



Perspectives
Wayne Fowler
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Power bills rise
HVAC use blamed
• Page 8A



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THURSDAY, JULY 2, 2026

Dougherty schools prepare for bell-to-bell student cellphone ban

By Kathryn Crockett
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ALBANY — As Georgia prepares to expand its statewide ban on personal electronic devices in public schools, Dougherty County School System leaders say they are working to balance compliance with the new law while giving individual schools flexibility in how they implement the policy.

During the Dougherty County Board of Education's June work

session, several community members, speaking on behalf of advocacy group SOWEGA Rising during the public comment period, voiced support for the district's proposed electronic device policy while encouraging school leaders to focus on communication, consistency and transparency as the new rules take effect before the 2026-27 school year.

The policy comes as Georgia's Distracted-Free Education Act requires public schools to prohibit

students from using personal electronic devices, including cellphones, smartwatches, earbuds and similar technology, throughout the school day. Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, the restrictions will apply to all grade levels. Districts retain flexibility in how they enforce the policy and store devices, while allowing exceptions for students whose medical plans, Section 504 plans or Individualized Education

See **BAN**, 2A



Staff Photo
Dougherty County schools are preparing to implement Georgia's new bell-to-bell ban on use of electronic devices policy for the 2026-27 school year.

From Ledo to Coston, Lee County's summer road projects are underway



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

A Lee County road resurfacing crew lays asphalt during a previous paving project, with new resurfacing and paving projects to begin this summer.

By Kathryn Crockett
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LEESBURG — Road construction is accelerating across Lee County as county officials move forward with multiple resurfacing projects, approving a new paving contract and revising transportation priorities ahead of what is expected to be an active summer construction season.

Updates provided during recent meetings of the Lee County Board of Commissioners show projects are underway or scheduled to begin on several county roads, while additional transportation improvements funded through the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program and Transportation Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax (T-SPLOST) are expected to begin shortly after the July Fourth holiday.

One of the first projects underway is resurfacing on Ledo Road.

County Manager Scott Addison previously told commissioners crews would begin work in mid-June using overnight shifts with an estimated completion time of three to four weeks. During Tuesday's meeting, Addison reported contractors had completed turn-out work and were preparing to begin asphalt resurfacing, weather permitting.

Commissioners also awarded the Coston Road paving project to East Coast Asphalt of Douglas for \$428,609.35 after receiving five bids.

According to county staff, East Coast Asphalt submitted the lowest responsive bid and received favorable reference checks. Officials said the contractor is expected to begin work within the next several weeks.

Commissioners also approved revisions to the county's FY 2026 LMIG State Aid Project report after several previously

See **PROJECTS**, 2A

Lee County moves another step closer to issuing long-awaited property tax refunds

By Kathryn Crockett
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LEESBURG — Lee County commissioners approved another administrative step last

week to move the county closer to issuing refunds for property taxes that were overcollected during the 2025 tax year, as officials continue working through the final stages of the

refund process.

The Lee County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted an amendment to a joint resolution with the Office of the Tax Assessor governing how erroneously collected ad valorem taxes will be refunded and how any unclaimed funds will ultimately be handled under Georgia law.

County Manager Scott Addison described the amendment as a housekeeping measure that updates the county's original resolution to ensure the Tax Commissioner's Office follows state statutory requirements for unclaimed refunds.

"Our original resolution had



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

The T. Page Tharp Governmental Building in Leesburg houses the Lee County Board of Commissioners.

See **REFUNDS**, 2A

PSC candidate Peter Hubbard makes case for election to full term

Staff Reports
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ALBANY — The list of complaints about data centers is a lengthy one. They include those related to quality of life, like excessive sound and lighting at facilities, as well as those that could impact health, like water pollution and air pollution from center emergency generators, to the potential to increase utility costs.

Another concern is the loss of farmland to the massive facilities.

While the centers have drawn the ire of residents in whose environs developers look to site a new one, the facilities have proliferated



Special Photo

Georgia Public Service Commission candidate Peter Hubbard holds his 4-year-old daughter. Hubbard, a Democrat who won a special election in November, is seeking a full six-year term in the PSC's District 3.

See **HUBBARD**, 2A

Periodical — Mail Label

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Now Accepting New Patients

Dr. Rebecca Broschart

AAPHC Lee Health Center
118 Robert B. Lee Drive
229-759-6508



From 1A

HUBBARD

ated. There may be as many as 5,000 or more spread across the country, with Virginia leading the pack with more than 500.

Closer to home, the data centers in Georgia have so far mostly been located in the Atlanta area, although one has been approved in southwest Georgia's Crisp County.

The issue of data centers is sure to be one with which the state's Public Service Commission has to tangle as companies look to expand.

Determining the impact to the state's electricity ratepayers that a jump in data centers, which are instrumental in computer cloud storage and AI computing, is one question that Georgia's Public Service Commission will need to answer as the number of centers continues to grow.

While the November races for constitutional offices, including governor and the U.S. Senate, will suck up most of the oxygen, two PSC races will be on the ballot.

In District 3, the PSC race will be a rematch between Democrat Peter Hubbard and Republican Fitz Johnson. Hubbard won the Nov. 4, 2025, special election, which also included PSC District 2.

"I think it's going to take more than a year to get to some of these issues," said Hubbard, who has 16 years experience in the energy in-

dustry, including developing solar and battery storage projects, analysis of markets and projecting fuel prices.

The PSC is responsible for setting rates for investor-owned utilities across the state, which includes Georgia Power Co., and approving energy infrastructure and planning.

"Where my concerns lie with data centers is (if) they pay their fair share," Hubbard said. "We're still relying on Georgia Power to determine that. The reason voters should pick me is I'm a rare breed in that I read everything that comes across my desk. I'm asking hard questions at the meetings. I want to get to the bottom of whether data centers are paying their fair share, are residential customers getting their fair share? I'm asking voters to give me the full six years so I can really get to the bottom of it."

One of the knocks on data centers is that they use huge amounts of energy and some utilities plan to give discounts to operators, leaving other customers to pay higher costs.

"I'm looking at this incredibly complex landscape and trying to use my experience and boil it down to are residential customers paying what they should?" Hubbard said. "You need someone who is totally going to be on your side looking at the issues, and I think that effort is going to take time. I am someone who takes very seriously the impact of this issue and the impact it has on people's lives."

From 1A

PROJECTS

planned roads were resurfaced through other projects.

The revised project adds portions of Grave Springs Road, Pinewood Road and Philema Road, while removing Stapleton Drive, Orchard Hill, Live Oak, Larkspur, Alucha, Fussell, and Sportsman's Club Road. Officials said those changes keep the overall project cost unchanged while reflecting roads that have already been completed or no longer require striping.

Several heavily traveled roads will receive thermoplastic pavement markings rather than traditional painted striping. County staff said the longer-lasting material is expected to improve durability on high-traffic roadways.

Those roads include Grave Springs Road, Lovers Lane, Oakland Parkway and New York Road.

Commissioners also discussed the next phase of improvements to Old Leslie Road.

County staff reported obtaining contact information for property owners involved in a planned land swap associated with the project. Rather than pave only the county-owned section immediately, commissioners agreed it would make more sense to complete the property exchange before constructing the entire roadway as one project.

The transportation projects coincide with several other capital improvements moving forward across the county, including the courthouse renovation project, which recently attracted nine contractors to a pre-bid meeting. County officials expect to receive bids later this summer before bringing a recommendation back to commissioners.

While officials have not released completion dates for every project, motorists should expect construction activity on several county roads throughout the summer as contractors begin work on multiple projects funded through local and state transportation programs.

Private \$37 million fiber investment aims to boost Albany's digital future

By Kathryn Crockett
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ALBANY — Construction is under way on what could become one of the largest privately funded infrastructure investments in Albany's recent history, as fiber internet provider Wire 3 begins building a \$37 million network expected to bring high-speed internet service to more than 37,000 homes and businesses over the next 12 to 18 months.

For many Albany residents, the announcement means more than faster downloads. It introduces another internet provider into a market long dominated by relatively few options, a shift Wire 3 officials say will give consumers greater choice while supporting long-term economic growth.

The Florida-based company announced Monday that construction crews have begun work on a 100% fiber-optic network throughout Albany, with the first customers expected to be connected as early as this fall.

"Our crews are beginning their work, and we're preparing to wire Albany for good," Wire 3 CEO Jai Ramachandran said in a statement, "ultimately transforming how people in Albany connect, work and run their businesses every day."

Company officials said Albany quickly emerged as a priority because it remains underserved by fiber internet despite its size and growth potential.

"As we looked at markets in Georgia, Albany stood out right away," Ramachandran said. "Residents and businesses deserve better options and better connectivity than what was available."

The company said pricing is designed to be aggressive. Officials say the company's aggressive pricing structure creates healthy competition in developing markets like Albany and noted the company recently lowered prices systemwide.

"Competition works well for everyone," Ramachandran said.



Photo Courtesy of Wire 3

A Wire 3 service vehicle is shown as the company begins construction of its \$37 million fiber-optic network in Albany.

"I'm sure you guys look at the duopoly between cable and phone companies that are likely most of your residents' only options. Adding in a third competitor, especially one that's powered by fiber, serves as a good way to not only improve the quality of service in the area, but really give residents a choice."

Company officials indicated Albany customers will receive the same pricing available in their established Florida markets, with introductory pricing starting at \$30 to \$40 per month.

Affordable pricing could make high-speed fiber accessible to households that previously considered fiber unaffordable. The company said reliable fiber internet has become increasingly important for remote work, education, healthcare and economic development.

Unlike many broadband expansion projects across the country, Wire 3 officials emphasized that Albany's network is being built entirely with private investment.

The company said it has not requested or received funding from the city, county, state or federal government and has historically relied on private capital to finance network construction.

Officials said remaining privately funded allows the company greater flexibility in deciding where to build while avoiding taxpayer subsidies.

According to Ramachandran, not relying on outside funding is one of the primary drivers in his company's success.

"We are a completely privately funded company," he said. "I think there's enough private money out there that we don't need to encumber the residents of any town to ask them for subsidies. My business model stands on its own."

Construction has already begun, with the first service area located west of Albany State University near Gillionville Road. Residents in affected neighborhoods will receive advance notice through direct mail and door hangers before crews begin work.

Rather than completing the city street by street, Wire 3 divides construction into neighborhoods of roughly 1,000 to 2,000 homes that can be activated as they are completed.

When completed, the full build will reach approximately 37,000 homes and businesses. Company officials estimate construction of that first phase will take between 12 and 18 months, depending on permitting, utility coordination and contractor availability.

Wire 3 also expects the project to create local employment opportunities during the build phase and beyond. While some specialized construction crews travel between markets, the company said it intends to hire local contractors whenever possible.

sible during construction and expects permanent positions in field service, sales and marketing after the network is operational.

"Once our network is up and running, we rely on a team of field service employees and contractors to install new customers and deal with any network maintenance issues," Ramachandran said. "Our preference is to have some people who are local manning those positions."

"We'll have more employees in the short-term during construction, but we will have a sustained employment impact on the area once it's complete, both with field service techs as well as sales and marketing folks."

Residents also may see indirect benefits as increased competition in tech and connectivity enter the local market.

Industry studies cited by the company suggest fiber availability can increase residential property values by 5% to 10%, while expanding opportunities for remote work and business recruitment.

Wire 3 officials say the company eventually hopes to partner with organizations such as school systems, hospitals and local governments after substantial portions of the network are completed.

The company also indicated Albany represents only the first phase of its southwest Georgia expansion. Officials said neighboring communities that remain underserved by fiber internet could become future candidates as construction progresses.

Ramachandran said he hopes the city of Albany will see Wire 3's investment as a long-term commitment.

"We intend to be partners in the communities," he said, "not just people traveling by night through the town as we build out fiber-optic networks."

Residents interested in receiving construction updates or learning when service will become available in their neighborhood can register through Wire 3's website.

From 1A

REFUNDS

that the money would be returned to us in 18 months if it wasn't paid out or the checks were not cashed," Addison told commissioners during Tuesday's meeting. "Now this authorizes (Tax Commissioner) Wendy (David) to follow Georgia state law with how the money is handled and turned over to the Department

of Revenue with the statutory timeframes."

The board first approved the joint resolution during its June 9 meeting, authorizing the David's office to begin the refund process after officials discovered taxpayers had been erroneously overcharged during the 2025 tax year. At that meeting, the tax commissioner told commissioners that any money remaining after the refund process is completed must be remitted to the Georgia Department of Revenue rather than retained by the county.

During last week's meeting, Addison said the Tax Commis-

sioner's Office continues working on calculations related to motor vehicle refunds, which require separate processing.

He said the office expects to provide cost estimates and invoices needed for the county to authorize payments before refund checks can begin.

"She should have us the cost, the quote and invoice this week so that we can pay her and then she could start the refund checks," Addison said.

Officials said processing the motor vehicle portion of the refunds has required additional time because of the volume of individual transactions involved.

Earlier this month, during a public forum, a resident asked when taxpayers could expect refunds to be issued. David estimated at that time that refunds would likely be distributed by the end of the summer.

Tuesday's action does not establish a mailing date for refunds but removes another procedural step before payments can begin.

County officials did not announce the total dollar amount to be refunded or how many refund checks remain to be processed.

From 1A

BAN

Programs require device use.

Several speakers said limiting classroom distractions could improve student engagement and academic performance, but they urged district leaders to clearly explain the policy's purpose to students and families.

One speaker encouraged the district to establish measurable benchmarks, including student engagement, discipline referrals, attendance and academic performance, so the community can evaluate whether the policy achieves its intended goals.

Another community member focused on parent communication, noting that many families have become accustomed to contacting students directly during the school day. The speaker encouraged the district to provide parent information sessions, frequently asked questions and clear guidance on emergency communication procedures before the start of the school year.

Other speakers stressed the importance of consistent implementation across all schools, recommending comprehensive

training for teachers, administrators and support staff on storage procedures, disciplinary expectations and communication with families.

Community members also asked district leaders to ensure accommodations remain in place for students whose medical needs or disability plans require access to electronic devices and suggested the district collect feedback from students, parents and educators during the policy's first year to identify any needed adjustments.

Michael Finley, the chief of staff for the school system, said the district has already begun communicating with parents through its messaging platform and is meeting with principals and school staff to gather feedback before finalizing implementation procedures.

"We want to make sure we get the proper feedback before we push those out for implementation," Finley said. "It's easy to sit behind a desk and write policies, but we have to connect with the people who actually have to implement them."

