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The Albany HERALD



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ALBANYHERALD.COM

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026

Audit of police surveillance cameras results in arrests of five former APD officers

By Alan Mauldin

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ALBANY — With the arrest of five former Albany Police Department officers, Police Chief Michael Persley said that the department will work to drive home its policy that law enforcement resources are solely for solving and prevent-

ing crimes, not personal use.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation announced the arrests on Monday.

The misuse of license-plate reading technology was uncovered through a regular auditing process that is part of the Flock Safety camera system that is used by the agency,

the chief said.

“The bottom line is when we find people who have misused resources, we’re going to hold them accountable,” Persley said. “These resources help fight crime, but we will not tolerate when they are misused.”

The GBI launched the probe

on June 25 at the request of the police department after an internal audit of the Flock license plate reader system.

“This internal audit revealed that the officers previously accessed the Flock system on multiple occasions and utilized and retained license plate data for non-law enforce-

ment purposes,” the GBI said in a news release.

Asked whether officers were accessing the equipment for personal use such as keeping tabs on romantic interests, Persley said “something like that.”

See **OFFICERS**, 2A



File Photo
Albany Police Department Chief Michael Persley.

New commander takes helm as Marine Corps logistics adapts to evolving battlefield

By Kathryn Crockett

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ALBANY — As the Marine Corps prepares for an era of contested logistics and great-power competition, one of its most important logistics organizations officially welcomed new leadership July 2.

Brig. Gen. Kevin G. Collins assumed leadership of Marine Corps Logistics Command during a change of command ceremony at Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany. Collins succeeds Maj. Gen. Keith D. Reventlow after four years leading the organization responsible for sustaining Marine forces around the globe.

Presiding over the ceremony was Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Sklenka, deputy commandant for Installations and Logistics, who made clear that Albany’s role

extends far beyond southwest Georgia.

“You’re looking at the heartbeat of that right here for the Marine Corps,” Sklenka said. “This is the Marine Corps’ sole depot. When we have to go fight bad guys, this is where everything gets put back together.”

The traditional passing of the organizational colors marked the formal transfer of authority, responsibility and accountability from Reventlow to Collins.

Sklenka said Collins was hand-selected by Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Eric Smith to lead the command at a pivotal moment as the service adapts to changing warfare and increasingly contested global supply chains.

“You could not have had a better guy coming in here,” Sklenka told the workforce. “You’ve got a Marine who was personally selected by the commandant of the Marine Corps to lead this wonderful organization.”

The outgoing commander

See **MCLB**, 2A



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

Incoming commanding general Brig. Gen. Kevin G. Collins, right, and outgoing commanding general Maj. Gen. Keith D. Reventlow render honors during the Marine Corps Logistics Command change of command ceremony Thursday at Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany. Collins assumed command as Reventlow departed for a new assignment as director for logistics, Joint Staff J-4, at the Pentagon.

United Way of Southwest Georgia halts funding for regional restructuring

By Carlton Fletcher

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ALBANY — Responding to a report that some agencies serviced by the United Way of Southwest Georgia expressed concern about a plan to withhold typical funding for a whole year during a “restructuring” period, the agency’s president and CEO, Orson Burton Jr., said this week the area United Way would use the time from now to July 1, 2027 to “postpone the traditional allocations



ORSON BURTON JR.

cycle for 12 months in order to fully rebuild our regional fundraising campaign be-

fore the next round of partner funding.”

Burton, who was selected to lead the United Way of Southwest Georgia slightly less than a year ago, said the local United Way’s board made the decision to be true to its calling as a regional agency.

“We serve 13 counties,” Burton said during a conversation at his office on Westover Boulevard Tuesday. “Historically, though, our impact has centered on Albany. We

See **FUNDING**, 2A

United Way CEO to kick off rebranded ASU series

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY -- Albany State University announced the launch of its newly rebranded President’s Speaking Series, formerly known as the President’s Lecture Series, with an inspiring keynote event focused on community impact. This event is open to the public.

The series will welcome Rosie Allen-Herring, the interim president and CEO of United Way Worldwide and national first vice president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., on July 14, at 6 p.m. in the Billy C. Black Building auditorium on ASU’s

East Campus.

A nationally recognized leader in philanthropy and civic engagement, Allen-Herring leads a global United Way network serving 48 million people across more than 30 countries. With more than 30 years of experience in corporate finance, strategic leadership, and community impact, she has dedicated her career to advancing equity and improving outcomes in health, education and economic mobility.

Allen-Herring’s career includes executive leadership roles at Fannie Mae, where she managed multibillion-

See **ASU**, 2A

Periodical — Mail Label

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Back to School starts with Wellness Check-ups!

Primary Care, Dental, Behavioral Health, & Vision Care
To find a location near you, visit aaphc.org.



AAPHC

Albany Area Primary Health Care



From 1A

MCLB

leaves Albany for one of the military's most influential logistics positions as director for logistics, Joint Staff J-4 at the Pentagon.

During his remarks, Sklenka credited Reventlow with transforming the command during a period when military planners increasingly recognized they could no longer assume unrestricted access to ports, shipping lanes and airfields in a future conflict.

"Things have changed," Sklenka said. "Not only will we be contested every step of the way getting into the fight, we'll be contested even back here."

He praised Reventlow for expanding advanced manufacturing capabilities, modernizing information technology and advancing the Marine Corps' Global Positioning Network, calling the initiative potentially his "defining" contribution.

"Your work with the Global Positioning Network may be potentially your defining moment — not just because of what you've done, but what you've set up for the future," Sklenka said.

For Reventlow, the ceremony was an opportunity to reflect on four years overseeing a workforce of nearly 4,000 Marines, civilians

and contractors.

Among the accomplishments he highlighted was Marine Corps Logistics Command's role in helping the Marine Corps achieve three consecutive clean, unmodified financial audits, a milestone years in the making.

The Albany-based command manages approximately one-quarter of the Marine Corps' military equipment and roughly one-quarter of its operating materials and supplies while maintaining inventory accuracy exceeding Department of Defense standards.

"Had we failed, the Marine Corps would never have achieved a clean, unmodified opinion," Reventlow said. "It has been a Herculean effort. ... It was accomplished by the hard-working, dedicated workforce who always endeavor to improve."

Reventlow also pointed to Project Leatherneck, an initiative to centralize and streamline management of Marines' individual combat equipment, and to expanding maintenance support directly alongside deployed Marine Expeditionary Forces in the Indo-Pacific.

"That's why this command truly exists, to ensure Marines will prevail when standing in harm's way," he said. "No matter what, it's all about the Marines."

Before leaving the podium, Reventlow took time to recognize Albany's long-standing partnership with the installation.

"We cannot support Marines without our community," he said. "A relevant LOGCOM means a more ready and lethal Marine Corps."

Collins arrives in Albany after serving with the 3rd Marine Logistics Group in Okinawa, Japan, where he helped shape logistics operations across the Indo-Pacific, an experience he said will help guide the command as it prepares for future conflict.

He described Thursday as a personal transition.

"I think this is the transition point where I transition from being a customer to being your commanding general," Collins said. "I've always been a happy customer, a satisfied customer."

His focus, he said, will be ensuring Marine Corps Logistics Command continues evolving alongside rapidly changing technology and warfare.

"My last two years have been spent shaping a theater to match up against a peer threat," Collins said. "Now my job is to continue that work ... but also to shape the globe to match up against that peer threat."

Pointing to conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle

East, Collins said recent wars have reinforced that military logistics must change as quickly as the battlefield itself.

"We're seeing a war going on in Ukraine and in the Middle East, and we know that is a signal to us that the old methods simply won't do," Collins said. "LOGCOM is going to modernize because warfare is changing, business processes are changing and technology is changing."

He said logisticians are helping set the pace for the Marine Corps' modernization efforts and future force posture.

Before closing, Collins thanked the Albany community, saying he and his wife, Susan, looked forward to becoming part of southwest Georgia.

"There is no better way to meet members of the community than celebrating our nation's Independence Day together," Collins said. "We look forward to being part of this great community."

As he concluded his first remarks as commanding general, Collins reminded the Marines, civilians and contractors gathered inside the base gymnasium of the expectations that accompany the uniform.

"The nation expects a lot of Marines, a lot of the Marine Corps," he said. "What the nation expects, we will always deliver."

Federal agency to investigate Monday paragliding fatality

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – The death of a paraglider who was killed Monday morning is under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board, Dougherty County Coroner Michael Fowler said.

Kenneth Raymond Backus, 63, was declared dead 8:40 a.m. after the accident in the 1800 block of Cordele Road.

"It looked like he may have nicked a tree," Fowler said.

The apparent cause of death is blunt force trauma, the coroner said.

The NTSB will perform toxicology tests and further investigate the accident, Fowler said.



DOUGHERTY CORONER
MICHAEL FOWLER

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR PACKAGE OF BEER, AND WINE LICENSE

Notice is hereby given that Albany BP LLC, doing business as BP Food Mart, located at 2418 Sylvester Rd., Ste. 10 & 11 Albany, Georgia 31705, has made application for an Alcoholic Beverage License for the off-premises package sell of beer, and wine, for consideration and approval by the appropriate governing authority.

This notice shall be published in the Albany Herald on July 4th, 7th & 9th in compliance with applicable law.

From 1A

ASU

dollar investment portfolios and led initiatives resulting in more than \$2 billion in community investments. She also has received numerous honors, including induction into the Washington Business Hall of Fame and recognition

among the nation's most powerful business leaders.

The President's Speaking Series serves as a platform for meaningful dialogue, leadership development, and career preparation, reinforcing Albany State's dedication to student success and community engagement.

This event is expected to draw significant interest, with seating limited to 300 at-

tendees. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members are encouraged to secure tickets early. Tickets are available online.

The President's Speaking Series continues to position Albany State University as a hub for thought leadership, innovation and engagement, bringing influential voices to campus to inspire the next generation of leaders.

Albany State University **ASU**

PRESIDENT'S SPEAKING Series

HOSTED BY
DR. ROBERT O. SCOTT
ASU PRESIDENT

FEATURED SPEAKER
ROSIE ALLEN-HERRING
INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO, UNITED WAY WORLDWIDE
NATIONAL FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

THEME
COMMUNITY IMPACT

TUESDAY
JULY 14, 2026
6:00 PM
BILLY C. BLACK BUILDING
EAST CAMPUS



SCAN QR CODE TO RSVP
LIMITED SEATING AVAILABLE

Special Illustration: ASU

From 1A

FUNDING

are calling this effort a type of reimagining regional impact, and it culminates in a relaunched campaign in July 2027 with a goal of \$500,000 or more for a meaningfully stronger funding base than our current trajectory could sustain.

"With that in mind, when your aim is regionalism and having an impact on 13 separate counties, that takes time and intention. Continuing the allocations cycle as-is would

have meant funding partner commitments from a one-time carryover that simply will not exist again next year. That path balanced a single budget while quietly eroding the foundation underneath all of us, leaving no sustainable base for future allocations. The board concluded that a full 12-month rebuild lets us engage the right staff, reach corporate donors during their Q4 giving cycles, and stand up the infrastructure to grow giving across all 13 counties."

Burton said the funding pause would allow the local United Way to solidify its commitment to Albany-based

agencies as well as agencies in the 13-county southwest Georgia region that includes Dougherty, Clay, Dooley, Early, Calhoun, Randolph, Sumter, Crisp, Mitchell, Lee, Wilcox, Baker and Worth counties.

"In short," he said, "this is not a retreat from our commitment to (Albany nonprofits). It is the work required to make that commitment real, durable and sustainable."

Representatives of some Albany-based agencies that had typically received United Way funding said they were "blindsided" by the announcement.

"Our particular program does not get a lot of United Way funding, so it will not be detrimental to the operations," one representative said. "But there are some other agencies that get a significant amount of money, and announcing this out of the blue at 9:43 on a Saturday night just two days before they would normally be effective could be bad for them. That could have some significant impacts on those nonprofit agencies/programs that were expecting that money."

Another agency representative said: "The main purpose of the United Way is to raise funds and then distribute the funds to the nonprofits. It sounds like, for the next year, they are planning on raising funds but leaving the nonprofits out in the cold with only two days' notice. Something just does not feel right about this from both the recipient side for agencies that receive United Way allocations, and a potential donor side. Why would I give money if 100% is going to United Way?"

Burton said the local United Way is not "leaving anyone out in the cold," that the agency has other ways of providing funding and services for local nonprofits.

"We certainly provide other services to our nonprofits, such as offering local grant allocations that align with

our activities and goals," he said. "And we're impacting hundreds of Albany-area children through what we're calling our Summer Collective program."

When Albany State University announced it would not fund the summer National Youth Sports Program this year, a year after the summer program celebrated its 50th anniversary in Albany -- most funded primarily by Albany State -- Burton and United Way officials stepped into the breach with a proposal to continue summer activities for Albany youths.

The city of Albany allocated \$350,000 for the program.

"When we saw what was happening (with the summer youth program), the board saw this as an opportunity to step up," Burton said. "We had a strategy in place, and the city accepted our proposal to give local children an opportunity that might not have been available."

"As we speak, in real time, the United Way of Southwest Georgia is impacting hundreds of children in our community."

Still, there are those who say the short-term impact could be harsh on local nonprofits that have traditionally relied on funding from the United Way.

"I (think one can see) the concerns that we have and the potential impact that a bunch of nonprofit agencies are now going to be facing," one agency representative said.

But Burton asked that agencies and donors who are vital elements of United Way understand that the collective concept that will have a "significant impact throughout the region" is a plan whose time has come.

"The plan has begun; it's being implemented throughout the region," he said. "And I am 1 million percent sure that we're all going to be better off together."

From 1A

OFFICERS

The five arrested and charges filed are:

Tytianna Davis, 27, five counts of misuse of license plate data and one count of violation of oath of office;

Jade Jackson, 32, two counts of misuse of license plate data and one count of violation of oath of office;

Nicholas Richardson, 30, 11 counts of misuse of license plate data and one count of violation of oath of office;

Brittney Smith, 23, one count each of misuse of license plate data and violation of oath of office;

Issac Whitus, 24, two counts of misuse of license plate data and one count of violation of oath of office.

"When we misuse that (equipment) it's disappointing, and we have to rebuild trust with the community," Persley said. "It's disappointing when you let your personal life mesh like this with your professional life ... using it for people they have personal contact with to check their whereabouts."

