INSIDE TODAY:
MILLION PINES FESTIVAL 2026

TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

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Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival returns with more than 250 vendors

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

The Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival will return to Soperton's Iva Park on Nov. 7 and Nov. 8 with over 250 vendors, the most in the festival's history.

"We're completely packed," said event organizer Tammy Pullen. "We've got a waiting list now, probably 50, 60 on there by now."

The Million Pines Arts & Crafts Festival's creation was spearheaded by Jack Pournelle and Mary Pournelle in 1972 to support local civic groups and local communities, giving them a venue to sell and promote their products. Since then, the event has achieved statewide acclaim, receiving upwards of 10,000 visitors each year according to Soperton City Mayor John Koon.

"It was just kind of a community gathering, and for years, even after I

MILLION PINES
Continued on page 8



Alamo to pursue new DOJ law enforcement grant

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

The Alamo City Council agreed to pursue a $500,000 no match grant from the federal Department of Justice's (DOJ) recently announced Assisting Neighborhoods and Governments with Enforcement of Laws (ANGEL) Grant Program during their regular meeting on Oct. 19.

According to the DOJ's Sept. 26 announcement of the program, the ANGEL Grant Program "seeks to protect American citizens from being victimized, harmed, or killed by violent criminal illegal aliens."

"This funding opportunity is a way for local law enforcement to honor victims and counter the dangerous sanctuary policies that have decimated public safety in so many states," said Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward Jr. in the announcement. "The Trump Administration and this Department of Justice want to ensure local law enforcement have the resources they need to ensure the deaths of innocent Americans never happen again."

Woodard claimed the program was targeted towards local law enforcement departments "whose states have failed to provide you with the support you need to conduct law enforcement or immigration enforcement."

A selected applicant must

ALAMO GRANT
Continued on page 7

Periodical — Mail Label



Make-up artist Maddison Atkinson applies prosthetic make-up to actor Kagan Herndon on October 24 in Treutlen County/LOGAN REYNOLDS

Scare Grounds of the South brings new faces to Treutlen horror staple

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

New operators are aiming to revitalize a long running horror attraction in Treutlen County, bringing along experience from a lifetime in the industry.

Devin Hayostek was born up north in Pennsylvania, where he became involved in horror-themed attractions from a young age.

"I went through my first haunt when I was about eight years old, started acting in one when I was 14," said Hayostek.

According to Hayostek, his interest in horror attractions is not so much an interest in horror – although he does have an interest in horror – but rather an interest in performance and entertainment.

"What I do as my career and I'm really passionate about, you know, creating a really immersive and fun Halloween experience for everyone," said Hayostek.

Hayostek would work in several roles at these attractions, and would work

SCARE
Continued on page 7



Julie Downs and Devin Hayostek pose in front of the doors to their main attraction, titled "Nightveil Manor," on October 24 in Treutlen County. The two originally lived in Pennsylvania, but moved to Georgia to pursue Devin's dream of operating a horror attraction/LOGAN REYNOLDS

Soperton City Council to take action against dog vandalism

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

The Soperton City Council affirmed its stance to leverage fines against owners of dogs guilty of vandalism during its regular meeting on Oct. 20 in the Soperton City Hall.

Soperton resident Leon Gillis spoke to the council during their work session regarding roaming packs of dogs which have vandalized multiple residents' vehicles. He recounted his own experience with the vandals, resulting in damages to his truck and his wife's car, as well as "at least six other people" affected in his neighborhood.

"The next week, the dog came back and vandalized [the car] again, and my truck again," said Gillis. "I had to spend over $18,000 repairing all that stuff."

Gillis also recounted stories from other residents whose vehicles had been affected by the dogs.

"I'm not opposed to anybody having dogs as pets, but they don't have to pay for what's going on," said Gillis."We have to pay for it."

The city council agreed with Gillis' concerns, with Mayor Pro-Tem Xandra Brown claiming a long-haired poodle to be "one of our main culprits." According to the council and Gillis, the dogs would occasionally be seen in pairs or larger groups while roaming.

Antwon McClendon said the city's public works division had been working to capture the roaming dogs, and even reported he had captured the last of the dog vandals on the day of the meeting.

"I got them all," said McClendon. "I got the last two today."

The public works department had also ordered more traps for future captures, as the limited number of traps the department owned forced city employees to frequently move the traps in order to capture the dogs.

According to the city attorney, the city of Soperton does have an ordinance in place, which would allow the city to fine dog owners "$1,000 a day" while their pets are in city custody. Mayor John Koon agreed with this approach, and asked the attorney to verify the correct owners to begin sending warning letters.

DOGS
Continued on page 7





Industrial fire in Treutlen injures two at Bitcoin mining facility

An industrial fire injured two employees at the bitcoin mining facility in the Treutlen County Industrial Park, which began at approximately 10:45 a.m. on Oct. 22. The two employees were airlifted to Augusta for treatment, and both responded positively to treatment according to County Manager Joseph Glenn. The fire was extinguished quickly, while the cause is under investigation by state authorities /LOGAN REYNOLDS

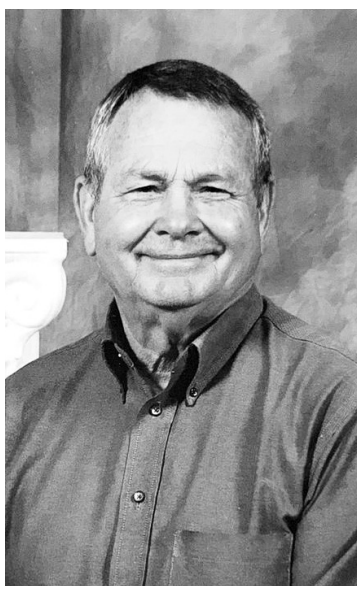
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OBITUARIES



Alvin Wheeler

Mr. Alvin Wheeler, 85, beloved husband of Kay Wheeler for 62 years, of Soperton, Georgia, passed away on Friday, Oct. 16, 2026, at his home in Treutlen County after an extended illness.

Born in Treutlen County, he was the son of Shady Alvin Wheeler Sr. and Pearl "Teny" Wheeler of Soperton. Alvin attended Treutlen High School and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Mr. Wheeler was a charter member of Morningside Baptist Church, where he served as Chairman of Deacons, Moderator of Business Meetings, and in various other positions throughout most of his adult life.

At an early age, Alvin learned to live by a simple rule: "If you get a dollar, don't spend it all—save at least ten cents." He carried this principle throughout his life and went on to establish several successful businesses, including TALCO Transfer Inc., I-16 Towing and Recovery and I-16 Truck Sales. He was also involved in timber farming.

Mr. Wheeler was active in his community, serving on the Treutlen County Board of Commissioners and the Treutlen County Development Authority. He was also a founding member of the Oglethorpe Volunteer Fire Department and established the Oglethorpe Fire Department Support Group to assist in purchasing turnout gear for the volunteer firefighters.

Mr. Wheeler leaves behind his wife of 62 years, Kay Wheeler; their three children, Stacy Wheeler, Travis Wheeler (Cheryl), and Jarrett Wheeler; six grandchildren, Stacy Wheeler, Kayla Wheeler, Keith Wheeler, Nicole Wheeler, Kevin Wheeler, and Dallas Wheeler, all of Treutlen County; and four great-grandchildren, Cameron, Dawson, Paisleigh and Aurora.

Funeral services were conducted at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2026, in the Williams Chapel of Sammons Funeral Home, with Dr. Vic Fordham and Pastor George Grimes officiating.

Mr. Wheeler will be laid to rest in Boiling Springs Baptist Church Cemetery.

Serving as pallbearers will be Kevin Wheeler, Stacy Wheeler, Mike Kight, Tommy Ennis, Mark Beasley and Jody Walsh.

Honorary pallbearers will be Bo Herndon, Trey Murphy, Sylvester Harris, Ronnie Phillips, Terry Phillips and Ronnie Peebles.

His family received friends on Monday evening, Oct. 19, 2026, from 6 until 8 p.m. at Sammons Funeral Home. Friends and family may also visit at the home of Alvin and Kay Wheeler.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Morningside Baptist Church Playground Fund.

Sammons Funeral Home - Since 1917

Lawmakers hear fallout from Georgia Supreme Court ruling against a fire fee

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia lawmakers are hearing concerns about the potential impact of a state Supreme Court ruling that struck down a firefighting fee in Chatham County last week.

The court ordered the county to refund about $30 million in fees and interest in a class-action lawsuit over its now-defunct fire service fee, but the decision could affect more than that one coastal community, since other jurisdictions levy various fees.

"This is a very large concern of Perry and all municipalities," said Randall Walker, the mayor of Perry, a city south of Macon.

Andrea Arnold, the city manager of Decatur, in metro Atlanta, said her city is seeking to grow revenue beyond property taxes. She mentioned fees on recreation, sanitation and stormwater.

The court ruling could undermine that effort, she said. "The recent state Supreme Court decision has us extremely concerned about the future of fees."

Some but not all fees are specifically authorized under state law.

Arnold and Walker presented to members of the House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Local Government Taxation, Funding, and Budgeting at its meeting in Perry on Wednesday.

Without fees, cities and counties would have limited means of generating revenue beyond property and sales taxes.

Clint Mueller, deputy director of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, illustrated the challenge for local governments by pointing to a state college in North Georgia.

State colleges do not have to pay property taxes, Mueller said. "But if a fire occurs on any of their properties, who's going to come put it out? The county fire department is going to put it out. So there's still a cost."

Rep. Mike Cheokas, R-Americus, said a county leader in his area had expressed a preference for fees over property taxes because some property owners, such as nonprofits, are exempt from paying property taxes.

"Even though you have to provide those services, you're not getting reimbursed for that," Cheokas said.

He asked advocates and local leaders for suggestions about how to resolve their concerns.

Mueller said the only way to address the ruling is to change either state law or the state constitution to make service fees legal.

