The Courier Herald

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Habitat seeking volunteers for House No. 44

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The Dublin-Laurens County Habitat for Humanity is looking for volunteers to help with house build No. 44.

The groundbreaking for this new project will begin at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 7 on Gateway Drive.

"It's not hard to find," said Habitat Executive Director Tracy Kinney. "It is one road over from where we built the last two houses."

Following the groundbreaking, volunteers will begin to work from then up to noon, where a group will bring out lunch.

"The groundbreaking will be about a five minute service and then we'll start raising the walls," Kinney said. "We will be building a three bedroom and two bath house for a single mom and one son."

Volunteers will be needed. Those 15 and younger are not allowed on the construction site while 16 and 17-years-old have to have parental consent to work on the house.

"We'll have people who will show them what to do and that we have everything they need," Kinney said. "No experience is needed."

People who want to volunteer can go to the organization's website at dublin-habitat.com.

"Everything is on there," Kinney said.

For more information, call (478) 275-1818.



Habitat Executive Director Tracy Kinney reads a program during a dedication ceremony for House No. 43/**PAYTON TOWNS III**



Volunteers worked on House No. 43/**PAYTON TOWNS III**



Chris Kinney, right, goes over safety details during the beginning of House No. 43/**PAYTON TOWNS III**



Members of Omicron Mu Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity cooked and served VA veterans and staff at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

Local fraternity gives back to VA veterans

By PAYTON TOWNS III

Since 2009, Omicron Mu Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. has served a meal for the veterans and staff at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center. That tradition continued this year.

Members grilled and served food during this 17th annual event that was held on Saturday, Oct. 24.

"We had a brother who started this program and we do it every year as part of that community service that we have vowed to do," said fraternity president David Turner. "We just want to show that we are out here to help the community."

Many of the members in Omicron Mu Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., are veterans.

"It is good for other veterans to see us doing this," Turner said. "Volunteering for this is something special that we enjoy."

Turner and Keith Griffin, chief of voluntary service at the VA, both served in the Air Force. Griffin said the veterans who received food during this event were from the VA's Community Living Center and their rehabilitated veterans in the domiciliary.

"This is such a unique opportunity," said Griffin, who is always waiting on a call from Turner each August about this event. "This is a time for fellowship. I also see it as a time of mentoring to some of our veterans. They face some extraordinary challenges and situations sometimes. It's more than (the fraternity) coming to provide food to our veterans. It's them able to have one-on-one conversations with our veterans. The veterans all go through situations or experience and one of the fraternity brothers may be able to share how they

VETERANS
Continued on page 3



'HOW BOUT THEM RAIDERS!': WL WINS STATE SOFTBALL CROWN

The West Laurens Raiders are state softball champions once again, after pulling off the unlikely feat of winning three games in a row on the final day of the GHSA state fastpitch tournament Saturday in Columbus. They knocked off defending state champion Heritage in a morning elimination game, then the North Hall team who'd beaten them Friday in back-to-back rematches to complete their comeback to the top. This is the Raiders' second time securing the state's top prize, and a third if you also count the slowpitch title they won during the spring of the same school year as their first in 2022. "It's a great feeling to win another state title," West Laurens head coach Mike Thompson said. For more coverage, see Sports, page 5/**DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN**

Final tally for early voting in Laurens County tops 8.7K

By DONNELL SUGGS
Editor & Publisher

By 5 p.m. on Friday night, a long line of voters waited outside of the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration office in downtown Dublin. The last day of early voting in Georgia was on Friday, but a race to get those final early votes cast was taking place in real time.

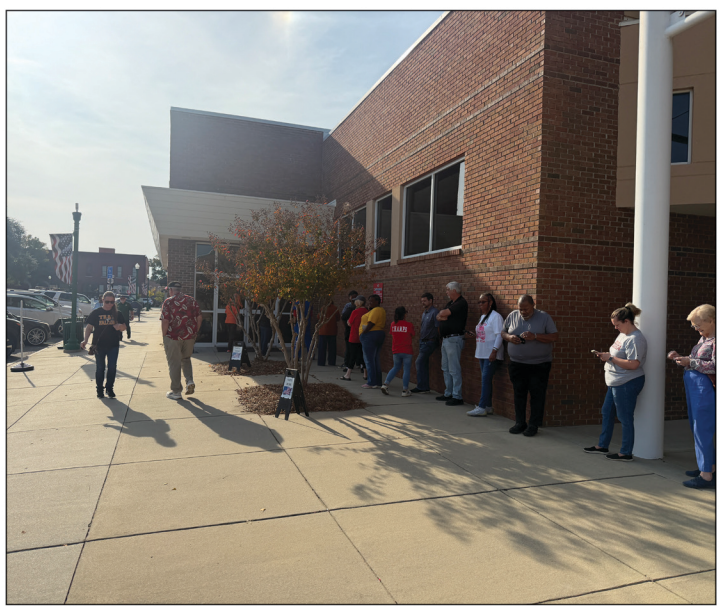
Laurens County saw 24% of its more than 36,000 registered voters, nearly one in every four, cast ballots for candidates running for offices in the midterm election. The total number of votes cast, 8,718, is a couple of percentage points higher than during the early voting period for the 2022 midterm elections (7,913). Though a small percentage, that is a higher voter turnout by any measure.

The early vote tally breakdown is 8.065 in person and 653 by mail. According to data by Georgia Votes, prior to Friday, there were spikes in voter turnout this week in comparison to the first days of early voting some two weeks ago.

With some 27,000-plus registered voters waiting to vote on Tuesday, November 3, Election Day, local polling stations – NOTE: the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration office is not a polling station on Election Day – there should be an expectation of wait times to cast ballots. On Friday, the wait times to cast ballots averaged around 2-3 minutes.

There are several polling stations in Dexter, Dublin. Dudley, East Dublin, and Rentz, including Cedar Grove Fire Station, the Buckeye Fire Station, in the Stubbs Park Community Center gym, at the Hampton Mill-Dexter Community Center in Dexter, Dudley Fire Station #4 in Dudley, at the Reedy Springs-Rentz Fire Department on 2115 Davidson Street in Rentz, and at the Smith Precinct Building on 102 Broad Street in East Dublin.

On Tuesday, Election Day, polls open at 7am and close at 7 p.m. Tonight, The Courier Herald will follow all of the races, including the race for House Representative 155 seat, in print, online, and on via a live blog on Facebook.



By 5 p.m. on Friday, October 30, a long line of voters waited outside of the Laurens County Board of Elections & Registration office in downtown Dublin. On the last day of early voting there was a rush to get those final early votes casted/**DONNELL SUGGS**

INDEX

OBITUARIES 2
DAILY SCRIPTURE 3
DID YOU KNOW? 3
EDITORIAL 4
TELL IT! 4
SPORTS 5
COMICS 7

1 section, 8 pages • Vol. 113, No. 123, Pub. No. 161860

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OBITUARIES



Lyneve Wheeler Powell

Funeral services for Lyneve Wheeler Powell, 82 will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026, in the Richard N. Stanley Jr. Memorial Chapel of Stanley Funeral Home and Crematory, with interment to follow at Westview Cemetery. Rev. Randy Adams and son-in-law Jim Dutcher will officiate.

Mrs. Powell was born Sept. 11, 1944, in Swainsboro, Georgia. She was the daughter of the late Duncan Wheeler and Lillie Mae Grizzard Wheeler. She was also preceded in death by her siblings, Delma Logue, Shirley Wilkes, and J.D. Wheeler; 4 half siblings, Maxine Nobles, Jackie Reese, Hugh Dorsey Wilkerson and Weyman Wilkerson. She was a homemaker. She was a member of Brown Memorial Baptist Church.

"Lil Lynn Wheeler" started singing and playing the guitar at the Peach State Jamboree in Swainsboro at the age of 13. A record producer in Nashville, Tenn, met with her parents for fried fish on a Sunday afternoon and later drove her to Nashville to record two songs he had written for her. She made her own record. She was 14 years old and recorded "Too Small" and "Save A Little Lovin" with Elvis Presley's band. "Lil Lynn Wheeler" from Kite, Georgia was something else. She played and sang in a weekly line up along with Brenda Lee, Hank Williams Jr., Mel Tillis, George Jones, etc ... She has always been the Star of the show. Mrs. Powell passed away Saturday, Oct. 31, 2026.

Mrs. Powell is survived by her husband, Ambros Powell of Wrightsville; two daughters, Donna Dutcher (Jim) of Bonaire and Jann Alligood (Chan) of Dublin; two sons, Stan Powell (Anna) of Wrightsville and Chad Powell (Kathryn) of Warner Robins; a brother, McCoy Wheeler (Carmen) of Wrightsville; 10 grandchildren, Benton Dutcher (Andi), Nicholas Durden (Bethany), Chanley Alligood (Bryant), Anna Stewart (Zach), Elynn Alligood, Garrett Powell, Ella Powell, Cole Powell, Wayne Powell, and Laura Powell; three great-grandchildren, Kinley Dutcher, Beau Durden and Janey Stewart; and several nieces, nephews and friends.

Pallbearers will be Dickie Barber, Mike Barber, Greg Rowland, Kevin Brantley, Shawn Wombles, and Kevin Durden. Honorary Pallbearers will be Garrett Powell, Nicholas Durden, Benton Dutcher and Bryant Blount.

