the smaller sprayer costing \$10,000 less than the larger alternative.

“[McClendon’s] recommendation was to save this city \$10,000 by going with the smaller unit that mounts to the golf cart that we recently approved the purchase of,” said Simons.

Otherwise, the two machines were identical in terms of operation. According to Simons, the remote controlled operation would allow for sprayings to be a “one-man operation,” with McClendon specifying the driver would spray in the city in two 2-hour sessions each week.

The council did express concerns about the lack of a warranty mentioned by the vendor, London Foggers. However, they opted to move forward with the purchase pending more information on a warranty.

Council Member Misty Brantley offered a motion to approve the purchase of the smaller sprayer, which passed unanimously.

The council also considered the purchase of six cameras for the recreation complex on Ball Park Road. The \$7,352 quote for the cameras was offered by Wise Computer Systems, who have previously installed cameras for the city in the city hall and Soperton Police Department.

“I think the camera system is just kind of indicative of the world that we’re living in right now,” said Simons. “I think we have to have this to protect this city and this body. If the type of activities we’re getting reports of are taking place out there at that new rec facility, I think this will be a good hedge of protection around the city and around us as a council.”

Simons made a motion to purchase the camera system from Wise Computer Systems, which passed unanimously.



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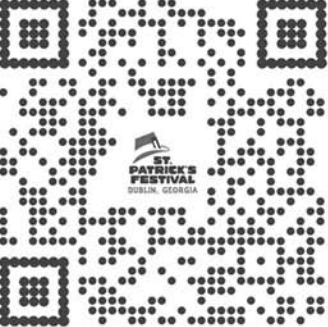
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Returning to the spotlight on a different stage

My phone showed I had an incoming call from Christy Blue. I thought I knew what she was calling about. It turned out I was partially correct.

Blue, who has directed many Dublin Main Street Player shows, not only wanted me to write a preview of their next production but she also asked if I would play a part.

What she did not know was that I was committed to the part of Master of Ceremonies even before I knew what was going to be required for me to do. After all, I was not going to be in “Elf Jr. The Musical,” which is currently being worked on for the next Dublin Community Theatre play from Nov. 20-22. For one thing, I am too old for that show.

So, if I wanted to keep my feet dabbling in the theater world here in Laurens County, I had to be a part of DMSP’s production of “Polter-Heist.”

Thankfully my role involves some improv. I have control of my character, what he wears and how he sounds. And thankfully, my wife, Jill, will be assisting me with the information I have to convey to the audience.

In other words, she will be naturally reacting to me the way she does when I act like a fool at home.

“Polter Heist” is a murder mystery show that will



MAN ABOUT TOWN...

By PAYTON TOWNS III

give the audience a chance to guess the murderer and the motive, and perhaps, win some prizes. This theater production, which will begin with supper at 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 30 and 31 at The Ice House, 213 S. Monroe St., costs \$45. Tickets can be purchased at Colleen’s China, Emerald City Treasures (on Telfair Street) and at Visit Dublin GA.

This show was a chance for me to return to the spotlight. I just won’t be standing on a stage. The action will be amongst the audience. That is a big difference from when I played multiple characters in “Annie,” Rev. Hopkins in “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,” and Liver Lips Louie in “Guys and Dolls” in DCT productions.

Work on “Polter-Heist,” a murder mystery show written by Tony Schwartz

and Marylou Ambrose, began in August when we gathered at Blue’s house to read through the script. Since then, the cast has been practicing approximately three times a week in various places. I have had a front-row seat to watching the talent that will be on displayed at the end of next month.

Being involved in a theater production, whether it is DMSP or DCT, is a time commitment. Starring in a show reminds me of when I played trombone in the marching band at Baldwin High School. In the marching band, I had to memorize my part of the music and know where I had to be on the football field during each song. If I daydream or tune out, I may get in the way of someone else in the band.

That is the same way

when it comes to being in a show. You have to know your part, know where you are supposed to be, know what you’re saying and doing or else it may throw others off.

I have been involved in shows where actors missed their cues. During practice that is not such a big deal. It is different when it happens during a live performance. I do recall a time or two when a prop was left out on stage and another actor had to pick it up and walk off with it or carry it around during the next scene.

One of my favorite prop mistakes happened during a show I was watching at Georgia College & State University almost 20 years ago. The two main characters were in jail, talking planning how to escape when the door popped open on its own.

That was not part of the plot. They looked at each other and then at the open door as they waited for their partners in crime to bust them out. They ran on stage and announced they were there to save them, only to look at the open door and wonder why they had not already escaped.

Those things may happen in shows. It is part of theater, and something I am proud to once again be doing for the Dublin Main Street Players.



By LORAN SMITH

that reflected the proper attitude when you took a seat at the counter.

For over 12 years, Amy built a reputation that made her the doyenne of ADD Drugs.

She enjoyed telling her customers the latest joke that she had heard and was eager to collect one from you, if you had one to make her day. Just about a week before she died, I told her a true story about the Florida land boom and bust in the mid 1920s.

Two guys from South Georgia went down to Miami looking for work, but the bust had brought ruin to the boom. Flat broke, they walked by a restaurant advertising steaks and strawberry shortcake and went inside. They were seated,

commenced to order, and enjoyed steak and dessert to the fullest.

When they finished, they walked up to the cashier, who was also the proprietor, and asked him what he would do if two drifters came into the restaurant, ordered steaks and dessert, and did not have the money to pay?

The owner replied, “Why I would kick them square in the rear.” With that one of the diners bent over and said, “Well, in that case take out for two.”

That made Amy laugh with verve and satisfaction. So, the last memory I will have of Amy will always be making this bundle of goodwill, elite hospitality, and eternal selflessness, laugh.



Amy Gibson

The west end of the lunch counter at ADD Drug in the Five Points section of Athens was occupied all last week, but not with anxious diners, which is usually the case. Instead, there were flowers, cards of sympathy, and a somber atmosphere, which was brought about by the death of the queen of the food operation, Amy Gibson.

Amy was a hard worker, a pretty brunette with a touch of gray that gave her a classic look. Most of all she had an evergreen smile that made this well-known spot in the Classic City the place for good food, unparalleled service, ambient atmosphere, and a broadside of love and laughter if you were a regular. If you weren’t a regular, you could join Amy’s club by showing a smiling face and not your backside.

Students, faculty, and local folk hang out there. When students settle across the state and become dotting alumni, many of them, when they return to Athens, order a meal at ADD Drug, which began operations in 1961 by the Horton family. ADD is an acronym for Athens Discount Drugs.

When Kevin Florence took over the ADD Drug, he said he knew nothing about the lunch business, but he quickly knew what to do. “I simply asked Amy what I should do. She took over and supervised the entire operation. We never had a problem, and we had the smoothest transition imaginable. She made many friends for us, and we will always be indebted to her for making our customers feel good all the time.”

Vanessa Owings worked with Amy for over five years and was on the verge of tears when she said, “She

was more than a co-worker; she was my friend and became a part of my family. We all miss her so much.”

Amy knew who the generous tippers were but did not bad mouth the cheapskates. “That’s their problem,” she would say of those who had resources but were miserly when it came to tipping the working class.

I have been an ADD Drug patron since it opened in 1961 and have hosted guests there, who were taken by the downhome atmosphere that prevails—to say nothing about the food, service from a smiling staff, and the collegial ambience.

That includes Verne and Nancy Lundquist, and Craig Silver, CBS; Holly Rowe and Todd Blackledge, ESPN; John Underwood, Sports Illustrated; and in the spring, Annika Sörenstam, the greatest of women’s golfers whose daughter wanted to tour the UGA campus, was pleased to have lunch with Amy.

She thought that was “neat,” but she reserved just as much affection for friends like Mike and Runell Cheek, Mac and Jennifer Coile, Ted and Sandy Dieter, Ricky Chastain, and a host of others. And while we are namedropping, let’s not overlook the fact that ADD Drug is patronized by Marianne Rogers who grew up on Bloomfield Street in walking distance of the establishment.

