The Courier Herald

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Dublin, Laurens County 2026 grad rates were among Georgia's highest

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

Georgia's high school seniors recorded a historic-high graduation rate in 2026, with most but not all area high schools showing some improvement.

The state's four-year graduation rate rose to 88.5 percent – an all-time high but one that was easily surpassed by all but one of the 11 public high schools in the Heart of Georgia Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) area, according to recently released stats from the Georgia Department of Education.

Dublin High seniors graduated at a 96.6 percent rate, West Laurens at 94 percent and East Laurens at 91.6 percent. West Laurens' (2.2 percent) and Dublin's (0.1 percent) rates both were up from 2025, while East Laurens' declined by 2.4 percent.

The only high school graduating at a rate below the state average in 2026 was Johnson County, at 87.5 percent.

Here are the 2026 graduation rates within the Heart of Georgia RESA. Counties with more than one high school or an alternative school include an overall rate, as well as rates for those individual:

• Dublin City (overall) – 93.9 percent
— Dublin High School 96.6 percent
— Moore Street School – 68.8 percent (16 students)
• Laurens County (overall) – 93.5 percent
— West Laurens High - 94.4 percent
— East Laurens - 91.6 percent
• Bleckley County (overall) – 97.8 percent
— Bleckley High School - 99.3 percent
— Bleckley Success Academy - 89.3 percent
• Dodge County (overall) – 88.2 percent
— Dodge High School – 91.5 percent
— Dodge Achievement Center – 65.5 percent
• Montgomery County High School – 96.8 percent
• Pulaski County (Hawkinsville High) – 90.5 percent
• Telfair County High School – 98.8 percent
• Treutlen High School – 89.8 percent
• Wheeler County High School – 93.1 percent
• Wilcox County High School – 92.1 percent

Georgia's 88.5 percent graduation rate was the highest since the state began using the adjusted cohort calculation as first required in 2011 by federal law.

A four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the percentage of high school students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma or state-defined alternate diploma. The "adjusted cohort" starts off with a high school's class of first-time freshmen and is adjusted for transfers, emigration and deaths.



Dylan Harrison's family stands with the members of law enforcement who attended an event remembering him, five years to the day he was killed in the line of duty/PAYTON TOWNS III

'We should never forget the name Dylan Harrison'

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Family and friends of a law enforcement officer gathered at a park in Dudley named after him to offer encouragement of moving on but not forgetting, five years to the day he was murdered.

Dylan Harrison's son Brody and wife Heather attended the event along with Dylan's parents, Jeff and Kathy, brother David and his family along with other family members and friends, many who are currently serving in different law enforcement agencies. They gathered at Dylan Harrison Memorial Park to mark the fifth year in which he was killed in the line of duty.

Not long after midnight on Oct. 9, 2021, Dylan, who was 26 years old, walked out of the Alamo Police Department. Almost an hour before, he had been involved in an incident at the Alamo Circle K across the street from the police department. Harrison deployed his taser on a man who had pushed the officer.

According to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Damien Ferguson, a friend of the man Dylan arrested, shot him. The GBI believed the ambush-style attack was retaliation for arresting Ferguson's friend. Dylan's brother, David, said there has been no

HARRISON
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DEA drug takeback day event at Dublin VA on Oct. 22

SPECIAL TO THE COURIER HERALD

The Dublin VA Medical Center is inviting anyone with expired medications to stop by the medical center on Friday, Oct. 22 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. to turn in expired medications that they would like to get rid of.

The event is sponsored by the Dublin VA Police Service and the VA Pharmacy.

VA Police will staff a drive-up booth in front of Building 1 to accept the medications so that participants need not leave their vehicles. On entering the front gate of the VA from Veterans Blvd. (Georgia Highway 80), vehicles can simply continue around the circle to the front of the main administration building where the booth will be set up.

The Dublin VA is located at 1826 Veterans Blvd, Dublin, Georgia, 31021. The public is encouraged to visit the medical center's Facebook page at "Dublin VA Medical Center" for additional details.

For more information on this event, contact Major Josh Brantley at Joshua.Brantley@va.gov



The Dublin VA Medical Center is inviting anyone with expired medications to stop by the medical center on Friday, Oct. 22/SPECIAL PHOTO

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First Friday: Getting to know more about DDA, Visit Dublin

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

Those attending the First Friday Means Business received a sneak preview of upcoming events that will be happening in downtown Dublin and with Visit Dublin GA.

Jennifer Jarvis, Dublin-Laurens Chamber of Commerce president and CEO, moderated a panel composed of Nichole Padgett, Dublin Downtown Development Authority MainStreet director, Glenda Berry, Theatre Dublin director, Jason Keyton, director of business development, and Miriam Lewis, executive director of Visit Dublin GA.

Jarvis said it was fun to hear the panels' excitement.

Padgett went through a long list of events, starting with the upcoming Chili-Cookoff and Fall Festival at the Market on Madison on Saturday, Oct. 17. They currently have 18 teams.

"If you have not been to this event, you are missing out," Padgett said. "We have so much fun."

Berry said they will have some Halloween-themed movies throughout October. They will also have the Eagles Tribute Band on Oct. 16.

"They are fantastic," Berry said.

Lewis brought up a new Christmas event. They have noticed that the visitor numbers around Dublin decrease in December.

"We wanted to find ways to get creative to bring people in," Lewis said. "One of the ways is we met with the Chamber back in the summer and we had this crazy idea."

They wanted to have a community-wide Christmas light decorating contest and plan to call it Merry Bright Lights in Dublin, Ga. This will be for everyone in the city and county.

"We are very excited," Lewis said. "We want to create a map for people to use to be able to drive around Dublin. People can take their kids out for dinner and then check the map and see what is close to them to go look and vote on."

Berry was excited to be able to announce an early Christmas present with the DCT's production of "Elf Jr. The Musical," to be held at Theatre Dublin on Nov. 20-22.

"We have 40 cast members who are all 18 and under," said Berry before calling up Sawyer Morton, who will be playing Buddy the Elf. "I hope everyone will come and support our young people. They are going to do a wonderful job."



Glenda Berry talked about Theatre Dublin during a panel discussion/PAYTON TOWNS III

Berry pointed out that the 22nd annual The Nutcracker will be coming up also, along with, "lots and lots of Christmas movies."

"We are going to have a lot of fun things going on at Theatre Dublin and we want you and your family to come out and enjoy them," Berry said.

Padgett said Dec. 4 will be the annual Jingle & Mingle, which will include a visit from Santa Claus and a tree lighting.

"We want to light up downtown a little more," she said. "We are going to have some snow. We'll have carriage rides downtown."

On Dec. 19, they will have breakfast with Santa. Then, to ring in the new year, they will hold the annual Shamrock Drop on Dec. 31.

Padgett knows people want to know who they need to contact for their venues such as the Carnegie Library, or information about the Farmers Market or Jackson Plaza.

"They can call me," she said.

Berry is an advocate and ambassador for performing arts. Three years ago, she was at a similar event when she talked with Jennifer Bryant who said her son Caleb may be interested in performing on stage for Dublin Community Theatre (DCT).

"If your child or relative has always wanted to be on stage, or maybe even backstage, reach out to us," Berry said. "Dublin Community Theatre is truly a community theater. It really comes from connecting people who have never been on stage. It's a wonderful way of helping to make this community come to life."

Lewis said Visit Dublin GA operates under the Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Division. They are very active with five social media pages, 10 websites and they are constantly serving outside the community on panels statewide and meeting with hundreds of guests and taking brochures.

"We are having conversation with them about why they need to come back to Dublin and homing in on what interests them and trying to bring them back," Lewis said. "We wear many hats."

Visit Dublin GA employees have been at many events and programs in the city.

"We work alongside our partners," Lewis said. "We love going out into our community to hand out information or give out stickers and anything that has Dublin on it so that it keeps Dublin on their minds."

Keyton, who recently began his new role in the Fred Roberts Hotel, would like people to come to see him first before they think about starting a business in the downtown area.

"I have a network of people who can actually help you before you start that process," he said. "The worst thing you can do is come to me in the middle of your project and it is too late for help. Information must be taken down before the beginning of the project. Don't be afraid to come to me even if it is six months to a year before anything happens."

There is a lot going on downtown.

"You have seen that it has changed a lot," Keyton said. "We want to keep that momentum going."

Keyton said it is very

DDA
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OBITUARIES



Elois Whipple Daniel

Funeral services for Ms. Elois Whipple Daniel will be held on Friday, Oct. 16, 2026, at 11 a.m. at Williams Chapel Baptist Church, 1142 Hwy, 29 South in East Dublin. The Rev. Roy Wells will deliver the eulogy. Interment will follow in the Dudley Memorial Cemetery in Dublin.

Ms. Elois Whipple Daniel, known as Lois "Lil Boosie," was born on March 5, 1942 in Wilkinson County to the late Thelma Coney and Carl Whipple. She was raised by Lula Stanley and Morris Stanley.

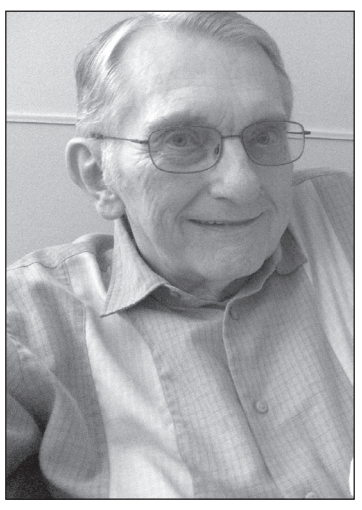
Lois was a dedicated mother and factory worker for Fortsman for 10 years and the Currys for many, many years and a caregiver for many citizens of Dublin and Wrightsville. Lois loved being outside in the yard, loved to travel and also loved tending to her flowers making sure they were kept watered and she adored her Garden Club members until she wasn't able to do the things she loved.

Lois was preceded in death by her husband, Sammie Lee Daniel; brother, Fred Whipple; mother, Thelma Coney; and father, Carl Whipple.

She leaves to cherish her memories: her son, Eric Kortez Daniel; daughters, Betty Jo King and Regina Benjamin; grandchild, Alaska Daniel; sisters, Doris Miller of Miami, Florida, and Pat Judon of Dublin; sisters-in-law, Ruthie Williams of Atlanta, Shirley Hayes Polite of East Dublin and Nona Staten of Florida; brother-in-law, James Daniel of Dublin; caregiver, Jacqueline Kinsey of Dublin; Remarkable Hospice staff, Angel Care Home Care staff; and Fairview Park Hospital staff.

