



**Perspectives**  
Scott Ludwig  
• Page 5A

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**UGA Star**  
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TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026

## No public turnout as Dougherty schools unveil \$178.7M budget

By Kathryn Crockett  
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Dougherty County School System officials presented a proposed \$178.7 million General Fund budget for Fiscal Year 2027 last week, describing a spending plan designed to absorb rising employee benefit costs, preserve classroom services and gradually reduce the district's reliance on reserves despite declining state revenue.

No members of the public attended or offered comments during the hearing, despite the district publishing legal notices and promoting the meeting through multiple communication channels for an extended period of time ahead of the budget hearing.

The proposed FY 2027 budget projects General Fund revenues of approximately \$178.7 million, down from an estimated \$186.2 million in FY 2026, a decrease of about 4%. Expenditures are

projected at \$181.8 million, resulting in a planned use of approximately \$3.1 million from the system's fund balance.

That deficit is smaller than the approximately \$4.7 million drawdown projected in FY 2026 and continues a broader trend of declining reliance on reserves. Budget documents show the district's projected ending General Fund balance falling from approximately \$41.3 million in FY 2023 to \$40.7 million in FY 2024,

\$39.6 million in FY 2025, \$34.9 million in FY 2026 and a projected \$31.8 million in FY 2027.

District leaders characterized the approach as an effort to make measured adjustments rather than rely indefinitely on reserves to offset revenue pressures.

"We saw about a \$1.6 million decrease in QBE funding this year compared to last year, but we were able to make cost ad-

See **BUDGET**, 2A



File Photo

Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany will once again open its gates to the public for its annual Independence Day celebration.

## Dougherty Environmental Control Division on front lines of mosquito war

Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin  
Michael Fields, a technician with the Dougherty County Environmental Control Division, examines a water sample at a ditch on Lockett Station Road. The division is responsible for monitoring and controlling mosquitoes in the county, including inside the city of Albany.



By Alan Mauldin  
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Summer is a time for long days that seem to last forever, backyard cookouts and the smell of fresh-cut lawns. But along with that freedom and long days comes the not-so-pleasant, the heat and humidity.

Those hot, wet summer months also can bring unwelcome visitors like aedes and culex, genera of those biting visitors who can make for an uncomfortable and itchy experience outdoors.

And those biting mosquitoes can be more than just a pest. They also can spread diseases that can be deadly, like the West Nile and the zika viruses.

In Dougherty County, the employees in the Environmental Control Division are out every weekday during the time of the year that the flying bloodsuckers are most active. The technicians monitor the county to detect the presence of larvae and cover the county in trucks spraying to keep mosquito numbers down.

The technicians face dangers more scary than mosquito bites, however. Asked whether he ever encountered water moccasins on the job, Michael

See **MOSQUITO**, 2A

## MCLB-Albany to host America's 250th Birthday celebration

Staff Reports  
news@albanyherald.com

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE-ALBANY — Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany will celebrate America's 250th birthday with its annual Independence Day Celebration, uniting service members, families, and the local community for a day of patriotic festivities honoring this historic milestone.

This year's event pays tribute to 250 years of American independence, reflecting on the nation's enduring commitment to freedom and the generations of service members who have safeguarded it. The celebration will feature an evening of live entertainment, activities for all ages, popular local food trucks, patriotism, and a fireworks finale, offering a memorable experience for attendees of all ages.

"We are proud to celebrate America's 250th birthday with our Marines, families, and the Albany community," MCLB Albany Director Elizabeth Quinn said. "This year, we're excited to once again open our gates and welcome the public to celebrate with us. This event is a chance for our neighbors, families, and the entire Albany community to come together and share in a day of pride, gratitude and celebration."

This year's event is open to the public. All attendees ages 18 and older must present a valid REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport to enter the installation.

See **MCLB**, 2A

## Southwest Georgia artists recognized at packed opening of exhibition

By Kathryn Crockett  
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — From a meditation on memory and dementia to vivid landscapes, intimate portraits and striking photography, artists from across southwest Georgia were recognized Thursday during the opening reception for the Albany Area Arts Council's 26th annual Southwest Georgia Regional Fine Art Exhibition and Sale.

The annual juried exhibition, one

of the region's largest showcases of visual art, features approximately 46 artists and nearly 90 works spanning painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography and mixed media.

Executive Director Nicole Willis said the exhibition continues to highlight the depth of artistic talent throughout southwest Georgia while creating opportunities for artists to share their work with the public.

See **ARTISTS**, 2A



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett  
Visitors view artwork during the opening reception of the Albany Area Arts Council's 26th annual Southwest Georgia Regional Fine Art Exhibition and Sale.

### Periodical — Mail Label

#### INDEX

- Classifieds ..... 11A
- Comics..... 6A-7A
- Crosswords..... 6A-7A, 11A
- Horoscopes ..... 3A
- Local News ..... 8A
- Perspectives ..... 5A
- Sports ..... 9A-10A
- Squawkbox..... 3A
- Weather ..... 3A



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## From 1A BUDGET

adjustments and efficiencies to absorb that reduction," Superintendent Ken Dyer said. Even with the planned draw-down, Dyer said the district expects to maintain substantial reserves.

"Even after this budget, we're projected to have more than \$30 million in reserves," he said.

He described the reserve fund as a tool to manage economic uncertainty and support strategic priorities.

"That reserve is there to help smooth out operations during economic cycles and to fund one-time expenditures or initiatives that we think are critical to our mission," Dyer said.

While revenues are projected to decline, district officials said employee benefits continue to be among the largest sources of budget pressure.

"For FY 2027, the Teacher Retirement System employer rate will be 22.32%, which is up 0.41 percentage points over last year," Dyer said. "That doesn't sound like a lot, but when you're dealing with a personnel budget of more than \$100 million, it is a lot."

Dyer also pointed to rising health insurance costs.

"Our state health benefit obligation for FY 2027 is almost \$10 million. In 2019, it was below \$4.5 million," he said. "That \$10 million represents about a third of our entire local tax digest."

Despite those pressures, the proposed budget includes step increases for eligible certified and classified employees and maintains the district's \$15-per-hour minimum wage.

"We felt strongly that no Dougherty County Schools employee should live in poverty. We raised the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and are committed to maintaining that," Dyer said.

Budget documents indicate district leaders concentrated many of their reductions outside direct instructional services. Instruction remains the largest expenditure category at approximately \$100.2 million, accounting for more than half of General Fund spending. However, instructional spending is projected to decline by roughly \$4.4 million, or 4.2%, compared with FY 2026.

Some of the largest reductions appear in administrative and support functions.

General administration spend-

ing is projected to fall from approximately \$5.9 million in FY 2026 to \$4 million in FY 2027, a reduction of more than 31%. School administration expenditures are projected to decrease by approximately

tion needed to continue operations? If it's not needed, we don't fill it."

He added that employee turnover has also contributed to lower personnel costs.

"Some of the reductions are

ticeship programs, expanded pre-kindergarten access, student mental health services, workforce credential programs, career pathway development and family engagement efforts.

Another significant unknown

budget remain preliminary and could change once the revaluation process is finalized.

The updated digest could have implications for the district's long-term financial outlook. While increased property values can generate additional tax revenue, Georgia's rollback provisions generally require local governments and school systems to reduce millage rates to offset growth attributable solely to reassessments rather than new construction or economic growth.

Because the revaluation has not yet been completed, district officials have not publicly quantified whether the final digest could reduce the amount of reserves needed to balance the budget or materially alter local revenue projections for FY 2027.

Dyer said the board's goal remains controlling costs before seeking additional revenue from taxpayers.

"This board has always maintained that we don't want to raise taxes," he said. "We want to cut costs responsibly before we raise taxes on taxpayers."

The Dougherty County Board of Education is scheduled to consider final adoption of the FY 2027 budget on June 11.



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

Superintendent Kenneth Dyer presents the Dougherty County School System's proposed FY 2027 budget during a public hearing at the district administration building on June 4. No members of the public attended the hearing.

9.3%, student transportation spending by about 10.5%, and business services by roughly 7.5%.

Dyer said part of those reductions stem from the district's approach to staffing vacancies and retirements.

"Every time we have a vacant position, we don't just fill it because it's vacant," Dyer said. "We ask, 'Is that posi-

positions that were left vacant, and in some cases retirees with 30- or 34-year careers and higher salaries were replaced with employees coming in at lower salaries," Dyer said.

The budget also continues funding for strategic priorities outlined in the district's recently adopted 2026-2030 strategic plan, including literacy initiatives, teacher appren-

facing the district is Dougherty County's ongoing countywide property revaluation, which is expected to be completed in July.

Budget documents note that the school system's final millage rate will not be set until more complete tax digest information becomes available. As a result, local revenue estimates included in the proposed



## From 1A MCLB

For complete details and base access requirements, visit <https://albany.usmccs.org/about/independence-day>.

File Photo  
A fireworks display will be part of Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany's July 4th celebration.

## From 1A ARTISTS

"We have about 46 artists in the show and right at 90 pieces of art," Willis said. "Most of the artists are local, although we had entries from as far away as Valdosta. It's still very much a regional show."

The exhibition's highest honor, Best in Show, was awarded to "The Inheritance," a prisma-color work by Kymm Foreman.

**Painting & Mixed Media**  
First place in Painting & Mixed Media was awarded to Leanne Peek for "Warm

Laundry," an oil painting on stretched canvas. A freelance portrait artist and live wedding painter, Peek describes her work as deeply influenced by photography and the pursuit of realism. "I am a photographer at heart, by degree, and love to capture the light in my paintings," Peek wrote in her artist statement.

Second place went to Patrick Foster for "Flower of Civilization," while third place was awarded to Carole Hall Gum for "Autumn's Palette." **Photography & Digital Art**

Gary Dyes earned first place in Photography & Digital Art for "Lost in the View," a digital photograph printed on premium metallic photo paper.

Dyes describes photography as both artistic expression and personal reflection. "I use photography as a means of self-expression using the spontaneity of street photography and the calmness of landscape and nature," he wrote in his artist bio.

Second-place was awarded to Mary Egler for "Water Fascination of Autistic Children & Happiness of Water," and third place went to Joe Clift for "Ancient Monolith." **Sculpture & Ceramics**

In Sculpture & Ceramics, first place was awarded to Abigail Heuss for "Inherited Blooms: Peony," a work crafted from wood, silver and enamel. A metalsmith whose

recent work explores memory loss, identity and dementia, Heuss examines how personal narratives shape an individual's sense of self. "I am fascinated by jewelry and household items because they are objects of intimacy," Heuss wrote. "Making this work is an investigation of communication and recollection, the habits and hopes that remain as memory fades away."

Second place was awarded to Cloie Davis for "Reclining Shield," created from welded steel, iridescent mica pigments and mixed media on MDF. Third place went to William Behrend for "Koi

See **ARTISTS**, 11A

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## From 1A MOSQUITO

Fields, who was checking water samples on Lockett Station Road this week, responded, "All the time."

"They'll go look at water; they'll check the water in ditches, canals, holding ponds, low-lying areas," division Manager Samuel Green said. "We do all four quadrants of Dougherty County (and the city of Albany), so we run four trucks."

On Lockett Station Road, the technicians dipped samples from a large pool of standing water, peering inside to look for larvae. They eventually tossed larvicide pellets into the water.

As of late May, the technicians had made two rounds of the entire county and were in the midst of the third round since the first rains came after a prolonged drought helped keep mosquito numbers at bay.

The Environmental Control Division is also responsible for applying herbicides and mowing along roadways and trimming trees and brush on rights-of-way on county-maintained roadways.

"We started spraying in April; in mid-April we started (using) adulticide," Green said. "It usually takes about five to seven days to complete a quadrant, depending on the weather. Running four, we can get to all four quadrants to make sure we get to citizens in a timely manner. Mosquitoes can carry diseases, and they are a nuisance. They can cause heartworms in dogs."

In addition to checking the standing water, the division also collects mosquitoes in traps that are sent for testing to check for mosquito-borne diseases. The first West Nile case was confirmed in the county in 2005, and the last time it was confirmed here was in 2018, when there was a cluster of four cases.

There has never been a confirmed case of Zika in the county, Green said.

The aedes genus mosquitoes are unique among mosquitoes in being active during the daytime. They are also often referred to as "ankle biters" because they tend to feed close to the ground.

At night, the culex varieties take over, and they can carry diseases including West Nile and Eastern and Western equine viruses.

One thing people can do to avoid bites is to limit time outside to when mosquitoes are least active.

