

No tax increase as Wrightsville sets millage rate

By DEIDRE LEDFORD
Editor

The City of Wrightsville has set the 2026 Millage rate and will not be enforcing a tax increase on its citizens. During the September City Council meeting, a rate of 9.326 mills was unanimously approved. This is a slight decrease from last year's rate of 9.376.

In other business, the Council heard from Mrs. Judy Graddy regarding some issues she is having on her property on Owl Street. Graddy explained

that the lot beside her is full of weeds, and overgrowth that is spreading onto her property. She also says the fence on that property has fallen onto her property and there are animals and other nuisances spilling over onto her property. She said it has gotten so bad, she is scared for her grandchildren to play outside. She also noted that when it rains, puddles end up in her yard from that lot due to debris causing it not to drain properly.

Mayor Janibeth Outlaw advised they would get the

Code Enforcer to look at it and see if it is violating any City ordinances. She noted that if no ordinances are being violated, it may be a civil issue and she would need to seek legal counsel.

A business license request for Papa's Pretties (owner Kathy Oliver) was reviewed and approved. This business is located inside of the Wrightsville Junction.

During department head time, Public Works Director Charles Blackburn reported they are dealing with water leaks left and right.

He mentioned a service line leak and a water main bust that had recently happened over the weekend. He thanked Red Man Farms for assisting with those. He said they had their annual EPD visit a week ago and it went pretty well. They are waiting on the official letter for the results.

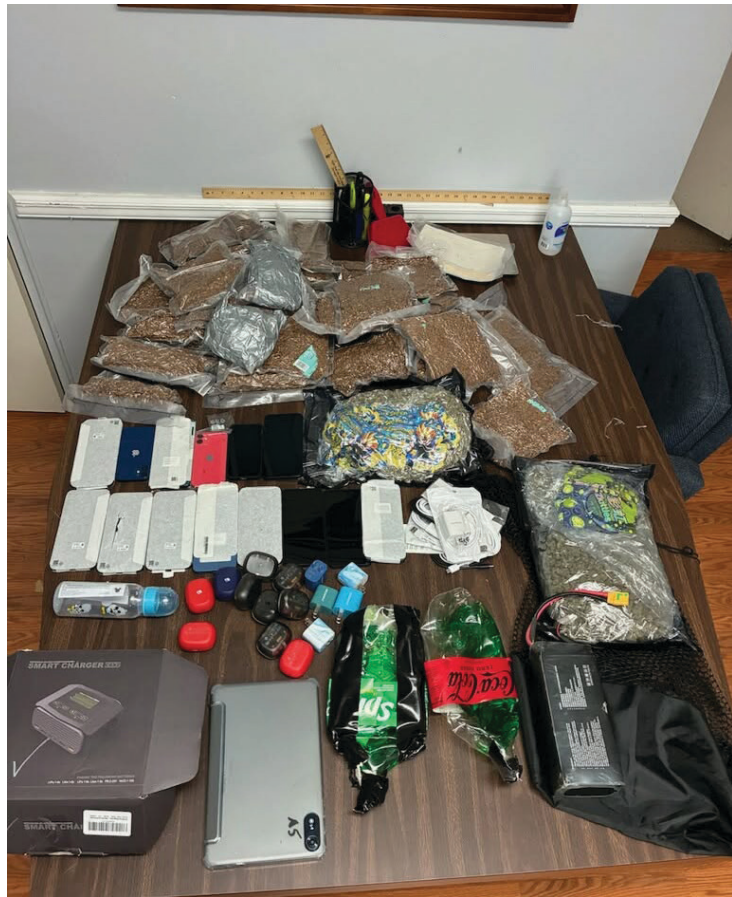
Fire Chief Shawn Wombles reported 32 calls for the month of August. He recently attended the Georgia Fire Services Conference. He added that Allied recently conducted a Battery and Energy Storage

System training for local firefighters. He commended everyone for how well the 9/11 Memorial Service turned out and mentioned that October is Fire Prevention Month and they will be hosting several things throughout the month. Wombles also advised that they are working on the renovation plans for the Fire Station/Emergency Operations Center.

Raymond Garner presented the report for the Police Department. There were 294 events and WPD issued 49 citations, 17 war-

rants, and made five arrests. He said USDA is sending the paperwork to finalize the grant and, hopefully, they will be able to purchase the new vehicles soon.

Councilman Matthew Lee said he has noticed a large increase in the amount of trash on the roadside since school started back, especially in the areas of Lee Street, Herschel Walker Drive and Chadwick Drive. He said it looks really bad and encouraged people to throw their trash in the garbage and not out the window.



Items seized during a contraband bust near Johnson State Prison/SPECIAL PHOTO

Contraband drone flight to prison thwarted by passerby

By DEIDRE LEDFORD
Editor

The delivery of a large amount of contraband items to Johnson State Prison was thwarted thanks to the keen observance of a passerby. Around 3:10 a.m. on Sept. 24, the 911 Center received a call from someone who spotted a drone near Johnson State Prison. Dis-

patchers immediately notified local law enforcement. Responding officers from the Wrightsville Police Department and the Johnson County Sheriff's Office were able to locate the drone and intercept the contraband before it made it to its intended location.

The drone, which had a large trash bag attached to it, and the suspect's vehicle were both confiscated. Items located inside the vehicle and trash bag included: one drone, one

DRONE
Continued on page 2



Nunez



Floyd



Wombles

Nunez picked as JoCo's top teacher

Wombles, Floyd also honored

By DEIDRE LEDFORD
Editor

The Johnson County School System has named Erin Nunez as the District Teacher of the Year. The official announcement was made on Sept. 23. Nunez was previously named the Elementary School Teacher of the Year, while Rhett Wombles and Heather Floyd were named the Middle and High School

Teachers of the Year.

Erin Crawford Núñez has more than 16 years of experience in education. A native of Dublin, Georgia, she earned her Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Valdosta State University and later earned a Master of Arts in Education with a focus in Enhanced Teaching Practices from Ball State University. She began her teaching career with

Dublin City Schools in 2010, where she taught second, fourth, and fifth grades. After eight years in the classroom, she moved into instructional leadership, serving as an academic coach from 2018–2022 and later as a school-level MTSS coordinator. In these roles, she supported teachers through professional learning, instructional coaching, data analysis, and intervention planning. Her work

TEACHER
Continued on page 2



SNAPSHOTS: LADY TROJANS CLAIM REGION

The Johnson County Lady Trojans have clinched the Region Championship for the second year in a row. The Trojans defeated the Glascock County Lady Panthers with a score of 12-0 Thursday evening. JoCo finished the season 10-0, undefeated in the region. Congratulations Lady Trojans!!

Voter privacy at issue in federal and state disputes

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit by the Trump administration seeking to obtain personal information about Georgia voters, and the state agency that sets election procedures did not pursue a proposed emergency rule concerning ballot secrecy.

At a special meeting of the State Election Board on Thursday, board members said they opposed a proposal by one member who sought to alter the way ballots are handled by poll workers.

Board member Salleigh Grubbs said she wanted to protect voter secrecy by having poll workers scan the ballots rather than allowing voters to do it them-

selves, which is the current procedure.

Her rule would have required voters to drop their ballots into secure boxes that poll workers would have emptied into scanners later, after shuffling the order of the ballots.

The proposal was intended to patch a known privacy hole in Georgia's voting system. The flaw could allow observers armed with artificial intelligence to combine distinct public records in a way that links voters to their ballots.

