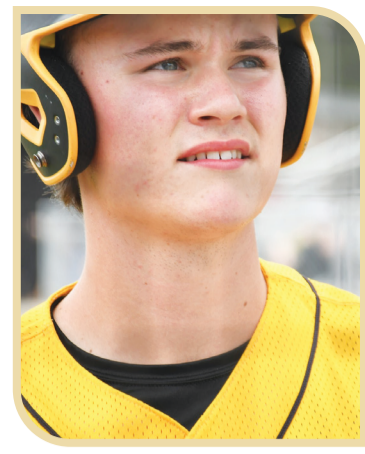


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Ralph Nader
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The Albany HERALD

Serving readers and online viewers in Metro Albany, Camilla, Tifton and Americus



Player of year
Worth's Kilcrease honored
• Page 9A



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TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2026



Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin

Albany Police Department Capt. Terrence Whitlock, left, and Chief Michael Persley address the Dougherty County Commission on Monday. The officers gave an update on the department's Repeat Offender Initiative, launched in January.

Albany police officials offer update on Repeat Offender Initiative

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY -- One percent is a small portion of the city's population, but the Albany Police Department recognizes that this small percentage of residents is responsible for a massive amount of the crime, particularly violent crimes, on the streets.

Seeking to make an impact on those violent crimes, the department in January launched its Repeat Offender Initiative. In launching that effort, police described the goal as reaching the "1% of the population that drive gun violence that has plagued the city."

In 2025, there were 23 homicides in Dougherty County, and the people police want to reach are those who are repeat perpetrators of violence and themselves are often the victims in shootings. The initiative looks to identify and reach those most at risk of being both victims and perpetrators in that cycle.

So far, a working group has been formed and is meeting, and a staff of two officers assigned to the initiative is keeping an eye on those who fit into the group the initiative is trying to reach.

"We've identified several offenders we're trying to monitor and make sure they stay in line with their (bond) conditions," Albany police

See POLICE, 2A

Phoebe electrophysiologist reaches Advanced Pacemaker milestone



Special Photo: Phoebe

The Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital electrophysiology team and representatives from Medtronic celebrate Dr. James Coman's 100th Micra pacemaker procedure.

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY-- For nearly two years, Karla Frazier was having trouble breathing.

"I started getting tired and short of breath when I was walking. I thought it could be asthma," the 57-year old from Camilla said.

The undiagnosed condition made it difficult for her to handle her job, work in her yard and fully enjoy being with her grandchildren. But, she says, "I would just keep on going."

One Sunday morning in April

2025, Frazier said she felt so bad she went to the ER in her hometown hospital. Her heart rate was so low, the doctor wanted to admit her.

"I just went to see if I had a cold or something," she said. "I wasn't ready to stay in the hospital."

Frazier left, but the doctor made her promise she would seek advanced care at Phoebe the next day. She lived up to that promise.

"The next morning, I washed my clothes, took my grandba-

See PHOEBE, 2A

James Rubino installed in new role at Marine Corps Logistics Command



Special Photo

James L. Rubino, center, takes part in a ceremony as he was welcomed to Marine Corps Logistics Command in Albany. A retired Marine colonel, Rubino held multiple commands during his 32 years in uniform.

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE-ALBANY

Marine Corps Logistics Command (MARCORLOGCOM) welcomed James L. Rubino as the command's executive deputy during his Senior Executive Service appointment during a recent ceremony at Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany.

In his new role, Rubino will oversee integrated logistics support to the Fleet Marine Force and serve as the principal civilian advisor to the commanding general of MARCORLOGCOM.

Prior to his appointment to the Senior Executive Service, Rubino served five years as the deputy director of the

Logistics Division at Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics, overseeing sustainment programs, logistics policy, logistics information technology, and maritime prepositioning initiatives.

A retired Marine Corps colonel with more than 32 years of service, he held multiple command, staff and

joint assignments, including command of Combat Logistics Regiment 35 and service as the Marine Corps Forces Pacific G-4.

His military career included participation in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi

See RUBINO, 2A



JAMES L. RUBINO

Lee County property assessment notices set to arrive as farm values jump 83%

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

LEESBURG — Lee County property owners should expect to receive assessment notices soon, but local officials are urging residents to read them carefully and understand that

higher assessed values do not necessarily mean equally higher tax bills.

The Lee County Board of Tax Assessors approved the 2026 assessment notices Wednesday and voted to include an informational insert designed to help taxpayers understand

how property values, exemptions and appeals work.

Among the most significant changes in this year's preliminary digest is an average 83% increase in agricultural land fair market values. The figure

See NOTICES, 2A



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

Members of the Lee County Board of Tax Assessors and members of the public discuss upcoming property assessment notices during a meeting Wednesday.

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Welcome New Residents!

Class of 2029



Phoebe
Family Medicine Residency



Ali Annooz, MD



Evan Dilican, MD



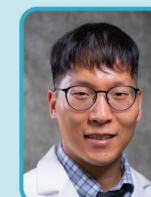
Zeba Ejaz, MD



Clive Keago, MD



Samuel Kouatcheu, MD



Jae Lee, DO



Esteria Maxim, MD



Stephen Meyers, MD



Saurabh Saxena, MD



Jean Toffey, DO



Ayanna Turner, MD



Jonassie Zamor, MD

Public safety drives Leesburg's \$4.2 million Fiscal Year '27 budget

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

LEESBURG — The Leesburg City Council approved the city's Fiscal Year 2027 budget Tuesday night, adopting a spending plan that projects approximately \$4.21 million in general fund revenues and expenditures and increases investments in pub-

lic safety, administration and sanitation services.

The adopted budget anticipates \$4,207,633 in general fund revenue, up from the Fiscal Year 2026 approved budget of \$4,091,154. Major revenue sources include local-option sales tax collections of \$766,700, refuse collection charges of \$625,880, payments from the Lee Coun-

ty Board of Education totaling \$526,359 and insurance premium taxes of \$401,170. Property tax revenues are projected at \$386,294. The city also budgeted a \$100,000 beginning fund balance and a \$150,000 transfer from other funds.

Public safety remains the city's largest expenditure category, with a FY '27 budget of \$2,018,139. Personnel costs account for most of that spending, with police salaries and benefits projected at \$1.76 million. The budget also includes funding for vehicle maintenance, uniforms, community relations activities and other operational expenses.

Administrative services are budgeted at \$584,925, an increase from the FY '26 approved amount of \$545,339. Personnel costs for administration are projected at \$362,343, while the budget also includes allocations for computer support,

insurance, training and contributions to community organizations, including the Lee County Library, Family Connections and the Lee County Chamber of Commerce.

Public works expenditures include a refuse collection contract budgeted at \$542,562 and near-

ly \$321,000 in personnel costs. The department also budgeted funds for equipment maintenance, street lighting, mosquito control and other operational needs.

The budget maintains a \$50,000 contingency fund to address unforeseen expenses

during the fiscal year.

The adopted spending plan reflects modest growth in city revenues and continued emphasis on maintaining core municipal services, particularly public safety and sanitation, which together account for a significant share of general fund expenditures.



Special Photo

Downtown Leesburg is pictured at sunset in a photo from the city of Leesburg's website. City leaders approved a \$4.2 million Fiscal Year 2027 budget Tuesday night, with public safety and essential services accounting for the largest share of spending.

From 1A POLICE

Capt. Terrence Whitlock said. "We're meeting with the DA's office. We're meeting with faith-based leaders."

Recently, officers also have been making traffic stops in high-crime areas to identify individuals who have active arrest or probation warrants and get them off the streets, Deputy Chief Wendy Luster said.

"As a result, we are recovering weapons," she said. "We are going to continue to do that until we see a decrease."

Whitlock and Chief Michael Persley gave an update on the Repeat Offender Initiative to the Dougherty County Commission on Monday.

Whether a crime occurs in the city limits or unincorporated Dougherty County, the commission is involved as the budget for the jail and courts are a countywide function. About 45% of the county's budget goes toward criminal justice, Commissioner Gloria Gaines said.

"And that is money that comes out of our citizens' pockets," she said.

The Albany program is a pilot expansion of an Atlanta initiative that was established in 2022 and has been credited with reducing violent crime, according to police. Elements of the Atlanta initiative include tracking repeat offenders and sharing information on those offenders with other law enforcement agencies.

Police will work with the district attorney's office, judges and other officials to prevent violent defendants from re-entering the community while awaiting disposition of violence charges. Part of the initiative is to make better cases to secure convictions against violent offenders and to identify and monitor those who are at risk of committing violence or becoming victims themselves.

In addition to more closely monitoring those who are most likely to play a role in violent crime through monitoring and encouraging pre-trial detention when warranted, at-risk individuals also can receive intervention, including assistance with substance abuse, employment training, anger management and other support.

The program can be successful "when you spend money on the front end with the right resources with those who want to (change)," Persley said. "One thing that will make this successful is ... we give them something to do. If we don't give them some things to do, it will be highly unsuccessful."

For Gaines, changing the mindset of those who are willing to do so would be a good outcome.

"If we get one or two individuals to change their path, that's the goal," she said. "If we can change their mindset and give them something better to do, that's the goal. Unfortunately, we have those who are not going to change. Those are the people we want to keep in jail."

From 1A NOTICES

prompted concerns from residents, who questioned how another round of reassessments would be received after last year's tax digest controversy.

"People are going to really get aggravated," resident Brian Granberry told the board. "It's one thing on top of the next."

Officials emphasized that the increase represents changes in fair market value and does not automatically translate into an equivalent increase in property taxes.

"The 83% is just the fair market value increase," Board of Tax Assessors Chairman Philip Husain said. "Most of your agricultural and your forest land property is under what's called a covenant, and the covenant lowers values significantly."

Chief Tax Assessor Doug Goodin said the revaluations are part of the county's normal assessment cycle.

"Land wasn't reassessed last year. Farm property wasn't reassessed, and commercial property wasn't either," he said. "This is the year for that again. The majority of farms in Lee County are under conservation. We've all worked really hard to get everything right."

Under Georgia law, property owners can voluntarily place qualifying agricultural, timber and conservation lands into covenant programs that assess taxes based on current use rather than often much higher fair market values. In exchange, landowners agree to keep the property in a qualifying use for a specified period.

"There's a preferential covenant, a conservation use covenant, an FLPA covenant, and a transitional FLPA that you can put in for one year if you're in a transitional area and think you might develop it within a year," Goodin said. "You can put it in one year at a time."

Board member Amanda Wiley reassured residents that staff members are available to answer questions and help property owners understand their options.

"Somebody can email Doug and say, 'Here's my property. What can I do?'" Wiley said.

Board members said many agricultural properties have

not been reassessed in approximately 15 years or longer, contributing to the sizable increase in values.

Officials also stressed that assessment notices reflect fair market values rather than actual tax bills.

"We're not trying to increase anyone's property above its fair market value," Husain said.

Property tax bills are influenced by several factors beyond market value, including millage rates, exemptions and tax limitation programs. Officials noted that many agricultural and timber properties participating in conservation programs may see significant increases in fair market value while continuing to pay taxes based on substantially lower covenant values.

The meeting also included extensive discussion about property appeals.

"All you can appeal is the fair market value from last year to this year," Chief Appraiser Doug McCormick told attendees.

Officials explained that taxpayers cannot appeal millage rates or overall tax bills through the assessment appeal process. Appeals are limited to issues such as fair market value, uniformity and taxability.

Board members also expressed frustration that the new assessment notice format

required by state law provides only a single estimated tax savings figure rather than separating savings by taxing entity, such as the county and school system.

"That's something we had great discussion about," Husain said. "We needed to have tax savings divided by the taxing entity. As far as we've been able to tell right now, that's not going to be allowed. They want one number and one number only."

To help address confusion, the board voted to include an educational insert titled "Understanding the Annual Notice of Assessment" with the mailing.

"I think this is helpful information for people to be able to read their assessment," Wiley said.

Officials also discussed House Bill 581, which generally limits annual increases in taxable value for qualifying homesteaded properties to no more than 3% per year, even when market values rise more sharply.

Officials repeatedly encouraged property owners to review their assessment notices carefully, determine whether they qualify for homestead or conservation protections, and contact the assessor's office if they have questions about their individual property values.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Betty Day (26-040) has submitted an application to the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission requesting Special Approval to operate a Community Residence to serve five to six clients on a .36-acre parcel zoned R-1 (Single-Family Residential District). The property is at 1124 Acker Dr. (0000N/00019/045). The property owner is AMIE LLC. The applicant is Betty Day, **Ward 3**

Yolanda Williams (26-041) has submitted an application to the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission requesting that the Official Zoning Map of Dougherty County, Georgia, be amended to rezone a 0.23-acre parcel from R-2 (Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District) to C-R (Community Residential Multiple-Dwelling District). The property is at 2017 Indica Trail (00059/00024/008). The purpose of the rezoning is to operate a community residence with 7 clients. The owner of the property is Haven's Light Group LLC. The applicant is Yolanda Williams, **Ward 6**

Camelia Powell (26-042) - has submitted an application to the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission requesting that the Official Zoning Map of Dougherty County, Georgia, be amended to rezone a 0.24-acre parcel from R-3 (Single-Family Residential District) to C-R (Community Residential Multiple-Dwelling District). The property is at 1408 Edgerly (0000H/00014/016). The purpose of the rezoning is to allow rental rooms. The owner of the property and applicant is Camelia Powell, **Ward 3**

GMX Real Estate Group Acquisitions, LLC (26-043) - has submitted an application to the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission requesting that the Official Zoning Map of Dougherty County, Georgia, be amended to rezone a 0.845-acre parcel from C-7 (Mixed-Use Planned Development District) to C-2 (General Mixed-Use Business District). The property is at 2705 Dawson Rd (00352/00002/06K). The purpose of the rezoning is to allow for the operation of a coffee shop. The owner of the property is RCG-Albany PM, LLC. The applicant is GMX Real Estate Group Acquisitions, LLC, **Ward 5**

The Albany Dougherty Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on this request on **Thursday, July 2, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.** at the Government Center, 222 Pine Avenue, Room 100, Albany, GA. Based on the information presented at the public meeting, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation and forward it to the Board of City Commissioners.

The City of Albany Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing on **Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.** in the Government Center, 222 Pine Avenue, Room 100, Albany, GA 31701.

