

Perspectives
Thomas Knapp
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The Albany HERALD



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New ASU Coach
Mayes era to start
• **Page 10A**



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TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

CC Crockett, left, poses on stage during the teen bikini division at the OCB Immortal Muscle Pro/Am Bodybuilding Competition in Atlanta, where the Albany teen placed second in her debut appearance.

Albany teen, 16, makes bodybuilding debut at Atlanta OCB Pro/Am

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — At an age when many teenagers are still exploring extracurriculars, 16-year-old CC Crockett stepped onto a competitive bodybuilding stage for the first time over the weekend — and left with a medal.

Crockett, an Albany resident and student at Albany Technical College Academy, placed second in the teen bikini division this weekend at the OCB Immortal Muscle Pro/Am Bodybuilding Competition in Atlanta, becoming the youngest competitor to medal across all categories at the event.

The competition marked Crockett's debut in the sport, but the result was no accident. Behind the podium finish were months of disciplined training — and a mindset that reflects a broader cultural shift among young athletes.

"From the day she walked in and said she was going to train for a competition, I've watched her transformation. Getting to a competition physique takes a tremendous amount of discipline," Tony

See **BODY-BUILDING**, 2A

ASU set to host annual Blue & Gold Scholarship Gala

Staff Reports
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ALBANY — Albany State University, Georgia's largest public historically black college and university, will welcome corporate leaders, alumni, and community partners from across the Southeast to the 2026 Blue & Gold Scholarship Gala on April 11 at 6 p.m. in the ASU West Campus Arena.

The annual celebration supports student scholarships and reflects the university's growing

momentum as a nationally recognized center of academic excellence, research, and work force development.

Presented by the Albany State University Foundation, the gala aims to raise \$1.5 million to expand scholarship opportunities for students pursuing careers in high-impact fields such as science, health care,

business, education, public service and technology.

This year's theme, "Reigniting the Flame. Powering the Future." honors Albany State University's legacy while looking forward to the next era of student achievement, innovation and opportunity. The gala offers an elegant, evening of live



entertainment, distinguished honorees, and powerful networking opportunities for businesses and community partners committed to advancing higher education and work force development in southwest Georgia.

The 2026 gala will feature nationally recognized performers Chris Kelley and the UnKut Band, and will be emceed by Maurice Johnson, acclaimed actor and ASU alumnus, and Karla Heath-Sands, award-winning TV person-

See **ASU**, 2A

Chris Carr makes his case in Albany to be state's next governor

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — The vicious personal attacks and high-cost ad campaigns of two top Republican gubernatorial candidates is being described by many as intense and unprecedented as candidates get into the heart of the battle for the May 19 GOP primary.

With the seat for the top position in the state government open for the first time in eight years, a number of candidates are vying to be the Republican candidate, including businessman Rick Jackson and Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, whose feud has caught the attention of other candidates.

Among the other hopefuls vying for the governor's office are Attorney General Chris Carr, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and former college football coach Derrick Dooley.

"I think they've really gone nuclear on each other, for lack of a better term," Carr, who recently made a campaign stop in Albany.

While Jones and Jackson are generating a lot of heat through their negative back-and-forth, Carr said he is focusing on the issues that are important to Geor-

See **CARR**, 2A



Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin

From left, Albany Assistant Police Chief Wendy Luster and APD Lt. Chris Hutcherson greet Republican gubernatorial candidate Chris Carr during a recent campaign stop in Albany.

FEMA confirms Dawson fire engine delayed by shutdown

By Kathryn Crockett
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DAWSON — A new fire engine purchased for the city of Dawson through a federal grant remains out of service as the ongoing partial government shutdown stalls final approvals, with the Federal Emergency Management Agency now confirming the delay is part of a broader nationwide impact.

In a statement provided to The Albany Herald, a FEMA spokesperson said the shutdown has halted key administrative steps required to activate grants, leaving communities

like Dawson unable to put critical equipment into use.

"This is yet another way the American people are being impacted by the unnecessary and irrational shutdown, which has halted critical support for local communities to prioritize partisan political demands over public safety," the statement read. "Because FEMA is shut down, we cannot finalize grant approvals or compliance reviews, which is directly affecting the city of Dawson."

The fire engine — funded through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program —

has already been delivered to Dawson, but cannot be placed into service until the grant process is formally completed. That process typically includes final compliance checks and authorization steps required before equipment can be operational.

Local officials have said the delay leaves the city in a holding pattern, with a fully equipped, ready-to-use emergency vehicle sitting idle while awaiting federal clearance.

While FEMA did not provide a timeline for when normal operations might resume, the agency indicated that the



File Photo

The Dawson Fire Department has a brand new fire truck sitting, unused because of bureaucratic issues associated with the partial federal government shutdown.

shutdown has broadly disrupted its ability to process grants and support local emergency services nationwide.

The Assistance to Firefight-

ers Grant program is designed to help departments acquire essential equipment, improve

See **SHUTDOWN**, 2A

Periodical — Mail Label

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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Today scores just above zero, tomorrow is below, so get it done today or wait until Thursday or after for better odds. A heartfelt approach helps tasks feel more meaningful and purposeful.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Visibility can be a double-edged sword, today you might prefer less to more. If you are single and dating, you could be looking with inner-child eyes for romantic fantasy instead of true partner material.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Friendships can require patience over time since no one's perfect. However, if the pattern stays permanently out of balance, action may be called for. You can't fix anyone, but you can place them appropriately.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Even though today scores above zero, stars are sinking toward tomorrow, so keeping it low-key could be a better strategy for today and tomorrow. Thursday's stars rise into Friday's, should be a better day to make a move.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): How to engage with all of reality and not become cynical could be a question. Yes, you need to keep your eyes open. But keep them open with neutrality, with neither positive nor negative expectations. Just see what you see.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Not everyone will see you, but you can always see yourself. Keep inner dialog loving and supportive, celebrate every win, validate your motivations and efforts, praise every attempt just for the courage it took.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Access your deepest self with a regular practice of sitting or meditation; treasure awaits within. What you'll find are actually the building materials for constructing your very best life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Some of the most profound connections are with friends, not romantic partners, a kindred soul may need some connection today. While you may be focused on mundane daily tasks, find

time for glimmers and miracles.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The best advice factors in both logical problem solving and necessary emotional context, a wise and loving friend can offer both. Break free today if possible, try to lighten it up if you can.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Grounding down into your ancestral roots and the 3-D foundation you've built for yourself can be stabilizing when the world feels uneven. Notice whether someone is supporting or draining you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): One of the best ways to deepen your understanding is to teach the material to someone else. Learn, then share. While you may feel like you're offering teamwork, it may seem someone else is caught up in emotion.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Someone close could seem emotional or reactive, childish behavior could be triggered. Continued attention to financial matters eventually creates positive change, but you'll need to maintain the effort a while longer.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: The early part of 2026 brings you more challenge than the remainder, April should be about the end of difficulties for a while and the beginning of better times. Weather the first part of April — just get through it. Never shame yourself over other's choices but do analyze the pattern and learn the lesson. Before month-end, expect joyful news, positive sweeping changes, artistry and creativity, and the ability to roll up sleeves and get to it. May brings money. Also the potential for fame, but you may need to sidestep a brief tangle. Your determination should pay off big. Though you'll need to lean away from a few spiraling thoughts in June, the reward is a greater sense of your purpose and mission, the potential for an unexpected windfall, and an umbrella of general protection.



- 1909** – Construction of the RMS Titanic begins
- 1917** – The United States takes possession of the Danish West Indies after paying \$25 million to Denmark, and renames the territory the United States Virgin Islands
- 1918** – Daylight saving time goes into effect in the United States for the first time
- 1921** – The Royal Australian Air Force is formed
- 1931** – An earthquake which destroys Managua, Nicaragua, kills 2,000
- 1932** – Ford unveils its V-8 engine
- 1933** – The Civilian Conservation Corps is established with the mission of relieving unemployment in the US

- 1949** - Newfoundland becomes Canada's 10th province
- 1953** - Department of Health, Education & Welfare is established
- 1954** - US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, is established
- 1958** - US Navy forms atomic sub division
- 1965** - US ordered the 1st combat troops to Vietnam
- 1980** - President Jimmy Carter deregulates banking industry
- 1990** - Riots began in London over the new poll tax laws
- 2004** – In Fallujah, Iraq, 4 American private military contractors working for Blackwater USA, are killed after being ambushed

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- Anesthesia Tech Day
- Cesar Chavez Day
- Dance Marathon Day
- Eiffel Tower Day
- Holy Tuesday
- International Hug a Medicalist Day
- National Apres Day
- National Bunsen Burner Day
- National Clams on the Half Shell Day
- National Crayon Day
- National Farm Workers Day
- National Prom Day
- National She's Funny That Way
- Tater Day
- Terri's Day - (In Honor of Terri Schindler Schiavo)
- Transfer Day - (U.S. Virgin Islands)
- World Backup Day

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's kind of fun to do the impossible."

Walt Disney,
animator (1901 - 1966)

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

I thought the circus had come to Albany early this year until I got closer and saw it was just a bunch of clowns in a No Kings protest.

Darton was impeccably maintained for decades with a relatively small budget. Today, the Albany State West campus has turned into a dump. Every building is falling apart, and the grounds are eyesores. What is the Georgia Board of Regents doing?

The recent release of pictures of Trump with young, underage girls are sickening. You people who keep supporting this pedo are as sick as he is. Check out the pictures, and if you are not ill, you need to go take a long look in the mirror.

How can we ever turn this around? No police force to speak of, and the ones that are on duty let racing go on all night. It seems firemen are entering homes after they burn and stealing jewelry and entire safes. The coroner and sheriff's investigators were made to look like complete fools on "Dateline." City and county politicians are giving away millions from a tax base that is shrinking to their criminal buddies. Our schools brag of success, but state and national test results are in the lower 10%.

If you feel like it is a good idea to vote again for any of our commissioners, mayor or the "fake pastor," remember a few things: They have no intention of doing anything about the proliferation of drug den motels, 4-year-olds killed by drag racers, or illegal use of your tax dollars for pet projects. These people only care about themselves and their own wallets.

I'm initially shocked but then not surprised when squawkers in this forum use "racism" to contradict complaints against our crooked local politicians, the majority of whom are black. Personally, I'm not OK with any crooked politician -- black or white -- misusing my tax money. People who think this way are the true racists.

If the Governor's office and state auditors are reading this, please come to Albany and review city and county finances, elected leaders, and law enforcement. We are paying higher taxes, and citizens' concerns are going completely unaddressed.

The True President likes to hang around losers, thinking they make him look better.

Amazing to listen to some of the reasons albanys is losing several of its restaurants. One so-called specialist says it is location and not keeping up the property. That's not the reason, and it is not the prices. It is most of the employees' attitude, appearance, and inability to understand orders. It is the filming of (customers) fighting inside restaurants. I hate to say it, but i think we are just seeing the beginning of closures of many businesses. It is the employees, and it is many of the customers' behavior.

Man, Fletcher, you are bringing the nostalgia with the stories about bands from past and present eras. Keep it coming.

It's been noted several times that Trump has filed many lawsuits over the years, but he's not suing anyone over accusations they're making about him and the Epstein Files. He's not even threatening lawsuits. I wonder why. That Man Without a Family

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Weather Forecast



Today
82°
60°



Wednesday
83°
61°



Thursday
83°
61°



Friday
81°
64°



Saturday
83°
63°



Sunday
83°
60°



Monday
70°
53°

Daily Bridge Club

Inner needs

By Frank Stewart

Tribune Content Agency

My friend the English professor has studied the evolution of language. He is convinced it developed out of a deep inner need

NORTH ♠ 6 5 4 2 ♥ K J 10 ♦ 5 2 ♣ 8 5 4 3			
WEST ♠ J 10 9 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ A Q 10 ♣ J 9 7 2		EAST ♠ Q 8 7 3 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 9 8 7 6 4 ♣ Q 10	
SOUTH ♠ A K ♥ A Q 9 8 3 ♦ K J 3 ♣ A K 6			
South 2 ♣ 2 ♠ 3 NT	West Pass Pass	North 2 ♠ 2 NT 4 ♥	East Pass Pass All Pass
Opening lead – ♠ J			
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Frank Stewart

with a third trump as well as the A-Q of diamonds. Next time I'll pass 3NT."

At Trick Two, South should lead the king of diamonds. He wins West's trump shift, loses a second diamond, wins the next trump and ruffs his last diamond in dummy to assure 10 tricks.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: S Q 8 7 3 H 6 5 D 9 8 7 6 4 C Q 10. Your partner opens two clubs (strong, artificial), you respond two diamonds (negative or waiting) and he bids two spades. What do you say?

ANSWER: A textbook call is available: Jump to four spades. You show good support but deny any side-suit ace, king, singleton or void. You say you are willing to play at game but discourage pursuing a higher contract. If partner tries for slam, he is on his own.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

Advice Columnist

Boss is an alcoholic, but no one at office will face reality

By Eric Thomas

Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: My boss is what could be called a "functioning alcoholic," which in this case means that, in spite of having a severe drinking problem, he manages to hold down a job, even while actively drunk.