Voter check-in records and ballot images are public documents, but the link between the two must by law be severed to maintain voter privacy.

PRIVACY
Continued on page 6



Fire crews were dispatched to a structure fire on Friday evening around 6:15 p.m. Upon arrival, they found a storage shed completely engulfed in flames. The shed and its contents were completely destroyed but firefighters were able to contain the fire and keep it from spreading to nearby structures. No injuries were reported/SPECIAL PHOTO





A great crowd was in attendance for Tuesday evening’s Business After Hours at the Depot. This event, which was hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority, was presented by Whitney Kyzer, Director of MainStreet Wrightsville. Kyzer spoke to guests about MainStreet’s visions and future plans for downtown Wrightsville and Johnson County/DEIDRE LEDFORD



DRONE

Continued from page 1

charger, 6,985.3 grams of tobacco, 1,060 grams of marijuana, 14 phones, 10 ear pods, nine charger cords, seven charger blocks, 837.8 grams of an unknown liquid, and one baby bottle.

Thanks to the hard work and determination of the WPD, JCSO and the Georgia Department of Corrections, these items were prevented from entering the prison.

The public is reminded that anytime you observe anyone or anything suspicious, to not hesitate in contacting local law enforcement.



TEACHER

Continued from page 1

in MTSS strengthened her commitment to using student data to identify individual needs and provide meaningful academic support. In the 2023–2024 school year, Mrs. Núñez made the personal decision to return to the classroom and joined the second-grade team at Johnson County Elementary School. She brought with her the knowledge and experience gained through instructional coaching and MTSS, but also a renewed appreciation for the daily work of classroom teachers. She holds both a Reading Endorsement and an MTSS Facilitator Endorsement. Throughout her career, she has remained especially passionate about foundational reading, supporting struggling learners, and helping students recognize their own growth.

Mr. Rhett Wombles is a dedicated educator, coach, firefighter and community member who is proud to serve the same small town and school that helped shape him. Having grown up in the community and attended the school where he now teaches, returning to his alma mater as an educator has been both a personal and professional calling. His connection to the school and community has shaped his belief that education is about more than academic achievement. To Rhett, education is about building relationships, developing character and investing in the lives of young people.

Rhett graduated from Brewton-Parker University in 2020 with a degree in education. During the 2023–2024 school year, he returned to his alma mater as a teacher. Returning to teach in the same school and community where he grew up has given him a unique appreciation for the role educators play in students' lives. It has also strengthened his commitment to giving back to the community that invested so much in him. As a 7th-grade science teacher, he strives to create an engaging and meaningful classroom where students feel supported, challenged, and valued. He believes that strong relationships with

students and their families are essential to student success. By incorporating hands-on learning, technology, collaboration, and real-world experiences, Rhett makes science meaningful and relevant for his students. He wants his classroom to be a place where students feel comfortable asking questions, making mistakes, and discovering their own potential.

His commitment to his school extends beyond the classroom. He is actively involved with the school's PBIS team, where he works alongside colleagues to promote positive behavior, encourage student success, and help create a school culture where every student feels supported and valued. He believes that schools are strongest when educators work together to meet the needs of the whole child. Coaching is another important part of his life and commitment to students. As a middle school baseball coach, he has been honored to be voted Middle School Baseball Coach of the Year in 2024, 2025, and 2026. He was also honored to receive the Softball Assistant Coach of the Year award in 2025. Athletics provide Rhett with another opportunity to build relationships with students and teach lessons that extend beyond the classroom. Through sports, he emphasizes teamwork, perseverance, accountability, discipline, and resilience. He believes that the lessons students learn through athletics can continue to impact them long after their playing days are over.

Rhett's involvement with young people also extends into the county recreation department, where

he coaches and works with members of his community. These experiences allow him to continue building relationships with students and families outside of the school setting. Whether he is teaching in the classroom, coaching on the field, or working at the recreation department, Rhett values every opportunity to invest in the young people of his community.

In addition to being an educator and coach, Rhett is proud to serve as a firefighter for the City of Wrightsville. As a firefighter, he serves his community in another meaningful way. Whether responding to an emergency, supporting a student through a difficult time, or encouraging an athlete after a tough game, Rhett believes service is about being willing to show up when others need you.

His Christian faith and personal values guide the way he approaches his life and work. He believes strongly in integrity, service, accountability, and doing the right thing even when no one is watching. These principles shape how he teaches, coaches, leads, and serves his community.

Returning to his alma mater was more than simply accepting a teaching position for Rhett. It was an opportunity to give back to the school and community that helped raise him. His goal is to invest in students, build meaningful relationships, and leave his school and community stronger than he found them. Through education, coaching, firefighting, and community service, Rhett remains committed to making a positive difference in young people's lives and helping them recognize their potential.

Mrs. Heather Floyd's decision to become a teacher began, in part, with her own experience as a struggling student. Math never came easily for her. She remembers the frustration she felt while sitting in algebra and genuinely not understanding the concepts and ideas that others seemed to grasp with ease. She knew there were young people who would experience that same frustration, whether they struggled with reading, writing, mathematics or another subject. Because she understood what it felt like when learning did not come easily, Mrs. Floyd wanted to be the teacher who recognized students' frustration, understood their struggles, and helped them find a way to succeed. This desire led her to elementary education and her first classroom as a first-grade teacher.

Mrs. Floyd began her teaching career in first grade, but over the next 23 years, her path in education took her in unexpected directions. She moved from elementary school to middle school, adult education, and eventually high school English Language Arts. Although the ages of her students and the content she taught changed, her reason for teaching did not. Every step in her journey broadened her perspective as an educator and strengthened her belief that effective teaching begins with understanding the students in front of her.

Throughout her career, the diverse learning needs and backgrounds of Mrs. Floyd's students profoundly shaped her instruction. From first grade through adult education, and from students who struggled academically to those who

were gifted, she learned that every student brings a unique story, set of experiences, strengths, and needs into the classroom. These experiences taught her that meaningful relationships are at the heart of effective teaching. Knowing her students allows Mrs. Floyd to create lessons and learning experiences that feel relevant and purposeful. Building relationships is not simply about caring; it provides the insight she needs to make thoughtful instructional decisions, meet students where they are, and help each student feel valued, understood, and capable of success.

Knowing her students helps Mrs. Floyd recognize when they need grace and when they need accountability. Sometimes a student needs someone to understand, and at other times, that same student needs someone who will not allow them to settle for less than what they can achieve. Mrs. Floyd recalls a student who came to school exhausted after being awake all night caring for her crying baby. The student had a major project due that day but had not been able to finish it. Mrs. Floyd recognized that the student needed grace in that moment, so she gave her an additional day to complete the assignment. The following day, when the student attempted to submit the assignment partially completed, Mrs. Floyd did not accept it because she knew the student was capable of more. Instead, Mrs. Floyd found time during a class in which the student was excelling for her to complete the assignment in Mrs. Floyd's classroom. Her expectations for the student had not changed;

rather, the support the student needed in each moment had changed.

Just as knowing her students helps Mrs. Floyd determine what they need from her personally, it also helps her determine what they need from her instructionally. When she first teaches argumentative writing, Mrs. Floyd prefers to use topics that are fresh, relevant, and accessible to her students. Choosing topics with which students can easily connect removes one potential barrier to the writing process. Rather than spending their energy trying to understand an unfamiliar topic, students can focus on developing a claim, selecting evidence, organizing their ideas, and communicating their argument effectively. This approach does not remove the challenge from the lesson; instead, it allows Mrs. Floyd to place the challenge where she intends it to be.