"None of it was connected to any law enforcement-related actions. Nothing we had (seen) determined there was a legal reason to be checking those license plates."

The Flock Safety system provides monitoring, and a relatively new feature has streamlined that process to provide information on potential misuse in a timely manner, the chief said.

"It will let you know when those parameters have been breached," Persley said. "You go back and look at what was the reason. It's unfortunate that you have occurrences like this. To reiterate: Whatever you did with the technology, we're able to track you and what you did with the technology."

Albany Area Chamber of Commerce

Southern Rebar & Supplies, Inc.



STAR BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

The Albany Area Chamber of Commerce proudly recognizes Southern Rebar & Supplies as this week's Star Business of the Week.

Although the Southern Rebar & Supplies name is new, the company has built on more than three generations of experience as a trusted leader in rebar fabrication, construction materials, and structural steel fabrication. Serving residential and commercial projects alike, SRS provides quality products and expert service for foundations, walls, basements, retaining walls, shoring, structural steel, and complete concrete forming and finishing solutions.

With locations in Albany, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Johnson City, Tennessee, Southern Rebar & Supplies is committed to delivering exceptional customer service, dependable products, and industry expertise to contractors and builders throughout the Southeast.

Through their dedication to quality, reliability, and customer satisfaction, Southern Rebar & Supplies continues to play an important role in supporting construction and economic growth across our region.

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

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WALB NEWS 10

The Albany HERALD

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ALBANY CEO

FOX 31

WSWG

Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Today's a below-zero day in the Universal sky, odds are poor. Tomorrow the stars are back in sunshine, wait for tomorrow for better odds of better outcomes. Wait a day or two to deal with finances.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Hold the thought or communiqué and develop it further before you send it out into the world, today is unlikely to deliver helpful results to actions taken. Over time, your authenticity invites your soul tribe.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Childhood business could come up internally, notice if a reaction seems to be that of someone much younger. Triggers are arrows pointing to what's ready to be healed. Once healed, the issue is no longer hair-trigger and overwhelming.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Overall this is a time to shine, but today you might not get the responses you'd prefer. Wonky, below-zero stars allow for less helpful, less predictable, and more random outcomes. Consider carefully before you confide.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): True polish comes from working directly with your inner grit, you can't slap a glossy finish over rough material and expect to feel solid inside. Build your majestic self — by yourself, for yourself, for those you love, for those you serve.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Friendship can be an ultimate saving grace when you've chosen friends mindfully. Don't spend all your time with those that don't align personally, or don't align with your values, ambitions, or dreams.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Emotions and clear understanding of facts often don't work well together, emotions can cause intuition to swing wildly, too. Wait at least a couple of days to think through any arrangement you hope to set up.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A good relationship can provide nurture to both people as needed. The vibe is there now, but today's below-zero stars could cause something to misfire. Tomorrow

and Saturday should feel better.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Let duty be your motivation, put your heart into helping someone deserving that you care about. Consider your cooperative relationships, those you collaborate with and are interdependent with.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The focus could be on a relationship but today could still feel sub-optimal due to a poor Universal day score. Next week could bring a communication breakthrough if you're working on things.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Home is supposed to be your ultimate safe space, yet many still don't have this. Do what you can, with where you are, with what you have, to make your home provide the support and sanctuary you need.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Create from your soul. Only you have your exact gifts, your exact mission, and your exact magic. The world needs all of us to contribute our unique offerings. Hold back a message for a day or two.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Your mind and communication could be at the forefront now or very soon. July should be a blessed month overall, so many of 2026's worst problems should already be behind you. Expect an improved understanding of your mission and destiny, and the Universal support to put new insights into action. Later in July, a wave of anxiety could descend, even in the absence of big personal problems. The pattern brings the fear but nothing in the sky is delivering problems concurrently. August could be another good month — grace, a glow-up, artistry, and improvement in financial status. Late in August, don't let peer pressure make you do a big, public, foolish display, despite any temptation. A windfall could drop on your doorstep in September, along with another intercession from the Universe, taking you higher still.



1776 - Per orders from George Washington, the Declaration of Independence to be read out to members of the Continental Army in Manhattan

1790 - One third of the Russian Baltic fleet is captured by the Swedish Navy

1816 - Argentina declares their independence from Spain

1850 - U.S. President Zachary Taylor dies after eating raw fruit and iced milk and contracting cholera morbus. Vice President Millard Fillmore becomes the next U.S. President

1863 - The Union gets complete control of the Mississippi River after the Siege of Port Hudson ends

1868 - The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, guaranteeing African Americans full citizenship. Also gives all persons in the U.S. due process of law.

1893 - Daniel Hale Williams, an American heart

surgeon performs the first successful open-heart surgery in the U.S. without anesthesia

1918 - The deadliest rail accident in U.S. history occurs in Nashville, Tennessee when an inbound local train collides with an outbound express, killing 101 and injuring 171 people

1944 - During World War II, American forces take Saipan

1958 - A 7.9 Mw strike-slip earthquake occurs in Alaska which causes a landslide that produces a megatsunami which kills five people

1982 - Pan Am Flight 759 crashes in Kenner, Louisiana, killing 145 on board and eight more on the ground

2006 - S7 Airlines Flight 778, veers off the runway while landing in wet conditions in Siberia, killing 125 people

2011 - South Sudan gains their independence and secedes from Sudan

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,
author (1859-1930)

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

Not only are Yancey Bros. building a new business in Cordele, but Rideout Arsenal is closing up shop in Virginia and moving to Thomasville. That's 150 new jobs with starting salaries of about \$65,000 a year. Albany went to Thomasville a few years ago and hired their utilities manager to come and straighten out our WG&L department. Maybe we should look into hiring their chamber of commerce and business development people.

People need to stop saying, "This is not America." Unfortunately, this IS America, or what it has become. You can't change something if you're in denial about what it is. That Man Without a Family

Thank you, Carlton Fletcher, for initiating a "local only" filter on the Squawkbox. I doubt that neither Fox News nor MSNow has any interest in southwest Georgia. On another matter,: red light camera:. Good job, Albany. You can tell a seasoned Albany driver by when the light turns green, they stop and look both ways to make sure some yo-yo isn't coming to run the red light.

Is it true Cubans are fleeing New York to avoid Communism?

That Baldwin and Olson made the All-Star Game and Michael Harris II didn't is a shame and a sham. Baldwin has completely forgotten how to hit, and Olson is so inconsistent it's maddening. There are always injustices, but this one reeks.

Why do we have such bad choices for governor?

Every household on Old Dawson Road should save all of their fast-food wrappers, etc. for a year. Then go through St.Andrews and start throwing it out. Afterwards, go to Winfred Road into Lee County and throw out more. People from both locations use Old Dawson to litter.

I was so shocked by the number of red lights run at East Oakridge Drive and Radium Springs Road that I had to read it twice. We obviously need red light cameras, no matter how much drivers complain.

Did any of you ever receive those DOGE checks of \$5,000 we were promised? How about those tariff rebate checks? Oh, that's right, the Supreme Court ruled that those rebates were to be sent to corporations. Just a few more lies to add to the growing mountain of this administration.

If ever there was a statewide race that should add "Neither of the above" as one of the choices, it's this year's gubernatorial race. I think the first part of that word is an apt description: A pair of "goobers."

Thursday's Editorial page was a great read. Keep marching.

The city manager reported this week that the Albany Police Department staffing is close to 90 to 100%. Then the chief reports that at one red light at Oakridge Drive and Radium Springs Road, there were 1,129 drivers running that red light in one day. That is 47 each hour. Why not put one patrol car, one officer at that intersection for one eight-hour shift and make 376 arrests? Wouldn't that pay for that officer's salary and the patrol car? And maybe save a few lives?

Weather Forecast



Today
93°
74°



Friday
93°
74°



Saturday
93°
74°



Sunday
86°
73°



Monday
83°
72°



Tuesday
86°
72°



Wednesday
91°
72°

Daily Bridge Club

Overberried

By Frank Stewart

Tribune Content Agency

"One thing I can't figure out about Joe," a club player said to me: "He overbids. If I dropped as many tricks as declarer as he

NORTH ♠ Q 10 ♥ J 8 ♦ Q 8 4 3 ♣ A J 8 3 2			
WEST ♠ 8 5 ♥ A 10 6 4 2 ♦ A 10 7 2 ♣ 10 6		EAST ♠ 6 4 3 ♥ K Q ♦ K J 9 6 5 ♣ Q 5 4	
SOUTH ♠ A K J 9 7 2 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ None ♣ K 9 7			
South 1 ♠ 2 ♣ 4 ♣	West Pass Pass All Pass	North 1 NT 3 ♠	East Pass Pass
Opening lead — ♠ 5			
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Frank Stewart

does, I would go low."

My friend was talking about Joe Overberry, who thinks it's nobler to go down in pursuit of an overtrick than to make his bid. That obsession costs him and his partners tons of points.

As South in a penny game, Joe opened one spade and rebid two spades over North's 1NT. When North scraped up a raise to three, Joe bid four.

"If North's points had been in diamonds," my friend said, "game might have been hopeless."

DOWN ONE

West led a trump, and Joe drew trumps, cashed the king of clubs and finessed with dummy's jack. East won and shifted to the king of hearts, and the defense took three hearts for down one.

Advice Columnist

Grandfather's gift to estranged grandchild may come with strings

By Eric Thomas

Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: A few years ago, my 24-year-old child came out as nonbinary and chose a new name, "Avery." While the adjustment hasn't always been easy, most of our immediate family now use Avery's new name and pronouns. The exception is my husband's parents, especially my father-in-law, who does not accept Avery's identity and has criticized them about it in phone calls and texts. As a result, they are now estranged.

Avery will turn 25 in a few weeks, and apparently my father-in-law has a tradition of giving each grandchild \$10,000 on that birthday. My husband only learned about this yesterday, when his father called to discuss it. He wants the gift to be a surprise and asked us not to tell Avery ahead of time. During the same conversation, however, he insisted that he will never accept Avery's identity, though he says he hopes to repair the relationship.

The timing is difficult because Avery wants to return to college this fall to finish their degree. I've already told them I can help with tuition but not living expenses, so this money would make a real difference.

My husband, who has reluctantly accepted Avery's identity but still believes it may be a "phase," thinks Avery should simply accept the money and move on. I plan to support whatever Avery decides, but I also wish there were some way to mend the relationship with their grandparents

without asking Avery to ignore the hurt they've experienced.

Should I encourage Avery to accept the gift as a loving gesture, despite the rejection that accompanies it? Or would doing so only deepen the pain

and confusion for everyone involved?

— *Torn Between Peace and Principle*

Dear Torn: It seems unlikely that, given Avery's grandfather's position, this money wouldn't come with some strings, at least emotionally. So, it's best that Avery goes into this arrangement clear-eyed. That isn't to say that they have to accept or agree to any strings. If their grandfather wants to repair the relationship, a check isn't going to be the thing to do it.

Since they're estranged, it would be helpful to find out what your father-in-law plans to do in order to get Avery this money. If he, for instance, wants to show up unannounced, it would be helpful to encourage him to rethink it or to warn Avery. But Avery is also an adult and should be trusted to navigate complex family dynamics on their own. If they're looking for advice, you can tell them that in this case, accepting the money doesn't seem to require denying anything about themselves and, as you noted, will help them to continue to pursue their dreams.

Dear Eric: I have a question about dividing belongings after a loved one dies. My mother is over 90 and failing. She will not likely live long. She has a house full of things that have huge sentimental value to my siblings.

I have seven brothers and sisters that have varying relationships to my mom and I from estranged to very close.

As the executor, I am very concerned about how it will go after she passes. She has chosen one of her possessions to go to every child and grandchild, but this only puts a small dent in



Eric Thomas

what she has. The emotions will be quite high.

Suggestions on how to handle this? Selling everything and splitting the money does not seem like the right thing to do.

— *Concerned Daughter*

Dear Daughter: I'm sorry about your mother's failing health. I'm sure that negotiating her care, your feelings and the questions around the estate is complicated and difficult. If your mother is willing, ask her to invite each child to come to the house before she passes, go through the sentimental items, and make a list of what they'd like. I've seen cases in which family members will go through a home and put stickers on things to "claim" them.

This allows your siblings, and you, the added benefit of connecting with your mom about these items before she's gone. This also allows you to preview any items that might be contentious. If two siblings want the same thing, you can then tell them and ask them to work it out between each other in advance. If they can't come to an agreement, perhaps you do a simple drawing to determine who takes it.

It's best that you communicate your plan and the reasoning behind it with everyone clearly. You may even want to send the list out to everyone in advance, so there's less possibility for confusion and re-creation. Emotions may still cause people to pull you into conflicts, but by front-loading your desire for fairness (and removing yourself from being the final word), you can add some peace and reason to a complex family dynamic.

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

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THE ALBANY HERALD

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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

—Georgia Trust for—
LOCAL NEWS

**TODAY’S
BIBLE
VERSE**

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”
Romans 14:11

COLUMNIST ■ MARC HYDEN

As insurance rates fall, tort reform takes much-deserved victory lap

Few of Gov. Brian Kemp’s policy initiatives have sparked as much controversy as his efforts to rein in rampant lawsuit abuse. He began championing this in 2023, and at the time, Georgia had one of the country’s most problematic civil justice systems, particularly burdening insurers and consumers.

A 2023 study even found that the broken tort system annually resulted in about 124,000 fewer jobs locally, and it increased costs on each Georgian by about \$1,200. Despite this, opposition – largely from the Democratic caucus and trial lawyers – mounted, and their message was consistent: The governor’s tort reforms won’t help Georgians.

Kemp and company pressed ahead anyway and ultimately prevailed by the narrowest of margins. In 2025, he signed the proposals into law, and while it can take many years to determine the success of any public policy, early returns appear incredibly promising to the dismay of naysayers who claimed they would invite disaster.

The doomsday predictions were curious given the scope of the reforms. As I wrote previously, the measure in question – Senate Bill 68 – simply aimed “to curb lawsuit abuse in many ways, including limiting attorneys from cherry-picking more favorable judicial jurisdictions; permitting juries to consider seat belt usage in car accident cases; ending jury awards for phantom damages; and reforming premises liability so that companies are not unfairly held responsible for injuries that occur near their businesses.”