Over the years, I have been phasing out the act of "looking the other way." My refusal to accept his drinking has led him to cast his wrath upon me on occasion. He thinks that I am trying to take him down. What I want is for him and for everyone in my office to face reality.

It is a very sad thing to watch. Thankfully, I don't have to interact with him much.

I feel let down by my boss. A big part of my job is to make him look good, and it seems like he is sabotaging my efforts. I have now basically given up my support for him.

If I were to report him to upper management or talk to him about it directly (I would prefer to do the latter), he would just clean up his act for a few days and then revert.

Now it feels like working for him is making me an enabler of his habit. I am seeking some way, any way to cope here.

– Lost Office Worker

Dear Worker: It will help you to put an internal boundary between you and your boss. In your letter, there seems to be a sense of personal responsibility for, or disappointment in, your boss and his actions. While his drinking is a professional problem that's impacting your ability to do your job, stopping it seems to have taken on aspects of a personal crusade.

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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THE ALBANY HERALD

Perspectives

The Albany HERALD

ALBANYHERALD.COM

Carlton Fletcher

EDITOR

—Georgia Trust for—

LOCAL NEWS

TODAY'S BIBLE VERSE

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

John 6:35

COLUMNIST ■ THOMAS L. KNAPP

Fine, give TSA agents back pay ... then send them home for good

At airports across the US, Transportation Security Administration agents have been “working” — that is, impeding, harassing, ogling and groping air travelers — without pay since Valentine’s Day due to a congressional feud over funding for their parent department.

Well, some of them, anyway. Several hundred have quit; quite a few are calling in sick more often.

On March 27, PresidentTrump directed the Department of Homeland Security to start paying TSA employees again, using “funds that have a reasonable and logical nexus to TSA operations.” They may start getting paid again as soon as Monday.

They should also stop getting paid again as soon as possible. Permanently.

The very existence of the TSA has been a costly 25-year mistake. Now, with the DHS funding dispute still in full swing, it’s time to correct that mistake by abolishing the agency, sending its workfare clients back into the productive sector, and returning airport security responsibility to airports and airlines.

Let’s do a quick cost-benefit analysis:

Cost, Part 1: While TSA doesn’t have its own budget line — its operating costs are part of the larger DHS appropriation — its estimated costs of operation come to about \$9 billion per year.

That’s about \$27 per year from every man, woman, and child in the U.S., whether that man, woman, or child travels by air or not.

Cost, Part 2: The government doesn’t offer official statistics on wait times in TSA “security” lines, but estimates put average wait times at 20-30 minutes, and passenger “screenings” per year at 750-800 million.

That’s somewhere around 250-300 million hours



KNAPP

spent standing in “security” lines at airports: At the U.S. federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, around \$2 billion worth of air travelers’ time wasted.

And I’m low-balling that number, because the actual wait time isn’t the only time travelers waste on TSA. They spend extra time packing in “TSA-friendly” ways. They arrive at airports extra-early just in case the lines are long.

Now, for the benefits:
(THIS SPACE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.)

TSA doesn’t even pretend its screenings have verifiably stopped so much as a single terrorist attack since its founding in 2001.

Is it possible the existence of TSA has had some kind of undetectable, unmeasurable deterrent effect? Sure, but probably less so than could have been achieved by the prior systems adapting and improving their screening techniques after 9/11. Nation-wide uniformity makes it easier for terrorists to know what they’re up against; decentralized responsibility and variety make planning attacks more difficult.

Why was TSA created in the first place? As Rahm Emanuel once said, in a different context, “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. ... It’s an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before.”

Authoritarian politicians saw the 9/11 attacks as an opportunity to increase their control over American travelers – and to bill those travelers for the imposition. It was a mistake to let them exploit that opportunity, and now is a great time to tell them to knock it off and restore a measure of freedom and sanity to U.S. air travel.

Thomas L. Knapp is director and senior news analyst at the William Lloyd Garrison Center for Libertarian Advocacy Journalism (thegarrisoncenter.org). He lives and works in north-central Florida

COLUMNIST ■ WAYNE FOWLER

A columnist’s journey to belief

David Brooks wrote a New York Times column he called “My Decade-Long Journey to Belief.” He writes for a secular audience, so I’m sure there’s more to the story. But it’s his story.

Some of Brooks’ story seems to parallel the faith journey of C.S. Lewis. Brooks describes his pre-faith life as agnostic and religious, but not spiritual. In 2013, he began to have some unexpected and illuminating moments.

“I was in a crowded subway car,” he writes. “I had this shimmering awareness that all the people in it had souls. ... Maybe there was a soul-giver.”

Lewis’s parallel thought was, “You have never talked to a mere mortal.”

Hiking in the Rocky Mountains, Brooks sat on a rock to meditate on a Puritan prayer focused on the Beatitudes. The implications startled him. He glimpsed “a moral grandeur far vaster and truer than anything that could have emerged from our prosaic world. It hit me with the force of joy.”

He describes joy as “a presence that transcends the self.”

Lewis also connected joy to a desire for the transcendent. He concluded, “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is I was made for another world.”

On another point, Lewis and Brooks both reasoned that human morality posits the presence of a Creator beyond the material universe. For both



FOWLER

men, the next leg of the journey was theism. During this time, Lewis called himself “the most reluctant convert in all England.” Brooks said faith “tiptoed into my life.” He describes faith as a venture toward something, a yearning for something beautiful yet not fully grasped.

Both men sought Christian friends to explore their thoughts. After a late-night stroll with friends along Addison’s Walk in Oxford, Lewis realized the “myth” of God becoming man, dying, and rising back to life is actually credible. This broughthem to a major inflection point. What would he do with the Christian gospel?

Not long after that stroll, he rode with his brother, Warnie, on a motorcycle to Whipsnade Zoo.

“When we set out,” he wrote, “I did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did.”

Faith is a journey with a major crossroad. At that crossroad, you cross over from sleep to consciousness, darkness to light, death to life.

“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Eph. 5:14)

The call of Christ is to repent (a change of mind) and believe in the gospel (who Jesus is and what He did). Saying “yes” at that crossroad begins the Christian life. Afterwards, the journey features a new way, new companions, and a guiding Helper.

David Brooks has written his final column for the Times. His journey continues.

Wayne Fowler has been a pastor and columnist in Georgia since 1996. Email mountainchristian@brmmemc.net.

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.

COLUMNIST ■ DICK YARBROUGH

Going back to a hometown that is no longer home

The American novelist Thomas Wolfe wrote, “You can’t go home again.” He was correct. You can’t. I tried it along with my friend, Philip.

A near-fatal attack of sepsis has made driving an automobile a challenge for me and a firm no-no to my kids. Through a mutual friend, I was introduced to Philip, who has driven for some of the rich and famous and has been



YARBROUGH

I was born in East Point and spent part of my adult years there, but I had no earthly idea of Philip’s East Point – where it was or how to get there. This was, after all, the segregated South.

On our various trips, we decided that we should go back to East Point one day and visit our collective haunts. That day came a few weeks ago. It had been a long time for me, and the East Point I saw was not the East Point I knew as a youngster. As Gertrude Stein said of Oakland, “There is no there there.” A lot of familiar landmarks have been razed and nothing is in their place.

Time hasn’t been kind to the home I grew up in and the surrounding neighborhood. A number of boarded-up houses and weed-infested lawns. A few fixer-uppers, but not many. Our first home as a married couple looked sadly decrepit. Our last home as a family has held up, but it sits under the flight path to and from Hartsfield-Jackson, which was the impetus for us to leave.

From there, it was on to Philip’s East Point, literally across the railroad tracks. But if I was looking for a bunch of rundown shacks and trash-infested sidewalks, I was in for a surprise. What I saw were brick houses and neatly trimmed lawns. In the segregated days, the area had been home to black professionals: doctors, attorneys, businesspeople. Frankly, his old neighborhood looked better than mine. But my life was easi-

er.

Philip was in the first class to integrate Russell High School and dealt with the indignities that came with the experience. But this was nothing new for him. Being black in the segregated South was full of indignities.

When I was growing up, there was an amusement park known as Funtown: rides, miniature golf, skating rink, etc. I went there often. Philip and his friends could not go. They could only peek over the fence. If park employees saw the group’s hands on the top of the fence, they would rap their knuckles with a stick.

Music was Philip’s passion, and he quickly became a part of the marching band at Russell High School and the school’s music program. He faced the typical racism he expected from teachers and students, but even back then the occasional white teacher or white classmate was willing to help him adjust to this new environment. Thankfully, not everybody was a racist.

I asked Philip if he suffered any physical abuse in those days. He recounted being jumped by a group of white boys while attending band camp. The attackers were not a part of the camp. They were attending a nearby church retreat. A Christian church retreat.

There were some points of pride in Philip’s East Point. When his grandfather, Will Tinch, a long-time city employee, died at the age of 113, the city’s dignitaries served as escorts for his service.

I left my East Point for life in corporate America. Philip left his and joined the Navy. Two different people. Two different backgrounds. Two different eras. But we realized something that united us. When I was in high school, a Dairy Queen opened just off campus. It was a gathering place for my friends and me. It was for Philip and his friends, too. What better way to end our excursion to East Point than lunch together at the Dairy Queen?

East Point is no longer home for Philip or me, but it is where we grew up and, despite the divide of race and age and experiences, it is responsible for creating a lasting friendship between the two of us. That made it worth the trip.

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

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:

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What to watch TUESDAY

March 31, 2026
All times Eastern. Start times can vary based on cable/satellite provider. Confirm times on your on-screen guide.

Will Trent
ABC, 8 p.m.
Suspicion starts to build around Amanda (Sonja Sohn) after her gun is used in a self-defense shooting in the new episode “Did I Screw This Up?”

NCIS
CBS, 8 p.m.
In the new episode “Fleeting,” Navy Week takes a deadly turn when a stolen squad car flips and reveals a murdered sailor in the trunk.

Best Medicine
FOX, 8 p.m.
In the new episode “A Tale of Two Sister Cities,” Martin (Josh Charles) is skeptical when Port Wenn welcomes an extremely friendly delegation from their sister city in Norway.

Secrets of the Bees
Nat Geo, 8 p.m. ■ New Two-Part Series
National Geographic’s award-winning explorer Bertie Gregory is back for another entry in the *Secrets of* franchise, executive produced by James Cameron. And with over 20,000 species of bees, responsible for pollinating a third of the food we eat, this was no small undertaking. Viewers will learn about how the intelligent insects use tools and communicate with a “waggle dance,” and what happens when the hive is attacked. And there are *secrets* aplenty, promises Gregory. “Every other scene [makes you go], ‘What the heck is going on?’ You’re going to have your mind blasted by bees.” Two episodes air back-to-back tonight.

NCIS: Origins
CBS, 9 p.m.
After Dr. Tango (Julian Black Antelope) is arrested for stealing human remains from a national park, Dr. Donald “Ducky” Mallard (returning Adam Campbell) assists the team in proving his innocence in the new episode.



HUW CORDEY, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Doc
FOX, 9 p.m.
On her last day at Westside, Joan (Felicity Huffman) chooses an unlikely successor, crowns a chief resident and imparts some final wisdom to the next generation in the new episode “Next.”

Henry David Thoreau
PBS, 9 p.m. ■ Series Finale
In the documentary’s third and final episode, “Several More Lives to Live,” Henry David Thoreau completes his two-year experiment at Walden Pond and returns to New England society. He travels extensively through Massachusetts and Maine, experiencing the natural world and connecting with the Indigenous Penobscot people. He becomes a respected land surveyor and natural scientist, and he takes on a prominent role as a staunch abolitionist. Thoreau would not live to see the end of slavery, as he succumbed to tuberculosis in 1862 at age 44.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Star of the Month: George Brent

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

Turner Classic Movies’ salute to Irish American actor George Brent continues with 14 of his movies airing tonight and into tomorrow afternoon. A leading man of cinema in the ‘30s and ‘40s, Brent’s low-key approach was perfect for Warner Bros.’ female-driven melodramas — he never upstaged the leading lady but always elevated the material. Tonight’s lineup begins with 1939’s **Dark Victory (pictured)**, where Brent plays Dr. Frederick Steele opposite Bette Davis’ dying socialite

WARNER BROS.

Judith Traherne. Davis earned an Oscar nomination for this tear-jerker, and Brent’s understated performance as her devoted physician provides the emotional anchor. Programming continues with other notable Brent roles that showcase his range, including **‘Til We Meet Again** (1940), **Honeymoon for Three** (1941) and **Jezebel** (1938).

The Verdict
Vice TV, 9 p.m.
This episode, “Muhammad Ali vs. Mike Tyson,” explores what would have happened if these two fearsome iconic fighters had met in their prime. Would Tyson’s strength have bested Ali, or would Ali’s quickness and stamina have taken Tyson apart? Chris Berman (ESPN), Jimmy Roberts (NBC Sports), boxing trainer and commentator Teddy Atlas, former heavyweight champion and *SiriusXM* host Gerry Cooney, Joon Lee (ESPN), and veteran sports journalist Hank Gola are ready to battle this question out.

R.J. Decker
ABC, 10 p.m.
In the new episode “Burn Notice,” R.J. (Scott Speedman) unravels the truth about a Little League coach whose family is being mysteriously targeted.