The high court upheld a superior court ruling that found Chatham County's fire fee was effectively a property tax and was illegal because, unlike a property tax, it was not based on property value.

Instead, owners were billed according to the anticipated cost of extinguishing a fire on their property. The fees were partly based on square footage, so owners of larger buildings paid more.

Chatham County stopped collecting the fire service fee in June 2024.

Without it, homeowners and other property tax payers must cover the cost to protect colleges, hospitals and other tax-exempt properties from fires.

The study committee is scheduled to meet again at the Capitol on Wednesday, when the discussion about fees could continue.

PASTOR'S VIEWPOINT

By CHARLES "BUDDY" WHATLEY

It's an unwritten rule of scripture and of almost any other book we read that if something is repeated, it's important. Remember our stories of the leper and now the lame man appears in all three synoptic gospels... Matthew, Mark and Luke because they are similar. Synoptic comes from "syn" meaning together and "optic" meaning seeing; the first three gospels see things in much the same way... the fourth gospel John is quite different and now we're ready for our story of the lame man and his mat!

Jesus is teaching and preaching in Capernaum inside a packed house with people standing outside because there was no room in the house. Mark 2.1-2 tells us, "A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.

Suddenly, four men, apparently friends of the lame man, appear outside the house carrying a mat with the lame man lying on it, but there was no room in the house for them. And we can't help but think of Jesus' birth when there was no room in the inn for him. Then Mark 2 and Luke 5.18 add to the story, "When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. Suddenly four friends become four very good friends because they won't take no for an answer. They literally dig a hole in the roof and lower the mat and their friend down to the feet of Jesus... meanwhile not making friends in the house as the roof literally falls down on the crowd.

Then Mark 2.5 records an unexpected moment, "When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" After all their work, they wanted Jesus to say, "Get up and walk;" but all they get is, "Your sins are forgiven." Only then does Jesus say in Luke 5.24, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Never forget God's goal is wholeness, both physical and spiritual!

Charles 'Buddy' Whatley is a retired Methodist pastor serving Dawson Street Methodist Church in Thomasville, Ga.



(Front) Ella Bell; (back row, left to right) Madelyn Burkett, Cady Brown, Kewon Coats, Kendrick Pound/**SPECIAL PHOTO**

4th graders explore the wonders of space in science class

Mrs. Bridges' fourth-grade science students had an exciting start to the school year as they explored the wonders of space during the first several weeks of class.

Throughout the unit, students participated in a variety of hands-on activities designed to expand their knowledge of the universe. They created Solar System projects, demonstrated the phases of the Moon using Oreo cookies, and learned about different types of space technology, including telescopes, space probes and observatories.

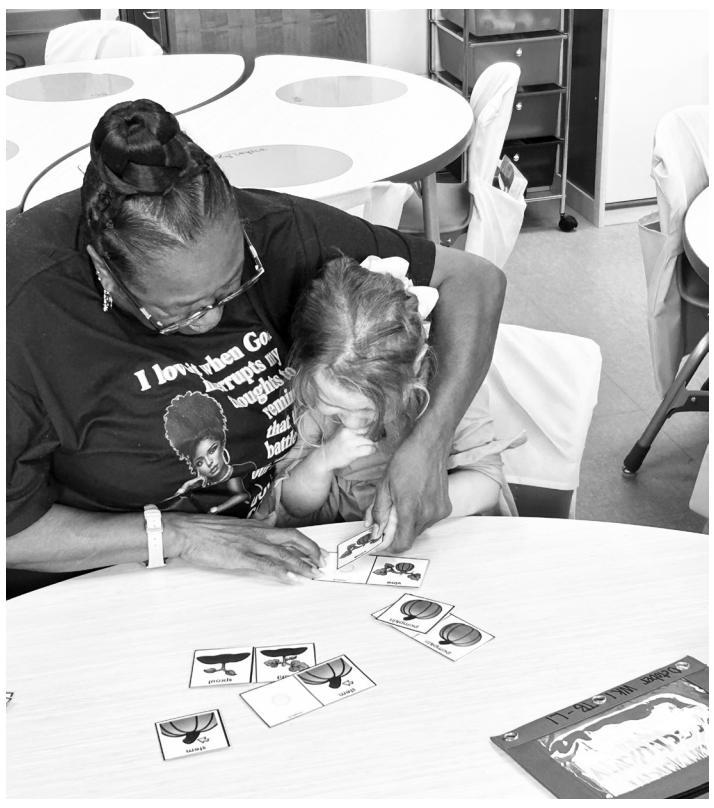
Students also discovered how Earth's movements affect our daily lives. They learned how Earth's orbit around the Sun and its tilted axis contribute to the changing seasons, while Earth's rotation creates the cycle of day and night.

Through these engaging lessons and creative projects, Mrs. Bridges' students have been busy developing their scientific knowledge and exploring the mysteries of the universe.

The school year is off to an exciting start, and Mrs. Bridges and her students look forward to more discoveries and adventures as they continue their journey through fourth-grade science.



Isabella Pope; (back row, left to right) Lakelee Smith, Roscoe Butler, Justin James/**SPECIAL PHOTO**



Mrs. Browning and Ms. Collins' Class learn about pumpkins

Fall learning is in full swing in Mrs. Browning and Ms. Collins' class in Wheeler County. Students have been enjoying the book *Pumpkin, Pumpkin* by Jeanne Titherington while exploring the world of pumpkins through hands-on activities.

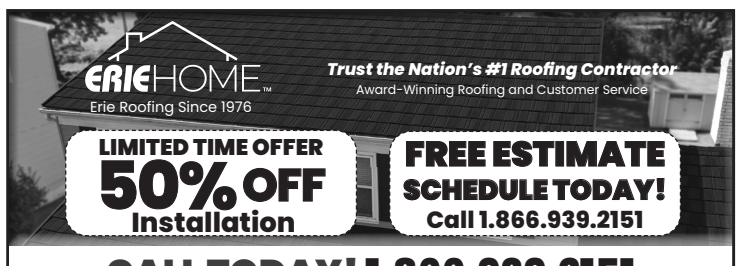
In *Pumpkin, Pumpkin*, readers follow Jamie as he plants a pumpkin seed and watches it grow. The story takes students through the pumpkin's life cycle, from a tiny seed to a growing vine, a flower, and finally a big, orange pumpkin. The story provides a wonderful opportunity for students to learn how plants grow and change over time.

One of the exciting activities taking place in the classroom is a pumpkin vocabulary task box! Students are practicing matching pumpkin-related words with pictures, strengthening their vocabulary, picture recognition and matching skills while reinforcing what they have learned.

Mrs. Browning and Ms. Collins' class is having a *gourd* time learning all about pumpkins. Students pictured are Larry Rapp, Judson Knowles and Brynlee Butler.

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DID YOU KNOW...?

How old was the youngest serviceman to fight for the U.S. in World War II?

By JACK BAGLEY
GTLN

Well, this week's Halloween, the first of the four year-end events (three of them are holidays but Halloween isn't). Can you believe we're this close to the end of the year already?

Neither can I.

I've already decided that I'll follow my usual custom regarding Halloween - I won't dress up in a silly costume, and I won't participate in the extortion of candy by kids. I'm cheap. Put the cuffs on me.

On second thought, don't put the cuffs on me. They aren't comfortable in any configuration.

What the heck, let's just get to this week's trivia. Oh ... and Trick or Treat!

Did you know ...

... the numbering of the U.S. Interstate Highway system actually makes a kind of sense? North-south Interstates are numbered sequentially, beginning in the west, with odd numbers, while the east-west Interstates are numbered beginning in the south with even numbers. A three-digit Interstate number indicates a connecting route, with the first digit being the purpose of the road and the last two the major highway it connects with. A three-digit Interstate number can be repeated as often as necessary, but not more than once in a state. (I always wondered about that.)

... only one woman, to date, has appeared on a U.S. currency note? First First Lady Martha Washington (1731-1802) had her portrait on the face of the $1 silver certificate notes of 1886 and 1891, and on the back of the $1 silver certificate of 1896. Two women have been featured on coins: Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Sacagawea (1788-1812), who both appeared on U.S. one-dollar coins. (They spend, that's all that matters.)

... an abandoned Russian cruise ship was a navigation menace for years? The MV *Lyubov Orlova*, built in 1976, was used for cruises to Antarctica. The ship was taken out of service in 2010 and sat for two years at a dock in St. John's Newfoundland, Canada. In 2012, while the issues of decommissioning the ship were being dealt with, the *Lyubov Orlova* was being towed for scrapping to the Dominican Republic when it broke free from its tow lines. For the next several months, the ship drifted in international waters. It is believed that the *Lyubov Orlova* sank some time in 2013, but no one is sure. (Holy ghost ship, Batman!)

... the youngest U.S. serviceman to fight in World War II joined when he was twelve? Calvin Graham (1930-1992) enlisted in the Navy on August 15, 1942, in Houston, Texas. He served aboard the USS *South Dakota* and his ship participated in several battles, with Graham earning a Bronze Star and Purple Heart, along with a couple of Navy Commendations. After Graham was a day late in getting to his grandmother's funeral in Texas in 1943, however, his mother revealed to the government how old he really was, and the Navy discharged him and his awards were revoked. Graham joined the Marine Corps in 1948, but his enlistment ended early when he fell from a pier and broke his back. His original discharge was upgraded to an honorable one and his military medals from World War II (except for the Purple Heart) were reinstated in 1978. Graham's Purple Heart was finally reinstated in 1994, after his death. (It takes the government a while, it seems, to recognize courage when they see it.)

... a shrimp has five pairs of legs? (Which makes going to the shoe store an absolute horror sometimes.)

... three states in the U.S. have an official bat? Virginia claims the Virginia big-eared bat as its "official" flying mammal, while Texas and Oklahoma lay claim to the Mexican free-tailed bat. (Then there's Kentucky, whose official bat is the Louisville Slugger™.)

