

**Perspectives**  
Ralph Nader  
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# The Albany HERALD



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**Series champs**  
Okies claim NCAA title  
• Page 10A



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THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2026

## Dougherty Commission considers \$104 million budget for 2026-2027 fiscal year

By Alan Mauldin  
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ALBANY – The Dougherty County Commission is putting the final touches on a budget proposal that totals \$104.1 million, representing a 2% increase in overall spending from the

current fiscal year while giving employees a 3% cost of living adjustment.

The good news for taxpayers is that the county's spending package does not include a tax increase for the budget year that begins on July 1. To pres-

ent a balanced budget package, the commission is using up to \$6.1 million of reserve funds to plug any shortfall.

Broken down, the proposed budget includes \$80.23 million in spending for the general fund maintenance and opera-

tions, a 3.3% increase over the budget year that runs through June 30. Another \$255,764 is earmarked for capital improvement projects, a decrease of 53.1% from the 2025-2026 budget year.

For the special services dis-

trict fund, which provides for fire protection, recreation and other services in unincorporated Dougherty County, spending is anticipated to increase by 2% to \$10.73 million.

Also separate from the general fund budget is the county's

solid waste enterprise fund, which has a planned increase in maintenance and operations of 17.4%, to \$5.67 million, and capital outlays being boosted by 122.5%, from \$965,000 to

See BUDGET, 2A

## Theatre Albany's first 55-over production set for weekend matinees



Staff Photo: Carlton Fletcher

Retired educators and local theater enthusiasts Gary and Suzanne Unger are having their first go at directing in this weekend's "Singing in the Rain Sr.," with a cast of actors 55 and older.

Staff Photo: Carlton Fletcher  
This weekend's Theatre Albany production of "Singing in the Rain Sr." will have shows Saturday and Sunday, starting at 2:30 p.m. each day.

By Carlton Fletcher  
carlton.fletcher@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – All right, all right. Let's go ahead and get the jokes out of the way:

"Our biggest problem is actors remembering their lines ... and where the theater is." "We're doing matinees because our actors don't drive at night." "There's always the concern that we won't

finish our performances in time to get to the 'early-bird' special at Sizzler."

Gary and Suzanne Unger have heard these jibes – and plenty more – since early May when they bravely took on the roles as first-time directors of Theatre Albany's production of "Singing in the Rain Sr." It's the kind of thing you might expect to hear when all 23 actors in your cast are

between the ages of 57 and 79.

And it all started, surreptitiously, of course, when the Ungers took a trip to Rochester, N.Y.

"Suzanne and I were in Rochester, and we saw a performance by a senior citizen group called the 'Geriactors,'" Gary Unger, a retired music teacher who has served as music director for "30-plus" local productions, said. "I looked at Suzanne and

said, 'We can do this.'"

Plans for the 2025-26 Theatre Albany season had been pretty much set when the Ungers broached the idea of doing a play starring senior actors with members of the theater's board. They got a strong, positive reaction.

"('Singing in the Rain Sr.') was not part of the season, but we brought it up just after Christ-

mas, in early January, maybe, and the board got excited about the idea," Gary Unger said. "We sat down and figured out a time that we could fit it into the schedule, and here we are, just a few days away."

Squeezing "Singing in the Rain Sr." into the Theatre Albany schedule was no small order. In fact,

See MATINEES 2A

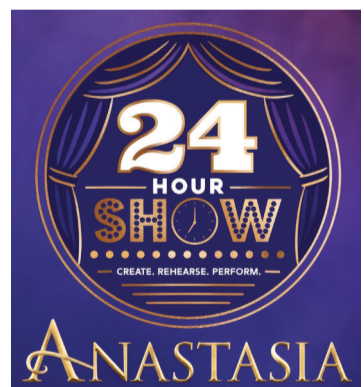
## Homeschool students reduce prep time for 'Anastasia' production to 24 hours

Staff Reports  
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – So you're a part of the Albany Area Homeschool Theater Association group that has the acting bug, and you're going to take part in Friday's production of "Anastasia."

Here's what you get to prepare for the one-off performance: Your character, a script ... and nothing else.

While the usual local production takes weeks and even months of preparation – to build sets, to walk through blocking and dialogue, to rehearse, to fine-tune any perceivable issues – the students and the adult volunteers who



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett  
Albany Area Homeschool Theater Association students will put on 24-hour production of "Anastasia."

will bring "Anastasia" to Byne

See ANASTASIA, 2A

## Albany gas prices among Georgia's lowest as summer fuel costs decline

By Kathryn Crockett  
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – Local motorists are paying some of the lowest gasoline prices in the state this summer, offering a welcome break for family budgets even as fuel markets remain vulnerable to sudden shifts.

According to AAA, the average price for a gallon of regular gasoline in the Albany metro area was approximately \$3.45 this week, making Albany the second-least expensive metro market in Georgia behind Dalton at \$3.41 and slightly ahead of Brunswick at \$3.48.

The prices come after months of volatility driven by international conflicts, state tax policies and shifting crude oil markets.

Earlier this year, Georgia temporarily suspended its state motor fuel excise tax, eliminating approximately 33 cents per gal-



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

Gas prices are displayed at an Albany-area gas station in June. Albany's average fuel prices rank among the lowest in Georgia this summer.

See GAS, 2A

### Periodical — Mail Label

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## From 1A BUDGET

\$2.146 million. That increase represents an investment in equipment that is needed to keep the landfill operating efficiently, Director of Solid Waste Services Seth Lassiter told commissioners during their Monday meeting. “We’ve had some issues,” Lassiter, who came on board a few weeks ago, said. “We’re fixing infrastructure. Also, we’re trying to get the system online so we can monitor it while we’re not out there.” The spending also includes

improvements to the landfill’s gas system. The county provides methane that is produced from processes within the landfill to Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany for energy production. Another need is global positioning system (GPS) technology needed to efficiently utilize space at the landfill, Lassiter said. “The hope is making it a more efficient enterprise fund, is that right?” Commissioner Clinton Johnson said, to which Lassiter responded in the affirmative. The solid-waste fund is the only money-generating operation for the county. For the 2026-2027 budget

year, the county does not anticipate transferring funds from the account to fund other parts of the budget. While the act of producing a balanced budget calls for using up to \$6.1 million in reserve funds, or general fund balance, as Assistant County Manager Barry Brooks referred to them, that does not mean the county will spend that much over the amount of revenue taken in for the upcoming budget year, Brooks said. For the current budget year, the county used a \$7 million figure for the purposes of presenting a balanced budget, but actually spent only about \$200,000 of that amount, Brooks said.

“Typically, you never spend all you budgeted,” he said. “You have positions that are vacant longer than you anticipated (for example) ... so you’re not actually spending the cash. “The other side of the coin is you could have higher revenues than projected. We’re very conservative in budgeting revenues. That also reduces the need to use fund balance.” Spending more than collected revenues year after year is cooking up a potential recipe for disaster, Commissioner Russel Gray said. “It’s just math,” he said. “We don’t necessarily have to fund economic development. It’s a nice thing to do. I’m simply talking about operating our government and doing the core services we need. That’s our one job, to provide service delivery and charge appropri-

ately for that.” The county is facing a declining population while needing too provide the same services, Gray said. Commission Chairman Lorenzo Heard said that Gray was one of the commissioners who last year promoted a jail over-

haul that included \$11 million for a replacement chiller unit. On the topic of population loss, Commissioner Anthony Jones said that commissioners need to put their heads together with the city of Albany and Dougherty County School Board to discuss the future.



Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin  
Dougherty County Commissioners Russell Gray and Gloria Gaines have a conversation prior to Monday’s commission meeting. The commission discussed a proposed \$104.1 million budget.

## From 1A MATINEES

The cast only last week got into the theater to rehearse. The theater’s production of “The Color Purple” just finished a successful run the week before, so the theater’s stage was in use through June 7. That meant rehearsals at a pair of local churches that offered their spaces to the troupe, meaning time on the Theatre Albany stage would be limited. “We’re so grateful that Avalon Methodist and First Methodist churches gave us access to spaces that allowed us to rehearse,” Unger said. “Of course, going through rehearsals in a gym and on a pavilion is not the same as being on the stage. “We’ve kind of walked our actors through a tour of the theater to get them used to the actual place where they’ll be performing. That’s been a big disadvantage, but everyone’s adjusting now.” Another issue for the cast is that the majority of them have little to no acting experience. “Three-fourths of the cast have never acted before,” Suzanne Unger said. “Timing has become one of our biggest issues.” Still, the Ungers say they’re elated to be a part of bringing a new element to the local arts scene.

“This is a pretty big deal for us and for the cast,” Gary Unger said. “And, be clear, this is not a spoof. It’s based on the classic movie ‘Singing in the Rain,’ but without the dancing. Sure, there are challenges with a cast of senior citizens – we have two in the cast who are 79! – especially when most of them have either never been on stage or haven’t been in a play since they played a giraffe in the third grade. “And for a first-time event like this, yes, there are people associated with the theater who have more experience (in directing) than Suzanne and I. But I feel like we were called to do this.” Kathleen Stroup, who’s taken the role of Dora Bailey, and Eddie and Marcy McCarty (Don Lockwood and Lina Lamont) are among the play’s leads. Other actors in the cast include Bob Campbell (Cosmo Brown), Paula Paulk (Roz), Bill Swan (R.F. Simpson), Soraya Miller (Kathy Seldon), Melvin Paulk (policeman/orchestra director), Deborah Freeman (Roscoe Dexter), Cher McDonald (Miss Dinsmore), Sandy Hardy-Meadows (teacher) and Marilyn Gibson (Zelda) Hardy-Meadows and Zan Twigg are Broadway Dancers, while Hardy-Meadows, Terrie Patterson, Sheila Phillips and Twigg are “Kathy’s Girls.” Members of the play’s ensem-

ble are Renee Carmen, Teresa Carmen, Marilyn Gibson, Ted Gibson, Coni Grebel, Ruth Henry, Anita Lime-Simms, Hardy-Meadows, McDonald, Mark Mitchell, Patterson, Twigg, Phillips and Laurie Whatley. Judy Dabbs joins the Ungers as the play’s choreographer, while Lauren Collver serves as stage manager; Mike Hayes as sound engineer; Jackson Morrow as sound assistant; Megan Lisenby as costume designer; Butler Stoudenmire as lighting director; Tina Justice and Jenny McNair as props masters; Caleb Dale as set designer; Demi Addison, Erin Andrews and Megan Lisenby as makeup artists; Summer Ethridge and Amber Kirksey as hair stylists; and Olivia Brown, Arianna Calvacanto, Isabella Barfield, Melissa Griffin, Noah Lorber, Dean Morrow and Luke Twigg serve as the stage crew. “Everyone’s having a great time,” Suzanne Unger said. “I can’t help but think what a great opportunity this is to give these older actors an opportunity to perform.” Talk for a few minutes with the Ungers’ about “Singing in the Rain Sr.,” and their excitement at making their directorial debuts with the group of senior actors is palpable. Like their actors, they can hardly wait for showtime. “The theater has been doing ‘junior’ shows with kid actors for a while, and we were kind of losing some of our audience along the way,” Gary Unger said. “This is something new altogether, and the community seems to be excited about it. There are only a few tickets left. “As we’re getting closer to the first performance, it’s starting to hit some of the cast. There’s a little more of the ‘wow!’ factor each day. It’s really going to hit when they’re hooked up to microphones, the lights come up and they hear the applause of the audience. I can’t wait.” Showtime for the Saturday and Sunday performances this weekend is 2:30 p.m.

## From 1A ANATASIA

Church Friday will get no such luxuries. They are, in fact, bringing the first 24-hour play to the area. “We get together at the church Thursday night at 7 p.m.,” Vickie Knuckles, who heads up the homeschool acting troupe, said. “And we do the play starting Friday at 7 o’clock. There are no rehearsals, no advance preparation.” The concept of the 24-hour play is growing in popularity across the country, Knuckles said. She said the concept was brought to her by student-actors and volunteer parent team members who thought such an undertaking would be “a pretty cool idea.” Knuckles, who directed four locally produced plays in the last calendar year – at Byne, Theatre Albany and with the homeschool group – said the more she thought about it, the better she liked the concept. “It’s just so different,” she said. “And I thought it would

be a great challenge for our students. When I brought up the idea, they liked it. And they’re really anxious to see it through, to show that they can do it.” Knuckles outlined the plan for her budding thespians and her technical team: – Gather at Byne at 7 p.m. Thursday for a general all-hands-on-deck meeting. – While tech crews work on the sets, the cast starts working on their parts through the late-night and early-morning hours. – Around breakfast time Friday, the cast will come together for rehearsals. – Friday at 7 p.m. is showtime. “We’ll be working all night, and we have almost every minute planned out,” Knuckles said. “Of course, everyone will not be working on stuff the whole time, so they’ll have opportunities to rest. But no one is leaving; no one is going home to get eight hours sleep. “We did hold auditions and had 20 people try out. They’re all in the play, and with the technical crew, there will be about 40 involved. We simply sent out an invitation and

invited all who were willing to be a part of this. Everyone seems really excited about the concept.” In addition to current members of the homeschool association in grades 9-12, Knuckles also invited alumni of the group and other homeschool students to get involved. “Everybody’s been trying to kind of get their head around what we’re doing leading up to Thursday,” Knuckles said. “It usually takes six to eight weeks of pretty intense preparation to get ready for a production. We’re doing it all in 24 hours. “I know we’re going to hit some walls along the way, but I’m hoping the adrenalin kicks in for everyone as we get closer to time for the play. I’m excited to see what happens.” And is there any secret to pulling off such a seemingly daunting task? “Coffee,” Knuckles says. “Lots of coffee.” Tickets for “Anastasia,” which are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, are available online or at the door the night of the performance.



Staff Photo: Carlton Fletcher  
All 23 actors in Theatre Albany’s “Singing in the Rain Sr.” are 57 years old or older.

## From 1A GAS

lon on gasoline and 37 cents per gallon on diesel to provide relief from rising fuel costs tied to Middle East tensions and fears of supply disruptions. Gov. Brian Kemp first suspended the tax in March and later extended the suspension through Memorial Day travel before allowing it to expire in early June. State officials estimated the tax break saved motorists roughly \$5 on a typical 15-gallon fill-up. When the suspension ended June 3, analysts warned prices could quickly jump by about 30 to 33 cents per gallon. However, the increases did not materialize uniformly across Georgia as crude oil prices eased and global markets stabilized. Industry analysts noted that some stations increased prices gradually while others absorbed portions of the

tax’s return through competitive pricing. That combination of factors has helped keep Albany among Georgia’s least expensive places to purchase fuel. The statewide average remains higher than Albany’s, and motorists in metro areas such as Macon and Savannah continue to pay about 25 to 30 cents more per gallon than drivers in southwest Georgia. For Albany consumers, the savings can add up quickly. A driver filling a standard 15-gallon tank in Albany is spending roughly \$4 to \$5 less per fill-up than drivers in some of Georgia’s highest-priced markets. For commuters traveling daily between Albany and neighboring communities or families taking summer vacations, youth sports trips and weekend getaways, those differences can amount to dozens of dollars in monthly savings. Lower gasoline prices also provide indirect benefits by

easing transportation costs for businesses and consumers already grappling with higher housing, grocery and insurance expenses. Energy analysts say several factors are contributing to the recent downward trend. Crude oil prices have declined from spring highs, concerns about disruptions to shipping routes in the Middle East have eased, and domestic fuel supplies have remained relatively stable despite increased summer demand. Still, experts caution that gasoline markets can change rapidly. Hurricane season, refinery outages or renewed geopolitical tensions could quickly send prices higher again. For now, though, Albany motorists are entering the heart of summer with some of the cheapest gasoline in Georgia – a rare piece of good news for consumers after years of inflation and rising household costs.

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Bush Animal Clinic’s commitment to exceptional veterinary medicine, outstanding customer service, and the well-being of every pet has earned them the trust of generations of families. Their dedication to both animal health and the Albany community continues to make a lasting impact.