Rather than requiring every school to use the same storage method, Finley said each campus will submit its own plan for district approval.

Depending on each school's facilities and operations, storage options could include lockers, locked pouches or allowing students to keep devices on their person as long as they remain put away and inaccessible throughout the school day.

Board members asked administrators to provide school-specific storage information before classes begin so they can answer questions from parents.

Finley said board members will receive reference materials outlining each school's approved procedures.

Superintendent Kenneth Dyer said information about the policy has already been distributed to families and that additional communication will continue throughout the summer as the district prepares for implementation.

"We will continue to inform parents of the new policies and procedures as we get closer to the school year," Dyer said.

The electronic device policy was presented as part of a broader package of student policy revisions receiving a second reading before the board. District officials said several other policies remain under review before final adoption.

Obituary

announcements

Remembering
loved ones
and honoring
their memories

To place an obituary announcement in the Albany Herald, go to <https://legacy.memoriams.com/network/albanyherald/obituary>
Fill out form online and submit payment.

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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Today's not an action day with below-zero stars, but balances are needed in life. Use below-zero days to do less and replenish more. Then, when the stars give you the thumbs up, you are rested and staged for big moves.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): While certainty feels good, it's not a day to be certain. Your take on a situation could be way off despite how it feels. Don't push — neither your sector of dealing with the world nor today's day score support being right.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Illusions are beautiful and realistic, but reality is your real ride or die. Just like actions over words, base decisions on what's real and proven. Hold off on financial moves like opening an account or making a big purchase.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Something intentionally hidden or just not transparent enough could make something look worthy that isn't. Don't make important decisions until next Tuesday earliest, too much isn't known at this time.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): When the stars say to stay inside, the time isn't wasted if you use below-zero days to keep building foundational pieces. Nothing is more foundational to your life than your own inner self. Stay on track for self-mastery.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Proven methods are a stronger choice when below-zero stars punish experimentation. Save new trials for days in above-zero sunshine and you'll get fewer errors. Don't test friendships now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Creativity is a muse that isn't linear, you can chase her through dimensions and spirals until you give up, then she'll land on your shoulder like a dragonfly. Focus on career but tread gently until stars improve.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Ground yourself in what's real, there's no real grounding to be had from a mirage, it's only a falsity. You

may have much of value to teach, consider ways of getting your wisdom and skills out there.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't say it unless it's true, falsehoods undermine your credibility and self-esteem, both. Any time you surrender your integrity, you lose a brick or two from your base of believing in yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't sign anything for a few more days, too much isn't known or isn't clear. You may have to stand up against big pressure to make the move now, but the timing is wrong. Wait until Tuesday or later.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You could appear glamorous or iconic now but entitled behavior likely still won't fly. Show up in support of a worthy cause to bring life to a circle of reciprocity — this is what sustains.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The first person not to lie to is yourself. If you're clinging to anything other than reality, every decision will be off. Drill down to your own sacred truths and hold onto them. This is the beginning of true authenticity.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Today is the beginning of your personal new year, and it should be significantly better than the first half of 2026. The Universe opens with some yummy gifts — mental acuity, communication skills, benevolent protection, needs met. Sound good? You should also get a glimpse of your destiny macro and the steps needed to get there. Late this month fear could rear its head, even if there are no current threats. Take needed actions but shut down any worry that isn't in the here and now. August brings cash, potentially a new and ongoing income stream. A 'hold my beer and watch this' temptation should be decisively side-stepped late in August for the usual reasons. Expect a windfall or happy surprise in September, October could bring highest cosmic guidance but take people with a grain of salt.

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

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

Previous Solution: "I expected to be a classical theater actor ... I quickly learned that I had to pay back my school loans." — Frances McDormand
TODAY'S CLUE: H sjenbo O
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CELEBRITY CIPHER
by Luis Campos
Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

" H O X U K K Z G E H ' Y C U U L G E . H
D J G Q Q T J X I U T E Z J Y S N H W E Z G E
H K D H E J . H V H L H L X ' E , E Z J X H
K U S Q L X ' E P J L U H X C H E . " — G L J Q J

Previous Solution: "I don't want to be in the mainstream ... If the critics start liking my movies, then I'm in deep trouble." — John Carpenter
TODAY'S CLUE: v sjenbo O
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QUOTE OF THE DAY
"Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them."
Joseph Heller,
author (1923-1999)

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
Congratulations to Condele for getting the Yancey Manufacturing plant that will employ 300 employees. Is the Dougherty County Manager and Albany Economic Development Commission asleep at the wheel? Yancey/Caterpillar (previously Carlton Co.) has been an integral part of Albany for decades. We should have had the competitive edge.

Weather Forecast

Today 93° 72°	Friday 94° 72°	Saturday 94° 74°	Sunday 93° 74°	Monday 90° 74°	Tuesday 91° 74°	Wednesday 91° 74°
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Daily Bridge Club
Keys to success
By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

I've heard an optimist defined a man who tosses his car keys to a parking valet -- and doesn't look back. A defender may be obliged to take an optimistic view: Assume a friendly lie of the cards.

Against 3NT, West led a low diamond: ace, deuce, four. Dummy next led a heart: eight, king, ace. West saw nothing better than to lead another diamond. South captured East's ten, led a club to dummy and returned the jack of hearts. West took the queen and cashed his ace of spades and king of diamonds to hold South to nine tricks.

NINE TRICKS
West had to be an optimist. South's bidding showed about 11 points, so East had zilch. South clearly has plenty of material for nine tricks unless West wins five first. Moreover, after East's discouraging signal at Trick One, West must give up on setting up

his diamonds. West gives the defense a chance by assuming East has the ten of spades. When West takes the ace of hearts, he leads the ace and queen of spades. East-West get two spades, two hearts and a diamond.

DAILY QUESTION
You hold: S K 9 8 4 3 H K D Q J 8 4 C Q 9 3. Your partner opens one heart, you respond one spade, he bids two hearts and you try 2NT. Partner next bids three diamonds. What do you say?
ANSWER: Partner shows six hearts, four diamonds and minimum values. With the same pattern but a stronger hand, his second bid would have been three hearts or two diamonds. Pass. Your 2NT told your story, and partner wants to stop low. Be happy you have found a good fit.
North dealer
N-S vulnerable

Advice Columnist
Accidental voicemail reveals sister-in-law's true feelings
By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

– Hurting

Dear Eric: On Mother's Day I received a voicemail, on my cellphone, from my sister-in-law. It evidently was a butt call that recorded my brother, sister-in-law and two of their friends having a good time drinking and bad-mouthing me.

In the voicemail my sister-in-law told their friends that her husband's sister "was a piece of work", to which my brother responded, "she's nuts." They both said that they need an interpreter to translate my text messages because, once in a while, I misspell a word or two. They were rolling in laughter during the entire voicemail, at my expense. They said several not-so-nice things about me.

All of a sudden, during the voicemail, my sister-in-law said "Wait." She must have noticed her phone had called mine and the conversation ended.

This did not sound like things my sister-in-law would say. She goes to bible study and professes to be a religious person. But of course, they were drinking and their friend said, "I think I'm drunk." This voicemail hurt me very much.

My husband and I will be at a family gathering in a couple of weeks and my brother and sister-in-law will also be there. Should I just say "Hi" and go on or should I drop a hint about the voicemail? She may not have realized that her phone was leaving me this message. I decided to do nothing at this time, but I want her to know that I received the voicemail message.

How do you suggest that I handle this?

Dear Eric: My friend drives me crazy. All of her life she has made bad decisions. She is 73 years old and cannot retire because she has no financial stability. She has lived with James for 12 years. She told him early on that she was looking for marriage. Marriage has not happened.

He's been good to her in many ways. He's taken her on vacations all over the world but guards his finances. She has no rights of survivorship to his estate. She can remain in his house for three months after he dies and then it has to be sold and his daughters get everything. She's on her own.

The rest of her life decisions are equally convoluted and not in her best interests. She loves to whine but doesn't make any changes to protect herself.

It all came to a head when James' daughter's husband had severe mental illness and committed suicide. His death was tragic on many levels.

She told me some private information about him that appalled me. There was a horrific crime involved. She did this after he died. To me, she crossed the line when she did that. I didn't need to know any of it. She did this because I felt very bad for him and she wanted me to know that he was no angel.

I resented her for doing that, so I told her it was time for me to bow out, and I have ended my relationship with her. I miss her but I also feel she can't be trusted if she needs to do that posthumously to make her point.

What do you think about this turn of events?
– Lost Friend

Dear Friend: This relationship was breaking apart long before she shared the private information with you. So, while trust is a major issue, it's clear from your letter that you just don't agree with the way she lives her life or the choices she makes. As a result, this friendship is misaligned.

It's natural to miss a friend, but you should ask yourself what would be different if you tried to reconcile. If nothing changes — your opinion or her actions — you're likely to end up with the same result.

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Ever thought of obeying the law and not worrying about School Zone and Red Light cameras? They can't catch you if you don't commit the crime.

I agree, Squawker. There's plenty enough corruption going on right here at home for us all to get worked up over. Your praise or criticism of Trump, Republicans or Democrats way down here in south Georgia has about as much of an impact as a Trump promise.

My dad has been gone for a long time now, but I used to laugh when he and mom visited overnight and he brought a gallon-size clear plastic baggie that was filled with his medications. I wondered how anyone would ever need all of those meds. I went out of town last week and laughed at myself when I realized that I now carry a gallon-size baggie filled with meds. Oh how fast we turn into our parents.

Stacey Abrams, as bad a candidate as she was, would have been a better choice for the Democratic nominee for governor. Keisha Lance Bottoms represents past failed policies. We need a governor like Rick Jackson to continue leading our great state of Georgia forward.

Carlton's new daily prayer: Lord, give me patience. If you choose to give me strength, please include bail money.

I read in Saturday's paper that the city is passing a budget that's a third of a billion dollars! For that much money, each citizen should get a private valet to come and serve them tea and crumpets. But we do have to pay for ridiculous items like virtual tours and FOIs -- Friends of Lorenzo's -- land-grab schemes.

Amen, Fletcher. I'm one of those quick-witted folks who figured out what restaurant you were talking about, and I've made the same decision you and Tara did. After the second time of "we're out of chicken." I decided I'd go to one of the other 40 places or so around here where they actually have the food that's in the name of their establishment.

At what point did "competence" stop being a factor in the way people vote? Whether the next president or governor is Republican or Democrat, I hope we can bring competency back to the offices of power.

I find it hilarious that several big-time sports "personalities" and even a local squawker is complaining about the treatment poor Caitlin Clarke is getting in the WNBA. It's the WNBA ... who cares?

Judges in this country -- local, state, federal -- are supposed to be impartial arbiters, interpreters of the laws on the books. But on every level, the judiciary in modern-day America has become political arms of whichever party or constituency put them in office.

THE ALBANY HERALD

Perspectives

The Albany
HERALD
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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

— Georgia Trust for —
LOCAL NEWS

**TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE**

*"For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand,
saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."
Isaiah 41:13*

GUEST COLUMNIST ■ WAYNE FOWLER

America's sacred inheritance

Earlier this year, Secretary of State Marco Rubio mentioned Christianity in a speech to international leaders in Munich. He was referencing an important historical fact. He was not advocating "Christian nationalism."

Usage varies, but if that term is defined so broadly that any connection between God and government is contemptible, then founding father John Adams is guilty. He called the moment America declared independence, "the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty from one end of the Continent to the other."

Also guilty is Benjamin Franklin, not known to be a Christian. "The longer I live," he wrote, "the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – that God governs in the affairs of men."

The early patriots understood the positive civilizational impact of personal Christian faith. John Adams described what it would look like if all citizens regulate our conduct by the Bible. "Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men."

Patrick Henry noted Christianity is the source of religious freedom.

"This great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason, peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here."

One of Western Civilization's founding principles

is that all people are created in God's image. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks points to the implications of that truth.



FOWLER

"We are called to create order in our personal lives and in society as a whole," he wrote. "We are God's image. ... Ahead of us is the task set by God: to be his agents of justice and compassion."

The historical fact is that America emerged and thrived in the fertile soil of Judeo-Christian thought and values. However, the birth of America 250 years ago is not the Christian's major point of historical reference. It is 2000 years ago when Jesus revealed Himself as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

It follows that our greatest motivation is neither politics nor the survival and spread of Western Civilization. It is the desire to witness a great worshipping multitude "from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9)

America is built on the idea that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life and liberty. When "isms" and ideologies creep in and mask those rights or contradict what is true, we are victimized by a tragic miscalculation. Our Union is less perfect, just, and tranquil.

Maybe that's why in that speech, Rubio called the Christian faith the "sacred inheritance" of those who settled and built America. It is ours, too, when we dare to claim it.

COLUMNIST ■ THOMAS KNAPP

Reflecting Pool solution? It's right there in the name

Between ruinous wars abroad (e.g. the war on Iran) and at home (e.g. the wars on immigrants and drugs), rising inflation, election-rigging attempts from both sides of the major party "aisle," an apparent rising trend of "teen takeover" riots, and a host of other problems, the recent algae bloom fiasco at Washington, D.C.'s Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool seems to rank rather low on the list of things Americans might want to obsess over.

I am, however, a slave to the news cycle, and for some reason that's one of late June's dominant stories. So, hey, let's talk about it.

The bare basics:

U.S. President Trump touted a "makeover" for the Reflecting Pool, including a new "American Flag Blue" liner, then handed the job off to a crony contractor who, for \$14 million, managed to completely screw it up. Almost immediately, the pool took on the hue, and odor, of a sewage lagoon.

Naturally, Trump wasn't going to blame himself for the dumb idea, or his pet contractor for the poor execution, or himself again for parading his motorcade across the pool after the liner was installed – almost certainly holing/tearing it in spots – so he manufactured imaginary vandals and started having people arrested (including former Olympic canoeist David Hearn, for the "crime" of touching a floating piece of the torn liner).

Apart from the arrests, it all really feels like a mildly funny "dog bites man" story: The usual government incompetence, the usual minor corruption, the usual results.

But this time, it captured the public imagination.

The people want answers, and the people want solutions. Therefore, I, a servant of the people, have offered the explanation above and will offer a solution below.