Meetings of the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission and the City of Albany Board of Commissioners are open to the public. Those wishing to speak or provide comments should contact the Planning & Development Services Department before the meeting at (229) 438-3901, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

As set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Albany does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to or treatment or employment in its programs or activities. The Human Resources Department has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in section 35.107 of the Department of Justice Regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the rights provided there is available at the Office of Human Resources. The City of Albany will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice (7 working days). Any requests for reasonable accommodations required by individuals to fully participate in an open meeting, program, or activity of the City of Albany, Georgia, should be directed to Paul Forgey, AICP, 240 Pine Avenue, Suite 300, Albany, Georgia, 31701, (229) 438-3901.

From 1A PHOEBE

bies to my mother's house, then went to the ER in Albany," she said.

At Phoebe, Frazier was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with bradycardia, a condition in which the heart beats too slowly or pauses, depriving the body of oxygen, and she was told she needed a pacemaker.

"I had great nurses," Frazier said. "They got me everything they could on the pacemaker because I wanted to read up on it. My nurses and my children talked to me about it, and I went on and made up my mind to do it."

Phoebe Electrophysiologist Dr. James Coman decided the best option would be the Micra AV, the world's smallest pacemaker.

"Micra is a leadless pacemaker that can be implanted in about six minutes through

an IV in the vein of the leg," Coman said. "There are no cuts needed on the chest as with a typical pacemaker, and the battery lasts for about 12 years. Not every patient is a candidate for this device, but for those who are, it represents a leap forward in comfort and management for those specific patients."

Phoebe was the first hospital in the region to utilize the device, and Coman recently became the first physician to implant the Micra in 100 patients in south Georgia.

"Our volume has risen significantly over the last few years," Coman said. "Patients have no awareness the device is in their heart, and there are no long-term restrictions after one is placed. These devices are also extremely hard to infect, so they are great choices for patients at the highest risk for recurrent infections."

The device, which is about the size of a large vitamin capsule, continuously monitors

the heart's electrical activity and delivers tiny electrical impulses to keep it beating at a normal, steady pace. It has an outstanding success rate, and it has certainly worked for Karla Frazier.

"I used to have to do a little bit and sit down, do a little bit and sit down," she said. "Now, I can keep going without having to stop. I don't have shortness of breath like before."

Frazier's pacemaker has truly been a life-changer. She says she's back to full activity at work, and she no longer struggles to do yard work or play with her grandkids.

"I was kind of skeptical, but it's been great," she said.

South Georgians who believe they need to be evaluated to determine if they need a pacemaker should talk to their primary care physician or cardiologist. They can also call Phoebe Electrophysiology at (229) 312-7790 for more information.

From 1A RUBINO

Freedom and humanitarian assistance efforts during Operation Tomodachi in Japan.

"Our civilians provide a steady hand on the tiller, guiding us in the right direction," Maj. Gen. Keith D. Reventlow, the commanding general of Marine Corps Logistics Command, said. "The Executive Deputy plays a critical role in ensuring this organization remains aligned with

service and joint priorities, while carrying the long-term vision needed to support the Fleet Marine Force.

"Jim brings decades of experience leading Marines across the total force, and that experience matters. He understands where the Marine Corps is going and will help lead this organization as we modernize to meet the challenges of the future."

Rubino is a native of Beaver, Pa., and holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Boston University and a bachelor of science de-

gree in Management Science from Waynesburg College.

Rubino said his appointment reflects not only a new responsibility, but also the continued support of the family, mentors and teammates who helped shape his career of service.

"You don't get through a career like this by yourself," he said. "I have been fortunate to have my family's support through 18 moves, and I appreciate everyone who helped make this opportunity possible."

Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Today is another day for big moves if your individual cycles support them. Aligning with a partner could be easier than at some times, both minds and hearts could be vibing nicely now.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Explore your mind, it contains more answers and more wisdom than you might think. You find your own thoughts in quiet, away from the digital noise. An old-school method could work perfectly it a new situation.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Let your self-expression out to play, bring on the whimsy. Silly is a wonderful antidote to 24/7 competence. A lot can start to come together for you financially, it looks like the Universe is bringing next steps soon.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): This is the part of the year when the focus is rightly on you. A lot of gifts can be revealed over the next month or so — you could soon have the clarity of knowing exactly how to move forward.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your word is law. So are your thoughts. Both reflect the beliefs that underlie your current frequency and the creation of your reality. Shift your energy to shift your life — manifestation always follows frequency.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You are the sum of what moves your needle. Hang with people whose lives you admire and whose accomplishments you aspire to. Follow people online with the same qualities. Place yourself where you can be inspired to grow.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A lot of building blocks can be set into place over the next few weeks as the path gradually emerges just ahead of you. Clarity isn't seeing ten steps ahead in a blur. Clarity is seeing the next step, in high resolution.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Another dip into the well of self today could bring forth another treasure of under-

standing. Planning something mind-expanding could be a fit — a new class, a new adventure, a new goal.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Cooperation and collaboration pave the way for everyone to win; isn't that really a better outcome? When all rise, tensions release equally. A friend could offer a helpful solution.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A generous attitude juices relationships in a way that servicing ego never can. Good relationships are each one for all, not all for just one. Tap the wholesome and benevolent vibe in both of you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Building easier workflows isn't just for high-tech offices. Invest into making your daily responsibilities easier — diagnose pain points, consider fixes, roll out improvements, feel less stressed, enjoy more living!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your gaze could turn more outward as you get interested in something new; a previous situation likely gets resolved or put on the back burner. It's a great period to express yourself fully.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: A lot of the stress that life brought in during 2026 should be over and there should be less on your horizon for the remainder of the year. Some excellent possibilities should arrive in the next 30 days or so, there's the chance for positive growth, clear thinking, getting on the path to your destiny, all with assistance from the Universe. Don't let worry, slow you down late in July, it should pass by quickly anyway. A big chance to increase cash flow could land in August, be sure to do all due diligence before you sign. Late August, just say no to a bad idea whose time will never come, even if you really want to try it. Mid-September could bring a windfall or happy surprise. October brings high wisdom and attunement, stay connected to your insights and intuition.



1810 - The Pacific Fur Company is formed by John Jacob Astor

1868 - Christopher Latham Shoes receives a patent for the "Type-Writer"

1887 - The first national park, Banff National Park is created in Canada when the Rocky Mountains Park Act becomes law

1926 - The first SAT exam is administered by the College Board

1938 - The Civil Aeronautics Authority is formed in the US with the signing into law of the Civil Aeronautics Act

1951 - The SS United States is christened and launched

1969 - IBM creates the modern software industry when they announce they will price its software and services separately from their hardware

1985 - Air India Flight 182 is downed by a terrorist bomb off the coast of Ireland killing all 329 aboard

2001 - An 8.4 earthquake hits the southern coast of Peru, followed by a tsunami that leaves 74 dead and 2,687 injured

2016 - The United Kingdom votes 52% to 48% to leave the European Union

2017 - Pakistan has a series of terrorist attacks that are responsible for 96 deaths and 200 wounded

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- International Widow's Day
- Let it Go Day
- National Hydration Day
- National Pecan Sandies Day
- National Pink Day
- Pink Flamingo Day

- Public Service Day
- Runner's Selfie Day
- SAT Math Day
- Typewriting Day
- United Nations Public Service Day
- United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday

The Albany Herald (U.S.P.S. 012-320), 306 W. Broad Ave., Albany, Ga 31701, published daily by GTLN, is the legal organ of Dougherty and Calhoun Counties. Periodicals class postage paid at Albany, Ga. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Albany Herald, 306 W. Broad Ave., Albany, Ga 31701. Business Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead.

Benjamin Franklin,
American Founding Father (1706-1790)

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

Nearly every time I drive by one of Albany's drug motels, there is an ambulance, fire truck or police car in the parking lot. Our local elected officials have allowed these eyesores to become a constant danger, endangering our brave first responders. Please say a prayer for them. Shame on our city and county commissions. These dumps should be torn down.

Why not let Molson/Miller take over the "brewery" and use it for a tourism attraction?

Really, we have people here buying the Trump nonsense of rigged elections in California and LA in particular? People, stop drinking the Koolaid, reading those silly posts, and watching Fox Not Really News. How could a non-reality show Republican contestant with no experience running anything but his mouth win a mayoral race in a city where only 18% of registered voters are Republican? They have got you concerned about LA, and you have burned through your credit card limits to buy food and gas.

For some reason, some voters think Democrats will help lower prices. They never lowered prices during the four years Biden was president. Gas has dropped to \$3.42 a gallon. You will never see it at that price if Democrats win the midterms. Prices will go back up over \$4 a gallon and will never get below \$4.

If the U.S. had no immigration, there would be no America.

I rode by the homeless encampment/dump site behind the library, a block down from Deerfield, and was amazed at the cleanup job. If the homeless MO is to set up in places where they won't be seen, the cleanup crew took care of that. What an excellent job, and quick response from the city after The Albany Herald reported the mess.

That apartment complex is rat-infested and falling apart. Why aren't city officials involved?

Squawker, you're not even a frontrunner. You complain about the Braves when they're one of the best teams in baseball. I guess you'll celebrate if the Phillies do catch them. Why don't you quit watching their games and get out more?

That the clown in the White House held a bunch of cage fighting matches on those hallowed grounds shows just how low this buffoon will sink. He's crazed -- and y'all said Joe Biden was addled -- and yet you cult members and Congress keep being led around by this person who is dead set on destroying our country to feed his own massive ego.

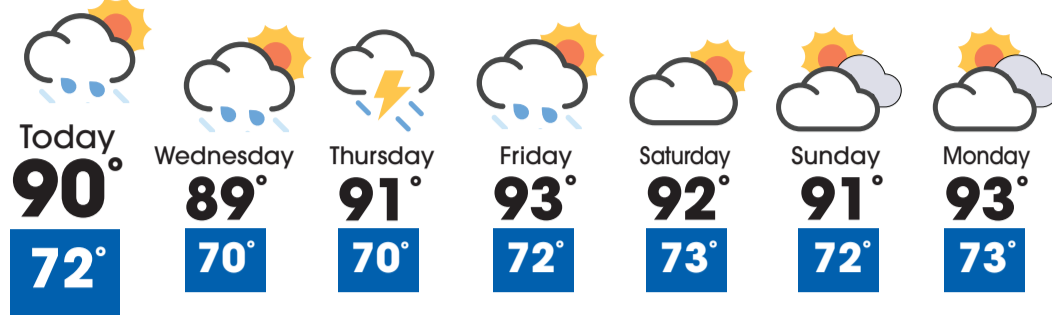
Lincoln's illegal war of 1861-65: For continued collection of excessive 47-51% tariff taxes from the South for the enrichment of northern railroads, industry and banks ... not slavery.

I am starting to worry about Carlton. I think some of these comments might be getting to him. At lunch, he casually asked whether he could use the express lane if the other person was in the trunk.

Fletcher, your column about Lewis Grizzard piqued my interest, so I checked out some of his books. You're right, some of the topics are a bit dated, but you're also right that his skills far surpass any of his would-be impersonators ... like Dick Yarbrough.

ADS: Advertising can be placed by phone, email and/or in person Mon-Fri., 8:30 am - 5 pm or call 229-888-9300. For classifieds and display/public notices/online ads email Phil Cody at phil.cody@albanyherald.com or call 229-888-9300. Our office is at 306 W. Broad Ave., Albany, GA 31701. **BILLING:** Business hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5 pm, contact number: 229-888-9300.

Weather Forecast



Daily Bridge Club

Louie's empty wallet

By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

Father's Day is celebratory at Unlucky Louie's house. Louie has sired nine children and, by extension, a half-dozen grandchildren.

NORTH			
♠ A 5 3			
♥ Q 4 3 2			
♦ A J 4			
♣ 8 6 5			
WEST		EAST	
♠ K Q 10 9 4		♠ J 8 7 2	
♥ J 9 7		♥ A 10 8 5	
♦ Q 6 3 2		♦ 10	
♣ 3		♣ 10 7 4 2	
SOUTH			
♠ 6			
♥ K 6			
♦ K 9 8 7 5			
♣ A K Q J 9			
South	West	North	East
1 ♠	1 ♠	6 ♣	3 ♠
5 ♣	Pass	6 ♣	All Pass
Opening lead — ♠ K			
©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC			



Frank Stewart

Louie took dummy's ace. He led a trump to his king and a trump back to dummy's jack. When East showed out, Louie lost a trump and the ace of hearts.

The winning line was difficult. Louie's correct play in trumps was to lead the jack without taking the king (also winning if West had the singleton queen). If East has the singleton ten, Louie can pick up the trumps, but he needs three entries to his hand. At Trick Two, he must make a farsighted play, leading a heart from dummy.

Say East takes the ace and forces with a spade. Louie then leads a trump to the jack. He returns a club to his hand, lets the nine of trumps ride and takes the ace. He can come back to the king of hearts to draw West's queen of trumps and take the rest with high clubs.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

"I love 'em all," Louie told me, "but they're always needing five dollars or ten dollars or sometimes more. I'm a father — if a father is somebody who has a bunch of pictures in his wallet where he used to keep his money."

Louie would have an easier time keeping his kids financed as well as fed if he held down his losses in the club's penny game. As today's South, Louie opened one diamond, West threw in a one-spade overcall, North offered a negative double and East jammed the auction with a jump to three spades. Louie's hand was worth five clubs, and North bid a slam even though Louie would be declarer.

West led the king of spades, and

Advice Columnist

Married friend might be flirting

By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

— Mixed Signals

Dear Eric: I am a long-retired senior citizen. I manage my days by finding things to do. In the evenings, I generally go out to a handful of local establishments. Being single I sit at the bar to dine and have a cocktail. I am friendly and chat with just about anyone.

At one establishment, I run into a lady from time to time. She is married but her husband works long hours and is seldom with her. I have met him a couple times. Seems like a nice enough fellow.

She and I have gotten friendly. To me it was just friendly social talk. Recently, however, she was out with a friend, and I was sitting several seats away. Her friend left and she moved next to me.

To be honest, I do find her attractive but never gave much thought to a romantic connection due to her marriage situation.

But that night we talked much longer than ever before. I found that she consistently would touch me. Maybe on the hand or shoulder. When I said goodnight that evening, she put her arms around me and kissed me on the cheeks.

She also mentioned to me several times when she would be back and I should come by. I have not gone back since, because I am confused. Not sure if she is just very friendly and gregarious or romantically attracted to me. If she were single, I would ask her out in a heartbeat. I know I will run into her again soon and am not sure how to handle it. I understand she is married and that should be taboo. What should I do?

Dear Eric: My (former) friend is a Fixer. She'd constantly give therapy advice though her experience was only from online chats. When she can't fix you, she disappears into thin air. I hurt myself and her calls stopped and so did her texts.