Amy arranged photos on the wall from coaches who have had a tasty sandwich over the years, including Kirby Smart, Jack Bauerle, Joni Taylor (who now is at Texas A&M), Mark Richt, and others.

Nobody loved working and satisfying customers more than Amy, who was always displaying a sign

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

- Galatians 3:28 (King James Version)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."

- F. Scott Fitzgerald

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

- Sept. 29, 2026 is...
- National Police Remembrance Day
 - National Biscotti Day
 - National Starbucks Day
 - World Heart Day
 - VFW Day
 - National Mocha Day
 - National Coffee Day
 - Happy Goose Day

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Very tired of everyone discussing Dublin City Schools missing money as if someone stole it and needs to be jailed. The money was spent (stupidly) – they spent more than they had for a long period of time, hence a huge deficit. I seriously doubt that anyone stole it. It was just incompetence on the part of the former administration and the former school boards that let this go on with no accountability. This is why you should be careful about who you vote for. Board members should understand education/finances/budgeting etc. I hope the new school board and administration will operate more soundly.

In 1989 we paid 3 percent sales tax in Dublin and Laurens County. Now we pay 8 percent and will be voting in November to increase sales tax another 1 percent for a total of 9.

Before raising taxes, why not make cuts and freeze commissioners salaries for two years?

I would like to know of the millions of dollars that we’ve spent on schools in the last 12 or 15 years in Laurens County, how has it developed and have we gotten better?

How ridiculous that families argue with each other in the Police Beat. They remind me of “Mama’s Family” on the TV show. If you are that mean to each other, I can’t imagine how you treat people on the street.

Good morning my Laurens County taxpayers. We knew that the county will do what they want to do. We are no different than Dublin. We have wasteful spending and building things just because. It is up to us to do something about it.

Maybe the GBI needs to come in and look at all of the county taxpayers' stuff, just like they did Dublin. It’s a mess. Trust me!

The Laurens County Commission turned down the Dublin City School board when they wanted them to approve a bond issue. One commissioner said every one of you school board members

should resign tonight. Now the commissioners are raising our property taxes over 30 percent and want us to vote in an additional sales tax. Should we now say every commissioner should resign tonight?

If Commissioner Kemp and the other commissioners believe that a person’s life is just as important in Cadwell and Cedar Grove as it is in Dublin, why are all six ambulances based and housed inside the city limits of Dublin and East Dublin? Answer that!

I read a lot about people complaining about tax money being spent on sports and sports complexes. Schools with good sports programs, generally as a rule, don’t have a lot of discipline problems. Money spent on sports complexes, like what Dublin and Laurens County is doing, brings a lot of people from out of town into the community. They spend a lot of money and is very good to the community.

If the FLOST is approved and is supposed to lower our property taxes, why raise the millage rate now instead of waiting to see what the penny tax brings in?

Does it take two people to read water meters? If it does it probably be a good idea to divide and conquer.

Let me get this straight. Laurens County has \$20 million in the bank. That’s not enough... not clear what it’s not enough for, but it’s not enough for the commissioners so they want 30% more in taxes to add to the \$20 million they already have. It’s the stereotypical politician. More is never enough.

Is the county collecting rent on the grain cart at the end of Maddox Royster Road? Maybe they could sell it to keep the millage rate low. Could the sheriff’s department use it?

New houses on a new road between Claxton Dairy and Blackshear Ferry do not have street name signs. The sign bandit is not happy about it. What will it take to get signs put up? Can 911 help?

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



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2024

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

FROM THE RECORD

Marriage: Christian Logan Studdard to Kinsey Jamisen Helen Clark; Gordon Donaldson Thigpin to Jennifer Scarano Banks; Bryson Chance Tapley to Jacey Nicole Wood; Thomas Landon Thompson to Rebekah Lee Graham; Al-isha Renae Orange to Antwan Ryanard Coney; Bobby O’neal Jr. to Shelsea Deonna Whipple

Paternity/Legitima- tion: Jayquan Abdul Pryor v. Noelle Marie Lotowitz

Complaint for Di- vorce: Brooklyn Floyd v William Kirkland; Benjamin Diatta v Marquita Garnes

Modification/Child Custody, Visitation & C/ Support: Britny Sterling v James Allen Starley, III

Modification of Cus- tody: Nicole Kersey v Howell Kersey

Automobile Tort: Cindy Johnson v Garrett Industries, Inc., John Doe & Jamaree Pendergrass; Cameron Demorse v Baggett Farms, LLC. & Eric Dent

Complaint for Dam- ages: Euler Hermes North America v Oconee Sporting Sales, Inc

Contract: Associated Credit Union v Jetty Russ Simmons; Southwood Fi- nancial v Joel & Reggie Howard; Southwood Fi- nancial v Maresa Martinez; PCA Acquisitions v Wen- dell Mincey; Earnest West v Abdulah Saghir

General Tort: Norri- son King v Laurens Coun- ty School District & Larry Chip Fleming

Real Property: Green- spring Capital v Estate of Juliette Brown

Petition to Establish Title Against All The World: Dublin-Laurens Land Bank v Tract/Land, Ray St, Nolan Thomas, Saide Thomas

Affidavit for Continu- ing Garnishment: Auto- mobile Acceptance Corp. v Ayiana Henry & Defense DFACS

Complaint–Child Support: GA DHS EX REL Skylar Brown ET AL vs Shaun Brown; GA DHS EX REL Tycin Harden vs Reginald Tucker; GA DHS EX REL Tavaris Wright vs Tavaris D. Wright;

Contempt–Child Support: GA DHS EX REL Tylih Shivers vs John Johnson

Modification–Child Support: GA DHS EX REL Arianna Pittman vs Tyron- dric Pittman

Liens: Bobbie Allison Unruh & Curtis Wayne Johnson, Jr to Robins Fed-

eral Credit Union; Michael C Turner & Dublin Food Systems, Inc to Communi- ty Bank of Johnson County; Damian Montaldi Linder to First Franklin Financial Group; Bob W Pope to Fifth Third Bank, National Asso- ciation; Gregory Smith to Preferred Capital Funding; Michael Spivey to Mark Eas- ler; Goolsby Services LLC/ John W Goolsby to Amur Equipment Finance, Inc; Marcie Durden to Cred- it Acceptance Corp; Thuy Nguyen to Wells Fargo Bank NA; Michael Gilmore to Wells Fargo Bank NA; Donetrius Whipple to The Credit Union Loan Source, LLC; Terrance Bernard Ro- zier Jr to Consumer Port- folio Services, Inc; Homer Allen to Preferred Capital Funding; Trelani A Wright to Capital City Bank; Va- nessa Branham to Medical Center Navicent Health; Sherreka Thomas to Spring Oaks Capital SPV, LLC; Pamela L Dewberry to 1st Franklin Financial Corpo- ration; Angel G Boatright to AU Medical Center, Inc; Nichole Lynn Allison to HS Financial Group, LLC; An- thony Marion to DNF As- sociates, LLC; Isaac Mason to HS Financial Corp LLC; Willie Ellington to Internal Revenue Service; Shield Bozeman to Internal Reve- nue Service

