



Perspectives
Chad Warbington
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The Albany HERALD

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Independence Day
U.S. set to celebrate
• Page 12A



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TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2026



Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin

The Albany Special Olympics team was recognized by the Albany City Commission during a recent meeting. The team earned 17 gold medals, reportedly the most earned by any team.

Albany Commission approves \$358.2 million budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – The Albany City Commission has settled its Fiscal Year 2027 budget, approving a spending package that will not require a tax increase, but the current 2025-2026 budget also has cast a shadow over the city's finances.

The commission approved the \$358.2 million spending plan

during its final meeting of the budget year that ends on June 30. That amount represents an increase over the \$342.8 million budget for 2025-2026.

During the same meeting, commissioners approved an amendment to the 2025-2026 budget totaling \$7.76 million. The spending includes \$300,000 in additional funds for demolition of dilapidated buildings in the city, which exceeded the

budgeted amount of \$400,000; \$3.11 million for police school zone cameras, and \$2 million for police salaries and fire department expenditures of \$1.34 million for school zone cameras and additional fire department salaries totaling \$1 million.

The funds for the school zone cameras will be paid from fines collected, not through taxes, officials said.

"I think we're all kind of taken

aback by the amount," Mayor Bo Dorrough said.

The news wasn't all negative. The increase in money budgeted for salaries means that the police and fire departments have moved closer to being fully staffed. After years of running at about 70% of full staffing, the police department is now closer to 90%.

See BUDGET, 2A

State Bar of Georgia honors Willie Lockette with Marshall Professionalism Award

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA – Dougherty Judicial Circuit Superior Court Senior Judge Willie Lockette of Albany was honored with the 25th annual Chief Justice Thomas O. Marshall Professionalism Award, presented recently during the annual meeting of the State Bar of Georgia.

A graduate of Fort Valley State University and the University of Illinois College of Law, Lockette was admitted to the State Bar of Georgia in 1974. He began his legal career as a staff attorney with the Albany Regional Office of the Georgia Legal Services Program, later becoming managing attorney. In 1991, he was appointed as a Magistrate Court judge for Dougherty County. He was first elected as Superior Court judge in 1996, later serving as chief judge before his retirement from full-time service in 2024. Lockette is a past recipient

of the State Bar's Dan Bradley Award for Public Service and earlier this year was honored with the Justice Robert Benham Award for Community Service, presented by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism.

The annual Chief Justice Thomas O. Marshall Professionalism Award, presented by

the Bench and Bar Committee of the State Bar of Georgia, honors one lawyer and one judge who have continued to demonstrate the highest professional conduct and paramount reputation for professionalism. Lockette was honored along with attorney

See LOCKETTE, 2A



Special Photo: State Bar of Georgia

Dougherty Judicial Circuit Superior Court Senior Judge Willie Lockette of Albany, right, was honored recently with the 25th annual Chief Justice Thomas O. Marshall Professionalism Award.

Georgia's school funding formula still ignores poverty; educators say students pay the price

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – Dougherty County School System Superintendent Ken Dyer told the Board of Education this week that one of the district's top legislative priorities failed to gain enough traction during Georgia's 2026 legislative session, leaving the state's education funding formula unchanged despite continued advocacy from school leaders across Georgia.

During a report to the board on the outcomes of this year's legislative session, Dyer discussed the district's efforts to persuade lawmakers to add

an "opportunity weight" to Georgia's Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula – a change supporters say would provide additional state funding for students living in poverty.

Georgia's QBE formula, established in 1985, already provides additional funding weights for certain student populations, including kindergarten students, students in early intervention programs and students receiving special education services. But it does not include a permanent funding weight

See FUNDING, 2A



KEN DYER



Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin

The East Oakridge Drive intersection at Radium Springs Road has been designated as the location where the most red light violations occur in Albany. A study identified five other intersections in the city where drivers routinely ignore red lights.

Red light violations will bring citations at a dozen Albany intersections

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – School zone speed cameras have drawn a significant amount of criticism in Albany and elsewhere around the state, particularly from drivers who have tickets arrive in the mail, as well as a number of state legislators who have tried to put the kibosh on the cameras.

But for advocates of the devices, there is one idea that is hard to negate. They work, at least when "work" is defined as causing a change in behavior among motorists traveling near schools where those cameras are in place.

Now, the city of Albany is going to try the same strategy at a dozen traffic lights that have been identified at intersections where drivers have a tendency to ignore the concept that "red means stop."

The Albany City Commis-

sion has approved a request from Albany police to allow placement of those devices at the 12 intersections in the city that were identified as high-risk sites.

Police officials plan to meet with RedSpeed Georgia, the company that operates the speed zone cameras at nine city school campuses, to work out the details of placement and rolling out the program.

Sitting at the top of the dirty dozen list of intersections is East Oakridge Drive and Radium Springs Road, where a study indicated 1,129 instances of drivers running red lights.

"And that was in a single day," Albany Police Chief Michael Persley said.

The North Slapppy Boulevard/Palmyra Road intersection came in at 724 violations in a day, followed by South Westover Boulevard/Gillionville Road.

A study that covered the

years 2022-2026 at six of the 12 intersections showed an average of 3.75 hit-and-run accidents during that time period, with an average of 104 accidents for the five years, according to police.

"When we talk about safe driving, there are plenty of examples we see every day of people disregarding red lights," Persley said. "A yellow light, to some people, instead of slowing down preparing to stop, they see that as speed up and try to get through that intersection."

After the installation of the school speed zone cameras in 2021, the loudest reaction came decidedly from those who were not fans. Many of those critics likely were among those who got ticketed for driving 11 miles or more over the posted speed limit in that area around the school campuses where the

See RED LIGHT, 2A

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U.S. 19 speed limit reduced for traffic approaching Nelms Road intersection

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – The speed limit for U.S. 19 traffic approaching the Nelms Road intersection has been reduced from 65 mph to 55 mph to further enhance safety for motorists traveling through the Putney area of Dougherty County.

The change in the speed limit was made in conjunction with the conversion of the intersection to a Reduced Conflict U-turn (R-CUT) design. Georgia Department of Transportation changed the intersection design in August 2025. However, changing a speed limit is a lengthier process that starts with an Engineering and Traffic Investigation and goes through multiple phases before new signs can be posted.

The lower speed limit is posted from mile markers 0.48 to 2.61, which is south of Hancock Road to north of Antioch Road. “Reduced speed ahead” signs also were installed to alert motorists of the change and give them

time to safely adjust their speed.

“When Georgia DOT was considering converting the U.S. 19 at Nelms Road intersection to an R-CUT, we told county officials that we would also explore reducing the speed limit in that area,” Southwest District Engineer Jason Willingham said. “We are pleased that these safety collaborations have been made and remind motorists of the importance of obeying posted speed limits and traffic control devices.”

Georgia DOT recommended the R-CUT due to the number of angle crashes that occurred at the intersection when Nelms Road traffic was controlled only by stop signs. Nelms Road traffic can no longer cross U.S. 19 to go straight across or to turn left. Traffic is required to make a right turn and travel downstream to complete a U-turn maneuver at Dorough Avenue or Broach Avenue.

By restricting traffic movement, motorists have fewer ways of potentially colliding

with other vehicles. Traffic movements on US 1.9. were not affected.

From 1A FUNDING

based on student poverty.

“We do have weighted categories,” Dyer told the board. “We don’t have a weight for students in poverty.”

The proposal centers on students identified through direct certification, a federal process that automatically determines eligibility for free school meals because a child’s family already participates in qualifying public assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or other income-based assistance. Because eligibility is verified through existing government records, families do not have to complete separate school meal applications.

“The data shows that students in poverty need additional support,” Dyer said. “The four-year initiative that we implemented here shows that if provided sufficient targeted support ... students can excel.”

Education finance researchers say Georgia now is among only six states that do not include a permanent poverty or opportunity weight in their primary K-12 funding formula. Forty-four states provide additional formula funding to districts serving students from low-income families through some combination of poverty weights, concentration grants or other targeted funding mechanisms.

States including Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Texas, Colorado and California incorporate student poverty into their funding formulas in different ways, generally allocating additional dollars based on low-income enrollment or concentrations of poverty. While the formulas differ, the goal is similar: Provide districts with predictable state funding to support students who research shows often require additional academic and nonacademic services.

Those dollars commonly fund interventions such as instructional coaches, intensive literacy instruction, tutoring, extended learning opportunities, smaller class sizes, school counselors, so-

From 1A LOCKETTE

Joel O. Wooten of Peak Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP in Columbus.

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.



Special Photo: Georgia DOT

The speed limit for U.S. 19 traffic approaching the Nelms Road intersection has been reduced from 65 mph to 55 mph.

From 1A BUDGET

As for the 2026-2027 budget, some commissioners complained about the process, including not having sufficient time to review and make changes to the final document.

“There’s a lot of cutting in here, a lot of cutting of infrastructure,” Commissioner Diana Brown said. “We need more time to go through this budget. You can’t give us 282 pages when we already had another 282-page budget.”

The budget is “top heavy” for higher-paid employees, Commissioner Jon Howard said.

“From tonight, I will be like the hawk watching the rabbit, watching what we do for those at the very bottom,” he said.

City Manager Terrell Jacobs warned the commission throughout the process that the city has some long-term obligations that will cost money in coming years. Chief among those are the city’s underground water mains. About 25 miles

of those underground pipes, some of which are 75 to 100 years old, will need to be replaced over the next five years.

The city has been burned in the past by putting off needed repairs. The city spent more than \$100 million to separate the stormwater and sewage drainage systems after the state Environmental Protection Division gave an ultimatum on that work.

“I’ve been doing this for 34 years,” the city manager said of the budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1. “This was a collaborative effort, getting input from you all ... from staff and the public. It was a challenging budget to put together.”

On the topic of the budget amendment leading to the \$7.7 million increase, Jacobs said that having the police and fire departments better staffed is a mixed blessing.

“In essence, there has been a kind of trend (where) the approach we’ve taken is budgeting for 70 or 80% (of full staffing),” he said. “Now we’re seeing numbers of closer to 90% to 100%, which is a good thing but a bad thing because you’ve got to pay for it.”

From 1A RED LIGHT

cameras are in place.

Over the first four years of the placement of the cameras, citations totaling \$14.5 million in fines were issued.

Statistics, however, show that the cameras worked, the police chief said.

A 2024 report showed that there had been a 95% reduction in speed violators in the school zones since the program was launched.

Traffic studies conducted prior to the installation of the cameras found hundreds of instances each day of drivers in school zones exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour.

“You see a decline in the number of violations, plus you can go out in those areas and see people are slowing down when the lights are flashing,” Persley said. “You see they’re driving 25.”

Albany first installed RedSpeed cameras in August 2021. In nine enforced school zones, drivers receive a citation for going 11 mph over the school zone speed limit. The first citation costs \$80. Subsequent citations are \$135. The cita-

tions are considered a civil infraction with no points added to driver’s licenses and no insurance increases.

The goal is for the traffic light cameras to produce a similar impact at intersections where drivers regularly blow through red lights.

“That was always the goal of the school zone cameras, to change the behavior,” Persley said. “It’s the same with the red lights, we want to change the behavior. When you see a yellow light, you need to slow down and prepare to stop. There are people now who are not paying attention at all to these traffic control signals.”

The chief also urged drivers to exercise caution at intersections by checking for oncoming traffic even with a green light.

As is the case for school zone infractions, the cameras at traffic lights will record a photo and video of violations. Citations are reviewed first by an Albany police officer before being referred to RedSpeed, which also reviews the information before a citation is mailed to the owner of the car involved.

Prior to issuing citations for red light violations there will be a grace period of 30 to

60 days, the chief said. During that period, violators will receive warnings instead of citations.

Police have looked at situations such as a funeral procession traveling through a red light, an instance in which citations would be waived, as well as for drivers turning left who are exposed when the light changes to red.

“The thing about it is the law (states) if you’re going into the intersection and it changes as you’re going through the intersection, that’s not a violation,” Persley said. “We’re talking about you’re approaching an intersection and we see you’re speeding up (when the light is yellow). That’s what we’re looking for.”

The impetus for looking at the situation came partially from the public.

“People have come to me saying we need to do something about people running the red lights,” Persley said.

Some of the other driving violations that the chief identified as contributing to accidents included: following too closely, driving recklessly by weaving in traffic in front of other cars, passing in no-passing zones.

“You’re in a hurry, but still you need to be a defensive

driver instead of an offensive driver,” Persley said.

Other hazards he identified include driving cars with maintenance issues like poor brakes and slick tires due to wear.

While the Albany Police Department has had good fortune this year in hiring additional officers, Persley said that they can’t be everywhere. Cameras will help extend the department’s eyes on the road.

“Using technology, it doesn’t replace the human being,” he said. “It aids what we’re doing. For the places where we have issues, it’s a force-multiplier.”

The other intersections selected for camera placement are North Westover Boulevard and Nottingham Way, Dawson Road and Stuart Avenue, South Slappey Boulevard and West Oglethorpe Boulevard, West Oglethorpe Boulevard and South Jefferson Street, South Slappey Boulevard and West Oakridge Drive, West Oakridge Drive and Newton Road, East Oglethorpe Boulevard and South Mock Road, East Oglethorpe Boulevard and Thornton Drive, and East Oglethorpe Boulevard and Rosebrier Drive.



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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): How you connect the dots, how you manage your personal life versus your outer world could be up for review now. Both parts of your life are supported now, meaningful progress can be made.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Today is the last good action day until next Tuesday — do it today if it can't wait. Communications could be favored, new ideas can circulate, learn about something you've always been curious about.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): It's OK to work on budget or planning today but don't open a new account or start anything you will want to grow over time. Wait until the stars support longevity, you'll get better conditions for this in about a week.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Matters of 'I' and 'Thou' could be at the forefront today, a relationship with someone close could be positive and supportive. The greatest partnerships support both people in living up to their highest potentials.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Life is a circle, though living in a straight line looks like reality. What you do, think, say, isn't happening in a vacuum, it's circulating throughout the cosmos. You are literally that important. Everyone is.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Expressing yourself can both distinguish you from, and link you to, your community. Strong communities are built from a diversity of strengths, talents, competencies. Be unique, work in cooperation.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): When your heart is at peace and your nervous system is regulated, your gifts can land most powerfully in the world. Look hard at yourself. Embrace your potential. Make promises to yourself and keep them unflinchingly.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A longing for more is likely, but it's likely a longing for more meaning and more purpose than for more and

better distractions. Pleasure is fine, but nothing makes life as passionate as purpose.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your potential has value, it has the most value when you develop it into what you came here to Earth to do. Instead of valuing outer validation, build inner self-respect one choice at a time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You could be improving your self-reference. Applaud yourself instead of finding your worth by echo-locating yourself against other people and society — most only support what serves them anyway.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Tangible help brings more than a full stomach or housing. Beyond the physical need being met, there's the relief from fear and the sense that there can still be soft landings in an often-harsh world.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): When you live more freely, you give permission to everyone who's watching to also free themselves. It's not just for you, it's for all. Become the person you've always dreamed of becoming.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: July could be an important month, opportunity could be circling and more than one need could be met. The earlier portion of 2026 brought plenty of challenges, the second half of the year could be more helpful for you. July could be your chance to listen to intuition and get significant clarity on next steps toward your best life. Protection and benevolence are energies you might feel surrounding you. Late July could roll you into a sudden sense of worry, but unless something is already wrong, these stars don't bring actual trouble, just worry — you may need to remind yourself a few times though. Cash flow could rise quickly in August, with it could come creative ideas and plenty of charm. Late August, if you fool around, it's almost a guarantee that you'll find out. Don't. Expect a nice surprise later in September.



