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Kickoff Football Season at the Dublin Farmers Market! Sport your favorite team gear!

VENDORS FOR SATURDAY
September 5, 2026 (7:30 AM to 12:30 PM)

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Produce
Shemeka Smith
Hair & Body Care, Juices
Off the Farm Produce
Produce
Boyd's Knives
handmade knives
Jordan Farms
Produce
Kaleigh Jordan
Produce
Hot Rod's Ohoopie Grilling Sauce
BBQ Sauce
Farmhouse Bread Co
Baked Goods
Infused & Rooted
Infused Olive Oils
Beasley Farms
Produce
Willhouse Creations
Baked Goods
Riverbend Meadow Market
Produce
Tasty Paws Pets
Dog Treats
Holi Crop Micro Farm
Micro Greens
Moss & Bloom
Sea Moss & Teas
Muddy Cups & Coffee
Iced Coffee
Colbey Asbell
Baked Goods & Lemonade
Blessed Loaf Bakery
Baked Goods
Whisked Away
Homemade Cupcakes
Beth Wood Natural Guru
Essential oils
From Andrew's Oven
Baked Goods
Crown & Spore
Gourmet Mushrooms
Frost Bites
Freeze Dried Candy & Veggies
Minter Hill Homestead
Baked Goods
The Blossom Barn
Fresh Cut Flowers
Taino Farms GA
Soaps, Candles, Lotions
Sweet Treats Cannery
Pickled Items, Jams
Core Matcha
Matcha Drinks
Crumbs of Joy
Baked Goods
MC Sweets
Cake Pops
Frost Bites
Freeze Dried Candy & Veggies
Jewelry by Keen
Handmade Jewelry
Peachtree Oven
Baked Goods
Bev's Sewing Room
Handmade Accessories
Oneal Honey Farm
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Grain & Goat
Cutting Boards
Cathaleen Traylor
Farm Fresh Eggs
Simply Magnolia
Candles
We are an authorized SNAP/EBT market.

County pitches 30 percent tax increase

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

The Laurens County Commission has proposed an almost 31 percent hike in local property taxes – the county's first tax increase in more than a decade.

The commission voted Tuesday to advertise the new millage rate of 7 mills, an increase of 1.502 mills from its current rate. The county's millage rate still would remain the lowest in Middle Georgia.

"Even at 7 mills, we

would still have one of the lowest millage rates in Georgia for a county government," said Commissioner Gerad Mathis.

"There's no county within 150 miles at 7 mills," added County Administrator Bryan Rogers.

The rate increase, along with recent property reassessments that boosted the value of the tax digest, would generate an additional \$3 million. Rogers said the additional revenue will allow the county to stop a recent trend of dipping into

its cash reserves to avoid raising taxes.

The county has spent almost \$3 million in reserves during the past two fiscal years to meet expenditures.

The commission will hold three public hearings on the proposed tax increase later this month.

What it means for homeowners

Had the commissioners kept the millage rate unchanged, taxes still would have gone up due to recent property reassessments that

increased the value of the county's tax digest. To avoid a tax increase altogether, the commission would need to roll back the millage rate to 5.36, from the current rate of 5.49.

If the 7-mill rate is approved, homeowners would see a significant increase on their tax bills.

For a home with a fair market value of \$200,000, homeowners would pay about \$120 more in taxes, county officials said. For a \$300,000 home, taxes would increase by about

\$180.

That does not include school taxes, which are levied separately by the Laurens County Board of Education.

Why the increase

In a news release announcing the tax increase – as required by Georgia law – county officials said its recently approved budget required a millage rate greater than the rollback

TAX HIKE
Continued on page 8



Members of the Official Dublin Walk Club pose for a group photo at an earlier event/SPECIAL PHOTO

New walking group bringing people together for positive health

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The Official Dublin Walk Club is looking to help people take steps toward healthy living.

Co-founders Sharod Darrisaw and Patrick Evans started the group about a month ago. They would like for anyone to come out to Southern Pines for its next event at 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 5.

"This is something that is positive in Dublin," Darrisaw said. "People are

happy to see this. It's good for all ages. We're trying to bring the community together."

The club's mission is to create a safe, welcoming space where people of all ages and all races can come together, stay active, meet people and encourage each other.

Darrisaw said people are struggling with isolation, stress and inactivity. The group's walks provide an opportunity for members to connect in a positive environment.

The benefits of joining these walks include healthier lifestyles through regular physical activity, while improving mental health by reducing stress and anxiety. The group wants to build friendships and strengthen community connections while creating a positive, family-friendly atmosphere where everyone is included.

This leads to accountability, motivation and support through fellowship that occurs before, during and after each walking

event.

"This is good for anyone, no matter where they are in their health journey," Darrisaw said.

This week's walk is dedicated to Samantha Lee, who was paralyzed in an accident.

"This walk is an opportunity for the community to stand beside her, encourage her and celebrate her strength while reminding others that no one has to face life's challenge's alone," Darrisaw said.

Crime lab looks into woman's death

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The body of a 55-year-old woman will be taken to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Lab to determine a cause of death after she was found in a home near the Laurens/Dodge County line Monday evening.

Melanie Douglas was pronounced dead at 10:24 p.m. in a house at 3690 Jay Bird Springs Road on Monday, Aug. 31, said Laurens County Coroner Richard Stanley.

According to Laurens County sheriff's Lt. Jeremy Reese, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office notified them about the situation.

"It was near the Dodge County/Laurens County

INVESTIGATION
Continued on page 8

Flock gun tech leads to arrests of juveniles

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Two juveniles were arrested after the city's Flock Gunshot Detection System led investigators to them after allegedly firing guns in the city Sunday morning.

According to Dublin Police Chief Keith Moon, officers responded to the area of 214 Roberts St. at 11:11 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 30 after they were notified by their Flock system. Officers found eight spent shell casings in the roadway. Witnesses told officers one man was wearing a red hoodie and black shorts while another man was wearing all black and ran towards Flanders Street.

Officers found the man in the red hoodie and identified him as a juvenile walking into the Emanuel Global Ministries, 116 Pritchett St. They were able to get him to come out of the church. Officers entered the area of the church and found a red Taurus G3 9mm. It returned as stolen when it was run through the Georgia Crime Information Center database.

He was later charged with possession of firearm by a minor, reckless conduct, theft by receiving stolen property and obstruction of officers.

Officers also met up with the other man who was also a juvenile. He had his hand in his jacket pocket and

JUVENILES
Continued on page 8

Dublin native comes home for book signing, speaking event

By KYLE DOMINY
Staff Reporter

In 1989, Angie Hammock Tracey was looking for an opportunity to return to Georgia. After a decade of working in Washington, D.C., she knew it was time for a change.

"I was getting homesick," the now 71-year-old said.

With an impressive resume that included working for the Reagan White House and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, she was able to land a job at the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1990. Working for the agency was a dream come true for the communications veteran, who served more than two decades with the CDC, but she began to notice something about the staff and leadership.

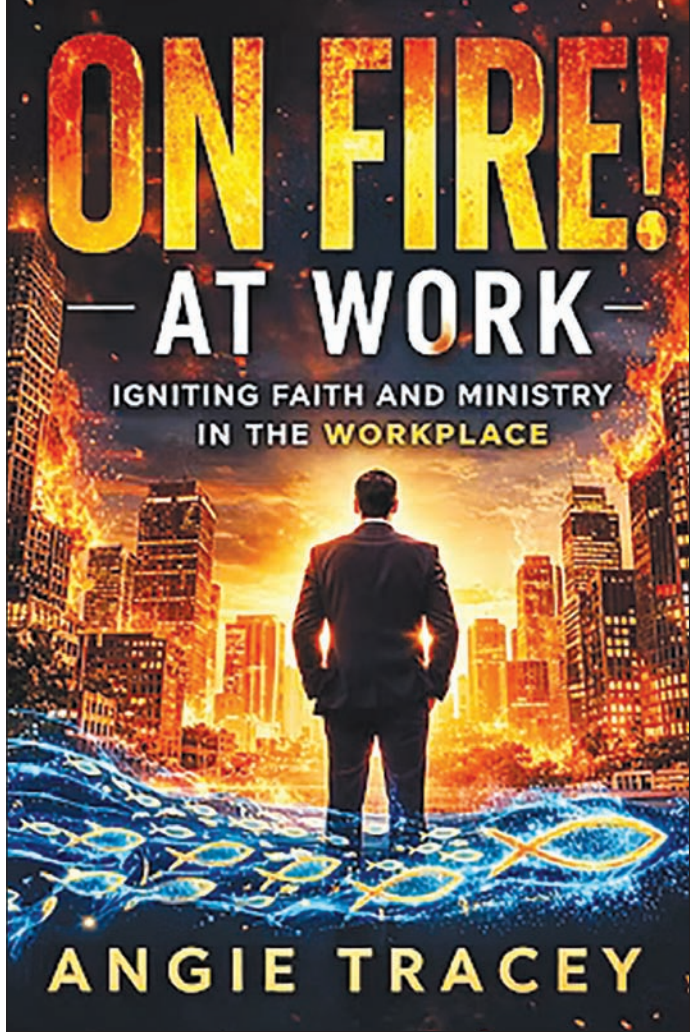
"CDC is a very apoliti-



cal, scientific and academic agency," Tracey reminisced. "That started to reflect on how the employees treated each other. There was a lack of compassion and empathy for each other."

To change the culture of the workplace,

BOOK SIGNING
Continued on page 8



Angie Hammock Tracey is returning home to sign copies of her book "On Fire! At Work! Igniting Faith and Ministry In The Workplace" about her time in the CDC/SPECIAL PHOTOS

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1 section, 8 pages • Vol. 112, No. 99, Pub. No. 161860

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OBITUARIES



Raymond Avery Bellflower

Funeral services for Raymond Avery Bellflower, 77, were held at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026, at Bethlehem Baptist Church with interment to follow at Dublin Memorial Gardens. Rev. Matthew Haywood will officiate.

Mr. Bellflower was born Feb. 27, 1949, in Helena, Georgia. He was the son of the late Kenny Bellflower and Thelma Johns Knowles. He was also preceded in death by his half-brother, Jimmy Knowles. He was a retired Foreman at Dublin Industrial. He was a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Mr. Bellflower passed away Sunday, Aug. 30, 2026, at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta.

Mr. Bellflower is survived by his wife, Flora M. Bellflower of Dublin; two daughters, Angie Payne (Harrison) of Dublin and Carla Poole (Mark) of Dublin; three grandchildren, Bridgette Fordham (Brittany), Lindsey Fordham, and Bella Claire Poole; and a beloved pet, Zoey.

Pallbearers will be Kenny Rowland, Stuart Harrell, Glen Fordham, and Kyle Giddens. Honorary Pallbearers will be FA Josey Class and David Nobles.

