



Swamp Gravy
Season events • Page 2A

Albany addresses worker safety after two employee deaths

By Alan Mauldin
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ALBANY— Albany City Manager Terrell Jacobs promised answers to residents and the families of two employees killed on the job last year, and he also outlined a plan to help ensure similar tragedies do not occur.

The city manager said that the city

is in the process of a thorough review of safety procedures and will implement new policies that will address safety across the board for the city work force.

During 2024, city employees Darrious Stephens and Sebastian Dykes Jr. were killed on the job in separate incidents. Stephens went into the Flint River while taking water

samples on Feb. 12, and his body was found downstream about three weeks later.

Dykes was working underground near the intersection of North Harding Street and West Society Avenue in December when the sewer collapsed on him.

The city is in the process of implementing new safety protocols



Terrell Jacobs

will begin June 1, and all of the new standard operating procedures will be

meant to prevent similar tragedies in the future, Jacobs said. Additional funding needed will be addressed during the budget process for the budget year that

implemented by the end of this year. “Safety is going to be a paramount focus we put up front,” Jacobs said. “We owe it to the families, we owe it to the community and we owe it to the employees.”

Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring employees follow all safety

SEE SAFETY, 2A



Staff Photo: Lucille Lannigan

Live Oak Elementary students check out medical equipment during a school medical career fair Friday.

IS THERE A FUTURE DOCTOR IN THE CLASS?

By Lucille Lannigan
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ALBANY — Some youths dream of becoming an astronaut, a ballerina or a firefighter. Officials at Live Oak Elementary School are hoping their elementary students aspire to go into the medical profession.

For the first time ever, the school hosted the Live Oak Elementary School Medical Arts Career Fair to give students an idea of what various career paths in the medical field would look like. The elementary school is the feeder for Merry Acres Middle School and Westover High School, which are

the Dougherty County School System’s designated medical arts schools. Westover even has a Medical Arts Academy for students.

“If they decide to take a pathway in the medical field, they can attend these schools,” Tonya McDuffie, a DCSS professional

Live Oak Elementary students explore medical careers during special event

counselor, said. “We want to give them the opportunity to see what it takes. If they decide to become a physician, they have some background knowledge from today.”

McDuffie organized the career day, which involved every kinder-

SEE CAREERS, 2A



Staff Photo: Tara Fletcher

B.J. Fletcher, left, shares a moment with fellow restaurateur Bo Henry during one of Henry’s “weekly” visits to BJ’s Country Buffet.

Restaurateur marks 25th year serving public at westside diner

By Carlton Fletcher
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ALBANY — Now in her 25th year as chief chef, bottle washer and proprietress of BJ’s Country Buffet, a popular diner on Albany’s west side, B.J. Fletcher has seen more than her share of challenges.

“We’ve faced storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, price increases, a snowstorm and even boycotts,” said Fletcher, who is marking her milestone anniversary at the 2401 Dawson Road restaurant by “going back to the things we’ve done over the years that our customers have enjoyed.”

“And, yeah, I realize that there have been times when people who didn’t like my politics took it out on my peas.”

Still, Fletcher has persevered at a location

SEE DINER, 2A

New firm set to begin operations at regional airport facility in Albany

By Alan Mauldin
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ALBANY — Along with new general aviation and hangar facilities, the Southwest Georgia Regional Airport soon will have a new fixed-base operator to oversee the operation of those facilities.

The Albany City Commission has chosen Valdosta Flying Service to take over from Eagles of America, which has been the fixed-base operator since 2010 but did not enter a proposal to resume its position.

The Valdosta-based firm was selected over AV Flight, a Michigan-based company. The new company will begin operations in Albany in May.

Those two companies were the only two out of nine solicited to tender offers, and Wings of America did not participate in the process.

“We’ve got two great operators,” Commissioner Bob Langstaff, who is on the city’s Aviation Board, said prior to a vote last week. “I don’t think we could go wrong with either of them. Unfortunately for us, we

have to choose.”

The two companies came in close on annual costs, with AV Flight at \$320,758 and Valdosta Flying Service at \$302,909.

Among the positives brought up for Valdosta Flying Service is the close proximity to Albany could allow it to provide better service. The three pilots who serve on the city’s Aviation Commission all gave a nod to the Valdosta company.

Fixed-base operators provide services such as fuel, parking, hangar

space and maintenance of aircraft.

The hangar and general aviation facilities represent a \$15 million investment of local, state and federal funding through infrastructure legislation approved in 2021.

The new company could bring some exciting new features, including the possibility of opening an aviation school, City Commissioner Chad Warbington said during a Thursday interview.

SEE AIRPORT, 2A

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Love Your Heart February is Heart Health Month

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week
- Quit smoking and limit alcohol consumption
- Eat a balanced diet
- Keep a healthy sleep pattern
- Stay up-to-date on health screenings



Swamp Gravy showcases 2025 season of events at iconic Cotton Hall Theater

Staff Reports

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COLQUITT — The stage has been quiet for long enough ... there are stories waiting to be heard as Cotton Hall Theater gears up for another whirlwind season. Filled with thrills, mystery and festive cheer, this year’s lineup has a story for everyone.

As the lights illuminate “Swamp Gravy: Graveside Service,” audience members will be transported to a cemetery where the past lingers in whispered stories and unexpected joy. This year’s edition of Georgia’s official folk-life play weaves together ghostly encounters, heart-warming memories and the sometimes comical ways we keep our loved ones alive in our hearts.

“Graveside Service” will take the stage March 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29, as well as Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25.

On April 5, laughter and excitement fill the air as children board “The Easter Train,” an interactive experience designed for young au-

diences where imagination comes to life. The bunnies are in a panic: The Easter egg shipment is late. What’s to be done? Young theatergoers will help unravel the problem, take part in an Easter craft, adopt a toy chick and capture the moment with a special photo.

Next up, the new musical “Freaky Friday” brings the classic mother-daughter mix-up to the stage with a modern, heart-felt twist. As Katherine and Ellie navigate each other’s worlds, they uncover new truths about themselves and each other. This production is sure to resonate with families, proving that sometimes, walking in someone else’s shoes is the best way to understand them.

“Freaky Friday” runs May 9, 10, 16 and 17.

Then the summer sun will take us to Bikini Bottom on June 20, 21, 27 and 28 in “The Spongebob Musical: Youth Edition.” When an erupting volcano threatens Bikini Bottom, the underwater town bands together



Photo by Hannah Harrison

The cast of Swamp Gravy rehearse for the newest edition of Georgia’s official folk-life play.

to save the day. Audiences will be swept up in the colorful, energetic spectacle that reminds us all that even the smallest hero can make a big difference.

When doors of “Woodstone Manor” creak open Aug. 15, 16, 22 and

23, they will welcome a group of guests that is promised a million-dollar prize — if the group can last the night. The audience is drawn into a world of secrets, suspense and a good dose of comedy in this new Murder Mystery Dinner Theater.

Who will fall victim to the mysterious happenings within the haunted halls? Only time will tell.

Lastly, to round out the year, a snowy surprise ... well ... another snowy surprise. When 6 inches of unexpected snow falls on Highway 27, a group of strangers finds itself stuck together for Christmas Eve at the Doublestack Diner. With nowhere to go, these travelers create their own kind of Christmas miracle, one filled with warmth, laughter and a few surprising connections. This show is certain to sell out well before the cold weather returns, with shows scheduled for Dec. 5, 6, 12 and 13.

For more information about any of the events happening at Cotton Hall, visit swampgravy.com or follow Swamp Gravy on Facebook and Instagram. The box office can be reached by calling (229) 758-5450. Whether you’re looking for mystery, music or magic, there’s a seat waiting for you.

From 1A CAREERS

garten through fifth-grade Live Oak student in activities that stretched throughout the entire school day. Ninety-five medical professionals from about 27 different medical organizations gave presentations to the students. Inside the gymnasium, students got to visit different tables and learn from different organizations. Some Live Oak students wore tiny, colorful scrubs and stethoscopes around their necks.

In one corner, students brushed teeth on denture replicas and heard from dental professionals from King Family Dental Care and Albany

Technical College. In another corner, they played the game “Operation” at a table run by Tift Regional Medical Center.

Quontasha Glover, the Albany State University Health Science Medical Laboratory Technology director, said while she’s attended many student career fairs, she’s never seen one dedicated specifically to elementary students.

“With the younger ones, we feel like we can target them early and pique their interest,” she said. “You never know when talking to someone at a younger age, what might stick in their head.”

Glover herself knew she wanted to become a medical professional after attending a career fair in high

school and hearing from Darton College students.

“I knew I wanted to be in the program then,” she said. “Now, I’m the director.”

Glover’s booth was covered in tubes with mock blood samples and colorful petri dishes.

“We wanted to make it more visual for the younger ones,” she said.

Glover said she was surprised and overjoyed with the inquisitive questions the elementary students came up with.

It was Danielle Mills’, a registered nurse for Phoebe at Piedmont, first time talking with elementary students about medical careers as well. At her table, students played with blood pressure cuffs.

“Observation is important,” Mills said. “People have a tendency to remember experiences like that.”

She said she loved working with the younger students.

“I feel the younger they are, the better you can get them into the system to want to be a medical professional,” Mills said.

Nursing students from ASU made their way through classrooms, teaching mini lessons on hygiene, blood pressure and using a stethoscope. Students were eager to play health care-themed games like “Jeopardy,” showcasing what they’d just learned.

Outside the school, students toured ambulances from Dougherty County EMS. They interacted with medical dummies in a mobile training ve-

hicle brought by the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine South Georgia.

McDuffie said she hopes students ended the day feeling more inspired to go into the medical field, and she hopes the medical volunteers feel appreciated. She said she plans to make this an annual event and has already had interest from some of the medical organizations about returning next year.

“Out of all of the career days that I’ve ever presented, this is one that is near and dear and true to my heart,” she said. “I’m so excited that everybody joined in and participated today. The greatest highlight is that the kids are excited and they’re enjoying it.”

From 1A DINER

that at one time was considered among the “jinxed” properties where businesses went to die.

“I heard all that talk,” Fletcher said of the failed businesses that came before her at her BJ’s location. “But I just did what my mama taught me; I got to work. Over the years, I think my staff will tell you that I lead by example. I’ll get in the dish pit; I’ll scrub the toilets. There’s no task I ask them to do that I won’t do.”

Fletcher said those employees are the key to her longevity at the restaurant. Half of them, she said, have been with her the entire 25-year run at BJ’s, and the other half have been on staff for 10 years or more.

“I just try to treat them the way I want to be treated,” she said.

As for those fickle patrons who showed their disdain for Fletcher’s politics, both as an eight-year member of the Albany City Commission and as a no-holds-barred post-commission columnist for The Albany Herald, the entrepreneur said she understands that her outspokenness can sometimes rub people the wrong way.

“But, you know, during those eight years on the commission, every one of my constituents knew that if they called me, I would answer,” she said. “Even after I lost my re-election bid (to Vilnus Gaines), the people throughout the city have continued to call me because they know I will listen and, if I can, I will help them.



Staff Photo: Tara Fletcher

B.J. Fletcher said half of her staff has been with her at BJ’s Country Buffet the entire 25 years she’s had the popular restaurant open.

“That’s become a problem with the leaders we have now. Until we get a group that works for the community, we’re going to continue to have problems. It’s like I tell the folks who ask: The only way to impact elected officials who don’t appear to care for the people they represent is to show up at the meetings and confront them face-to-face.”

To celebrate her anniversary, Fletcher plans to present on Thursday and Friday of this week “all the things your grandma used to make for Sunday dinner.

“Not everybody has Brunswick stew, catfish, mullet, fried chicken, dumplings, turkey legs and soul food favorites like chittlin’s and ox tail,” the restaurateur said. “We’re going to have all those on the buffet Thursday and Friday, and we’re offering a special where two people can come in and eat all they want for \$25. If that goes well, we

may even continue the special throughout February.”

Fletcher said BJ’s also plans to have two drawings for \$250 cash giveaways during the anniversary celebration.

“We plan to give a portion of our sales during the special to an organization that I’ve gained a lot of respect for, Feeding the Valley,” she added. “I think they’ve got a good handle on providing healthy food to people in need.”

Fletcher said she has a lot of memories at the 2401 Dawson Road location over the past quarter-century, most of them centered around her staff and the customers who make their way in for a hot meal on a regular basis.

“I can tell you, selling the building we’re in in 2019 was a huge part of our longevity,” she said. “That took a \$7,000 payment off my plate. But as I look back over these 25 years, it’s the people who

have kept us going. I miss my mom (who passed away five years ago), working with her and her keeping the plants going on the patio, but I love the people — the personalities — that have been through here over the years.

“My employees have been amazing; we truly are a little family. We may have our squabbles, but in the end, we pull together. As I said, I try to treat them the way I want to be treated, and they’ve repaid me with their loyalty.”

And those paying customers who have, over the years, kept the doors open through all the aforementioned calamities?

“I just want everyone who has supported us to know we really appreciate them,” she said. “It’s like I tell them: When you walk down the hallway into the restaurant and you look at the mirror on the wall, you will see the people who have kept us open.”