NCIS: Sydney
CBS, 10 p.m.
With many lives in danger, the team races to stop a bomber’s path of destruction in the new episode “Lone Wolf: Part Two.”

Frontline
PBS, 10 p.m.
Frontline presents “Strike on Iran: The Nuclear Question,” an updated and expanded investigation of Iran’s nuclear program in the wake of U.S. and Israeli attacks on the country.

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



‘Hellboy’ MARK ROGERS

- Sweet Home Alabama** (2002, Romance-comedy) Reese Witherspoon, Josh Lucas **Freeform, 6 p.m.**
- Hugo** (2011, Adventure) Ben Kingsley, Sacha Baron Cohen **MGM, 8 p.m.**
- The Day After Tomorrow** (2004, Action) Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal **AMC, 8 p.m.**
- The Woman Before Me** (2026, Suspense) Tayler Hamilton, Phillip Andre Botello **LMN, 8 p.m.**
- 27 Dresses** (2008, Romance-comedy) Katherine Heigl, James Marsden **Freeform, 8:30 p.m.**
- Highlander** (1986, Fantasy) Christopher Lambert, Sean Connery **BBC America, 8:30 p.m.**
- Selena** (1997, Biography) Jennifer Lopez, Edward James Olmos **E!, 9 p.m.**
- Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3** (2023, Science fiction) Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana **FX, 9:30 p.m.**
- Sonic the Hedgehog 3** (2024, Family) Jim Carrey, Ben Schwartz **MGM, 10:10 p.m.**
- The Expendables** (2010, Action) Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham **AMC, 10:30 p.m.**
- The Shawshank Redemption** (1994, Drama) Tim Robbins, Morgan Freeman **TNT, 10:30 p.m.**
- Hellboy** (2019, Action) David Harbour, Milla Jovovich **SYFY, 11 p.m.**

From the editors of TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



TV - What to watch

What to watch WEDNESDAY

April 1, 2026
All times Eastern. Start times can vary based on cable/satellite provider. Confirm times on your on-screen guide.

How I Met Your Mother
E!, 6 a.m. ■ Network Premiere
We’re going back to the very beginning with Episode 1 of the beloved comedy that ran from 2005-2014 as E! adds the sitcom to its lineup. Here we start with our first introduction to Ted Mosby, narrated by Bob Saget, who shares with his present-day children the stories of how he met their mother. Through the series-long flashbacks, we follow Ted (Josh Radnor) in his younger days living in New York City with his best friends. The cast also included Neil Patrick Harris, Jason Segel, Cobie Smulders, Alyson Hannigan and Cristin Milioti. The first 20 episodes air today, and the series continues throughout the month.

The Valley
Bravo, 8 p.m. ■ Season Premiere
The crew is ready to reset the vibe as they navigate major life changes from babies and breakups to bold new beginnings, but the drama is never far behind. When questionable behavior and unresolved tensions arise, it threatens to permanently pull this friend group apart.

Scrubs
ABC, 8 p.m.
J.D. (Zach Braff) is upset about not getting invited to Turk and Carla’s (Donald Faison and Judy Reyes) annual barbecue, so he tries to nurture his friendship with Carla at work in the new episode “My Best Friend’s Barbecue.”

The Masked Singer
FOX, 8 p.m. ■ Season Finale
The Season 14 winner is unmasked in the two-hour finale episode. Nick Cannon hosts with panelists Ken Jeong, Jenny McCarthy Wahlberg, Robin Thicke and Rita Ora.

Chicago Med
NBC, 8 p.m.
Dr. Charles (Oliver Platt) grapples with his own mental health following a harrowing experience working the suicide prevention line in the new episode “The Book of Charles.”

Expedition Files
Discovery Channel, 9 p.m. ■ Season Premiere
Explorer and esteemed storyteller Josh Gates plunges back into the archives of the past to uncover jaw-dropping new evidence behind the world’s most notorious mysteries. In the season premiere, Gates explores mind-blowing theories on American history: What really happened to USS *Scorpion*, an American Navy submarine that suddenly vanished during the height of the Cold War; the myth-busting truth behind Revolutionary War legend Paul Revere’s famous midnight ride; and a shocking theory surrounding America’s most infamous assassin — John Wilkes Booth — that suggests he might have escaped justice and met a far stranger fate than the one recorded in history books.



WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

America’s Culinary Cup
CBS, 10 p.m.
In the new episode “The Roots of Success,” airing at a special time, the remaining chefs face off in teams of three to deliver a vegetarian three-course menu to a dinner party of elite guests from the culinary world. Padma Lakshmi hosts.

Chicago P.D.
NBC, 10 p.m.
In the new episode “Restored,” Torres (Benjamin Levy Aguilar) tries to stop the cycle of violence after a teenager is killed in an act of revenge.

Our New World
PBS, 10 p.m. ■ New Series
In our constantly changing world, both nature and humans alike have to adapt. Discover the radical transformations of animals, plants, ecosystems and more through breathtaking visual effects as they tackle this ever-changing Earth in the face of global warming.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Starring Doris Day
TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.
In celebration of the anniversary of her birthday on April 3, 1922, TCM spotlights the singing and acting career of Doris Mary Anne Kappelhoff, aka Doris Day. Up first is 1955’s **Love Me or Leave Me**, in which Day delivers one of her most dramatic performances as a fictionalized version of Ruth Etting, the “singing sweetheart of the roaring ‘20s,” opposite James Cagney. Next,

the actress shines as the titular 19th century sharpshooter in the 1953 musical comedy **Calamity Jane (pictured)**, with Day channeling Jane’s romantic sentiments in “Secret Love,” which won the Oscar for Best Original Song. Three more Day performances complete tonight’s lineup, starting with 1949’s **My Dream Is Yours**, a lighthearted musical comedy featuring a cameo by cartoon icon Bugs Bunny. In 1960’s **Please Don’t Eat the Daisies**, Day wins hearts as the girl next door opposite David Niven, while 1952’s **April in Paris** showcases Day as chorus girl Ethel “Dynamite” Jackson opposite Ray Bolger.



WARNER BROS.

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



HOPPER STONE

- Friendship** (2025, Comedy) Tim Robinson, Paul Rudd **HBO, 6 p.m.**
- Young Guns** (1988, Western) Emilio Estevez, Kiefer Sutherland **BBC America, 6 p.m.**
- Beverly Hills Cop** (1984, Action) Eddie Murphy, Judge Reinhold **AMC, 7 p.m.**
- The Housemaid** (2025, Suspense) Sydney Sweeney, Amanda Seyfried **Starz, 7 p.m.**
- The Parent Trap** (1998, Children) Lindsay Lohan, Dennis Quaid **Freeform, 7 p.m.**
- A Royal Setting** (2026, Romance) Jen Lilley, Dan Jeannotte **Hallmark, 8 p.m.**
- Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle** (2017, Adventure) Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart **FX, 8 p.m.**
- The Mask** (1994, Comedy) Jim Carrey, Cameron Diaz **SYFY, 8 p.m.**
- The Naked Gun** (2025, Comedy) Liam Neeson, Pamela Anderson **MGM, 8 p.m.**
- Turbulence** (2025, Suspense) Hera Hilmar, Jeremy Irvine **Starz, 9:15 p.m.**
- Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure** (1989, Comedy) Keanu Reeves, Alex Winter **MGM, 9:30 p.m.**
- Ghostbusters** (2016, Comedy) Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig **SYFY, 10 p.m.**
- Fast Times at Ridgemont High** (1982, Comedy) Sean Penn, Jennifer Jason Leigh **AMC, 11:15 p.m.**

From the editors of TV Weekly and tvinsider.com

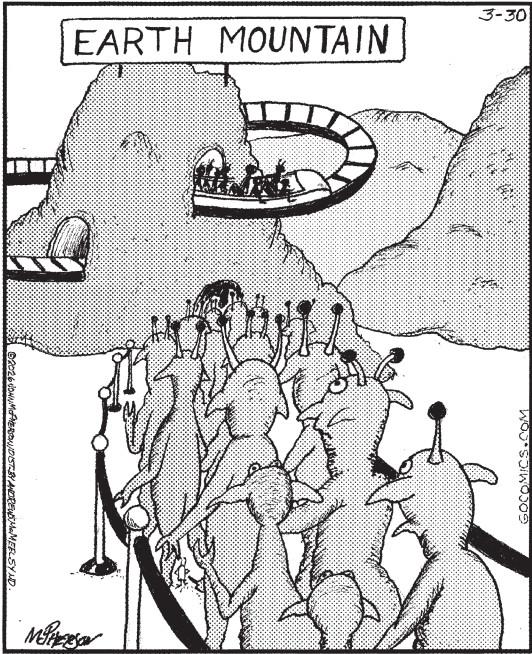


Know what to watch. Know where to find it.

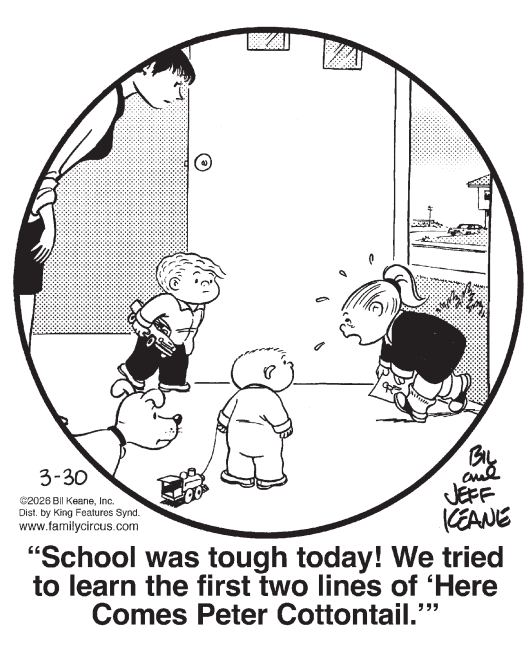
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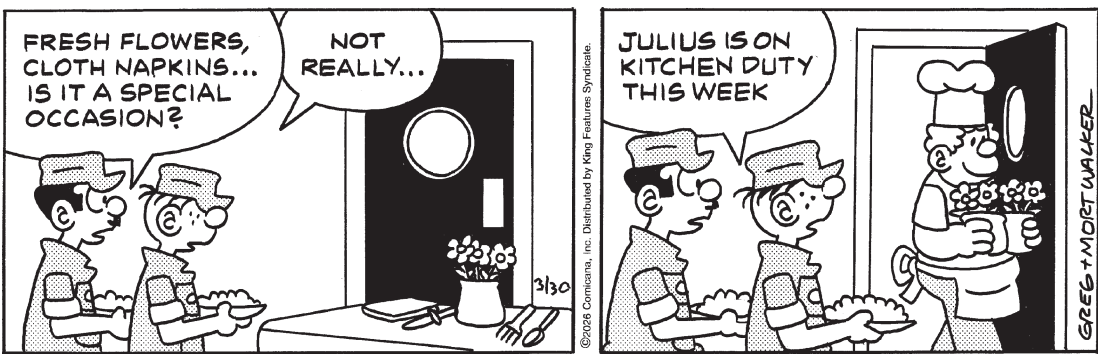
CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



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

3/30

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 WHATZIT SOLUTION: Put a ring on it

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

1 Bird that went extinct in the 1660s
5 Auction site with a "newly listed" sort option
9 Carrier on rails
13 Monumental
14 Herb in poultry stuffing
15 Purifying filter acronym
16 Adrift after a storm, perhaps
18 Happily ___ after
19 Weighing device
20 Cheddar shredders
22 Collectively
23 Jodie Comer's "Killing Eve" co-star
24 Subterfuge
25 Cone alternative at an ice cream shop
26 Rebound
27 Triage pro
28 Detective Spade of "The Maltese Falcon"
29 Precious stone
30 Stir-fry vegetable
35 Band's sound booster
36 Special ___: some mil. missions
37 Word before devil or dog
39 Top-notch
42 NNW opposite
43 Maker of jet-powered pogo sticks, in cartoons
44 "Let me explain ..."
46 "Haddeshtown" writer Mitchell
47 Choppy, layered style with black bangs
48 Corp. shake-up
49 Second to
50 Protection of intellectual property, or a phonetic hint to 16-, 23-, 30-, and 44-Across
53 Easy-Bake ___
54 Pilates target
55 Short message
56 Pharmacy orders, informally
57 "The Music of Tori and the Muses" singer-songwriter

DOWN

1 Oscar winner Benicio ___ Toro
2 American marsupials known for playing dead
3 "The Simpsons" character in a rhinestone suit
4 Gas pump number
5 East, in Spanish
6 Some four-year degs.
7 Generational divide
8 Long (for)
9 Lady's partner in an animated spaghetti scene
10 Unmask
11 Italian liqueur in a spritz
12 Like wetlands
17 Brewpub brew
21 Pros who know all the hot spots?
22 "Where the Wild Things ..."
23 Basic arithmetic homework
25 Goldfish, for one

28 Pastry that may be deep-fried in ghee
29 Stare in amazement
31 Cornish roasts
32 Overly inquisitive
33 Snail commonly cooked in butter
34 Supremely powerful
38 "That's correct"
39 Promising youngster

40 Get rid of
41 Pressed, as clothes
42 Trippy fungus, informally
43 Bless using oil
45 Neo-pagan religion
46 Gassy prefix
48 Loaves that may be marbled
51 Con's opposition
52 Contact list no.