1805 - The U.S. Congress organizes the Michigan Territory

1864 - Yosemite Valley in California is granted for public use, resort, and recreation by U.S. President Abraham Lincoln

1882 - Charles J. Guiteau is hanged in Washington D.C. after he assassinated U.S. President James Garfield

1906 - The Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act is passed by the U.S. Congress

1937 - The world's first emergency telephone number (999), is introduced in London

1953 - The first Chevrolet Corvette is made in Flint, Michigan

1956 - 128 are killed when a TWA Super Constellation collides with a United Air-

lines DC-7 above the Grand Canyon in Arizona

1960 - Congo gains independence from Belgium

1966 - The U.S. largest feminist organization, The National Organization for Women is founded

1971 - Ohio ratifies the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

1977 - The Southeast Asia Treat Organization disbands

1985 - Thirty nine American hostages are freed in Beirut after being hijacked on TWA Flight 847 and held for 17 days

1990 - East and West Germany merge their economies

2013 - Nineteen firefighters die during a wildfire in Yarnell, Arizona

2019 - President Donald Trump becomes the first sitting U.S. President to visit North Korea

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Indolence is a delightful but distressing state; we must be doing something to be happy."

Mahatma Gandhi,
Indian leader (1869-1948)

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

If you take all the Trump squawks -- pro and con -- out of the Squawkbox, people around here will be at a complete loss for what to gripe about. I've complained before about frivolous and useless local commentary on national issues, so I applaud the new direction of this feature.

It has been 161 years since the Civil War ended, and the losers are still complaining. Get over it already.

Please get someone with at least an ounce of common sense and some customer service skills to work at the local IRS office. Individuals deserve to be treated right.

OK, Johnny Reb Trump Drumstick, history lesson: The South fired first (see Fort Sumter, history book Chapter 16),¹¹ Southern States seceded (Chapter 17), started a war to save slavery (Chapter 18), got their collective (behinds) kicked (Chapter 20) while Lincoln saved the Union and laid the groundwork for a united America ... until President Dipstick, raised up the racist thread again. You are clearly a product of a flawed educational system and morally bankrupt upbringing

I'm sure Fletcher is behind this move to take squawks about national events out of the Squawkbox. He can't stand it that those of us who recognize the greatness of our True President want to spread the truth to combat the lies of people like him. We will prevail.

It is amazing how the WNBA and its officials and players want to damage or injure Caitlin Clark. All she did was save the league that was being supported by the NBA men's teams. Now, many players are making big bucks where before they were slightly above minimum wage. She has proved to be a true champion in sports. I wish she would take all of her Nike and Gator-ade money and quit.

I loved, loved, loved that Theatre Albany put on a play whose entire cast was 55 or older. Yes, we have to move forward and get our next generation involved, but that doesn't mean we should forget those who helped build this community. Way to go TA!

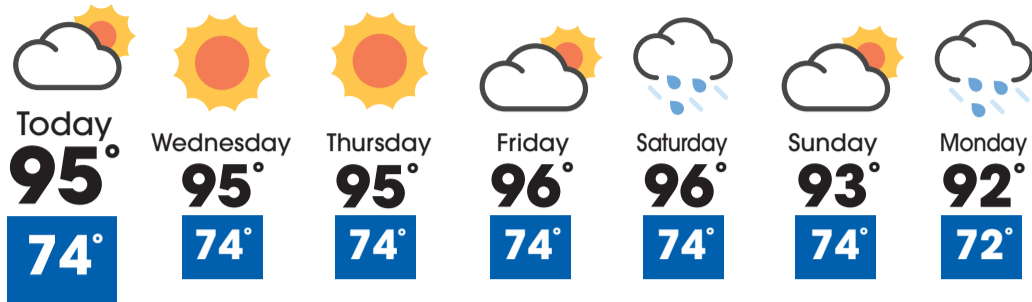
Democrats again want to abolish the Electoral College and go by the popular vote in picking the president. That way, they can cheat by stacking the votes in blue states like New York and California, which would mean votes in many states would be useless. Cheating is the only way Democrats win.

Ms. Wiley appears to be a very competent, capable and sincere individual. Trying to bring together all these non-profits that have their own leaders and, most importantly, their own budgets, is going to be tough. But you are absolutely right, ma'am: The only chance we have of making societal changes here is by working together. Good luck.

There aren't enough jails to hold all the lawbreakers we catch, let alone all of them that there are. Economics is too large a factor in our justice system.

So much good news. As Gill Scott Heron said, "As Wall Street goes, so goes the nation." Here's a look at some of the closing numbers: Racism is up; human rights are down. Peace is shaky; war items are hot. Jobs are down; money is scarce. And common sense is at an all-time low with heavy trading.

Weather Forecast



Daily Bridge Club

Make your own luck

By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

I'm approaching the age where "getting lucky" means being able to find my car in a parking deck. Luck is certainly a factor at bridge,

NORTH			
♠ 9			
♥ A 10 9			
♦ A K Q J 10			
♣ Q J 4 3			
WEST		EAST	
♠ A 8 6		♠ K J 10 7 5 4	
♥ K Q 7 3		♥ J 8 6	
♦ 5 4 2		♦ 8 7	
♣ 8 6 5		♣ K 2	
SOUTH			
♠ Q 3 2			
♥ 5 4 2			
♦ 9 6 3			
♣ A 10 9 7			
North	East	South	West
1♠	2♠	3NT	Pass
3NT(♠)	All Pass	2NT	Pass
Opening lead - ♠ 6			
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Frank Stewart

South had to assume that East held the king of clubs, but if East held, say, AKJ10xx,Jxx,xx,Kx, he would have overcalled one spade; his hand would have been too heavy for a preempt. If South plays low on the jack of spades, he survives.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: S 9 HA 10 9 D A K Q J 10 C Q J 4 3. You open one diamond, your partner responds one spade, you bid two clubs and he rebids two spades. You try 2NT, and partner bids three diamonds. What do you say?

ANSWER: Partner is begging to you stop low. He has a weak hand with six poorish spades or maybe five fair spades, diamond support and unbalanced pattern. Your 2NT showed extra strength and tried for game, and he rejected. Pass.

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

but winning players make their own luck.

In today's deal, East's preemptive jump to two spades pushed North-South into a shaky 3NT. North reopened with a double at his second turn, and when South took out to 2NT, North quite boldly raised to game.

West led the six of spades, and East's king won. When East returned the jack, South mullied — and played the queen. He went down two when West won and led his last spade, and East cashed four more spades.

UNLUCKY

South thought he'd made an unlucky guess; but even assuming his queen won the second spade, he still needed the club finesse to make the contract.

Advice Columnist

Daughter's breakup hurts mother, too

By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: I am a 64-year-old woman who allowed my daughter (35) and son-in-law (34) to move in about two years ago. They committed to each other in 2022 but didn't make a legal partnership. They have an open relationship.

He has pretty much always had a girlfriend. When I asked my daughter where her boyfriend was, she said she could have one but just had not met someone yet.

Well, you see where this is going. Now she has a boyfriend and is happy for the first time in a long while.

My daughter now realizes just what she has been missing. My son-in-law feels blindsided, as my daughter is asking for a complete break.

My heart is so broken. This has all been very fast. My son-in-law will be moving to another state to move in with his girlfriend. I would love any advice on how to navigate this.

— Love Them Both

Dear Love: Breakups don't just impact the separating couple. As you're experiencing, family members and friends can also find themselves grieving the lost relationship in some ways and having trouble figuring out new norms. This can be especially tough in a situation like yours in which everyone is living together.

As with a breakup, communication and clarity about boundaries are going to be very helpful tools for you. You also have a relationship with your son-in-law and so it's healthy to have a confirmation about what, if any, contact feels right for him moving forward and what, if any, contact between

the two of you feels right to your daughter. It's also fine to take a moment to tell him that you've appreciated the time you've spent together and you're sorry things are turning out this way.

It sounds like you didn't struggle to respect their choices when they were together, even if they weren't choices that you would have made for yourself. Approach this situation in the same way. They're going to need time and space to process this.

Part of your journey with this change will mean taking the time and space you need to process it as well. It won't be appropriate to try to do that with them too much, but it's good to acknowledge to yourself that you feel sadness or even grief and wish that things were different.

Dear Eric: My dear friend has been in communication with someone online (and by phone) who claims to be a famous celebrity. She believes this is love and she is convinced this person is for real.

My friend has been in a long-term, live-in relationship with a lovely man. She is preparing to abandon this life for the promise from this online person.

All her friends and family have tried to convince her this is not a real situation and she is being scammed. She has seen a therapist (to no avail) but is still enraptured by this online person. Also, money has been sent to Mr. Fake.

I don't know what else we can do to stop this ruination of her life. She will not only lose love and companionship but the outcome of selling her home. She's waiting for Mr. Fake to send her a plane to pick her up to travel. Just the other day he



Eric Thomas

told her he was ill and had to postpone the trip, still she believes him. Any advice?

— Very Concerned Friend

Dear Friend: Romance scams are so common and so dangerous that the FBI has a page dedicated to them and encourages citizens to report them to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (ic3.gov). So, your first option would be to gather as much information as you have and reach out to an authority for help.

As you know, a celebrity is highly unlikely to communicate with a fan in this way and, even if the celebrity was really reaching out, your friend should confirm, in person and with others, that the celebrity is who they say they are before spending any money or making any big changes. Frankly, any online paramour who asks for money and yet promises a plane should be treated with extreme suspicion.

Because your friend is taking such extreme measures (i.e., selling her house) and has rejected the sensible viewpoints offered by many, including her therapist, appealing to her logic may not be effective. It's possible that there is something else happening that's causing her to reject reality. Consider talking to her partner about your concerns. He surely shares them. Ask him about medical intervention or if she has any other troubling behaviors.

Anyone who is being scammed is advised to cut off all contact with the scammer immediately, but short of taking her phone and blocking all means of reaching out to the fake celebrity, that may not be an option right now.

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

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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

— Georgia Trust for —
LOCAL NEWS

**TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE**

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."
Psalms 55:22

GUEST COLUMNIST ■ CHARLES OCHIE

Can Albany attract the next generation of jobs?

As a professor of Criminal Justice, some readers may wonder what qualifies me to write about Albany's economy. My perspective comes not from formal training in economics, but from more than three decades of living, working and serving in this community.

I first arrived in Albany in the mid-1980s as a student at Albany State University and have since spent nearly 30 years working here. Along the way, I raised my family here and served on numerous city, county and regional boards, including the Economic Development Commission, Downtown Development Authority, Albany-Dougherty Planning Commission, Southwest Georgia Regional Commission, and several other civic organizations.

These experiences have given me a front-row seat to view Albany's economic successes, challenges, and ongoing efforts to create opportunity.

One question consistently arises whenever conversations turn to Albany's future:

Why don't we have more jobs? It is a fair question. But perhaps a more important one is this: Why has Albany struggled to retain some of its largest employers, and what will it take to attract the next generation of industry?

When I arrived in Albany, the city was home to several major employers that provided thousands of stable, well-paying jobs. Those companies helped sustain a strong middle class and served as pillars of the local economy.

Today, the picture looks very different. Over the years, Albany has lost several major employers. Merck closed its pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in 2007, eliminating hundreds of jobs. Cooper Tire, formerly Firestone, eventually shut down a plant that once employed roughly 1,400 workers. Albany also lost military aviation operations associated with Turner Field.

Looking back, it is tempting to ask what Albany did wrong. The reality is more complicated.

Many of the forces that reshaped Albany also affected other communities across the nation. Manufacturing jobs are no longer competing only with neighboring cities or states; they compete globally. Corporate decisions are increasingly driven by supply chains, labor costs, automation, consolidation, and shareholder expectations.

At the same time, modern companies often seek advantages that larger metropolitan areas can more readily provide, including larger labor pools, major airports, research universities, and extensive supplier networks. In today's economy, scale matters.

Work force development also presents challenges. Many emerging industries require engineers, information technology specialists, data analysts, and advanced manufacturing technicians. Like many

smaller communities, Albany faces the ongoing task of attracting and retaining highly skilled workers.

Yet focusing only on what Albany has lost overlooks an important fact: Not every major employer left.

MolsonCoors continues to expand its brewery operations. Procter & Gamble remains a major employer, and Mars Incorporated maintains a significant presence in the region. Their continued investment suggests that Albany still possesses meaningful competitive advantages.

The question, then, is not whether Albany can attract jobs. The question is what kinds of jobs best fit Albany's strengths in today's economy. Albany offers assets many communities would welcome: available land, rail access, highway connectivity, a strong agricultural base, and proximity to Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany.

The city is also home to Albany State University and Albany Technical College, both of which can play vital roles in preparing the workforce of the future. In addition, Albany's cost of living remains significantly lower than that of many fast-growing metropolitan areas.

These strengths create opportunities in agribusiness, food processing, health care, logistics, advanced manufacturing, and defense-related industries. Data centers may also become attractive because of the region's available land and infrastructure. As remote work continues to reshape the labor market, Albany has an opportunity to market itself as a destination for professionals seeking affordability, quality of life, and career opportunities outside major metropolitan areas.

Economic development is not about recreating the Albany of 1985. Those conditions no longer exist. The challenge is to build the Albany of 2035. Communities that succeed in the coming decades will not be those that spend the most time mourning the jobs that left. They will be the ones that identify their strengths, invest in workforce development, improve connectivity, and align themselves with growing industries.

Albany cannot control globalization, corporate mergers, or federal defense policies. But it can control how it prepares for the future.

The next generation of jobs will not look exactly like the last one. The real opportunity lies in ensuring that when those jobs arrive, Albany is ready. Albany State and Albany Tech can help lead that effort by expanding workforce training and educational programs that meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy.

The future of Albany's economy will depend not on what it once was, but on what it chooses to become.

Charles Ochie is professor of Criminal Justice and dean of the Graduate School at Albany State University and a long-time resident of Albany.



OCHIE

COLUMNIST ■ YONATAN HAMBOURGER

The idea that made America possible

As America prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday, there will be no shortage of discussion about freedom.

Freedom to worship. Freedom to speak. Freedom to vote. Freedom to build a life and pursue happiness.

But beneath every freedom worth having lies a more fundamental question:

What makes human beings worth protecting in the first place?

The widow living alone matters. The child with disabilities matters. The farmer, the teacher, the mechanic and the judge matter.

Not because of what they produce. Not because of what they earn. Not because of the influence they possess.

They matter because they are human beings.

Today that idea feels obvious. For most of human history, it was revolutionary.

Ancient societies were built on a very different assumption. Kings stood above subjects. Nobles stood above commoners. The strong ruled the weak. Human value was often measured by wealth, power, birth or usefulness.

The notion that every person possesses equal dignity would have sounded strange to much of the ancient world. Yet that is precisely the idea introduced in the opening chapter of Genesis.

The Hebrew Bible teaches that every human being is created in the image of God. Not kings alone. Not priests alone. Not a privileged class. Every human being.

Ancient Jewish sages drew a remarkable lesson from this teaching. Humanity begins with a single person so that no one could ever say, "My father was greater than yours." Human dignity does not come from ancestry, status, achievement or power. It comes from the divine image carried by every person. Centuries later, that idea would help shape the moral foundation of America itself.

The Declaration of Independence did not merely assert that all men are created equal. It explained why. Human rights were described as gifts from a Creator rather than privileges granted by government.

That distinction mattered then. It still matters now. If dignity comes from government, government can

redefine it. If dignity comes from public opinion, public opinion can withdraw it. If dignity comes from usefulness, some lives will inevitably be valued more than others.

But if every person possesses dignity because every person bears the image of God, then that dignity belongs equally to the strong and the weak, the successful and the struggling, the powerful and the forgotten.

This principle reaches far beyond politics. It shapes how communities function.

When neighbors stop seeing one another as people of inherent worth, something begins to unravel. People become categories. Opponents become enemies. The elderly become burdens. The struggling become invisible. Public life becomes harsher because its moral foundation has weakened.