The family received friends from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026, at 1825 Claxton Dairy Road, Dublin, GA 31021 and from 2 p.m. until 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2026, at Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory/Dublin Chapel has charge of funeral arrangements. To sign the Online Register Book please visit www.stanleyfuneralhome.com.



Hellen Pittman

Mrs. Hellen Pittman of Dublin, Georgia passed away on Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

www.ServicesByDudley.com

BIRTHDAYS

Sept. 3
Barbara Johnson
Kendrick Smith

Sept. 4
Cadence Haynes
Mallori Necci

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Linton Evans

Mr. Linton Evans, 71, of Montrose, Georgia, passed away on Aug. 30, 2026. Celebration of life services have not been finalized but will be announced by the funeral home staff at a later date. The family asks for continued prayers and comfort during their hour of bereavement.

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



Jamie Lamar Keene

Jamie Lamar Keene, passed away on Aug. 30, 2026, in Merritt Island, Florida, at the age of 45.

Jamie was born on Oct. 22, 1980, in Dublin, Georgia. He graduated from Dublin High School and attended South Georgia College. Jamie started playing soccer in middle school and continued to play throughout his high school years. He was voted best defensive player in his senior year. He went on to play soccer at South Georgia College before he decided to join the military.

Jamie was a veteran of the United States Marine Corp, serving three deployments during his enlistment including The Global War on Terrorism and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Upon returning home after his 4-year enlistment, he worked as an Aviation Electrician at Warner Robins Air Force Base.

He was preceded in death by his father, Lamar Keene. Jamie is survived by his mother, Donna Shirley and her husband Allen of Rentz; his daughter, Hannah Keene of Dublin; his sister, Hope Dominy and her husband Bill of Rentz; his brother, Wade Shirley and his wife Julie of Eufaula, Alabama; his sister, Karen Harding and her husband Scott of Olathe, Kansas; and several aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 4, 2026, in the Mary Whitaker Townsend Memorial Chapel at Townsend Brothers Funeral Home. Burial with full military honors will follow at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Norristown. Mr. Frankie Mathis and Rev. Robert Marina will officiate. The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until

the service hour on Friday at the funeral home.

Pallbearers will be Dan Hopkins, Thomas Rowland, Cole Rowland, Chris Hopkins, Mac Rowland, and Tyler Rowland.

In lieu of flowers, his family has requested memorial contributions to be made to Widow's Oil Ministry, via their website, or by mail, 1011 Stonewall Street Dublin, GA 31021, to support Veterans Crisis Services.

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



Ernestine Horne

Mrs. Ernestine Horne, a beautiful queen and the matriarch of our family, was called to her eternal rest on Sunday, Aug. 30, 2026.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, Sept. 5, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the Kingdom Hall, 2424 US-441 South, Dublin, Georgia 31021, with Steve Wyatt presiding. The viewing will be on Thursday and Friday at Wyche's Funeral Home. The last glance will begin at 10 a.m. at the Kingdom Hall and will commence at 10:45 a.m.

She was born June 8, 1944, in Irwinton, Wilkinson County, Georgia, to the late William and Christine Blash. Her family later moved to Dublin, Georgia, where she was raised alongside her siblings by her devoted grandmother, the late Mamie Lee Smith, affectionately known as "Mrs. Sweet."

Ernestine devoted nearly 20 years of service to the Oxford Shirt Factory and later worked several years at Evans Cabinet Company. In 2014, she became a devoted member of Jehovah's Witnesses, faithfully serving and worshipping at the Kingdom Hall. Ernestine will be remembered for her love of family, storytelling, acts of service, kindness to others, and, of course, her beloved dressing and chicken and dumplings.

She was preceded in death by her younger sister, Patricia Blash; daughter, Patricia Yvette Knight; brothers, Larry (Eugenia) Blash and Leon Blash; niece, LaToya Knight; former husband, Johnny Knight; and husband, Willie J. Horne Jr.

Ernestine leaves to cherish her memory her children, LaGina (Ernest) Blash-Henderson and Willie "Jamie" (Caroline) Horne III; godsons, Tony Horne and Ricky Horne; brother, Herbert Blash; sister, Jackie Pearson; sister-in-law, Debra Blash; son-in-law, Timothy Turner; nieces, Ashley

Atlanta-area rapper stole checks and sold the recipe for others to copy him

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A Stone Mountain rapper will spend six years in federal prison after pleading guilty to charges involving the theft of thousands of checks from the mail.

Shamarri Tache Brooks, 34, pleaded guilty in May to bank fraud and aggravated identity theft, according to his record in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

The federal indictment filed against him in December accused him of altering purloined checks to name recruits with their own accounts as the payees.

One check from August 2024 was for more than \$655,000. Another the same day was for more than \$122,000. Another the next day was for more than \$405,000.

In a brazen twist that displayed an instinct for business, Brooks traded on his knowledge by promoting and selling a collection of his financial fraud methods, the indictment said.

Blash and Shantaya Dudley; nephews, Chris Blash and Pete (Angel) Primus; and her beloved "road dog" and sister-cousin, Hazelean Nesbitt.

She also leaves to cherish her memory her grandchildren, Travis Blash, LaKendra Blash, Ernest (Reasheada) Sinkfield, Shaun (Ashley) Horne, Jamesha Horne, Keith Hunt, Kezaya Adams, Nazir Knight, and Kavar Taylor; along with a host of great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

Arrangements entrusted to Wyche's Funeral Home. (wychesfuneralhomeinc.com).

NEWS DIGEST

The next DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL meeting will be held at 4:30 p.m. in the International Room in city hall followed by its council meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Henry "Bud" Hicks Jr. Memorial Chamber on Sept. 3. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation and Pledge to Flag
- Special presentation
- Approval of Aug. 20 city council meeting minutes
- Approval of bills over \$15,000
- Approval of purchases over \$15,000
- First reading on ordinance #26-09 to amend the hotel height limit requirements
- First reading on ordinance #26-13 to amend FY' 26 budget
- Discussion and action on resolution #26-45 to amend the fee schedule that relates to roll off rates
- Discussion and action on resolution #26-47 to approve the terms for proposal from Cemsites Cemetery Software
- Discussion and action on

As part of his fraud-promotion business, the indictment said, Brooks sold the check images on their own or packaged with check-forgery tutorials in what he called the "Sauce Book," accepting payment on various digital platforms.

He even sold apparel, registering Brooks Merchandise as a limited liability company with the Georgia Secretary of State and marketing balaclava-style masks with bank logos and clothing with the logo "No Free Sauce" or "NFS."

Authorities alleged that he used his own product while working: the indictment said he wore "No Free Sauce" masks when depositing stolen, altered checks at ATMs.

It is unclear how much money Brooks made from the side hustles, but Hertzberg's office said he went unrewarded by the underlying work of check theft.

Brooks and his associates stole checks with a combined face value of more than \$6.5 million, but law enforcement recovered many of the checks from Brooks's home, adding that there was no evidence Brooks succeeded in "negotiating" the remainder of the stolen checks.

NOW HERE'S A TIP

- * This facial mask is good enough to eat. You might have a hard time deciding whether you want the facial or the snack: Mix together one mashed ripe banana with 3 tablespoons of sugar, and apply liberally to face. Leave it on for about three minutes, and rinse with warm water. Follow with your favorite moisturizer.
- * "The best way to soften butter is to let it stand at room temperature for 10 to 15 minutes. But if you are in a hurry, you can slice it into 1/2-inch pats and roll it between sheets of waxed paper. It will only take a minute or so." -- I.V. in Connecticut
- * Pet hair is best removed from upholstery with a squeegee. Drag over the upholstery or even your carpet to collect the hair into a ball. Dispose of the hair in the trash.

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resolution #26-52 to accept an agreement with Beard Equipment lease for Riverview Golf Course

- Discussion and action on resolution #26-53 to authorize the initial project assessment submission for the rural workforce housing grant

- Discussion and action on resolution #26-54 to authorize an amendment to the contract with Dublin Construction Company for the purpose of establishing a guaranteed maximum price for the Street Division Facility on Madison Street

- Discussion and action on resolution #26-55 to authorize an agreement with Women in Need of God's Shelter (WINGS) for the lease of city property

- Discussion and action on resolution #26-56 to authorize the application of a safety grant with Georgia Municipal Association

- Discussion and action on board appointments (if needed)
- Citizens comments
- Council comments
- Executive session if needed to discuss real estate, pending litigation or personnel
- Adjournment

The CITY OF RENTZ will hold a council meeting on Monday, Sept. 14 at 6 p.m. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Approval of August minutes
- Approval of financial statement
- Acknowledge visitors
- Old business
- New business
- Second reading of no vape shop ordinance
- Comments
- Adjourn

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MESSAGE BY
PATRICK BARNETT

10 AM

11 AM

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Georgia counties reporting more deaths than births on the rise

The number of Georgia counties reporting more deaths than births rose again in 2025, according to new data published recently by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). That unhappy number hit 98, up from 94 of the state’s 159 counties in 2024, and one county broke even, with the same number of births and deaths.

The number of counties reporting more deaths than births has been rising steadily since 2010. Before that — from 1994 (the earliest year for which DPH has data) until 2009 — the number floated primarily in the teens, not breaking 20 until 2010. But since then, with rare exception, it stair-stepped steadily up, peaking at 124 counties during the Covid pandemic before dropping back into its pre-Covid trajectory in 2023.

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By CHARLIE HAYSLETT

liest year for which DPH has data) until 2009 — the number floated primarily in the teens, not breaking 20 until 2010. But since then, with rare exception, it stair-stepped steadily up, peaking at 124 counties during the Covid pandemic before dropping back into its pre-Covid trajectory in 2023, as this column chart shows.