We connected again but it was for her advantage as she needed help. Our grandchild had stage 4 cancer. No calls asking how he is or how I'm holding up. I needed her more than ever. She said I was using her as an emotional punching bag. I responded with "you emotionally neglected me when I needed you the most!" I love my friend like a sister

Dear Signals: This may be an innocuous friendship, but it will be helpful for you and for her if you get some clarity.

First, check in with yourself. You stated you'd ask her out if she was single, but you won't be taking any action because she's married. That suggests that you'd be most comfortable with a friendship that didn't include cheek-kisses and touching. It's appropriate to set that boundary.

You can do so either by simply avoiding them should they come up again, or by directly telling her you enjoy her friendship, but you felt a little confused about the physical gestures and would prefer to express friendship in a different way. Directness is always better, to be honest. You need not imply she meant anything by it, but it's always good to let friends and others know how you like — and don't like — to be touched.

Dear Fixing: Before you reach out, you should ask yourself if the friend that you're seeking is the same person you'd be reaching out to. You write that she can't stop trying to fix everyone and she has been resistant when you asked her to listen and support you. You want to try again to get her to listen, but has anything changed?

Whether she genuinely believes she's helping or whether she is misapplying a desire to control, it's clear there's a big mismatch in your relationship. And that mismatch has resulted in hurt (perhaps, hurt on both sides). If you go into this with the same expectation that she'll listen, you're likely to only get hurt again.

This isn't to say that the expectation is wrong. You need a friend who will listen to you and support you. You've expressed that need. But you may realize that she is no longer that friend and so it may be better to seek that connection elsewhere.

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

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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

— Georgia Trust for —
LOCAL NEWS

**TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE**

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6

COLUMNIST ■ MICHAEL FERGUSON II

Congress must not balance budget on the backs of veterans

Some members of Congress seem to have forgotten the people they were elected to serve. While regular American citizens struggle through rising costs, inflation, uncertainty, and the constant threat of government shutdowns, many in Congress continue to receive their paychecks.

Yet some of those same elected officials appear willing to place the burden of Washington's failures on the backs of veterans. That is unacceptable.

Veterans did not create the dysfunction in Washington. Veterans did not cause the government to shut down. Veterans did not create inflation, high gas prices, or the misplaced spending priorities that continue to frustrate working families across this nation.

Veterans simply answered the call.

Some were drafted into service. Others volunteered. Some served one enlistment. Others retired after a full career. Many are still serving today. But all of them, in one way or another, made a commitment to defend the freedoms of the United States of America.

That is why H.R. 9237, the Take Care of America's Veterans Act, deserves serious public attention. Veterans organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, have raised concerns that provisions in this bill could alter disability compensation tied to common service-connected conditions such as tinnitus and obstructive sleep apnea.

These are not minor issues. Tinnitus affects countless veterans who live every day with ringing, buzzing or noise in their ears as a result of military service. Sleep apnea affects a veteran's ability to rest, recover, function and maintain a normal quality of life. These conditions can affect employment, family life, mental health and overall well-being.



FERGUSON

Veterans' disability compensation is not charity. It is not welfare. It is not a political favor. It is earned compensation for injuries, illnesses and conditions connected to military service. Congress should not expand benefits for one group of veterans by reducing or weakening benefits for another. That is robbing Peter to pay Paul. No veteran should have to lose so another veteran can gain.

Even more troubling is the dangerous precedent this could set. If Congress begins adjusting disability ratings to satisfy budget concerns rather than relying on medical evidence and the established VA rating process, then every veteran's earned benefit could one day be placed on the chopping block.

That should concern all of us. At a time when billions of dollars are being sent overseas and the American people are being asked to endure higher costs at home, veterans should not be forced to defend benefits they already earned. The men and women who served this nation deserve better than political games, budget tricks, and last-minute legislative maneuvers that threaten their compensation.

Congress must stand with "We the People." Congress must stand with active-duty service members, veterans who completed their service, retirees, and the families who stood beside them. The message should be clear: Do not balance the budget on the backs of veterans.

If H.R. 9237 contains provisions that reduce or weaken disability compensation for tinnitus, sleep apnea, or any other service-connected condition, those provisions should be removed. Veterans kept their promise to America. Now Congress must keep its promise to veterans.

COLUMNIST ■ RALPH NADER:

Why are Democrats opposing the benefits of an impeachment drive?

In my past two columns, I made the case for the Democratic Party to take the lead in pushing for Trump's impeachment. The majority of people favor firing Trump, and the massive number of blatant, impeachable acts by the lawless, corrupt, violent, unstable, dangerous Tyrant Trump increases by the day. If it helps the passive Democratic Party leadership, constitutional law specialists agree that were the Founding Fathers here today, not one would oppose impeachment.

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries and Sen. Chuck Schumer, the party's leaders in the House and Senate, respectively, know all the ways Trump is wrecking America. They know that the Democrats in the House and Senate overwhelmingly want to impeach Trump. So what's the problem with these two men and their weak Democratic National Committee?

Why do they constantly whine, "Now is not the time," "We don't have the votes," "Wait until after the midterm elections" which they know Trump has his Trumpsters working overtime to disrupt? These are not the real reasons; they are pretexts.

Trump, the burgeoning arsonist of our Republic and the Constitution for which it stands, should not be given one day more without being confronted by a fast-rising national impeachment movement. Along with a growing majority of Americans, the powerful New York City Bar Task Force declared in a March 9, 2026 report that Trump should be immediately impeached.

Why then is the Party leadership so cowardly and corrupt?

1. They are antidemocratic control freaks, quite comfortable contracting out their campaigns to corporate-conflicted, incompetent consultants. This is a long-building drive of political immolation. These control freaks have excluded the input and voter turnout proposals of progressive citizen groups and progressive labor unions, which could have shown them how to landslide the worst GOP ever in election after election

2. By definition, control freaks do not like electoral mandates from the public. These Democrats want to win elections their way: raise lots of money, including from corporate PACs and Wall Street, run on a very few issues distinguishing them from the Republicans, and declare they are not Trump the vengeful, wild outlaw. People want candidates who are fighters, specifically for their rights and interests, not slick politicians giving them double talk.

3. The Articles of Impeachment introduced by Representative John Larson, D-Conn. — viewed hostilely by Jeffries — offer a mechanism to check Trump's unbridled destruction of our democracy and "kitchen-table" necessities. Impeachment shines a spotlight on a host of reform agendas that the ossified Democratic leadership does not want to address, unlike restive younger Democratic candidates, some of whom are winning upset primaries. For example, Trump is starting his own wars, without the authority of Congress, a prime impeachable offense. However, AIPAC, the Israeli-government-can-do-no-wrong lobby embedded in the party, and the giant weapons manufacturers like Boeing, General Dynamics and Lock-

heed Martin support Trump's war making abuses.

A similar aversion extends to the "take care that the laws be faithfully executed" clause of the Constitution. This would open up a can of worms for the Democrats because Democratic Presidents have failed to faithfully execute the law by ignoring waves of corporate crime, hundreds of

billions of dollars in commercial billing fraud, including on Medicare and Medicaid, refusing to push for adequate corporate enforcement budgets, bankrolling huge corporate welfare schemes and allowing the tax code to be turned into Swiss cheese riddled with loopholes for the rich and powerful.

The Democratic leadership doesn't want the November election to be about the concentration of power abuses by plutocrats who have been inflicting so many injustices, crimes and anxieties on the American people, reducing their livelihoods and public services.

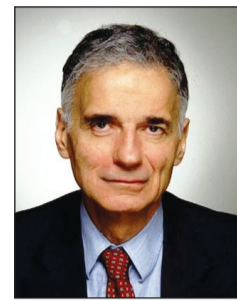
The Dems do not even take a loud, consistent campaign stand against Trump's crazed tax exemptions for big corporations — many of which pay little or no income taxes on their immense profits. According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, "The automaker Tesla reported zero federal income tax paid on almost \$5.7 billion of U.S. income in 2025. Southwest Airlines avoided all federal income tax on \$561 million of income last year; its competitor United Airlines achieved the same zero-tax result on almost \$4.3 billion of U.S. income. The entertainment company Live Nation Entertainment paid zero federal income tax on \$98 million of U.S. income. [and] Yum! Brands, the parent company of the fast-food chains KFC, Taco Bell and Pizza Hut, paid no federal income tax on over \$1 billion of U.S. pretax profits last year.

Small wonder that the huge number of Americans who despise Trump also do not trust the Democratic Party, which the media describes month-after-month as being in disarray. Repeatedly, people ask "What does the Democratic Party stand for?" The Democratic Party is led by political cowards which is why it is in disarray.

The bright light comes from insurgent Democrats from Texas to Maine who are coming to Congress to join the progressive core there and may challenge the leadership posts of Jeffries and Schumer in January 2027.

More immediate is how feeble the Democrats are in opposing Trump's intricate campaign to overturn election results. Trump has already said there should not be elections in November. He has spoken about invoking the Insurrection Act to unleash the police and the "Injustice Department" against state election officials, seizing ballots, obstructing mail-in ballots, sending intimidating police to the polls or election certification sites.

In April, Politico published seven very useful, practical ways to keep the November elections free and fair. Best advice for active voters and state officials I've seen. Stealing elections has to be done locally, where you are. Stand up to stop cold gangster Trump from committing his greatest impeachable crime this year. Don't wait for the Democratic Party to show you the way.



NADER

COLUMNIST ■ DICK YARBROUGH

Will our legacy be to leave this a better world than we found it?

Have you ever thought about your legacy? Legacy being defined as "the lasting impact one leaves on the world, both the tangible assets they pass down and the intangible influence they have on others."

For some reason, I have been pondering that subject lately. Maybe it is because I have more years in the rearview mirror than I have ahead of me. What am I leaving behind when I am gone? (By the way, I have no immediate plans to leave, but the timing is not up to me.)

My mentor, the late Jasper Dorsey, was vice president of Southern Bell's Georgia operations. He taught me a lot about the business world and played an important role in my progress up through the corporate ranks, for which I am grateful. More importantly, he taught me a lot of lessons about life. He constantly reminded me that we all have an obligation to leave this a better world than we found it. Otherwise, we have just wasted time and space.

I am pretty much set on the tangible assets I plan to pass on. But what about the intangibles? One of the most important things I can pass down is my good name. I inherited it from my parents. They were not wealthy people, but their reputation was solid gold. That was their legacy, the intangible assets that they bequeathed me. I pray I can pass along to my heirs. But that depends on me.

I have a term I call "walking sermons," and it means how we and our actions are perceived when we aren't aware people are watching us. In other words, do we walk our talk? One of my favorite stories concerns evangelist Billy Graham and it occurred many years ago, back when trains were the principal mode of travel.

He was in line seeking to change his ticket, dealing with a recalcitrant and rude clerk behind the counter. Billy Graham tried to explain to the clerk why he needed to take a different train, but to no avail. After several unsuccessful attempts, he thanked the clerk and left. Standing behind Billy Graham in the line was a newspaper reporter who recognized Graham from his television crusades and waited on him to



YARBROUGH

remind the clerk who he was or to demand to see his supervisor. He did neither.

The reporter later wrote that was probably Billy Graham's greatest sermon because it showed that he was the same person in the pulpit that he was in line to change his train ticket. A walking sermon.

I witnessed something similar some years ago when I was in New York to attend the Peabody Awards, given by the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Georgia. It was late afternoon, and famed radio commentator Paul Harvey walked into the hotel restaurant and was told the lunch hour was over. He asked politely if they could just fix him a sandwich and he would take it with him to his room. He had not eaten all day. He was told no again. After some more conversation, to no avail, he, like Billy Graham, thanked the waitress and left. I had always admired Paul Harvey's commentaries, but my admiration for the man grew that day as well.

I pass these anecdotes along because as eminent as both were in their respective fields, what you saw and heard was genuine. I have a feeling that is how they would both want to be remembered.

How do you want to be remembered? What do you want your legacy to be? And will this be a better world as a result of your efforts? Or mine? I am fairly sure at this stage of the game I'm not going to discover a cure for cancer or get nations to turn their swords into plowshares or unlock the mysteries of the universe. But I can be a good role model for my grandsons and great-grandkids and hopefully influence their behavior in a positive way. I can be a good friend without wanting something in return. I can be loyal to people who know I can be trusted. I can keep things in perspective — remember the Serenity Prayer — and swallow my ego and say "I'm sorry" when I deserve to be.

We are only going to pass this way once. But if we do it right, we will leave things better than we found them. That is and should be our legacy.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:

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306 W. Broad Avenue, Albany GA, 31701

What to watch

TUESDAY

June 23, 2026

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

NBA Draft

ABC & ESPN, beginning at 7 p.m. Live
Teams stock up on rookie talent with Round 1 of the NBA Draft tonight at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. Top prospects include BYU's AJ Dybantsa, Kansas' Darryn Peterson, Duke's Cameron Boozer and North Carolina's Caleb Wilson. Round 2 is tomorrow night on ESPN.

Love It or List It

HGTV, 8 p.m. ■ Season Premiere

Real estate agent David Visentin and his designer foe Page Turner return for 12 fresh episodes, as they help fed up families with lackluster houses check off all the boxes on their dream home wish list, either through Page's full-scale renovation of their current house or David finding them a new property on the market.

Frontline

PBS, 10 p.m.

The new episode "Baby Brokers" examines lax laws that leave the for-profit adoption industry ripe for abuse. Teaming up with independent newsroom Retro Report, *Frontline* investigates how so-called baby brokers have targeted pregnant women and families looking to adopt, and how Utah has become an epicenter of the problem.

House Hunters International

HGTV, 10 p.m.

After nearly 30 years keeping Canadians warm with their HVAC business, empty nesters crave some heat of their own in the new episode "Puerto Morelos Heat Swap." Drawn back to Puerto Morelos after many trips, they plan a bold move to Mexico for sun, culture and a slower pace.



'Love It or List It'

HGTV

CATCH A CLASSIC

M*A*S*H

MOVIES!, 8 p.m.

Director Robert Altman became a household name with the 1970 hit *M*A*S*H*, winning him the coveted Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and a Best Picture Oscar nomination. Set during the Korean War, the film focuses on a group of irreverent field hospital surgeons who use booze, sex and dark humor to keep their sanity amid the horror of conflict. Maverick doctors "Hawkeye" Pierce (Donald Sutherland) and "Trapper" John McIntyre (Elliott Gould) wage their own war against military bureaucracy and moral hypocrisy while patching up an endless stream of wounded soldiers and sending them back into dan-



EVERETT COLLECTION

ger. This groundbreaking masterpiece broke all the rules, delivering a mix of bold comedy and subversive satire that manages to be hilarious and deeply somber at the same time.

