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Albany State University generates \$328 million economic impact

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – Albany State University generated an estimated \$327,974,095 in economic impact during Fiscal Year 2025, representing a 16.2% increase over the previous year, the highest percentage increase among institutions in the University System of Georgia, according to the latest USG economic impact report.

The university also supported an estimated 2,826 jobs across its study area, an increase of 160 jobs from FY 2024. This includes Dougherty, Lee, Worth, Mitchell, Terrell, Sumter, Tift and Crisp counties.

The increase was driven primarily by growth in the economic impact associated with university operating expenditures, along with increases in student spending and person-

nel-related activity.

The latest results reflect Albany State’s continued momentum as the university strengthens its role as an economic and educational engine for southwest Georgia. The university has experienced steady enrollment growth since 2021



ASU President Robert Scott

that totals 7.8%, accompanied by a renewed institutional focus on retaining students through graduation and providing the resources and support necessary for their success.

“Albany State University is demonstrating what is possible when in-

stitutional growth is rooted in student success, regional responsibility, and a clear vision for the future,” ASU President Robert Scott said. “Our impact can be seen in the jobs we support, the businesses we strengthen, the families and future generations whose economic futures are changed, and the communities that benefit from the talent and leadership our graduates bring home. To-

gether we are building an institution that is growing with purpose.”

Under Scott’s leadership, Albany State has placed significant emphasis on ensuring that enrollment growth translates into student persistence and degree completion. The university’s one-year retention rate has increased steadily

See **ASU**, 2A

Albany reviews water system security after nationwide cyber attacks

By Kathryn Crockett
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ALBANY — Albany Utilities reviewed its water system and implemented precautionary measures after receiving an urgent warning about cyber attacks targeting water and wastewater infrastructure, city officials said, as federal authorities continue to investigate a recent wave of attacks that has included systems in Georgia.

Kendall C. Hodge, Albany’s director of utility operations, said his team received the cyber security warning July 27 and immediately evaluated the city’s system from two perspectives: the security and operation of its computerized monitoring system and Albany’s ability to continue providing water if that system became unavailable.

“From an operational standpoint, we have not experienced any known cyber security incident that has impacted the operation of our water system or SCADA system,” Hodge said.

Albany uses a Supervisory

Control and Data Acquisition system, commonly known as SCADA, to provide centralized, around-the-clock monitoring and supervisory control of its water infrastructure.

From the city’s Distribution Operations Control Center, employees can monitor wells, tanks, pumps, alarms and other equipment throughout the system.

The technology is significant because federal authorities have warned that cyber actors are increasingly targeting operational technology — computer systems that interact with physical infrastructure rather than simply storing information.

The FBI and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a warning in late July following cyber incidents involving water and wastewater utilities in multiple states. Attackers targeted internet-facing programmable logic controllers used



Staff Photo: Kathryn Crockett

Albany’s water and wastewater infrastructure is monitored around the clock through a centralized control system. Utility officials say the city has reviewed its systems following recent cyber attack warnings and can continue essential operations manually if computerized controls are disrupted.

See **WATER**, 2A

Lily Pad, law enforcement work together to seek justice for assault victims

By Tara Fletcher
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ALBANY -- When you’ve worked for a nonprofit as long as Mary Martinez, the executive director of the Lily Pad SANE Center Inc., has, you learn to choose your battles. But when it comes to getting justice for the victims of sexual assault and rape, Martinez doesn’t hesitate to pull out every weapon in her arsenal.

To get to the rest of this story, let’s go back. In 2015, an investigation uncovered 1,351 untested rape kits in storage at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. That inquiry was the catalyst for passing the 2016 law enacted as Senate Bill 304 that established the current timelines for testing and handling sexual assault kits, specifically that Law enforcement agencies must take possession of kits within 96 hours and submit them to the

Georgia Bureau of Investigation within 30 days and that all previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits be sent to the crime lab by August of 2016.

The problems with kits weren’t just in Atlanta. Rape kits all over Georgia, many sitting for more than a decade, were being located and processed, including many from Dougherty

County. Once the GBI entered the DNA information into its system, there were hits on multiple cases that belonged to one assailant. Dougherty County had a serial rapist.

For 13 years, starting in 2004, Duane Ballard had victimized at least 12 women and young girls. In November of 2022, Bal-

See **VICTIMS**, 2A



File Photos

Mary Martinez and APD Chief Michael Persley.



Special Photo: Phoebe

Georgia Southwestern State University President Kerry Palmer, left, and Phoebe Putney Health System President & CEO Scott Steiner celebrate after signing a partnership agreement.