To most people, these probably sound like commonsense approaches. However, tort reform critics suggested that they would prevent victims from receiving justice and big companies would financially benefit from these reforms without passing the savings on to customers. One outspoken activist even said that insurers don’t reduce premiums after tort reform. They simply pocket the savings. Those predictions sound concerning, but do they hold water?

Fast forward to 2026, and the sky has not fallen. In fact, plaintiffs continue to have their days in court and get the justice that they deserve, which is essential in a fair and balanced judicial system. As for the other charge, one tort reform opponent asserted, if lawsuit reform worked, then we would see premiums falling. If only we had data to address this claim. Oh wait, we do.

Marc Hyden is the senior director of state government affairs at the R Street Institute. Follow him on X at @marc_hyden.



HYDEN

In late 2025, Georgia’s Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner announced that Liberty Mutual planned to reduce premiums by an average of 5.7%, State Farm by a total average of 10% from the previous year and Safeco by around 5%. In February of this year, Allstate filed plans to reduce rates by 5%.

In April, Travelers Property Casualty Insurance Co. introduced plans to reduce premiums by more than 10%, and in June, filings showed that USAA would “lower rates, on average, by 4.7% at Gar-rison Property and Casualty Insurance Co., 4.5% for USAA Casualty Insurance Co. and 2.4% for USAA General Indemnity Co.,” according to an Atlanta TV station. And so on and so on.

This mirrors the success of tort reform elsewhere, and while the expectation from insiders was that tort reform would at the very least slow the rate of premium increases, they are coinciding with rate decreases. Correlation is not causation, and there are a host of factors that influence insurance rates. Yet tort reform has been one of – if not the – most significant policy changes affecting Georgia insurers in recent years.

According to Georgia Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John King, it is undoubtedly one of the primary drivers. In an op-ed, he wrote, “Georgia took meaningful steps to restore balance to its legal system, while preserving the right of every Georgian to seek justice when they’ve been wronged. [...] One year later, the early results are not just encouraging, they are measurable. Insurance costs are beginning to stabilize and, in many cases, decline.”

MARTA provides further evidence of this. In its Fiscal Year 2027 proposed budget, the transit agency forecasted the need for \$27 million for casualty and liability costs, compared to \$69 million in Fiscal Year 2025. The reason for this drop was – per a MARTA spokesman – “a reduced risk profile due to tort reform.”

No one can predict how long insurance premiums will remain on this downward trajectory. Rates result from complex calculations that represent risk, and if risk exposure increases – say due to a spate of large natural disasters – then rates will, too. That aside, given the early results following tort reform, it seems amazing that this was ever controversial.

GUEST COLUMNIST ■ GARY UNGER

For Albany’s senior actors, the show goes on

It’s over ... or is it?

What started with singing “Happy Birthday” for auditions to two sold-out performances, Theatre Albany’s first 55 and older production “Singin’ in the Rain Sr.” is no longer on the stage. But is it over?

In early May, auditions were held with the stipulation that actors had to be 55 years old or older. The cast required 23 people, and 23 people performed on opening night. (Actually, it was a 2:30 matinee since older people don’t like to drive at night.)

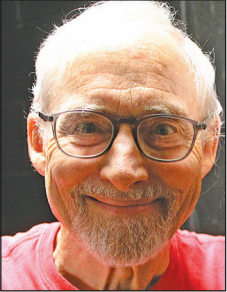
One person brought his wife to auditions, ended up auditioning and getting a part. No one was turned away; everyone was cast. There were veteran actors and singers, but most of the cast had never been on the stage.

First rehearsals brought trepidation, and cast members even thought of quitting. But as weeks of learning songs, learning dances, and learning blocking, the cast grew more confident. Repeating dance steps over and over and over and over ... the show began to take shape.

One cast member said, “I can sing, dance and act, it’s just hard doing all three at the same time.”

Rehearsing off-site and having only two weeks on the stage brought new challenges. The challenges were met with time and patience. Choreographer and “third director,” Judy Dabbs brought her experience to assist actors in every aspect of the production. She was vital to the show’s success.

Gary Unger, a retired educator, was the co-director, with his wife, Suzanne, of “Singin’ in the Rain Sr.”



UNGER

Quotes from the community and cast members reveal how deeply lives were touched.

“For several of us, being part of the cast was a healing experience: physically, mentally, socially,” one cast member said.

“This was one of the most rewarding challenges of my adult life,” another added.

“This has been one of the biggest challenges of my life, but the joy of them coming together to do this has had my heart

leap,” another said.

“Happily, the friends we made during ‘Singin’ in the Rain Sr.’ are now forever friends, and some have really changed me,” someone else offered.

“Every rehearsal has reminded us that the passion for the stage has no age limit,” an actor commented.

“Y’all provide a safe space for people who thought they may never be on stage or get on stage again,” one concluded.

For a cast, the show is never over. Memories remain, relationships run deep, and the urge to get back on the stage keeps pulling. Theatre Albany has many opportunities in this 93rd season. Audition, work backstage, paint, do make-up or hair, work as an usher, or just support it with your attendance at the shows. You will not be disappointed because “It is never over.”

For more information go to Theatrealbany.com.

GUEST COLUMNIST ■ CHARLIE HAYSLETT

Georgia’s job tax credits program: Big money, no oversight

At the end of a recent post on Georgia’s Job Tax Credit program, I asked readers to stay tuned, that there was more to come. The story was one that spawned a multitude of loose ends that I had to leave on the cutting room floor. This piece is about one of those loose ends, albeit a very big one: the simple question of who, if anyone, is making sure this thing works.

So I asked. And the first clear answer I got came from the person who manages the program at the Department of Community Affairs. The entire reply, verbatim: “There is no oversight process.”

Before we get into the oversight void, it’s worth noting just how big the Job Tax Credit program has become. I now have JTC reports from 2009 forward (except for one missing year, 2011). In 2009, businesses claimed about \$24.4 million in job tax credits for the creation of 4,409 jobs. From there through 2016, the annual total bounced around – up one year, down the next – and landed at \$53.4 million for 20,017 jobs.

Then it exploded. In 2017, JTC claims jumped to \$225.7 million and kept climbing, with a brief COVID-era pause in 2020 and 2021. In the first batch of reports the Department of Revenue sent me earlier this year, the program peaked at \$929.6 million in 2023. The revised, “corrected” reports they sent me a few weeks later knocked those numbers a good bit, but they still show a staggering increase in the past few years.

A program that quietly handed out a few dozen million dollars a year at the beginning of this period is now shaving something close to a half-billion dollars off Georgia companies’ tax bills every year, all in the name of “job creation.”

Maybe I’m naïve, but I figured that somewhere along the way, as the program ballooned from tens of millions to several hundred million, it might have occurred to somebody to build a proper set of brakes and gauges. I would have been wrong.

As it turns out, though, I’m not the only one to ask that question. A 2006 performance audit by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts of corporate income tax credits, including the Job Tax Credit, concluded that the Department of Revenue “cannot ensure that the credits have been accurately and consistently earned and used” because it relies heavily on taxpayer self-certifications, has limited documentation requirements, and audits only a small fraction of credits.

Three years later, a 2009 follow-up review by the same office found that “no steps have been taken to begin collecting data for evaluating the costs and benefits” of corporate tax credits, despite the 2006 recommendation that Georgia start doing just that. In that follow-up, the auditor noted that the state had forgone roughly \$644 million in corporate tax credits from 1999 through 2007 – without building the data systems needed to assess whether those tax expenditures were paying off.

The 2009 report did give DOR some credit for procedural improvements: an audit procedures manual for corporate tax credits, checklists for documentation, some training for auditors, and plans for an Integrated Tax System that would consolidate tax-credit administration. But on the big questions – collecting program-level data,

requiring supporting documentation up front, and building a quality-assurance process for approvals and denials – the verdict was blunt: “Not implemented.” DOR continued to argue that requiring documentation when businesses claim credits was not its job and that any decision to collect and analyze tax-credit data was a “policy decision for the General Assembly’s consideration.”

Fast-forward to 2022, and the Department of Audits and Accounts is still worrying aloud about whether the JTC program actually works. A tax-incentive evaluation of JTC found that the state does not collect the data it would need to know whether the credit is truly producing net new jobs and better outcomes in the counties it is supposed to help, and that credits have been granted without clear evidence of cost-effectiveness.

Instead of tightening oversight and finally building the data needed to answer those questions, the Department of Revenue has gone in a very different direction: It has made the program less transparent than ever.

For roughly 35 years, DOR has produced JTC reports showing, by county and by credit type, the number of jobs claimed and the amount of credit used. That changed recently. After being asked for the latest JTC reports and being submitted a handful of questions about seemingly odd JTC claims. DOR discovered “errors” in its data and then replaced 129 pages of detailed, county-specific entries with four 10-line statewide summary tables. The new reports aggregate every single JTC claim into statewide totals and strip out all county- and credit-level detail.

Amy Bushyeager, the DOR attorney who oversees the agency’s public information office, was sent several questions, including this one: Other than routine tax audits, does DOR perform any oversight of the JTC program or JTC claims? Anything to ensure that the jobs being claimed have actually been created and maintained as required under the law?

There’s been no answer. For a department that now insists it cannot let the public see even county-level JTC statistics, that silence speaks volumes – especially in combination with DCA’s “no oversight” acknowledgement.

Bottom line: Georgia now probably has the least transparent job-tax-credit program in the nation administered by a Revenue department that hides basic statistics and a Community Affairs department that freely admits “there is no oversight process.”

If this were a direct spending program, say a half-billion-dollar grant line for “job creation,” lawmakers would expect annual reports, performance measures, county-level breakdowns, and at least some assurance that the jobs being paid for actually exist.

Because the Job Tax Credit operates inside the tax code, those expectations seem to vanish. The dollars have exploded, the data have disappeared, and there is no visible oversight. As a result, taxpayers have no way of knowing how much of their state’s so-called job-creation money is actually landing in their communities.

Stay tuned. There are still a few more JTC loose ends to tie up – and a few rabbit holes to go down – before this story is done.



HAYSLETT

Charlie Hayslett is a mostly retired journalist and communications counselor now working on a book about the costs and consequences of the decline of rural Georgia. He blogs occasionally at www.troublingodscountry.com.

What to watch THURSDAY

July 9, 2026

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

Little House on the Prairie

Netflix ■ **New Series**

A new generation will be introduced to Laura Ingalls Wilder’s famous *Little House* books in this fresh adaptation of the Michael Landon-helmed series of the 1970s. In the eight-episode first season, the close-knit Ingalls family builds a new life on the Western frontier, where the joys of nature and the struggle for survival are deeply intertwined. The reboot features Alice Halsey (*Lessons in Chemistry*) as the curious, strong-willed and hot-tempered Laura Ingalls, the daughter of Charles (Luke Bracey) and Caroline (Crosby Fitzgerald), and younger sister of Mary (Skywalker Hughes).

FIFA World Cup: Quarterfinal

FOX, 4 p.m. Live

Eight teams remain in the quest to claim the World Cup, and one will be eliminated today following a quarterfinal match in Boston.

Celebrity Family Feud

ABC, 8 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Steve Harvey hosts a new season of the iconic game show featuring teams of celebrities playing with their family members or their work families for a chance to win \$25,000 for a charity of their choice.

Big Brother

CBS, 8 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Big Brother returns for Season 28, ushering in a landmark summer featuring the series’ 1,000th episode. Expect a season packed with twists and turns as a new group of Houseguests enter the iconic Big Brother house. After tonight’s 90-minute premiere, the series airs Wednesdays and Sundays, with hourlong live eviction shows airing Thursdays and the *Big Brother: Unlocked* companion series airing Fridays. Julie Chen Moonves returns as host.



Surviving Earth

NBC, 8 p.m.

In the new episode, a protective mother amphibian battles to keep her brood of eggs in water while the forest around her dries out and the trees collapse.

Press Your Luck

ABC, 9 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

The classic game of wits, strategy and high stakes returns as contestants compete for a chance at life-changing cash and prizes. Elizabeth Banks is back as host.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Happy 70th Birthday, Tom Hanks

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

It’s hard to believe that the cross-dressing Kip from TV’s *Bosom Buddies* turns 70 today, but it’s true. TCM celebrates tonight by chronicling the artistic evolution of one of cinema’s most beloved icons with a four-film marathon tracing the extraordinary range of Tom Hanks. It kicks off with Nora Ephron’s 1993 rom-com classic **Sleepless in Seattle (pictured)**, pairing Hanks and Meg Ryan in a film that made longing feel both funny and universal. Later that year came **Philadelphia**, a landmark drama co-starring Denzel Washington that broke new ground in mainstream Hollywood by confronting AIDS and discrimination head-on

TRISTAR PICTURES

in a monumental turning point in Hanks’ career that earned him his first Academy Award for Best Actor. Hanks made his directorial film debut with 1996’s **That Thing You Do!**, an effervescent, 1960s-set musical comedy following the rise and fall of a one-hit wonder that he also wrote and starred in as a savvy record executive. The evening concludes with Joe Dante’s delightfully dark satire **The ‘Burbs** (1989), featuring Hanks at the peak of his frantic, physical comedic energy as a stressed-out suburbanite driven to manic paranoia by his eccentric new neighbors.

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE

SUZANNE TENNER

I, Robot (2004, Science fiction) Will Smith, Bridget Moynahan **SYFY, 6 p.m.**

The Avengers (2012, Action) Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans **FX, 6 p.m.**

A League of Their Own (1992, Comedy-drama) Tom Hanks, Geena Davis **BBC America, 6:30 p.m.**

Bad Boys (1995, Action) Martin Lawrence, Will Smith **VICE, 7 p.m.**

Men in Black: International (2019, Science fiction) Chris Hemsworth, Tessa Thompson **E!, 7:30 p.m.**

The Silence of the Lambs (1991, Suspense) Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins **MGM, 8 p.m.**

To Catch a Cheater (2026, Suspense) Kate Watson, Philip Boyd **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Breakin’ All the Rules (2004, Romance-comedy) Jamie Foxx, Gabrielle Union **BET, 9 p.m.**

The Housemaid (2025, Suspense) Sydney Sweeney, Amanda Seyfried **Encore, 9 p.m.**

Deadpool (2016, Action) Ryan Reynolds, Morena Baccarin **FX, 9:30 p.m.**

The Mask (1994, Comedy) Jim Carrey, Cameron Diaz **E!, 10 p.m.**

Takers (2010, Action) Matt Dillon, Paul Walker **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

Happy Gilmore (1996, Comedy) Adam Sandler, Christopher McDonald **AMC, 11 p.m.**

From the editors of TV Weekly and tvinsider.com

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What to watch FRIDAY

July 10, 2026

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

FIFA World Cup: Quarterfinal

FOX, 3 p.m. Live

Today’s match has two teams competing in Los Angeles for a berth in the semifinals.