From 1A SAFETY

protocols, including the use of safety and personal protection equipment, and safety officers will be tasked with ensuring that is done and visiting work sites to ensure compliance with safety measures.

“We will have a total of seven safety officers (who will be) responsible for going out, assessing sites, ensuring if protocols are being followed,” Jacobs said. “Supervisors will make sure all employees have the equipment to do that job.”

Among the protocols that could have made a difference in Stephens’ death, the city manager said that in the future, employees collecting water samples will wear flotation devices and have another employee at the work site.

In the case of the sewer collapse, Jacobs said that in the future, the city will look to hire private contractors who have the expertise needed to perform challenging tasks like the ones city employees were

engaged in when the collapse occurred in December.

At the site where Dykes was working, there was no trench box and the employees were not extensively trained in the dangerous environment in which they were working.

“It was probably not the best decision for the (city employees) to be doing that,” Jacobs said. “In hindsight, that was a decision that should have been made differently. We should hire an outside contractor that has more experience in issues like that.

“There were failures in our decisions. Those decisions resulted in these deaths. We cannot undo what has been done. All we can do is try to address them and hopefully put us in a position where this doesn’t happen again.”

There are a number of jobs that city workers perform that are inherently dangerous, and the city’s focus will be to make sure that employees are trained and equipped to do them as safely as possible and return home at the end of the day, the city manager said.



File Photo

The city of Albany’s new general aviation terminal opened in June 2024. The Albany City Commission selected Valdosta Flying Service last week as the new operator for the facility that serves private air flight operations.

From 1A AIRPORT

“Mr. (William) Langdale (company CEO and CFO) runs another terminal in Valdosta,” he said. “He’s bringing a lot of ideas that worked in Valdosta. He’s got some out-of-the-box ideas that have worked there.”

The hangar facility provides the opportunity to bring in

revenue, both for use and for planes based in Albany that will bring in property tax dollars, the commissioner said.

“I can say that we have multimillion-dollar jets that call Albany home that we didn’t have two years ago,” Warbington said. “It’s not a money-making proposition; we still have to maintain it. But I feel these are great economic development tools.”

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Horoscopes

Plan time with family and friends. It will help you chill out and alleviate stress. Sell off items you don't need, and use the extra space that results for something that makes your life easier. Refuse to let what others do or say irritate you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Rather than challenge others for having different opinions, channel your energy into pursuing the most agreeable path. Focus on personal improvements and projects that bring you joy.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Participation will be in your best interest. Sign up for something that interests you. An open mind and a desire to try something new will lead to something exceptional.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Keep busy. Tidy up, clear space and update your surroundings to better accommodate your plans and prospects. Someone you encounter will grab your attention.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- A skeptical approach to what someone proposes will give you time to ask questions and check out the facts. Tame your emotions before getting into a conversation that can damage a friendship.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Distance yourself from people who try to exploit your generosity. Indulge in chasing information that will keep you up to date and informed. An emotional connection you have with someone will gain momentum.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Take nothing for

granted. If you love someone, be upfront about your plans and determine where you stand. Put more time and energy into maintaining a good reputation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Look before you leap. Have everything in place before you initiate something or someone new into your life. Not every offer will have the same value or positive impact.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Set high standards, and don't back down just because someone challenges you. An efficient plan will come in below budget and offer long-term benefits. Your discipline will pay off.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- A passionate approach to what you want will help you convince others to tag along for the ride. Your vivid description of how you see things unfolding will put you in the spotlight.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Engage in activities that ease stress and take your mind off situations you cannot control. Look inward and focus on what you can do to improve yourself, your skills and your future.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Today is all about maintaining equality and striving for common ground. Take a unique approach to running your home and dealing with personal relationships. Be compassionate toward yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Protect your health, well-being and reputation. Relying on others will lead to disappointment. Change can be good if you take the initiative and do the work yourself.

DO JUST ONE THING

by Danny Seo

Are you renovating your kitchen and wondering what can be done with old granite, stone or marble countertops? The last thing you should do is have them sent to a landfill. Fabricators can do more than just cut and install countertops. They can take your old surfaces and upcycle them into shelves, benches, coasters and trays. Or have the stone material recycled into crushed stone to cover driveways or walkways at home. If you can't find a use for the old materials at your own home, see if a local charity that builds affordable housing can use them for a project.

Today in History

Today is the 42nd day of 2025 and the 53rd day of winter.

TODAY'S HISTORY:
In 1945, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin concluded their conference in Yalta, on the Crimean Peninsula.

In 1990, anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela was released from prison in South Africa after 27 years.

In 2011, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ceded power in response to mass protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square, bringing nearly 30 years of rule to a close.

In 2013, the Vatican announced Pope Benedict XVI's intention to step down as leader of the Catholic Church.

TODAY'S BIRTH-DAYS: Thomas Edison (1847-1931), inventor; Max Baer (1909-1959), boxer; Eva Gabor (1919-1995), actress; Leslie Nielsen (1926-2010), actor; Mary Quant (1930-2023), fashion designer; Burt Reynolds (1936-2018), actor; Sheryl Crow (1962-), singer-songwriter; Jennifer Aniston (1969-), actress; Damian

Lewis (1971-), actor; Kelly Rowland (1981-), singer; Natalie Dormer (1982-), actress; Khalid (1998-), singer-songwriter.

TODAY'S FACT: In 1970, Japan successfully launched its first satellite, becoming the world's fourth space power after the Soviet Union in 1957, the United States in 1958 and France in 1965.

TODAY'S SPORTS: In 1990, Buster Douglas knocked out undisputed heavyweight champion and 42-1 betting favorite Mike Tyson in the 10th round of their match in Tokyo, completing one of the biggest upsets in boxing history.

TODAY'S QUOTE: "Yes, it's true, I've been called the Laurence Olivier of spoofs. I guess that would make Laurence Olivier the Leslie Nielsen of Shakespeare." -- Leslie Nielsen

TODAY'S NUMBER: 21 -- age at which Thomas Edison applied for his first patent, for an "Electric Vote Recorder."

TODAY'S MOON: Between first quarter moon (Feb. 5) and full moon (Feb. 12).

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In every American there is an air of incorrigible innocence, which seems to conceal a diabolical cunning."

A. E. Housman,
poet (1859-1936)

CORRECTION

This newspaper is committed to publishing fair and accurate information. Errors should be brought to the attention of Editor Carlton Fletcher at (229) 888-9300. Corrections or clarifications will appear in this space.

SQUAWKBOX

squawkbox@albanyherald.com

Creede Hinshaw has a lot of nerve writing a column speaking up for transgenders. He must not have been paying attention as our national and state Republican leaders have spoken out and made laws to offset the blight that these people are. He needs to listen to our president, and he doesn't need to be offering religious suggestions.

The original balance of power in three branches of government: Legislative (makes laws), executive (envisions), and judicial (interprets), is now (1) President (envisions, makes, enforces, interprets), and (2) Republicans (3) Democrats follow or protest. Rotted roots of a republic. .

I loved your column, Fletcher, on Gene Lyons' decision to discontinue his weekly column. I read his final column with mixed feelings of anger (at politicians like Trump and Huckabee) and sadness, as I realized this great writer was ending an illustrious career. My best to you, sir.

Surprised to see a chicken with a sign reading "Will work for eggs" at Dawson Road grocery store parking lot.

Sounds like Albany Utilities' new meter transition with an "estimated" non-imported reading were less than optimally planned. If I get an "estimated" bill, I will correspondingly send them my "estimated" amount due.

Such a typical MAGA post: The person is so happy that those who didn't vote for Trump are concerned about his deluge of tear-the-house-down executive orders. Obviously as a MAGA person, their concern is always about preventing someone from progressing beyond themselves, not understanding that they will be adversely impacted. Point ... we all lose; he grows richer.

President Trump is a fine Christian man. Just because he has to make tough decisions in the secular world, that doesn't make him less a Christian. Your attempt to denigrate this great leader is just short of blasphemous.

"Any man who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the government take care of him better take a closer look at the American Indian." -- Henry Ford

East ASU campus is geographically and socioeconomically nestled in Albany's most challenging area of high crime, poverty, presence of blight and bars, limited essential services, etc. The positive future for ASU and downtown is to transform it into a vibrant supportive extension to the 6,500-student ASU community.

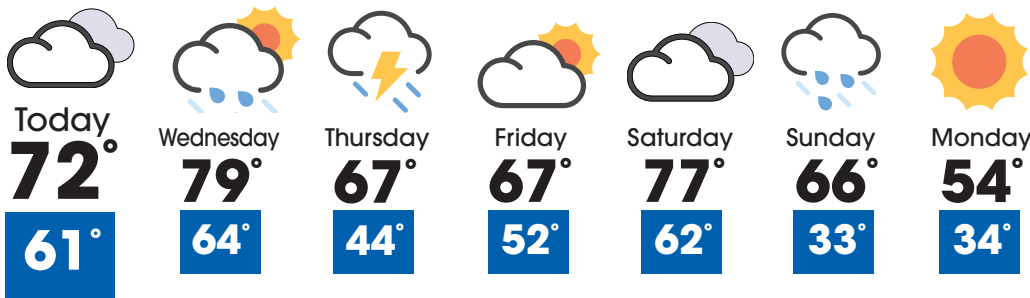
Never question the power of competition. Homerun Foods Gillionville/Westgate with competition across the street ... gas \$2.69. One mile down the road at Beattie, with no competition ... \$2.82.

Albany's DDA working on a "re-branding" effort with three different marketing consultants. If it's a pig's ear, it will never be a rose by any name.

Imagine you drive to Albany hoping to build a business. You are passed by a Charger with blue headlights going 70 mph in town; you see litter spread just outside the city's recycling center, and you read about the County Commission getting sued for an illegal firing done out of spite. Most people would keep driving to Columbus. Remember this at the polls in November.

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Weather Forecast



BRIDGE ■ PHILLIP ALDER

KEEP HUNTING FOR THOSE TRICKS



Tom Flynn, an author, journalist and novelist, said, "Be sure you positively identify your target before you pull the trigger."

As I mentioned yesterday, defenders should identify their target, the tricks that they need to defeat the contract. Then they should pull the trigger -- play the necessary cards.

In this deal, how should West have defended against three spades? He led the heart ace: three, nine, five. He continued with the heart king: six, four, seven. What should he have shot next?

South's jump to three spades was game-invitational, guaranteeing at least a six-card suit.

Since East had played high-low in hearts, West knew that South had begun with three

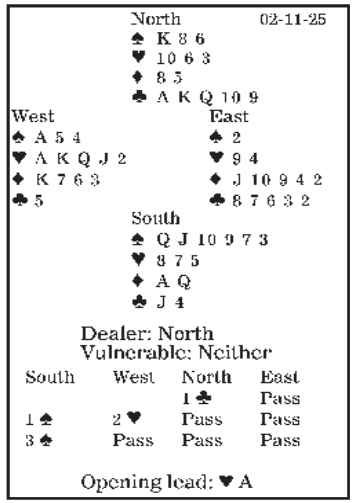
hearts. So West could see four tricks: one spade and three hearts. But where was the fifth winner?

If West shifted to his club, took the next trick with the spade ace, and gave his partner a heart ruff, perhaps he could receive a club ruff in return. However, from the bidding East could not have two spades.

Instead, West had to gain a trick with the diamond king. But if South had the diamond ace and queen, East had to lead the suit. How could West get East on lead?

Right -- he led his heart jack (not the two, which East might have read as a suit-preference signal for clubs, indicating that West was void in that suit).

East, thinking that South still had the heart queen, ruffed. And when South played a low heart, East correctly understood his partner's play. East shifted to the diamond jack -- down one.



ADVICE COLUMNIST ■ ERIC THOMAS

Colleague's new beard prompts questions



Dear Eric: I have known "Mary" for almost 10 years. We have a strictly business/professional relationship which requires us to meet several times a year.

Although we don't socialize, we do joke around and have small talk about family, pets, travel, movies, etc., when we meet. We've always gotten along well.

I know that Mary is gay (she has told me this). Based on our conversations, Mary has identified as female, although her physical appearance and clothing do not pin her to a specific gender.

At some point during the two months that I didn't see Mary, she grew a thick beard that completely covers her chin. When I saw the drastic and sudden (at least to me) change in her appearance, neither of us said anything about it. We just talked as if nothing had changed.

I believe that Mary has the right to present herself as she chooses, and I am not at all uncomfortable with her having a beard. But I feel awkward pretending it's not there. My question is whether I should acknowledge the change in her appearance, and if so, what is the appropriate thing to say. I don't want to offend her by saying or by not saying something. If you think I should just ignore it, then I'm sure I can get past the awkwardness.

— Beard Etiquette

Dear Etiquette: Because this is a strictly business relationship and because Mary hasn't mentioned it, ignoring the beard as you would another colleague's change in appearance is the best bet here. As you note, there's nothing wrong with the beard. There are times, in professional

settings, when a compliment on it might work out. But, in general, at work it's best for everyone to keep small talk out of the realm of physical appearance.