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



'Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom'

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

The Departed (2006, Crime drama) Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon **Paramount, 6 p.m.**

Novocaine (2025, Action) Jack Quaid, Amber Midthunder **MGM, 6:10 p.m.**

It Ends With Us (2024, Romance) Blake Lively, Justin Baldoni **FX, 7 p.m.**

The Long Walk (2025, Suspense) Cooper Hoffman, Mark Hamill **Starz, 7:10 p.m.**

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018, Adventure) Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard **SYFY, 7:30 p.m.**

The Naked Gun (2025, Comedy) Liam Neeson, Pamela Anderson **MGM, 8 p.m.**

Wild Card (2015, Action) Jason Statham, Sofia Vergara **VH1, 8 p.m.**

Misery (1990, Horror) James Caan, Kathy Bates **BBC America, 8:30 p.m.**

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003, Fantasy) Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen **TNT, 8:45 p.m.**

Up (2009, Children) Ed Asner, Christopher Plummer **Freeform, 8:55 p.m.**

The Dark Knight (2008, Action) Christian Bale, Heath Ledger **Paramount, 9:30 p.m.**

Transporter 3 (2008, Action) Jason Statham, Natalya Rudakova **VH1, 10 p.m.**

From the editors of

TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



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What to watch

WEDNESDAY

June 24, 2026

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

2026 FIFA World Cup

FOX & FS1, beginning at 3 p.m. Live

The final group stage games take place today for Groups A, B and C with Switzerland vs. Canada (FOX), Bosnia-Herzegovina vs. Qatar (FS1), Scotland vs. Brazil (FOX), Morocco vs. Haiti (FS1), Czechia vs. Mexico (FOX) and South Africa vs. Korea Republic (FS1).

Brilliant Minds

NBC, 8 p.m.

Wolf (Zachary Quinto) treats an anxious teen boy who's faced with undergoing a terrifying brain surgery procedure while awake in the new episode "The Hero's Journey."

The Kimberley: Australia's Wild West

PBS, 10 p.m.

The documentary series about the Kimberley, the northernmost region of Western Australia, continues with "Tidal Territory." Watch as thousands of migratory shorebirds fatten up on the world's richest intertidal mudflats, mudskippers battle for mates while avoiding predators, humpback whales enter the coastal waters and small marsupials called quolls contend with an invasion of poisonous cane toads. The region's jewel is revealed when Australia's biggest tides draw the ocean away from vast areas of coral.

House Hunters

HGTV, 10 p.m.

In the new episode "Is It a We or an I?," a retired Army colonel and his wife look to buy their first home together in Charleston, South Carolina. He wants a first-floor primary that's under budget, but she's ready to seize the day with a gorgeous and upgraded house.



'The Kimberley: Australia's Wild West'

PBS

CATCH A CLASSIC

TCM Spotlight: Disaster Movies

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

While many disaster films unleash obvious destruction, others simmer in the dread of what *could* happen. The latter describes 1971's *The Andromeda Strain*, part of TCM's continuing June spotlight on disaster movies. When a town's residents are found dead after a satellite crashes, scientists race to contain a lethal organism that turns human blood into powder, set against the backdrop of a clock that's ticking down toward nuclear destruction. In 1959's *On the Beach*, nuclear war has left the residents of Melbourne, Australia — the last habitable city on Earth (but not for long) — confronting their mortality as the end draws near. The next two films tap into the "last man on Earth" trope: *The Omega Man* (1971), with Charlton Heston as the lone survivor of a global biological catastrophe; and 1959's *The World, the Flesh and the Devil* (pictured), with Harry Belafonte as a trapped miner who emerges to find a world devoid of people after the spread of radioactive dust. Rounding out the evening



MGM

are George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Godzilla: King of the Monsters!* (1956) and the Christian drama *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1935).

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



'The Menu'

SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Gladiator (2000, Historical drama) Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix **AMC, 7 p.m.**

Spider-Man: Homecoming (2017, Action) Tom Holland, Michael Keaton **SYFY, 7 p.m.**

Sweet Home Alabama (2002, Romance-comedy) Reese Witherspoon, Josh Lucas **Freeform, 7:25 p.m.**

Dreamgirls (2006, Musical) Jamie Foxx, Beyoncé Knowles **MGM, 8 p.m.**

I Can Only Imagine 2 (2026, Drama) John Michael Finley, Milo Ventimiglia **Starz, 9 p.m.**

The Lost Boys (1987, Horror) Jason Patric, Corey Haim **BBC America, 9 p.m.**

The Dark Knight Rises (2012, Action) Christian Bale, Anne Hathaway **Paramount, 9:30 p.m.**

Aquaman (2018, Action) Jason Momoa, Amber Heard **TNT, 10 p.m.**

Johnson Family Vacation (2004, Comedy) Cedric the Entertainer, Vanessa L. Williams **VH1, 10 p.m.**

Bad Boys: Ride or Die (2024, Action) Will Smith, Martin Lawrence **FX, 10:30 p.m.**

Goodfellas (1990, Crime drama) Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta **AMC, 10:30 p.m.**

The Menu (2022, Horror) Ralph Fiennes, Anya Taylor-Joy **FXM, 11:40 p.m.**

Regretting You (2025, Drama) Allison Williams, McKenna Grace **MGM, 11:55 p.m.**

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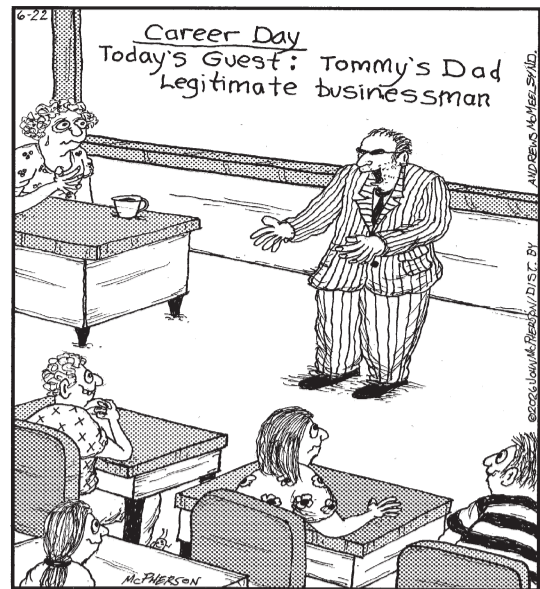
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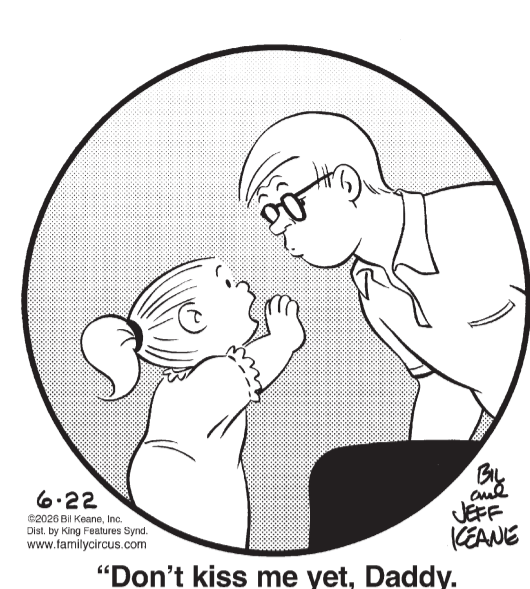
TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



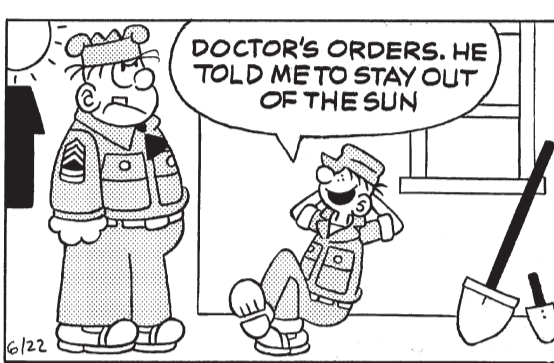
"So den, weez tie on t'ree cinderblocks, and ... BADA BING! Down to the bottom he goes! And dat was the last time anybody saw Bennie Da Mole!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bill Keane

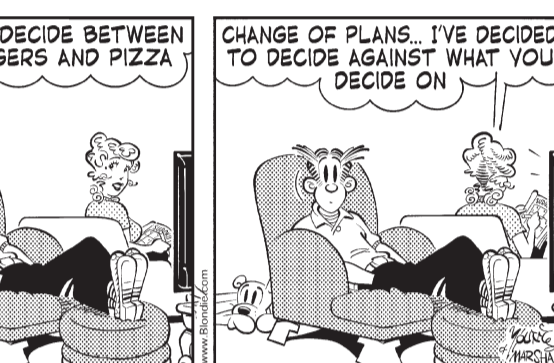
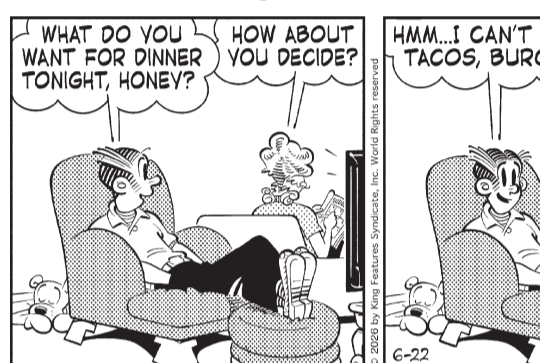


"Don't kiss me yet, Daddy. I don't have my lips out."

BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



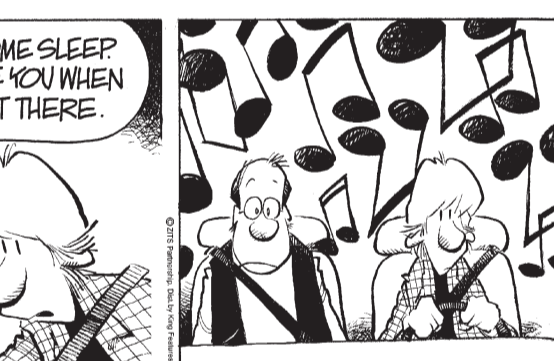
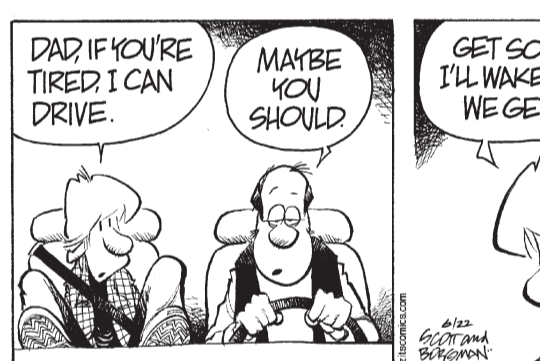
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



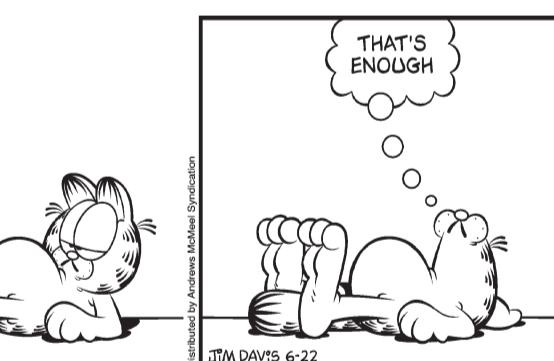
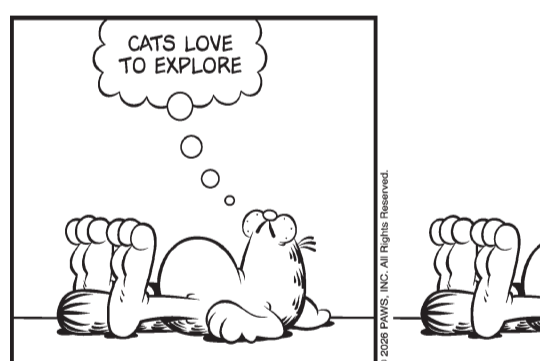
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



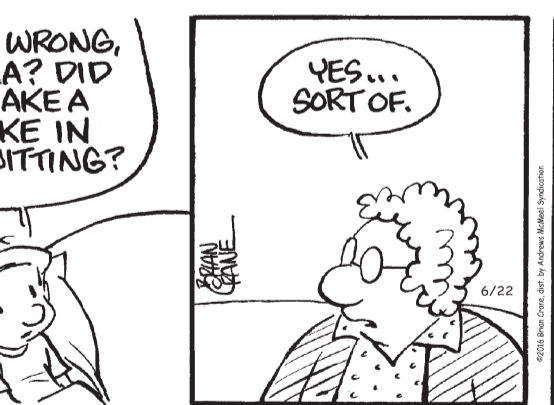
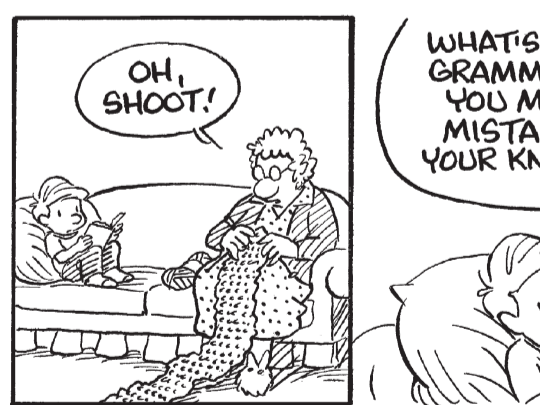
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