WNBA Basketball

ION, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Live

A regional WNBA game on ION has either the Golden State Valkyries at the Connecticut Sun or the Dallas Wings at the Toronto Tempo. The second game of the doubleheader has the Chicago Sky at the L.A. Sparks.

American Experience: ‘JFK’

PBS, 9 p.m.

PBS continues its celebration of America’s 250th birthday with an encore presentation of this 2013 *American Experience* installment looking back at the life, presidency and legacy of John F. Kennedy. Part 1 airs tonight. Part 2 airs next Friday.

The Listeners

Starz, 9 p.m. ■ **Series Finale**

This mysterious drama following Claire (Rebecca Hall), a teacher who hears a low, persistent hum that overturns her life, concludes. As the outside world closes in on the group, one last session ends in tragedy.



CATCH A CLASSIC

Special Theme: Summer of Darkness

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

The Friday night “Summer of Darkness” theme continues with three postwar films noir that were underappreciated in their time but became classics of the genre. Starring Farley Granger and Cathy O’Donnell, **They Live by Night** (1949) follows two young lovers whose dreams of a normal life are thwarted when a prison escape draws them into a desperate life on the run. Directed by Nicholas Ray, the picture blends romance and crime in a lyrical film noir about innocence pushed to the breaking point. Next up is 1950’s **Gun Crazy (pictured)**, starring Peggy Cummins and John Dall, which follows a pair of gun-obsessed lovers whose passion for firearms pulls them into a volatile crime



spree across the American West. Directed by Joseph H. Lewis, it is a hard-edged film noir celebrated for its daring visual style. Tonight’s theme concludes with **Night and the City** (1950), a hard-edged London noir about a small-time hustler (Richard Widmark) who claws his way toward a big score in the city’s wrestling underworld, only to find every scheme collapsing faster than he can spin it in a bleak world of desperation.

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE

LARRY HORRICKS

Barbie (2023, Comedy) Margot Robbie, Ryan Gosling **TNT, 6 p.m.**

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

Brave (2012, Children) Kelly Macdonald, Billy Connolly **Freeform, 6:30 p.m.**

Ocean’s Eleven (2001, Comedy-drama) George Clooney, Matt Damon **Bravo, 7 p.m.**

American Pie (1999, Comedy) Jason Biggs, Shannon Elizabeth **IFC, 7:15 p.m.**

Beetlejuice Beetlejuice (2024, Comedy) Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder **TBS, 8 p.m.**

Caught by Love (2026, Romance) Rachael Leigh Cook, Luke MacFarlane **Hallmark Media, 8 p.m.**

The Night Everything Changed (2026, Suspense) Lara Amersey, Monica Rodriguez Knox **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Rocky IV (1985, Drama) Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire **Sundance, 8:30 p.m.**

Spy (2015, Comedy) Melissa McCarthy, Jason Statham **FXM, 9 p.m.**

Fast X (2023, Action) Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez **SYFY, 10 p.m.**

O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000, Comedy-drama) George Clooney, John Turturro **TBS, 10:05 p.m.**

From the editors of TV Weekly and tvinsider.com

StayTuned

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The Ultimate Guide for What to Watch Now!

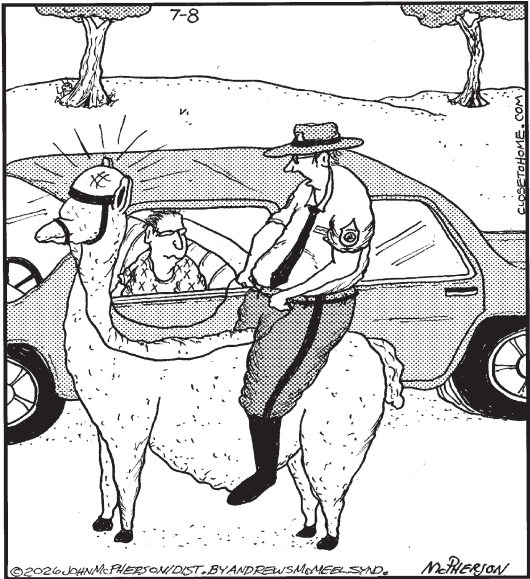
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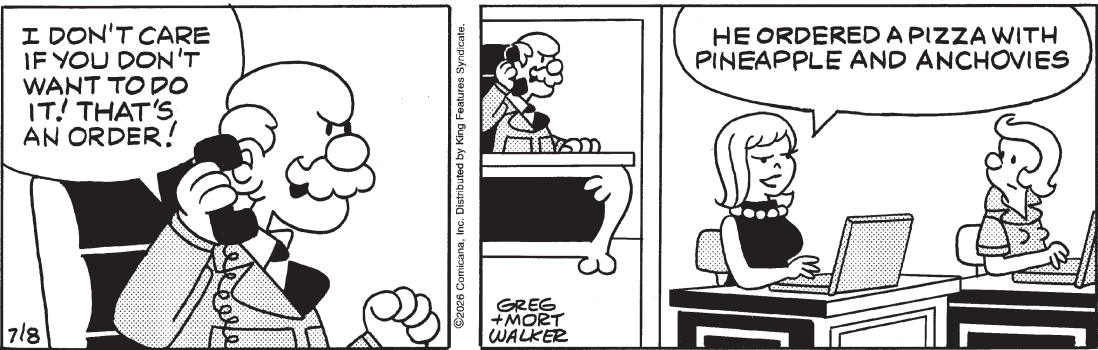
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TV - What to watch

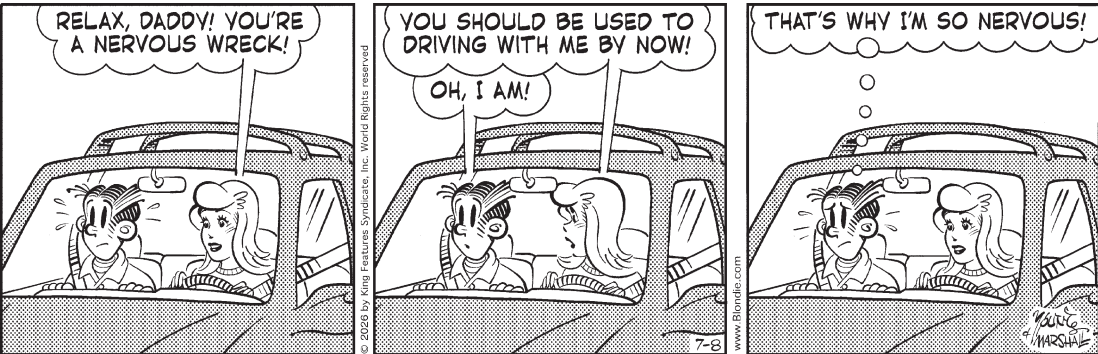
CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



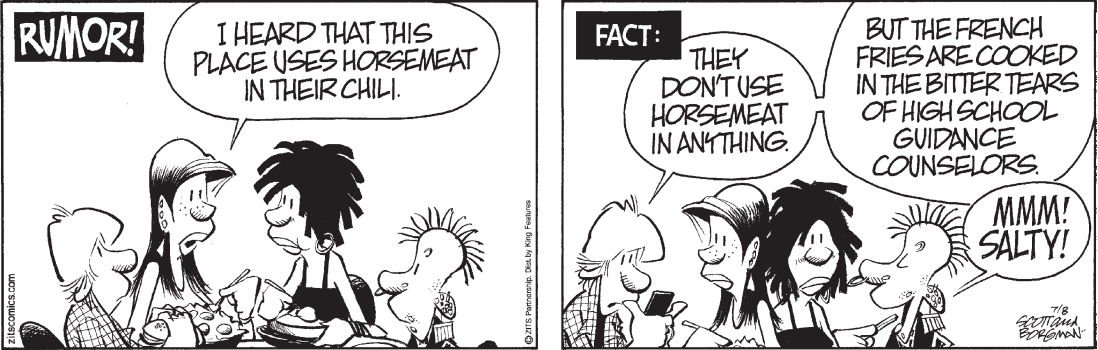
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



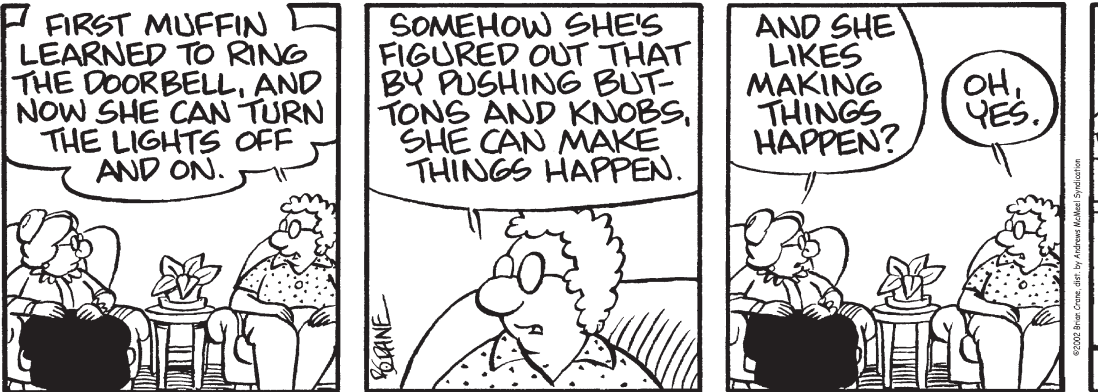
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane

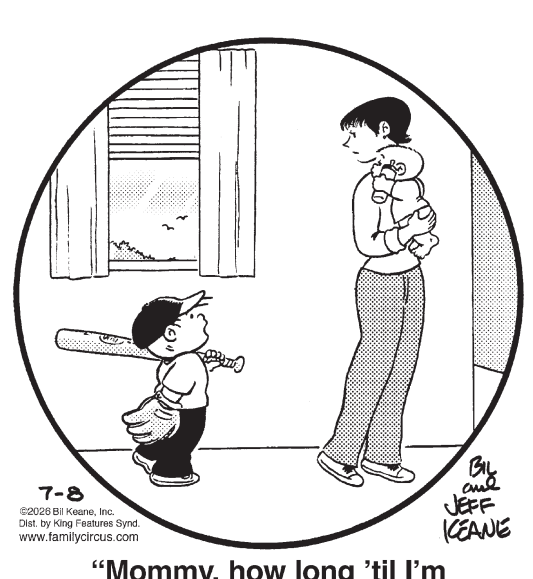


SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**
- Seaweed on tobiko maki
 - Diamond Head's island
 - Wants to take back
 - Security checkpoint request
 - CBS forensic franchise
 - See 34-Down
 - Corporation previously called Standard Oil of Indiana
 - Grieve
 - Dev of "Lion"
 - "Horned" bird
 - Language of the Quran
 - Snack steamed in a corn husk
 - Small shovels
 - Patella locale
 - Grammy winner Gorme
 - Like Kevin McCallister at Christmas
 - Inane
 - Feudal estate
 - Feb. follower
 - "Odds ..."
 - Tiny issue
 - With 6-Down, part of an Abraham Lincoln costume
 - Former South African president Nelson
 - Slices and
 - Member of MS NOW
 - Frequently, in poetry
 - March 14 dessert
 - Sign near a door slot of a 52-Across?
 - Look at
 - "Gangnam Style" rapper
 - Forever and a day
 - Group of lions
 - Home of Canadian curler Marc Kennedy
 - Community facility for researchers and book lovers
 - The "A" of IPA
 - ___ fountain
 - Greek fable writer
 - Healthy piece
 - Advice for patrons who borrow materials from a 52-Across?
 - Prefix with phone
 - Twinkle
 - Raison d'
 - Greek war god
 - County in southeast England
 - Furniture wood
 - Kingdom divisions
 - Food safety org.
 - Film spools
 - Peter the Great, for one
 - Not 'neath
 - Spot with many spots
 - Genetic material
 - Blood bank supply
 - ___ skates
 - Worldwide cold spell
 - Scottish hillside
 - Shoelace hole
 - Mountain hangout
 - Role models
 - Curses
 - Fill until full
 - Other, in Oaxaca
 - Steal a glance
 - Humanities degs.
 - ___ kwon do
 - Extreme sport with bunny hops

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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07/08/26

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			63						65	66				
67											69			
70												72		

By Jonathon Hales

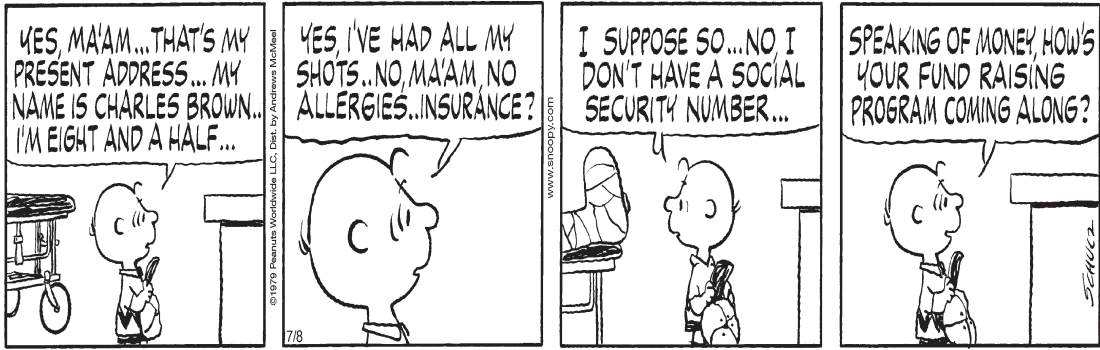
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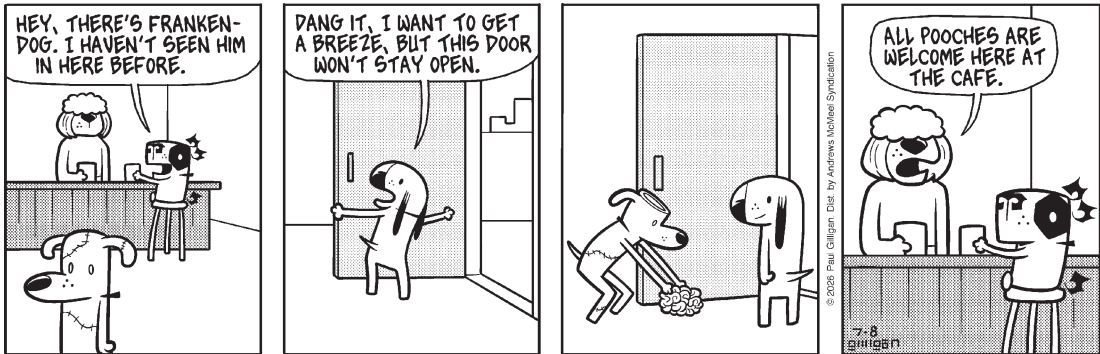
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

PIONEERS OF BLUES MUSIC

Solution: 10 letters

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

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Bands, BB King, Bessie, Birth, Cello, Chant, Composer, Dixon, Drums, Elvis Presley, Epic, Eric Clapton, Flair, Griffin, Hendrix, Hopkins, Howlin, Hymns, James, Janis, Jazz, Jimi, Jimmy, Joplin, Lightnin', Ma Rainey, Muddy, Patty, Piano, Reed, Robert, Scale, Skip, Smith, Solo, Songs, Soul, Swing, Tampa Red, T-Bone, Ukulele, Urban, Vinyl, Waters, Willie, Wolf

TODAY'S ANSWER: Three Kings

WHATZIT?