The Star Business of the Week is presented by WALB News 10 and Fleming & Riles Insurance, with treats provided by Sugar Mama’s Bakery.

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# Daily Horoscopes

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Though today's score is very high, tomorrow slides abruptly into the negative. Use today for important, one-day initiations — it's not a day for building a foundation for a long-term situation of any kind.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** A partnership could blossom with new energy, things could get easier with new systems or resources available. The quality and power of your mind are what drive the quality and power of your actions. Build the mind-set first.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** If a health matter is on your mind, a dive into deeper understanding could bring a solution today — be your own researcher. What you value drives many of your choices, it's a time to ask yourself what matters most.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** A creative solution from way outside the box could be the needed fix today — let your mind range and the answer should appear. You are your own primary resource, maintain your internal systems to keep the rest in motion.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** You've entered a season of inner exploration — you might feel more introverted and less interested in the kaleidoscope of motion and noise. Try to prioritize some time away from all outside influences.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** There's an idea lurking in the back of your mind, bring it to the forefront if you can, it could represent a big upgrade. Your social/networking activities could hold added importance for the next few weeks.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Career could be king or queen for the next month or so — if not career, this cycle will affect all the ways you bring your energies out into the broader world. There are treasures awaiting in this part of your life.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Openhearted appreciation and gratitude could be in you today, and/or in others looking in your direction. You are shining. It could be a time to teach, and also a time to

learn. Both must be forever entwined.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Like Gemini today, values could be a topic. Also up could be how you work with others and how you maintain balances in shared endeavors. When you bring fairness, you're more likely to have it returned to you.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** A worthy relationship could be on a path to new growth, new clarity, and greater cosmic protection. A relationship that's unworthy might fall away, but it's unlikely to be painful, difficult, or dramatic.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** You might be in the mood to clear the decks of half-done projects in the next few weeks, thus relieving your mind and helping you advance your life to the next square. Pay close attention to a big new 'A-Ha.'

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Don't attach quickly to a new thought leader or their thoughts. While they might prove themselves out, give it a little time as a habitual practice. The well of inspo should be flowing within your own heart now.

**IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY:** Happy birthday and happy rest of 2026! A lot of the year's challenges should be in your rear-view mirror now, better stars populate the rest of your year. An opportunity that arises in July could be what you've been waiting for, well-aligned, well thought-out, with lots of growth potential. Check it out thoroughly, but it could be something that's a real game-changer. Don't let a passing anxiety be a reason to say no, decide based facts and numbers. Early- to mid-August could bring both extremes, and increased cash flow. You could get some rizz and some artistic talent then too. Avoid acting on extreme feelings. An opportunity to do yourself dirty could arise in late August through a bad idea in the moment. Stay cognizant of consequences and don't do it. A windfall could arrive in September. Some high guidance could land in October, pay attention.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

**1788** - The State of Virginia becomes the tenth state to ratify the United States Constitution

**1910** - The United States Congress passes the Mann Act, that prohibits the interstate transport of females for "immoral purposes"

**1923** - The first ever aerial refueling in a DH.4B biplane is done by Captain Lowell H. Smith and Lt. John P. Richter

**1940** - During World War II, France officially surrenders to Germany

**1947** - The Diary of a Young Girl is published. It is also known as the Diary of

Anne Frank

**1950** - North Korea invades South Korea for the start of the Korean War

**1991** - Croatia and Slovenia declare their independence from Yugoslavia

**1993** - Canada swears in Kim Campbell as their first female Prime Minister

**1996** - 19 U.S. servicemen are killed during the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia

**2017** - WHO, the World Health Organization estimates that the country of Yemen (south of Saudi Arabia) has over 200,000 cases of cholera

## CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- Bourdain Day
- Color TV Day
- Day of the Seafarer
- Global Beatles Day
- Leon Day
- Mitch Lane Day
- National Bomb Pop Day
- National Catfish Day

- National Handshake Day
- National Strawberry Parfait Day
- School Prayer Banned Anniversary
- Statehood Day in Virginia
- World Vitiligo Day

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The best effect of fine persons is felt after we have left their presence."

Ralph Waldo Emerson,  
poet (1803-1882)

## 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

Superintendent Kenneth Dyer said "health care costs the system \$23,000 per employee." Our country has to get a grip on the high costs of medical and hospital care. These costs are not sustainable.

You want to talk about misuse of taxpayer money on a grand scale? How about the almost \$15 million, no-bid, vanity project American taxpayers are on the hook for to turn the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool "American-flag blue"? The algae has won, and the water is green. Then there's the dismantling of the East Wing for a ballroom. Where's the outrage about these and other abuses of power?

I have driven through the intersection of Highway 32 and Highway 300 hundreds, maybe thousands, of times. I can see where it is dangerous, but any wreck there is because of carelessness and not paying attention. With plans for a roundabout, I think that will make that intersection even more dangerous.

Rick bragged that he didn't owe anyone anything. Well, now he's beholding to all the Georgians who voted for him.

Georgia 26, Florida 21 ... Greatest football game ever! Sorry you missed it, Fletcher, but I was there. And I agree: That was the greatest moment in UGA football history.

The issues with the local school systems (Lee and Dougherty) is that we have people on those systems' boards who know nothing about the business of running such a huge taxing entity, so they spend taxpayer money like it was theirs to hand out. We need to set certain requirements for our school board members: Starting with enough basic common sense to know when they are damaging children's education in their efforts to hand out taxpayer money to friends.

Lewis Grizzard was one of the best Southern writers ever.

Our police and firefighters deserve compensation that is higher than our region given the tough work here. Write more \$250 speeding tickets to those going 65-plus mph down Dawson, Slappey and Westover and those with illegal, very dangerous modifications. Write fewer \$150 camera tickets to carpooling working parents going 37 mph in a school zone. Let's police smarter, increase ticket revenue and address the real dangers on our roads for once.

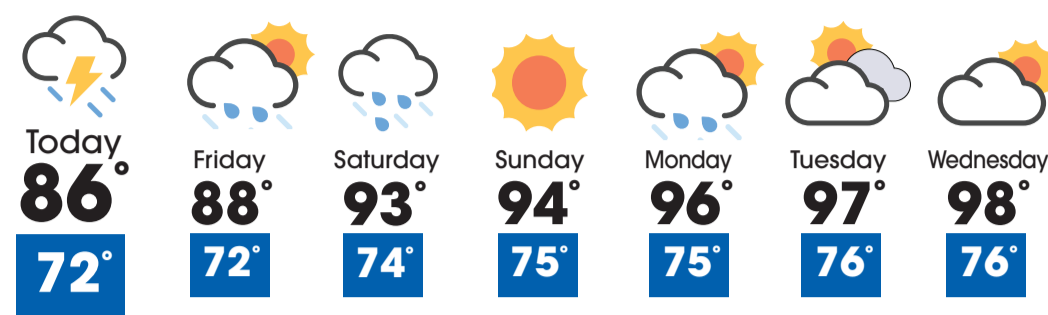
Never agree to any search without a warrant specifying what they are searching for and why. Two or three hours waiting for the warrant sure beats a felony conviction because of something someone else left behind.

The recent stories about the complete mess in the city of Dawson are a mere tip of the iceberg. Corruption runs rampant in this small community and has for some time now. Please keep digging; there's plenty to be found.

Greenland is now asking Trump to invade, hoping to get the same deal that Iran got.

Somebody really goofed up when they raised taxes in Lee County. There must be former Dougherty County employees working there.

## Weather Forecast



## Daily Bridge Club

### Cy's exercise plan

By Frank Stewart  
Tribune Content Agency

Cy the Cynic is no candidate for a no-belly prize; he is way overweight.

"Exercise," I told Cy. "Try jog-

<b>NORTH</b>			
♠ J 9 7 5 3			
♥ Q 9 8 7 4			
♦ 8			
♣ A 6			
<b>WEST</b>		<b>EAST</b>	
♠ Q 10 8 4		♠ 6 2	
♥ A 3 2		♥ None	
♦ J 7		♦ Q 10 9 5 2	
♣ Q J 10 3		♣ K 9 8 7 4 2	
<b>SOUTH</b>			
♠ A K			
♥ K J 10 6 5			
♦ A K 6 4 3			
♣ 5			
South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	All Pass	5♥	Pass
6♥			
Opening lead — ♣ Q			
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ging." "If God wanted me to jog," he said, "he would have given me a fast-forward button, not a belly button."

Cy often fast-forwards in the play -- often to his cost. As declarer at today's slam, Cy took the ace of clubs and led a trump to his king, winning. He then led ... a second trump.

### THIRD TRUMP

West took the ace and led a third trump. The Cynic won, cashed the A-K of spades and A-K of diamonds, ruffed a diamond and ruffed a spade. When East discarded, Cy lacked the entries to set up and cash dummy's fifth spade; he lost a diamond at the end.

Cy played too fast, as is his wont. After he wins the first trump, he



Frank Stewart

can proceed thus: ace of diamonds, diamond ruff, ace of spades, diamond ruff, club ruff, diamond ruff. Cy can then lead a trump to West, ruff the club return, draw the last trump and win the last two tricks with the king of diamonds and king of spades.

### DAILY QUESTION

**You hold:** S Q 10 8 4 H A 3 2 D J 7 C Q J 10 3. Both sides vulnerable. The dealer, at your left, opens one heart. Your partner overcalls one spade. The next player passes. What do you say?

**ANSWER:** Many players will overcall with light hands, but at this vulnerability, partner should have a decent hand and a good suit. Cue-bid two hearts to show a sound raise to two spades or more. If he bids two spades next, pass; otherwise, you will move toward game.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

## Advice Columnist

### Helpful in-laws shut out of family plans

By Eric Thomas  
Tribune Content Agency

**Dear Eric:** Our married son and wife share all their plans, ideas, life experiences with her family and we hear nothing. We watch our grandkids, help them at a drop of a dime, we even spiff up the house when watching the kids and let their dogs out.

When we hear what they're doing or planning from her side of the family, we've had to stop acting like it's a surprise. We just smile and nod.

Our daughter-in-law is definitely one-sided. She's slowly stopped inviting our side of the family to do things. My son goes along with it to keep her narcissistic behavior under control, but he doesn't see it is controlling him and us. There's even inequality in the way they give gifts. Last Christmas, they spent \$300 on my husband and \$10 on me. Her family received very large expensive gifts. I tell them gifts aren't about being equal but fair. So, do I back down on my gifts to my daughter-in-law?

— *Unequal In-Laws*

**Dear In-Laws:** As you probably know, it's not really about the gifts. So, pulling back on what you give your daughter-in-law isn't going to bring you the satisfaction you want.

There are a lot of strong feelings here about your daughter-in-law, but there is some information missing about your relationship with your son. Have you talked to him about what you're feeling and suggested concrete ways that you'd like to feel included?

Is he telling you about the plans or just leaving all communication up to his wife? It's possible that she's just better

at communicating with her side of the family and your son needs to communicate better with you.

They're not shy about including you in parts of their lives — you babysit and help them around the house. So, the crux of the issue could be the plans you're not hearing about. Do you expect/want to be doing things with her side of the family? Or do you want to be doing similar things with your side of the family? If it's the latter, you may have to be more proactive about getting the ball rolling on those things.

It's also possible that your daughter-in-law is aware of the negative feelings you have about her. She may be pulling back because of that conflict (which, of course, only makes the conflict worse). See if there's a way to smooth things out. You don't need to just take it, but if you're not seeing eye-to-eye with her, you can talk it out and see if you can come up with a new way of interacting so that everybody feels seen and heard.

**Dear Eric:** I am the sole surviving step-grandparent of a young man who recently married. I have always been very fond of him. I was not invited to the wedding. His mother informed me via text of the marriage two days later and stated, "immediate family attended." It was a local event. My late husband and I attended the weddings of both the groom's siblings some time ago. I feel hurt that I wasn't invited. Your thoughts?

— *Left Out*

**Dear Left Out:** I'm sorry you felt excluded. On the one hand, it seems like it would have been easy to include



Eric Thomas

you or at least reach out to you in advance. On a slightly different hand, their budget or space constraints may have dictated just how small they needed to keep it.

Since neither you nor they can go back and change anything, the best path forward is one that leads to a deeper relationship with your step-grandson. Reach out to him directly with your congratulations and see if he's open to a visit, a lunch, a phone call or something of the sort.

It's not clear to me how close you are right now, but since you're fond of him, it's worth telling him that and asking if he's open to forming a tighter bond with you. A wedding is an important day, but it's only one day. A relationship is made up of many ordinary days and many milestones; I hope you can be a part of his life for the ones still to come.

**Dear Eric:** Another response possible to the wife who wrote about her husband who got

very upset when she would call a professional about home repairs ("Mrs. Fix-It"):

Your response was good, but another is that this couple do not belong in an owner-occupied home. They should be renters who can call the landlord when something needs fixing.

— *JW in Minnesota*

**Dear JW:** This could, indeed, solve this problem once and for all. If the couple can't come to an agreement about how and by whom repairs are done, taking it off of their shared plate could be the next best option.

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

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THE ALBANY HERALD

# Perspectives

The Albany  
**HERALD**  
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Carlton Fletcher  
EDITOR

— Georgia Trust for —  
**LOCAL NEWS**

**TODAY'S  
BIBLE  
VERSE**

*"For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity."*

**Psalms 125:3**

**COLUMNIST ■ MARC HYDEN**

## For America's future, look to the ancient past: Rome

America is approaching a major milestone: its semiquincentennial, which is a fancy word that scarcely anyone knows how to spell or pronounce. It simply denotes that 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Despite this passage of time, America looks pretty good for her age. Of course, there have been a number of proud and shameful moments in our history, and we are currently on a concerning trajectory. Where it leads is not set in stone, but if you want to learn what could be in store for America, then look to the past, the very ancient past: Look to Rome.

While comparing the United States to ancient Rome can be cliché, at least on a superficial level, a deeper analysis shows striking similarities between the two superpowers. Since Rome has long since fallen, perhaps it can serve as a cautionary tale for Americans. So what lessons can we learn from the Roman Republic to avoid its fate?

To begin with, Rome originally existed as a monarchy — according to legend — beginning in 753 BC. The Romans tired of the oppressive rule and sparked a revolution in which they rejected the monarchy and formed a republic in 509 BC.

Its government comprised a number of politicians mostly elected through an ancient form of the electoral college, and the Romans boasted constitutional checks and balances, a kind of bicameral legislature, and some officials even wielded veto power. Veto means "I forbid" in Latin, and the Romans enjoyed certain rights and liberties. Sound familiar? It should because America's Constitution was based in part on the Roman Republic.

Also like the United States, after Rome formed into a republic, it engaged in numerous wars as it grew in power and size. Once it defeated its arch nemeses, Carthage and Macedonia, Rome emerged as the Mediterranean world's primary superpower, much in the same way that America found itself as a dominant global power following World War I and II and then the Cold War.

With increased might and wealth, the Roman Republic grew ill. Politicians and voters increasingly disregarded their constitution, side-stepped long-held precedent and looked at the government as an exploitable means to selfish ends. Politicians sought public office to enrich themselves and increase their prestige, and the people demanded expensive handouts, like free land on which to settle, subsidized grain and total debt forgiveness.

Both statesmen and voters were willing to go to



HYDEN

great lengths to achieve their goals. They openly violated term limits, abandoned norms, relied on riots and assassinations to settle political scores and suppress the vote, and politicians were willing to promise enormous welfare programs to the masses if they would vote them into office. The Roman Republic was in tatters.

As power, wealth and handouts became primary objectives — instead of respecting the rule of law — it was only a matter of time before the Republic devolved into a series of civil wars. After decades of intermittent fighting, one man remained standing — Augustus — and he announced that he was giving the Romans their Republic back. Yet it was an illusion. Instead of reinforcing the Republic, in 27 BC he replaced it with an autocracy with him at the helm.

The people were happy to trade their rights and liberties for security, entertainment and free grain, but their Republic was dead. Even so, Rome survived for hundreds more years. Many historians date the Western Roman Empire's fall to 476 AD and the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire's remnants to 1453 AD, but they operated more like military dictatorships and monarchies. Rome had come full circle.