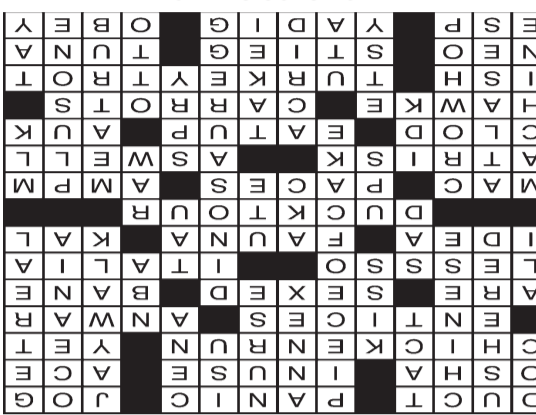
ACROSS

- 1 Channel that brings tears to one's eyes?
- 4 Diplomatic skill
- 5 "Easy-peasy-lemon-squeezy!"
- 6 Granny flat, maybe
- 7 Breastfeed
- 8 The Cyclones of the NCAA
- 9 Wrestler/actor John
- 10 Flightless migration in Toronto?
- 11 Australasia's region
- 12 "Be reasonable"
- 17 O : hug :: X : _
- 21 Org. with Cavs and Mavs
- 22 Boxer Muhammad
- 24 Paleontologist's prize find
- 27 Unhappy
- 29 Greek "T"
- 32 Org. that oversees NYC's Museum of the Dog
- 33 Sport- : auto for rugged terrain
- 36 Delivery company with brown trucks
- 38 _ and cheese
- 41 Tempos
- 42 Letters not found on a 24-hour clock
- 46 Under threat
- 48 Also
- 50 Clump of earth
- 51 "Your food is getting cold!"
- 54 Puffin kin
- 55 Maya of "Stranger Things"
- 57 Bugs Bunny fare
- 59 "Kinda like that"
- 60 Flightless migration on Thanksgiving?
- 63 "New" prefix
- 64 Nordic noir novelist Larsson
- 65 Some poke fish
- 66 Telepathy, e.g.
- 67 "Got it?," slangily
- 68 Do as one's told

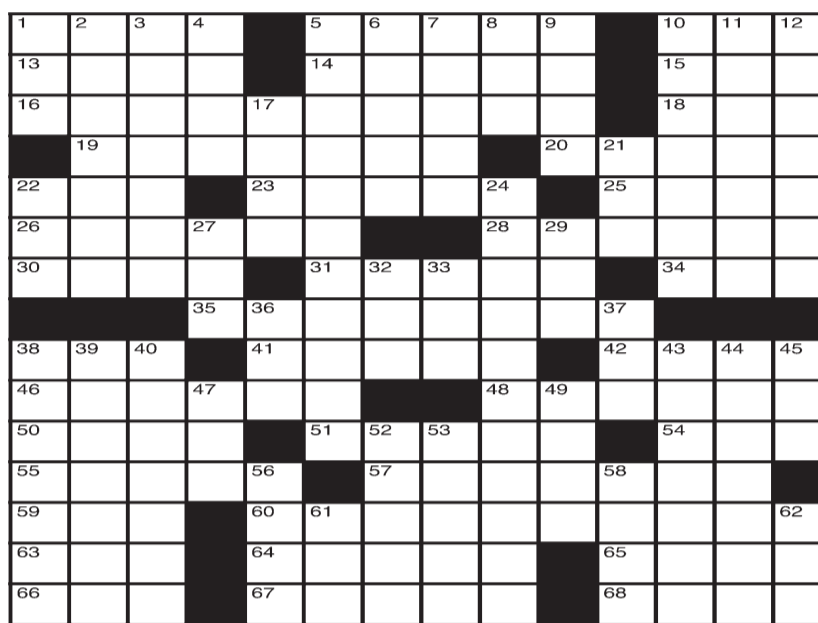
- 37 Like some poke fish
- 38 The "M" of ATM
- 39 Geography texts
- 40 Flightless migration in a cornfield?
- 43 Barbecue chef's coat?
- 44 Wedding guest's date
- 45 Civil rights leader honored in Jan.
- 47 Brief "No clue"

- 49 Light on one's feet
- 52 Bitter-smelling
- 53 "Star Trek" legend George
- 56 "Keep commerce human" website
- 58 Director Preminger
- 61 The Jazz, on scoreboards
- 62 Swift, to Swifties, when doubled

TODAY'S SOLUTION:



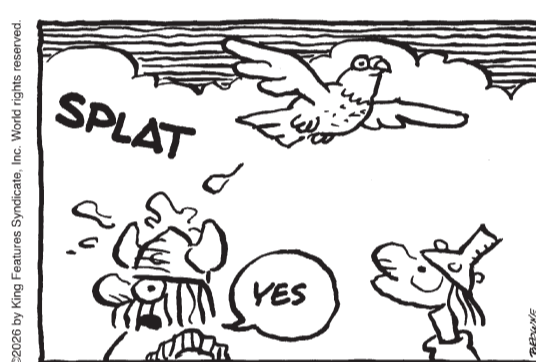
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06/22/26

By Robbie Cottom ©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

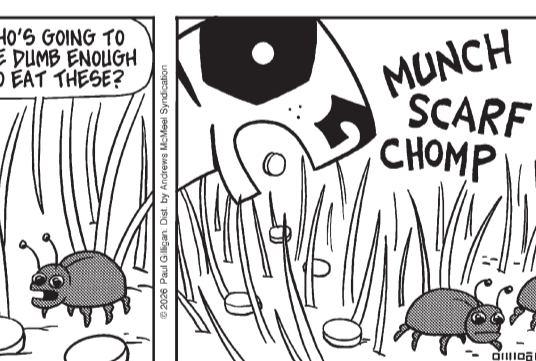
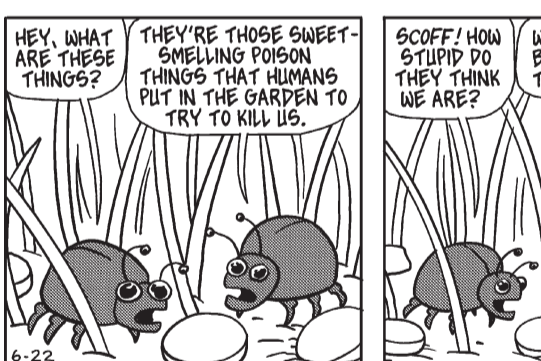
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

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



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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION: Live by the sword, die by the sword.

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

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

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.

FIFA WORLD CUP IS UNDERWAY Solution: 6 letters

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

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6/22

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Ball, Belgium, Bosnia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, England, Fans, France, Germany, Ghana, Goal, Haiti, Host, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jersey, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Paraguay, Pass, Portugal, Roar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Train, Tunisia, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan

TODAY'S ANSWER: Soccer

Elevate Summer Hosting with Health in Mind



Italian Sausage and California Grape Skewers

Servings: 6

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon dried Italian herb seasoning
- 4 precooked chicken Italian sausages
- 6 skewers (10 inches)
- 30 green, black and red Grapes from California
- 24 squares (1 inch each) red onion snipped fresh basil (optional)

In small bowl, combine olive oil, balsamic vinegar and Italian herb seasoning; set aside. Cut each sausage into six slices. Thread on skewers, alternating with grapes and onion.

Preheat grill to medium-low heat.

Place oiled piece of foil on grill and top with skewers. Grill 5 minutes, or until grapes are softened and sausage and vegetables are lightly browned, turning and basting with balsamic vinegar mixture occasionally.

Transfer to platter and garnish with snipped fresh basil, if desired.

Note: If using bamboo skewers, soak at least 1 hour in water to avoid burning.

Nutritional information per serving: 170 calories; 9 g protein; 11 g carbohydrates; 10 g fat (53% calories from fat); 2.5 g saturated fat (13% calories from saturated fat); 55 mg cholesterol; 470 mg sodium; 2 g fiber.

Easy Apps, Meals and Sides Made with Fresh, Juicy Grapes

FEATURE IMPACT

Once temperatures climb, summer entertaining tends to look a little different. Heavy comfort foods give way to lighter fare, tables move outdoors and hosts are on the hunt for dishes that feel effortless without sacrificing flavor. It's a season for skewers, salads and small bites that are easily shared on a patio among friends and loved ones.

Fresh ingredients, simple preparation and naturally hydrating foods can be the staples of your next summer soiree, especially when your goal is to spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the table with guests. Crisp, juicy, colorful Grapes from California are a natural fit as their sweetness can brighten savory dishes while balancing salty, smoky flavors off the grill.

With little preparation, grapes are a perfect snack while waiting for the main course; no peeling, slicing or complicated prep required. A quick rinse is all it takes to serve fresh grapes as an easy addition to snack trays or last-minute appetizers.

Tasty fuels healthy and healthy makes happy, which is why grapes, a natural source of antioxidants and other polyphenols and a good source of vitamin K, make for a

delicious accompaniment to usual summer fare. Serve them on their own for a hydrating snack thanks to their high water content, or take advantage of their combination of flavor, convenience and nutrition as a key ingredient that elevates summer recipes.

For example, Italian Sausage and California Grape Skewers can be the main attraction at barbecues and weekend gatherings, offering elegant presentation without spending hours in the kitchen. Paired with a California Grape Fennel and Citrus Salad, it's a light, easy meal that can both impress and refresh.

While guests wait for the main course, California Grape, Walnut and Endive Bites combine a sweet crunch with savory blue cheese. Top with a drizzle of honey – or hot honey for a bit of heat – to complement lively conversation and the familiar relaxation of summer gatherings.

In many ways, warm-weather entertaining is less about elaborate meals and more about fresh, approachable foods – like grapes – that help set the tone for a relaxing atmosphere, offering both a practical and elevated solution to make hosting a (summer) breeze.

To discover more ways to both elevate and simplify gatherings throughout the season, visit GrapesFromCalifornia.com.

California Grape Fennel and Citrus Salad

Servings: 4

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- sea salt, to taste
- 3 cups halved Grapes from California
- 3 fresh mandarin oranges, peeled and sectioned
- 1/2 cup very thin slivers fennel (anise)
- 4 cups baby arugula
- 1/3 cup roasted, salted pistachio kernels

In large bowl, stir olive oil, lemon juice, honey and salt. Add grapes, oranges and fennel; toss to coat. Place arugula in four bowls and top with fruit. Sprinkle with pistachios and serve.

Nutritional information per serving: 240 calories; 4 g protein; 33 g carbohydrates; 12 g fat (45% calories from fat); 1.5 g saturated fat (6% calories from saturated fat); 0 mg cholesterol; 60 mg sodium; 4 g fiber.



California Grape, Walnut and Endive Bites

Servings: 6

- 12 large red and green Belgian endive leaves
- 1/3 cup blue cheese
- 12 black, green and red Grapes from California, quartered
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted
- 1 tablespoon honey or hot honey

Place endive leaves on large platter and scatter equal amounts of cheese on each. Place four grape wedges on each and sprinkle with equal amounts of walnuts. Drizzle lightly with honey or hot honey.

Nutritional information per serving: 90 calories; 3 g protein; 8 g carbohydrates; 5 g fat (50% calories from fat); 1.5 g saturated fat (15% calories from saturated fat); 5 mg cholesterol; 105 mg sodium; 3 g fiber.

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Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority chapter announces 2026 scholarship recipients

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.'s Zeta Psi Sigma Albany Alumnae Chapter has announced the recipients of 13 scholarships awarded to exceptional local students

"Let's celebrate these remarkable scholarship winners, who stand ready to embark on exciting educational journeys," sorority officials said in announcing the scholarship winners, four of whom are members of the chapter's local Rhoer Club.

Officials with the local Sigma Gamma Rho chapter said that the \$500 scholarships will "help propel their aca-

demical dreams forward but also highlights the sorority's steadfast commitment to nurturing young talent and building a brighter tomorrow, therefore, truly embodying our sorority's commitment to 'greater service, greater progress' by planting financial seeds into our future generation."

The local scholarship winners were:

- Alaun Clark, Dougherty Comprehensive High School;
- Alisson Rodriguez-Morales and Heaven Keaton, Baker County High School;
- Krishna Patel, Crisp County High School;
- Aubrey Barnes (Rhoer), Georgia Cyber Academy;
- Antonio Guest, Chazsity

Tell (Rhoer), Jaala Marshall (Rhoer) and Knia Gullett, Monroe Comprehensive High School;

Caiden Gervin, Takhia Penn, Gregory Williams and Chasiti Williams (Rhoer), Westover High School.

"These students have already shown exceptional promise, and this scholarship is a powerful stepping stone toward achieving their dreams," sorority officials said in announcing the scholarship winners. "Our chapter, and the world alike, are honored, proud, and excited to witness the incredible contributions these scholars have to offer in their respective careers."



Special Illustration



Special Photo

Five Dougherty County students were among the 675 Georgia Connections Academy graduates in the Class of 2026.

Dougherty students among Georgia Connections Academy graduates

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY -- Georgia Connections Academy celebrated 675 graduates from across the state during its recent commencement ceremony. Among the graduating class were five students from Dougherty County.

Among the Albany Class of '26 graduates were Quintarus Cook, Garrett Cox, Jamari Dennard, Trenton King and Cristian Zimmerman.

Georgia Connections Academy's Class of 2026 has a wide range of post-graduation

plans. Among the graduates, 33% plan to attend two- or four-year colleges or universities, including Asbury University, Clemson University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, The Juilliard School, the University of Georgia and the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Additionally, 15% of graduates plan to pursue vocational training programs, 11% plan to enter the workforce directly upon graduation, while others plan to join the military, pursue performing arts pathways or take a gap year.

SRTC students compete at SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

THOMASVILLE -- Four Southern Regional Technical College students represented the college on a national stage recently, competing at the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta.

The four SRTC SkillsUSA members, including Ethan Fillyaw of Meigs, earned their spots at the national level after placing first at the SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference in February. The SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference, held in Atlanta each June, brings together more than 19,000 attendees for a week-long celebration of the skilled trades and is held in conjunction with the SkillsUSA Championships, where more than 6,500 state champions compete for national titles in more than 100 skilled and leadership competitions.

– Ethan Fillyaw placed sixth in technical Drafting (Post-secondary Division).

– Yudiel Duvergel competed in Electrical Construction Wiring.

– Luis Fernandez Gessa competed in Industrial Motor Control.

– Denix Hernandez competed in Medical Math. Duvergel and Hernandez



Special Photo: SRTC

The Southern Regional Technical College students who competed in the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference were, from left, Ethan Fillyaw, Denix Hernandez, Yudiel Duvergel and Luis Fernandez Gessa.

were awarded SkillPoint Certificates, which are awarded to competitors who meet or exceed the industry-defined "cut score". This means the competitor's skills are validated and endorsed by industry leaders, corporations and trade associations.

"Competing at the national level is a tremendous achievement, and these students earned every bit of it," SRTC Campus Director KaCee Miller said. "The work Ethan, Yudiel, Luis and Denix put into preparing for nationals speaks to their skill, their character, and the quality of training they receive here at SRTC. We could not be more proud to watch them represent our college on a na-

tional stage."

SkillsUSA is a national non-profit organization of students, teachers and industries working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps high school and college students enrolled in career and technical education programs to excel by teaching employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership in conjunction with their trade, technical and service occupations skills.