Warranty Deed: Sam- uel N Rogers, Jr to My Ngoc Lam; P2 Construction, LLC to Erica Ramsey Hadden & Davis Skeeters; Regina D & Douglas R Willhouse to Kallee Steele; Hambros, LLC to Jonathan Devin & Harliee Kathryn Hender- son; J Green Enterprises, LLC to Garywayne Kyle & Amy Wynette Lyles; Mi- chael Joel Beacham to WB Morgan Properties, LLC; Victor Lee & Shanta A Mc- Millon to John Sykes; Sha- ron Chance to Mary Alford; Lord & Hatcher Develop- ment, LLC to Amanda Ni- cole Gay & Gabriel Mayes Gary; John L & Lisa D Neff to David William & Emi- ly McKinnon; Suzanne W Cole to Suzanne W Cole Trustee of the Suzanne W Cole Revocable Living Trust Dated July 30, 2026; Paul Kennedy Family, LLC to Country Lots, LLC; Sylvia P Brown to Lana Malone Alligood, Trustee of the Sylvia Payne Brown Living Trust dated Sep- tember 14, 2026; Property Preservation All of Georgia , LLC to Philip Lyn & Ma- ria Dawn Martin; Dwight & Emma Hilton to Ben Zach- ary & Heidi R Rios; JWJ Investment Properties, LLC to William David Schaub; Rick Donald & Melanie Browning Gunn to Sheldon Brown; Richard W & Wen- dy M Slade to Gregory & Rebecca Chapman; Pame- la Pettis to Whitney Pettis Dixon; Ryan Dixon Admin- istrator of The Estate of Shelley Lynn Smith to M.L. Knight; Benjamin Curtis & Tiffany Julia Smith to Mat- co Homes, LLC; Shelia Bea- cham Hasty to Roger Lee

& Wendy Delana Hasty; Truc T Nguyen to Truc T & Tugen N Nguyen; Federal National Mortgage Asso- ciation AKA Fannie Mae to William Brice Cooper; Tresor Abety Kamana to Haliegh Herndon; William David & Brittany S Rowe to Steven Cole & Grayci Car- olyn Spires; Randy Brown to Dawn Bracewell & Mon- ica Morales; Carolyn Ann Keene Glover to The Revo- cable Living Trust of Caro- lyn Ann Keene Glover with Carolyn Ann Keen Glover acting as the trustee; Annie S Green to Howard Rentals, LLC; Ashlee B Allen NKA Ashlee McLean to Hunter Thrasher; Julian R Cook to Hinesville Home Center, Inc; Ellington Holdings, LLC to Brandon S & Ashlee B McLean; Karen Lee Ki- ght to Clay & Katie Carroll; Dylan Shillingburg to Dylan Shillingburg & Grace Ster- ling; Joshua Ashley Clark to Stellar Shamrock Solar LLC

Security Deed: MY NGOC LAM to Emet Mort- gage; Wimberly Property Holdings, LLC to Pinna- cle Bank, By Merger with Synovus Bank DBA Syno- vus Bank; Jackson & Vic- toria Horton Williamson to Sunmark Community Bank; M&W Paint & Body, LLC Michael Williams to Citizens Bank of Laurens County; Damon Keith Jes- sup of Bank of Dudley; Eri- ca Ramsey Hadden & Davis Skeeters to CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC; Jonathan Devin & Harliee Kathryn Henderson to Guild Mort- gage Company, LLC; Gary- wayne Kyle & Amy Wynette Lyles to US National Bank Association; John Reagin to Coastal Community Bank % Aven Financial, Inc; WB Morgan Properties, LLC to Bank of Dudley; John Sykes to Mutual of Omaha Mort- gage, Inc DBA Keller Hom- Loans; Robert Christopher & Jessica Sykes Johnson to Plaza Home Mortgage Inc; Amanda Nicole & Gabriel Mayes Gay to The Citizens Bank of Cochran; David William & Emily McKinnon to Vallant Bank; Georgia B Veal to Georgia First Bank; Country Lots, LLC to Ag- South Farm Credit, ACA; Phillip Lyn & Maria Dawn Martin to AgGeorgia Farm Credit, ACA; Ben Zachary & Heidi R Rios to Rocket Mortgage, LLC; William David Shaub to Vallant Bank; Vermel Thomas to

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Rocket Mortgage, LLC; Michael Scott Sullivan byu Diane Sullivan Attorney in Fact and Diane Sullivan to Rocket Mortgage; James Gregory to Farmers State Bank; Samual Zachery Andrews Jr & Lauren Haley Andrews to Robins Finan- cial Credit Union; Serena Fluker to Midfirst Bank; Bees Property Management LLC to Georgia First Bank; Cindy & Donald Wilkin- son to Rocket Mortgage, LLC; Paul Wayne Perry to Citizens Bank of Lau- rens County; Tuyen & Truc Nguyen to First Laurens Bank; Barney M Parker to State Bank of Cochran;

William Brice Cooper to Mortgage Research Center LLC DBA Veterans Unit- ed Home Loans; Haliegh & Dalton Herndon to First Laurens Bank; Graci Car- olyne Spires & Steven Cole to Farmers State Bank; Kristin & Ashley Baggett to Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC Dart Collateral Man- ager LLC; Wesley Ballenger & Brittany Ward Smith to Georgia First Bank; Dawn Bracewell & Monica Mo- rales to Randy Brown; Ja- miah Giles, Trustee of The Jamilah Giles Living Trust Dated April 11, 2023 to Navy Federal Credit Union; Howard Rentals LLC Carl

Howard Donnie Howard as Authorized Signers to Dina Investments, LLC; Hunt- er Thrasher to T2 Finan- cial LLC DBA Revolution Mortgage; Adam White to Vallant Bank; Brandon S & Ashley B McLean to Rock- et Mortgage; Rodrick Loyd & Astrid Smith to Midfirst Bank; Clay & Katie Carroll to Farmers State Bank; Dylan Shillingburg & Grace Sterling to Ameris Bank; Brian A & Erin K Brown to Loandepot.com, LLC; Pamela R Middlebrooks to Citizens Bank of Laurens County; Bates Group Prop- erties, LLC to Georgia First Bank



Mayor proclaims National Breast Cancer Awareness month

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

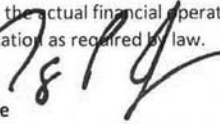
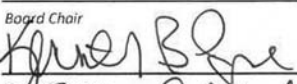
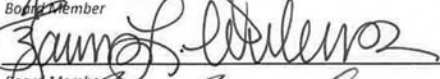
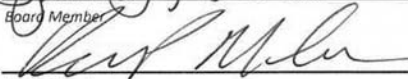
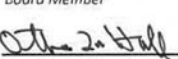
The ladies of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. joined Mayor Joshua Kight for a recent signing of a proclamation proclaiming October 2026 as National Breast Cancer Awareness month and Oc- tober 3rd, 2026 as Breast Cancer Awareness day in Dublin, Georgia

That the ladies of the Dublin-Laurens Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., have taken on the cause to raise

awareness of breast can- cer, fulfilling the sorority's commitment to promote physical health by educating the community about breast cancer and the importance of early detection and that the sorority acknowl- edges the community partners who stand with us today in the spirit of unity and sup- port for members of the community from diagnosis of breast cancer, to treat- ment, to becoming cancer free.

Delta Sigma Theta So- rority is hosting the annu-

al Breast Cancer: Walk for the Cure on Saturday, Oc- tober 3, 2026 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00p.m. at Fairview Park Hospital track for the purpose of bringing the community together for a common cause, educating the community about breast cancer, and generating funds to make a difference in the lives of those diag- nosed with breast cancer and donating to the Amer- ican Cancer Society to sup- port research earmarked for finding a cure for breast cancer.