Dear Eric: My father and stepmother, who are in their mid-80s and in good health, live an hour away from us. My wife and I have had a good relationship with them for more than 40 years, and we talk by phone at least once a week. We've always made it a point to include them in our family gatherings so that they could see their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

I'm usually the one who initiates us getting together for lunch somewhere near them. My stepmother's children live close by and stop by their house often. Recently, I invited them twice to come to our home when our kids and grandkids were here, and both times they declined stating, "We have too much going on."

If one of them has an appointment, then the day before and after is off limits for a visit. We missed getting together with them during the holidays because we were out of town. However, when we returned, I mentioned getting together three times, and my dad responded that he didn't know his schedule and would get back to me.

I'm really confused and hurt about what has happened. On the phone, he's very friendly and acts like nothing is wrong. My stepmother tells my wife that she loves her at the end of every call. We haven't seen each other in six months. I've stopped asking him about getting together because it obviously isn't important to him anymore.

— Confused Son

Dear Son: Your father and stepmother may have less capacity for making and following through on plans than they once did. Even though they're in good health, the rhythms of their lives continue to change. Try to set aside your emotions by thinking of this as a logistical challenge, rather than an intentional slight.

They've communicated part of this by setting the boundary around appointment days, for instance. It may just take a lot out of them. So it's not a case of them choosing their appointments over you, but rather them negotiating the new realities of their lives. Take the evidence of their love at face value.

You can make this easier on them and on yourselves by adjusting your expectations. Take the example of your stepmother's children. Though it's more convenient for them to stop by because they live closer, it's also probably more helpful for your father and stepmother to have a more flexible visiting cadence that doesn't require as much planning.

You may need to literally and figuratively start going the extra mile to make sure your father and stepmother are getting what they (and you) need. Test it out with a casual trip. "I'll be in the area today in about a half an hour. Mind if I swing by?" But also listen to the response and be prepared to keep adjusting until it feels right all around. Maybe they need less notice, maybe more. Grant them some grace here and remember that the goal here is meeting the ones you love where they are.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at eric@askingeric.com or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, Pa. 19110. Follow him on Instagram and sign up for his weekly newsletter at vericthomas.com.

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PERSPECTIVES

The Albany Herald

Carlton Fletcher, Editor

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GUEST COLUMNIST ■ CARDEN SUMMERS

Key Senate bills make way through committees

We’re now four weeks into the 2025 Legislative Session, and things are moving quickly under the Gold Dome. It’s been a busy and productive stretch, and I remain fully committed to standing up for the values and priorities of the 13th Senate District.

This week began with a press conference led by President Pro Tempore John F. Kennedy, R-Macon, and Senate Majority Leader Steve Gooch, R-Dahlonega, during which we unveiled our Republican caucus priorities for the session. Leader Gooch captured it perfectly: Georgia’s success depends on securing our future — whether that’s through protecting our children, safeguarding families, enhancing economic opportunities or ensuring that Georgia remains the best state in the nation to do business.

During his State of the State address, Gov. Brian Kemp outlined his top priority for this session: tort reform. I’m proud to report that two bills aimed at tort reform — Senate Bill 68 and Senate Bill 69 —already have been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

SB 68 takes a deep dive into tort law, revising rules on civil practice, evidence, damages and liability, all with one goal in mind: to reduce excessive payouts and curb the kind of lawsuit abuse that hurts local businesses. SB 69, the “Georgia Courts Access and Consumer Protection Act,” takes on third-party litigation financing, increasing transparency and protecting consumers from shady contract practices. These bills are just the beginning of efforts to make Georgia’s legal system fairer, more transparent and less prone to abuse.

Another key legislative priority that moved swiftly through the Senate this week is SB 1, the “Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act,” authored by Sen. Greg Dolezal, R-Cumming. This bill ensures that biological males cannot participate in women’s sports at the middle

school, high school or collegiate levels.

In addition to these priority bills, the Senate has been hard at work, setting a regular committee schedule and hearing testimony on topics ranging from public safety to AI-driven scams and synthetic drug testing.

I proudly introduced SB 80 this week into the Senate. If passed, SB 80 would revise the definition of “rural hospital organization” as it relates to eligibility to receive tax credits.

SB 80 is currently scheduled for a hearing before the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. I look forward to its passage in committee and its advancement through the legislative process.

I also co-sponsored several integral pieces of legislation this week, including SB 74, sponsored by Sen. Max Burns, R-Sylvania. This bill would create a misdemeanor violation for any librarian who knowingly distributes harmful materials to children and would provide a defense for librarians who make good-faith attempts to remove these materials from libraries.

Finally, I encourage students ages 12 to 18 to apply for the Senate Page Program. This is a fantastic opportunity for young Georgians to experience how their state government operates up close. Spots are limited and filling quickly, so don’t wait to apply.

I am incredibly grateful to continue representing the 13th Senate District. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

State Sen. Carden Summers serves as chairman of the Senate Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions. He represents the 13th Senate District, which includes Ben Hill, Berrien, Crisp, Irwin, Lee, Tift, Turner and Worth counties, as well as a part of Coffee County. He may be reached at (404) 463-5258 or by email at carden.summers@senate.ga.gov.



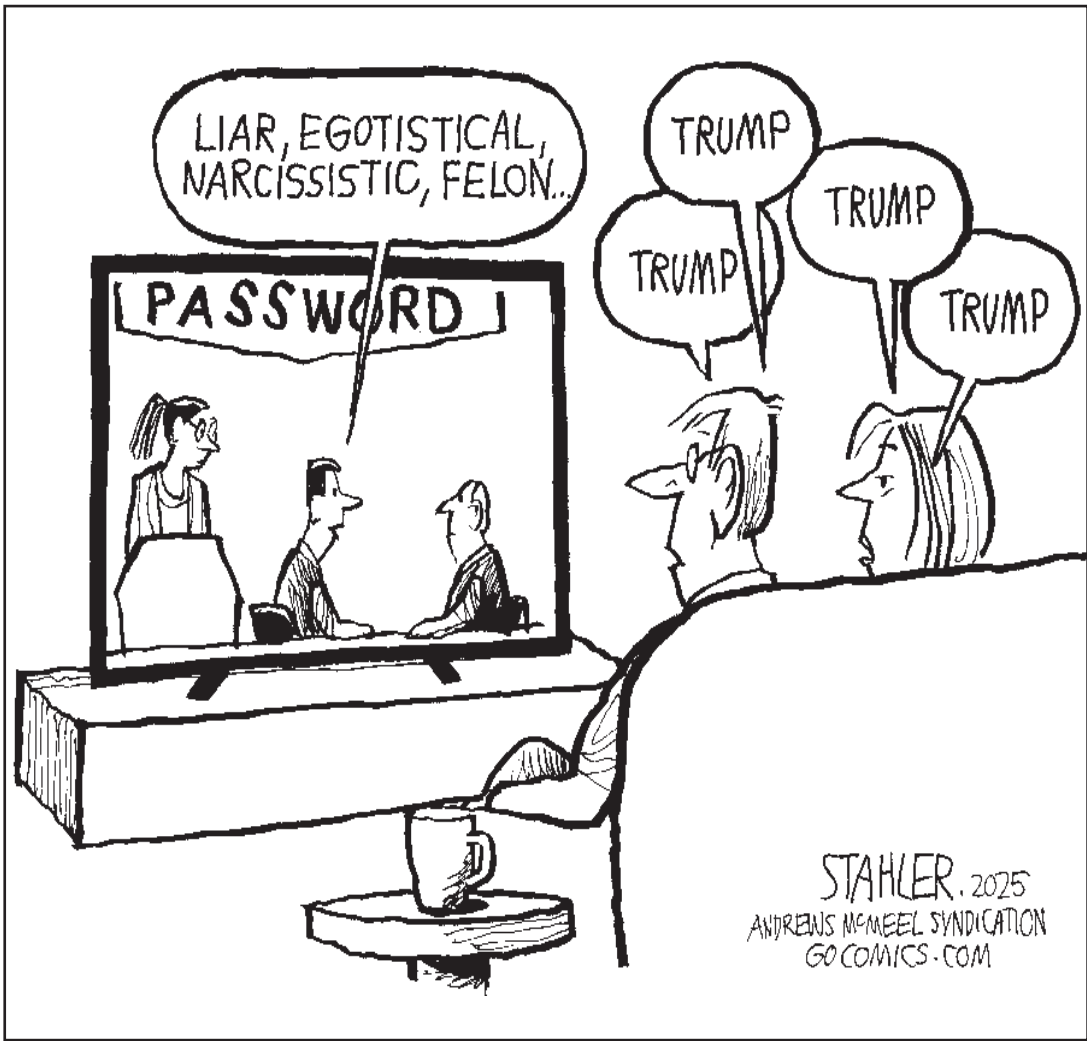
Carden Summers

“The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.”

Psalm 121:5

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:

EMAIL: carlton.fletcher@albanyherald.com
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The Albany Herald encourages letters to the editor on topics of general interest, but reserves the right to edit them for content and length. Letters should be no longer than 400 words and must include the writer’s name, address and daytime phone number for verification purposes.

GUEST COLUMNIST ■ GERALD GREENE

Pace of legislative work picks up in state House

Last week, members of the Georgia House of Representatives returned to the state Capitol following a winter storm that impacted much of the southern part of the state. One of our primary responsibilities this week was to hear from Chief Justice Michael Boggs of the Georgia Supreme Court as he delivered his State of the Judiciary address to a joint session of the House and Senate in the House Chamber.

House Appropriations Subcommittees and full House committees also began to meet this week, ramping up the committee process.

On Monday, we began the week with a moment of reflection and remembrance, honoring the millions of innocent lives lost during the Holocaust. Through the adoption of House Resolution 50, which designates Jan. 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the House reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that such atrocities are never forgotten.

Chief Justice Boggs addressed the House and Senate on Tuesday and began his State of the Judiciary address by emphasizing the rise in public confidence in state courts, noting that more than half of Americans now give positive ratings to their state judicial systems.

In his address last year, Boggs spoke about the shortage of court reporters across the state, and for much of this year, the Judicial Council’s Standing Committee on Court Reporting Matters has met with stakeholders to discuss this ongoing issue. This year, the chief justice noted that the Judicial Council is prepared to submit a balanced proposal that would allow trial judges the option to have some court proceedings be recorded by a digital system, thus reducing the amount of time spent retrieving necessary records.

When court proceedings are prolonged, victims are often subject to delays in receiving justice, and this proposal would help victims obtain closure in a timely manner. Next, he outlined the issue of legal deserts and the harm they pose to citizens in our state. Currently, there are seven rural counties in Georgia that do not possess a single licensed attorney, furthering the absence of justice for Georgians experiencing pressing legal matters such as



Gerald Greene

divorce, eviction or adoption.

Chief Justice Boggs went on to emphasize the positive work being done to improve outcomes for veterans in our state’s criminal justice system, highlighting the work of Cobb County’s Veterans Accountability and

Treatment Court program, which has worked tirelessly to decrease recidivism rates for incarcerated veterans through an 18-month program designed to address post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and other mental health issues.

The chief justice also reported that in recent years, attacks and threats

targeting Georgia’s courts, including those aimed at judges, have been on the rise. He highlighted a statistic from the United States Marshals Service, which revealed that threats against federal judges have nearly tripled over the past decade. In response to this escalating trend, Chief Justice Boggs proposed a series of upgrades to physical security measures, alongside comprehensive training initiatives designed to ensure that security situations are not only effectively managed but also prevented.

In addition to hearing the State of the Judiciary address this week, the pace of the House’s legislative work certainly picked up as the House Appropriations Subcommittees continued meeting this week to review the sections of the Amended Fiscal Year 2025 budget.

In addition, several full House committees have started meeting to discuss various bills assigned to them based on policy area. Once a bill passes out of its committee, it moves to the Rules Committee before being added to the House calendar for a vote by the whole House. After passing the House, the bill follows a similar process in the Senate, where it may be amended. If there are differences between the House and Senate versions, a conference committee is appointed to resolve them, and the final version then returns to both chambers for a final vote.

Gerald Greene, dean of the Georgia state Legislature, represents state House District 154.

COLUMNIST ■ DICK YARBROUGH

Reminding ourselves of what is important and what is not

Have you ever read, seen or heard something that sticks to your mind like glue and just won’t go away? I have. It was an article that appeared recently in the New York Times. (Yes, I do read the Times, but I don’t inhale.) Jancee Dunn, who covers personal health issues for the publication, asked the question: “What would you do if you knew you were at the end of your life?”

An excellent query, worthy of reflection.

In the article, Dunn references palliative and hospice care experts about what they have learned from patients nearing the end of their lives. This got my attention because my daughter-in-law, Jackie, is

a nurse focused on hospice care. I can think of few tougher jobs than dealing day-to-day with those who know — and you know — they are going to die. Of course, we all will at some point, we just don’t know when. If we did, what might we do differently?

We might start by not putting things off until tomorrow because we have more important things to do today. It just might be that what we are putting off — like checking up on an old friend we haven’t talked to in a while — is more important than changing the sheets or washing the car. (Note: I paused at this point and called my long-time friend from childhood, Derrell Clarke, to let him know I was thinking about him. It was a call long overdue.)