KNAPP

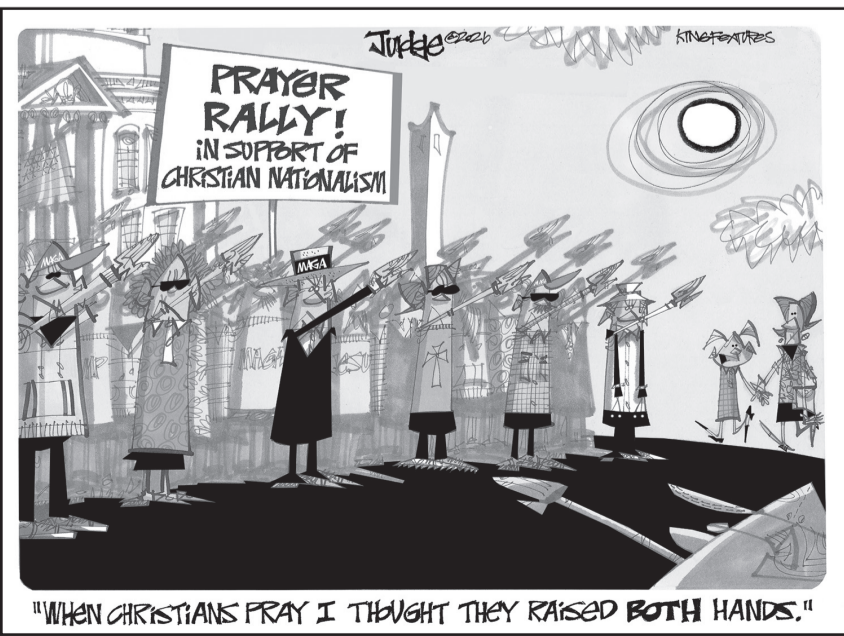
My solution has three parts: Part one: Drain the pool. Part two: Zone the pool "commercial." Part three: Auction the pool off to a new, private sector, owner.

I mean, it's prime commercial real estate, right? Smack in the middle of a busy tourist area, lots of people walking around all day long with money in their pockets.

And have you ever noticed what that tourist area's called? "The National Mall." But good luck finding a Nordstrom or Bath & Body Works there. It's mostly just museums and statues of, or for, dead people.

It's not like that particular reflecting pool is unique or necessary. There are two others – the Smithsonian Pollinator Garden's Reflecting Pool and the Capitol Reflecting Pool. And if that's not enough water, there's also the Constitution Gardens Pond and the Tidal Basin. Not to mention, you know, the Potomac River.

Drained, filled in, and built on, the Reflecting Pool would be a little small as shopping malls go – 339,000 square feet – but anchored by, say, a Walmart Supercenter (about 180,000 square feet) and filled out with a few specialty shops and a spacious food court, it would be far more useful, and a far better expression of "national pride," than the current stinking, algae-filled pretext for presidential graft, political pageantry/stuntery, and vengeful arrest tantrums.



"WHEN CHRISTIANS PRAY I THOUGHT THEY RAISED BOTH HANDS."

The Albany Herald encourages letters to the editor on topics of general interest, but reserves the right to edit them for content and length. Letters should be no longer than 400 words and must include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number for verification purposes.

COLUMNIST ■ RALPH NADER

Fatalities from Israel's Gaza genocide deliberately undercounted

The mainstream media has no problem guesstimating the deaths (500,000) from the Assad Dictatorship's Civil War in Syria, nor the estimated deaths in the wars in Ukraine, Sudan or Iran.

Somehow, media editors do not let their investigative reporters assess the extent of Israel's mass murder of civilians in Gaza – an exposed, defenseless population of 2.3 million people in an enclave the geographic size of Pennsylvania. The Associated Press notes that U.S. military historian Robert Pape believes, "Gaza is one of the most intense civilian punishment campaigns in history" and that, "It now sits comfortably in the top quartile of the most devastating bombing campaigns ever."

Why? One reason is that the Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health certifies deaths in Gaza based on reports from hospitals and morgues that were mostly blown up well over a year ago. (They report presently around 73,000 fatalities.) But Hamas has admitted that there are tens of thousands of bodies under the rubble, thousands more blown into bits or incinerated and unidentifiable. They also say their figures do not include the collateral deaths from the Israeli military F-16 bombings and relentless shelling of the people of Gaza or the deaths caused by the Israeli government-imposed blocking of food, medicine, healthcare, water, fuel, electricity and shelter.

The Israeli regime is fine with the Hamas undercount because they and the U.S. State Department know the real death toll (along with the injury count) is much, much higher. Hamas knows that on Oct. 7, 2023, the multi-layered Israeli border security apparatus was shaky. They then launched what turned out to be a suicide-homicide assault over the border, resulting in some 1,400 deaths as compared with the nearly 1,200 people – about 400 of them soldiers and police – shot by the Hamas raiders. To this day, with most Israelis skeptical, Netanyahu has blocked an independent official investigation of the mysterious collapse of the multi-tiered Israeli border security complex.

Netanyahu attributes it to negligence. There were, however, too many separate warnings, including 24-hour Israeli spotters from the Israeli side, plus Israel having the Hamas plans a year earlier, to accept that improbable pretext. Hamas, on the other hand, doesn't mind the world media repeating again and again their minimal, identifiable death count. They certainly do not want the realistic estimate death count to further outrage their subjects because Hamas did not protect the civilian population and did not have any air-raid shelters. Hamas certainly knew what was coming from the ultra-modern, savage Israeli military backed by co-belligerent Joe Biden's U.S. ultra-modern and lethal military industrial complex.

There is another media reluctance operating. The reports by eyewitnesses, and scholarly and military weaponry specialists, who arrive at minimum and maximum ranges of deaths (most of whom are children and women) bring repulsive denunciations and charges of anti-Semitism. Moreover, apologists for endless Israeli slaughter, like Bret Stephens, the mouthpiece of Netanyahu on the New York Times opinion page, have used the low Hamas figures to counter charges of Israeli genocide. If it was genocide, they inaccurately claim, the death toll would be much higher. In 2025, two major Israeli human rights organizations – B'Tselem and Physicians

for Human Rights Israel – each issued reports concluding that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

Well, the death toll is much higher: More than 600,000 lives destroyed or more than 25% of Gaza's original population. This leaves an improbable nearly 75% still alive, though

most are sick, injured or dying. Reporting reality would intensify the political, diplomatic, and civic determination to stop the killing, let in adequate humanitarian aid, and move toward resolving this conflict.

Analysts reported by The Lancet, international relief organizations, universities, and UN agencies all estimate hundreds of thousands of dead Palestinians from violent bombs, artillery, snipers, and the resultant, related secondary effects noted above.

For example, Professor Emeritus Paul Rogers of the University of Bradford in the U.K. back in April 2025 estimated the tonnage of explosives dropped on Gaza was the equivalent of six Hiroshima bombs, but more lethal because these daily projectiles are more targeted. Tarek Loubani, a Canadian physician who has served tours of duty at crumbling Gaza hospitals, puts the estimate at "hundreds of thousands of dead."

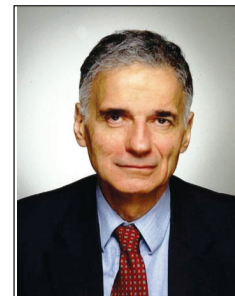
In a detailed, footnoted series of reports, Feroze Sidhwa, an American trauma surgeon who worked in Gaza's killing fields, has published much probative evidence by dozens of other health workers who experienced the ghastly horrors. These included the deliberate targeting by Israeli terrorist snipers of little children receiving bullets in their brains and hearts.

The recent report by Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, referred to a consensus of 680,000 deaths. The respected chair of Global Public Health at the University of Edinburgh, Professor Devi Sridhar, long ago was offering estimates far higher than those of Hamas.

The Hill reported that in November 2023, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf testified to a House committee that the actual number of Palestinians killed in Gaza was likely higher than the figures then being reported by Gaza health authorities at that time. She was immediately silenced and never again spoke about Israel's genocidal casualties. The State Department has been blocking a Freedom of Information demand for two years.

The huge Israeli bloc in Congress, of course, has allowed no hearings on the toll made possible by deadly U.S. weapons – costing billions of dollars paid for by U.S. taxpayers. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have reported that Israel used white phosphorus munitions in military operations in Gaza and along the Israel-Lebanon border shortly after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks.

Reporters could have gotten informed assessments and estimates about the Israeli-inflicted carnage in Gaza from Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, the World Central Kitchen, and other aid groups. Scores of infants and children in Gaza are dying every day from disease, malnutrition and untreated injuries. There are no health care facilities for them. The shameful U.S. newspapers, magazines, television, and radio disrespect the Palestinians in both life and death, something they would never dare to do if the shoe were on the other foot.



NADER

What to watch

THURSDAY

July 2, 2026

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

Rod, White & Blue: A Twilight Zone Celebration

Heroes & Icons, beginning at 6 a.m. ■ Catch a Classic

Heroes & Icons' annual Fourth of July tradition, *Rod, White & Blue: A Twilight Zone Celebration*, is a four-day fest of classic *Twilight Zone* episodes from both the original *Twilight Zone* and *The New Twilight Zone*. The iconic series was created and hosted by television visionary Rod Serling and originally aired on CBS from 1959 to 1964. The annual Heroes & Icons celebration has become a fan favorite and begins this year on Thursday, July 2, continuing through Monday, July 6, at 6 a.m. A special highlight of this year's marathon is the H&I premiere of the Season 4 episode "Miniature," airing Thursday, July 2, at 8 p.m. Featuring an early performance by Robert Duvall, the episode follows a lonely and socially awkward man who becomes captivated by a museum dollhouse, where the miniature world inside begins to feel more inviting than his own. Widely regarded as one of the series' most poignant and imaginative episodes, "Miniature" showcases *The Twilight Zone* at its most thought-provoking.

Surviving Earth

NBC, 8 p.m.

The new episode "When the Seas Died" tells the harrowing story of a giant marine reptile who scours the dying seas to find food for her unborn baby before giving birth amid a super hurricane.

WNBA Basketball: Dallas at Connecticut

Prime Video, 8 p.m. Live

Paige Bueckers leads the Dallas Wings against Aneeah Morrow and the Connecticut Sun in a WNBA showdown on Prime Video.

The Bear

FX, 9 p.m.

The hit comedy continues its fifth and final season on FX with "Mint," in which the restaurant turns in a new direction.



FX

CATCH A CLASSIC

Mutiny on the Bounty

TCM, 11:30 a.m.

Part of this morning's lineup of films starring Charles Laughton, 1935's *Mutiny on the Bounty*, based on the real-life 1789 naval rebellion and the 1932 novel by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall, follows the HMS *Bounty* on its voyage to Tahiti. The film is a clash of wills between Capt. William Bligh (Laughton), a sadistic disciplinarian who keeps his crew in line through intimidation and brutality, and Fletcher Christian (Clark Gable), his idealistic first officer who is forced to choose between his loyalty to the Crown and his conscience, with mutiny becoming inevitable. Tension and animosity



LOEW'S INC.

on the set between American movie star Gable and formally trained British actor Laughton translated beautifully to the bitter onscreen rivalry between Christian and Bligh. *Mutiny on the Bounty* was the only film in history to produce three Best Actor nominees (Laughton, Gable and Franchot Tone, none of whom won), leading to the creation of the Best Supporting Actor Oscar the following year.

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



FRANK MASI, SMPSP

Drumline (2002, Comedy-drama) Nick Cannon, Zoe Saldana **BET, 6 p.m.**

Men in Black 2 (2002, Action) Tommy Lee Jones, Will Smith **SYFY, 6 p.m.**

The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (2004, Children) Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke **NICK, 7 p.m.**

Independence Day (1996, Science fiction) Will Smith, Bill Pullman **ABC, 8 p.m.**

Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle (2017, Adventure) Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart **USA, 8 p.m.**

Love, Again (2026, Drama) Valerie Bertinelli, Henry Czerny **LMN, 8 p.m.**

The Haunted Mansion (2003, Family) Eddie Murphy, Terence Stamp **Freeform, 9 p.m.**

21 Jump Street (2012, Comedy) Jonah Hill, Channing Tatum **FX, 9:30 p.m.**

Predator (1987, Science fiction) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Carl Weathers **BBC America, 9:30 p.m.**

Easy A (2010, Comedy) Emma Stone, Penn Badgley **E!, 10 p.m.**

Kicking & Screaming (1995, Comedy-drama) Josh Hamilton, Olivia d'Abo **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

The Green Hornet (2011, Action) Seth Rogen, Jay Chou **SYFY, 10:30 p.m.**

Forces of Nature (1999, Romance-comedy) Sandra Bullock, Ben Affleck **MGM, 11:50 p.m.**

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

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What to watch

FRIDAY

July 3, 2026

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

Independence Eve Live With Anderson & Andy: Celebrating 250

CNN, 8 p.m. Live

Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen bring their New Year's Eve tradition to Independence Eve in New York City's Times Square, counting down live to a midnight ball drop honoring America's 250th birthday. They will be joined by celebrity guests and inspiring everyday heroes whose stories reflect the spirit, resilience and diversity of the United States. CNN correspondents and reporters stationed across the country will bring viewers into cities and small towns nationwide, spotlighting the people, traditions and celebrations shaping this historic moment in communities from coast to coast.

A Capitol Fourth: 250th Weekend Celebration

PBS, 8 p.m. Live

This special kicks off the historic Independence Day weekend's festivities on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, featuring the National Symphony Orchestra and musical performances by artists in several genres. Country music great Trace Adkins performs the television debut of his patriotic new song, "American Made." The concert finale includes a spectacular fireworks show over George Washington's iconic Mount Vernon home.



'A Capitol Fourth'

PBS

CATCH A CLASSIC

Special Theme: Summer of Darkness

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

TCM host Eddie Muller continues his takeover of Friday nights in July to focus on his favorite genre with a four-film lineup that represents the zenith of late 1940s film noir: **Force of Evil** (1948), 1948's **Act of Violence** (pictured), **Criss Cross** (1949) and **Thieves' Highway** (1949). What binds these four masterpieces together is a sense of post-war dread, where the American Dream has become a grim nightmare of greed, guilt and survival. Whether exploring corporate corruption in *Force of Evil*, the shattering of a suburban facade in *Act of Violence*, the fatalism of a tragic heist in



LOEW'S INC.

Criss Cross or the cutthroat capitalism in *Thieves' Highway*, each film is a glimpse into a rigged system. Anchored by powerhouse performances from John Garfield, Van Heflin, Burt Lancaster and Richard Conte, these stories feature compromised men trapped in a web of their own making.