The family will receive friends from 11 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026, at the funeral home.

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

STANLEY Funeral Homes & Crematory

Andrew "Shug" Wilburn

Celebration of life services for Mr. Andrew "Shug" Wilburn will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2026, at 12 p.m. Location: Brown Hill Baptist Church 2081 Highway 112 Cochran, Georgia. Rev. Clarence D. Thomas will serve as eulogist. Interment will follow at the Brown Hill Baptist Church Cemetery.

Andrew "Shug" Wilburn was born Nov. 11, 1961, to the parentage of the late Robert Wilburn and Millie Floyd Wilburn.

He was a native of Laurens County. He joined Brown Hill Baptist Church at a young age. He attended West Laurens High School. He worked with landscaping for many years and loved his family.

He leaves to cherish his memories his siblings; Robert Wilburn Jr., Gladys Wilburn James, Robbie Wilburn, Jerry Wilburn, Nathan (Aline) Wilburn, all of Dublin, Georgia; one aunt, Carrie L. White of Ellenwood, Georgia; a devoted cousin/friend, Fletcher Fitzpatrick and a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Family will receive friends at the funeral home on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026, from 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Serenity Funeral Home - Dublin has charge of arrangements.

Rubber company to invest $20 million in Treutlen County

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
GTLN

The Treutlen County Development Authority held a groundbreaking ceremony for EcoRubbers on Oct. 26 in the Soperton-Treutlen County Industrial Park, the first of three commemorating new businesses coming to the area.

"Ecorubbers is honored today to officially begin the construction of this processing facility," said Sean Register of the Treutlen County Development Authority.

EcoRubbers is a company which deals in rubber-based products, such as "premium artificial crumb rubber, truck sidewalls and interlocking heavy duty rubber tile" according to the companies website. These products are made by breaking down and recycling old tires, reusing the rubber in them to create "environmentally friendly artificial rubber crumb and modern rubber products."

According to Register, EcoRubbers investment in Treutlen County is "about $20 million." The company will bring 45 jobs to the county with an "average hourly wage" of $23 per hour. Register introduced four speakers during the ceremony, including three local officials and one representative from EcoRubbers.

The first to speak was Luke Kicklighter, who serves as Chairman of the Development Authority Board. Kicklighter lauded the revitalization of the local downtown area and said the introduction of companies such as EcoRubbers helped to combat complacency which could spell the end of the community.

"One lesson I've learned over the years is the kiss of death for a community is for our leadership to take the mindset that, 'We like things the way they are; we don't want things to change,'" said Kicklighter.

Following Kicklighter, Register introduced the Treutlen County Board of Commissioners' Chairman Phil Jennings and Soperton Mayor John Koon as the next two speakers respectively. Both thanked the development authority and EcoRubbers for the investment in the community.

"We look for a long, long standing relationship, and we look forward to seeing what EcoRubbers is going to do," said Mayor Koon.

The final speaker was EcoRubber's Andrew Wang, who described the project as a "state of the art" tire processing facility which would be used to create several of EcoRubbers' products.

"We looked at several sites in Georgia, and Treutlen County was by far the best place for our business," said Wang.

Following the speeches, representatives of the Soperton City Council, Treutlen County Board of Commissioners, Treutlen County Development Authority Board and EcoRubbers all posed for photos with gold-plated shovels.

Attendees were also offered Subway sandwiches and refreshments brought by Deborah Ferre, owner of the local Subway and member of the development authority's board.

The development authority will hold two more groundbreaking ceremonies for more companies investing in Treutlen County, though those dates have not been announced. According to Kicklighter, the second ceremony was originally scheduled on the same week as EcoRubbers', but had to be delayed.

NEWS DIGEST

The Laurens County Board of Elections and Registration will meet on Friday, Nov. 6 at 1 p.m. in the Board of Elections and Registration Office of the Laurens County Courthouse Annex Building located at 117 E. Jackson St., Suite A in Dublin, to certify the election results of the Nov. 3 General Election. They will also hold their monthly meeting following the certification. The agenda follows:

- Call to order
- Invocation
- Roll call
- Recognition of visitors
- Minutes of previous meetings
- Old business
- Discussion of office procedures
- Revenue expenditures and outlay
- New business
- Certification of Nov. 3
- General election
- Executive session

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Explaining an adverse drug reaction called DRESS Syndrome

By DR. KEITH ROACH
King Features

DEAR DR. ROACH: Could you explain what happened to me with a condition called DRESS syndrome? I had back-to-back urinary tract infections (UTIs) that were about six weeks apart. For the first one, I was treated with three days of an antibiotic, and it went away. For the second, I was given another week of the same antibiotic.

My UTI symptoms improved quickly, but after three days on the antibiotic, I developed a rash. I first noticed spots on my legs, but by the next morning, they were on both of my legs and arms with some on my belly and upper back. The following day, I had fever, chills, profound weakness and dizziness.

I went to the emergency room, and my blood pressure dropped to 80/42 mm Hg. I had elevated liver enzymes and an elevated kidney function. Although my total white blood cell count was OK, one type of blood cell count -- eosinophil -- was high. I was treated with fluids and IV antibiotics for sepsis.

All my cultures, including the urine and blood cultures, were subsequently normal. The infectious disease doctor ultimately diagnosed me with DRESS syndrome -- a type of adverse drug reaction to the antibiotic. She stopped all antibiotics. She said that the second infection was likely a holdover from the first one, and my body just reacted badly to the antibiotic.

So, what happened? I was shocked that it affected so many things -- my blood pressure, kidneys, liver, etc. I felt so dreadful. -- D.L.B.

ANSWER: If a person comes in with an infection, low blood pressure, and dizziness, it'd be assumed that they have sepsis, and I can't fault the ER for treating you aggressively with IV antibiotics and fluids. Septic shock is a life-threatening emergency, and it can take only minutes before the process becomes irreversible once a person shows up in the ER.

However, one clue was there from the beginning. The rash started when you got a second dose of the antibiotic and had been there for over a day before the severe symptoms and low blood pressure became present. Your eosinophil count was another clue as to the diagnosis.

A drug reaction with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS) is a severe, allergic-type reaction. The exact mechanism isn't known, but up to 75% of people with DRESS develop a reactivation of one of the common herpes viruses, including Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, HHV-6, and HHV-7 -- all of which can cause a mononucleosis-type syndrome. This may be due to a temporary decrease in the immune system, which is associated with the severe illness.

Several antibiotics are associated with DRESS, including sulfa drugs, vancomycin, minocycline, and drugs for tuberculosis. In addition, antiseizure drugs and allopurinol for gout are considered high-risk for DRESS.

Your infectious disease doctor was very sharp to recognize this uncommon condition (1 per 100,000 people per year) and stop the offending antibiotic. The fact that your cultures all came back negative (making an infection unlikely), and you got better after stopping the antibiotic, confirms that she was almost certainly right.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

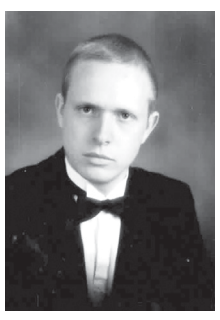
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BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 4
Scott Daniel
Geneva Rozier

Nov. 5
Marie McKinley

In memory of a special son



Richard Earl Thigpen
June 7, 1978 - Nov. 4, 1998

It's sometimes hard to know why some things happen as they do for so much joy and happiness was centered around you.

It seems so hard to comprehend that you're no longer here, but all the happy memories will help to keep you near.

You're thought about with pride, son, with each mention of your name. Death cannot change a single thing; the love will still remain.

Love, mother, stepdad, Eli and family



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Keisha Lance Bottoms (above, center) visited Dublin early in the campaign season and returned on Sunday, November 1, 2026. She said of the energy in the room, "It speaks to the energy around this campaign. People are fired up"/**DONNELL SUGGS**

'People are fired up': Keisha Lance Bottoms makes one more stop in Dublin before Election Day

By DONNELL SUGGS
Editor & Publisher

Democratic gubernatorial candidate and former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms made a campaign stop in Dublin on Sunday afternoon. An Atlanta native, former magistrate judge, Atlanta City Councilmember, and member of the Biden-Harris presidential administration, Bottoms has crisscrossed the state, including making a stop in Dublin earlier this year, during her campaign to become the first Black governor in state history.

With only 48 hours till the polls open for the final time this election season, Bottoms returned to Laurens County, the 43rd most populous county in the state, to gauge interest in her campaign. If the sound of the crowd when she was introduced by Statesboro Mayor Jonathan McCollar was any indication, the people were ready to hear what she had to say.

"Dublin, I am happy to be here a few days till Election Day. We have some really important things on this ballot. This is an opportunity for us to decide who we are as a state," Bottoms said.

Bottoms stopped by the Emory Thomas Auditorium to both motivate the Democratic base and reach a few potential voters who may be still deciding which direction to go in the race for the state's next governor. When she asked the room full of supporters whether or not they voted early, a majority raised their hands. She followed that inquiry with, "How many of y'all are going to vote on Tuesday?"

Despite there being more than 35,954 registered voters in Laurens County, only 8,700 voted during the advanced voting period, which ended on Friday, October 30, 2026.