The United States is not in this stage. We still have a functioning republic with checks and balances and legitimate elections, but our republic is showing cracks and signs of stress. Despite this, Rome's fate is not necessarily going to be our own. The Republic fell — not because its constitution or institutions failed — but in part because voters no longer bought into the idea of a republic, resorted to violence and coalesced around base politicians. These men in turn acted unscrupulously.

To avoid this mistake, we must respect the sanctity of our institutions over politicians, strictly adhere to our Constitution and precedent and elect people of integrity. As our semiquincentennial approaches, we should heed the founders' advice, because the power to secure our republic lies with us first, not politicians.

"To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea," James Madison wrote. "If there be sufficient virtue and intelligence in the community, it will be exercised in the selection of these men. So that we do not depend on their virtue, or put confidence in our rulers, but in the people who are to choose them."

Marc Hyden is the senior director of state government affairs at the R Street Institute, and he is a Roman historian. Follow him on X at @marc\_hyden.

**GUEST COLUMNIST ■ CHRIS CLARK**

## Georgia's competitive edge starts with energy

Georgia's economic success story did not happen by accident.

Over the past six years, Georgia has exceeded previous economic development records, generating more than \$174.7 billion in investment and creating more than 255,000 jobs across more than 2,600 projects. Perhaps most importantly, 83% of that investment has occurred outside metro Atlanta, proving that in Georgia, zip codes do not dictate opportunity.

Behind that success is something most Georgians rarely think about until it disappears: reliable energy infrastructure.

The Georgia Chamber's long-term strategic plan, GEORGIA|2050, recognizes a simple truth: Reliable infrastructure is the foundation of every strong economy. Gov. Brian Kemp, legislative leaders, the Public Service Commission and our utility partners deserve tremendous credit for maintaining a disciplined, long-term approach to energy planning while many states across the country struggle with uncertainty and instability.

When the lights go out in other parts of the country, they stay on in Georgia. That reliability matters.

Every part of Georgia's economy depends on safe, affordable, readily available and consistent power. Manufacturers require it to operate advanced facilities. Hospitals rely on it to deliver care. Families depend on it to power homes and transportation. Farmers need it to operate equipment and irrigation systems. Technology companies and data centers require enormous computing capacity supported by reliable electricity. Even everyday consumer demand continues growing as our economy becomes increasingly digital and connected.

Georgia has been able to meet that demand because our state planned ahead, both in recent years and decades into the past.

Our vertically integrated utility structure, overseen by the PSC, allows utilities to make long-term investments while

remaining responsive to evolving consumer and business needs. That system has helped Georgia maintain one of the most reliable and affordable energy environments among top GDP-producing states, even during periods of expansive growth, national inflation and global uncertainty.

Georgia also benefits from one of the most diverse and collaborative energy ecosystems in the country.

Georgia Power, Oglethorpe Power, Georgia's EMCs, Georgia Transmission, MEAG Power, Dalton Utilities and others continue investing in generation, transmission and grid reliability across the state. Our strong natural gas infrastructure also provides critical reliability and flexibility as energy demand continues evolving.

At the same time, Georgia has embraced an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy. Nuclear, natural gas, solar, hydropower, battery storage and emerging technologies will all play a role in powering Georgia's future. The completion of Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 positioned Georgia as home to the nation's largest producer of clean energy, while utilities across the state continue expanding renewable generation and strengthening grid resiliency.

This conversation is not simply about growth for growth's sake. It is about keeping Georgia affordable, competitive, and prepared for the future.

The states that win economically over the next 25 years will be the states capable of delivering safe, reliable, affordable energy to support homes, businesses, manufacturing, logistics, innovation and next-generation technologies. Georgia is positioned to lead because leaders here have consistently been willing to think long-term instead of waiting for crises to force action.

Energy security is economic security. And Georgia's continued success will depend on preserving the thoughtful, collaborative approach that brought us here in the first place.



CLARK

Chris Clark is president/CEO of the Georgia Chamber.

**COLUMNIST ■ GARY WISENBAKER**

## Who benefits when America stops building? China

Americans have always been builders. Americans built the railroads that connected a continent, highways that connected a nation, power grids that electrified rural America, and communications networks that transformed the world.

Every generation has faced critics who warned against growth, development and progress. But Americans understood a simple truth: To lead, you must build.

While the subject changes, the lesson remains the same. One might think the realm of academia would grasp this lesson, yet it does not.

The race for Artificial Intelligence dominance is now the most important strategic competition of our time. The nation that leads in artificial intelligence will gain enormous advantages in economic growth, scientific research, military capability, cybersecurity and global influence.

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum recently put it bluntly, observing that artificial intelligence dominance will decide who is "going to control the world."

China's leaders know this. Chinese President Xi Jinping has described AI as a strategic priority and has directed enormous investments into computing infrastructure, semiconductors, and data centers racing to create the power to control the next generation of technology. That should concern every American.

Data centers are not glamorous. Most people will never visit one. Yet these facilities are the backbone of artificial intelligence. They provide the computing power needed to train AI systems, process infor-

mation, support cloud services, and drive the modern digital economy.

Yet, here in the United States, a growing movement seeks to slow, delay, or outright stop the construction of data centers. There are obviously legitimate concerns. Data centers require land, electricity, and water. Citizens deserve honest answers about environmental impacts, infrastructure demands, tax incentives, and quality-of-life issues. And this requires transparency and accountability.

But what has emerged in recent years is not organic. Researchers, members of Congress, and policy organizations increasingly argue that a sophisticated influence campaign is fueling opposition to American AI infrastructure.

A report by the nonpartisan Bitcoin Policy Institute alleges that Chinese state media, activist networks and foreign-funded nonprofit organizations are working in tandem to amplify opposition to data centers and AI development in the United States.

The report elucidates that this effort is to slow or stop American development and specifically points to Chinese state-controlled media outlets that regularly warn Americans about the environmental and economic dangers of data centers while simultaneously celebrating China's own rapid expansion of AI infrastructure.

Ironically, however, China is not holding public rallies demanding a moratorium on data centers. Chinese activists are not pro-

testing Beijing's construction of AI infrastructure. China is building aggressively because its leaders understand what is at stake. Yet AI opponents here are demanding that America stand down.

It was once assigned that Vladimir Lenin praised such a special corps as "useful idiots." (Though it was probably the term of socialist economist Ludwig von Mises.) These foot soldiers would co-op and subvert democratic processes propagandizing according to Moscow's dictates.

But, in this case, China's. Senator, Bernie Sanders, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have proposed legislation that would place a moratorium on new AI data-center construction. Similar campaigns have appeared at state and local levels across the country. Dozens of local governments have already enacted restrictions or pauses on new projects. These efforts benefit China, not the United States of America.

Every delayed project means less computing power. Every cancelled project means fewer jobs, less investment, and reduced technological capacity. Every year spent arguing about whether America should build AI infrastructure is a year China spends building it.

Recent investigations have also raised questions about the role of foreign money

flowing through nonprofit organizations involved in anti-data-center campaigns. Congressional committees are examining those allegations, and lawmakers have called for greater scrutiny of foreign-funded activism that may affect national security interests. These efforts should continue whether or not this is ultimately confirmed as the larger strategic reality remains unchanged.

China wants to win the AI race; this cannot be allowed. This does not mean every data center belongs in every community. Local governments should carefully evaluate proposals. Environmental standards should be enforced. Infrastructure impacts should be addressed responsibly. This is critical.

But America cannot afford to adopt a philosophy of "build nowhere" or the simplistic "No" to data centers.

History teaches that great powers do not decline solely because their competitors become stronger. They decline because they lose confidence in themselves. The question facing America today is not whether artificial intelligence will transform the future: it will. In the end, nations do not win technological competitions by filing lawsuits, imposing moratoriums, blocking construction, or peddling propaganda scripted with misinformation and prevarications emanating from and by hostile foreign interests.

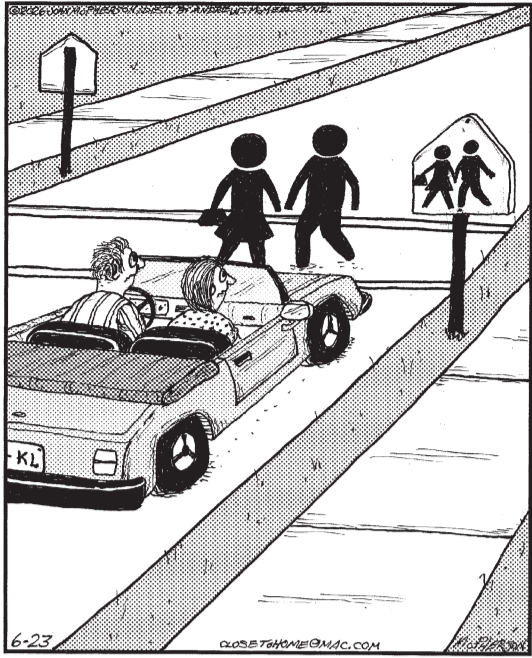
While America can and must win the AI race, it can and must build to do so.



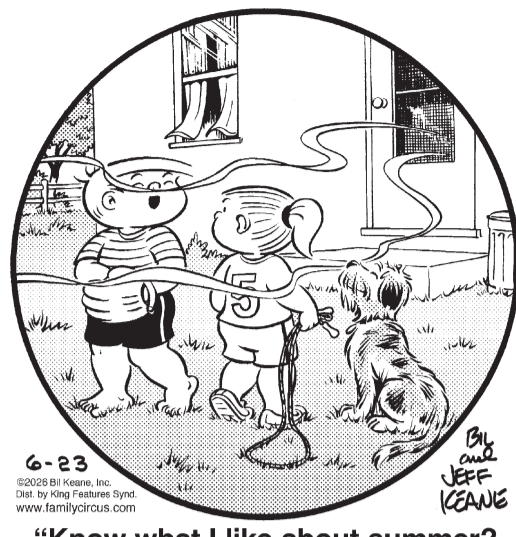
WISENBAKER

Gary Wisenbaker is currently a Realtor with Century 21 Realty Advisors in Valdosta and is licensed in both Georgia and Florida.

**CLOSE TO HOME** John McPherson



**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** Bill Keane



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"Know what I like about summer? We don't hafta go indoors to smell dinner cooking."

By Bill Keane

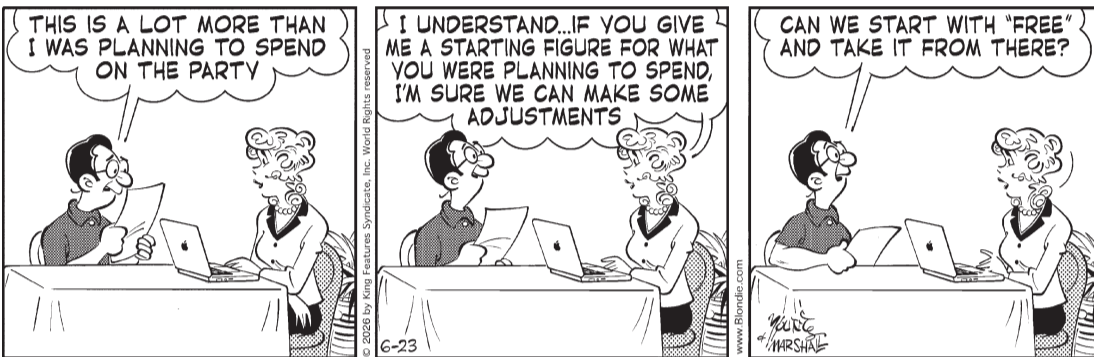
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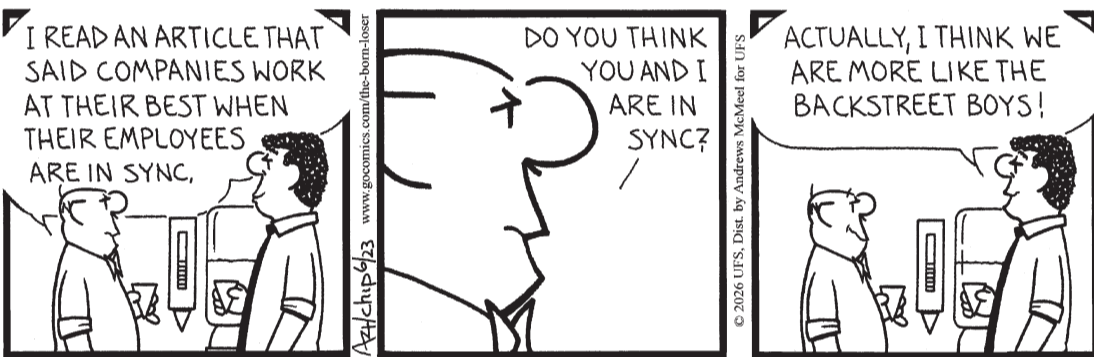
**BLONDIE** Dean Young & John Marshall



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**THE BORN LOSER** Art & Chip Sansom



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**CROSSWORD**

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Don't — — stranger"
  - 4 Have to
  - 8 Diner fare
  - 12 Insect secretion
  - 13 — Minor
  - 14 Penne — vodka
  - 15 Scrap of food
  - 16 On deck
  - 17 Painter — Gauguin
  - 18 Plainspoken
  - 20 Holy Roman —
  - 22 Melody
  - 23 Actress — Dawn Chong
  - 24 Artistic paste-up
  - 28 Bungling
  - 32 Actress — Adams
  - 33 Matured
  - 35 Role in "The Matrix"
- DOWN**
- 1 Shapeless mass

**TODAY'S SOLUTION:**

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

- 2 Nobleman
- 3 Fact
- 4 Chanted word
- 5 Employ
- 6 Half dozen
- 7 Spud
- 8 Occur
- 9 Jai —
- 10 Aspersion
- 11 Healthy
- 19 Long river in Africa
- 21 Household worker
- 24 100 yrs.
- 25 Bouquet
- 26 Liquid meas.
- 27 "Yikes!"
- 29 Fascinate
- 30 Pome fruit
- 31 Musical sound
- 34 Female sheep
- 37 Ticket remnant
- 38 Level
- 40 "Star Trek" engineer
- 42 Moon landscape feature
- 44 Commence
- 46 Wound mark
- 47 " — or not ..."
- 48 Actor — Julia
- 50 Bewildered
- 51 Flat floater
- 54 United
- 55 Celestial altar

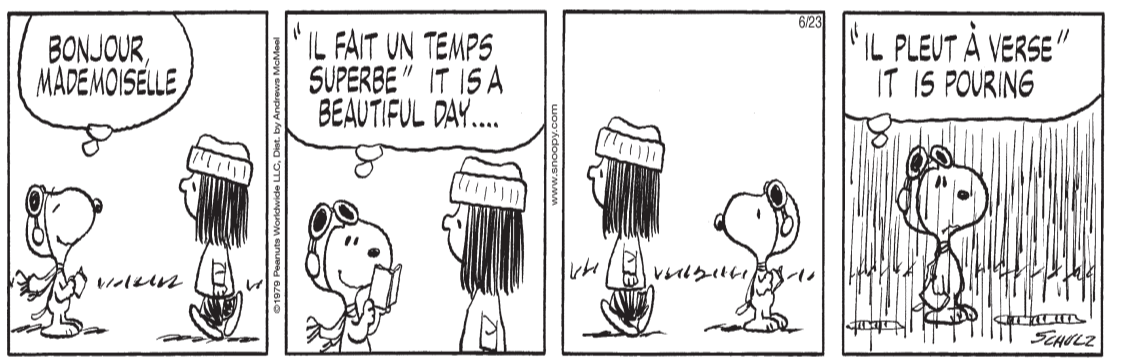
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13					14			
15			16					17			
18			19			20	21				
		22				23					
24	25			26	27		28		29	30	31
32				33	34			35			
36				37				38			
39			40			41		42			
			43		44		45				
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52					53	54	55			56	
57					58					59	
60				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

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**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE** Chris Browne