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



JAIMIE TRUEBLOOD

The Green Hornet (2011, Action) Seth Rogen, Jay Chou **SYFY, 6:30 p.m.**

Crocodile Dundee (1986, Comedy) Paul Hogan, Linda Kozlowski **Sundance, 7 p.m.**

Independence Day (1996, Science fiction) Will Smith, Bill Pullman **FX, 7 p.m.**

How to Make a Killing (2026, Suspense) Glen Powell, Margaret Qualley **HBO, 7:10 p.m.**

National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007, Action) Nicolas Cage, Jon Voight **Freeform, 7:30 p.m.**

Back to the Future (1985, Comedy) Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd **AMC, 8 p.m.**

Where the Heart Lands (2026, Romance) Jana Kramer, Tyler Johnson **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Enough (2002, Suspense) Jennifer Lopez, Billy Campbell **BET, 9 p.m.**

The Fast and the Furious (2001, Action) Vin Diesel, Paul Walker **MGM, 9:35 p.m.**

When I Said I Do (2026, Romance) Sarah Drew, Eric Johnson **LMN, 10 p.m.**

Protector (2025, Action) Milla Jovovich, Isabel Myers **MGM, 11:25 p.m.**

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



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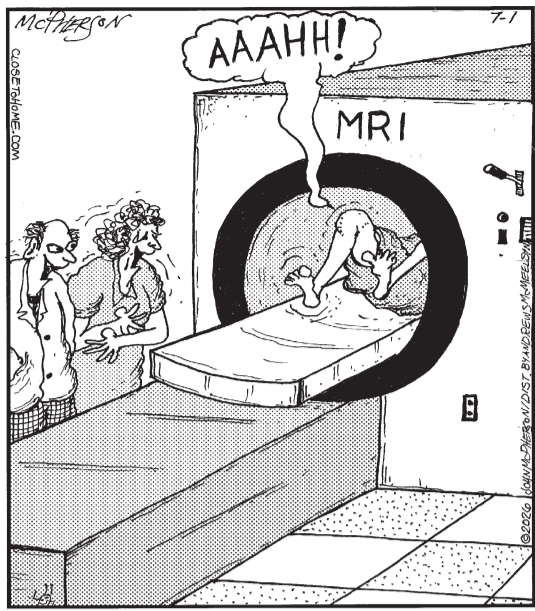
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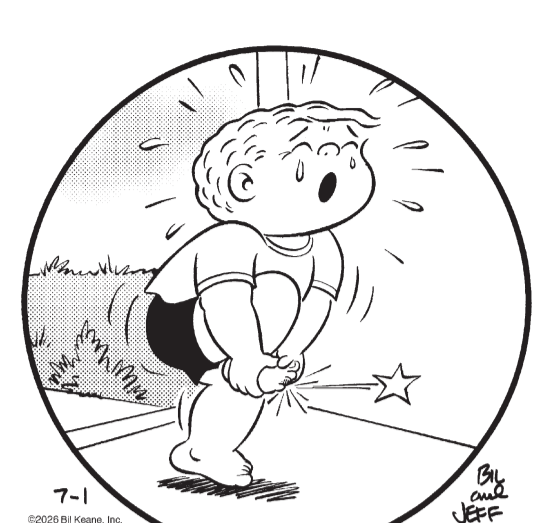
TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



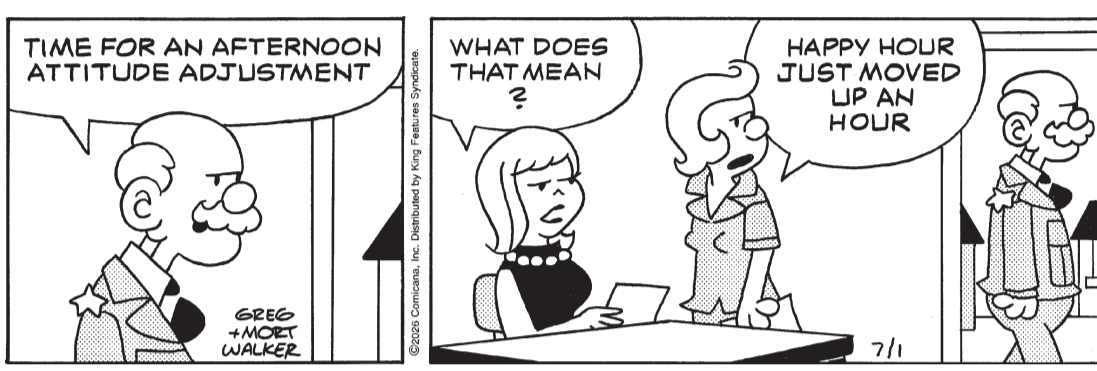
"I tell ya, work's been a lot more fun since we hung that rubber spider in there."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bill Keane

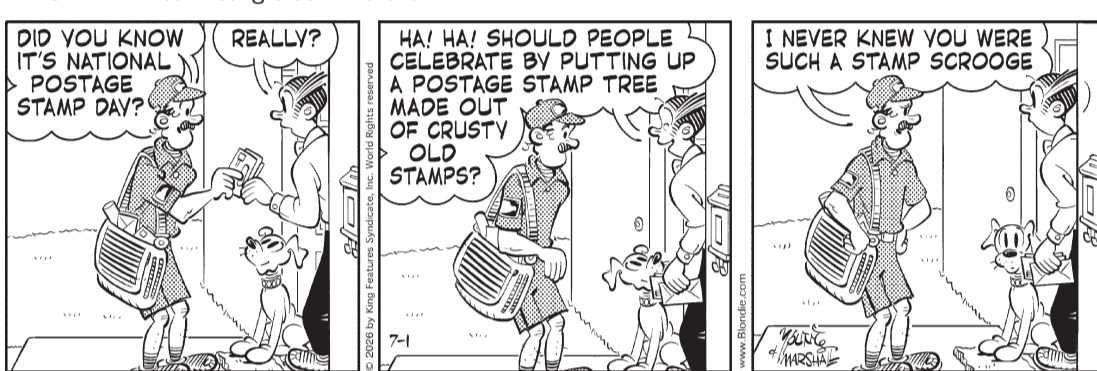


"It's the piggy who had roast beef!"

BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



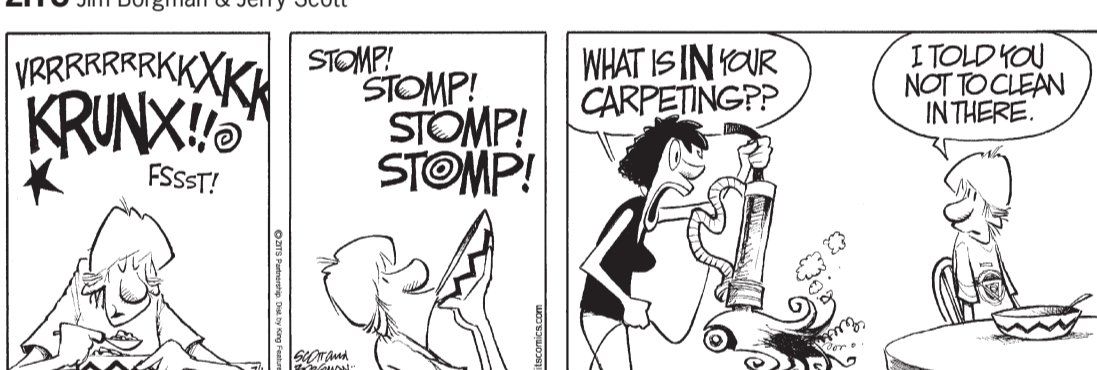
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



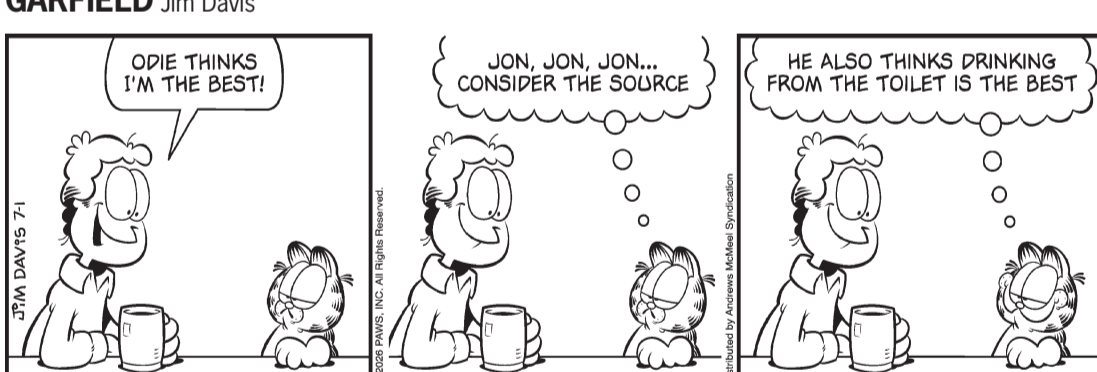
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane

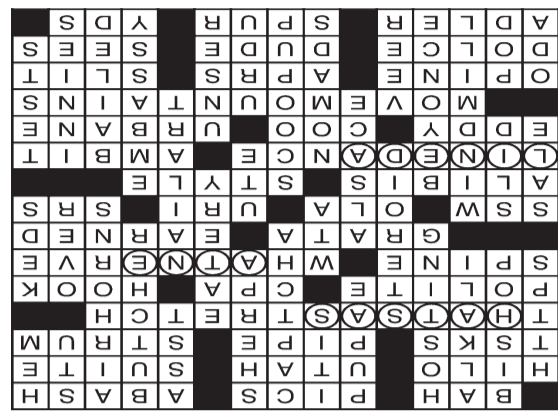


Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

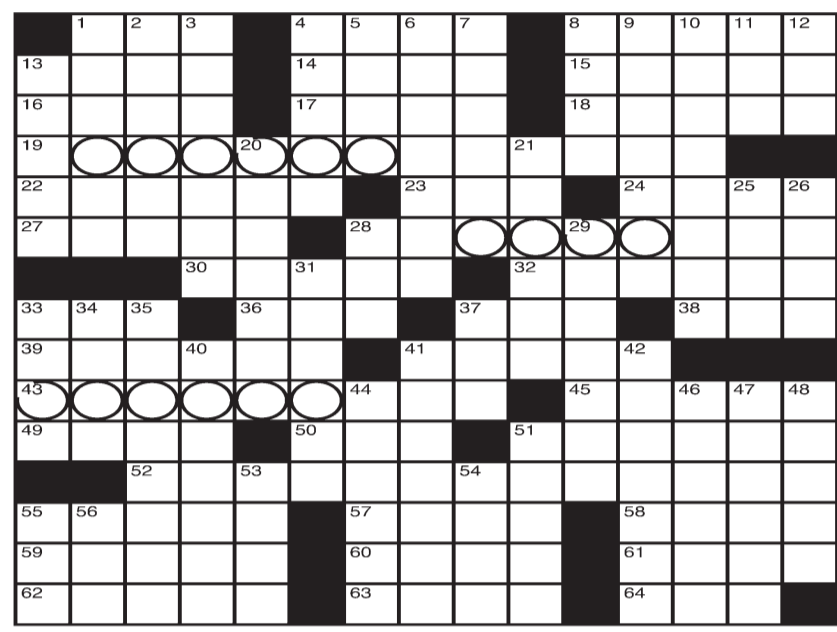
Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**
- 1 "A Christmas Carol" scoff
 - 4 Insta posts
 - 8 Discomfit
 - 13 County seat of Hawaii County
 - 14 Home of the Mighty Five national parks
 - 15 Bundled software collection
 - 16 Disapproving sounds
 - 17 Plumbing part
 - 18 Play a banjo
 - 19 "Well, not quite ..."
 - 22 Well-mannered
 - 23 IRS form expert
 - 24 Catchy part of a song
 - 27 Book part
 - 28 "The gall!"
 - 30 Persona non —
 - 32 Worked for
 - 33 Compass rose dir.
 - 36 Portuguese greeting
 - 37 Sch. in the smallest U.S. state
 - 38 Some SAT takers
 - 39 Excuses
 - 41 Fashion
 - 43 Move to the country?
 - 45 Scope
 - 49 Small whirlpool
 - 50 Murmur
 - 51 Smooth and suave
 - 52 Go to great lengths, or what this puzzle's circled letters do?
 - 55 Share one's thoughts
 - 57 Financing figs.
 - 58 Skirt feature
 - 59 Sweet, in Italian
 - 60 "Bro!"
 - 61 Goes out with
 - 62 Stella who founded an acting school in New York City
 - 63 Short railroad branch
 - 64 Fabric store meas.
- DOWN**
- 1 Diagonal mover in chess
 - 2 High-pH substance
 - 3 In charge of Thanksgiving dinner, say
 - 4 Butterflies-to-be
 - 5 "Yep"
 - 6 Bot blocker
 - 7 Tibetan people
 - 8 Exec's helper
 - 9 Mispronounce horrendously, as a name
 - 10 Shock jock's sound effects
 - 11 "The Simpsons" disco guy
 - 12 Tailored edge
 - 13 Part of an encrypted URL
 - 20 Anti-inflammatory choice
 - 21 Restaurant
 - 25 Finito
 - 26 "Comfortable. Confident." shoe brand
 - 28 Elena Rybakina's org.
 - 29 Finger painting?
 - 31 Cultural territory in France's Grand Est region
 - 33 Realtor's success
 - 34 Made it home quickly?
 - 35 Image on Dutch Bros coffee cups
 - 37 Sporty truck, briefly
 - 40 "Cowboy Carter" icon
 - 41 Grab before anyone else can
 - 42 Diplomatic mission
 - 44 Migratory people
 - 46 Helped (out)
 - 47 Concave belly buttons
 - 48 Tries, as patience
 - 51 Auto racing family name
 - 53 Swerve
 - 54 Rawalpindi language
 - 55 "Ghost" psychic
 - 56 Okra or orca unit

TODAY'S SOLUTION:



07/01/26



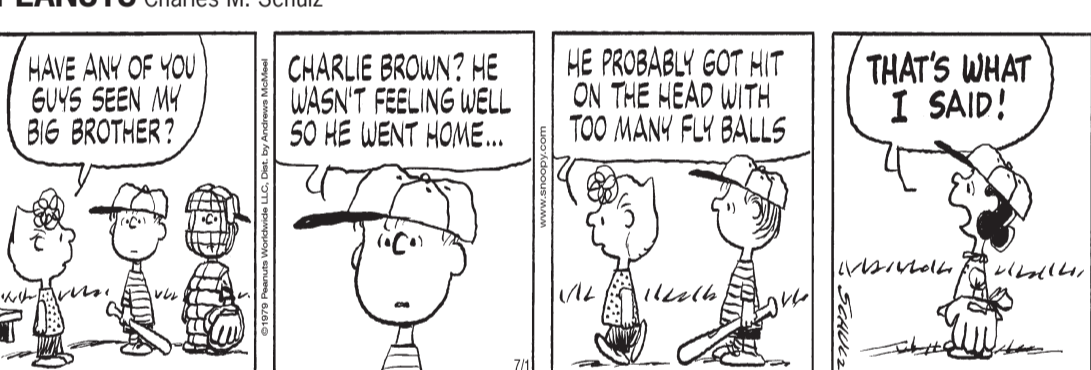
By Emily Biegas ©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

