



Perspectives
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Dougherty courthouse renovation plans could come in October

File Photo: Alan Mauldin
Dougherty County’s Judicial Building is due for a substantial renovation that will address security, safety and other concerns and bring the structure up to date.



By Alan Mauldin
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ALBANY – For a building that is nearing 60 years old, the Dougherty County Courthouse building is looking good for its age. But it is in need of a good makeover that includes providing courtroom functions and modernization. That was architect Mike Johnson’s

assessment of the Judicial Building after an extensive evaluation and conversations with employees who work in the facility every day. “There are portions of this building that are original and in outstanding shape,” Johnson, president of SRJ Architects, told Dougherty County commissioners during a Monday

See **RENOVATION**, 2A

‘Hope lives here’ as Motif sober living recovery home opens in Albany



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

Motif co-founders Tiffany Cox, left, and Mo Taylor react as community members and city officials welcome the opening of the women’s sober living home during a ribbon-cutting celebration in Albany.

By Kathryn Crockett
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ALBANY — Just a few months after founders were racing to meet fire safety requirements and raise money for a sprinkler system, Motif officially celebrated the opening of its new women’s sober living home last week with a ribbon-cutting attended by supporters, volunteers and community leaders. For co-founders Mo Taylor and Tiffany Cox, the celebration marked the culmination of a vision that began nearly five years ago and one that she said was sustained by an outpouring of community support. The opening follows months of preparation and fundraising after Motif announced plans to provide structured sober living for women recovering from addiction, addressing what the founders have described as a significant gap in recovery housing across southwest Georgia. “I think the biggest thing was the sprinkler system, passing the fire inspection and raising all that money,” Taylor said. “Our hurdles have been small. Everything that we have put out there and asked for has been given. Everything in this house — the house and everything in it — has

See **MOTIF**, 2A

A sausage, a Gatorade and a lesson for parents and educators

By Kathryn Crockett
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ALBANY — Demont Pope thought he was about to teach his 7-year-old daughter a lesson at the dinner table. Pope, an Atlanta-based speaker, educator and Air Force veteran, is the founder and CEO of Demont Pope & Associates. He is the author of “Purpose Over Pointless Excuses” and has spent more than a decade working with schools nationwide through keynote presentations, leadership training and mentoring programs focused on student engagement, school culture and resilience. Speaking Friday as the keynote speaker at the Dougherty County School System’s 2026-27 Back-to-School Convocation, Pope shared a family story to challenge educators and parents to become partners in helping children grow. A father of five, Pope’s daughter had ignored the meal on her own plate and reached for his instead. Then, in the few seconds he turned toward the stove, she dipped a piece of sausage into her fruit-punch Gatorade.

Pope immediately corrected her. “Don’t be that type of person,” he recalled telling her. Instead of apologizing, his daughter looked back and answered, “Don’t be the type of person who tries new things and likes it?” The room inside the Albany Civic Center erupted in laughter Friday morning as Pope admitted realizing he had just lost an argument to a second-grader. His wife avoided eye contact. His son braced for the punishment that never came. Instead, Pope gave his daughter a high five. The story wasn’t really about sausage or Gatorade. It was about perspective — and about adults remaining open to seeing the world through a child’s eyes. “What we think is weird and crazy, to the next generation is normal — it’s innovation,” Pope said, urging educators not to be so quick to correct behavior that they miss the creativity behind it. That lesson became one of the defining moments of the Dougherty County School System’s 2026-27 Back-to-School Convocation, where

Pope challenged educators and parents alike to rethink how they lead, listen and learn alongside children. Pope built his keynote speech around a simple question. “Why did you say yes?” he asked. “Not to the title. Not to the posi-

tion. Not to the contract. Why did you say yes to kids?” From there, Pope broadened his message beyond the classroom, making clear that the question ap-

See **LESSON**, 2A



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett
Demont Pope, an Atlanta educator, Air Force veteran and founder of Demont Pope & Associates, challenges Dougherty County School System employees to lead with purpose, accountability and empathy during the district’s 2026-27 Back-to-School Convocation Friday at the Albany Civic Center.

Dawson salary list reveals a two-tier city where command pay outpaced inflation while frontline workers fell behind

By Kathryn Crockett
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DAWSON — A review of eight years of city of Dawson salary records reveals a widening divide in employee compensation. The city’s salary schedule shows the largest pay increases are concentrated among leadership, department head and supervisory positions, while many frontline employees received increases that failed to keep pace with inflation, leaving the city’s payroll increasingly divided between those whose earn-

ings accelerated and those whose purchasing power stagnated or declined. The city has not produced records explaining why individual salaries changed, making it impossible to determine how much of those increases resulted from promotions, reclassifications or raises. The disparity comes as the city faces mounting financial pressure. Its Fiscal Year 2026 budget counted at least \$200,000 in revenue officials later acknowledged the city does not actually collect.

Its annual audit remains incomplete. And at the July 9 City Council meeting, where those financial issues were discussed, the council voted to set the city manager’s salary at \$75,000, along with a \$600 monthly travel allowance, a city-paid phone plan and a six-month performance review that could increase the salary to \$82,000. A review of the city’s current salary schedule, cross-referenced with publicly available 2018 payroll records and statewide wage data published by the U.S. Bu-

See **PAY**, 2A



File Photo
As the city of Dawson struggles financially, a study of the city’s salary structure shows an inconsistency in pay structure.

Periodical — Mail Label

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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Tomorrow is an underwater day in the Universal sky and dark days continue through the weekend. Do it today or wait until Monday for greatly improved odds. A friend might appreciate some support.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Below-zero days are just fine for continuing projects begun previously, no reason progress cannot be made. Just give things another going-over once stars are back in daylight before you submit anything.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Poor stars make for poor outcomes — hold your thought until Monday or after for better results. Use caution in handling both credentials and personal issues online, you could be vulnerable.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Purchases made or accounts opened on negative-scoring days like today seldom perform well or satisfy over time. Wait at least until Monday to initiate something — next week ushers in August's best stars.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Do your best to find balance in personal relationships now and avoid extreme behavior due to tumultuous stars. Don't sweat any small stuff in the next three days, reduced expectations help avoid disappointment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): When all contribute, all can rise. Don't hold back on connection with your community, it's one of the central ways life can offer meaning and a reason to continue. Lean into moderation; avoid excess.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Intensity could arise in a friendship, allow yourself or someone else to express as long as boundaries are maintained. Today's a poor day for business but could be wonderful for no-pressure creativity.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): On below-zero days, balance can be much harder to maintain. Today the topic could be work-life balance. Problems don't typically get

resolved unless stars are in sunshine, be patient.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Instead of doubling down, consider giving something a rest. It's not a good day to push, resistance could be everywhere through the weekend. Don't share your heart today, wait until next week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It can be disastrous to sign anything or make a major move when stars are this dark. Just waiting a few days reverses everything and odds get very good. Be patient, timing really is everything!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A partner or someone close might come on very strong in the next few days, weather it as you can. By Monday the patterns driving this should have passed. Deploy boundaries if you feel vulnerable.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): If tasks don't go smoothly, step away even briefly, then take another whack at getting them done. Patience and a calm nervous system will serve you well for the next few days.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Your mood could be especially benevolent today, you might want to give gifts, not just receive. It's a pivotal time for you — early 2026 could have been very challenging, the rest of the year looks both easier and better. August could bring a viewpoint that leaves you breathless: Could this vision of yourself and your unfolding path even be true? It is. It's what's next. Don't be afraid, all will be provided in perfect time. September could bring a test of frequency: Are you ready for the next level of opportunity, or will you waste time on empty pursuits? You get to decide and either enjoy, or regret. More clarity likely descends in October, suddenly you see how the dream could all happen. November should bring the needed resources to bring it all together. Suddenly the dream could start to really come to life.



- 1619** - The House of Burgesses convenes for the first time in Jamestown, Virginia
- 1626** - An earthquake in Naples, Italy kills approximately 10,000 people
- 1729** - Baltimore, Maryland is founded
- 1871** - The Staten Island Ferry Westfield's boiler explodes, killing over 85 people
- 1945** - During World War II, Japanese submarine I-58 sinks the USS Indianapolis, killing 883 men
- 1956** - In God We Trust as the U.S. National motto is signed as a joint resolution of the U.S. Congress and President Dwight D. Eisenhower
- 1962** - The Trans-Canada Highway which is the longest national highway in the world opens
- 1965** - Medicare and Med-

- icaid are established when U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Social Security Act of 1965 into law
- 1974** - U.S. President Richard Nixon releases subpoenaed White House recordings after the Supreme Court of the U.S. ordered him to
- 1975** - Jimmy Hoffa disappears from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan never to be heard from again
- 2003** - The last of the old style Volkswagen Beetles roll off the assembly line in Mexico
- 2012** - A power grid failure in Delhi, India leaves more than 300 million people without power
- 2020** - NASA launched their Mars 2020 mission from an Atlas V Rocket at Cape Canaveral Dir Force Station in Florida

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- Father-In-Law Day
- Health Care Now!
- Medicare's Birthday
- International Day of Friendship
- National Cheesecake Day
- National Chicken and Waffles Day
- National Chili Dog Day
- National Intern Day
- National Support Public Education Day
- National Whistleblowers Appreciation Day
- Paperback Book Day
- Share a Hug Day
- World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
- World Snorkeling Day

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

If grass can grow through cement, love can find you at every time in your life.

Cher
US actress & singer (1946 -)

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

I guess all the proposed hotel rooms downtown are intended to accommodate the crowds coming to Albany to follow the virtual Civil Rights tour.

Isn't it odd that some frivolous bills like an extremely oversized payment to a fellow pastor at United Way and a check for some kind of virtual tour are hastily paid by the Dougherty County Commission, but nondiscretionary payments like building repairs and A/C repairs can't seem to get approved? It feels like some people are trying to line their friends' pockets.

Dang, Carlton, hating Collins because of his son-in-law? 80% of American fathers wished their daughters had married someone else. You had better rethink supporting Ossoff, who attended the most expensive private schools in Atlanta, never had a real job, father even bought him his home when he moved to DC. And on the facing page of your article in Saturday's Herald, the voting record on ossoff was shown. Of the four bills and appointments listed, all passed the Senate. Ossoff voted against every one of those.

The story about the lady with the conjoined twin was an interesting read. The fact that she persevered and took care of her family shows the strength of the human spirit.

When our Code Enforcement office doesn't function at all ... When KADB has no neighborhood cleanup events ... When APD is called to crumbling drug motels a dozen times a weekend ... this is when job opportunities go elsewhere, and poor children are stuck in poverty for another generation. The Albany City Commission and city manager need to start doing their job, or the governor's office should replace them with a professional group that will.

After reading Chad's OpEd in the paper, I reviewed his campaign finances to see where his campaign finances are coming from.

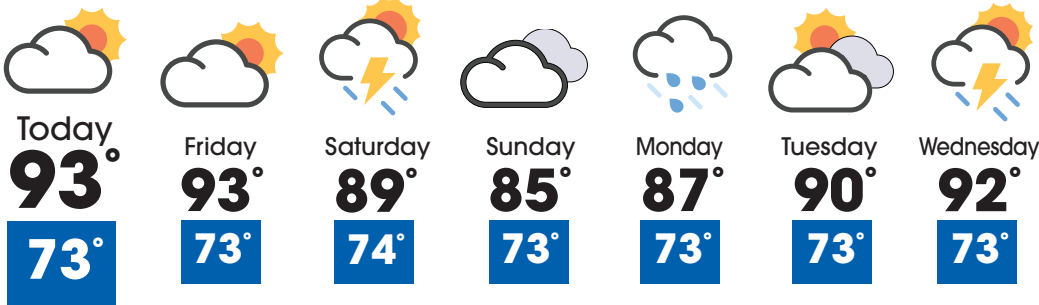
True, many nonprofits are fraudulent; worthless people abuse charities. Albany is rightly criticized for bad leadership, waste and stupidity, but folks like the Salvation Army having no money to feed the hungry is morally and ethically reprehensible to any community, especially when solutions should be and could be made in a moment. Children go to bed hungry while the media talk and the wealthy go to the beach. God will judge us this day.

Well, Fletcher, while The Herald ignored loud and clear facts of the malfeasance of your favorite news sources, the real Albany crowd moved their money and families to the Panhandle. Maybe you should find another line of work inspecting old vinyl for scratches.

Do I understand the story right? Albany commissioners have given some guy from Maryland \$600,000 to remodel the Gordon and the Rosenberg/Herald building into apartments? So now he has some plans and blueprints. For \$600,000? And his connection to Albany is through the Sherrod family, the same Sherrods that sued the government during the Obama years and they got \$13 million for what was maybe a total fabrication of a failed farming business 40 years before. Now what possibly could go wrong with this business venture?

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Weather Forecast



Daily Bridge Club

Spectacular play

By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

“So you think Minnie's glasses account for her remarkable plays?” Cy the Cynic asked me.

Minnie Bottoms wears old bifo-

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

cals that make her mix up kings and jacks, often to her opponents' dismay. “She's an expert disguised as a little old lady,” Cy fumed. “Ever seen a ‘discovery play’ on defense?”