During the 30-minute event, Bottoms spoke about Medicaid expansion, affordability, reasons she is a better candidate than her opponent, Republican political neophyte Rick Jackson, who made a campaign stop in Forsyth County at the same time Bottoms was in Dublin, and what she called, "getting back on track."

"We will get Georgia back on track," she said. "We need that whole ballot energy where you go in and see that whole ballot from top to bottom."



Bottoms supporters gather outside the Emory Thomas Auditorium following the campaign event on Sunday, November 1, 2026. Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026/**DONNELL SUGGS**

Asked if the level of support in Dublin on Sunday night was what she expected, Bottoms said it was. "It speaks to the energy around this campaign. People are fired up."

Middle Georgia continued to be an area of interest for Democratic candidates as sitting Senator Jon Ossoff made a stop in Warner Robins on Sunday.

Before she left the auditorium, Bottoms took a couple of requests for photos and shared some words with supporters. People like community activist Thomas Wheeler who told The Courier Herald that it was important for Bottoms to be here because of the symbolic connection to the auditorium whose namesake is Dublin's first Black City Councilman.

"This is a good thing," he said.

Or Kenny Walters who said he wasn't in attendance to support any particular candidate. "I'm here to encourage people to vote. I want them to look at the issues, and then exercise their Constitutional right to vote."

Both Wheeler and Walters are part of the thousands of county voters who have voted early.

Richard Stanley, born and raised in Dublin, was more specific about why he was there Sunday night. "Im here to support Keisha Lance Bottoms for governor," he said.

Monday will be busy for Bottoms who has several other campaign stops planned for the day before Election Day, Tuesday, November 3.

Before she was done in Dublin, Bottoms had one more question and answer for the crowd: "Do you want a woman who believes our best days are ahead of us? Well, I'm that kind of woman."

LCSO confiscates 1.8 pounds of fentanyl, large amount of money

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

The Laurens County Crime Suppression Unit served a search warrant on a storage facility in Dublin, which led to the seizure of a significant amount of suspected fentanyl and money.

Tireecka Taylor was charged with trafficking fentanyl and trafficking methamphetamine after the search was held on Oct. 27. The investigation remains active and ongoing, with additional charges pending as agents continue to look at leads.

During the search, agents discovered approximately 1.8 pounds of suspected fentanyl consisting of both powdered fentanyl and pressed fentanyl pills. They also took $19,523, which was believed to be associated with illegal narcotics activity.

The search warrant started from an ongoing narcotics investigation that began from a previous search warrant at Taylor's residence. Agents were able to develop additional information that led them to the storage facility.

"Their persistence and follow-up investigation resulted in the discovery of a substantially larger quantity of suspected fentanyl and additional evidence of suspected drug trafficking activity," the press release said. "The seizure represents another significant step in the ongoing effort to combat dangerous narcotics and disrupt drug trafficking operations within Laurens County."

These investigations resulted in the seizure of approximately 1.86 pounds of suspected fentanyl, five ounces of suspected methamphetamine pills and money.

"The Laurens County Crime Suppression Unit remains dedicated to aggressively investigating those involved in the distribution of illegal narcotics and holding offenders accountable," LCSO said in the press release. "The Crime Suppression Unit will continue working to identify, target and dismantle drug trafficking operations that threaten the safety and well-being of our communities."



Fraternity members and Carl Vinson VA Medical Center officials and a veteran gathered for a picture before lunch was served on Oct. 24/**PAYTON TOWNS III**

VETERANS

Continued from page 1

through a similar experience. It could be something in sharing with that veteran and letting them know that they can do the same thing."

Events like this cookout builds morale. The biggest takeaway though is the veterans seeing that people and organizations in the community care about them. Some of the veterans do not receive visitors because their loved ones live far away.

"For organizations like this to come out here, give back and do this, it means a lot," Griffin said. "I always get asked when this fraternity is coming back, or when the next group is coming. They strive for organizations to come out here and support them."

Turner volunteers at the VA a lot. They enjoy being able to help the veterans.

"As a veteran, I know how that feels," he said. "We want to make sure the veterans are cared for. I want people to understand what veterans have been through."

To volunteer and help a veteran, people can email Griffin at keith.griffin@va.gov or call his office number at (478) 277-2729.

"I challenge other organizations, fraternities or sororities to come out and establish relationships with our veterans," Griffin said. "We are entering the holiday seasons, and one thing I like about Dublin and Laurens County, this community always comes together and provides the veterans with some sort of joy."

Dublin Christmas Parade
Sponsored by the Exchange Club of Dublin
Saturday, December 5th, 2026

Check out our Facebook page, Dublin Exchange Club for more information!

All entries must be decorated with a Christmas Theme and well Lighted.
The parade will begin at 6:00 P.M. Line-up starts at 4:30 P.M.
Entry Fee: $100 – Check/Cash/Venmo Deadline for Entry: November 20, 2026
Before November 27, 2026, late applications will be considered with an entry fee of $150
No entries will be accepted after November 27, 2026 – NO EXCEPTIONS

Entry Name: _____

Primary Contact Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature of Primary Contact: _____

By signing above entrant and all participants within your group agree to hold the Exchange Club of Dublin harmless from any loss or injury resulting from participation in the Christmas Parade and follow all rules and regulations of the City of Dublin for Parades. See Parade Rules at the following website: **www.cityofdublin.org/business/permits-and-licenses**

Please select your type of entry (Circle One):

Float (Truck and Trailer); Car (2 Cars Per Entry); Motorcycle or Bike (6 Per Entry); Walking (30 Per Entry)

Do you want your entry to be judged (circle one): YES or NO

If yes, please select your category (circle one): Church or Organization or Commercial/Business

1st Place - $100 2nd Place - $50 3rd Place - $25

- Entry forms must be received with valid payment and be properly filled out to be considered for entry.
- We will contact you on the week of the parade with your line-up number.
- Please be sure that your entry can maintain a steady pace through the entire parade route.
- Per City Ordinance, Horses must be bagged while inside the city limits and during the Parade.
- Due to safety requirements, please do not throw any items, including candy, from floats, vehicles, or while walking during the parade.
- Floats will not be allowed to unload passengers until they reach the Christ Chapel parking lot.
- It is the desire of the Exchange Club of Dublin to have only one Santa Clause participate in the Parade. The Santa Float will be at the end of the Parade.
- The Christmas Parade is a family event. The Exchange Club of Dublin reserves the right to refuse or remove any participant that we deem inappropriate for this event.
- If the Parade is cancelled, refunds will not be given.
- Make checks for Christmas Parade Entry payable to:

Exchange Club of Dublin Christmas Parade
P.O. Box 381, Dublin, GA 31040
For more information, please contact us at 478-697-2866 (Michael Edge)
Entry forms can be dropped off at 702 East Jackson Street, Dublin GA (Middle Georgia Mechanical)
or
1006 Bellevue Avenue, Dublin GA (Redeemed Realty)

Heroes are those who provide help



MAN ABOUT TOWN...

By PAYTON TOWNS III

I used to be scared of the dark as a young child. I liked to see my surroundings when I closed my eyes to go to sleep. Now, if I wake up with the lights still on, it means I fell asleep reading or watching TV.

I remember my dad telling me that if I trusted in God, I could trust that he would watch me while I sleep. He also told me it was highly unlikely that Darth Vader was in my closet and was waiting for my parents to leave before coming out with his lightsaber brightening up the room I shared with my brother. On a side note, at the end of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" in 2016, Darth Vader comes out of the dark on the good guys. Before they saw him, they heard him breathing before he lit up his lightsaber. It played like a nightmare I used to think about when I was little, but it was so cool to see it played out on the big screen.

Also played out was the journey of Luke Skywalker. My brother and I loved "Star Wars" from the time it came out. He favored Han Solo while I liked Luke. One could fly a fancy star ship and the other could use the force to have objects fly through the air.

Ultimately these were heroes who did extraordinary things while saving the galaxy, which leads me to another hero I admired when I was little. I can recall walking into a movie theater excited about seeing another movie. The year was 1978 and I was about to watch my first superhero film.

It did not start out so well though with a planet blowing up because it was too close to the sun. But thankfully, a little boy was saved by his father, sending him to Earth, where he would be adopted. This young man discovered he had powers on Earth.

Of course, this young man turned out to be Superman. The story that flashed before my eyes made me believe a man could fly, catch the leading lady falling from a helicopter crash and save many lives. And when you throw on John Williams' musical score, one that I would be humming for many days after, I could not help but to enjoy watching "Superman."

By the time we walked out of the theater, I wanted a cape and the ability to fly. I knew I could not do that, but I did become a reporter in Milledgeville before moving to The Courier Herald in 2005. Another fun fact, former Dublin Mayor Phil Best calls me Clark Kent. He used to ring up the newspaper's front office and asked to speak to Clark Kent. The receptionist usually did not get that the first time but knew from then on that he was referring to me.

There have been other heroes I liked growing up such as Spiderman and Batman. And later I have enjoyed watching the X-Men, the Avengers and Guardians of the Galaxy.

When I think of an ultimate hero, it would have to be Jesus Christ. As we will hear in a few months during Christmas, Jesus left heaven to be born in a manger and live a human life. He was the light in the darkness, pointing everyone to his Father in heaven.