After 23 years in education, Mrs. Floyd has learned that teaching does not remain static. Standards change, technology advances, and each new group of students brings different strengths, challenges, and needs. As education continues to evolve, Mrs. Floyd will continue to learn and adapt alongside her students while holding onto the relationships that remain at the heart of effective teaching. While she does not know what the classroom of the future will look like, she does know that there will always be a student sitting in it who needs a teacher who cares and understands.



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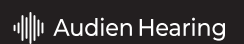
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WILL HOST A TOWN HALL MEETING
TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED
CEDAR CREEK ENERGY CENTER
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AT 110 RAILROAD STREET
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Johnson County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

Johnson County Farm Bureau will hold its Annual Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 22, 2026, at The Depot, 6745 East College Street, Wrightsville, GA 31096.

Birthdays

Larry Griffin, Sr.....	October 6
Riley Wilson.....	October 6
Katie Ledford.....	October 7
Wendy Kreutz.....	October 7
Jaylen Byrd.....	October 7
Brenda Linder.....	October 8
Tommy King.....	October 8
Henry Copeland.....	October 9
John Davis, Jr.....	October 9
Desmi Young.....	October 9
Terriona Smith.....	October 10
Izell Stephens, III.....	October 10
Marshall Powell.....	October 10
Taylor Powell.....	October 10
Le'Neisha Davis.....	October 10
Emily Wyatt.....	October 10
Thomas Reese.....	October 11
Toye Boulineau.....	October 11
Lamar McCoy.....	October 11

Anniversaries

Charles and Kim Greenway.....	October 7
Larry and Lynette Griffin.....	October 7
Jeff and Renee Decker.....	October 12
Brett and Connie Colston.....	October 12

Compliments of
The Johnson Journal

DID YOU KNOW...?

Ten Years of Trivia!

By JACK BAGLEY
GTLN

I've told this before, but it's definitely worth re-telling now.

In October of 2016, I had a problem - I was laying out the newspaper and had a pretty good-sized "hole" on one page, blank space with nothing in the folder with which to fill it.

Remembering my days as a teacher, I recalled the trivia bits I used to post on the classroom bulletin board and thought, "Why not stick some of those in that hole on page six?" or whatever page it was.

The reaction from the readers was immediate and positive, so I made it a column the following week.

That was ten years ago. This week, my little emergency solution turns ten years old, and I am amazed and gratified that it's lasted so long, and is so popular with you, the readers. Thank you for the last decade of enjoyment that we have both derived from all of this.

Let's get to the tenth anniversary of trivia right now!

Did you know ...

... a woman was elected to Congress before women had the federal right to vote? Jeannette Rankin (1880-1973) was the first woman to hold federal elected office in the United States. She was elected in 1916 as a member of the House of Representatives from Montana. She was elected again in 1940. Montana women were able to vote for her at her first election; the 19th Amendment, ratified in 1920, gave all American women the right to vote in federal elections from that point on. (A true trend-setter.)

... it's never a good idea to land a plane with your eyes closed? In 1986, a jet from the Soviet national airline Aeroflot was on approach to land in the Russian city of Grozny. The captain of the flight reportedly bet the first officer that he could land the plane without visual confirmation – in other words, land with his eyes closed. He didn't really close his eyes, of course; he used an all-instrument approach and curtained off the windows of the plane's cockpit. As you might expect, this did not end well: Flight 6502 touched down far too fast, overturned, and killed 63 people, including the first officer. (I guess the captain never collected on the bet.)

... colors exist that your eye cannot see? Of course, you already know about infrared (one wavelength below red) and ultraviolet (one wavelength above violet), but other such colors exist – and don't have names. People perceive these colors when looking at an image featuring side-by-side red and green strips and side-by-side blue and yellow strips on a black background. Scientists are studying these shades of color never before detected. (A colorful comment, no?)

... a popular celebrity was the inspiration for an insect's nickname? The species of horsefly that has a large gold backside is known as the "Bootylicious" horsefly. The identity is associated with entertainer Beyoncé (born Beyoncé Giselle Knowles, 1981). She recorded the song "Bootylicious" in 2001, and researchers say the horsefly is something of a diva among insects. (Uh, yeah.)

... goats have been used as torture devices? Specifically in the torture known as "the goat's tongue." In the Middle Ages, the victim would be tied to a tree, and the soles of the victim's feet would be moistened with salt. A thirsty goat would then be set loose to lick the victim's feet until the flesh was worn away. (A baaa-a-ad way to torture people.)

... those lines down the middle of the highway were inspired by milk trucks? A man named Edward Hines (1870-1938) was traveling on a highway in 1911 and following a milk truck which was leaking onto the roadway. Hines realized that putting a line down the middle of the road would help with safe traveling, and the idea took off. (Hey, whatever works!)

... talk show host Jerry Springer (1944-2023) was British? Springer was born in London – inside the Highgate Underground station, to be precise, which was used as a bomb shelter during World War II. Springer and his parents would later emigrate to the United States and settle in Queens, New York. He served as a city councilman in Cincinnati, Ohio, from 1971 to 1974, resigning after admitting to hiring a prostitute, but won his seat back in 1975. Springer was chosen by the council to serve as Mayor from 1977 to 1978 (Cincinnati did not elect mayors at the time; they do now). He ran unsuccessfully for governor of Ohio in 1982 and twice considered running for the Senate, but negative associations with his off-the-wall talk show kept him from doing so. (Jer-ry! Jer-ry! Jer-ry!)

... the popular 1940s and 1950s fad of swallowing live goldfish began on a bet? In 1939, a freshman at Harvard University, Lothrop Withington, Jr. (1917-2013) was challenged to swallow a live goldfish for a \$10 bet. Withington, who was running for class president at the school, accepted the challenge, swallowed the fish, and began the series of events which eventually forced a Massachusetts state senator to introduce a bill outlawing the consumption of live goldfish. (There's something awfully fishy about that story.)

... *Beauty and the Beast* was the first animated movie nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award™? The 1991 Disney feature also had the distinction of having three of its musical numbers nominated for Best Song, one of which – the title song – won. (A tale as old as time.)

Now ... you know!

A right-handed bass guitar turns out be a good investment

An old belief says that left-handed people are more creative than their more populous right-handed counterparts.

I doubt that that school of thought is actually true just based on the statistics alone. I know very few lefties at all, let alone creative ones. I consider myself a pretty imaginative southpaw, but that hasn't made life necessarily easier in our right-hander's world.

Growing up there was a gang of five boys - my brother, cousins and myself - together as often as we could be. Whether rampaging through the woods, felling small trees to build forts or playing ball in the abandoned garden spot (we often played with a tennis ball so we could pretend to be heavy, home run hitters), my left-handedness was often a handicap, especially in sports.

Having an older brother and cousin meant using hand-me-down



By KYLE DOMINY

equipment, right-handed equipment. I learned to play baseball, and golf, right-handed. Maybe that's why I never showed much aptitude in such endeavors. Not that I've ever been much of a sports guy anyway. I'm too afraid of the ball to ever have been a Major Leaguer, and golf, though this opinion could change when I'm in a different stage of life, takes too much time and money.