07/01/26

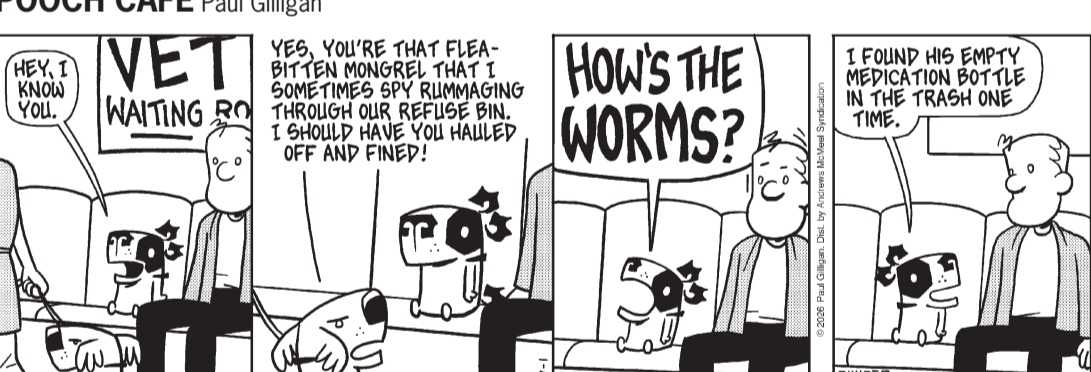
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

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

MONTREAL'S FAMOUS SCHWARTZ'S DELI Solution: 6 letters

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

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Bagel, Beef, Best, Brisket, Canada, Catering, Charcuterie, Cheese, Coleslaw, Combo, Entrée, Frankfurter, Fries, Herbs, Homemade, Karnatzel, Landmark, Marinade, Meat, Mustard, Olives, Pastrami, Pickle, Poutine, Quebec, Restaurant, Ribs, Rye Bread, Salami, Sandwich, Sauce, Sausage, Sides, Simple, Sit Down, Smoked, Spiced, Steak, Steam, Tourist

TODAY'S ANSWER: Line Up

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

WHATZIT?

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



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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:

After all is said and done

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

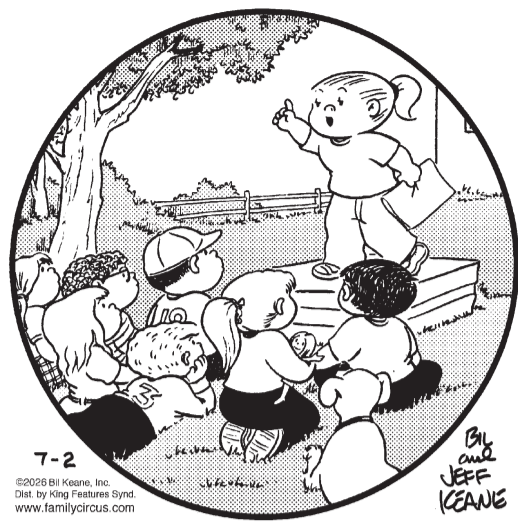
6	5	2	8	7	9	4	1	3
8	7	1	6	4	9	5	2	3
9	4	1	2	5	7	8	6	3
7	1	6	4	9	2	5	1	8
2	8	9	7	5	1	6	4	3
4	1	5	3	6	8	2	7	9
2	7	1	6	8	4	5	9	3
5	7	2	1	4	4	8	5	9
1	9	8	1	4	5	7	3	6

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



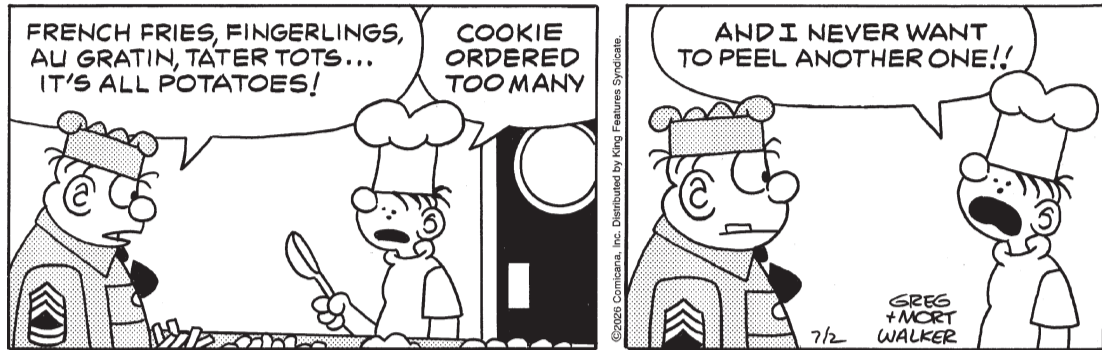
"Do they use toxic fertilizers here? Nah. We've been golfing here for 45 years and we're totally fine."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bill Keane



"All those in favor say 'eye.' Opposed say 'nose.'"

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 Shaggy head of hair
 - 4 Guns
 - 8 Remove, as a hat
 - 12 Cry of discovery
 - 13 Manner of walking
 - 14 Root of all —
 - 15 Knight's title
 - 16 Jekyll's other self
 - 17 Liver secretion
 - 18 Hot drink
 - 20 Avoided
 - 22 Owns
 - 23 Fruit stone
 - 24 Burrowing rodent
 - 28 Reveal (2 wds.)
 - 32 Aid and —
 - 33 Ponder
 - 35 Porter
- DOWN**
- 36 "— and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance"
 - 37 Family member
 - 38 Threesome
 - 39 Singer — John
 - 41 Tropical storm
 - 43 Sawbones
 - 45 Kindled
 - 46 Calm
 - 49 Open a certain way
 - 52 Sign
 - 53 Bit to drink
 - 56 In days past
 - 57 By — and starts
 - 58 Helper
 - 59 Edge
 - 60 Genealogy chart
 - 61 Poles
 - 62 Female deer

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

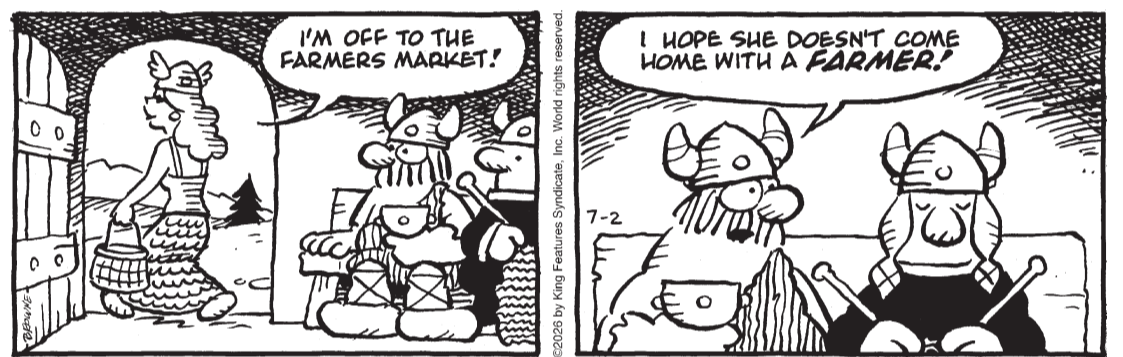
DOWN

- 1 Not neut. or fem.
- 2 Buckeye State
- 3 Diploma material
- 4 Horrified
- 5 Sunbeam

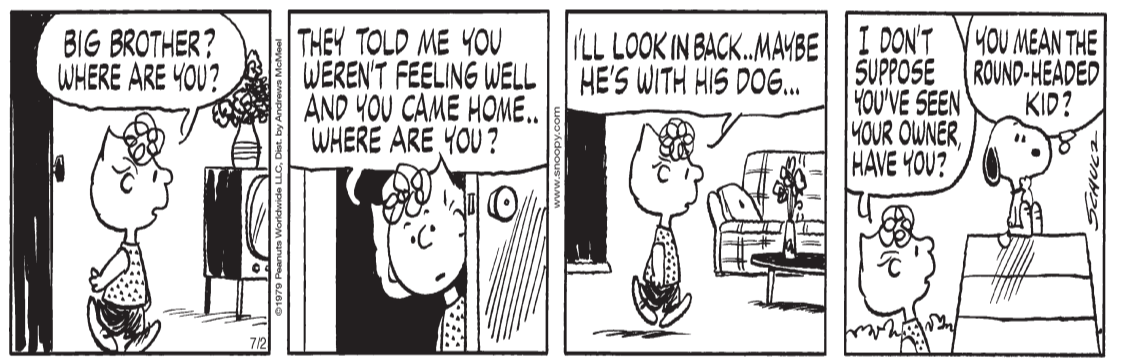
- 6 Central
- 7 Soak
- 8 Formal argument
- 9 Old Roman poet
- 10 Do an office job
- 11 Escaped
- 19 Kiln
- 21 Despicable
- 24 Light fog
- 25 Cain's victim
- 26 Down Under bird
- 27 — of the litter
- 29 Ace of Cups, e.g. (2 wds.)
- 30 Hodgepodge
- 31 Sign gas
- 34 Piggery
- 37 Shortly
- 38 Reedy
- 40 Danish seaport
- 42 Showy feathers
- 44 Wood for closets
- 46 Gentle
- 47 Arab VIP
- 48 Nerve network
- 50 Exchange fee
- 51 Fleshy fruit
- 54 — de Janeiro
- 55 Do sums

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

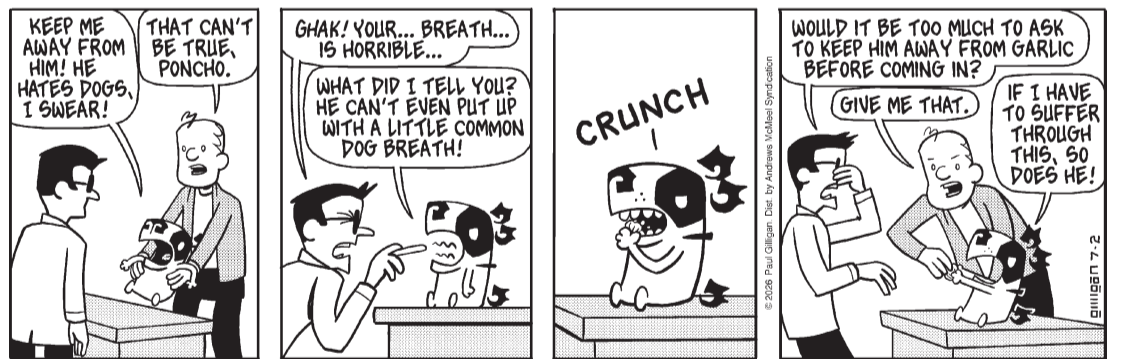
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

WHATZIT?

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



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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:
Pisces

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

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

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.

CHAPPELL ROAN (MUSICIAN)

Solution: 8 letters

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

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7/2

After Midnight, Album, Amstutz, Award, Ballad, Best New Artist, Better, Bitter, Bold, Casual, Coffee, Dance, Days, Fans, Feminomenon, Good Luck Babe, Grammy, Guilty Pleasure, Hot To Go, Karma, Kayleigh, Lacy, Live, Lyrics, Meantime, Piano, Pink Pony Club, Popular, Sing, Social Media, Solo, Star, Tours, Upbeat, Viral, Wigs, Willard

TODAY'S ANSWER: The Giver

Nursing group: New Georgia law interpretation will mean less rural health care

By Alander Rocha
Georgia Recorder

ATLANTA — A showdown between nurses and those representing physicians boiled over in a Georgia House Health committee hearing over a medical board's guidance that nurses warned could lead to shuttered clinics and diminished healthcare access in rural parts of Georgia.

The Georgia Composite Medical Board issued a "position statement" in early May that tightened the board's interpretation of a state law passed in 2006 that prohibits physicians from being an employee at a clinic owned by an advanced practice registered nurse under their supervision.

Under the new guidance, if a physician receives any compensation for overseeing a clinic owned or run by advanced practice registered nurses, they are considered an employee of that clinic.

The new interpretation is already causing doctors to back out of agreements with nurses that are essential for

them to work in Georgia.

"The consistent message from the APRNs has been that delegating physicians have either terminated or are considering terminating their protocol agreement due to uncertainty surrounding the position statement," Tara Taylor, executive director of the Georgia Board of Nursing, said. "Without a protocol agreement, APRNs cannot practice legally, and this could leave a lot of their current patients without access to healthcare."

Taylor also said that financial compensation is the "foundation" of these agreements and without it, there is little incentive for physicians to supervise clinics run by advanced practice registered nurses. She added that although the medical board's new guidance seemed to focus on nurses operating IV hydration or med spas, the nursing board is concerned the guidance could also be applied to clinics providing healthcare in rural areas where

there might be a shortage of physicians.

"Many of these concerns are coming from nurse practitioners who provide primary care and psychiatric services throughout Georgia," she said. "Their concern is for the clinics serving rural and underserved communities where physicians are already in short supply. In many of these areas, APRNs are a critical source of access to healthcare."

Representatives for physicians and the medical board pushed back against claims that the new guidance could worsen access to healthcare services, noting a rise in the number of board-approved collaboration agreements. And they say the new guidance is aimed at preventing shady online businesses from brokering these agreements.

Brent Walker, a lawyer representing the Medical Association of Georgia, said that the guidance isn't aimed at legitimate agreements between physicians and nurses

but "rubber-stamp relationships" stemming from unscrupulous websites facilitating them.

"We just want to make sure that you're focused on patient safety, and that the collaborating and supervising relationships are meaningful, and not just the sham that you bought online for \$500 or \$1,000 a month, that you really are engaged in keeping the patients first when it comes to practice and the expansion of access to care," Walker said.

Jeremy T. Bonfini, the state medical association's CEO and executive director, said the "guidance isn't about a prohibition on compensation for serving in a supervisory role" and that the group is working with the nursing community to clarify the new guidance. He did not address questions about what incentives physicians would have to enter these agreements without compensation.