STATEMENT OF ACTUAL FINANCIAL OPERATIONS			
Laurens County School System, Georgia			
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2026			
Published pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67, in the form specified and prescribed by the State Auditor			
	General Fund	All Other Governmental Funds	Total
REVENUES			
Property Taxes	20,260,904		20,260,904
Sales Taxes	381,289	10,144,275	10,525,564
State Funds	63,201,732	2,452,302	65,654,034
Federal Funds		12,484,207	12,484,207
Other Revenues	2,330,446	48,140,016	50,470,462
Total Revenues	86,174,371	73,220,800	159,395,171
EXPENDITURES			
Current			
Instruction	55,854,107	8,180,309	64,034,416
Support Services			
Pupil Services	6,733,067	3,267,831	10,000,897
Improvement of Instructional Services	1,443,001	97,879	1,540,880
Educational Media Services	1,005,011	72,599	1,077,610
Federal Administration		30,740	
General Administration	2,676,324	18,622	2,694,947
School Administration	5,238,652	83,059	5,321,711
Business Administration	926,444		926,444
Maintenance and Operation of Plant	6,262,246	381,986	6,644,231
Safety	1,263,358		1,263,358
Student Transportation Services	4,716,646	823,148	5,539,793
Central Support Services	699,126	89,041	788,167
Other Support Services	71,390	976,341	1,047,731
Enterprise Operations		151,013	
Community Services		800	
Food Services Operations	274,193	8,447,051	8,721,244
Capital Outlay	233,524	591,989	825,513
Debt Service		4,738,157	4,738,157
Total Expenditures	87,397,087	27,950,566	115,347,654
Revenues over (under) Expenditures	(1,222,716)	45,270,234	44,047,518
Other Financing Sources (Uses)			
Other Sources			-
Other Uses	450,718	(8,775,066)	(8,324,349)
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	450,718	(8,775,066)	
Net Change in Fund Balances	(771,998)	36,495,167	35,723,169
Fund Balance, Beginning	28,623,409	19,529,665	48,153,073
Fund Balance, Ending	27,851,410	56,024,832	83,876,242
CERTIFICATION: We, the undersigned, being all of the members of the governing board of the above-named local school system/state charter school and the local school superintendent/chief administrator, certify that this Statement of Actual Financial Operations for the fiscal year shown above, prepared on the form specified and prescribed by the State Auditor pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67(c), has been examined by each of us and, to the best of our knowledge and belief, fairly presents the actual financial operations and current financial status of the school system/state charter school. Executed prior to publication as required by law.			
Signature	Printed Name	Date	
	Tony Johnson	9/23/2026	
	Kenneth Payne	9/23/26	
	Kevin Malone	9/23/26	
	Jarvis Wilcher	9/23/2026	
	Dr. O.J. Hall	9/23/26	
Local School Superintendent/Chief Administrator			



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WEST LAURENS 21, SOUTHEAST BULLOCH 0

Bloodsaw's big night paces balanced attack as Raiders get first shutout

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

There was nothing flashy about it. But West Laurens got a much-needed region-opening win out of the way with a 21-0 shutout of Southeast Bulloch Friday night at the SHU.

The Raiders' defense had its most dominant performance so far, and their offense once again rushed for a season-high, with 197 of a balanced 270 total yards.

They built the three-score lead in the first half, and despite failing to extend it, stood on an opposing zero for the quick-moving final 24 minutes to collect a straightforward second victory.

Though there's plenty that would have made it more thorough, West Laurens was more than satisfied with the way it took another step forward, and brought an end to the two-game slide since its only previous win at Dodge

County earlier this month.

"All in all, we'll take the progress," Raiders head coach Kip Burdette said. "We got a region win, and they don't ask how, they ask who. Hopefully, we'll build from it."

Their new feature back Kaden Bloodsaw had 100 yards and two touchdowns on 17 carries to lead the backfield.

Justin Blash chipped in 14 for 49, and Jaden Stanley a 58-yard sprint to the house to close out the scoring late in the second quarter.

West Laurens' remaining possessions came up empty, including one other drive into the opposing red zone that resulted in a missed 24-yard field goal.

But the defense had no plans on letting Southeast Bulloch come anywhere near the scoreboard.

The Yellow Jackets were held to just six first downs and only 90 total yards. Leroy Mack led Raider defenders

with 8.5 total tackles, three for loss and a hurry. The senior also got a hand on a Southeast Bulloch punt for a partial block late in the first quarter.

Chafin, Nicholas Hester and J.D. Hogan added six apiece. Hogan, Stephen Odom and Jamari Blash were in on pass break-ups.

"I think they may have gotten one or two first downs in the second half, but that was about it, and it was really just slam the door shut," Burdette said.

Southeast Bulloch mirrored West's four turns on offense in the opening half, and punted twice. The Jackets' first and last drives both got to plus territory, but stalled.

Eli Reed's 50-ish return of the opening kickoff set them up in some semblance of business just over midfield to get the night going, but they'd go four

RAIDERS
Continued on page 7



Kaden Bloodsaw and Jace Williams (11) celebrate after the former scored the Raiders' first touchdown of the game midway through the first quarter/LYLE DORMAN

DUBLIN 27, BLECKLEY COUNTY 21

Twists, and turn(over)s...

Irish survive 3 giveaways, 2 defensive touchdowns to take down Royals in rollercoaster region debut

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Turnovers seemed to turn Friday's top-10 battle between Dublin and Bleckley County on its head every time you turned around.

Three fumbles and two interceptions were far more than wrinkles in the fabric of the back-and-forth between teams projected to be 2-AA's two best.

Each of the five changes of possession changed matters just when you thought the matchup was smoothing out to follow a predictable course.

The Royals used two of the above to score defensive touchdowns. The other three occurred in plus territory to end threats by both offenses.

But at the end of it all, two grinding scoring drives in a shutout second half got the Irish home from Cochran with an edge-of-your-seat win, 27-21.

Both rivals emerge from the potentially region title-swinging clash with an overall record of 4-1, and five region games still to go.

Dublin (1-0 region) has another bye week before continuing region play against Swainsboro Oct. 9. Bleckley visits the Tigers this coming Friday.

The Royals converted Irish mistakes into two of the three touchdowns that made up their 21-14 halftime lead, as turnover issues that have been Dublin's one major achilles heel this season re-

curred during its opening and closing sequences of the half.

Quarterback Ryland Yates was scrambling near his own end zone barely two minutes into the game, when a hit from Bleckley nose tackle Cody Register knocked the ball loose in the end zone for a touchdown recovery by Willy Walters.

A Bleckley pick-six ended the half, as Octavius Tate ran back a misdirected pass 85 yards on the final play, and the Royals turned around a Dublin threat to take the lead before the break by going up themselves.

BC had its own issues with turnovers, committing two that included a red zone fumble on the first drive of the game, though it'd still end up with the 7-0 lead courtesy of the Irish mishap.

But finishing drives into or near plus territory was, overall, a rotten-luck proposition for the Purple and Gold, which would miss a field goal in the second quarter, be intercepted by JaKarian Jones in the third and be stopped on fourth downs twice in the last.

Dublin recovered from the early disaster and scored on back-to-back possessions to climb back into the lead, then did the same with two touchdowns in three as it faced a similar starting hole to begin the second half.

A missed point-after kick left the door squarely ajar for a backdoor winner if Bleckley could make good on either



Cayden Dardy falls on the loose ball after a Bleckley fumble on its opening drive deep into Irish territory/DONN KESTER, for the GTLN

of two shots at a game-tying touchdown that reached the red zone in the game's last 10 minutes.

But the Irish would turn them away with a pass break-up at their 6, and again around their own 20 with under a minute left, as a Brody Fleming pass fell incomplete.

The Wing-T delivers again...

Jamarcus Knight, on 13 carries for 133 yards, and Trav Bostic, with 17 for 107, brought the big plays for the Irish on the ground. Yates and Jaydon McRae – starting in place of the inactive Dontavious Cannon at fullback – took care of the key short-yardage situations up the middle, and had two touchdowns each.

Yates also completed a pair of passes, one to McRae, for 30 additional yards.

Dublin had some penalties and

IRISH
Continued on page 7

GATEWOOD 48, TRINITY 13

Gators' ground game gets best of Crusaders in Eatonton

By JEREMY PAYNE
Correspondent

The Trinity Crusaders traveled to Eatonton Friday night looking for their third road win of the season, as well as their third-straight regular season win over Gatewood.

Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned as Trinity fell to 2-4 on the season with a 48-13 loss to the Gators.