**PEANUTS** Charles M. Schulz



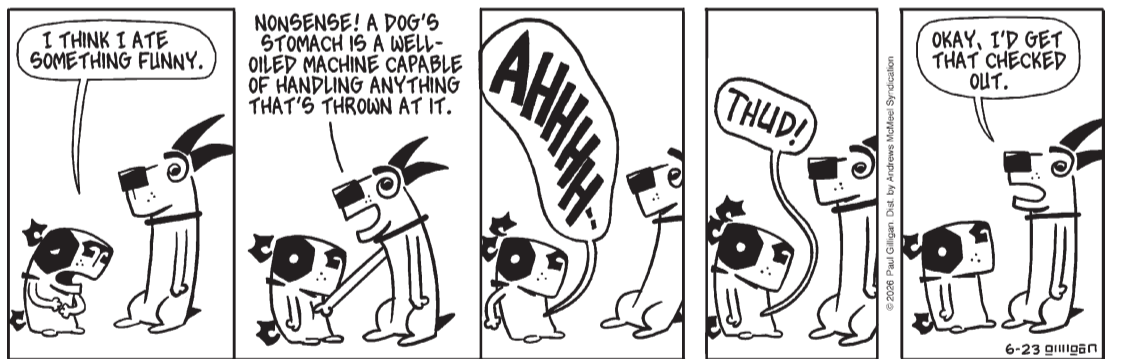
**ZITS** Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



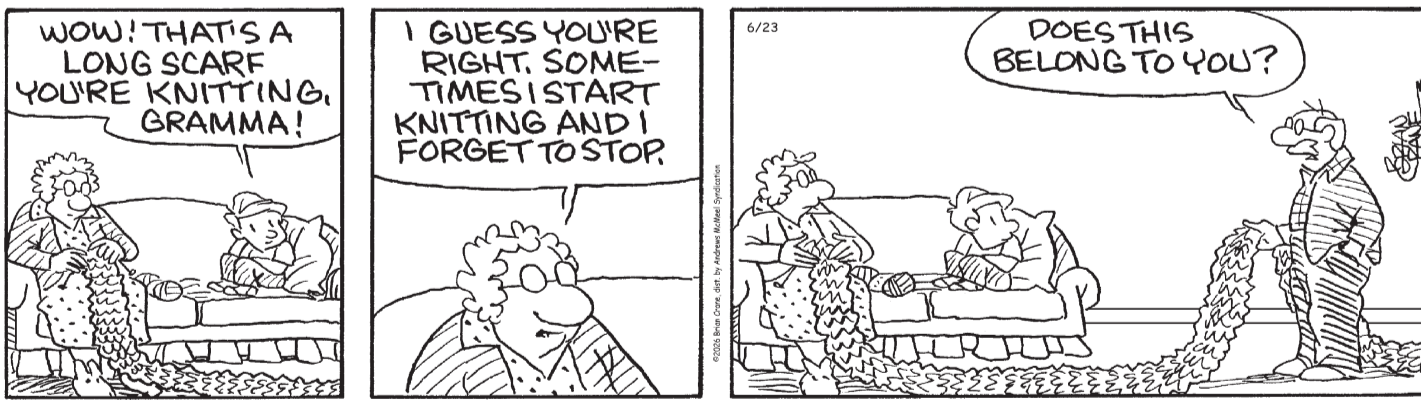
**GARFIELD** Jim Davis



**POOCH CAFE** Paul Gilligan



**PICKLES** Brian Crane



**WONDERWORD** By DAVID OUELLET

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

**CRUMBL MAKES DECADENT COOKIES** Solution: 8 letters

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

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Almond, Animal Cookies, Bacon, Banana, Batch, Batter, Bun, Candy, Carrot, Chewy, Churro, Cinnamon, Cobbler, Dessert, Espresso, Glaze, Hamsley, Icing, Instagram, Jam, Jason, Lemon, Marshmallow, McGowan, Milk, Molten Lava, Oatmeal, Oreo, Peanut, Rich, Sawyer, Sea Salt, Soft, Sugar, Tartlet, Toffee, Treats, Trendy, Twix, Utah, Vanilla, Waffle

**TODAY'S ANSWER:** Frosting

**SUDOKU**

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

**WHATZIT?**

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

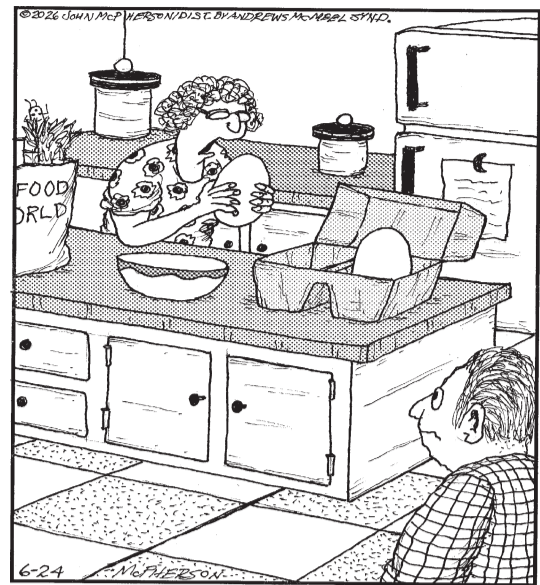
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2	X	2	=	4	I	S	I	S
3	X	2	=	6	I	S	I	S
4	X	2	=	8	I	S	I	S
5	X	2	=	10	I	S	I	S

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

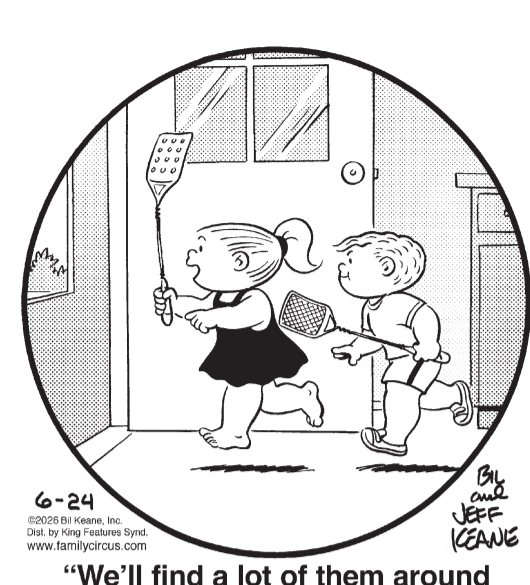
**TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:**  
Table tennis

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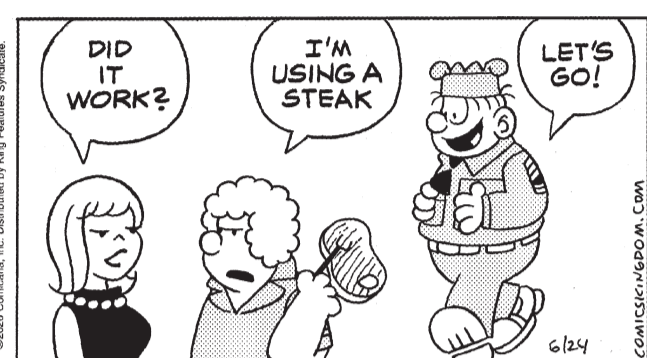
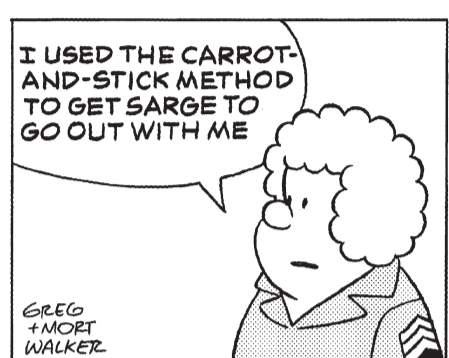
**CLOSE TO HOME** John McPherson



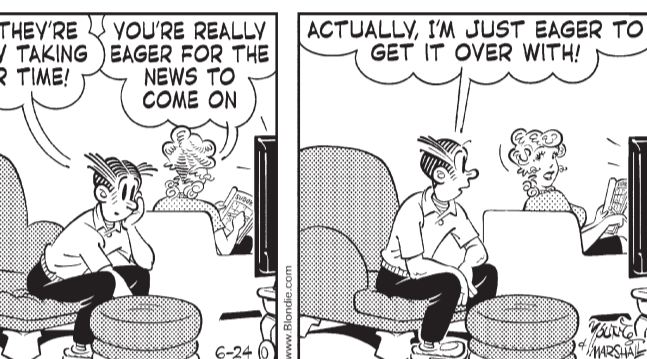
**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** Bill Keane



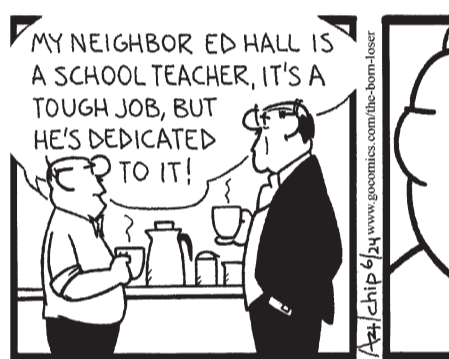
**BEETLE BAILEY** Mort & Greg Walker



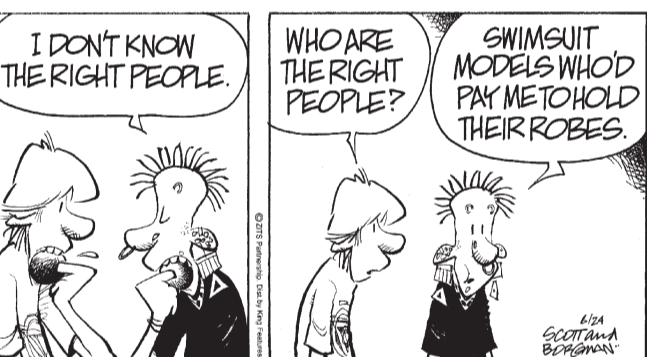
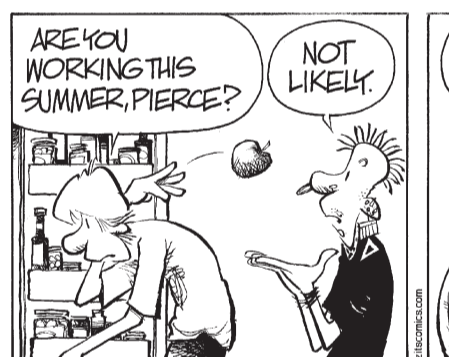
**BLONDIE** Dean Young & John Marshall



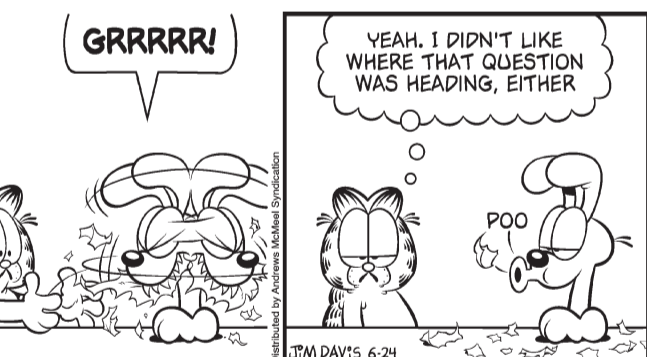
**THE BORN LOSER** Art & Chip Sansom



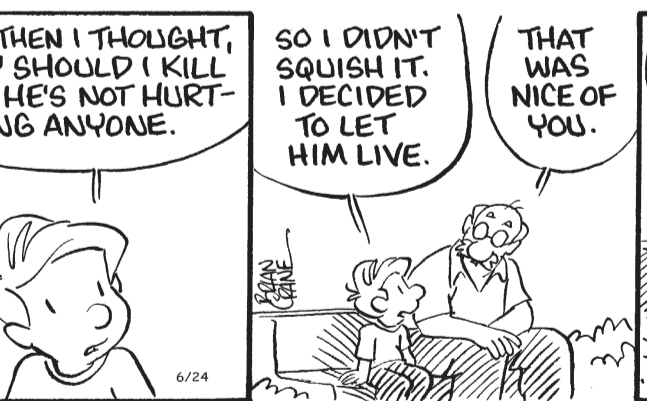
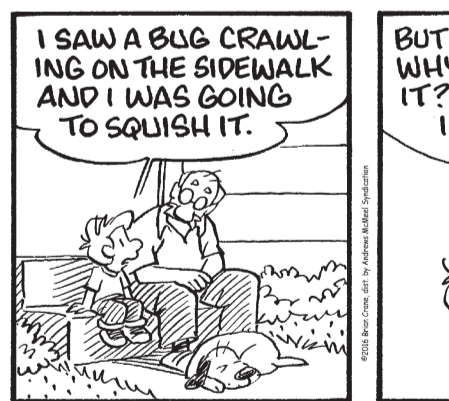
**ZITS** Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**GARFIELD** Jim Davis



**PICKLES** Brian Crane



**Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle**

Edited by Patti Varol

**ACROSS**

- Getting off the fence
- Abbr. that includes many racial identities
- Indian state known for silk and tea
- Nothing special
- Subdued
- High wispy clouds
- 'Twas the night before Christmas?
- 'Time of financial growth
- Antidiscrimination HR initiative
- Replace with a grawlix, say
- Helping
- Gush
- 'What may follow kids in a candy store?
- Elixirs
- 'To \_\_\_ is human ...'
- Past regulation, briefly
- Blooper reel bit
- Sounding shocked
- TD's six
- 'Handshake alternative
- Knight's title
- Italian scooter
- Try to be like
- Eye ailment
- Puppy's bark
- Speechified
- 'Stressful contest?
- Antacid brand
- 'Let me check'
- Someone who has a trying job?
- Manicure choice
- Finish dramatically, or what the answers to the starred clues do
- Andrea Gibson's \_\_\_ to the Public Panic Attack
- Oktoberfest mug
- Soul legend Franklin
- Craggy hill
- Kagan of the Supreme Court
- 'Let's hear it!'