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

F	A	W	N
B	L	U	E
Y	E	L	L
P	I	N	K
B	R	O	W
G	R	E	E

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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:

With flying colors

TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

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

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



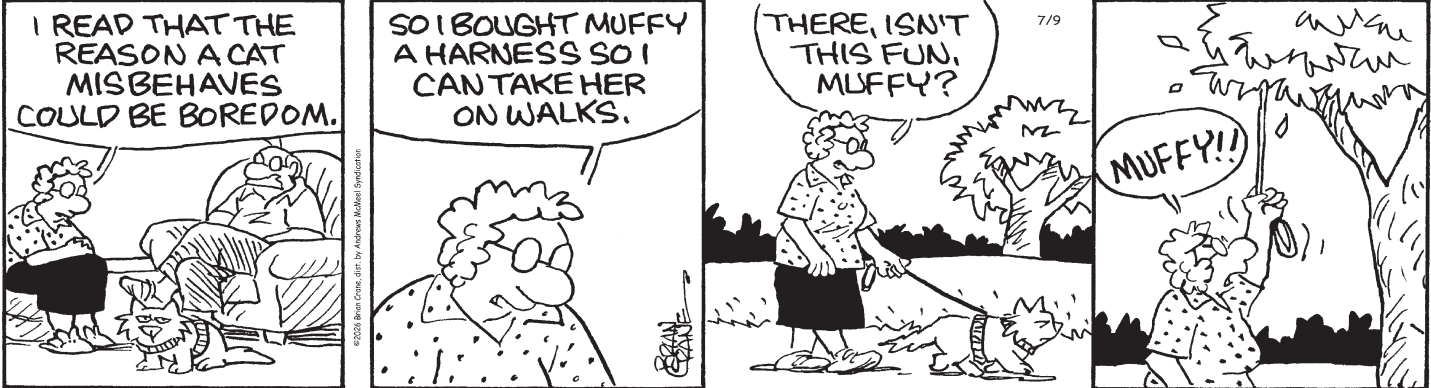
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING:☆☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

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

HO

HO

HO

+

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:

HO HO HO

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Suitable
4 Rude fellow
8 5,280 feet
12 Cry of disdain
13 Uncommon
14 Notion
15 Student at Yale
16 Slanted type: Abbr.
17 Mailbox feature
18 Doctrine
20 Pays attention
22 PIN prompter
24 "Able was I — I saw Elba"
25 Muss
28 Sadness
32 Concurred
33 In days gone by
34 Dernier —
35 Edible mollusk
38 Tried
42 Reared

DOWN

1 Help to do wrong
2 Wan
3 Slender
4 Easily broken
5 Cheerios — Crunch
6 Spoken
7 Depends
8 Gardener's device
9 Lazy
10 Juan Ponce de —
11 Consumes
19 Relaxation

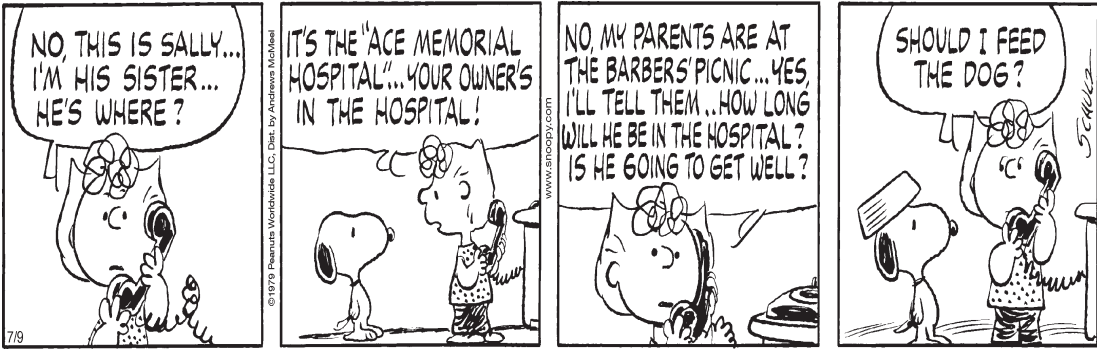
TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

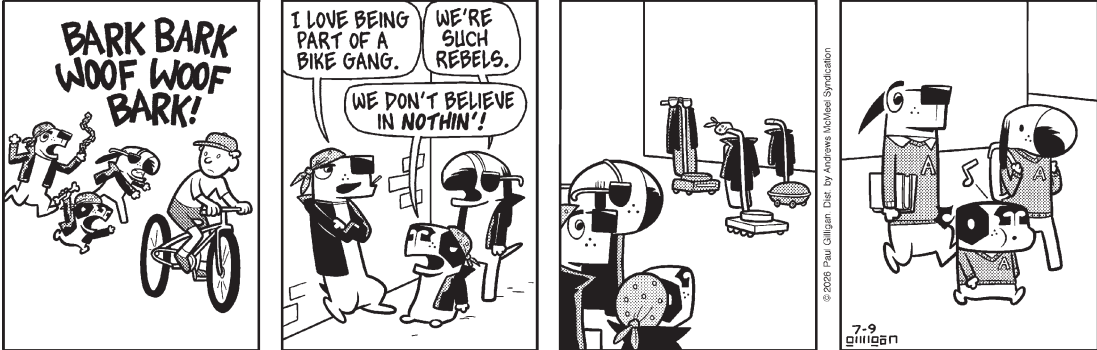
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

BOSTON STRIP STEAK Solution: 9 letters

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

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Aroma, Barbecue, Beef, Bold, Boneless, Butcher, Charcoal, Cook, Cross-cut, Fajitas, Flavors, Garlic, Gravy, Grill Rack, Herbs, Juiciest, Lean, Lemon, Marbling, Meal, Meat, Medium, Moist, Onion, Plate, Rare, Recipe, Restaurant, Salads, Salt, Sauce, Sauté, Sear, Sirlion, Size, Smoke, Stir-Fry, Tasty, Temperature, Tender, Texture, Thermometer, Thyme

TODAY'S ANSWER: Sub-primal

Ruth’s Cottage and The Patticake House launches domestic violence fundraiser

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON—This July, the Tifton Judicial Circuit Shelter Inc., DBA Ruth’s Cottage and The Patticake House (RCPCH), is launching its sixth annual campaign with a goal of raising \$50,000 to support services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault throughout south Georgia.

In 2025 alone, Ruth’s Cottage and the Patticake House answered 1,037 hotline calls, provided emergency shelter to 353 individuals, helped 224 individuals with getting a temporary protective order from their stalker or abuser, supported 115 sexual assault survivors through advocacy, served five adult human trafficking victims, and provided 152 forensic interviews for children who have been abused and/or witnessed a violent crime and an additional forensic interview for their non-offending caregiver.

In total, Ruth’s Cottage and The Patticake House served 3,884 adults, children, and pets across all their programs in 2025.

“These numbers reflect the ongoing need for our services throughout the communities we serve,” Nancy Bryan, the executive director of RCPCH, said. “Behind every service



provided is a person or family facing one of the most difficult moments of their lives. Thanks to the support of our donors, community partners, and volunteers, we are able to offer safety, advocacy, and support when it is needed most. However, because of insecure funding due to changes in federal grants and the recent budget vetoes by Gov. (Brian) Kemp in the state budget for victim-serving organizations, we need our community’s help to keep these services going.”

RCPCH serves the Tifton Judicial Circuit through direct services and outreach and education programs in Tift, Turner, Irwin and Worth counties. Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in 2002, RCPCH’s mission is to end domestic violence, sexual violence, and child abuse through a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to investigations, advocacy, support, prevention and education.

Founded to provide domestic violence services, child advocacy services, and sexual assault services under one or-

ganization, RCPCH became the only state-certified triple program in south Georgia in 2018 and remains one of only a few agencies in Georgia to offer all three programs.

Through a 24-hour emergency hotline, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, crisis intervention, support groups, sexual assault advocacy and child advocacy services, RCPCH provides comprehensive support to victims and their families. The Patticake House Child Advocacy Center offers forensic interviews, family advocacy services, and forensic medical exams for children and youths who have experienced abuse. Additionally, RCPCH is also certified through the state to serve both children and adults who are victims of human trafficking.

“Our goal is not only to respond to crisis situations but to help create pathways toward healing and self-sufficiency,” Bryan said. “The support we receive through this campaign allows us to continue providing essential services while strengthening the communi-



Special Images: Ruth's Cottage

ties we serve.”

Funds raised through the annual campaign will support emergency shelter, child advocacy services, sexual assault services, crisis intervention, court accompaniment, transportation assistance, basic necessities and community support groups for survivors and families, and training opportunities to help community members prevent and/or recognize key issues.

“Every contribution helps ensure that these services remain available for those who need them,” Bryan said. “We are grateful for the continued support of our communities and invite everyone to join us in helping Stop the Hurt. Donations of all sizes make a difference.”

Those interested in supporting RCPCH may donate online, through Venmo at @ruthscottage_thepatticakehouse, by mailing a check to P.O. Box 2727, Tifton, Ga. 31793, or by delivering contributions to the RCPCH Administrative Office at 211 Chesnutt Ave. in Tifton.



Special Photo: Georgia Rivers\

Outdoors enthusiasts are invited to beat the Georgia summer heat with one of several canoe/kayak trips planned on state waterways.

Adventurers can cool off on Georgia rivers with summer canoe/kayak trips

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATHENS -- It’s hot out, but a statewide river conservation group reports that it’s cool on Georgia’s rivers.

Through the end of the summer, Georgia Rivers will host several canoe/kayak/paddleboard trips and kayak fishing trips on north Georgia rivers. The group’s outdoor adventures continue into the cooler months with trips on south Georgia’s Flint River and in the Okefenokee Swamp.

“When it comes to summertime in Georgia, there’s not much better than dipping your toes — or your whole body — in a Georgia river,” Georgia Rivers Executive Director Rena Peck said in a news release.

Registration is currently open for paddle trips on the Chattooga River in northwest Georgia (July 25), the Chattahoochee River in Columbus (Aug. 8), the Toccoa River near Blue Ridge (Aug. 22) and the Oconee River near Athens (Sept. 12).

Kayak fishing trips are planned for the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta (July 18 and Aug. 15), the Chestatee River near Dahlonega (Aug. 29) and the Flint River near Thomaston (Sept. 19-20).

In the fall, Georgia Rivers will host two-day camping and paddling trips on the Flint River (Oct. 9-11) and on the Okefenokee Swamp and Suwannee River (Nov. 6-8 and Nov. 20-22).

Registration for these events is now open.

A day trip on the Savannah River near Augusta is also planned for Nov. 1.

Additional information and registration instructions are available at www.garivers.org/events.

The summer events on the Chattooga, Toccoa and Chattahoochee rivers feature visits to local folk art landmarks, including Howard Finster’s Paradise Gardens near the Chattooga River; Eddie Owens Martin’s Pasasquan in Buena Vista (a short drive from the Chattahoochee in Columbus), and The Groovy Zoo, a metal

sculpture wonderland near the Toccoa River in Mineral Bluff.

The Sept. 12 journey on the Oconee and Nov. 1 trip on the Savannah will include harvests of wild fruits and jam-making sessions — wild muscadine on the Oconee and wild persimmons on the Savannah.

Kayak fishing adventures are led by American Canoe Association-certified kayak-fishing instructor Kendon Townsel, who will provide tips and training for getting the most from kayak fishing experiences.

The Oct. 9-11 Georgia Rivers Fall Float on the Flint will introduce paddlers to a 36-mile stretch of the river between Albany and Bainbridge filled with playful shoals, abundant wildlife, beautiful limestone bluffs and blue hole springs. The trip features two nights of camping at Rocky Bend Flint River Retreat in Newton, meals catered by local restaurants and breweries, and nightly educational programs.

The organization heads to the Okefenokee in November. On Nov. 6-8, paddlers can explore the Okefenokee Swamp’s wilderness canoe trails and a portion of the Suwannee River with

camping, catered meals and nightly educational programs at historic Griffis Fish Camp in Fargo.

On Nov. 20-22, paddlers will stay at the Stephen Foster State Park Suwannee River EcoLodge while exploring both the east and west side of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, which may earn UNESCO World Heritage Site status this summer. This event features catered meals and nightly educational programs.

“We organize these trips to engage people with our rivers,” Peck said. “When people experience our rivers, they are motivated to take action to protect them. We need a statewide village to keep our rivers clean, healthy and accessible to all.”

The trips support the organization’s river conservation efforts.

Southwest Georgians ... Put on your dancing shoes

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – In partnership with the SOWEGA Council on Aging, The Albany Area Arts Council has announced the launch of the Michelle Oaks Mattocks Memorial Dance Program. Led by instructor Autumn Cockrell-Abdullah, “Salsa: Movement, Music, and Connection” provides a welcoming, senior-friendly salsa class that offers a fun way to explore dance, music and movement while building confidence, balance, coordination, and community.