He was crucified for this, taking our place to cover our sins. But then he rose from the grave three days later.

A few weeks ago, I was invited to the Dublin Exchange Club's law enforcement and firefighters award ceremony. Year after year these men and women continue to put their lives on the line and run toward the danger while most of us run the other way.

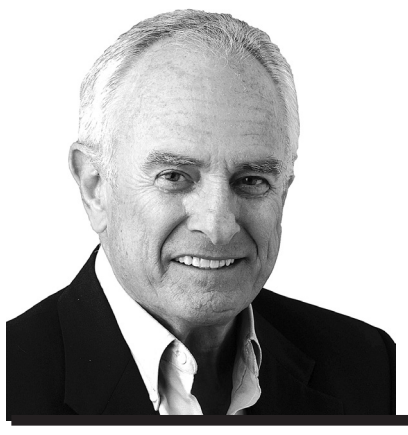
They react as they are trained and make a difference in people's lives. For those in law enforcement and firefighters, they meet a lot of people on their worst day.

The definition of a hero is a person celebrated for bravery, helping others in face of danger. When I think of examples of heroes I think of law enforcement officers, firefighters, military, doctors, nurses and power linemen (I don't know about you but the majority of us cannot do anything when the power goes out after a bad storm).

There are also those who take a stand for the weak or small. They may work in organizations like Stepping Stone, TLC CASA, The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Dublin-Laurens Teen Court, Heart of Georgia Healthy Start, the Lighthouse Adult Day Care Center and W.I.N.G.S.

Sometimes we may not think of ourselves as heroes because we don't have super powers and we look at what happened as only doing our job. But if we can help other people, like my father did by telling me to put my trust in God to get me to go to sleep, then it is important to do even the small things.

Four trees



By LORAN SMITH

Editor's note: This originally ran in June 2018.

There are four trees in Athens, three on the University of Georgia campus, which are accompanied by interesting and fascinating vignettes: They are the "Tree that Owns Itself," on Dearing Street, the late Toombs Oak on North Campus, the Spec Towns oak from the 1936 Olympics and the pecan tree which is the centerpiece of the courtyard at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education.

That last one might not be recognized by campus historians, but sentiment here is such that I think it should be included. In the last half century, one could make the argument that no building has meant more to the University than this hotel and conference center. To many outsiders, it is the face of UGA. It is the way visitors far and wide have come to know the campus and the city.

The Georgia Center was one of the original five Kellogg Centers which were part of a matching fund program from the Kellogg Foundation. Hugh B. Masters was the first director in Athens. He was an innovative, iconoclastic and far sighted thinker. He was the first environmentalist I ever knew. Not only did the building include an attractive and becoming courtyard, it included a giant pecan tree, which flourishes today, as its centerpiece. The Georgia Center was built in the middle of a pecan grove, proving that developers and home owners can protect trees if they choose too. Masters authored a clause in the construction contract that the contractor would be hit with a heavy fine if any of those pecan trees were seriously damaged or destroyed.

A Georgia Historical Marker on North campus marks the spot where a "majestic" Toombs oak once stood. Legend has it that Robert Toombs of nearby Washington was expelled from Franklin College in 1828 but returned "on the next commencement day and spoke so eloquently under the tree that the entire audience left the chapel to hear him." It has also been handed down that lightning struck the tree on the day Toombs died and never recovered." Toombs served in the Georgia legislature, the U. S. Congress, the U. S. Senate and became the Secretary of State of the Confederacy, an able, if controversial man.

The "tree that owns itself," or the "son of the tree that owns itself" always intrigues visitors to Athens when you take them by his landmark. Two hundred years ago, a UGA professor, William Jackson, had such fond memories of the tree where he played as a kid that he deeded the tree to itself. There is a marker which reads: "For in in consideration of the great love I bear this tree and the great desire I have for its protection for all time, I convey entire possession of itself and all land within eight feet of the tree and on all sides. –William H. Jackson."

When the tree fell in 1942 friends, neighbors and aficionados of the tree, planted an acorn from the tree. It grew, matured and is standing regally on the same property causing it to be named, "The son of the tree that owns itself."

Perhaps the most famous tree of all was the Spec Towns Oak.

Georgia's late athletic director, Herman Stegeman, and his wife, Dorothea, who accompanied Spec to Berlin, brought home an oak from the Black Forest, which was given to Spec Towns for winning the gold medal in high hurdles competition. The oak flourished behind the North Stands of Sanford Stadium for years.

When the stadium was expanded with upper deck construction in 1967, the tree had to be transplanted to another location on campus. The crew which managed the transplant was not properly supervised. They dug a hole too small for the tree. At about quittin' time late in the afternoon, they realized the tree would not fit the hole so they cut the roots off to make it fit. Unfortunately, the tree died.

The late Dean of Men, William Tate, contacted the German consulate in Atlanta, acquired a replacement tree from the Black Forest. That tree died, too. An acorn was saved, however and a young tree is growing at the South end of the track with no ill effects. This means the son of the half brother of the Spec Towns oak is surviving.

Spec Towns was my coach at Georgia, and his boys were all were saddened by the turn of events which bought about the demise of the original oak, but I guess we came out better than most. This explanation about that: If you are a young athlete and were given a sapling from the Black Forest, what do you do with it? How do you get it back home? Spec said he saw many of the trees being thrown overboard into the Atlantic. In his case, the boat on which he departed Berlin was headed to Oslo, Norway where he had further competition; he set the 110 yard high hurdles record of :13.7 which stood for 14 years.

Had Dorothea Stegeman not been sentimental enough to bring the Towns oak back across the ocean, making sure it was watered and cared for, we would have not enjoyed the original Spec Town oak as long as we did. There was another sidebar to its survival. The campus gardener for UGA at that time was of German descent, and he took special care of the tree, owing to his German heritage. That was significant, but the heroine of the story is Dorothea Stegeman who made sure the tree survived the Atlantic crossing.

A teammate of mine and his father, both great friends of Spec Towns, Johnny and Buddy Broadnax kept part of the trunk of the original tree. I have a small plank from that trunk which is a prized possession.

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do there things, ye shall never fall."

- 2 Peter 1:10(KJV)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"Our political leaders will know our priorities if we tell them, again and again, and if those priorities begin to show up in the polls."

- Peggy Noonan

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

Nov. 3, 2026 is...

- Election Day
- National Homemaker Day
- Jellyfish Day
- Smart Home Day
- National Sandwich Day
- National Housewife Day
- Cliche Day

TELL IT!



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

So thankful for Dr. Hall's leadership. He embodies what a superintendent should be. We needed that in Laurens County. I hope he stays for many years to come.

The reason no one showed at the DCS board meeting is because it won't make a difference. It appears the new board is no different than the old board. Just let the taxpayers bail foot the bill.

Why don't the board borrow the money and bail out the school instead of taxing the people to death. The school tax for the past three or four years has been terrible. No excuse. We didn't need astro turf at the stadium.

I read the comment saying at least the land fill on North Jefferson Street is kept neat. I have to disagree. Piling everything up in piles is really not keeping it neat. It bothers me because it is ugly. It is on one of the main through fares of Dublin that is traveled by many. And I live in North Dublin and I don't like seeing it everyday.

To the speeders on Village Circle, guess what? You are going from one stop sign to another. Drive through here like you have sense. Police can write a lot of tickets on this street! The speed limit is 25!

I hate to be ugly but DCS need to pay whatever the fee is for the City of Dublin to collect their tax fees. Nobody else struggling is getting a break!

Macon-Bibb did it. Clarke did it. Augusta-Richmond did it. Why are Dublin and Laurens County still running two separate governments? Consolidation is a must!

Dublin already runs water, sewer, police and fire for the heart of this county. Let the people with the experience run the whole thing. Consolidation is a must!

Growth doesn't stop at the city limits. A Dublin-led government can plan roads, water lines and zoning for the whole county, not just inside the lines. Consolidation is a must!

Consolidation isn't about taking anything from county residents. It's about putting the most experienced government in charge of serving everyone. Consolidation is a must!

As ugly as the conversation is about prisoners at the hospital, as a retired nurse I could write a book on the horror stories involving inmates. Those nurses shouldn't be put in that situation.

I was a part-time security guard at the hospital before county deputies were stationed overnight there and I saw the dangerous prisoners coming in and out with the less than stellar guards.

I sure am enjoying this time of year where the weather is not exactly hot or cold. I wish we could have more of a season like this. I am just going to praise God for what we have and enjoy it while we can. I hope everyone is looking forward to the upcoming holiday season.

TELL IT! GUIDELINES

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Keep it local. Submissions should focus on issues, people and places in Dublin and Laurens County. We are not the right venue for commentary on national politics or public figures outside our community.

Be civil. Personal attacks, profanity and hate speech will not be published. Criticism is welcome; name-calling is not.

Stick to the facts. Submissions must not contain false statements of fact about identifiable individuals or organizations. We cannot publish content that is defamatory or exposes the Courier Herald to legal liability.

The Courier Herald reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity, and to decline any submission at its sole discretion. Submission does not guarantee publication.