Phoebe, GSW expand partnership to strengthen healthcare workforce

Staff Reports
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AMERICUS – Phoebe Putney Health System and Georgia Southwestern State University are expanding their long-standing partnership through a strategic collaboration designed to address critical healthcare workforce needs. Phoebe has pledged a transformational investment to significantly expand health-

care education and workforce development opportunities in southwest Georgia.

“This investment represents a shared commitment to the future of healthcare in southwest Georgia,” GSW President Kerry J. Palmer said. “By investing in students and expanding access to high-demand healthcare programs, Phoebe is helping GSW pre-

See **GSW**, 2A

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From 1A

GSW

pare more highly skilled professionals who can build careers and serve the communities that need them most. We are incredibly grateful for this partnership and the impact it will have for generations to come.”

The expanded agreement creates new and enhanced healthcare pathways for students, strengthening the region’s pipeline of locally educated and trained healthcare professionals.

“We know the most effective way to address the shortage of healthcare professionals is to educate and train them here

From 1A

VICTIMS

lard was convicted of 16 felony counts, including rape, child molestation and aggravated assault. He was sentenced to life plus 100 years.

The Duane Ballard case was the reason Dougherty County and the Lily Pad were chosen to be the pilot program for the current sexual assault kit processing program, SAKI, or Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. This system tracks each kit from the manufacturer to the Lily Pad, to the police station’s evidence locker and to the GBI. Not only can it be tracked by law enforcement and the Lily Pad, the victims can log in and see the progress.

For a number of years, this system, along with the 2016 law, had been working smoothly.

From 1A

WATER

to operate equipment within water systems, according to federal authorities.

In some incidents, attackers changed network settings and passwords, causing utilities to lose monitoring or control of equipment. Federal authorities reported operational consequences including loss of water pressure and flooding.

At least two Georgia water utilities, Clayton County Water Authority and Columbus Water Works, have publicly reported cyber security incidents associated with the recent wave of attacks.

Hodge said Albany Utilities took the warnings seriously and reviewed its own environment in coordination with the city’s Technology and Communications Department.

The departments also implemented precautionary measures

in southwest Georgia,” Phoebe President and CEO Scott Steiner said. “At Phoebe, we are constantly looking for innovative and effective ways to create or enhance partnerships with vital institutions like Georgia Southwestern to build the quality workforce needed to meet the current and future healthcare needs of our region.”

The collaboration provides funding to establish the Phoebe Fellows Program, expand GSW’s Associate of Science in Nursing program, launch a new Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy program and provide a loan forgiveness pathway for GSW graduates who pursue advanced degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy

But in recent years, Martinez noticed there was a breakdown in the system, and kits weren’t being processed in a timely manner. Around 33 kits had taken one to two years to process, and 13-15 kits still were unprocessed.

“Can you imagine what it’s like to be a victim, coming forward and putting yourself through the testing process only to log on to SAKI and see over and over again that your test hasn’t even been sent to the GBI?” Martinez asked.

After multiple meetings involving, the Albany Police Department and the Dougherty County district attorney’s office, Martinez decided to take a more public approach and publicized her frustration in a Facebook post: “48 rape kits I’ve found so far. Turned in years late or not at all. Does that make you feel safe? Begging for the bare minimum.”

based on information contained in the warning, he said.

Hodge did not disclose details of those measures, and The Albany Herald is not seeking information about specific cyber security configurations that could compromise the city’s defenses.

One of the most consequential questions raised by the attacks is what happens if hackers successfully disrupt the centralized computer system used to monitor and control a city’s water infrastructure.

In Albany, Hodge said, losing SCADA would not mean losing the ability to operate the water system.

“The water system is not solely dependent on SCADA to operate,” he said.

If communications or supervisory control through SCADA became unavailable, trained water system operators could be dispatched to equipment throughout the system and operate it locally, he said.

or athletic training and return to work with Phoebe.

“Phoebe is fortunate to have had an outstanding partnership with Georgia Southwestern for many years,” Phoebe Vice President for Education & Talent Acquisition Tracy Suber said. “We know GSW graduates are confident, competent and well-prepared to enter the workforce, and we are pleased to expand our alliance to provide opportunities for even more students to attend GSW to get the education and skills they need for a successful healthcare career.”

The agreement also recognizes the partners’ shared commitment to educating, training and retaining healthcare professionals who are connected

The post got a lot of attention, but still the rape kits were not moving.

Lily Pad board member Karen Hanner saw the post on Facebook and thought, “This is not OK.” She personally called APD Chief Michael Persley and asked to set up a face-to-face meeting regarding the kits. They met the next day at 11 a.m. By 1 o’clock that afternoon, Persley had identified all of the outstanding kits and they were driven directly to the GBI. Simultaneously, Martinez was on the phone with the district attorney’s office.