Cy had played at four spades. Minnie, West, led a heart: six, jack, ace. Cy led a trump to the queen and back to his king. Minnie took the ace.

“The defense needed two more tricks besides the ace of clubs,” Cy said: “two hearts, or one heart and a club ruff. Minnie led the jack of clubs! I won in dummy, and Minnie next led her ace!”

“She thought she had the A-K,” I laughed.

STUCK

“We set her straight,” the Cynic

Advice Columnist

Downsizing senior gives to everyone but best friend

By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: I have a long-time friend who is downsizing as she prepares to sell her home and move into assisted living. Every time we talk, she shares a story about a unique item and the lucky person who has received it.

I am genuinely happy about this and wholeheartedly support giving away treasures before you die so you can ensure it's going to a good home.

I'm also human and starting to feel left out of the largesse. Any tips on how to navigate my feelings and her process?

– Not Ungrateful

Dear Not Ungrateful:

Try to put her experience into context. She's going through a big change in her life, one that may involve some grief. Giving her belongings away may feel good but it also might make her sad or give rise to existential fears about being forgotten. Try to listen to her stories from her perspective. See if you can hear her telling you about her attempts to leave a legacy and reckon with her life thus far. It may soften the edge a bit.

Additionally, if there are items that you want, be proactive about asking for them. She may be grateful to know they'll be in appreciative hands. Or, if there isn't any particular item that you have your eye on, consider asking her if you can help her in this process. Having a conversation about her process in person, with the actual items near at hand may make the experience feel different and offer an opportunity to ask for something you want.

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

Perspectives

The Albany HERALD
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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

—Georgia Trust for—

LOCAL NEWS

TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE

*“There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee:
neither is there any rock like our God.”*

1 Samuel 2:2

COLUMNIST ■ MARC HYDEN

‘The Odyssey’ embarrasses anti-woke crusaders

One of the troubling realities of living in a hyper-politicized world is that it sometimes feels impossible to escape politics, even at movie theaters. People increasingly complain that Hollywood embeds political agendas into its movies. Many viewers are so weary of the trend that they see politics even where no ulterior motive exists.

That was the situation my wife and I walked into when we recently went to see Christopher Nolan’s “The Odyssey” in a theater – a movie that has been criticized for being too “woke,” far adrift from its original version and historically inaccurate. While I am no movie critic, I applaud Nolan for his recreation of the epic, but perhaps one of his greatest accomplishments was embarrassing anti-woke crusaders.

For those of you who slept through your literature classes, “The Odyssey” chronicles the storied journey of King Odysseus of Ithaca (located in modern-day Greece) home from the legendary Trojan War. In fact, it follows the events of “The Iliad,” which recounted the extended conflict between the Trojans and the Greeks. The poet Homer is credited with authoring both works.

Since “The Odyssey” is nearly 3,000 years old, spoiler alerts seem unnecessary, but be forewarned anyway. Within the epic, Odysseus braves many trials, stands against the gods and eventually returns to his homeland. There is nothing too controversial about this, but Nolan’s casting decisions caused an outcry.

It was announced months ago that Elliot Page – a transgender actor – was part of the movie. Casting Page made some commenters believe that “The Odyssey” would have some left-leaning ideology hidden within it, and that really got under the skin of some big names, especially when it was rumored that Page would play Achilles.

“Casting a +/- 95 pound former woman [...] as the greatest warrior in Greek mythology is a [expletive] move. [...] Maybe one of theses days Hollywood will least to stop pushing this crap on us,” Donald Trump Jr. complained on Instagram, grammatical errors and all.

Trump was clearly trying to be offensive and get more social media reactions. Instead of waiting to see the movie, he unleashed his tirade, which was a dumb mistake. Page didn’t play Achilles, but rather a boy named Sinon. Moreover, Page enjoyed less than 6 minutes of screen time in the nearly 3-hour movie and was fatally wounded in the first scene.



HYDEN

So much for Page serving as a catalyst for some woke agenda, but maybe some folks simply did not want a trans man cast at all. If people are offended by Page’s voluntary transition that impeded nobody’s rights, then they would be shocked and appalled at the kind of activities the ancient Greeks were up to.

Another casting decision threw the same crowd into another rage. The character of Helen of Troy was played by Lupita Nyong’o, an award-winning Kenyan-Mexican actress, who enjoyed less than 4 minutes of screen time. In response to these casting decisions, Elon Musk whined, “Shame on Chris Nolan for desecrating Homer. He will never live it down.”

There’s a lot to untangle here. From a historical perspective, Helen was a Spartan princess, and probably would have looked like many of those in the Greek Peloponnese region. However, if you bristle at this potential historical inaccuracy, then you should be outraged by the existence of a cyclops, race of giants and a witch who turns men into animals in “The Odyssey.” What’s more, nobody seems at all worried about the myriad Americans of non-Greek descent cast in the movie, but I digress.

It is true that Homer spoke of Helen as “white-armed,” but that probably denoted her class rather than her race. Either way, let’s be honest about “The Iliad” and “The Odyssey.” As I noted in my second book “Romulus: The Legend of Rome’s Founding Father,” Homer’s work, at least “The Iliad,” has a grain of truth at the heart of it, but it is otherwise almost entirely fiction. Helen probably never existed. If Homer is permitted license to produce a fictional work, then why can’t Nolan?

I am not a fan of movies force-feeding me political propaganda, and I wouldn’t have been thrilled if Nolan had Odysseus deliver a 45-minute diatribe, for instance, on why the ancient Greeks need to buy carbon credits to offset their carbon footprint, why they should ban plastic bags or anything along those lines. And he didn’t.

At the end of the day, Nolan’s “The Odyssey” was an enjoyable movie with themes that centered around a man’s conflict with the gods and the importance of showing hospitality to strangers. Before you complain that the woke mob is at it again, maybe go see the movie. You might be surprised that it offers a pleasant escape from our over-politicized lives.

GUEST COLUMNIST ■ FRAN PAPPAS

The world has forgotten

The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea

is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

What goes around, comes around.

I am becoming increasingly troubled by the fact that there is a movement to rewrite our history books. I hope the forces behind this movement, reconsider and consider its ramifications.

Think about it. Wanting us to believe that things happened in a particular way when they didn’t is abominable; it’s false; it’s a distortion of truth; it’s presenting us with a falsified reproduction of that life. By erasing history, future generations will never understand what really happened and will not be able to learn what not to do to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

Irish statesman Edmund Burke and Spanish philosopher George Santayana wrote similar aphorisms to the one that stands out for me, said by Winston Churchill: “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

In every period of history throughout centuries, acts and events have taken place that were unconscionable, at times to suit one’s agenda, but we learned from them. Didn’t we?

What impacted me the most was my experience at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust History Museum in Israel. I felt as if I was personally living through the atrocities of the Holocaust, and looked to God for guidance and understanding. Emmanuel in Hebrew means God is with us.

The Holocaust is the topic I choose to write about by introducing three films circulating the U.S., mostly in museums. I’d like to see them shown in major theaters. If they ever come your way, make a point to see them.

A 2008 film, “Pizza In Auschwitz,” is a story of a different kind of Holocaust survivor who endured five concentration camps and finally convinced his reluctant children to spend a night in Auschwitz in the same barracks where he once slept.

The 1995 Oscar- and Emmy-winning “One Survivor Remembers,” features one woman’s account of surviving.

The 1983 film, “Ihr Zeit Frei,” highlights the accounts of five former U.S. servicemen and a survivor who share their personal stories of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps in 1945.

Jews have faced enormous adversity and persecution throughout history, emerging from the Holocaust, the worst atrocity ever committed against humanity ... the world vowed never to forget. But the world has forgotten. Just 81 years after the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp, the vile realities of anti-Semitism are being minimized, distorted, and denied. Once again the Jews are being targeted and murdered for one reason ... they are Jewish.

If we forget the lessons of the past, we are doomed to repeat them. We know our God is a God of peace. With prayer, we can help each other better understand the issues that have divided us and fulfill what’s best for our country in a positive, peaceful way.



PAPPAS

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:

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

COLUMNIST ■ DICK YARBROUGH

Putting God and this tiny rock called Earth into perspective

Sometimes I start these conversations not knowing where they are going to end. This is one of those times. The subject today concerns current events, the universe and religion. Now you can see why I don’t know where this is headed. Any one of the topics is complex enough in its own right without mixing them all together.

I think it began with the Artemis 2 lunar flyby of the far side of the moon last April, a total distance of about 695,000 miles and more than 230,000 miles from Earth. Staggering numbers almost beyond human comprehension.

That led me to a series called “How the Universe Works” that had originally aired on the Discovery Channel back in 2011. I found it on HBO Max last month. When you look at the size and scope of the universe, the Artemis 2 trek was like an inch to a million miles or more. This is a big and very complex universe. And this planet we call Earth amounts to one grain of sand on the beaches of St. Simons.

And that gets me to current events. As I write this,

we are at war with Iran. Iran is at war with us and our allies. Israel is at war with Islamic terrorists. Russia and the Ukraine have been at war going on five years. There are civil wars in Sudan and Myanmar. Yemen and Haiti. According to data from the International Committee of the Red Cross, there are currently anywhere from 65 to 130 active armed conflicts globally. Peace on Earth? Forget about it. And we think that Earth is all there is? Forget that, too.

Our planet, which we seem hellbent on destroying, resides in a solar system that includes the sun, eight planets, five dwarf planets, hundreds of moons, and thousands of asteroids and comets. Our Solar System is located in a galaxy known as the Milky Way. In addition to the Solar System, the Milky Way is estimated to contain another 100 billion to 400 billion stars and at least that number of planets.

There’s more. Scientists think there are at least 2 trillion galaxies from what they have been able to observe, and the feeling is that there are even more

yet to be seen. Several trillion galaxies with each containing hundreds of billions of stars? Maybe you can get your head around those numbers. I can’t. I can say that comparing our planet to a grain of sand on the beaches of St. Simons may be a gross understatement. What is not an understatement is that we are one tiny insignificant rock in a universe vast beyond our comprehension. And that brings me to religion.

I believe in God. If anything, the more I learn about the vastness of the universe, the more convinced I am of God’s presence. It’s called faith. I have it, and I don’t need to justify it to anyone. God is not a he or a she or an it, something we can define in human terms. In the Bible, God says, “I am who I am.” That pretty much sums it up for me. God is God.

For all my life, I have thought of God only in terms of this Earth. Heaven and hell. Adam and Eve.

The Garden of Eden. Was that the work of God? Did

God pick out Earth from all the untold multi-trillions of planets to create a walking and talking man?

(And woman.) Or did life on this Earth form some 3.5 billion years ago through abiogenesis, a process in which life was created from non-living matter, as scientists maintain,

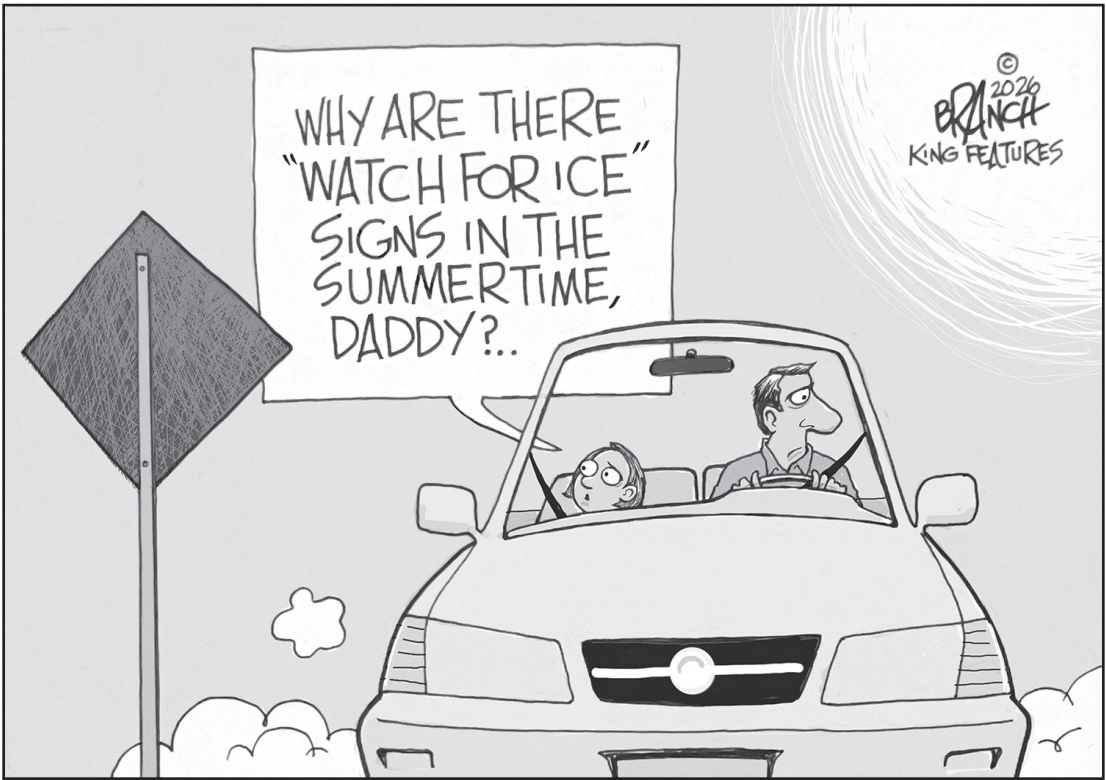
and then evolved into who and what we are today?