Dunn talked to Dr. Vicki Jackson, president of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine Board of Directors, who obviously has seen and dealt with death and dying throughout her career. Jackson told Dunn she is quick to let patients know she loves them. Nothing is more important than loving and knowing you are loved.

When my dad passed away, the family was waiting in a small room at the hospital for confirmation. When the doctor came in with the news, the first words that came out of my mouth were, “I have no regrets.” And I didn’t. I loved him, and he loved me. I didn’t have to think back on things I wished I had said or done differently. That’s the greatest tribute I

could pay the man.

When my 20-year-old grandson, Zack, died unexpectedly while training for an upcoming marathon, I remembered that the last time I saw him was as he was leaving our house. He held out his hand to say good-bye and then remembered sheepishly that I don’t shake hands with those I love. I hug them. That hug will sustain me for the rest of the days I may have left.

Experts tell Dunn that hospice patients say they miss the little mundane things in their lives. Ordinary things like grocery shopping. Walking the dog. Exercising. Mundane things that aren’t so mundane when you are no longer able to do them. I will try to remember that when I am putting away the dishes or filing paperwork or opening the mail. And to be thankful I still can.

And the small stuff? If we knew our days were but a precious few, how important would the small stuff be? Not very, I suspect. Yet, how much time do I spend fretting about something that happened to me in a yesterday that is gone or worrying about a tomorrow that may not come? In doing so, I miss a spectacular sunrise, forget to say thank you, don’t return a smile and obsess on all the things wrong in this world rather than being grateful for all that is good. I have just wasted a day I can’t get back.

Finally, Dunn says those dealing with hospice patients will often ask them what have they left undone, something they have always wanted to see or do. Personally, I have seen just about every cathedral in Europe, been in the Oval Office, survived a roadside bomb in Iraq and have a painting hanging in the state capitol. What else is there to do? Actually, a lot.

I need to remind myself that at any moment I could be one of those souls in hospice care. To realize how fragile life is. To take nothing for granted. To have no regrets. To know the only thing that really matters is that I leave this a better world than I found it. I’m not there yet, and I have a long way to go. I thank Jancee Dunn for the wakeup call.

Contact Dick Yarbrough at dick@dickyarbrough.com or at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, GA 31139.

What to watch TUESDAY

February 11, 2025

All times Eastern. Start times can vary based on cable/satellite provider. Confirm times on your on-screen guide.

The Witcher: Sirens of the Deep

Netflix ■ Original Film

This animated film is based on the live-action fantasy series *The Witcher* and is led by Doug Cockle, who reprises his role from the *Witcher* video game series as the voice of sword-swinging hero Geralt of Rivia. The movie takes viewers deeper into the Continent as Geralt is hired to investigate a series of attacks in a seaside village and finds himself drawn into a centuries-old conflict between humans and merpeople.

Will Trent

ABC, 8 p.m.

In the new episode “No Faith in Second Chances,” Will (Ramón Rodríguez) investigates a murder with a familiar pattern, forcing him to confront his past.

St. Denis Medical

NBC, 8 p.m.

In the new episode “Nobody Even Mentions the Brownies!,” Joyce (Wendi McLendon-Covey) pushes the staff to upsell

patients on hospital procedures, kicking off some fierce competition and a case of mistaken identity; Bruce (Josh Lawson) and Ron (David Alan Grier) try to play plumber for a day.

FBI

CBS, 8 p.m.

When a gunman opens fire at a homeless shelter in Astoria, the team is led toward a killer with connections to a Mexican cartel in the new episode “Shelter.”

Night Court

NBC, 8:30 p.m.

In the new episode “Ab-ventures in Babysitting,” an old friend returns and leaves Abby (Melissa Rauch) saddled with taking care of a baby during court. Meanwhile, the gang tries to stop an influencer from publicly embarrassing the courthouse.

High Potential

ABC, 9 p.m. ■ Season Finale

In “Let’s Play,” an anonymous tip to the LAPD sparks an unusual kidnapping investigation with multiple victims.

Great Migrations:

A People on the Move

PBS, 9 p.m.

In the new episode “One Way Ticket Back,” explore how the reverse migration of Black Americans to the South — driven by mass movements, economic change and an ongoing struggle for freedom — continued to reshape the country.

The Rookie

ABC, 10 p.m.

In the new episode “The Gala,” it’s Valen-



MITCH HASSETH

tine’s Day, and Lt. Grey (Richard T. Jones) gives Tim (Eric Winter) and Lucy (Melissa O’Neil) an unromantic assignment, while John (Nathan Fillion) and Celina (Lisbeth Chavez) track down a missing girl. Later, the team sharpens up for a charity gala where multiple relationships come to a head.

The Irrational

NBC, 10 p.m.

In the new episode “Murder She Rode,” after a champion horse throws and kills his rider, Alec (Jesse L. Martin) and Phoebe (Molly Kunz) are called upon to save the horse from being euthanized. Their investigation reveals that what happened isn’t at all as it appears.

Chautauqua at 150: Wynton Marsalis’ All Rise

PBS, 10 p.m.

Featuring stories of faith and democracy, this special celebrates Chautauqua’s sesquicentennial.

François Truffaut and Marcel Moussy), **Splendor in the Grass** (1961; winner William Inge), **The Candidate** (1972; winner Jeremy Lerner) and **North by Northwest (pictured)** (1959; nominee Ernest Lehman). The evening theme is “Oscar-Worthy Drama Queens,” featuring **Jezebel** (1938; Best Actress winner Bette Davis), **A Streetcar Named Desire** (1951; Best Actress winner Vivien Leigh and Best Supporting Actress winner Kim Hunter), **Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?** (1966; Best Actress winner Elizabeth Taylor), **Johnny Belinda** (1948; Best Actress winner Jane Wyman) and **Possessed** (1947; Best Actress nominee Joan Crawford).



TURNER THEATRICAL LIBRARY

riel Box and Sydney Box), **Monsieur Hulot’s Holiday** (1953; nominees Jacques Tati and Henri Marquet), **I Vitelloni** (1953; nominees Federico Fellini, Ennio Flaiano and Tullio Pinelli), **The 400 Blows** (1959; nominees

CATCH A CLASSIC

31 Days of Oscar 2025: Best Original Screenplay Winners and Nominees/ Oscar-Worthy Drama Queens

TCM, beginning at 6 a.m.

Today’s 31 Days of Oscar daytime lineup features films that were nominated for or won Academy Awards for their original screenplays: **The Seventh Veil** (1945; winners Mu-

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What to watch WEDNESDAY

February 12, 2025

All times Eastern. Start times can vary based on cable/satellite provider. Confirm times on your on-screen guide.

Harlem Ice

Disney+ ■ New Series

This five-part docuseries (all available today) highlights the moving stories of the coaches and girls of Figure Skating in Harlem as they prepare for competitions and performances, and have unique experiences as girls of color breaking the “ice ceiling” and gaining access to a global stage.

Honeymoon Crasher

Netflix ■ Original film

In this French comedy, after his fiancée dumps him at the altar for her ex, a young man is left with no alternative but to go on his romantic honeymoon with his mother.

Wild Cards

The CW, 8 p.m.

In the new episode “Once a Con a Time in the West,” Max (Vanessa Morgan) and Ellis (Giacomo Gianniotti) pursue a killer who attempted to murder a stallion, uncovering a family secret.



FOX

The Masked Singer

FOX, 8 p.m. ■ Season Premiere

A new group of costumed celebrities take to the stage to perform in Season 13 of the singing competition series.

NHL Hockey: 4 Nations Face-Off: Canada vs. Sweden

TNT & truTV, 8 p.m. Live

The NHL forgoes the traditional All-Star events for this seven-game tournament taking place in Montreal and Boston Feb. 12 through 20 and featuring teams made up of the best players from Canada, Finland, Swe-

den and the USA. The puck drops on the 4 Nations Face-Off with Canada vs. Sweden in a round-robin game in Montreal.

Summer House

Bravo, 9 p.m. ■ Season Premiere

In Season 9 of the reality show, nine friends who share a summer house return to the Hamptons — along with two fresh faces — ready to have some fun in the sun.

NOVA

PBS, 9 p.m.

In “Egypt’s Tombs of Amun,” follow archaeologists as they discover a long-lost ancient cemetery in Egypt’s sacred desert.



TURNER ENTERTAINMENT CO.

Aweigh (1945; winner George Stoll), **On the Town** (1949; winners Roger Edens and Len- nie Hayton) and **Oklahoma!** (1955; winners Robert Russell Bennett, Jay Blackton and Adolph Deutsch). The evening theme is “Os- car-Worthy Boxers,” featuring **The Champ**

(1931; Best Actor winner Wallace Beery, who tied with Fredric March for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*), the TCM premiere of **The Fighter** (2010; Best Supporting Actor win- ner Christian Bale) and **Raging Bull** (1980; Best Actor winner Robert De Niro).

CATCH A CLASSIC

31 Days of Oscar 2025: Best Original Score Winners/Oscar-Worthy Boxers

TCM, beginning at 6:45 a.m.

Today’s 31 Days of Oscar daytime lineup features six films with musical scores that won Academy Awards: **Summer of ’42** (1971; winner Michel Legrand), **Easter Parade (pictured)** (1948; winners Johnny Green and Roger Edens), **Camelot** (1967; winners Alfred Newman and Ken Darby), **Anchors**

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Blind Date Book Club (2024, Ro- mance-comedy) Erin Krakow, Rob- ert Buckley **Hallmark, 6 p.m.**

Despicable Me (2010, Children) Steve Carell, Jason Segel **Nick, 6 p.m.**

Do the Right Thing (1989, Drama) Danny Aiello, Ossie Davis **BET, 6 p.m.**

RoboCop 2 (1990, Science fiction) Peter Weller, Nancy Allen **MGM, 6 p.m.**

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (2022, Action) Letitia Wright, An- gela Bassett **FX, 8 p.m.**

Her Fatal Fling (2024, Suspense) Katherine Gibson, Jack Pearson **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Love Don’t Cost a Thing (2003, Romance-comedy) Nick Cannon, Christina Milian **VH1, 8 p.m.**

Top Gun: Maverick (2022, Action) Tom Cruise, Miles Teller **Para- mount, 8 p.m.**

Winter Castle (2019, Romance) Emilie Ullerup, Kevin McGarry **Hall- mark, 8 p.m.**

Bury the Past (2021, Suspense) Sarah Allen, Rebecca Amzallag **LMN, 10 p.m.**

Dear John (2010, Romance) Chan- ning Tatum, Amanda Seyfried **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

U.S. Marshals (1998, Action) Tommy Lee Jones, Wesley Snipes **AMC, 11 p.m.**

From the editors of **tv** weekly
TV Weekly and tvinsider.com

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



SCOTT GARFIELD

Hunting Housewives (2024, Suspense) Denise Richards, NeNe Leakes **LMN, 6 p.m.**

National Security (2003, Comedy) Martin Lawrence, Steve Zahn **BET, 6 p.m.**

Royally Ever After (2018, Ro- mance) Fiona Gubelmann, Torrance Coombs **Hallmark, 6 p.m.**

Dear John (2010, Romance) Chan- ning Tatum, Amanda Seyfried **VH1, 8 p.m.**

Descendants 3 (2019, Children) Dove Cameron, Sofia Carson **Dis- ney, 8 p.m.**

The Beekeeper (2024, Action) Jason Statham, Emmy Raver-Lamp- man **MGM, 8 p.m.**

The Wish Swap (2025, Romance) Emily Tennant, Jake Foy **Hallmark, 8 p.m.**

Thor: Love and Thunder (2022, Action) Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman **FX, 8 p.m.**

Woman With the Red Lipstick (2024, Suspense) Rebecca Liddiard, Marshall Williams **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Tall, Dark and Dangerous (2024, Suspense) Jamie Bernadette, Mat- thew Pohlkamp **LMN, 10 p.m.**

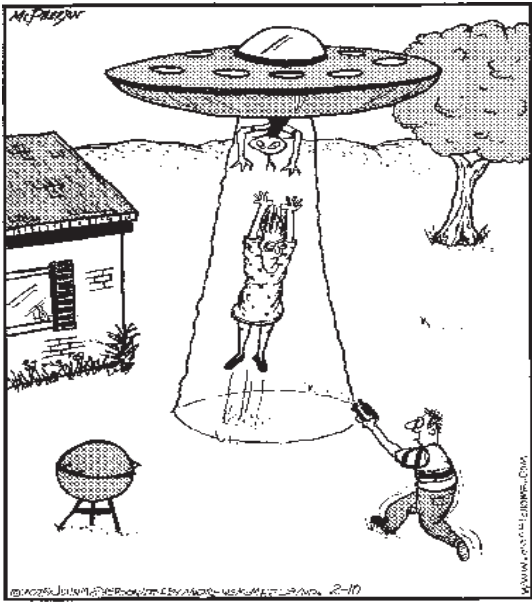
Heartbreakers (2001, Comedy) Sigourney Weaver, Jennifer Love Hewitt **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