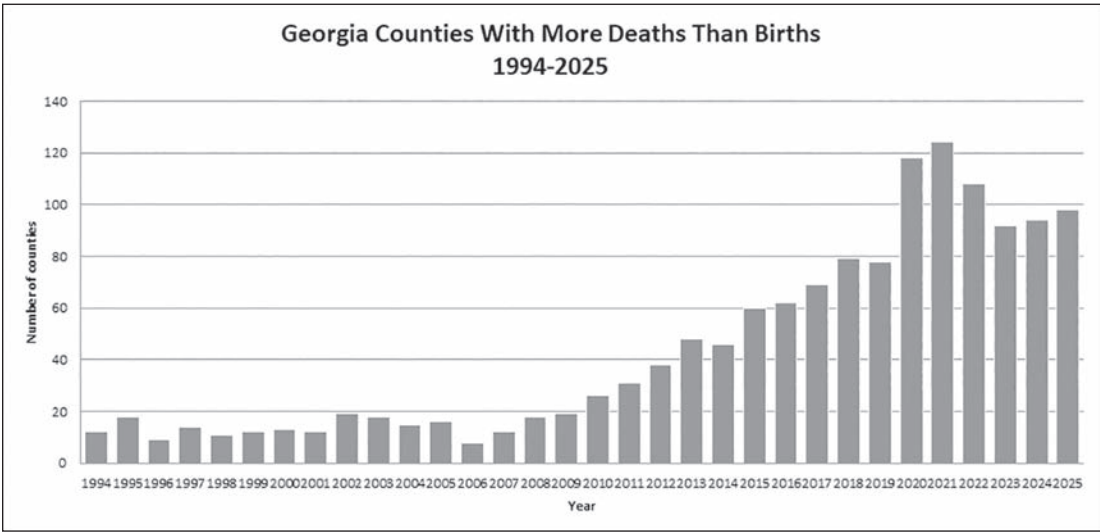
Not surprisingly, most of the counties posting more deaths than births are small, sparsely populated counties south of the gnat line. Georgia has 102 counties with populations of fewer than 35,000 people; overall, those 102 counties suffered 3,286 more deaths than they gained in new births.

Virtually all of deep southwest Georgia (aka SOWEGA) posted negative numbers. That includes Thomas (Thomasville) and Dougherty (Albany) counties, both important pop-

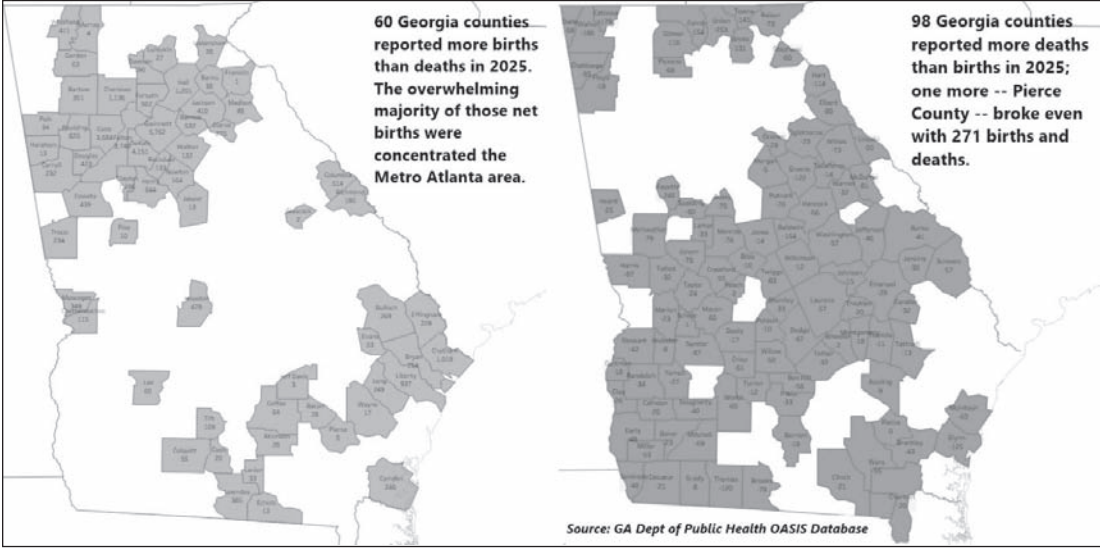
ulation and economic centers. It’s not until you get into the south-central part of the state, along I-75, that you start to find some positive numbers, including in Tift and Lowndes counties, whose county seats are Tifton and Valdosta.

Statewide, Georgia last year posted 125,143 births against 97,802 deaths, a net gain of 27,341. Nearly all of that net gain — 22,004 net births, or 80.5 percent of the state’s total — took place in my Trouble in God’s Country 12-county Metro Atlanta region. The other areas posting relatively positive numbers were the exurban counties just north of Atlanta; the fast-growing counties between Atlanta and Athens, and the coastal region anchored by Savannah and several neighboring counties, including Bryan County, site of the new Hyundai meta plant.

The differences even



Two charts revealing the number of Georgia counties reporting more deaths than births /SPECIAL GRAPHICS



turn up in the state’s political geography. Of the state’s net 27,341 new births, 22,175 — 81.1% were in the 27 counties that sided with then-Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential

race. Only 5,166 net births took place in the 132 counties that went for Donald J. Trump.

Few buckets of data offer a clearer picture of the Two Georgias.

Charlie Hayslett is a

mostly retired journalist and communications counselor now working on a book about the costs and consequences of the decline of rural Georgia. He blogs occasionally on these subjects at www.troubleingodscountry.com.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Was a well-known general thrice nominated for the Medal of Honor?

By JACK BAGLEY
GTLN

Good grief, where is the time going so quickly? I mean, here it is September already!

You know what that means, right? (Well, you do if you’re a regular reader of this silly stuff.). It means that later on, just three more weeks or so, I have another one of those silly events called “birthdays.”

This month, I’ll turn 68 years old.

While I ruminate on what all that could possibly mean, I’ll turn over the trivia column and let you enjoy some things that don’t cause me to feel older.

Did you know ...

... two separate attacks on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii took place during World War II? We are all familiar with the “day of infamy” attack which happened on December 7, 1941, and which brought the United States into the war. A second attack, on March 4, 1942, is lesser known. Dubbed “Operation K,” this involved two Japanese flying boats attacking Oahu Island once again, specifically targeting a dock. Bad weather and even worse navigation caused the bombers to miss the dock, dropping their ordinance harmlessly near a high school. (Thanks to Terry for the tip!)

... an astronomer once designed a super-telescope? Adrien Auzout (1622-1691) drew up a design for a 1,000-foot-long refracting telescope. He thought that the telescope would have a magnification so great that he would be able to see animals on the Moon. The telescope would not be contained in a tube, but instead would have been an “aerial” telescope which uses lenses mounted high in a tree or on a pedestal,

and the observer holding the eyepiece lens. (Now that would be a heavenly view.)

... a man can make a sound humans can’t hear, but elephants can? Tim Storms (born 1972), a singer said to have the “world’s deepest voice,” holds the world record for the lowest note produced by a human. The note is eight octaves below the lowest G on a piano, and cannot be heard by the human ear — but elephants can hear it, scientists say. Storms himself cannot hear the note, but he says he can “feel” it in his head. His vocal abilities arise from the fact that his vocal cords are twice as long as most peoples’. (What the elephants think of Mr. Storms’ ability has not been recorded for posterity.)

... a famous American general was nominated three times for the Medal of Honor? Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), one of the most well-known and controversial Army officers in American history, was nominated for the Medal of Honor on three separate occasions. The first was in 1914, when then-Captain MacArthur conducted long-range reconnaissance behind enemy lines in Mexico as part of the Veracruz expedition. The award was submitted by General Leonard Wood (1860-1927), but was rejected by a board convened to review the award, which said awarding the Medal of Honor might encourage staff officers to ignore their commanders and go off on their own missions. The second recommendation came during World War I, when then-Brigadier General MacArthur led another reconnaissance patrol, this one into a gap in German barbed wire fencing and was wounded, ending up the sole survivor of the patrol. This award was

NOTICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All concerned citizens are invited to join these public meeting.

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

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

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

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

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

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

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

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

Flock safety and surveillance in Georgia

I love science fiction – novels, television, movies – you name it. The capacity of technology to shape and improve our lives fascinates me, as does the counternarrative. For example, imagine that every trip you take in your car – to church, a political meeting, a protest or a doctor's appointment – leaves behind a record in a searchable database. Electronic eyes following you in secret, tracking your behavior, feeding a profile of you to unseen, unnamed observers. These watchers did not ask for your consent to being tracked. Worse, this record of your daily activities can last indefinitely - without you knowing how long the information will be stored, who can search it or how far it can travel.

Yet, what I described here is not from Star Trek or an Ursula K. Le Guin novel. It is the reality created by the rapid expansion of automatic license plate readers, including technology developed by Flock Safety, a company founded here in Georgia. And it's coming to a telephone pole near you.

Flock uses automatic license plate readers (ALPRs) to collect data including license plate numbers, the make and model of a car, the location of scratches on a car, and even the bumper stickers a car may have. Not to mention a timestamp, the coordinates, and the direction a car is traveling. The ACLU estimates that the organization has installed upwards of 120,000 cameras all across the country, with around 8,000 ALPRs being located in Georgia alone according to DeFlock The USA's camera map. As of 2025, Flock claims to produce more than 20 billion license plate scans each month.

As a state legislator, I supported traffic cameras to regulate speeding and to track reckless drivers in school zones. I firmly believe surveillance technology can serve a legitimate public purpose. Law enforcement agencies have used license plate readers to locate stolen vehicles, identify dangerous suspects



and solve serious crimes. In one Georgia case, camera imagery helped authorities track a pickup truck and arrest four people accused of killing an 18-year-old in Hiram. Technology is neither good nor bad - it is a tool. Our questions have to center on who uses it, how and why.

ALPR technology's power and utility are not the issue. But useful technology does not absolve government of its obligation to establish clear rules. Indeed, the more powerful the tool, the greater our responsibility to regulate its use. License plate readers already exist, but their growth has outpaced the safeguards necessary to protect the public. We cannot become subservient to our leaders by ignoring how they deploy technology. Loss of civic power happens gradually, one freedom conceded, one invasion of privacy accepted.

We live in the south, so we drive. It's a fact of life. Most drivers do what's right (except for slow drivers in the left lane), so by and large, the vehicles captured by these systems are not connected to criminal activity. What that means is much of the Big Brother tracking focuses on ordinary people going about their daily lives. Yet their movements can still become part of a database accessible to law enforcement agencies. Potentially to data brokers who want to track your habits. Or sales people who want to flood your inbox or track your kids. Again, far-fetched, but who would have imagined stories of AI hacking other companies even five years ago? Or your IG or Facebook being

an electronic mall on your phone?

Flock and ALPRs are the tip of a very deep iceberg where disaster lurks. Georgia law permits license plate data to be retained for as long as two and a half years. The state places few meaningful restrictions on how that information may be used, including whether it can support civil immigration enforcement or be transmitted for other purposes. Local governments are often left to negotiate privacy protections on their own, despite confronting companies and systems that operate across the country. These decisions come with lobbyists on one side and your neighbors on the other.

Flock assures its customers that they are the only group that has access to their data and control over where it is shared, suggesting that federal agencies and Flock do not have access to the information. Regardless of their promises, the number of investigations into abuse of the company's tracking technology is on the rise, astoundingly so. In Georgia, just over the past few months, an alarming number of police officers have been arrested in Cherokee and Greene counties, in addition to Albany and Fayetteville, for unauthorized use of license plate data. These incidents do not mean that every officer or agency will abuse the system. They do mean that promises and internal policies are not enough. It's why we have a legislature and why we make laws.