As I got older, however, I became more inclined to learn how to play a gui-

tar. What kind of guitars were readily available? The right-handed kind. So I borrowed one from my brother and started practicing. At the time, left-handed guitars were more expensive and were not available in many popular makes and models, so I opted to continue playing right-handed.

So every stringed instrument I have ever owned, I played backwards. Naturally backwards per my perspective anyway.

For some time I had a

bass guitar, right-handed of course, purchased on the cheap from a discount music store when I was a teenager. I had my eyes on another prize at the time (I was already dating my future wife) so the instrument saw little use. The guitar has spent most of its life zipped in an equally cheap carry case, tucked away in a closet wherever I've happened to call home at the time.

Until now.

My son expressed interest in learning the bass guitar. Lucky for you, I told him, I have one begging to be unpacked and put to use. And put it to use he has. The other day came home to walls rattling, a deep note reverberating from his bedroom. He's still getting the hang of it, earning callouses on his fingers. He says it hurts, and I tell him that nothing worth doing ever comes easy.

But this might come easier for him than his old man, because lucky for him ... he is right-handed.

October 6, 1932.

Wrightsville High School football season opens against Swainsboro at the local fairgrounds. This years team is mostly new players but have been excellently trained by Coach McDonald. The first string includes Claxton Clarke, center; Grady Sumner, "Preacher" Holloway or James Vickers, tackles; Dick Shurling, guard; Ralph Brinson, end; Hugh Hall, backfield; Carl Moore, E. R. Spell and Kight, all new members.

The 10th and 11th grade home economics girls organized a club with Ruby Kate Price, President; Veola Riner, Vice-President; Lena Lovett, Secretary-Treasurer; Sadie Hall, Reporter. The teacher, Miss Lucile Suddeth, home economics teacher is sponsor. The Home Demonstration Agent is having a clothing clinic for renovation and remodeling of old clothes and hats. Miss Martha Martin, daughter of R. R. Martin, is now teaching at Adrian Consolidated School.

Judge Grover C. Bidgood failed to pay his municipal taxes six months before his election. Mr. O. D. Cullen filed a petition in Laurens Superior Court to oust him as the presiding officer of the Dublin City Court. Mr. & Mrs. M. A. Jackson lost their home to a fire. Roy L. Dowd and Corine Brag-

From Days Gone By Historian Donald Smith



don were wed by Rev. John L. Ivey. He is a son of Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Dowd and the brides parents are Mr. & Mrs. C. S. Bragdon of Metter.

Mr. John A. Douglas, cotton census reporter for Johnson gives figures up to September 16, there being 3,780 bales ginned up against 5,327 this time last year. The sugar cane crop of Johnson County appears to be getting taller and taller as well as adding to its quality. Mr. H. T. Tharpe of New Home brought in the tallest of the season establishing a new record. It measured 8 feet 2 inches. It topped the previous record by some 8 inches.

The veterans will get their checks this week through Ordinary W. J. Flanders. It was \$50 each for the veterans and 16 widows. The veterans left are Henry Wheeler, Sim L. Cooper and A. J. Hall. Mr. W. H. Lovett was formally nominated state senator from the 16th district by the

convention at Idylwild. The soda parlor and cafe of Luther Downs is now being operated by Roy Frost. It will be called Frost Soda Parlor and Cafe. Road construction expenditures reached a new peak in Georgia last year. Johnson County is still without a hard surfaced road. Johnson is one of the very few counties in Georgia that is without a paved road of some kind, and its stratigic location on the Bee Line and Jefferson Davis highways should merit action.

The statements of condition of the local banks. Bank of Adrian \$49,899.18; Exchange Bank \$165,029.25; Bank of Wrightsville \$161,957.75.

Mr. & Mrs. Reuben Carroll, near Wrightsville, infant child died and was buried at Liberty Grove. Mr. Carroll is a farmer in the Hall community.

Mr. Bartow Brantley, prominent county citizen died in a Dublin hospital and was buried at Union

Hill. He was 59, a native of Washington County but lived here for many years. Surviving are his mother and children, Floyd, George, Bill, Buford Brantley, Mrs. Clayton Lord, Mrs. G. D. Davis and Mrs. J. A. Colston.

There are countless numbers of families in this county who are in need of food and raiment. They are not starving and naked, to be sure, but they are in need. There is no way to get around this. It cannot be denied. In recent months the Red Cross distributed a large amount of flour. Although they tried hard to distribute to the needy only, but there were those who claimed a share and received it, who were not entitled to it. A man who will receive in this manner something that he is in less need of than his neighbor, when his neighbor and his children are hungry, has not a spark of charity in his heart. Now the cloth ration has been cut, this cloth should go to those little children who are without clothes to enter school; to the families of fathers who are out of work and no means of support and those widow mothers who are facing the prospects of a hard winter without sufficient clothing to warm their bodies. If you can buy do not stand in the way of those who can't.

COUCH THEATER

By DEMI TAVERAS
King Features

Spider-Man: Brand New Day (PG-13)

The fourth installment in Tom Holland's "Spider-Man" film series is finally out to rent on Oct. 6 after its legendary run in theaters, where it became the third-highest-grossing film of all time! (Luckily, Marvel isn't holding back with on-demand streaming of the film, like Universal is with Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey.") Zendaya ("The Odyssey") and Jacob Batalon ("The Wrecking Crew") are back in their roles from the previous three films, while Jon Bernthal's Punisher makes his first appearance in the series. More newcomers include Florence Pugh ("Thunderbolts"), who joins the cast as her MCU character Yelena Belova, and Sadie Sink ("Stranger Things") makes her debut in the MCU as Jean Grey. The film picks up four years after Dr. Strange's spell wipes Peter's (Holland) existence off the face of the planet. (Amazon Prime Video)

Animals (R)

After teaming up with his longtime buddy Matt Damon for action-thriller film "The Rip," Ben Affleck is back

on Netflix with this crime thriller, co-starring Kerry Washington ("Wake Up Dead Man") and Gillian Anderson ("The Julia Set"). "Animals" follows Los Angeles mayoral candidate Mark Kimball (Affleck), whose son suddenly gets kidnapped during his political campaign. The kidnapper demands a ransom, but with all his money spent on his campaign, Mark is forced to resort to more dangerous methods of getting his child back. In turn, amid the chaos, secrets from his and his wife's past emerge that they never expected to come to light. Steven Yeun ("The Rip") and Adriana Paz ("A Mouthful of Ash") round out the rest of the cast. Stream it on Oct. 9! (Netflix)

Avatar: Seven Havens (TV-PG)

If you have any Zillennials in your home, you know the chokehold that "Avatar: The Last Airbender" still has on them. It's long regarded as one of the best animated fantasy series of all time and introduced us to beloved characters like Aang, Katara, Zuko, Appa and more. Shortly after the original "Avatar" series ended, a sequel series, "The Legend of Korra," aired from 2012 to 2014. Now, 12 years later, a third series is set to premiere on Oct. 9, following Korra's

Avatar successor, Pavi, who's also a reincarnation of Korra. Taking place 225 years after "Korra," Pavi and her twin sister, Nisha, team up to save the Seven Havens before an apocalyptic event destroys their world. (Paramount+)

Matchbox: The Movie (PG-13)

After the \$1 billion feat that "Barbie" (2023) achieved in theaters, Mattel had no choice but to wonder, "What if we made movies about every iconic toy we have?" However, because "Masters of the Universe" bombed, they decided to go for a streaming-only release for this action-comedy film based on the Matchbox toy cars. John Cena ("Coyote vs. Acme") leads the film as spy and former soldier Sean Walker, who reconnects with the childhood friends he used to play cars with. But while they're at the bar, the entire group gets drugged and kidnapped by a group of criminals who are searching for a nuclear warhead; and even though his past almost gets his old friends killed, they decide to help Sean in an attempt to steal the bomb and clear their names. Check it out on Oct. 9. (Apple TV)

Politicians

Most of us poke fun at politicians, but sometimes we let it go too far, and I am always reminded of a comment made by the late Jim Minter, editor of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

In a small circle of friends at a dinner party, the topic was about no-good politicians. The conversation eventually gained traction, and the bulk of the attendees were castigating politicians when he asked, “Do you know a politician?” Most everybody nodded their head affirmatively and he asked. “You probably don’t think he is such a bad fellow, do you?”