For more information about the SkillsUSA club at SRTC, visit online at <https://southernregional.edu/student-life>.

Southern Regional Technical College offers more than 150

degree, diploma and certificate programs that are designed to get students quickly into their desired careers, and 38 general education courses that transfer to University System of Georgia institutions and 19 private colleges and universities in Georgia. SRTC has instructional sites located in 11 counties across southwest Georgia for the convenience of its students.

For the most up-to-date information on registration, class dates, and program offerings, interested individuals can log on to www.southernregional.edu or call (888) 205-3449. Fall semester begins Aug. 18.

Calmer hurricane season expected in Atlantic

By Sam Gauntt

The Georgia Recorder

WASHINGTON — The Atlantic Ocean is predicted to have a tamer-than-usual hurricane season this year, but experts say it's necessary to remain vigilant as it can take only one serious storm to cause significant damage.

But with many of the nation's climate and weather-focused and emergency response agencies facing proposed funding cuts, some policy analysts are warning that states' ability to respond to serious weather events could be weakened.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts there will likely be between eight and 14 named storms, with between three and six of those becoming hurricanes, this season.

NOAA estimates there will be between one and three serious hurricanes — those ranging from Category 3 to Category 5, which bring winds higher than 157 mph. An average hurricane season has about 14 named storms and three serious hurricanes.

This season's relatively less-predicted intensity comes

mainly from the current El Nino, according to Matthew Rosencrans, NOAA's lead for seasonal hurricane outlook.

"August, September, October is really the peak of the hurricane season, that accounts for 90% of all your tropical storm and hurricane activity in the Atlantic," he said. "And we're expecting even that to be quiet, too."

While NOAA will update its forecast for the remainder of the season in August, Rosencrans said the difference between the early and later summer forecasts is not typically large, but often a change of just one or two predicted storms.

Even though the upcoming hurricane season isn't likely to be as intense as in years past, some storm-prone states may be more unprepared to respond to them, some experts warn.

The Trump administration's funding cuts, layoffs and reorganization efforts to the nation's weather and climate-related agencies have put these communities at risk, according to a recent report from the Center for American Progress.

"The Trump administration has just made it its mission to stretch out our federal agencies way too thin," Lucero Marquez, the center's associate director for federal climate policy, said.

Marquez said that many states don't have the infrastructure to handle severe weather events

entirely on their own without federal assistance. If local governments are forced to shoulder more of the burden, she said, it could affect their ability to respond to crises.

If agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency were to withdraw support, she said, state and local communities would not be equipped.

Top U.S. House Democrats on the Homeland Security Committee say more than 5,000 FEMA employees have left since January 2025 and a recent report by a review panel recommended more cutbacks.

According to data from the Disaster Dollar Database, a tool launched by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace that tracks federal funding for disaster recovery efforts, residents and households in Florida, Texas and Louisiana alone have received more than \$10 billion in relief payments since 2015.

But representatives for the federal government's weather and emergency response agencies said they're fully prepared for the season.

In a statement to States Newsroom, a FEMA spokesperson said the agency is "ensuring workforce stability and a strong, deployable force for upcoming national events and potential disasters; making the agency leaner, faster and laser-focused on supporting



Special Photo: Georgia Recorder

The Atlantic Ocean is predicted to have a tamer-than-usual hurricane season this year.

state, local, tribal and territorial partners before, during and after disasters."

"FEMA continues to maintain a roster of experienced leadership and support staff across headquarters and regional offices, including through acting and career personnel serving in key roles to ensure continuity of operations and mission readiness," the statement read.

A representative for the National Weather Service echoed this sentiment.

"We have been and continue to be fully staffed for around-the-clock operations to meet the rigorous demands of severe weather season, hurricane season, and all other weather hazards," Erica Cei, a spokesperson for the National Weather Service and its National Hurricane Center, said in a statement.

A lighter season doesn't mean there still can't be a dangerous or damaging storm.

Rosencrans said that the forecasts predicted the overall amount of storm activity, not necessarily the strength of an individual storm.

"Definitely the potential (exists) for any one of the storms that does form to go all the way to Cat 5, if it hits the right area of low wind shear and the right area of warm sea surface temperatures," he said. "In bulk, we're not expecting to see as many of them this year, because you just don't have as much energy in the Atlantic."

To stay safe during significant weather events, Rosencrans recommended preparing ahead of time and stocking up on food, water and gas.

He also advised residents to gather all necessary paperwork, such as proof of residency documentation, in addition to reviewing insurance policies for flooding or storm damage.

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Logue, Kilcrease lead All-Albany baseball team

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY - Southwest Georgia baseball enjoyed one of its finest seasons in recent memory.

Worth County reached the state semifinals for the first time in school history. Baconton Charter broke through to its first-ever Final Four appearance. Deerfield-Windsor advanced to the GIAA Class AAA state championship series.

Those accomplishments made selecting the Albany Herald's 2026 All-Albany Baseball Team one of the most competitive in years.

Three coaches had strong cases for Coach of the Year honors.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Worth County's Avery Kilcrease was named the Albany Herald's Baseball Player of the Year after leading the Rams to the first Final Four appearance in school history. Kilcrease dominated on the mound with an 11-3 record and a 1.09 ERA while batting .437 with 10 home runs and 34 RBIs.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Baconton Charter head coach Marc Logue led the Blazers to a 25-10 record and the program's first-ever state semifinal appearance in his first season at the helm, earning The Albany Herald's Coach of the Year honors.

Worth County's Will Smith guided the Rams to a 28-10 record and the first Final Four appearance in school history. Deerfield-Windsor's Kyle Keen led the Knights to a 21-10 record and a berth in the state championship series. Both accomplished remarkable feats.

But this year's Coach of the Year honor goes to Baconton Charter's Marc Logue.

Taking over a program is never easy. Making history in your first season is something entirely different.

In his first year as head coach, Logue guided the Blazers to a 25-10 record and the first Final Four appearance in school history. He accomplished

See **BASEBALL**, 10A



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Pelham's Josiah Battle attempts a layup while teammates Dontravise Troutman and Dequay Daniels look on during the Hornets' summer basketball game against Lee County on Wednesday in Leesburg.

Lee County runs by Pelham in summer basketball

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

LEESBURG — For five years, Mykel Edwards walked the sidelines at Lee County High School as an assistant coach.

Wednesday afternoon, he returned to Leesburg wearing different colors and sitting on the opposite bench.

"It was very strange," Edwards said. "I spent five years there, so it was definitely weird being on the far end and also being in the visitor locker room, which, believe it or not, was my first time ever in there. But it felt great being back and seeing everyone."

Edwards, now the head coach at Pelham High School, brought his Hornets to Leesburg for a summer basketball doubleheader featuring junior varsity and varsity contests against the Trojans.

Lee County came away with victories in both games, but not before Pelham made things interesting.

The junior varsity contest turned into a defensive battle that wasn't decided until the final minutes.

Pelham briefly grabbed a 23-22 lead on a steal and layup with less than two minutes remaining, putting the Hornets in position for an upset.

The Trojans, however, responded with the same defensive intensity that has become a trademark of the program.

Lee County shut down Pelham's offense the rest of the way and closed the game on an 8-2 run to secure a 30-25 victory.

The varsity game followed a similar script early.

Pelham battled toe-to-toe with the Trojans during the opening minutes and trailed just 12-9 midway through

the first half.

Then Lee County's defensive pressure began to take its toll.

The Trojans forced turnovers, pushed the pace in transition and finished the half on a 14-2 run to build a commanding 26-11 advantage.

Any hopes of a Pelham comeback disappeared after halftime.

Lee County's speed and defensive pressure continued to create problems for the Hornets as the Trojans steadily pulled away, eventually extending the margin to 53-19.

Despite the lopsided final score, Edwards saw positives from his young team.

"I felt as if we came out and played hard the first half," Edwards said. "I believe in the second half we kind of got down on ourselves because our shots weren't falling and Lee County made us uncomfortable."

Edwards said his team's effort on the defensive end was encouraging.

"What stood out to me was the first half and our defensive energy," he said. "We defended okay and now we just have to find a way to put it all together."

The Pelham coach was also pleased with what he saw from his junior varsity squad despite the narrow loss.

"My JV group surprised me as well," Edwards said. "They played much better as a team. Even though we didn't get that win, playing as a team is what will get us there."

For Lee County, the summer continues to be about developing a roster that looks significantly different from the one that took the floor

See **LEE**, 10A

Westover's William Owens chooses Mercer

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — Westover defensive tackle William Owens has spent years earning a reputation as one of the area's toughest and most dependable football players.

On Wednesday afternoon, that hard work paid off.

Surrounded by family, coaches and teammates, Owens announced that he will continue his football career at Mercer University, choosing the Bears over numerous other scholarship opportunities.

For Owens, the decision came down to more than football.

"It was about the brotherhood that I saw at Mercer," Owens said. "That and the fact that their defensive scheme is similar to what we do at Westover."

Owens also said he plans to study business while attending Mercer.

The commitment marks another milestone for a Westover program that continues to produce college-level talent under head coach Corey Joyner.

Joyner said Owens' recruitment remained active until the very end.

"William has had about 10 offers to play college football," Joyner said. "But he has impressed one coach so much that that coach has called me at least 15 times in the last 24 hours trying to convince William to decommit and



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Westover defensive tackle William Owens signs to continue his football career at Mercer University during a ceremony Wednesday afternoon at Westover High School. Joining Owens for the occasion are, from left, sister Makayla Harris, mother Latasha Miller, father Brinson Miller and cousin Qayshawn Mathis.

join his school."

Joyner said the attention Owens received from college coaches was no surprise.

"William has studied and worked hard," Joyner said. "He shows great work ethic and continues to work to get better."

The veteran coach added that Owens' leadership has become increasingly valuable this summer as Westover searches for a new defensive assistant coach.

"This summer he has kind of been acting as our defensive line coach as we try to hire a defensive coach," Joyner said. Former Westover defensive

line coach Bo Daniels, who recently became the head football coach at Monroe High School, also praised Owens during the ceremony.

Daniels coached Owens firsthand and said he possesses many of the qualities college programs seek when evaluating defensive linemen.

"As a coach, you're always looking for players that are fast, physical and tough, and that's what William is," Daniels said. "He can be stubborn at times — most good players are. But when it has to do with technique or his job, William is always coachable and will do what he is asked to do."

Those traits helped Owens develop into one of the region's most respected defensive players and ultimately earned him the opportunity to play at the NCAA Division I level.

Now he will take those talents to Macon, where he hopes to help Mercer continue its rise as one of the Southern Conference's top football programs. He will be joined by Lee County athlete Jordan Bush, who announced on social media Tuesday that he has committed to play at Mercer.

Owens is the son of Brinson and Latasha Miller.

Brendan Sorsby to enter supplemental draft

Field Level Media

Texas Tech quarterback Brendan Sorsby is entering the NFL's supplemental draft, the school announced on Monday, ending a growing legal drama surrounding his college eligibility.

Sorsby had until June 22 to decide whether to apply for the supplemental draft, which the league opens for players who miss the filing deadline for the standard draft or have college eligibility issues crop up.

Texas Tech board chairman Cody Campbell said in a statement on Monday, in part, "This decision was made with Brendan and his family and is purely an output of practical analysis of the situation. Brendan and Texas Tech stand on very solid and legitimate legal ground, but he faces a June 22nd deadline to be eligible to enter the NFL's supplemental draft, and there is no practical way to resolve all the various pending legal disputes and ensure his eligibility prior to this date."

"This is the only viable and fair path for Brendan and his future, as well as for his teammates, and our university."

The supplemental draft ap-



Special Photo: Nathan Giese/Avalanche-Journal

Texas Tech quarterback Brendan Sorsby announced Monday that he will enter the NFL Supplemental Draft, ending his pursuit of restored college eligibility following a legal battle with the NCAA over sports betting violations committed while he was a player at Indiana.

peared to be a likely option for Sorsby earlier this month — until a judge in Lubbock County, Texas, granted him a temporary injunction against the NCAA regarding the governing body's decision to rescind his eligibility over sports betting violations.

Texas Tech stood by Sorsby as he fought to regain his college eligibility, but in doing so the university angered its peers. The Big 12 Conference filed a complaint against Texas Tech and the Texas attorney general earlier Monday as it sought a ruling allowing

it to enforce its own bylaws. The Big 12 asked the court to clarify that it has the authority to establish and administer its own eligibility rules.

Separately, the NCAA filed a formal appeal in Lubbock County District Court with a request for expedited resolution in Sorsby's case, aiming to settle it before the 2026 college football season began. Sorsby's trial date had been set for February 2027.

Sorsby's attorney, Jeffrey Kessler, told ESPN on Monday of Sorsby's lawsuit against the NCAA regarding the quarterback's eligibility, "It is now moot, so we will withdraw it."

The 15 Big 12 athletic directors, excluding Texas Tech, met last week and unanimously expressed their opposition to Sorsby playing for the Red Raiders. Big 12 university presidents were scheduled to meet Monday to discuss potential sanctions.

Sorsby was the source of an offseason firestorm after his legal team admitted the quarterback placed at least 40 bets on the

See **SORSBY**, 10A



Terrell County girls continue summer work

Terrell County girls' head basketball coach Tammye Jenkins-Ware speaks with her team during a halftime break Tuesday while playing the Dougherty Lady Trojans at Monroe High School. The Lady Greenwave played back-to-back games Tuesday afternoon, falling 31-29 to Perry in a last-minute score. The Greenwave also fell to Dougherty, 24-18. Terrell County didn't have several regulars available on Tuesday as they continue through the summer work period.

Staff Photo: Joe Whiffield

Floyd Mayweather faces felony charges for bad check

Field Level Media

Floyd Mayweather allegedly wrote a \$200,000 check in December 2024 for a watch in Las Vegas but "had insufficient money, property, or credit" in his account to complete the transaction, so he now faces two felony charges per Nevada court records.

Mayweather, 49, was represented by his counsel on Monday at a hearing in Clark County court on official charges of "theft, value \$100,000 or greater" and "draw or pass check with intent to defraud, value \$1,200 or greater."

The complaint, which Clark County prosecutors filed on April 27 and was followed three days later by a court order for Mayweather to appear before a judge, alleges the former 15-time boxing champion wrote a \$200,000 check from a Wells Fargo Bank account to Gold and Beyond on Dec. 31, 2024, but could not cover the cost of the watch.

As for the theft charge, the complaint states that Mayweather wrote the check "in exchange for obtaining property or services" while "knowing that the check would not be paid when presented," and did so "knowingly, feloniously, and without lawful authority."