We need enforceable standards, independent oversight and transparent records that allow the public

to know whether those standards are being followed.

The same principle must apply to data sharing. Flock has said that its customers control their own information and determine where it is shared. But the public deserves more than vague, unenforceable assurances. Residents should be able to understand which agencies have access, what searches are being conducted, how long records are retained and whether the system is being used for purposes beyond solving serious crimes. Remember when signing up for a grocery store program simply meant a coupon at the checkout, not that they'd sold your buying history to a company that now invades your social media and seems to read your mind?

I use the example of your Piggly Wiggly card in jest, but the threat is real. Surveillance technology may be used to investigate immigration status, reproductive health care or constitutionally protected protest activity. It can be used to tell your boss about your habits after work, or to alert others who disagree with your choices. The ability to reconstruct a person's movements can reveal intimate details about their beliefs, relationships and medical decisions. Those consequences are too significant to be governed by a patchwork of contracts and voluntary policies.

Georgia lawmakers need to act. First and foremost, the state should sharply limit how long license plate information can be retained unless it is connected to an active criminal investigation. Georgians' movements should not remain searchable for years without cause. This should appeal to Democrats, Republicans, Libertarians and Independents alike - because eroding our freedom is a nonpartisan issue. And giving the party in power too much of it helps no one.

More broadly, we need a statewide, public conversation about how technology is changing our daily lives – and we need clear rules to ensure that promises of safety don't mean sacrifice-

TELL IT!



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

Don't be ridiculous. The biggest animal in Georgia that causes billion of dollars of car damage is a two-legged heathen.

Zoning isn't an "evil." If you want a say in what someone else can do with their property, expect rules on yours too. If you oppose zoning, don't complain when something you dislike moves in.

I'm putting 75 junk cars, 300 roosters and a giant neon sign in my front yard. Zoning is tyranny! Data center coming? Quick—somebody regulate those people! You can't have your cake and eat it folks.

There are several empty flag poles at firehouses around the county. It would sure be nice to have old glory flying at these locations since there is a pole already there.

Lived in Dudley for 63 years. We know who the complainer is. I love this town and the people that represent us on Council. We actually voted them in. Thanks.

If the city is adamant about mowed lawns, they should pay for it themselves. Fining people who can't afford a mower or to pay a landscaper is yet another attack on impoverished people.

Often look at landscaping and historic houses everywhere. Behind the big windows sits an elderly person who would love someone to mow or maintain their lawn for free. Be a good Samaritan. God will.

Housing authority apartments need to

start holding the home owners responsible for the shootings. I know they cant control what people do, but they can control who they have to their house.

Housing authorities needs to kick home owners out when shooting happen at their homes. There are kids and elderly people who lives there too. Pay cops more money to sit and patrol. Cameras don't work.

This is the wrong economy to levy an additional sales tax in. With the elevated cost of everyday goods and services and the struggling middle class we need to find other ways. We are taxed enough.

We have been told that a lot of the sales tax in this community is paid by people that don't live here. And no doubt some of the sales tax is paid by nonresidents. But it is time we are given the facts.

Has access to all Dublin City School facilities have been removed for all suspended board members, or can some still use their badge and emails? Access should be deactivated immediately.

Why can't we have ordinances against data centers? Not about land owners selling but more land taken by the government for gigantic power grids, no water pressure, and horrific sound pollution!

I want to say happy birthday to Mrs. Harriett Claxton. I sure miss you at The Courier Herald and I wish you would come back. Happy birthday and many more!

TELL IT! GUIDELINES

Have something to say about life in Dublin and Laurens County? We want to hear it. Tell It! is a space for community voices: praise, frustration, questions and everything in between.

- SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**
 - Keep it local. Submissions should focus on issues, people and places in Dublin and Laurens County. We are not the right venue for commentary on national politics or public figures outside our community.
 - Be civil. Personal attacks, profanity and hate speech will not be published. Criticism is welcome; name-calling is not.
 - Stick to the facts. Submissions must not contain false statements of fact about identifiable individuals or organizations. We cannot publish content that is defamatory or exposes the Courier Herald to legal liability.
 - The Courier Herald reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity, and to decline any submission at its sole discretion. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Mike Collins' son-in-law

I have warned my two kids that if they ever contemplated divorcing their spouse, I was keeping the one they brought. My son-in-law is a retired public schoolteacher with a PhD, a coach and was named Georgia's Teacher of the Year. He can build anything, including the house they have occupied for the past 35 years. He is kind and thoughtful and smart as a whip.

My daughter-in-law is a nurse who spent most of her career in hospital nursing and retired as a hospice care nurse, one of the toughest jobs I can imagine. As I have stated on previous occasions, she is credited with having saved my life (that, according to the doctors) when she saw how pale I looked one evening and got me to an emergency clinic and then into the hospital. It was sepsis. She remains my go-to regarding matters of my health.

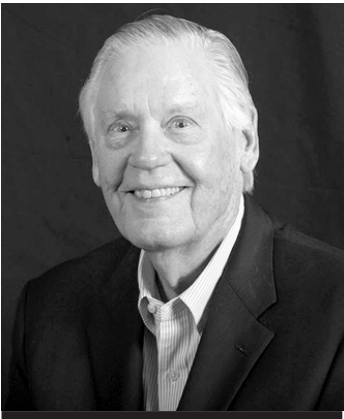
It's a shame I'm not running for the U.S. Senate in Georgia. I could talk about the real issues facing our nation and not have to worry about dealing with the next harangue coming from an in-law. I'm afraid that is not the case for Republican candidate, Cong. Mike Collins. His race-ranting, antisemit-

ic, misogynistic son-in-law doesn't seem to have an off-switch or much interest in helping his father-in-law focus on the issues instead of having to talk about him.

David Alan Scheer II is identified as a social media influencer which is said to be "someone who uses their trust and credibility online to shape attitudes, behaviors and decisions."

According to various sources, Scheer has some 1.5 million followers on TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram and other channels. His misbegotten efforts to shape attitudes, behaviors and decisions are only serving to make his father-in-law's campaign a lot more difficult than it already is where polls show him running behind incumbent Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff.

On his Telegram channel, Scheer wrote, "We're going to retake America for Christian White men!" I have a feeling God is going to zap whatever brains this guy may have (which can't be a lot) when the time comes and will hopefully give the privilege of pulling the switch to Ray Charles Robinson, of Albany, Georgia, and Moses. In the meantime, I would



By DICK YARBROUGH

suggest Scheer spend more time reading the Sermon on the Mount and less time on Telegram. He might learn what Christianity is really all about.

Scheer has called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a "Satanic war-mongering, Zionist piece of garbage" and in 2025 displayed a German Nazi Party propaganda poster from the 1930s with the text "I want to make babies, Not die for Israel." Ask the Nazis how that turned out for them. He has also asserted that Jews have "captured American politics," and that "Gen-Z doesn't hate Hitler." (Gen-Zer's are defined as 14 to 29 years of age. What do they know about Hitler? Ask them instead about Taylor Swift or love bombing.)

As for women, Scheer has stated, "(R)epeal the 19th amendment and a lot of issues will resolve themselves." The 19th Amendment guarantees women the right to vote. I'm going

to assume the women in the Collins household have no problem with being thought of as unworthy to vote. The women in the Yarbrough household would punch his sexist lights out. That would resolve a lot of issues, too.

I don't know Mike Collins. I did know his daddy, the late Cong. Mack Collins, quite well. He was very helpful to us in the runup to the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. And a good guy. His son may be a good guy, too, but if he can't manage his family how can he manage the affairs of state?

Mike Collins either can't or won't get Scheer to shut his trap. How all of this can be a positive in his campaign is a mystery to me. He had to abort a press conference in Monroe County recently because reporters kept asking him to address the claims of his son-in-law's ties to antisemitism and white nationalism, instead of letting him discuss his health care initiatives, which was the purpose of the press conference. You can bet it won't be the last time this happens.

Watching this guy spew his verbal garbage on the Internet reminds me to say thank you to Ted and to Jackie. You two may not be social influencers but you are great in-laws who have never embarrassed me or the family. Maybe I should have run for the Senate.

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

The Courier Herald

LOCAL MATTERS



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2024

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Print: \$12.50/month

Digital: \$10.50/month

Periodicals Postage Paid at Dublin, Georgia

(USPS 161-860) - Published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

POSTMASTER: Send address change to:

The Courier Herald, 115 South Jefferson Street, Dublin, GA 31021

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— for Local News —

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Courtney Vessell/CIRCULATION MANAGER

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

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

- Psalm 1:1

Dublin Police Department

- John Wesley Calvin, 21, was charged with possession of marijuana less than one ounce at the Hop-In on East Jackson Street at 12:40 a.m. on Aug. 17.

An officer saw a gold 2012 Nissan Quest parked at a fuel pump. The officer saw that the vehicle remained stationary at the pump for approximately 20 minutes. The officer noticed a man slumped over behind the steering wheel. Officers approached the vehicle to check on the driver, identified as Calvin.

The driver was initially unresponsive. While standing outside the vehicle, an officer saw a small amount of green leafy material in Calvin's hand and recognized it as suspected marijuana. He also saw what appeared to be material used to prepare a marijuana blunt.

A Glock handgun was lying in plain view of the front passenger seat. The firearm was equipped with an extended magazine and was within Calvin's immediate reach. The officer opened the driver's door and attempted to wake Calvin. He suddenly awakened and appeared confused, dazed and fearful. For the officer's safety, and due to the firearm being within Calvin's reach, the officer removed him from the vehicle and moved him away from the gun.

Calvin was transported to the police department where he was processed, fingerprinted and released on a summons.

- An officer made a traffic stop and arrested Darian Brown, 29. He was charged with possession of marijuana at Quick Stop No. 3, on North Jefferson Street around 11:07 p.m. on Aug. 18.

- Craig Legrego Sanford, 43, was charged with obstruction of law enforcement officers, disorderly conduct, driving under the influence and driving while license suspended or revoked at 3:58 p.m. on Aug. 17. An officer saw a man, identified Sanford, yelling on a yard on Williams Street.

- Thomas Alan Roosevelt, 64, was charged with driving while license suspended or revoked on Veterans Boulevard at 12:36



POLICE BEAT...

a.m. on Aug. 17.

An officer responded to a vehicle collision involving Roosevelt. He said he had pulled out of a parking stall and was heading back toward Veterans Boulevard when his vehicle was hit. The officer ran Roosevelt's information through GCIC which returned showing his driver's license was suspended for failure to appear.

The officer told Roosevelt of the suspension. He stated, "But I'm on private property."