Designed for all experience levels, the class teaches foundational salsa steps at a comfortable pace, with no partner required.

These classes are offered on a flexible drop-in basis without the need to commit to a multi-week session, making it easier than ever to enjoy dance whenever individuals’



Special Illustration

schedules allow.

Participants are encouraged to arrive approximately 15 minutes before their first class to complete registration. Comfortable clothing is recommended, along with hard-soled shoes or socks for the best dancing experience.

Class Details
• Wednesdays at noon and 6 p.m.
• \$10 per class; free for dancers age 60-plus
• Please arrive 15 minutes early to register
• Wear hard-soled shoes or socks

• No partner needed — just come ready to dance
For questions about upcoming events at the Arts Council, visit Facebook for more information or call (229) 439-2787. Regular gallery hours are Monday-Thursday, noon-4 p.m.

Tiftarea YMCA donates proceeds from Tour de Tifton to TRMC Foundation

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON – The Tiftarea YMCA recently donated a portion of the proceeds from the 16th annual Tour de Tifton and Ilse Boyette Memorial Ride to the Tift Regional Medical Center Foundation to support the Ilse Boyette Book Scholarship.

Held March 28, the annual cycling event attracted more than 60 riders from across the region. Participants had the opportunity to choose from scenic south Georgia routes ranging from 11 to 100 miles, making the ride accessible for cyclists of all experience levels.

“We are grateful to the Tiftarea YMCA for its continued partnership and support of the TRMC Foundation,” Mandy Brooks, executive director of the TRMC Foundation, said. “Events like the Tour de Tifton not only bring our community together but also help provide educational opportunities for students pursuing their goals.”

The Ilse Boyette Book Schol-



Special Photo: TRMC

The Tiftarea YMCA Tour de Tifton board presented the Tift Regional Medical Center Foundation with funds designated for the Ilse Boyette Book Scholarship. Taking part in the presentation were, from left, Tiftarea YMCA CEO Jason Bishoff, Joe Gray, TRMC Foundation Director Mandy Brooks, Paul Horst and Dr. Bret Wagenhorst.

arship awards two \$500 scholarships each year to nontraditional students who need assistance purchasing college textbooks. The scholarship was established by Boyette’s family through the TRMC Foundation in honor

of her commitment to education, healthcare and the community.

Boyette served as a registered nurse at Tift Regional Medical Center for more than 20 years and was an avid cyclist who helped organize,

volunteer for and participate in the inaugural Tour de Tifton in 2009.

For more information about the TRMC Foundation or the Ilse Boyette Book Scholarship, visit trmcf.com or call (229) 391-3310.

Greater Community Baptist Church to host Men’s and Women’s Day Conference

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ARLINGTON – Tremaine O. Alford Sr., the pastor and founder of Greater Community Missionary Baptist Church here, is inviting the community to attend the Men’s and Women’s Day Conference at the 566 Pioneer Road NE church Saturday starting at 10 a.m.

Taking part in the conference will be Apostle Fred-

erick Johnson and Pastor Stephanie Johnson, Pastor James Mitchell and the Pastor/Co-pastor team of Eddie and Taungia Jones.

All are welcome to attend the conference, but those who cannot attend in person can watch live on the @greatercommunity Facebook page.

Deacon Clifford Marshall is chairman of the event.

Five Braves headed to All-Star Game

By Mark Bowman
Braves.com

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Braves will be well represented at this year’s All-Star Game. The Braves matched the Philadelphia Phillies and Los Angeles Dodgers for the most National League selections with five players named to the Midsummer Classic, highlighted by rookie catcher Drake Baldwin and veteran closer Raisel Iglesias earning the first All-Star selections of their careers.

Joining Baldwin and Iglesias are first baseman Matt Olson, second baseman Ozzie Albies and left-hander Chris Sale, who reached a significant milestone by earning his 10th career All-Star selection.

The five representatives are Atlanta’s largest All-Star contingent since eight Braves were selected in 2023. Olson and Albies are the only holdovers from that group. “You want to have a good representation,” Olson said. “These guys have been playing well all year. I’m happy we’ve got some guys who are deserving. I still feel like there’s a couple more that deserve it as well. We’ll see what happens there.” One player who narrowly missed making the initial roster was center fielder Michael Harris II, who finished just behind the Dodgers’ Andy Pages in fan voting among National



File photo

Chris Sale earned his 10th career All-Star selection and headlines Atlanta’s five-player contingent for this year’s Midsummer Classic, tying the Phillies and Dodgers for the most National League representatives.

See **BRAVES**, 10A



Special Photo: Submitted

Defending champions Janky Promoters of Atlanta celebrate the championship after winning last year’s Battle of the South at Monroe High School. The 31st annual tournament tips off Saturday with 20 teams from Georgia, Florida and Tennessee competing in the two-day, double-elimination event.

Battle of the South tips off Saturday at Monroe

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — For 31 summers, some of the Southeast’s top basketball talent has made its way to Albany for one weekend of intense competition, familiar faces and community fellowship. This weekend, the Battle of the South returns for another chapter. The 31st annual tournament tips off Saturday at Monroe High School, bringing together 20 teams from Georgia, Florida and Tennessee for two days of high-level competition featuring semi-professional players and professionals who compete overseas. The double-elimination tournament has become one of southwest Georgia’s longest-running summer basketball traditions, attracting talented players who return year after year to compete for the championship. “We will have some big names coming back,” tournament organizer Fred Pickett said. “They enjoy coming back to compete in this tournament. We just want it to be a surprise who is coming.” For Pickett, however, the tournament has always been about more than the names on the roster. “It is really a great family event, and it is such a blessing to be able to put together this tournament for the last 30 years,” he said. This year’s tournament will also continue a tradition that began last summer by honoring one of the event’s most beloved competitors. For the second consecutive year, the

tournament’s Most Valuable Player will receive the Marvin Douglas MVP Award, named in memory of longtime tournament standout Marvin Douglas, who passed away before last year’s event. Douglas was a familiar face at the Battle of the South for many years and remains one of the tournament’s most respected players. Fans once again will be able to enjoy the action free of charge, thanks to the support of 15 sponsors, including the City of Albany and Dougherty County. “It is such a blessing to be able to host this tournament in a great city like Albany,” Pickett said. “The community enjoys this event, and there is no place better to have it.” Pickett also expressed his appreciation to Monroe High School boys basketball coach Michael Hoffpauir for opening the school’s gymnasium for the event. “Big thanks out to Monroe Coach Michael Hoffpauir for allowing us to use the great facility at Monroe,” Pickett said. Opening-round games begin Saturday at 9 a.m., with action continuing throughout the day. Sunday’s schedule starts at 10 a.m., and the tournament concludes with the championship game at 6 p.m. With another field of talented players, free admission and a tradition now entering its fourth decade, the Battle of the South once again promises a weekend of exciting basketball for fans across southwest Georgia. “We are ready to throw up the ball and get rolling,” Pickett said.



Special Photo: Imagn Images

Belgium’s relentless attack kept the pressure on the United States throughout Monday’s Round of 16 match in Seattle, handing the Americans a 4-1 defeat to end their World Cup run. Belgium advanced to the quarterfinals to face Spain.

Belgium rout ends U.S. World Cup run

Field Level Media

SEATTLE — For a few weeks, the United States looked like a program ready to take a meaningful step on the world stage. Then Belgium reminded the Americans how far they still have to go. Charles De Ketelaere scored twice and added an assist Monday as Belgium overwhelmed the United States 4-1 in the Round of 16, ending the Americans’ World Cup run with a harsh lesson in finishing, defending and the unforgiving nature of knockout soccer. The Red Devils advanced to face Spain in Friday’s quarterfinals in Inglewood, Calif. The U.S., one of the tournament’s co-hosts, was left to sort through a night that exposed many of the concerns that had followed the team into the World Cup. “It just hurts to be eliminated,”

U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino said. “We did not play at the level that we had shown in the past. In spite of that, we are very proud of our whole campaign together. And today hurts.” Belgium wasted little time seizing control. De Ketelaere scored in the ninth minute after the U.S. failed to clear the ball inside its own box, allowing Nicolas Raskin to collect possession and feed De Ketelaere between defenders Tim Ream and Antonee Robinson. The Americans briefly found life in the 31st minute when Malik Tillman’s free kick deflected into the net to tie the match at 1-1 and ignite the sellout crowd of 66,925. The momentum lasted less than two minutes. De Ketelaere struck again in the 33rd minute, beating Ream to a cross from Leandro Trossard and heading Belgium back

in front. From there, the match tilted firmly toward the Red Devils. “I think when you concede goals that easily against a team of that quality and that caliber, it’s going to be difficult,” U.S. midfielder Tyler Adams said. “We gave them good chances, or even half-chances, and they finished them. It was just a little bit too easy today.” The United States pressed for an equalizer early in the second half, but Belgium delivered the decisive blow in the 57th minute when goalkeeper Matt Freese misplayed a long ball outside his area. De Ketelaere helped set up Hans Vanaken, who finished into an empty net for a 3-1 lead. Christian Pulisic left in the 59th minute after being injured while attempting a shot, further dimming any hope of an American comeback. Romelu Lukaku added Belgium’s fourth goal in stoppage time after a U.S. turnover. “We played with mastery, with willingness and with determination,” Belgium coach Rudi Garcia said. “We showed a great face to the world.”

The loss came after a dramatic buildup in which FIFA restored Folarin Balogun’s eligibility less than 36 hours before kickoff. But while much of the attention centered on the striker’s availability, Belgium’s attack exposed the Americans’ deeper problem: a back line that could not handle the step up in class. Pochettino, whose contract expires after the World Cup, said he will take time before deciding whether to remain with the national team. He reportedly has an offer to stay through the 2030 cycle. “We have set the foundation to be successful in the future,” Pochettino said. That future now becomes the focus for Team USA, which must decide whether Pochettino is the coach to lead the next generation toward the 2030 World Cup in Morocco, Portugal and Spain.

Hodo named to lead Greenwave basketball

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

DAWSON — Telvin Hodo didn’t come to Terrell County hoping to build a respectable basketball team. Respectable isn’t the standard. Around Dawson, the Greenwave have a history of competing for region championships and making postseason noise. Hodo believes the pieces are already in place to return the program to that level. His job now is convincing his players to believe it, too. “We’re trying to bring back the tradition of winning at Terrell County,” Hodo said. “We want to be fighting for region championships and competing for state titles.” After spending the past decade paying his dues as an assistant coach, Hodo finally gets his first opportunity to

lead a varsity program. He began his coaching career at Lithia Springs High School before spending the last several seasons at Hardaway High School in Columbus, coaching virtually every level of the game along the way. “I’ve coached just about every level of basketball except varsity head coach,” Hodo said. “This is an opportunity I’ve been working toward.” He inherits a Greenwave team that finished 11-15 overall and 10-10 in region play last season, but Hodo sees something much different than a sub-.500 record. He sees experience. Terrell County graduated only two seniors, meaning nearly the entire roster returns with another year of varsity basketball under its belt. Leading that group is Dom-

inique Polite, whom Hodo believes has the talent to become one of southwest Georgia’s premier players. “I think he can be one of those guys who leads the right way,” Hodo said. “I told him I believe he can earn Region Player of the Year if he keeps working.” Polite is one reason Hodo believes the Greenwave can contend immediately, but the first-year coach knows talent alone won’t change the direction of the program. Culture will. Throughout June, Terrell County’s practices looked different than in years past as players adjusted to Hodo’s system, one built on accountability, communication and trusting one another. “We’ve definitely gotten better at trusting each other



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Coach Telvin Hodo is the new head boy’s basketball coach at Terrell County High School. He comes to Dawson after spending 10 years in coaching, most recently at Hardaway High School in Columbus.

See **HODO**, 10A

Braves armed for draft weekend

By Mark Bowman
Braves.com

ATLANTA — A year ago, the Atlanta Braves used the Major League Baseball Draft to address a glaring need in their farm system by stocking up on position players. The early returns have been

encouraging.

Now, armed with two first-round selections and the ninth overall pick, the Braves hope to build on that success when the 2026 MLB Draft begins Saturday.

Atlanta owns the No. 9 and No. 26 overall picks, giving

the club two of the first 26 selections and five picks in the opening four rounds. Combined with an \$15.87 million bonus pool — the eighth-largest in baseball — the Braves are well-positioned to further strengthen what has become one of the organization’s deepest farm systems in years.

“You can never have enough arms,” Braves.com wrote in its draft preview, “but thanks to last year’s selections, the Braves will enter this year’s MLB Draft with their farm system more balanced and as strong as it’s been in a decade.”

That turnaround began in last year’s draft, when Atlanta selected position players with five of its first six picks.

Shortstop Tate Southisene, the club’s first-round pick, has already climbed to No. 4 on MLB Pipeline’s list of Braves prospects after battling his way from Single-A to High-A this season. The 19-year-old entered the week with 10 home runs, 43 stolen bases and a .929 OPS before his promotion in June.

Fellow infield prospect Alex Lodise ranks fifth in the organization, while Conor Essenburg is No. 13. Left-handed pitcher Briggs McKenzie, Atlanta’s fourth-round selection a year ago, has emerged as the club’s No. 7 prospect and could ultimately prove to be the biggest steal of the class.

The Braves have enjoyed a string of successful drafts in recent years.

Drake Baldwin, selected in the third round in 2022, developed into the 2025 National League Rookie of the Year and will start behind the plate for the National League in this year’s All-Star Game.

The 2022 draft also produced top pitching prospects JR Ritchie and Owen Murphy, while 2023 first-round pick Hurston Waldrep became a key contributor in Atlanta’s rotation late last season. Cam Caminiti, the Braves’ top selection in 2024, has developed into MLB Pipeline’s No. 44 overall prospect.

Atlanta is hoping this year’s class can have a similar impact.

The organization hasn’t owned a top-10 pick since selecting catcher Shea Langeliers with the ninth overall choice in 2019. Langeliers never played for the Braves in the major leagues but became the centerpiece of the trade package that landed All-Star first baseman Matt Olson from Oakland before the 2022 season.