The Courier Herald

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

The new standard: Young team's title run resets West Laurens softball's high bar for success

By CLAY REYNOLDS
Sports Editor

There are championship seasons that you come into with most of the pieces already in place. Then there are some, like this year's for the West Laurens Raiders, that require some serious climbing to get to the top.

Their 2026 softball team wasn't one many would have picked to win it all at the start of this year, with unproven freshmen stepping into at least three key starting roles, an overwhelmingly inexperienced pitching staff and defensive flux at a few other spots on the infield where upperclassmen would be required to play positions they never, or at least seldom, had before.

An offseason reset following the graduation of a huge and talented senior class forced the Raiders to do some building, break a lot of new ground, and tinker with some things on the fly once the season got going.

But as they went deeper, and got better, they'd find the unexpected makings of their program's second-ever fastpitch state title, which came to fruition Saturday as their storybook run concluded with a fifth win out of six games at the GHSA tournament.

"From where we started to where we ended, it's just a complete 180 turnaround," said West Laurens head coach Mike Thompson. "The girls just kept getting better. I kept telling them all season, let's just get better every day, ladies, let's just improve every day. Let's work on the things we're not good at, and as individual players, you work on the things you're not good at, and we'll work on the things we're not good at as a team, and they did. They just kept getting better. They kept grinding and they'd make mistakes, and me and Coach (Jody) Pollock would get on 'em, and they would just respond every time."

The Raiders had conquered the GHSA tournament's double elimination bracket only once before, back in 2022, but pride themselves on carrying a yearly expectation of being in the mix with the state's top contenders in Columbus.

The past six West Laurens teams in a row, and plenty more going back through the years, had all made it there. This one, despite some obvious disadvantages, wasn't about to be a first since 2019 to come up short.

In the process of working to measure up to that high and unchanging standard, the 2026 Raiders may have actually raised the bar a little more.

They'll now go down among the school's greatest squads in history, particularly in an offensive category with a lineup that, 1-through-9, had the power and clutch hitting ability to rival any group that had come through before.

That's what carried their fortunes through the entire tournament.

West's 57 hits on the week included 12 home runs, by five different players: Demmie Moss led the way with four. Madison Brown and Maggie Shea Lord hit three each and Paisley Powell and Ella Thompson added the remaining two.

That continuation of a season-long offensive trend would help this team shatter a longstanding school record for homers in a year.

"Forty-one was the final total, which is just incredible," Thompson said. "The school record was 30, and that has stood since 2011, when I had that group of girls who could really swing it."

A decent number were to be expected from hitters like Brown and Moss, who had already shown some decent pop as returning starters.

But a surprising amount came from others in Lord, Thompson, Powell and Audrie Edenfield who had not, at the varsity level anyway, shown a serious tendency to go deep with any regularity.

That proved to be a huge bonus for a club that, not



Chandler Malone and West Laurens first base coach Jody Pollock celebrate after a base hit/DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN



Maggie Shea Lord scores on an Ella Thompson base hit to extend the Raiders' third-inning lead in the rubber match with North Hall/DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN





Demmie Moss was mobbed at the plate (right) after hitting her fourth home run of the week (left) to give West Laurens a 5-2 lead in the second inning of Saturday's finale /DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN

anticipating nearly as much juice outside the heart of the order, had spent a lot of practice time during the summer and early fall preparing to play a lot more A-B-C softball.

That would serve them well in just as many big moments when they were able to move runners into scoring position with less than two outs, and put a ball in play to get them home.

"When you can do that and get on base and bunt and run the bases a little bit, and then you hit the home run, you're turning solo home runs into 2- and 3-run homers, which completely changes games," Thompson said. "Solo home runs don't beat you a lot of times, but a 3-run home run will get you."

This lineup also had no weak spots, with players in every hole who could do whatever was needed, and also change the game with a single swing. Every one of them stepped up at some point over the six-game stretch to do something important at the plate.

"Every time a different girl stepped up to the plate, I had confidence she was going to make something happen, that she was going to get on base and get it to the next girl, then that one get on base and get it to the next girl," Thompson said. "Everybody came through, and just really played great."

Coming a long way...

Though the offensive pieces of the puzzle on the edges and corners proved easy to place, the ones out in the middle were much more troublesome to find and fit in the season's early going.

The Raiders' defense, which struggled in an up-and-down month of August, ultimately got situated and comfortable by early September.

The pitching staff, as much a work in progress at the start, did so as well with junior Peyton Crabb emerging from an early three-member rotation as the team's go-to in the circle throughout the regular season.

"We just kind of rode Peyton," Thompson said. "She's a really durable pitcher. She can go. She can pitch today and then come back again and pitch tomorrow. I asked her one time, at some point, can you go throw two games today? And she said, Coach, I can throw as many as you need me."

Moss, whose starts before Saturday were limited to a handful in that early feeling-out phase, also proved to be an ace up the sleeve who came on in the postseason to do some important work.

The sophomore, after helping save a come-from-behind win to complete the second-round sweep of Adairsville, followed Crabb in the circle to pitch the final few innings of the tournament's first four games, then made the start – with Crabb in the lineup as designated player, and waiting in the wings for some potential relief – in both Saturday's rematches with North Hall.

Both arms ended up being instrumental in how the team's run shaped up.

"I don't want to discredit Peyton's effort, and I told her yesterday, she didn't get to throw in the last two games, but without her, we wouldn't've been where we were," Thompson said. "She logged most of the innings all year long and we were where we were because of her.

"But Demmie really stepped up. I kept thinking she would run out of gas too at any point, and I said, I'm going to ride her until she runs out of gas, and then we're going to go back to Peyton or Audrie, and see if they can get us some outs. But she just kept getting outs and kept getting outs. I kept telling Peyton to stay loose, we were probably going to need her. And she just kept getting outs."

RAIDERS
Continued on page 6

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ROUNDUP

Bleckley squeaks by EL, Dublin clinches region at Vidalia

Riverside rushing attack too much for Trinity; JoCo's depth on display in rout of GMC

By CLAY REYNOLDS, JEREMY PAYNE and RALPH JACKSON

Region 2-AA's top teams had different experiences on the road in week 11, as Bleckley County wound up in a close one at East Laurens and Dublin enjoyed a comparatively straightforward victory at Vidalia. But both came out on top to remain once-beaten, and lock in their respective finishes, the Irish as region champion and Royals as runner-up.

In the remainder of last Friday's local action, Trinity fell to Riverside Military to close out its season, and top-ranked Johnson County pounded GMC to stay undefeated and on track for the region 5-A title, which will be decided this coming Friday.

Read full recaps of all four games online at courierheraldtoday.com/sports. Here's a glance at how each played out...



Bleckley County's Kelvin Sneed (7) and Jason McNulty (9) knock down a final East Laurens pass intended for Tawan Horne to force a turnover on downs with less than a minute to go, sealing the Royals' seven-point win to improve to 8-1/CLAY REYNOLDS



Trinity quarterback Jude Evans runs straight into your living room on one of his eight carries for a team-leading 55 yards in Friday's home loss to Riverside Military/DANNY SCARBORO

Bleckley Co. 21, East Laurens 14

The Royals got a good pre-Halloween scare out of East Laurens, which grabbed early leads with touchdown passes from Skyler Snead to Major Floyd and J.J. Wright in the first half to make this the most competitive game in the teams' rivalry since 2016.

Bleckley responded to both with drives to score on short carries by Zyion Love, who'd punch in a third to finally put the visitors on top for the first time early in the third quarter.

Though the Falcons prevented any further addition with stands to force a fumble and a punt, they spent the remainder of the second half in their own territory until a last-chance drive from inside their own 10 reached scoring range with only minutes to go. Trouble ensued upon entering the red zone, where a bad snap and two lost-yardage plays set up a fourth and nearly 40, on which their final shot was knocked incomplete.

"I don't think they expected us to play the game we played," said East Laurens head coach Jesse Hicks. "Our kids played their hearts out. I'm so proud of these young men, the way they played and the way they stuck it out."

Snead threw 15 completions for a career-high 243 yards. Bryson Hazley led a collection of productive receivers with four catches for 94. Floyd had five for 70, while Wright and Gary Stockton contributed 41 and 38 respectively on a combined five receptions.

But the Bleckley defense also held East Laurens to only 30 yards rushing on 16 carries.

Love's 150 yards rushing carried the Royals' attack, which was content to run it and consume clock, though a shorter game meant cutting it a little closer as a handful of missed opportunities on Falcon stops in plus territory kept their lead to just seven.

"Coach Hicks and his staff had those guys ready to play tonight, and we were not," said Bleckley County head coach Von Lassiter. "They had our number. They lined up and did some things a little bit differently... We didn't help ourselves. We turned the ball over, got down there and didn't score a couple of times. Just a poor performance on our part, against a good football team, and when you do that, you're thankful to win."

The Royals (9-1, 5-1 region 2-AA) will have a Friday to rest up as they await word of their playoff draw, from a likely seed among the top five, as East Laurens (3-6, 2-3 region) gets set to finish its regular season at Dublin.

FOOTBALL
Continued on page 6

RAIDERS

Continued from page 5

Moss, whose pitching and clutch hitting would earn her the tournament's MVP honors, made perhaps the biggest improvement of any individual Raider over the course of the season as she turned it on to become a real game-changer both at the plate, on the hot corner and in the circle.