Gatewood took the opening kickoff and wasted no time getting going. The home team needed just five plays to march 78 yards for the opening score of the contest.

Quarterback Bennett Haley ran it in from five yards out to give the Gators a 7-0 lead less than three minutes in.

Trinity couldn't move the ball on either of its first two possessions, with just nine yards on six plays. Following a second-consecutive punt, Gatewood went back to work.

The Gators, who had a three and out on their second possession, would run just three plays again. This time the third play ended a 68-yard scoring drive as Sean Bennett scored from 11 yards out to make it 14-0 midway thru the opening quarter.

Trinity finally got the offense working on its third possession, marching 67 yards in six plays to get on the scoreboard. Tayt Evans would find paydirt on a 30-yard run to make it 14-6, and the Crusaders appeared to be right back in the contest.

The momentum was short-lived. On the ensuing kickoff, Bennett took the ball at the 30, made a couple of nice moves and outran the Crusader special teams unit for a 70-yard score to put the Gators up 20-6 after a quarter.

Disaster struck on the next Trinity possession as the Gators intercepted a pass on the second play of the drive and returned it inside the red zone. Two plays later, Bennett Haley found Drew Love for a 15-yard TD pass to

CRUSADERS
Continued on page 7



East Laurens defenders battle to get Swainsboro running back Kyle Johnson on the ground during one of his 28 carries for nearly 250 yards/ZACH DAWSON

SWAINSBORO 42, EAST LAURENS 13

Johnson, Tigers storm past Falcons

From STAFF REPORTS

East Laurens had things headed in a good direction, and some upset hopes that were threatening to catch fire as it summoned a series of clutch passing plays for a pair of touchdowns that would both cut the lead of No. 10 Swainsboro to just a score during a late first-half firefight.

But the Falcons, over the course of the entire night, had too many things working against them to keep it burning much past the early third quarter.

Red-hot running back Kyle

Johnson and the Tigers ran away with the game's remainder to win 42-13 Friday at the new Falcon Field.

East Laurens held itself back with preventables like penalties that didn't help the home cause. Neither did lost-yardage plays, at the hands of a stout Tiger defense, which took a good bit away from an offensive total that would have otherwise been greater than the final 124.

But the Falcons' biggest struggle was slowing down Johnson, who carried 28 times for an incredible 242 yards and five touchdowns.

Joshua Gray and Shannon

Benjamin, who shared five connections for 72 yards, combined for Swainsboro's only other score at the end of the frenetic sequence going into halftime.

Adding injury to insult was the loss of quarterback Skyler Snead after taking a hard hit on the first series of the third quarter, followed by most of the offensive momentum East had built up in a strong finish to the first half.

Before the exit, Snead had completed five of seven passes for 89 yards and both his team's

FALCONS
Continued on page 7

RAIDERS

Continued from page 6

and out.

West Laurens declined an illegal block penalty to give them a manageable fourth and five, but J.K. Small was badgered in the pocket by Maxx Chafin, on a short pursuit that dropped him for a sack to force the turnover on downs.

A handful of solid late-down runs by Stevie Padgett led to the deepest SEB penetration of the night with a little more than a minute to go in the half, but a series of penalties (a first calling back a Small keeper down to about the 20) turned the situation into a third and very long, forcing the Jackets to cut their losses and take it to halftime.

The plus-seven turnover margin that's buoyed their struggling offense through four games didn't come into play, as neither side gave the football away, and Southeast would do nothing but punt the rest of the night.

Hitting the ground running...

For a second-straight week, West Laurens began the game with a scoring drive, after the Chafin sack



Jaden Stanley tears down the home sideline to a 58-yard touchdown on a single-play scoring drive to give the Raiders their final TD in the second quarter/LYLE DORMAN

set them up at their own 44.

Thirty-six of the 56 yards were passing, as Duggan Malone dialed up Bloodsaw and Tre'J Germany on short bootleg completions to get to the 1, where Bloodsaw carried it right for his first career touchdown.

The Raiders drove 72 to do the same, with Bloodsaw bouncing one outside and gunning the throttle to cover 24 yards to the end zone, on the next try to take their first multi-score lead of the year.

Throws, this time first career receptions by Chafin

from a variety of spots in a fullback capacity, featured just as prominently along the balanced trip.

At the end of it, West Laurens had three backs with 20 yards or more rushing, and Malone 47 passing to a distribution of three targets.

"They kind of live and die by man (coverage)," Burdette said. "We were hoping to slip some backs out, and stuff like that. We were able to hit those early and kind of loosen some things up too, bootlegs and that sort of thing. Duggan



West Laurens defenders Leroy Mack (0) and Maxx Chafin (8) celebrate after a tackle for loss in the second half of Friday's shutout, in which the Raiders held Southeast Bulloch to less than 90 total yards/LYLE DORMAN

did a good job of that."

Drive 3 ended with a punt, but the fourth late in quarter 2 needed one play to get back to the house on a 58-yard Stanley keeper, off a jet fake to Hogan from a wildcat look.

From there, nothing much happened offensively either way, with the exception of a scoreless final drive that was keyed by first downs on a strike from Malone to a crossing Hogan and a Bloodsaw carry that helped West Laurens reach the red zone for just the second time.

"I think we could've probably taken some more chances in the second half," Burdette said. "We took a couple of negative plays that I'm not really happy about... We ate up a bunch of clock, that's good. You can keep your defense off the field, but at the same time, we'd like to produce some points out of that.

"We'll take the win and learn, but we've gotta score points in the second half."

West Laurens continues region play in Pooler Friday against Savannah's New Hampstead.

CRUSADERS

Continued from page 6

make it 28-6.

Trinity picked up a pair of first downs on its next drive, but would eventually have to punt again.

Gatewood went 60 yards on eight plays to get on the board one final time in the opening half. Bennett scored for the third time, this time from eight yards out, to make it 27-7 at the half.

The Gators added two more scores on their first two possessions of the second half. Brady Haley had both on runs of 47 and 34 yards to make the score 48-7.

Trinity would get one more touchdown in the fourth quarter with a very impressive drive. The Crusaders would march 90 yards on eight plays for the score. Sam Owens ran it in from 25 yards out to make it 48-13, and that would be the final.

Tayt Evans led the Crusaders with 81 rushing yards on 13 carries and added 19 yards receiving. Owens finished with 67 yards in just six attempts and caught a pass for 13.

Landon Moreno led Gatewood with 170 yards rushing. Brady Haley ended his night with 89 yards rushing and 33 yards receiving. Bennett scored twice on the ground and added the kickoff return score.

Trinity (2-4) will be back on the road next Friday as it travels to Macon to face Windsor Academy.

IRISH

Continued from page 6

the next possession, Dublin similarly imposed its will all the way along a 74-yard drive to tie the game back in the first.

Big carries by Bostic and Knight keyed the trip. Yates finished things off with a sneak. NaZyon Mitchell's point-after evened the score at 7.

Bleckley punted, and Dublin started with a plus field before repeating the process.

Its second series was stuck in a third and long, but a 12-yard pickup saved a chance to keep it going on a fourth-and-short keeper by Yates that went for 10.

He made the play to salvage an unlikely fourth down after a similar progression starting from the Royals' 15, scrambling on a fourth and seven, and taking it in from 12 to give Dublin the lead just more than 60 seconds into the second quarter.

The Irish, for the most part, bottled up the carries of Bleckley's Zyion Love and Kix Foskey on the Bleckley's run options, forcing Fleming to beat them through the air.

The Royals put together their only official scoring drive of the night, highlighted by his scramble and completion to Gage Harris on an impressive catch to reach the Irish 5, and responded



Cody Register knocks the ball away from Ryland Yates (left) and Willy Walters (15, right) recovers for the first of Bleckley's two defensive touchdowns in the first half/DONN KESTER, for the GTLN



Dublin's Jamarcus Knight tries to slip the ball inside the pylon, though his knee was out of bounds on this run that nearly tied the game on a second Irish drive of the night. Ryland Yates scored on the next play to make it 7-7/DONN KESTER, for the GTLN

on a single-yard run by Love to equalize midway through the second.