Please post your condolences online at ServicesbyDudley.com

Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin



James Dillon Logue

James Dillon Logue, born on July 13, 1939, in Dublin, Georgia, passed away on Oct. 10, 2026, in Eatonton, Georgia, leaving behind a life marked by hard work, devotion to family, and a quiet strength that touched all who knew him.

Dillon was the beloved husband of Alice Poole Logue and a devoted father, stepfather, grandfather, brother and friend. He was preceded in death by his parents, Leron and Avis Logue; his sons, Steve Logue and Cail Logue; and Jane Logue, the mother of his children. He is survived by his daughter, Debbie Caldwell, and her husband, Johnny; his stepson, Trey Lowery; his stepdaughter, Amanda Spires; his grandchildren, Jon Eric Richardson, Kristin Little and her husband, Aaron, and Lindsey Richardson; and three great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, L.T. Logue and his wife, Scharlene; his sister, Wonnie Oliver and her husband, Tony; and several nieces and nephews who will cherish his memory.

Dillon spent many years serving his country and community through his work and service. He retired from Warner Robins Air Force Base as an Environmental Specialist, where he was respected for his dedication, reliability, and strong work ethic. In addition to his civilian career, he served in the Army Reserve, reflecting his commitment to duty and service. Those who knew Dillon admired the steady example he set through his actions and the pride he took in doing every job well.

A man of Christian faith, Dillon lived his life with humility and grace. His faith was an important part of who he was and guided him through the joys and challenges of life. He was known as a great woodworker, someone who could create with his hands and take pride in craftsmanship. He also enjoyed the lake life and fishing, finding peace and happiness in the simple pleasures of time spent outdoors.

Services will be held at noon, on Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026 in the Mary Whitaker Townsend Memorial Chapel with Rev. L.T. Logue and Rev. Aaron Graham officiating. Visitation will be held an hour before the service. Burial will follow at Dublin Memorial Gardens.

Pallbearers will be Dalton Oliver, Aidan Oliver, Austin Graham, Philip Graham, Joshua Thomas and Aaron Little.

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

Ronald Williams

Mr. Ronald Williams of Dublin, Georgia, passed away on Monday, Oct. 12, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

Go to www.ServicesByDudley.com for updates.

Inez Kinsey

Mr. Inez Kinsey of Dublin, Georgia, passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2026. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time.

Go to www.ServicesByDudley.com for updates.

NEWS DIGEST...

Dublin City Council will hold its pre-council meeting at 11 a.m. in the International Room before holding its regular meeting at noon in the Henry "Bud" Hicks Jr. Memorial Chamber on Oct. 15. The agenda follows:

- Approval of Oct. 1 city council meeting minutes
- Approval of bills over $15,000
- Approval of purchases over $15,000
- Discussion and action on resolution #26-63 to establish city council meeting times
- Discussion and action on resolution #26-64 to authorize the 2027 employee health insurance benefits package
- Discussion and action on resolution #26-65 to approve the GMP with Dublin Construction Company and an addendum with Thomas and Hutton for the Springdale Park Project
- Discussion and action on resolution #26-66 to approve the levy and collection of the city of Dublin School District 2026 final tax millage
- 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 Historic Review Board will meet on Oct. 20 at 5:15 p.m. in the Henry "Bud" Hicks Jr. Memorial Chamber located in the Dublin City Hall.

Bottoms attacks Jackson over abortion at solo debate

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms attacked her Republican opponent, Rick Jackson, on data centers, fuel costs and abortion when he skipped what would have been their final debate Monday night.

Bottoms used Jackson's absence from the Atlanta Press Club event to claim her opponent believed that women who are victims of rape should have to prove it before they can qualify for an exemption from Georgia's ban on abortion after fetal cardiac activity is detected, typically six weeks into pregnancy.

Bottoms used the portion of the debate when candidates are allowed to ask each other questions to say, "If he were here, I would ask, how do you prove that you have been raped in order to get an abortion?"

Bottoms alleged that the wealthy entrepreneur was flying on his private jet "rather than having to answer to the people of Georgia about this irresponsible position."

Bottoms apparently was referring to a June news report about an audio recording of Jackson at a campaign stop.

An attendee reportedly asked Jackson, who supports Georgia's anti-abortion law, about the law's exception for rape, according to a report about the recording by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Jackson reportedly responded, "You've still got life."

Jackson had indicated weeks ago that he would not participate in this latest installment of the long-running debate series, which was intended to give Georgia Public Broadcasting viewers a chance to watch nearly every statewide candidate think on their feet.

The only other candidate to decline an invitation was Fitz Johnson, the Republican running to unseat Democrat Peter Hubbard from the Public Service Commission.

Bottoms pledged to look for willing Republicans to help Democrats overturn Georgia's six-week abortion ban, though she said she hoped that "whole ballot energy" would result in her party taking control of the General Assembly.

Bottoms also attacked Jackson over his investments in the data center and oil refinery sectors.

BIRTHDAYS

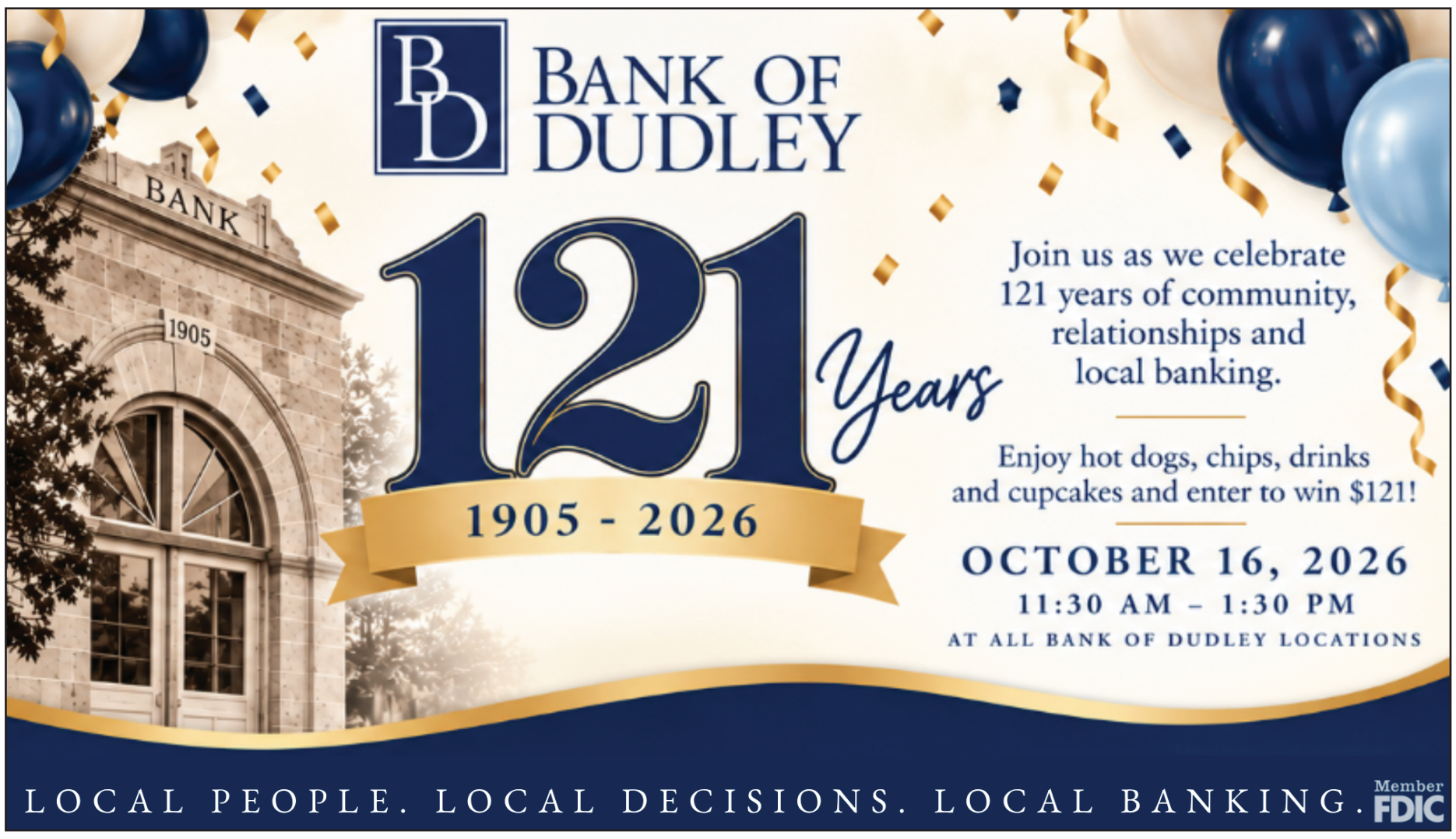
Oct. 15
Kyawn Jackson
Rodney Rozier
Maxwell Wallace

Oct. 16
Pat Dominy
Tiya L. Edwards
Dina Hester
James Smith
Sara Twiss

ANNIVERSARIES

Oct. 15
Ben & Pat Dominy
Paul & Haley Mitchell





The et cetera Chronicles - vol. 142



By SCOTT B. THOMPSON SR.

WHY ME, LORD? - Helen Twitty must have kept asking herself, "Why me, Lord?" Her brothers, Peter and Russell, absolutely hated her fiancé; her father had just died, and her mother was near death. Rebecca met and almost instantly fell in love with Edward Keen, a local merchant, who was described as "a young man of integrity, enjoying the confidence of many of friends," by the editors of the Dublin Times.

The Times in the sugar-coated wedding announcement wrote, "He is full of energy and determination and knows no such word as fail." The notice went on to proclaim that "no marriage has ever excited more interest nor given more genuine satisfaction." The editors went on to assert that the "greatly admired, exceedingly handsome, vivacious, and friendly bride's choice of a local groom would please everyone in the county. Peter, who went to become a lawyer, would object to that statement.

The quickly arranged wedding was scheduled to take place in the old parsonage of First Methodist Church, located on the northwestern corner of North Franklin Street and East Mary Street. Helen's father, the Rev. Peter S. Twitty, had died just a couple of years before while serving the First Methodist Church. The service was to take place inside the home, but owing to the grave illness of the bride's mother, Mrs. Rebecca Twitty, the simple wedding was moved outside in the front yard.