If found guilty of fraud, Nevada law states Mayweather



Special Photo: Joe Rondone/The Republic

Retired boxing champion Floyd Mayweather attends a sporting event in this file photo. Mayweather is facing two felony charges in Nevada after prosecutors alleged he wrote a \$200,000 check for a luxury watch in December 2024 without sufficient funds to cover the purchase.

could face a prison sentence of one to four years and be forced to pay a \$5,000 fine along with restitution costs. The felony theft charge could put him behind bars for one to 20 years and cost him as much as \$15,000 in fines.

Gold and Beyond filed the complaint against Mayweather with the Clark County District Attorney's office in February, according to Mark Cook of Cook & Kelesis, which represents the business. Cook said the delay was deliberate in hopes Mayweather would pay what he owed, but the law firm had not

received any responses from Mayweather or his counsel.

The Clark County District Attorney's Office and Mayweather's attorney were not available for comment.

Mayweather is scheduled to face kickboxer Mike Zambis on June 27 for an exhibition in Athens, Greece. Despite a tax lien of more than \$7.2 million levied by the Internal Revenue Service against Mayweather for unpaid taxes in 2018 and 2023, his tax attorneys have worked it out with the IRS to allow him to make the brief trip to Greece.



Two Albany State stars selected for HBCU Classic

Special graphic

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Albany State basketball standouts Na'Haviya Paxton and Shakur Poteat have been selected to participate in the fourth annual HBCU All-Star Dream Classic, scheduled for Aug. 8 at the famed Rucker Park in Harlem, New York.

Paxton and Poteat are among 40 student-athletes from Historically Black Colleges and Universities across the country chosen to compete in the showcase event, which highlights some of the top talent in HBCU basketball.

Their selection gives Albany State representation on one of basketball's most recognizable courts. Rucker Park has long been considered one of the sport's most iconic ven-

ues, hosting legendary players such as Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Allen Iverson and Julius Erving throughout its history.

Albany State Director of Athletics Dr. Kristene Kelly said the honor reflects the work both players have put in during their collegiate careers.

"We are incredibly proud of Na'Haviya and Shakur for earning this well-deserved opportunity," Kelly said. "Their selection reflects their hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence both on and off the court. They will represent Albany State University and HBCU athletics with pride on one of basketball's most historic stages."

The Dream Classic, now in its fourth year, serves as both a basketball showcase and a

celebration of HBCU culture and achievement. In addition to highlighting athletic talent, the event promotes educational opportunities and the impact HBCUs continue to have on students and communities nationwide.

For Paxton and Poteat, the invitation provides an opportunity to compete against many of the top players from HBCU programs while gaining exposure on a national stage.

The pair will also represent Albany State and the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference during the event, which is expected to draw fans, alumni and supporters from HBCUs across the country.

The HBCU All-Star Dream Classic is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 8, at Rucker Park in New York City.

Harris celebrates first Father's Day as dad

By Mark Bowman
Braves.com

ATLANTA — Michael Harris II has spent the past few months learning that fatherhood comes with plenty of surprises.

"It's pretty cool being a parent," the Atlanta Braves center fielder said. "I guess you can't really prepare for what it's actually going to be like, but my first couple months have been pretty exciting."

This Father's Day will be especially meaningful for Harris and his wife, Esther, who welcomed their first child, Michael Harris III — nicknamed "Trip" — in April.

The Braves outfielder credits his parents, Michael and LaTaucha Harris, for providing the example he hopes to

follow.

"I'm just kind of following in their footsteps," Harris said. "I feel like they raised me to be a good man. I just want to be there for all those moments and milestones."

Harris has balanced the demands of parenthood with one of the best stretches of his season. Since Trip's birth, the 2022 National League Rookie of the Year has hit .325 with 12 home runs and a .911 OPS, helping fuel Atlanta's offense.

The strong play has also boosted his chances of earning his first All-Star selection. Harris ranked fourth among National League outfielders in the latest All-Star voting update.

While his production on the field has been impressive, Har-

ris said his favorite moments come when he returns home after games or road trips.

"Whenever I come back home, I'm always excited to see him," Harris said. "You just want to spend as much time as you can with him."

Fortunately, Harris still has plenty of support from his own parents, who regularly attend Braves home games.

"He has put me in a good position to be successful in life and show me what it's like to be a good person, have good character and always treat everybody with respect," Harris said of his father.

Now, as his father celebrates his first Father's Day as a grandfather, Harris is beginning a new family tradition of his own.

From 9A

BASEBALL

the feat with a roster that featured just three seniors, making the postseason run even more impressive.

Baconton Charter has long been one of Southwest Georgia's most respected baseball programs, but no Blazers team had ever reached the state semifinals until this spring.

For leading that breakthrough season, Logue is the Albany Herald's 2026 Coach of the Year.

If the coaching race was close, the Player of the Year selection was much easier.

Player of the Year
Avery Kilcrease,
Worth County

No player in Southwest Georgia had a greater impact on winning than Kilcrease.

The Rams' standout was dominant at the plate and nearly unhittable on the mound while leading Worth County to its historic Final Four run.

Kilcrease batted .437 with 10 home runs and 34 RBIs while serving as one of the most dangerous hitters in the region.

On the mound, he was even better.

The junior finished 11-3 with a sparkling 1.09 ERA and recorded 153 strikeouts, the highest strikeout total of any high school pitcher in Georgia this season.

Whether he was driving in runs or overpowering hitters, Kilcrease delivered whenever the Rams needed him most, making him the clear choice as the Albany Herald's 2026 Player of the Year.

Pitcher of the Year
David Hutchins,
Deerfield-Windsor

The senior right-hander anchored the Knights' run to the GIAA Class AAA state championship series, compiling a 6-1 record with a 2.36 ERA while consistently delivering in the biggest games of the season.

Hitter of the Year
Hudson Coronati,
Baconton Charter

Coronati sparked the Blazers' historic Final Four run with a .435 batting average and was one of the most consistent offensive performers in Southwest Georgia.

Defensive Player of the Year

Brady Weaver, Worth County

The Rams' standout catcher provided leadership behind the plate while helping manage one of the state's most effective pitching staffs during Worth County's historic season. He caught 259.2 innings, threw out 25 base runners and picked off six more. He owned a .988 fielding percentage with 346 total chances and had 44 assists.

First-Team Pitching Staff
Collins Clark, Deerfield-Windsor

DJ Easom, Worth County
Daniel Cruz, Baconton Charter

Cole French, Lee County
Michael Merritt, Sherwood Christian

All-Albany First Team
Lane Seals, Deerfield-Windsor

Graysen Spears, Lee County
Knox Hillhouse, Lee County
Gage Tomlinson, Deerfield-Windsor

Jack Hampson, Terrell Academy

Quinton Peterson, Baconton Charter
Kingston Offord, Dougherty
Luke Rogers, Worth County

Colton Suggs, Baconton Charter

Boyd Pollock, Deerfield-Windsor

Brodey Hancock, Worth County

Second-Team Pitching Staff

West Rushton, Deerfield-Windsor

Colby Griffis, Worth County

Brody Cowart, Terrell Academy

Logan Mathis, Lee County

Javion Tinch, Monroe

All-Albany Second Team

Marcus Heath Jr., Dougherty

CJ Richardson, Baconton Charter

Kayden Logue, Baconton Charter

Cole Lindsey, Lee County

Kameron Vicks, Monroe

Braiden Parrish, Sherwood Christian

Nathan Taczy, Lee County

Hunter Green, Terrell Academy

Gabe Daniel, Deerfield-Windsor

Drake Wiggins, Deerfield-Windsor

From 9A
LEE

a year ago.

Head coach Kirven Davis said the Trojans are working through the loss of several experienced players.

"We've lost a lot of experience as three starters moved out," Davis said. "Kaiden Newberry moved to Alabama, Ashton McKinney moved to Tennessee and Devin Williams transferred to Westover. We have a lot of work to do."

From 9A
SORSBY

Indiana football team while a member of the program in 2022 and 2023. In all, he wagered about \$90,000 on college and professional sports over a four-year period. He entered an addiction treatment program on April 27.

Texas Tech was prepared to have Sorsby play the entire regular season and any playoff games after he served a two-game suspension at the start of the campaign.

The NFL's supplemental draft has not been conducted since 2023, as it's only held when a prospect chooses to

One bright spot Wednesday was freshman Chayse Randle, who impressed Davis during the summer workout.

Randle starred at Merry Acres Middle School last season and is among a group of younger players being counted on to help fill the void left by the departing veterans.

The Trojans remain a work in progress, but Wednesday's performance provided another glimpse of the defensive pressure and athleticism that Davis hopes will define his team when the regular season arrives.

enter. No player has been chosen as a supplemental draft pick since 2019.

The supplemental draft is likely to be conducted in late July, with a precise date not set.

The Miami Dolphins, New York Jets and Cleveland Browns are among the QB-needy teams that may consider Sorsby, though first-year Browns coach Todd Monken said this month that considering Sorsby was "a slippery slope" due to his history of gambling on sports.

Sorsby threw for 5,613 yards, 45 touchdowns and 12 interceptions over the past two seasons at Cincinnati. He also ran for 1,027 yards and 18 touchdowns in 24 games.

Areas where insects may gather in your yard

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Outdoor entertaining is a big part of life when the weather warms up. An afternoon and evening spent enjoying warm weather in the backyard is the ideal for millions of people come summertime.

An idyllic day entertaining outdoors can be compromised by insects. Biting insects may drive some people indoors, while others may avoid outdoor entertaining spaces entirely at times of year when mosquitoes and other bugs are most active. Bug spray can be a quick and effective remedy against insects, but homeowners also can identify spots on their property that insects may seek out as a food source, breeding ground and/or hiding place.

• Standing water: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note mosquito larvae and pupae live in water with little or no flow. Standing water around a property can be an ideal spot for mosquitoes to lay eggs. Containers that hold water, like bird baths, flower pots or water bowls for pets, may be inviting mosquitoes to lay eggs in your yard. The CDC also notes that mosquitoes may even lay eggs in tree holes that collect water. Remove bird baths from your property if you're having mosquito issues, and turn over water bowls and empty planters before going inside each night.

• Leaves: Fallen leaves that are not collected and discarded or added to compost piles may be providing a breeding ground for unwanted insects. Slugs and beetles hide and breed in fallen leaves, so it's imperative that homeowners promptly address spots where leaves have fallen.

• Untidy areas: The landscape solutions experts at Bio-Advanced® note that keeping a neat and clean outdoor environment is the simplest way to eliminate insect habitats on a property. Insects hide in buckets, boards, bricks, and

even toys. While it can be a chore to keep up with the exterior grounds of your home, particularly when the weather is warm, a nightly scan of the property and some light

Insects are unwelcome guests when entertaining outdoors. But there's much homeowners can do to keep insects from setting up shop on their properties.



Special Photo: MCC

Insects may be drawn to food gardens, which can make outdoor living areas less comfortable.

tidying up will make your outdoor entertaining spaces less appealing to various species of insect.

• Food gardens: Gardening is an enjoyable hobby that studies have shown benefits gardeners' mental and physical health. But food gardens can serve as primary food sources for insects. However, that does not mean you cannot have a food garden and still enjoy a relatively insect-free outdoor entertaining space. Homeowners are urged to speak with a local garden center for advice on plant diversity. Some plants, like mint and dill, may attract beneficial insects that keep harmful insects at bay. Local climate can affect what works and what doesn't, so work with a local professional to identify your options.

Obituary announcement

Daniel E. Beaulieu
November 16, 1959 - June 15, 2026

After a brief illness, we say, "Fair Winds and Following Seas."

Dan was born in Hibbing, Minnesota, and raised in Brainerd, where he graduated from Brainerd High School in 1978. After spending some time at the University of Minnesota Duluth, he joined the United States Marine Corps in 1980—a decision that prompted his mother to famously say, "That's not what I meant when I told you that you needed to do something."

Dan spent the next 22 years serving his country as a Marine. If asked about his career, however, he would likely shrug and tell you he was simply doing his job. Recognition and accolades never meant much to him. Hard work, loyalty, and taking care of the mission did.

During the 1980s, Dan enjoyed all the typical Marine Corps shenanigans before marrying Cassy in 1991. Together they built a life centered on family, laughter, and service. They raised their son, James "Michael" Beaulieu (Beth), and Dan took great pride in watching his grandson, Riley, grow and compete on the baseball field.

The Marine Corps took Dan and his family across the country, including assignments in Barstow, California, and St. Cloud, Minnesota. In 1997, he moved to Albany, Georgia, where he completed his military career at MCLB Albany in 2002. Retirement from the Marines did not slow him down. He continued supporting Marines as a contracting specialist at MCLB Albany until finally retiring years later.

Dan was a man who believed in showing up, doing the job right, and not making a fuss about it. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, and friend. He loved his family fiercely, even if he wasn't always the type to say much about it.

He was a man of few words—unless, of course, he was telling you how to do something. Then he had plenty to say.

Dan leaves behind his wife, Cassy; his son, James "Michael" Beaulieu (Beth); his grandson, Riley; his father, Duane "Bumper" Beaulieu; his sister, Jane (Jim); and numerous family members and friends who will miss his steady presence, dry humor, and unwavering loyalty.

Dan would not want us to be filled with sadness. He would want us to remember the laughs, the stories, the lessons, and the time we were fortunate enough to spend with him.

"Carry On."
Semper Fi — Out.

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The Millennium Center - Cuthbert, GA

Full-Time

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7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 mother or father (6)	_____
2 scary dream (9)	_____
3 sound reasoning (5)	_____
4 pestering (8)	_____
5 Travis Kelce's sport (8)	_____
6 roadside runoff collectors (7)	_____
7 North Dakota State's city (5)	_____

RE	PA	NIG	GIC	ARE
HTM	HAS	LL	TCH	FO
FAR	ES	NT	SLI	OT
GO	BA	DI	NG	LO

Saturday's Answers: 1. MAINSTREAM 2. COBBLED 3. BOBBY 4. RANK 5. RENTIER 6. AURIFEROUS 7. SPOCK 6/22

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 reveal (4)	_____
2 pilot (7)	_____
3 top-of-the-line (9)	_____
4 "Little Women" matriarch (6)	_____
5 recap (7)	_____
6 "All About That Bass" singer (7)	_____
7 reacted to the alarm (5)	_____

TRA	OR	SH	RI	AVI
AT	NDO	LU	MA	RU
XU	IN	RM	OW	AWO
OR	KE	WN	EE	OUS

Monday's Answers: 1. PARENT 2. NIGHTMARE 3. LOGIC 4. HASSLING 5. FOOTBALL 6. DITCHES 7. FARGO 6/23

Americanisms

"If you retain nothing else, always remember the most important rule of beauty, which is: Who cares?"