They all agreed that their friend was not someone they took pleasure in castigating. His point was well taken.

I have known a lot of politicians in my life, and I sorta like most of them. There have been some I really liked and with



LORAN SMITH

whom I enjoyed a friendship over the years.

Opponents, however, are like offensive coordinators. They don’t hold back when their favorite team loses a big game, and the offensive coordinator and the play caller is second guessed without reluctance.

It was Mark Twain who said, “Why spend money looking up

your family tree? Just go into politics and your opponent will do it for you.”

Grover Cleveland was accused of fathering an illegitimate child, the accusation gaining such traction that the Democrat admitted culpability. This resulted in a Republican ditty that went like this: “Ma, Ma, where’s my Pa? Gone to the White House, Ha, Ha, Ha.”

The Democrats retorted with, “James G. Blaine, the continental liar from the state of Maine.” That reminds us that nothing is new under the sun.

My take is that all candidates not be allowed to buy television advertising. Make ‘em to go back to the stump, which is a reminder that it would be more fun.

I love the stories about Gene Talmadge whose routine was take over a political rally, regardless. If he were speaking, he would rail long and loud about a few issues and when he left and the next speaker had begun, he would

stage a fist fight with his henchmen, and the fisticuffs took all attention away from the subsequent speakers.

If he spoke later in the program or last, he would arrive with horns blaring from his cavalcade and he would begin rambling through the crowd, shouting and shaking hands to the extent that nobody heard a word that was said from the podium.

You may, if you are up on Georgia’s political history, know that Carl Sanders was the first governor elected after the Supreme Court outlawed the County Unit system in 1963.

He defeated Marvin Griffin, who famously said, “A lot of people that ate my barbecue voted for somebody else.”

After Carl Sanders became an ultra-successful lawyer in Atlanta, I often went by his office at the corner of North Avenue and West Peachtree Street and reminisced with him about Georgia football,

politics, and whatever was topical for the moment.

One day he told me an interesting story. One weekend of the Georgia-Florida game, he was entertaining some VIP guests on state business at the Cloister on Sea Island, when he saw Marvin Griffin show up with his wife for dinner.

He did not have a reservation and was being turned away by the receptionist. The former Governor was pleading his case enthusiastically, but the receptionist kept shaking her head vigorously.

Carl said that he got up and went up to the Griffins and invited them to his table. Gov. Griffin graciously thanked his onetime political adversary and subsequently treated Carl’s guests with a litany of stories that in no time had them laughing to the extreme.

When dinner was over, Carl’s guests asked him seriously, “How in the world did you defeat a fellow like that?”

If the election were held today...

“If the election were held today” is how questions for polls are framed. It’s used to get a snapshot of where things are now. There is sleight of hand involved to then use the results to project what will happen later. The chasm in between makes a huge difference.

Let’s first differentiate between two kinds of polls. There are those done mostly for media purposes. Some are done by news outlets themselves, while others are done by groups who wish to generate news coverage. Some of the latter are by supporters of a candidate, often laundered through “independent, nonpartisan” organizations. Others are from interest groups that want to influence a particular issue by injecting it into a campaign.

These are usually the cheapest to perform, and are thus often shallow or superficial to the point that they should be ignored. Instead, they are amplified as was the intent of their design, to reinforce today’s

snapshot as the foundation for what the sponsors wish the future to be.

Other polls, often commissioned by candidates or some of those same interest organizations for internal use, are much more complex and dive into subject matters more deeply. They cost several times more to produce than the others, because the data actually matters. While those who construct and conduct them fully understand the fleeting nature of asking how someone feels today, they also understand the purpose is to figure out what they must do to get the results they need much later.

This isn’t about whether or not you can or should believe polls. It’s about understanding what they are and are not.

Polls when properly constructed and executed remain fairly accurate in representing where things stand with public opinion on an issue or candidate on the day the questions are asked. The problem comes when we try to either as-

sume that opinions are locked in stone, that others aren’t actively trying to change those opinions, or that someone will motivate or de-motivate some respondents. That’s before we consider that most people forget that in any statistical sample there is a “margin for error” which often can totally change the results if pushed to the extreme.

Let’s ignore the math and just focus on the concept and construct. Polls do not predict the future. They only tell you where things stand right now.

One of the most profound examples of this was the re-election campaign of President George H. W. Bush. In the spring the prior year, he had an 89% approval rating. Bill Clinton was fighting just to remain relevant while mired in multiple scandals. Even in the following June, Bush still led Clinton by 5 points.

Voters are fickle. More importantly, they vote with self-interest – in private. Too many candidates and campaigns forget that



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

while many recite the approved party lines and clap on command, what actually happens when it is time to make a decision in private can be a very different thing. Just ask a lot of skilled union members.

So now we approach the midterms, and the polls aren’t looking great for many Republicans. Many from the MAGA wing are still celebrating their achievements from 2024’s election, as if it were a permanent victory. Many voters are looking at promises that not only said that the rate of inflation would decrease, but that actual prices would come down.

The voters were angry in 2024. Inflation was too high. Our borders weren’t just open, but the Administration was flying immigrants in as asylum seekers by the tens of thousands. Americans who had just endured forced lockdowns and closed schools suddenly saw a new class of non-citizens at the front of the line for essential services.

President Trump’s initial approval ratings were higher than his first term. But as illustrated in the example above, that was a snapshot in time.

Some Republican candidates chose to make their primaries about fealty to the President. They’re having a hard time now, as circumstances have changed.

Others, while not distancing themselves from the President, charted their own path and message. They were better suited for this stage of the cycle.

Chief among them here at home is Rick Jackson. While a self-made billionaire who has tailored his narrative as an outsider to mirror President Trump, he wasn’t the President’s endorsed candidate in the

GOP primary. He’s thus had a wider birth to position where voters’ minds will be next month, as opposed to where they were a year ago.

Which brings us to a brief post on Twitter/X, from Washington pundit and UGA Alum Mary Katherine Ham. Sharing the campaigns most recent ad, she noted “Rick Jackson’s is the only campaign that has figured out how to effectively remind people how 2020 felt and that Dem leadership from that time will take you back there (because) they have never reckoned with mistakes. “Woke 1 was crazy” doesn’t answer this critique.”

The decision on who will lead Georgia will be made based on how voters feel between October 13th, the beginning of early voting, and November 3rd. The next month will be a battle between current grocery and gas prices versus memories of Covid shutdowns, protests, and unchecked lawlessness. Georgians will choose their future based on which days they remember the least fondly or more profoundly.