In an instant, the nuptials took a real, ironic and sad turn. It was a calm Thursday morning on Dec. 3, 1903. The Rev. J.M. Lovett eagerly awaited performing the marriage of his close colleague's daughter. Mr. Keen, a bookkeeper for the grocery, Baum and Dreyer, could not hold on to his anticipation.

The couple took their places in a fully equipped buggy. As the ceremony began, the bride's brothers, with their pistols drawn, threatened to shoot Keen, who retorted that he would marry their sister even if they killed him for it. Keen sent word for help from the police. Not one, not two, but four officers showed up. The Twitty brothers submitted to the superior force and stood by as the ceremony was completed. As soon as the vows were said and the pronouncement of marriage was made, Keen cracked the whip, and his horse sped toward the railroad with all haste.

Peter Twitty Jr., went on to become a favorite in Dublin, serving as mayor in the World War I era. After he left Dublin, he went to work for the United States Navy and wrote a massive 500-page book on real estate owned by the Federal government.

A week later, Twitty's mother died of pneumonia. Life was not happy for Helen and Edward. The couple moved to Florida, where they spent seven years. The couple had two sons. After nearly 60 years of widowhood, Helen Twitty Keen died in 1969. Atlanta Const. Dec. 2, 1903, New Orleans Times Democrat, Dec. 5, 1903.

HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL ENGINEER - Thomas Alexander Ross traveled the world. During his lifetime, he lived on three of the four major continents. When the end of his life was near, he chose, of all places in the world, to live in the tiny community of Montrose, Georgia. Ross was born in Scotland in the latter 1860s to George N. Ross and Agness Dempster Calhoun Ross. He moved to Capetown, South Africa, where he obtained his primary education. At the age of 20, Ross obtained his civil engineering degree from the Agricultural and Mechanical College, now known as Auburn University, in 1889. Almost immediately, Ross joined Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Royal Engineers. As a civil engineer and British officer, Captain Ross oversaw the construction of military and governmental infrastructure in British colonies and nations in Africa, China and Japan. In the early 1930s, Ross moved to Montrose, where he died on April 3, 1945. He is buried in Riverside Cemetery in Macon. Macon Telegraph, April 5, 1945.

FDR IS OUR MAN - Supporters of Wendell Wilkie for president in 1940 in Dublin were extremely disappointed. In what was hoped that a rally for Wilkie would draw a big crowd, but it was an extreme embarrassment. The leader of the rally, a reporter and one man who stepped in just to see what was going on. Mountain Home, Talladega, Ala. Oct. 2, 1940.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Who really said it?

By JACK BAGLEY
GTLN

Okay, that's enough celebrating for now.

We've got my birthday out of the way, and we have the column's birthday out of the way. Halloween is coming up, but I'm still too exhausted from the previous celebrations to deal with it just yet.

So let's get into this week's trivia - and it's going to be a somewhat different kind of trivia. This week, we're looking at famous quotes attributed to famous people who actually didn't say them.

Get ready to have your mind dazzled, folks.

Did you know ...

... who said "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer"? The quote is attributed to the ancient Chinese scholar Sun Tzu (544 BC-496 BC). Known for his work *The Art of War*, which is still studied by military forces today, Sun Tzu said a lot of noteworthy things - but this isn't one of them. In fact, the quote comes from the 1974 movie *The Godfather Part II*, and was spoken by the character of Michael Corleone, played by actor Al Pacino (born 1940). (It's good advice, regardless of the source.)

... who said "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result"? This popular one is said to have been uttered by physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955), but there is no definitive proof he ever said it or wrote it. In fact, nobody is sure where the comment comes from. (But it's right.)

... who said "Well-behaved women rarely make history"? Many people think that line came from actress Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962), and it would have been most appropriate if indeed it had. But it didn't. The line was actually uttered in 1976 by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (born 1938), a historian. Her work specialized in early America and the history of women, so she should know. (And how.)

... who said "If you can dream it, you can do it"? This line is said to have been the mantra of Walt Disney (1901-1966). However, there's no actual record of Disney himself saying it. The quote comes from the Disney organization, but it was crafted long after Walt's death. (Maybe the mouse said it.)

... who said "I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it"? You might think it was the French writer Voltaire (born François-Marie Arouet, 1694-1778), or possibly Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). You'd be wrong in either case. The line was actually written in 1906 by Evelyn Beatrice Hall (1868-1956), a British writer and biographer of Voltaire. She wrote it while summarizing his attitude toward free speech. (I many not agree with who said it, but will ... uh ... never mind.)

... who said "We are not amused"? This classic is attributed to Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom (1819-1901). The pure ice of the line is enough to freeze the worst attempt at humor in its tracks ... but Her Majesty herself denied ever saying it, and no written record of the words exist. Nobody knows where the line actually came from, but it probably was derived from her almost humorless image. (We are not ... whatever.)

... who said "The death of one man is a tragedy; the death of millions is a statistic"? This rather dark thought is said to have come from Soviet leader Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) but, again, nowhere in his speeches or writings does Uncle Joe ever say it. People who study such things say the words more likely stem from mid-20th Century German writers and satirists. (Truth comes from many angles.)

... who said "You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore"? Well, I can tell you who didn't say it, though it is attributed to him - Christopher Columbus (1451-1506). The words appear nowhere in his writings. They do appear, however, in the writings of the man who actually said them, André Gide (1869-1951) a French author. (I don't cross oceans. I can't swim.)

... who said "Good artists copy; great artists steal"? If you've been following the theme of the column, you know it wasn't Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), the famous Spanish painter and sculptor who is said to have said it. The idea of the quote comes from numerous artists throughout time, but exactly who codified it in those words is not known. (Great writers do the same thing. Good thing I'm not a great writer.)

... who said "History is written by the victors"? Most people who are familiar with the line think it came from Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965), Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during most of World War II. But the saying is much older than Churchill, reaching back into the 19th Century. While he may not have said it, he certainly lived it. (With great aplomb, I might add.)

... who said "A penny saved is a penny earned"? That sounds like pure Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), doesn't it? And in a way, it was. He used similar wording in his Poor Richard's Almanac, but it was more along the lines of if you save a penny, you have two. The quote evolved through time to the way we hear it today, but Franklin never put it in those words. (Got a penny? Neither do I - they don't mint them any more.)

... who said "The end justifies the means"? Most think it comes from Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), a Florentine diplomat, author and philosopher. Nope. The thought may have been based on Machiavelli's works, but he never wrote that actual line. It developed over time as people read his works and became something he should have said.

Now ... you know!















No debate on who is the best candidate in upcoming election



By DICK YARBROUGH

I hope you saw the debates on Gray Media this past week between gubernatorial candidates Republican businessman Rick Jackson and the Democratic nominee, former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. I don't think either one helped or hurt their campaign. Pretty much boilerplate stuff, except when Jackson talked about going to the "gas store." That caused a wince or two. I can see why he isn't going to do any more debates. He's not good at it. Bottoms came across much more polished but then you have to remember she was an in-over-her-head, one-term mayor. She's the best Democrats could come up with?

The senatorial debates were a little more spirited. Incumbent Democrat Jon Ossoff called Republican Cong. Mike Collins a bigot with "ties to white nationalists." Collins said Ossoff was an extremist who voted for men in girls sports," and "a trust fund kid who's never had a job in his life."

Ossoff, who is Jewish, didn't back away from his stance opposing U.S. weapons sales to Israel, saying Israeli forces violated international humanitarian law in the war in Gaza. "I also care about innocent Palestinian life and make no apology for my votes," he said.

At a time when many Republican candidates are treating Donald Trump like the weird uncle who talks too loud and belches too much at family reunions, Mike Collins made no bones about his support for the president, from the war with Iran to his tariff decisions. He is all-in on Trump.

The man behind making the debates possible and then serving as moderator was WANF news anchor Rick Folbaum. He did an outstanding job of keeping things on track, even stopping candidates politely but firmly when they tried to go over their allotted time.

Chris Wallace, with whom Folbaum had worked at Fox News, told him if the headlines the next day were about the moderator, then you had done something wrong. They were not, but his performance is worthy of mention here.

Of course, I can't help but feel some bitter irony here. I could have been on that stage with Jackson and Bottoms or Ossoff and Collins had I started my campaign as a write-in candidate earlier. I had been thinking about running for governor, but no doubt I would make a good senator, too. It really doesn't matter to me. A job is a job.

This is not to say I won't be a formidable candidate come Nov. 3. The groundswell of support has been humbling. From the time I broached the subject of running as a write-in candidate until today, confirmed commitments of support among Georgia voters has soared from 3 to 41. That, my friends, is a 1,226.67 percent increase. That's the good news. The not-so-good news is that to get the additional 2,111,467 votes I would need in order to be elected would require a 5,148,680.49 percent increase. That could be a problem.

Since, due to factors beyond my control, I was unable to speak directly to those 2,111,467 of you who are undecided, let me share with you why I think I am the best candidate for governor/senator (pick one) this November.

First, if elected I will (inhale) Lower taxes. Reduce crime. Shrink the size of the government. Create jobs. Stand up to powerful special interest groups. Fight bureaucracy. Secure our borders. Take care of our veterans. Improve education and fix Medicare. (exhale.)

Second, I don't have an embarrassing idiot son-in-law who is a misogynistic racist to deal with. Actually, my son-in-law is pretty smart. After all, he married my daughter. That was pretty smart.

Third, I was never mayor of Atlanta. Had I been, I would not have bailed on the city in its time of need and gone to Washington and gotten a made-up nothing job in the Biden Administration.

Fourth, I promise that if I am running low on fuel, I won't roll down the window and ask where the nearest gas store is.

Finally, if any politician or bureaucrat so much as thinks about drilling in our Okefenokee for titanium dioxide so that the world never runs out of toothpaste whitener, I will slather them in barbecue sauce and toss them in the middle of the swamp at supper time. That's sure to get the alligator vote.

I'm not sure what else the 2,111,467 of you out there need to know. It is obvious that I would make a great governor/senator (pick one.). Of that, there is no debate.

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

A long look at our short term thinking



GEORGIA POLITICS

By CHARLIE HARPER

Secretary of State Marco Rubio was in Greece last week. He took a long look around. He looked backward. He looked forward. He looked around at our European Partners. He simultaneously took a long look at us. The speech was designed to make us look inward.

The remarks were wordsmithed to the finest detail. The optics set the Acropolis squarely in focus in the background to punctuate the historical line drawn straight to the present. Choices for direction and ultimately our future were placed in the balance.