... most Americans cannot pass their own citizenship test? Of immigrants who come to the United States and seek legal citizenship, an amazing 91% are able to take the citizenship test and pass it, most on the first try. By comparison, a sampling of American citizens living in Miami showed that only one out of 15 could pass the test. (There's something very disconcerting about that fact.)

... gorillas are very intelligent primates? They have been observed using tools, and having varied forms of communication. Gorillas can even be taught sign language. One classic example was Koko (1971-2018), a gorilla kept at the Gorilla Foundation preserve in Woodside, California. During her lifetime, Koko learned about 1,000 words or concepts in American Sign Language, with which she was able to communicate with her keepers. She showed remarkable intelligence, too: When shown a ring but not taught the sign for it, Koko combined two signs she knew, "finger" and "bracelet," for the concept of a ring. (Heck, I'm not that smart.)

... archaeologists once discovered what they thought was apparent proof of UFOs? In 1938, an archaeological expedition to China discovered stone disks about nine inches in diameter in caves in the Baian-Kara-Ula Mountains. Each of the 716 disks was reportedly etched with tiny hieroglyphics which, when translated, told a story about "aircraft from other worlds crashing into the mountains." Also called the Dropa stones, the disks were allegedly given to museums in China, but none of the disks has ever been put on display. Interestingly, the museums mentioned do not seem to have any record of the disks, and that leads many researchers to believe they are simply a hoax. (Oh well, easy come, easy go.)

... you won't find penguins just in Antarctica? Sure, that's where most of them are, but you'll also find significant populations of the flightless swimmers in New Zealand, Chile, Australia, South Africa, and Argentina. (They do get around.)

Now ... you know!

A pomegranate and a pitbull: A cautionary adventure

THE NEW SOUTHERN DAD



By KYLE DOMINY

The pomegranate shrub grows along an old fence row on some old family property. When it was planted, I don't know, but it has grown there as long as I can remember. What I can tell you is I look forward to collecting the fruit that weighs down the limbs about this time of year.

On one side of the fence is a long dusty drive that leads into the woods. On the other is a pitbull. This season the choicest of pomegranates grew on the wrong side of the fence.

First, a little about the pitbull. It belongs to my cousin, who has an affinity for the breed. This animal is a beautiful, well-cared for specimen, that, besides a ferocious bark and walking around on an imposing all-muscle frame, doesn't appear to be aggressive. In fact, outside of the fence and when its owner is present, the dog is as friendly as any family pet.

That being said, I'm not taking any chances unaccompanied on its home turf.

The fear of pitbulls is a new phenomenon in our society. In the late 19th Century, the dogs were praised as the quintessential American breed, representing hard work. During the World Wars, pitbulls were used as patriotic mascots featured on recruitment posters and war bond ad campaigns. However, acts of cruelty have followed the breed and given it some negative notoriety.

The cultural significance of the pomegranate goes back even further - to old times, civilizations and religions. The fruit represents fertility, abundance, life and the hereafter. The Egyptians buried their kings with pomegranates and a variety of treasures fashioned after the fruit. The columns along King Solomon's temple were adorned with carved pomegranates. In ancient Greece the pomegranate was considered the fruit of the dead, and the seeds bound Persephone to the god of the underworld.

Now they are an overpriced superfood loved by nutrition influencers and health nuts. Unless you have access to an heirloom shrub, preferably one not watched over by a large dog.

Temptation presents itself in many ways. Mine was looking at a ripe piece of fruit, out of arm's reach with a knee-level pitbull barking just a few feet away. As I walked along the road side of the fence recently, I thought I would have to settle for the smaller bounty growing within the safe harvesting range.

Then opportunity reared its head. Something else caught the dog's attention, some other perceived threat that sent it sprinting along the fence row. I knew I couldn't pass up that chance but try as I might, leaning against the rusted metal wire of the structure, I still couldn't reach the bounty before me.

It was only a matter of time before the guard dog returned its attention to me. I grasped at the limbs of the plant, pulling the tree's canopy closer and closer until finally I was able to pluck the fruit that I desired.

That may seem like a lot of work to get three pomegranates. And perhaps it is. That's why I intend on planting the seeds from one so I can eventually harvest my own ... pitbull not included.

COUCH THEATER



Stephen Graham, left, and Liev Schreiber star in "Nocturne"/**Photo courtesy of Apple TV**

By DEMI TAVERAS
King Features

Nocturne (TV-MA)

Liev Schreiber ("Splinter Cell: Deathwatch") leads this six-episode crime-drama series premiering on Oct. 30. The series follows homicide detective Jonah Lynn (Schreiber), who gets pulled back into one of his previous cases after more victims start to go missing. At a loss as to how there could be more victims when the original perpetrator is behind bars, Jonah's FBI agent daughter, Saga (Zazie Beetz), volunteers to go undercover and get closer to the serial killer. But as determined as Saga and Jonah are, serial killer Jurek Walter (Stephen Graham) is a master manipulator and knows how to unearth the buried emotions inside those he has affected. (Apple TV)

Carrie (TV-MA)

The 1974 novel "Carrie" by Stephen King has seen a few adaptations, including Brian De Palma's 1976 film, the 2013 version starring Chloe Grace Moretz, and now a 2026 eight-episode miniseries! Summer H. Howell ("Normal"), who began working in film and TV as a child actress, takes on the iconic role of the telekinetic Carrie White. Howell was undoubtedly in great hands under the direction of Mike Flanagan, who's known as the showrunner for horror series like "The Haunting of Hill House" and "The Fall of the House of Usher." Other notable names in the cast include Matthew Lillard ("Behemoth!") and Samantha Sloyan ("The Exorcist: Martyrs"). Stream it now before spooky season comes to a close! (Amazon Prime Video)

East of Eden (TV-MA)

Florence Pugh ("Dune: Part Three") is no stranger to period pieces, having starred as the well-mannered Amy March in Greta Gerwig's "Little Women" (2019). So, she's an excellent choice to portray Cathy Ames in this seven-episode TV adaptation of John Steinbeck's 1952 novel. Taking place in the late 1800s through World War I, the series tells a story that explores similar themes to the story of Cain and Abel in the Book of Genesis. It particularly focuses on the marriage between Cathy and her husband, Adam, her subsequently leaving her twin sons and husband, and the emotional turmoil it left behind to each of them. Mike Faist ("Challengers") and Christopher Abbott ("You Can See Everything") co-star alongside Pugh. The entire series is out now to stream. (Netflix)

War (TV-MA)

It's clearly a week for television, and this week's final pick is a sleek legal-drama series led by Dominic West ("The Crown") and Sienna Miller ("Horizon: An America Saga"). Since it's deemed an anthology series, the main characters will change as the seasons progress. This first season, which has already premiered its first four episodes, focuses on a divorce case between a tech mogul named Morgan (West) and an international actress named Carla (Miller). Each has the backing of a top London law firm, and although their intentions are to keep the proceedings as civilized as possible, war is sure to erupt between them and their lawyers once the case starts leaning too far in either direction. New episodes premiere every Thursday. (HBO Max)

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Fall color



LORAN SMITH

As one gets older, trips down memory lane become more treasured, and now that fall is upon is, those moments when I can sit by an indolent fire with a good book and a glass of wine are more appreciated than ever.

October has been in a sprint since September ebbed away amid the most bothersome and prolonged heat that I can remember, and now I wish we could slow October down with little more than a week left in my favorite month.

I want to meet up with my friend Jimmy Harris, who has taken me fishing on the Chatthoochee for years. I could spend hours and days reminiscing about fishing this Georgia tributary.

He taught himself to become a fly fisherman, and he is an expert who often takes off for flyfishing destinations such as the Rocky Mountain West and Argentina.

However, he can't get enough of fly-fishing opportunities in his own back yard—and the Chattahoochee which has its beginning at Jack's Knob in the Blue Ridge Mountains and flows past Columbus forming the boundary of Georgia and Alabama.

All along the Chattahoochee River, there are fishing and recreational opportunities. There are places in Atlanta where you can fish for trout with high-rise buildings in the background.

For years I frequently visited with Atlanta friends who lived near Lovett School and would walk the track around the football field and commune with nature. Listen to the Chattahoochee as it flowed by and spook the Canada geese, which congregated there in the early morning.

Sometimes when I take a long flight, like to the West Coast, I find myself enraptured with the solitude and conjure up in my mind's eye the images of the Chattahoochee that I hold dear, which fortunately never fade away.

To accompany Jimmy Harris into the Chattahoochee and listen to the whisper of my favorite river is an experience that I will never tire of—which I am about to experience again.

I cannot imagine living in this bountiful state and not fishing the Chatthoochee and swooning to its effects. To wade out into this classic mountain stream and feel the cool waters slapping against your waders, seeing a whitetail deer monitoring all movements, and observing a flock of mallards settling softly on the river as you prepare to make a cast into the water—a tiny fly awkwardly meeting up with a ripple, taking your lure downstream.

Wham—bam! A rainbow trout parked stealthily in a shadow streaks toward the fly with the greatest of alacrity and heads downstream as you feel the line on your rod tighten, his actions signaling that he is full of fight and will not capitulate.

The fly rod bends almost double, as "mister three pounder" slams about with unending commitment and resolve. Even though your concentration must be maintained as you tire him out and reel him to your net, you, nonetheless, are consciously aware of the setting in which you are blessed to be immersed—the refreshing North Georgia mountains, the still pristine Chattahoochee flowing freely, and nature's bounty reminding you that you are fortunate to be away from guns, violence, and greed.

As you and your bounty both try to catch your respective breaths, you wish the outdoor experience for the world over. Instead of placing the United Nations Building in New York, why not set up shop on the banks of the Chattahoochee? After a good night's sleep for all delegates, let them fly fish in the mornings and then dine on silver queen corn for lunch. Lunch to be followed by a 30-minute nap. Negotiating would take place in the afternoon.