"Demmie's got a lot of potential. She's a great player, and I'm not surprised by her performance," Thompson said. "I'm just glad it finally showed up in the biggest moment. She played great, they all played really great."

Bouncing back...

After a come-from-behind effort to beat Ridgeland in the opening round Wednesday, then a more straightforward victory over Cherokee Bluff to continue advancing in the winner's bracket, the big weekend began with a devastating setback in Friday's 13-5 loss to North Hall.

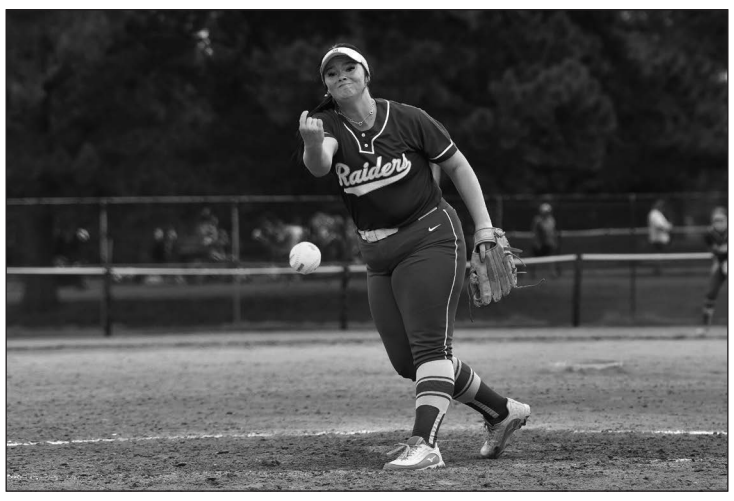
West Laurens put together a late comeback to draw within four twice on a pair of Lord home runs, as well as RBIs by Chandler Malone and Powell that came in the fifth and sixth innings.

But the Trojans, who also out-hit the Raiders 13-8, kept scoring to put their early lead well out of reach.

The defeat – one that was big enough to knock your confidence down a peg or two – seemed to be just the gut check that was needed to get them refocused ahead of a daunting task of winning three-straight on Saturday.

West would rattle those off with flying colors to earn some redemption, and become the tournament's only team in any classification to force or win an "if" game.

"It's really remarkable what they were able to accomplish," Thompson said. "It's difficult to win on Saturday in Columbus, No. 1. But to win three games, on championship Saturday against the quality of teams that are always there, it's just really remarkable. I'm just so proud of these girls. The seniors stepped up and played great, and led us."



Demmie Moss went the distance for the Raiders in the circle in both of Saturday's games against North Hall/**DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN**



Audrie Edenfield singles in Saturday's opening win over Heritage/**DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN**

The Raiders' opposition in Saturday's first elimination game would be perennial state tournament rival Heritage, of Ringgold, which had knocked them from the ranks of the unbeaten, or sent them home outright, in many a previous matchup.

The Generals would out-hit them 9-6 in the game, but West Laurens was able to cash in an early opportunity with two on base to strike for three in one home run swing by Brown, and establish an early lead in the first inning.

The Raiders held onto the last run of that advantage with two key outs to escape a bases-loaded situation in the top of the seventh, and win 4-3.

West Laurens would lead the hitting in both the next two games, and blow the lid off of the last one after once again going up early and hanging on late for a 6-3 decision in the initial North Hall rematch. Two homers by Brown, and another by Moss, helped insure the lead against a comeback by the Trojans, who'd score a run each in the last three frames.

They got runners to the corners with two outs in the bottom of the seventh, but a fly ball toward Malone produced the final out.

The turning point of Saturday's rubber match came after a two-run first to give North Hall an early edge, as Brown hit a two-run single to tie the game, and Moss followed with three-run blast to center to put the Raiders up 5-2.



Ella Thompson connects for a base hit and RBI in the third inning of Saturday's second game with North Hall/**DARRELL ROADEN, for the GTLN**

RBIs by Moss, Brown, Thompson, Malone, and Edenfield followed in a six-run third to make it 11-2 and send the game on a snowball's course.

Powell hit a solo shot in the sixth for a little insurance in the midst of a five-run push by North Hall from the fourth through the sixth, but this time it was West Laurens' turn to wave while riding off into the sunset.

The final score would be 12-7.

"When we got in the lead, Demmie hit the big home run to put us up, and really changed the momentum of the game, and just kind of propelled us," Thompson said. "We kept scoring more runs."

The late lead of five, in contrast to a comparatively razor-thin margin of just one run that decided the Raiders' clinching victory over Whitewater in '22, made the ending and celebration a little different, and much less stressful for Thompson and his staff after an infield pop-up put the final out in the books.

But this return trip to the top proved to be just as special as he and Pollock shared a celebratory hug outside the dugout before storming the field with their players.

The trophy presentation ceremony and a three-hour ride back to Dexter, where plenty of the fans and family in attendance all week were once again waiting for their arrival at the school, offered plenty of time to soak all the emotions in.

"It's just always special when the community and the school comes out to support the girls," Thompson said.

The bus rolled up next to the Raiders' dugout, on the back of which are some yellow softball-shaped cutouts with the years and rosters of all their teams through the years to win a region crown or advance to Columbus.

Before too long, there will be another there that reads "AAAA State Champions," that won't just serve as a marker of this team's memorable achievement.

It'll also be there as another sign coaches can point to during the next set of offseason workouts as a reminder of something they harped on so frequently this fall that it likely echoed between the bleachers on many afternoons: "The standard is the standard."

It didn't budge one bit for this West Laurens team that, despite facing its share of challenges, had an uncommon determination to rise and meet that mark.

"They took many butt-chewings throughout the year, but they responded and they got better and they improved, and just kept working at it," Thompson said. "Ole Chandler Malone kept saying all year long, 'Coach, everybody's doubting us.' And I kept saying, 'Yes, everybody's doubting us, but they don't know what we know.'"

Now, they do.

SCOREBOARD

SOFTBALL
Friday
North Hall 13,
West Laurens 5

Saturday
WL 4, Heritage 3
WL 6, North Hall 3
WL 12, North Hall 7

FOOTBALL
Friday
Bleckley Co. 21,
East Laurens 14
Dublin 48, Vidalia 6
Riverside Military 44,
Trinity 9
Johnson Co. 48, GMC 3
Treutlen 41, Hawkinsville 7
McIntosh Co. Academy 12
Montgomery Co. 0
Swainsboro 52,
Dodge Co. 13
Washington Co. 48, Butler 0
Wheeler Co. 42,
Telfair Co. 25
Wilkinson Co.12,
Hancock Central 8

PREP SCHEDULE

FLAG FOOTBALL
Thursday
East Laurens
at Portal/**5 p.m.**

Monday
EL at ECI/**5 p.m.**

Tuesday
Dodge Co. at EL/**5 p.m.**

FOOTBALL
Friday
EL at Dublin
Windsor Forest
at West Laurens
Johnson Co. at Jenkins Co.
Claxton at Montgomery Co.
Dodge Co. at ACE Charter
Wilcox Co. at Treutlen
Hancock Central at
Twiggs Co.
Wheeler Co. at Dooly Co.
/7:30 p.m.

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FOOTBALL

Continued from page 5

Dublin 48, Vidalia 6

The Irish didn't miss a step in a businesslike road win to capture their 20th region championship in school history.

They left zero doubt, scoring four touchdowns and forcing a turnover in each half of the rout at Buck Cravey Field.

A beastly performance by fullback Dontavious Cannon, who sprung numerous big plays for 185 yards and two touchdowns on his 11 carries, headlined another balanced ground attack.

V.J. Bond rolled up 91 yards and a touchdown on three attempts, Jamarcus Knight 82 and a TD on nine, Trav Bostic 62 on eight and Jayden McRae 53 on six.

Quarterback Ryland Yates scored twice on six keepers, and threw to Will Wallace for a third and final Irish touchdown deep in the fourth quarter.

Deontae Walker forced a first half fumble that Kye Young recovered, and McRae intercepted a fourth-quarter pass that was altered by a hit on the pressure of Domimarkeyo Walden.

Jalen Dardy led a menacing Dublin pass rush with a sack and two tackles for loss.

Vidalia's only scoring came post-halftime as Tyler McKinney returned his second third-quarter kickoff in as many weeks for a touchdown.

The Irish (8-1, 5-0 region 2-AA) will be back in the Shamrock Bowl Friday for senior night against East Laurens as Vidalia visits Swainsboro.



Major Floyd catches a Skyler Snead pass over the shoulder in the end zone to put the Falcons up first in Friday's opening quarter/**CLAY REYNOLDS**



In the Crusaders' customary touchdown celebration, lineman Andrew Helton lifts up scorer Mason Lane after his run to get Trinity on the board in the first half/**DANNY SCARBORO**

Riverside Military 44, Trinity 9

Despite some more early offensive success, the Crusaders couldn't do nearly enough to slow down another opponent that ran wild, to the tune of 399 yards rushing.

J.J. Blackwell rushed for 247 yards and three RMA touchdowns, and also ran back a punt 64 yards for the night's final score. Tristan Hughley added 120 and another of the scores that helped the Eagles pull away after taking back the lead for the final time in the second quarter.