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

T	A	L		S	O	W		S	D	E	W
E	L	O	N		E	O	C		N	E	O
L	H	G	I	H	A	D	O	C		E	N
	G	H	O	N	E		H	I	V	H	O
S	I	V	N	O	V		A	H	M	S	E
E	W	O	V	E	O	S	S	O	W	I	D
A	T	S		S	O		D	W			
	V	E	D	D	V	N	S	H	V	G	N
		W	E	G		N	V	S		L	W
A	T	T	W	E	D	N	O		E	S	N
H	O	V	H	D	N	V	S		E	N	O
S	H	E	L	V	E	G		E	T	V	C
H	E	A	E		V	E	S	L	V	L	S
V	D	E	H		E	G	V	S		C	I
M	A	R	T		A	V	B	E		O	D

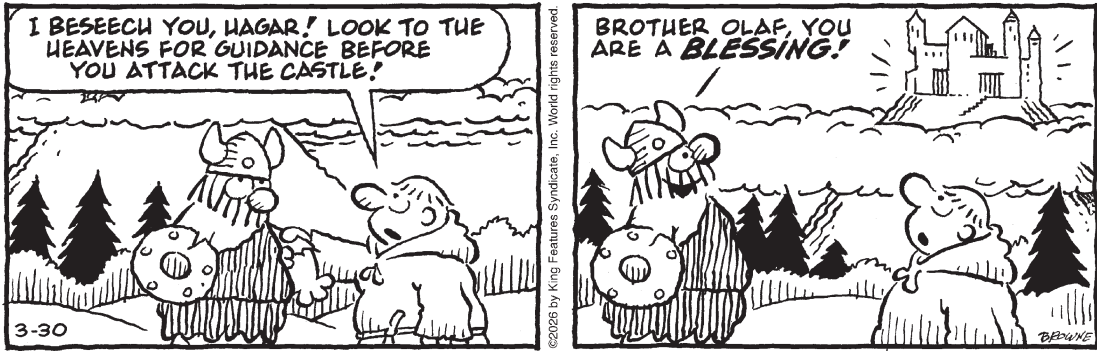
03/30/26

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49					50	51						52	
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56					57					58			

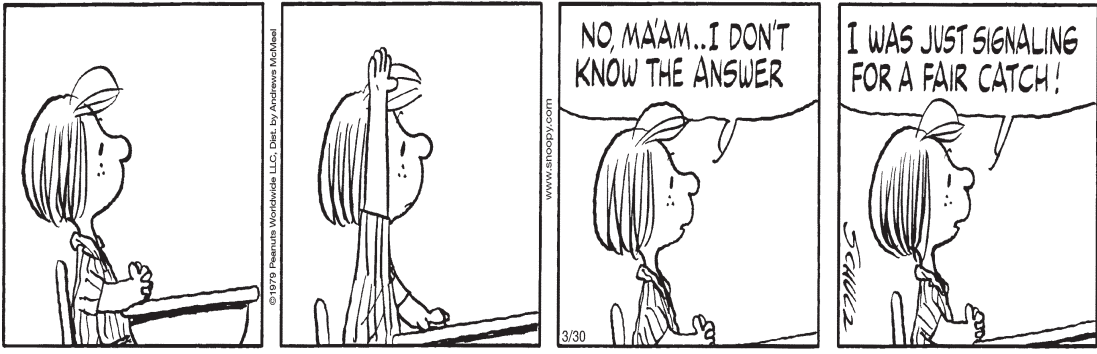
By Michael B. Berg & Brian Callahan
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03/30/26

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.

FOODS WITH SUPER VITAMINS

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

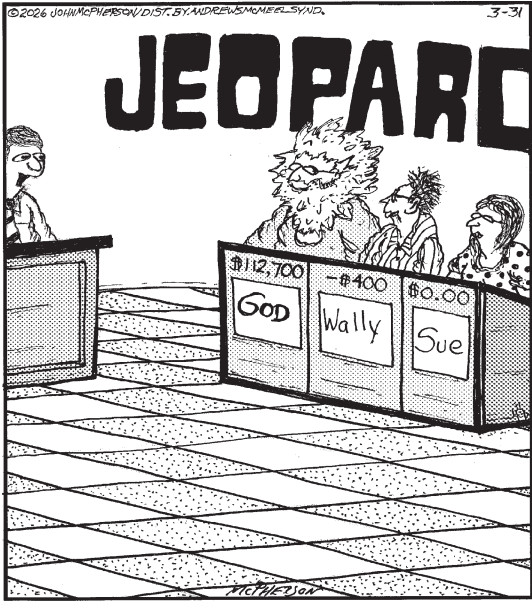
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3/30

Bell Peppers, Beta Carotene, Biotin, Blood, Body, Bones, Collagen, Daily, Diet, Dose, Eggs, Energy, Enzyme, Ginger, Health, Heart, Hormones, Immunity, Iron, Kale, Leafy Greens, Magnesium, Meat, Metabolism, Muscles, Mushrooms, Nails, Nutrients, Orange, Prevent, Seeds, Skin, Spinach, Supplements, Sweet Potato, Teeth, Vision, Well-being

TODAY'S ANSWER: Legumes

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



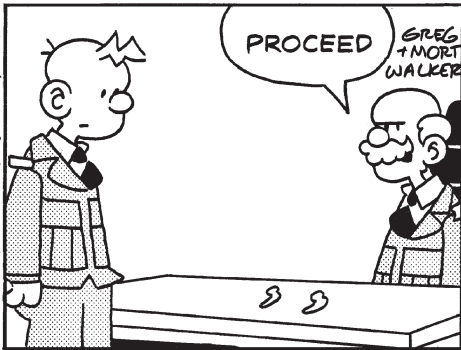
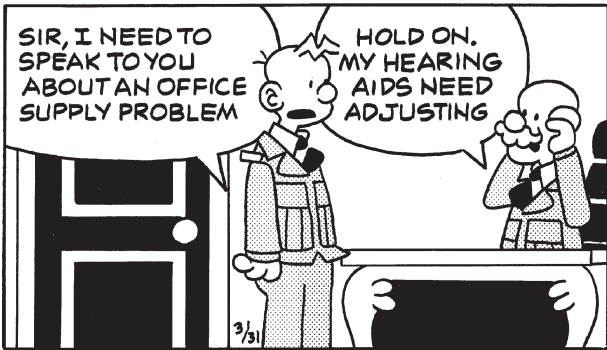
“Right again, God, but please wait until AFTER I ask the question to answer.”

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane

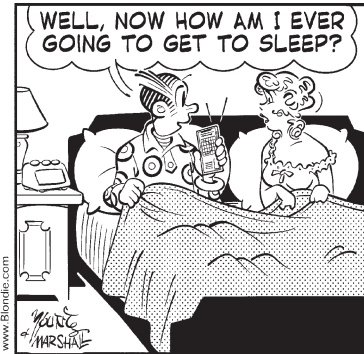
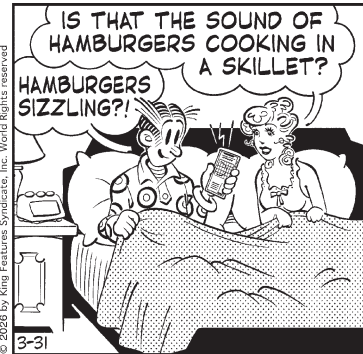


“If you don’t learn the alphabet, you’ll never be able to buy vitamins.”

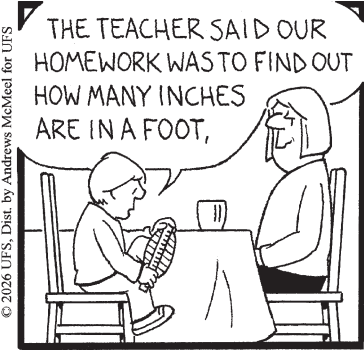
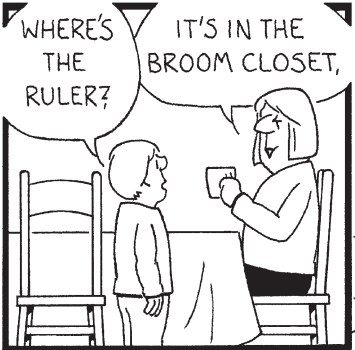
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



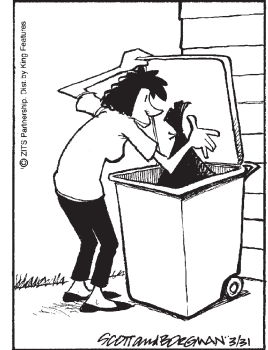
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



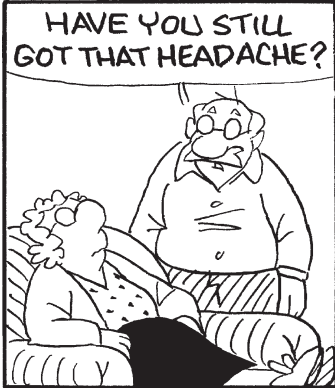
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

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 WHATZIT SOLUTION: Off the top of my head

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS
- 1 Part of speech (Abbr.)
- 4 Ocean liner
- 8 Waistcoat
- 12 Mauna —
- 13 Fork prong
- 14 Chancellor — von Bismarck
- 15 Long — of the law
- 16 Skeletal part
- 17 “Curb — Enthusiasm”
- 18 Effect
- 20 Narrow space
- 22 Curved path
- 23 Embrace
- 24 Thespians
- 27 Brown pigment
- 31 Annoys
- 32 Succulent plant
- 34 Naval rank (Abbr.)
- 35 “We’re off to — the wizard ...”
- 36 Bed size
- 37 Spotted rodent of South America “—, I’m Adam”
- 38 Disconnect
- 40 Gull
- 44 — anemone
- 45 Alpaca relative
- 48 Be unsteady
- 51 Adam’s grandson
- 52 Jazz type, for short
- 54 — Jima
- 55 Measure of land
- 56 Grotto
- 57 — culpa
- 58 Touch down
- 59 Get wind of “To — is human ...”
- DOWN
- 1 Jai —
- 2 Student housing, for short

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

- 3 Crammed (Hyph.)
- 4 Plaster for exterior walls
- 5 Sword handle
- 6 Hotel
- 7 Fuzzy fruit
- 8 Journey
- 9 English school
- 10 Shock
- 11 Whig’s opponent
- 19 — and crafts
- 21 Trick
- 24 Length x width
- 25 Uncooked
- 26 Slipped
- 28 Post-war period
- 29 Short distance
- 30 — rule
- 31 Ideology (Suffix)
- 33 United
- 36 Agents (Hyph.)
- 37 Actor — Newman
- 39 Diverted
- 41 Wall Street worker
- 43 Observe
- 45 Meat for stew
- 46 Ancient Peruvian
- 47 Maize
- 48 — bean
- 49 Fancy pitcher
- 50 Bellow
- 53 Actress Issa —

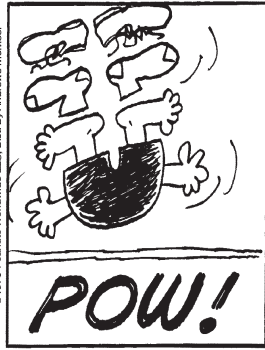
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18			19			20	21					
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	24				25	26		27		28	29	30
31				32		33			34			
35				36					37			
38			39			40		41				
			42		43			44				
45	46	47					48			49	50	
51					52	53			54			
55					56				57			
58					59				60			

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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.

CABLE-STAYED BRIDGES Solution: 6 letters

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

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TODAY'S ANSWER: Design

Pair of artists selected for solo exhibitions at Albany Museum of Art

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – Two solo exhibitions will open in late May at the Albany Museum of Art in the museum’s second juried open call for Georgia and Alabama artists. Jessica Ambadipudi, of Leesburg and Rylan Steele of Columbus were selected by the panel of judges.

Steele’s exhibition, “The Middle Way,” will be in the upstairs McCormack Gallery. Ambadipudi’s work will be shown in “The Home of Birds” in the West Gallery. Both exhibitions open on May 21 and will continue through Aug 29. Emerging and mid-career artists from Georgia and Alabama were eligible to apply.

“This was a thrilling second year for our open call proposals,” Director of Curatorial Affairs Katie Dillard said. “We were pleased to re-

ceive about 20 submissions, and were especially pleased to see so many artists from Alabama apply, which means the word is getting out the way we had hoped. This was another challenging year for our judges to come to a conclusion regarding the winner, and, through unique circumstances in our exhibitions calendar, the museum was able to award two winners of equal standing the opportunity for exhibition.

“As many of us are aware and anticipating, this summer marks the semiquincentennial anniversary of the United States of America. In honor of this nation’s landmark celebration, we are pleased to add more diverse artistic expressions to the overall message being shared this summer.”