With four of the first 84 selections this year, Atlanta believes it has another opportunity to assemble a draft class reminiscent of its outstanding 2016 haul that included Kolby Allard, Mike Soroka, Austin Riley and A.J. Minter.

Who the Braves choose at No. 9 remains uncertain.

In his latest mock draft, MLB.com’s Jim Callis projects Atlanta selecting Stoneman Douglas (Fla.) High School left-hander Gio Rojas, considered one of the nation’s top prep pitchers. Callis also noted the Braves could instead target a polished college hitter such as Georgia Tech outfielder Drew Burress, Arkansas catcher Ryder Helfrick or Texas A&M second baseman Chris Hacopian.

Regardless of which direction Atlanta goes, the Braves enter the weekend with valuable draft capital, financial flexibility and a recent track record that suggests another productive weekend could help keep the organization’s pipeline flowing for years to come.

From 9A HODO

er this summer,” Hodo said. “We are putting them into a system with full practices that, from what I’m told, is different than what they’ve had in the past.”

The biggest sign that the buy-in is taking hold came during a summer game against neighboring Lee County.

The victory won’t count in the standings, but Hodo believes it counted where it mattered most.

“I know it’s just a summer game and it doesn’t count, but for our guys it was nice,” Hodo said. “They told me they hadn’t beaten Lee County at anything in a while, so they were happy to get a win over Lee.”

For Hodo, the celebration afterward revealed more than the final score.

“What that tells me is that if we keep working together and play together, we can compete.”

The balancing act now becomes preparing Terrell County to win immediately while continuing to develop the younger players who will sustain the program in future seasons.

“Coaching at this level is challenging because you have the ‘win now’ mentality while also working to develop the future,” Hodo said. “It is a delicate balance.”

Still, Hodo believes this year’s roster is capable of making a run.

“We’ve got some talented juniors and seniors, and I be-

lieve we can challenge for a region title,” he said. “At the same time, I’m working to develop these younger players as well.”

That won’t be easy in one of southwest Georgia’s toughest basketball regions, but Hodo embraces the challenge.

“I am excited to be leading the charge for Terrell County boys basketball,” he said. “We want to do what is necessary to compete in a very deep region. Tough competition is ahead, but I believe we can compete and make some noise with buy-in from the guys and support from the community.”

While wins and championships remain the ultimate goal, Hodo hopes his impact extends beyond the scoreboard.

“I am blessed to have this opportunity to lead the Terrell County program,” he said. “I look forward to bringing the tradition back through hard work and helping our kids get into college and be successful at the next level.”

Summer victories won’t appear in the record book, and optimism alone won’t bring back the Greenwave tradition.

But after a month under Hodo’s leadership, Terrell County has taken the first step toward changing something more important than its record.

The Greenwave are beginning to expect more from themselves.

If that mindset continues to grow, Hodo believes the wins—and perhaps a return to championship contention—will follow.

From 9A BRAVES

League outfielders. Harris remains one of the leading candidates to receive an All-Star replacement if another position player withdraws.

Baldwin’s selection caps a remarkable rise for the 25-year-old catcher, who was named the National League Rookie of the Year just last season. He becomes the third different Braves catcher to earn an All-Star nod over the past five seasons, joining Travis d’Arnaud in 2022 and Sean Murphy in 2023.

The rookie also was elected to the National League’s starting lineup, joining Albies as Atlanta’s two fan-elected starters.

Iglesias also will make his All-Star debut after four full seasons with Atlanta. The veteran closer entered the weekend with 17 saves and a sparkling 1.53 ERA while anchoring one of baseball’s top late-inning bullpens alongside Robert Suarez and Dylan Lee.

Lee could still join his teammates if roster changes are needed. Suarez is expected to miss the All-Star Game after being sidelined by right elbow inflammation.

Sale continues adding to an already impressive résumé.

The reigning National League Cy Young Award winner earned his 10th All-Star selection and third consecutive nod since joining Atlanta. Entering Saturday’s start against the New York Mets, Sale ranked third in the National League with a 2.10 ERA and had compiled a 1.70 ERA over his previous 12 starts.

Only Los Angeles Angels star Mike Trout, with 12 selections, has more All-Star appearances among active major league players. Former

Braves first baseman Freddie Freeman also earned his 10th All-Star selection this season.

Olson, meanwhile, continues Atlanta’s tradition of elite first basemen. The Atlanta native earned his fourth career All-Star selection and third since joining his hometown club before the 2022 season. Entering the weekend, Olson was tied with Freeman for the National League lead among first basemen with a 2.8 Wins Above Replacement (fWAR) and ranked fifth in Major League Baseball with 207 home runs since the start of the 2021 season.

Albies also secured his fourth All-Star berth but will receive a new honor when he starts at second base for the National League. His previous selections came in 2018, 2021 and 2023, though this marks the first time he has been voted into the starting lineup. Albies entered the weekend with 14 home runs after injuries limited him to just 26 combined over the previous two seasons.

One notable absence from Atlanta’s All-Star group is Ronald Acuña Jr. The 2023 National League MVP saw his injury-shortened season end his streak of five consecutive fan-elected starting assignments. Acuña’s five previous starts matched Braves legends Hank Aaron and Chipper Jones for the most fan-elected starts in franchise history.

Despite missing Acuña, the Braves again boast one of baseball’s deepest collections of star talent, with five players headed to the All-Star Game and the possibility of additional roster additions before festivities begin.



Special Photo: UGAAA

Georgia infielder Kolby Branch will be looking to add a gold medal to his collection of awards after earning a spot on the USA Collegiate Team that is in Taiwan to compete for the World Collegiate Baseball Championship.

Branch earns spot on USA baseball team

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATHENS, Ga.—University of Georgia graduate Kolby Branch has earned a spot on USA Baseball’s Collegiate National Team (CNT), it was announced Sunday.

Branch will be on the team that left Monday to compete in the inaugural World Collegiate Baseball Championship in Taichung City, Taiwan, from July 11-15. The 2026 CNT roster was named after 11 days of workouts, practices, and intrasquad scrimmages across North Carolina and Virginia. A total of 53 players were vying for a spot on the team.

“After nearly two weeks of an extremely competitive Training Camp, we are excited to finalize the 28-man roster that will represent the United States in the inaugural World Collegiate Baseball Championship,” said Eric Campbell, USA Baseball’s General Manager of Professional and Collegiate National Teams. “The talent at Training Camp was incredible and made this decision difficult, but we are confident that these 28 players will represent the U.S. well in our quest to win a gold medal.”

Branch, a 6-0, 200-pound

native of Lucas, Texas, was a three-year starter for the Bulldogs and was awarded a Gold Glove for his defensive play this past season as selected by the American Baseball Coaches Association and Rawlings Sporting Goods.

Branch started all 67 games for the Bulldogs this past season as they finished with a 53-14 record, tied for third at the College World Series and had a final ranking of No. 3 in the national top 25 polls. He posted a .975 fielding percentage in 277 total chance and batted .291 with 19 doubles, 20 home runs and 60 RBI. The Bulldogs won the Southeastern Conference regular season and tournament titles and made their first College World Series appearance since 2008.

The World Collegiate Baseball Championship format will feature five days of games, with three days of pool play followed by the semifinals and medal games. The U.S. will open its pool play slate on July 11 against Korea at 12:30 a.m. ET/12:30 p.m. local, face Chinese Taipei on July 12 at 6:30 a.m. ET/6:30 p.m. local, and then play Japan on July 13 at 12:30 a.m. ET/12:30 p.m. local. The semifinals will be played July

14 and the finals, which will consist of gold- and bronze-medal games, will be held July 15.

The Bulldogs who have represented USA Baseball on a CNT over the year have included Cris Carpenter (1987, LHP), Dave Fleming (1989, LHP), Brian Powell (1994, RHP), Clint Sammons (2002, C), Kyle Farmer (2012, SS), Robert Tyler (2015, RHP), Cole Wilcox (2019, RHP), Charlie Condon (2023, 1B/OF), Alton Davis II (2024, LHP), Tre Phelps (2024, INF/OF) and Kolten Smith (2024, RHP).

Overall, 21 schools and five conferences are represented on the 2026 CNT roster. The Southeastern Conference (SEC) boasts 16 athletes on the roster to lead all conferences, followed by the Big Ten and Big 12 with six, the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) with two, and the Sun Belt Conference with one.

The 2026 Collegiate National Team will be led by manager Dan Hartleb. He will be joined by Matt Hobbs (pitching coach), Jonathan Hernandez (assistant coach), Tracy Smith (assistant coach), and Tom Walter (assistant coach).



File photo

Former Georgia and Miami quarterback Carson Beck, now with the Arizona Cardinals, impressed during offseason workouts and could earn playing time as a rookie if Arizona decides to move on from veteran Jacoby Brissett t+his season.

Carson Beck to start for Arizona?

By: Jason La Canfora

Sportsboom.com

No one should make too much of the results of any spring practices, but SportsBoom has long heard that the Cardinals selected Carson Beck in the third round to see him play this season before wading into the 2027 quarterback draft.

And with starting quarterback Jacoby Brissett skipping essentially all of the team’s offseason work, mired in a contract impasse, Beck made the most of the opportunity.

The situation between Brissett and Arizona lingers, and numerous NFL executives have opined to SportsBoom that this offseason that they believe Brissett will be gone by the trade deadline.

An injury to a starting quarterback elsewhere could bring that to a head sooner than that.

Won’t Be Sitting All That Long

Beck’s stature and performance created a buzz in the Cardinals’ locker room.

He played a ton of college football and bounced around, so he picked up different systems and matured, and Cardinals’ star tight end Trey McBride was recently gushing about Beck on the popular “Bussin With The Boys” podcast.

It would be silly to invest a top five pick on a quarterback next season (Arizona will be that bad, by design) without getting a look at Beck first. While his attitude turned

some teams off through the draft process, he had some strong supporters as well.

“We liked him,” one GM told SportsBoom on Beck after the draft.

“We think he has a chance to start and win a lot of games. That’s a good spot for him, because he’s going to play.”

Beck helped Miami reach the national title game last season and spent five years at Georgia before that, winning two national titles but not playing full-time in those seasons.

He has prototypical NFL size and sufficient athleticism and a big enough arm, but decision-making will be an issue until proven otherwise.

5 ways to shrink your cat’s carbon pawprint

(StatePoint) Cats are famously low-maintenance companions. They don’t need walks, they entertain themselves, and they’re perfectly happy ignoring you for hours at a time. But as any devoted cat owner knows, low-maintenance doesn’t mean no impact. From the food in their bowl to the litter in their box, cats leave a measurable mark on the planet. The good news is that a few small, practical changes can add up to something meaningful — without requiring a lifestyle overhaul or a bigger budget. Here’s where to start:

1. Rethink what’s in the bowl.

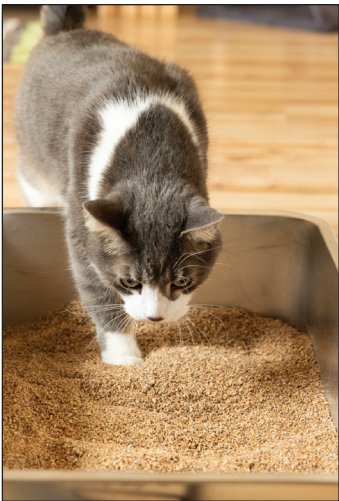
Pet food is one of the largest and least-discussed contributors to a cat’s environmental footprint. Meat-heavy diets — particularly those built around beef or lamb — carry a significant carbon cost in production. Shifting toward poultry-based or fish-based formulas, or incorporating more vet-approved plant-protein options, can meaningfully reduce the emissions associated with feeding time. Even small adjustments, multiplied across 49 million cat-owning households nationwide, represent a substantial collective impact.

2. Buy in bulk, buy less often.

Every trip to the pet store — or every delivery to your door — has a transportation footprint. Consolidating purchases into larger, less frequent orders reduces both packaging waste and the emissions associated with last-mile delivery. It’s one of those rare environmental wins that also saves money. Fewer, bigger purchases beat many small ones almost every time.

3. Choose toys that last.

The pet toy industry has its own version of fast fashion — cheap, plastic-heavy products designed to be replaced every few weeks. Durable toys made from natural materials like cotton, wool, or sustainably sourced wood last longer, generate less waste, and are often safer for cats who like to chew. One well-made toy beats 10 disposable ones



Special Photo: StatePoint

on every metric that matters.

4. Switch your litter.

This is the big one. Conventional clay litter is made from sodium bentonite — a material extracted through strip mining that destroys topsoil, disrupts ecosystems, and never biodegrades once it reaches a landfill. Americans consume 5 billion pounds of it every year, most of it moving through the supply chain at 30 to 40 heavy pounds per household per month.

Lightweight, plant-based alternatives have closed the performance gap entirely. Catalyst, made from upcycled softwood fiber reclaimed from lumber production, covers one cat for two months in a single 15-pound bag and is now available at Walmart stores nationwide for under \$10 a month. Thanks to its composition, it weighs less than conventional litter, requires less mining, and produces less waste, while helping you maintain the same clean litter box. Learn more at catalystpet.com.

5. Spay and neuter.

It’s the oldest advice in pet ownership, and still the most environmentally significant. Every unplanned litter adds animals to a system — shelters, resources, food, waste — that already runs at capacity. Spaying and neutering remains the single highest-impact decision a cat owner can make for the long-term health of both the pet population and the planet.

Small choices, made consistently, add up. Fortunately, loving your cat and loving the planet don’t have to be mutually exclusive.

Obituary Announcements



Robert Michael Ashton
Mr. Robert Michael Ashton, 80, of Leesburg, passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, July 6, 2026. Born on September 8, 1945, in Texarkana, TX, Mr. Ashton was the son of the late Robert and Marjorie Paige Ashton. He proudly served our country in the United States Air Force and retired from Miller Brewer in HR management. He loved coaching softball and soccer and enjoyed bowling. He greatly enjoyed sports especially when his children and grandchildren were involved in playing. Robert enjoyed the outdoors and keeping his grass cut. He was a member of Lakeside Baptist Church and will be remembered as a loving husband, father, and grandfather. In addition to his parents, Mr. Ashton was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Linda Hatcher Ashton. Those left to cherish his memory include his 3 children, Bryan M. Ashton of Leesburg, Pam K. Goodwin and Louie of Leesburg, and Jeff Ashton and Kali of Cordele; and his 7 grandchildren, Kasie, Tyler, Abby, Toni, Cole, Brody, and Amilia. The family will host a memorial service at a later date. Joseph W. Jones Funeral Home of Leesburg has been entrusted with the care of the Ashton family.