Venom (2018, Action) Tom Hardy, Michelle Williams **FX, 10:30 p.m.**

Rampage (2018, Action) Dwayne Johnson, Naomie Harris **TNT, 11:30 p.m.**

From the editors of **tv** weekly
TV Weekly and tvinsider.com

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**
- 1 Fixed-term bank accts.
 - 4 Employ, as power
 - 9 Soap Box Derby town in Ohio
 - 14 Cool
 - 15 Mexican marinade
 - 16 Grassy plain
 - 17 "Softens as it cleans" classic detergent brand
 - 19 North Carolina's ___ Banks
 - 20 Skull cavity
 - 21 Should have said
 - 23 Advantage
 - 24 McFlurry competitor
 - 29 Filmmaker Ang
 - 30 Singer Rawls
 - 31 Hang around
 - 32 Country with a vital canal
 - 35 German article
 - 36 "The Road Not Taken" poet
 - 39 Dazzling success
 - 41 Natural ability
 - 42 Gets up
 - 45 Picnic pest
 - 46 "___! Humbug!"
 - 49 Rapper whose debut studio album was 1990's "To the Extreme"
 - 52 Art ___: geometric architectural style
 - 53 Tangle under a desk
 - 54 Environmental activist Thunberg
 - 55 Puppy
 - 58 Combination weather that makes travel difficult, and what the ends of 17-, 24-, 36-, and 49-Across comprise
 - 61 Blender setting
 - 62 Video game pioneer
 - 63 12/31, e.g.
 - 64 Stockpile
 - 65 Unlikely to bend
 - 66 Hi-___ photo

- 2 Split into portions
- 3 Dish cleaner
- 4 In more ___ than one
- 5 Wallet cards
- 6 Seemingly forever
- 7 Awkward word to drop on a first date, informally
- 8 Wooden peg
- 9 Basketball Hall of Famer Mourning
- 10 Most clumsy
- 11 Stool pigeon
- 12 Lowest sudoku number
- 13 "That's neither here ___ there"
- 18 Feel sorry about
- 22 Feel poorly
- 24 "That's all, folks!"
- 25 Motor oil measure
- 26 Bickering
- 27 Kyo of "Star Wars"
- 28 Rap's Dr. ___
- 30 Chocolate dog
- 32 Summer treats on sticks
- 33 NYC transit org.
- 34 Cigna rival
- 36 Really mess up

- 37 Actress Russo
- 38 Canadian prov.
- 39 Cleveland NBA'er
- 40 "You for Me" singer Rita
- 43 Marries secretly
- 44 Camera type, briefly
- 46 Pricy German wheels, informally
- 47 On the go
- 48 Elaborate pranks

- 50 Marketing battle
- 51 Last Supper question
- 52 Like a county that prohibits the sale of alcohol
- 54 Crossword diagram
- 55 New Deal org.
- 56 Engine noise
- 57 Pitcher's stat
- 59 Badger
- 60 Uni- + bi-

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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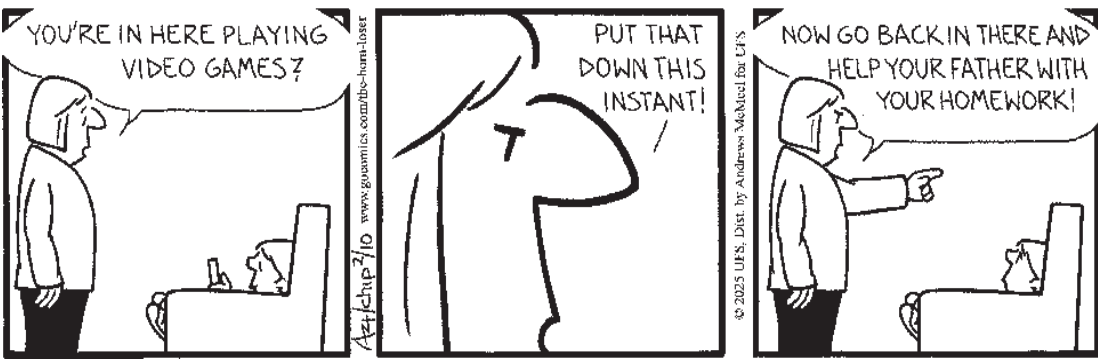
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61							62					63		
64							65					66		

- DOWN**
- 1 Sculptor's tool

By Annemarie Brethauer
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02/10/25

THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



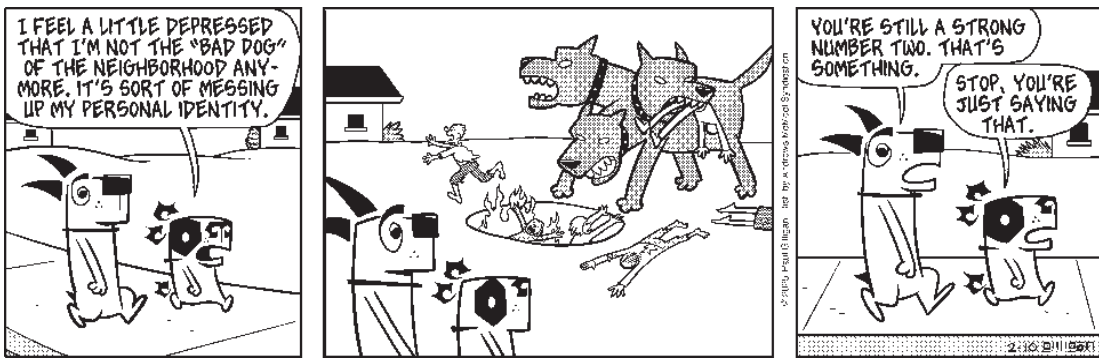
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

YOUR PASSION IS ... Solution: 8 letters

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

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2/10

Aims, Animals, Athletic, Charity, Code, Construction, Cook, Crafts, Creation, Dance, Design, Drama, Draw, Dreams, Driving, Faith, Fashion, Fitness, Food, Garden, Health, Help, Inspire, Jobs, Learn, Life, Love, Lyrics, Math, Medicine, Mentor, Movie, Music, Painter, Pets, Photography, Positive, School, Science, Sketch, Songs, Sport, Tourism, Wellness

TODAY'S ANSWER: Swimming

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

WHATZIT?

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



SUDOKU INSTRUCTIONS:

Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

L	9	8	6	1	E	7	5	2
1	S	E	4	Z	2	9	6	8
7	6	Z	9	S	8	E	2	1
Z	8	9	S	E	4	6	1	2
E	1	S	8	2	6	Z	9	7
6	7	2	1	9	Z	S	8	5
9	E	4	2	6	1	8	Z	E
8	2	6	Z	4	5	1	3	9
S	Z	1	E	8	9	2	4	6

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:

The first cut is the deepest

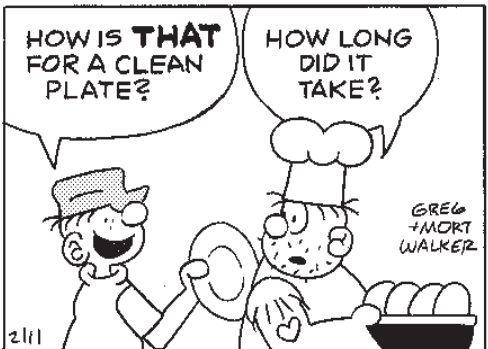
2/10

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CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



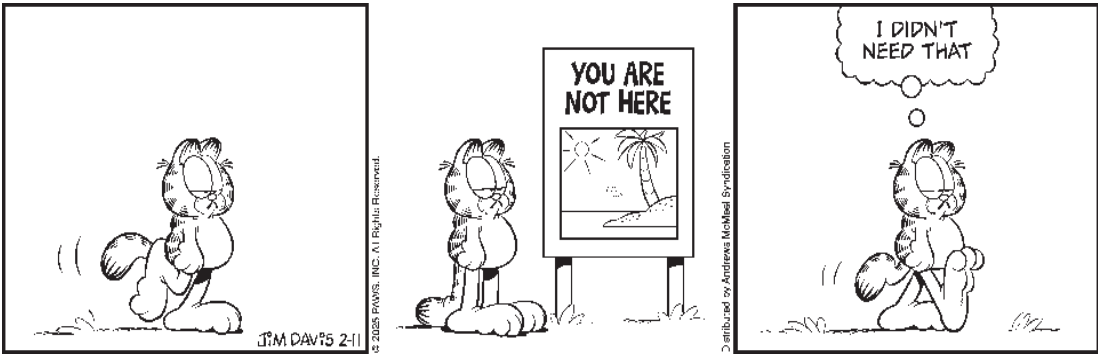
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



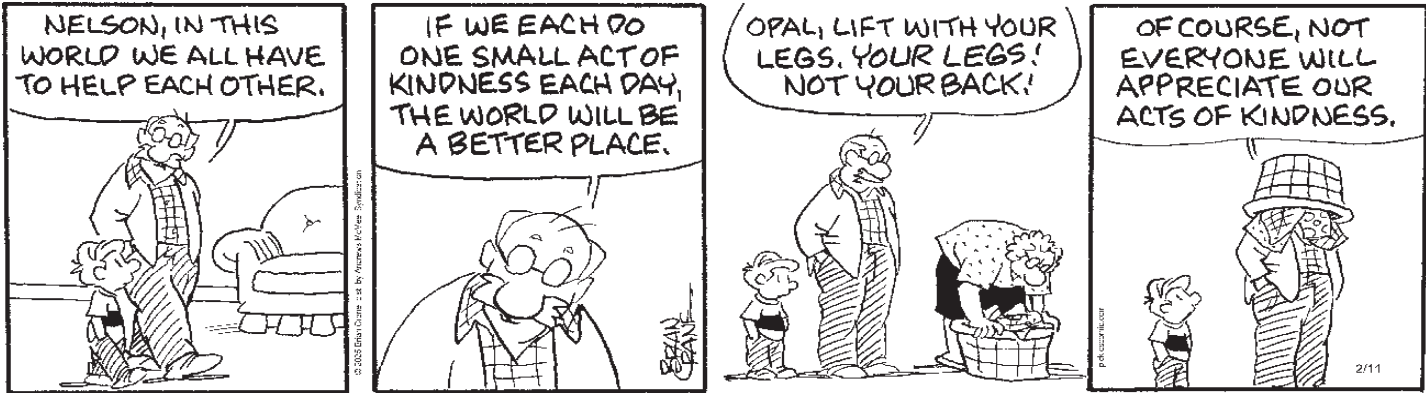
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

ABOUT

SUDOKU INSTRUCTIONS: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION: Out and about

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Pointer

4 Costly fur

9 — and cheese

12 “Diamonds — Forever”

13 Works at

14 Commotion

15 Took off

16 Talks wildly

17 — -com

18 Abounding

20 In flames

22 Carry with effort

23 Cruel ruler

24 Walked on

26 Came to be

28 Tentative taste

29 Illuminated

30 Dimple

34 Versifier

36 “Give — — whirl!”

37 Likewise not

38 Perfect

40 Circular current

41 Customer

44 Sheep’s cry

45 Wan

46 Beat decisively

50 Rest

51 Willow rod

53 Achieved

54 Publishing workers (Abbr.)

55 Type style

56 Cup handle

57 Actor Billy — Williams

58 Stockholm denizen

59 Abbr. on maps

DOWN

1 Sour

2 “Dies —”

3 Actress — Cruz

4 Bit of greenery

5 Actor — Alda

6 — cherry

7 Permit

8 Compositions

9 Soprano — Callas

10 Beautiful

11 Orbiting body in space

19 Mire

21 — Mertz of “I Love Lucy”

23 Complete

24 Recipe meas.

25 — de Janeiro

26 Extraterrestrial

27 Actress — Hayworth

31 Imperil

32 Show assent

33 Attempt

35 Retread

39 Generous ones

40 — de parfum

41 Blanched

42 Stage whisper

43 The ones here

44 Carried

46 Duration

47 Peruse

48 Outer garment

49 Raison d’—

52 Do a farm job

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15				16						17		
18			19					20	21			
		22					23					
24	25				26	27						
28					29				30	31	32	33
34			35		36					37		
			38	39					40			
41	42	43						44				
45						46	47				48	49
50				51	52					53		
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

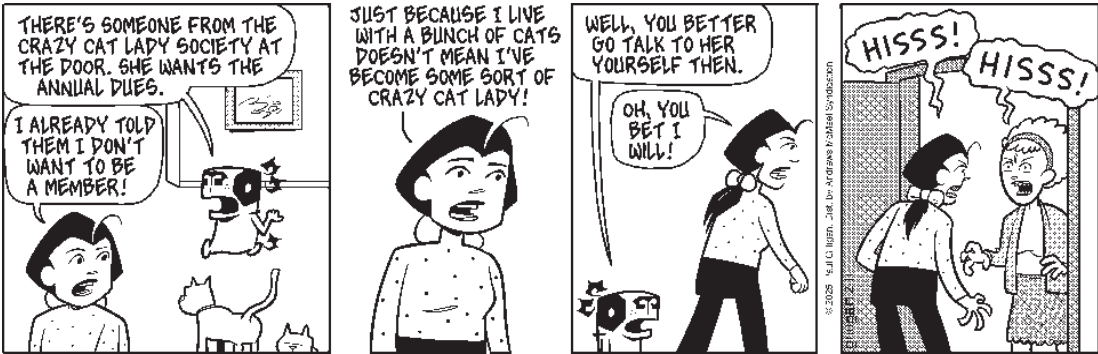
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

TWEED HAREM PANTS

Solution: 8 letters

L C O T T O N S T A E L P B F

A A W I D E W I E C I F F O A

I S N G V I F W L N D N E L B

R H T O N M A O E I T G C D R

E M W T I I O N L I N O R N I

T E E L S S H O F I N H O S C

A R S T E C S T W W R O P T U

M E R L T O U E O A L B P N S

H B Y E F O S R F L R O E E T

S T R T P G B F A O C M D M O

S T G A U P U B L N R A U R

S S R N N C I P E A K P R A

E R S I E D U Z S L R L A G

T N I R P L E D O M T E E I O

S I M P L E G A T N I V W S R

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Ankles, Balloon, Belt, Blend, Boho, Bold, Brand, Brown, Cargo, Cashmere, Clothing, Cotton, Cropped, Cuff, Custom, Fabric, Flare, Garments, Hem, Length, Linen, Loose, Material, Model, Office, Outfit, Pair, Pleats, Print, Professional, Pull, Sewing, Simple, Slim Fit, Snug, Soft, Solid, Stretch, Stripe, Style, Vintage, Waist, Warm, Wear, Wide, Winter, Woven, Zipper

TODAY'S ANSWER: Trousers

OBITUARIES



Dolores A. Griffin (Baker)

Dolores Griffin, 73, of York, PA, entered the presence of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on February 5, 2025, at Inners Creek Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Dallastown, PA.