One could question the timing of both this speech and dedicating to it a column that is mostly focused on State of Georgia politics just weeks before pivotal midterm elections. Some will note it was Rubio's soft launch of a campaign for 2028. It may be, but that is another topic for another time.

We do have choices to make over the next few weeks. The choices do matter. Elections have consequences. The Acropolis was constructed about 2,500 years ago. The roots of modern democracy and our western world was planted and cultivated there. They've matured and endured throughout two and a half millennia bringing us to today.

We, relatively short sighted people, are too often stuck in the present. We take our history and the sacrifices made to get us here for granted, not unlike third generation trust fund kids separated from the hard work, motivations, and necessity that fueled the initial wealth creation.

We have also largely separated ourselves from future consequences of poor present choices. A broad social safety net, bailouts, victimhood, or a lack of personal accountability or shame are all acceptable off ramps from personal or financial failure. We're living in a time of unimaginable personal wealth and standards of living to even our forefathers a century ago, much less to those of the ancient Greeks. Too many look around at all we have, what have available to us individually and collectively, and only see the problems. They neither see the history nor work it took to get here, nor the systems that have withstood for centuries that have allowed us to stay here – at least, for now.

Our politics have grown short sighted and narrowly focused on ourselves. We want what we have and more. We don't wish to sacrifice to keep it.

America has endured various wars in the last quarter century that most of the country at least tacitly agreed were important. We fought them with all volunteer armed forces. The The general public hasn't been asked to sacrifice anything. As a result, we've grown more and more distant from our military and the consequences of military action, as well as allowing festering inaction around America's major active adversary of the last half century. We're now flailing about with mixed messages to both our allies and enemies as to what our goals are in Iran and the middle east, as well as Russia and Ukraine.

China, for now, has chosen to be eerily silent on Taiwan. The saying "data is the new oil" was meant for Wall Street, as it was primarily used to fuel appetites to finance the tech boom. Taiwan produces about 90% of the world's advanced semiconductors, which are now part of our everyday life and also critical to our defense apparatus. Those who wanted us to keep out of the middle east over oil should be taking a long and critical look at our current reliance on Taiwan.

These are not easy topics. They have weight because the implications and consequences are heavy.

But the speech given by Secretary of State Rubio wasn't one of despair urging us to manage malaise with a stiff upper lip, nor was it one of gleeful platitudes that tell us to cheer up and ignore the pressing challenges we currently face. It was, instead, an appeal to return to greatness.

In noting that "decline is a choice", he instead urged us to choose greatness.

"Too often, these days, we build downwards. We design our standards to ensure that no one will lose. We preoccupy ourselves more with the comfort of the worst than the potential of the best. We hold the most exceptional things among us hostage to the average."

Part of the problem with a never ending campaign cycle is that it is difficult to step back and see the big picture. We have instant online reactions to every event. We have deep partisans and foreign influence operations reacting immediately to any headline of consequence to divide or distract us.

For some, there is big money in being a divisive influencer. For others, there is a long game in destabilizing the world's most successful experiment in freedom to date.

Secretary Rubio gave us the big picture, visually and rhetorically. We – Americans, Europeans, The West, and all who yearn to live freely – have more in common to unite us than what divides us.

We need to take a long look around over the next few weeks before casting our ballots.

We must not take what we have for granted. We must instead look for those who will work together to build upwards.

We owe it to 2,500 years of those who built the foundation from which we stand. More importantly, we owe it to the generations who will inherit this from us when it is our time to pass the torch.

TELL IT!



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

I've noticed a lot of trash containers are being left in the road not put back in drives or yards. This is not good.

Thanks to the hard work by the sign bandit for understanding the value of road signage in the delivery of effective public safety services. Everyone join in and be vigilant for this cause please.

Imagine Dublin and Laurens County negotiating one contract for fuel, insurance, equipment and supplies. Consolidation could give taxpayers greater purchasing power.

Could Dublin's management structure serve as the foundation for one countywide government? Taxpayers deserve a comparison of costs, services and accountability. It's a must!

Potholes, signs and road maintenance don't stop at the city limits. Unified infrastructure planning could help Dublin–Laurens prioritize projects across the entire county. Consolidation is a must!

Could you take that $120 million and solve some of those DCS problems? Or the county problems? Or give it to the robbed taxpayers? Guess not.

Superintendent O.J. Hall, really? Practicing and having games on Wednesdays? And practicing on Sunday for football and band for the middle school? Sunday and Wednesdays are the two main days Christians go to church. I just want to know what is next?

Do you know who some of the best musicians in the world are? Guitar playing long dogs and harmonica playing jailbirds.

Thanks so much to The Courier-Herald for running the ad to adopt Chase, a homeless dog being cared for by the Humane Society! I hope The Courier Herald does this more often. Let's all support the Humane Society. Adopt, don't shop!

For all the people that are bragging about the City of Dublin millage rate, they are hiding their increases in water, sewer and gas! They have a monopoly on it and you are getting raked over the coals!

The Dublin City Council should not go along with the city school not having to pay them for getting the taxes that they have requested from the system. The Dublin City Schools is throwing money away still.

I love the skeleton and ghost goat in the yard on Country Club Road! You can tell that someone loves people.

Glad local government consolidation was discussed during the state representative debate. Whichever one supports the city taking over Laurens County gets my vote.

There was a deputy sitting where the grain cart was. I wonder if he was guarding the area to make sure it didn't show back up. The power of Tell It.

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.

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name."

- 1 Peter 4:16 (New International Version)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"If you want to be happy, be."

- Leo Tolstoy

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

Oct. 15, 2026 is...

- International Sloth Day
- National Get Smart About Credit Day
- World Students' Day
- National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day
- National Mushroom Day
- National Grouch Day
- I Love Lucy Day
- National Roast Pheasant Day
- National Chicken Cacciatore Day
- International Day of Rural Women

The Courier Herald

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

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL OUTLOOK

Bleckley-Dodge rivalry, battleground region games among area's biggest matchups in busy week 9

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

The Heart of Georgia's 2026 football season turns onto the home stretch, as region races all over the area begin to heat up, on a first of four Fridays left – three, if you're in the GIAA – before playoff time.

Hump games up and down the schedule will include a marquee matchup of longtime rivals, separation opportunities for various teams hoping to climb from the middle of the pack and three more tests for Laurens County GHSA squads who are headed back on the road.

No. 5 Dublin (5-1, 2-0 region 2-AA) has taken the best shot of two challengers so far. The Irish will have another in store from a hungry ACE Charter team (5-2, 1-2 region) eager to turn its region fortunes around after back-to-back losses, and also likely to bring the kitchen sink.

A recent trend of short games should continue for West Laurens (3-4, 2-1 region 3-AAAA) as it starts a two-game road trip at Long Co. (1-5, 0-2 region), and faces another smashmouth offense sharing its dedication to consuming clock and controlling field position. The Raiders will once again have to make the most of a precious few opportunities to come out on top.

East Laurens (2-5, 1-2 region 2-AA) needs to regroup from last week's thumping by Dodge, and get its offense and defense locked back in quickly, if it hopes to make the best of a visit to Vidalia (2-4, 0-2 region) that will likely be the best remaining chance at a third win indispensable to its dwindling playoff hopes.

Trinity (2-5, 0-2 district), likewise, will be in a must-win mode as it hosts the county's only home game, in need of a resurgence from its defense to slow down the run-heavy attack of Flint River Academy (3-3, 0-2 district).

Region 2-AA's weekly title fight will have neighboring rivals Bleckley County (6-1, 2-1 region 2-AA) and Dodge County (4-2, 2-0 region) going head-to-head for a 51st time, and though the No. 6 Royals have the better record and standing, the Indians (a 34-16 leader in the all-time series) have come on strong in three consecutive wins since late September and found a way to pull out both the teams' last two barnburning battles by a combined five points. A third-straight would throw some serious wrinkles into the region race.

It'll be important games for plenty more area playoff contenders looking to take a step closer to earning a playoff spot. Those include Brentwood (5-3, 2-1 district), which tries to bounce back against a second-straight unbeaten opponent at Briarwood (8-0, 3-0 district), Montgomery County (4-2 overall) in a massive test at Portal (6-1, 1-0 region 3-A), Washington County (3-4, 2-1 region 4-AAA) at home against Thomson (2-4, 1-1), a Wilkinson County team (3-4, 2-1 region 5-A) hoping to beat Glascock Co. (3-4, 2-1 region) to the next rung on the 5-A ladder.

Treutlen (5-2, 1-2 region 4-A) needs one badly as it welcomes Dooly County (2-4, 1-1 region 4-A) to Bobby Driggers Stadium, Wheeler County (2-4, 1-1 region 4-A) tries to avoid tripping up at Turner Co. (1-6, 1-2 region) and Twiggs County (1-6, 0-3 region) tries to reverse a five-game slide against Jenkins County (2-4, 2-0 region).

WEEK 8: HOW THE REST OF THE AREA FARED

Bleckley, Wheeler, Wilco rack up region wins; WACO falls in one of Thursday night's thillers

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

Bleckley Co. 45, ACE Charter 15

Brody Fleming fired three touchdown passes, one to Jason McNulty in the first half and two others to Kelvin Sneed in the third quarter, and rushed for a fourth to lead the Royals to their second-straight win of region play. Zyion Love and Raylan Devane also scored rushing touchdowns, and Dylan Lamb added an early field goal. The Royals used three fourth-down stops, including one at the goal line in the last minute of the second quarter, to maintain their shutout until ACE's back-to-back scores on throws by Ace Hatcher in the third and fourth. The win, a 75th in nine seasons for Bleckley head coach Von Lassiter, pushed him past Jimmy Kilpatrick as the school's winningest all-time.

Wheeler Co. 28, Treutlen 16

The Vikings spotted Wheeler County an early touchdown after an issue fielding the opening kickoff, and the Bulldogs cashed in with a pass from Kavion Williams to Joseph Moore. They'd go on to take full advantage of three other scoring chances, as Tyrese Parker ran for scores in the second, third and fourth quarters. Treutlen, presented the same number, was only able to score on two as Peanut Tobler (15 carries for 106 yards) finished off drives with runs and two-point conversions for a 16-14 halftime lead. A surefire chance to go back up failed on a fourth down at the Wheeler 5 with four minutes left, before Parker's third touchdown provided a parting shot in the last minute.