Roosevelt had pulled out of the parking stall and was headed to the road. The officer advised Roosevelt that he had been operating the vehicle on the road and that he would be cited for driving while his license was suspended.

His wife took possession of the vehicle while Roosevelt was arrested and transported to the police department. He was released on a summons.

Laurens County Sheriff's Office

- On Aug. 18 at 10:20 p.m., an investigators riding in a marked patrol vehicle saw a gray Toyota Camry traveling east on I-16 at the 44 mile marker traveling too close to an 18 wheeler in the right lane. The Toyota also failed to maintain its lane by driving over the fog line.

The driver was removed from the vehicle and denied consent to have her vehicle searched. A K-9 was deployed and alerted on the front passenger side of the vehicle where Michael Bernard Dean Sr., 43, of Macon was sitting. The deputy opened the door and found a black Sig Sauer 9 mm handgun under the seat in a black plastic bag. While checking Dean's name through 911, they advised he had warrants out of Laurens County, Bibb County and Houston County.

A clear plastic bag was found in Dean's front left pocket. He was asked if he was in possession of anything else and Dean said no. He was advised if he had

anything else that he would be charged with crossing the guard line as well.

After Dean was transported to jail, a clear hand tied plastic bag containing a powder and rock like substance was found under the back seat of the vehicle. The deputy who transported Dean reviewed his in-car camera and the video showed Dean removing something from inside his pants and attempting to hide it by placing it between the seat back and the seat of the patrol truck. The content found in Dean's front right pocket was positive for methamphetamine. The bag found in the deputy's car tested positive for fentanyl.

- At 5:55 p.m. on Aug. 22 a deputy responded to East Maine Street in reference to making a report about an incident.

- A deputy talked with a woman about a trespass that happened on South Peachtree Road at 6:59 p.m. on Aug. 25.

- A deputy met with a walk-in at the sheriff's office about an incident that occurred on Old Hawkinsville Road at 12:54 p.m. on Aug. 19.

- On Aug. 20, a deputy was dispatched to Highway 441 in reference to a damage report that happened around 2:21 p.m.

- Gregory Durham, 41, of East Dublin was charged with possession of MDMA (ecstasy) and criminal damage to property in the second degree on South Elm Street.

Editor's note: This information is public record and was taken from reports of local law enforcement agencies. These reports do not reflect guilt or innocence. An "arrest" does not always indicate incarceration. Readers are cautioned that people may have similar names. Police Beat does not identify minor children, victims of sexual assault, suicide attempts or medical conditions. Cases dismissed do not appear if the newspaper is notified before deadline.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS AND FINAL NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A WETLAND

September 3, 2026
Laurens County Board of Commissioners
117 E Jackson St.
Dublin, GA 31021
(478) 272-4755

These notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by Laurens County.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or about September 20, 2026, Laurens County will submit a request to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, to undertake a project known as Laurens County Senior Center Renovation. The purpose of the project will be exterior and interior improvements, along with improvements to building systems and specialty components. Estimated funding is approximately \$1,128,781. The project is located at 112 Nathaniel Dr. East Dublin, 31027.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Laurens County has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at 5405 Oak Street, Eastman, Georgia 31023, and may be examined or copied weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the Environmental Review Record to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 5405 Oak Street, Eastman, Georgia 31023. Comments may also be submitted by email to bnewby@hogarc.org. All comments received by September 19, 2026 will be considered by Laurens County prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

Laurens County certifies to The Georgia Department of Community Affairs that Bryan Rogers in his capacity as County Administrator consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under National Environmental Policy Act and related laws and authorities and allows Laurens County to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs will accept objections to its release of funds and Laurens County's certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of Laurens County; (b) Laurens County has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by The Georgia Department of Community Affairs; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs at 60 Executive Park South, N.E. Atlanta, Georgia 30329. Potential objectors should contact the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Bryan Rogers,
County Administrator and Certifying Officer

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, US Economic Development Administration, Laurens County, City of Dublin, Groups, and Individuals Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that Laurens County under Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under the Community Development Block Grant Program, Grant No. 25p-y-087-1-6792. The proposed project(s) is located at 112 Nathaniel Drive, East Dublin, Laurens County, Georgia 31027 and is in a wetland. The proposed activity involves the rehabilitation, renovation, and minor expansion of the Laurens County Senior Center to upgrade the facilities to adequately meet the needs of the community. This project will directly benefit 153 local seniors. The project footprint is 5,383 gross square foot. Proposed improvements will be exterior and interior improvements. Exterior improvements will include structure and siding, roofing, specialized roof additions, HVAC unit housing, outdoor dining, openings to include doors and windows, and accessibility and paving. The interior improvements will include spatial layout and reconfiguration, finishes to include repainting and ceiling tiles, flooring and access, and kitchen upgrades. There will also be system and specialties improvements to include HVAC units, lighting, and security measures.

Laurens County has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing wetland: To build a new Senior Center facility. This alternative was not considered reasonable due to several factors which include but are not limited to the following: (a) The existing facility is in relatively good condition. (b) The existing facility is in a location that is easily accessible and familiar to the Laurens County residents/ users. The Laurens County Senior center has been in this location since 2011 (roughly 14 years). The Laurens County residents and users of the facility are used to and comfortable with the location. (c) Renovating and adding on would be faster and a more cost-effective use of county and grant funds. This is based on land costs, land/site development, and overall new construction prices.

Laurens County has reevaluated alternatives to renovating in the wetland and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to wetland development. Approximately .25 acres of wetland are in the project area. No work is being done outside of the Senior Center to disturb the wetland, and Laurens County has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in a wetland and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in a wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the Laurens County Commissioners Office at 117 E Jackson St., Dublin, GA 31021, on or before September 19, 2026 (478) 272-4755, Attention: Bryan Rogers, County Administrator, during the hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. A full description of the project may also be reviewed at 5405 Oak St., Eastman, GA 31023 from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Comments may also be submitted via email at bnewby@hogarc.org.

Date: September 3, 2026

COMMUNITY NEWS

Our Health Matters Health Expo, presented by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc, Beta Alpha Chi Zeta Chapter, will be held at the Katherine W. Gray Resource Center, 404 S. Washington St. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19. There will be a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Donors must be 16 or older and a photo ID is required. Go for a day of wellness and fun which will

include free health screenings, nutrition information, health and wellness resources, music, food and

giveaway, family-friendly activities, local vendors and community organizations.

Classifieds

Employment

EQUIPMENT OPERATOR PUBLIC WORKS
The City of Dublin is accepting applications for an Equipment Operator in the Public Works Department. This Team Member must have a positive attitude and initiative. Work involves the responsibility for the safe and efficient operation and maintenance of moderately heavy or specialized equipment. This employee must be able to operate and maintain a diverse range of equipment which includes a variety of trucks and construction equipment. The operation of this equipment requires considerable manipulative skill and the ability to perform specialized tasks to which the equipment is assigned. During slack periods, workers may perform various unskilled/semi-skilled duties. Supervision is received from the Public Works Director and/or Street Supervisor who makes oral or written assignments and inspects work while in progress and upon completion. Applicants must have a valid Georgia Commercial Driver's License, High School Diploma or GED, and successful applicant must pass a drug screen. Salary range for this position is \$42,463.67-\$65,818.68 annually. An extensive fringe benefit package including health, dental and life insurance is also offered. Applicants may apply online through our www.cityofdublin.org website until position is filled. The City of Dublin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Local 7-day Forecast:

The next 48 hours:

THURSDAY:

95°

Partly sunny; afternoon storm possible.

Sunrise: 7:08 a.m.

THURSDAY NIGHT:

71°

Mostly cloudy and humid.

Sunset: 7:54 p.m.

FRIDAY:

91°

Humid with intervals of clouds.

Sunrise: 7:08 a.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT:

72°

Partly cloudy and humid.

Sunset: 7:53 p.m.

Saturday

9/5

HIGH/LOW

94/71

Humid with sunshine and clouds.

Sunrise: 7:09 a.m.

Sunset: 7:51 p.m.

Sunday

9/6

HIGH/LOW

92/69

Some sun with a thunderstorm or two.

Sunrise: 7:10 a.m.

Sunset: 7:50 p.m.

Monday

9/7

HIGH/LOW

86/68

Humid.

Sunrise: 7:10 a.m.

Sunset: 7:49 p.m.

Tuesday

9/8

HIGH/LOW

90/69

Sun and clouds; spot storms likely.

Sunrise: 7:11 a.m.

Sunset: 7:47 p.m.

Wednesday

9/9

HIGH/LOW

90/65

Less humid with plenty of sun.

Sunrise: 7:11 a.m.

Sunset: 7:46 p.m.

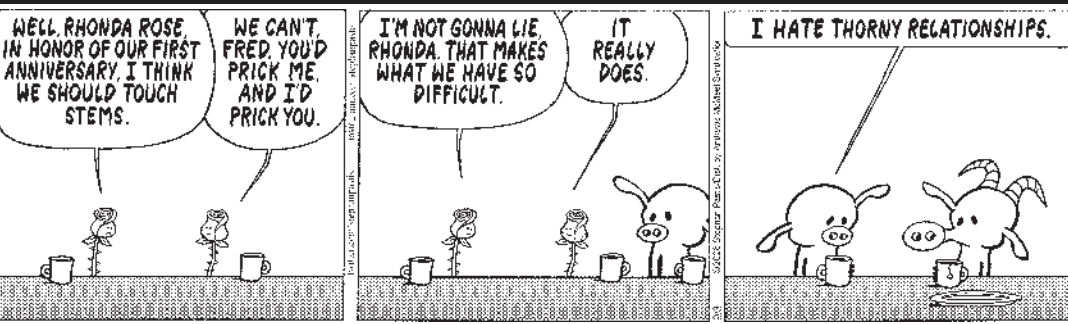
River levels...