Finally, the squeaky wheel was getting the grease, and the victims were closer to justice.

Although that problem was solved, there were still questions: How did this happen and how can we make sure it doesn’t happen again?

“We’re human; we’re not perfect,” Persley said. “When

Those employees would coordinate with the Distribution Operations Control Center while centralized monitoring and control were being restored.

“Personnel would be dispatched in a systematic manner to address emergent issues and physically operate the system to restore and maintain system stability,” Hodge said.

That type of backup capability has become increasingly important as federal agencies warn water utilities to prepare for attacks capable of crossing the line between computer-system disruption and physical infrastructure problems.

Federal authorities have recommended that utilities strengthen protections around remotely accessible industrial equipment, maintain backups and ensure critical processes can continue if centralized computerized controls become unavailable.

The recent incidents follow years of warnings about the

to southwest Georgia.

“Students will benefit from greater access to our programs, as well as from a clearer pathway into rewarding careers right here in our region,” Courtney Ross, dean of GSW’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences, said. “This investment gives us the opportunity to grow strategically in areas where the workforce need is significant while continuing to provide the high-quality education and hands-on preparation our students expect from GSW.”

Key elements of the expanded partnership include:

Phoebe Fellows Program: Each year, 20 nursing students selected as Phoebe Fellows will receive \$15,000 scholarships.

we drop the ball, all we can do is figure out what we can do to fix it. When a sexual assault occurs, the sexual assault nurse gives the kit to an investigator, then it goes to property, where an evidence tech completes the paperwork and it is loaded into two systems. Then it is delivered to the GBI.

“We are going to make sure that the policies and rules are updated, and we re-educated everyone in the department.”

Persley also took it upon himself to call his peers in the region, reminding other chiefs to make sure they’re processing their kits according to the law.

“This situation shows that community partnerships are important,” the APD chief said. “Victims need advocates with strong voices, and sometimes we need reminders, checks and balances. If everything is going right, I question what’s missing.”

vulnerability of the nation’s water infrastructure.

EPA inspections beginning in 2023 found widespread deficiencies in water-system risk and resilience practices. Federal watchdogs also have warned that water and wastewater utilities face particular cyber security challenges because of aging technology, staffing shortages and limited resources.

The latest attacks have brought those concerns closer to home.

Federal authorities separately warned in July that Iranian-affiliated cyber actors had been targeting internet-accessible industrial control equipment across water, municipal and energy infrastructure since at least March. Authorities have not publicly established that those actors were responsible for all of the water-system attacks reported later in July.

The attacks underscore a vulnerability increasingly confronting public utilities: The same technology that allows operators to monitor wells, pumps and tanks from a central location can also create new avenues for disruption.

For Albany, Hodge said the city’s defense includes preparing for the possibility that those computerized controls may not always be available.

“As is standard protocol for water distribution service providers in the state of Georgia, we maintain contingency plans, procedures and protocols that allow essential water operations to continue if centralized computerized controls become unavailable,” he said.

That means a successful disruption of Albany’s centralized monitoring system would not necessarily mean a loss of water service. Operators can be dispatched into the field to physically control equipment while the city works to restore its centralized system — providing a layer of resilience increasingly important as cyber threats move beyond computer networks and toward the infrastructure residents depend on every day.

Albany’s water and wastewater infrastructure is monitored around the clock through a centralized control system. Utility officials say the city has reviewed its systems following recent cyber attack warnings and can continue essential operations manually if computerized controls are disrupted.

In exchange for financial support, participating students will commit to two years of employment with Phoebe following graduation, creating a direct pathway from the classroom to the healthcare workforce.

Expanded ASN Capacity: The investment will allow GSW to expand enrollment capacity in its Associate of Science in Nursing program by 25 students annually. The program currently serves approximately 40 to 50 students, meaning the additional capacity will substantially increase the number of students who can pursue nursing education at GSW each year.

Respiratory Therapy Program: The gift will provide seed funding to establish a new Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy program at GSW. Funding will assist with faculty positions and other start-up costs necessary to develop and launch the program, further expanding the university’s portfolio of healthcare degrees in response to regional workforce needs.

Exercise Science Graduate Pathway: Phoebe will establish a loan repayment incentive, valued at up to \$45,000, for eligible GSW graduates who complete advanced degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy or athletic training and accept qualifying employment with Phoebe.

From 1A

ASU

since 2020, growing by nearly 12.8 percentage points during that period.