Witt Byrd connected on a 29-yard field goal to get the Crusaders first on the board, and Mason Lane rushed for a touchdown to cap off a six-play, 65-yard march to re-take the lead after a Riverside score in response toward the end of an active first quarter.

But the Eagles would dominate the second, third and fourth, following with the game's last five touchdowns in a row, plus an interception and fourth-down stop before the half.



Johnson County players and cheerleaders release balloons in memory of Shawn and Bella Linder, just more than seven years since their tragic deaths in a 2019 car accident, during Friday's pregame tribute/**RALPH JACKSON**

Quarterback Jude Evans rushed for 55 yards and and threw for another 57 for Trinity's offensive lead. Lane added 50 yards on 13 attempts.

Sam Owens had a catch for 56 yards. Defensively, Andrew Helton led the team in tackles with 11, while Lane and Gavin Hightower added nine each. They all also had a pair of tackles for loss.

Trojans head coach Don Norton was encouraged by the contributions from his younger players and the competition that has developed throughout the Trojan roster.

"There were some really, really bright spots from some of our younger guys," he said. "The great thing about Johnson County is we have kids, and we're competing all around. Every single day, every kid has an opportunity to get better and take a spot and run with it."

The evening's events at the Blue Monster also included a heartfelt tribute to Coach Shawn Linder and his daughter Bella, who tragically lost their lives in a car accident seven years and one day earlier. The Trojans took the field holding balloons, as fans released more from the stands in memory of the father and daughter.

Johnson County (9-0, 5-0 region 5-A) will travel to Millen next Friday to face Jenkins County in the final game of the regular season, looking to complete an undefeated campaign before turning its attention to the state playoffs.

Johnson Co. 48, GMC 3

The Trojans' proverbial next men up shined in the stead of some usual starters, top offensive producer Jeremiah Scott and O-lineman Derrick Dixon among them, who were sidelined with injuries as six different ball-carriers – Kelsey Waters, Zacorian Graddy, Jamir Wadley, Jacaden Webb, Jeremiah Taylor and Morgan Prosser – combined to score the game's seven offensive touchdowns.

JoCo rushed for 368 of its 424 yards of offense, and held GMC to only 86, as it collected a ninth win of the season.

Waters led the group of backs with 107 yards and a pair of touchdowns on four attempts. Graddy added a single carry for 71. Wadley had 68 yards, Webb 51 and Taylor 43.

Chance Wombles completed four of seven passes for 56 yards, with Daezon Devero hauling in three receptions for 42 yards.

Classifieds

Miscellaneous For Sale

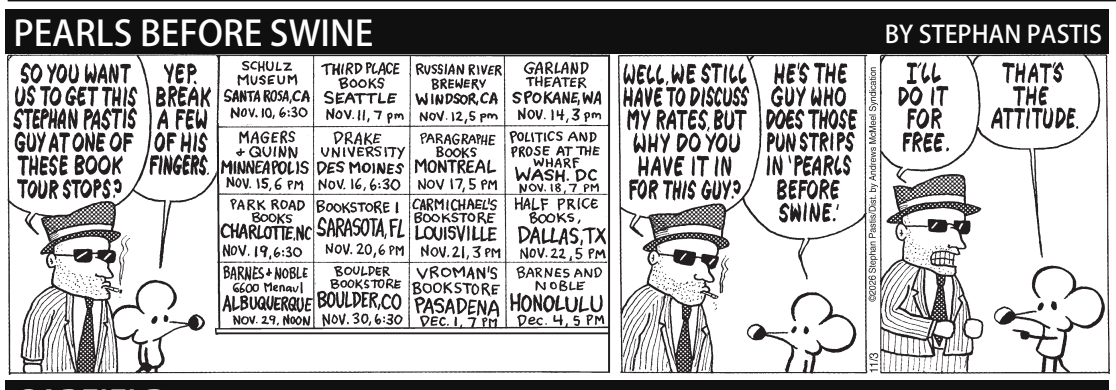
U Pick Sweet Potatoes, $10 per 5 gal. bucket, bring containers. Randy Deloach: 912-282-4300 day, 912-739-4124 night. 1026 Herman Lynn Rd, Claxton, GA.

Yard/Estate Sales

Multi Family Garage Sale: (your favorite) 2200 Peacock Dr. Thurs. 8-5, Fri 8-5, Sat 8-12.

Yard Sale: 1706 Meadowdale Dr, Dublin. Nov 6th & 7th 8am-until.

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE — BY STEPHAN PASTIS



GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



OVERBOARD — BY CHIP DUNHAM



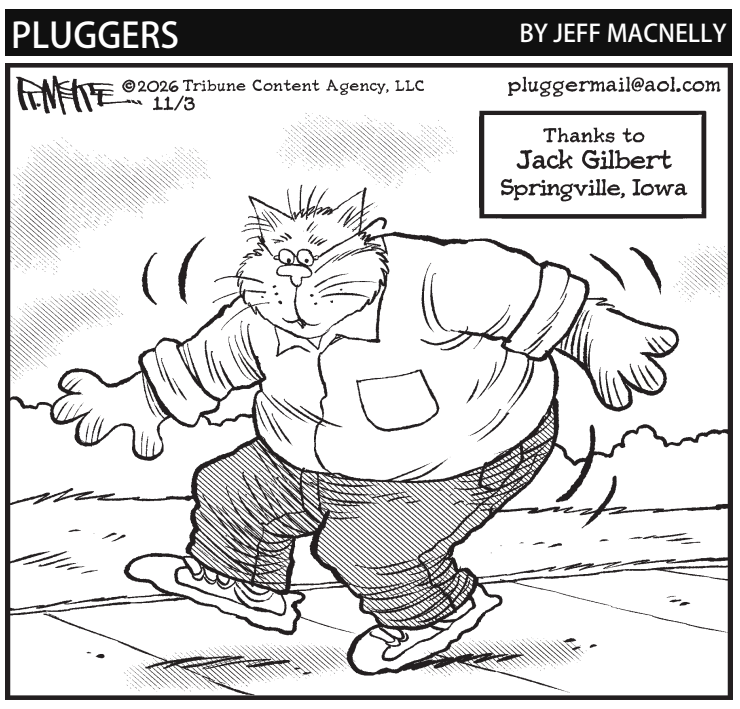
DEFLOCKED — BY JEFF CORRIVEAU



ZIGGY — BY TOM WILSON



PLUGGERS — BY JEFF MACNELLY



Some people have perfected their power walk; you're a plugger if you've perfected your power waddle.

Holidays bring up issues of gratitude



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My sister-in-law lives across the country. For years, we shipped each other's children Christmas gifts. A few years ago, she went through a difficult divorce and has since stopped sending gifts. While we didn't discuss it, I figured it was a financial strain, which is understandable.

My issue is that we continued to send her children gifts but have never received a thank-you or even an acknowledgment. I feel it's rude, but my husband doesn't think it's a big deal. Am I wrong in feeling this way? -- LOVES CHRISTMAS IN CHICAGO

DEAR LOVES CHRISTMAS: You are not wrong; your husband is. Those children should have been taught from an early age that it is important to acknowledge gifts they receive with a thank-you note or, at the very least, a phone call, text or email. Not to do that is, indeed, rude, but don't blame the kids. The blame falls on the parents who failed to teach them basic good manners.

Speaking of the parents, ask your sister-in-law if she is still comfortable with the gifts you send to her children. Her family's failure to show gratitude may be a hint that they feel guilty about being unable to reciprocate.

****

DEAR ABBY: I've been a divorced woman for the past 10 years and am at retirement age. In the divorce, I received my house, which is almost paid for. My family, including my daughter (40), her husband (42), my son (36), my nephew (42) and my granddaughter (12), all live in that house. I moved out and into a place with a friend whose house is paid for. The adults are all employed full time. The plan was for them to pay me rent until my granddaughter graduates from high school (six more years).

Unfortunately, the only ones paying rent regularly are my son (who pays all the utilities) and my nephew, who was just diagnosed with end-stage renal disease and is going on dialysis. I have already sat down with the others and had the talk that the rent is due on the first of the month; after that, it is late. I even send them text reminders a week before it's due.

What other options do I have to get my daughter and son-in-law to pay their share of the rent? This money is supposed to be going into my retirement fund so I can retire when I'm 70 or 72. The house is in a top school district, so I don't want to evict them and jeopardize my granddaughter's education. -- GRANDMA LANDLADY

DEAR LANDLADY: Would it be possible to enlist your son and nephew to apply some social pressure on the deadbeat couple? It would have been better if you'd had more than a verbal agreement from the start, but it's not too late. Draft a formal lease contract, including penalties for late payment, and insist that everyone sign it. If possible, have them set up a direct monthly transfer of funds from their bank accounts to yours. Always be firm and professional, and consult a lawyer if you need ideas other than eviction to encourage prompt payment.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren. For nearly four decades, Jeanne Phillips penned this column, which was founded in 1956 by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 270135, Kansas City, MO 64127. COPYRIGHT 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION. 1130 Walnut, Kansas City, MO 64106; 816-581-7500

Monday, November 2, 2026

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Void ♡ A K 9 6 4 ◇ Q J 7 ♣ A J 5 4 2

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♡	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

A - It is dangerous to bid, vulnerable at the three-level, but it is also dangerous to pass. Bid 3H, with as much confidence as you can muster.