Oconee (at Dublin) 1.3'

Ocmulgee (at Macon) 5.5'

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



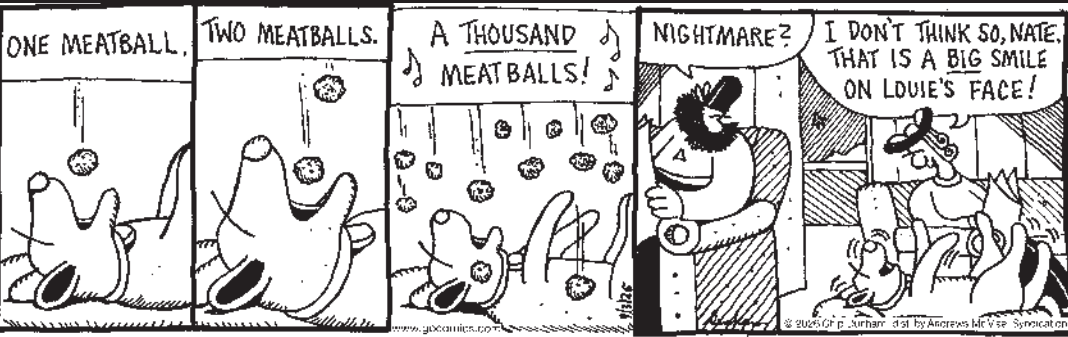
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



OVERBOARD

BY CHIP DUNHAM



DEFLOCKED

BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



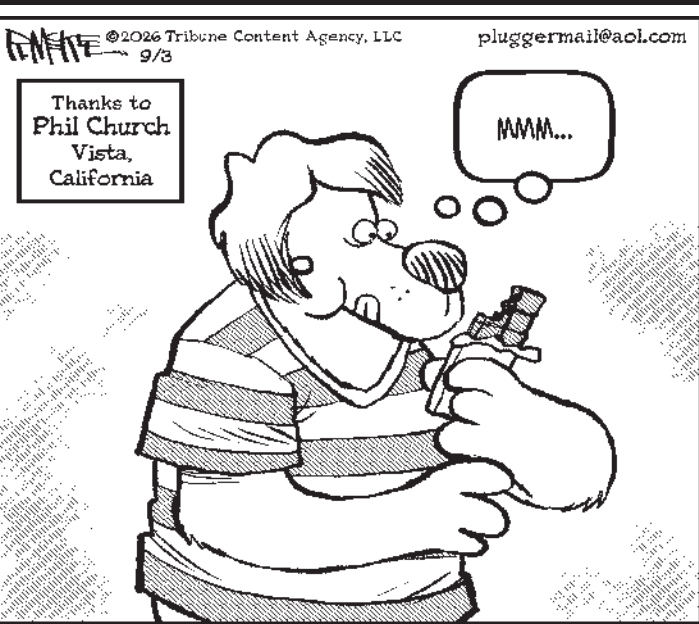
ZIGGY

BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS

BY JEFF MACNELLY



A plugger's bar experiences usually involve a block of chocolate.

Thursday, September 3, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES
©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

OPTIONS

Both vulnerable, South deals

NORTH
♠ A K 10 9 2
♥ A J 8 6
♦ 6
♣ Q J 6

WEST
♠ J 7 4
♥ K Q 10 7 4 3
♦ K 10 8
♣ 8

EAST
♠ 6 5 3
♥ 9
♦ A 7 3
♣ A 10 9 7 5 2

SOUTH
♠ Q 8
♥ 5 2
♦ Q J 9 5 4 2
♣ K 4 3

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
Pass Pass 1♠ 2♣
2♦ 2♥ DBL 3♣
3♦ All pass

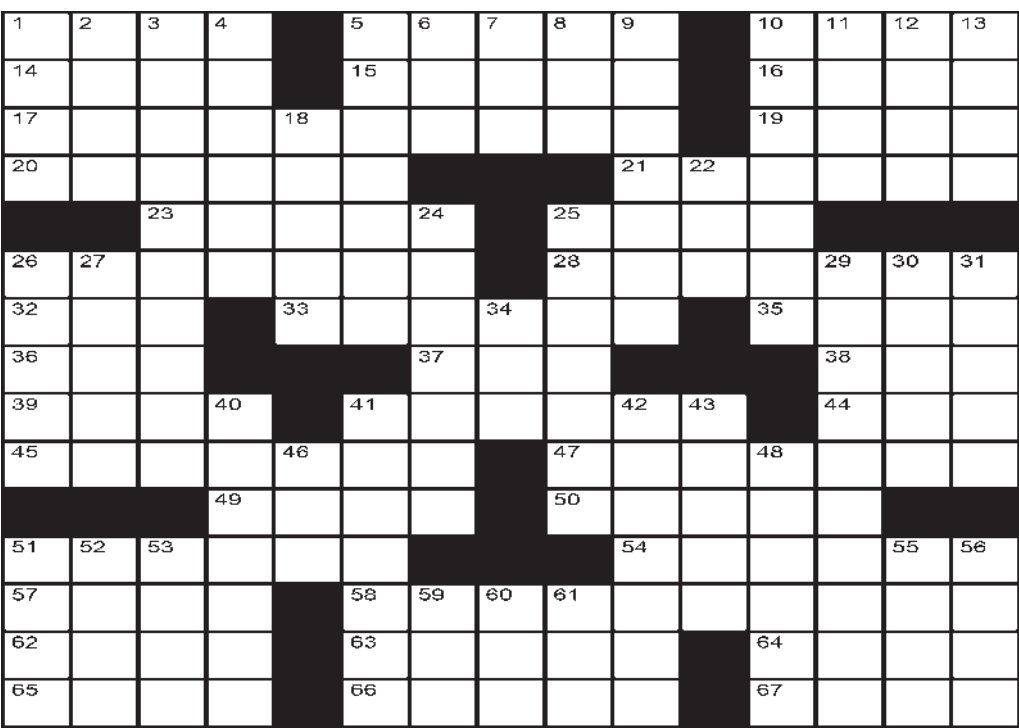
Opening lead: Eight of ♣

Today's deal is from a competition in Norway, where weak two bids are apparently out of favor. Some players with the North hand would have bid three no trump at their last turn. That contract might make on this lucky lie of the cards. Declarer would have to use both of his dummy entries to lead hearts toward the ace-jack, ducking when West split his heart honors on the first lead of the suit, North would then take the heart finesse on the second round of the suit. This would resolve the entry problem getting back to his hand. Three diamonds seemed safe enough, losing three diamond tricks and one club. East-West put up a nice defense. East won the opening club lead with the ace and returned the suit, West ruffing with the eight. The king of hearts shift was taken by dummy's ace and three rounds of spades allowed South to discard his remaining heart. Now a diamond to the queen and king put West back on lead. West led the queen of hearts knowing South would ruff it. It would then be up to South to guess the diamond position. South might guess wrong by leading a low diamond, hoping the ace was now singleton, or he could make the winning play of the jack of diamonds, hoping to pin the now singleton 10. East took this guess away from South by ruffing the queen of hearts with the ace of diamonds and leading a club. West's 10 of diamonds was promoted into the setting trick. Nice play!

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

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**
- 1 Involuntary movements
5 Parking attendant
10 Potato ____
14 Needing lotion, in a way
15 From Galway, e.g.
16 Impolite
17 Container for Coors: 2 wds.
19 Often: 2 wds.
20 Issued in installments
21 Vlasic product
23 Gave three stars to, say
25 Soccer movement
26 Important speech
28 Artist's workshop
32 Prescriptions: Abbr.
33 Pain meds: Abbr.
35 Jane Austen novel
36 ____-friendly
37 Display type: Abbr.
38 "Sid the Science Kid" network
39 Gets married
41 Walking a trail
44 House member
45 Great joy
47 Sowing machines
49 Called up
50 Abhors
51 Lighter fuel
54 Shiny Christmas decor
57 Clickable image
58 Resembling a snake
62 Ran in the wash
63 Railroad vehicle
64 Stratford-upon-____
65 Back talk
66 Shows boredom
67 More or ____
- DOWN**
- 1 Folder features



Created by Stella Zawistowski

- 2 "Understood": 2 wds.
3 Cheerwine, e.g.: 2 wds.
4 Aleppo native
5 Purple flowers
6 "How Great Thou ____"
7 Ignited
8 Bilingual learner's class: Abbr.
9 Absolutely awful: 2 wds.
10 Snap, ____, pop
11 The Incredible ____
12 Worshipped figure
13 Alonso of baseball
18 ____ Rouge, LA
22 Frozen water
24 Hanging out cards
25 Jewish funeral prayer
26 Mardi Gras group
27 Perform well
29 Awe-inspiring



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- 30 Glowing coal
31 Coarse files
34 "Ugh!"
40 Bits of DNA
41 Truthfulness
42 Tidies up
43 Arrive: 2 wds.
46 Actor McKellen
48 Tooth-related
51 Babies' neckwear
52 The Bruins' school: Abbr.
53 Stay on your ____
55 Son of Seth
56 Glasses part
59 Historic period
60 Not cooked
61 Brooch

Widow's new beau doesn't pull his weight

DEAR ABBY: My husband died six years ago. I met a widower three years ago. He was nice and attentive, but not anymore. We moved in together, and the last two years I have been miserable.

I pay half the rent. I also pay for all the groceries and gas and pick up the check every time we go out to eat. He even takes my meds, so I have only half of what I need. The only time he is not moody is when I wait on him hand and foot.

I have nothing. I live on Social Security, and so does he. He doesn't hit or abuse me, so I feel like I should stay, yet I'm so unhappy. He doesn't talk to me or even give me a hug. I think I'm stuck and don't know where to turn. My grown kids don't need to hear that I messed up, and I don't want to burden them. Can you please advise me? -- MISERABLE IN ARIZONA

DEAR MISERABLE: Gladly. Your grown children need to know exactly what your situation is with this man. Whose name is on the lease of your dwelling? If it isn't you, there is no reason why you can't end this pain. Tell your kids what's going on and ask for their help in getting out of this soul-crushing mess. It may be embarrassing, but it may be the only way to escape.



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I will be attending my nephew's wedding in the northeast part of the country. I live in the mid-Atlantic. I have been told that at the reception each plate will cost \$200, and they are expecting their wedding gifts to be worth at least the cost of the plate. Therefore, if a couple attends and both spouses dine at the reception, a \$400 wedding gift is expected. Are these guidelines for real? -- BAFFLED ABOUT ALL THIS

DEAR BAFFLED: These "guidelines" do not exist except in the minds of the presumptuous individuals who are throwing this shindig. A wedding reception is not a quid pro quo affair. The cost of the celebration is borne by the bride and groom and their parents, and not one else. If you plan to attend,

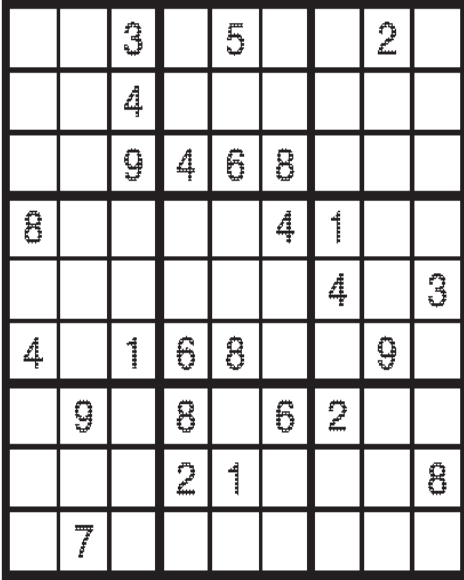
your wedding gift should not cost more than you can comfortably afford.