No debate that these should be great debates

Unless you have been living in a cave, you have no doubt been inundated with political ads from businessman Rick Jackson and former Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, who are running for governor; and incumbent Democrat Jon Ossoff and Republican challenger Cong. Mike Collins, the two candidates vying for the U.S. Senate seat in Georgia. The ads are so incessant, we almost know them by heart. But what about the candidates themselves? How much do we know about them when they step out from in back of their ads?

You will get the chance to find out for yourself on Oct. 6 and Oct. 8. All four have agreed to face-to-face debates on WAFN in Atlanta and streamed on Gray Media stations live and statewide. The gubernatorial debate will take place on Oct. 6 at 8 p.m. and the Senate debate on Oct. 8 at 7p.m.

Frankly, I was surprised to hear the news. With the election just a bit more than a month away, why would the candidates want to expose themselves to their opponent? I asked WANF news anchor, Rick Folbaum, the man behind the project. How did he make it happen?

“As much as I’d like to take credit that I was able to earn the campaigns’ trust with my decades of experience and dazzling charm,” Folbaum quips, “the truth is these candidates want to be able to reach as many

voters as possible and Gray gives them that ability. This was our main selling point.” Gray owns stations in every major media market in Georgia, making them the only outlet that could offer live, primetime statewide coverage.

Folbaum says: “Back in February, I approached my bosses with the idea that WANF and Gray Media should host political debates ahead of the November midterms. They said, ‘Sure, go ahead and get the campaigns on board.’ That’s when I started reaching out to the campaigns to tell them what we wanted to do and make the case we could be trusted to do it.”

Since this was before the primaries, Folbaum called

everyone. Once he knew the nominees from each party, he was able to focus on the two candidates for governor and the Senate.

Folbaum, a 30-year broadcast veteran, says he had contacted Ossoff’s office first, since he was running unopposed in the Democratic primary. Then he was in contact with communications directors and campaign managers with the other candidates. “I wrote up proposals outlining our vision and shared them with the campaigns,” Folbaum told me. He followed up with regular phone calls offering to answer anyone’s questions or concerns.

“Deciding whether to take part in a debate and which debates to sign on to

is no easy decision,” he says. “There is so much at stake in these elections and the campaigns, understandably, want to make sure they’re signing on to an event that will be carried out fairly for everyone involved.”

The gubernatorial debate is a town-hall-style debate. Some of those asking questions will be in the debate hall. Those who don’t live in metro Atlanta will have their questions recorded and played back for the candidates during the debate. Most importantly, the people asking the questions will go through a thorough vetting process to make sure they don’t have any affiliation with the campaigns or with any other political organization.



DICK YARBROUGH

In the Senate debate, a panel of journalists from Gray Media stations in Albany, Macon, Savannah, Columbus and Augusta will ask the questions that reflect the concerns of voters in their particular area.

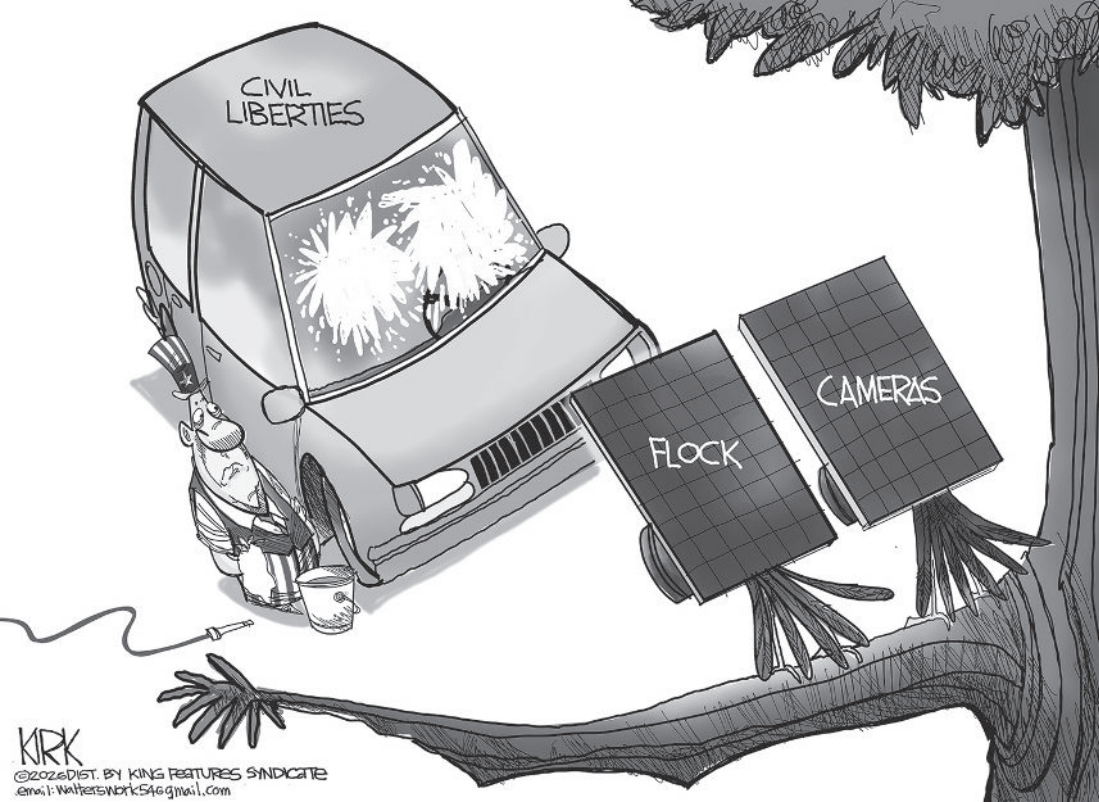
Folbaum says polls show most voters have already made up their minds. I agree, based on the “see-no-evil” responses I get from those who would support their candidate if he or she were seen running jaybird-naked down I-75. But

the debates can also change minds if a participant does extremely well or very poorly. There is no safety net.

Your assignment: Tune in. Take off the blinders. Watch. Listen. Then decide who best can serve us in Washington and in the governor’s office. As for Folbaum, who will moderate the debates, he talked to Chris Wallace, with whom he had worked at Fox News. “Chris’s main piece of advice to me,” he said, “was to be as invisible as possible. If the headlines the next day are about the moderator, then you’ve done something wrong.”

Not much chance of that happening. So far, everything he had done has been right. Let the debates begin. And may they be great debates.