Dolores was preceded in death by her parents, Walter and Marjorie Baker, and her brother, Frank Baker. She grew up in Thomasville, NC, and later moved to Albany, GA, in the early 1980s. In her later years, she resided in York, PA.

She was a dedicated and hardworking woman, spending many years employed at Albany Area Primary Health Care, Wall Cataract and Eye Care Clinic, and Cobb's Little Acres in Albany, GA.

Above all, Dolores was a loving mother and grandmother. She is survived by her children: Norman (May) Griffin III of Powell, OH; Robert (Jennifer) Griffin of Smithville, GA; Mary Thomson of York, PA; and Joshua (Anna) Griffin of Albany, GA. She was also blessed with seven grandchildren who brought her great joy.

Dolores' radiant smile could

light up any room. She found joy in serving others and was deeply devoted to her faith. Over the years, she loved being involved in her cherished home church, The Albany Gospel Chapel in Albany, GA, where she served in the nursery, Sunday school, and Awana Club. Her life was a testament to one of her favorite scriptures:

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." – Ephesians 4:32

Dolores touched the lives of everyone who knew her. She will be deeply missed.

A Graveside Service and Burial will take place on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 1:00 PM at Mount Rose Cemetery (1502 Mount Rose Ave., York, PA 17403). Attendees are asked to gather at the cemetery's front entrance between 12:45-12:55 PM.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at The Albany Gospel Chapel (2556 N Slappey Blvd., Albany, GA 31701) on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 11:00 AM, with a covered-dish reception to follow.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Anchorage (162 Hampton Lane, Leesburg, GA), a faith-based treatment center and ministry that was dear to Dolores' heart.

Services are under the care of the Austin H. Eberly Funeral Home, Inc., Dallastown. To share condolences please visit www.eberlyfuneralhome.com

Albany Utilities' meter problems lead to some estimated readings

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – During the February meter exchange, data from the city of Albany's Utilities Authority's new AMI meters did not import for a few billing cycles.

Due to this glitch, several customers will have estimated readings on their bills. Estimated readings can lead to a true-up on the next reading. City officials said staff is planning to work extra hours

to ensure that the estimated bills match the previous actual readings.

Any customer who receives an estimated bill and has a question about the amount due may call (229) 883-8330.

If the middle section of customers' bills on the "Type Read" section has an "A" printed next to electricity and water sections, that indicates that meters received an actual reading. If the column shows an "E," the meter reading was estimated.

Scott announces Congressional Art Contest for 2025

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON – U.S. Rep. Austin Scott, R-Ga., has announced that his office is taking submissions for the 2025 Congressional Art Competition. All high school students (9-12th grade) who reside in or attend school in the Eighth Congressional District are encouraged to participate.



Austin Scott

The winning entry will be displayed in the United States Capitol for a year alongside artwork from every congressional district across the country. Artwork submitted must be original in concept, design, and execution, no larger than 26 inches by 26 inches by 4 inches, and can be in the form of paintings (oil, acrylics, watercolor, etc.), drawings (pastels, colored pencil, pencil, charcoal, ink, mark-

ers), collage (must be two dimensional), prints (lithographs, silkscreen, block prints), mixed media, computer-generated art, or photography.

All artwork must be framed when submitted. Artwork that is submitted on a canvas does not require framing; however, it must have hooks affixed for hanging.

This year, all entries from across the district will be displayed at the Syd Blackmarr Art Center in Tifton for an exhibit and awards ceremony on May 4 at 2 p.m.

All artwork must be framed and submitted by April 18 at one of the following drop-off locations: Scott's District Office in Warner Robins at 120 Byrd Way, Suite 100 or Scott's District Office in Tifton at 127-B Central Ave. N.

For more information or questions, contact Charles White in Scott's Tifton District Office at (229) 376-8061 or email charles.white@mail.house.gov.

GSW business students finish No. 1 in worldwide Business Strategy Game

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

AMERICUS – Graduating business students at Georgia Southwestern State University received accolades fall semester for their top performance in the Business Strategy Game, outscoring more than 6,000 teams from more than 300 colleges and universities around the world.

The Business Strategy Game is an online exercise in which students are divided into teams of three or four and assigned the task of running an athletic footwear company for a total of 12 simulated years. Teams compete head-to-head against companies managed by other class members and thousands of teams across the world.

The comprehensive computer simulation is part of a final senior capstone Strategic Management course led by Robert Bennett, a professor of management in the GSW College of Business and Computing. Company performance rankings are based on factors like stock price, return on equity, earnings per share, demand generation, image and market reputation, and credit rating, requiring students to position their firms competitively to achieve overall strategic and financial success.

Georgia Southwestern students' Dragonfly Footwear Co. finished No. 1 in the world in overall score and finished in the Top 10 worldwide in nearly every scoring category. The team – made up of seniors Grayson Cude of Leesburg,



Special Photo

From left, Agility Steps team members Jared White, Kiersten Back and Bryce Kittrell; and Dragonfly team members Chris Woods, Grayson Cude, Stephen Hester and Ronald Romero.

Stephen Hester of Dawson, Ronald Romero of Buena Vista, and Chris Woods of Americus – finished with an ROE of nearly 65% and a stock price approaching \$800 per share. In the final simulated year of the competition, Dragonfly posted nearly \$500 million in net profit on nearly \$2 billion in worldwide sales. They ranked at or near the top in the world throughout the fall 2024 semester.

While Bennett spends time in class working with students on how to drive any business to maximize financial and strategic performance, he does not advise students directly on decisions in the simulation.

"It is quite impressive that GSW students have developed a long history of performing exceptionally well in this simulation," Bennett said. "Just about every week, we have at least one or two teams from

GSW in the Top 100 rankings."

He noted that the Dragonfly team ran an impressive operation throughout the simulation.

"I was most impressed with how much attention they placed on the little details that really put them in the upper echelons of teams worldwide," Bennett said. "Dragonfly won accolades for their corporate citizenship and support of charities and the communities in which they operated."

Agility Steps Footwear, the second-place team in the GSW class, finished in the Top 25 in the world in total score. The team – made up of seniors Kiersten Back of Leesburg, Bryce Kittrell of Leesburg, and Jared White of Atlanta – also finished in the Top 40 or 50 in the world on every scoring variable.

The margin was razor-thin between Dragonfly and Agility Steps, with Agility Steps actu-

ally reporting slightly higher revenue and profit in the final simulated year.

"Agility was right there pushing Dragonfly every step of the way," Bennett said. "I think the two teams motivated each other to do so well. There wasn't a whole lot of daylight between the two teams to be honest; they were neck and neck all the way."

The GSW students were able to gain valuable experience in managing a business by making business decisions under circumstances that mirror real-world competitive conditions. Company operations from the exercise parallel those of actual athletic footwear companies competing in a global market, selling branded and private-label athletic footwear in four geographic regions: Europe-Africa, North America, Asia-Pacific and Latin America.

City of Albany plans annual Arbor Day tree giveaway

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – The city of Albany will host its annual Arbor Day tree giveaway Feb. 22 in the rear parking lot of the Albany Civic Center at 120 W. Whitney Ave.

The giveaway, which is first-come, first-served, will be held

from 9-11 a.m., or until all trees are given away.

Participants can pick from among several types of trees, including magnolia, crepe myrtle, cypress, holly, maple and birch. All trees will be given away in 5-gallon containers.

Participants will be limited to two trees per vehicle.



Special

The city of Albany will host its annual Arbor Day tree giveaway Sturday.

Bird Count Birding Walk planned at Pebble Hill

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

THOMASVILLE – Pebble Hill Plantation will host a morning of birding on Saturday at 9 a.m.

Participants will explore the diversity of feathered friends that inhabit the Red Hills region of south Georgia and north Florida with birding expert Janell Cleveland. An avid birder and local Thomasville resident, Cleveland will lead the walk and share her expertise on bird species that make their homes in this area.

This walk is for anyone who wants to explore birding as a hobby or simply wants to spend a morning in the outdoors enjoying nature.

On this guided walk, participants will learn the basics of birding, bird identification skills, how to use binoculars for observation, and recognizing bird species by their calls. They will observe year-round residents such as Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, and Tufted Titmice and participants also will look for birds that are on the move this time of year.

"Georgia's Neotropical songbirds – tanagers, thrushes, buntings, swallows, vireos, and most warbler species – that nested



Special

Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville is hosting a bird walk to observe native birds.

here in the spring and summer have by now migrated to their winter homes in Central and South America," Kitty Spivey, the program coordinator for Pebble Hill Plantation, said. "Another group of migratory birds, however, is coming in to replace them."

These so-called "winter birds" breed primarily up north and then migrate in the fall to winter in Georgia and some other Southern states.

As part of the program, Cleveland will share how participants may use smartphone tools to upload their findings and aid in bird identification. These are

tools that can be used at home or any other places where there are opportunities to observe birds in their natural habitats.

Cleveland's passion for birds has taken her around the world, and she has birded in 43 states, 12 countries, and on four continents. She said her favorite place to birdwatch, though, is right here in south Georgia. Cleveland will share helpful tips on how to use some of the great new tools for bird identification available for smartphone users.

"Janell has always loved being outdoors and grew up camping, hiking, and canoeing," Spivey

said. "Her grandmother taught her about birds from a young age, and they would spend hours wandering through her gardens and studying birds and their behavior. She enjoys sharing that passion with others."

The beginner birding walk is open to guests age 8 and older. Participants will meet at 9 a.m. at the Learning Center and are encouraged to bring water, insect repellent, binoculars, and to wear comfortable shoes and neutral-colored clothing. Bird identification books and binoculars will be available for free-loan during the program. The walk will end at 11 a.m.

Pebble Hill Plantation is a designated birding site on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Southern Rivers Birding Trail. There are always unique local birds and beautiful migrating birds to see at Pebble Hill.

Participants are invited to bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the grounds of Pebble Hill after the birding walk. Tickets for this program are \$16 for adults (ages 17-older), \$8 for children (ages 8-16), and are on sale now and may be purchased by visiting pebblehill.com. More information may be obtained by calling (229) 226-2344.

SUPER BOWL LIX

Eagles stymie Chiefs, soar to 40-22 victory

Field Level Media

NEW ORLEANS — The Philadelphia Eagles earned their second Super Bowl championship in franchise history Sunday, using two first-half interceptions to build a 24-0 halftime lead and defeat the Kansas City Chiefs 40-22 at Super Bowl LIX in the Caesars Superdome.

The Eagles, who had previ-

ously won Super Bowl LII 41-33 against the New England Patriots, got after Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes to the tune of six sacks and a fumble as well as the two interceptions, limiting Kansas City to six points through 57 minutes.

Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts completed 17 of 22 passes for 221 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. He also led the team

in rushing with 72 yards and a score on 11 carries. He helped Philadelphia exact revenge on Kansas City after the Eagles lost to the Chiefs 38-35 in Super Bowl LVII two years ago.

Rookie wide receiver Xavier Worthy hauled in eight catches for 157 yards and two touchdowns for the Chiefs, who were

SEE EAGLES, 10A



The Philadelphia Eagles picked off two passes in the first half and built a 24-0 halftime lead Sunday in New Orleans and won the Super Bowl 40-22.

Photo courtesy of Field Level Media



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Albany State head baseball coach Scot Hemmings talks with Isaiah Haygood during last week's game at ASU West. Haygood, a freshman from Lowndes High School in Valdosta, is following in his older brother's footsteps. His brother, Tre Haygood, played at Albany State in 2013 and 2014.