Jason Jones, executive director of the Georgia Com-



Special Photo: Alander Rocha/Georgia Recorder
Nancy A. Hurlock, a nurse practitioner based in Statesboro, told lawmakers that a new interpretation of a 2006 state law could hinder access in rural areas.

posite Medical Board, pointed to physicians providing oversight from out of state and having ghost offices "where no genuine medical practice occurs," as well as physicians entering agreements to oversee care that falls outside of their specialty.

"We've learned that the laws and rules sometimes are not looked at, so they

do what people do and follow what somebody else is doing," Jones said. "We've got to make sure we educate, make sure they're doing right instead of following the wrong way," Jones said.

Lawmakers on the committee instructed the nurses and physicians to work together on an agreement to prevent a legislative fix.



File Photo

Cranking up the air conditioning to fight rising summer heat drives up a household's energy use.

Georgia Power just lowered its fuel rate. So why are power bills still high?

By Emily Jones
WABE/Grist

ATLANTA — Many Georgians are likely seeing higher electric bills as the summer weather warms up. That's typical, and it's still happening this year even though Georgia Power just lowered the rate it charges for fuel.

Two of the main factors in a power bill — how much energy you use and the rate the utility charges — both increase in the summer. Cranking up the air conditioning to fight rising summer heat drives up a household's energy use. And millions of people all over Georgia running their ACs can put a strain on the whole grid.

"When we need to produce more energy at a peak load like that, especially from the hours of 2-7 p.m., it does cost more to create energy," Georgia Power spokesperson Matthew Kent said.

When utilities are already producing large amounts of energy, piling on more demand could mean firing up additional power plant turbines, which is expensive. That's one reason Georgia Power and many other utilities charge a higher base rate for electricity in the summer. Another is to discourage customers from using so much energy it overloads the grid, according to Liz Coyle, executive director of the consumer advocacy group Georgia Watch.

"You're gonna pay more for using extra power during peak time in hopes that maybe you'll use less so that they can make sure they can keep the lights on," she said.

The higher rate multiplied by increased usage means bills can be 30-50% higher for a typical customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month, according to Georgia Power.

Summers also are getting hotter due to climate change, amplifying the challenge.

Atlanta's average summer temperature has increased by more than three degrees

Fahrenheit since 1970, according to Climate Central.

"The good news is there are steps that people can take to make their homes more energy efficient," Coyle said. "Depending on their income level, some can get access to no-cost services to make their homes more energy efficient."

There are simple ways to cut power use, like unplugging chargers and appliances that aren't in use. Finding ways to reduce air conditioner use can have a major impact, too.

"Air conditioning being the most expensive thing that you are powering this summer, knowing when you have that on by using a programmable thermostat, you can really cut your bill throughout the summer," Kent said.

Increasing the temperature on the thermostat by one degree can mean a 3-5% savings, he said.

Georgia Power offers free home energy audits for customers, as do Electric Membership Cooperatives. Rebates are also available for efficiency improvements like insulation, sealing, and more efficient appliances and HVAC through both Georgia Power and the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority.

"It's worth looking and checking a variety of sources to see what's available in terms of a rebate for replacing an old HVAC," Coyle said. "That can save thousands of dollars in a year or two."

Coyle urged caution in switching to those programs, because they can sometimes mean higher costs in the long run and remove the incentive to reduce energy use.

"I understand that some people need the predictability, but the main thing we want to do is help people lower their power bills year round," she said. "We generally hope that people will do more to take advantage of ... programs to help lower their power bills in the summer, rather than just think that they're doing better by spreading those higher costs over the rest of the year."

This coverage is made possible through a partnership between WABE and Grist, a nonprofit environmental media organization.



Sanford Bishop



Austin Scott



Raphael Warnock



Jon Ossoff

Congress Votes

By Targeted News Service

WASHINGTON, June 26 — Here's a look at how Georgia's members of Congress voted over the previous week.

Along with its roll call votes this week, the Senate also passed the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Museum Artifacts Act (S. 675) to contribute funds and artifacts to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, N.D.

The House also passed the Disaster Loan Accountability and Reform Act (H.R. 4238) to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration; the COVID Fraud Transparency Act (H.R. 826) to require the inspector general of the Small Business Administration to submit a quarterly report on fraud relating to certain covid loans; the Main Street Competes Act (H.R. 8882) to examine how the competitiveness of small businesses is affected by the enforcement of federal antitrust laws.

HOUSE VOTES:

FARMERS AND NATURAL DISASTERS: The House has passed the Emergency Conservation Program Improvement Act (S. 629) sponsored by Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., to change two federal programs that make payments to farmers and foresters damaged by natural disasters by increasing both program eligibility and the amounts sent to recipients. The vote, on June 23, was 368 yeas to 19 nays.

YEAS: Loudermilk R-GA (11th), Bishop D-GA (2nd), Allen R-GA (12th), Scott, Austin R-GA (8th), McBath D-GA (6th), Carter R-GA (1st), Jack R-GA (3rd), Johnson D-GA (4th), Williams D-GA (5th), McCormick R-GA (7th), Collins R-GA (10th)

NAYS: Clyde R-GA (9th)
HOUSING BILL: The House has agreed to the amended version of the Housing for the 21st Century

Act (H.R. 6644) sponsored by Rep. J. French Hill, R-Ark., to increase eligibility for issuing and receiving house financing assistance from various federal housing agencies, and make other changes to housing regulations and loans. Hill said the bill "cuts unnecessary barriers to new home construction. It modernizes federal housing programs." The vote, on June 23, was 358 yeas to 32 nays.

YEAS: Loudermilk R-GA (11th), Bishop D-GA (2nd), Allen R-GA (12th), Scott, Austin R-GA (8th), McBath D-GA (6th), Carter R-GA (1st), Jack R-GA (3rd), Johnson D-GA (4th), Williams D-GA (5th), McCormick R-GA (7th), Collins R-GA (10th)

NAYS: Clyde R-GA (9th)
SBA CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The House has passed the Small Business Lending Fraud Prevention Act (H.R. 7401) sponsored by Rep. Daniel Meuser, R-Pa., to require Small Business Administration employees to certify an absence of conflict of interest for loans they are managing. A supporter, Rep. Roger Williams, R-Texas, said: "This bill will provide a safeguard against improper loan approvals and establish a clear basis for prosecution if an employee knowingly approves loans prohibited by conflict of interest rules." The vote, on June 24, was 415 yeas to 0 nays, with 1 voting present.

YEAS: Entire Georgia delegation

BUSINESS COMPUTING LOANS: The House has passed the Small Business Technological Advancement Act (H.R. 915) sponsored by Rep. Mark Alford, R-Mo., to authorize the Small Business Administration to provide loan guarantees for lenders financing cloud computing and business software efforts at small businesses. The vote, on June 24, was 414 yeas to 4 nays, with 1 voting present.

YEAS: Entire Georgia delegation

INVESTMENT EXPLOITATION: The House has passed the Financial Exploitation Prevention Act (H.R. 2478) sponsored by Rep. Ann Wagner, R-Mo., to allow an investment management company to put off the redemption of an asset, such as mutual fund shares, if it suspects the redemption request was wrongly made and would exploit the asset owner. The vote, on June 25, was 414 yeas to 2 nays.

YEAS: Entire Georgia delegation

SENATE VOTES:

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY: The Senate has agreed to the amended version of the Housing for the 21st Century Act (H.R. 6644) sponsored by Rep. J. French Hill, R-Ark., to increase eligibility for issuing and receiving house financing assistance from various federal housing agencies, and make other changes to housing regulations and loans. The vote, on June 22, was 85 yeas to 5 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

DIPLOMACY WITH EUROPE: The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Darrell Owens to be the U.S. representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a group whose member nations range from Russia to Canada. Owens, an on-going officer in the Army Reserve, has been a military specialist aide for two members of Congress, and most recently a liaison with Congress for the Veterans Affairs Department. The vote, on June 23, was 67 yeas to 30 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

IRAN WAR AUTHORIZATION: The Senate has passed a bill (H. Con. Res. 86) sponsored by Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, D-N.Y., to require the cessation of military action against Iran in the absence of specific authorization from Congress. The vote, on June 23, was 50 yeas to 48 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

TEXAS JUDGE: The Senate has confirmed the nomination of John George Edward Marck to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. Over the past five years, Marck has been an attorney for the Southern District, following eight years as an attorney in the New York City government. The vote, on June 24, was 52 yeas to 45 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

OHIO JUDGE: The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Michael J. Hendershot to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio. An assistant solicitor general in the Ohio Attorney General's Office for 15 years, Hendershot was previously a private practice lawyer in Columbus and in Phoenix. The vote, on June 24, was 50 yeas to 44 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

STUDENT LOANS: The Senate has rejected a motion to proceed to a bill (S.J. Res. 196) sponsored by Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., that would cancel an Education Department rule on student loans issued this May that reorganized loan repayment plans and changed limits on certain types of loan amounts. Merkley said: "Let's reject this rule that puts up a huge barrier for the children of families of modest means and medium incomes or low incomes." The vote, on June 24, was 45 yeas to 52 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

IRAN WAR AUTHORITY: The Senate has rejected a motion to proceed to a bill (S.J. Res. 185) sponsored by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., to order the cessation of military action against Iran unless Congress has authorized the hostilities. Kaine called the bill an affirmation that the president "cannot restart a war legally unless he asks Congress for permission." The vote, on June 24, was 47 yeas to 50 nays, with 1 voting present.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

IRAN WAR AUTHORITY: The Senate has rejected a motion to proceed to a bill (S.J. Res. 185) sponsored by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., to order the cessation of military action against Iran unless Congress has authorized the hostilities. Kaine called the bill an affirmation that the president "cannot restart a war legally unless he asks Congress for permission." The vote, on June 24, was 47 yeas to 50 nays, with 1 voting present.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA



Staff Photo: Joe Whiffield

Dougherty's Kaydin Farley runs after catching a pass during OTAs against Monroe last week at Westover High School.

Joyner sees growth in the trenches

By Joe Whiffield
Sports Editor

ALBANY - Before the wins come, before the playoffs are discussed and before the bright lights of Friday night return, football teams are built in the quiet weeks of summer.

For Dougherty, that's where head coach Uyl Joyner believes the biggest strides have been made.

With the Georgia High School Association's annual "Dead Week" bringing a temporary pause to football activities, the Trojans enter July encouraged by what they accomplished during June workouts, particularly after competing in last week's OTA sessions at Westover High School.

Now the challenge becomes turning offseason progress into victories after a difficult 2-9 season in 2025.

"I really like what I've seen from our defensive line," Joyner said. "That has been our major focus in the offseason and I'm really seeing growth. The offensive line has improved too, so I think

we are moving in the right direction."

That assessment might not generate the same excitement as discussing quarterbacks or explosive receivers, but Joyner knows championships — and playoff appearances — are almost always decided where the average fan rarely looks.

Dougherty's rebuilding effort starts up front.

Three members of last year's starting offensive line were freshmen, forced into varsity action before they were fully developed. Those growing pains came with mistakes, but they also provided valuable experience.

Now those same linemen return as sophomores with a full year of varsity football, months in the weight room and a much greater understanding of the game.

"The jump from freshman to sophomore is big," Joyner said. "They know a lot more now than they did a year ago plus we've had time together and spent time in the weight room."

If that growth continues, it could unlock the Trojans' biggest offensive weapons.

Senior David "Blue" Burgess returns as one of Southwest Georgia's most versatile playmakers. Whether he lines up at quarterback, wide receiver or another offensive position, Burgess has the athletic ability to change games with the ball in his hands.

The Trojans also welcome back sophomore quarterback Micah Joyner, whose promising freshman season was cut short by injury.

Before being sidelined, Joyner threw for more than 1,000 yards and 11 touchdowns in just eight games, displaying poise beyond his years while giving Dougherty optimism about the future.

With another offseason of development and improved protection in front of him, the sophomore could become one of the more dangerous young quarterbacks in Class AAAA.

See **JOYNER**, 10A

Lea Henry's 42nd Camp of Champs opens soon

By Joe Whiffield
Sports Editor

ALBANY - For 41 summers, Lea Henry has watched generations of Southwest Georgia children walk into the gym with a basketball in their hands and leave with something much more.

This July, the Olympic gold medalist will continue that tradition when she hosts the 42nd annual Camp of Champs at Deerfield-Windsor's W.T. Henry Gym. The two-week camp will run July 7-10 and July 13-16 and is open to boys and girls ages 5-18.

Henry's camp has become one of Albany's longest-running youth sports traditions. Last summer, a record-breaking 300 campers participated over the two-week event, learning basketball fundamentals while also developing teamwork, sportsmanship and confidence.

"We had a wonderful two weeks of basketball camp," Henry said following last year's record turnout. "Our staff worked hard to make sure the 300 campers not only had a great time, but learned about the game and



File Photo

Lea Henry's Camp of Champs will open at Deerfield-Windsor for young basketball players from age 5 to 18 in mid-July and there is still time to register for one week or two.

how to be good teammates. It is so neat to see boys and girls ages 5-16 all together

for camp."

A member of the United States women's basketball

team that captured the gold medal at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, Henry recently retired as athletic director for Dougherty County Schools. Retirement, however, has done little to slow her commitment to youth basketball.

Campers ages 7-18 will participate from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. each day, while children ages 5-6 will attend morning sessions from 9 a.m. until noon. Registration is \$150 for one week for older campers and \$100 for younger campers, with discounted rates available for those attending both weeks. Walk-up registration will be accepted, although preregistration is encouraged to assist with planning.

Each day features skill instruction, individual fundamentals, competitive drills and games designed to challenge players of all experience levels in a fun environment.

For more information or to register, contact Henry at leahenry5@gmail.com or 404-556-2302. Registration forms and additional camp information are available through Camp of Champs.



Staff Photo: Joe Whiffield

Lee County's Trey Bush drives toward the basket during Friday's summer game against Monroe in Leesburg. Monroe took both the JV and Varsity games over the Trojans.

Monroe closes summer with sweep of Lee

By Joe Whiffield
Sports Editor

LEESBURG — For about six minutes Friday afternoon, Lee County looked every bit like the fast, physical basketball team head coach Kirven Davis hopes it will become.

The rest of the afternoon reminded him just how much growing remains.

Monroe erased an early deficit with a barrage of 3-pointers and relentless transition defense, then pulled away in the second half for a 57-41 victory over the Trojans in the final summer basketball play date before the GHSA's annual Dead Week.