**DOWN**

- Futbol chant
- Drench
- Article
- Cincinnati MLBers
- Doberman docs
- Dishonorable wager
- Faucet
- Ohio city on Lake Erie
- Loud person
- Green film on copper
- Actress Witherspoon
- Film starring Barbra Streisand as a woman who pretends to be a yeshiva boy
- 'Have we \_\_\_?'
- Herring kin
- Dim sum root vegetable
- Department head?
- Finish first
- Org. emulated in 'Heated Rivalry'
- Lass

**TODAY'S SOLUTION:**

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

By Sala Wanetick & Dena R. Verkuil  
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**SUDOKU**

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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

Ringside seat

**TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:**

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

**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.

**WOUND NURSES** Solution: 8 letters

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

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**TODAY'S ANSWER:** Patients

**CLOSE TO HOME** John McPherson



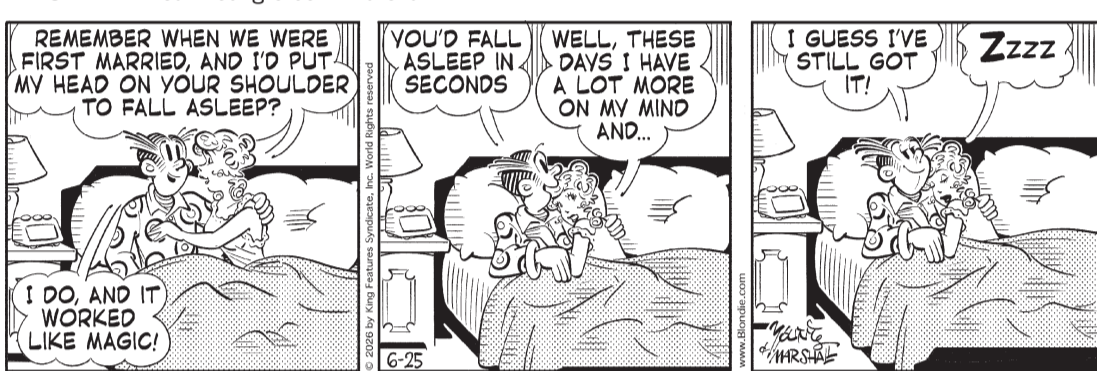
**THE FAMILY CIRCUS** Bill Keane



**BEETLE BAILEY** Mort & Greg Walker



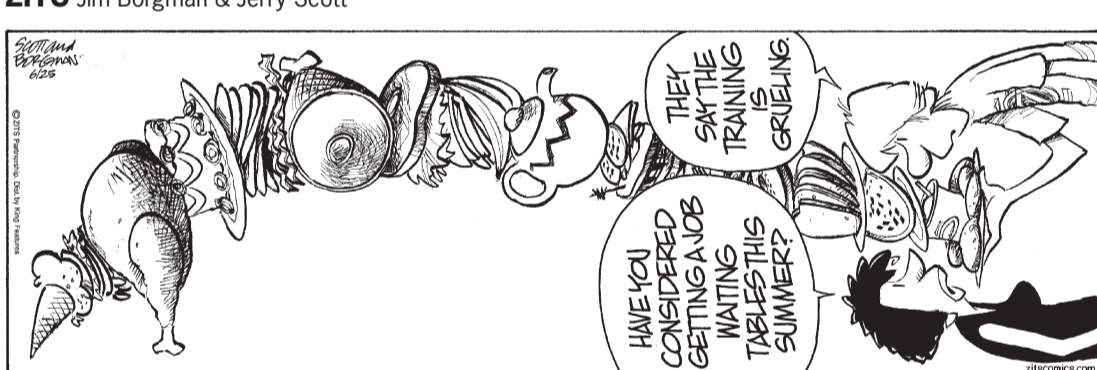
**BLONDIE** Dean Young & John Marshall



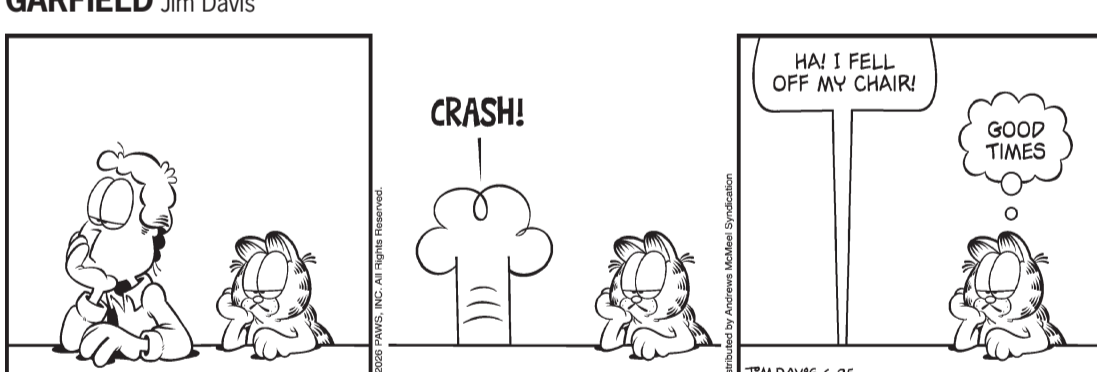
**THE BORN LOSER** Art & Chip Sansom



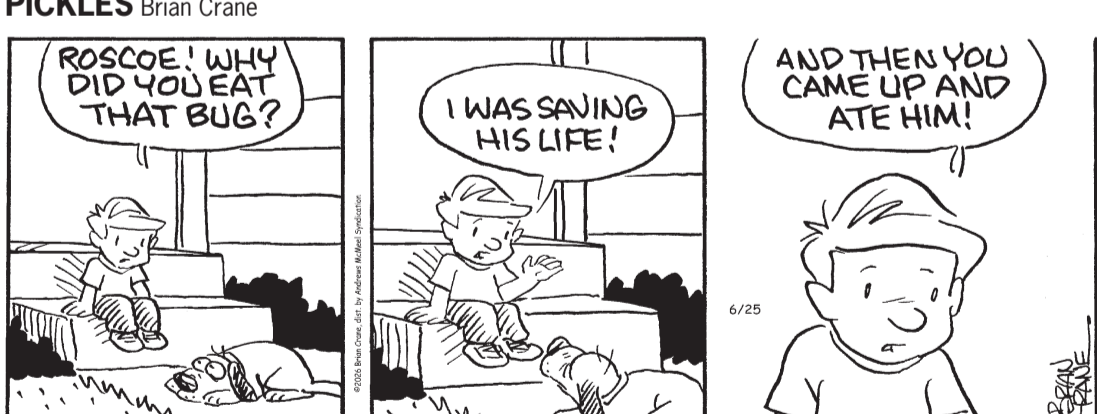
**ZITS** Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**GARFIELD** Jim Davis



**PICKLES** Brian Crane



**CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**  
 1 Lively dance  
 4 Pelt  
 8 Venomous snakes  
 12 Mine's output  
 13 — St. Vincent Millay  
 14 Work  
 15 Shakespearean tragedy (2 wds.)  
 17 Ditty  
 18 Bars legally  
 19 Used with another  
 21 Court divider  
 22 Tolkien monster  
 23 Utter  
 26 "No —, ands or buts!"  
 28 Chafe  
 31 Sing with closed lips  
 32 Agitated state  
 33 "Able was I — ..."

**DOWN**  
 1 Jest  
 2 Showy flower  
 3 Fellow

**34 Ball**  
 35 Cherry type  
 36 Turkish title  
 37 Between zeta and theta  
 38 Harvest deity  
 39 "Iliad" poet  
 41 Zodiac animal  
 43 Jewel  
 44 Copyist  
 47 Kidnapper's demand  
 51 Shred  
 52 Collarbone  
 54 Irish Gaelic  
 55 Mist  
 56 State near Miss.  
 57 Clutter  
 58 Portent  
 59 Singer — King Cole

**TODAY'S SOLUTION:**

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

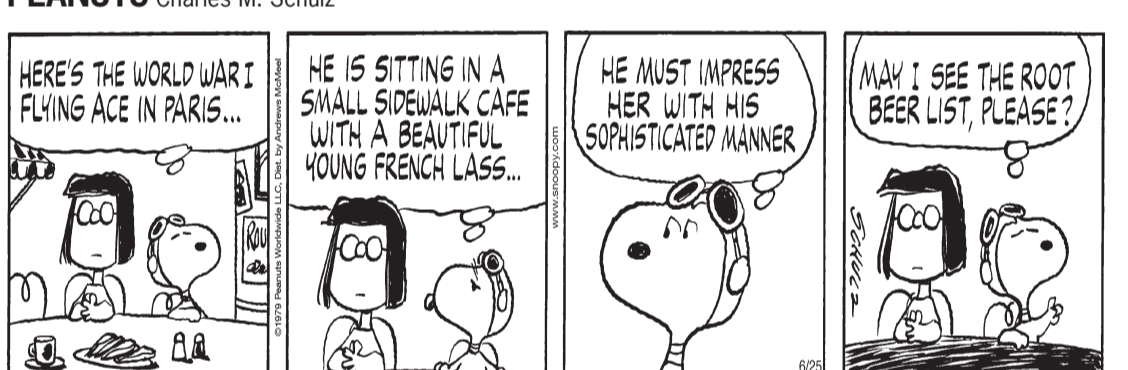
- 4 Right-hand man  
 5 That is, in Latin  
 6 Letters in genetics  
 7 Corn spikes  
 8 Fragrant oil
- 9 Dairy product (2 wds.)  
 10 Yearn  
 11 Toboggan  
 16 "— With the Wind"  
 20 Emcee  
 23 Brake part  
 24 Injure  
 25 Humiliate  
 26 Rustic stopovers  
 27 Small fruit  
 29 Press  
 30 Tolerate  
 32 Drink a little of  
 35 Landmine  
 39 Paradise  
 40 Hotel chain  
 42 Buenos —  
 43 Eat from the pasture  
 44 Stalk  
 45 Bird beak part  
 46 Repeat  
 48 Read in haste  
 49 — podrida  
 50 Vegan's no-no  
 53 On the — (running)

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

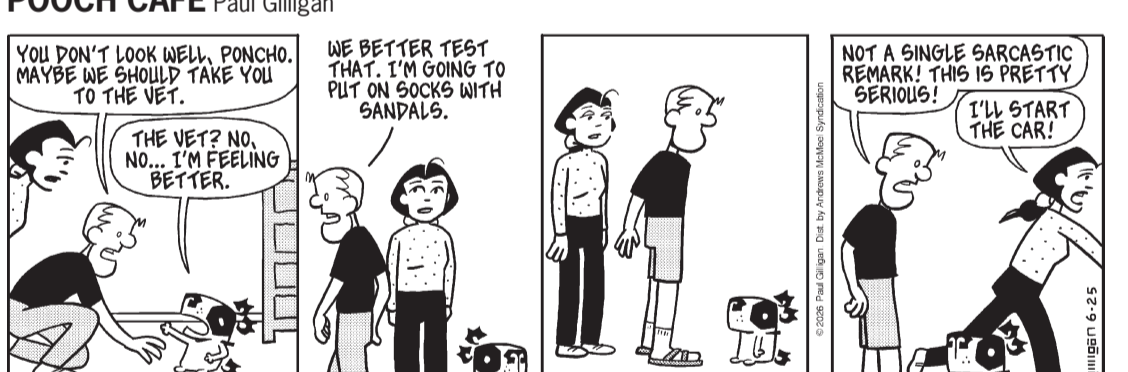
**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE** Chris Browne



**PEANUTS** Charles M. Schulz



**POOCH CAFE** Paul Gilligan



**SUDOKU**

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

**WHATZIT?**

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

T	E	A
E	T	A
A	T	E

**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:** Dot the T's and cross the T's

**WONDERWORD** By DAVID OUELLET

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

**TWEED HAREM PANTS** Solution: 8 letters

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

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Autumn, Balloon, Blend, Brand, Brown, Capris, Cargo, Casual, Clothing, Cotton, Cuff, Custom, Flare, Herringbone, Khaki, Longer, Loose, Material, Neutral, Panel, Plaid, Pleats, Pockets, Print, Sewing, Simple, Soft, Solid, Straight, Style, Suede, Thick, Trend, Twill, Velvet, Vintage, Waist, Wardrobe, Warm, Wear, Wide, Winter, Wool, Woven, Wrap, Zipper

**TODAY'S ANSWER:** Textured

# Governor's veto impacts planned Albany hotel project

By Alan Mauldin  
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

**ALBANY** — Gov. Brian Kemp's veto of legislation that included funding for state historic tax credits is forcing Albany city staff to look for other funding options for a planned downtown hotel project.

Albany Downtown Manager Lequrica Gaskins told The Albany Herald that the project by Maryland-based development group Woodmont Lodging is planned to be a Marriott-branded hotel.

A proposal to help make up for that potential loss in funding for the proposed \$43 million project is making its way through the Albany City Commission. Staff have recommended sending a letter in support of a Section 108 loan for the project to show the city's commitment.

The city has tentatively pledged \$9 million from a downtown development fund

for the project but that pledge has not been formally approved.

The Section 108 loan guarantee could assist in making up for the loss of historic tax credits for the hotel/renovation project at the former Water, Gas & Light building at 205-207 Pine Ave. and the former Rosenberg Brothers Department Store/Albany Herald building at 126 N. Washington St., Gaskins said.

Gaskins made the request to the Albany City Commission on Tuesday.

State legislators included the tax credits in the budget passed this year, but Kemp vetoed that funding as well as funding for a Phoebe Putney Health System collaboration with the Morehouse School of Medicine.

"We knew that was a possibility," Gaskins said of the veto. "When we have these projects, we have a plan A and a plan B. We are utilizing plan B because we know

we don't have those (credits). It (Section 108) is a resource the city of Albany is able to utilize."

Through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development program, governments are allowed to utilize a portion of their Community Development Block Grant funding as loans for large community development projects.

Since the city has not formally approved the \$9 million in funding, city staff has recommended the letter of support as a way for the city to validate its support.

In April, the commission approved a \$600,000 loan to Woodmont Lodging to allow the company to develop architectural plans and formulate a guaranteed maximum price for construction.

Commissioners asked to get the construction costs before proceeding further. The developer also will have a design that will help in seeking fed-

eral historic tax credits, new market tax credits and other funding sources through that process.

The Phoebe-Morehouse project, which was also part of the cuts impacted by Kemp's veto, is planned to create more than 100 new physician resident slots based at Phoebe in medical specialties that would include emergency medicine, general surgery, internal medicine, obstetrics and psychiatry.

"We're disappointed that funding included in next year's state budget to help expand graduate medical education in Albany will not be coming to our community, but that decision is not going to impact Phoebe's partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine or our commitment to bring more physician residents to southwest Georgia," Phoebe Putney Health System President and CEO Scott Steiner said in an email response. "We look forward



File Photo

Gov. Brian Kemp's line-item veto of legislation that included funding for state historic tax credits is forcing Albany city staff to look for other funding options for a planned downtown hotel project.

to working with state leaders on future funding opportunities to support these vital programs that will improve access to quality healthcare in our region."

Phoebe and Morehouse are already moving forward with a partnership that has brought

residents and students from the college to train at Phoebe facilities, led to additional research in the area and expanded health initiatives, according to Phoebe.

The line-item veto also included a \$3 million allocation for Phoebe.

## MCLB-Albany Independence Day celebration planned Friday

Staff Reports  
news@albanyherald.com

**MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE-ALBANY** — After a half-decade's absence, Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany is opening its gates to the public for the nation's 250th Fourth of July celebration.

The celebration will be held on Friday after the ceremonies were closed about five years ago, partially in reaction to COVID-19.

The Independence Day celebration kicks off at 6 p.m., with gates open to the public beginning at 5:30.

This year's free event pays tribute to 250 years of American independence, reflecting on the nation's enduring commitment to freedom and the generations of service members who have safeguarded it. It will feature an evening of live entertainment, activi-

ties for all ages, popular local food trucks, patriotism, and a fireworks finale, offering a memorable experience for attendees of all ages.

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

All attendees ages 18 and older must present a valid REAL ID-compliant driver's license or U.S. passport to enter the base. No weapons or other contraband are permitted.

The event will have a clear-



Special Illustration: MCLB-Albany

Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany will hold its annual Independence Day celebration on Friday with a program that includes food, music and closes with a fireworks display.

bag policy and other security measures in place. For a complete list of base access

requirements, visit <https://albany.usmc-mccs.org/about/independence-day>.

## Southwest Georgia students recognized by colleges, universities

By Carlton Fletcher  
carlton.fletcher@albanyherald.com

**University of Alabama President's, Dean's Lists TUSCALOOSA, Ala.** — A total of 14,306 students enrolled during spring semester 2026 at the University of Alabama were named to the dean's list with an academic record of 3.5 (or above) or the president's list with an academic record of 4.0 (all A's). Local students honored include:

Elizabeth Pierce of Albany-Deans List  
Sarah Sternenberg of Albany-Deans List  
Chanse Taylor of Baconton-Deans List  
Macy Wiggins of Dawson-Deans List  
Joshua Barnes of Leesburg-Presidents List  
Joshua Stokes of Leesburg-Deans List

**Maryland Global Dean's List**

**ADELPHI, Md.** — More than 20,000 University of Maryland Global Campus students were named to the Dean's List for the spring 2026 term. To be eligible for the honor, a student must complete at least six credits during the term, earn a grade-point average of at least 3.5 for the term, and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 at UMGC. Area students honored include:

Kristina Akins of Leesburg  
Inza Diarrassouba of Albany  
Kaleatrice Ford of Albany  
Crystal Guillory of Albany  
Katelyn Haines of Albany  
Jeffrey Hartman of Albany  
Allen Janis of Albany  
Tiffany Joiner of Leesburg  
John Miller of Leesburg  
Mason Mims of Albany  
Alejandro Nanez of Leesburg

**Samford University Dean's List**

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala.** — Samford University recognized 2,408 students named to the Dean's List for the spring 2026 semester. To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must have earned a minimum 3.5 grade-point average out of a possible 4.0 while attempting at least 12 credit hours of coursework. Among those honored are Anna Kimsey of Albany.