The scientists interviewed on “How the Universe Works” surmised that there well could be other forms of life somewhere in our galaxy or beyond.

They just haven’t found them yet. If so, did God put them there? Or was God a one-planet God? If so, why us? A bunch of fractious people who can’t get along with each other?



YARBROUGH



What to watch THURSDAY

July 30, 2026

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

Surviving Earth

NBC, 8 p.m. ■ **Season Finale**

This natural history series taking viewers back 450 million years to witness the incredible resilience of life concludes its first season with “When America Flooded.” A mother bear struggles to raise her two cubs in the face of a gripping ice age that eventually drives all giant mammals to extinction.

What Shark Attacked?

Discovery Channel, 8 p.m.

Shark attacks are extremely rare, but when they happen, the first question is always the same: What kind of shark was it? Scientists investigate mysterious attacks from around the world using cutting-edge forensic analysis – including bite pattern comparison, geographic profiling, video evidence and eyewitness testimony – to identify the species responsible and uncover why these life-threatening encounters occur.

The Bear

FX, 9 p.m.

In “Caramel,” the series’ penultimate episode, a hard service has the restaurant staff flustered.



‘Surviving Earth’ NBC

How to Train a Great White

Discovery Channel, 9 p.m.

Marine biologist Dr. Tristan Guttridge ventures into the shark-infested waters of New Zealand to answer a provocative question: Can sharks be trained?

Ultimate Shark Dive

Discovery Channel, 10 p.m.

World-class Red Bull high diver Molly Carlson leaps from a helicopter hovering above the open ocean in a bid to complete the highest freefall dive in Shark Week history, targeting a narrow plexiglass cage surrounded by circling reef sharks and risking a direct plunge into a chum-filled feeding frenzy where seconds mean survival.

Ancient Aliens

History, 10 p.m.

Host Giorgio Tsoukalos opens the series archives to celebrate alien investigators who have been brave enough to ask the question “Are we alone in the universe?” From a hardened skeptic turned true believer to a fearless reporter who investigated high strangeness and a hotel manager who

discovered otherworldly clues hidden in the distant past, could these investigators have uncovered proof of an alien presence on Earth?

Paris Is Always a Good Idea

Hallmark+ ■ **New Series**

Lacey Chabert, Scott Michael Foster, Rebecca Hanssen, Henry Czerny and Barbara Niven star in the new six-episode limited series based on the bestselling romance novel of the same name by Jenn McKinlay. The series is shooting on location in Paris and Spain and follows career-driven nonprofit executive Chelsea Martin (Chabert), who travels to Paris with her confident rival-turned-ally Jason Knightly (Foster) to secure a major donation, but a heartfelt message from her late mother – and a loving push from her sister Annabelle (Hanssen) – sends her on an unexpected journey to reconnect with the three great loves she once left behind. From the rolling hills of Ireland to the magic of Paris and the sun-kissed vineyards of Spain, Chelsea retraces old footsteps and discovers that sometimes moving forward means first looking back.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Starring Edward G. Robinson

TCM, beginning at 6:30 a.m.

Spend the day with Edward G. Robinson, one of classic Hollywood’s most versatile actors. Robinson became famous playing gangsters and tough men, but today’s TCM lineup shows how much more he could do. The schedule begins with **Bullets or Ballots (pictured)**, a 1936 crime drama

costarring Joan Blondell and Humphrey Bogart, followed by **Dr. Ehrlich’s Magic Bullet** (1940), in which Robinson spreads his acting wings as physician and scientist Paul Ehrlich. **Larceny, Inc.** (1942) lets him play crime for comedy, while **The Stranger** (1946), directed by Orson Welles, casts him as a government investigator tracking a Nazi fugitive. Nazis show up again in the next film, the pre-World War II thriller **Confessions of a Nazi Spy** (1939), in which Robinson stars as an FBI agent investigating German attempts to spy on the U.S. The day also includes **The Prize** (1963) and



WARNER BROS.

The Cincinnati Kid (1965), proving that Robinson remained a commanding screen presence well into later decades.

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From the editors of TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



What to watch FRIDAY

July 31, 2026

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

WNBA Basketball

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

Viewers will see either the Seattle Storm at the Atlanta Dream or the Dallas Wings at the Washington Mystics in ION’s regional WNBA game. The second matchup features the Indiana Fever at the Portland Fire.

Sharkzilla Takes New York

Discovery Channel, 9 p.m.

After a wave of mauled marine life washes ashore in New York, conservation biologist Dr. Craig O’Connell launches an investigation to find the culprit that leads to an old nuclear dumping ground teaming with great whites and makos.



‘Fightland’ JAMES MINCHIN

Fightland

Starz, 9 p.m. ■ **New Series**

Executive produced by Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson, this crime drama is a gripping story of redemption, betrayal and brutal ambition set within the underworld of British boxing. Duke Kilroy (Howard Charles) is a former boxing champion and

ex-convict who returns to London to seek vengeance against the crime syndicate he thinks betrayed him. Nicholas Pinnock and Deborah Ayorinde also star.

My Strange Shark Addiction

Discovery Channel, 10 p.m.

How far will people go to fuel their fascination with sharks? The answer is somewhat alarming when viewers meet four devoted shark “fin-atics,” whose obsession shapes every aspect of their lives. From a dentist who spends every spare moment searching for life-size shark replicas that overwhelm his home to a woman who insists she has a special connection with her shark “boyfriend,” you’ll meet them all.

Mysteries From Above

History, 10 p.m.

Each episode sets out to investigate significant historic and contemporary sites from the revealing vantage points of drone, satellite and aerial photography. Tonight’s episode, “Mysterious Marine Creatures,” features “fishy” marlin hunting behavior, whales with an odd accessorizing habit, a confounding congregation of sharks and mysterious circles on the ocean floor.



UNITED ARTISTS

as corrupt police Capt. Hank Quinlan. The lineup ends with **Odds Against Tomorrow** (1959), a tense crime drama starring Harry Belafonte, Robert Ryan and Ed Begley that brings racial conflict directly into its doomed heist story.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Special Theme: Summer of Darkness

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

TCM closes out July’s Summer of Darkness programming with a late 1950s noir lineup that shows the genre evolving into something more morally unstable. First is **Sweet Smell of Success (pictured)**, Alexander Mackendrick’s razor-sharp 1957 drama starring Burt Lancaster as ruthless columnist J.J. Hunsecker and Tony Curtis as press agent Sidney Falco, who will do almost anything to stay in Hunsecker’s orbit. Next is **Touch of Evil** (1958), Orson Welles’ border-town noir starring Charlton Heston, Janet Leigh and Welles himself

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



‘The Day the Earth Stood Still’ WETA

Rush Hour 2 (2001, Action) Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker **TNT, 6 p.m.**

Tyler Perry’s Madea’s Big Happy Family (2011, Comedy-drama) Tyler Perry, Shad ‘Bow Wow’ Moss **BET, 6 p.m.**

The Super Mario Bros. Movie (2023, Family) Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy **Bravo, 7 p.m.**

Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021, Action) Tom Holland, Zendaya **Freeform, 7:55 p.m.**

Elemental (2023, Children) Leah Lewis, Mamoudou Athie **Disney, 8 p.m.**

Road House (2024, Action) Jake Gyllenhaal, Daniela Melchior **TBS, 8 p.m.**

The Twin Who Lived (2026, Suspense) Kristina Clifford, Johnny Ramey **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Time and Water (2026, Documentary) Andri Snær Magnason **NGC, 9 p.m.**

Happy Gilmore (1996, Comedy) Adam Sandler, Christopher McDonald **IFC, 10 p.m.**

The Accountant (2016, Suspense) Ben Affleck, Anna Kendrick **TBS, 10:20 p.m.**

While You Were Sleeping (1995, Romance-comedy) Sandra Bullock, Bill Pullman **POP, 10:30 p.m.**

The Day the Earth Stood Still (2008, Science fiction) Keanu Reeves, Jennifer Connelly **FXM, 11:10 p.m.**

From the editors of TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



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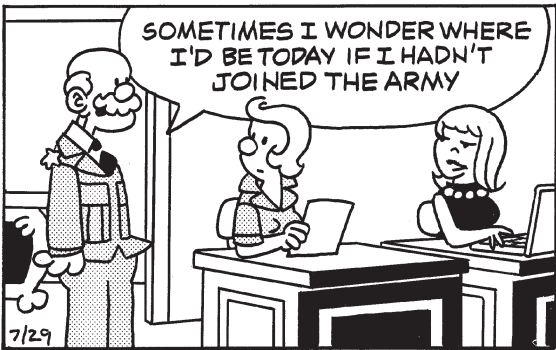
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TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



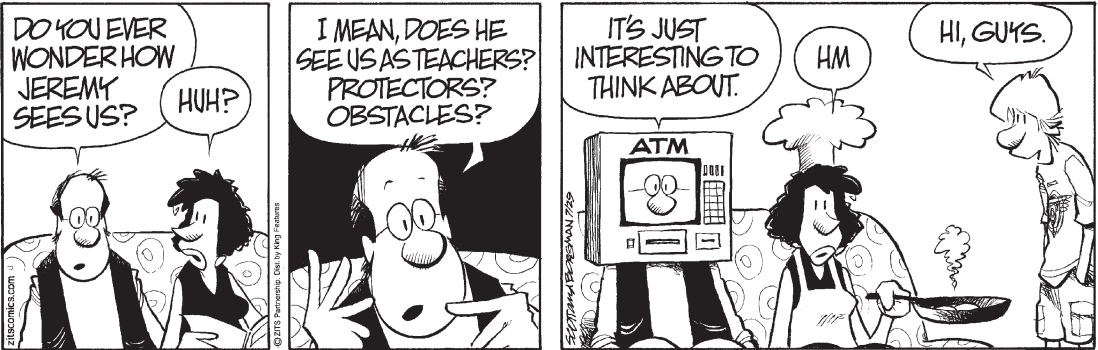
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



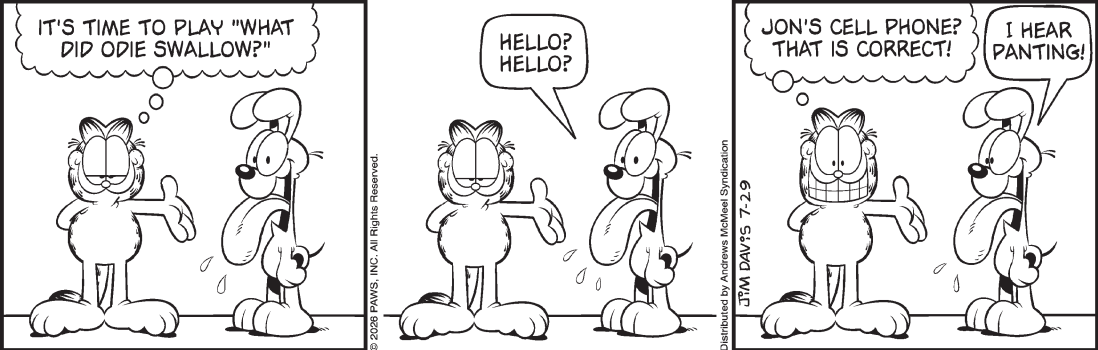
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



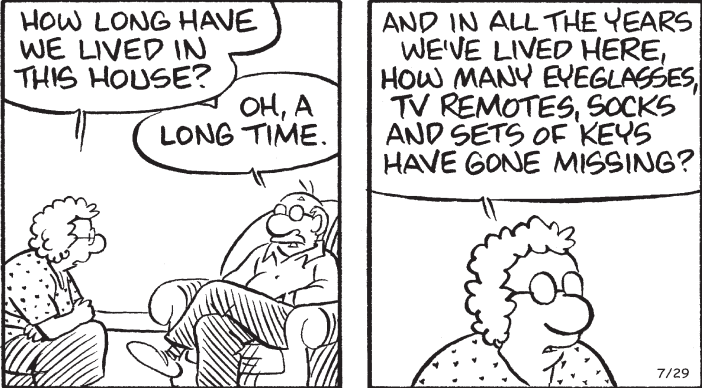
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



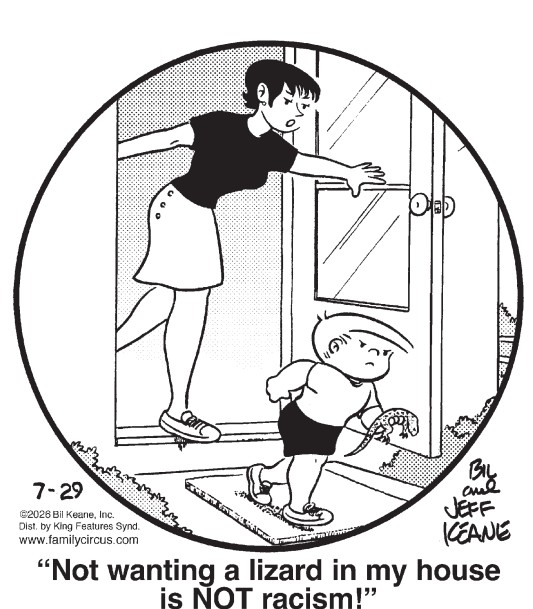
PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING:☆☆☆☆☆								
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1			9		3			
7				2			9	
	9		2	4	6		8	5
6		7		9		2		1
5	2		7	1	8		6	
	3			7				9
			5		9			8
		5	1					