Asked about what people can do to avoid exposure to mosquitoes, Green gave the standard advice of wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants. But accepting that is not practical in the age where many people wear short sleeves and shorts because of the heat, an insect repellent containing DEET

See **MOSQUITO**, 11A

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# Daily Horoscopes

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** If you hit a roadblock, step back and strategize instead of accepting defeat or getting reactive. Even just an hour or two could make the difference. Continue to learn things that benefit your world.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Some patience could turn defeat into victory just by waiting a few hours for stars to shift. As stars shift, so do conditions, timing really does affect outcomes. Hold off on money-related decisions this week.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Some people declare goals and wonder why they get so many 'life lessons.' Seek alignment instead. When you're lined up with your destiny, every move is supported, you get the gifts, you bypass unnecessary pain.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** The best way forward for the moment could be waiting for a better moment. Moving at the wrong time doesn't just delay progress, it sets you back and drains energy. Stay on track in building your inner mastery.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** You might need more than one grain of salt if you're trying to swallow something that's clearly off-base or tone deaf. Be discerning about your inputs of all kinds — garbage in, garbage out.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** While it is a generally good period for career-building, this week doesn't support new beginnings of any kind. Keep working on projects and plans for launch on a much stronger day that lines up with great individual cycles.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Dealing with someone close could seem like a minefield for a day or so, put a pin into whatever is getting tangled, return to the situation when a test step or two meets less resistance. Share wisdom.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Getting from point A to point B could be surprisingly challenging. Patience is your ally, stars are likely to unwind quickly, don't lose your cool. A

plan to share resources could gradually come together.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** An attempt to move creatively could hit pothole after pothole for a couple of days, but you should finally break free once stars form new patterns. Focus on a new person of interest.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** You might need all your Zen-like nervous system regulation to deal with today's challenges, likely close to home. Keep breathing and let a better vibe emerge, as it should fairly quickly.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Don't speak until your mind fully clarifies, it could be another day or so, but you should know when you're really ready. Artistic or musical pursuits could be both personally expressive, and cathartic.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Don't purchase or invest anything of significance for a day or two more, your sector of money is in a muddle for now. Your home space could be welcoming and refreshing if the world's noise gets too loud.

**IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY:** Your mind could be working unusually well during your birthday month. It's a great time to think about your life with clarity; communications could also run smoothly. July brings a train of gifts to enjoy. The first gift could allow you powerful new insights about your path forward. The second protects you and brings peace. The third gift brings money, charisma, and attractiveness. Enjoy, this could be a nice change after a more challenging start to the year. Later July dips you into a more turbulent vibe but keep things mellow and moderate and this won't bite you. Beware of a 'hold my beer and watch this' temptation in August, you don't want the consequences which could potentially unfold — this particular point can make fools out of the wisest people. Expect a windfall late near month-end.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

**1856** - Five hundred Mormons leave Iowa City, Iowa carrying all their possessions in two-wheeled handcarts and head west for Salt Lake City, Utah

**1934** - The first Donald Duck cartoon, 'The Wise Little Hen' is released

**1958** - London's Gatwick Airport in Crawley, West Sussex, is officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II

**1959** - The first submarine to carry ballistic missiles, the USS George Washington is launched

**1963** - The Equal Pay Act is enacted

**1968** - A National Day of mourning is declared by U.S.

President Lyndon B. Johnson after the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy

**1979** - Michael Cairney topples a record row of 169,713 dominoes

**1983** - Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party wins the British parliamentary election

**1984** - Donald Duck's 50th birthday is celebrated at Disneyland

**1985** - American Thomas Sutherland is kidnapped and held hostage in Lebanon. He is finally released in 1991.

**2013** - Edward Snowden publicly makes his identity known as the leaker of NSA documents

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

Historians are like deaf people who go on answering questions that no one has asked them.

Leo Tolstoy,  
writer (1828-1910)

## 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

All the politicians and all the area nonprofits cry about jobs in communities like ours, but the overwhelming majority of people living off welfare checks and collecting free stuff from those nonprofits would not accept a job if one was handed to them.

Jackson is too chickens--to face Burt Jones in a debate? Sounds about right, although Jones is certainly not worthy of Georgians' votes either. And Bottoms? Give me a break. I never thought I'd see the day where Brian Kemp would be missed as governor.

I do not claim to know the pros and cons of the data center debate, but I do know one thing: As an eighth-generation Georgian, I do not like the growth that the state has seen in the past 20 years or so. I understand people need jobs, but the growth in the last 20 years has brought folks to our state. As these new people move into Georgia, our natural resources are not unlimited. We do not see it here, but everything north of Macon is hardly Georgia anymore. The Savannah area is being invaded in record numbers. Growth is not always good

Good for the city for making sure the unsightly mess off Stuart Avenue was cleaned up, and good for the Herald for reporting on the homeless encampment until it was addressed. This was indeed good news.

Trump once famously said, "We're going to win so much, you're going to be sick and tired of winning." I guess he just has a different definition of "winning" than the one in the dictionary. That Man Without a Family

What a touching and well-written article about the life of Dr. Robert Clay. Ms. Crockett is correct: The amazing growth of Lee County can be directly attributed to Dr. Clay and the Lee School System. God-speed to such a remarkable man.

Franklin Graham is part of the cult of Trump, and Graham, like his idol, is no more a Christian than Satan himself. Graham has always been about money, and he's figured hopping on the Trump gravy train is the way to get more of it.

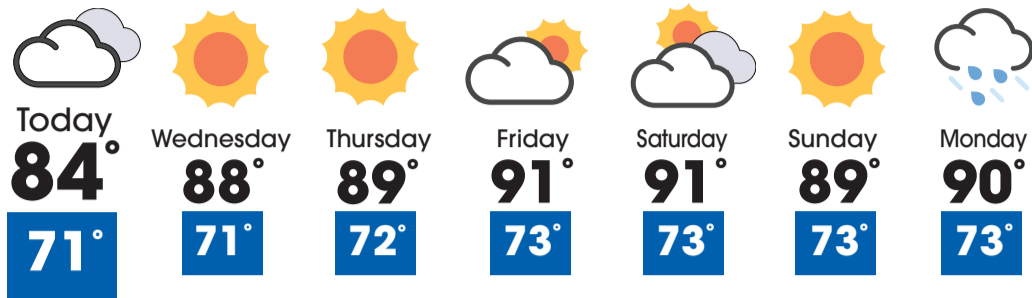
A UFC fight on the White House lawn? What's next, a tractor pull?

As he prepares to leave what is an overwhelming job for the next phase of his life, I wish Albany Police Chief Michael Persley the best that life has to offer. I -- and many people I know -- salute you, chief, for the hard work you gave to the people of this city.

If you want good companies to bring quality jobs to this area, you'd better really improve the schools and the governing bodies.

All you turncoats turning your backs on our True President when the going gets a little tough are just cowards. It's like the great man says, "You can pay a little more for gas and groceries as long as we keep bombing Iran's nuclear arsenal." There are plenty of us whose faith will never waiver.

## Weather Forecast



## Daily Bridge Club

### Difficult defense

By Frank Stewart  
Tribune Content Agency

Cy the Cynic says it takes a person of great intelligence to understand the extent of their ignorance. Today's South made

NORTH			
▲ A J			
♦ K 8 2			
♥ 7 6 5			
♠ A Q 8 4 2			
WEST		EAST	
▲ K 10 9 7 4 3		▲ Q 8 5 2	
♦ A 5		♥ Q 6	
♦ Q		♦ A J 10 9 2	
♠ J 9 6 3		♦ 10 7	
SOUTH			
♠ 6			
♥ J 10 9 7 4 3			
♦ K 8 4 3			
♠ K 5			
North	East	South	West
1 ♠	2 ♠	4 ♠	1 ♠
2 ♥			All Pass
Opening lead - ♦ Q			
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his game contract, and nobody realized, even after the deal was over, that he could have been defeated.

West led his singleton queen of diamonds, and East took the ace and returned the jack. When South put up the king, West ruffed and led a spade. South took dummy's ace, ruffed the jack and led a trump.

### LAST DIAMOND

West won and led a club, and South won with the king and led a second trump to dummy's king, drawing East's queen. South next took the A-Q of clubs, discarding a diamond, and ruffed a club. He got back to dummy with a trump to pitch his last diamond on the good fifth club. Making four.



Frank Stewart

"Nothing we could do," East and West shrugged.

Maybe East-West should have gone to four spades; the defense to beat four hearts was elusive. West must ruff the second diamond with the ace of trumps. Then East will get in with the queen in time to cash a diamond.

### DAILY QUESTION

**You hold:** S A J H K 8 2 D 7 6 5 C A Q 8 4 2. You open one club, your partner responds one spade, you bid 1NT and he tries two hearts. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Your partner has at most 10 high-card points, and since he did not respond one heart (with four hearts and four spades, he would bid his suits "up the line"), he probably has five spades and four hearts. Bid two spades. He will usually do better at a 5-2 fit than at a 4-3. North dealer Both sides vulnerable

## Advice Columnist

### After helping with car trouble, neighbor gives silent treatment

By Eric Thomas  
Tribune Content Agency

**Dear Eric:** My boyfriend has a second home in Florida where we stay three to four months a year. He pays "Marcus", a neighbor, to look in on the house and drive the car when we're not there.

Marcus has had issues with the car. One year, he apparently drove the car without gas and caused significant damage. The car is ancient, we could not prove he was responsible, and I paid a several thousand-dollar repair bill.

Last year, he apparently did not drive the car enough, the battery died, and he enlisted another neighbor "Jim" to help him jumpstart the car. We had been friendly with Jim and his wife, socialized at community functions, and went out to dinner a few times a year.

My boyfriend thanked Jim for his role with the car when we returned to Florida and I also thanked Jim in our annual Christmas card. Unfortunately, Jim has stopped speaking to us.

My boyfriend contends I should have purchased a gift card for Jim and his wife, as accessing a hybrid battery is not easy, the car is in my name, and saying thank you was not enough.

I think we paid Marcus to take care of the car, Marcus engaged Jim for assistance of his own accord, and if any compensation was expected, it should have come from Marcus. Who is correct and is it too late to make it right?

- Not Trying to Be Ungrateful

**Dear Not Trying:** I'm by no means a mechanic, but I've jumpstarted my share of hybrids. Unless I'm missing something

else here, this is in the "Favor" category. A gift card would be nice, but a thank you suffices.

Ask Jim if there's something else going on or something you can do to help repair the relationship. It seems odd he'd stop speaking to you about this alone. It could be that Marcus is even more of a troublesome presence than you know, and Jim has reached his limit. But that's just conjecture, of course.

Either way, it would be prudent to ask someone other than Marcus to mind the car. And consider getting roadside assistance.

**Dear Eric:** My husband and I have been together for more than 33 years. He is, in so many ways, a wonderful person, and we've built a good life together. When I met my husband, he already had a young son. My husband's ex, the child's mother, did everything she could to undermine any sense of normal family life. She even threatened my life.

Throughout our marriage, I often felt that my husband's connection with his ex crossed lines. There was no cheating, but he shared personal things, such as details about our marriage.

There were even Christmas mornings he spent with his son and his ex instead of with me and my family.

Counseling helped somewhat; the therapist tried to help him understand how damaging those choices were. As their son entered his teen years, he struggled with serious behavioral issues and eventually drug abuse. Before he passed away at 21 from drugs, there were many painful incidents: threats, fights, drilling holes in doors to spy on me while nude, bringing criminals into



Eric Thomas

our home, stealing, and more.

Despite everything, my husband and I survived it, and we truly love each other. But my husband still has contact with his ex, even 15 years after their son's death. She continues to make comments implying that I was the problem, and my husband brushes them off instead of defending me. Am I supposed to tolerate this forever?

- Blended Family

**Dear Family:** I'm sorry for what you've gone through. Your husband has crossed too many boundaries and though therapy showed him how it was affecting you, it doesn't seem he's made amends. That doesn't mean he has to sever this relationship with his ex, per se, but it needs to change and he needs to be proactive about it.

It's unconscionable that someone who has threatened your life in the past and continues to malign you is still treated as a non-issue. But your husband has to want to acknowledge your feelings and do the work to fix your marriage. It's unclear if he wants to.

Draw a line for yourself. There doesn't seem to be a need for you to ever interact with his ex-wife, so tell him that that's not going to work for you anymore. Tell him that you need him to recognize the hurtful impact his ex-wife has had on you and on your marriage and work on making things different in the future. This may mean more counseling for both of you. It would also be helpful for you to seek individual counseling, to help process your feelings about this relationship and the complicated, painful emotions brought up by his son's death.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at [eric@askingeric.com](mailto:eric@askingeric.com) or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, PA 19110. Follow him on Instagram and sign up for his weekly newsletter at [verichthomas.com](http://verichthomas.com).

## CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- Call Your Doctor Day
- Coral Triangle Day
- Donald Duck Day
- National Earl Day
- National Strawberry-
- Rhubarb Pie Day
- World APS Day
- World Pet Memorial Day
- Writers' Rights Day

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## DOJ to award \$300 million to cities dedicated to restoring law and order

### Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Justice Department has announced the Model Cities Initiative, a whole-of-city approach directing nearly \$300 million in federal funding to transform public safety in America's cities. Through this initiative, two to four cities will be selected to receive awards supporting the implementation of comprehensive and innovative strategies to reduce crime, restore law and order, and enhance public safety. Proposals from qualifying cities are due Sept. 1.