A native of India, Ambadipudi began working in animation before transitioning into illustration and visual



Jessica Ambadipudi



Rylan Steele

storytelling. “The dynamics of her beginnings in graphic design and illustration have deeply informed her practice and the creation of works like those exhibited in ‘The Home of Birds’,” Curator of African Art and African Diasporic Art Sidney Pettice said. “She thinks about the deeper symbolism of the bird, a migrat-

ing being that’s able to create a home anywhere.” After coming to the U.S. to pursue her MFA at Savannah College of Art and Design, Ambadipudi was drawn to the notion of homesickness and questioning what exactly home is after moving away from hers, Pettice said. “Through immersive exploration of the star, bird, and

home motif, textural color, and dynamic worldbuilding, the artworks in ‘The Home of Birds’ encourage close looking and reflection,” Pettice added.

Rylan Steele is a photographer and an associate professor of photography at Columbus State University. The body of work for “The Middle Way” came to fruition after he reread the 1960 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The Southern Gothic novel, which spawned an Oscar-winning movie, explores race, gender, and class while also telling the story of childhood and the pivotal parts of growing up.

“That led Steele to his project of photographing his son Owen over the past nine years,” Pettice said. “Each image offers a glimpse into his boyhood, what his room looked like, who his friends were, and what his responsibili-

ties were.” Rereading “To Kill a Mockingbird” with the perspective of a father made Steele question who his son would become as an adult. “These images documenting his childhood almost act as a recounting, things that can be revisited, re-remembered,” Pettice said. “We are pleased to share these two unique exhibitions with visitors this summer, and promote the immense talent that lives and thrives within our nearby communities,” Dillard said. The third annual open call for a summer 2027 exhibition will start on July 1. In addition to Georgia and Alabama artists, the invitation to apply will be extended to emerging and mid-career artists working in Florida. Information on how to apply will be posted on the AMA website: <https://www.albany-museum.com>.



File Photo

Albany State students meet leadership candidates at on-campus event

By Isaiah Flynt

Albany State University

ALBANY– The Office of Student Engagement and students at Albany State University recently held an on-campus Meet the Candidate event during which students campaigned for various leadership positions.

The event brought a sense of energy to the candidates, their supporters and curious students, creating an energetic atmosphere during which attendees learned more about each would-be leader’s platform points and what they would do to bring about change.

The Meet the Candidates event took place at the C.W. Grant Student Union Ballroom. The candidates presented creative campaigns, drawing inspiration from iconic movies and themes.

SGA (Student Government Association) presidential and vice president candidates are

Landon Davis and Kentrell Box, who based their platform on the Netflix series “Stranger

Things,” renaming it “Stranger ASU.” Darren Smith and Shonnell Reavy based their platform on the movie “Now You See Me 2,” renaming it “Now You See Us.”

Aaron Francis-Dany and Diya Johnson based their campaign on the Disney original movie “Aladdin,” naming their campaign “Wish 1903.”

Sophomore class president and vice president candidates Zamir Cooper and Dominick Thomas were inspired by the historic Black Panther party and titled their campaign

“The United Rams: A Class Revolution.” Candidates for Ms. Sophomore are Neveah Alfred and Deja Wingfield. Alfred’s campaign was inspired by an album cover and named “How to Get Away with The Crown.” Wingfield said her campaign stands for “kindness, confidence, and school spirit.”

The Junior class presidential and vice presidential candidates are Ariel Kizer and T’Miyah Williams, facing Barrington Sims and Kameron Jones. The Mr. Junior candidate is Justin Flowers while the. Ms. Junior candidates are Eva Clark and Niyah King.

The Senior presidential and vice presidential candidates are

Aolani Carter and Taniyah Lewis, and the Ms. Senior candidate is Kyra Smith, whose platform is based on a Disney original series “That’s So Raven.”

The Ms. ASU candidates are upcoming seniors JA’shalyn Grier, Jenia Jordan, Ryan Ruffin, Clara Jackson, Madilyn Montgomery and Meadow Reliford. Each of the candidates’ platforms is based on a competition show or movie such as “The Voice,” “Wicked” and “Inside Out.” The Mr. ASU candidate is incoming senior Isaiah Jones, whose campaign theme is “Details.”

“Too often, I am seeing people leave Albany State because they feel as if they are not important because they do not hold leadership roles on campus, but they also do not know how to compete for the roles,” Ms. ASU candidate Ruffin said. “I want to equip students with the tools and knowledge to confidently step into these roles.

“Furthermore, I want to hold events that are not segregated amongst different organizations but inclusive and open to any student, such as fitness socials to better mental and physical health. Finally, I will promote academic excellence through scholarship competitions: whether it’s writing essays or giving speeches, students will have the chance to broaden their knowledge while also winning money.”

Junior presidential candidate Zamir Cooper said, “The event today was a 10 out of 10, and I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to be running for class president. What I loved most about the event was the speeches and the support shown throughout the event.

“The speeches were very empowering, leaving a positive mark and excitement for the future. We showed how powerful unity is in our community.”

As the ASU family celebrates the incoming student leaders who have promised to make a change at Albany State University, the university’s executive cabinet has shown dedication and commitment, fostering a supportive environment for student leadership, allowing students to have opportunities like the Meet the Candidates event.

GSW hosts Innovation and Entrepreneurship competition

AMERICUS – The College of Business and Computing (COBAC) at Georgia Southwestern State University recently hosted its first-ever Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, showcasing student-driven business ideas and entrepreneurial talent.

The event opened with remarks from GSW President Michelle Johnston and COBAC Dean Gaynor Cheokas, who welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of innovation and leadership in today’s business landscape.

Students presented their ventures to a panel of judges, and two teams were awarded top honors, each receiving \$1,000 in prize funding. La Ruta Café earned the Best Pitch award, while FitFlow was recognized for Best Innovation. Both winning teams will advance to represent GSW at the inaugural University System of Georgia Innovation and Entrepreneurship Pitch Competition on April 6–7 at Kennesaw State University’s Marietta campus. The statewide competition offers participants the opportunity to compete for \$25,000 in cash prizes, the USG trophy, mentorship from industry experts, and access to leading institutional accelerators.

Participants and business concepts included:

Graham Harrod (Leslie) - MVRC (The Most Valuable Running Center): A performance-focused training center for runners in Augusta, de-



Submitted photo GSW

From left, Assistant Professor Toney Duckworth-Chambless, Cedrick Nabb, Elijah Coleman, Katrina Holmes, Katana Glover, Graham Harrod, Macy Taylor, Milly Velasquez, Emily Jimenez and Senior Lecturer Becca Jones took part in Georgia Southwestern’s recent Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition.

signed to combine expert coaching with a strong sense of community.

Katrina Holmes (Manchester) - The Excellence Academy: An academic program aimed at strengthening early literacy and foundational math skills for K–2 students through small-group instruction, while also preparing future educators with hands-on classroom experience.

Macy Taylor (Ochlocknee) – FitFlow: A first-of-its-kind wheelchair seat cover featuring built-in cooling technology to enhance comfort and usability.

Cedric McNabb (Norcross) and Elijah Coleman (Americus) – Echt: A real-time AI mobile app designed

to protect users from identity theft, fraud, and misuse of personal information.

Milced Velasquez (Vienna) and Emely Jimenez (Leslie) - La Ruta Café: A mobile specialty coffee camper offering hand-crafted beverages and a culturally inspired coffee experience.

Katana Glover (Leesburg) – DeafRescue: A wearable device that alerts individuals who are hard of hearing to emergency situations and enables first responders to access interpreter services via QR code, while automatically notifying emergency contacts with GPS location.

Judges for the competition included Qaijuan Willis, director of Downtown Americus Main Street and interim tourism director for the city of Americus; Hailey Hobbs, marketing and sales coordinator at TCI Powder Coatings in Americus; and Kim Horne Folmar, director of sales and marketing at Horne Pecan Company and an entrepreneur in agribusiness.

The event was made possible through the support of the GSW Foundation, the High-Impact Approach to Integrative Learning (HAIL) initiative, the Marketing and Management Association and the GSW College of Business and Computing.

ABAC’s Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo a homecoming highlight

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON — Would-be south Georgia cowboys are encouraged to saddle up for Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College’s homecoming celebration, featuring the high-flying Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo

The rodeo returns to campus April 10-11 as part of a full weekend of activities.

This year’s homecoming theme is “Greetings from ABAC, ‘Moore’ Than Just an Address,” reflecting Moore Highway as a place where students experience more than just an education.

“Our hope in welcoming alumni back to campus is they are reminded of ABAC’s impact on their lives,” said Lynda Fisher, director of alumni and special events. “We would love for alumni and friends to join us for this weekend as we reconnect with others on campus.”

Homecoming events include the following:

Friday, April 10
ABAC Plant Sale | 9 a.m.-5 p.m. | ABAC Farm Greenhouse
Alumni Awards Luncheon | 12:30 p.m. | Gres-

sette Gym | Reservations required

Filly Softball doubleheader vs. Faulkner University | 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. | Filly Field

Stallion Baseball vs. Point University | 5 p.m. | Stallion Field

Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo | 7 p.m. | Rodeo Arena
Alumni After-Party | 9:30 p.m. | Alumni House Patio

Saturday, April 11
Remembrance Service | 10:30 a.m. | Chapel

Alumni Cookout | 11:30 a.m. | Lakeside Lawn | \$15

Filly Softball doubleheader vs. Point University | 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. | Filly Field

Stallion Baseball doubleheader vs. Point University | 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. | Stallion Field

Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo | 7 p.m. | Rodeo Arena

For more information and to register for events, visit abac.edu/homecoming.

Gates for the rodeo open each night at 6 p.m. with events beginning at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults ages 18 and older. Tickets for ages 6-17 are \$10 each, and 5 and younger are free. A VIP access add-on is \$10. Tickets are valid



Special Photo: ABAC

ABAC’s Gee Haw Whoa Back Rodeo is one of many events during the college’s homecoming 2026 celebration.

for one night only. Tickets will be sent electronically on April 9 to the email provided at purchase.

Hillery Culpepper of ABAC’s Office of College Advancement said that this year a limited number of VIP seating tickets will be sold.

“Secure those tickets fast, as VIP seating is limited,” Culpepper said.

All current ABAC Alumni Association members will receive free admission to

Saturday night’s rodeo by presenting their digital membership card at the gate.

ABAC’s Golden Girls will perform before Friday night’s rodeo and during intermission Homecoming Royalty will be crowned and the coveted Stallion Cup will be awarded. Each night, children are invited to participate in the boot scramble during intermission.

Albany State sweeps Clark Atlanta

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — By Saturday afternoon at Albany State West, this much was clear: the Golden Rams aren't just winning — they're tightening the screws.

Pitching. Defense. Timely hitting. And, perhaps most telling, a lineup adjustment that's already paying dividends.

Albany State completed a three-game sweep of SIAC rival Clark Atlanta with a 5-2 win in the finale, capping a weekend that showcased a team beginning to look complete.

"We got great starting pitching out of Reddell and Sam Crew, and then Chase Ledger was lights out in the pen," Albany State head coach Scot Hemmings said. "We had some timely hitting, and the move to put Luke Addison at leadoff led to some big RBIs.

I thought we cleaned up the defense and free passes, which usually results in wins."

That formula showed up in all three games — and especially when it mattered most.

A lineup tweak that changed everything

Senior third baseman Luke Addison, a Terrell Academy product, slid into the leadoff spot this weekend — and immediately set the tone.

In Game 2, Addison delivered a two-RBI single to jumpstart the offense. In the finale, he did it again, driving in two runs as part of a three-run second inning that flipped an early deficit into control.

Across the series, Addison wasn't just getting on base — he was driving runs in, igniting rallies from the top of the order.

That's not typical leadoff production. But then again,



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Chase Ledger, a redshirt sophomore from Southland Academy, pitched "lights out," according to head coach Scot Hemmings, on Saturday. Ledger entered the game in the fifth inning and pitched three and one-third innings to earn a save.

this isn't a typical lineup right now.

The inning that broke it open

Game 2 turned in the fifth inning — and it came with a thunderous, back-to-back message.

First, sophomore Isaiah Haygood, a Valdosta product, crushed a solo home run to get things started.

Then came the move.

With two outs, Hemmings went to his bench and called on junior transfer Aiden Payne, a former Georgia College outfielder. Payne didn't waste the opportunity — launching a three-run homer to nearly the exact same spot in right field.

Two swings. Four runs. Game changed.

Albany State scored 14 runs in that contest, piling up 11 hits and nine walks while blowing the game open late

with a five-run eighth inning.

Haygood finished with four hits and three RBIs, while Payne's pinch-hit blast was the decisive moment.

Pitching that travels — and wins

If the offense delivered the highlights, the pitching provided the backbone.

Jeremiah Reddell gave Albany State a steady start in Game 2, allowing just two runs in 4.2 innings before turning it over to the bullpen.

From there, Chase Ledger took over — and slammed the door.

Ledger worked 3.1 innings to earn the save, striking out three and stabilizing the middle innings when Clark Atlanta threatened.

In the finale, Sam Crew was just as sharp.

The right-hander went the

See **ALBANY STATE**, 10A



Special Photo: Braves.com

Atlanta pitcher Spencer Strider is expected to be back with the team soon, according to Braves' president of baseball operations Alex Anthopoulos.