Communities flourish when the opposite happens. A teacher refuses to give up on a difficult student. A volunteer visits someone confined to a nursing home. A neighbor checks on a family going through a hard season. A business owner treats employees with respect rather than as expendable resources.

These actions may seem small, but they all spring from the same conviction: Every person matters.

America's founders understood that self-government depends on more than constitutions, elections and laws. It depends on citizens who recognize obligations beyond themselves. Self-government requires self-restraint, mutual respect and a recognition of human dignity. Laws can encourage those virtues, but they cannot create them. When a society loses the moral habits that sustain freedom, even the strongest institutions begin to weaken.

As we celebrate 250 years of independence, it is worth remembering that America's greatest inheritance is not merely a system of government. It is a vision of the human person. A vision rooted in the belief that every individual possesses a worth that cannot be bought, earned, voted upon or taken away.

Long before it became a political principle, it was a moral one. The future of the American experiment depends upon whether we continue to believe it.



HAMBOURGER

COLUMNIST ■ CHAD WARINGTON

Albany Utilities and data centers - Part 3

This is the third Op-Ed I've written on the topic of Albany Utilities and data centers. This is only my opinion, and I'm not representing anyone else with these facts and statements.

To recap what I have written in the past Op-Ed's:

-- Albany Utilities has the ninth-lowest electric rate in the state out of hundreds of electric providers.

Albany does not have an electric rate problem. We have a high usage problem.

-- The state of Georgia has one of the best electric grids in the country. So Georgia is seeing a lot of data center interest in all parts of the state.

-- Data centers are seeing tremendous growth because we as consumers are asking

for more and more data from cloud storage, social media usage, streaming services and now running AI algorithms. I learned the other day that an AI search uses 10 times more electricity than a simple Google search.

-- The city of Albany entered the power industry all the way back in 1912 and drove a lot of industrial growth to the city. Forty-nine cities in Georgia, including Albany, retained their electric utilities through all the changes in the last 100 years, and now those 49 cities form the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG) Power.

-- In the '90s, the federal government almost deregulated the entire power industry,

but it did not happen due to the large capital investments required for electric service.

-- Today, every state is different across the U.S., and the state of Georgia has a "hybrid" type of customer choice through which only large power loads have customer choice and smaller residential-type power loads are based on a territory map set by the state legislature.

It's important to communicate all of that background before getting into data centers and how Albany could and should respond. Every community in Georgia is different, and a one-size-fits-all approach to either oppose or support data centers is not a good approach.

As Albany citizens, we need to look at data centers through our own lens and not through some outsider's political lens or another community's lens. For context, the city of Albany is a 200mW electric system serving the entire city. The average data center you hear about typically starts in the 500mW range and goes up from there. That is 2 1/2 times the size of the entire city of Albany power grid.

In Blakely right now, while I could not find an exact power load, they are contemplating a data center that is in the gigawatt range. That's 1,000mW, which would be five times the size of the city of Albany's power.

The "elephant in the room" is the massive amount of electric power that is needed, far beyond the current power generation and distribution assets in the state of Georgia. These power assets are very expensive and are "generational" assets with 50-year life expectancy.

The first issue with that statement: Can we or should we build 50-year generational

power assets for a consumer trend asking for more data for systems that are only a few years old? What happens if the consumer data trend changes in five years? We built 50-year power assets; what about the remaining 45 years of the power asset's life?

After the first issue of massive amounts of power needed, then we get into land use

(Where do these large buildings go?), water use (They need cooling for the computers.) and incentives (Typically, job creators get incentives and data centers do not create a lot of new jobs.)

On the positive side, the millions and possibly billions of dollars worth of taxable property in a community creates huge new taxes going into the city and

county budgets. Some communities have plans to completely eliminate homestead property taxes with new data center property taxes.

Also, the 49 cities that are part of MEAG Power, have the added benefit of possibly serving electricity to a data center and could significantly discount residents' power bills with the electric revenue

from a data center.

But with financial benefits come financial risks. What if the data center shuts down and a community's entire budget was based on one large taxpayer? It's like putting all your eggs in one basket. Citizens would have a huge tax bill shock.

What if a community's electric finances were based on one large electric customer, and the customer cuts back or uses less power than committed? A community would have large assets "not paid for," and citizens could be stuck with paying the bill.

So, here are my opinions and well-reasoned thoughts on Albany and data centers:

-- Albany must be in the data center game. We can't sit on the sidelines and let all the other cities financially benefit. We can't miss this opportunity to possibly land a large taxpayer and a large electric utility payer that could lower all of our taxes and utilities in the city. It could put us at a disadvantage for economic development if we sit on the sidelines.

-- While the large 500mW and higher data centers seem to be the trend, one approach is to start small and build a 100mW or 200mW data center. It would lower the risk and allow the trends and changing market to settle out and then add on more load over time.

-- Without question, a data center has to pay its "full freight" up front, not over time or via partial payments. Their impact costs should not be "socialized" to the general public. That means they pay for all infrastructure costs, electrical power upgrades, water system impacts, transportation burdens and stormwater impacts. Citizens should not be on the hook for any of these costs. These costs should all be paid 100% up front before any work is started.

-- The possibility of downsizing or closure is a significant risk since data centers are relatively a new market. We should require a decommissioning and remediation bond so taxpayers are not left with cleanup costs.

-- We should require the most advanced and efficient cooling system to lower the water use. Early data centers required tremendous amounts of water for cooling, but better closed-loop cooling systems have been developed.

-- We need new zoning categories and criteria specifically for data centers. Right now, a data center could apply the "use-by-right" strategy and apply under the manufacturing section of zoning, and we may not be able to have any say or input. There needs to be specific zoning tables and categories for data centers and other large technology users.

-- If and when a data center goes beyond just "kicking the tires" in Albany, we need to have a serious conversation of how the additional taxes and additional utility revenue will lower the cost for all citizens. Also, there needs to be a cushion or rainy-day fund that protects citizens if the additional taxes and utility revenue lowers or ends.

-- Lastly, citizens need full transparency in the process. Recently, I have proposed that any data center in Albany be required to get a "special use" permit that must be voted on and approved by the City Commission. That would make sure all negotiations and plans are out in the open and transparent. Social media thrives off of conspiracy theories and negative news. The best defense is open and honest dialogue and transparent sharing of information.



WARINGTON

What to watch

TUESDAY

June 30, 2026

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

Lucy Worsley Investigates: The American Revolution

PBS, beginning at 5 p.m.

Catch an encore of this two-part series in which historian Lucy Worsley examines the American Revolution from the British perspective. The first part, "The Break Up," airs this afternoon. Part 2, "A Messy Divorce," airs tonight.

MLB Baseball: Detroit at N.Y. Yankees

TBS & truTV, 7 p.m. Live

Kevin McGonigle and the Detroit Tigers visit the Bronx to take on the N.Y. Yankees for Game 2 of a three-game series.

Presidential 1776 Award

CBS, 8 p.m.

CBS presents the finals of the first ever Presidential 1776 Award competition, a nationwide civics challenge created to celebrate America's top high school students and their knowledge of our nation's founding principles. The program awards scholarships totaling \$250,000, including a top prize of \$150,000.

Lakefront Bargain Hunt: Renovation

Magnolia Network, 9 p.m.

A Hudson Valley couple looking for a waterfront vacation spot for their whole family turns an outdated home into a lakeside retreat in the new episode "A Couple Renos a Waterfront Home in New York's Finger Lakes."

Frontline

PBS, 10 p.m.

The new episode "The Crown Prince & the President" examines the alliance between Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and President Donald Trump.



MAGNOLIA NETWORK

CATCH A CLASSIC

The Yearling

MOVIES!, 10:50 p.m.

This acclaimed, Best Picture Oscar-nominated 1946 adaptation of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Pulitzer Prize-winning 1938 coming-of-age novel has become as much of a beloved, and tear-jerking, family classic as the book itself. Set in the backwoods of Florida in the late 19th century, the drama follows preteen Jody Baxter's (Claude Jarman Jr.) introduction into adult responsibilities and the often harsh "world of men" through his special relationship with a fawn that he discovers. The film won Oscars for its color cinematography and its art direction (interior decoration, color), and among its other nominations were Best Actor and Actress for Gregory Peck and Jane Wyman as Jody's parents.



EVERETT COLLECTION

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



DISNEY

Faith in the Flames: The Nichole Jolly Story (2025, Docudrama) Chrissy Metz, Colin Moss **LMN, 6 p.m.**

National Treasure (2004, Adventure) Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger **AMC, 6 p.m.**

Avengers: Endgame (2019, Action) Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans **FX, 7 p.m.**

A Castle of Our Own (2026, Romance) Erica Cerra, Brennan Elliott **Hallmark, 8 p.m.**

The Hunt for Red October (1990, Suspense) Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin **BBC America, 8 p.m.**

The Martian (2015, Science fiction) Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain **MGM, 8 p.m.**

Moana (2016, Children) Auli'i Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson **Freeform, 8:35 p.m.**

National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007, Action) Nicolas Cage, Jon Voight **AMC, 9 p.m.**

Red 2 (2013, Action) Bruce Willis, John Malkovich **SYFY, 9 p.m.**

Black Adam (2022, Action) Dwayne Johnson, Aldis Hodge **TNT, 10:30 p.m.**

Major League (1989, Comedy) Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen **Paramount, 10:30 p.m.**

Kingsman: The Secret Service (2015, Action) Colin Firth, Michael Caine **FX, 11 p.m.**

The Day After Tomorrow (2004, Action) Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal **SYFY, 11:30 p.m.**

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TV Weekly and tvinsider.com

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What to watch

WEDNESDAY

July 1, 2026

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

Enola Holmes 3

Netflix ■ Original Film

Adventure chases detective Enola Holmes to Malta, where personal and professional dreams collide on a case more tangled and treacherous than any she has faced before. The mystery adventure stars Helena Bonham Carter, Henry Cavill, Sharon Duncan-Brewster and Millie Bobby Brown.

Brilliant Minds

NBC, 8 p.m. ■ Series Finale

The medical drama following brilliant neurologist Oliver Wolf (Zachary Quinto) ends after two seasons with "The Way Home."

The Kimberley: Australia's Wild West

PBS, 10 p.m. ■ Series Finale

This three-part documentary about Australia's remote Kimberley region concludes with "Into the Fire." See how small marsupial savanna gliders explore the canopies of wooded areas, how Traditional Owners use ancient fire practices to help threatened species, how creatures escape extreme heat in sandstone refuges and how crocodiles engage in territorial conflicts in overcrowded rivers.



'Enola Holmes 3'

JOHN WILSON, NETFLIX

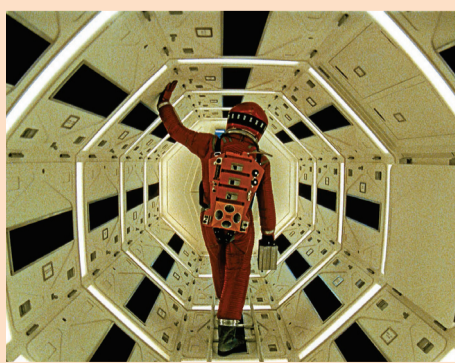
CATCH A CLASSIC

Canada Day

TCM, beginning at 6 a.m.

TCM celebrates the birth of the nation of Canada with films featuring actors from our neighbor to the north. The lineup starts with the 1934 musical **Dames**, starring Nova Scotia native Ruby Keeler as the leading lady in a Broadway show that's threatened by an eccentric millionaire (who happens to

be related) who launches a moral crusade against the entertainment industry. Other Canadians are featured in 1948's musical comedy **Two Guys From Texas** (Jack Carson), 1945's film noir **Conflict** (Alexis Smith), the 1952 drama **The Bad and the Beautiful** (Walter Pidgeon), the 1968 sci-fi epic **2001: A Space Odyssey** (pictured) (Robert Beatty and Douglas Rain, the chilling voice of HAL 9000), the 1948 Western **The Treasure of the Sierra Madre** (Walter Huston) and the 1983 comedy **Strange Brew** (Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas). Take off, eh?



MGM

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



PETER IOVINO

Pitch Perfect (2012, Musical comedy) Anna Kendrick, Skylar Astin **Paramount, 6 p.m.**

Airplane! (1980, Comedy) Robert Hays, Julie Hagerty **SHO, 6:30 p.m.**

Shelter (2026, Action) Jason Statham, Bodhi Rae **Breathnach Encore, 7:05 p.m.**

Maleficent: Mistress of Evil (2019, Fantasy) Angelina Jolie, Elle Fanning **Freeform, 7:20 p.m.**

Armageddon (1998, Science fiction) Bruce Willis, Billy Bob Thornton **AMC, 8 p.m.**

Good Morning, Vietnam (1987, Comedy) Robin Williams, Forest Whitaker **SHO, 8 p.m.**

When I Said I Do (2026, Romance) Sarah Drew, Eric Johnson **LMN, 8 p.m.**

The Long Walk (2025, Suspense) Cooper Hoffman, Mark Hamill **Encore, 9 p.m.**

Undertone (2025, Horror) Nina Kiri, Adam DiMarco **HBO, 10:10 p.m.**

Pulp Fiction (1994, Crime drama) John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson **MGM, 10:35 p.m.**

They Took My Daughter (2026, Drama) Vanessa Simmons, Angeli-que Valentine **Starz, 10:55 p.m.**

Mortal Kombat (2021, Action) Lewis Tan, Jessica McNamee **TNT, 11 p.m.**

Bad Boys (1995, Action) Martin Lawrence, Will Smith **FX, 11:30 p.m.**

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

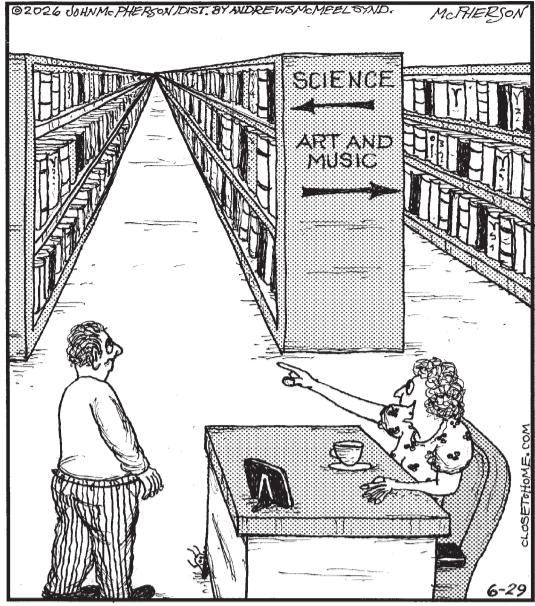
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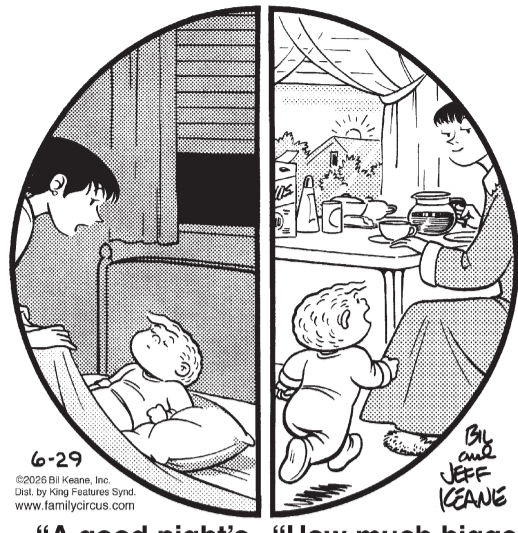
TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



"Books on infinity? Sure, head down this aisle here, and just keep going and going."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bill Keane



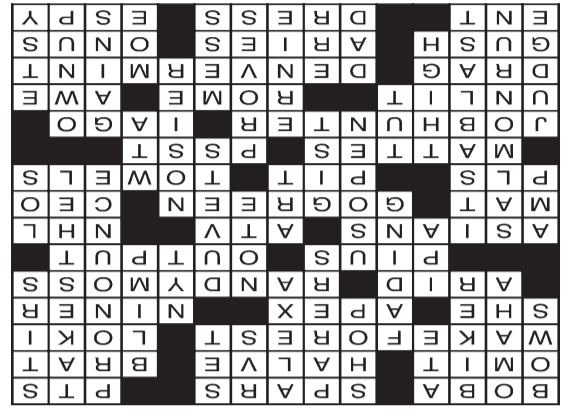
"A good night's sleep makes you grow." "How much bigger did I get last night, Mommy?"