"This administration is leveraging every authority to ensure the safety of all Americans," acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said in a news release. "The Model Cities Initiative will super-

charge our law enforcement partners and restore the rule of law to America's neighborhoods, towns and cities. Our message is clear: We will help those who help us."

Investments will be made in a variety of areas addressing public safety, behavioral health, and related staffing, equipment, and services with the goal of leveraging federal resources to build capacity, strengthen accountability, and deliver measurable reductions in crime that can serve as a model of innovation for replication nationwide. Eligible applicants include local government entities serving a population of at least 100,000.

The MCI initiative will support a range of allowable activities, including:

Hiring and retention of sworn and non-sworn per-

sonnel directly engaged in or supporting violent crime reduction efforts.

Purchase or lease of equipment, tools, or technology that reduce crime and restore law and order, including but not limited to real-time crime centers; forensic and DNA tools; body-worn cameras; license plate readers; artificial intelligence systems; small unmanned aircraft systems and counter-UAS; ballistic identification systems, and information technology upgrades.

Training and professional development that support intelligence-led policing, violent crime investigations, crisis response, correctional practices that strengthen re-entry outcomes, and coordination with state and federal law enforcement partners.

Facility Costs including

lease, rental, or renovation expenses for space directly used in program operations, such as service delivery sites, training facilities, real-time crime centers, or intelligence analysis centers.

Mental health and substance use services that directly support prevention, crisis response, screening and early intervention, treatment, case management, and related services addressing issues linked to public safety outcomes, including services provided in correctional facilities and in the community.

Re-entry, transitional support, and recidivism reduction programs and services designed to reduce repeat offending, support transitions from custody, and promote successful reintegration into communities, including operational costs for county

jails and state prisons that support reentry preparation.

Victim services for American victims of crime, including, emergency assistance, case management, shelter and temporary housing, medical and dental care, advocacy, transportation, child care, legal services and employment assistance.

Youth crime prevention and intervention services that address risk factors for juvenile delinquency and violence, including gang intervention and suppression programs.

Cities will apply through a whole-of-city approach. That means that city leaders, including the mayor, sheriff, county prosecutor, and others, will work together to submit one application that proposes a persuasive vision of how this money can be awarded



Special Logo

strategically throughout their city to improve law enforcement engagement, victim services, detention and re-entry services, and preventive programs.

Additional information about the award is available at [www.justice.gov/grants](http://www.justice.gov/grants). The planned competition is a multiphase process. DOJ anticipates making initial award decisions in late 2026. To apply for this award, submit application materials to [MCIapplications@usdoj.gov](mailto:MCIapplications@usdoj.gov).

## Final defendant sentenced in \$3 million bank fraud conspiracy

### Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

MACON — The final defendant tied to a larger FBI investigation into a \$3 million bank fraud conspiracy targeting a Morris Bank branch in Gray was sentenced to prison for his role in cashing checks in violation of the federal Bank Secrecy Act.

James Kevin Meyers, 57, of Gray was sentenced to serve 12 months and one day in prison after he pleaded guilty to one count of causing the filing of false currency transaction reports on Feb. 18.

In two related cases, Ronnie Atkinson, 57, of Macon was sentenced to serve a total of 84 months in prison to be followed by five years of supervised release after he pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. Atkinson was also ordered to pay a total of \$3,357,073.21 in restitution.

Alan Childs, 60, of Gray was sentenced to serve 12 months and one day in prison and was ordered to pay \$3,094,200.98 in restitution after he pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud.

U.S. District Judge Marc T. Treadwell presided over the cases. There is no parole in the

federal system.

"This case makes clear that we will identify and hold accountable every individual involved in a fraud scheme," U.S. Attorney Will Keyes said. "We remain committed to working with our law enforcement partners to stop financial crimes and protect the public's trust."

"Financial crimes like this undermine trust in our banking system and harm everyday people across our communities," Robert Gibbs, the supervisory senior resident agent in charge of FBI Atlanta's Macon office, said. "Whether someone is committing fraud directly or helping conceal it, we will continue holding every participant accountable for abusing positions of trust and enabling million-dollar schemes."

According to court documents and statements made in court in the related cases, Atkinson obtained his first loan for his timber-harvesting business with Morris Bank in March 2018, which was handled by Childs, the bank's Market President. All subsequent loans were handled by Childs. By June 2019, Atkinson reached the maximum \$500,000 loan threshold, and Childs was not allowed to make additional loans to Atkinson without higher approval. Atkinson's loans were downgraded to substandard, indicating they displayed a well-defined weakness

that could jeopardize collection.

Beginning in August 2019 and continuing through May 2022, Atkinson had relatives and friends appear as borrowers on loans intended for his benefit, which Childs knew were for Atkinson's benefit, and which exceeded his \$500,000 limit without proper approval. In loans involving the purchase of goods, Atkinson included many fraudulent bills of sale. In addition, Atkinson instructed some of the so-called reported sellers of the goods to just cash the loan checks instead and give the money to him or one of his relatives.

As it relates to Meyers' case, Atkinson brought several Morris Bank loan and cashier's checks to Mr. Kevin's Check Cashing in Macon, a money services business managed by Meyers. As a domestic financial institution, Meyers' company was required to comply with the Bank Secrecy Act regulations and reporting requirements, including filing Currency Transaction Reports for transactions exceeding \$10,000.

Atkinson cashed the loan checks several times without the listed payee present, each for more than \$10,000. The CTR should have listed the person who presented the check and left with the cash as Atkinson. Instead, the CTRs listed the payees of the check, although they

were not present and did not collect the cash. Meyers would either personally cash these checks for Atkinson or direct his employees to cash them and file the CTRs with the listed payees' names, even though Atkinson cashed the checks.

As a result of the conspiracy, Morris Bank issued 57 loans to and for the benefit of Atkinson, with a total loss of between \$1.5 million and \$3.5 million. As part of the larger investigation, agents found that five of the Morris Bank loan checks were cashed illegally under Meyer's direction for \$166,788, \$117,409, \$93,338, \$126,743, and \$280,013.

On April 7, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division. The Fraud Division is investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

The case was investigated by the FBI. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Howard prosecuted the case for the government.

## FARMERS FOR BURT JONES

Fellow Farmers,

We write today as state legislators. More importantly, we write to you as Georgia farmers who have had the unique experience of witnessing the intersection of governmental policy and the effects those policies can have on our family farms.

We each fight in Atlanta every day during the legislative session on behalf of the Agriculture community. In the environment under the Gold Dome, we learn pretty quickly who has the backs of our state's farm families and rural Georgia. **We can tell you unequivocally that Lt. Governor Burt Jones has been a steadfast friend to agriculture and rural Georgia. Even during times when it would've been easier, and perhaps even more politically prudent to go in a different direction, he has stood by and fought for the interests of the agriculture industry and farming families in both his former role as a State Senator and now as Lt. Governor.**

Combined, those who signed this letter represent families who have farmed for generations. Burt and his family have farmed on the same land in Butts County for six generations. We may be Senators and Representatives while the legislature is in session, but we are always full-time farmers.

**We each know, without a doubt in our hearts, that Burt Jones is the person we trust most to fight for our family farms and yours too. That is why we are supporting him in his campaign to be our next Governor and humbly ask you to join us in voting for Burt Jones on June 16th.**

May God bless your families, your farms, and our shared future. Your friends,

**Senator Russ Goodman**  
Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee

**Representative Robert Dickey**  
Chairman, House Agriculture Committee

**Senator Sam Watson**  
Senate Agriculture Committee

**Senator Lee Anderson**  
Chairman, Senate Natural Resources Committee

**Senator Drew Echols**  
Chairman, Senate Economic Development Committee

**Representative John Corbett**  
House Agriculture Committee

**Representative Angie O'Steen**  
House Agriculture Committee

**Representative Jutt Howard**  
House Agriculture Committee

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# THE ALBANY HERALD

## Perspectives

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Carlton Fletcher  
EDITOR

— Georgia Trust for —  
**LOCAL NEWS**

**TODAY'S  
BIBLE  
VERSE**

*"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*  
**Matthew 11:29**

**COLUMNIST ■ SCOTT LUDWIG**

## The best birthday party ever

No one says "Happy Birthday, America" better than Donald Trump. Ask anyone wearing a MAGA hat if you have any doubt.

The man with an ego so large that it should have its own zip code is holding nothing back when it comes to celebrating the 250th anniversary of our country's independence, the day we should all take the time to remember we all have the fundamental right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

So enjoy it while you can because as for where we'll be by the end of Trump's second time on the presidential dance floor is anyone's guess. But that's another story for another day. Hopefully that won't be necessary, but if I'm being realistic, it's only a matter of time.

For now, let's get back to the party and see what Orange Julius Caesar has in store:

– The introduction of a \$250 bill into our currency system, with his likeness and EKG-like signature on the front. Despite it being against the law to print money with someone who is still alive on it, currency with that large a denomination doesn't make any sense.

For one thing, the chances of getting change if you tried using it in our current electronic economy are slim, because there's not many businesses anymore with that kind of cash in their registers. For another, there aren't many people walking around carrying that much money to begin with. Besides, if you pay in cash, you'll likely get the same looks I got several years ago when I wrote a check at the grocery store.

Trump would be better served to introduce something smaller, like a \$25 bill. That way the majority of his sycophantic supporters would have just the right amount of money to pay for a case of PBR. And for those on the opposite end of the economic spectrum, a \$25 bill would be the perfect tip for the guy who fetches their Mercedes from valet parking.

□ The Freedom 250 Concert scheduled during the Great American State Fair this summer has seen a number of formerly scheduled performers dropping out after they learned the event wasn't nonpartisan, as they were originally led to believe. Martina McBride, Bret Michaels, Young MC, and Morris Day are some who have already jumped ship. At this time, Vanilla Ice, Flo Rida, and C+C Music Factory are still in line to perform, leaving us all asking the same question: Whatever happened to Lee Greenwood?

At press time, there was a real possibility that Trump was going to be the headliner.



LUDWIG

In other words, since he isn't having any luck getting anyone to perform, he may give a speech instead.

It will be like a red, white, and blue version of Lollapalooza. Only without any entertainment.

□ The UFC – that stands for Ultimate Fighting Championship – will host the UFC Freedom 250, a mixed martial arts event, on the South Lawn of the White House. It is planned for June 14, allegedly to commemorate our country's birthday, which actually is July 4. Realistically, the fight is to celebrate Trump's 80th birthday, which just so happens to fall on June 14. Currently a 4,000 to 5,000-seat outdoor stadium is under construction at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. for the event. Between the construction of a temporary structure to watch men beat each other senseless -- and the destruction of the East Wing to make room for Trump's oversized and gold-embossed ballroom -- it's only a matter of time before we see the Beast, the president's official state car, sitting on concrete blocks somewhere along Pennsylvania Avenue. People are saying – and by that I specifically mean me – that no one does white trash better than the White House.

That's just some of what's in store. There's more, but I don't have enough space to write about them: the commemorative passports with Trump's face on them; the first automobile race ever held in the nation's capital, the Freedom 250 Grand Prix; and the Rededicate 250 initiative for the National Day of Prayer that was held on the National Mall back on May 7 to remind us that we are one nation under God, even though Trump himself couldn't attend because he chose to play golf instead.

Check your local listings for a full calendar of events. Be advised that there will be a lot going on, so times may vary. For example, in my case, the UFC fight falls on the exact day and time I planned to see the latest Steven Spielberg movie. Sure, I'll hate to miss seeing Alex Periera take on Ciryil Gane for the UFC heavyweight title – let's be honest, who wouldn't? -- but I already bought my ticket for the theater.

By the way, the title of the movie is "Disclosure Day." I mention it as a reminder that all of

Trump's bells and whistles for the 250th anniversary are just part of a series of diversions to distract attention from the Epstein Files, and that there is still hope said files will have a disclosure day of their own.

And when that time finally arrives, just imagine: Spielberg will have the makings for another blockbuster. Reckoning Day.

**COLUMNIST ■ WAYNE FOWLER**

## The haunting of Saipan

I stood in silence staring death became meaningful into the deep blue sea 150 feet below me at Banzai Cliff. Behind me was the sheer rock face of Mt. Marpi. Silence seemed the only response to what happened here on Saipan 80 years ago.



FOWLER

WWII came to Saipan with the American amphibious assault against entrenched Japanese forces. To the Americans, control of the island would place Tokyo within range of B-29 bombers. The death toll was heavy for the Americans. The last Japanese soldiers died in suicide charges against American positions.