Then it was their turn to

swing momentum.

Bleckley forced a three-and-out, and was most of the way to an 80-plus yard

drive to take the lead, thanks to a 50-yard carry for Love's biggest gain, though a third-down hold by the Irish forced a field goal attempt that swung wide.

Once again, the Royals would get the touchdown anyway, just in less predictable fashion as Dublin worked its way to their 30, and took a shot on a Yates rollout as time expired.

The Royals' pass rush forced him to extend the play, and some confusion ensued as his receiver went left. Yates' throw, anticipating a cut in the other direction, sailed to the waiting Tate with blocking for the return.

Yates was the only man with a chance to save the tie, but his diving tackle missed

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

Friday

Dublin 27, Bleckley Co. 21
West Laurens 21, Southeast Bulloch 0
Swainsboro 42, East Laurens 13
Gatewood 48, Trinity 13
Johnson Co. 61, Glascock Co. 22
Washington Co. 38, Westside Augusta 14
Montgomery Co. 35, Atkinson Co. 12
Telfair Co. 39, Treutlen 23
Brentwood 42, Pinewood 22
Wilkinson Co. 57, Twiggs Co. 0

PREP SCHEDULE

SOFTBALL

Monday

Gatewood at Trinity /4:30 p.m.
Bleckley Co. at Dublin /5:30 p.m.
West Laurens at East Laurens/6 p.m.
Tuesday
Edmund Burke at Trinity /4:30 p.m.
Long Co. at WL/5 p.m.
Swainsboro at Dublin /5:30 p.m.
Wednesday
Telfair Co. at WL/5 p.m.
Thursday
Dublin at ACE Charter /5:30 p.m.
Bleckley Co. at EL/6 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL

Tuesday

WL at Pierce Co./5 p.m.

Thursday

WL at Baldwin/5 p.m.

Saturday

WL at Region 3-AAAA Tournament

FOOTBALL

Friday

East Laurens at ACE Charter
Trinity at Windsor
West Laurens at New Hampstead
Bleckley Co. at Swainsboro
Brentwood at Edmund Burke
Cross Creek at Washington Co.
Glascock Co. at Twiggs Co.
Hawkinsville at Wheeler Co.
Johnson Co. at Wilkinson Co.
Treutlen at Turner Co.
Vidalia at Dodge Co.
Warren Co. at Montgomery Co. /7:30 p.m.

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at the Dublin 45, and Tate took a convoy into the end zone and the half with a 21-14 lead.

FALCONS

Continued from page 6

touchdowns.

The Falcons spent the rest of the game in a combination of the wildcat and their standard sets, with Jeremiah Rozier, the recently uninjured Zanorrior Ellington, Bryson Hazley (with a clubbed non-throwing hand) and freshman Caleb Johnson all spending a bit of time behind center.

The contingencies were able to turn the possession in progress into another positive one, with a push over midfield that relied on a Major Floyd catch and Hazley scramble, but it ultimately led to a punt.

And East Laurens wouldn't progress from its own territory the rest of the night.

Floyd, with three catches for 62 and one touchdown, and Aveone Wicker, who caught one big one that went 68 for the second score, joined Gary Stockton and Tawan Horne with catches to bolster the passing dimension.

But Swainsboro made it tough sledding on the ground.

Rozier led East Laurens backs



Jeremiah Rozier tries to elude two Swainsboro defenders who were right on him from the snap on second-half run/ZACH DAWSON

with 10 carries for 52, but the team's combined losses, for nine total ball-carriers, totaled out to a net of only 35.

The Tigers continued to feed Johnson after his first touchdown, on a 13-yard pitch to the left edge that credited the block of D.J. Cuyler, pushing a Falcon six yards over the goal line, to get them on

the board six minutes into the game.

His second, from 36, was set up by a 46-yard Benjamin catch from Gray on wheel route early in quarter 2.

East Laurens responded, taking advantage of good field position courtesy of 20 yards in penalties that backed up Swainsboro's

kickoff to its 20.

But the 60-yard drive wasn't a cheapo by any stretch.

A first-play dime from Snead found a well-covered Floyd near the right sideline for a gain of about 35.

He'd hit him again with a back-shoulder throw from 24 on the very next play for the touchdown, and John Thang's point-after made it a 13-7 game.

East Laurens was also penalized on its kickoff, but came out alright on Marco Danford's return out to the Swainsboro 29.

But the Tigers needed just about five plays to answer, with Johnson scampering up the middle from 36 for another touchdown with 1:57 left, to put them back up by 13.

The Falcons, once again, went to the air for a big play to hold serve as Snead found Wicker on a 63-yard catch-and-run with just under 40 to go, bringing them back within six once again.

Neither could that lead make it to halftime, as yet another unsportsmanlike foul (of an estimated eight in the game) affected the

ensuing kick. That, plus a face-mask on the return, put Swainsboro back in business at the East 33.

The Tigers snuck five plays into the remaining seconds, burning one more timeout to stop the clock at three as East stood up a run around the 10 with three seconds to go.

On the final play, Gray (who was 13-of-20 for 116) rolled all the way out on the right, dumping the ball to an unlikely receiver hanging out back to his left. The open Benjamin, simply standing by, made the catch and ran the remaining five yards to score.

Johnson got back to work midway through the third quarter, adding to the lead and his touchdown total on a slip up the middle from 58 yards as the Falcons failed to fill his lane. His last fit in between a Swainsboro three-and-out, a fumble and a turnover on downs.

East Laurens (1-4, 0-1 region 2-AA) visits ACE Charter Friday, while Swainsboro (2-3, 1-0 region) heads back home to face Bleckley County.

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THANKS FOR THE WARNING

CLICK

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NO, IT'S MY 'HEY, THERE'S SEAGULL POOP HEADED FOR YOUR COFFEE' BARK, BUT UNFORTUNATELY MY VOCAB ISN'T AS SPECIFIC AS YOURS!

DEFLOCKED

I STRUGGLE WITH THIS NEED TO CONSTANTLY POINT OUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH OTHERS.

MAYBE WE SHOULD EXPLORE WHAT'S UNDERNEATH THIS DESIRE FOR SUPERIORITY.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY NOT ALWAYS BEING A LITTLE KNOW-IT-ALL.

THIS MAY TAKE A WHILE.

THIS "MIGHT" TAKE A WHILE.

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If you've worn camouflage for more than five days in a row, you're a plugger.

Stay-at-home dad feels pressure to work

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have been married for 20 years. She's an academic, and we've lived a transient lifestyle to accommodate her career. She had a greater professional vision than I ever did, so I opted to stay at home and raise the children. I became Mr. Mom at great social cost. It was hard to make friends, and many in my social circles (or what was left of my social circles) made backhanded remarks, usually behind my back. I don't regret my choice. We have three fantastic children. All of them earn straight A's and are kind, loving, respectful people. Had we reversed roles, we'd be poorer and have grumpier, less emotionally intelligent children.

A few years ago, I decided to go back to school and earn my master's degree, and I now teach as an adjunct at a local college. The kids are older, and I have more free time, but I'm still the primary caretaker. I wanted a job that would give me enough room to look after our older kids while making some side money. The plan worked out smoothly until we hit financial difficulties. My wife now says I need to change jobs. She wants me to get out of academia because we need the money. She says I need to "grow up and get a real job." This feels like an assault.