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**
- 1 Tapioca pearls in some tea
 - 5 Trades jabs in the ring
 - 10 WNBA stat: Abbr.
 - 13 Forget to mention
 - 14 Cut equally
 - 15 Spoiled kid
 - 16 *University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina
 - 18 Norse god of mischief
 - 19 "That's all ___ wrote"
 - 20 Mountaintop
 - 21 Forty-___
 - 22 Dry as a bone
 - 24 "Hall of Fame wide receiver who was drafted by the Vikings in 1998"
 - 27 Name of 12 popes
 - 29 Production amount
 - 30 Nearly five billion people
 - 33 Rugged ride, briefly
 - 34 Stanley Cup org.
 - 36 Yoga roll
 - 37 Strive to reduce one's carbon footprint, or what the answers to the starred clues do?
 - 40 Corp. head
 - 41 "Thx" counterpart
 - 42 Cherry center
 - 43 Handouts at a spa
 - 45 Nonreflective finishes
 - 48 "Hey, over here!"
 - 49 "Person looking for employment"
 - 51 "Othello" villain
 - 54 Like new candles
 - 55 Italy's capital
 - 57 Astonishment
 - 59 queen
 - 60 "Major coin producer in Colorado"
 - 63 Talk effusively
 - 64 Fire sign of spring
 - 65 Load to bear
 - 66 Middle-earth's Treebeard, for one
 - 67 Put on clothes
 - 68 Athletic award
- DOWN**
- 1 Gift toppers
 - 2 Nebraska city
 - 3 Motorcyclist
 - 4 Grabbed a bite
 - 5 Boutique
 - 6 Small kitchen knives
 - 7 Apple : Siri :: Amazon : ___
 - 8 Motor homes, for short
 - 9 Tennis match part
 - 10 Sound out, as a word
 - 11 Admits defeat, informally
 - 12 Keeps from sticking to the pot, perhaps
 - 15 Goodyear airship
 - 17 Growing dim
 - 21 Empire St. paper
 - 23 Hoppy beer letters
 - 25 Post-it ___
 - 26 Bed covers
 - 28 Last Grand Slam event of the year
 - 30 Concert device
 - 31 Upstream migration that feeds grizzly bears
 - 32 "This party rocks!"
 - 33 Museum display
 - 35 Angeles
 - 38 Main point
 - 39 More meddlesome
 - 44 Tour gp. for Coco Gauff
 - 46 Quadriceps locale
 - 47 "Tsk!" kin
 - 48 Shows beyond doubt
 - 49 Courtroom decision-maker
 - 50 Orange Muppet who sings "When Bert's Not Here"
 - 52 Obtains
 - 53 Admit (to)
 - 56 State of disarray
 - 58 Site with vintage items
 - 60 Stereotypical teller of terrible jokes
 - 61 Make a goof
 - 62 Barkeeper who is a frequent target of Bart's prank calls

TODAY'S SOLUTION:



06/29/26

BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



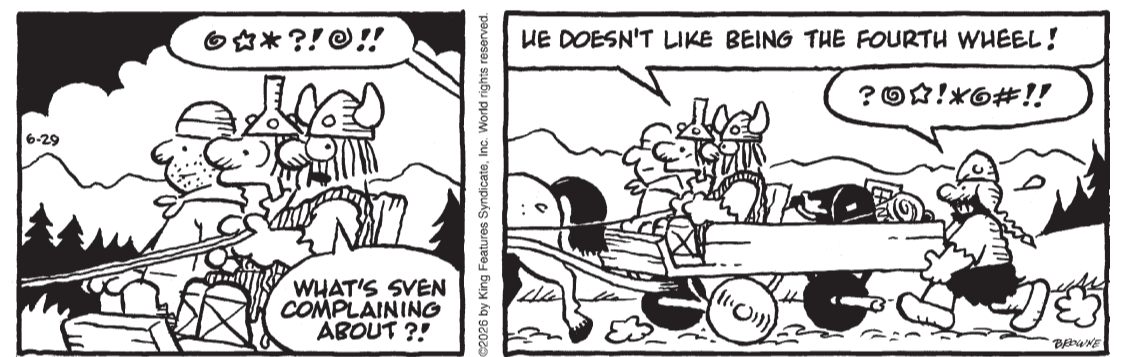
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



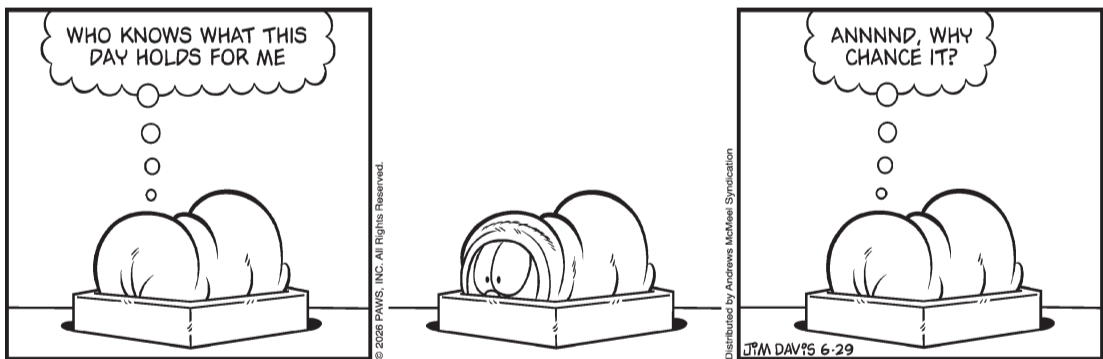
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



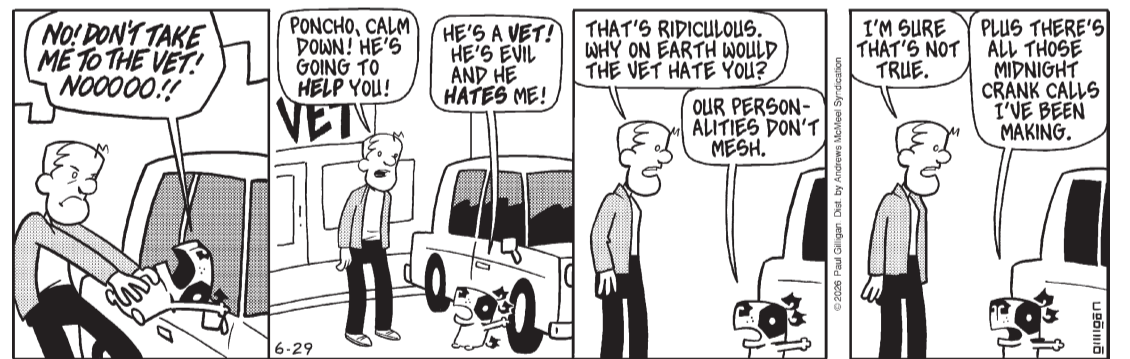
PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



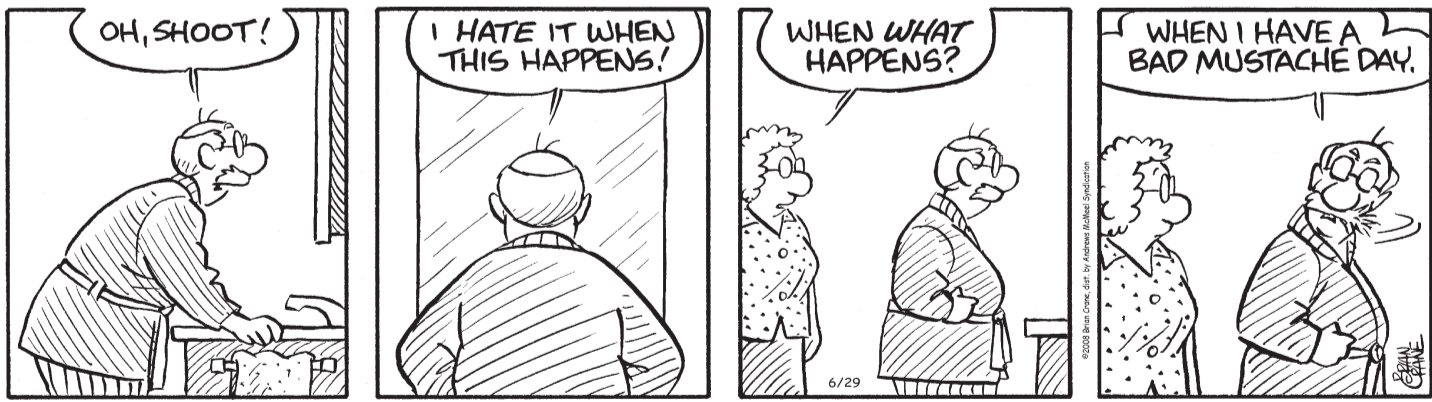
GARFIELD Jim Davis



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



PICKLES Brian Crane



WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

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

LANDLINE TELEPHONES Solution: 6 letters

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

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6/29

Address, Answer, Antenna, Audio, Automatic, Calls, Chat, Code, Communicate, Connect, Conversation, Cord, Desk, Dial, Display, Handset, Hello, House, Identity, Land, Language, Listen, Loud, Machine, Mail, Memory, Menu, Message, Name, Receiver, Reception, Signal, Speaker, Switch, Technology, Tone, Transfers, Transmitter, Vintage, Voice

TODAY'S ANSWER: Rotary

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

WHATZIT?

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



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

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:

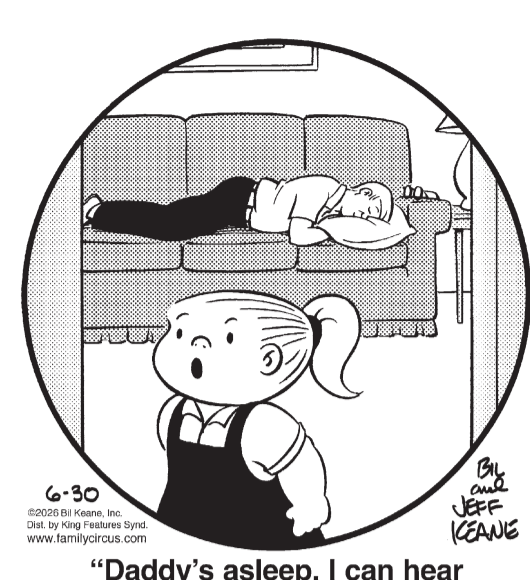
Point of view

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



"Oh, Tanya, put these protective headphones on. Don't want you to have your eardrums rupture from Mrs. Hollingsworth's screams."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bill Keane



"Daddy's asleep. I can hear him purring."

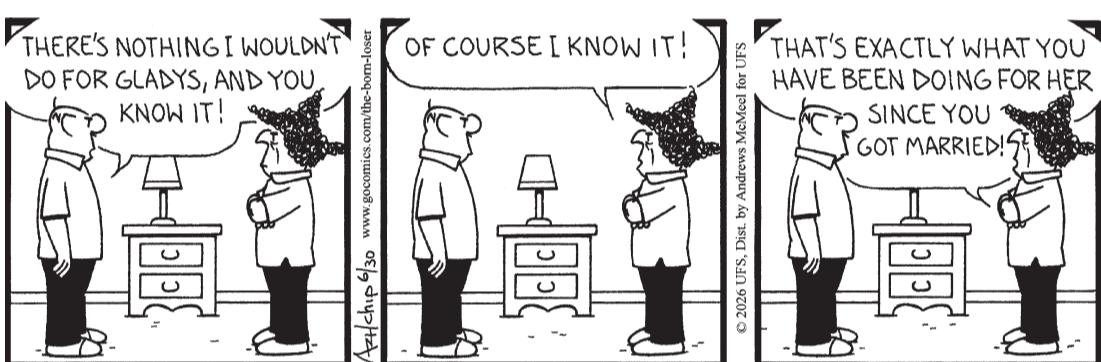
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



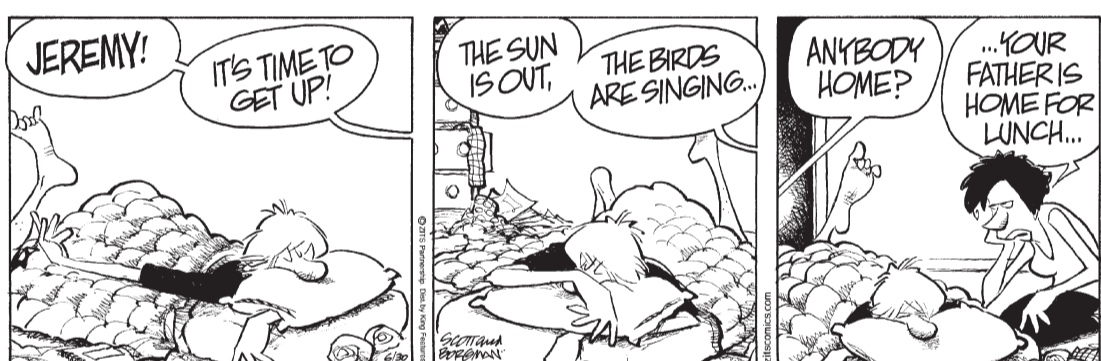
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



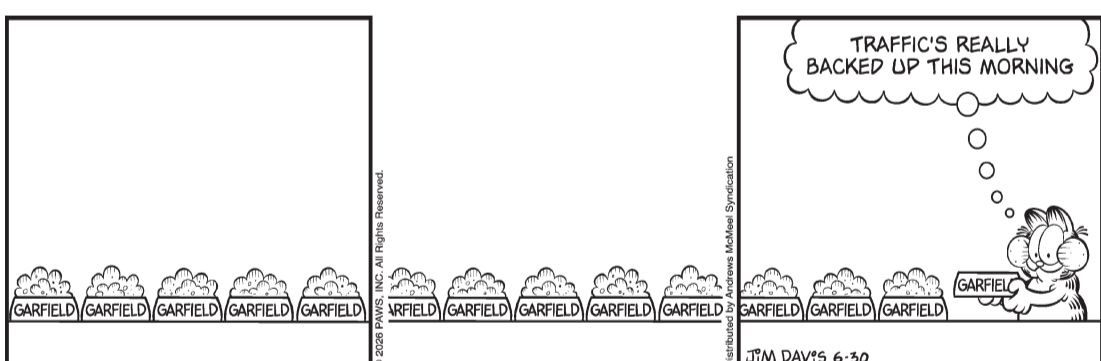
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



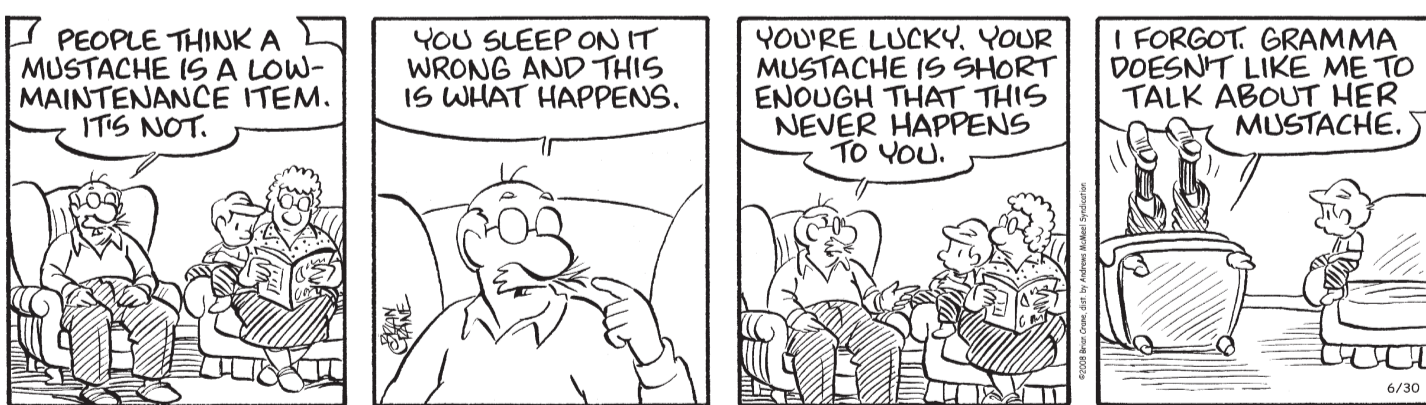
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Clothing retailer
 - 4 Yak
 - 7 Ensnare
 - 11 ET's craft
 - 12 Nix
 - 13 Throw with force
 - 14 "— & Order"
 - 15 Sailors' saint
 - 16 — uncertain terms
 - 17 Primp
 - 19 Went around
 - 21 Regret
 - 22 — Cruces, New Mexico
 - 23 Army chaplain
 - 25 Mythical hybrid
 - 29 The "I"
 - 30 Go on a rampage
 - 32 Numerical prefix
 - 33 Fight
- DOWN**
- 1 Swallow greedily
 - 2 Remotely
 - 3 Switch off (2 wds.)