So, what happened to brand the serene landscape of Marpi Point with such grim notoriety? As the Americans pushed northward, thousands of Japanese soldiers and civilians, including mothers and children, leapt from the cliffs toward the jagged rocks or raging ocean. Suicide was their final choice, either because of coercion, national pride, or unfounded rumors about the Americans.

Even as the haunted souls approached the cliffs, American soldiers shouted "Tomodachi" (friend) to no avail. That sunny day, I marveled at the deep blue Pacific and felt the sea breeze on my face. I witnessed the monuments erected to commemorate the lives lost and to appeal for abiding peace among the nations.

"Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness," one inscription said. The history, the scene. ... It all invited contemplation of the meaning of life and death. The people who died here had lost hope. Life and

locked doors, wondering if the last three years had been meaningless.

The words of the chief priests rang in their ears: "He saved others; He cannot save Himself." (Matt. 27:42) It was into that impossible, hopeless moment Jesus entered. He appeared alive to his disciples saying, "Peace be with you."

When you suffer dread and confusion, Jesus brings focus. When you wander the haunted lands of memories, He is near. When all seems lost, His death resurrects your life with meaning, hope and joy. He reconciled "all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ... He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach -- if indeed you continue in the faith." (Col. 1:20-23)

Death, whether yours or someone else's, invites sober contemplation. Do you think of it as stepping through to light and eternal truth? Is it a final reckoning or meaningless oblivion? As you consider the alternatives, Someone calls out, "Friend." To you personally, Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

That is your Savior calling.

## SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:

EMAIL: carlton.fletcher@albanyherald.com  
MAIL: Albany Herald News  
306 W. Broad Avenue, Albany GA, 31701

**COLUMNIST ■ THOMAS KNAPP**

## Tennessee celebrates the new-fangled nuclear family

In mid-April, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee signed a legislative resolution designating June "Nuclear Family Month."

The purpose, naturally, was to grandstand on supposedly counteracting the annual "Pride Month" celebrations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and ... well, I'm sure a few more adjectives have come along since I sat down to write this column, but I don't know what they are ... people that have become a fixture of US life over the last few decades.

Historically, though, the idea is just as "progressive" as "Pride Month," and somewhat less historically grounded.

Here's how the resolution begins: "The nuclear family, consisting of one husband, one wife, and any biological, adopted, or fostered children, is God's design for familial structure and has been the bedrock of society since the creation of the world."

I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that the resolution purports to be grounded in the Bible. Which, apparently, the legislators and the governor forgot to read before framing up that resolution.

The primary biblical Jewish family unit – the mishpachah or clan – was an "extended," not "nuclear," family. Everyone from grandparents to grandchildren to nieces, nephews, cousins and servants lived in close proximity to each other

under the supervision of clan "patriarchs," the alpha males of the family lines.

Globally, even outside of the biblical milieu, "extended family" units were the historical norm for millennia, for precisely the same reason that they're less prevalent now: Economics.

The major forces that created the celebrated modern "nuclear family" were industrialization, urbanization and prosperity. As workers moved off of large, multi-generational feudal or family farms and into towns to work in factories and stores, their diversity of employment location, and therefore choice of where to reside, fragmented.

As they became more prosperous, they were able to acquire separate shelter for smaller groups – instead of 10 people in a one-room apartment, it became three or four in a two bedroom apartment, or perhaps a small house.

Then came the automobile, the freeway, and the suburbs, at which point a young couple could, in relative (to, say, the Oregon Trail) ease, move across the country from their mothers and fathers while still expecting a reasonably comfortable lifestyle in their new environs.

The nostalgia for a 1950s "mom, dad, two kids, Chevy four-door, well-mani-



KNAPP

cured lawn around a tidy cottage" way of life is not nostalgia for "the old days," let alone for the days shortly after "the creation of the world." It's nostalgia for post-World War II Pasadena, Calif.

I see no particular reason anyone should begrudge Tennessee its own transformation

– also centered around WW II – from a

largely rural, agricultural economy to a more urban, industrial economy, with its neat suburbs and "nuclear family" arrangements.

But trying to put a moral spin on those arrangements, backdating and falsifying the history of humankind – and, to the extent we might think we know them, the decrees of God – to "own the libs" is at least as silly as the silliest "Pride Month" celebrations.

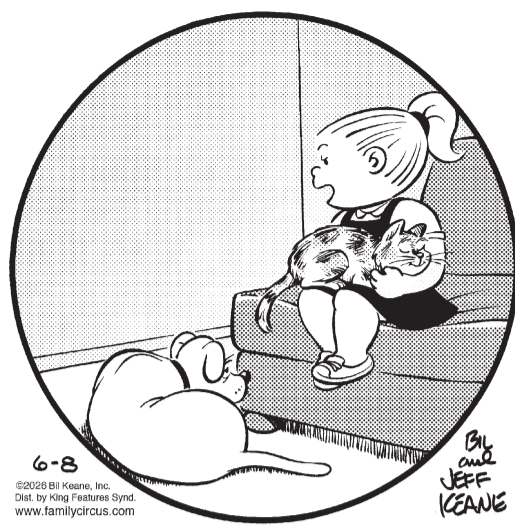


**CLOSE TO HOME** John McPherson



"Duncan, that is BRILLIANT! We can make a FORTUNE by selling the mummy's wrapping as toilet paper!"

**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** Bill Keane



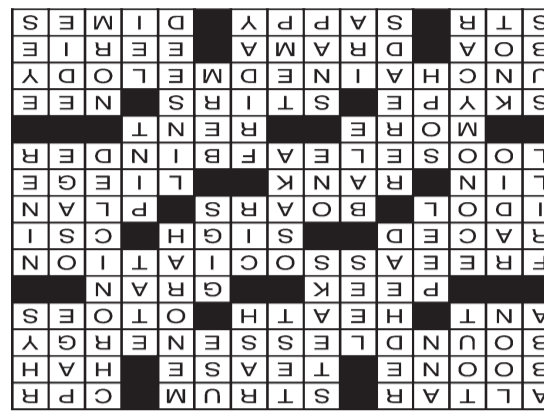
"Cats are smart. They don't grow too big to fit in a lap."

**Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle**

Edited by Patti Varol

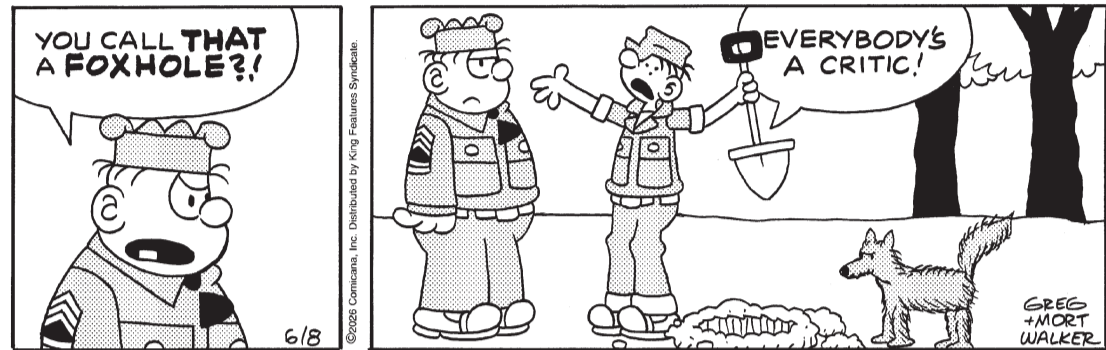
- ACROSS**
- 1 Table where Holy Communion is consecrated
  - 6 Play, as a guitar
  - 11 Lifesaving skill, for short
  - 14 Yankees manager Aaron
  - 15 Make fun of
  - 16 Scoffing laugh
  - 17 Get-up-and-go that never goes
  - 20 Crumb-carrying insect
  - 21 Toffee bar brand
  - 22 Great Plains Natives
  - 23 Quick look
  - 24 Family nickname for some matriarchs
  - 25 Therapy technique that encourages a thoughtful flow of ideas
  - 32 Sped
  - 33 Sound of relief
  - 34 Forensic sci. specialty
  - 35 Megastar
  - 36 Tusked hogs
  - 38 "Sounds like a ...!": "Works for me!"
  - 39 "Hamilton" creator -Manuel
  - 40 Corporal or private
  - 41 Feudal lord
  - 42 School organizer with three rings
  - 46 Extra helping
  - 47 Tenant's monthly payment
  - 48 App replaced by Microsoft Teams
  - 50 ... the pot: causes trouble
  - 52 Word before a maiden name
  - 55 Righteous
  - 58 Brothers hit in the film "Ghost"
  - 59 Comedy counterpart
  - 60 Otherworldly
  - 61 Cello's sect.
  - 62 Cloyingly sentimental
  - 63 Coins that can be screwdrivers in a pinch
- DOWN**
- 2 Canadian lake bird with a unique call
  - 3 Promote loudly
  - 4 ... Arbor, Michigan
  - 5 One with hair like Little Orphan Annie
  - 6 T-bones, e.g.
  - 7 Sample
  - 8 Foolishly impulsive
  - 9 "... it or lose it!"
  - 10 Hanukkah centerpiece
  - 11 Told the story of
  - 12 Beep on a beeper
  - 13 Actor Matthew of Netflix's "The Beast in Me"
  - 18 Wine sediment
  - 19 Coup d'—
  - 23 Rind
  - 24 Jobs for a band
  - 25 Perk
  - 26 "All Things Considered" medium
  - 27 Option for travelers on a budget, perhaps
  - 28 Japanese port city
  - 29 Geometric fig. with a radius
  - 30 Missouri River tributary
  - 31 Bay Area NFLer
  - 36 Hay bundle
  - 37 ... and only
  - 38 Ice cream purchase
  - 40 Goes over again, as a contract
  - 41 Type of oil extracted from flax
  - 43 Former frosh
  - 44 Start of many long weekends
  - 45 Natural sandbank
  - 48 Long sandwiches
  - 49 Nautical speed unit
  - 50 Simple fastener
  - 51 Fill-in worker
  - 52 Convention
  - 53 Emmy winner
  - 54 Potato buds
  - 56 401(k) rollover target
  - 57 Tropical garland

TODAY'S SOLUTION:



06/08/26

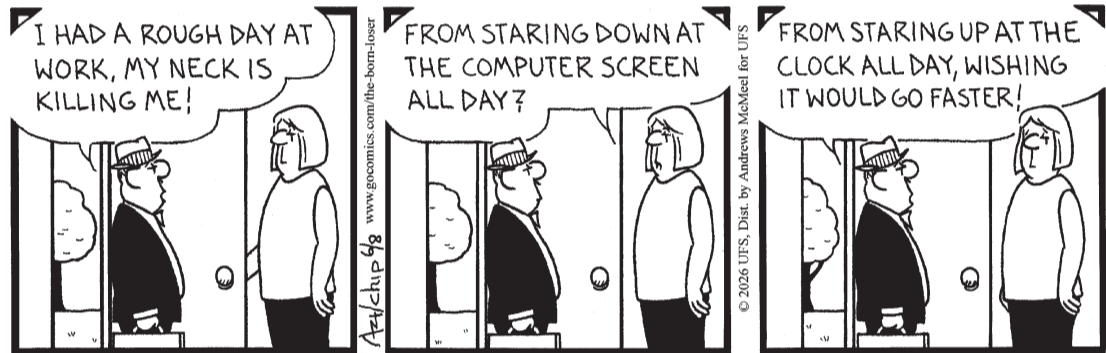
**BEETLE BAILEY** Mort & Greg Walker



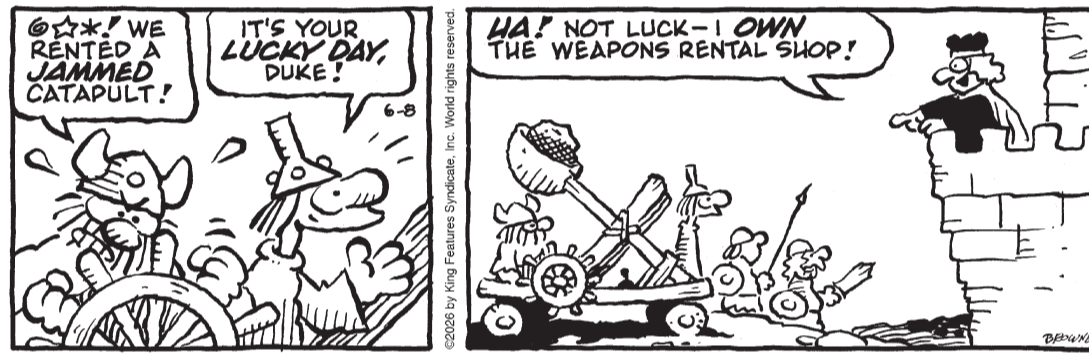
**BLONDIE** Dean Young & John Marshall



**THE BORN LOSER** Art & Chip Sansom



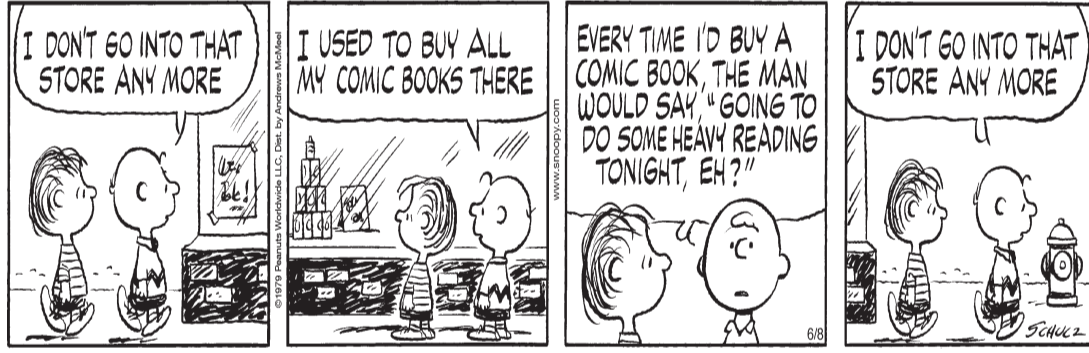
**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE** Chris Browne