Q 2 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A Q 9 8 7 5 2 ♡ K ◇ A J 4 ♣ Q 7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♠	?

What call would you make?

A - It is tempting to bid 4S, but honors in short suits are not as valuable as honors in long suits. Their value depends on what they complement in partner's hand. Bid 3S.

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ Q 10 8 ♡ A ◇ A K J 10 9 7 6 ♣ 7 5

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1◇	Dbl	1♡	2♣
?			

What call would you make?

A - The opponents are annoying you. Try to shut them out with a power rebid. Jump to 3D.

Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ 3 ♡ Q 10 3 ◇ A 10 5 2 ♣ A K Q 5 3

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♡	Pass	?	

What call would you make?

A - Slam prospects are waning, but they are not dead yet. Should partner show a fifth heart or belated club support, slam may still be there. Give him a chance to show one of those holdings – bid 2NT if forcing, bid 3D if not.

Q 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ A 9 8 7 3 ♡ 9 ◇ A Q 9 5 ♣ A J 7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♡	Pass	Pass	?

What call would you make?

A - Bidding requirements in the passout, or balancing seat, are reduced by about a king. This hand is too strong for a simple 1S bid in this position. Start with double.

Q 6 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:

♠ K J 8 ♡ J 10 2 ◇ A 6 ♣ A 9 6 5 4

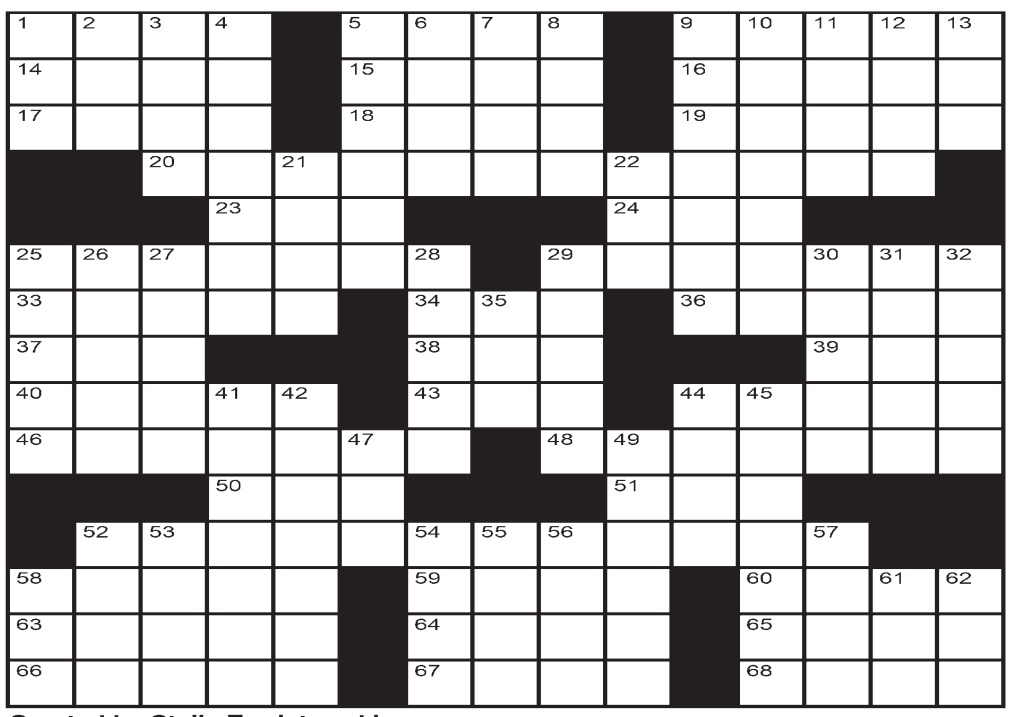
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♡	Pass
?			

What call would you make?

A - Partner's 2H bid has promised a fifth spade, and in support of spades, you have a maximum for your earlier bidding, perhaps more. Jump to 3S.

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

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski



Created by Stella Zawistowski

ACROSS

1 "Don't ___ with me!"
5 Settled the bill
9 Furniture for sitting
14 Hewn, as logs
15 Taxi trip
16 Caused: 2 wds.
17 Group of three
18 Square footage
19 Speak in public
20 ABC show since 2005: 2 wds.
23 End of a shoe
24 The Eagles, on scoreboards
25 Pals
29 Wedding reception offering: 2 wds.
33 Loans
34 Dance like Gregory Hines
36 Morally sordid
37 Not Rx: Abbr.
38 What birthday candles signify
39 Wee bit
40 Dental hygiene brand
43 "Yes" signal
44 Award
46 Snow White's fairy-tale sister: 2 wds.
48 Stereo part
50 Soldiers: Abbr.
51 Give weapons to
52 World traveler
58 Come up
59 Igloo competitor
60 Curly green veggie
63 Stopwatch, e.g.
64 Unpleasant sensation
65 Agenda part
66 Containing nothing
67 "Frozen" queen
68 Brooklyn's NBA team

DOWN

1 AZ clock setting: Abbr.
2 Listening organ
3 Big gulp
4 Laughed loudly
5 Appealed to God
6 Runs on TV
7 Formulated thought
8 Author Koontz
9 Attire
10 Female protagonist
11 Comedian Sandler
12 ___-bitty
13 Fish eggs
21 Very long time periods
22 Tablet program
25 Elevator selection
26 Stylishly old
27 Andes natives
28 Witness's spot
29 Newspaper essays
30 Dyeing technique
31 Astonish
32 Actress Winona
35 In the past
41 Kit with bricks: 2 wds.
42 Illegal payment
44 Shampoo brand
45 Crème brûlée vessel
47 Language suffix
49 Statue of Liberty's coating
52 Stern and forbidding
53 Opposite of stiff
54 Use a keyboard
55 Not fake
56 Elevator brand
57 Evaluate
58 Had a meal
61 Allow
62 Ambulance letters: Abbr.

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

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SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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

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

ANSWER:

KIDS' CORNER

Brought to you by Dublin-Laurens County CHAMBER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

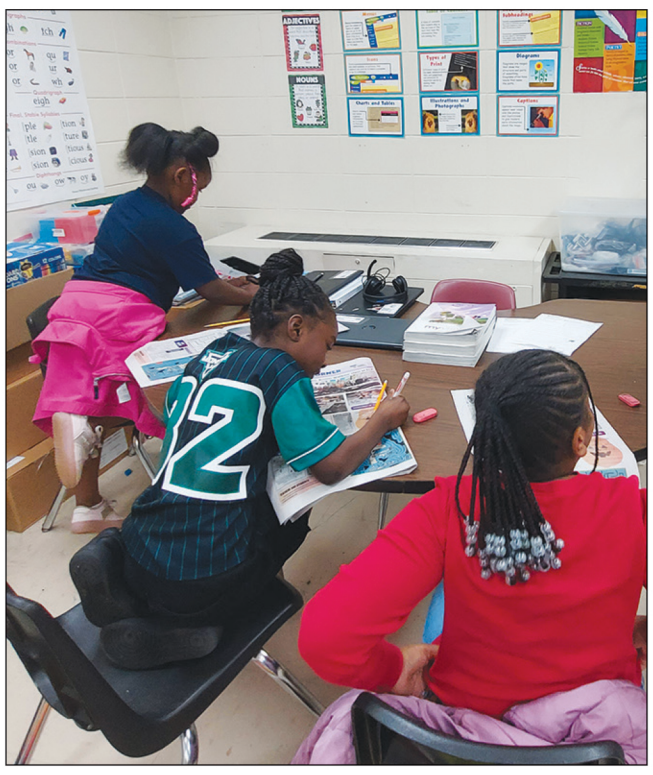
Vol. 035 | Follow Herald the Hound every Tuesday on Kids' Corner from The Courier Herald

CLASS OF THE WEEK: Mrs. Rochelle Findlay's class at Susie Dasher

Kids are always excited to see their picture in the newspaper, and one student in Mrs. Rochelle Findlay's class at Susie Dasher Elementary was on the front page the day Herald the Hound came for a visit. He enjoyed his moment in the spotlight, below right, as the rest of class dove into the activities on the Kids' Corner page.









Ask Herald the Hound

Do you have a question for Herald? A favorite book you want to recommend? Use the space below to write Herald a letter.

Puzzles4Kids

by Helene Hovanec

CODED RIDDLE

Change each letter to the one that comes immediately BEFORE it in the alphabet to find a riddle and its answer.

Here's a copy of the alphabet to guide you:

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

P O U I B O L T H J W J O H , X I B U D P N F T B U

_____

U I F C F H J O O J O H P G U I F Q B S B E F ?

_____

U I F M F U U F S " Q . "

_____

Fun Fact

Chickens are adept at problem-solving and object recognition. They can solve puzzles by pecking the pieces with their beaks to let their human helpers know which ones go where. They also can find treats hidden under cups.



Source: worldanimalprotection.org

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MINI SUDOKU

	2		1		
1					5
	5	1			
4					
		6	2		
			5	6	

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

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ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

Puzzles4Kids Answer

On Thanksgiving, what comes at the beginning of the parade? The letter "P."



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TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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