Braves expect Strider back 'sooner rather than later'

By Mark Bowman
By Mark Bowman

Two years ago, Braves catcher Sean Murphy suffered a Grade 1 left oblique strain on Opening Day and ended up missing nearly two months. The club doesn't expect to be without starter Spencer Strider for nearly as long this season.

Strider was placed on the 15-day injured list with a Grade 1 left oblique strain prior to Opening Day, but in an appearance on MLB Network Radio on Sunday, president of baseball operations Alex Anthopoulos indicated that the right-hander's injury wasn't as bad as the one Murphy had in 2024.

According to Anthopoulos, Murphy said it took him four weeks just to get to the point where he could sneeze or cough without feeling something in his side.

"Strider didn't have any of those symptoms at all," Anthopoulos said. "It was mild, and I think it will be sooner rather than later that you see him back."

Injury issues are nothing new for Strider. The righty missed most of 2024 while recovering from surgery to repair a torn UCL in his right

elbow, then suffered a right hamstring strain after his first start back last season that cost him more than a month on the IL. He also dealt with a left oblique strain in 2022 and missed about a month, sustaining the injury on Sept. 18 before returning to start Game 3 of the NLDS against the Phillies on Oct. 14.

This particular IL stint was made retroactive to March 22, so Strider is eligible to return as early as April 6.

The Braves' staff could certainly use his help. With Spencer Schwellenbach, Hurston Waldrep, AJ Smith-Shawver and Joey Wentz joining Strider on the injured list, Atlanta is working with precious little rotation depth behind Chris Sale, Reynaldo López and Grant Holmes, each of whom spent significant time on the IL last year.

That said, it's unclear which version of Strider the Braves will be getting after he finished 2025 with a 4.45 ERA and 9.4 strikeouts per nine innings over 23 starts, a far cry from the 3.36 ERA and 13.7 K/9 he recorded across 2022-23.

Knights sweep Eagles, win 8th straight

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — In a rivalry that rarely lacks intensity, Deerfield-Windsor left little doubt this week who holds the upper hand.

The Knights controlled all three games against Terrell Academy — including a 5-0 and 6-4 sweep Thursday in Albany after Tuesday's win in Dawson — to push their record to 8-1 and extend their winning streak to eight games.

More than just wins, the series revealed a team settling into a clear identity.

"Once again our pitching stood out," Deerfield-Windsor head coach Kyle Keen said. "David Hutchins dominated game one — complete game shutout and only threw 77 pitches."

Hutchins was in command from the start in Thursday's opener, allowing just two

hits while efficiently working through seven innings. The Eagles never found a rhythm at the plate as Hutchins controlled the tempo throughout.

Deerfield-Windsor gave him early support.

Grier Morey's two-run double in the first inning set the tone, and the Knights added another run in the second on a wild pitch to build a quick 3-0 lead. Patient at the plate and aggressive on the bases, Deerfield-Windsor drew nine walks and stole six bases, constantly applying pressure.

Gabe Daniel collected two hits from the leadoff spot, while Collins Clark drove in two runs. Terrell Academy managed just two hits, one each from Hunter Green and Brody Cowart.

If the opener showcased dominance, the nightcap showed resilience.

Terrell Academy briefly seized control, taking a 2-1 lead in the second inning on



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Deerfield-Windsor senior David Hutchins threw a complete game shutout Thursday afternoon, needing only 77 pitches to help the Knights beat Terrell Academy 5-0 in Albany.

a Deerfield error and an RBI single from Brooks Strickland. The Eagles regained the lead again in the fourth when Bo Holland drew a bases-loaded walk to make it 3-2.

But Deerfield-Windsor answered with the game's decisive swing.

Drake Wiggins delivered a bases-clearing double in the bottom of the fourth, turning a one-run deficit into a

See **KNIGHTS**, 10A

Hawks maintain No. 6 seed with win over Kings

Field Level Media

Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 27 points, Jalen Johnson added 26 points and 10 assists and the Atlanta Hawks held off the visiting Sacramento Kings for a 123-113 victory on Saturday.

CJ McCollum scored 22 points, while Jock Landale finished with 19 points and 13 rebounds for the Hawks (42-33), who won their 15th game in 17 tries. Zacharie Risacher tallied 13 points and Mohamed Gueye chipped in 10 for Atlanta, which holds a half-game lead over Philadelphia for the East's No. 6 seed — the last

guaranteed playoff spot.

DeMar DeRozan led Sacramento (19-56) with 22 points, followed by Maxime Raynaud's 18 points and 10 boards. Precious Achiuwa had 16, DaQuan Jeffries scored 15 and Daeqwon Plowden had 14 for the Kings, who dropped their third straight. Malik Monk and Killian Hayes both scored 10 points.

Atlanta pushed its 12-point halftime lead to 16 on Gueye's 3-pointer with 8:08 left in the third.

The Kings pulled within nine on DeRozan's layup, before Atlanta extended the lead back to 13.



Special Photo: Kameron Taylor

Atlanta's Nickeil Alexander-Walker, right, scored 27 points Saturday night as the Hawks beat the Kings 123-113 Saturday night to win for the 15th time since the All-Star break and maintain the No. 6 seed for the upcoming NBA playoffs.



Podiatry Appointments Now Available

Our Podiatrists, **Dr. Jimmie Felton**, **Dr. Elisa Faulk** and **Dr. Timothy Pitts**, are able to accommodate new patients and Quick Access Appointments so that you don't have to wait long to see a local Podiatrist. To schedule an appointment with our Podiatry team, please call **229-405-6959** and ask for an Appointment.

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Royals avoid sweep with strong start from Seth Lugo

Field Level Media

Seth Lugo pitched 6 1/3 scoreless innings and Bobby Witt Jr. hit safely for the third straight game to help the visiting Kansas City Royals defeat the Atlanta Braves 4-1 on Sunday and salvage a win in the three-game series.

The victory helped the Royals avoid their first sweep since June 24-26 against Tampa Bay. Lugo (1-0) allowed five hits, did not walk a batter and struck out three. Lucas Erceg pitched the ninth inning to earn his first save of the season. Witt was 1-for-3 at the plate

with a walk, a run and an RBI, his first of the season. He hit .364 for the series, going 4-for-11. He turned a double play in the ninth inning to end the game. The losing pitcher was Grant Holmes (0-1), who pitched five innings and allowed three runs on five hits, two walks and four strikeouts. Rookie Didier Fuentes worked the final four

innings and allowed one run on two hits with one walk and four strikeouts. In the third inning, Kansas City's Nick Loftin appeared to have grounded into a double play, but the play was challenged and reversed, allowing Loftin to remain on first base. He took third on a throwing error by Jorge Mateo and scored on a single by Witt. The

Royals had been 0-for-10 with runners in scoring position in the series. Kansas City added a solo homer from Carter Jensen in the fourth. It was Jensen's first homer and settled in the first row of the seats in right field. The Royals upped the lead to 3-0 with a run in the fifth. Vinnie Pasquantino singled home Nick Loftin, who opened the

inning with a double. Kansas City added an insurance run in the eighth inning. Witt led off with a walk and came around to score on Jensen's sacrifice fly. The Braves spoiled the shutout in the eighth inning as Drake Baldwin, who homered on opening night, drilled a solo shot off reliever John Schrei.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Albany State head coach Scot Hemmings gives Aiden Payne a high five as he rounds third base after Payne belted a pinch-hit three-run homer in the fifth inning of Saturday's first game against Clark Atlanta. Heading into the bottom of the fifth, Albany State was ahead 4-2 but after a big fifth inning, the Rams went on to win that game 14-5.

From 9A

ALBANY STATE

distance, allowing only two runs (one earned) over seven innings while striking out seven to secure the sweep. It was exactly the kind of outing Hemmings had been searching for — efficient, composed, and in control. **Finishing what they started**

The Golden Rams set the tone early in the series opener, scoring 12 runs behind a relentless approach at the plate, drawing 11 walks and

capitalizing on nearly every opportunity. By the end of the weekend, the numbers told the story: balanced offense, aggressive baserunning, cleaner defense — and pitching that held up under pressure. More importantly, it looked sustainable.

"I am glad to sweep," Hemmings said, "but we have a really tough two weeks ahead on the road, and that will determine a lot." That's the next test. The Golden Rams will host Middle Georgia State at home Tuesday before a weekend trip to Atlanta to face Morehouse. Game time Tuesday in Albany is 4 p.m.

From 9A

KNIGHTS

5-3 advantage the Knights would not relinquish. "Gage Tomlinson came out strong in game two but took a comebacker off his foot, so he had to throw with some discomfort," Keen said. "He was still able to give us five strong innings, and then Morey Grier came in the last two innings to get the save." Tomlinson earned the win, allowing just one earned run over five innings, while Grier closed the door late. Deerfield-Windsor finished with 10 hits in the finale. Collins Clark led the way with three hits, Wiggins drove in three runs, and Hutchins added two hits. Daniel continued to create problems on the bases with two steals. "Our offense was better than Tuesday, but it's still not where we want it to be," Keen said. "We are getting runners on base and failing to get them in."

From 9A

HAWKS

Sacramento closed the third on a 7-1 run — including Hayes' buzzer-beating triple — to cut its deficit to 88-82 entering the fourth. The Kings tied the game at 97 apiece on Plowden's 3-pointer with 8:03 left. Johnson's five straight points began an 11-0 run that gave the Hawks a 108-97 edge with 5:47 remaining. The margin was pushed to 14 on Landale's triple. After DeRozan and Plowden's 3-pointers, McCollum's trey sealed the Atlanta win.

Neither team took a lead larger than five in the first quarter, as Jeffries' 3-pointer with 46 seconds left gave the Kings a 30-27 lead after 12 minutes. Sacramento opened up a seven-point lead on Plowden's dunk at the 9:05 mark of the second quarter. After Monk's hook shot put the Kings ahead by 2, Alexander-Walker's triple and Gueye's dunk stamped a 14-0 run to put the Hawks up 63-51. McCollum beat the first-half buzzer with a mid-range jumper to give Atlanta a 66-54 lead. Alexander-Walker had 14 first-half points, while Achiuwa's 12 led the Kings.

Rodney Mayes named men's basketball coach

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Albany State has its next leader for men's basketball, and the Golden Rams are turning to a coach with a blend of collegiate experience and professional pedigree. Rodney Mayes has been named Albany State's head men's basketball coach and will officially begin his role April 6, the university announced. Mayes arrives in Albany with more than a decade of coaching experience at the collegiate level, most recently serving as head coach at Lyon College, where he guided the program through its transition from NAIA to NCAA Division III while maintaining on-court success. Albany State President Dr. Robert Scott said the hire comes at a key time for the university's athletics program. "We are excited to welcome Coach Mayes to Albany State University," Scott said. "He brings a strong foundation of experience, leadership and a clear commitment to the de-



Special graphic

Albany State University names Rodney Mayes its new men's basketball coach.

velopment of student-athletes. This is an important time for our athletics program, and we look forward to the impact he will have on our campus community and beyond." Before taking over at Lyon, Mayes built his résumé with assistant coaching stops at the University of West Georgia and Point University. At West Georgia, he was part

of a program that posted an 86-61 record, made multiple NCAA Tournament appearances and competed for conference championships. At Point, he helped guide the Skyhawks to an Appalachian Athletic Conference title and a national top-25 ranking. Albany State athletic director Dr. Kristene Kelly said Mayes distinguished himself through-

Moving the Chains: A Gator's Holy Grail

By Scott Ludwig

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The first time Cindy and I walked through Spurrier's Gridiron Grille in Gainesville, Florida, we spent a considerable amount of time looking at the photographs, artwork, exhibits, and memorabilia that fill out the museum component of the establishment. For two longtime Florida Gators, it was a walk down Memory Lane — stirring up old yet familiar memories we share of the university's football team over the past 60 years. Following the same route with Freddie Wehbe, however, shed an entirely different light on things — some of which I am about to share with you now. (Some, however, are for Gators only. Sorry.) First, the photographs and artwork: An oil painting from Brian Meade with Steve Spurrier at the center wearing his traditional visor surrounded by the coaches he inspired to wear one as well: Kirby Smart, Bob Stoops, Lane Kiffin, Mike Gundy, Gus Malzahn, Lincoln Riley, and Chip Kelly. Caricatures drawn by former Gator football player James Bates (who played on Spurrier's 1996 National Championship team; Bates was the captain of the defensive unit) of all the University of Florida coaches who have won National Championships in any sport.

A drawing titled 'The Kick' by artist Rick Reeves featuring Steve Spurrier's game-winning field goal (he kicked as well as played quarterback for the Gators) against Auburn at Florida Field on October 29, 1966. It's been known as the kick that nailed down the Heisman. An endless array of photographs of Steve Spurrier, ranging from his high school days in Johnson City, Tennessee, to the opening of his restaurant in Gainesville, covering a span of more than six decades. Next, the exhibits and memorabilia: The two restrooms upstairs are adorned with wallpaper featuring Spurrier's 24 favorite plays, all in his handwriting and reproduced directly from the napkins on which they were originally written. (Freddie pointed out that there is more of them to see in the women's restroom, as they have an extra stall. And yes, I saw them all. Remember, this was a private tour.) The outfit his wife, the former Jerri Starr, wore to the 1966 Florida-Auburn game. At the time they had been married all of 46 days.