— Tina Fey

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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.

" W G Z H Z G Q L Z T Z X C I V Z H G Z H B R M U A C
W G Q W M W G M X J Q H Z T H M U U M Q X W
V M Z Y Z C B R Q H W . . . O Z O Q X W W B T Z
Y Q V W M L Q W Z F Q X F W Q J Z X Q O Q K ."
— H K Q X H Z K X B U F C

Previous Solution: "It was my father who taught me to value myself. He told me ... that I was the most precious thing in his life." — Dawn French
TODAY'S CLUE: S sjenbø o
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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.

" O X Z F Y M ' B L X C S X M L U O C S T B T M L
C A Y B O X Z R M X C . I J I M T W O X Z ' S I
Y A X S S T U K I C S T B I S , O X Z S X C M
R M X C K I N L I Y M N I Q D I S T I M F I T V
Z M S T J Y K I N ."
— T V V Y S Y I

Previous Solution: "There have been superhero films that I think are brilliant pieces of art ... We want to be captivated and taken away." — Ryan Reynolds
TODAY'S CLUE: n sjenbø z
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Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle
Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

- Voting faction
- Botanical transplant
- Post that's bigger than a gig
- Like chocolate lava cake
- "Folklore" music artist Swift
- "_ seen worse"
- Disc-tossing team sport
- "Aw, so sweet!"
- Like elevator music
- Chicken _ king
- Actor Cariou
- Contest played on a star-shaped board
- Ascends
- South African language with click consonants
- Tuna roll topper
- Some hazy brews, for short
- Piano pieces for four hands
- "You're not wrong"
- 28-Down amenity, maybe
- Ballet class rail
- Plump pet, slangily
- Pool hall activity
- _ de la Cité: Notre-Dame home
- Coffee container
- Not much
- Spine-tingling artwork?
- Nintendo player's side quest, or what the circled letters of 16-, 23-, and 41-Across create
- Cenozoic
- Like apacas
- A bird flying into the house, say
- Cold War operative
- Agreements
- Bit of headway

DOWN

- Like dry champagne
- Disney girl who teaches Stitch the meaning of ohana
- Prefix meaning "eight"
- Sequences of tight turns on racecourses
- Frontier departure point?
- Marbled bread
- Italian sports car, briefly
- Unshaped
- NYC nabe south of SoHo
- Align (with)
- Roasting appliance
- Red root vegetable used in some dyes
- Breezy goodbyes
- Cocktails made with lime, vodka, and ginger beer
- Dishwasher's station
- Like tempura
- River-dwelling mammal that can't swim
- Sci-fi writer Asimov
- Area far from downtown
- French darling
- Tourist's base
- Greg Evans comic strip
- Grows older
- In-person fantasy event, casually
- "Thinking about it"
- LAX projections
- Lack of objectivity
- Unlikely to get out of hand
- "Dam straight"
- Sleeping bag spot
- "_ Haw"

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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

By Adam Shapiro
©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC 06/23/26

Early County Board of Education names Mary Felton sole superintendent finalist

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

BLAKELY – The Early County Board of Education has announced that Mary A. Felton has been named the sole finalist for the position of superintendent of the Early County School System.

In partnership with the Georgia School Boards Association, the board conducted a

comprehensive search process to identify the district's next leader. Throughout the process, board members gathered input from staff members and community stakeholders regarding the qualities, priorities, and leadership characteristics they believed were most important in the next superintendent. That feedback helped guide the board's evaluation of candidates and ultimate

decision.

Felton currently serves as chief academic officer for the Dougherty County School System in Albany, where she provides executive leadership for curriculum, instruction, literacy, special education, gifted education, multilingual learners, and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE). In this role, she leads district academic improvement initiatives, supports school leaders, oversees strategic resource alignment, and helps drive instructional innovation throughout the district.

A resident of Albany, Felton brings more than 20 years of experience in public education to the Early County position. Her career includes service as assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and

student support services for Bulloch County Schools in Statesboro; principal of Morningside Elementary School in Dougherty County; principal of Second Chance Academy in Evans County; assistant principal in both Evans County and Rockdale County Schools; literacy coach and Interim ELA Coordinator in Rockdale County Schools; educational specialist for Miami-Dade County Public Schools; classroom teacher in Georgia and Florida; and university professor with Barry University, Nova Southeastern University, and Johns Hopkins University.

Felton holds a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University, a Master of Business Administration degree from Strayer University, a



Special logo

specialist degree in Reading, a master of science degree in Elementary Education, and a bachelor of science degree in Business Administration.

"The Board sought a leader who demonstrates a strong commitment to student achievement, fiscal responsibility, community engagement, and building positive relationships with all stakeholders," Alice Hutchins, chairperson of the Early County Board of Education, said. "Dr. Felton's extensive experience at both the school and district levels, her commitment to academic excellence, and her student-centered approach distin-

guished her as a strong candidate. We are excited about the leadership she can bring to the Early County School System and our community."

Under Georgia law, the board must wait a minimum of 14 days following the announcement of a sole finalist before taking final action on the superintendent appointment. The Early County Board of Education has scheduled a called meeting for July 1, at 8 a.m. at the Early County Administrative and Training site, where final approval of the superintendent appointment will be considered as an agenda item.



Photo Courtesy of Farah & Farah.

Antonio Guest, right, receives an Empowering Greatness Scholarship prize pack with a member of the Farah & Farah Albany office team.

Monroe graduate receives Farah & Farah scholarship

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY -- Monroe High School graduate Antonio Martinez Guest of Albany has been named a winner of the Farah & Farah Empowering Greatness Scholarship, recognized for his exceptional leadership potential and deep commitment to community transformation.

Guest said he is set to attend Morehouse College, where he will major in Business Administration and minor in Education, while simultaneously enlisting in the National Guard to cultivate elite discipline and

operational skills early in his career. With a long-term vision of establishing a premier management consulting and crisis management firm in Atlanta, Guest said he views higher education as a vital tool to build stronger, more efficient systems that lift up underserved communities.

Passionate about youth mentorship, financial literacy, and expanding educational access, Guest stands out as a purpose-driven leader dedicated to translating his personal success into a lasting legacy of opportunity and hope for others, officials with the law firm said.

By Maya Homan
Georgia Recorder

ATLANTA -- Georgia's special legislative session started last week, and while partisan fights about redistricting are likely to dominate and attract daily protests, there is one issue that legislators must come to an agreement on: What to do about Georgia's election system.

The state's current election equipment uses QR codes to count ballots but has faced criticism from cybersecurity experts and proponents of hand-marked paper ballots, who say that ballots should be counted based on text that can be deciphered by humans.

Under a state law passed in 2024, QR codes cannot be used to tally election results starting in July, but Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger told lawmakers that changing systems would require about \$66 million in state funds to purchase new equipment. During both the 2025 and 2026 legislative sessions, lawmakers adjourned without appropriating the funds necessary to make the switch.

An alternate proposal that would extend the deadline for new equipment until 2028 was unveiled in March and passed the House on the final day of the 2026 legislative session. However, it didn't come up for a vote in the Senate this year, leaving a longstanding stalemate over the future of Georgia's election system unresolved.

The looming deadline to remove the QR code from Georgia's ballots is what originally opened the door to a special session. But when Gov. Brian

Kemp issued his proclamation in May calling for the session, he also raised the stakes when he included redistricting on the agenda in the wake of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that diluted a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. He has since added additional business, such as local property tax referendums.

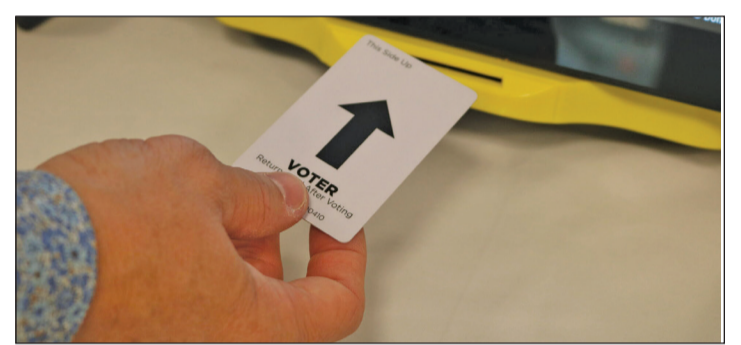
Further complicating the ballot issue is an ongoing feud between the secretary of state's office, which oversees elections throughout the state, and the State Election Board, which is tasked with drafting rules to ensure that elections run smoothly. Earlier this month, the board passed a resolution allowing counties to implement hand-marked paper ballots for the 2026 general election, contradicting guidelines from the secretary of state's office that counties must continue using Georgia's current voting machines.

But as legislators prepare to head back into special session, key players appear to be weighing their options still.

Moultrie Republican Sen. Sam Watson, who chairs the Senate committee that handles election-related bills, said in an interview that he hasn't made up his mind yet about potential solutions.

"Honestly, I really don't have an opinion at this point," he said.

But Rep. Victor Anderson, a Cornelia Republican who chairs the House Governmental Affairs Committee, said there is work underway to draft a bill that would appeal to lawmakers in both chambers. Though the eventual goal is to switch to hand-marked paper ballots, he said, that kind of systemic change will likely have to wait



Special Photo: Georgia Recorder

The looming deadline to remove the QR code from Georgia's ballots is what originally opened the door to a post-r runoff election special session.

until after the midterms.

"We pushed ourselves too tight to this July 1 deadline, too close to the November election, and now to the July 28 special election for conditional Congressional District 13," he said. "So there's very few options that are viable at this point, regardless of what a handful of people are talking about."

But even within the GOP, there is not necessarily a consensus on what the best move is. Covington Rep. Tim Fleming, who is also the Republican nominee in the race to become the next secretary of state, said he supported activating the state's emergency backup ballot procedures to ensure that QR codes were not in use during November's general election.

"I hate that we're having to come back to special session to solve this, but I believe we have to remove the QR code off of the ballot to come in compliance with SB 189," Fleming said shortly after the Atlanta Press Club's runoff debate against fellow Republican Vernon Jones.

Democratic Secretary of State nominee Penny Brown Reynolds has taken the opposite

stance, calling on lawmakers to push back the deadline for removing QR codes from Georgia's ballot.

"Even with full funding, it is not realistic to expect full implementation between July and a November general election without creating significant risk to accuracy, consistency and public confidence," Brown Reynolds told the Georgia Recorder in May.

Senate Minority Leader Harold Jones, an Augusta Democrat, said he wasn't sure what ideas legislators would be introducing but agreed that it is likely too late for Georgia to switch voting systems ahead of the general election.

"It's a difficult transition to make," Jones said Monday. "It's going to be less than 180 days until the election, so that just is not feasible."

House Minority Leader Carolyn Hugley called the QR code issue a "manufactured issue," and said Republicans were the ones who would have to come up with a solution.

"They will have to determine how they want to [solve] the problem that they created," Hugley said.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Mary Alice Thomas (26-044) has submitted an application to the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission requesting that the Official Zoning Map of Dougherty County, Georgia, be amended to rezone .42 acres from R-2 (Single-Family Residential District) to RMHS (Mobile Home Single-Family District). The rezoning would allow for the installation of a manufactured home for single-family residency. The property is at 507 Engram Court (00138/00012/005). The property applicant/owner is Mary Alice Thomas. **District 6**

The Albany Dougherty Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on these requests on **Thursday, July 2, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.** at the Government Center, 222 Pine Avenue, Room 100, Albany, GA. The Planning Commission will forward its recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners based on information presented at the public meeting.

The Dougherty County Board of Commissioners will conduct a public hearing on **Monday, July 20, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.** in the Government Center, 222 Pine Avenue, Room 100, Albany, GA 31701.

Meetings of the Albany Dougherty Planning Commission and the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners are open to the public. Those wishing to speak or provide comments should contact the Planning & Development Services Department at (229) 438-3901, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., before the meeting for additional information.

As set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Dougherty County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to or treatment or employment in its programs or activities. The Human Resources Department has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in section 35.107 of the Department of Justice Regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided there, is available at the Office of Human Resources. Dougherty County will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice (7 working days). Any requests for reasonable accommodations required by individuals to fully participate in an open meeting, program, or activity of the City of Albany, Georgia, should be directed to Paul Forgey, AICP, 240 Pine Avenue, Suite 300, Albany, Georgia, 31701, (229) 438-3901.

Athens meth dealer receives two life sentences

Staff Reports

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MACON – The man who distributed hundreds of kilograms of methamphetamine from the Rapid Lube in Athens where he worked, covertly stashing boxes in the shop, was sentenced to life in prison as part of a Homeland Security Task Force investigation into a cross-border drug ring moving thousands of kilograms of drugs from Mexico in boxes of jalapeños to a conversion lab in Monroe, Georgia.

James Len Ramey, 54, of Comer was sentenced to serve two life sentences in federal prison, one for each count, to be served concurrently, after he previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine and one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine. U.S. District Judge Tripp Self III presided over the case. There is no parole in the

federal system.

"Mexican drug cartels rely on local collaborators to move deadly illegal substances into our country and distribute them," U.S. Attorney Will Keyes said. "Without these willing participants, these poisons would never cross the border or devastate lives here."

"This investigation is a prime example of the critical work being done to dismantle violent drug trafficking organizations that operate with impunity, bringing dangerous narcotics into our communities," Marlo Graham, special agent in charge of the FBI Atlanta Office, said. "The FBI's role in this investigation, alongside our dedicated federal, state and local law enforcement partners, has led to the disruption of a significant methamphetamine operation and the arrest of multiple individuals responsible for poisoning our communities."

According to court documents and statements made in court, the FBI in Athens

received information in January 2024 that Ramey was selling kilograms of methamphetamine from Rapid Lube in Athens, where he worked. The FBI investigation revealed that Ramey was supplied with drugs by individuals operating a methamphetamine conversion lab inside a residence on Mountain Creek Church Road in Monroe (Walton County), who were receiving the drugs from Mexico, stashed in boxes of jalapeños. The methamphetamine was imported into the United States in liquid form, converted at a clandestine conversion laboratory, and ultimately distributed by Ramey to a network of downstream dealers.

Ramey received approximately 30 kilograms of methamphetamine every two weeks from his Mexico-based source of supply, whom Ramey met while serving a state prison sentence for possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute in Lumpkin County Superior Court.