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



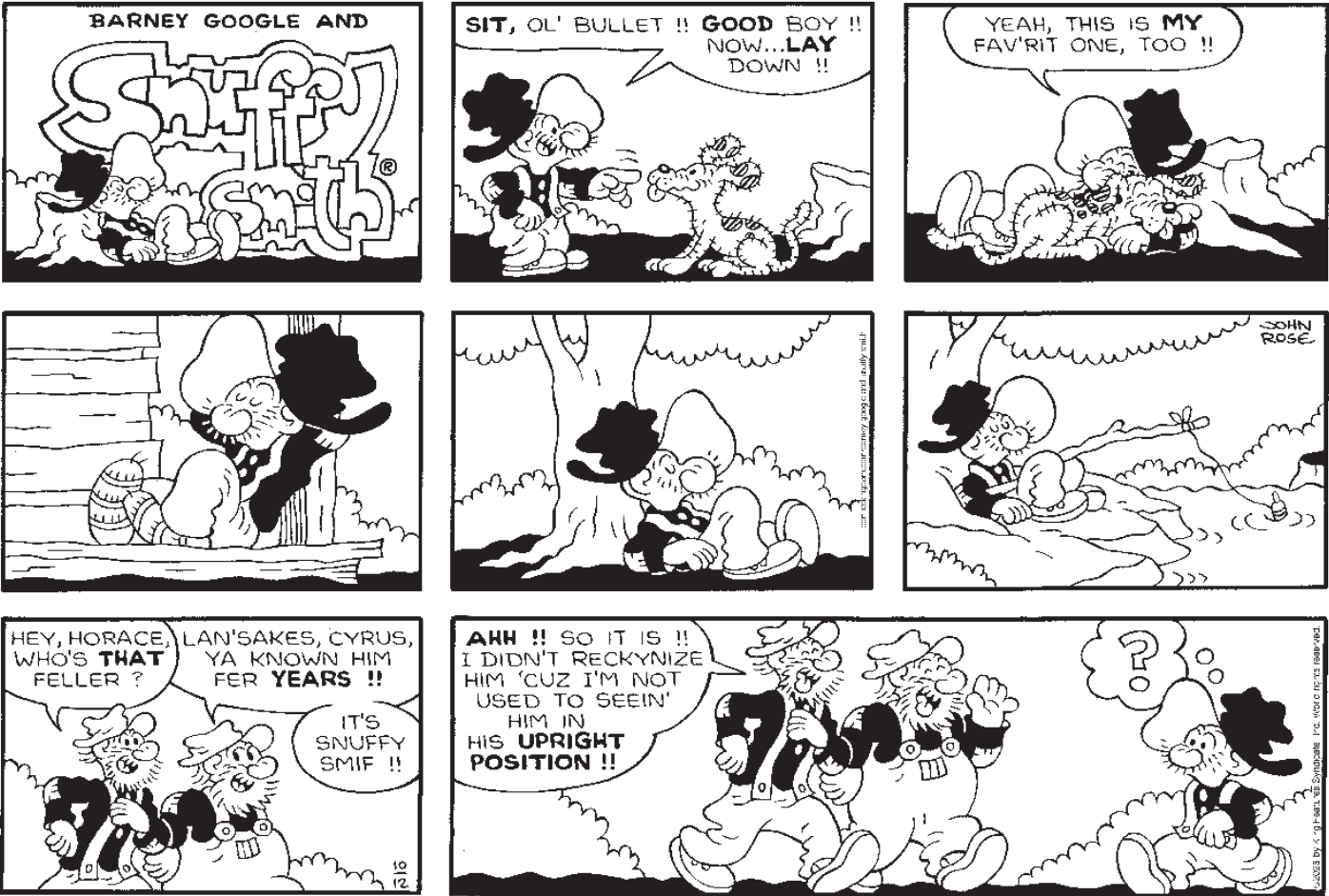
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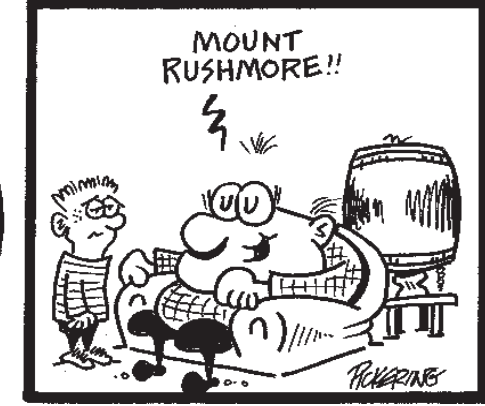
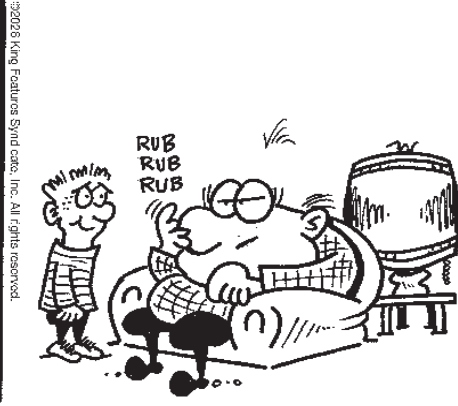
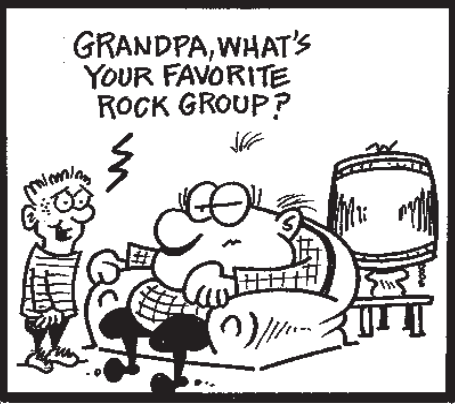
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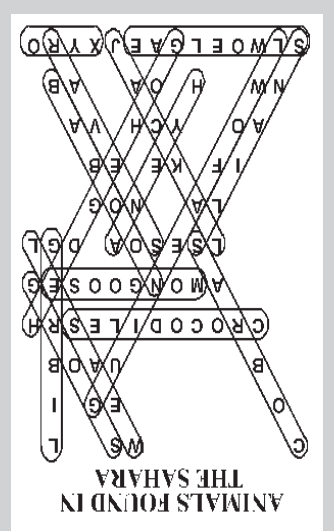
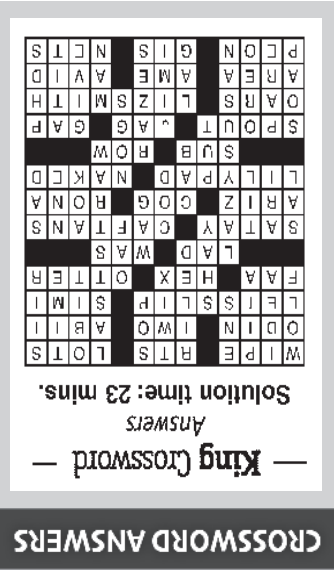
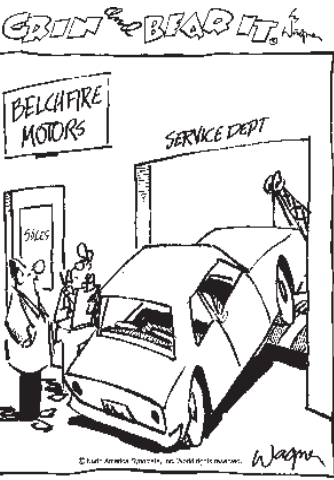
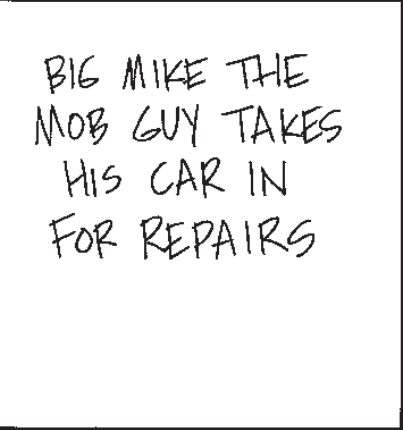
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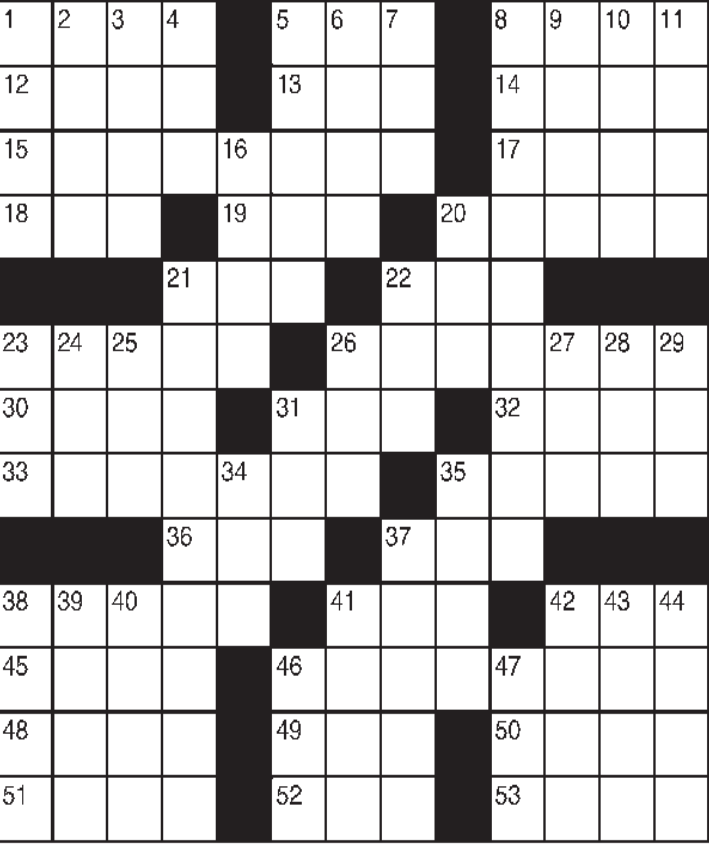