Sporting equipment and game balls Spurrier used in high school. Freddie mentioned that he was a better baseball player than football player in high school — and a better basketball player than baseball player. In other words, of the three sports he played as a teenager, football was his weakest. A large mosaic of the Head Ball Coach is the first thing to catch your eye when you enter the restaurant. It occupies the entire wall behind the front desk, is composed of 12,144 different tiles — and is absolutely spectacular. There are collections of memorabilia everywhere you look. Helmets. Visors. Shirts. Rings. Watches. Trophies. Game balls. Award certificates. Heisman trophies. Davey O'Brien awards. Maxwell awards. The trophy for the 1996 National Championship. It's enough to make any Gator proud. A letter from Spurrier to his team in June of 1996 informing them they needed to improve their conditioning (inspired by a 62 — 24 loss to Nebraska in the National Championship game the year before) and that they had 'a chance to be the best team ever at Florida.' The team went on to win Florida's first National Championship, winning the title with a 52 — 20 win over rival Florida State. And last but not least, an orange-and-blue-alligator-adorned leather boot worn on the sidelines by Ray Graves, Spurrier's head coach during his playing days.

Wehbe provided plenty of stories, photographs, and videos that aren't available to the general public as well. I'll end with a glimpse 'behind the curtains.' Remember Kirby Smart and Mario Cristobal exchanging verbal albeit playful blows in February? The Georgia coach teased the Miami coach about aggressive recruiting, excessive NIL spending, and stealing players. In retaliation, the Miami coach talked about his team's recent success and how much a player could accomplish with good coaching.* * Carson Beck played for Georgia in 2024 before transferring to Miami. In 2025, Beck led the Hurricanes to the National Championship game (a loss to Indiana). Smart coached Beck at Georgia; Cristobal coached him at Miami. This all took place at the annual FWAA Steve Spurrier Awards ceremony held at Spurrier's Gridiron Grille. Trust me: reading about it is one thing; seeing it as it occurred in real time is another.



Submitted photo

I'd like to share more, but as I said before, some things are for Gators only. Wehbe also has video of Doug Dickey, the former Tennessee and Florida head coach, who was in attendance for the awards. Wehbe said that Dickey was responsible for giving both Steve Spurrier (when Dickey coached the Gators) and Phil Fulmer (when Dickey was Tennessee's athletic director) their first coaching jobs. It was impressive how good Doug Dickey still looks for a man 93-years-young. (Yes, I meant to say young.)

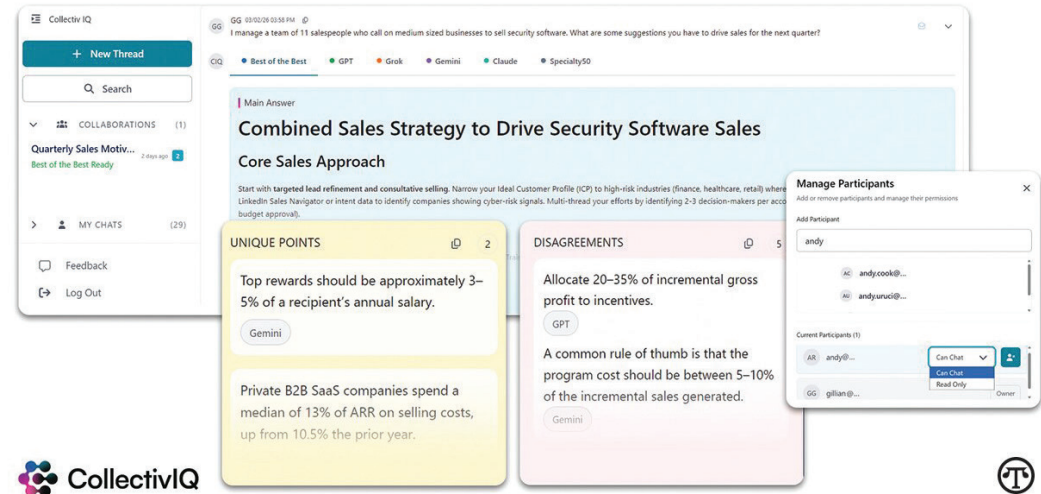
I would be remiss if I didn't mention my personal favorite: the game ball from the 1995 Florida-Georgia game. It's my favorite because of what's written on the football: **GAME BALL STEVE SPURRIER FLA. 52 GA. 17**

MOST POINTS SCORED BETWEEN THE HEDGES OCT. 28, 1995

It came with a story, of course. The Gators were leading in the game, 45 — 17, when one of the players on the sideline approached Spurrier and said 'you know, coach, no one has ever scored 50 points against Georgia in Athens.' On that note, the second-string Gator quarterback added another 7 points on the scoreboard with an 8-yard touchdown pass as time expired. (Worth noting: Kirby Smart played for the Bulldogs that season.) Which is the perfect segue for me to end with one of Steve Spurrier's most famous quotes: 'It's not my job to stop my team from scoring. It's your job. If you don't want to be scored on, do something to stop it

TECHNOLOGY IN OUR LIVES

The hidden problem with AI answers, and how to get responses you can trust



In a world where information is abundant, but certainty can feel scarce, having a consolidated AI “brain” working on your behalf may be the smartest way forward.

(NAPSI)—Artificial intelligence has rapidly become a core part of daily life, with some reports finding that 55% of people are using it instead of search engines. From drafting emails and planning vacations to answering medical and financial queries, millions now turn to AI for fast, easy-to-understand answers.

But more and more, we find ourselves wondering, “What if the AI answers we’ve come to rely on are wrong?”

The Problem

Most AI chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Grok) generate responses using a single system developed by one engineering team. That means when you ask a question, you’re getting an answer from one model’s interpretation and bias, based on probability. Which is why these AI chatbots sometimes deliver responses with “hallucinations,” meaning they contain false or misleading information or miss important context. And unless you actively check every answer yourself, you may never know that a response is partially or fully inaccurate.

A Solution

Tackling this challenge head-on is CollectivIQ, a new AI system developed in-house at multi-billion-dollar digital procurement and technology company Buyers Edge Platform. It was born from a simple but powerful idea: instead of relying on one AI model, why not ask several and compare the results?

How it Works

When someone asks a question with CollectivIQ, it simultaneously queries leading AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Grok (and up to ten others). From there, it compares their responses, flagging where they agree and where they differ. It then synthesizes everything into a

single, clear answer. Think of it as a panel of experts debating your question before delivering a conclusion.

AI is increasingly influencing real-life and business decisions, and when you’re making important choices, confidence and trust matter. CollectivIQ takes out the guesswork by providing transparency across models. If multiple AI systems independently arrive at the same conclusion, that agreement adds reassurance. If they disagree, seeing those differences can help you think more critically before acting. This “consensus approach” also helps reduce bias, which is the idea that every AI model is trained differently and may emphasize different sources or points of view. By comparing multiple outputs at once, CollectivIQ users can see a broader range of viewpoints instead of relying on a single perspective.

A Point about Privacy

Another growing concern among users is privacy. Many people worry about how their questions and data are handled behind the scenes, and if other people using the system can see it. CollectivIQ was built with security and data control in mind, and does not allow information to be absorbed into public training systems.

As AI becomes more embedded in daily life, the question has evolved from whether to use it to how to use it wisely. If AI models are individual experts, CollectivIQ acts like a moderated roundtable discussion. Instead of accepting the first answer you hear, you get a consensus-backed response designed to improve clarity, reduce risk and strengthen decision-making.

Learn More

To learn more about how AI consensus works and how you can try it for yourself, visit www.collectiviq.ai.

Did You Know?

AI is increasingly influencing real-life and business decisions, and when you’re making important choices, confidence and trust matter. CollectivIQ takes out the guesswork by providing transparency across models. Learn more at www.collectiviq.ai.

Obituary announcement



Mr. David Taylor

William David Taylor, age 80 passed away peacefully on March 22 of Pneumonia complications at Harborview Tifton Skilled Nursing Facility in the wonderful care of their Hospice team after bravely battling cancer for many years. David was born in Albany, GA to Charles “CW” and Alice Taylor on March 12, 1946. He earned a Business degree from University of Georgia and was proudly enlisted in the United States Air Force as a Navigation and Bombing Trainer Specialist before working for over 25 years for Dekalb county making a successful career as a tax appraiser assisting small businesses. He set roots in Decatur GA, building a family and life there for 30 years that he was extremely proud of. He was active in many youth sporting events, school concerts, marching band performances, essentially every single thing he could do to support his son Daniel.

He made countless friends through his work and his many hobbies including horseback riding, fishing, golf, fantasy baseball, target shooting, and became a master of caning furniture; and of course cheering for his beloved Georgia Bulldogs and the Atlanta Braves. David’s sense of humor, story telling and quick wit, along with his endless endeavor to help all those around him will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

He is survived by his loving wife of 55 years Daniela M. Taylor, his son Daniel W. Taylor (Victoria Meliopoulos), Sister Linda Windham, and brother Mike Taylor (Don Brown) and his true love, his horse Tico.

A memorial will be held at Kimbrell-Stern Funeral Home in Albany, GA, officiated by Rev. Ronnie Kinsaul with prayers by Rev. Caroline Leach on April 3rd. Services will be at 1PM with visitation starting at Noon.

In Leu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to either the Albany Humane Society (<https://albanyhumane.org/donate>) or Tunnel to Towers (<https://t2t.org>)

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.
3 John 1:2 - NKJV

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7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES

- 1 errors (8)
- 2 circus entertainers (6)
- 3 single-minded (10)
- 4 wishing for a different end (9)
- 5 turning on an axis (8)
- 6 like a kid’s party house (6)
- 7 teardrop-shaped squash (7)

SOLUTIONS

STA	MI	CLO	MI	DE
WNS	NED	ING	NCY	FUL
BB	HU	KES	REG	ROT
ARD	AT	BOU	RET	TER

Saturday’s Answers: 1. TAMES 2. THROWBACK 3. RACERS 4. YELLOWTAIL 5. BRUCE 6. SHEA 7. CELERITY 3/30

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES

- 1 walkie talkie response (4)
- 2 Twist or Stone (6)
- 3 Mauna Loa’s threat (8)
- 4 spare tire holder (5)
- 5 Green Giant’s specialty (7)
- 6 razor-sharp (6)
- 7 only bivalve that swims (7)

SOLUTIONS

TU	ER	OV	TI	OL
IV	ES	ER	TR	GGI
UP	TE	UNK	ER	ALL
SC	OP	AS	VE	ON

Monday’s Answers: 1. MISTAKES 2. CLOWNS 3. DETERMINED 4. REGRETFUL 5. ROTATING 6. BOUNCY 7. HUBBARD 3/31

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

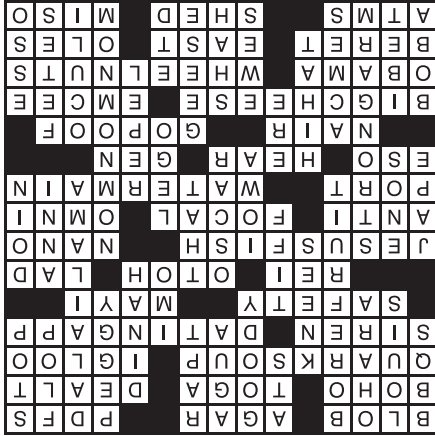
- 1 Formless mass
- 5 Vegan-friendly gelatin alternative
- 9 Many emailed docs
- 13 Relaxed aesthetic
- 14 Roman forum robe
- 15 Coped (with)
- 16 Hot mixture of elementary particles
- 18 Maker of Playmate coolers
- 19 Ambulance wailer
- 20 Match or Tinder
- 22 Two-point football play
- 24 “Allow me”
- 25 Outdoor gear giant
- 26 Texter’s hedge
- 28 Wee boy
- 31 Colloquial name of the Christian symbol the ichthus
- 35 Tiny, in tech
- 36 Not in favor of
- 37 ___ point: center of attention
- 39 Luxury hotel chain
- 40 Dockworker’s workplace
- 41 Large utility pipe
- 43 27-Down, in Spanish
- 44 Catch words?
- 46 Age group, for short
- 47 Hair removal brand
- 49 Vanish into thin air
- 52 Head honcho
- 56 One making introductions, say
- 58 Former U.S. president Barack
- 59 Fasteners in a tyre change
- 61 Artist’s flat cap
- 62 Sunrise direction
- 63 World Cup cheers
- 64 Check-in places?
- 65 Outdoor storage structure
- 66 Soybean paste

- 2 Western writer L’Amour
- 3 Catherine of “Home Alone”
- 4 Yielded results
- 5 @ signs
- 6 Treat
- 7 ___ fresca: Mexican beverage
- 8 Completely engrossed
- 9 Elisabeth Moss’s “Mad Men” role
- 10 Tibetan spiritual leader
- 11 Failed film
- 12 “That’s enough of that”
- 15 “Queen of the Blues” Washington
- 17 Joints worked in lunges
- 21 “If u ask me ...”
- 23 Petty disagreement
- 26 ___ the Grouch
- 27 Yonder thing
- 29 Latin years
- 30 “How you ___?”: Joey’s “Friends” catchphrase
- 31 Funny prank
- 32 Eve’s grandson