**University of Arkansas, Little Rock-Dean's List**

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** — Shane Fisher of Albany has been named to the Dean's List for the spring 2026 se-

master at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The Dean's List recognized more than 1,800 students with superior academic performances at the end of the semester. To be on the Dean's List, UA-Little Rock students must earn at least nine credit hours and maintain at least a 3.5 GPA.

**University of Arkansas Chancellor's List**

**FAYETTEVILLE, Ark.** — The University of Arkansas is recognizing students for earning a place on the spring 2026 Chancellor's List, the university's highest semester academic honor for undergraduates. Kathy Goodpasture of Albany joins a select group of students who have achieved a 4.0 grade-point average for the semester while completing at least 12 credit hours of coursework required for graduation.

**Georgia College & State University - Graduates**

**MILLEDGEVILLE** — A number of local students participated in Georgia College & State University's spring 2026 commencement ceremonies recently. Among the graduates were:

Emma Sinderson of Leesburg, bachelor's candidate Special Education major in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education.

Bentley Savelle of Leesburg, bachelor's candidate Theatre major in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Courtney Cook of Poulan, master's candidate Curriculum and Instruction major in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education.

Sam Orndorff of Leesburg, master's candidate Health & Human Performance major in the College of Health Sciences.

Kamryn Lane of Leesburg, master's candidate Middle Grades Education major in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education.

Lamarshia Holley-Hurley of Albany, master's candidate Secondary Teacher Education major in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education

Ragen Singleton of Camilla, specialist candidate Teacher Leadership major in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education.

## Albany Museum's ninth HeART of Albany Festival returns Nov. 7

Staff Reports  
news@albanyherald.com

**ALBANY** -- The Heart of Albany Festival, a fall art celebration at the Albany Museum of Art, will return to the museum on Nov. 7. The ninth annual festival will feature professional chalk artists, artists demonstrating their work, and the third annual Southwest Georgia Regional Student Art Competition.

"The Heart of Albany Festival is a celebration of the arts, and a thank-you to the community for its exceptional support throughout the year," AMA Executive Director Andrew James Wulf said in a news release. "With work underway for our move downtown in 2028, that unwavering community support is more important than ever. We hope everyone will mark their calendar and come out for this free event and enjoy the art, entertainment, food, games and vendors."

The festival will open at 10 a.m. and run until 5 p.m. at the AMA, located at 311 Meadowlark Drive, adjacent to Albany State University's West Campus. The festival showcases talented professional chalk artists from Georgia and neighboring states who compete for the Best of Show cash prize as they present their takes on each year's theme by creating larger-than-life artworks



Special Photo: Albany Museum of Art

The ninth annual Heart of Albany Festival will be conducted on Nov. 7 at the Albany Museum of Art's 311 Meadowlark Drive location. The free festival features artists, entertainment, games and activities, vendors, and food trucks.

on the pavement while festivalgoers watch.

"The theme for this year's contest will be announced soon," Director of Curatorial Affairs Katie Dillard said. "Once it is announced, professional chalk artists can apply via a link on the AMA festival website: [www.albany-museum.com/events/heartfest/participate/](http://www.albany-museum.com/events/heartfest/participate/)."

Dillard said plans include a 3D photo-op in chalk on the museum's entryway. In past years, festivalgoers have taken photos in which they appeared to be atop a hot-air balloon high above Albany, and on a skateboard bursting with a splash of paint from the sidewalk.

"We will also have local and regional artists demonstrating their talent and selling their

artwork," Director of Education and Public Programming Annie Van Oteghem said. "Plus, student groups and amateur chalk artists will compete for bragging rights."

Live entertainment will be on the James M. Barnett Jr. Foundation Stage throughout the day.

"We will have a featured performer during the afternoon," Wulf said. "We will announce that in the coming weeks."

Sponsors like the James M. Barnett Jr. Foundation enable the museum to put on the festival each year with free admission for everyone. Businesses interested in being a sponsor can contact AMA Development Director Chloe Hinton at [chloe.hinton@albanymuseum.com](mailto:chloe.hinton@albanymuseum.com).

Vine Vision has been the longtime sponsor of the AMAZing Activities play area for kids, which will return with a bounce house, games and art-inspired activities. The Vendor Village, with unique items and gift ideas just in time for Christmas shopping, will be in the shady pecan orchard on the museum grounds, as will the food truck court. Applications for vendors and food trucks will open in August, and registration links will be at [www.albanymuseum.com/events/heartfest/participate/](http://www.albanymuseum.com/events/heartfest/participate/).

Inside the museum, the art galleries will be open for viewing. The West Gallery will exhibit the third annual Southwest Georgia Regional Student Art Show. Middle and high school students from the region will be invited to enter works in four categories, with the top three high school winners in each category winning cash awards.

"We will start taking submissions for the student contest after the 2026-27 school year starts," Van Oteghem said. "And during the festival, those attending will use their smartphones to vote for the People's Choice winner, who also will receive a cash award."

Festival updates and details will be posted at [www.albanymuseum.com/events/heartfest/](http://www.albanymuseum.com/events/heartfest/), and on the museum's social media.



File Photo

Atlanta Braves second baseman Ozzie Albies has been one of the few bright spots in Atlanta's struggling June offense, posting an .838 OPS this month while the Braves search for consistency amid injuries and lineup challenges.

## Braves struggle to find offensive spark

By Mark Bowman  
Braves.com

**SAN DIEGO** — The Braves returned from a West Coast swing on May 10 leading the Majors in both runs scored (228) and OPS (.784). By the end of May, they had dropped to second in runs scored (316) and third in OPS (.761).

Even with this injury-influenced late May decline, it was hard to envision how much worse things would get this month. The Braves suffered a 1-0 loss to the Padres on Monday night at Petco Park and now own an MLB-worst .634 OPS in June.

"That's surprising," manager Walt Weiss said of the June ranking. "Our

offense is going to be fine. It's a good offense. It's the cycle of a season. Offenses go through it more than any other aspect of a team, the ups and downs."

What has gone wrong? Well, there's plenty of factors at play. But it's not a coincidence that the offensive decline has coincided with the absences of Ronald Acuña Jr. and Drake Baldwin.

Acuña returned from his first injured list stint on May 19, the same day Baldwin was placed on the IL. Baldwin returned from the IL on June 16, exactly one week after Acuña reinjured his left hamstring and went back on the IL.

It doesn't help that Michael Harris

II has also missed a handful of games this month because of lower back discomfort.

But what really hurts is Baldwin has gone 1-for-25 with 15 strikeouts since hitting MLB's longest homer of the season in his first plate appearance back from the IL. His struggles have created more reason to question the team's decision to end his one-month IL stint after he played just one Minor League rehab game.

"Just trying to get back into the speed of a big league game," Baldwin said. "I'm just trying to find the timing and

See **BRAVES**, 10A



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Monroe's Tristen Terry shoots for two during Monday's summer game against Thomas County Central in Albany.

## Monroe runs by TCC in summer basketball

By Joe Whitfield  
Sports Editor

**ALBANY** — Summer basketball victories don't show up in the standings, but for Monroe head coach Michael Hoffpauir, Monday's 66-44 win over Thomas County Central offered another encouraging sign that the Tornadoes' next generation is beginning to find its footing.

Freshman King Leverette knocked down a corner 3-pointer, rising sophomore Armonis Jefferson controlled the paint and several younger players logged meaningful minutes as Monroe continued its summer schedule with a convincing victory over the Yellow Jackets at Monroe High School.

"We have a mixed group this year where we have a few seniors, some key rising juniors and some good freshmen," Hoffpauir said. "My focus is getting them all some experience to grasp an understanding of the varsity level."

The Yellow Jackets came out firing, connecting on an early 3-pointer and building a 10-6 lead before Monroe settled in.

Once the Tornadoes found their rhythm, the game changed quickly.

Monroe ripped off 20 unanswered points, turning a four-point deficit into a commanding 26-10 advantage. The defensive intensity that helped carry the Tornadoes to a Final Four appearance last season began creating transition opportunities, while Monroe's size and athleticism overwhelmed Thomas County Central.

By halftime, Monroe had stretched the lead to 30-12.

The second half provided more opportunities for Monroe's younger players to shine.

Leverette buried a 3-pointer from the corner before Tristen Terry followed with consecutive shots from beyond

the arc as the Tornadoes expanded their advantage to 49-23. Inside, Jefferson and Robert Adams controlled the boards and protected the rim, making life difficult for the Yellow Jackets.

Thomas County Central briefly found success midway through the second half, attacking the basket for three consecutive layups to trim the deficit and force a Monroe timeout.

Any thoughts of a comeback were short-lived.

Moments later, Elijah Rivers drilled a 3-pointer from the top of the key to stop the run and restore a 20-point cushion. Monroe maintained control the rest of the way on its way to the 22-point victory.

While veterans such as Terry, Rivers and Adams provide a foundation, Hoffpauir said much of the summer has been devoted to accelerating the development of players who will be asked to take on larger roles next season.

"We will be counting on some young guys to play this year and they have been stepping up to the occasion," Hoffpauir said.

"King and Armonis being two contributors, and we are pushing some others such as Jaliel Knowles to step their games up."

That's exactly what summer basketball is designed to accomplish.

The wins are nice, but for Monroe, the bigger objective is preparing a roster that blends experienced returners with emerging young talent. If Monday's performance was any indication, the Tornadoes are making progress toward that goal.

In junior varsity action, Monroe topped the Yellow Jackets, 48-30.

Monroe will continue its summer schedule later this week in Americus before closing out the week Friday at Lee County.

## Wyndham Clark now ranks in top 10 after winning U.S. Open again

Field Level Media

Wyndham Clark's remarkable comeback season reached another milestone Monday as the two-time U.S. Open champion vaulted back into the top 10 of the Official World Golf Ranking following his dramatic victory at Shinnecock Hills.

Clark climbed 26 spots to No. 8 in the world one day after surviving a tense final round to capture his second U.S. Open title in four years. The victory completed an unlikely resurgence for the 32-year-old, who had fallen as low as No. 75 in the rankings earlier this season after missing the cut at the PGA Championship.

"It comes down to just believing that good things are going to happen and that you're going to make the putt, and fortunately the ones I needed to make, I did," Clark said.

Clark finished at 4-under-par 276 after shooting a final-round 3-over 73 Sunday at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y. His six-shot lead entering the final round nearly vanished as he struggled through stretches of the day, but he never surrendered the lead and held off Sam Burns by one stroke.

The victory marked Clark's second major championship, adding to his breakthrough triumph at the 2023 U.S. Open at Los Angeles Country Club. He became the 24th golfer to win multiple U.S. Open titles and joined Brooks Koepka and Bryson DeChambeau as the only players to win the championship twice since 2017.

The win also served as redemption for Clark, whose disappointing 2025 U.S. Open at Oakmont included a missed cut



Special Photo: Bill Streicher-Imagn Images

Wyndham Clark follows the flight of a tee shot during the U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y. Clark overcame a shaky final round to shoot 73 and finish at 4-under-par, capturing his second U.S. Open championship in four years with a one-stroke victory.

and a highly publicized incident in which he damaged lockers in the players' area, resulting in a temporary ban from the club.

"The first one was kind of just the breakthrough of knowing I can do it, and then this one was a lot of redemption," Clark said. "Last year was so tough, a terrible year. I left this place in shambles, and it's amazing what a year can do. I'm leaving here this Sunday as a champion, and I'm just so blessed."

Clark's resurgence has been building for several weeks. After dropping to No. 75 following the PGA Championship, he won the CJ Cup Byron Nelson outside Dallas to climb to No. 45 in the rankings. A third-place finish at the Memorial Tournament moved him to No.

37 before Sunday's major victory vaulted him back among the game's elite.

The final round was anything but easy.

After playing the front nine in 3-over par without a birdie, Clark watched his six-shot cushion shrink to a single stroke multiple times. Burns, who began the day seven shots behind, mounted a charge with a final-round 67 and briefly threatened to erase the deficit.

Clark steadied himself with a birdie at No. 10, but another bogey at No. 13 left the tournament hanging in the balance.

The pivotal moment came at the par-4 16th. After driving into the fescue, Clark appeared headed for damage control. Instead, he salvaged the hole

and rolled in a 24-foot birdie putt to extend his lead back to two shots.

"To make birdie there was honestly a bonus," Clark said. "I just wanted to make par. That was one of the pivotal points of the tournament."

A three-putt bogey on the 17th cut the margin back to one shot, but Clark calmly two-putted for par on the final hole to secure the championship.

Burns' runner-up finish lifted him from No. 30 to No. 15 in the world rankings. The three-time PGA Tour winner recorded his third consecutive top-10 finish in the U.S. Open.

"I think I did my best, and I did everything I could to have a chance to win today," Burns said. "I started the day seven shots back. That's very difficult to overcome, especially against someone who is playing as well as Wyndham has been playing."

South Korea's Tom Kim finished third at 1-under par after shooting 70 on Sunday. The finish represented Kim's best major championship performance since the 2023 British Open and propelled him from No. 141 to No. 64 in the world rankings.

J.T. Poston, Keith Mitchell and world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler tied for fourth at even par. Scheffler, who was attempting to complete the career Grand Slam on his 30th birthday, never mounted a serious challenge.

Meanwhile, DeChambeau's struggles in major championships continued. After missing his third consecutive major cut of 2026, he slipped two spots to No. 34 in the rankings despite a strong season on the LIV Golf circuit.

## Georgia Tech finalizes plans for \$70M stadium renovation

Staff Reports  
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**THE FLATS** — The design for Georgia Tech's upcoming \$70 million renovation to Bobby Dodd Stadium at Hyundai Field is complete.

The first major renovation to the 113-year-old home of Georgia Tech football since 2003 will begin immediately following the conclusion of the 2026 season and will be completed ahead of the 2027 campaign.

The renovation is part of Georgia Tech athletics' Full Steam Ahead initiative, which was officially launched in 2024. At launch, the preliminary concept included upgrades to the facility's video board and sound system, elevated premium spaces and the addition of chairback seating to replace current bleacher seating across the stadium.

As the project has evolved and analysis has been completed through the course of the design process, the architect and construction manager identified that some originally proposed elements are either functionally unfeasible within the existing structure of the stadium, or could only be accomplished through a substantial increase to

the project budget (likely more than doubling the originally approved financial investment).

Specifically, extensive studies identified that implementing a modern flip-up chairback system throughout Bobby Dodd Stadium is unfeasible due to tread depths (the horizontal measurement from the front edge of one row of seating to the front edge of the row directly behind it). Like many stadiums of its vintage, Bobby Dodd Stadium has tread depths that are much narrower than the modern industry standard. Modern stadiums are built with a 33-inch tread depth to accommodate chairs, and 30 inches is the minimum for installation of a flip-up chairback system. The tread depths at Bobby Dodd Stadium are 26.5-27 inches in the lower west, 27 inches in the lower east and lower north and 25.75 inches in the upper east.

Therefore, the only options to install a flip-up chairback system would be to either eliminate every other row of seating throughout the stadium, which would have drastically reduced capacity, or demolish and reconstruct significant portions of the stadium. In addition to being extremely costly, it was also unlikely that those options could be completed



Special Photo: Georgia Tech Athletics

Bobby Dodd Stadium in Atlanta will be undergoing a \$70 million renovation after the 2026 football season.

ed within a single offseason construction timeline.

Based on the analysis, the best and most responsible solution for adding permanent chairbacks to Bobby Dodd Stadium is attached chairback seats, which allows seats to be affixed directly to the stadium's existing bleachers.

Many industry-leading bleacher-attached chairback seats were tested. Several proved to be too tight for spectator seating within the stadium's constraints, as they would lead to insufficient legroom for taller individuals.

However, a bleacher-mount-

ed, non-flip-up mesh chairback seat was identified as a product that could be installed at Bobby Dodd Stadium without sacrificing fans' safety, comfort or experience. Fans were invited to test the seats during Georgia Tech football's spring game in April, and they received positive reviews, leading to the final decision that the bleacher-mounted, fixed mesh seats would be the permanent chairback solution for Bobby Dodd Stadium.