**ZITS** Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



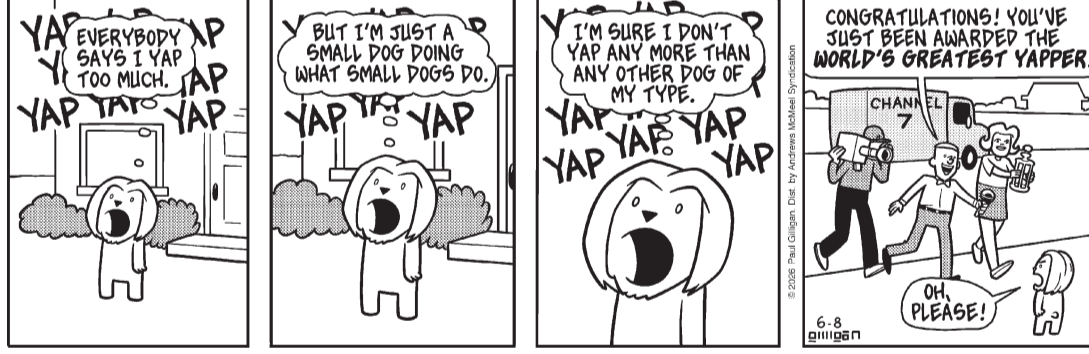
**PEANUTS** Charles M. Schulz



**GARFIELD** Jim Davis



**POOCH CAFE** Paul Gilligan



**PICKLES** Brian Crane



**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.

CRUISES FOR EXPLORERS Solution: 5 letters

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

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Anchor, Azamara, Bay, Biology, Bunk, Canoe, Captain, Chart, Coast, Costa, Discovery, Disney, Dock, Dolphin, Grotto, Gulf, Horizon, Island, Love, Map, Marina, Monsoon, Mythology, Oasis, Oceania, Paddle, P and O, Polar, Radar, Royal Caribbean, Rudder, Sand, Scuba, Ship, Shoreline, Signal, Strait, Tide, Viking, Watchtower, Weather, Windstar

TODAY'S ANSWER: Coral

**SUDOKU**

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

**WHATZIT?**

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

**MATTERHORN APPALACHIANS**

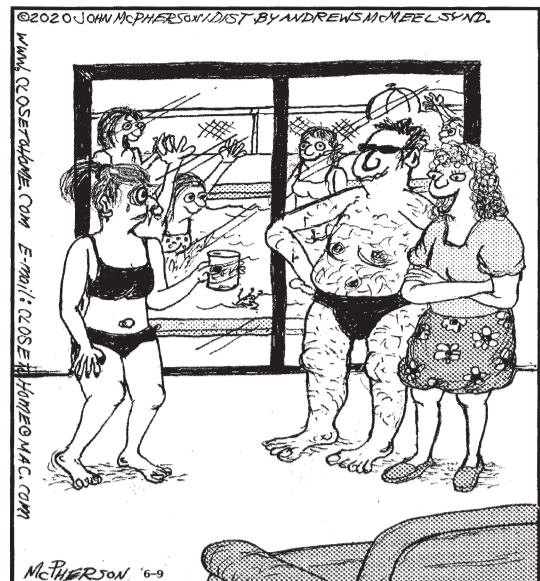
SUDOKU INSTRUCTIONS: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

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

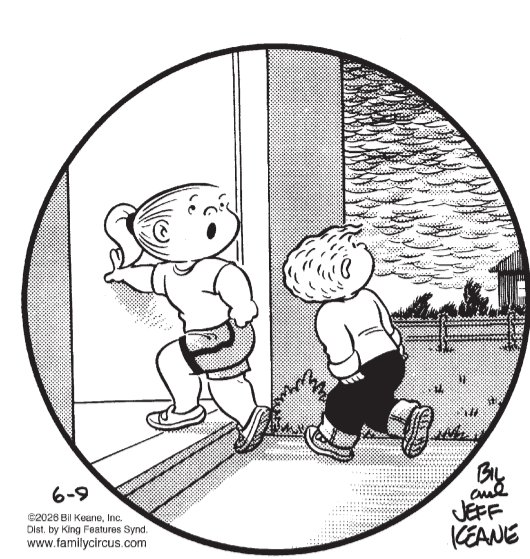
TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION: Friends in high places

**CLOSE TO HOME** John McPherson



"SO, Melissa, either you agree right NOW to have your nose and navel piercings removed, or your dad will go out and greet your friends in his Speedo!"

**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** Bill Keane



"God always turns the lights down when He's gonna put on a storm."

**BEETLE BAILEY** Mort & Greg Walker



**BLONDIE** Dean Young & John Marshall



**THE BORN LOSER** Art & Chip Sansom



**CROSSWORD**

- ACROSS**
- 1 Spherical object
  - 4 Applaud
  - 8 Gherkin flavoring
  - 12 Female deer
  - 13 Track
  - 14 Needlecase
  - 15 "— Day Afternoon"
  - 16 Wheel shaft
  - 17 Comedian Jay —
  - 18 Rigid
  - 20 Insightfulness
  - 22 "— to mention ..."
  - 23 Pull
  - 24 Irked
  - 28 Mutineer
  - 32 Root vegetable
  - 33 "The — of the Magi"
  - 35 Mineral
  - 36 Goof
  - 37 Aspiration
- DOWN**
- 1 Likelihood
  - 2 Cheer

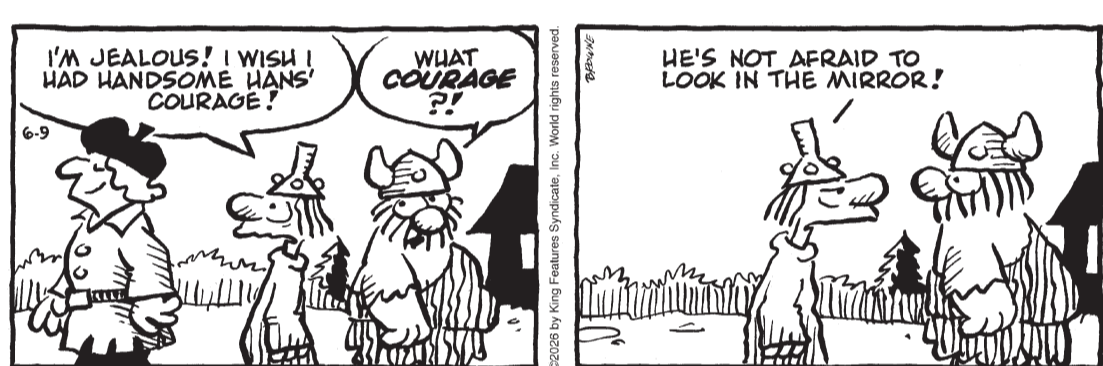
**TODAY'S SOLUTION:**

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15			16					17		
18		19			20	21				
	22				23					
24	25		26	27	28		29	30	31	
32			33	34			35			
36			37				38			
39		40		41		42				
		43		44		45				
46	47	48				49		50	51	
52				53	54	55		56		
57				58				59		
60				61				62		

- 3 Kind of luck
- 4 Cunning
- 5 Not very strict
- 6 Trouble
- 7 Skirt feature
- 8 Flood
- 9 Particular thing
- 10 "Clair de —"
- 11 Big cat
- 19 Length measure
- 21 Terse
- 24 Son of Adam and Eve
- 25 Notorious Roman ruler
- 26 — ideal
- 27 Watch face
- 29 Monopoly, e.g. (2 wds.)
- 30 Therefore
- 31 Tilt
- 34 State near Ga.
- 37 Metric unit
- 38 Burn the surface of
- 40 Worn down
- 42 Melted
- 44 Squander
- 46 Pointers
- 47 Have — — in one's bonnet
- 48 Mention
- 50 Orchestra member
- 51 Kite appendage
- 54 Plaything
- 55 "... — I saw Elba"

**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE** Chris Browne



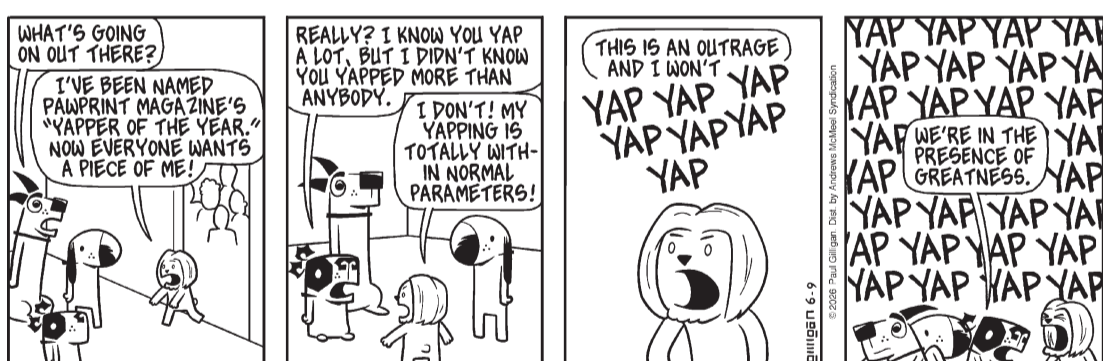
**PEANUTS** Charles M. Schulz



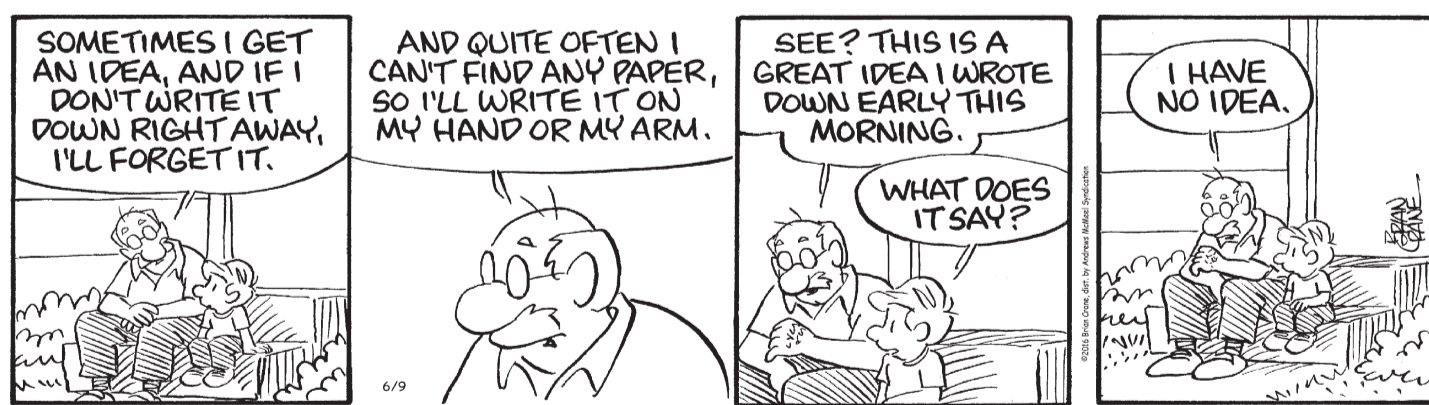
**GARFIELD** Jim Davis



**POOCH CAFE** Paul Gilligan



**PICKLES** Brian Crane



**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.

**A RAUCOUS CROWD** Solution: 10 letters

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

**SUDOKU**

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

**WHATZIT?**

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

**VOICE**

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

**TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:**

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

**TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:** Voicemail

# Phoebe Family Medicine clinic moves to hospital as residency program expands

ALBANY — The physician residents and faculty members who make up the Phoebe Family Medicine Residency are seeing their patients in a new location. The program's clinic relocated from Phoebe Northwest to the Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital campus, creating a more integrated and effective environment for medical training and patient care.