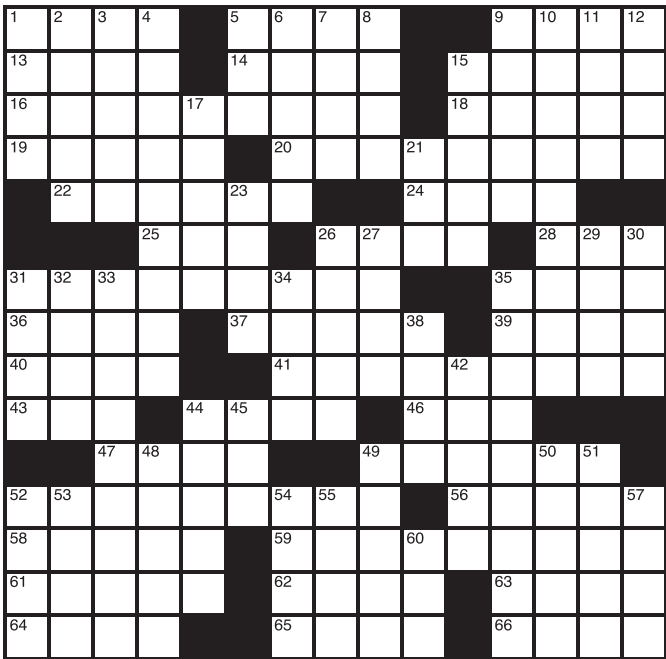
- 33 Boss around
- 34 State with more pigs than people
- 35 Cutesy “Delicious!”
- 38 Toymaker that introduced Smart Bricks in 2026
- 42 Drive away
- 44 Cymbals played by foot
- 45 Before, in old odes
- 48 Topmost points

- 49 Honking birds
- 50 Circular windows
- 51 Lavish celebrations
- 52 Treat consumed with a wide straw
- 53 “Yeah, right”
- 54 Baaing mamas
- 55 Persian for “king”
- 57 Gas brand in Canada
- 60 Flight takeoff hr.

ANSWER TO TODAY’S PUZZLE:



03/31/26



DOWN
1 Grillin’ and chillin’ events

By Rebecca Goldstein
©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

03/31/26

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

“ ONE GKB’W DXW WCXMX JO JER,
NBYO JO CKMP SNMZ KBP MVRZ
KBP JO BNW LEVWX ZBNSVBD SCKW
ONE’MX PNVBD.” — KYKB KYPK

Previous Solution: “A healthy family life requires frequent use of three phrases: ‘May I?, Thank you, and I’m sorry.’” — Pope Francis

TODAY’S CLUE: O sjenba 7

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CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

“ XEXMI DNEXA JXSBDT ZBRL RLX
TUXHGACRBEX VGXTRBND, ‘ZLCR BY
‘O’ LCUUXDXP?’ RLCR’T LNZ ING
TRCMR.” — RNW HACDHI

Previous Solution: “You can’t get there by bus, only by hard work and risk and by not quite knowing what you’re doing.” — Alan Alda

TODAY’S CLUE: O sjenba S

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Dougherty schools approve \$2,000 retention bonuses for staff

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — The Dougherty County Board of Education unanimously approved one-time employee retention supplements of up to \$2,000 during its mid-month meeting Thursday, continuing a program district leaders say proved successful in boosting morale and retention when first implemented last year.

Superintendent Kenneth Dyer recommended the supplements, pointing to both statewide action and strong local feedback from the district’s initial rollout in 2025.

“In the past, when this has happened, the supplement has been for full-time employees, but we want to extend it to more employees to en-

sure they all feel appreciated,” Dyer told board members. “Extending it to all our eligible full- and part-time public school employees, including teachers, custodians, staff, school district employees and bus drivers providing they meet certain criteria is right. We all work together to make good things happen for the students we’ve been called to serve.”

The move aligns with action at the state level, where Gov. Brian Kemp and the Georgia General Assembly approved a \$2,000 pay supplement for state employees and select public school staff as part of the amended Fiscal Year 2026 budget signed into law earlier this month.

District officials said the local plan ensures employees not included in



File Photo

The Dougherty County School System has voted to give employees bonuses up to \$2,000.

the state-funded supplement also will receive bonuses, maintaining consistency across the work force. “We’re not only talking about

full-time employees — we’re also including our part-time employees and substitutes,” Dyer said. “What we recommend is that we extend that to a larger number of our employees again, as we have in the past.”

Under the approved plan, full-time employees are eligible for up to \$2,000, while part-time and substitute employees will receive prorated amounts based on days worked.

The total cost of the program is estimated at approximately \$4.524 million, with funding coming from about \$2.925 million from the Georgia Department of Education, \$1.502 million from district general funds and \$97,000 from Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early

Care and Learning.

Board approval authorizes the superintendent and district staff to finalize procedures for distributing the payments. Dyer said the district is prepared to move quickly.

“If the board approves this, we can have it processed quickly so our employees receive it in a timely manner,” he said.

District officials indicated payments are expected to be issued to eligible employees before or during spring break.

Leaders said the supplements remain part of a broader effort to retain educators and support staff in a competitive labor market, particularly in regions continuing to face work force shortages.



Special Photos: Phoebe

The procedure and recovery areas at the Phoebe Digestive Health Center provide space for necessary colonoscopies.

Phoebe, Horizons, AAPHC celebrate partnership during Colon Cancer Awareness Month

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — A partnership to help uninsured and underinsured southwest Georgians get access to cancer screenings and cancer care has become a national model for how hospitals, community health centers and nonprofit organizations can work together to increase screenings and save lives.

In recognition of Colon Cancer Awareness Month, Phoebe Putney Health Systems, Horizons — South Georgia’s Cancer Coalition, and Albany Area Primary Health Care are highlighting their 18-year partnership that has expanded access to life-saving colorectal cancer screening and prevention services across southwest Georgia.

“One of the greatest challenges for community health centers like AAPHC is to overcome access barriers to hospital and specialty care for poor and uninsured patients,” Dr. James Hotz, who helped found AAPHC in 1978, said. “With the help of Phoebe, AAPHC achieves cancer screening rates that are consistently 20% above those reported by the other community health centers in Georgia. This partnership has been shown in research publications to be a

model for the effectiveness of navigation to overcome barriers to cancer care.”

Since the formal launch of the partnership in 2008, the three organizations have worked together to ensure that patients, both insured and uninsured, receive timely colorectal cancer screening and navigation services. AAPHC identifies patients through the complete care process and Phoebe provides screenings and any necessary follow-up care.

“This partnership is a powerful example of what can be accomplished when health systems, primary care providers and community organizations align around prevention,” Dr. Troy Kimsey, a surgical oncologist and the medical director of oncology at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, said. “Colon cancer is highly preventable and very treatable when detected early. Together with Horizons and AAPHC, we are removing barriers and saving lives.”

Over the last five calendar years alone, Phoebe provided colonoscopies for 2,583 patients, discovered polyps in 1,726 patients and diagnosed 14 cases of cancer through this program. Most of the patients

sent to Phoebe have some level of insurance, though uninsured patients receive free or reduced-cost colonoscopies, ensuring that lack of insurance does not prevent access to preventive care.

“These results show that our work is not limited to one patient population,” incoming Horizons CEO Jennifer Johnston said. “We are meeting people where they are and helping them access appropriate screening, regardless of insurance status.”

Beyond screening, the collaborative program’s impact is seen in the number of patients who had polyps removed during colonoscopies, stopping cancer before it could develop. In other cases, colorectal cancers were identified, allowing patients to begin treatment earlier, when outcomes are often significantly improved.

“Every polyp removed is a potential cancer prevented, and every cancer caught early represents a better chance at successful treatment,” Kimsey said. “That is why screening matters so much.”

The roots of the collaboration date back even further. Horizons launched a pilot program in 2005 with an AAPHC clinic in Baker County where reduced-cost colonoscopies were provided at Phoebe us-

ing grant funding. As the pilot program showed success, Phoebe partnered with Horizons and AAPHC to provide colonoscopies for uninsured and underinsured individuals, laying out the foundation for the region-wide program that continues today.

Now, nearly two decades later, the partnership remains committed to reducing colorectal cancer disparities across southwest Georgia.

Colon cancer is one of the most preventable cancers, yet it remains a leading cause of cancer-related death. The partners encourage adults, especially those age 45 and older and those with a family history of colorectal cancer, to talk with their health care provider about screening options.

“Awareness saves lives,” Kimsey said. “During Colon Cancer Awareness Month, we want people to know that screening works, support is available, and no one has to navigate this journey alone.”

Together, Phoebe, Horizons and AAPHC are proving that long-standing collaboration, access to care and early detection can change outcomes and save lives, and they are committed to continuing the partnership to serve patients throughout southwest Georgia.

ADICA

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Downtown Albany welcomes Albany’s Best Running to Front Street Market

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Albany’s Downtown Manager’s Office has announced that Don Borowski, owner of Albany’s Best Running, will bring his specialty athletic retail business to downtown Albany. The store will be located at 108 Pine Ave. in the Front Street Market, with an anticipated opening in summer 2026.

Borowski, a successful entrepreneur with established locations in Statesboro, Tifton and Valdosta, is expanding his presence in south Georgia. Albany’s Best Running will offer high-quality running and athletic footwear from leading brands such as Brooks and HOKA, providing a personalized retail experience for runners, walkers and fitness enthusiasts.

The Albany Dougherty Inner City Authority Board unanimously approved the lease agreement during a recent meeting, demonstrating continued confidence in the growth of downtown Albany.

This is another exciting step forward for downtown Albany,” Downtown Manager and ADICA and DDA Executive Director Lequira Gaskins said. “Albany’s Best Running strengthens our retail base while supporting health, wellness, and community engagement. We are proud to welcome this business to downtown.”

This announcement reflects ongoing downtown

development efforts led by the Albany Dougherty Inner City Authority and the Downtown Development Authority. Other current and active downtown projects include:

- 56 residential units at the Davis Exchange Building to expand downtown living opportunities;
- Development at 115 and 121 Front Street, including the 4C on Front project, which will house the Georgia Grown Resource Center;
- The Harlem Renaissance Legacy Wellness Center;
- Planned enhancements to the Ritz Theatre and Cultural Center;
- Development of the St. Nicholas Hotel;
- Continued streetscape improvements to enhance connectivity, accessibility, and the overall downtown experience;
- Groundbreaking for the Albany Museum of Art (coming soon);
- Development of four downtown storefronts, including the Sliver’s Building and the Churchwell Building located on Washington Street, which will include an Amici restaurant

These initiatives highlight a continued focus on revitalization, support for small businesses, and creating a destination where people can live, work, and thrive. The Downtown Manager’s Office encourages the community to support Albany’s Best Running and stay tuned for grand opening details later this summer.



File Photo

Albany Police Department officers responded to the 1500 block of Georgia Avenue last week in reference to a shooting.

Victim in critical condition after Georgia Avenue shooting

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY— Albany Police Department officers responded to the 1500 block of Georgia Avenue last week in reference to a shooting.

A 25-year-old male is listed in critical condition at Phoebe Putney Memorial

Hospital after being taken to the facility for his injuries.

Police are asking anyone who has information regarding this incident to contact APD at

(229) 431-2100. Citizens may also submit a tip through the APD Mobile App, or through Crime Stoppers at (229) 436-TIPS.

Georgia Senate puts stamp on 2026-27 budget

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — The Georgia Senate has approved its version of the \$38.5 billion Fiscal Year 2027 budget, sending it to the state House for negotiations over the disagreements.

The House started the budget process, passing its version earlier this month.

Among the big differences: The Senate reduced the House’s increase in funding for the state’s public colleges and universities by just over \$110 million, increased the amount for private K-12 school vouchers by \$31 million and added \$100 million

to the state employee pension system.

“I think this is one of the most important lines in the budget,” Sen. Blake Tillery, R-Vidalia, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, told senators before Friday’s unanimous vote for passage. Pensions have been eroded by decades of inflation as increases have failed to keep pace, he said. The extra money is intended to trigger regular annual cost of living increases.

The Senate agreed with the importance of the House’s focus on literacy but amended the way that new program would be funded. Instead of

building money to hire 1,313 literacy coaches for K-3 classrooms into the public school funding formula, the Senate chose a \$70 million grant.

The Senate made myriad smaller changes. It cut the \$11 million the House had allocated to hire staff to confirm all food stamp enrollees are eligible.

Georgia has one of the highest “error” rates in the country, which can mean loss of federal funding. Lawmakers in both chambers want to reduce that rate, but the Senate chose to accept an offer from the company Equifax to do the work for free.

The House disagreed with

the Senate’s changes and the Senate held fast, sending the budget to a conference committee to iron out the wrinkles.

Higher education funding could be a sticking point. Tillery said he had heard complaints about the Senate cutting the University System of Georgia’s budget. But he pointed out that the system budget would still rise under the Senate’s proposal, from \$3.6 billion in state funding this year to \$3.76 billion next year. It just would not rise as much as the House proposed.

“Only in government,” he said in an interview, “can you give an agency more money next year than this year and it be a cut.”