Albany State wins two of three in South Carolina

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

HARDEEVILLE, S.C. — The Albany State Golden Rams baseball team fell behind early in all three games of their weekend series against the University of South Carolina at Beaufort, rallying to win two of them. Albany State took game one 9-5, won game two 15-10 and dropped game three 13-6.

"I was really proud of the way we fought back in both wins," Albany State head coach Scot Hemmings said. "Landon Kiefer came in the first night and struck out 11 in five innings to help us regain momentum. Calvin Baker was outstanding in relief in game two after closing game one. I was also excited to see two freshmen, Chase Ledger and Quindon Wright, throw the ball extremely well."

"Offensively, we had four freshmen — David Kile, Austin Nipper, Mason Turner and Isaiah Haygood — who played significant roles and held their own. We still need to clean up some areas, but I'm very encouraged by how we're playing. Anytime you can go on the road against a Peach Belt team and win the series, it's a successful weekend," Hemmings added.

Game one: Albany State 9, USC Beaufort 5

The Sandsharks jumped out to a 5-0 lead before Kiefer took over on the mound and shut them down. The right-hander pitched

SEE BASEBALL, 10A



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Monroe senior James Adams and the Golden Tornadoes earned a first-round bye in the region tournament and will play Thursday at Monroe. The Tornadoes will play the winner of the Bainbridge vs. Peach County game set for tonight.

FEBRUARY FRENZY

Basketball games set for every night this week in Albany

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — It's not quite March Madness, but local basketball teams are in the thick of a February frenzy as the high school playoff season begins. Three local tournaments will bring teams to the Albany area for games every night this week, with championship matchups set for Friday night at Lee County High School, Monroe High School and Albany State West.

Lee County

The Lee County Trojans wrapped up their regular season Saturday night with a 65-36 win over Coffee. With the game in hand, the starters sat out the fourth quarter, but Matthew Hardwick, Braden Moore and Kam Sanders still reached double figures. Hardwick led with 15 points, Moore scored



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Lee County's Matthew Hardwick scored 15 points to lead the Trojans to a season-ending win over Coffee in Douglas on Saturday night. The Trojans are off until Thursday when they will host the semifinals of the region tournament at Lee County High School.

12 and Sanders added 10.

Lee County will host the region semifinals and finals beginning Thursday. The Trojans will face the winner of the Veterans vs. Thomas County Central game. Houston County also earned a first-round bye and will play the winner of Northside vs. Coffee. The Lady Trojans fell to Coffee

53-33, dropping them to the No. 3 seed in the region. Taliyah Porter led Lee County with 13 points, but the loss means the Lady Trojans will not receive a first-round bye and must defeat Houston County to advance.

"We didn't play as a team," Lee County girls' head coach Tondra Davis said. "We didn't play mentally strong."

The play-in games will be held at Northside (Warner Robins) today. The Lady Trojans will take on Houston County at 7 p.m. If they win, they will face Veterans at 4 p.m. Thursday at Lee County High School.

Westover, Monroe, Dougherty

The Westover Patriots (16-6) lost their final regular-season game in

SEE FRENZY, 10A

Morehouse ends ASU's win streak, 83-79, in overtime

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — Albany State's second-half comeback forced overtime Saturday against Morehouse College, but the Golden Rams fell short, losing 83-79 and snapping their five-game winning streak. The loss drops Albany State to 14-8 overall and 11-4 in the SIAC.

The Maroon Tigers used a full-court trapping defense early to build

a quick lead. Later in the first half, Morehouse switched to man-to-man defense, allowing Albany State's G'Shan Aldridge and Shakur Poteat to break loose for back-to-back three-pointers.

Despite those efforts, Albany State struggled to slow down Morehouse, and the Maroon Tigers extended their lead to 46-25 at halftime.

SEE ASU, 10A

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Visiting No. 6 Florida prevails over No. 1 Auburn

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

Walter Clayton Jr. came back from injury and collected 19 points and nine assists to lead visiting No. 6 Florida to its second upset of a top-ranked team this year, toppling No. 1 Auburn 90-81 on Saturday.

Alex Condon produced 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Gators (20-3, 7-3 Southeastern Conference), who also stunned then-No. 1 Tennessee on Jan. 7. Thomas Haugh added 16 points and nine rebounds and Will

Richard chipped in with 12 points as Florida snapped Auburn's 14-game winning streak and its 15-game run in the SEC, which dated to last year.

Florida led by as many as 21 points in the second half on its way to its first upset in eight tries of a No. 1-ranked team on the road. While the Gators benefited from the return of Clayton, they also overcame the loss of second-leading scorer Alijah Martin (15.3 points per game), who was sidelined by a hip injury.

Miles Kelly scored 22 points and

Johni Broome delivered 18 points, 11 rebounds and six assists to pace Auburn (21-2, 9-1). Tahaad Pettiford added 14 points and Chaney Johnson added 13 for the Tigers, who led 31-25 in the first half before the Gators took control.

Clemson 77, No. 2 Duke 71

Viktor Lakhin scored 22 points and Chase Hunter made the go-ahead basket in the final minute as

SEE ROUNDUP, 10A

Trae Young’s big night propels Hawks past Wizards, 125-111

Field Level Media

Trae Young scored 35 points, his 14th game with 30-plus points this season, and led the visiting Atlanta Hawks to a 125-111 win over the Washington Wizards on Saturday night.

The Hawks have won two straight and three of their last four, and divided the season series with Washington at 2-2. The Wizards have lost two straight following their season-long three-game winning streak.

Young was 13-for-26 from the floor and 5-for-14 on 3-pointers. He added 14 assists for his 31st double-double of the season.

Zaccharie Risacher added 18

points, and Georges Niang made his Atlanta debut and scored 16 points, including four 3-pointers, with six assists.

Washington got 23 points and seven assists from Bub Carrington and 21 points and six assists from Jordan Poole.

Atlanta led 106-85 when Washington went on a 19-6 run. Poole’s basket cut the lead to 112-104 with 7:10 left, but the Wizards never got closer than seven.

There were four lead changes and two ties in the first quarter, with Atlanta carrying a 30-26 lead into the second quarter. The game was tied 56-56 with 1:18 left, but the Hawks outscored the Wizards 7-2 to take

a 63-58 lead into the break. Young scored 23 points in the half.

The Hawks grabbed the momentum in the third quarter when Niang connected on four straight 3-point attempts for a 78-64 lead with 8:40 to play. Atlanta padded the lead to 104-83 going into the fourth quarter.

The Hawks played without Clint Capela (personal reasons), and the team reportedly requested waivers on Bones Hyland, who was just acquired from the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Wizards were without deadline acquisitions Colby Jones, Alex Len, Khris Middleton and Marcus Smart, as well as Alex Sarr (left ankle sprain) and Anthony Gill (right ankle sprain).



Atlanta Hawks forward Zaccharie Risacher goes in for a slam dunk during Friday night’s win over the Milwaukee Bucks at State Farm Arena in Atlanta.

Photo by Ernest Mari for the Albany Herald

From 9A

EAGLES

emphatically prevented from becoming the first team in NFL history to win three straight Super Bowls.

Philadelphia’s Saquon Barkley, the NFL Offensive Player of the Year, celebrated his 28th birthday by setting two NFL records in the first half, becoming the single-season scrimmage yards leader (regular season plus playoffs) on his first carry before breaking the single-season rushing yards record on the

final play of the first half.

Barkley finished with 57 yards rushing on 25 carries and added six catches for 40 yards. Across the regular season and postseason, Barkley finished with 2,857 yards from scrimmage and 2,504 rushing yards to break both records, previously held by the Denver Broncos’ Terrell Davis (1998).

After back-to-back sacks of Mahomes during a second-quarter drive, Eagles rookie defensive back Cooper DeJean, who was also celebrating a birthday (his 22nd), broke in front of a pass and returned his

interception 38 yards for a touchdown with 7:03 left in the second quarter to stake Philadelphia to a 17-0 lead.

Two drives later, edge rusher Josh Sweat, who finished with 2 ½ sacks, pressured Mahomes into his second interception, which linebacker Zack Baun collected at the Chiefs’ 14-yard line. Two plays after that, Hurts found A.J. Brown for a 12-yard touchdown, putting the Chiefs in a 24-0 hole with 1:35 left in the half.

The Eagles went up 27-0 on Jake Elliott’s 29-yard field goal, and after the Chiefs failed on a fourth-down

attempt, Hurts found DeVonta Smith alone behind the defense for a 46-yard scoring play and a 34-0 lead.

Mahomes, who completed 21 of 32 passes for 257 yards with three touchdowns and two interceptions, finally got the Chiefs on the board with a 24-yard scoring pass to Worthy with 34 seconds left in the third.

On the Eagles’ first score, a pass by Hurts down the right sideline was reeled in by Jahan Dotson for 27 yards to set up a first-and-goal from 1 yard out. Hurts punched it in a play later out of the “tush push” formation to help Philadel-

phia go up 7-0.

Kansas City safety Bryan Cook snuffed out the Eagles’ second straight scoring opportunity with an interception of Hurts at the Chiefs’ 2-yard line, but a drive later, Philadelphia made it 10-0 on Elliott’s 48-yarder, capping a seven-play drive.

The Eagles held a 179-23 edge in first-half yardage and outgained the Chiefs 345-275 for the game.

Elliott connected on field goals of 48 and 50 yards to conclude the Eagles’ scoring. Mahomes threw two late touchdowns to DeAndre Hopkins and Worthy.

From 9A

BASEBALL

five dominant innings, allowing just one hit and one walk while striking out 11.

With Kiefer in control, the Golden Rams rallied, scoring four runs in the fifth and five more in the eighth to complete the comeback. Former Lee County standout Hill Corley led the way with four hits, while senior third baseman Austin Roberts drove in three runs.

Game two: Albany State 15, USC Beaufort 10

Game two followed a similar pattern. After a quiet first inning, the Sandsharks jumped on Albany State starter Gercal Reyes for six runs in the second inning with just one out. Hemmings turned to Andrew McBride to slow the momentum, and Calvin Baker later earned the win in relief after entering in the fifth.

Corley and designated hitter Matt Delay each drove in three runs as Albany State powered its way to another comeback win. Seth Stargell added a home run, while the Golden Rams got doubles from Trenten Justice, Isaiah

Haygood and two from Delay.

Game three: USC Beaufort 13, Albany State 6

The Sandsharks took control early in game three, scoring six runs in the first two innings against Albany State starter Brady Davis and adding seven more against reliever Sebastian Griffeth. By the fifth inning, USC Beaufort led 13-2.

However, the Golden Rams’ bullpen held firm the rest of the way, as William Beasley, Chase Ledger and former Terrell Academy standout Quindon Wright combined for scoreless relief.

Albany State managed just six hits in the loss and committed three errors. Former Terrell Academy star Luke Addison provided the biggest highlight, driving in four runs on two hits, including a three-run homer in the seventh.

Up next

Albany State will travel to Columbus State on Wednesday before hosting a week-end series against SIAC foe Tuskegee. The series begins at 5 p.m. Friday, with Saturday’s games at ASU West scheduled for noon and 3 p.m.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Albany State guard Shakur Poteat hit five three-pointers in the second half Saturday and finished with 23 points, but the Morehouse College Maroon Tigers ended the Golden Rams’ winning streak with an 83-79 win in overtime at the Jones Brothers HPER Complex at ASU East.

From 9A

ASU

The Golden Rams clawed their way back in the second half, led by Poteat’s sharp shooting. The junior from Orlando knocked down five of six three-pointers and scored 18 second-half points, helping Albany State rally to tie the game at 70 and force overtime.

In the extra period, Morehouse’s Ahman Decker took control, scoring eight points. He went 4-for-4 from the free-throw line and added two bas-

kets as the Maroon Tigers outscored the Golden Rams 13-9 in overtime to secure the win.

Four Golden Rams scored in double figures, with Poteat leading the way with 23 points and Aldridge adding 22. Center Jabari Williams finished with 13 points, Kendale Johnson had 12 and Blaise Wallace contributed nine. Wallace dominated the boards with 13 rebounds, while Williams pulled down 11.

Benedict College visits Albany on Saturday, with the women playing at 2 p.m. and the men at 4 p.m on East Campus at the Jones Brothers HPER Complex.

From 9A

FRENZY

overtime Saturday night in Fort Valley but held onto the No. 2 seed and a first-round bye in the region tournament.

Bryson Carter and Jaden Holmes each scored 13 points, while Greg Williams added 11, but the Patriots fell to Peach County 65-60. As the No. 2 seed, Westover is off until Thursday, when the team will face the winner of tonight’s Dougherty vs. Cairo matchup.

The Dougherty Trojans (15-9), the No. 3 seed, will host No. 6 seed Cairo (4-18) on at 6 p.m. today in Albany.

The Lady Patriots (11-8) secured the No. 3 seed after a 57-38 win over Peach County. Sydney Donaldson had a dominant performance, finishing with 23 points, 20 rebounds and four assists. Charity Green added nine points, while Wyleria Holmes and Alex Marcus each scored seven. Marcus also pulled down 13 rebounds.