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

- 4 Hair goo
- 5 Cash dispensers, for short
- 6 Pamphlets
- 7 Desire for water
- 8 Litter's smallest
- 9 British composer
- 10 Trudge
- 12 Top layer
- 18 Continental abbr.
- 20 Writer — Fleming
- 23 Persian fairy
- 24 Eager
- 25 Speaks softly
- 26 Enticed
- 27 "Exodus" author
- 28 Hoarfrost
- 31 Refrigerator feature (2 wds.)
- 35 Motifs
- 38 Hospital worker
- 39 Shoe part
- 41 "... — mouse?"
- 44 Graven image
- 45 Stem joint
- 46 Greek portico
- 47 Eat
- 49 River in England
- 50 Promontory
- 53 Spinning toy

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

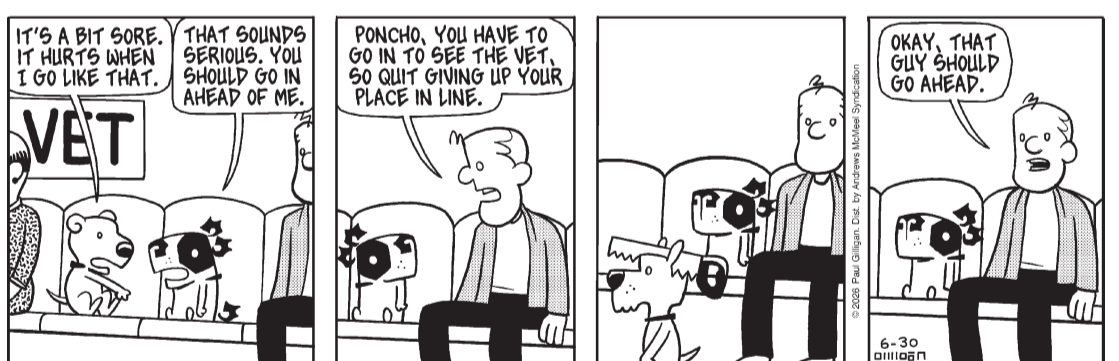
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

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

STRANGER STRANGER

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: Strangers in the night

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.

FOR MILQUETOASTS ONLY Solution: 6 letters

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

TODAY'S ANSWER: Humble

Albany Museum of Art curator leaves to pursue advanced degree

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Sidney Pettice, the inaugural curator of African Collections and African Diasporic Art at the Albany Museum of Art, is embarking on the next step in her career path as she pursues her Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee.

"I'll be a Vol, a Volunteer; I'm going to the University of Tennessee to get my Ph.D. in American history, with a focus on African-American history. I'm so excited," Pettice said, adding she plans to remain in the art field. "Ideally, one day I'd love to lead an institution. I think that's my long-term goal."

AMA Executive Director Andrew James Wulf said that Pettice had an immediate positive impact on the institution upon joining the AMA staff in October 2023.

"Sidney has been an extraordinary colleague whose intelligence, warmth and generosity of spirit have enriched every aspect of the Albany Museum of Art," Wulf said. "Through her scholarship, curatorial vision, and deep commitment to our community, she has helped us tell more expansive stories and become a more welcoming and relevant museum."

Pettice worked with Director of Curator Affairs Katie Dillard. Together, they planned and installed exhibitions at the museum.

"It's been great to work with (Dillard), and I've learned so much from her, especially about the hands-on aspects of it," Pettice said. "Now, I feel so confident doing art installations and everything that comes with that, all the behind-the-scenes things that you wouldn't think about."

"It has been a genuine pleasure and a joy to work with Sidney," Dillard said. "She brought such a brightness to work every day, but more importantly, she truly helped the AMA change the game in what it means to be a mu-

seum for everybody. I know wherever she goes next, she will continue to bring that brightness and take on every challenge with grace."

Pettice came to the Albany Museum of Art position endowed by the Walter & Frances Bunzl Family Foundation after earning an M.A. degree in Curatorial Studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in New York. She earned a bachelor's degree in Art History in her home state from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she began focusing on ancient African art history and expanding her education and scholarship to include the African Diaspora, both ancient and contemporary.

Asked her best memories from her time in Albany, Pettice pointed to two in particular.

"My first Art Ball was so much fun, and it was the 60th anniversary Art Ball, so it felt really special," she said. "I didn't really know what to expect. All I knew was this very highbrow New York gala where you kind of sit in silence, but here, our black-tie events feel so much more like coming together in celebration. It just happens to have fancy clothes. I really appreciate the environment that's created with that."

Another, she said, was the closing reception for the summer 2025 "Her Ladyship, Countess of Cumakala," which was South African artist Buqaqawuli Nobakada's first solo exhibition in the United States. Pettice curated the exhibition, and Nobakada traveled to Albany to attend the closing.

"That closing was so great," Pettice said. "I enjoyed seeing people line up to meet her and take photos with her. I thought that was a super-cool experience. Just to be the person who helped plan it, I was really proud of that event."

Before joining the AMA, Pettice was published in the Atlanta-based art and criti-

cism magazine Burnaway and conducted archive-based research and organizational projects as a studio assistant for conceptual and performance artist Lorraine O'Grady. She also conducted a small archival research project at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta, where she produced material on the artist Selma Burke for the museum's institutional record.

In addition to her curatorial work at the AMA, Pettice headed the project for the downtown Albany mural "The Cosmic Gospel Tour," honoring Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Aretha Franklin and Albany native Ray Charles, one of 100 projects across the nation funded by the National Endowment for the Arts' Celebrating America250: Arts Projects Honoring the Na-

tional Garden of American Heroes program. She also worked with the South Georgia Archives at the Thronateeska Heritage Center on an oral history project that highlights several accounts of Albany, drawn from the narratives of key local historians and community organizers.

Pettice said her time at the AMA has gone by quickly, even as she looks to the future.

"Life always feels like it's constantly being fast-forwarded," she said. "Coming out of my graduate program in New York, I was like, 'OK, I'll end up wherever I end up, but I really hope to be in the South.' I'll end up again wherever I end up, but, again, I hope it's in the South and that I can continue the work that I've done in Southern institutions."



Special Photo: Albany Museum of Art

Sidney Pettice, the curator of African Collections and African Diasporic Art at the Albany Museum of Art, is embarking on the next step in her career path as she leaves Albany for Knoxville, Tenn.

Yancey Engineered Solutions to bring 300 new jobs to Crisp County

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA -- Georgia-based engineering and manufacturing company Yancey Engineered Solutions will invest \$5.7 million in a new manufacturing facility in Cordele, creating 300 new jobs over the next several years in Crisp County.

"Yancey provides solutions and services that keep Georgia moving, supporting everything from small businesses to large manufacturers across every industry," Gov. Brian Kemp said. "This new facility will not only provide direct opportunity for hard-working Georgians in Crisp County, it will help drive further growth statewide."

Founded in 2004, Yancey Engineered Solutions provides power generation packaging systems and is a division of Yancey Bros. Company (Yancey), the authorized Caterpil-

lar dealer for Georgia.

"Yancey Bros. has served Cordele and Crisp County for decades, primarily with our Caterpillar earth-moving equipment, parts and service,"

Trey Googe, Yancey's CEO, said. "We are excited to be able to add new teammates from the Cordele/Crisp community and to manufacture products here that help fill a need in a growing and important market we serve."

Yancey's new facility will be located at 502 South Midway Road in Cordele. The company will refurbish the former Big Tex manufacturing facility and plans to hire welders, quality control technicians, assembly workers, and drivers.



Pat Wilson

Interested individuals can learn more about working at Yancey at www.yanceybros.com/careers.

"Cordele is very excited by Yancey's decision to redevelop the Big Tex facility and to hopefully rehire many of the former employees of Big Tex," Cordele Mayor and Crisp County-Cordele Industrial Development Authority Vice Chair Wesley Rainey said. "This project is a great development for Cordele."

"Our community is beyond thankful for Yancey's decision to land here," James R. Dowdy III, chairman of the Crisp County Board of Commissioners and the Cordele-Crisp Industrial Development

Authority, said. "Further, it demonstrates that our economic development efforts are paying dividends and are consistent with our citizens' visions of growth."

Senior Regional Project Manager Christy Bozeman represented the Georgia Department of Economic Development on this competitive project in partnership with the Cordele-Crisp Industrial Development Authority, Crisp County Power Commission and Georgia Quick Start.

"Yancey Bros. has shaped Georgia's story for a century — and they are not slowing down as they continuously evolve to serve industry needs," GDECD Commissioner Pat Wilson said. "Yancey Engineered Solutions represents an exciting addition to Yancey's portfolio that helps provide reliable energy to users. Congratulations to Cordele-Crisp County and Yancey on this new chapter of growth."

Twelve indicted in alleged drone smuggling conspiracy

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

MACON — An indictment has been unsealed charging 12 individuals in a vast alleged conspiracy using drones to smuggle contraband, such as drugs and cellphones, into 10 prisons across eight states, including Georgia, representing the largest federal prosecution to date involving coordinated drone operations to smuggle illegal items into prisons.

The 17-count indictment was returned by a federal grand jury in the Middle District of Georgia. According to the indictment, beginning in September 2023 until May 2026, the defendants allegedly engaged in a conspiracy to use six drones to drop illegal contraband at least 38 times into 10 federal prisons: Federal Correctional Institute Atlanta; Beckley (Beaver, W. Va.); Jesup; Federal Medical Center Lexington (Ky.); Manchester (Ky.); Memphis (Tenn.); Federal Correctional Complex Petersburg (Hopewell, Va.); Pollock (La.); Talladega (Ala.); and Yazoo City (Miss.).

The following individuals are charged by indictment:

-- Ira Christopher Jackson, aka "Chris," "CJ," "Action," "Action Jackson," 42, of Macon, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a schedule I controlled substance;

-- Chrystal Dunn, 37, of Macon and Greenville, S.C., is charged with one count of conspiracy to

provide contraband in prison; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana; one count of travel in aid of racketeering; and two counts of use of a communication facility in causing or facilitating the commission of felonies under the controlled substances act. She is facing a maximum of life in prison.

-- Jeff Richardson, 23, of Macon and East Point is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana; one count of travel in aid of racketeering; two counts of use of a communication facility in causing or facilitating the commission of felonies under the controlled substances act; and one count of owning and operating an unregistered drone. He is facing a maximum of life in prison.

-- Leviticus Blash, 42, of Macon, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a Schedule I controlled substance; and two counts of travel in aid of racketeering. He is facing a maximum of life in prison.

-- Tysean Richardson, 23, of Macon and East Point is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana; and one count of travel in aid of racketeering. He is facing a maximum of life in prison.

-- Glenn Middleton, 70, of Macon, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison; one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana; one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine; and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. He is facing a maximum of 20 years in prison, plus a minimum of

five years imprisonment consecutive to any other sentence if convicted of the possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

-- Aaron Hubbard, 37, a BOP inmate, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison and one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a schedule I controlled substance. He is facing a maximum of 30 years in prison.

-- Xavier Maxwell, 30, of Macon, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison and one count of conspiracy to tamper with evidence. He is facing a maximum of 20 years in prison.

-- Lamethus Douglas, aka "Mephy," 47, a BOP inmate, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison and is facing a maximum of five years in prison.

-- Robert Lee Whisby Jr., aka "Lil Pumpkin," 51, a BOP inmate, is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison and is facing a maximum of five years in prison.

-- James Phillips, 51, of Jacksonville, Fla., is charged with one count of conspiracy to provide contraband in prison and is facing a maximum of five years in prison.

According to court documents, the BOP had a drone detection system that provided alerts when drones were within the vicinity of BOP properties. In addition to alerting that drones were present, the system provided information on the drone's make, model, and drone identification number, along with the launch location, flight path and altitude.



Special Photo

A heavy payload drone was used in a plot to smuggle contraband into 10 federal prisons.

Illegal items and contraband allegedly dropped during the conspiracy were methamphetamine, marijuana, and other controlled substances; objects including saw blades designed and intended to be used as weapons and to facilitate escape; cellphones; and tobacco.

As further alleged in the indictment, Jackson used a former day care center, referred to as "The Lab" by the defendants, to store items used in the conspiracy, and five of the drones were routinely activated at and near "The Lab" in the days leading up to prison contraband drops. Kenna Middleton allegedly assisted in flying drones, storing contraband, and communicating with federal prison inmates to facilitate the drops. Blash allegedly assisted in the contraband drone drops by traveling to the federal prisons to help with the drone flights and drops. Dunn allegedly provided transportation and served as a lookout for the drone drops. Jeff and Tysean Richardson allegedly flew

drones for contraband drops. Glenn Middleton allegedly stored items to support the contraband and narcotics conspiracies at his home. Maxwell allegedly helped to prepare and package contraband for the drone drops.

The indictment alleges that Douglas, a BOP inmate at FCI Manchester and FMC Lexington; Whisby, a BOP inmate at FCI Memphis; Hubbard, a BOP inmate at FCI Beckley; and Phillips, a former BOP inmate at FCI Jesup, FCI Talladega, and other BOP facilities; all utilized contraband cellphones to schedule contraband drops at their federal prisons.

U.S. Attorney Will Keyes for the Middle District of Georgia; Director William K. Marshall III of the Federal Bureau of Prisons; Special Agent in Charge Marlo Graham of FBI-Atlanta; and Special Agent in Charge Joseph Harris of the Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, Southern Region, made the announcement.

Lee County football improves during OTA with Roswell

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

The Lee County football coach wanted to know one thing: how his Trojans stacked up against one of Georgia's best programs.

By the end of two days of OTA (Organized Team Activities) competition against Roswell, Fabrizio liked what he saw.

"It was phenomenal work," Fabrizio said. "Roswell has a really good football team and by working against them, we got better."

The Hornets, who finished 12-2 and reached the Class AAAA state semifinals last season, provided exactly the kind of competition Lee County wanted before entering the GHSA's mandatory "Dead Week."

Roswell also brought a familiar look to Leesburg. Four former Lee County assistant coaches are now on the Hor-

nets' staff, adding another layer of familiarity to the summer workouts.