DEAR ABBY: I lost my wife in November to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) that had progressed to cirrhosis. She also had polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which was diagnosed in 1990. No doctor told my wife in the intervening years, "You have PCOS, so you need to get your liver checked." For some reason, most general practitioners and OB-GYNs do not tell their patients this.

According to the World Health Organization, about 10% of women have PCOS. According to the National Institutes of Health, between 34% and 70% of PCOS patients develop fatty liver disease. Could you use your platform to tell PCOS patients to advocate for themselves to get liver scans done? I don't want any other family to experience the loss that my family has. -- WARNING TO WOMEN

DEAR WARNING TO WOMEN: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your wife to this terrible disease. Readers, I can't promise insurance will pay for the additional testing for all PCOS patients, but it can't hurt to raise the subject with your doctor.

SUDOKU



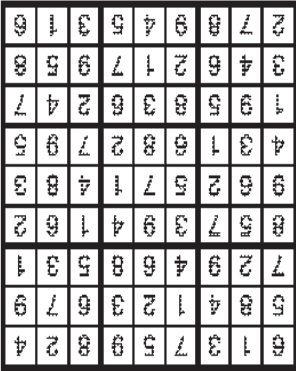
Fun By The Numbers

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: intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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



ANSWER:

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL OUTLOOK

Plenty of points to prove for local teams in week 3

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Dodge County has maintained a steady upper hand on West Laurens in the teams' rivalry, which will be renewed for a 29th time on Friday at Memorial Stadium in one of the area's top week 3 matchups.

But though the Indians' pattern of success in the series (good for a 21-7 all-

time record) has continued into recent seasons, the advantage has not extended to Eastman, where the Raiders won on four out of their last five visits.

That trend of strong road performances will need to continue as they return from an early-season bye looking to even their 0-1 record. West's second-straight battle with a member of AA's

crowded top 10 (the Indians opened last week with a win over Lamar County) should shape up in similar fashion to its opener against Bleckley, in which inconsistency running the ball, and getting possessions off the runway, was a main culprit in their slow start.

In another of Friday's marquee showdowns, No. 3 Dublin (2-0) welcomes fel-

low unbeaten Baldwin (2-0) to the Shamrock Bowl for homecoming, and the first installment of a long-dormant rivalry since 1975.

The arm of Braves quarterback Kamden Patterson (who has thrown for 640 yards and seven touchdowns with only one interception in two games), paired with top receivers Justin Burton and Jerriek Carswell, creates

a deep passing threat the likes of which the Irish defense hasn't reckoned with yet. But the group has measured up well in two tests so far, and even if it gives up a few big plays, looks to have a pass rush capable of taking Baldwin off its torrid pace.

East Laurens (0-2) may have a must-win game on its hands after a winnable one slipped away in overtime

last week at Southeast Bulloch. The Falcons welcome a Washington County team (0-2) that's likely just as miffed after failing to finish out a bigger fourth quarter lead against ACE.

Slowing down the Golden Hawks' physical run game will go along with the obvious – cutting down on penalties and turnovers – in keys to reversing this early-season slide.

Trinity (1-2) will be out to make the most of another chance to even its record on the road in a 7 p.m. start at Augusta Prep. The Crusaders' success will once again hinge on their ability to come up with pivotal stops, and finish off key drives.

The rest of a cut-and-dry week 3 slate has Bleckley County (2-0, hosting Jasper County), Brentwood (1-2, welcoming Robert Toombs), Montgomery County (2-0, on the road at Lanier County) and Treutlen (1-0, at Tattall County) all looking to take care of business, while Wilkinson County (0-2, hosting Jefferson County) and Twiggs County (1-1, at Mount de Sales) have their hands full in the next games up.

WEEK 2: HOW THE AREA FARED...

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Montgomery Co. 15,
Wheeler Co. 14

The pair of rivals traded two touchdowns each, but an early safety ended up making the slight difference for the Eagles as they pulled out a second-straight thriller at home. Zaden Waller and Elijah McEwen combined for the tackle, as John Miller recovered a low snap with Wheeler County backed into its own end zone, for the key points on the opening possession. Waller rushed for 107 yards, and McEwen 90 along with MoCo's two offensive scores later in the game, the last to go in front for good late in the third quarter. The Bulldogs' Jaden Bridges and Malik Madison scored the unanswered touchdowns in between for a lead of 14-9 early in the third quarter. McEwen also posted a team-high 18 total tackles, and three for loss, on behalf of the Eagles' defense, which sealed it with a goal line stop as Joseph Moore's pass on fourth down fell incomplete with 3:13 to go.

Dodge Co. 30, Lamar Co. 13

The Indians needed two quarters to get things settled on defense, but pitched a second-half shutout after Lamar County hit big plays to answer both their early touchdowns before the break. Both came out of their goal-line package as fullbacks Peyton Butts and Keyzan Harris (taking a step back from his usual spot on the offensive line) crossed the goal line in the second quarter for their portion of a 13-all tie. Jeremiah Burns juiced out two defenders to score from 20 yards off a catch in the flat from Kain Mincey, who was 15-of-22 for 161 with a single interception, Jordan Johnson broke loose for a score from 40 to finish off his 113-yard night on the ground and Isaac Murray hit a 24-yard field goal as Dodge County pulled away.

Bleckley Co. 34, Cook 19

The Hornets threatened a late comeback, but were held in check for most of the night by the Bleckley defense, which allowed only 232 total yards. The Royals ran out to a three-score lead in the second and third quarters, but left an opening early in the final period as Cook narrowed the gap to only eight points with touchdowns on the run of Markeise Miller and a pass from Nole Register to Malcolm Merritt, with the help of a BC fumble. The visitors got the ball back with a fourth-down stop at their own 30, but Marty Beck's interception and return quickly put Bleckley back in position to put the lead away on a final Kix Foskey rushing touchdown. The Royals' Zyion Love rushed for a pair of scores with 118 yards on 17 carries. Brody Fleming (16 completions for 157) hit Foskey and Jason McNulty

for touchdowns. McNulty, Gage Harris and Octavius Tate had five catches each.

Brentwood 49, Gatewood 27

The Eagles put together a big night on the ground and made the most of multiple Gatewood mistakes to finally reach the win column. Tristan Robinson rushed for 122 yards on 13 carries, and joined Baylor Cobb in scoring a pair of touchdowns. Tristan Copeland, Jacob hooks and Chase Daniel also visited the end zone as part of the 335-yard effort on the ground. Hooks added an interception, and Copeland joined J.W. Hitchcock with fumble recoveries for a hand in the three Gator turnovers that were instrumental in helping Brentwood build its 28-7 halftime lead, then maintain at least 14 points of separation down the stretch.

ACE 23, Washington Co. 20

The Golden Hawks were close to a first win of the Jay Ware era after Kade Swint's touchdown carry, and a Kamden Reaves two-point conversion carry, had them up 20-3 with just north of six minutes to go. But ACE rallied for three touchdowns in the remaining time. It took six plays for the Gryphons to score, as a 19-yard Ace Hatcher run cut it to a 10-point game, then an onside kickoff hit the wrong way off a set of WACO hands, and they found the end zone again, via Hatcher's 15-yard completion to Peyton Burden, in just four additional snaps. Jack Perry, who had 22 total tackles, made three for loss, intercepted a pass and forced a fumble, came up with a sack to force the Hawks to punt it back with two minutes to go. Brady Balkcom shook off a tackle to tiptoe the sideline on the last 20 of 37 yards on Hatcher's touchdown pass to conclude an 84-yard game-winning drive. The senior QB was responsible for 296 total yards. The ACE defense forced three turnovers. WACO's Aiden Watts was 7-of-13 for 129 yards and threw for two earlier TDs.

Greene Co. 24, Wilkinson Co. 18

For a second straight week, the Warriors' best offense was their defense... and this time special teams, which combined for all their scoring via fumble returns by Damareon Justice and Daverie Walker on back-to-back second quarter possessions, and Quenterrion Stanford's return of a field goal blocked by Tyler Hogan (who had nine total tackles and three for loss) in the second half. Wilco's attack, unable to escape its own territory for most of the night, couldn't do much to counter the 246 yards of Greene County, which was led by Jonathan Lawrence's 16 carries for 114 and one score, and Kaden Cummings' eight for 96 and the other two. The Tigers' defense, whose Q.J. Rob-



Elijah McEwen celebrates after reaching the end zone for a Montgomery County touchdown to put the Eagles up 9-0 on Wheeler County early in Friday's second quarter/LOGAN REYNOLDS, GTLN

bins had two picks, made 11 tackles for loss and three sacks.

Swainsboro 28, ECI 21

Ja'Bios Smith rushed for a touchdown to put the Tigers up 28-14 early in the fourth quarter. ECI answered as Davis Johnson (7-of-15 for 115 yards) hit Terrance Weaver on his second touchdown pass of the night to narrow the Swainsboro lead to the final seven, and the Bulldogs forced a punt to get the ball back. But an interception by Jayvion Sherrod in the last few minutes would clinch Thursday's first career win for new Swainsboro head coach Dwight Smith. the Tigers' Joshua Gray completed 10 passes for 121 yards, and two touchdowns of his own to Kyle Johnson, who accounted for 163 yards from scrimmage.

Toombs Co. 44, Vidalia 6

The Bulldogs pulled away with 34 unanswered points in the second and third quarters to build on their lead of 3-0 after one. Joseph Owens was 11-of-16 passing for 224 yards, Donterrius Mincey rushed for four touchdowns on 22 carries for 207 and Brandon Stephens caught seven passes for 193 to lead their second-straight 500-yard game. Alex Scott had nine total tackles, one for loss and a sack to help the Toombs defense limit Vidalia to 79 total yards, and a fourth-quarter rushing touchdown by Ja'Marion Lanier.

Warner Robins 21,
Northeast Macon 20

The Raiders had Robins down late after the last of their three unanswered touchdowns on a 25-yard completion from Jordan Wiggins to Jacory Sherman. But a long kickoff return positioned the Demons to answer with a touchdown run to tie by Antavious Hawkins, then re-take the lead on an extra point with 16 seconds to go. Turnovers played a pivotal role, as Robins recorded two interceptions among its repeated key stops in the first half, and Northeast converted

a Demon fumble into a second of its earlier touchdowns in the comeback. Wiggins rushed for 105 yards and one touchdown, and threw 18 completions for 207 and the other two. He was involved in all but 15 yards from scrimmage of their 327.

Baldwin 35, Hephzibah 26

The Rebels held Kamden Patterson to 41 yards on the ground, but the Baldwin QB threw for 307 and two touchdowns in another fine performance that helped the Braves improve to 2-0. Jerlioundus Armstrong rushed for two scores, and caught a 66-yard Patterson pass for another. Hephzibah, whose Reante Byrd carried 19 times for 141 yards and a touchdown and Trust Mack had 203 total yards and a hand in a pair of other scores, kept it interesting late with two fourth-quarter touchdowns.