After graduating from medical school, residents spend three years at Phoebe training under the guidance of experienced faculty. They complete specialty rotations and provide inpatient care at Phoebe hospitals, but a cornerstone of their training is also managing the care of their own dedicated group of patients in a clinic setting. Consolidating both aspects of the training under one roof will benefit the residents and their patients.

"Having all our residents and clinical resources in one location at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital is a tremendous step forward for our

program," Dr. Clifford Dunn, the program's director and a graduate of the program himself, said. "This environment allows our residents to train alongside specialists, access advanced diagnostic tools, and experience the full spectrum of inpatient and outpatient care, all in one place."

"It allows us to operate more efficiently, elevates the quality of training we can provide and better prepares our physicians for the future of medicine."

The residents will continue to have daily opportunities to collaborate with specialists across a broad range of disciplines in the hospital, deepening their clinical knowledge and sharpening the critical thinking skills required of a well-rounded family medicine physician. They will no longer have to travel across town for their clinic work or to learn from or consult with PFMR faculty members.

Patients of the PFMR Clinic also will experience improvements because of the reloca-



Special Photo: Phoebe

The physician residents and faculty members who make up the Phoebe Family Medicine Residency are seeing their patients in a new location.

tion. The hospital-based setting provides direct, convenient access to on-site laboratory services, imaging, and a wide range of specialty care, all without requiring patients to travel to multiple locations for their health care needs. The clinic is also located next to the Phoebe Pharmacy, providing patients with quicker and easier access to medications. This level of integrated access is especially valuable for patients managing chronic

conditions or those who require coordinated care across several medical disciplines.

Phoebe Physicians President Dr. Estrellita Redmon said the move is about much more than a simple change of address.

"By bringing our residency clinic into the hospital, we are delivering a seamless, patient-centered experience where our community members have easy access to the comprehensive services they

need," Redmon said. "We are also setting the stage for the future as we grow our graduate medical education programs through our partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine."

"Over the next few years, we will see a dramatic increase in the number of physician residents and medical students training at Phoebe, with a goal of increasing the number of physicians in our community and improving access to care."

That growth is already occurring with the expansion of the PFMR from eight to 12 residents per class. Primary care physician shortages remain a challenge in many rural and underserved communities throughout Georgia, and training more family medicine residents locally increases the likelihood that those physicians will choose to practice in the area after completing their training. Phoebe has long recognized the importance of graduate medical education — the PMFR launched in 1993 as the region's first medical

residency program — and this expansion underscores that commitment.

Patients visiting the new PFMR Clinic are encouraged to enter the hospital through the Medical Towers entrance where Red Coat transporters will be on hand to greet visitors and provide assistance. From the entrance, patients should take an immediate right and continue past the new Phoebe Pharmacy. The PFMR Clinic is located on the left. Signage is posted to help guide patients to their destination.

The clinic's address is 425 W. Third Ave., Suite 105. Step-by-step directions to locations throughout Phoebe's main and Meredyth Place campuses are also available on the Find Your Way section of Phoebe's website, [www.phoebehealth.com](http://www.phoebehealth.com).

For more information about the PFMR Clinic or to schedule an appointment, visit <https://phoebehealth.com/new/make-an-appointment/> or contact the clinic directly at (229) 312-8800.

## Albany, Dougherty County plan Juneteenth celebration

By Alan Mauldin  
[alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com](mailto:alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com)

ALBANY — The city of Albany and Dougherty are gearing up for the sixth Juneteenth celebration on June 20, with a lineup of music, activities and culture on tap.

The annual celebration will be held from 1-6 p.m. on June 20 at the Albany Civic Center, with doors opening at noon.

"This event right here is just going to be centered around the family," Dougherty County Commissioner Anthony Jones said. "We would appreciate everybody to come out on June 20. This is the way the county and city are giving back to the community. This is a joint venture between the two governments."

The event will include food trucks, and children up to 17 eat free, the commissioner said. There also will be a kid's zone with a bounce house and other activities for youngsters.

Live entertainment lined up includes the Freedom Singers of Albany, the Compilation Band and the Soulful Soundz Band. All but the headliner are local performers, Jones said, because a focus was put on including the abundance of local talent for the event.

Juneteenth celebrates broadly the end of chattel slavery and specifically commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger read Orders No. 3 in Texas, informing people there of the



File Photo

The Freedom Singers, including original member Rutha Harris, are scheduled to perform in this year's joint city/county Juneteenth event. The local Juneteenth celebration will be held on June 20.

abolition of slavery, which had been announced 2 1/2 years earlier with the Emancipation Proclamation.

President Biden signed the bipartisan Juneteenth National Independence Act into law on June 17, 2021, establishing a national holiday.

The 2025 edition of Juneteenth cost about \$37,000 between the two governments, Jones said. The commissioner did not have exact numbers for attendance for last year's event but estimated it was about 2,000.

"Each year it's getting bigger and better," he said. "We're going to have a little flavor for everybody, so this is great."

## Georgia high court scraps vaccine-based pause on executions

By Ty Tagami  
*Capitol Beat News Service*

ATLANTA — The Georgia Supreme Court has removed a pandemic-era barrier to executions, checking off a legal condition that must be met before ending the lives of certain inmates sentenced to death.

The decision overturned a lower court ruling that had put executions on hold over access to COVID-19 vaccines. But at least one legal obstacle remains before executions can resume in those cases.

In an order issued this week, the high court ruled for state Attorney General Chris Carr, who had appealed a 2022 decision in Fulton County Superior Court after the Federal Defender Program Inc. secured a pause in the execution of death row inmate Virgil Delano Presnell Jr.

The Fulton decision that was reversed involved access to COVID-19 vaccines. The Fulton judge had halted executions until vaccines became "readily available."

The opponents of executions argued that this condition had not been met because COVID-19 vaccines were not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for children

under 6 months old.

However, the high court's opinion, authored by Justice Carla Wong McMillian, said the lack of approval for babies was not relevant for convicts sentenced to death and that vaccines are now widely available.

"Given that the state

produced undisputed evidence that the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine is adequate for all members of the public to obtain the vaccine and that no legal impediment exists for all members of the public to be vaccinated, if deemed medically appropriate, the trial court erred in concluding that the COVID-19 vaccine was not 'readily available' to all members of the public," the opinion said.

One obstacle to executions remains. A footnote in the opinion said a separate condition involving inmate visitation has not yet been litigated.



Special Photo: John McCosh/Georgia Recorder

Atlanta's public transit authority, MARTA, will be under a federal investigation after a high-profile stabbing death.

## Federal Transit Administration to launch investigation of MARTA after stabbing attacks

Staff Reports  
[news@albanyherald.com](mailto:news@albanyherald.com)

ATLANTA — The Federal Transit Administration will launch an investigation into Atlanta's public transit authority after two stabbing attacks frightened commuters last month.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced that his agency will look into MARTA's security spending, safety protocols and risks to riders and workers.

"Every American should be disturbed by the horrific crimes we have seen on MARTA in the last month," Duffy said in a statement. "No one should be forced to fear for their safety simply because they choose to ride public transit."

On May 30, 66-year-old Margaret Swan died after being stabbed multiple times on a MARTA train. A 25-year-

old Decatur man is in custody and faces charges related to the killing.

On May 24, a 40-year-old man was stabbed at a MARTA station following an altercation, according to federal authorities. Police are seeking a suspect in that attack.

The transit agency serves more than 500,000 people every weekday across trains, buses and streetcars. It's likely to come under increased scrutiny when soccer fans descend on the city for a series of World Cup matches starting later this month.

Duffy said MARTA has 15 days to submit data on security, including on their safety funding and action plans. In an email, MARTA senior communications director Stephany Fisher suggested MARTA will comply with the investigation.

"We welcome the opportunity to share with federal officials the hard work that the MARTA team puts in every day, as well as the significant investments in personnel, technology and operational measures that MARTA has in place to support safety and security across our entire system," Fisher said.

Fisher said safety and security are top priorities for the thousands of people MARTA employs.

"MARTA remains committed to continuously evaluating and strengthening our safety programs, procedures, and resources to provide a safe, secure and reliable transit experience for the communities that we serve," she added.

The FTA also has ordered investigations into transit agencies in cities including Chicago, Washington, New York and Los Angeles.



The Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County, Georgia will make appointments to the following listed Boards. Candidates should submit a letter of interest and/or resume by **5:00 p.m. June 17, 2026** to Bristeria Clark Hope, Deputy County Clerk at [bclark@dougherty.ga.us](mailto:bclark@dougherty.ga.us).

Please call 229-431-2121 X0 or visit the Government Information page at <https://www.dougherty.ga.us/government/board-appointments> for additional details about each board.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ALBANY-DOUGHERTY LAND BANK</b> One (1) appointment. Application required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ELECTRICAL BOARD</b> Four (4) appointments with eligibility requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ASPIRE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH &amp; DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES BOARD</b> — Two(2) appointments with eligibility requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT REVIEW BOARD</b> One (1) appointment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CHEHAW PARK AUTHORITY</b> — One (1) appointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GAS BOARD</b> - One (1) appointment with eligibility requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY &amp; CHILDREN SERVICES</b> — One (1) appointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DOUGHERTY COUNTY HEALTH BOARD</b> - One (1) appointment with eligibility requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION</b> One (1) appointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SOUTHWEST GEORGIA HOUSING TASK FORCE</b> — One (1) appointment</li> </ul>

## Georgia's catcher named award finalist

Staff Reports  
news@albanyherald.com

ATHENS — Georgia catcher Daniel Jackson's remarkable season has earned him a spot among the five finalists for the Dick Howser Trophy, awarded annually to the top player in college baseball.

The National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association announced the finalists Thursday for the award, which will be presented June 12 during a news conference at Charles Schwab Field in Omaha, Neb., the site of the College World Series.

Jackson is joined on the finalist list by UCLA shortstop

Roch Cholowsky, Louisville first baseman Tague Davis, UC Santa Barbara pitcher Jackson Flora and Arizona State outfielder Landon Hairston.

The Sandy Springs native has been one of the nation's most productive players while helping Georgia capture its first Southeastern Conference regular-season championship since 2008 and add an SEC Tournament title.

Jackson earned SEC Player of the Year honors after leading the conference in several offensive categories. He enters the postseason batting .396 with 29 home runs, 93 hits and a .860 slugging percent-

age. His 29 home runs rank fourth nationally, while his batting average ranks among the nation's top 15.

The 6-foot-2, 200-pound junior has also excelled behind the plate and on the basepaths. Jackson has stolen 25 bases this season, becoming the first catcher and only the sixth Division I player to record at least 25 home runs and 25 stolen bases in the same season.

His all-around play helped Georgia earn the Athens Regional title and a No. 1 national ranking heading into NCAA Super Regional play against Mississippi State.

A Georgia player has won the Dick Howser Trophy once before. Former Bulldogs star Charlie Condon captured the award in 2024 after one of the most prolific offensive seasons in college baseball history.

Named in honor of former Florida State coach and major league manager Dick Howser, the trophy has been awarded annually since 1987, with the exception of the pandemic-shortened 2020 season. Past winners include Georgia Tech's Jason Varitek and Mark Teixeira, Florida State's Buster Posey, Vanderbilt's David Price, LSU's Paul Skenes and



Special photo: UGAAA  
Georgia catcher Daniel Jackson, the SEC Player of the Year, has been named a finalist for the 2026 Dick Howser Trophy, college baseball's highest individual honor.

Georgia's Condon. Jackson and the Bulldogs were set to face Mississippi State this past weekend with a trip to the College World Series on the line.

## Lady Tornados open summer with win over Terrell County

By Joe Whitfield  
Sports Editor

ALBANY — It didn't take long for Monroe's Taylor Mckinzy to find her shooting touch.

The Lady Tornados' sharpshooter buried three consecutive 3-pointers from the corner in the first half Thursday afternoon, helping Monroe race to a commanding lead on the way to a 46-34 victory over Terrell County in a summer practice game.

The final score was closer than the game itself.

Monroe dominated the opening half and carried a 33-13 advantage into the locker room before Monroe began rotating players freely in the second half. The extra playing time allowed Terrell County to settle in offensively and trim the margin against a Monroe team that reached the Class 3A Final Four last season with a 27-4 record.

For Acree, the outcome was secondary to getting her team back on the floor.

"Today was about shaking off the rust," Acree said. "We've got a lot of work to do, but it was good to get on the floor and get some competition."

The Lady Tornados return much of the nucleus that fueled last season's deep playoff run. Mckinzy was joined Thursday by teammates KJ Acree, Maleyah Hines, Gendalys Harvey, Mariah Toye, Naraji McDowell, Jibria Butler and others as Monroe opened its summer sched-

ule by hosting teams from around Southwest Georgia for a day of practice games. Monroe also had new faces on the floor including rising ninth graders from Radium Springs.