For Lee County, the OTAs served as another checkpoint for a team carrying lofty expectations into the 2026 season.

The Trojans return the nucleus of last year's 8-4 squad, including eight players already committed to Division I programs, with several others continuing to attract interest from college recruiters.

"We have a good football team and we are really excited about the coming season," Fabrizio said. "However, we play in a division and in a region where there is little room for error."

While Lee County's roster is loaded with experience, Fabrizio believes several players have taken noticeable steps forward during summer workouts.

Quarterback Jordan Bush has been one of the biggest surprises.

"We've been impressed with



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Lee County running back Dominique Ball breaks free for a touchdown during Thursday's OTA against Roswell at Lee County High School. The Trojans wrapped up their June workouts before the annual GHSA "Dead Week" and will return to practice after the Fourth of July holiday.

Jordan Bush at quarterback," Fabrizio said. "He has always been a great athlete, but his passing has really improved." Bush will have plenty of weapons at his disposal, beginning

with Texas A&M commitment Jaden Upshaw, one of the state's premier playmakers.

"Jaden will always make that catch," Fabrizio said. "But he's really gotten better at running the ball."

Defensively, the Trojans continue to build around one of the area's most experienced units.

Three-year starting linebackers Greg Batson and Jace Murray return to anchor the defense, while an athletic junior secondary consistently made plays against Roswell.

"Trey Bush, Champ Brown and KJ Streeter all made some big plays against Roswell," Fabrizio said.

Lee County wasn't at full strength. Defensive back Montravious Clay continues to recover from an injury, while Clemson-bound tight end Carter Blackwell sat out after receiving stitches.

Even with so much returning talent, Fabrizio insists that

few starting jobs have been secured.

"There is still a lot of time this summer to work," he said. "We believe in competition, and our guys will compete for those spots and playing time. July is about improving and getting ready."

That competition has become one of the trademarks of Lee County's program.

The Trojans expect every position to be earned, not given, and the coaching staff plans to continue evaluating players when practice resumes after the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

For now, the players get a brief break during the GHSA's annual "Dead Week," seven days when coaches are prohibited from conducting workouts or practices.

When they return, the focus shifts from summer development to preparing for a season filled with high expectations.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Dougherty's Jayden Nelson battles against Lee County's Kam Franklin during Thursday's summer game at Sumter County High School in Americus.

Dougherty Trojans looking for consistency

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

AMERICUS — The scoreboard mattered Thursday, but not nearly as much as what it revealed.

Dougherty left Sumter County's final summer play date with a pair of victories, including a hard-earned 45-40 win over host Sumter County and a sudden-death overtime victory over Lee County. More importantly, the Trojans left with another reminder that last season's breakthrough has changed the expectations surrounding the program.

"We had a great finish to last season, but we're still growing as a team," Dougherty coach Terrence Noel said. "Consistency is the biggest thing for us right now. There are moments when we look like a state championship contender, and there are moments when we still look young. That's all part of the process."

That's the balancing act facing the Trojans this summer.

Last season, Dougherty played with little outside pressure before making a surprising run. Now opponents expect their best, and Noel is challenging his players to embrace that reality instead of running from it.

"We're transitioning from a season where there weren't many expectations to one where

the target is on our back," Noel said. "We have to wear it proudly and embrace the challenge."

The Trojans showed both sides of that equation Thursday.

Against Sumter County, Dougherty looked every bit like a championship contender during the opening half. Armeen Walker knocked down an early 3-pointer, Jherel Gibson converted free throws and Marcus Heath Jr. and Ernest Townsell added baskets as the Trojans built a 29-17 halftime lead.

Then came another lesson.

Sumter County opened the second half with a 13-0 run, turning Dougherty's comfortable advantage into a one-point deficit as the Trojans struggled to handle the Panthers' defensive pressure.

Rather than fold, Dougherty answered.

Gibson finally stopped the drought with a driving basket before Mikel Roberts delivered the biggest sequence of the game. After drilling a 3-pointer earlier in the half, Roberts attacked the rim with 1:15 remaining, completed a three-point play and put Dougherty ahead for good, 41-39. The Trojans finished off the 45-40 victory with timely defensive stops.

Earlier in the day, Dougherty displayed similar resilience against

Three-point barrage powers Monroe

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

AMERICUS — Summer basketball is supposed to answer questions, not crown champions.

If that's the standard, Monroe head coach Michael Hoffpauir liked many of the answers his Golden Tornadoes provided Thursday.

Monroe wrapped up two days of work in Americus by rolling to convincing victories over Valley High School and Macon County during a multi-team play day hosted by Sumter County High School, displaying the offensive chemistry that has steadily developed throughout the month.

"We looked good today," Hoffpauir said. "It seems like our guys are figuring each other out and playing better together. We still have a lot of work to do to build our defensive presence, but we are in a good place closing out our summer season. Now it's about getting stronger, faster, and improving shooting and IQ."

That progression has been the objective all month.

After replacing several key contributors, including leading scorer Brayden Burns, from last season's squad, Monroe entered June searching for offensive rhythm and leadership. By the final day of summer competition, the Golden Tornadoes looked far more comfortable playing together.

Against Macon County, Monroe wasted little time taking command.

Armonis Jefferson scored the game's first two baskets before Elijah Rivers buried a 3-pointer to stake the Tornadoes to

a quick 7-0 advantage.

Then came an avalanche from beyond the arc.

Brandon Massey drilled consecutive 3-pointers during Monroe's explosive first-half run. Tristen Terry followed with a long-range basket, King Leverette added another and Terry connected again as Monroe stretched its advantage to 24-12 before halftime.

Macon County played with much more energy after the break and competed evenly for stretches of the second half, but the early deficit proved too much to overcome as Monroe coasted to the victory.

The Golden Tornadoes were even more dominant earlier in the day.

Monroe overwhelmed Valley High School from the opening tip, building a commanding 38-6 halftime lead behind relentless defense and balanced scoring. The Tornadoes never allowed Valley back into the contest while emptying the bench during the second half.

The two victories capped another productive week for a Monroe team that has faced quality competition throughout June while continuing to blend experienced players with newcomers expected to play significant roles this winter.

Hoffpauir said the biggest improvement has come in the way his players are beginning to trust one another offensively.

The ball movement has become crisper. The shot selection has improved. Most importantly, players are growing more comfortable in their roles.

The coach isn't ready to declare his team a finished product.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Monroe's Tristen Terry lays up two points during Thursday's game against Valley High School during summer games at Sumter County High School.

He believes Monroe must become more physical on the defensive end and continue improving its overall basketball IQ before the games begin counting.

Still, Thursday's performance offered another indication that the foundation is taking shape.

"We're in a good place," Hoffpauir said. "Now it's about getting stronger, faster and improving shooting and IQ."

For a team still putting the pieces together, that's exactly where Monroe hoped to be when summer basketball came to an end.

Thomas suspended one game for fist into Clark's throat

Field Level Media

Phoenix Mercury star guard Alyssa Thomas has been given a flagrant foul 2 by the WNBA office and suspended one game for "recklessly making contact with her fist to the throat area" of Indiana Fever star guard Caitlin Clark during Wednesday's game between the teams.

The incident occurred with 6:52 left in the second quarter of the Mercury's 111-109 triumph over host Indiana. No foul was called.

Thomas was planning to serve the suspension Saturday when Phoenix visits the Toronto Tempo.

The WNBA office said it has the option to review games and "classify as flagrant any foul not called as such during a game."

In this instance, Clark drove into the lane and fell on her side following contact with Phoenix defender Lexi Held. In the ensuing scramble for the ball, Thomas pushed her fist into Clark's throat before getting up and stepping over Clark.

Fever coach Stephanie White was upset after the contest that Thomas wasn't called for a foul. "No. 1, you've got to call it. It's absolutely egregious and ut-



Special Photo: race Smith/IndyStar

Phoenix Mercury forward Alyssa Thomas, center, and Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark become entangled during Wednesday night's WNBA game in Indianapolis. The league later suspended Thomas for one game after upgrading an uncalled play to a Flagrant 2 foul.

terly disrespectful," White said.

The teams also had played a testy contest two nights earlier in which a combined six technical fouls were called during Indiana's 86-77 victory.

Thomas, 34, is a six-time

All-Star. She is in her second season with the Mercury after playing 11 campaigns with the Connecticut Sun.

Thomas is averaging 14.7 points, 8.4 assists and 6.6 rebounds in 18 games this season.

Clark exited Wednesday's game with 5:15 left in the third quarter due to back issues.

Clark, 24, is averaging a career-high 21.2 points, 8.2 assists and 4.0 rebounds through 17 games this season.

Five Braves advance in All-Star voting

Media Reports

ATLANTA — Even amid a difficult stretch on the field, the Atlanta Braves continue to dominate in the voting booth.

Five Braves advanced to the final phase of fan voting for the 2026 Major League Baseball All-Star Game, highlighted by catcher Drake Baldwin and first baseman Matt Olson, as Phase 1 results were announced Thursday.

Joining Baldwin and Olson as finalists are second baseman Ozzie Albies and outfielders Ronald Acuña Jr. and Michael Harris II. Only the defending World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers placed more finalists in the National League.

The final round of voting began Monday and runs through noon on July 2. Winners will be announced July 4, with the 2026 All-Star Game scheduled for July 14 at Philadelphia's

Citizens Bank Park.

Perhaps no Braves player has made a bigger leap than Baldwin.

Baldwin's first half was good enough to withstand a rough finish. Before a strained oblique sent him to the injured list for nearly a month, the reigning National League Rookie of the Year had established himself as one of baseball's top catchers. He's hitting .268 with 14 home runs, 39 RBIs and an .835 OPS overall, though he's still searching for his swing since returning on June 16.

Standing in his way is Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Will Smith, who remains on the injured list with a neck strain but still finished second in the voting.

Olson is looking for his fourth All-Star selection after putting together another power-filled season. The former Parkview High School stand-



File Photo

Atlanta Braves outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr. is one of five Braves players who have advanced to the second round of Major League Baseball's All-Star voting.

out has clubbed 20 home runs, driven in 52 runs and owns an .870 OPS, his best offensive numbers since his 54-homer campaign in 2023.

His competition is familiar.

Freddie Freeman, the long-time Braves star now with the

Dodgers, led National League first basemen in Phase 1 voting after batting .282 with 13 home runs and 43 RBIs. Freeman has started five of the last seven National League All-Star Games at first base.

Albies also advanced af-

ter enjoying one of his best offensive seasons in recent years. The switch-hitting second baseman has raised his OPS by more than 100 points from last season while hitting 12 home runs and providing steady defense. He will square off against Philadelphia Phillies second baseman Bryson Stott for the starting job.

The Braves also have two outfield finalists, though only one appears likely to play.

Acuña finished among the top three National League outfield vote-getters despite suffering a Grade 1 left hamstring strain earlier this month. The five-time All-Star and 2023 National League Most Valuable Player is expected to remain sidelined through the All-Star break, making it unlikely he'll participate even if fans elect him as a starter.

If Acuña is unable to play, it could open the door for Harris.

After struggling through an injury-plagued 2025 season, the former National League Rookie of the Year has bounced back impressively. Harris is batting .306 with 14 home runs, 42 RBIs and an .850 OPS while once again flashing Gold Glove-caliber defense in center field.

While Braves fans celebrated five finalists, National League designated hitter Shohei Ohtani of the Dodgers automatically earned a starting spot after receiving a league-high 3.34 million votes. Toronto Blue Jays second baseman Ernie Clement was the American League's leading vote-getter and also secured an automatic starting berth.

Phase 1 vote totals no longer matter, however. Every finalist begins Phase 2 with zero votes, giving Braves fans another opportunity to send one of baseball's largest contingents to the Midsummer Classic.

Four Tech players named All-American

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — Georgia Tech's record-breaking baseball season continued to earn national recognition Thursday as the Yellow Jackets placed a nation-leading four players on D1 Baseball's All-America teams, including three first-team selections.

Outfielder Drew Burress, catcher Vahn Lackey and third baseman Ryan Zuckerman were named first-team All-Americans, while second baseman Jarren Advincula earned second-team honors. No other program had more first-team position players than Georgia Tech, which claimed three of the 10 first-team spots.

The honors cap one of the finest seasons in school history after the Yellow Jackets won the ACC regular-season and tournament championships, advanced to the College World Series and finished among the nation's elite.

Burress continued to cement his legacy as one of the greatest players in Georgia Tech history.

The Houston County product became the first Yellow Jacket to earn first-team All-America honors in each season of his collegiate career and now owns a school-record 12 first-team All-America selections from the sport's major publications, surpassing former Tech great Jason Varitek.

Burress also became just the second player in program history to be a unanimous first-team All-American by all six major organizations in the same season, joining Kevin Parada in 2022.

The junior hit .358 with a .473 on-base percentage and a .657 slugging percentage while setting Georgia Tech's career home run record with 60. He added 22 doubles, three triples and 16 home runs this season while scoring a career-high 82 runs.

Behind the plate, Lackey developed into one of the nation's premier catchers.

The Suwanee native batted .397 with 20 home runs, 78 RBIs and 85 runs scored

while capturing ACC Defensive Player of the Year honors. His .397 batting average led all Division I catchers, and his powerful throwing arm continued to discourage opponents from attempting to steal bases.

Lackey also helped guide Georgia Tech's pitching staff to the lowest ERA in ACC conference games.

Zuckerman earned the first first-team All-America honor of his career after enjoying a breakout season at third base.

The Pennsylvania native slugged 23 home runs, tied for the fifth-highest single-season total in school history, while batting .345 with 79 RBIs and 71 runs scored. He also earned ACC Tournament Most Valuable Player honors after homering three times during the conference championship.

Advincula, despite landing on the second team this time, completed one of the most remarkable offensive seasons in college baseball.

The Santa Clara, California, native led all Division I players with 111 hits and batted .434, tying Jay Payton for the highest single-season batting average in Georgia Tech history among players with at least 200 at-bats.

Advincula recorded at least one hit in 57 of 61 games and produced the second-longest hitting streak in program history at 29 games while striking out only 16 times in 256 at-bats.

The quartet spearheaded one of the nation's most explosive offenses and helped Georgia Tech produce one of its most successful seasons in decades.

The Yellow Jackets finished with four first-team All-Americans for the first time since 1994, matching a program record established by Jason Varitek, Nomar Garciaparra, Jay Payton and Brad Rigby.

The latest honors further underscore what was already evident throughout the spring: Georgia Tech fielded one of the nation's deepest and most talented teams, with four players now recognized among college baseball's very best.

fensive firepower that made them dangerous a season ago. They also experienced the scoring droughts and defensive lapses that can erase double-digit leads.

Those moments are exactly why June exists.

"There are moments when we look like a state championship contender," Noel said, "and there are moments when we still look young."

By the end of the month, Dougherty had shown both. Noel believes the next step is making sure one appears far more often than the other when the season begins this winter.

From 9A

TROJAN

Lee County.

After falling behind 10-0, the Trojans chipped away before surviving a dramatic finish. Lee County forced sudden-death overtime when Kayden Drake followed his own missed free throw for the tying basket as time expired, but Dougherty responded with the only basket in overtime to escape with a 37-35 victory.

For Noel, the wins were encouraging. The inconsistency, however, remains the focus. The Trojans flashed the of-

Turkey stuns U.S. team, 3-2, but Americans advance

Field Level Media

Kaan Ayhan scored on almost the last kick of the match in the eighth minute of second-half stoppage time as Turkey stunned a makeshift U.S. team 3-2 in Inglewood, Calif., on Thursday in the final World Cup Group D match.

Ayhan was in front of the net to poke in the ball as the U.S. scrambled to cover.