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**
- Daytona 500 org.
 - Poetic measure
 - Hushed "Hey!"
 - Musical interval
 - Enunciate poorly
 - Stratford-___-Avon
 - *Book series with a character in red-and-white stripes
 - Café or thé lightener
 - "When pigs fly!"
 - Gender-specific pronoun
 - Florence of Florence and the Machine
 - Stage award
 - "Oily oily oxen free" game
 - More spent
 - R&R provider for GIs
 - Steamed bun
 - Play-___: Fun Factory maker
 - Tally
 - Garment worn with a choli
 - *Presentation tool that doubles as a cat toy
 - Nautical call
 - Decide (to)
 - Ecol. monitor
 - Gun, as an engine
 - Actress Thurman
 - "Spoon River Anthology" poet Edgar Lee
 - *Document in some pirate stories
 - Radar image
 - Proprietor
 - Diarist Anaïs
 - Orchestral pace
 - Kristen of "Bridemaids"
 - "Gotcha!," and what can be said about the answers to the starred clues
 - Cozy quarters
 - Japanese noodle
 - "That's a lie!"
 - Put through the paces
 - Petty quarrels
 - Goes back to zero
- DOWN**
- "There, there"
 - "Things Fall Apart" novelist Chinua
 - Aspartame alternative
 - Opportunity for students to consider their futures
 - State definitively
 - Hi-___ monitor
 - "To repeat ..."
 - "I'll take complete credit, thanks"
 - Mess around a sty
 - Cleveland team
 - Drawer handles
 - Long key
 - "That's the word on the street"
 - Demolition letters
 - Sound like a fan
 - Tokyo, long ago
 - "lol"
 - A5 and Q5 automaker
 - Colorful carp
 - Safari platform
 - Mobile download
 - Polka ___
 - Vehicle safety devices
- 7-29**
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S	I	E	S	E	R		S	M	O	H		I	S	E	I
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I	T	B		d	V	W	E	N		S	V	E	R	I	
S	H	E	L	S	V	W		V	W	N		A	E	H	
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O	V	B		O	S	N		H	E	I	H	V	E	M	
K	E	E	S	D	N	V	E	d	I	H		E	I	B	O
	H	O	T	E	M		W	I	H		H	E	A	E	N
I	I	V	I	O	d	T	V	M	S	E	H	E	H	M	
N	O	d	N	R	N	T	S		E	A	V	I	C	O	
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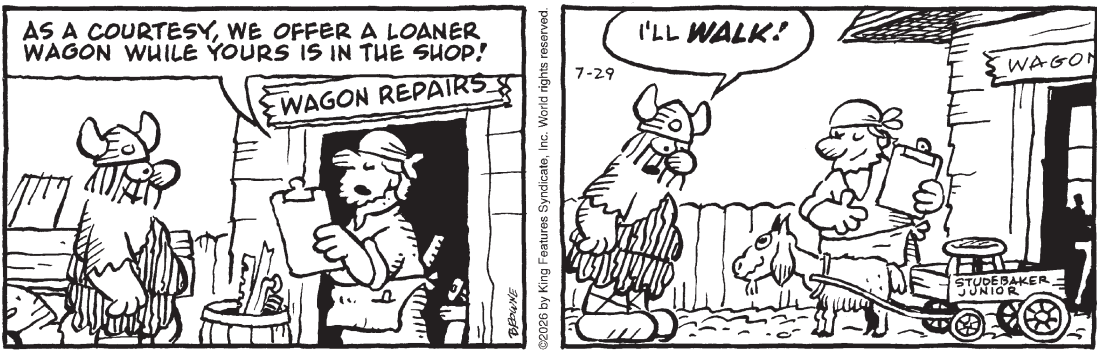
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1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10		11	12	13	14
15							16					17			
18							19					20			
21							22			23	24				
25						26			27						28
29					30				31			32			
				33				34	35			36			
		37					38			39	40				
41	42					43				44					
45				46	47				48				49	50	51
52			53					54	55			56			
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60						61	62			63					
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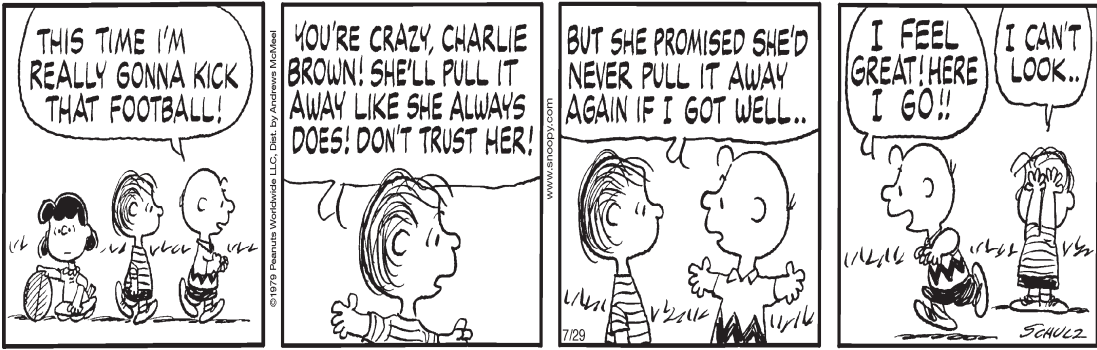
By Sala Wanetick & Dena R. Verkuil
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07/29/26

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

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

WRITING A REFERENCE LETTER

Solution: 10 letters

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

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7/29

Academic, Accomplishments, Achievement, Apply, Boss, Business, Call, Candidate, Clear, Cover, Details, Email, Employ, Example, Excel, Facts, Goal, Hire, Jobs, Join, Leads, Manager, Position, Recommendation, Research, Role, Salary, Sales, School, Select, Send, Skills, Spelling, Strength, Supervisor, Team, Template, Title, Traits, Voice, Work, Years

TODAY'S ANSWER: Interviews

WHATZIT?

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



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

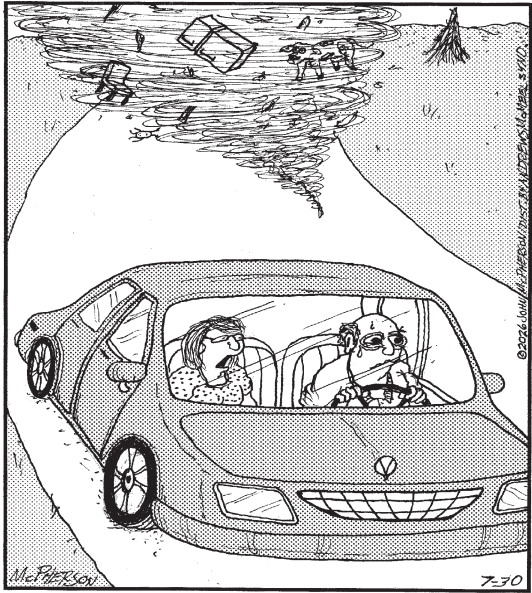
TODAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTION:

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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:

Fed up to the back teeth

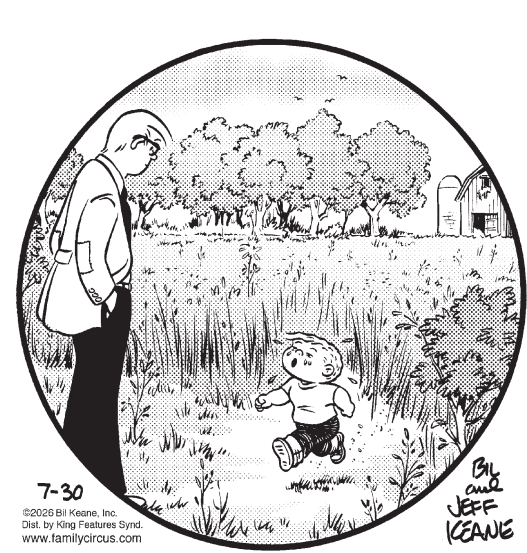
CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



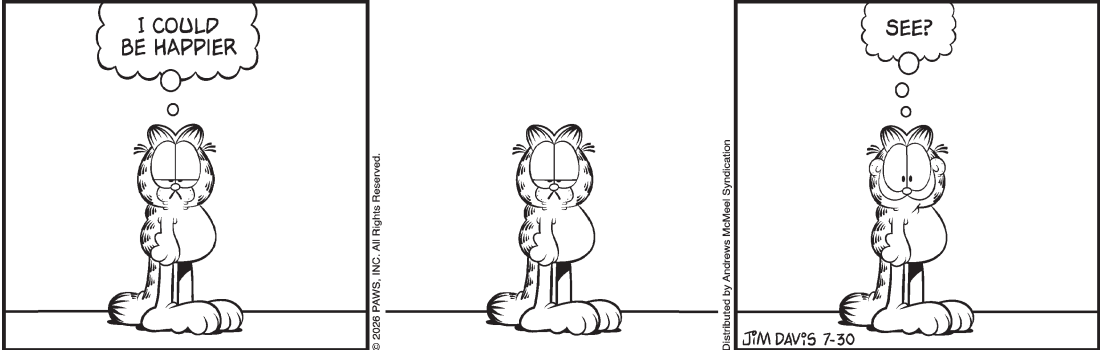
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



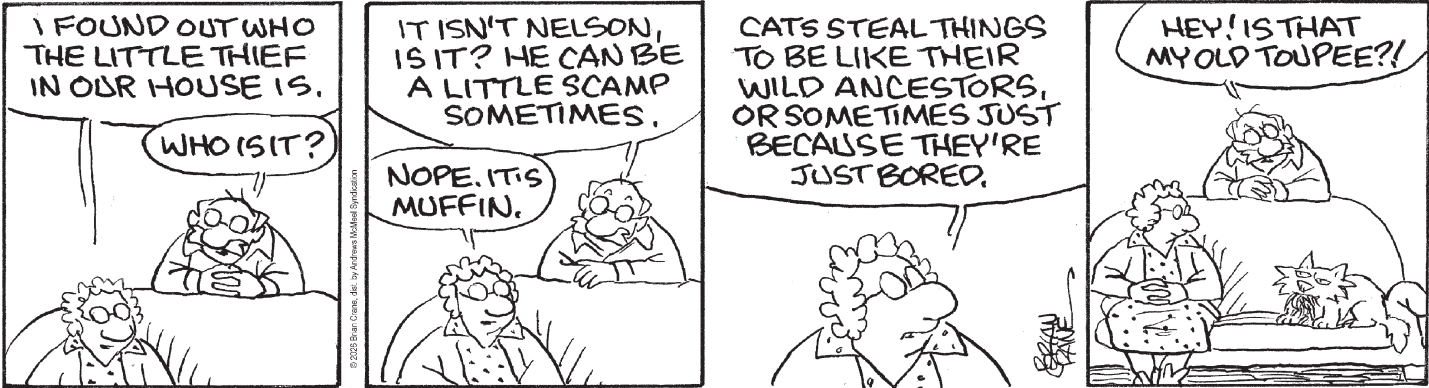
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

WHATZIT?