FPD 21, Westfield 13

The Vikings' four interceptions (two by Harris Everitt, and one each by Cason Chatfield and Fisher Stokes) killed most of the Hornets' progress despite a several-yard advantage in total output, and 269 in total production from their quarterback Brock Johnson. Two rushing touchdowns by Everitt, and one by Cash Walker, produced the late FPD lead that was sealed as Jayden Cannon's pressure forced the final pick late in the game.

Other week 2 results...

Twiggs Co. 34, Central-Talbotton 12
Peach Co. 42, Jones Co. 19
Mays 23, Northside 9
Jeff Davis 42, Clinch Co. 7
Central Macon 42, Jordan 0
Westside Macon 40, Rutland 23
Bulloch 48, Tattall Square 14
John Milledge 49, Piedmont 7
Mitchell Co. 30, Hawkinsville 26
Veterans 35, Trinity-Sharpsburg 31
GMC 49, Crawford Co. 12
Jefferson Co. 43, Cross Creek 7
Valdosta 56, Howard 6
Mount de Sales 21, Pinewood 6
Sherwood 28, Robert Toombs 18
Southland 49, CFCA 21
Windsor 41, Augusta Prep 7

SCOREBOARD

SOFTBALL
Monday
Central Macon 12, Dublin 3

Tuesday
ACE Charter 14, Dublin 0
Brentwood 11, Trinity 3
East Laurens 2,
Bleckley Co. 0
West Laurens 11,
Southeast Bulloch 2

PREP
SCHEDULE

SOFTBALL
Thursday
Warner Robins at EL (doubleheader)/4 p.m.
Harlem at West Laurens /5 p.m.
Pinewood at Trinity /5:30 p.m.
Dublin at Swainsboro /6 p.m.

Saturday
Lowndes at WL/10 a.m.
Treutlen at WL/2 p.m.

FOOTBALL
Friday
Trinity at Augusta Prep /7 p.m.
Baldwin at Dublin
Washington Co. at EL
WL at Dodge Co.
Jasper Co. at Bleckley Co.
Robert Toombs at Brentwood
Montgomery Co. at Lanier Co.
Twiggs Co. at Mt. de Sales
Treutlen at Tattall Co.
Jefferson Co. at Wilkinson Co./7:30 p.m.

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



THE PANEL... Last week/OVERALL

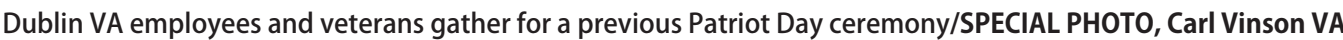
THIS WEEK'S MATCHUPS...
Baldwin at Dublin
Trinity at Augusta Prep
Washington Co. at East Laurens
West Laurens at Dodge Co.
Treutlen at Tattall Co.
Jefferson Co. at Wilkinson Co.
Rockmart at Mary Persons
Warner Robins at Northside
Jefferson at Peach Co.
Hawkinsville at Schley Co.
ECI at Statesboro
Toombs Co. at Swainsboro

Dublin Augusta Prep East Laurens Dodge Co. Treutlen Wilkinson Co. Rockmart Warner Robins Jefferson Schley Co. Statesboro Toombs Co.	Dublin Trinity WACO Dodge Co. Treutlen Jefferson Co. Mary Persons Warner Robins Peach Co. Hawkinsville Statesboro Toombs Co.	Dublin Augusta Prep WACO Dodge Co. Tattall Co. Jefferson Co. Mary Persons Warner Robins Peach Co. Hawkinsville Statesboro Swainsboro	Dublin Trinity WACO Dodge Co. Treutlen Jefferson Co. Rockmart Warner Robins Peach Co. Hawkinsville Statesboro Toombs Co.	Dublin Augusta Prep WACO Dodge Co. Treutlen Jefferson Co. Mary Persons Warner Robins Peach Co. Hawkinsville Statesboro Toombs Co.	Dublin Augusta Prep East Laurens Dodge Co. Tattall Co. Jefferson Co. Rockmart Warner Robins Jefferson Schley Co. Statesboro Toombs Co.	Dublin Trinity WACO Dodge Co. Treutlen Jefferson Co. Mary Persons Warner Robins Peach Co. Hawkinsville Statesboro Toombs Co.	Dublin Augusta Prep East Laurens Dodge Co. Treutlen Jefferson Co. Mary Persons Warner Robins Peach Co. Hawkinsville Statesboro Swainsboro
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SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

The Carl Vinson VA Medical Center will host its annual Patriot Day and Day of Service and Remembrance on Friday, Sept. 11, at 8:30 a.m., honoring the memory of those lost in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and celebrating the enduring spirit of America. The ceremony will be held on the front lawn of the medical center, beside the U.S. flag.

The event will feature a formal flag raising by the Carl Vinson VA Police Department, accompanied by



rate "due to the need to increase services in the area of public safety and emergency services."

"The cost of goods and the cost of doing business – this is, at the end of the day, a business we're running here – is significantly more," said Mathis. "I know the fuel bill y'all paid last week was double what it was last year."

The county commission tries to keep at least six months of operating expenses in reserve, but has had to tap into those funds to cover increased costs – and avoid raising taxes.

The county used almost \$1 million in reserve funds for fiscal year 2025 and about \$1.7 million in FY26, Rogers said after Tuesday's meeting.

Laurens County Sheriff

Larry Dean asked the board about the impact to taxpayers, saying he expects to face questions from the public.

"I know my budget is a large part of it, with the increase in fuel costs and vehicles," the sheriff said. "I need to be out in the public defending it."

What's next

Before a final millage is set, the commission will hold three public hearings on the

The first will be at 10 a.m. on Sept. 14. The final two will be on Sept. 22 – at noon and then at 6 p.m. The commission then will meet at 6:30 p.m. to vote. All of the meetings will be in the administration building at the courthouse annex.

If approved, the tax increase would be the first by the county commission since 2015, when the millage rate was set at 7.15 mills.

line so they initially responded,” Reese said. “They saw she was dead and contacted us, and we responded.”

LCSO officials got the call at 6:44 p.m. Monday and notified its investigators. Reese said Douglas was found inside the house, adding that she did not live in the home where she was found.

“It is an ongoing and active investigation,” Reese said. “Of course, we’ll take any loss of life seriously.”

Anyone with information is asked to call the Laurens County Sheriff’s Office at (478) 272-1522 and ask for any investigator.

Tracey founded the Christian Fellowship Group, the U.S. government's first Christian employee association in 2001, just months before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The CDC would play a major role in the aftermath at both the World Trade Center and Pentagon, with agents and staff screening the attack sites for chemical and biological weapons, hazardous material and other dangers.

"The CDC played a major role in the recovery," Tracey said. "God gave birth to our association at the right time. People were really seeking God during that time."

The Christian Fellowship Group would support workers during that time and beyond, helping the staff navigate their daily duties and deal with workplace conflict.

Tracey retired from the agency in 2014. She recently penned a book about her time at the CDC, "On Fire! At Work: Igniting Faith and Ministry in the Workplace," sharing the story of her experience and encouraging others to express their faith at work.

"This is the true testimony of how God transformed by work place," she said. "The book gives a step by

Tracey is returning to her native Dublin this month for several events to share her story. She will be the guest speaker for the Christian Women's Connection and the Women After Five groups on Sept. 17 and she will hold a book signing event at The Olive Branch on Sept. 26.

Tracey's time at the CDC and with the Christian

group was not all without controversy. The association faced legal challenges as well as a petition for it to be rejected, all of which failed.

"God just smoothed the path as only he could do," Tracey's father, Jim Tracey, said.

Tracey's career began at an intern at the Macon ABC station. An absent father paved the way for her to be on an on-screen personality while she was still earning her degree at Mercer University.

Tracey's father, Jim

smock, was no stranger to the public eye. The Dublin businessman and politician in the state government introduced her to politics at a young age. She went to her father's capitol to work as an aide to Georgia Congressman Billy Evans. Evans, who would later move his seat to Dublin's 1st District, chaired the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. Tracey would develop a passion for combating drug abuse that would lead to the attention of First

cy Reagan, who
ing awareness on
her top priority
r husband's ad-
on.
would serve
t President Ron-
an's two terms
roles including
revention for the
dise and director
Lady's Just Say
n.
of Tracey's ap-
have not been fi-
or more informa-
www.angietracey.

would not remove it. Officers arrested him and found a black Ruger 9mm pistol on the juvenile. This gun also came back as stolen when run through GCIC.

This juvenile was charged with possession of firearm by a minor, reckless conduct and theft by receiving stolen property.

Both juveniles are in custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice and were in the Cadwell Regional Youth Detention Center.

NOTICE									
The Laurens County Board of Commissioners does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the Commissioner's Office on September 22, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.									
CURRENT PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY									
C o u n t y w i d e A r e a	COUNTY WIDE		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
	V A L U E	Real & Personal	1,574,002,282	1,774,929,768	1,843,385,423	2,120,244,642	2,362,448,058	2,524,680,064	
		Motor Vehicles	21,458,360	19,655,540	19,426,420	18,855,570	17,196,250	16,022,870	
		Mobile Homes	14,646,206	16,989,136	18,285,915	18,226,540	20,575,589	24,813,318	
		Timber - 100%	24,539,868	20,968,606	28,389,387	14,002,434	17,558,079	9,615,687	
		Heavy Duty Equipment	1,800,992	1,674,948	7,427,228	2,332,313	2,937,627	2,656,073	
		Gross Digest	1,636,447,708	1,834,217,998	1,916,914,373	2,173,661,499	2,420,715,603	2,577,788,012	
		Less Exemptions	205,608,399	260,573,452	281,738,252	251,229,924	346,831,740	446,392,557	
	NET DIGEST VALUE		1,430,839,309	1,573,644,546	1,635,176,121	1,922,431,575	2,073,883,863	2,131,395,455	
	R A T E	Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage	10.8970	10.5440	10.7360	9.3460	9.0620	10.6590	
		Less Rollback (Local Option Sales Tax)	3.7400	3.7900	4.0380	3.6020	3.5640	3.6590	
		NET M&O MILLAGE RATE		7.1570	6.7540	6.6980	5.7440	5.4980	7.0000
		TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED		\$10,240,517	\$10,628,395	\$10,952,410	\$11,042,447	\$11,402,213	\$14,919,768
	TAX	Net Tax \$ Increase			\$387,878	\$324,014	\$90,037	\$359,767	\$3,517,555
		Net Tax % Increase			3.79%	3.05%	0.82%	3.26%	30.85%



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