Methinks that environment would take the hostility out of the give-and-take sessions to make the world more compatible and hospitable.

From Albany to Atlanta, on and with purpose



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

Albany Georgia is the kind of place you have to go to on purpose. It's about 45 minutes to an hour off I-75, whether you're traveling from Cordele or Tifton. It's landlocked in the heart of Southwest Georgia. And it's one of the places that helped me fully understand and appreciate, as an "Atlantan", the outlook of those who live in rural Georgia.

About a decade ago I was asked to join a trip through South Georgia with those who had worked on constructing and passing the revised gas tax formula with a bill that added almost one billion dollars per year to Georgia's road repaving and bridge rebuilding budget. That bill also added the first dedicated state funding to transit systems.

The era was just past the peak of the Tea Party movement, and some leaders were a bit nervous how the bill was being received at the local level. This particular leg of presentations that were part sales, part listening tour, took us from Columbus one late afternoon, to Albany for dinner, and on to Valdosta for a breakfast presentation the following morning.

The Albany stop was different from the public town hall type events in the other two cities. We arrived a bit late to what I recall was a nice steakhouse and were welcomed and escorted to a room in the back. A handful of community leaders had been assembled by the local chamber to have dinner with us and chat.

I recall the setup being a "U" shaped assemblage of tables where the local chamber folks were mostly on one side. Our group filled in most of the other side. The Chamber President sat toward the middle. I was the closest of our group to her.

Everyone was hungry by the time we arrived. Food was served promptly and everyone began eating. Our guys were making small talk among themselves, as were the hosts on the other side of the table. The Chamber President and I exchanged a few awkward looks as whatever collaboration we were supposed to be having wasn't yet happening.

I, lacking shyness and always willing to risk inappropriateness, spoke up a bit over the voice level everyone else was using and said to her, "Well, I'm sure y'all are weary of people saying we're from Atlanta and we're here to help, but what's on everyone's mind?"

The others quit talking. Everyone looked at the Chamber President for her response.

She didn't flinch. In a very direct and sincere voice she said "No. We're genuinely happy someone is here to ask."

What followed was a long two-way conversation that lasted for more than two hours. We arrived off schedule and departed for Valdosta even more so. I and we learned a lot in that time. I still remember quite a bit of it.

The transportation dream goal was to extend the rail line from Cordele, which was Georgia's first "inland port", to get direct and higher speed freight rail access to Georgia's growing ports. That would go a long way to helping them attract businesses. Unlike Metro Atlanta and most of North and Coastal Georgia, the Southwest corner of the state was losing population and jobs.

We drilled down further. I got granular. I asked specifically what kind of employers they were hoping to attract. The realistic short term goal was a meatpacker, or some other type of food processor.

I'd been covering Economic Development announcements for years. They weren't looking for a Kia factory like West Point had landed. Metro Atlanta had been landing regional tech headquarters and bio-science jobs with six figure average salaries. Albany wanted, dare I say needed, employers to help them process regionally grown food.

Governor Brian Kemp shifted the focus of Economic Development to Rural Georgia. The success of the efforts have transformed both the rural economy and as we're seeing with the current elections, the issues and expectations of much of the state.

Albany was not left behind. Outdoor Network added a new facility to build outboard boat motors. Proctor & Gamble shifted production of some major brands to their facilities in the area. Several logistics companies have also expanded in the area.

Economic development success is measured differently in different parts of the state. In Albany and much of deep rural Georgia, every job matters.

Governor Kemp also noticed that commitment to land every job and employ every Georgian by that Chamber President, even if it might not raise eyebrows to most Metro Atlantans. Her name is Barbara Rivera Homes, and Governor Kemp appointed her as Labor Commissioner after the death of Commissioner Bruce Thompson.

She's now running for election, on the ballot for the first time. I didn't meet her as a politician, but as someone who very much understood what people "from Atlanta" could do to help (or hurt) the prospects of those who live and work in remote parts of the state.

Now she is in one of those pivotal positions. She works in Atlanta. I have no doubt that when she is in rural Georgia, people know instantly that she is there to help.

Reflections on a grandson who left us much too soon



DICK YARBROUGH

Editor's note: This feature originally ran in September 2023.

My oldest grandson, Zachary Earl Wansley, died 15 years ago this past week while on a training run for an upcoming marathon. He was 21 years old. I am not sure what he would be doing today were he here, but I am positive whatever it might be, he would be a success. He always was.

As to what happened, I do not know. Zack was at the peak of physical condition. The results of the autopsy were shared with his parents, my daughter and son-in-law. I never asked because it wouldn't bring him back.

One of the first calls I received when word got out that my grandson had died was from former Gov. Carl Sanders, who had lost his own grandson after a long and debilitating illness. No one, he told me, should ever outlive their children or grandchildren. Wiser words this great man never spoke.

But outlive Zack, I have done. And now I am left with the memories of an exceptional young man who was the epitome of an achiever. He was an honor student, president of his high school senior class, captain of the cross-country team and winner of the Journal Cup as the school's Outstanding Graduate. None of this went to his head. If there was a vote for Most Likeable, he would have won that, too. Zack was the total package.

Both of his grandfathers were graduates of the University of Georgia as were his father and mother, so there was no question as to where Zachary would be going to college. And off to college he went – to The Georgia Institute of Technology. Not a spur of the moment decision, either. This kid was always an unrepentant and unapologetic Yellow Jacket, who could more than hold his own with all the Bulldogs in his family.

As with everything else he did, Zack excelled academically at Tech and was a member of the cross-country team until he chose to participate in the institution's co-op program, where he would work a semester and attend classes a semester. And, of course, he was highly regarded by the firm for whom he worked and who made a sizeable donation to Georgia Tech in his memory when he passed away.

When our four grandsons turned 10, the Beloved Woman Who Shared My Name decided we would take each on a trip of their choosing in the U.S. No parents allowed. Zack and his younger brother, Nicholas, wanted to ride a domed train overnight from Seattle to San Diego. One of their cousins, Brian, wanted to go fly-fishing in Montana, and the other, Thomas, chose Boston.

The trips were such a success we decided to do it again before the grandboys were grown and gone. This time, Nicholas decided to go to Scotland where his grandmother's ancestors had lived. Brian opted for the bright lights of New York City, and Thomas, a visit to the D-Day beaches at Normandy. That left only Zack.

As the oldest grandson and the one I had loved the longest, I told him we would go anywhere on this planet he wanted to go. Just name it. His request? He wanted to go to Yankee Stadium to see the New York Yankees play and then to Boston's Fenway Park to see a Red Sox game. I reiterated that I was talking about anywhere on this planet. He reiterated he was talking about Yankee Stadium and Fenway Park. So we went to Yankee Stadium and Fenway Park.

It was, appropriately, the trip of a lifetime. We had our own private box at Yankee Stadium. In Boston, we were treated like royalty by the fans around us when they discovered a grandfather and his grandson had traveled up from Georgia to see their beloved "Sox" play. Four months later, Zack was gone. But that memory is forever.

Three months after Zack died, Cameron Charles Yarbrough made his appearance as the family's first great-grandchild and, soon to be 15, is showing much of the same drive to succeed as the cousin he never got to meet. Cameron is an excellent student and a promising high school cross-country runner. I have reminded him he could have no better role model than Zachary Earl Wansley.

There is no use questioning why someone so special with so much potential was taken from us so suddenly. It happened and nothing can change that fact. All I know is that no one should ever outlive a child or grandchild. And I have.

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



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LEGALS

TREUTLEN CO. LEGALS

S26-056
TREUTLEN SUPERIOR COURT
TRADE NAME REGISTRATION
PERSONNALLY APPEARED THE UNDERSIGNED WHO ON OATH DEPOSES AND SAYS THAT:
HIDDEN ACRES SPECIALIZED SERVICES, LLC
2087 ROCKLEDGE ROAD, ROCKLEDGE, GA 30454
IS/ARE DOING BUSINESS IN TREUTLEN COUNTY, GA., UNDER THE NAME OF:
DEEP SOUTH MAINTENANCE & REPAIR
6745 GA HWY 86, SOPERTON, GA 30457
AND THAT THE NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE CARRIED ON AT SUCH ADDRESS IS:
DIESEL & AUTO REPAIR
SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS 19TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2026.
MARY CAULEY
NOTARY PUBLIC
OCTOBER 29, NOVEMBER 5, 2026