Wheeler County receiver Ethan Hall lays out to attempt a catch in the Bulldogs' win over Treutlen Thursday night in Alamo/LOGAN REYNOLDS, GTLN

Wilkinson Co. 14, GMC 12

A touchdown and two-point conversion amid a penalty-plagued portion of the second half delivered the Warriors their third win, and a key second in league action to grab a share of third place with Glascock County, which they'll host this week. Multiple plays in the third-quarter sequence got called back, but Quenterrion Stanford was able to find Mahki Johnson on a corner route for Wilco's go-ahead touchdown, then Tyler Hogan from a similar distance away for the conversion that had them in front after GMC returned the ensuing kickoff (which was also backed up by a 15-yard penalty) for a touchdown. The Bulldogs' effort at a game-tying conversion was stuffed by a yard and a half, and they wouldn't make it further than the Wilco 35 on any remaining possession. Evan Stasney rushed for 179 yards and GMC's first-half touchdown to answer the Warriors', via a six-yard pass from Stanford to Daverie Walker on the opening drive. The Wilco defense held GMC on multiple opportunities, including once in the red zone just before halftime.

Hephzibah 42, Washington Co. 35

The teams went tit-for-tat in regulation, with the Rebels holding a 7-6 lead after a quarter, WACO recouping the point to tie at 14 going to the half and the teams trading 14 each in the third and seven each in the fourth. Hephzibah struck first in its portion of overtime, as Reante Byrd and quarterback Trust Mack went in together on a mesh play for a short touchdown. WACO reached first and goal from the Rebels' 5 on its possession, but ran into some trouble on losses of six, then 10 more, courtesy of tackles for loss by Jayden Hester and Roosevelt Habersham. A 15-yard pass completion to the 7 got them a manageable shot on fourth down, but the pass on a sprint-out play fell incomplete to place Hephzibah by itself, above the once-beaten Hawks, Westside, Thomson and Burke County, as the unlikely leader of region 4-AAA. Mack threw for 137 yards and a pair of touchdowns to Christopher Kohn and Byrd, who had 87 yards on 11 carries, and three other rushing touchdowns.

Hawkinsville 28, Wilcox Co. 0

The Red Devils solidified their standing in first place with a third region 4-A win in this strong Thursday-night showing in Rochelle. Ethan Coffey was 5-of-6 for 89 yards and a touchdown to Johnathan Solomon. Martin McDonald ran for two of the three remaining scores, on 10 carries for 192. Samir Whitehead had the other. William Robinson recorded 21 total tackles and three for loss, while Peyton Jackson, Kenyez Bryant and Kaleb Nelson intercepted passes to lead the Hawkinsville defense.

Jeff Davis 37, Bacon Co. 0

Mark Durden accounted for 154 of 315 total yards, and three of five touchdowns, for the second-ranked Jackets as they continued their unbeaten run going into this week's showdown at No. 3 Thomasville. The junior QB rushed for 114 and a score, and completed both his two passing attempts for 20-yard TDs to Jacob Laney and Braylon Varnadore. Kobe Hill also rushed for a touchdown, and had eight tackles and a sack on the other side of the ball. Jude Worthington and Jaiden King intercepted passes for a Jeff Davis defense that held Bacon County to only 110 total yards.

Northside 25, Tift Co. 24

The Eagles trailed 21-13 at the half, and then by two after Keirion Tate's second rushing touchdown of the night narrowed the Tift County lead but failed to tie on an unsuccessful conversion attempt. David Olguin knocked down a field goal to stretch the Blue Devils' lead to five, but Northside overtook them with just under two minutes to go as Tate – the Eagles' offensive leader on 25 carries for 145 and 12 (of 15) completions for another 142 – entered the end zone for a third time. Northside sealed the game with a turnover on downs. Tift County's Ty Roberts was 16-of-29 for 191 and two scores.

Northeast Macon 42, Central 0

Jordan Wiggins completed 25 of his 30 passes for 302 and three touchdowns, and rushed for a fourth to help get the Raiders to 6-1 overall. Scottavian Thomas had five receptions for 76 and two of the TDs. Ryan Brinson and Landen Jefferson also had scores on the ground. Cedric Jackson registered eight total tackles, and two for loss, to lead a Northeast defense that gave up only 83 total yards.

Peach Co. 54, Westside, Macon 14

The Trojans broke 50 points for a fourth time this season, as Ashton Barton (16 attempts for 157 and two scores) and Zion Ellison (10 carries for 149 and three) once again led its several-headed offensive attack. Westside's Jaiden Stephens completed 12 passes for 217 and a touchdown to counter, but the Seminoles had only 94 yards rushing.

Thomasville 24, Fitzgerald 21

The Bulldogs won it late on a memorable scoring drive, capped by a memorable trick play as Christian Hayes caught a 16-yard touchdown pass from his receiver Kensley Reddick

AREA
Continued on page 6

SCOREBOARD

SOFTBALL
Monday
East Laurens 13,
Social Circle 1
EL 13, Social Circle 3

PREP SCHEDULE

SOFTBALL
GHSA Playoffs, Round 1
Wednesday
Hardaway at West Laurens (doubleheader)/**3 p.m.**
Thursday
Hardaway at West Laurens (game 3, if necessary)/**TBD**

GHSA Playoffs, Round 2
Monday, Oct. 19
East Laurens at Berrien (doubleheader)/**TBD**

FOOTBALL
Friday
Dublin at ACE Charter
East Laurens at Vidalia
West Laurens at Long Co.
Flint River Academy at Trinity
Bleckley Co. at Dodge Co.
Brentwood at Briarwood
Dooly Co. at Treutlen
Jenkins Co. at Twiggs Co.
Montgomery Co. at Portal
Thomson at Washington Co.
Wilkinson Co. at Glascock Co.
Wheeler Co. at Turner Co.
/**7:30 p.m.**

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

Classifieds

Yard/Estate Sales

Garage Sale: Sat Oct 17 8am. 580 Coleman Lane Dublin

Albany Classifieds

MERCHANDISE

Miscellaneous for sale

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





THE PANEL...	RODNEY MANLEY	PAYTON TOWNS III	KYLE DOMINY	JEREMY PAYNE	JANICE BALLARD	RALPH JACKSON	DON CARSWELL	FORREST KILGO
Last week/**OVERALL**	9-3/**69-27**	7-5/**63-33**	7-5/**54-42**	8-4/**68-28**	7-5/**64-32**	7-5/**64-32**	6-6/**68-28**	9-3/**68-28**
THIS WEEK'S MATCHUPS...								
Dublin at ACE Charter	Dublin	Dublin	Dublin	Dublin	Dublin	Dublin	Dublin	Dublin
East Laurens at Vidalia	VIdalia	VIdalia	VIdalia	East Laurens	VIdalia	East Laurens	East Laurens	VIdalia
West Laurens at Long Co.	West Laurens	West Laurens	West Laurens	West Laurens	West Laurens	West Laurens	West Laurens	Long Co.
Flint River Academy at Trinity	Flint River	Flint River	Flint River	Flint River	Flint River	Flint River	Trinity	Flint River
Bleckley Co. at Dodge Co.	Bleckley Co.	Bleckley Co.	Dodge Co.	Bleckley Co.	Bleckley Co.	Dodge Co.	Bleckley Co.	Bleckley Co.
Brentwood at Briarwood	Briarwood	Briarwood	Briarwood	Brentwood	Briarwood	Brentwood	Briarwood	Brentwood
Montgomery Co. at Portal	Montgomery Co.	Portal	Portal	Portal	Portal	Portal	Portal	Montgomery Co.
Thomson at Washington Co.	WACO	Thomson	WACO	Thomson	WACO	Thomson	WACO	Thomson
Wilkinson Co. at Glascock Co.	Glascock Co.	Wilkinson Co.	Glascock Co.	Wilkinson Co.	Glascock Co.	Glascock Co.	Wilkinson Co.	Glascock Co.
Baldwin at Troup	Troup	Troup	Troup	Troup	Troup	Troup	Troup	Baldwin
Howard at Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons	Mary Persons
Jeff Davis at Thomasville	Thomasville	Jeff Davis	Thomasville	Thomasville	Thomasville	Thomasville	Thomasville	Thomasville

'The standard is the standard'...

Young Raiders maintain high bar, finish strong to enter state playoffs as No. 2 overall seed

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor



Ella Thompson speeds into second base ahead of the Johnson County throw after reaching on an error during last Tuesday's win/CLAY REYNOLDS



Peyton Crabb has found success pitching to contact for outs like this one against JoCo last Tuesday, when she had only one strikeout, but held the Trojans scoreless on just five hits/CLAY REYNOLDS

West Laurens softball never relaxes its standards.

But if the Raiders ever were to, it would have been completely understandable coming into this season, which they were set to begin with not only an especially young roster, but also a brand new pitching staff and multiple infield starters playing out of their native positions.

High expectations set by coaches, and players themselves, stood tall despite some early struggles for the developing team over an up-and-down month of August.

Instead of making excuses, West Laurens made progress.

And as the regular season played out, the Raiders measured up pretty well, in a strong finish that once again has them entering the state playoffs as one of AAAA's top seeds.

"I'm surprised a little bit," said West Laurens head coach Mike Thompson. "I really feel like our young kids have grown up a lot this season. Where we started, with so much youth and inexperience, and now where we're at to this point, it's just amazing. It's really a credit to them and how hard they've worked."

The Raiders, with last Thursday's 10-6 win to complete a season sweep of Houston County, wrapped up with a strong overall record of 21-7 and a 6-2 mark in the region, good to earn them the second overall seed in the state tournament, right behind No. 1 and 3-AAAA champion Long County.

West Laurens will open at home Wednesday with 31st-seed Hardaway.

The Raiders' 23rd-year head coach prides his program on refusing to lower a bar that past region- and state championship teams have positioned higher and higher every year. And he borrowed a line from long-time Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin in stressing that point during preseason practices and games that made clear this rebuilding squad would have to come a long way to reach it once again.

When Thompson took a moment to call attention to that remarkable progress during a team huddle at one point last week, his players weren't nearly as impressed, quickly echoing back the phrase he and assistant coaches had made a slogan from way back in the summertime.

"I said something to them about the season, and all, and one of the girls said, 'Coach, the standard is the standard. We expect to do this, we expect to win, we expect to be in Columbus, we expect to be there at the end, we expect to be a top five team,'" Thompson said. "They've really worked hard. They've put in the work, and it's really paid off and we've jelled and we seem like we're playing some of our best ball here at the end, which is great, where you need to.