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

little late
little late

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: Too little, too late

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Typeface
5 Sweet potato
8 Not as much
12 Culture medium
13 Letter after zeta
14 Singing voice
15 Nevada city
16 Emphasized
18 Ground grain
19 Honest —
20 "I — — Camera"
21 Actress — Ball
25 Pampering, for short
28 Long narrow mark
29 Pastures
33 Montana's capital
35 Cargo boat
36 Greek marketplace
37 Hazard
38 — bene

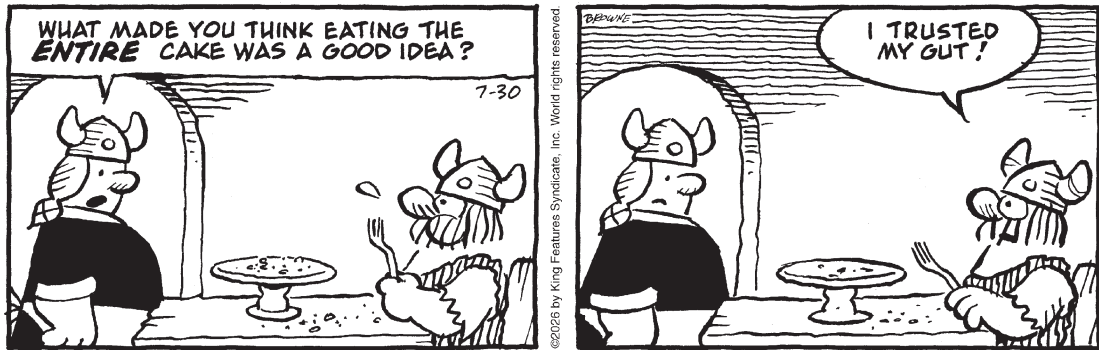
DOWN

1 Work the land
2 Pointed arch
3 Dog in "Peter Pan"
4 Online troublemaker
5 "Indeed!"

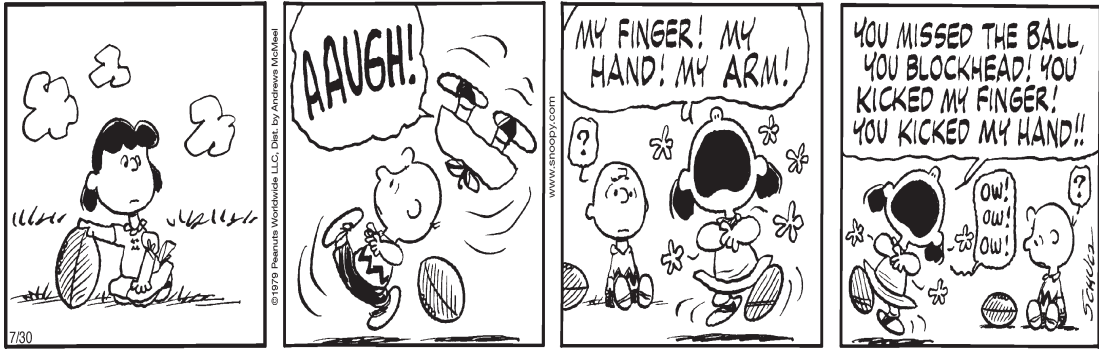
TODAY'S SOLUTION:

6	A	c	h	i	e	7	D	e	c	o	r	a	t	i	v	e	8	V	e	g	a	s	9	B	o	r	n	F	r	e	l	i	o	n	e	s	10	G	o	b	l	e	t	11	S	a	l	12	C	u	l	t	u	r	e	13	P	a	n	14	A	r	c	h	15	N	e	v	a	d	a	16	E	m	p	h	a	s	i	z	e	d	17	L	o	n	g	18	G	r	a	i	n	19	H	o	n	e	s	t	20	I	—	21	B	a	l	22	W	o	r	k	23	W	o	r	k	24	W	o	r	k	25	P	a	m	p	e	r	i	n	g	26	W	o	r	k	27	W	o	r	k	28	W	o	r	k	29	P	a	s	t	30	P	a	s	t	31	P	a	s	t	32	P	a	s	t	33	C	a	p	i	t	34	C	a	p	i	t	35	C	a	p	i	t	36	C	a	p	i	t	37	C	a	p	i	t	38	C	a	p	i	t	39	C	a	p	i	t	40	C	a	p	i	t	41	C	a	p	i	t	42	C	a	p	i	t	43	C	a	p	i	t	44	C	a	p	i	t	45	C	a	p	i	t	46	C	a	p	i	t	47	C	a	p	i	t	48	C	a	p	i	t	49	C	a	p	i	t	50	C	a	p	i	t	51	C	a	p	i	t	52	C	a	p	i	t	53	C	a	p	i	t	54	C	a	p	i	t	55	C	a	p	i	t	56	C	a	p	i	t	57	C	a	p	i	t	58	C	a	p	i	t	59	C	a	p	i	t	60	C	a	p	i	t	61	C	a	p	i	t	62	C	a	p	i	t
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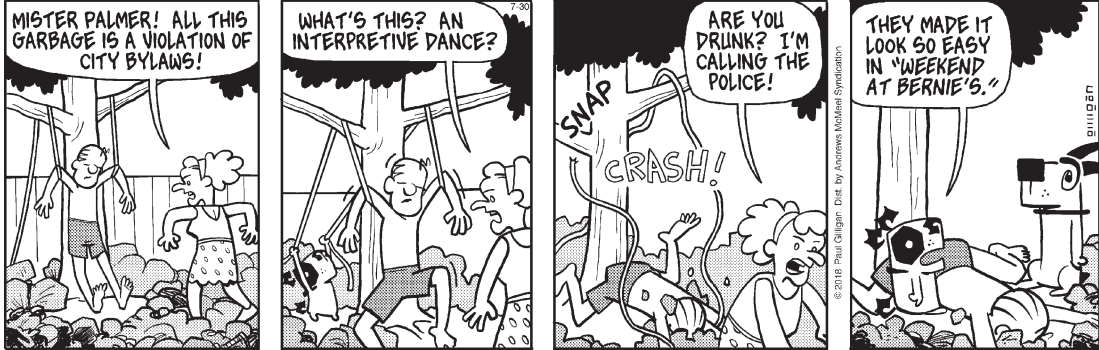
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

OZEMPIC

Solution: 10 letters

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TODAY'S ANSWER: Decreasing

Led Zeppelin tribute band to perform at Albany Municipal Auditorium

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Radio station ROCK 103.5 FM and First Media Services will present tribute band Stairway to Zeppelin live at the Albany Municipal Auditorium on Sept. 19.

Experience the music, energy and electrifying stage presence of one of the nation’s premier Led Zeppelin tribute bands. Stairway to Zeppelin faithfully recreates the iconic sound of rock legends Led Zeppelin, delivering fan favorites like “Whole Lotta Love,” “Black Dog,” “Rock and Roll,” “Kashmir” and the

unforgettable “Stairway to Heaven.” Lifelong Zeppelin fans and newbies discovering their music for the first time will groove to a concert that captures the power and excitement of one of the greatest rock bands of all time.

Fans are encouraged to make it a full night of classic rock by arriving early for the pre-show party! Rock 103 staff will be outside the Auditorium for music, Rock Truck giveaways and more before the doors open.

Tickets for the show will go on sale Aug. 7 at 10 a.m. Fans can purchase tick-



Submitted Graphic

Led Zeppelin tribute band Stairway to Zeppelin will perform live at the Albany Municipal Auditorium on Sept. 19.

ets online at Ticketmaster.com or visit the Georgia’s Own Credit Union Box Of-

fice at the Albany Civic Center, open Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Colquitt Regional receives American Heart Association Stroke Care Awards

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

MOULTRIE — Colquitt Regional Medical Center has received recognition from the American Heart Association, earning both the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Achievement Award and the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Rural Silver Recognition for its commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based stroke care to patients throughout south Georgia.

The Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Achievement Award recognizes hospitals that consistently follow the latest research-based guidelines for stroke treatment, helping ensure patients receive timely, coordinated care that improves survival, reduces disability, and enhances recovery. The Rural Silver Recognition honors hospitals that demonstrate excellence in acute stroke care while addressing the unique healthcare challenges faced by rural communities.

Stroke remains one of the leading causes of death and long-term disability in the United States. A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, either by a blockage or a ruptured blood vessel, preventing oxygen from reaching brain tissue. Because brain cells begin to die within minutes, rapid diagnosis and treatment are essential to improving outcomes.

“We are honored to receive both the Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Achievement Award and the Rural



Submitted photo

Helping assure that Colquitt Regional Medical Center received the American Heart Association’s Get With The Guidelines Stroke Gold Achievement Award and Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Rural Silver recognition were, from left, Heather Bryant, EMT; Emergency Department Nurse Crystal Gossett; Director of Emergency Department Justin Felts; Stroke/Trauma Coordinator Christi Griner, Intensive Care Unit Director Renee Ellenberg; Radiologic Technologist Gracie Lopez; and EMS Captain C.J. Roberts.

Silver Recognition from the American Heart Association,” Colquitt Regional President and CEO Jim Matney said. “These recognitions reflect the dedication of our physicians, nurses, emergency department staff, EMS partners, and multidisciplinary stroke team who work together every day to provide timely, evidence-based care. Whether a patient lives in Moultrie or one of the many rural communities we serve, our goal is to ensure patients throughout south Georgia have access to exceptional stroke care where and when they need it most.”

The American Heart Association’s Get With The Guidelines-Stroke program helps hospitals nationwide align patient care with the latest scientific research and nationally recognized treatment guidelines. Participating hospitals con-

tinually evaluate and improve their performance in key areas of stroke care, including rapid diagnosis and treatment, brain imaging, emergency medical services communication, stroke assessment documentation, dysphagia screening, patient education, discharge planning and consultation with stroke

specialists.

The Rural Recognition program further acknowledges hospitals that meet performance standards while overcoming the unique challenges often associated with providing healthcare in rural communities, including longer transportation times and limited access to specialized services.

In addition to providing evidence-based treatment, Colquitt Regional educates stroke patients and their families on recovery, reducing future stroke risk, and managing their health after leaving the hospital. The health system also continues to invest in advanced technology, physician expertise, emergency services and clinical training to strengthen stroke care across the region.

Together, these recognitions highlight Colquitt Regional’s ongoing commitment to clinical excellence, patient safety, and expanding access to high-quality stroke care for the communities of south Georgia, hospital officials said.



Special Illustration: Georgia DOT

DOT urges drivers: ‘Check Your Height, Know It’s Right’

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — The Georgia Department of Transportation has announced it is joining a public awareness campaign aimed at helping drivers avoid striking bridges with vehicles. The “Check Your Height, Know It’s Right” campaign encourages motorists to check that their vehicle is not too tall to safely fit under bridges that extend over state and local roadways. These overhead collisions, commonly known as bridge strikes, damage vehicles and infrastructure, hinder mobility and put the public and emergency responders at risk.

Such was the case on July 15, 2021 when a dump truck with an improperly raised bed struck the State Route (SR) 86 overpass in Treutlen County on Interstate 16. The impact shifted the bridge nearly 6 feet and caused irreparable damage, requiring the bridge to be demolished and the interstate to be closed in both directions. All lanes of I-16 were re-opened to traffic by the evening of July 16, 2021, but the replacement of the SR 86 overpass cost approximately \$4 million and took more than a year to complete, highlighting the significant cost and impact bridge strikes can have on the traveling public.

The “Check Your Height, Know It’s Right” campaign urges motorists to know the height of their vehicles and to comply with posted bridge heights, targeting all classes of drivers (CDL and passenger class drivers) operating commercial trucks or leased trucks (delivery and moving box-type), and recreational vehicles. Motorists are responsible for knowing the height of their vehicle and should always watch for and adhere to signage indicating bridge heights.



File Photo

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization announced Saturday that it had decided to add the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge to its World Heritage Site List.

Okefenokee earns World Heritage site status, but mining concerns persist

By Ty Tagami

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Fresh off the world stage with the departure of FIFA World Cup fans, Georgia is back in the limelight with the listing of the Okefenokee Swamp as an international treasure.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization announced Saturday that it had decided to add the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge to its World Heritage Site List.

The decision, reached during the 48th World Heritage Committee session in Busan, South Korea, makes the swamp the first such site in Georgia and the first listed national wildlife refuge in the United States, which already has more than two dozen listed sites.

“Receiving World Heritage status affirms what those of us who know and love the Okefenokee have always believed: this place is special,” Kim Bednarek, executive director of Okefenokee Swamp Park, said in a statement while attending the committee session.

She and other Okefenokee advocates say the designation will put south Georgia on the global map as a tourist destination, boosting the regional economy.

Gov. Brian Kemp said in a statement that it was “a fitting recognition for the Okefenokee that will further strengthen rural communities that surround it.”

A 2024 study said a World Heritage listing would draw 800,000 tourists a year, doubling visitation and creating about 750 long-term jobs and about \$60 million in annual economic impact.

U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff said in a statement that the designation “will help protect this renowned natural treasure for generations to come, promote tourism, and support southeast Georgia’s economic growth.”

The Okefenokee is the first U.S. natural World Heritage Site added in more than three decades and brings the number of World Heritage sites in the country to 27.

Other natural sites include the Grand Canyon, Yosemite and Yellowstone in the United States, and the Great Barrier Reef, Mount Kilimanjaro and the Galapagos Islands beyond.

Sites can also have cultural value, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal. The swamp’s mass of floating peat deposits makes an unstable surface for walking. It led to the swamp’s name, often translated as “land of the trembling earth” from the Muscogee language.

It also played a role in UNESCO’s decision, according to Bednarek’s group, which said the World Heritage Committee recognized the swamp for its ecology, biodiversity and the scale of its subtropical freshwater peatland ecosystems.

A group called Georgia Rivers said it facilitated a study of carbon storage in the peat that established the “Outstanding Universal Value” required to support a World Heritage bid.

Rena Ann Peck, executive director of Georgia Rivers, attended the committee session in Busan with Bednarek. She said she hoped the designation would encourage more swamp visitors.

The swamp has the largest undisturbed peat deposit on the North American Coastal Plain. It is also home to more than 1,200 species of animals and plants.

And it has mineral wealth that industry would like to tap.

For years, a threat loomed at the edge of the swamp, as a company called Twin Pines Minerals sought to mine titanium dioxide. Then, last year, that threat was neutralized when a group called The Conservation Fund assembled about \$60 million to purchase the nearly 8,000-acre property.

But other properties nearby could also host a mine.

Researchers at the University of Georgia released findings late last year that showed how harmful this could be to the swamp.

Mining requires significant amounts of water. The mines would draw it from an aquifer deep below the swamp, under the assumption that an intervening layer of clay separates the swamp from the aquifer.

The UGA research found otherwise, tracing water isotopes and discovering that water from the swamp appeared to be draining into the aquifer. Their conclusion: mining would drain the swamp.