S26-050
SUMMARIES OF PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
PURSUANT TO REQUIREMENTS OF THE GEORGIA CONSTITUTION, ATTORNEY GENERAL CHRISTOPHER CARR, SECRETARY OF STATE BRAD RAFFENSPERGER, AND LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BETSY HOWERTON HEREBY PROVIDE THE SUMMARIES OF THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS THAT WILL APPEAR ON THE NOVEMBER 3, 2026, GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE PEOPLE OF GEORGIA (SHORT CAPTIONS ARE THOSE ADOPTED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS PUBLICATION BOARD):
-1 -
INCREASES THE MAXIMUM QUALIFYING ACREAGE FOR ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION AS BONA FIDE CONSERVATION USE PROPERTY.
HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 32
GA. L. 2025, P. 1081
( ) YES
( ) NO
SHALL THE CONSTITUTION OF GEORGIA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING FAMILY FARMLAND, BE AMENDED SO AS TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM ACREAGE TO QUALIFY FOR ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION AS A BONA FIDE CONSERVATION USE PROPERTY FROM 2,000 ACRES TO 4,000 ACRES?"
SUMMARY
THIS PROPOSAL INCREASES THE MAXIMUM ACREAGE TO QUALIFY FOR ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION AS A BONA FIDE CONSERVATION USE PROPERTY FROM 2,000 ACRES TO 4,000 ACRES. IT AMENDS ARTICLE VII, SECTION I, PARAGRAPH III OF THE GEORGIA CONSTITUTION, RELATING TO UNIFORMITY, CLASSIFICATION OF PROPERTY, ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND, AND UTILITIES, BY REVISING SUBPARAGRAPH (E)(1).
A COPY OF THIS ENTIRE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE JUDGE OF THE PROBATE COURT AND IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.
- 2 -
PROVIDES FOR THE NONPARTISAN ELECTION OF ALL PROBATE COURT JUDGES.
HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 251
GA. L. 2026, P. 1110
( ) YES
( ) NO
SHALL THE CONSTITUTION OF GEORGIA BE AMENDED SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT ALL PROBATE COURT JUDGES BE ELECTED IN NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS?"
SUMMARY
THIS PROPOSAL PROVIDES THAT ALL PROBATE JUDGES SHALL BE ELECTED IN NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS. IT AMENDS ARTICLE VI, SECTION VII, PARAGRAPH I OF THE GEORGIA CONSTITUTION, RELATING TO SELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE OF JUDGES, BY REVISING SUBPARAGRAPH (A).
A COPY OF THIS ENTIRE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE JUDGE OF THE PROBATE COURT AND IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.
- 3 -
AUTHORIZES CREATION OF GEORGIA NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 FUND FOR 9-1-1 SYSTEMS EXPANSION, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATION.
HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1243
GA. L. 2026, P. 1109
( ) YES
( ) NO
SHALL THE CONSTITUTION OF GEORGIA BE AMENDED SO AS TO AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO DEDICATE CERTAIN EXISTING REVENUES, INCLUDING REVENUES REALLOCATED BY LAW, TO A NONLAPSING FUND TO BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE EXPANSION, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATION OF EMERGENCY 9-1-1 SYSTEMS IN THIS STATE?"
SUMMARY
THIS PROPOSAL AUTHORIZES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE BY GENERAL LAW FOR THE CREATION OF THE GEORGIA NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 FUND. IT AMENDS ARTICLE III, SECTION IX, PARAGRAPH VI OF THE GEORGIA CONSTITUTION, RELATING TO APPROPRIATIONS TO BE FOR SPECIFIC SUMS, BY ADDING A NEW SUBPARAGRAPH (S).
A COPY OF THIS ENTIRE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE JUDGE OF THE PROBATE COURT AND IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.
OCTOBER 15, 22, 29, 2026

S26-057
ABANDONED MOTOR VEHICLE ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE:
YOU ARE HEREBY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OCGA 40-11-19 (A) 2, THAT PETITIONS WERE FILED IN THE MAGISTRATE COURT OF TREUTLEN COUNTY TO FORECLOSE LIENS FOR ALL AMOUNTS OWED. IF THE LIEN IS FORECLOSED, A COURT SHALL ORDER THE SALE OF THE VEHICLE TO SATISFY THE DEBT. THE VEHICLE IS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT: 2B'S TOWING, LLC YARD LOCATED AT 5420 GA HWY 29 SOPERTON, GA. (478) 455-0293 ANYONE WITH AN OWNERSHIP INTEREST IN THIS VEHICLE SHOULD CONTACT THE BUSINESS ABOVE.

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MODEL: COROLLA
OCTOBER 29, NOVEMBER 5, 2026

Pre-K scientists make big discovery in Mrs. Poole and Mrs. Rivers' class

Our Pre-K classroom was filled with curiosity, excitement, and a little pumpkin magic this week as our young scientists participated in a hands-on Pumpkin Investigation!

The investigation began with a close look at our classroom pumpkin. Students used their observation skills to describe what they noticed. They discovered that the pumpkin was orange, round, heavy, and big. They also noticed that it had a stem and lines running down its sides.

Our little learners put their math skills to work, too! Using connecting cubes, the class measured the pumpkin and discovered that it stood 15 cubes tall. Then, the students counted the lines on the pumpkin and found a total of 24 lines!

The biggest question of the day was, "Will our pumpkin sink or float?" Before testing their predictions, students shared their guesses. Four students predicted that the pumpkin would sink, while the rest of the class predicted that it would float.

It was finally time to test their predictions! With eager eyes watching, the pumpkin was placed in the water, and the class made an exciting discovery: Our pumpkin floated!

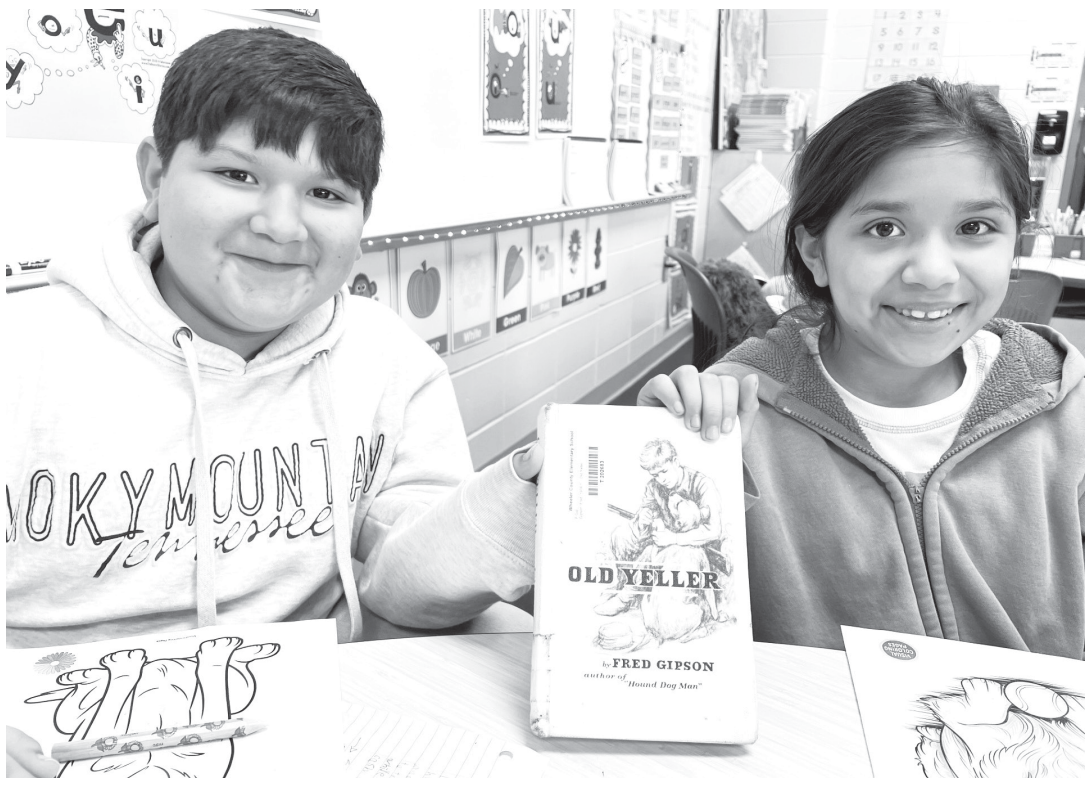
This fun investigation gave students the opportunity to practice observation, measurement, counting, prediction, and scientific thinking. Most importantly, it reminded us that learning is even more exciting when we can explore, ask questions, and discover answers together!

Our little scientists are growing big minds, one investigation at a time!

Who knew one pumpkin could teach us so much?



Back row: Judson Knowles, Elijah Mancio, Rhett Taylor, Da'Shaun Solomon, Ian Nelms, Ridge Keene, Larry Rapp, Kannon Sharpe. Middle row: Patience Moore, Liberty King, Khloey Mitchell, Heidi Davis, Kalli Davis. Front row: Imaray Aviles, Laney Harvill, Bryce Williams, Mary Hale



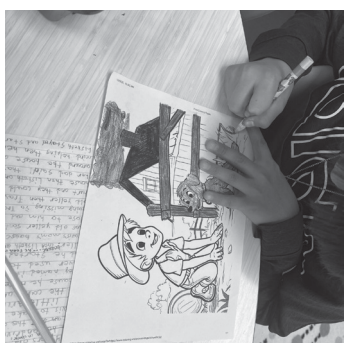
Students discover important life lessons through Old Yeller

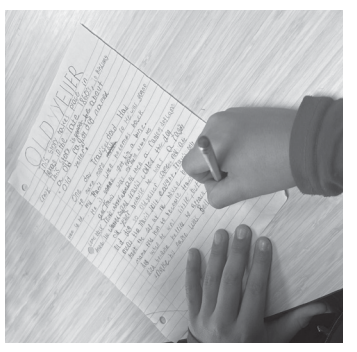
By SEÑORA FORD
Wheeler County Schools

This year, our fourth- and fifth-grade students began reading chapter books, and one of the books they chose was Old Yeller by Fred Gipson.

During class, students took turns reading the chapters aloud while their classmates followed along in their books. After reading, we discussed what happened in each chapter, learned new vocabulary words, and made predictions about what might happen next. These activities helped students improve their reading skills, learn new words, and understand the story more deeply.

Now, students are working on essays about the book. We also plan to watch the movie version of Old Yeller and compare it with the book. Students will discuss the similarities and differences between the two versions. Books often include more details about the characters, their feelings, and the events in the story than movies do. This is one reason reading is so important!





One of the most meaningful parts of this book is the lesson about kindness, love, and responsibility. Students shared that they learned to be kind to animals and people, even if they are not members of their own families.

Old Yeller plays an important role in the Coates family. He protects them from danger on several occasions and shows loyalty and courage. As Travis grows closer to Old Yeller, he learns about love, responsibility, and making difficult decisions. The ending is especially emotional because Travis must make a heartbreaking decision, even though he loves Old Yeller.

Through this book, students are learning more than reading skills. They discover important life lessons about friendship, compassion, courage, and the meaning of love.

Reading Old Yeller has been a wonderful opportunity for our students to enjoy a classic story while developing their reading, writing, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Most importantly, it reminds us that love and kindness can come from unexpected places and that sometimes the hardest decisions are made of love.