"I've told them all season long, let's just keep getting better. Let's improve every week. Let's get better at what we're not doing great every week. And let's keep getting better and at the end of the season, we'll be alright. And that's what they've done."

Losses in four of the fall's first eight games proved there was a lot to figure out. But when region play began in September, West Laurens got on a winning streak, and didn't stop playing confident softball.

After reeling off eight in a row, before a heartbreaking loss to Long County interrupted the run, the Raiders would go on to win nine of their last 11, in the process beating several teams – Perry, Long and Telfair County – that they had lost to a first go-round.

They finished the regular season with five victories in a row.

"I haven't really looked at how many we've won straight," Thompson said. "I just keep telling them, the next game, this is the most important game. With the power rankings, regions really don't matter. Every game's a region game."

Unlike the past several seasons in a few top-heavy regions, there weren't many pushover games in or outside of the Raiders' 3-AAAA slate.

The only teams the entire fall the Raiders beat by double digits were Liberty County, Treutlen and Wilcox County.

"Our schedule, looking back from when I made it to now, I didn't know it was going to be as high quality," Thompson said. "I think our PSR, our power ranking score for opponent wins is the highest in all of AAAA, which says, we've seen quality competition. There's been no games where like, this is a win, we're going to get a win today, other than maybe one or two. Every game, it could go either way. We've played really good people. We've seen really good pitching."

By leaps and bounds...

It was clear from the beginning that this small, but talented roster had a lot of potential. Just how well the group tapped into that as it gained vital experience this fall was pretty staggering.

Chief among the pleasant surprises is this team's potent offense, which is averaging 8.4 runs and was held to three or less in a game by just four opponents. It was also a lineup that had zero dropoff in power.

"The school record for home runs is 30, and we hit 27 last year with those three big bats that we had in the middle of our order," Thompson said. "We hit 27 home runs this year with the girls that we have, and if you had told me at the beginning of the year we'd hit 27 home runs, I'd've told you you were a liar."

That trend has owed as much to the boppers – Demmie Moss, Madison Brown, Paisley Powell and Audrie Edenfield – as it does to others in the order who swing quality bats, but tend to hit more for average.

Ella Thompson, who's left the yard a few times and slugged up a storm as one of the team's top three in doubles, and Chandler Malone, who's had a knack for finding the gap and went 3-for-4 in the momentum-boosting win over Long County Sept. 29, are great examples from the top two spots in the order. Maggie Shea Lord and Allie Sahli have also continued to provide quality at-bats and baserunning.

The talented first-year players joining the squad off of multiple region championships in middle school were a little fresh-faced at the start, but likely grew the most between game 1 and 28.

"Our freshmen have really exceeded our expectations," Thompson said. "Kinsley Moore has been fabulous behind the plate. Paisley Powell has had an unbelievable season for a freshman, she's hit the cover off of it. Same thing with Audrie Edenfield. She pitched well when we needed her to, and played third. At the plate, she's been great."

West Laurens' biggest question marks at the start of the season were positioned around the infield, where three of four spots would belong to new starters, and the two in the middle were both players brand new to theirs.

There were plenty of inevitable defensive hiccups in the early going.

"It took us a few games to kind of iron some things out," Thompson said.

After several games, the Raiders opted to flip-flop Thompson, who had begun the season at her more familiar second base, and Lord, who had played second before, but was a total newbie on the left side of the infield. The switch-up proved to put both players in spots where they were more comfortable, and their improved consistency – both were part of two double plays versus Long County – has reflected that.

Another key puzzle piece was the emergence of Peyton Crabb as the true ace of a pitching staff that, early on, was rotating multiple young hurlers that had them juggling multiple defensive lineups as each played musical chairs between the circle, first and third.

The senior, since that early-September turning point, has "really settled in as the No. 1 and has really been lights out."

"She's really done everything we've asked her to do," Thompson said. "A lot of fastpitch pitchers try to throw four, five, six pitches. And we've been telling her since her freshman year, if you'll just throw three pitches, and throw those three good, you'll be able to get outs. Let's don't make it rocket science. Let's be able to throw one pitch inside, one pitch outside and be able to change speeds. And she's really bought into that and done a great job."

Her hold on the main spot has freed up Moss, Edenfield and Powell to focus their full attention on hitting and playing the field.

Offensively and defensively, the Raiders seem to have found a sweet spot that will make them a force to be reckoned with in the postseason.

"I feel like at this point, you're going to have to pitch really well to slow us down, because we've not been shut out, not one time, all year long," Thompson said. "We swung the bat really well. And we've played better defense, especially the last half of the season."

He feels good about this week's first-round matchup with Hardaway, which finished fifth in region 1-AAAA with a 13-17 overall record.

Presuming a win, the West Laurens would host either Adairsville or Mary Persons in a second-rounder that will amount to a test, one way or the other.

The Raiders are more familiar with the Bulldogs from seeing, and beating, them on a neutral field in Milledgeville back in mid-September.

"We know they've got a pretty solid team," Thompson said.

But the Tigers have a nearly identical record, and some quality pitching that will make them a tough out as well.

"I like our chances, the way we're playing, and like the girls said, the standard is the standard," Thompson said. "It's just what they expect and what we expect out of them. They're expected to play at a certain level, and we've told them that all year long, whether you're a freshman or a senior, you're expected to play and perform at a certain level, and they've bought into that."

AREA

Continued from page 5

on a throwback with a select few seconds to go on a running fourth quarter clock. Hayes had a touchdown passing and rushing to go along with the reception, completing 12-of-20 from QB for 120 (his passing TD was to Michael Watts) and rushing 12 times for 115. Fitzgerald's late lead resulted from carries by Darryon Devine and Abraham Phelps, who rushed 18 times for a team-leading 180 yards. The third was a 56-yard connection – the Canes' lone pass completion – between Caden Cowan and David Davis.

Perry 45, Jones Co. 20

The Panthers' offense continued its hot streak since scoring 57 on Locust Grove before their bye week, with Jhamard Cobb completing 6-of-9 for 160 yards, and a touchdown on one of two receptions by J.D. Arnette that accounted for all but 20 of them. Kam Oliver toted a big load on 32 carries for 173 and four TDs, while Bhryson Gordon also scored once on seven attempts for 45. Perry batted down eight passes, and Trystan Rhoades had two sacks, on the defensive side.

Thomas Co. Central 43, Houston Co. 3

The defending state champs rolled in their third-straight region game, headlined by a pristine 12-of-13 night for quarterback Aidan McPherson, who had 178 yards and two touchdowns passing, plus a pair more on 10 carries for 60. Kobe Carnage and Gary Pringle had interceptions. The Yellow Jackets held Houston County to a total in the neighborhood of only 175 yards.

Windsor 30, Gatewood 17

The Knights got one of their biggest wins yet as their strong season continued in The Swamp. Heath Woodard was picked off twice on a hard-luck night passing, but rushed 24 times for 180 yards and three touchdowns. Hunter McGreggor added a fourth on three carries for 58, and made 13 tackles, and two for loss. Windsor also forced two fumbles.

Other week 8 finals...

Lee Co. 49, Veterans 0
Telfair Co. 56,
Turner Co. 33
Aquinas 42, Jefferson Co. 19
Rutland 55, Southwest 32
Central Fellowship 7,
Tiftarea Academy 0
Edmund Burke 49,
Thomas Jefferson 6
JMA 49, Tattnall Square 7
Stratford 45,
Mount de Sales 0

You can help us find a home for "Chase".



Chase is a boy who loves his toys.

Chase has lived here at the Dublin/Laurens County Humane Society for more than a year.

We took in Chase from the married couple who adopted him years ago when he was a puppy. Unfortunately, the husband passed on and the wife had to go into a nursing home.

Chase is a Redbone Coonhound. This breed is known for its ability to track and tree raccoons. Because of their size and toughness, these hounds also can take on big game such as bears and cougars.

Chase is one of the heaviest and tallest dogs currently at the shelter. He weighs around 70 pounds. Despite his size, Chase acts like a puppy when it comes to his squeak toys and chew toys. He absolutely loves playing with his toys.

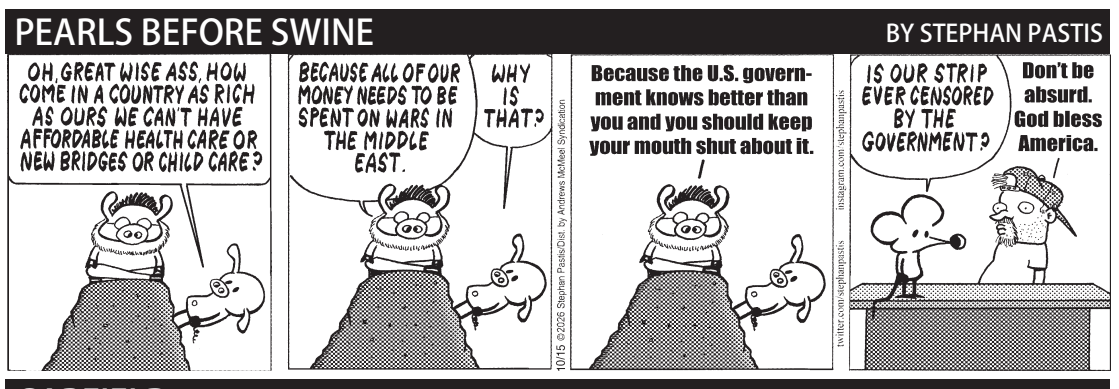
Chase would be an excellent guard dog for an animal herd or his owners' property, as long as he has frequent access to the indoors.

Chase would be happiest in a home with a family who appreciates his size and energy. Despite that energy, Chase sleeps like a baby at night.

You can come see Chase Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The shelter is located at 618 Firetower Road, just east of Hwy. #441 where it crosses I-16.

Help us find the home Chase so richly deserves. He is truly a sweet, loving, wonderful dog!