Meanwhile, political pressure was building to protect the Okefenokee.

Ossoff, a Democrat, and others from Georgia’s congressional delegation, urged the Department of the Interior to pursue the World Heritage designation.

Then, last year, University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue, who had previously been the state’s first Republican governor in more than a century and a former Cabinet secretary, joined the campaign. He asked Interior Secretary Doug Burgum to seek the World Heritage designation because, Perdue wrote, it would “preserve a national treasure while also delivering incredible economic benefits to the state of Georgia.”

The group Environment Georgia noted that more than 30,000 acres adjacent to the Okefenokee remain eligible for mining.

“This World Heritage Site recognition affirms what so many Georgians already know — the Okefenokee is a natural treasure,” Jennette Gayer, the group’s Georgia director, said in a statement. “We call on our leaders to ensure this special place, a wonder of the world, is protected from the threats of mining.”

DARTS MPO
NOTICE OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
The Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study (DARTS) will hold Special Called meetings on Thursday, August 6, 2026. DARTS meetings are open to the public and will be held hybrid via Zoom or In-Person at 240 Pine Avenue, Suite 380.

Technical Coordinating Committee
August 6, 2026 at 9:00 A.M.
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89111652486?pwd=zSFBOnc8iXU1knc89lbZW0ygGthCsK.1>
Meeting ID: 891 1165 2486
Passcode: 235570

Policy Committee
August 6, 2026 at 10:00 A.M.
Join Zoom Meeting Link:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81575051857?pwd=EtyahCJJ3QqUKqBjiWX119tVmaLlbi.1>
Meeting ID: 815 7505 1857
Passcode: 261415

City of Albany Planning & Development Services
240 Pine Avenue, Suite 300, Albany, GA 31701

If you have any questions, please contact Transportation Planner, Tanner Anderson, at (229) 302-1843 or taanderson@albanyga.gov

DARTS MPO
AVISO DE REUNIÓN ESPECIAL CONVOCADA
El Estudio Regional de Transporte del Área de Dougherty (DARTS) celebrará reuniones especiales convocadas el jueves, 6 de agosto de 2026. Las reuniones de DARTS están abiertas al público y se llevarán a cabo en modalidad híbrida, a través de Zoom o de manera presencial en 240 Pine Avenue, Suite 380.

Comité Técnico de Coordinación
6 de agosto de 2026 – 9:00 a. m.
Enlace para unirse por Zoom:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89111652486?pwd=zSFBOnc8iXU1knc89lbZW0ygGthCsK.1>
ID de la reunión: 891 1165 2486
Código de acceso: 235570

Comité de Políticas
6 de agosto de 2026 – 10:00 a. m.
Enlace para unirse por Zoom:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81575051857?pwd=EtyahCJJ3QqUKqBjiWX119tVmaLlbi.1>
ID de la reunión: 815 7505 1857
Código de acceso: 261415

Ciudad de Albany
Servicios de Planificación y Desarrollo (Planning & Development Services)
240 Pine Avenue, Suite 300, Albany, GA 31701

¿Tiene alguna pregunta? Si tiene alguna duda, comuníquese con el Planificador de Transporte, Tanner Anderson, al teléfono (229) 302-1843 o por correo electrónico a taanderson@albanyga.gov.

Mike Norvell sees bigger role for Ousmane Kromah

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

TALLAHASSEE — Mike Norvell didn’t have to mention Ousmane Kromah on Monday.

But when Florida State’s head coach was asked about players who have impressed him during the offseason, the former Lee County standout quickly became part of the conversation.

Norvell grouped Kromah with veteran Sam Singleton and transfer Tre Wisner while discussing what he believes could become one of Florida State’s biggest strengths entering fall camp.

“Sam Singleton...has had

an unbelievable summer,” Norvell said. “I think that group there with him and Ous (Ousmane Kromah) and obviously Tre coming in, it’s going to be a fun backfield to watch.”

The comments are encouraging for Kromah, who enters his sophomore season after seeing limited action as a true freshman in 2025. While he wasn’t a major part of Florida State’s offense last season, Norvell’s unsolicited praise suggests the Seminoles expect him to compete for a much larger role this fall.

Kromah isn’t the only Albany-area running back to have worn a Florida State uniform in recent years. For-



Special Photo: Florida State University

Former Lee County running back Ousmane Kromah could see a more significant role for the Florida State Seminoles this season with Coach Mike Norvell saying the backfield is going to be fun to watch.

mer Dougherty High stand-out Kameron Davis spent time with the Seminoles before transferring to Liberty during the offseason, leaving Kromah as Southwest Georgia’s lone hometown representative in Florida State’s running back room entering the 2026 season.

The Seminoles officially begin preseason practice this week with optimism after what Norvell described as one of the program’s most productive offseasons.

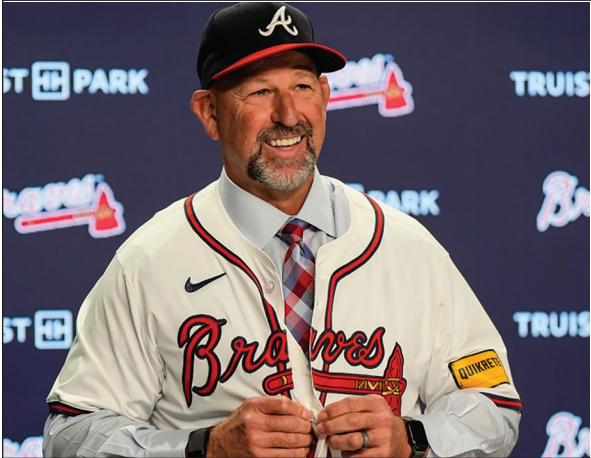
“I’m really proud of our guys for the summer work that’s gone in,” Norvell said. “This team has done everything that we’ve asked them to do up to this point.”

Florida State also enters camp healthier than it did during the spring.

Norvell said receiver Jayvan Boggs and linebacker Mikai Gbayor continue progressing after injuries and could be available for the Seminoles’ Week 0 opener against New Mexico State. Defensive lineman Jordan Sanders is expected to be fully cleared for the start of camp.

Norvell highlighted several returning players who elevated their games during the offseason, including defensive linemen Daniel Lyons and Deante McCray, receiver Ashlynd Barker, tight

See **KROMAH**, 10A



Special Photo: Braves.com

Manager Walt Weiss and Braves President of Baseball Operations Alex Anthopoulos are expected to be active before the MLB trade deadline as Atlanta looks to strengthen both its starting rotation and offense for the stretch run.

Braves need pitching, bat as trade deadline looms

By Jason Foster
Braves.com

The Braves’ biggest need before next week’s MLB trade deadline remains adding help to a shaky starting rotation, but strengthening the lineup may be nearly as important if Atlanta hopes to make a deep postseason run.

A surprising statistic underscores why the Braves could also be in the market for another impact bat.

According to the Elias Sports Bureau, Atlanta entered Sunday with 316 innings in which it failed to put a runner on base, the fourth-highest total in the National League and the sixth-most in Major League Baseball. The number highlights an offense that has been prone to disappearing for long stretches despite a productive start to the season.

Much of that total can be traced to a disastrous June, when the Braves posted a major league-worst .213 batting average and .599 OPS. While the offense has rebounded in July, several issues that contributed to those struggles remain concerns.

The lineup was hit hard when Ronald Acuña Jr. reinjured his right hamstring on June 9. Although Acuña wasn’t producing his typical power numbers before landing on the injured list, his .373 on-base percentage consistently helped set the table at the top of the order.

Catcher Drake Baldwin also missed significant time after suffering an oblique injury on May 18. Before getting hurt, Baldwin carried a .932 OPS. He homered on the first swing after returning but then endured a prolonged 2-for-43 slump.

Atlanta also received virtually no offensive production from Baldwin’s replacements. Sandy León, Chadwick Tromp and Austin Wynns combined to hit .110 with a .231 OPS during Baldwin’s absence, including a stretch in which the trio went just 1-for-40.

Shortstop has been another offensive black hole for much of the season. Ha-Seong Kim and Jorge Mateo have combined to hit .169 while filling the position, including a .102 average and .322 OPS during June.

Third baseman Austin Riley also struggled through much of the first half. Although he has caught fire since the All-Star break with a .921 OPS, Riley posted just a .288 on-base percentage and struck out in nearly 30 percent of his plate appearances through his first 95 games.

The Braves are not alone among contenders that frequently go down in order. The New York Yankees led the majors entering Sunday with 321 scoreless innings in order, while the Philadelphia Phillies (317) and Arizona Diamondbacks (312) also ranked among the league leaders. However, Atlanta was the only division leader among the top dozen teams in that category.

Even with the recent offensive improvement, Atlanta still has glaring weaknesses. Left field has produced a major league-worst .629 OPS this season, while the designated hitter position has

See **BRAVES**, 10A

Top Ten: SWGA’s most recruited football players

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

With the 2026 high school football season just days away, Southwest Georgia once again features one of the state’s deepest collections of college football talent.

Lee County leads the way with five players in the Albany Herald’s preseason Top 10 recruiting rankings, while Westover, Dougherty and Colquitt County also boast Division I prospects expected to make headlines this fall.

1. Jaden Upshaw, WR, Lee County (Texas A&M)

The area’s top prospect, Upshaw committed to Texas A&M after receiving 32 scholarship offers from some of the nation’s premier programs. The Aggies currently boast the nation’s No. 1-ranked recruiting class, making Upshaw Southwest Georgia’s highest-profile recruit entering the season.

2. Kyson Mallard, OL, Westover (Louisville)

Mallard remains one of Georgia’s premier offensive linemen. Despite overcoming a knee injury, he continued to attract Power Four attention before committing to Louisville, where his size, athleticism and physical style project well at the collegiate level.

3. Gregory Batson, LB, Lee County (Uncommitted)

Batson remains one of the state’s most coveted linebackers after reopening his recruitment following a previous commitment to Florida State. His combination of speed, instincts and physicality continues to attract interest from major college programs.

4. Carter Blackwell, TE, Lee County (Clemson)

Blackwell gives Lee County another elite Power Four recruit. The Clemson commitment has developed into one of Georgia’s top tight ends thanks to his versatility as both a blocker and pass catcher.

5. Shavezz Dixon, OL, Lee County (North Carolina)

Dixon gives Lee County yet another Power Four commitment on the offensive line. The North Carolina pledge has the size, strength and technique college coaches covet and should anchor the Trojans’ offensive front this season.

6. Antwan Lockett, WR, Colquitt County (Georgia Tech)

One of South Georgia’s most explosive offensive weapons, Lockett committed to Georgia Tech after establishing himself as one of the state’s premier playmakers. His speed and big-play ability make him a threat every time he touches the football.

7. David Burgess, ATH, Dougherty (Uncommitted)

Burgess has quickly emerged as one of Southwest Georgia’s fastest-rising prospects. The versatile athlete told the Albany Herald he plans to announce his college commitment during the 2026 season and is expected to draw increased attention throughout his senior year.

8. Eric Spann, DB, Dougherty (Georgia Southern)

After transferring from Monroe, Spann gives Dougherty another Division I talent in the secondary. The Georgia Southern commitment is expected to be



Staff Photo: Sonja Stroyls

Westover offensive lineman Kyson Mallard is one of the most recruited high school football players in southwest Georgia. He has committed to play at Louisville.

one of the Trojans’ top defensive playmakers this fall.

9. Jace Murray, LB, Lee County (Army)

A leader on one of Georgia’s premier football programs, Murray committed to Army after developing into one of the area’s most dependable linebackers. His toughness, football IQ and leadership make him an invaluable piece of Lee County’s defense.

10. William Owens, DL, Westover (Mercer)

Owens rounds out the Top 10 after committing to Mercer. The disruptive defensive lineman has become one of Southwest Georgia’s top defensive front prospects and will be counted on to anchor the Patriots’ defense this season.

Southwest Georgia running back Colt Williams has committed to play college football at

Harvard University, and several other area players could make an impact this fall and move onto that list. Those include Westover’s Morgan Williams, Monroe’s Jordyn Shorter, Worth County’s Lyndon Worthy, among others.

Lee County’s five selections underscore the Trojans’ reputation as one of Georgia’s premier talent-producing programs, but the region’s recruiting success extends well beyond Leesburg. Westover, Dougherty and Colquitt County continue to produce Division I prospects, while several emerging underclassmen are expected to join the list in the coming years. With another football season set to begin, Southwest Georgia once again will be a regular destination for college recruiters looking to evaluate some of the state’s top high school talent.

Baseball Hall of Fame worth the wait for Kent, Jones, Beltran

Field Level Media

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Few Baseball Hall of Famers have waited longer than Carlos Beltran, Andruw Jones and Jeff Kent to feel like rookies one more time.

“This is the closest thing to my first at-bat in the big leagues,” Beltran said as he opened his speech Sunday afternoon. “Where I feel excited to be here, but at the same time, I feel very nervous.”

It’s finally time to relax for Beltran, Jones and Kent, whose collective patience was rewarded when they were officially enshrined in front of an estimated crowd of 12,000 on a sun-splashed day at the Clark Sports Center in this bucolic upstate town.