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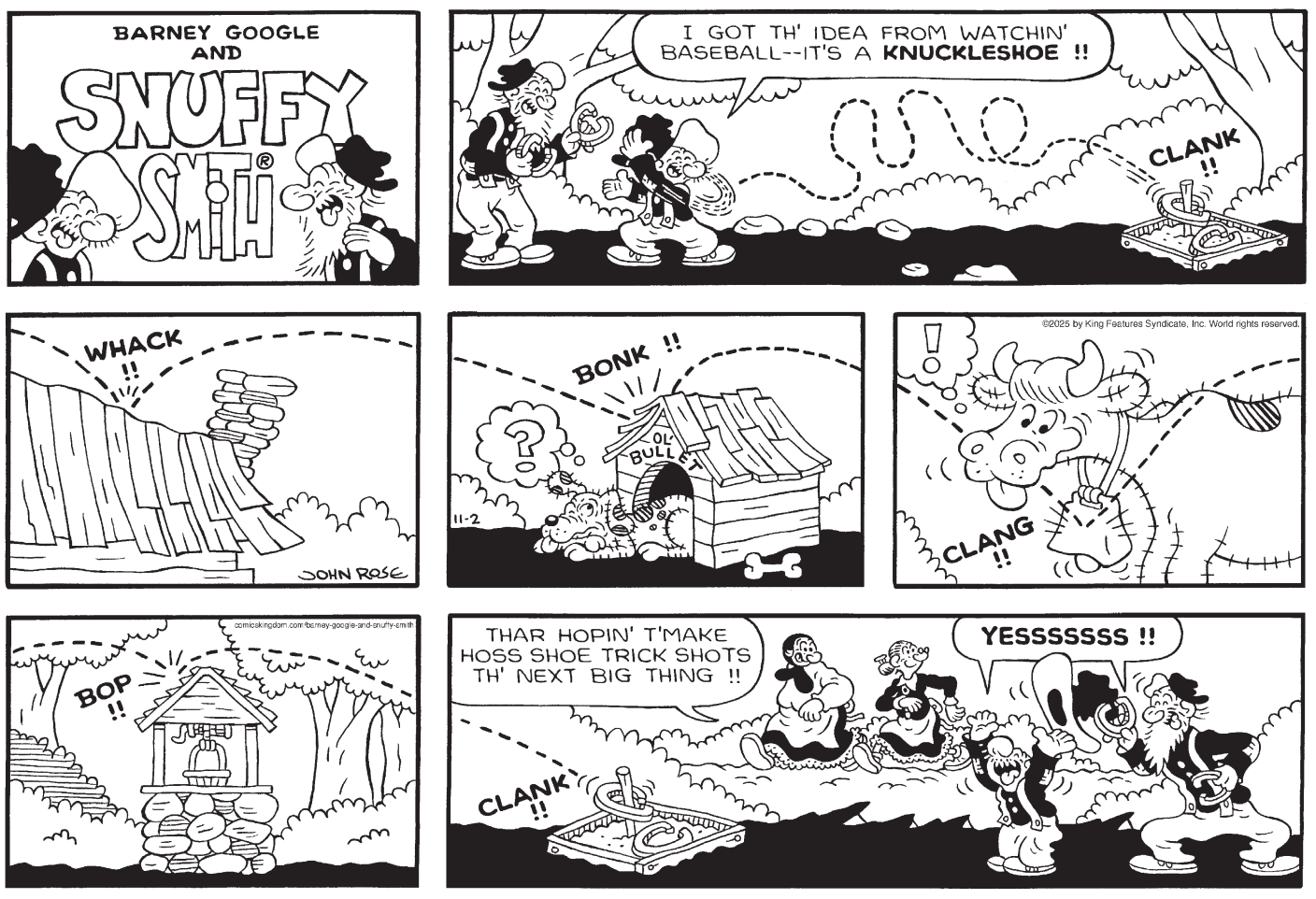
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WANTED

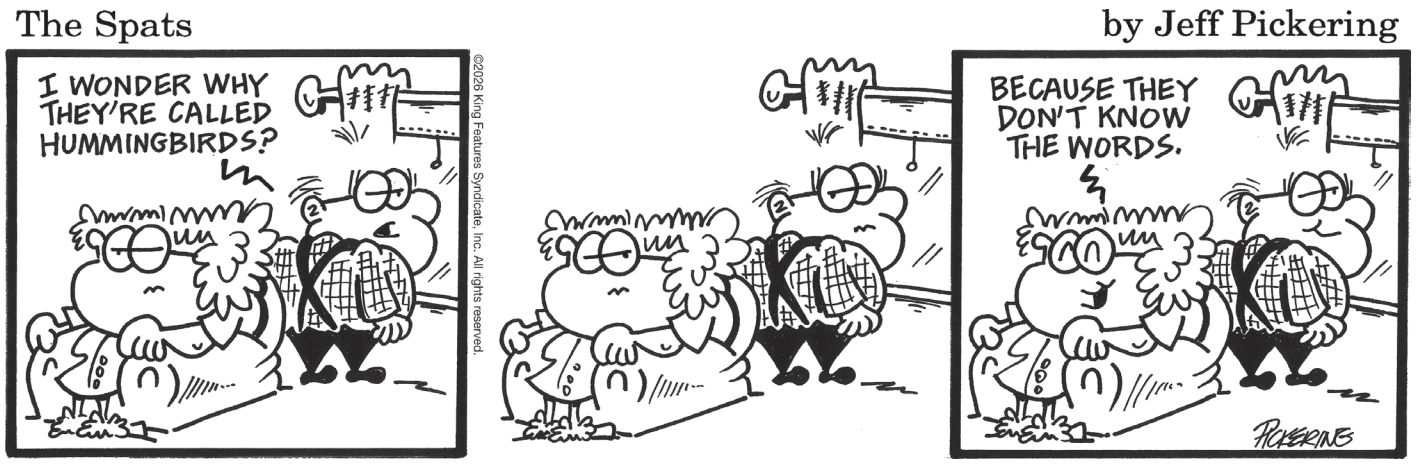
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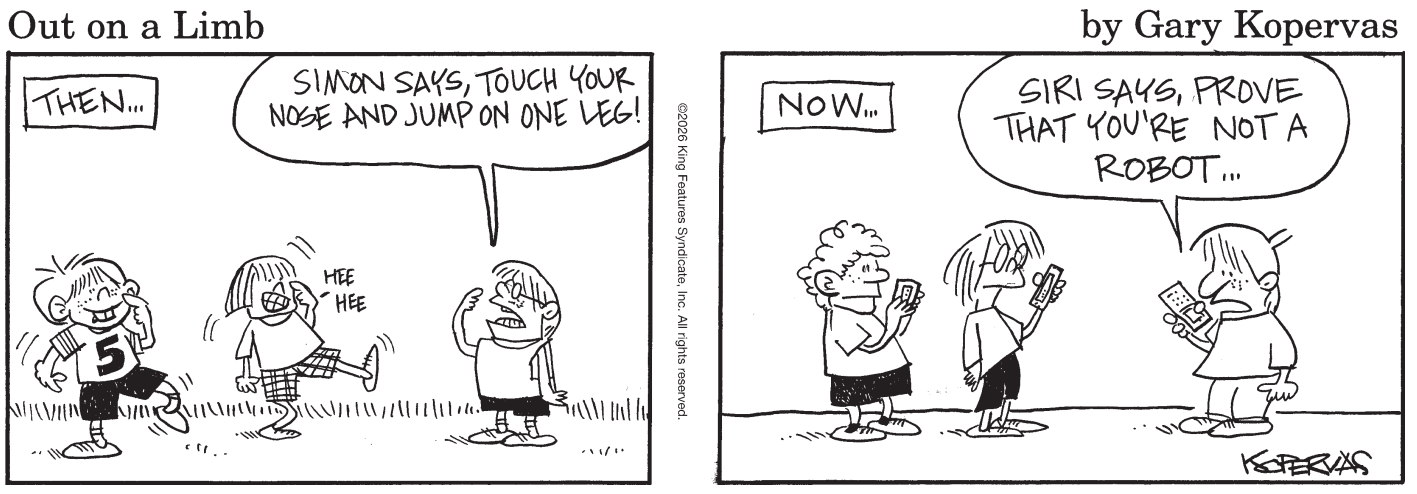
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



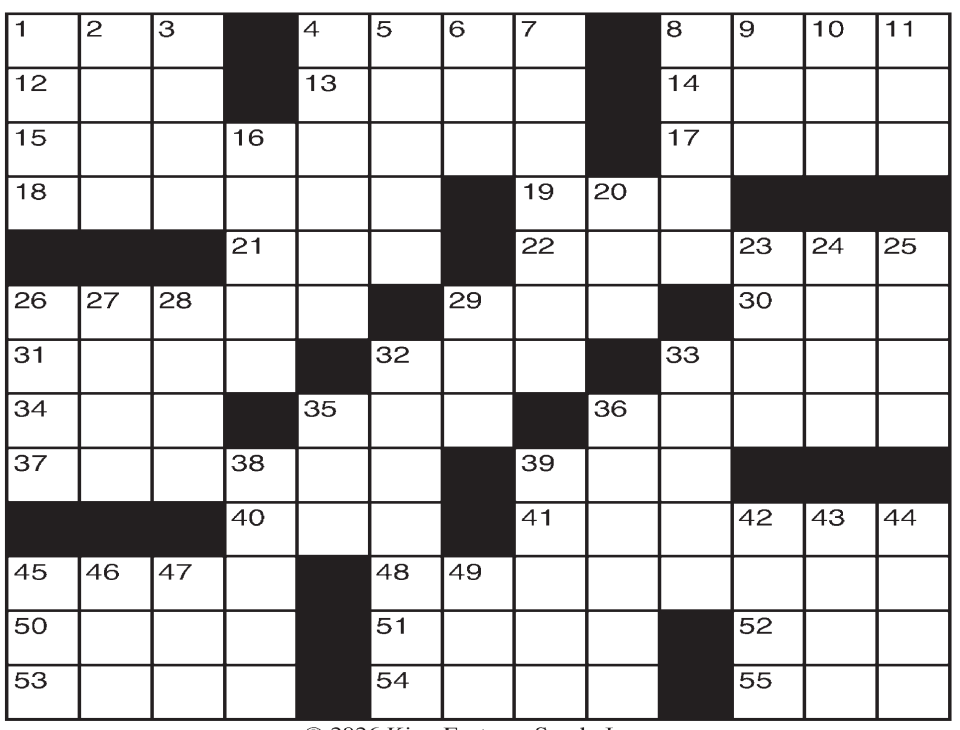


"I've since come to realize that forever is, like, too long."