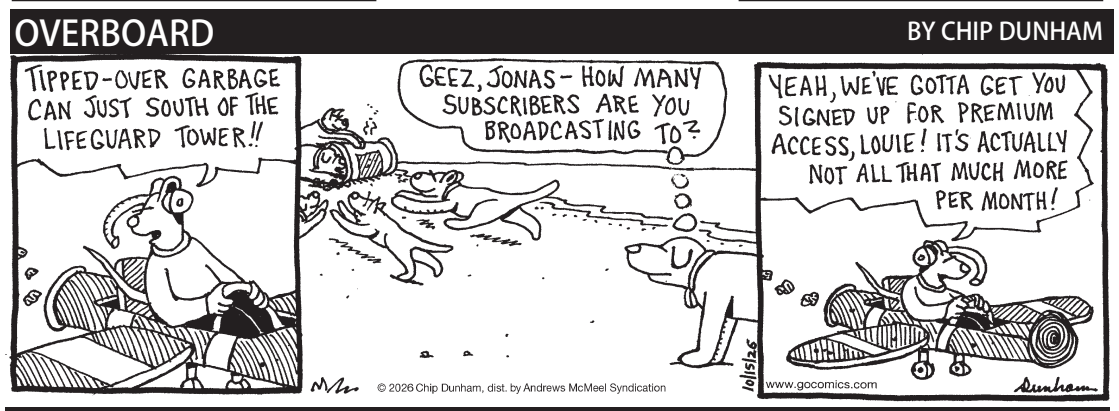
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE — BY STEPHAN PASTIS



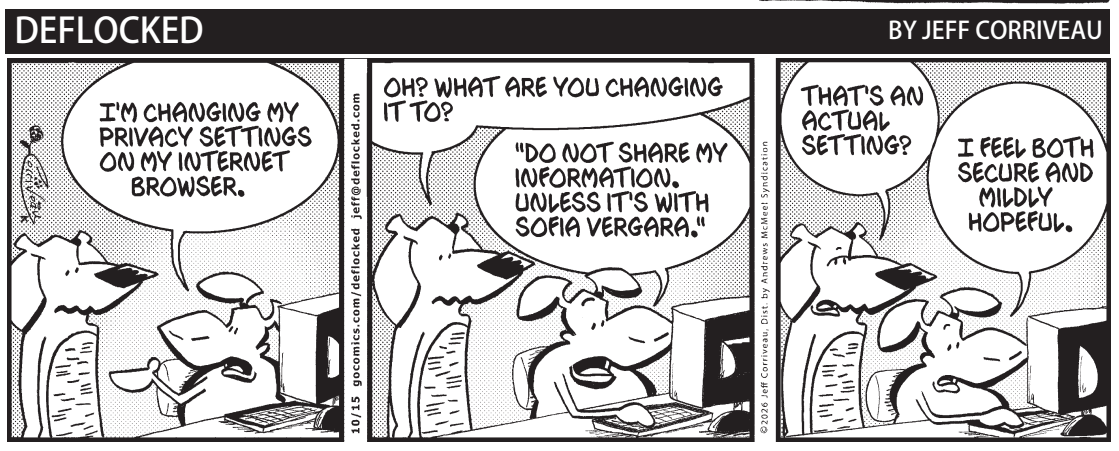
GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



OVERBOARD — BY CHIP DUNHAM



DEFLOCKED — BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



Father is appalled that his daughter leads on classmate



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I are the proud parents of a popular, beautiful, charming and usually well-meaning 16-year-old girl. However, some of her recent behavior is causing serious concern.

"Lindsey" is part of her class's "in" crowd. Still, she's engaging and friendly to everyone, which is a value my wife and I have worked to instill in her. One boy, "Henry," is sweet on her. In short, Henry is not exactly in her social circle. He's quiet, but he gets excellent grades and is considerate and respectful.

Lindsey has been giving Henry the impression that she is romantically interested even though she isn't. As a result, he's helped her with many school projects, among other favors. She often has him over to maintain the charade. I've gotten to know Henry, and I genuinely like him. He's a good kid, and I'm disgusted at Lindsey's behavior.

I tried to talk to Lindsey about it, and she said she's "just using what God gave her" to better her life. She seems to think that if Henry is happy being around her, she's not doing anything wrong. I feel I should talk to Henry about this, or at least his parents. What do you think? I love my daughter, but I don't want her taking advantage of (and possibly destroying) this young man's heart! -- DOUBTING DAD

DEAR DAD: Henry may be happy now, but you and Lindsey both know he'll be crushed when the truth comes out. This must end immediately. Inform Lindsey that if she doesn't come clean and sincerely apologize to Henry, there will be consequences. Be prepared to follow through in whatever way you would normally discipline a self-centered, misbehaving child.

****

DEAR ABBY: I've had a college friend for more than 45 years. We've had some issues over the years. Because I have a bit of a temper, she has said numerous times that I belong in a mental institution. We had another disagreement several months ago and have ceased all communication. She spoke to me in the tone of voice you would use to talk to a 2-year-old.

I'm now having some medical issues she and her husband are not aware of. We are not young anymore. My dilemma is this: If she or her husband passes, do I go to the funeral? I now use a walker, and if their church's chair lift is broken, I would be unable to attend the service anyway. I live quite a distance away. -- ESTRANGED FRIEND IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEAR FRIEND: Nowhere did you indicate that this friend is having health issues. In light of your long friendship, she should be made aware that you are unwell. Tell her you would not want your long friendship to end as things stand.

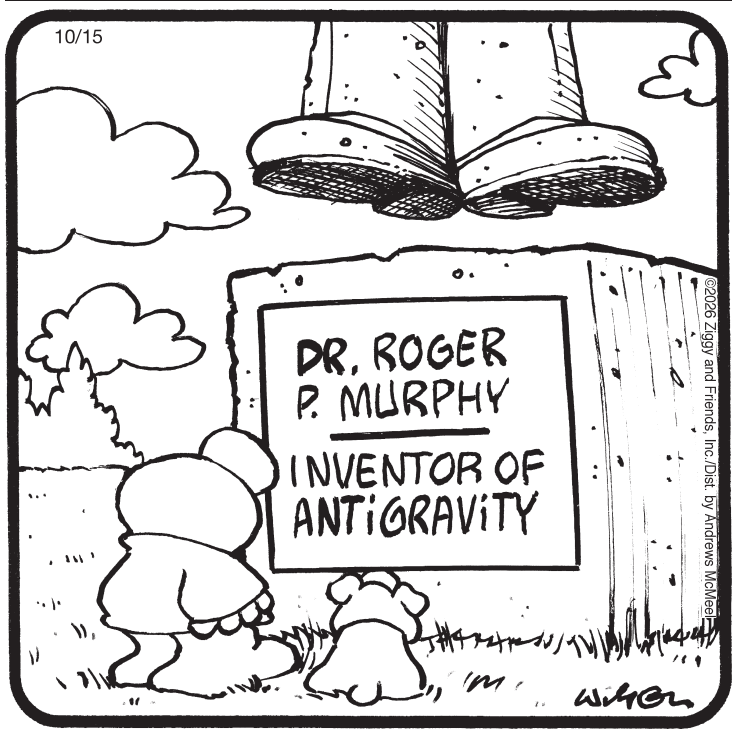
Funerals are intended as a support for the living. If you would like to attend when the inevitable does occur, contact the person who will conduct the service and ask if the funeral home or house of worship is ADA accessible. There's no need to stay home due to what might go wrong.

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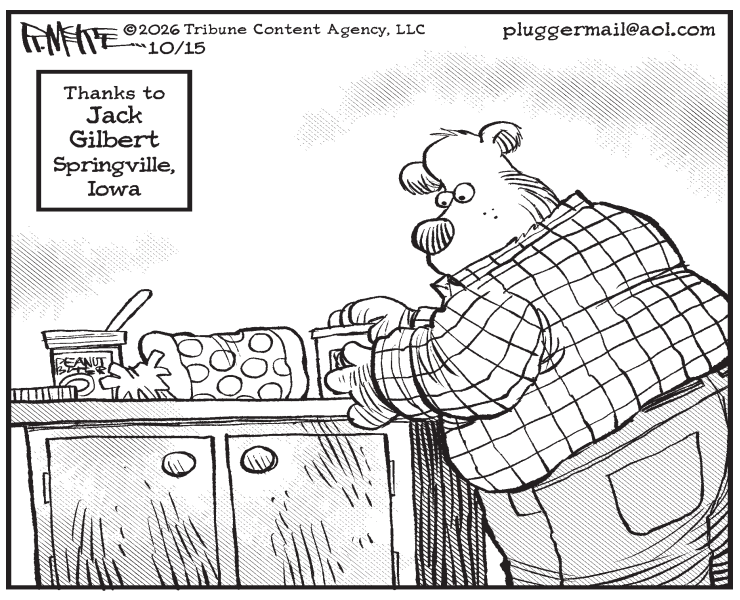
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren. For nearly four decades, Jeanne Phillips penned this column, which was founded in 1956 by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 270135, Kansas City, MO 64127. (EDITORS: If you have editorial questions, please contact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

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ZIGGY — BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS — BY JEFF MACNELLY



A plugger's idea of meal prep is making sure there's enough peanut butter and jelly for the week's sandwiches.

Thursday, October 15, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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VALUE JUDGMENT

East-West vulnerable, East deals

NORTH
♠ 7 6
♡ A 6
◇ 10 8 7 5 4
♣ J 9 6 4

WEST
♠ 5 4
♡ 8 7 4 3
◇ J 9 3
♣ K 8 7 2

EAST
♠ K 10 9
♡ K Q J 10 9
◇ K 6 2
♣ 5 3

SOUTH
♠ A Q J 8 3 2
♡ 5 2
◇ A Q
♣ A Q 10

The bidding:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
1♡	Dbl	2♡	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All pass	