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

I value my summers because I can continue to look after my kids, who still need care. I feel like had I been a woman, and had she been a man, her attitude would be different. Early in our marriage, we agreed she'd be the primary breadwinner. I love my job and my lifestyle, but she's making me feel like a mooch. I believe I have lived up to my end of the bargain. Am I wrong? -- MR. MOM IN THE SOUTH

DEAR MR. MOM: You are not "wrong," in that you have kept up your end of the bargain, but your wife may not be wrong either, except in being disrespectful. The cost of living is higher now than it was even a few years ago. In order to maintain your current lifestyle, it may be necessary to bring in more money than you've been earning. It's not one's

fault that circumstances have changed since the original bargain was struck, but if you don't adapt, you'll create hardship for the whole family.

DEAR ABBY: Sometimes when I am at a store waiting to check out, a person will move up very close to me. It isn't because they don't have plenty of room. It makes me uncomfortable. What is an appropriate thing to say to someone who crowds you during your transaction? -- NEED MY SPACE

DEAR SPACE: Many people feel the same as you do about being crowded at a cash register, because they don't want anyone peering over their shoulder as they make their payment. All you have to do is turn to the person and say, "Would you mind stepping back? You're making me nervous."

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 or P.O. Box 270135, Kansas City, MO 64127. (EDITORS: If you have editorial questions, please contact Clint Hooker, clint.hooker@andrewsmcmeel.com.)

SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

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

Level: Beginner

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

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!

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

ANSWER:

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sandwich shops
 - 6 Golden retriever, e.g.
 - 9 Like porcupines
 - 14 On the ball
 - 15 The "A" in 49-Across
 - 16 Not self-confident
 - 17 Deception: 3 wds.
 - 20 "Wait one ___!"
 - 21 Body of saltwater
 - 22 Coerce
 - 24 Religious sculpture
 - 26 Photo shooter
 - 27 Creates sour feelings in
 - 30 Abided
 - 31 "Rats!"
 - 32 Fraudulent operation
 - 34 Mojito ingredient
 - 35 Sign into law
 - 37 ___ or nothing
 - 38 Actor Guinness
 - 40 Positively declare
 - 41 '90s tech devices: Abbr.
 - 42 Pharmacy
 - 45 ___, white, and blue
 - 46 Pilfered
 - 47 Store transactions
 - 49 Hoppy beer: Abbr.
 - 50 Like a ___ of bricks
 - 51 "Be more polite!": 4 wds.
 - 60 Gracefully athletic
 - 61 Notable time
 - 62 Vertebrate's feature
 - 63 Doomed one
 - 64 T-shirt size: Abbr.
 - 65 Athletic awards since 1993
- DOWN**
- 1 "___ Boot" (1981 film)
 - 2 Shade tree
 - 3 Lion of the zodiac
 - 4 Annoying

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14						15				16				
17						18				19				
			20							21				
		22				23		24				25		
	26					27		28				29		
30						31				32			33	
34						35				36		37		
38				39			40					41		
	42				43	44						45		
			46						47		48			
				49						50				
51	52	53				54	55	56				57	58	59
60						61				62				
63						64				65				

Created by Stella Zawistowski

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

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- 39 Skin near a nail
- 41 Agreements before marriage
- 43 The ___ State (Minnesota)
- 44 Picnic side dish
- 48 Not taut
- 51 Tail movement
- 52 In the past
- 53 Pewter
- 54 Skirt edge
- 55 "You ___ too much!"
- 56 Wee bit
- 57 Small taste
- 58 One or more
- 59 "Sure!"

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

- Q 1 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:
- ♠ A Q 10 9 6 3 ♣ 8 6 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ 9 6
- Right-hand opponent opens one no trump. What call would you make?
- A - A good suit is the primary requirement when you overcall one no trump. This is about the minimum acceptable strength, so we would bid 2S at this vulnerability.
- Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:
- ♠ K 2 ♠ 10 ♦ K J 9 6 5 2 ♣ K 7 5 4
- NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
INT 2♠ ?
What call would you make?
- A - This is the kind of problem you face after an overcall like in question #1. Remember that making nine tricks is usually much easier than 11. You have a spade stopper, so bid 3NT. This problem would be much tougher had the overcall been 2H.
- Q 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:
- ♠ A 8 7 6 2 ♠ 7 5 4 ♦ 9 ♣ A Q 9 3
- WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
10 Pass 20 ?
What call would you make?
- A - You might have stumbled onto a robbery in progress. Bid 2S before you are stolen blind.
- Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:
- ♠ A 8 7 6 4 ♠ J 8 6 3 ♦ A J ♣ 4 3
- NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
INT Pass ?
What call would you make?
- A - Should you employ transfers, bid 2H, showing five spades, and rebid 3H, showing four or more hearts as well. If transfers are not part of your system, start with 2C. Stayman, and continue with a jump to 3S should partner bid 2D.
- Q 5 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:
- ♠ A K 9 7 2 ♠ 9 8 ♦ A ♣ K 10 8 7 3
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
? What call would you make?
- A - "Five-five, come alive" is an old bridge adage. This hand needs very little to make a game. Bid 4S!
- Q 6 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:
- ♠ A K Q 4 3 ♠ Q 7 5 ♦ A 6 2 ♣ A 5
- As dealer, what call would you make?
- A - Some players would promote this hand, because of the five-card suit, and open 2NT. We agree with that concept but prefer that the five-card suit be a minor suit. Open 1S.



Dublin District Attorney Harold McLendon was pleased with the turnout for the first Expungement Workshop held at the Oconee Gym/PAYTON TOWNS III

DA WORKSHOP
Continued from page 1

people with their issues.

Jones went to a Georgia Municipal Association convention and found out about a similar program held elsewhere.

“I heard other cities in the Atlanta and Augusta area was doing this, and I was interested in it,” Jones said. “I wanted to do that in Laurens County for a while. I just needed to get together with DA McLendon. I want to thank the DA for having his staff there to help and for the Dublin Police Department to be open so that people could go there and purchase a copy of their criminal record.”

Laurens County Commissioner Brenda Chain remembered when she began talking with Jones about this workshop.

“There are so many people who have been arrested and their cases were dismissed for whatever reason and it stays on their record,” Chain said. “That means they cannot get jobs. We thought this would be a great way for workforce development and help them be able to take care of their families.”

Chain owns four different businesses. She understands how background checks are important.

“If their cases have been dismissed, it should not follow them,” she said.

Which has been the case



DA’s office executive assistant Joan Taylor reviews information with an attendee/PAYTON TOWNS III

for Jacqueline Denise Jaudon-Wright and Jada Coney. Wright’s issue, which stemmed from a county outside of McLendon’s circuit, was dismissed but showed up on her criminal record. Despite not being able to have anything done with it Saturday, she did receive advice on what she needed to do to correct her record.

“This shows that Dublin is about changing the attitudes regardless of your past, which now won’t affect your future,” she said. “My case was dropped (years ago) and it should not show up (on her record).”

Coney just wants to be able to apply for a job with-

out having her pass case, which was dismissed, seen by a potential employer.

“It has been hard to get a job,” she said. “Now I have a second chance. God is good.”

Jones encouraged people who were not able to be helped here, to go to the area they needed to in order to clear their record.

“The biggest thing is giving people hope again,” Jones said. “This program is a hope giver. They now have hope to get jobs that they didn’t think they would ever be able to apply for. Now we have more productive citizens to put into the workforce.”

In Georgia’s race for governor, focus shifts to farms

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Pledging to fight for farmers, Republican Rick Jackson unveiled his plan to support Georgia’s agricultural industry as the sector gets squeezed by rising prices for diesel, fertilizer and other essentials.

“I want our farmers to know that as governor I will be in the fight to help them in any way I can,” the healthcare executive said at a small gathering of supporters and media at Cagle’s Farm in Canton, a tourist destination.

Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms fired back, with her campaign saying that she had already met with farmers and unveiled her own plan. The former Atlanta mayor also pointed to Jackson’s alliance with President Donald Trump, noting that the rising prices for diesel and fertilizer that were hurting farmers had occurred during Trump’s watch.