For Davis, the result mattered less than the lesson.

"We are inexperienced right now and we're a tale of two teams," Davis said. "One is passionate and confident and the other lacks a leader and game experience. We've made some strides this summer but have a ways to go. Nevertheless, I am proud of them."

That inexperience wasn't evident early.

Rising seniors Josiah Franklin and Tremayne Johnson established themselves inside as Lee County raced to an 8-3 advantage. The Trojans defended well, controlled the paint and forced Monroe to search for answers from the perimeter.

The Golden Tornadoes eventually found them.

Elijah Rivers buried a 3-pointer to cap an 8-0 run and give Monroe its first lead at 11-8. Lee County

answered when Trey Bush knocked down a 3-pointer, but Monroe had found its offensive rhythm.

Tristen Terry answered with a three of his own before Rivers connected again from long range. Freshman King Leverette added another late 3-pointer as Monroe closed the half on another surge to build a 28-20 advantage.

The game turned for good in the opening minutes of the second half.

Leverette was fouled behind the arc and calmly converted all three free throws before Robert Adams scored inside and completed a three-point play, stretching Monroe's lead to 34-20.

Lee County never recovered.

Monroe's defense forced three consecutive turnovers, each leading to uncontested layups as the Golden Tornadoes quickly expanded the margin to 50-33 and removed any suspense.

While Monroe celebrated another strong summer performance, Davis left encouraged by the progress of a young team still searching for consistency.

Replacing four starters from last season has created growing pains, but it has also accelerated the development of players who will be counted on this winter.

Friday's loss reinforced the challenge ahead. Lee County showed flashes of the aggressive, confident team Davis wants to see. It also showed the mistakes that accompany an inexperienced roster learning

See **MONROE**, 10A



MLB owners push to limit deals

Field Level Media

If Major League Baseball owners get their way, mega-deals like those signed by Juan Soto with the New York Mets and Shohei Ohtani with the Los Angeles Dodgers will be a thing of the past, as part of their latest labor proposal to the MLB Players Association on Thursday.

The owners want to implement a maximum contract length of five years for all free agents who switch teams, along with six years for free agents who re-sign with their existing teams. They also want to remove contract deferrals like Ohtani's 10-year, \$700 million contract he signed in late 2023 that deferred \$680 million of the deal.

Among the other items on the owners' agenda Thursday included a \$202 million limit on deals for free agents signing with other teams. There are more than 20 players in excess of that number, including four who more than double

that proposed limit. Currently, the maximum contract value for a free agent staying put is six years at \$265 million.

Regarding free agency and the minimum salary, the league proposed increasing that salary to \$1 million from \$780,000 next year for players who have reached two years of service time. Players below that line would earn \$1 million if they have reached one full year of service time, including a \$900,000 minimum salary plus an automatic \$100,000 bonus from the Pre-Arbitration Bonus Pool. Per league data, that increase in the minimum salary is the latest year-over-year increase in the history of the league.

Also, players who have posted five years of service time by 30 would be eligible for free agency, one year less of service time than is currently on the docket. Since free agency began in 1976, it has taken six years of service time to earn free agency.

The league did not ask for changes to arbitration, but did

propose eliminating qualifying offers and deferred contracts.

Regarding the maximum contract length, a player with less than a year of service can re-sign with his own team for up to 12 years, including six before free agency and six after. If the contract begins next year, the player could sign a 12-year, \$500 million deal.

"Today, in addition to proposing the largest-ever increase in the minimum salary, earned by over half of MLB players, we accepted two landmark changes to free agency that have been in place for 50 years," said MLB spokesperson Glen Caplin. "We agreed to both the MLBPA's proposal to provide earlier access to free agency and their proposal to eliminate the qualifying offer system, a provision players view as a drag on free agency."

The latest proposal hinges on the union accepting management's recent salary cap plan, which the union has been strongly against. Thursday's bargaining saw

the union quickly reject the owners' latest bid.

"The overall drag on player compensation here dramatically outweighs the benefits suggested here," MLBPA interim executive director Bruce Meyer said soon thereafter. "Some of the suggested benefits are of no benefit or value at all in a cap system. ... In a cap system, it's a zero-sum game, and it's just moving money around."

As for the risk of losing games next season due to an impasse in negotiations, the current labor agreement between the owners and the union does not expire until Dec. 1, so the sides still have time to work out a deal. Both sides are offering their takes on the future of the game without engaging in negotiated bartering.

"What's being proposed now is really illusory given it's all in the context of a cap," Meyer said.

Hawks build around defense, depth

Media Reports

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Hawks made one thing abundantly clear during the 2026 NBA Draft: toughness, versatility and defense are no longer just buzzwords. They're the blueprint.

Just months after reshaping the franchise by trading long-time star Trae Young to Washington, the Hawks used three draft picks to continue building a roster designed to compete now while laying the foundation for the future.

Atlanta selected Houston point guard Kingston Flemings with the eighth overall pick Tuesday night before adding rugged St. John's forward Zuby Ejiofor at No. 23. The Hawks then traded up five spots in Wednesday's second round to draft North Carolina center Henri Veesaar with the 52nd overall selection.

Taken together, the draft class reflects a franchise intent on becoming younger, longer and more physical without sacrificing its playoff aspirations.

The Hawks finished 46-36 last season, captured the Southeast Division title and reached the Eastern Conference playoffs before bowing out to the

New York Knicks in six games. Since moving on from Young, Atlanta has re-signed veteran guard CJ McCollum, added Aaron Wiggins in free agency and committed to a young core led by Jalen Johnson, Onyeka Okongwu, Zacharie Risacher and Dyson Daniels.

President of Basketball Operations Onsi Saleh summed up the organization's approach after the opening round.

"We got the two best competitors in the draft," Saleh said of Flemings and Ejiofor.

If that was the goal, the Hawks appear to have accomplished it.

Flemings enters the NBA as the centerpiece of Atlanta's draft class after an outstanding freshman season at Houston. The 6-foot-3 guard averaged 16.1 points, 5.2 assists, 4.1 rebounds and 1.5 steals while shooting 48 percent from the field, 39 percent from 3-point range and 85 percent from the free-throw line.

The 19-year-old led the Cougars in scoring, assists and steals, established the school's freshman scoring record with 594 points and became the first freshman in Houston history to earn All-America honors.

Known for his explosive first step and relentless competitive-

ness, Flemings excels attacking the basket while also earning praise as one of the nation's premier perimeter defenders. His ability to pressure opposing ball handlers should allow him to contribute immediately, even as his offensive game continues to mature.

The Hawks view him as much more than an immediate contributor. He represents the organization's long-term answer at point guard following Young's departure.

After hearing his name called on draft night, Flemings emphasized the values that have shaped him.

"Family is everything," he said. Atlanta hopes those intangibles translate into leadership as his career develops.

Later in the first round, the Hawks strengthened their frontcourt by selecting Ejiofor, one of college basketball's biggest breakout stars.

The 6-foot-8, 245-pound forward-center transferred from Kansas to St. John's and flourished under Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino. He averaged 16.4 points, 7.3 rebounds, 3.6 assists, 1.3 steals and 2.2 blocks while shooting 54 percent from the field.

His dominant senior season

earned him the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award as the nation's top center along with Big East Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year and Big East Tournament Most Outstanding Player honors.

Ejiofor's defensive versatility made him especially attractive to Atlanta. He can protect the rim, switch onto smaller players and rebound in traffic while bringing the physical style the Hawks felt they lacked during their playoff loss to New York.

His outside shot remains a work in progress, but Atlanta believes his defensive impact, basketball IQ and relentless motor give him the tools to become an immediate contributor off the bench with the potential for a much larger role.

The Hawks completed their draft Wednesday by trading up from No. 57 to No. 52 to select Veesaar, a skilled 6-foot-11 center from North Carolina.

The Estonia native took an unconventional route to the NBA, developing in Real Madrid's academy before spending three seasons at Arizona and transferring to North Carolina, where he enjoyed a breakout campaign.

Veesaar averaged 17.0 points, 8.7 rebounds, 2.1 assists and



Special Photo: NBA

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver congratulates first-round pick Kingston Flemings after the Atlanta Hawks selected the Houston guard with the No. 8 overall pick in the 2026 NBA Draft.

1.2 blocks while shooting better than 60 percent from the field and an impressive 42.6 percent from 3-point range.

His ability to stretch the floor immediately distinguishes him from Atlanta's other frontcourt players. The Hawks envision him developing into a modern center capable of spacing defenses, creating opportunities for teammates with his passing and finishing plays above the rim.

He will likely need additional strength before becoming a regular rotation player, but the Hawks clearly valued his

upside enough to move up five spots to secure him.

While each player brings a different skill set, together they address Atlanta's biggest needs.

Flemings provides the franchise's point guard of the future. Ejiofor adds toughness, rebounding and defensive versatility. Veesaar offers floor spacing and long-term potential at center.

Rather than chasing star power, the Hawks spent draft week assembling complementary pieces that fit the identity they hope to establish.

Bulldogs earn No. 8 Directors' Cup ranking

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATHENS — Fueled by three national championships, Southeastern Conference titles in football and baseball and one of the most successful athletic years in school history, the University of Georgia finished eighth in the final 2026 Learfield Directors' Cup standings.

The Bulldogs totaled a school-record 1,081.25 points, earning their second top-10 finish in the past four years and the 13th top-10 Directors' Cup finish in program history.

The Learfield Directors' Cup recognizes the nation's most successful overall athletic departments based on NCAA postseason performance across all sports.

"We are extremely proud of

our student-athletes, coaches and staff," Georgia Athletic Director Josh Brooks said. "From national and SEC championships to new conference and school records and another strong academic campaign, this will be a year to remember for Georgia Athletics. I want to thank our tremendous staff that worked tirelessly to make sure this would be a special season and Bulldog Nation for its commitment and dedication."

Georgia's banner year included national championships in women's tennis and both the NCAA indoor and outdoor women's track and field championships. The track program captured its third consecutive national title, while the men's outdoor track team finished as the national runner-up.



File Photo:

Georgia finished No. 8 in the final 2025-26 Learfield Directors' Cup standings, which recognize the nation's top overall athletics programs based on success across 19 NCAA sports.

The Bulldogs also continued their dominance within the Southeastern Conference. Georgia won SEC championships in football and baseball, becoming the first school since LSU in 2011 to capture both conference titles in the same academic year.

Football finished 12-2 and claimed its second straight SEC championship, marking the program's first back-to-back conference titles since winning three consecutive championships from 1980-82. Under Kirby Smart, Georgia has posted a remarkable 65-7 record over the past five seasons.

The baseball team enjoyed arguably the greatest season in program history.

The Bulldogs captured both the SEC regular-season and tournament championships before advancing to the Men's College World Series for the first time since 2008. Georgia established school records with 53 victories overall and 23 SEC wins.

Head coach Wes Johnson was named SEC Coach of the Year, while Daniel Jackson earned both SEC and national Player of the Year honors after becoming just the third player in conference history to win the Triple Crown.

Georgia's success extended well beyond football and baseball.

The men's basketball team established a school record with 22 regular-season victories while earning its second straight NCAA Tournament appearance. The women's basketball team also reached the NCAA Tournament, marking the first time since the 2010-11 season that both Bulldog basketball programs qualified for March Madness in the same year.

The GymDogs recorded their best national finish in a decade, placing sixth nationally while advancing to the NCAA semifinals for the first time since 2019.

Georgia's soccer program reached the NCAA Tournament for a school-record fourth consecutive season, while softball advanced to the NCAA Super Regionals for the fourth straight year under head coach Tony Baldwin. The Bulldogs also continued their excellence on the tennis courts. The women's program won its third national championship in the past two seasons and reached the NCAA semifinals for the fourth consecutive year. The men's team finished 20-9 and advanced to the NCAA Super Regionals for the first time since 2023.

Georgia's success wasn't limited to competition. Bull-

dog student-athletes posted a 3.26 cumulative GPA during the spring semester after setting a school record with a 3.30 GPA in the fall.

The Bulldogs also joined rare company nationally. Georgia was the only athletic department in the country to win at least 12 football games, 40 baseball games and 20 games in both men's and women's basketball while qualifying for the postseason in all four sports. Georgia also was one of only two schools nationwide to qualify for the College Football Playoff, both NCAA basketball tournaments and the Men's College World Series during the 2025-26 academic year.

2026 Learfield Directors' Cup Top 20

Texas — 1,322.00
Stanford — 1,263.50
UCLA — 1,199.25
North Carolina — 1,166.75
Virginia — 1,148.75
Florida — 1,104.50
USC — 1,095.50
Georgia — 1,081.25
Michigan — 1,076.75
Ohio State — 1,071.25
Duke — 1,039.25
Texas A&M — 980.00
Alabama — 968.75
Arkansas — 965.75
Tennessee — 964.75
Oklahoma — 930.75
Nebraska — 929.00
LSU — 926.75
Notre Dame — 898.50
Princeton — 878.5

MONROE

From 9A

to play together.

The junior varsity game followed a similar script.

Monroe carried a 20-13 half-time lead before Lee County rallied behind early second-half 3-pointers from Chayse Randall and Kameron Frank-

lin to pull within 23-19. The Golden Tornadoes answered the challenge, however, and closed out a 39-29 victory.

With summer competition complete, both programs now enter the GHSA's mandatory Dead Week before players return to offseason workouts later this summer. Official basketball practice begins in October in preparation for the 2026-27 season.

and defensive lines won't make preseason highlight reels, but it gives the Trojans their best chance to compete against larger, more experienced opponents throughout the fall.

After a week away from organized football during Dead Week, Dougherty will return next week to begin preparations for August.

The Trojans open preseason play with an Aug. 14 scrimmage against Northside-Columbus before officially kicking off the 2026 season Aug. 27 against a highly regarded Sumter County team expected to contend for the Class AAA state championship.

For a program looking to take the next step, the foundation appears stronger than it was a year ago.

Now comes the hard part. The lines have to keep improving, the young quarterback has to stay healthy, and the Trojans must prove that offseason promise can translate into Friday night success against one of Georgia's toughest region schedules.

From 9A

JOYNER

But individual talent alone won't guarantee success.

Last season, Dougherty squeezed into the state playoffs after earning just one Region victory — a win over crosstown rival Monroe.

This fall promises to be much tougher.

Realignment has created a daunting nine-team Region 1-AAAA that stretches from Columbus to the Florida state line. Familiar rivals Bainbridge, Cairo, Monroe and Westover remain on the schedule, but the Trojans now add four Columbus-area schools — Columbus, Shaw, Spencer and Hardaway — to one of the state's deepest football regions.