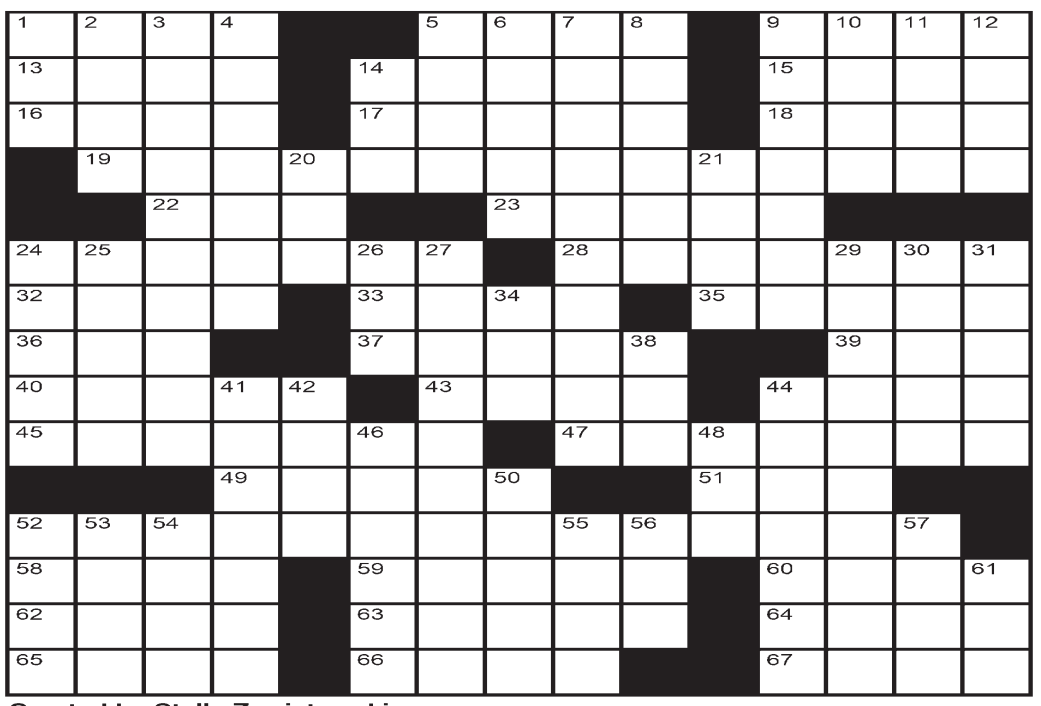
Opening lead: Seven of ♡

What do you think of North's bidding? South has shown a strong hand, but is the North hand worth a raise? We think it is. Two trumps, a doubleton, and an ace might be enough for game, and partner does not have to go on to four. A raise is fine. South won the opening heart lead with dummy's ace and led a spade to his queen, winning the trick. What next? There is no entry to dummy, so the best play is to lead the queen of clubs from hand. If an opponent takes the king, the jack will be an entry to dummy to repeat the spade finesse. But what if the queen of clubs holds the trick?

South should continue with the ace and another club. The opponents can win and cash a heart but will then have to lead something that helps you. They won't lead a heart or a spade, so the best they can do is lead a diamond from East, forcing you to take the diamond finesse. This might lose if East had the king of clubs but is sure to win if West held that card. A close game, but worth bidding. The chance for success is adequate. Nice raise!

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

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski



Created by Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS
1 Baby's bed
5 Behaves
9 Strong smell
13 Uninteresting person
14 Noisy laugh
15 Dwell
16 Categorize
17 Glass-roofed courtyards
18 __ Saint Laurent
19 Team that fights blazes: 2 wds.
22 Scottish cap
23 Handbag part
24 Postseason contest
28 Good health practices
32 Building sites
33 Israeli airline: 2 wds.
35 Hairstyling business
36 Magician Geller
37 Palm-tree fruits
39 NYC summer clock setting: Abbr.
40 High-IQ society
43 Puts (down)
44 Permanent mark
45 U.K. language
47 Grant a right (to)
49 Griddled corncake
51 Screw up
52 Cars, buses, and bikes
58 Round of applause
59 Tennessee NFL player
60 Finds a total
62 Common skin condition
63 Native people of Alaska
64 Author Stephenson
65 Rip
66 __-Alt-Del
67 __ buco (Italian dish)

DOWN
1 "Big Brother" network
2 Top of the mouth
3 Annoying
4 Commits treachery
5 Poker payment
6 US Marine __
7 Ironman competitor
8 "The __ Night" (Van Gogh painting)
9 Washington's capital
10 Plunge
11 Baking appliance
12 Respite
14 Feeling down
20 Mopey rock music
21 Price stickers
24 Nom de __
25 Actress Sophia
26 Satisfied
27 Tinderbox: 2 wds.
29 Semiconductor parts
30 Like lymph tissue
31 __ nous (between us)
34 Ingested
38 Government ID: Abbr.
41 Verbally defame
42 Is on TV
44 Designer Christian
46 __ tank
48 Vietnamese holiday
50 Pianist Rubinstein
52 "__ does it!"
53 Run fast
54 Actress Kendrick
55 Follow closely
56 "Soldier" insect
57 Privacy docs: Abbr.
61 __-pitch softball

P	U	S	H	■	T	A	P	E	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	M	A	P	L	E	■	A	M	O	N	G	■	■	■
■	S	U	N	D	A	Y	■	P	U	R	R	E	D	■
A	C	T	I	O	N	■	■	■	S	T	O	L	E	N
G	O	I	N	■	T	H	R	E	E	■	L	A	C	E
T	U	N	I	C	■	A	I	M	■	A	L	T	A	R
S	T	Y	■	H	A	R	P	I	S	T	■	O	L	D
■	■	■	■	A	H	I	■	R	I	B	■	■	■	■
A	S	H	■	M	A	S	C	A	R	A	■	P	H	O
C	H	E	A	P	■	S	A	T	■	T	A	L	O	N
D	E	A	N	■	G	A	T	E	S	■	G	A	L	L
C	A	T	T	L	E	■	■	■	T	R	E	N	D	Y
■	R	E	L	I	E	F	■	T	A	U	N	T	S	■
■	■	D	E	N	S	E	■	M	I	N	D	S	■	■
■	■	■	R	E	E	D	■	I	N	G	A	■	■	■

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SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

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

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

ANSWER:

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

HARRISON

Continued from page 1

updates on his brother's case. Ferguson is awaiting trial.

Dylan, who served as a member of the Oconee Drug Task Force Agency, was working with the APD to make some extra money for his family and the evening of Oct. 8, 2021 was his first and only shift.

"This is a rough day, five years later," said Dylan's former co-worker Steven Cady. "I can't help but think of the bravery of Heather and how she and Dylan's parents had to move forward. You all have done a fantastic job honoring (Dylan). Law enforcement, firefighters and paramedics have all dealt with tragedy. We are great about compartmentalizing things and moving on."

David announced they have started the Dylan Harrison Memorial Foundation, a non-profit organization that gives financial aid to high school students who are pursuing a career in public safety.

"We are looking to double, if not triple, the amount that we were able to give last time," David said. "I have always said Dylan cared about other people. He had a way of showing up for them when they needed him. He was the kind of person who put others before himself and that was evident by the way he lived his life. I am proud of the man he was, and the life he lived."



Pastor AJ.. Wright said it was okay to wrestle with God/ **PAYTON TOWNS III**



A member from the Georgia State Patrol played "Taps" as members of the Laurens County Fire Department presented the colors at the beginning of the program/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

Pastor A.J. Wright, who preached at Dylan's funeral, said they usually gather on Oct. 9 to remember one of the worst days in their lives. They all remember where they were when the phones went off with the terrible news that Dylan had been shot.

"And if we're not careful, we can go back to that same moment," Wright said. "There is nothing wrong with remembering that, but I believe there comes a point where we have to make a decision. Are we going to live our lives simply remembering how Dylan died or are we going to allow his life and the sacrifice he gave to challenge how we live in the here and the now."

People can remember. People can grieve. The past can be honored while heading toward the future, Wright said.

"Moving forward means I am taking everything I have walked through and everything I've learned," the pastor said. "Even the pain I've experienced and I'm allowing God to shape me into who I am today."

There is nothing wrong with remembering the past. Just don't live in it.

"You cannot change what happened on (Oct. 9, 2021)," Wright said. "None of us can. By the grace of God that day does not have to have control over us for the rest of our lives. Some of us have wrestled for years since this happened. Why did this happen? Why Dylan? Why did God allow this? And some may still be angry at the circumstances, angry at people and maybe even angry at God."

And that, Wright clarified, is fine.

"It's okay to wrestle with God," he said. "Just read the Psalms. King David was a guy who wrestled with God. Job was a guy who wrestled with God."

He recalled the story in the Bible when Jesus went to see about his friend Lazarus, who had died by the time he got there. Mary and Martha told Jesus that if he had been there, Lazarus would not have died.

"The Bible said Jesus wept at that moment," Wright said. "You have a savior who knows exactly what you are going through. He knows the pain you are going through. We have got to bring that pain to the only one who can carry it, because you are not meant to carry that pain alone. He carried it, and he carried it to the cross.

"I believe the greatest way we can honor Dylan is not simply by remembering the day we lost him, but by allowing what we walked through that changed the way we live today," he added. "Do not forget what God has done."

Wright recalled how 300 people stood and wanted to be saved during Dylan's funeral. Many contacted Wright about wanting to know more about giving their lives to Jesus.

"Think about how one of the darkest days of our community, hundreds of people were confronted with the hope of the gospel because of Dylan's sacrifice," Wright said. "God used Dylan's death for his glory. What the enemy intended for destruction, God was able to use. We cannot forget that."

Dylan's brother was one of the 300 who accepted Jesus that day.

"His death brought me to the reality that life is short," David said. "We are not promised tomorrow. There is so much more in life than what we see in front of us. Luckily, through the pain of losing my brother, I found the Lord. In these five years there has been a lot of hurt but there has also been a lot of healing through those who came to salvation through the domino effect of Dylan's sacrifice."

Wright believed Dylan would not want his family and friends trapped in the pain of losing him. He stressed that Dylan loved Jesus and he would want them to make sure they make it to heaven.

"When the last day comes and we take our last breath, the most important thing will not be how many people knew your name, how much money you made or how successful you were," he said. "The question that matters is do you know Jesus Christ? He died the death we deserve and he walked out of the grave three days later. As christians, our last breath on this side of heaven is our first breath in heaven with God our father.

"(On Oct. 9, 2021), when Dylan went home, my man graduated to heaven," Wright said. "And that is where we are all trying to get to."

DDA

Continued from page 1

important to partner with other people or organizations.

"Dublin is a very strong community," he said. "We might not have a specific event that we have done together, but everything is always promoting one another. We've had the Crawfish Festival, which is a collaboration between the DDA, the city of Dublin, investors and Visit Dublin GA. When our theater has events, our restaurants are busy and they benefit from people coming into town and spending tax dollars. A lot of (the DDA's) money comes from hotel-motel tax. The more things we can bring into town, the more things we can do and the more things we can partner on."

He pointed out that they partner together with the DCT shows, music events, the DDA's Chili-Cookoff and Fall Festival, Farmers Market and with things Visit Dublin does at the interstate.

"We really work well together, no matter what the situation is," Keyton said.

The event, which was held on Oct. 2, was sponsored by Addington Place.

"We have a big misconception of what we are," said administrator Brandon Thomas. "We try to provide an experience. We must educate people about what we are so they won't be scared of assisted living. The experience you get on a cruise ship is the same experience you get at Addington Place."



A group from the community listens to information/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