If the Lady Patriots defeat Cairo in the first round, they will face the Dougherty

From 9A

ROUNDUP

the Tigers knocked off the Blue Devils at Clemson, S.C., ending Duke’s 16-game winning streak.

Hunter sank four free throws in the last 15 seconds to finish with 14 points and teammates Jaeden Zackery and Ian Schieffelin each had 12 points. Clemson (19-5, 11-2), which lost earlier in the week in triple overtime to visiting Georgia Tech, moved within a game of first-place Duke.

Tyrese Proctor scored 23 points, Cooper Flagg racked up 14 of his 18 points in the last 6:05 and Kon Knueppel had 14 points for Duke (20-3, 12-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), which seemed in position to emerge as the new No. 1 team in the country after top-ranked Auburn lost earlier in the day at home to No. 6 Florida.

No. 3 Alabama 85, Arkansas 81

Grant Nelson and Chris Youngblood scored 15 points apiece to help the Crimson Tide post a victory over the Razorbacks in Southeastern Conference play at Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Mouhamed Dioubate had 14 points and Mark Sears added 11 as the Crimson Tide (20-3, 9-1 SEC) moved into a first-place tie with top-ranked Auburn in the SEC standings. Alabama has won six straight games and 14 of its last 15.

Zvonimir Ivisic scored a career-best 27 points and collected seven rebounds for the Razorbacks (14-9, 3-7), who had a two-game winning streak snapped. Adou Thiero scored 22 points and Johnell Davis added 13 points.

No. 4 Tennessee 70, Oklahoma 52

Chaz Lanier scored a game-high 21 points as the Volunteers coasted to the

Lady Trojans (15-10) in the semifinals.

Both Monroe teams earned first-round byes. The Golden Tornadoes (16-9) and the Lady Nadas (20-5) will face the winners of the Bainbridge vs. Peach County matchups in round one.

Class A — Region 1

The No. 2-ranked Randolph-Clay Red Devils (23-2) and the No. 3-ranked Calhoun County Cougars (20-2) headline the Region 1-A tournament at Albany State West. Both teams earned byes and won’t play until the semifinals on Thursday.

The Seminole County Lady Indians (21-4) and the Randolph-Clay Lady Red Devils (19-6) also earned byes and will begin play in the semifinals.

Four games are scheduled each day this week at ASU West, beginning at 4 p.m. The semifinals are set for Thursday, with championship games on Friday.

Deerfield-Windsor and Terrell Academy

The Deerfield-Windsor basketball teams will compete in the GIAA Region 3-AAA semifinals today at Georgia

win Saturday afternoon in Norman, Okla. Zakai Zeigler collected 17 points and nine assists for Tennessee (20-4, 6-4 Southeastern Conference).

The Volunteers fired on all cylinders, hitting 14-of-16 shots from the field and connecting on their first six shots from behind the arc to start the game. Tennessee shot 60.4 percent from the field for the game en route to winning their third contest in a row. The Volunteers’ success from behind the 3-point line also opened up driving lanes. Tennessee held a 36-20 edge on points in the paint.

Jalon Moore scored 12 points and Brycen Goodine added nine for Oklahoma (16-7, 3-7) which dropped its second straight game.

No. 5 Houston 69, Colorado 59

J’Wan Roberts scored 20 points, LJ Cryer and Terrance Arceneaux added 15 points apiece, and the Cougars went on the road to earn a win over the Buffaloes at Boulder, Colorado.

Milos Uzan contributed 12 points for Houston (19-4, 11-1 Big 12), which has won 15 of its last 16 games. Julian Hammond III had 22 points and was the only Colorado player to score in double figures.

The Buffaloes (9-14, 0-12) have lost 12 in a row for the first time since the end of the 2008-09 season, and they are two losses shy of matching their worst start to a conference schedule since going 0-14 in the Big 8 in 1985-86.

No. 8 Iowa State 82, TCU 52

Reserve Curtis Jones scored 24 points on 7-for-11 shooting from the field as the No. 8 Cyclones cruised past the Horned Frogs in a Big 12 Conference matchup in Ames, Iowa.

Milan Momcilovic finished with 14 points in his return from a hand injury for Iowa State (18-5, 8-4), which snapped a three-game losing streak. Dishon Jack-

son also scored 14, while Joshua Jefferson notched a double-double with 13 points and 10 rebounds.

Vasean Allette and Trazarien White scored nine points each to lead TCU (12-11, 5-7). Ernest Udeh Jr. added eight points for the Horned Frogs.

No. 9 Michigan State 86, Oregon 74

Jase Richardson scored 18 of his game-high 29 points in the second half, leading the Spartans to a comeback win over the Ducks in East Lansing, Michigan.

Michigan State (19-4, 10-2 Big Ten) overcame a 14-point halftime deficit, scoring the first 12 points on its way to 50 points in the second half, including a 17-2 run through the middle of the half that decided the game. Jaxon Kohler had 14 points and 12 rebounds, and Tre Holoman added 13 points for the Spartans, who ended a two-game losing streak.

Oregon, after hot 3-point shooting in the first 20 minutes, missed all eight of its attempts in the second half and made just 6 of 24 shots overall in that time frame. The struggling Ducks (16-8, 5-8) lost their fifth straight game. Jackson Shelstad led the team with 22 points.

No. 10 Texas 67, No. 15 Missouri 64

Wade Taylor IV’s 3-point jumper with 2.1 seconds left lifted the Longhorns over the Tigers in Southeastern Conference play in Columbia, Missouri.

Pharrel Payne led the Aggies (18-5, 7-3 SEC) with 20 points, and Taylor scored 15. Henry Coleman III pulled down 16 rebounds.

Tamar Bates scored 16 points for the Tigers (17-6, 6-4), whose 15-game home winning streak ended. Jacob Crews scored 14 points off the bench for Missouri and Mark Mitchell added 12. The tenacious Aggies held the Tigers to 5-for-21 3-point shooting and blocked six shots.

GIGANTIC SUCCESS MAGNET!

Medicaid expansion in Georgia draws interest from long-opposed Republicans

By Ty Tagami
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Advocates seeking health insurance for more low-income Georgians are encouraged that Medicaid expansion is starting to draw support among what for years has been unified Republican opposition.

Although just four GOP state senators joined 17 Democrats when Senate Bill 50 was introduced late last month, it was still a milestone for Laura Colbert.

“This bill is really exciting because it’s Georgia’s first bipartisan legislation that would close Georgia’s coverage gap,” Colbert, the executive director of Georgians for a Healthy Future, said.

The measure would create PeachCare Plus, expanding

Medicaid access for Georgians making less than 138% of the federal poverty level.

Currently, only Georgians who earn at or below the poverty level qualify for coverage. Unlike 40 other states, Georgia has not sought the expanded access – and associated federal money – that has been on the table for more than a decade.

To qualify in Georgia now, a single person must earn less than \$15,650 and a family of four is capped at \$32,150.

To qualify for the state’s Pathways to Coverage program -- a limited form of Medicaid expansion Gov. Brian Kemp rolled out in 2023 -- adults must work, go to school, volunteer or do other qualifying activities for 80 hours a month.

No other state has such a requirement. The upshot: A tiny fraction of eligible Georgians

are covered.

“If you take away the 6,500 people in Pathways, we have over 200,000 people living in the health insurance coverage gap, without access to affordable health care,” Leah Chan, an analyst with the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, said.

Expanding Medicaid to allow access for those earning up to 138% of the poverty level would add hundreds of thousands to the eligibility list.

The federal government would cover 90% of the cost, but Kemp has consistently questioned the longevity of that funding stream, worried about the cost shifting to Georgia taxpayers.

Grant Thomas, the deputy commissioner with Georgia’s Department of Community Health, said at a recent hearing for SB 50 that Kemp’s approach is saving taxpayers money.



Special Photo: GBI

The GBI has ruled that there was no foul play in the shooting death of a Tifton man.

GBI: No foul play in man’s death

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON — An investigation by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation has concluded that there was no foul play in the death of a 68-year-old Tifton man who died of a gunshot wound Thursday.

At the request of the Tifton Police Department, GBI agents responded to the scene at a Tift County home where TPD officers found Larry Johnson, 68, of Tifton, dead from a gunshot wound. Johnson was pronounced dead at the scene, and his body was

taken to the Macon Crime Lab for an autopsy.

A GBI Medical Examiner has completed an autopsy and determined there was no foul play in Johnson’s death. The results of the autopsy will be provided to investigators and Johnson’s family.

Births

Unless otherwise noted, the following births all took place at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany between Dec. 1, 2024 and Jan. 4, 2025:

Morgan, Alani Justyce Amour, daughter, was born Dec. 1 to Lauryn Jones and Tyrone Morgan of Smithville.

Williams, Eli Kyrie, son, was born Dec. 1 to Deasia Williams of Sylvester.

Walters, Alaina Milan, daughter, was born Dec. 2 to Christany Walters of Americus.

Griffin, Ymir Vontrell, son, was born Dec. 2 to Latasha Griffin and Ykeeus Griffin of Albany.

Conley, Hevynn Alayah, daughter, was born Dec. 3 to Tia’Kaneicia Conley of Camilla.

Baltenberger, Oaklynn Reese, daughter, was born Dec. 3 to Heather Baltenberger and Christopher Baltenberger of Leesburg.

Jackson, Willow Nevaeh-Grace, daughter, was born Dec. 3 to Kayla Jackson and Willie Jackson of Albany.

Jackson, Lei’lani Sanora Shocore, daughter, was born Dec. 3 to Tyshantis Jackson of Albany.

Roberts, Dawson Daniel, son, was born Dec. 4 to Taylor Robets and Elton Roberts of Sylvester.

Johnson, Kayce Taylor, son,

was born Dec. 6 to Kristin Johnson and Taylor Johnson of Albany.

Lovitt, Kaizen, son, was born Dec. 6 to Tarshika Wingfield and Larry Lovitt of Albany.

Johnson, Lady Aurora Mae, daughter, was born Dec. 6 to Empress Anderson and Antonio Johnson of Albany.

Peek, Faith Elyse, daughter, was born Dec. 6 to Sarah Peek and Christopher Peek of Albany.

Wilkerson, Khalil Simba, son, was born Dec. 6 to Whitley Wilkerson of Albany.

Walker, Sariah Naomi, daughter, was born Dec. 7 to Faith Adkins and De’Monta Walker

of Ashburn.

Adams, Jackson Isaiah Shauquille, son, was born Dec. 9 to Jalisa Wade and Jovaris Adams of Albany.

Nolf, Ruby Addison, daughter, was born Dec. 9 to Brit-tany Ruby and Chandler Nolf of Albany.

Albury, Jude William, son, was born Dec. 9 to Hailey Al-bury of Meigs.

Cisneros, Gabriel Wilson, son, was born Dec. 10 to Lisa Cisneros and Julio Cisneros of Dawson.

Shellhouse, Liliana Noelle Jayne, daughter, was born Dec. 11 to Casen Shellhouse and Johnathan Shellhouse of Leesburg.

Williams, Noah Terrell, son,

was born Dec. 11 to Whitley Williams and Nathaniel Wil-liams of Americus.

Quimby, Raiden Jarmon, son, was born Dec. 13 to Shamonica Wall and Rondarian Quimby of Albany.

Taylor, Roman Jordan Da-jiro, son, was born Dec. 14 to Samantha Thomas and Rich-ard Thomas of Albany.

Erickson, Nicolas Fitz, son, was born Dec. 14 to Brittany Erickson and Scott Erickson of Albany.

Ray, Jamir Amari, son, was born Dec. 15 to Deondra Ray of Americus.

Poole, Wilson Lee, son, was born Jan. 1 to Kara Poole and Matthew Poole of Camilla.

Greene, Cason Patrick, son,

was born Jan. 1 to Mickeeia Byrd and Carterrius Greene of Albany.

Thomas, Jha’leah Nicole, daughter, was born Jan. 2 to Jayla Vicks and Quentin Thom-as of Camilla.

Williams, Grant Luke, son, was born Jan. 2 to Taylor Wil-liams and George Williams of Leesburg.

Hancock, Emily Ruth, daugh-ter, was born Jan. 3 to Court-ney Hancock and John Han-cock of Lenox.

Hellemn, Dallas Kayte, daugh-ter, was born Jan. 3 to Ashley Hellemn and Travis Hellemn of Albany.

Vall, Shadno, son, was born Jan. 4 to Raven Solomon and Shadno Vall of Albany.

Notice Of Intention To Introduce Local Legislation

Notice is given that there will be introduced at the 2025 regular session of the General Assembly of Georgia a bill to amend an Act creating the Albany-Dougherty Inner City Authority, approved March 30,1977 (Ga.L.1977,p.4220), as amended; and for other purposes.

“INTENT TO OPT OUT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION”

The City of Leary Mayor and Council intends to opt out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for Leary, GA.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this matter to be held at Leary City Hall located at 4411 East Main St, Leary GA 39862 on Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 12:00 pm.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this matter are at Leary City Hall located at 4411 East Main St, Leary, GA 39862 on Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:00 pm.