While Monroe showed flashes of the form that carried it to the state semifinals, Terrell County demonstrated resilience after a sluggish start.

The Lady Greenwave struggled to find an offensive rhythm in the first half against Monroe's pressure and perimeter shooting. But after halftime, Terrell County began attacking more confidently and played much more evenly with the Lady Tornados.

Like Monroe, the Lady Greenwave are coming off a successful season. Terrell County finished 24-5 last year, captured a region championship and advanced to the Class A Final Four.

Head coach Tammye Jenkins Ware said Thursday's games highlighted both the promise and the challenges facing her team.

"We lost three seniors and we really haven't had any time to practice," Jenkins Ware said. "I liked what I saw at times. It was good to get on the court and we played much better in our second game than we did the first."

With a young roster adjusting to larger roles, Jenkins Ware said confidence will be a major point of emphasis throughout the summer.

"It's all about building confidence for these girls and



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield  
Rising sophomore Maleyah Hines shoots for two during Thursday's summer game against Terrell County. Hines and the Lady Nadas are "shaking off the rust," according to head coach Jennifer Acree, but Monroe won both of its Thursday games.

playing with confidence," she said. "We've got a lot of work to do and big challenges ahead of us."

Fortunately for both programs, June basketball is designed for exactly that purpose.

The wins and losses won't count for anything when the regular season arrives. Still, Thursday offered both Final Four programs an early measuring stick as they begin preparations for another run at the state playoffs.



Special Photo: Ron Cheney-Imagn Images  
Recovering from a fractured ankle suffered in Denver's playoff win over Buffalo, Broncos quarterback Bo Nix is expected to return to practice during the team's mandatory minicamp later this month.

## Denver's Bo Nix expected back for minicamp

Field Level Media

Denver Broncos quarterback Bo Nix is on track in his recovery from a fractured ankle and expected to participate in mandatory minicamp on June 16-18, head coach Sean Payton said Thursday.

The Broncos' first three days of voluntary OTAs concluded Thursday, the first session open to the media. Nix was in attendance but did not participate with the team during this time.

"It's good," Payton said of Nix's progress in his recovery after fracturing his right ankle in Denver's divisional-round playoff win over the Buffalo Bills on Jan. 17.

"You don't see the pre-practice, but he's been throwing," the coach said. "I do think in our third week, when you guys (media) are out here for three straight days, I think you'll see more of a role."

Denver has a second week of OTAs slated for June 9-11, with Nix expected to miss that as well, Payton said.

Quarterbacks Jarrett Stidham and Sam Ehlinger are competing for the backup position behind Nix.

Nix, 26, had surgery three days after the injury, and underwent a pre-planned cleanup procedure on the ankle in April.

He has been a spark in the two seasons since Denver picked him 12th overall in the 2024 NFL Draft. He has posted a 24-10 regular-season record with a 64.8 completion percentage, 7,706 passing yards and 54 touchdowns to 23 interceptions. He has also rushed for 786 yards and nine TDs, leading the Broncos to the playoffs both years.

## Charges against Falcons' Branch dismissed

Field Level Media

Misdemeanor obstruction charges against Atlanta Falcons rookie receiver Zachariah Branch have been dismissed, his attorney announced Wednesday.

The former Georgia standout was arrested on April 19 in Athens, Ga., and charged with obstructing a police officer and obstructing public sidewalks/streets.

The following weekend, the Falcons selected Branch in the third round (79th overall) of the 2026 NFL Draft.

"After reviewing all evidence, including videos, and discussing the case with us, the State agreed to dismiss all charges against Mr. Branch," attorney Kim Stephens said in a statement, per The Athletic. "Zachariah cooperated fully with

law enforcement and did not commit a crime on the night of his arrest and never should have been arrested. We are glad this matter is over and that Mr. Branch's excellent reputation and good name restored."

In his lone season at Georgia in 2025, following a transfer from Southern California, Branch led the Bulldogs with a school-record 81 receptions for 811 yards and six touchdowns. Georgia went 12-2 and lost 39-34 to Ole Miss in the Sugar Bowl.

In three college seasons, the first two at USC, Branch had 159 receptions for 1,634 yards and nine touchdowns in 37 games.



Special Photo: Kirby Lee-Imagn Images  
Atlanta Falcons rookie wide receiver Zachariah Branch had misdemeanor obstruction charges stemming from an April arrest in Athens dismissed Wednesday.

# Early takeaways from MLB-best Braves

By Mark Bowman  
Braves.com

ATLANTA -- Drake Baldwin is about two weeks from rejoining the Braves' lineup, and Hurston Waldrep is about four weeks from adding to the rotation depth that hasn't been an issue since many of us prematurely worried about it when four starting pitchers were injured during Spring Training.

Yeah, Austin Riley has endured the most frustrating 60-game stretch of his career, and Ha-Seong Kim entered Wednesday with as many hits (4) in 45 at-bats as Kyle Farmer has recorded with just 14 at-bats.

But for the most part, things continue to go right for manager Walt Weiss and the Braves, who remain on pace for 110-plus wins. Here are a few thoughts about where the team stands with 100 games remaining.

1. Weiss delivered good

news on Tuesday when he said Baldwin could return during the next homestand, which runs June 16-21. Missing just a month with a strained oblique seems to be the best-possible outcome. Baldwin entered Wednesday tied with James Wood for the NL lead in weighted runs created plus (160).

There's no doubt the Braves miss Baldwin's impact bat. But entering Wednesday, they had gone 9-4 and scored 5.4 runs per game since he was injured on May 18. They scored 5.2 runs per game while going 32-16 in the 48 games played before he strained his right oblique. Don't try to make sense of it. Just accept that this team is really good.

2. Weiss deserves a lot of credit for regularly playing Jorge Mateo instead of Kim over the past week. Mateo has always had incredible tools. The 30-year-old veteran was the Yankees' top prospect (per MLB Pipeline) in 2016. New

York's No. 2 prospect at the time was Aaron Judge.

Who knows how long Mateo continues to shine with both the bat and the glove. But Weiss has shown he'll stick with the hot hand, even if that means sparingly playing Kim, who is on a one-year, \$20 million deal. President of baseball operations Alex Anthopoulos also deserves credit for giving Weiss the confidence to know he supports these kinds of decisions.

3. Chris Sale was set to enter Thursday's start against the Blue Jays ranked fourth in the Majors (third in the NL) with a 2.01 ERA. The 37-year-old hurler has continued to impress through his first 11 starts. His four-seamer averaged 97 mph during last week's start at Fenway Park. That's the highest average he has produced with that pitch in a game since the end of the 2018 season.

With another strong start, Sale could join Roger Clem-

ens (2005), Justin Verlander (2022), Tim Hudson (2014) and Kenny Rogers (2005) as the only pitchers 37 or older to produce a sub 2.00 ERA through the first 12 starts of a season going back to the start of 2000.

4. Matt Olson played in his 844th consecutive game on Wednesday. Barring any postponements, he'll pass Stan Musial and rank eighth on the all-time list on Aug. 2. There's at least a chance Olson could eventually rank No. 3 on this list. But he'll never catch Lou Gehrig, who played 2,130 consecutive games.

With MLB celebrating Lou Gehrig Day on Tuesday, Olson tallied a pair of extra-base hits, including a unique game-winning homer. Given Olson is the game's current Iron Man, there was at least reason to wonder if the home run was wind-aided or Gehrig-aided?

5. Within a recent newsletter, I wrote that nine Braves



File Photo

Atlanta Braves manager Walt Weiss is making all the right moves so far as Atlanta leads Major League Baseball in wins and has a nine-game lead in their division with about 100 games left to play.

are deserving of an All-Star nod. My colleague Jason Foster mentioned Dominic Smith as another potential candidate. Yeah, I know he's not going to get more votes than Shohei Ohtani as the NL's designated hitter. But Foster was correct to include Smith as an underdog selection.

Anyhow, my nine candidates include five pitchers: Sale, Bryce Elder, Raisel Igle-

sias, Robert Suarez and Dylan Lee. The pitchers aren't part of the ballot process that began on Thursday.

The Braves position players I think could be elected include Ronald Acuña Jr., Michael Harris II, Olson and Baldwin. Take a look at the ballot and determine which Braves you believe should be in the NL's starting lineup.

## Sale feeling like 2018 again

By Mark Bowman  
Braves.com

ATLANTA — Chris Sale's return to Fenway Park likely played a part in him producing his highest average four-seam fastball velocity since the end of the 2018 season.

But the Braves' 37-year-old hurler may have also benefited from the two extra days of rest, which he will once again experience before starting against the Blue Jays on Thursday night at Truist Park.

"It's always a good day when Sale is on the mound for us," Braves manager Walt Weiss said. "We always feel good."

Sale ranks fourth in the Majors (third in the NL) with a 2.01 ERA. He has allowed two earned runs or fewer in 10 of his first 11 starts. With another strong start, he could join Roger Clemens (2005), Justin Verlander (2022), Tim Hudson (2014) and Kenny Rogers (2005) as the

only pitchers age 37 or older to produce a sub-2.00 ERA through the first 12 starts of a season (since 2000).

When the Braves acquired Sale from the Red Sox before the 2024 season, they were taking a chance on an injury-plagued hurler who had totaled 151 innings from 2020-23. But the lefty won the 2024 NL Cy Young Award and he has continued to get stronger with age.

Sale's four-seamer averaged 97 mph as he limited the Red Sox to two runs over five innings on May 28. That stands as the pitch's highest average velo in any game since the start of 2019. His second-highest average was also recorded last month, when he averaged 96.8 mph with his heater during a May 16 home start against Boston.



File Photo

Atlanta ace Chris Sale lost Thursday's game against the Toronto Blue Jays but says he is feeling like his old self so far this season, especially when he gets an extra day of rest.

## Moving the Chains: 90% air ... and other impracticalities

By Scott Ludwig  
MagicLudwig1@gmail.com

Trees are 90% air.'

According to Arnold Palmer, anyway.

By that he meant there's a high probability of hitting a golf ball directly through the branches of a tree since most of its mass comes from the carbon dioxide in the air.

If your name is Arnold Palmer, that may be true. For everyone else, it's just not practical.

Case in point: when I was on my high school golf team, I followed Arnie's advice. Rather than becoming the next Arnold Palmer, I butchered so many trees I came close to being the next Paul Bunyan.

Long story short: Palmer's observation didn't make sense — just like some other things in the world of sports.

For example, why is a basketball court 94 feet long? Why not an even 100?

OK, that was more of a rhetorical question than anything else. Besides, who cares? Let's take it up a notch.

Now that the average player in the NBA is 6'7" tall, which is 4 inches taller than the average player was in 1950, why is the goal still at the same height? At one time dunking the ball was the exception, not the rule — as it is now. Players making baskets 90% of the time, as they do by dunking the basketball, doesn't seem very challenging.

Taking it a step further, if offensive goaltending is touching the basketball anytime it is inside the rim, shouldn't it be defensive goaltending if the ball is touched anytime

it is above the rim? Serious question: how is it even remotely fair that a jump shot 12 feet in the air can be swatted away like a fly?

And why can basketball players call a timeout while airborne and falling out of bounds? Shouldn't they have at least one foot on the court at the time?

Speaking of feet inbounds, let's move along to football. Why does the Super Bowl start at a time (6:40 p.m.) that NO OTHER GAME starts during the course of the regular season? Is it fair that the participating teams have to adjust their pre-game rituals on Super Bowl Sunday to accommodate a kickoff time they're not accustomed to? And surely those ridiculously long half-time shows disrupt the flow of the game in some way.

And why aren't video reviews used for the single most arguable call the sport has to offer: pass interference (or the lack thereof)?

And why doesn't the NFL eliminate the new 'dynamic kickoff' that has taken away the element of surprise for onsiders kicks, not to mention taking away the excitement generated by the way kickoffs were conducted since the dawn of civilization?

And why does college football still allow that ridiculous 'down without contact' rule? Why make an innocent slip as punitive as a devastating tackle?

And if an official is figuratively part of the field and therefore dropping the football when colliding with an official is considered a fumble, why can't contact with the ground

— which is literally part of the field — cause one, too?

And seriously, NFL: SEVENTEEN games? On what planet besides earth do they play an odd number of games during the regular season?

And why are the NFL (as well as the NCAA) trying different things to speed up the game — which have continually demonstrated to do just the opposite? I remember when games were over in three hours. Today they're lucky to finish in four.

Speaking of games that drag on for too long, it's time to address Major League Baseball.

Why do baseball managers wear the same uniforms as the players on their team? It's not like that in other sports. You don't see Andy Reid standing on the sidelines wearing shoulder pads and a helmet or John Calipari sitting on the team bench wearing a pair of shorts.