Gerald “Wayne” Holmes
Gerald “Wayne” Holmes, 77, of Morgan, Georgia, passed away peacefully at his residence on Thursday, July 2, 2026 surrounded by the love of his family.

Graveside funeral services will be held on Monday, July 6, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Morgan City Cemetery, Morgan GA. Rev. A.B. Stroud will officiate. Serving as Honorary pallbearers are Dean Sizemore, Mark Daniels, Chase Sizemore, Christopher Olsen Mike Varnum, Dewayne Beckam and Mack Jones.

Wayne was born on June 18, 1949, in Columbus, GA, to the late Sylvester and Fay Harrington Holmes. As a young boy, he started working the family farm with his father located in Cuthbert, GA before eventually settling in Morgan his home, where he spent the past 50 years building a life centered on family, hard work, and friendships.

He graduated from Randolph County High School, where he played football, and later attended Andrew College in Cuthbert, where he graduated. Wayne later started his own business, Holmes Remodeling, and spent many years doing construction and home remodeling for folks all across Southwest Georgia.

Wayne never met a stranger and enjoyed life’s simple pleasures. Whether he was cheering on the Georgia Bulldogs with a loud “Go Dawgs!”, pulling for the Atlanta Braves, or spending time at the lake with family and friends, he treasured every moment. He loved summer afternoons on the porch with a cold beer in hand, relaxing at the lake house, and making memories on the beaches of St. George Island. Above all else, Wayne loved his family. His greatest joy came from spending time with his children, grandchildren, and the many people he loved.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Sylvester and Fay Holmes; his beloved daughter, Priscilla Holmes Boyce; and his grandson, Benjamin “B.J.” Jason McCrary.

Survivors include is his loving wife of 55 years, Nelline “Nell” Sizemore Holmes of Morgan; his children, Patricia Nell McCrary (Ricky) of Albany, Ritchie Lee Holmes (Patty) of Morgan, Kim Sebastian (Tony) of Leesburg, and Tiffany Holmes Rowe of Albany; his grandchildren, Melanie Holmes of Morgan, Andrea Arnold (Chad) of Leesburg, Michael Brandon Holmes of Morgan, Joshua Wayne Boyce of Lakeland, Florida, Jenni-fer Rae Boyce of Lakeland, Florida, Morgan Allen Rowe of Charleston, South Carolina, and Savana Grace Sebastian of Dunwoody; his sisters, Sylvia Holmes of Huntsville, Alabama, and Patsy “Pat” Holmes of Newnan; along with numerous extended family members.

The family will receive friends at Mathews Funeral Home on Sunday, July 5, 2026 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

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MULTI-FAMILY YARD SALE!
Saturday, July 11
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U-Vest Building
Household items, home decor, name brand clothes and shoes, lots of baby items, costume jewelry, comforters (different sizes), baby crib, small china cabinet and much more!
Grilled hot dogs & hamburgers sold.
Car Wash! Great deals!!

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Frances Patrick Estate Sales
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Offering the Estate of Pat Godfree. 225 Story Lane, Leesburg, Ga 31763
Fri., July 10, 8-5, Sat., July 11,9-2, Sun., July 12, 9-2
Not responsible for accidents, no children on stairs, climb stairs at own risk. Street Parking only, enter front door, exit check-out door. Ck, Cash, CC

Full two story home. Civil War memorabilia, antique items, 2,1950's Singer model 221 sewing machines, one with original table, sofas,,bookcases, Civil War books, king and queen beds, chest, full kitchen, iron patio table and chairs, tools, Christmas and halloween decor. Second home on property with furniture. See estatesales.net for photos

Miscellaneous for sale

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

JOBS

Full-Time

Public Works Director City of Edison

The City of Edison is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Public Works Director. This position is responsible for planning, organizing, directing, and managing all operations of the Public Works Department for City of Edison. This position oversees Infrastructure maintenance and development, including roads, bridges, drainage systems, and fleet management.

Applications with a complete job description may be obtained from the City of Edison Administrative Office located at 19437 Hartford St., Edison, Ga from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. daily. Applications will be accepted until August 7th , 2026.

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

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 gave a hand (6)

2 top off (6)

3 common track shape (4)

4 talking out of (9)

5 jump like a jack-in-the-box (6)

6 Montezuma, for one (5)

7 largest city in Scandinavia (9)

SP AL ED HE ILL

LP RR OCK DE RI

OV NG ING REF EC

AZT LM ST HO TE

Tuesday's Answers: 1. DANDELIONS 2. BLUSTERING 3. PAUSES 4. MISPLACED 5. THUMBELINA 6. AUSTRAINS 7. SHEDS

7/8

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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.

“ HT HIUVP G HRFP JYGP NP VRF HIAPT DIG HP UI URSP KPJJIAJ, QYU NP FXFA’U VRZP HIAPT UI BI UI UVP UVPRUG.” — QPGARFPUUP OPUPGJ

Previous Solution: “The modern artist is working with space and time, and expressing his feelings rather than illustrating.” — Jackson Pollock

TODAY’S CLUE: *a sɪnbe ɹ*

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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.

“ Q WXB AC QYMFQCAF VWXV QV LXF SD CA SP CLA. Q LXF FMGGCUVDB HP FC SXAP XSNQAE GDCGYD . . . ICSGDVQVCUF XAB VDXSSXVDF. ” — UQIJ WXAFDA

Previous Solution: “My mother made sure we had money for me to take lessons, but we didn’t have money to go to the theater.” — Bernadette Peters

TODAY’S CLUE: *ɜ sɪnbe ɹ*

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Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

3 “About me” summaries

5 Carried the day

8 Cuts it close

14 Skip past

15 “_____takers?”

16 Nikon product

17 Dance move performed when entering a room?

19 Unexpectedly funny

20 Adopt, as an alias

21 Cancan move performed while skydiving?

23 Makeshift swing

25 Bard’s before

26 Network supported by “viewers like you”

29 Number of legs on a prawn

30 Shows up

35 Tango move on “Yellowstone”?

38 Half an Everest expedition

39 Actor Sharif

40 Club VIPs

42 Inner: Prefix

43 Curt

46 Five-point spin on the dance floor?

49 James M. Cain’s “_____Pierce”

51 Spanish gold

52 Contact site

53 Singer Yoko

54 Wasabi

56 Leap at a military ballet?

61 Coffee shop emanations

65 Artful dodger?

66 Pas de deux move performed where the road divides?

68 Spot

69 Apple core, for short

70 Store that sells Frakta shopping bags

71 Sounds like a bird

72 Slump

73 Like a lawn at dawn

DOWN

1 Led Zeppelin’s final studio album

2 Famous _____cookies

32 Locale

33 Log passage

34 Granite or marble

36 Yucky stuff

37 Comfy loungewear

41 “Enough!”

44 Assignment

45 Terms of service

47 Accent piece

48 “The Fountainhead” protagonist

50 _____Pérignon

55 Utterly reliable

56 Not erect

57 Solemnly swear

58 Fully appease

59 Falco of “The Sopranos”

60 Some USO patrons

62 Podcaster’s purchase

63 Several

64 Remain

67 Happy Greek cry

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

AMED DVS SLEJEM L

VEXI UD ECIION

LEITKHO FDEVAE

SWORV FMWREVB

SVEF ONO

EXAE ORO DEBD TIV

NHJL RVLS L P Q RVV

ONNE SRD HWVO

LNESC SV IDHONVR

SEAIHVR NEILS B

EXE ERI L

KOIXDOR DEWUNSSV

CINORFI dEJLSBOOQ

VHREWVO ANV LIIOQ

SEAVHS NOM SBWQ

07/09/26

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71 72 73

By Robin Stears

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07/09/26

Albany Tech underwater robotics team earns recognition at world championships

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY -- The Albany Technical College Titan Alliance Robotics Team represented Albany Technical College and southwest Georgia at the 2026 Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) World Championship held recently in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

Hosted by the Marine Institute of Memorial University and the National Research Council, the international competition brought together 86 of the world's top student underwater robotics teams representing 20 countries to compete in one of the most recognized student robotics and technology competitions in the world.

Titan Alliance team members participating in the championship included Favin Gear,



The Albany Technical College Titan Alliance Robotics team represented Albany Technical College and southwest Georgia at the 2026 Marine Advanced Technology Education World Championship held recently in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.



Special Photos: ATC

Dion Flint, Jayden Jenkins, and team captain Nevous Morgan.

For Albany Tech students, the opportunity represented more than a competition. It gave them the chance to apply classroom knowledge on a larger scale, demonstrate tech-

nical and professional skills before international judges, and show how hands-on technical education prepares students for emerging careers in engineering, robotics, advanced manufacturing, marine technology, and related STEM fields.

Despite significant challenges during the competition, including damage sustained to their remotely operated vehicle during transportation and unexpected technical issues, the Titan Alliance team demonstrated perseverance and professionalism. Their determination earned them second place in the Guts and Glory Award category, presented to the individual or team that best exemplifies resilience, determination and resolve in overcoming adversity during

the competition.

"This was a meaningful opportunity for our students to take what they learned at Albany Technical College and demonstrate it on an international stage," Albany Tech President Emmett L. Griswold said. "The Titan Alliance Robotics Team represented the talent, discipline and innovation we see every day in our students. We were pleased to see them carry the Albany Tech name, and the state of Georgia, into this level of competition."

Under the guidance of Dennis Courtney, chair of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology at ATC, the Titan Alliance Robotics Team spent the season designing, refining, testing, and preparing its underwater robotics system for

competition. The team also completed technical documentation and participated in presentation and question-and-answer judging components as part of the championship process.

"The excitement around this team continued to build because our students put in the work," Courtney said. "They approached this project with engineering focus, teamwork, professionalism and persistence. Competing at the MATE World Championship gave them the chance to measure their skills against some of the best student underwater robotics teams in the world."

"Walking into the 2026 MATE World Championship, we faced challenge after challenge, but those obstacles taught us that

resilience, teamwork and determination can overcome almost anything," Morgan said. "Competing alongside and learning from teams around the world showed me that engineering is about far more than building robots -- it's about building relationships, solving problems together, and discovering that your future is limited only by your willingness to keep pushing forward."

Morgan is a soon-to-be graduate of Albany Technical College's Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology Associate of Science degree program. Following graduation, he will transfer to Kennesaw State University this fall to continue pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering.

Building on the experience gained at the World Championship, the Titan Alliance Robotics Team is already preparing for the 2027 season, including planned competition at the SkillsUSA State and National Championships and a return to the MATE World Championship in Seattle next June.

Funding for this initiative was made possible through the TEAAMS initiative, Teaching Empowering African American Males To Succeed, led by Dr. Quanta Bell.

For more information about Albany Technical College programs, visit www.albanytech.edu.

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GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Southwest Health District

Special Illustration: Southwest Health District

Southwest Health District announces back-to-school vaccine clinic

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — The Southwest Health District has announced a Back-to-School Vaccine Clinic on Saturday from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Dougherty County Health Department at 1710 South Slappey Blvd. in Albany.

"The community is invited to join us for a day to protect, prepare, and immunize children before they head back to school," Dougherty County Nurse Manager RN Brooke Stewart said. "Children will receive a free clear backpack while supplies last after they get their vaccines."

There also will be a diaper giveaway and child car seat safety check offered at the event.

For parents and children who are unable to make it to the event on Saturday, the

Health Department is offering vaccine appointments and the free clear book bag offer throughout the entire month of July.

"A healthy start to the school year begins with staying up to date on vaccinations," Stewart said.

How it works:

Come to the Dougherty County Health Department on Saturday from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. -- No appointment needed.

OR Call (229) 638-6424 to schedule a child's vaccine appointment.

Receive a free clear book bag at the appointment during the month of July.

Get ready for a healthy school year.

For more information, call or visit the Dougherty County Health Department at: (229) 638-6424.

Lee County JROTC cadets honored by DAR for citizenship and leadership

By Lynne Malone

Special to The Albany Herald

LEESBURG — Several Lee County High School JROTC cadets were recognized for outstanding citizenship, leadership and service during the school's recent JROTC Honors Night, receiving awards from the Old Herod Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Old Herod Chapter Regent Jane Washburn presented DAR Youth Citizenship Medals to ninth-grade Cadet Christopher Hoffman, 10th-grade Cadet Atiya Greene and 11th-grade Cadet Hailey Benstine.

According to Lee County High School JROTC Instructor Xavier Macer, the students were selected for consistently demonstrating the qualities of honor, service, courage, leadership and patriotism through their participation

in the JROTC program.

The chapter also presented its annual DAR ROTC Bronze Medal to senior Cadet Gabrielle Vanderwalt.

The award recognizes an outstanding senior cadet who exemplifies dependability, good character, adherence to military discipline, leadership ability and a patriotic understanding of the importance of JROTC training. Recipients also must rank in the top 25% of their graduating class.

Macer said Vanderwalt has consistently demonstrated those qualities throughout her time in the program, making her this year's recipient of the prestigious honor.

The annual recognition highlights the partnership between the Old Herod Chapter and the Lee County High School JROTC pro-



Special Photo

Outstanding Lee County High School JROTC cadets were recognized for outstanding citizenship, leadership and service during the school's recent JROTC Honors Night.

gram in encouraging leadership, citizenship and service among students.

(Lynne Malone submitted

this article on behalf of the Old Herod Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution).

Southwell holds double ribbon-cutting event for campus name changes

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON -- Southwell held a double ribbon cutting ceremony with the Tifton-Tift County Chamber of Commerce recently to

commemorate name changes for the West Campus and the MSK Center.

The West Campus is now Southwell Health Park. The MSK Center, located at South-

well Health Park, is now the Southwell Musculoskeletal Institute.

Southwell Health Park is also the home of Southwell Medical Clinic (formerly Af-

finity Clinic).

Southwell Health Park is located in Tifton right off Interstate 75 at exit 64. For more information, visit mysouthwell.com/healthpark.



Special Photos: Southwell

Southwell held a double ribbon-cutting ceremony recently to unveil new names for the MSK Center, which is now the Southwell Musculoskeletal Institute, left, and the system's West campus, now the Southwell Health Park.

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