Sebastian Berhalter produced a goal and an assist for the U.S. (2-1-0, 7 points), who failed in a bid to win all three group matches at a World Cup for the first time. Turkey (1-2-0, 3 points) led 2-1 at halftime.

The result did not matter for either team.

The U.S. won their first two matches to advance, and they will face Bosnia and Herzegovina in the round of 32 on July 1 in Santa Clara, Calif. Turkey was eliminated after losing 2-0 to Australia and 1-0 to Paraguay despite taking a combined 62 shots.

In a U.S. lineup that had nine new starters from the team's 2-0 win over Australia on June 19, Auston Trusty scored in the third minute off a corner kick by Berhalter. Midfielder Weston McKennie and forward Ricardo Pepi were the lone holdovers in the U.S. lineup.

Turkey finally got their first goal of the tournament in the 10th minute when Arda Guler, a 21-year-old star for Real Madrid, tied it 1-1, and Baris Alper Yilmaz made it 2-1 in the 31st.

The U.S. took the early lead when Trusty one-touched an in-swing from the left side by Berhalter, whipping a shot to the near post for his first



Special Photo: Kirby Lee-Imagn Images

United States goalkeeper Matt Turner stretches to make a save as Turkey's Arda Guler attacks the goal during Thursday's World Cup Group D match in Inglewood, Calif. Turkey scored in second-half stoppage time to hand the U.S. a 3-2 loss.

goal in 10 career matches for the national team.

However, the new-look U.S. lineup looked disjointed, and Guler soon found space and scored off a pass by Yilmaz.

A minute after a potential Mark McKenzie goal from another set piece was called offside to deny a 2-1 U.S. lead, Turkey completed a nice combination play with a goal. Orkun Kokcu took a shot that nicked off Yilmaz and went past Matt Turner, the 2022 World Cup starter who sat the first two matches in favor of Matt Freese.

Berhalter tied it 2-2 in the 49th minute after Turkey was unable to clear

following a long throw-in. He was at the top of the box to lace a shot inside the left post.

Crucial for the U.S. was the return of Christian Pulisic from a left calf injury, as the star winger entered in the 58th minute in place of Timothy Weah. Pulisic left at halftime of the opener against Paraguay and did not play vs. Australia.

Four minutes later, Pulisic got behind the defense, forcing a save by Ugurcan Cakir. Less than two minutes after that, a ball to Pulisic went off his shin and Cakir stretched to make a fingertip save at the top right corner.

Tony's Take: Dusty May's incredible rise

By Tony Duckworth

tonyduckworthsr@gmail.com

Michigan to Dallas. When Dusty May became a student manager for Indiana Hoosier legend Bob Knight in 1996, I'm certain he did not think he would be a national champion head coach 30 years later. In addition to winning a naty this year, May is now head coach of the NBA Dallas Mavericks.

May will be the third national champion college coach to depart for the Association, following cutting down the nets in March Madness. Larry Brown, Kansas, made the jump in 1988, and Billy Donovan bolted Florida after winning back-to-back titles for the greener pastures of the NBA.

Given the landscape of the NIL NCAA and transfer portal, I can't imagine May will be the first to make the jump when the opportunity arises.

May is a prime example of how the new version of college sports allows one to rebuild a roster into a champion overnight. That being said, this version of the wild west can be described as feast or famine. As quickly as one builds a championship roster, a bad pickup in talent or poor chemistry can weigh down a squad, keeping a team from meeting its potential.

May has demonstrated he

is an elite head coach, but so much of coaching success comes from the jimmies and the joes, not the X's and O's. May will inherit Duke product Cooper Flagg as the foundation of the Mavericks' future. Given Dusty May's temperament, as long as the Mavericks brass brings in talent to complement Flagg, he will enjoy success in the professional ranks.

Path. Dusty May's path to the NBA is nothing short of remarkable. ESPN published an article on June 22, 2026, that chronicles May's climb to the Association. From student manager in the BIG10 to video coordinator at USC, which led to assistant coaching stops at Eastern Michigan, Murray (KY) State, Alabama-Birmingham, Louisiana Tech, and Florida ('15 - '18) while UGA head coach Mike White led the Gators.

Dusty emerged as a rising star in the college basketball coaching ranks following his improbable run as head coach at Florida Atlantic. For those who enjoy a March Madness Cinderella, May led #9 seed FAU to the Final Four in 2023. May's back-to-back season records of 35 - 4 and 25 - 9 at FAU opened the door for him to come full circle and return to the BIG10 at Michigan. May's last four seasons as

an intercollegiate basketball coach were an impressive 124 wins against 26 losses. That was a remarkable run.

P.S. Michigan's AD should crawl on all fours to hire Billy Donovan.

What? @SBJ (Sports Business on X) has the tweet of the week. "(The University of) Louisville athletics expects to run a record deficit of about \$30 million in FY27, its fifth negative balance in eight years.

The projected deficit is \$18.8 million higher than the department's \$11.2 million deficit in FY26."

It makes you wonder if the U of L Board of Trustees consists of members of the U.S. Congress.

Milestone. I can't say I envisioned that I would write 100 editions of Tony's Take when my first column ran in the Sports Page of the Albany Herald in July 2024. While I had been involved in sports most of my life, including three decades in intercollegiate athletics, I had never written a sports column. Like it or not, here we are two years removed from my first edition until the century mark.

There are times when it is a challenge to come up with topic(s). I will say writing this column is a highlight of my week. I begin putting "pen



Tony Duckworth

to paper" on Monday evenings with a Tuesday evening round of adding the finishing touches to the column. I let the column rest overnight, and early Wednesday morning, I reread the column and make a few edits before I email the finished product to Sports Editor Joe Whitfield.

I have no idea how many locals read my takes, but I do enjoy the comments some make to me in the community and the occasional email about the topics I write. I appreciate the platform the Albany Herald provides this Maconite weekly, and I will continue to work to provide meaningful content to our local newspaper.

Follow Tony Duckworth on the X platform at @tonyduckworthsr or email him at tonduckworthsr@gmail.com. Duckworth is a native of Macon and is the President and CEO of the Albany Area YMCA.

New research shows how root canal treatment helps protect your whole body

(StatePoint) Root canal treatment is not only a tooth-saving procedure that preserves smiles and improves dental health, new research suggests that it can have far-reaching medical benefits that impact the entire body.

While it's long been known that some untreated dental infections can be associated with an increased risk of heart disease and diabetes, the positive impacts of treatment have not been as well studied. In order to understand how a successful root canal treatment can benefit heart and metabolic health, a team of researchers at King's College London tracked changes in the blood chemistry of patients who had undergone the procedure due to the common dental infection, apical periodontitis. What they discovered was improved glucose metabolism, a key factor in preventing diabetes, better lipid profiles, which are linked to heart health, and reduced inflammation.

The reason that root canal treatment is so effective is that during the procedure, the endodontist removes inflamed or infected pulp, carefully cleans and shapes the inside of the root canal, then fills and seals the space. By doing so, they are stopping the spread of infection and preventing harmful bacteria from entering the bloodstream.

"When you experience symptoms of swelling or pain indicating an infection, it's important to act immediately by making an appointment with an endodontist to save your tooth and protect your body," says Dr. W. Craig Noblett, president of the American Association of Endodontists (AAE).

More information about dental symptoms and the benefits of root canal treatment can be found by visiting <https://www.aae.org/patients/>, the patient edu-

cation site of the AAE. "We now have a deeper understanding than ever before of how intrinsically linked oral health care and overall health truly are. This understanding serves to reinforce the importance of a whole-body approach to care that helps protect smiles and prevent systemic complications," says Dr. Noblett.



Special Photo: Statepoint

Obituary announcements



Ms. Rebecca "Red" Thrower Peak

Rebecca Thrower Peak, lovingly known as "Red" by many who knew her, passed away peacefully at her home on June 19, 2026. Rebecca received her high school diploma from Westover High School. She leaves behind a legacy of kindness, laughter, and open doors that will forever live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Rebecca was born on July 24, 1952, to the late Ralph and Ann Thrower. She was a rare and beautiful soul who truly never met a stranger. With her warm spirit and compassionate heart, she welcomed everyone into her life as if they were family. She had a deep love for animals and a special gift for bringing people together, earning the admiration and affection of many throughout her life. She also found joy in her favorite television show, *In the Heat of the Night*, and recently developed a fondness for NCIS television series.

A familiar and friendly face in the community, Rebecca found joy in connecting with others through her work. She spent many wonderful years at Saville Jewelers and Sunshine Travel Agency, and later at Lowe's, where she eventually retired. Her dedication to service extended beyond her career, as she was a devoted Charter Member of the Albany Evening Lions Club. Through her involvement, she played an instrumental role in raising funds to provide essential vision services to those in need.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her brothers, Ralph Thrower and his wife, Barbara, and Russell Thrower; and her sister, Elaine Thrower.

Rebecca's memory will be forever cherished by her son, Chris Peak and his fiancée, Yulia Panchenko; her daughter-in-law, Jennifer Peak; her sister, Linda Billings; her sister-in-law, Liz Thrower; and a loving circle of nieces, nephews, and dear friends, including Pam Hentschel, Debi Griffin, and her childhood friend, Nancy Washburn.

Rebecca's warmth, generosity, and vibrant personality will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

A memorial gathering to honor her life will be announced at a later date.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Leola Rabon (Harpe)

Leola Harpe Rabon, 93, died on Monday, June 22, 2026. Known as "Ma" to the many that loved her, she was born in Rowena, Ga., on April 5, 1934. Her parents were Hubert Harpe and Bernice Meadows Harpe, both of Rowena, Ga.

She graduated from Arlington High School in 1951. Her 37-year career spanned Southern Bell, BellSouth Corporation, and AT&T. She retired in 1989 from AT&T.

She lived in Edison, Ga., at Willowood Assisted Living since December 2021.

She was preceded in death by her husband Billy Rabon, grandson Blake Lusk, and two sisters - Lillian Harpe of Albany, Ga., and Lyllia Bailey of St. Augustine, Fla.

She is survived by her daughter Cindy Rabon of Leesburg, Ga., and grandson Scott Lusk and his partner Sean Spivey, of Washington, D.C., and Rehoboth Beach, Del. She was a member of Arlington Baptist Church, where she volunteered for many years in the nursery.

A private burial service was held on Friday, June 26, 2026, at 11:00 AM at Oak Grove Cemetery in Arlington, Ga., with her long-time friend Pastor Selinda Wakefield of Gethsemane Freewill Baptist Church officiating.

The family would like to thank Becky Butler and Selinda Wakefield for helping care for Ma in her final months and days.

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Miscellaneous for sale

For Sale: 1 Burial Plot in Riverside-Oakview Cemetery. \$550. Call 229-439-4728 or 229-886-1359

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Fire Fighting Pilot for Thrush Aircraft, LLC in Albany, GA. Pilot fixed-wing aircraft as Pilot in Command to deliver newly manufactured aircraft to international customer locations worldwide, including pre-flight planning, route analysis, weather evaluation, fuel planning, & compliance with applicable aviation regs & operational procedures. Provide ground & flight instruction to customer pilots on aircraft operations, including simulator training, aircraft systems, standard & emergency procedures, & specialized operational training programs such as aerial firefighting, mountainous terrain operations, & train-the-trainer instruction. Req: 5 years of experience in Fire Fighting Piloting. Mail resume to Thrush Aircraft, LLC at 300 Old Pretoria Rd. Albany, GA 31721.

IRRIGATION TECH needed for a small irrigation co. Must have driver's license and be willing to learn. Call Tommy at 229-603-1373.

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The Millennium Center - Cuthbert, GA

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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. EOE/Drug Free Workplace/E-Verify.

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.

" K VEPBW AEKGA LE RYZIRY. K
BGMEQBW DBKGA H OHIL EC LYB
RYEKI ... K RBILHKG VQ BGMEQBW
NHLRYKGA HGW VKTLBGKGA LE JQ
WHW." - HIBLYH CIHG XVKG

Previous Solution: "I think the interview form works best on the radio. There are a lot of personality traits conveyed in a person's voice." - Terry Gross

TODAY'S CLUE: *U s y e n b e r*
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CELEBRITY CIPHER
by Luis Campos
Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

" O VEHVYLVQ LX UV M YRMPPOYMR
LJVMLVC MYLXC ... O ZSOYWRA
RVMCIVQ LJML O JMQ LX HMA UMYW
DA PYJXXR RXMIP." - KCMIIYVP
DYQXCDMIQ

Previous Solution: "I loved going to church. I enjoyed being a part of the choir ... I certainly enjoyed watching and listening to my dad." - Aretha Franklin

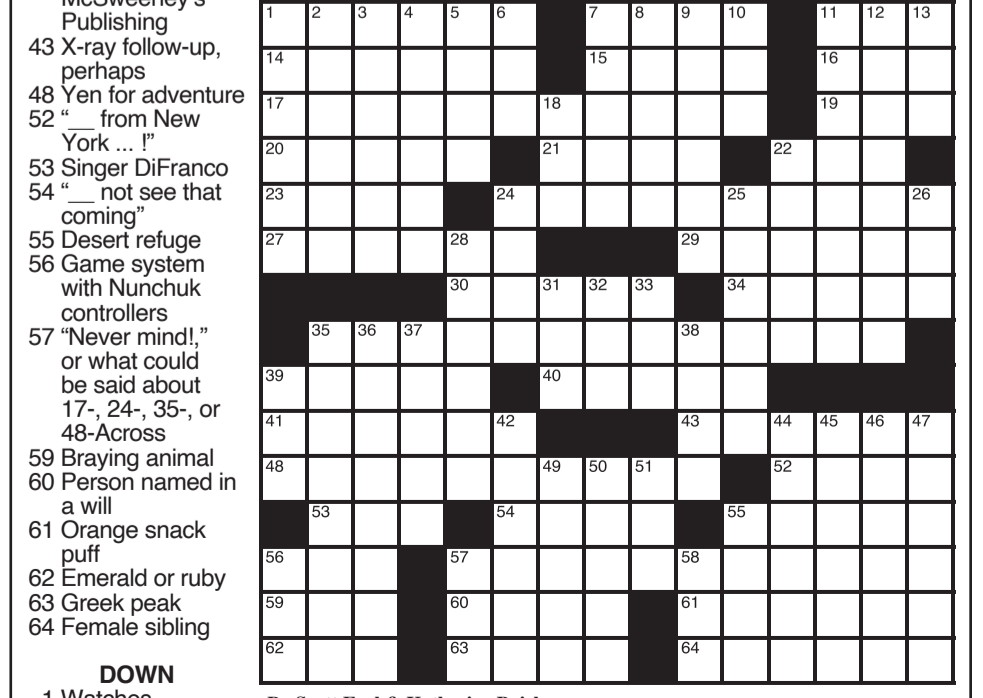
TODAY'S CLUE: *S y e n b e r*
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Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Heated Rivalry" co-star Williams
 - 7 Mountain goat with long horns
 - 11 Pigpen
 - 14 Boxer's punch combo
 - 15 The whole ___ yards
 - 16 Red letters?
 - 17 Old 45, perhaps
 - 19 Male turkey
 - 20 Dark deeds
 - 21 Oscar winner Malek
 - 22 Population fig., often
 - 23 Hard to track down
 - 24 Hiker's annoyance
 - 27 Put points on the board
 - 29 African American folk magic
 - 30 More than wants
 - 34 Preppy tops
 - 35 Lucky purchase, one hopes
 - 39 Sherri's twin on "The Simpsons"
 - 40 "Stuart Little" actress Davis
 - 41 Writer/editor Dave who founded McSweeney's Publishing
 - 43 X-ray follow-up, perhaps
 - 48 Yen for adventure
 - 52 "___ from New York ...!"
 - 53 Singer DiFranco
 - 54 "___ not see that coming"
 - 55 Desert refuge
 - 56 Game system with Nunchuk controllers
 - 57 "Never mind!" or what could be said about 17-, 24-, 35-, or 48-Across
 - 59 Braying animal
 - 60 Person named in a will
 - 61 Orange snack puff
 - 62 Emerald or ruby
 - 63 Greek peak
 - 64 Female sibling
- DOWN**
- 1 Watches overprotectively
 - 2 Pioneering mainframe
 - 3 Robert of "Killers of the Flower Moon"
 - 4 Salon tool
 - 5 Hooting birds
 - 6 Neither partner
 - 7 Native Peruvians
 - 8 Ecosystem
 - 9 Make more nutritious, say
 - 10 Crossed through, with "out"
 - 11 Stands by
 - 12 Sound from a choo choo train
 - 13 "Delish!"
 - 18 Directional ending
 - 22 Kindle unit
 - 24 Notion, in French
 - 25 Hanna-Barbera feline who hatched schemes in an alley
 - 26 Greek goddess of the dawn
 - 28 Whole
 - 31 Rowing machine, colloquially
 - 32 Henna, for one
 - 33 Fr. holy woman
 - 35 Core-engaging exercise
 - 36 Living creature
 - 49 Actor Elba
 - 50 Small crown
 - 51 Chi. summer hrs.
 - 55 "Fancy meeting you here!"
 - 56 Move like a happy pooch's tail
 - 57 "Dexter: Resurrection" ailer, for short
 - 58 Includes on an email