A record 60 living Hall of Famers attended the ceremony, with the 57 already inducted sitting on the stage behind the trio of new inductees, who increase the Hall’s membership to 354 people.

Beltran was elected by the Baseball Writers Association of America in his fourth year on the ballot while Jones earned enshrinement in his ninth year of eligibility.

“This is a day we’re not going to forget,” Jones said. “I feel like a rookie today.”



Special Photo: Gregory Fisher-Imagn Images

New Baseball Hall of Fame inductees, left, Jeff Kent, Andruw Jones and Carlos Beltrán display their plaques during the National Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony Sunday in Cooperstown, N.Y. The trio officially joined baseball’s immortals before an estimated crowd of 12,000.

Kent, who never received more than 46.5% of the vote during his 10 years on the writers’ ballot from 2014 through 2023, was elected by the contemporary baseball era committee last December.

“Johnny Bench, he told it to me this morning before we got on the bus that ‘You belong, you belong,’” Kent said. “It hasn’t hit me yet.”

The trio delivered speeches touching on the international flavor of the day and the long

paths they took to baseball immortality.

Kent, a 20th-round pick of the Toronto Blue Jays out of Cal in 1989, hit 351 of his 377 homers while playing second base, the most ever by someone at that position. He recalled growing up racing motorcycles as a teenager before his dad offered to buy him a pickup truck if he earned a college scholarship to play baseball.

“That truck is still with me. It sits in my garage as a simple

reminder that some of the simplest things ...” Kent said before pausing. “The simplest things can change the entire direction of your life.”

Kent hit .274 with 78 homers and a .777 OPS for the Blue Jays, New York Mets and Cleveland from 1992 through 1996 before emerging as a star with the San Francisco Giants. The infielder hit .297 with 175 homers and a .903 OPS and won the 2000 National League Most Valuable Player award during his six seasons in the Bay Area.

“San Francisco was home,” Kent said. “San Francisco was where every lesson I’ve learned finally came together.”

Jones, who signed with the Atlanta Braves out of Curacao for \$46,000 as a 16-year-old in 1993, mentioned his 16 fellow Curacao natives who have reached the majors as the first player from Curacao to make the Hall of Fame.

Jones’ .254 average is the second-lowest of any Hall of Fame position player while his 1,933 hits are the fewest for a Hall of Famer who began his career after 1970. But the election of Jones — who averaged 33 homers and over 100 RBIs per season while

See **BASEBALL**, 10A

Stanford players take first step toward collective bargaining unit

Field Level Media

Founded five years ago as an advocacy group for athletes, the College Football Players Association announced on Monday that Stanford football players have formed the CFBPA's first chapter led by active athletes — a first step toward what the group hopes will eventually become a collective bargaining unit.

Regarding who the athletes will negotiate with, CFBPA founder and executive director Jason Stahl points to the conferences.

“We are very optimistic that other chapters will be announced soon,” Stahl, a former faculty member at the University of Minnesota, told The Athletic.

After communicating with Stanford players for more than a year, Stahl met with more than 50 players at the school's campus in Palo Alto, Calif., late last month. The Cardinal players elected fifth-

year offensive lineman Fisher Anderson and fifth-year linebacker Ernest Cooper as player representatives.

“We (at Stanford) have always had a pretty tight relationship with the NFL Players Association,” Anderson said on a podcast produced by the CFBPA, which was founded with a goal of organizing players from major colleges.

“Last year when this opportunity came about, it made me think if this is something that has had such a benefit on the National Football League, could it be done on the college football level?”

Stanford third-year defensive lineman Benedict Umeh echoed his teammate's sentiment.

“Whenever I leave those meetings (with the NFLPA) I think, ‘Why don't we have one of those?’” Umeh told The Athletic.

A bipartisan bill, the Protect College Sports Act, introduced

in May by Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), is unlikely to be voted on before the session ends in early August, The Athletic reported last week.

The bill aims to establish antitrust protections and national compensation standards for the NCAA and college conferences. Without it, college sports leaders believe that collective bargaining with athletes could create stability and ensure compliance with antitrust laws without needing government involvement.

“Standardization is necessary,” Umeh said. “The congressional bill could serve toward that purpose, give us the legal scaffolding to get everything in place. The issue with a congressional bill, in my eyes, is the players don't get much of a say at all.”

This isn't the first time college athletes have tried to form a union, but none of the previous movements have panned out, including Northwestern football players in 2014 and

the Dartmouth men's basketball team in 2024.

Stahl in 2020 was involved in another athlete-organized movement initiated by Pac-12 players and, the following year, started the CFBPA.

In 2022, he attempted to organize Big Ten athletes to negotiate better long-term medical benefits and possibly a share of conference revenue. The plan also fizzled out despite some progress, especially at Penn State.

Although schools have been allowed to pay athletes directly since 2025 as part of a revenue-sharing plan, the athletes are not technically being paid to play. The compensation is for their name, image and likeness (NIL), and the players are regarded as independent contractors.

“The schools are paying us to play,” Umeh said.

A wide variety of state labor laws could make it difficult for the CFBPA to operate nationwide. Therefore, Stahl said the CFBPA hopes Divi-



Special Photo: Darren Yamashita-Imagn Images

Stanford linebacker Ernest Cooper, 44, is among the Cardinal players helping launch the first active-athlete chapter of the College Football Players Association, a move organizers hope will eventually lead to conference-wide collective bargaining in college football.

sion I players will establish local chapters and negotiate collectively with their respective conferences.

“College football players deserve a meaningful voice in the decisions that shape their athletic, academic and

economic futures,” Stahl said. “Stanford football is the first of what the CFBPA envisions as 17 ACC football chapters, creating the framework for conference-wide player representation and, ultimately, collective bargaining.”

From 9A KROMAH

end Landen Thomas and offensive lineman Andre Otto. He also praised the development of the running back room, making Kromah one of only a handful of players he mentioned by name.

Another reason for optimism is continuity along the offensive line.

Unlike a year ago, when the Seminoles relied heavily on newcomers learning to play together, this year's unit enters camp after spending months working side by side.

“I feel a lot better now than where maybe I felt a year ago just within the cohesiveness of a group because of the reps,” Norvell said.

Defensively, Norvell likes the makeup of a quicker, more athletic front that fits new coordinator Tony White's aggressive philosophy.

“We want to attack. We want to be able to create disruption up front,” Norvell said. “We don't have a ton of the 340-pounders, but ultimately we've got fast, explosive, powerful guys.”

Norvell also said freshmen Jasen Lopez and Devin Carter remain “on the fast track” to earn early playing time if they continue progressing throughout August.

Florida State opens the season against New Mexico State in Week 0, but one of the more intriguing position battles to watch throughout fall camp could be in the Seminoles' backfield.

12 Bulldogs named to preseason SEC team

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ATHENS, Ga. — Georgia football had 12 selections on the 2026 Preseason Media Days All-Southeastern Conference Teams, according to a league announcement on Friday.

Georgia, Oklahoma and Texas were all tied-first with 12 preseason All-SEC selections each.

Of Georgia's 12 selections, four Bulldogs were named to the preseason conference first team: redshirt senior OT Earnest Greene III, redshirt senior C Drew Bobo, junior S KJ Bolden and redshirt sophomore DB Ellis Robinson IV.

More, Georgia was selected to finish first in the conference this season, as well as receiving a league-leading 87 votes to win the 2026 SEC

Championship. Media in attendance at SEC Media Days selected the Texas Longhorns to face the Bulldogs in the championship game.

On top of Georgia's four first-team selections, five Bulldogs were selected to the second team: junior RB Nate Frazier, senior TE Lawson Luckie, sophomore OL Dontrell Glover, sophomore DL Elijah Griffin and senior ILB

Raylen Wilson. Further, three Bulldogs – redshirt senior QB Gunner Stockton, senior OLB Gabe Harris, Jr. and senior S Khalil Barnes – were voted to the third team.

Georgia opens the season at Dooley Field in Sanford Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 5 against Tennessee State. The game will stream live on SEC Network+ at 3:00 p.m. ET.

From 9A BRAVES

posted just a .652 OPS since May 1, ranking 26th in baseball over that span.

Those numbers suggest adding another middle-of-the-order bat could be just as important as bolstering the rotation.

Among the players who could fit Atlanta's needs if they become available are outfielders Lane Thomas of the Royals and Jo Adell of the Angels. Astros shortstop

Jeremy Peña would also be an intriguing option if Houston were willing to move him, while Giants infielder Casey Schmitt offers right-handed power and defensive versatility.

With October aspirations still firmly in view, the Braves appear likely to pursue pitching before the August 3rd deadline. But if they hope to maximize their championship chances, adding an impact hitter may prove just as critical. A lineup that too often fails to generate baserunners is unlikely to sustain postseason success.

Field Level Media

After the Los Angeles Lakers were eliminated in the second round of the 2026 postseason, superstar LeBron James wrote that he was “done,” but on Monday, the Philadelphia 76ers officially welcomed the four-time MVP and four-time NBA champion into the fold.

James, who turns 42 in December, signed a two-year deal worth \$8 million to join a star-studded Sixers roster that includes former MVP Joel Embiid, former NBA Finals MVP Jaylen Brown, All-Star Tyrese Maxey and Rookie of the Year runner-up VJ Edgecombe.

The NBA's all-time scoring leader, James will enter his 24th season with the goal of helping the Sixers win their first title since 1983. Like the Lakers, the Sixers were bounced in the second round, falling to the eventual champion New York Knicks. Philadelphia has not advanced past the second round since 2001.

“I cannot wait to see LeBron alongside Jaylen Brown, VJ Edgecombe, Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey and our talented roster as we work to deliver a championship for Philly,” team owner Josh Harris said.

Despite his age, James remains one of the league's best players, coming off a season when he averaged 20.9 points, 7.2 assists and 6.1 rebounds over 60 games. Over his 23 seasons, the 22-time All-Star has averaged 26.8 points, 7.5 rebounds and 7.4 assists in



Special Photo: Darren Yamashita-Imagn Images

LeBron James officially joined the Philadelphia 76ers on Monday, giving the franchise another future Hall of Famer as it pursues its first NBA championship since 1983

1,622 games.

“There is no doubt LeBron is one of the greatest players to ever play the game of basketball and there are no words to measure the impact he'll have on this organization,” team president Mike Gansey said.

Among James' numerous accolades, he is a four-time NBA Finals MVP, a 21-time All-NBA selection, a three-time All-Star Game MVP and a member of the NBA's 75th anniversary team. He is also the first player to earn NBA Finals MVP honors with three teams (Lakers, Miami Heat, Cleveland Cavaliers).

Drafted No. 1 overall by the

Cavaliers in 2003, James played seven seasons before taking his talents to South Beach with the Heat, winning his first two NBA titles in Miami. He went back home to Cleveland and helped end a 56-year title drought in 2016. In 2018, he joined the Lakers and led them to a championship in 2020.

James and Gansey, who have ties going back to their Ohio high school basketball days in 2001, will reunite in Philadelphia. Gansery took over GM duties after Daryl Morley was fired in May.

Gansey, who starred at Olmsted Falls High School, was runner-up for Ohio's Mr. Bas-

ketball in 2001 to James, who won the award three times at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School before going straight to the NBA in 2003.

“I have had the pleasure of knowing LeBron since high school and have seen the high-level impact he's produced at every stop of his basketball journey,” Gansey said. “He is a consummate professional, the ultimate competitor and a tireless worker. But he is also an incredible person with natural leadership traits, a family man, and someone who possesses unwavering commitment to community and those around him.”

From 9A BASEBALL

winning 10 Gold Gloves over 12 seasons with the Braves from 1996-2007 — symbolizes the growing emphasis on rewarding a player's peak instead of his longevity.

He is the eighth member of the Braves' NL East dynasty to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, joining former teammates Tom Glavine, Chipper Jones, Greg Maddux, Fred McGriff and John Smoltz as well as executive John Schuerholz and manager Bobby Cox.

“Hitting home runs is great but I took a lot of pride in my defense, because that was my winning games,” Jones said. “And the Braves won a lot of games because of pitching and defense.”

Beltran, a second-round pick of the Kansas City Royals in 1995, took the stage to chants of “Puerto Rico!” in honor of his native country. The 49-year-old pulled a Puerto Rican flag from his jacket pocket early in his speech.

Beltran ranks fourth amongst switch-hitters with 435 home runs, behind Hall of Famers Mickey Mantle, Eddie Murray and Chipper Jones. He is also one of just three centerfielders with at least 400 homers and 300 stolen bases along with Hall of Famers Willie Mays and Andre Dawson.

The four-year Hall of Fame wait was likely due to Beltran's

role as the lone active player named in the report on the sign-stealing 2017 Houston Astros, which cost him his job as the New York Mets manager before he skipped a game in 2020.

Beltran entered the Hall sporting a Mets hat on his plaque. He hit .280 with 149 homers, 559 RBIs, 100 stolen bases and three Gold Gloves in 6 1/2 seasons with the club, with whom he is a special assistant to president of baseball operations David Stearns.

“Every organization shapes your career — New York shaped my life,” Beltran said. “The Mets cap, what it represents to me is growth and it represents the place where I became the best version of myself.”