“Slick Rick Jackson has proven he is too afraid to stand up to Trump and fight for Georgia’s farmers,” TaN-

isha Cameron, the Bottoms campaign spokesperson, said in a statement.

Jackson’s plan would preserve an agricultural tax exemption and suspend the state tax on diesel fuel during price spikes. It also would connect family farms with “cost-effective capital,” recruit fertilizer makers, oppose cheap imports from countries with weak regulatory requirements, and establish an emergency water reserve of 250 million gallons a day.

Jackson said he also would foster co-op meat and produce processing centers to bring down costs. Bottoms and Jackson align on that idea. Her plan encourages cooperatives allowing farmers to pool resources while sharing equipment and processing capacity.

Like Jackson, Bottoms also would target taxes, in her case by supporting property tax relief for heirs. She also would push for more agricultural education — in schools and through free pathways to technical college. And she would help farmers fill out paperwork

for federal programs.

Bottoms’ campaign said she would oppose Trump’s tariffs, yet she slammed Trump for announcing temporary relief from certain beef tariffs.

State Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper, a Republican, pushed back on that Trump policy last month, warning on social media that it could harm cattle producers.

“Increasing our reliance on imported food is not a long-term solution to Americans’ affordability concerns,” Harper posted. “We can lower costs for consumers while supporting the farmers and ranchers who produce our food here at home.”

Neither Bottoms nor Jackson offered many details about how they would execute their plans.

On restricting agricultural imports from countries with lax regulations, for instance, Jackson basically said to trust him.

“I don’t know all of the ways,” he said, “but if there’s any way to do it, I’ll get it done.”

NEWS DIGEST

The DUBLIN CITY BOARD of EDUCATION will hold a called meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the board office. The agenda:

- Call to order
- Invocation and pledge to the flag
- Approval of agenda
- Approval of minutes (9-21-26)
- General administration
- Local board orientation - financial training
- Executive session
- Discussion of personnel

- Discussion of real estate
- Discussion of litigation
- Return to regular session
- Approval of personnel
- Adjournment

FUTURE KEYS LTD. is sponsoring a Women in recovery for Christ group this Saturday Oct. 3, 2026 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., at 112C Rowe St., for “Women In the Bible.” This is a nonprofit facility and donations are accepted at the end of the study.



The Fred Roberts Hotel is celebrating 100 years as a downtown Dublin landmark/PAYTON TOWNS III

FRED ROBERTS
Continued from page 1

in and started a renovation project.

“This was turned into a show place,” Thompson said.

The first floor of the Fred Roberts Hotel now houses J. Keyton Salon, Emerald Ease and others while Kight Law Offices are on the second floor and at least eight residences on the third and fourth floors.

“This is a great place,” said former Dublin Mayor Phil Best. “My wife and I lived here for almost 13 years.”

Keyton, the director of business development for the Downtown Dublin Association, has his office located in the hotel.

“I love that we were able to preserve a part of history that was centrally located in downtown. I love the common-shared-mixed space that we use. I love that it is in the heart of downtown Dublin. It was a waste sitting here.”

The access to Theatre Dublin and Main Street is also a plus, he said.

“It’s all about location, location, location,” Keyton said.

(UNAUDITED) STATEMENT OF ACTUAL FINANCIAL OPERATIONS			
Dublin City Schools, Georgia			
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2026			
Published pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67, in the form specified and prescribed by the State Auditor			
	General Fund	All Other Governmental Funds	Total
REVENUES			
Property Taxes	13,360,825		13,360,825
Sales Taxes	1,042,033	3,032,552	4,074,585
State Funds	17,670,493	979,578	18,650,071
Federal Funds	123,252	7,205,412	7,328,664
Other Revenues	1,098,022	1,464,084	2,562,106
Total Revenues	33,294,624	12,681,627	45,976,251
EXPENDITURES			
Current			
Instruction	17,063,845	3,083,036	20,146,881
Support Services			
Pupil Services	1,674,291	1,526,308	3,200,599
Improvement of Instructional Services	1,134,450	741,092	1,875,543
Educational Media Services	328,583	312,142	640,725
General Administration	292,129	123,252	415,381
School Administration	2,264,232	105,519	2,369,751
Business Administration	1,357,435	2,844	1,360,279
Maintenance and Operation of Plant	3,164,478	72,631	3,237,108
Student Transportation Services	1,366,208	24,073	1,390,281
Central Support Services	765,005		765,005
Other Support Services	365,523	73,349	438,873
Enterprise Operations		72,304	72,304
Community Services	274,716	7,203	281,919
Food Services Operations		2,834,034	2,834,034
Capital Outlay		1,082,395	1,082,395
Debt Service	311,120	483,323	794,443
Total Expenditures	30,362,016	10,543,503	40,905,519
Revenues over (under) Expenditures	2,932,608	2,138,124	5,070,732
Other Financing Sources (Uses)			
Other Sources			-
Other Uses			-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	-	-	-
Net Change in Fund Balances	2,932,608	2,138,124	5,070,732
Fund Balance, Beginning	(3,864,237)	318,555	(3,545,681)
Fund Balance, Ending	(931,628)	2,456,679	1,525,051
CERTIFICATION: We, the undersigned, being all of the members of the governing board of the above-named local school system/state charter school and the local school superintendent/chief administrator, certify that this Statement of Actual Financial Operations for the fiscal year shown above, prepared on the form specified and prescribed by the State Auditor pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67(c), has been examined by each of us and, to the best of our knowledge and belief, fairly presents the actual financial operations and current financial status of the school system/state charter school. Executed prior to publication as required by law.			
Signature	Printed Name	Date	
<i>David Westerfield</i>	Mr. David Westerfield		
Board Chair			
<i>Priscilla Adams</i>	Ms. Priscilla Adams		
Board Vice Chair			
<i>Teresa Holiday</i>	Ms. Teresa Holiday		
Board Member			
<i>D'Andrea King</i>	Ms. D'Andrea King		
Board Member			
<i>Frederick Green</i>	Mr. Frederick Green		
Board Member			
<i>Angela Wright</i>	Ms. Angela Wright		
Board Member			
<i>Mr. Douglas Eaves</i>	Mr. Douglas Eaves		
Board Member			
<i>Marcee Pool</i>	Marcee Pool, Interim Superintendent	9/25/26	
Local School Superintendent/Chief Administrator			



CLASS OF THE WEEK: Mrs. Tara Mullis' class at Southwest Laurens

Herald the Hound made his way down to Rentz recently for a visit to Mrs. Tara Mullis' class at Southwest Laurens Elementary School where students are learning about the different types of writing - declarative, narrative and opinion. After hearing a story about a boy and his pet moose the students talked about their own pets and favorite animals.



Puzzles4Kids

by Helene Hovanec

CRISSCROSS – THE PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES – PART 1

Each word will fit into one spot in the grid. Use the starting letters as a guide and fit each word into its spot. All words will be used, so cross off each one after you put it into the grid.

3 Letters

BOY
GUY
LAD
SON
TOT

4 Letters

BABY
GIRL
LASS
NANA
TEEN

5 Letters

DADDY
NIECE
TWEEN
UNCLE
WOMAN

6 Letters

FELLOW
FRIEND
MOTHER
PERSON
SISTER

7 Letters

GROWNUP
NEWBORN

P

M

MINI SUDOKU

		5			
2	6				
1					3
				1	6
		2	6		
	3				2

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

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ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU
ANSWERS

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

Puzzles4Kids
Answer

GROWNUP	TWEEN	BOY	B
IR	IE	IO	B
RE	ON	W	B
SON	UNCLE	MOTHER	NANA
LASS	T	LAD	T
FRIEND	S	OT	DADDY
WOMAN			

WORKSHEET OF THE WEEK

A community helper is someone who works to make somewhere a safer and better place to live. Define the job of each helper below:

Police officer _____

Firefighter _____

Teacher _____

Doctor _____

Nurse _____



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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