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:



By Scott Earl & Katherine Baicker ©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC 06/30/26

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 oceans' flows (8)
 - 2 holds attention (10)
 - 3 mortgage provider (6)
 - 4 lands a blow (7)
 - 5 joy (7)
 - 6 plant extracts (10)
 - 7 symphony section (8)

- SOLUTIONS**
- ENTS
 - CURR
 - PTI
 - ND
 - TES
 - VA
 - ER
 - BOTA
 - CALS
 - KES
 - EME
 - MOV
 - CA
 - ST
 - ELAT
 - NT
 - ION
 - NI
 - RI
 - LE

Saturday's Answers: 1. NANCY 2. CHARGING 3. TRUMPETER 4. MARCUS 5. BREASTPLATE 6. CORUNDUM 7. MARE 6/29

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 feeling despondent (6)
 - 2 launches a soccer ball, say (5)
 - 3 NASCAR venue (9)
 - 4 quiet (6)
 - 5 place for kids to cool off (9)
 - 6 reflexive male pronoun (7)
 - 7 reticent (9)

- SOLUTIONS**
- MS
 - RA
 - MOP
 - CK
 - KI
 - CKS
 - LER
 - CET
 - FF
 - INK
 - RA
 - ELF
 - LE
 - ING
 - RET
 - SEC
 - IVE
 - HI
 - SPR
 - MU

Monday's Answers: 1. CURRENTS 2. CAPTIVATES 3. LENDER 4. STRIKES 5. ELATION 6. BOTANICALS 7. MOVEMENT 6/30

Americans prepare to celebrate country's 250th anniversary

By Ashley Murray
Georgia Recorder

WASHINGTON — Parties, protests, displays of historic documents, odes to the Founding Fathers — and a massive political rally by the president — will mark a deeply polarized nation's 250th anniversary on this Fourth of July.

Pomp and circumstance will abound for the semiquincentennial as the similarly named America250 and Freedom 250 celebrations offer different slates of programming on Independence Day and beyond.

A countdown and ball drop will ring in the holiday in the eight time zones across the United States and its territories. The milestone birthday bash will close with an "unprecedented pyrotechnic spectacle" in the skies above the National Mall.

In Philadelphia, a time capsule, to be opened in 2276, will be buried beneath Independence National Historic Park. The capsule contains contributions from each state and territory; sports memorabilia, including an Olympic gold medal; a 1GB digital archive from the Library of Congress; and a pocket Constitution signed by each Supreme

Court justice, among hundreds of other items.

Visitors to the nation's capital can watch and anyone across the country, and the world, can tune in to a live dramatic reading of the Declaration of Independence at 10 a.m. at the National Archives.

The public also will be invited to seldom-accessible spaces. The Federal Circuit Center for Innovation & Law will open its doors July 3. Guests, who must register ahead, will get the rare opportunity to don a judge's robe and take part in a mock trial inside the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit's courtrooms.

Two separate celebrations of America's big year are similarly named but feature vastly differing programs that stretch beyond Independence Day.

America250, a 24-member bipartisan commission created by Congress a decade ago, has spearheaded nationwide initiatives for school students, corporate employees and young entrepreneurs.

The commission has organized plenty of July Fourth happenings, including the ball drops, time capsule burial and simultaneous block parties in Charleston, S.C.; Fort Camp-



Special Photo: Ashley Murray/States Newsroom via Georgia Recorder
A 250th anniversary flag is displayed on the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, location of the vice president's office, on 17th Street NW in Washington, D.C.

bell, Ky.; and Milwaukee.

America250 also will host a benefit concert at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, which will feature Chris Stapleton and the Smashing Pumpkins. Tickets are \$17.76, and all proceeds go to nonprofit organizations to kick off "Giving 4th," a nationwide initiative to promote mid-year donations.

It is all separate from President Trump's plans for 2026. Days after beginning his second term, Trump issued an executive order creating Task Force 250, resulting in White

House-led programming known as Freedom 250.

America250 Chair Rosie Rios said the parallel initiatives are a collaboration to balance events in the nation's capital and beyond.

"You see a lot of activities that the administration is planning in D.C. It was our agreement that we would focus on 'sea to shining sea,' and still obviously have opportunities for all Americans to participate across the board," Rios, who served as U.S. treasurer under the Obama administra-

tion, said.

The White House initiative will take over the National Mall.

As part of the Freedom 250 lineup, Trump will visit North Dakota on July 1 ahead of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library opening set for July 3. A Freedom 250 fireworks display at Mount Rushmore in South Dakota also is scheduled for the eve of Independence Day.

Attendees can also expect to see an increased National Guard presence as part of the administration's "summer surge."

On Aug. 22-23, motorsports will come to the capital for the Freedom 250 Grand Prix, where an NTT IndyCar Series race will follow a 1.7 mile circuit "through the National Mall and surrounding city streets," according to the event's website. Rios said America250 also has an "after-the-fireworks strategy."

They include a private guided tour of the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla.; Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota; or Yellowstone National Park in Montana and Wyoming, among other choices.

The commission is also aiming to make 2026 the "largest

year of volunteer hours ever recorded by our country," Rios said. A counter on the commission's website displays the number of "America Gives" hours tracked, and Rios will announce a grand total on New Year's Eve in Times Square.

"We've had great stakeholders who've already made their pledges. Coca-Cola, for example, made a pledge for 250,000 volunteer hours. Not to be outdone, Rob Manfred from Major League Baseball says, 'Well, we're going to do 250,000 volunteer hours,'" Rios said, referring to the baseball commissioner.

Not all Americans are feeling celebratory.

A coalition of organizers, led by those who spearheaded the 2017 Women's March, will host a nationwide mobilization event June 27 demanding change for America's next 250 years.

Progressive groups including the 50501 movement, All of U.S. 250, Next 250 and Get Free are expecting up to 5,000 people at a flagship march near the White House and thousands more at teach-ins, faith events, art installations, marches and cultural events at 80 locations throughout the U.S.

Should we be worried about screwworms?

By Leigh Hataway
UGA/CAES

ATHENS -- The New World screwworm is attempting a comeback on U.S. soil. It's not a welcome one.

Screwworms are the larval stage of a parasitic fly that lays eggs in open wounds or body cavities of any warm-blooded animal. (Yes, that includes the eyes, mouth, ears and other body openings.) The maggots burrow into and feed on the flesh of their host, feasting on their tissues.

"Speaking as a scientist and an animal lover, I would just as soon eradicate screwworms from the face of the Earth," Nancy Hinkle, a professor in the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, said. Hinkle is also the UGA Cooperative Extension veterinary entomologist for the state of Georgia.

Screwworms had been present in the U.S. since the mid-1800s. Every year, screwworm flies were transported north as far as Nebraska and surrounding states as people moved cattle across state lines.

The federal government eradicated the species state-side by the 1960s and collaborated with Latin American governments to destroy the pest all the way to Panama.

But it maintained a stronghold in countries further south. The June 3 detection of a screwworm in a calf in Texas marks the first time in decades that the parasite was spotted on the American mainland.

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture once again ramps up its response to what could become a rapidly spreading threat, Hinkle answers pressing questions about what the screwworm is and whether we should be worried about its return.

Screwworms eat living flesh. And this can essentially be any warm-blooded animal.

Cats, dogs, pigs, chickens, rodents, possums, raccoons, white-tailed deer, coyotes, foxes — any animal that you can name that's warm-blooded in the Southeast is a potential host for the screwworm. The population of screwworms could explode rapidly.

Even if you don't have pets, cattle or horses, or if you're not worried about wildlife, you should be concerned for yourself because they can also infest humans.

Most people will avoid this. We brush away flies that approach us.

But there are subpopulations of people who are vulnerable. Homeless people, for example, could be at risk or people who are sleeping outside.

Screwworms will fly into open mouths and lay their eggs around our gums, and then the maggots will hatch and start feeding on our gums and all the oral tissue there.

Should people be worried about screwworms? No. Like anything in life, you want to stay informed about what's going on, but it's not something you need to be worrying about right now.

If that changes, UGA Extension will get the word out about the types of actions people need to be taking to protect themselves and their animals from screwworms. The federal government used what's called the sterile insect technique to get rid of the parasites before. And, for the general public, I have to say that the way it works doesn't make a lot of sense. You think, "How does releasing more screwworms eradicate screwworms?"

Back in the 1950s, scientists discovered that the female screwworm mates only once in her entire life. If that



Special Photo: UGA/CAES

Screwworms are the larval stage of a parasitic fly that lays eggs in open wounds or body cavities of any warm-blooded animal.

one time that she mates, she mates with a male that does not have viable sperm, then her eggs will never hatch.

So they sterilize male flies and then release them to mate with the females. Eventually, after mating with a sterile male fly, the female will die, leaving no offspring behind to carry on the next generation.

That's right. It worked. We eradicated the screwworm from North America, and we can do it again.

I have faith in the process. But we have to hire enough people to have inspections of

cattle and other animals being transported across the border. We have to have people ensuring that infested wildlife are either getting treated or euthanized.

We don't want animals carrying screwworms farther north, farther west, farther south or farther east. We certainly don't want them headed toward Georgia.

It's going to take time, it's going to take effort and it's going to take money to contain the infestation and beat this pest back south again. But we can do it.

Georgia Trust awards \$165,000 to 18 historic sites

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation has awarded \$165,000 in grants for historic preservation projects in Georgia through its 1772 Foundation Grants for Georgia, Callahan Incentive Grant and Wade and Mary Lu Mitchell African American Heritage Preservation Grant programs.

The 1772 Foundation, partnering since 2023 with the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, this year has awarded historic preservation matching grants totaling \$125,000 to 14 Georgia private nonprofit organizations for maintenance of their historic sites.

The 2026 The 1772 Foundation Grant recipients are: Alonzo F. and Norris B. Herndon Foundation - \$10,000 (Herndon Home Museum, Atlanta)

The Wren's Nest - \$10,000 (Atlanta)

Historic Meadow Garden - \$9,000 (Augusta)

Historic Columbus Foundation - \$10,000 (Rankin House, Columbus)

Martin Centre Preservation Company - \$10,000 (Martin



Special Photo: Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation has awarded \$165,000 in grants for historic preservation projects in Georgia.

Theatre, Douglas)

Monroe Co. Historical Society - \$5,000 (Train Depot Complex, Forsyth)

Towns County Historical Society - \$10,000 (Berrong-Oakley House, Hiwassee)

Boggs Rural Life Center, Inc. - \$10,000 (President's House, Keysville)

Marietta Educational Garden Center - \$5,000 (Fair Oaks, Marietta)

Newington Heritage Society - \$8,000 (Walker Grove Baptist, Newington)

Sunnyside Historic Foundation - \$9,000 (Sunnyside School, Pine Mountain)

Sautee Nacoochee Community

Association - \$9,000 (Sautee Nacoochee School Gymnasium, Sautee Nacoochee)

Thomasville History Center - \$10,000 (Metcalf Courthouse, Thomasville)

The Garden Center Inc. - \$10,000 (The Crescent, Valdosta)

Grant funds will support a wide range of preservation projects, including foundation stabilization and drainage improvements, roof replacement and repair, restoration of historic doors and windows, masonry and exterior rehabilitation, hurricane recovery efforts, and repainting and repair of historic building exteriors.

Lawmakers go home with more campaign fodder, few results

By Ty Tagami
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA -- The 2026 special session of the Georgia General Assembly may be remembered more for what did not happen than for what did.

Gov. Brian Kemp called lawmakers back to the Capitol mainly to complete work they had left unfinished during their regular session last winter and spring.

They had failed to address a looming deadline of their own making: Had they gone home Tuesday without addressing their own July 1 prohibition on the use of QR codes in the state's voting machines, pandemonium would have reigned in the November midterm elections.

Georgia would have been left with no legal method for tallying votes, other than the paper ballots intended for sporadic emergencies, such as power outages.

After creating that deadline two years ago, legislators managed Tuesday to push it back by nearly two more years.

They also checked another item off Kemp's to-do list, retroactively approving his second gas tax suspension of the year. Kemp ordered the first one in March after lawmakers, still in session, authorized it.

But they had already gavelled out of their regular session when he declared a state of emergency to extend the suspension into June.

Legislators did not pass any other major policy, although they may have gathered more fodder to present to voters as they campaign ahead of November.

About an hour before the special session started last week, Republican leaders from the House and Senate announced that they would not pursue a big and controversial item: redistricting.

Kemp had put that on their agenda after the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in April that weakened the 1965 Voting Rights Act's protections against maps that dilute minority voting strength.

The proposal had already created an outcry among Democrats and civil rights groups, leading GOP lawmakers to consider the potential downsides of fueling opposition rage and Democratic turnout during the midterms.

Republicans also failed to win Democratic support for Kemp's call to consider putting a new 1% sales tax on local ballots. The referendums would have generated hundreds of

millions of dollars to reduce homeowner property tax bills.

The scores of nearly identical local measures were introduced mostly by Republicans, one per city or county. They required a two-thirds vote for passage, and it became clear after the first votes last week that Democrats would oppose all of them.

Even so, after a string of defeats, Republicans kept calling up more of those bills. In the House, Rep. Chuck Efrstration, R-Mulberry, moved to reconsider each of them twice, the maximum allowed.

Democrats said they opposed the measures because they would have increased the cost of groceries and other daily necessities, with the revenue going to people fortunate enough to own a home.

They called it a tax increase. Republicans supported the measures, saying that rising property taxes had made homeownership unaffordable for many.

Brookhaven, a city in metro Atlanta, had just raised its property tax rate 40%, noted Rep. Scott Hilton, R-Peachtree Corners.

"By voting red, you are suppressing voters' cherished right to vote on property tax relief," he said.

By invoking that color, Hilton meant the "no" button on lawmakers' desks, not the color associated with his political party.

But red incumbent lawmakers will likely be using the blue "no" votes against the tax swap during their political campaigns this year.

The strategy prompted a rebuke from Rep. Angela Moore, D-Stonecrest, who complained about the cost to taxpayers of the special session.

That money would have been better spent on a state down payment assistance program, she said, "instead of wasting our time on trying to tax our constituents."

Yet Democrats engaged in political sport, too, calling for a vote on a matter Republicans managed to evade. GOP lawmakers in the House wanted nothing to do with a Democrat's call to override a veto by Kemp.

During their regular session, House Bill 1192 had been a bipartisan measure, with both Efrstration, the majority leader, and Rep. Carolyn Hugley, D-Columbus, the minority leader, among the top co-sponsors.