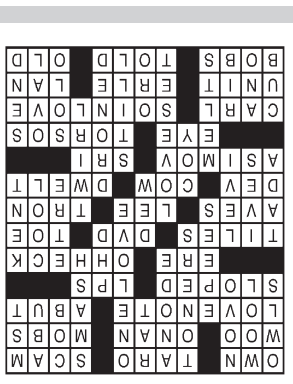
King Crossword

ACROSS
1 Personal
4 Poi base
8 Fraud
12 Romance
13 — incline (tilted)
14 Unruly groups
15 Message from an admirer
17 Border on
18 On an angle
19 Vinyl records
21 Before
22 "Darn it!"
26 Scrabble pieces
29 Movie format
30 "Little piggie"
31 Rd. crossers
32 Grant's foe
33 1982 sci-fi film
34 "The Newsroom" actor Patel
35 Farm grazer
36 Resided
37 "I, Robot" author
39 Lanka lead-in
40 Storm center
41 Sculpted trunks
45 Sagan or Sandburg
48 Romantic Ella Fitzgerald song
50 Squad
51 — Stanley Gardner
52 PC linking system
53 Short cuts
54 Snitched
55 Vintage

DOWN
1 They give a hoot
2 Scarf material
3 De — (from the start)
4 Printer refills
5 Battery part
6 Squealer
7 Bob Marley hit song
8 Big hit
9 Corn core
10 — Dhabi
11 Rockies hrs.
16 Tools for duels
20 Third degree?
23 To be, in Tours
24 "Neato!"
25 Superman's alias
26 "There!"
27 Currier's partner
28 Jeans maker Strauss
29 Morning moisture
32 Mini-shutout at Wimbledon
33 Spin
35 Demure
36 Buzzed
38 Thaws
39 Unmoving
42 Aviator's milestone
43 Track shape
44 Email command
45 Young lion
46 Year in Spain
47 Chest bone
49 Granada gold

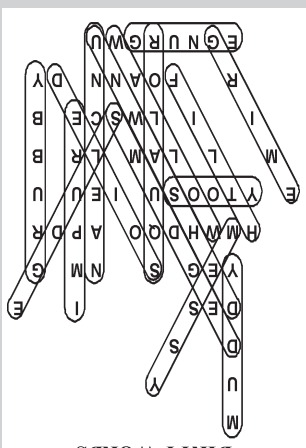


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— King Crossword —
Answers
Solution time: 26 mins.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



MAGIC MAZE ANSWERS

MAGIC MAZE • DIRTY WORDS

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: A HARD TO REMOVE SPOT

Filth	Impure	Smudged	Unclean
Grime	Messy	Soiled	Unwashed
Grubby	Muddy	Sooty	Wallow
Grunge	Sludge	Squalor	

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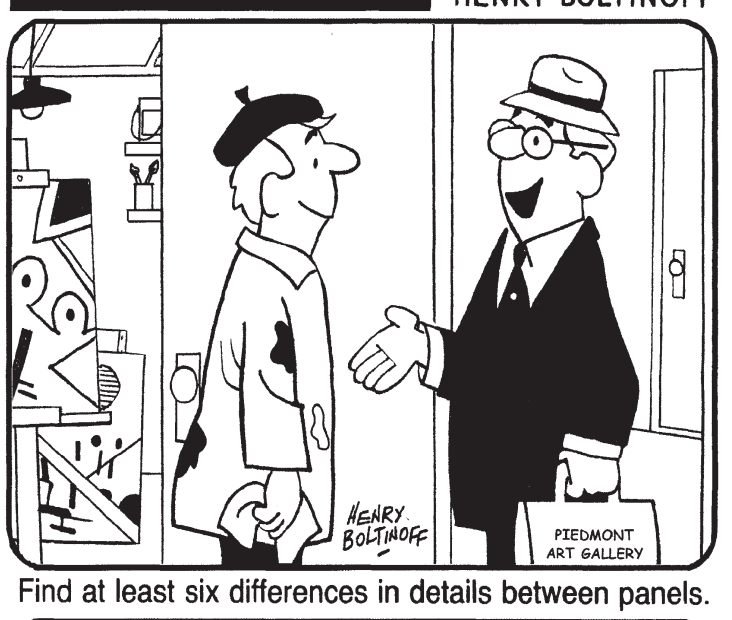
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

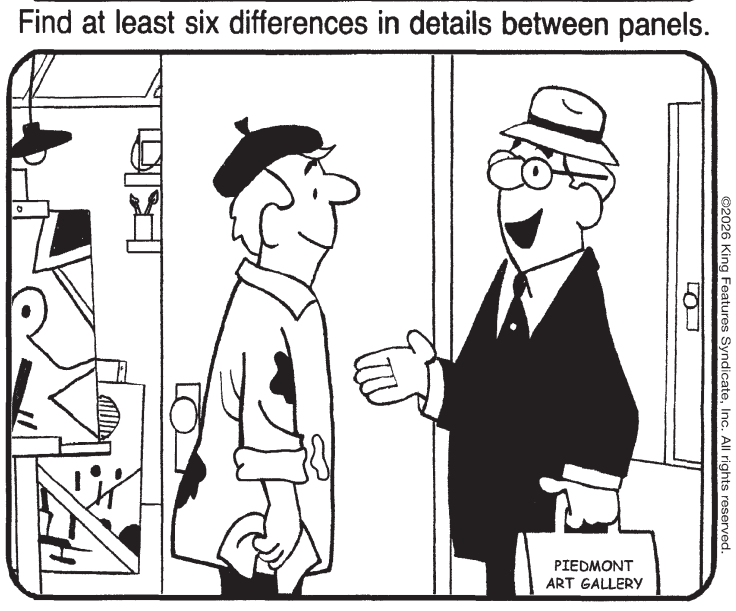


HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Light is moved. 2. Sleeve is rolled up. 3. Hand is moved. 4. Door is moved. 5. Thumb is moved. 6. Painting is different.



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The Treutlen County FFA held its annual fall festival on the afternoon of Oct. 22 in the Jean Gillis Memorial Park in Soperton/**LOGAN REYNOLDS**



SNAPSHOTS: MOCO FALLS TO ECI IN REGION BOUT







The Montgomery County Eagles and the Emanuel County Institute Bulldogs in action on Oct. 23 on the Brogdon Field in Mount Vernon. The Bulldogs won 41-13/**LOGAN REYNOLDS**

ALAMO GRANT

Continued from page 1

use the provided funds for one of seven reasons: apprehending illegal immigrants; collection of information to counter "gang or other criminal activity;" investigating and prosecuting both crimes committed by illegal immigrants and drug and human trafficking within the United States; court operations related to the previous crimes; the temporary detention of illegal aliens; the transportation of illegal immigrants to "locations related to the apprehension, detention, and prosecution" of illegal immigrants; and support for other agencies in their efforts to locate and detain illegal immigrants.

Both City Manager Jeffery Floyd and City Attorney Perry Avery likened the ANGEL Grant Program to a similar grant program the city aims to pursue, labeled the "Biden Grant" after the administration which it began under. Both grant programs focus on offering funding to local law enforcement departments with requirements to assist with the immigration enforcement operations of the Homeland Security Task Force.

"The only difference is it's a smaller pool," said Avery. "The Biden is a $3 billion pool. This one's $25 million."

According to Floyd, city employees had already completed the necessary preparations for the ANGEL grant pre-application ahead of the meeting, as the deadline for the application was set on October 20. The deadline for the full application was set for October 27.

"We are already prepared for the ANGEL grant," said Floyd.

Included in the $500,000 grant funds would be $10,000 to pay administrative fees, allowing the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission to administer the grant.

Council Member Dondrea Geter offered a motion for the city to pursue the ANGEL Grant Program, which passed unanimously.

In regards to the Biden grant, the city is waiting on the federal government to open the third round of applications for the grant program, though a Heart of Georgia representative speculated the ANGEL grant could be a substitute for that third round.

In other action items, Geter also offered a motion to continue to pursue a CBDG grant for the city's sewer system, as the city's previous application had failed. The motion passed unanimously.

Floyd asked the council to place LMIG projects out for bid, which would include projects focused on sections of Jefferson Street, Pine Street and Stubbs Avenue. Council Member Patricia Woodard offered a motion to advertise the bids, which passed unanimously. The council also approved an application for 2027 LMIG projects.

Woodard also offered a motion to adopt the proposed 2027 budget, which passed unanimously.

DOGS

Continued from page 1

"Let's make sure we have the right people, and then let's send them a letter and tell them, you know, if it happens again, then we're going to start not only getting the dogs, but we're going to hold them responsible also," said Koon.

Mayor Pro-Tem Brown also thanked Gillis and other residents for assisting in the apprehension and identification of the dogs.

"We have been trying to reduce the dog traffic in these neighborhoods, and the participation and the assistance that you all have given us as far as trying to take pictures of the dogs, so that we know what dogs need to be targeted, I appreciate you all for that," said Brown. "Hopefully, with the new traps and the fines, we would help mediate some of this."