MAGIC MAZE ANSWERS

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Use a squeegee
5 ACLU concerns
8 Oodles
12 Valhalla VIP
13 — Jima
14 Slightly
15 Reveals by accident
17 California valley
18 LAX and JFK overseer
19 Bad spell
20 Playful sea critter
21 Young bloke
22 Used to be
23 Skewered Thai recipe
26 Beach robes
30 Four Corners st.
31 Gearwheel tooth
32 Barrett or Jaffe
33 Pond floater
35 Unclothed
36 Long lunch?
37 Tier
38 Teapot feature
41 Binge
42 Hiatus
45 Galley gear
46 Legendary gossip columnist



- 9 Final notice
10 Clock reading
11 Swizzle
16 Horse-drawn carriage
20 Klutz
21 Revolving tray
22 Witty one
23 Bando of baseball
24 "Exodus" hero
25 Up to
26 Massachusetts cape degrees
27 Fine, to NASA
28 Compass dir.
29 Blue
31 Taxi
34 Impose
35 Egg drinks
37 Demolishes
38 Daytime drama
39 Rid of rind
40 Sweet sandwich
41 Rock's Hendrix
42 Donate
43 Profiting
44 Prof's degrees
46 Trail the pack
47 "Sheesh!"

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ANIMALS FOUND IN THE SAHARA

ECNKIFDAXWSVTLQ
OMOJHFCAYWEGUIR
PNLBJHFDDBZUAOBX
OVT CROCODILES RH
RSQOMAMONGOOSEG
KITHFLSESOADDGL
BZYRWLAVTNOGRQO
NLKIIHFKEFEBDCA
ZXWAOCVYCHUVASR
QONWNMHKOAJIABH
FSLWOELGAEJXYRO

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: LARGE FLIGHTLESS BIRD

- Baboon Gerbil Hyena Ravens
Cobras Grogs Jackal Snails
Crocodiles Guinea fowl Mongoose Weasel
Eagle owls Hedgehog Oryx

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Legals

J26-042
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF
JOHNSON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF CARTHER CASON
JR., DECEASED
ESTATE NO. PR2026-42
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION
NOTICE

TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES and to whom it may concern:
RICKY CASON has petitioned for RICKY CASON to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of **CARTHER CASON JR.** deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before October 19, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Jennifer Morris
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Labreka McCloud
Clerk of the Probate Court
P.O. Box 264
Wrightsville, GA 31096
478-864-3316

September 22, 29, October 6, 13, 2026

J26-043
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

GEORGIA, JOHNSON COUNTY
All creditors of the estate of William Arthur Herrington, Jr., decedent, late of Johnson County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to Morgan M. Boulineau, Attorney, Cadle & Boulineau, P.C., P.O. Box 68, Swainsboro, GA 30401 according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

This 15th day of September, 2026.
Matthew Herrington, Executor of the Estate of William Arthur Herrington, Jr., decedent
Cadle & Boulineau, P.C.
P.O. Box 68
Swainsboro, GA 30401

September 22, 29, October 6, 13, 2026

J26-046
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF JOHNSON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF WILLIAM DALLAS PRICE, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. PR2026-046
NOTICE

IN RE: The Petition to Probate Will (and Codicil(s)) in Solemn Form in the above-referenced estate having been duly filed.
TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES
This is to notify you to file objection, if there is any, to the petition to probate will in solemn form, in this Court on or before November 2, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Jennifer Morris
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Patricia Claxton
Clerk of the Probate Court
P.O. Box 264
Wrightsville, GA 31096
478-864-3316

October 6, 13, 20, 27, 2026

PRIVACY
Continued from page 1

A voter activist has contended that new AI tools combined with a preexisting weakness in Georgia's voting system could empower malefactors to determine how people voted, potentially using that information to coerce voters into selecting preferred candidates.

Voting technology experts have confirmed the flaw exists.

A voter's identity is supposed to be kept separate from the ballot record, but a seemingly random number remains on the digital record of the ballot.

The number can be decoded to deconstruct the order in which ballots were scanned.

Because records that show when voters checked into their polling places are

public — and sequential — the two pieces of the puzzle can theoretically be assembled into a picture that links voters to their ballots, although check-in order does not always correlate with scanning order.

"To keep the published record anonymous, ballot scanners shuffle the electronic records randomly before releasing them. But a security vulnerability disclosed back in 2022 shows the shuffle can be reversed, and some states have not applied the software update that resolves it," Princeton University researcher Max Springer wrote in a university technology blog in August.

Georgia is among those states, he wrote.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger has already taken steps to address the flaw by restrict-

ing public access to some pieces of the puzzle.

Technical expert Ben Adida said at Thursday's virtual meeting that the weakness in Georgia's voting system is real and serious and needs to be addressed, but he said Raffensperger's approach was technically good enough for now.

Adida, the executive director of VotingWorks, which makes election equipment, added that updating the voting machine software now to improve the randomization feature would introduce a far greater danger of election chaos.

He said it would be like updating the operating system on an iPhone before a big meeting.

"In my opinion, it's far too risky to consider," he said.

But he also acknowl-

edged he was not a legal expert.

And Grubbs, a Republican appointee to the five-member board, contended that the countermeasures by Raffensperger, also a Republican, violate state transparency laws.

"We're talking about legal issues of compromising constitutional and codified ballot secrecy and a quote unquote mitigation plan that the secretary came up with that is frankly illegal," Grubbs said.

She also contended that Raffensperger's solution to protect ballot secrecy was flawed and thus could lead to lawsuits over the constitutionality of the election result.

A local election chief said at the meeting that Grubbs' proposal was impractical to implement just weeks ahead of the election.

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