The leading newcomer on next year's ballot is catcher Buster Posey, who hit .302 and won an MVP while helping the Giants to three championships during his 12-year career. Former Philadelphia Phillies star Chase Utley, who received 59.1% of the vote in his third year on the ballot, is the top returnee.

Former Giants managers Dusty Baker and Bruce Bochy are also strong candidates to be elected via the contemporary baseball era non-players committee, which is slated to meet in December.

Auburn's Jackson Koivun rockets in world rankings

Field Level Media

One win has put Jackson Koivun on the map. It might also be enough to get him a spot in the FedEx Cup playoffs.

Koivun won the 3M Open on Sunday in Minnesota in his third start since turning pro. The 21-year-old, a former college star and No. 1-ranked amateur in the world, went 25 under par at TPC Twin Cities and beat World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler by three shots.

Not only did it secure Koivun a two-year exemption on tour and an invitation to the Masters, it also put him in the playoff hunt.

Koivun jumped 124 spots in the FedEx Cup points race to No. 70, the final spot that will qualify for the first leg of the playoffs, the FedEx St. Jude Cham-

pionship, with two weeks to go in the regular season.

Koivun is ahead of recognizable names such as Australia's Jason Day (No. 74), Keegan Bradley (No. 76), Brooks Koepka (No. 84) and Tony Finau (No. 87), who would miss the playoffs were the season to end Monday.

The 3M Open victory also vaulted Koivun from No. 206 to No. 73 in the Official World Golf Ranking. When Koivun entered the U.S. Open for his final start as an amateur, he was ranked No. 260; by making the cut and tying for 23rd there, he moved up to No. 217. He'd since climbed a bit higher after tying for 10th at the ISCO Championship.

Koivun was a three-time Southeastern Conference Player of the Year, a three-time All-American and a two-time na-



Special Photo: Marc Lebryk-Imagn Images

Jackson Koivun reacts after a putt during the 3M Open. The 21-year-old rookie earned his first PGA Tour victory Sunday.

tional champion at Auburn. He turned pro ahead of the John Deere Classic in early July.

From 2A
PAY

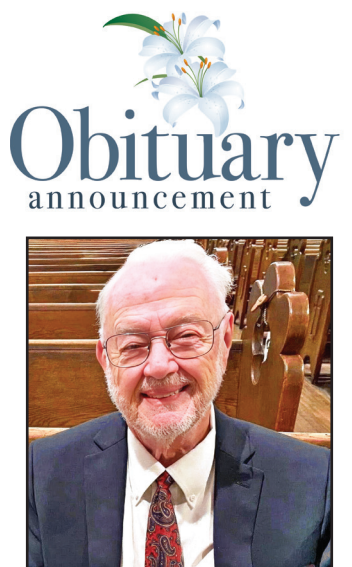
well over half of the city’s recurring income.

The city manager attributed payroll growth to recent pay increases, implementation of the city’s minimum wage adjustment and overtime built into certain employee schedules, though which employees are eligible for overtime remains unclear. During the same meeting, the city announced a hiring freeze, suspended discretionary spending and elected to leave the city clerk position vacant, a move expected to save approximately \$70,000 annually, while simultaneously seeking authority to borrow between \$400,000 and \$420,000 to maintain operations. No supporting financial records were presented at the meeting.

Council member Sondra Walker requested a staffing report showing pay rates for all city employees. The salary schedule reviewed for this article appears to be that report, although it was provided without any accompanying compensation policy, salary study or explanation of how wages were determined.

The payroll discussion comes as Dawson remains under a state enforcement order tied to its wastewater system. As previously reported by The Albany Herald, Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division escalated years of sewage violations into a 2024 consent order after the city accumulated dozens of permit violations and multiple sewage spills. Missing the extended construction deadline in 2028 could expose the city to penalties of up to \$100,000 per day. The city manager told council members the wastewater treatment plant remains one of

Dawson’s largest operating expenses, while utility rates have not been increased since 2011. The city’s audit also remains unfinished. During the July 9 meeting, one council member questioned how the city could borrow money without completed financial statements. The city attorney responded that a loan secured by the city’s certificates of deposit would not require a completed audit.



George M. Chastain, III, MD
George M. Chastain, III, MD died Sunday, July 19, 2026 at his home.
His memorial service will at 11 AM on Saturday, August 8, 2026 at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. The Rev. Stephen Norris and the Rev. Christopher A. Pappas will officiate. There will be a reception to follow the memorial service at St. Paul’s Parrish Hall.
Dr. Chastain was born in New Brunswick, NJ and graduated from Sayerville High School, Sayerville, NJ in 1955. He received his BA from Emory University in 1959 and his Doctorate of Medicine from the Emory University School of Medicine in 1963. Dr. Chastain served as a flight surgeon with the US Air Force Air Rescue Service from 1963 to 1967 at Eglin Air Force base, Ft. Walton

The Dawson News requested personnel action forms documenting promotions and re-classifications, salary histories, adopted pay scales, overtime records and council minutes approving compensation changes in order to distinguish promotions from raises and explain how salaries were established. At the time of publication, the city had not responded to those requests.

Beach, FL and at Ton San Nhut Air Force Base, Republic of Viet Nam. Captain Chastain was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service.
Following his discharge from the Air Force, Dr. Chastain began his Anesthesiology Residency at Emory University in 1970. He began private practice in Albany in 1972. In 1985, Dr. Chastain became an Associate Professor of Anesthesiology at Emory University School of Medicine. Dr. Chastain became the Chief Medical Officer of Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in 1987. He was the first physician to hold this office in the State of Georgia.
During his medical career, Dr. Chastain was recognized for many achievements. He was appointed by Governor Joe Frank Harris to the Georgia Composite State Board of Medical Examiners in 1980 and was elected president in 1982 and served until 1992. He helped develop the Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital Chaplaincy Program. He co-chaired the Best Practice Committee and Peer Review Committee of the Partnership for Health and Accountability with the Georgia Hospital Association.
Dr. Chastain was a member of the American Medical Association, the Medical Association of Georgia, the Dougherty County Medical Society, past president, American Association of Anesthesiologists, Georgia Society of Anesthesiologists, past president, Physician Executives of Georgia, Inc., past president. He was an alumnus of Leadership Georgia and served in the first Board of Directors of Leadership Albany and helped plan healthcare presentations to new members. Dr. Chastain is a member of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and was a former member of Porterfield Methodist Church. He was a past board member of the Albany Symphony Board and the Boy Scouts of America. He was also a past member of the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the American Cancer Society where as a cancer survivor he lectured on “Seasons of Survival, the Road Following Cancer.”
Dr. Chastain was preceded in death by his first wife, Sarah Anne Chastain.
Dr. Chastain is survived by his wife: Fran Pappas Chastain; her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren; his children: Sarah Beth Morgan, Scott Chastain, and George Chastain, IV; three grandchildren.
Those desiring may send memorials to the Willson Hospice House, 312 Foundation Lane, Albany, GA 31707, or to Wounded Warrior Project, support.woundedwarriorproject.org.

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.

“ X A T L O V Q A T N S M T Z Q A X W L A I L
... T R L X ' D O I N S T Z M E V W E I S Z A T Z .
D P Y T S M R Z O S M T W W P Q T S B M L I V Z
Z A X O W X Z Z W M V Z I Y X T E I S V O . ”
— S T O A X L T H I R M O

Previous Solution: “One true measure of a nation is its success in fulfilling the promise of a better life for each of its members.” — John F. Kennedy
TODAY’S CLUE: a sjenbe 7
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CELEBRITY CIPHER
by Luis Campos
Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

“ X Q ' T Q K H O Y Y J O Z V E L Y B E P B X
E F T O K H B B E F T ... H P Q T Q ' K F
Y O Z Q F Z V M B L P F G Q H B E O U L T Q
B L H P B X F Z V X P Q Z H B N T B K K O H . ”
— F F T B Z J N U T L V Q T

Previous Solution: “I had such a great childhood ... And I’m so grateful for that. My parents really carved out this little utopia for us.” — Rashida Jones
TODAY’S CLUE: i sjenbe 0
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Albany Area Chamber of Commerce

Up 2 U Entertainment

The Albany Area Chamber of Commerce proudly recognizes Up 2 U Entertainment as this week’s Star Business of the Week.

As a family-owned and operated business born and raised in Albany, Up 2 U Entertainment was created with one goal in mind—to provide a fun, welcoming place where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can come together to make lasting memories. Offering six exciting attractions: axe throwing, a rage room, splatter paint, spin art, a golf simulator, and arcade games—there’s truly something for everyone. Whether you’re planning a family outing, date night, birthday party, team-building event, or just looking for a unique experience, Up 2 U Entertainment delivers affordable fun that keeps guests coming back.

Dedicated to bringing new and exciting experiences to our community, Up 2 U Entertainment continues to create a space where friends and families can connect, laugh, and make unforgettable memories. And be sure to keep an eye out for their exciting fall events, which are sure to bring even more fun to the Albany community!

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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YARD SALE, July 31st & Aug. 1, 8 am until. 295 Flowing Well Road, Leesburg, GA 31763. Any questions, call or text 229-894-8048. 3 Families. More stuff brought in from storage. Everything from lots of antique furniture, chest drawer, twin bed frames, queen mattress, what-nots, end tables, pictures, stove. Plenty of clothes for everyone going cheap. Everything will be inside and outside. Full house of everything. Rain or Shine.

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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. Contact the office at 229-835-2269. Applications will be accepted until August 7th , 2026.

Sell it! Buy it! See it!

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 buses and bicycles (8)	_____
2 happening (9)	_____
3 two quarters (4)	_____
4 dried up (8)	_____
5 like a 1970s rug (6)	_____
6 Rolling Stones' Richards (5)	_____
7 haggis accompaniment (7)	_____

RED	ING	CL	VE	OCC
HI	WIT	TUR	HA	SH
URR	AG	HE	ES	KE
GY	PS	ITH	NI	LF

Tuesday's Answers: 1. KNICKKNACKS 2. LEGENDS 3. HONE 4. BRAIN 5. ARABIC 6. CRAWLED 7. DISBANDED 7/29

7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 shed light on (9)	_____
2 able to figure things out (11)	_____
3 labyrinths (5)	_____
4 historical novelist Kate (5)	_____
5 “pet” irritation (5)	_____
6 pp, to a musician (10)	_____
7 “work tops” (7)	_____

OU	EXP	NED	EVE	MA
QUI	NI	FUL	BL	RES
IMO	OU	PIA	LAI	PE
RCE	SES	NN	ZES	SS

Wednesday's Answers: 1. VEHICLES 2. OCCURRING 3. HALF 4. WITHERED 5. SHAGGY 6. KEITH 7. TURNIPS 7/30

Release Date: Thursday, July 30, 2026

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS	DOWN	39	48
1 Thompson of “Creed”	1 Social finesse	Cult classic of 1990s TV	Cataloged work
6 One crunch, e.g.	2 Standards of right and wrong	40 Therefore	53 Pyramid builders of Mexico
9 Accord, for one	3 Stew	41 “O, turn thy sword another way; / Strike those that hurt, and hurt not those that help”: “Henry VI, Part 1”	54 Supermodel Crawford
14 Dined on, quaintly	4 Sputnik launchers	43 Sun visor	56 Big cat
15 Big bird	5 Chad’s continent: Abbr.	45 Sin of	57 Seemingly forever
16 Año Nuevo month	6 Cave	47 To be, in Latin	58 Zip
17 Car named for a California beach city	7 Come to light		59 See 39-Across
20 South American monkey	8 Antes up		60 Shakespearean prince
21 In and of itself	9 Zooplankton habitat		63 Army fare, briefly
22 Toolbar image	10 Jazz up		64 Cul-de-__
23 Carefully considering something	11 Frees of frost		
26 Alien-seeking field: Abbr.	12 Leafy retreats		
27 Pin number?	13 Gin or tonic		
28 Loch with a legend	18 Nail polish brand		
29 Mach 1 breaker	19 Came together		
31 Author Rand	24 Cheesehead’s st.		
32 Catch a few winks	25 Semiprecious stone with black-and-white bands		
35 Cereal-based snack	30 Holier-__-thou		
39 With 59-Down, “Tommy” band	31 Well-ventilated		
42 Land measure	32 __ cheese		
44 Strong suit?	33 Was sore		
45 Due, as an apology	34 Prepare for later broadcast		
46 Home of the Frontier Days rodeo	36 Coastal raptor		
49 “__ hoping!”	37 Marvel Comics mutants		
50 Nav. rank	38 Does lawn work		
51 __-nez			
52 West Texas city			
54 Having raised surfaces, as teeth			
55 California restaurant opened by Alice Waters in 1971			
59 “Hold your horses!”			
61 Yank at			
62 Pet food brand			
65 Like some cheese			
66 Revise, as prose			
67 Gumbo vegetable			
68 Shoppe adjective			
69 “Mighty” batter who strikes out in a classic poem			
70 Tiny amt. of time			

By Jeffrey Wechsler
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07/30/26

The Dougherty County School System is excited to welcome our students, families, and employees back for the 2026–2027 school year! We look forward to a year filled with learning, growth, and success. Here’s to a fantastic school year!

School Starts August 3!

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