SCARE

Continued from page 1

for multiple attractions in Pennsylvania. While he worked in the horror entertainment industry into his adult life, he never owned an attraction of his own until a location in Treutlen County, titled Scare House of the South, came to his attention.

Scare House of the South was a somewhat notorious attraction in Treutlen County which remained in operation for 15 years, described by County Manager Joseph Glenn as an "adult gore fest." The site utilized a 100 year old house as the home of its main attraction.

"It's a pretty high barrier of entry to get into the industry, and we saw the opportunity to come into a turnkey operation that was already running and put our spin on things," said Hayostek.

He purchased the site and moved to Georgia in the beginning of summer with his fiance, Julie Downs, to begin renovating the business into the attraction of Hayostek's dreams: Scare Grounds of the South.

Hayostek and several staff members, including Tedford Braswell, who carried over from the previous attraction, worked during the off-season to ready the site for the Halloween season, building scenery by hand.

Hayostek even built the first game in the attraction, a ball tossing game where players aim to break bottles, by hand.

"It's not just a business," said Downs. "It's a passion."



Actor JT terrorizes guest Coleson Barrow with a chainless chainsaw on October 24 at the Scaregrounds of the South attraction in Treutlen County. The attraction has multiple actors in the open area to interact with and scare guests /**LOGAN REYNOLDS**

Scare Grounds of the South features two main horror attractions for guests to walk through. Both are walk-through attractions with a linear path for "safety and flow reasons," leading guests through a series of curated scares.

The first is "Nightveil Manor," a haunted house utilizing the over 100 year old house on the property. Guests are shepherded through dark, claustrophobic corridors to multiple rooms evoking classic horror tropes, such as serial killers, haunted dolls and even ghosts wearing bedsheets.

"It's kind of your classic haunted mansion," said Hayostek. "It's actually an almost 125 year old house on the property, so we really went in there, improved the scenic decor, made it kind of appear to be a real abandoned haunted mansion."

Meanwhile, the second attraction – titled "Chronophobia: Terror Through Time" – takes guests through a time-bending experience, utilizing the previous operation's more "eclectic" scares.

"The previous operation was pretty eclectic over there, so there's... werewolves, and, you know, some zombies, aliens, all types of themes over there," said Hayostek.

For Hayostek and the other organizers, Nighveil Manor was the main priority for the current season in terms of preparation and set-up, with plans in place to focus on Chronophobia through the upcoming off-season.



Guests Jaqueline Villasenor, Jasmine Villiasenor, Carter Chaney and Isaiah Thomas prepare to enter the haunted house attraction "Nightveil Manor" on October 24 in Treutlen County/**LOGAN REYNOLDS**

"Nightveil Manor was really our really big push this year creatively to put tons of effort, and money and hours into creating a really cool scenic experience in there, and next year is Chronophobia," said Hayostek. "We have lots of cool stuff planned there."

The open area between attractions is titled "Midnight Midway," where guests can purchase drinks and food from the Muddy Coffee food truck or play games. Actors will also roam through this area, occasionally chasing guests with chainless chainsaws.

Scare Grounds of the South offers a tamer experience than its predecessor, with a recommended age of 12 and older, but according to Hayostek, this has led to some mixed reactions to the attraction. While many guests were glad to have an attraction the whole family could attend, some also reported dissatisfaction with the loss of the more intense thrills of the previous operation.

However, Scare Grounds of the South does have an option for more adult-oriented scares in its "director's cut" event on November 7, an event where "participants may be touched by actors, separated from their group, forced to navigate challenges and puzzles, and subjected to immersive interactions not featured during standard operating nights," according to the business' website.

"That is kind of our more hands-on, adult oriented attraction where some folks still look for that kind of extreme experience," said Hayostek.

That memory of the more intense predecessor still exists in guests, with one family traveling from Milledgeville on October 24 to attend for the first time in 10 years. However, that memory also lingers for local lawmakers, leading to delays in Scare Grounds of the South's business license.

The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners first received the business' application in September, which was tabled due to a negative connotation with the previous establishment. The board was more accepting of Hayostek's application during their October meeting, as he made the operation open for first responders to inspect.

"The folks from the county came out and we talked, and I was able to share our vision for the property and kind of clear the air that that kind of experience isn't going to be here anymore," said Hayostek.

The board also tabled the application in October, however, over further questions regarding the operations.

According to Hayostek, he aims for Scare Grounds of the South to be a piece of Treutlen County the community can be proud of.

"This is kind of a dream come true for me and my fiance, Julie," said Hayostek. "She knows that I've been working in this industry for a long time, and, you know, our commitment is to continue to invest in this property, continue to upgrade things, and really create a place for Treutlen County to be proud of."



Treutlen High School Band brings new director into festival tradition

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
Staff Reporter

The Treutlen County High School marching band will serve as the opening performance of the Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival on Nov. 7, a longtime tradition for the school but a first for the most recent band director.

Travis Mansfield is a native of Americus, where he first developed his love of music in middle school. This love of music would follow him through high school, where he acted as a drum major, and into his secondary education at the University of Georgia, where he would serve as a member of the Redcoat Marching Band.

"I was a member of the UGA Redcoat Band all four years while I was in college during undergrad, where I played sousaphone and tuba for concert," said Mansfield.

At the university, he studied elementary education, eventually graduating in May of 2026 with a bachelor's degree in education, and recently graduated a second time with his master's degree in education.

However, while he initially aimed to pursue a career as an elementary school teacher, his love of music drew him to seek out work as a band director.

"I originally was looking to do elementary education, but I just enjoy music so much," said Mansfield. "I had a great band director who I looked up to, and she taught me all the ropes, and music is



just a big part of my life, so I decided that I wanted to be a band director and make a positive impact. You know, give back to [a] music program the same way that a music music program gave that to me."

When he began serving as Treutlen County High School's band director, Mansfield aimed to foster an environment of enjoyment and involvement. He has encouraged his students to take pride in their work as a band, as well as the community to be involved with the band.

"I like to get the community involved, and I just like to have something that everybody can have a sense of pride over," said Mansfield.

One of the primary methods Mansfield uses for community involvement is through band events and performances, such as having the band perform in marching band competitions for the first time "in over a decade," as well as in parades and festivals.

"So, a lot of what we're doing this year is just getting out there, making sure that people know who the Treutlen Vikings are and what they are all about, and, you know, just having some pride in what we have in Treutlen County," said Mansfield.

While the band's performance in the Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival will serve to further that goal, the Treutlen County High School marching band has a tradition of performing at the event which stretches back many years.

For the event, the band will perform the United States national anthem followed by sections of its halftime show performance used during football games. The show is a collection of popular songs pulled from several different periods, aiming to resonate with audience members of all ages.

"There's a couple of different songs, but again, just a lot of songs that people are familiar with, every generation, you know," said Mansfield. "Just some recognizable tunes."

Mansfield is confident in his band's performance for the festival and in the community's attention towards them. The band has been practicing for the event, aiming to incorporate new songs into their repertoire for the festival.

"We are feeling pretty good, and I am feeling pretty confident about our performance at the Million Pines Festival," said Mansfield.







MILLION PINES ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL 2026

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
9 a.m. - 10 a.m. - Treutlen High School Marching Band
10 a.m. — 11 a.m. - sound check
11 a.m. — 1 p.m. - Tres Hombres
1 p.m. — 3 p.m. - The High Mileage Band
3 p.m. — 4 p.m. - Love 2 Dance

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8
Noon — 2 p.m. - King's Cross Quartet
2 p.m. — 3 p.m. - Seth Hutcheson & Son



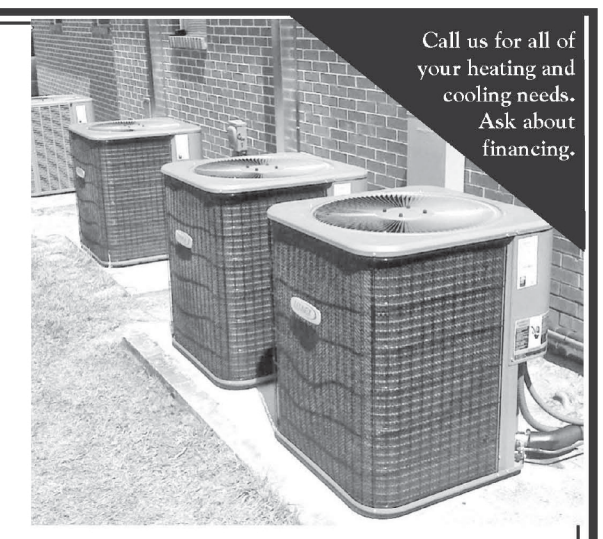








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Christy Nobles
Coastal Kettle Corn & Pork Skins
Country Sass Door D é cor
County Line Creations
Creations By Mikky & Ma
Crumbs Of Joy
Designs At 890
Designs By Michelle
Diamonds In The Ruff
Dirty South D'zines
Downtown Craft House
Dp Wings
Dublin Shrine Club
Dust Busters
East Ga State College
Emerald City Sweets
Evelyns Sweets And Treats
Fayes Candles
Forty-One Willow
Gary Johnson
Georgian Mullins
Haileys Creations
Hand Painted Amish Gourds
Handcrafts By Joann
Happle Critters Crochet
Hard Work Hands
Hfm Farm
His & Her Designs
Hl3 Designs
Hometown Sports D é cor
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Imaginarium
Insane Wangz
Ivy Mist Candles
J & B Ranch
J & R Outfitters
J Bloom Designs//Permalink
Jed's Nuts
JT Kelly Pottery
Knives & Pork Rinds
Knotty Pine Laser Design & More
Knottyy D Crochet
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Lala's Creations
Life Enrichment Center
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Midnight Sun Woodcrafts
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Rickys Snak Shak
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Rita Brown
Rocking Sliger
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Toni's Crafts
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