When considering the extent of the chairback installation through-

See **STADIUM**, 10A

# Oklahoma powers past North Carolina to win national title

## Field Level Media

Thanks to monster nights from Kyle Branch and Jaxon Willits, Oklahoma blasted No. 5 North Carolina 13-2 to win the program's third Men's College World Series title, taking the decisive Game 3 of the championship series on Monday in Omaha, Neb.

Branch went 3-for-4 with two runs and six RBIs, blasting a three-run homer in the eighth.

Branch was just 1-for-16 in the MWCS before his big night Monday.

Willits reached base in his

first five plate appearances, finishing 3-for-4 with two runs, two RBIs and two walks.

"He's one of our hardest workers, and he's our best leader," Sooners coach Skip Johnson said. "When you have your team where one of your best leaders is your hardest worker, and then he does that, I don't have to say much. That's called attitude."

The last four in Oklahoma's lineup went a combined 9-for-17 with eight runs and nine RBIs.

In the ninth, Jackson Cleveland struck out three consec-

utive hitters after a leadoff single to give the Sooners their first title since 1994.

The Sooners averaged eight runs per game in the MCWS.

It was an improbable run for Oklahoma, which dropped its final four Southeastern Conference series before going one-and-done in the conference tournament.

However, the Sooners got hot in the regional, eliminating No. 2 overall seed Georgia Tech before sweeping Kansas in the super regional to advance to Omaha for the second time in five seasons. They also eliminated the SEC Champion Georgia Bulldogs on the way to the title.

"They didn't want to give in, and that was what was incredible," Johnson said. "They never gave in, and they were selfless for that."

The SEC has won seven consecutive MCWS titles, with six different programs winning championships in that span.

The Sooners finished 14-16 in SEC play but wound up 43-23 overall.

"I think we knew that the talent was always in the room," Willits said, "and that's something that Skip and all the coaches preached to us from

day one in the fall is that this group of guys is special. Whether we were playing well or not, we believed that we had the talent in the room to go out and win a national championship."

Oklahoma scored in five consecutive innings to build a 9-1 lead, turning much of the latter part of the game into a celebration as pitchers Nick Wesloski and LJ Mercurius kept the Tar Heels largely off balance.

Mercurius (7-7) came on with one out in the third and surrendered just four hits and a run with five strikeouts and no walks in 5 2/3 innings.

North Carolina starter Jackson Rose had surrendered just three hits over 12 innings in the NCAA Tournament entering the Monday finale, but the Sooners touched him up for six hits in 2 2/3 frames. He fanned five without issuing a walk.

"They (the Tar Heels) took us on a ride that was unbelievable," North Carolina coach Scott Forbes said. "We came up a little bit short, but I would take that ride again every day of the year. While we're sad, the sadness will go away. We also talk about joy. Joy doesn't go away, and these guys have



Special Photo: Steven Branscombe-Imagn Images

An Oklahoma player celebrates during the Sooners' 13-2 victory over North Carolina in the decisive Game 3 of the College World Series championship series Monday in Omaha, Neb. Oklahoma captured its third national championship.

given me, our coaching staff, our fans, our administration, everybody, a ton of joy and a ton to be proud of."

The Sooners broke through for two runs in the second.

The Tar Heels appeared to cut the deficit in half in the bottom of the second on Rom Kellis V's single to right with Erik Paulsen on second.

However, Dasan Harris came up firing to third, throwing out Carter French at third just before Paulsen crossed the plate to end the inning.

The Sooners made it 3-0 in the third before the Tar Heels scratched across a run in the bottom half.

After four consecutive one-

out walks and a two-run single by Willits made it 6-1 in the fourth, Tar Heels freshman phenom Caden Glauber came in to escape the jam.

In North Carolina's Game 2 win on Sunday, Glauber threw five shutout innings in relief, firing 65 pitches.

North Carolina had not lost a game this season in which Glauber appeared.

The loss keeps the Tar Heels (54-14-1) without a title despite 13 MCWS appearances. They were also the runner-up in 2006 and 2007.

"They gave it all they had," Forbes said. "We just ran out of gas when it's all said and done."

## From 9A STADIUM

out the stadium, several factors were examined. First, the 25.75-inch tread depths in the upper east remain too narrow for the bleacher-mounted chairbacks. Second, comfortable spacing for the non-flip mesh chairbacks is 20 inches per seat, as compared to 18 inches per seat, which results in a loss of seating capacity. Further, as part of the fan experience improvements included in the design, aisles will be widened and handrails added in most sections where new seats are installed, resulting in a further decrease in capacity.

When considering all of the factors, and in the interest of not reducing stadium capacity to levels that would greatly affect Georgia Tech fans' opportunities to see the Yellow Jackets in action at Bobby Dodd Stadium, the decision was made to install 12,500 chairback seats. Following three-straight crowds of 50,000-plus to close the 2025 football season (Georgia Tech's most crowds of 50,000-plus since 2014), as well as three sold-out concerts in 2025-26, post-renovation stadium capacity will be approximately 50,000, significantly higher than the originally projected capacity of approximately 42,000.

"We remain committed to delivering a renovation that positively impacts all fans, preserves capacity at a level to meet demand and maintains the tradition of our historic home," Georgia Tech vice president and director of athletics Ryan Alpert said. "This project is designed to modernize the gameday experience, while preserving the character and atmosphere that

make Bobby Dodd Stadium at Hyundai Field so special. We're looking forward to delivering on those promises and welcoming fans to a newly renovated Bobby Dodd Stadium in 2027." In all, the stadium's significant upgrades include: the addition of 12,500 chairback seats; new handrails and wider aisles in designated sections; a new, state-of-the-art videoboard; a new, state-of-the-art sound system.

Additionally, the stadium's premium areas will receive substantial renovations, including: remodeled suites; construction of a new Founders Club on the west side of the stadium; an overhaul of East Club seating and indoor spaces, including the addition of a new VIP Members Club.

Due to the overall change in the facility's seating manifest caused by the installation of the 12,500 chairback seats, Bobby Dodd Stadium at Hyundai Field will undergo a full reseating process ahead of the 2027 season. However, the number of season ticket members that are significantly impacted by the reseating is anticipated to be lower than originally expected due to stadium post-renovation capacity of approximately 50,000 being considerably higher than the preliminary concept of an approximate 42,000-seat capacity. Details on the reseating process will be finalized and announced in the coming months.

This summer, Georgia Tech athletics will announce a list of 100 improvements to the gameday experience at Bobby Dodd Stadium that will be implemented prior to the 2026 season, ahead of the renovation project that will be completed in 2027.

## Hawks sign McCollum, add Wiggins in trade

### Field Level Media

ATLANTA — The Hawks took two significant steps toward solidifying their roster for the 2026-27 season Sunday, agreeing to a contract extension with veteran guard CJ McCollum and acquiring wing Aaron Wiggins from Oklahoma City in separate moves aimed at building on last season's playoff appearance.

Multiple media outlets reported that McCollum has agreed to a one-year, \$21 million contract extension to remain in Atlanta, while the Hawks also landed Wiggins in a trade with the Thunder for two future second-round draft picks.

The extension keeps one of Atlanta's most important veteran leaders in place after McCollum helped spark the Hawks' late-season turnaround following his arrival in a January trade from Washington.

According to reports, the deal includes a trade kicker and was completed before the June 30 deadline for McCollum to sign an extension before potentially reaching free agency.

McCollum, 34, was acquired in the blockbuster deal that sent four-time All-Star Trae Young to the Wizards. The veteran guard quickly became a key piece for Atlanta, averaging 18.7 points in 41 games while helping the Hawks win 18 of their final 20 regular-season games to secure a playoff berth.

His biggest moment came during Atlanta's first-round playoff series against the eventual NBA champion New York



Special Photo: Brett Davis-Imagn Images

Atlanta Hawks guard C.J. McCollum has agreed to a one-year, \$21 million contract extension to remain with the Hawks after helping lead Atlanta to the NBA playoffs following his January trade to the club.

Knicks. McCollum scored 32 points in Game 3 at Madison Square Garden and knocked down a 15-foot fadeaway jumper that gave the Hawks a 2-1 series lead.

A 13-year veteran, McCollum remains one of the league's most reliable perimeter shooters. He made at least 150 3-pointers for the 11th consecutive season, making him the only NBA player to reach that mark every year since the 2015-16 season.

For his career, McCollum has averaged 19.5 points, 3.8 assists and 3.6 rebounds in 863 games with Portland, New Orleans, Washington and Atlanta.

Before his NBA career, McCollum became one of the heroes of the 2012 NCAA Tournament when he scored 30 points to lead 15th-seeded Lehigh to a stunning first-round upset of second-seeded Duke.

While retaining McCollum was Atlanta's priority, the Hawks also added depth by acquiring Wiggins from Oklahoma City.

Atlanta reportedly will send the Thunder its 2030 second-round draft pick and the less favorable of the Hawks' or Los Angeles Lakers' second-round selection in 2032 to complete the deal.

Wiggins, 27, averaged 9.4 points, 3.1 rebounds and 1.7 assists in 65 games last season, including 21 starts. Though his role diminished during Oklahoma City's playoff run, he has shown the ability to provide scoring punch and defensive versatility off the bench.

The former Maryland standout averaged a career-best 12.0 points during the 2024-25 season and owns career averages of 8.7 points, 3.2 rebounds and 1.4 assists in 339 NBA games.

Selected by Oklahoma City in the second round of the 2021 NBA Draft, Wiggins has three years remaining on his contract and is scheduled to earn approximately \$9.2 million next season.

The acquisition fits within Atlanta's financial flexibility, as the Hawks can absorb Wiggins' salary through the \$11 million trade exception created when they dealt guard Luke Kennard to the Lakers in February.

Taken together, Sunday's moves reflect the Hawks' commitment to remaining competitive in the Eastern Conference. By retaining a proven veteran leader in McCollum and adding a productive two-way wing in Wiggins, Atlanta strengthened both its starting lineup and overall depth heading into the upcoming season.

## From 9A BRAVES

get back into the flow of it."

Baldwin went 0-for-4 with a career-high four strikeouts on Monday night. The 2025 NL Rookie of the Year has struck out three-plus times in three of the six games he has played since being activated. He struck out three-plus times in just three of the 169 games he played before going on the IL, dating back to last year.

"That carousel is going fast when you try to jump back on after missing time," Weiss said. "That's all I see with Baldwin. He'll be fine. He's a great hitter. It only takes being a tick off in this league to struggle. I think that's all it is."

Good signs from Riley?

Austin Riley will need more than just a good game or two to create confidence he is turning the corner. But with a three-hit night on Monday, the third baseman is hitting .391 (9-for-23) with a .826 OPS over his past six games. This stretch doesn't include any extra-base hits. But it seems like the timing might be returning for the two-time All-Star.

Riley singled against Michael King's slider in the second inning and against his fastball in the seventh. He also singled against Mason Miller's 87.2 mph slider in the ninth. He just got his bat on the ball against Miller's

hard breaking ball, but he produced 100-plus mph exit velocities on the two singles against King.

"Riley had one of his better games offensively in a while," Weiss said. "He swung the bat well against some tough right-handed pitchers. King is tough on righties, and of course, he got the hit off Miller. Miller has been one of the most dominant, if not the most dominant pitcher in the game, especially against righties."

The Braves had one of the game's best offenses, despite Riley struggling through the early part of the season. If he can turn things around, he could again be a great asset by the time the lineup gets healthy.

Not all bad

Ozzie Albies homered twice on Saturday and seems to be seeing the ball as well as he has at any point over the past few years. His .838 OPS in June ranks third on the team, trailing Matt Olson (.860) and Mauricio Dubon (.867). Harris has produced a respectable .772 OPS this month.

But it's been a rough month for Dominic Smith (.481 OPS) and Mike Yastrzemski (.521 OPS). Shortstop Ha-Seong Kim's offensive struggles have made him a \$20 million bench player. But Jorge Mateo, who is currently getting most of the starts at short, has gone just 3-for-25 with a double in June.

## MLB braces for contentious CBA negotiations

### Field Level Media

Insight into just how contentious the upcoming MLB labor battle will become is coming to light with the season nearing the midway point.

The collective bargaining agreement between the MLB Players' Union and team owners is set to expire on Dec. 1, and negotiations on a new pact are expected to be combative.

Owners are expected to angle for a salary cap, while players are expected to be steadfast against salary restrictions.

While team values are rising at a rapid pace, so are player salaries, although it is the teams themselves that are agreeing to deals like Shohei

Ohtani's \$70 million per season and Kyle Tucker's \$60 million per season.

The free-spending Los Angeles Dodgers agreed to both of those deals, shining a light on the two-time defending champions as a team that is hard to compete with both on the field and with the checkbook.

In MLB's latest labor proposal, as reported by multiple outlets, an area of savings for owners would be cost-cutting measures in player development. When the current CBA was agreed to in 2023, minor league players received a raise.

Triple-A players saw minimum salaries jump from \$17,500 to \$35,800, while

Double-A and Single-A players jumped to \$27,300 from \$13,800 and \$11,000, respectively.

According to multiple reports, owners now hope to eliminate high school players from the draft, with the minimum age for draft-eligible players is raised to 20. The draft also could be reduced from 20 rounds to 12.

Raising the age of draft-eligible domestic players would be a boon to college baseball, which would be set to receive a huge influx of talent.

Another potential money-saving change for MLB owners would be to create an international draft, instead of the current custom of signing

international free-agent deals.

The age limit for signing international players would rise from 16 to 18, meaning that if all proposed changes are made, players that are not from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico could join franchises sooner than domestic talent.

Both the domestic draft and the international draft would be limited to \$200 million pools, well below what is currently spent on prospects.

The changes could save owners as much as \$1 billion combined over the life of the next CBA, according to some estimates, all as team values continue to rise at record rates.

# Phoebe raises awareness for PTSD during National PTSD Awareness Month

**Staff Reports**  
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**ALBANY** – In recognition of National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month this June, Phoebe is sharing information about the impact of trauma and the importance of accessible, effective care across southwest Georgia.

PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop after experiencing or witnessing traumatic events, including accidents, violence, medical emergencies or natural disasters. Symptoms may include intrusive memories, avoidance, anxiety and changes in mood that can interfere with daily life. But experts say recovery is possible with the right treatment.

“Some research suggests that 50%-85% of patients experience good results from evidence-based PTSD treatment,” Phoebe Behavioral Health Psychiatrist Dr. Eric Ragazzino said in a news release. “And while there is scientific evidence that medication can be beneficial in the treatment of PTSD, overall, the evidence suggests that the best treatment outcomes are achieved with evidence-based psychotherapy interventions.”

“At Phoebe, we offer therapy for trauma-related disorders, as well as medication to help augment the treatment of trauma-related disorders. Research also suggests that early intervention can shorten the timeframe it takes to achieve resolution of symptoms, and in some cases can prevent symptoms from progressing to more severe levels.”

Phoebe delivers PTSD care through a comprehensive behavioral health network anchored at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital and expanding throughout the region.

At PPMH, patients experiencing severe PTSD symptoms, such as crisis-level anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or inability to function can receive immediate support through the Emergency & Trauma Center’s dedicated behavioral health unit.

For those requiring more intensive treatment, PPMH also offers an inpatient behavioral health unit, where patients participate in structured, trauma-informed care plans aimed at stabilizing symptoms and preparing them for continued recovery.

“PTSD can significantly affect a person’s ability to function day-to-day, but with

the right support, patients can regain stability and improve their quality of life,” Phoebe Behavioral Health Psychiatrist Dr. Maria Jasinskas said. “Our inpatient and emergency services provide immediate care, while our outpatient programs ensure patients have the support they need long after a crisis has passed.”

Both Ragazzino and Jasinskas bring a personal perspective to their work, having each served in the U.S. military.



Dr. Eric Ragazzino



Dr. Maria Jasinskas

Their experience as veterans informs their understanding of trauma and its lasting effects, particularly for those who have faced high stress or life-threatening situations. This shared background strengthens Phoebe’s commitment to providing compassionate, informed PTSD care, not only for veterans, but for all individuals across southwest Georgia impacted by trauma.