There will be little margin for error.

The expanded region means every Friday night becomes more significant, and every victory harder to earn.

That's why Joyner has spent so much of the offseason emphasizing fundamentals instead of flash.

Building stronger offensive

Reeves signs with Indiana Pacers

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA - Georgia Tech's Kowacie Reeves Jr. has signed an Exhibit-10 contract with the Indiana Pacers, joining a prestigious list of former Yellow Jackets to turn professional.

Reeves finished his collegiate career playing his final three seasons at Georgia Tech where he started all 67 games he appeared in, averaging 29.0 minutes and 12.1 points per game. This past season, Reeves led Georgia Tech in scoring at 15.1 points per game, while averaging 3.8 rebounds and 1.2 assists.

His redshirt-senior season, Reeves led the Yellow Jackets in three-pointers made (60) and was second in steals (27) and blocks (19), while shooting 45.6 percent from the field, 38.7 percent from three-point distance and 77.9 percent at the free throw line. The Ma-

con, Ga., native finished the season ranked 16th in the Atlantic Coast Conference in scoring overall after recording 24 double-figure scoring games, including eight with 20 points or more.

Reeves, who played his first two seasons at Florida before transferring to Georgia Tech, played in 127 college games in his career with 84 starts. He capped his collegiate career with 1,231 career points, including 808 at Georgia Tech.

Following his final season at Georgia Tech, Reeves participated in the Portsmouth Invitational Tournament, where he averaged 23 points and 5.3 rebounds while shooting 56.8 percent from the field and 42.8 percent from beyond the arc. Reeves earned All-Tournament recognition at the conclusion. Reeves also participated in several pre-draft NBA workouts with teams including the Washington



Special Photo: Georgia Tech Athletics

Georgia Tech's Kowacie Reeves will spend his summer with the Indiana Pacers after signing a contract with the team this past week. He finished his senior year with the Yellow Jackets with an average of 15.1 points per game.

Wizards, Indiana Pacers, Orlando Magic and Memphis Grizzlies.

An Exhibit-10 contract will

allow Reeves to compete during the Summer League for a roster spot with the Pacers or G League affiliate.

Carr convicts three PDE gang members in DeKalb County

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

DECATUR – Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr today announced that the state’s Gang Prosecution Unit has secured three new convictions in DeKalb County involving members of PDE, a local criminal street gang also known as Paradise East or Paper Drugs Extortion.

While associated with PDE, the defendants engaged in criminal gang activity and committed various weapon offenses in furtherance of the gang.

One of the defendants, Darius Scott, was convicted by a DeKalb County jury, and the other two defendants, Jamerison McCamey and Corey Dumas, entered guilty pleas prior to trial. Both McCamey and Dumas were sentenced to prison. Sentencing for Scott will take place at a later date.

“This is yet another step in our ongoing efforts to dismantle the growing gang networks that are terrorizing our communities, and we won’t stop until all those responsible are behind bars,” Carr said in a news release. “By partnering with APD and DeKalb County Police, we have been able to take down violent repeat offenders, and we have removed illegal weapons from our streets.

“Keeping Georgians safe will always be our top priority, and those who support or participate in violent gang activity will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

This case was prosecuted by Assistant Attorneys General Lee M. Stoy Jr. and McKenzie Gray. It was investigated by the DeKalb County Police Department and the Atlanta Police



CHRIS CARR

Department.

“Gang violence and organized criminal activity have no place in DeKalb County,” DeKalb County Police Chief Gregory Padrick said. “This conviction is the result of the outstanding work of DeKalb County Police detectives, the Attorney General’s Gang Prosecution Unit, and our law enforcement partners who worked tirelessly to build a strong case and hold these offenders accountable.”

“The Atlanta Police Department is committed to getting criminal street gangs off our streets and out of our neighborhoods,” Atlanta Police Chief Darin Schierbaum said. “Anytime we stop illegal activities, especially those driven by criminal street gangs, it is a win for communities locally and nationally..”

PDE was formed in the Bouldercrest Road area of DeKalb County. It derives its name from the apartment complex, Paradise East, which serves as the gang’s base of operation. PDE was born out of Sex Money Murder, a Blood gang from New York City.

The defendants in this case, along with their convictions and sentences, include

Scott, 35, of Dallas was convicted of the below charges fol-

lowing a two-day jury trial in DeKalb County. Sentencing will occur on July 7.

3 counts of Violation of the Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act

3 counts of Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon

1 count of Unlawful Possession of a Machine Gun

McCamey, 22, of Atlanta pleaded guilty to all charges brought against him in April. He was sentenced to 20 years, with the first 10 years to be served in prison and the remainder on strict probation.

2 counts of Violation of the Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act

1 count of Possession of a Firearm by a First Offender Probationer

Dumas, 20, of Atlanta pleaded guilty to all charges brought against him in January 2026. He was sentenced to five years in prison.

2 counts of Violation of the Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act

1 count of Possession of a Handgun by a Person Under the Age of 18 Years

Since it began its historic work on July 1, 2022, the Gang Prosecution Unit has investigated and prosecuted cases in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Bibb, Bryan, Chatham, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Dougherty, Fulton, Gwinnett, Laurens, Lowndes, Muscogee, Richmond, Spalding, Thomas, Upson and Washington counties, with roughly 140 convictions secured across the state.

The Gang Prosecution Unit is based in Atlanta, with regional, satellite prosecutors and investigators in Albany, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, Savannah and southeast Georgia.

Obituary announcements

Mike H Moorman

Mike Hobby Moorman, 93, of Lee County, GA, passed away June 26, 2026 at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital. Funeral services were held Tuesday, June 30, 2026 at 2:00 pm at The First Baptist Church of Leesburg. Rev. Josh Posey officiated. Interment followed in Leesburg Cemetery with Masonic Rites. Mr. Moorman was born in Tift County, GA on July 29, 1932 to Georgia and Julia Moorman. He graduated from Tift County High School. He married his sweetheart, Laverne Marshall in 1951 and served as a police officer in Tifton from 1956-1957 and served on the Civil Defense Unit in Tift County until 1966 under the sheriff of Tift County. Mr. Moorman moved to Lee County, GA in 1966 and farmed in Lee and Tift Counties until 1980. He was employed with S&S Tractor Company before being employed with Lee State Prison where he farmed and manufactured fertilizer until his retirement in 1998.

Mr. Moorman was very active in the Lee County community where he was member of The First Baptist Church of Leesburg and The Jane Studdard Sunday School Class. He was a long time Master Mason, member and Past Master of Chehaw Lodge #701, a York Rite Mason and Member of William J. Pen Chapter #015. Mr. Moorman was also a member of The Order Of Eastern Star, Crape Myrtle Chapter #163. He was a member of Hasan Shriners, served as Ambassador At Large and was a member of the Scat cats Unit. Mr. Moorman also served on The Farm Bureau Board for fifty years in Lee County and enjoyed fishing and riding in his golf cart. Mr. Moorman was preceded in death by his son, Michael Tony Moorman. Survivors include his wife, Laverne Moorman and a daughter, Gloria (Wayne) Ammons all of Lee County, GA, his grandchildren, Eric (Dana) Ammons of Lee County, GA, Cassie Barkley (Stephen Smith) of Lee County, GA and four great-grandchildren, Emma Barkley, Adah Barkley, Teghan Smith and Realean Smith and several nieces, nephews, and friends who are like family. The family will receive friends on Tuesday from 1:00 pm until 2:00 pm at The First Baptist

Church of Leesburg. Those desiring may make memorials in memory of Mr. Moorman to Shriners Hospitals For Children c/o Hasan Shriners Transportation Fund 1822 Palmyra Rd, Albany, GA 31701.



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 Savelle 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.



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 - Lillia 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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Albany Legals

Calhoun Co. Legals

The Calhoun County Democratic Committee will hold a meeting on Monday, July 6, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. The meeting will be held at the Calhoun County Community Center (former Boys and Girls Club), 597 Pioneer Road, N.E., Arlington, Georgia 39813. For additional information, please contact Rev. Lou Gene Bush at 229-835-3057.
July 2, 2026

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7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 performing a role (6)	_____
2 place for tennis (5)	_____
3 enlarge in scope (7)	_____
4 Ryan O'Neal's daughter (5)	_____
5 relevant (7)	_____
6 perfunctory (10)	_____
7 "underground operative" (5)	_____

OP	OAD	NG	AC	RT
TI	UM	AL	EN	OS
BR	ME	APR	COU	AN
CH	NER	IC	MI	TAT

Tuesday's Answers: 1. MOPING 2. KICKS 3. RACETRACK 4. MUFFLE 5. SPRINKLER 6. HIMSELF 7. SECRETIVE 7/1

7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 welcome (5)	_____
2 vitally important (7)	_____
3 making laws (11)	_____
4 like a Wagyu steak (7)	_____
5 turn cream into butter (5)	_____
6 perplexed (9)	_____
7 mountains in Eastern Europe (11)	_____

IA	GR	CRUC	URN	NG
RBL	STIF	LATI	PATH	IAL
CAR	LEG	MY	EET	CH
IS	NS	ED	MA	IED

Wednesday's Answers: 1. ACTING 2. COURT 3. BROADEN 4. TATUM 5. APROPOS 6. MECHANICAL 7. MINER 7/2

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS	68 Boo-boo	23 Portfolio piece	51 Spots for education?
69 "Like, yesterday"	70 "The Pat McAfee Show" network	26 Prefix with day or way	52 Subtle hair dyes
5 Taylor-Joy of "The Queen's Gambit"	71 Turow book set at Harvard	30 shadow	54 Awards ceremony host
9 Whipper		32 Umami	56 Childish comeback
13 Vulgar one		36 Dane	58 Director Kazan
14 Bird on the Canadian dollar coin		37 Social rules	60 Take part in an outdoor fantasy game
15 Hard to erase, perhaps		39 Actress Vardalos	63 Possess
17 "Today was rough"		41 Fitting	64 Contend (for)
19 High cost for the Super Bowl		44 Long sammich	65 Nigiri topper never served raw
20 "... at the very least"		46 Level of authority	
21 Dame introduction?			
22 "Parks and Recreation" town			
25 Red friend of Cookie Monster			
27 Was first			
28 "Close enough"			
29 Yemen port that faces the Somaliland port Berbera			
31 "I am in this meme"			
33 Checkpoint for the terminally on line?			
34 Banh mi spread			
35 Fashion week focus			
38 Health insurance giant			
40 Update from a Lyft driver			
42 Big mad and not hiding it			
43 Floor connectors			
45 Architect's constraint, for short			
47 Feminine pronoun			
48 Meaty sauce			
49 Engrave on glass			
50 Kilt companion			
51 HS fundraiser			
53 Very, informally			
55 Ocean escapades?			
57 Command to attack			
59 Middle-distance runners			
61 Bracelet spot			
62 Potbelly that needs constant feeding?			
66 Oktoberfest souvenir			
67 Bread for an Italian sandwich?			

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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

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By Ella Dershowitz ©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC

A Time to Remember

ROBERT SEBASTIAN KNIGHT

Robert Sebastian Knight passed away due to injuries from an automobile accident on Wednesday June 3, 2026. He was 18 years old and would have been a senior at Lee County High School this upcoming August. Robert was a one of a kind person who touched the lives of so many people. Although Rob's life was cut far too short, the impact he made will last forever. His kindness, laughter, compassion, and love for others will continue to live on in the hearts of everyone blessed to know him. He leaves behind a legacy of joy and a reminder to love deeply, laugh often, and cherish every single moment. Rob's light may no longer shine among us, but its warmth will remain forever in the hearts of those who loved him.

He was the last person that deserved to leave life this way, he was the kindest kid I have ever met. He deserved to walk that stage, he deserved to travel the world, he deserved to live a life with the love of his life and all the good this world has to offer. Rob experienced a life that was more difficult than most and when he told me about his story I would always think about how he deserved so much more. He got kicked out and moved in with me permanently and that was the day my life changed forever. I had a brother that supported me, cared for me, and motivated me everyday no matter what I was going through. The next year of my life I finally got to see him happy as ever with a family that loved him every step of the way. Then that life was taken from him. There will not be a day that goes by that I won't think about you Robert. I will always look for you in the sun, the stars, and anything else that is bright. I love you with all of my heart. He was the light in my world. He was the funniest person I have ever met and I never went a second without laughing when I was with him. You will never leave my heart or my mind. The world lost one of his strongest angels and as long as I'm alive you will always have someone that loves you.

I love you big bro-Cayden Nelms

Rob was my light in the dark, my reason to keep going in this messed up world. Me and Rob had an unexplainable relationship, he's been by my side ever since we were small. No amount of words or pictures can even come close to the amount of love that I have for you. I'm so happy that I had the honor of being your older brother. Rob didn't have the greatest upcoming, some nights we didn't have lights or water or was staying in a motel. Rob always found a way to bring laughter to the scenario. He meant the world and beyond to me, he was my purpose in this life. I know Rob would want all of us smiling and being happy right now. I just pray you come see me sometimes bro.

I love you little bro-Alberto Knight

You were my brother, blood, heart, ray of sunshine, happiness, love, support, confidence, smile, and most importantly my reason to keep pushing. You brought happiness to so many people. When you walked into the room, it was filled with laughter, joy and excitement. You were not just someone who grew up saying I love you, but you were the love, you were everyone's happiness. I will forever cherish every moment with you. I know you have them angels smiling and laughing. Rest peacefully Robert and I hope you are looking down on everyone and realizing just how loved you are.

I love you Robert-Adriana Hernandez

Having the opportunity to love Rob and become his "Ma Dukes" will forever be one of my greatest blessings. Rob was joy, that joy radiated from him. He made you want to be a better person. He made you smile, not because he was doing some kind of incredible magic trick but because that was the energy that surrounded him. Rob grew up without parents that loved and supported him. His childhood was far more difficult than most but you would never know that looking at him. Rob gave more to the world than it gave to him. He left this earth a better place. When he gave me the title, ma dukes, it was an honor, a privilege. Having him in my life was a reward. He was the prize. He was so incredibly easy to love and losing him has left a humongous hole in my heart. I will never understand why it had to be him. We will miss his smile, his laughter, and his bone breaking bear hugs.

Rest peacefully in the arms of Jesus, knowing you are loved beyond measure and will be missed beyond words. Your light will never fade and your memory will live in our heart forever!

*I love you always-Ma Dukes
(Heather Hearn)*