Speaking of wearing shorts, why does tennis use 15 — 30 — 40 — game as a scoring system and not 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 (or game)? Why complicate things? And how come players get second serves? That's like giving a professional golfer a mulligan, a kicker another try after a miss, or a batter another swing after strike three.

And if boxers can talk to their trainers between rounds and golfers can talk to their caddies between shots, why can't tennis players talk to their coaches during a match?

Switching gears, fans pay good money to watch sporting events. They should be allowed to cheer as they see fit. That should include ten-

nis, golf, and bowling. Why should they be any different from baseball, football, and basketball? Why can't a fan who paid good money to watch yell 'shank it' on Brooks Koepka's backswing?

In soccer, who is responsible for keeping track of the time — and why it is always kept a secret? It seems to me that more than one person — I have to assume it's one of the officials on the field — should know how much time is left in the game. Like the fans, for example.

By the way, if there's any sport that needs someone to keep track of the time, it's baseball. Why not just say that whichever team is ahead after a certain amount of time has elapsed should be declared the winner? All of the other team sports have time limits on their games. For basketball it's 48 minutes and for football it's 60. But for baseball, it's until the cows come home.

Ninety minutes for a baseball game sounds reasonable. That's 10 minutes per inning. If the game is tied at that point, the two coaches could meet on the mound for a quick game of rock/paper/scissors to decide the winner. That way, at least it would add a little excitement to a game that otherwise moves along at the pace of a glacier.

Then again, if you enjoy watching two teams chew sunflower seeds, spit tobacco, and adjust their batting gloves (and/or crotches) a bazillion times — in between the 10 or 11 minutes of actual action in a game — baseball is the sport for you.

Although, let's be serious: it's not very practical.



Special Photo: Daniel Dunn-Imagn Images

San Antonio Spurs star Victor Wembanyama walks the court during Game 1 of the NBA Finals on Wednesday in San Antonio, where two fans who entered the playing surface during the fourth quarter were later banned for life by the NBA.

## NBA bans fans for rushing court, Wemby in Game 1

Field Level Media

The cost of an on-court selfie with Spurs All-Star Victor Wembanyama during Game 1 of the NBA Finals was a lifetime ban by the league for a pair of fans who disrupted the game in the fourth quarter on Wednesday night in San Antonio.

San Antonio trailed the New York Knicks 92-86 and had possession with 6 minutes, 28 seconds left in the game when a male fan ran on the court holding his phone above his head in his right hand. He approached Wembanyama near the 3-point line, stood in front of him with his cellphone fixed on the 7-foot-4 Wembanyama, who smiled briefly as security closed in and escorted the fan beneath the Spurs' basket and out of the arena.

"The individual who entered

the court area during Game 1 of The Finals was arrested and will be banned for life from all NBA arenas. A second individual will also receive a lifetime ban for his role in the incident," the NBA said in a statement on Thursday.

Spurs rookie Dylan Harper lost the ball as the fan was taken off the court and Knicks forward Mikal Bridges grabbed it for an apparent steal. Because of the disruption, referees huddled to determine the result of the change of possession should be a jump-ball. Wembanyama easily won the tip as the game resumed.

NBA ticket purchases note fans strictly are prohibited from entering all restricted areas of the stadium, including the court.

Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said the fan wasn't a factor in San Antonio struggling to score down the stretch.

# Thomasville business leader among Leadership Georgia honorees

## Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — Leadership Georgia has announced the recipients of its 2026 statewide awards, honoring five distinguished Georgians whose leadership, service and impact have strengthened communities and institutions across the state.

The 2026 honorees include business executives, nonprofit leaders, higher education advocates and civic changemakers whose work reflects Leadership Georgia's mission of building a stronger, more connected Georgia through informed and collaborative leadership.

Among the five chosen is Vann Parrott, the chief operating officer of Big Top Manufacturing in Thomasville.

The other recipients are:

- William "Dink" NeSmith, co-owner of Community Newspapers Inc. of Cornelia;
- Jay Bailey, president and CEO of Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs in Atlanta;
- Kathryn Dennis, president

of Community Foundation of Central Georgia in Macon;

• Jere Morehead, president of the University of Georgia in Athens.

"Each of these nominees represents the best of Leadership



Georgia," Camila Knowles, Leadership Georgia's Board of Trustees chair, said. "Their influence extends far beyond their individual professions or communities. Through service,

innovation, mentorship and a deep commitment to Georgia, they have created lasting impact across our state and inspired others to lead with purpose."

The awards will be presented during the 2026 Leadership Georgia Alumni Gala on Nov. 14.

Parrott is the recipient of the 2026 Frederick B. Kerr Service Award, which recognizes extraordinary service and dedication to Leadership Georgia. For more than 25 years, Parrott has served Leadership Georgia in numerous leadership roles, including program chair, trustee and president. His influence has been especially impactful in southwest Georgia, where he has helped cultivate generations of engaged leaders and strengthen connections across communities throughout the region.

Known for his steady leadership, institutional knowledge and unwavering willingness to serve, Parrott's impact can be seen throughout the organization and across the state.



Special Photo

## DID YOU KNOW?

(MCC) Americans will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States in July 2026, and the word "semiquincentennial" may come up in conversation during those celebrations. Some people may not be familiar with the term and what it means. A semiquincentennial is the 250th anniversary of something. It breaks down to "half" of a "quincentennial," which is 500 years. Synonyms may include sestercentennial, bisequicentennial or quartermillennial. Each term refers to a period of 250 years. It's a rather large word for a simple meaning, but people are bound to hear more of it as 2026 goes on and Independence Day is celebrated on July 4.

## From 2A MOSQUITO

can offer the best protection, he said.

Individuals can have different results with products, so he suggested experimenting to find the one that works best.

While county workers are not allowed to spray along private roads or treat private property, Green said that he is available to consult with individuals who are having problems with mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can breed in

a minute amount of water, even a bottle cap from a plastic drink bottle, the manager said. One product that can help are mosquito dunks, which are available at home-improvement stores.

Green also encouraged beekeepers and individuals who host hives on their property to let him know where honey bees are located. The larvae used can affect bees, and with the location of hives available the technicians can avoid spraying close to them.

"We need those honey bees," Green said. "We need our pollinators."

**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.

" P O N A X H F V P T S D B P R C P D U  
V P D J P D J P V S B P K X T R O P D X R N M N F K  
C X S K R . . . N D X N E R C X J K X S R X V R  
R X S T C X K V P C S B Z S V R C X V P D J P D J  
R X S T C X K . " — H X K M O V R K X X Q

Previous Solution: "Stay present in the moment as much as possible and understand things are not going to go according to plan." — Demi Lovato

TODAY'S CLUE: O s i e n b e N

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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.

" T R X V G L H S T R X Z O J L H J H M T R X Z  
G N J Z V A Z N J S J Z N X H O Z N I N M N H V N M L H  
V G N G L W V R Z T R Q V G N Y R Z P M , A X V  
V G N H T R X Z N J M . " — B J K N W A J P M Y L H

Previous Solution: "I love music and I think singing is a direct line to your heart ... one of the greatest teachers I had was the singing teacher." — Meryl Streep

TODAY'S CLUE: n s i e n b e X

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## From 2A ARTISTS

Carp," carved from holly wood harvested from his backyard.

The opening reception drew a large crowd of artists, collectors, family members and community supporters, with attendees filling the gallery as they viewed the works on display. Conversations spilled from one artwork to the next as visitors discussed techniques, shared personal connections to the pieces and celebrated the accomplishments of local artists.

Beyond recognizing artistic achievement, the exhibition served as a gathering place for artists, collectors and community members from across southwest Georgia. During the reception, attendees remarked on the quality and diversity of the work on display, with one visitor noting the exhibition demonstrated "how much talent and creativity there is" throughout the region.

Willis said one of the most rewarding aspects of the annual exhibition is seeing artists grow over time. She pointed to artists who have progressed from participating in group exhibitions to earning solo shows at the Arts Council gallery. In a region not often associated with a vibrant art scene, the exhibition offers a different perspective, one focused on creativity, craftsmanship and community connection.

The 26th annual Southwest Georgia Regional Fine Art Exhibition and Sale will remain on display at the Albany Area Arts Council gallery. Images of the winning works, artist information and juror details are available through the Arts Council's online exhibition gallery.

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**Calhoun Co. Legals**

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR 2026 BEER AND WINE LICENSE Mer Soledad Galvan Valdovinos has petitioned the City of Arlington, Georgia for a license to sell beer and wine at the following location. El Supremo Grill 2, 17576 Highland Ave. N, Arlington, GA 39813. Citizens wishing to give written or oral comment should be present at the Council meeting at the Jimmie C. Harpe Community Center on 2nd Tuesday of the month, June 9, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Call **229-888-9300** to subscribe to the **Albany Herald.**

**Albany Legals**

**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	SOLUTIONS
1 peak (6)	_____
2 sends a text (8)	_____
3 in dreamland, perhaps (6)	_____
4 lack of ease (10)	_____
5 cast out (8)	_____
6 expanses of exposed rock (8)	_____
7 British actress Rampling (9)	_____

MIT	SUM	SA	DIS	ASL
GES	CO	OU	OPS	BAN
RLO	CHA	MES	MFO	IS
TTE	HED	TCR	RT	EFP

Saturday's Answers: 1. APPROVES 2. DISMAL 3. GLITTERATI 4. MIDWEEK 5. CRUDITES 6. WINCHESTER 7. BIFID 6/8

**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	SOLUTIONS
1 what champions display (8)	_____
2 passes out (6)	_____
3 indicates indifference (6)	_____
4 1960s marine TV star (7)	_____
5 gets more mature, presumably (4)	_____
6 "Little Mermaid" king (6)	_____
7 start to grow (9)	_____

IT	IN	TRO	RU	IES
FA	ES	TS	FLI	AG
SH	ON	PP	PH	MIN
GER	ATE	TR	ER	GS

Monday's Answers: 1. SUMMIT 2. MESSAGES 3. ASLEEP 4. DISCOMFORT 5. BANISHED 6. OUTCROPS 7. CHARLOTTE 6/9

**Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle**  
Edited by Patti Varol

**ACROSS**

- 1 Wig makeup
- 5 Food that might be served alla vodka
- 10 Diamond experts?
- 14 "KPop Demon Hunters" bandmate of Mira and Zoey
- 15 Fuel-carrying ship
- 16 Go past a simmer
- 17 Cocktail poured with a heavy hand
- 19 Teeny bit
- 20 Norway's capital
- 21 Texting format, briefly
- 22 School composition
- 23 "As \_\_\_ on TV"
- 25 Dessert that quivers
- 27 Chopping tool
- 29 Honest amount of reliable work
- 34 Young chap
- 35 Male cat
- 36 Some church donations
- 37 Frosty
- 38 Grasped
- 39 \_\_\_ and yang
- 40 Hoppy beer letters
- 41 Like plagiarized text
- 43 Delt neighbor
- 44 La Brea \_\_\_ Pits
- 45 Resilient person
- 48 Method: Abbr.
- 49 Sportscaster Musburger
- 50 "Another thing ..."
- 52 Like steaks with a lot of marbling
- 55 Mermaid's realm
- 57 Singular
- 59 Baghdad locale
- 60 Social media debut of a romantic relationship, or what 17-, 29-, and 45-Across have
- 63 iPhone virtual assistant
- 64 Skip, as a syllable
- 65 Passed-down tales
- 66 "Ciao!"
- 67 Breading need
- 68 Like some Olympic races

**DOWN**

- 1 Time sheet figs.
- 2 Car
- 3 "So happy to be back together!"
- 4 Rummage (through)
- 5 "Love Is Blind" personal space
- 6 Broadcasts
- 7 Car-unlocking tool
- 8 Grew anxious
- 9 Torah holder
- 10 Assassin's Creed game company
- 11 Sounds from cows
- 12 Pocket bread
- 13 Defeat, as a dragon
- 18 Enemies
- 22 Pixieish
- 24 Never
- 26 Wright of "Black Panther"
- 27 Red carpet celebs
- 28 Precision knife brand
- 30 "Thanks a \_\_\_!"
- 31 "You asked for a fight, you'll get one!"
- 32 Square up with
- 33 Former Russian rulers
- 36 Wait Disney Concert Hall designer Frank
- 39 Shaggy ox
- 42 Letters on some Pride merch
- 43 Traditional Mexican game of chance
- 46 At a reduced price
- 47 Jazz icon Fitzgerald
- 51 All \_\_\_ Day: November 2
- 52 Black Power symbol
- 53 Song that might end on a high note
- 54 Like a cranberry, or a dessert that might contain cranberries
- 56 Does some math
- 58 Very light brown
- 60 "Wait just a minute!"
- 61 Permit
- 62 Dress edge

**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:**

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

06/09/26

By Amanda Rafkin & Amie Walker  
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