Ongoing PTSD treatment is primarily delivered through Phoebe’s outpatient behavioral health services, where patients receive psychiatric evaluation, medication management and therapy. These services help individuals process trauma, develop coping strategies and manage symptoms over time.

To make PTSD care more accessible, Phoebe is expanding outpatient and therapy services into Phoebe Sumter Medical Center and Phoebe Worth Medical Center, reducing the need for patients to travel long distances for care. At Phoebe Worth, therapy services are becoming available on-site, while Phoebe Sumter is preparing to introduce expanded behavioral health access in the near future.

Phoebe also is bringing mental health providers into primary care and urgent care settings across the region, allowing patients with PTSD symptoms to be identified and connected to care in familiar, trusted environments.

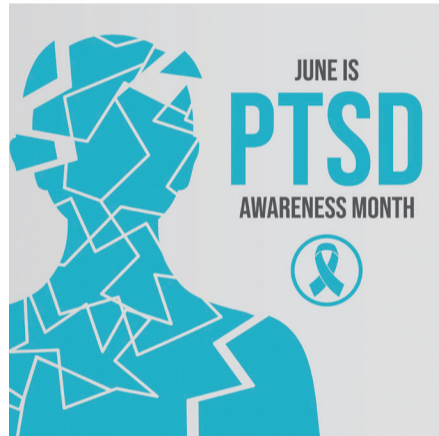
“The research suggests that many people do not seek treatment for PTSD because they believe that they should some-

how be able to handle the problem themselves, or that the symptoms are not yet serious enough to require treatment and that over time the symptoms will simply resolve on their own,” Ragazzino said. “Fear of judgment from peers, family or co-workers, as well as treatment cost and accessibility are often factors as well. These beliefs and factors sometimes leave people suffering unnecessarily.”

During PTSD Awareness Month, Phoebe encourages individuals to recognize symptoms, seek help early, and support loved ones who may be struggling after trauma.

“PTSD doesn’t have to be something people face alone,” Jasinskas said. “With the right treatment and support, recovery is absolutely possible. Left untreated PTSD symptoms can negatively impact your overall health by also impairing your sleep, memory and ability to handle day to day. Never worry alone; get help.”

To learn more about Phoebe Behavioral Health services or to schedule an appointment, call (229) 312-7001 or visit [www.phoebehealth.com/behavioralhealth](http://www.phoebehealth.com/behavioralhealth).



Special Logo

## This Day in Music

**1967** - All You Need is Love is premiered by The Beatles to 400 million people watching on TV

**1969** - These Eyes by The Guess Who is certified gold

**1969** - Hot Fun in the Summertime is recorded by Sly & The Family Stone

**1969** - He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother is recorded by The Hollies

**1970** - 25 or 6 to 4 is released by Chicago

**1984** - Purple Rain is released by Prince and ends up becoming his most successful studio album

## This Day in Sports

**1903** - The NY Yankees and the Chicago White Sox end deadlocked at 6-6 in 18 innings

**1934** - The NY Yankees pitcher John Boaca strikes out 5 times and ties the record for consecutive strikeouts

**1961** - Baltimore and California each use 8 pitchers during a 14 inning game

**1968** - In his first major league game and playing for the Giants, Bobby Bonds hits a grand slam

**1972** - Bernice Gera becomes the first female umpire in pro baseball

**1988** - Cal Ripken Jr plays his 1,000th consecutive game

**1991** - Martina Navratilova wins a record 100th singles match at Wimbledon

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**Women’s Recovery &**

## Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

**ACROSS**

- 1 Positive reply to “How’s your health?”
- 8 Carrot relative
- 15 Reminiscent of an almond’s flavor, say
- 16 Guises for gamers
- 17 Activity of a rogue
- 18 Voids
- 19 Dazed and confused
- 21 Superlative suffix
- 22 Outfits
- 25 Sharp
- 28 “Sorry, but it’s \_\_\_ from me”
- 29 Shea successor
- 32 Tax cheat
- 36 Hush-hush doc
- 37 Carmichael who plays Lady Edith on “Downton Abbey”
- 39 Land of the Minotaur
- 40 With 42-Across, risky business practice, or what can be found in this puzzle’s circles?
- 42 See 40-Across
- 44 “Will all great Neptune’s \_\_\_ wash this blood / Clean from my hand?”: Macbeth
- 45 “\_\_\_ bleu!”
- 47 Actress Whitman
- 48 Bring out the blue pencil again
- 50 Slow-cooked dish
- 51 Mass. summer hrs.
- 52 Sings like Ella Fitzgerald
- 54 Laudatory lines
- 55 “Captain’s \_\_\_ stardate ...”
- 58 Cause of a blank photo
- 62 Really gets to
- 65 Backless tops
- 69 Makes softer, as sound
- 70 Electric current units
- 71 Montana neighbor
- 72 First name of the 28th U.S. president

**DOWN**

- 1 Calligraphy supply
- 2 Merriment
- 3 Fig. texted en route
- 4 “Jailhouse Rock” star
- 5 Property claim
- 6 Gumbo vegetable
- 7 Things on rings
- 8 Lose it under pressure
- 9 Path
- 10 Old cloth
- 11 RR stop
- 12 “The Greatest Average American” host
- 13 Bargatze
- 14 Really gets to
- 15 Furtive call
- 20 Impetus for a bluff, perhaps
- 22 Animosity
- 23 Bring about
- 24 Vandyke kin
- 26 Team working off camera
- 27 Come by honestly
- 29 Care center
- 30 Actor McKellen
- 31 Helpers in harbors
- 33 Thought to be
- 34 Online NYSE choice
- 35 Puts back to zero
- 38 Bank holding: Abbr.
- 41 Small amounts
- 43 Bauxite, e.g.
- 46 Org.
- 49 \_\_\_ scout
- 53 Thompson of “Selma”
- 54 Chose
- 55 Helen of Troy’s mother
- 56 Scott Turow work
- 57 Seize
- 59 “Saint Joan” playwright
- 60 Mil. print
- 61 Blue Buffalo rival
- 63 Beverage suffix
- 64 Austrian lang.
- 66 Do the wrong thing
- 67 \_\_\_ Speedwagon
- 68 NNE U-turn

### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

W O R D S    V I T E S    A L B A N Y

S E E    T M V    S N E D V E R

S E R V I C E    S E R V I C E

S E D O    S L V O S

I D E    M E T L S    I D E E E R

E V M    R O V S    N V E C O

S H E N R O C    G N I T L U C

E T E R C    V R I V L    V D N

R E V A D E R    L A V I C    O N V

I S E    N I P    S V N I

S E E    V G E N    A R E L V N K

S H V L V A V    K R E I L U N

S I N P    S A R P    K E L E F E

06/25/26

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

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48 49 50 51

52 53 54

55 56 57 58 59 60 61

62 63 64 65 66 67 68

69 70

71 72

By Jeffrey Wechsler  
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**Substance Use Services Director**

Program Director needed for managing the daily operations of a substance use treatment program in Cuthbert, GA. Minimum requirements include a Bachelor’s Degree in a related field and CAC Level II (or Master’s + CAC Level I), 5+ years working with individuals with substance use disorders and at least 1 year of supervisory experience. For more information and application instructions, go to [www.voase.org/careers](http://www.voase.org/careers). EOE/Drug Free Workplace/E-Verify.

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**7 LITTLE WORDS**

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

**CLUES**

- 1 highly polished (6)
- 2 ladle and spatula (8)
- 3 hoodwinks (5)
- 4 Scarecrow’s desire (5)
- 5 fictional prince of Denmark (6)
- 6 munched on clover (6)
- 7 Lana Del Rey’s first name (9)

**SOLUTIONS**

HA LS SY GL EN  
OS BRA ZA FOO ML  
SI ET IN UT ZED  
GRA TH ELI BE LS

Tuesday’s Answers: 1. SHOW 2. AVIATOR 3. LUXURIOUS  
4. MARMEE 5. RUNDOWN 6. TRAINOR 7. AWOKE    6/24

**7 LITTLE WORDS**

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

**CLUES**

- 1 the folks next door (9)
- 2 filling roles (7)
- 3 February birthstone (8)
- 4 appreciating (11)
- 5 collarbone, to a doctor (8)
- 6 like a clear blue sky (8)
- 7 as a swashbuckler would (8)

**SOLUTIONS**

NG NE BORS CLAV ST  
LE CERU THY RI CAS  
DA TING ICLE IGH ING  
AME LY BRAT CE LEAN

Wednesday’s Answers: 1. GLOSSY 2. UTENSILS 3. FOOLS  
4. BRAIN 5. HAMLET 6. GRAZED 7. ELIZABETH    6/25

**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.

“ C W H E G T Y A P O P N A L I A B P T N E G O  
P Z T B J Y A V P B E P P N O B E C O P A C O ,  
E L Q B P M Q W P N O C B A C M X P E L O T M B X W  
A L P N O U A P J N O L . ” — J N Y A B P T V N O Y  
Z E X U O L

Previous Solution: “You can’t go wrong by writing what you know. Even if you’re a horrible writer, your own knowledge and experience is unrivaled.” — Issa Rae

TODAY’S CLUE: N s i e n b e r 7

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**CELEBRITY CIPHER**  
by Luis Campos

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

“ F L Q C I M S I E W X X C Q L A B W K J A B S A E C T  
B S G L A C R L S M K . . . U B S A X K S A T M S R  
A C O L C O R L W X Q C K S M I B E . J C A C S K E  
O R S E J M C T K F . ” — N M S K R L D C U W A V

Previous Solution: “My favorite thing is to have two scripts at the same time, and study them simultaneously in the kitchen.” — Christopher Walken

TODAY’S CLUE: H s i e n b e r 8

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# Joseph Mulholland re-elected to Board of Governors of State Bar of Georgia

## Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — South Georgia Judicial Circuit District Attorney Joseph K. Mulholland has been re-elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the 56,000-member State Bar of Georgia and was installed recently.

Mulholland will continue to serve in the South Georgia Judicial Circuit, Post 1 seat on the board, representing Baker, Calhoun, Decatur, Grady and Mitchell counties. He earned his

law degree from the Georgia State University College of Law and was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia in 2001. Mulholland was elected in 2004 as the youngest district attorney in Georgia history at the age of 27.

He prosecuted the first predatory loan case in Georgia that removed companies preying on the elderly, persons of color and military personnel. He has taken the lead on prosecution and drafting laws on many subjects, including scrap metal, human trafficking and dog fighting. He

has tried more major felony cases than any other elected prosecutor in the last 20 years. Before his election as district attorney, Mulholland worked for Justice Harris Hines of the Supreme Court of Georgia and the Bankruptcy Division of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The Board of Governors is the 160-member policymaking authority of the State Bar, with representation from each of Georgia's judicial circuits. The board holds regular meetings at least four times per year.

The State Bar of Georgia, with offices in Atlanta, Savannah and Tifton, was established in 1964 by the Supreme Court of Georgia as the successor to the Georgia Bar Association, founded in 1884. All lawyers licensed to practice in Georgia belong to the State Bar. Its more than 56,000 members work together to strengthen the constitutional promise of justice for all, promote principles of duty and public service among Georgia's lawyers, and administer a strict code of legal ethics.



Joseph Mulholland

## Congress Votes

### Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

WASHINGTON — Here's a look at how Georgia's members of Congress voted over the previous week.

Along with its roll call votes, the Senate also this week passed the Declaration of Independence Reaffirmation Act (S. 4828) to reaffirm the Declaration of Independence as an organic law of the United States; and a bill (S. Res. 444) condemning the dictator of China, Xi Jinping, for deceit, undermining prospects for peace and security, and orchestrating crimes against humanity.

There were no key votes in the House this week.

### SENATE VOTES:

**APPEALS COURT JUDGE:** The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Justin D. Smith to be a judge on the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. After time as a lawyer for Missouri's attorney general, governor, and the state's Agriculture Department, Smith joined the James Otis law firm in St. Louis. An opponent, Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., faulted Smith for representing President Trump in various lawsuits, and said "his record shows he is too ideological and too extreme for the federal bench." The

vote, on June 15, was 48 yeas to 43 nays.

**NAYS:** Ossoff D-GA  
**NOT VOTING:** Warnock D-GA

**REVIEWING IMMIGRATION CASES:** The Senate has rejected a motion to proceed to consideration of a bill (S.J. Res. 190) sponsored by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., that would disapprove of and void a rule issued by the Executive Office for Immigration Review this February that changed procedures for appellate reviews of rulings by immigration judges. Kaine said the rule had essentially made the appeals process "meaningless by imposing such tight time deadlines on the filing of appeal and encouraging the dismissal of appeals on a summary basis as to render the appeals process completely unworkable." The vote, on June 16, was 46 yeas to 48 nays.

**YEAS:** Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

**IRAN WAR:** The Senate has rejected a motion to discharge from its Foreign Relations Committee a bill (S.J. Res. 172) sponsored by Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., that would have required the cessation of U.S. military action against Iran absent authorization from Congress. Warnock said adopting the measure would "send a message that the president should not



Jon Ossoff



Raphael Warnock

feel that he can easily and so cavalierly use American might while Congress stands idly by." The vote, on June 16, was 47 yeas to 48 nays.

**YEAS:** Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

**SOUTH KOREA:** The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Michelle Steel to be U.S. ambassador to South Korea. Earlier this decade, Steel was a House member for two terms, representing two different California districts, after five years on the Orange County Board of Supervisors. The vote, on June 17, was 55 yeas to 39 nays.

**NAYS:** Ossoff D-GA  
**NOT VOTING:** Warnock D-GA

**HONDURAS:** The Senate has rejected a motion to discharge from its Foreign Relations Committee a bill (S. Res. 616), sponsored by Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., that would require a report from the State Department on Honduras's human

rights practices, including suspected ties to drug trafficking and information on its former president, Juan Orlando Hernandez, who President Trump pardoned from U.S. imprisonment late in 2025. Cortez Masto said, "The president's action here is the opposite of law and order. In fact, it contradicts efforts to combat drug trafficking, and it undermines law enforcement." The vote to discharge, on June 17, was 44 yeas to 50 nays.

**YEAS:** Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

**EUROPEAN FINANCING:** The Senate has confirmed the nomination of George Holding to be the U.S. Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Holding was a House member, representing a North Carolina district, for four terms; he has also been a U.S. attorney in the state. The vote, on June 18, was 48 yeas to 39 nays.

**NAYS:** Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

## Democrats again block GOP plan to swap property tax cuts for sales tax increases

### By Ty Tagam

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — For a second time this year, Democrats in the Georgia House rejected a Republican plan to reduce homeowner property tax bills.

The Democrats' argument was unchanged from their refusal to support a similar GOP tax plan earlier this year: a sales tax to subsidize homeowner property tax bills would have raised prices on everyone for everyday necessities.

"The no-vote today is a vote for no new taxes," Rep. Tanya Miller, D-Atlanta, said on Saturday, the third day of a special session. She called the Republican proposal, which would have let 67 communities put a 1% sales tax on the ballot, a "bait and switch."

A penny-on-the-dollar sales tax would have saved homeowners in Gwinnett County \$250 million and homeowners in Forsyth County at least \$60 million, Rep. Shaw Blackmon, R-Bonaire, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said.

It is "the kind of relief

that could have helped some residents stay in the homes they own," he said.

Blackmon was in charge of crafting the chamber's approach to affordability during an election year when the issue is a top concern.

During the regular session, he had proposed House Resolution 1114, which would have put a constitutional amendment on the ballot statewide asking voters if they wanted to pay more in sales tax so homeowners could pay less in property tax.

Republicans have a majority in the House and Senate, but constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority. Democrats rejected HR 1114.

Kemp then called lawmakers back to the Capitol to deal with lingering election issues and added the local sales tax question to their agenda.

The catch: Although SB 33 did not require a two-thirds majority, each local bill it authorized did. Democrats remained opposed on Saturday when local legislative delegations brought their measures to a vote as a package in the House.



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