Albany State has expanded investments and programs designed to help students remain enrolled and graduate, including the Presidential Scholarship Program, University College, Summer Success Academy, Study Tables, the HBCU-UP STEM Academy, and other academic and student support initiatives. These efforts reflect the university’s focus on creating a comprehensive pathway from recruitment to retention and, ultimately, graduation.

The university also has expanded its graduate education portfolio to meet emerging workforce and community needs. In the past three years, Albany State has introduced new graduate degree programs in trauma psychology, athletic training, and integrated biotechnology; added a Juvenile Justice concentration to its Criminal Justice graduate program, and launched eight graduate certificates in business and public administration.

These investments come as Albany State continues to see opportunities for further enrollment growth, particularly at the graduate level.

The economic impact report also illustrates the long-term value Albany State graduates bring to Georgia and the nation. ASU conferred 1,439 degrees and certificates in FY 2025, representing an increase of approximately 2.1%.

Using synthetic work-life earnings estimates for Georgia, the study projects that ASU’s FY 2025 graduates could generate approximately \$4.04 billion in lifetime earnings, with approximately \$1.19 billion attributable to their educational attainment.

By degree level:

- Master’s Degrees – 206 graduates; approximately \$721.9 million in projected Georgia work-life earnings; \$63.5 million attributable to degree attainment.
- Bachelor’s Degrees – 627 graduates; approximately \$2 billion in projected Georgia work-life earnings; \$891.6 million attributable to degree attainment.
- Associate’s Degrees – 596 graduates; approximately \$1.29 billion in projected

“At Phoebe Sumter, we’ve had the opportunity to work closely with GSW for many years. We see how they train and support their students, and we know the caliber and quality of the graduates they produce,” Phoebe Sumter Chief Nursing Officer & Chief Operating Officer Kelsey Reed said. “We appreciate the impact our GSW nursing partnership has had throughout our health system, and we look forward to helping create the new Respiratory Therapy program and seeing how it will benefit patients at each Phoebe hospital.”

The partnership builds on years of collaboration between Phoebe and Georgia Southwestern, including previous investments in nursing education and simulation-based learning. GSW’s Phoebe Simulation and Learning Center supports nursing students with hands-on training in simulated patient environments, and Phoebe has identified Georgia Southwestern as a vital regional education partner supporting healthcare workforce development.

The expanded strategic collaboration is designed to reduce reliance on external recruitment, increase access to healthcare education in southwest Georgia and create a more stable and sustainable healthcare workforce for the region.

From 1A

ASU

Georgia work-life earnings; \$231.5 million attributable to degree attainment.

- Certificates – 10 graduates; approximately \$20.8 million in projected Georgia work-life earnings; \$3.1 million attributable to the credential.

According to the USG report, “Work-life earnings increase with each step up in post-secondary educational attainment, a finding that holds for both Georgia and the nation as a whole.”

Together, these figures demonstrate the multiplier effect of Albany State’s mission: Investments in students produce benefits that extend well beyond the campus, contributing to individual economic mobility, workforce development, and the broader economy.

Albany State’s economic impact comes as the university takes a more intentional approach to institutional growth and regional collaboration.

Under Scott’s leadership, the university established a chief university growth officer position and appointed Troy Beetz to the inaugural role. The position is designed to bring greater collaboration across areas of the university that traditionally have operated independently, creating opportunities to align enrollment, advancement, marketing, partnerships, business development, and external affairs around a shared growth strategy.

The university’s growth strategy extends beyond Albany State itself. By strengthening partnerships with businesses, government, community organizations, and other institutions, ASU is positioning itself as a catalyst for economic development throughout Albany and the broader southwest Georgia region.

Albany State’s economic impact has increased in each of the past two reporting cycles, following increases of approximately 2.5% in FY 2023 and 6% in FY 2024. The 16.2% increase reported for FY 2025 represents a significant acceleration in the university’s economic contribution.

The broader University System of Georgia generated a record \$25.1 billion in economic impact for the state during FY 2025, an 8.9% increase over the previous year.

The USG also reported that a college degree continues to provide substantial long-term economic value, adding more than \$1.4 million to the average USG graduate’s lifetime earnings.

Albany Area Chamber of Commerce

Albany Air Conditioning & Heating

STAR BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

ALBANY

Air Conditionin & Heating

The Albany Area Chamber of Commerce proudly recognizes Albany Air Conditioning & Heating as this week’s Star Business of the Week.

Serving Albany and Southwest Georgia since 1949, Albany Air has grown from a small family-run business into one of the region’s most trusted HVAC companies. For more than 75 years, their commitment to quality, integrity, and exceptional customer service has remained at the heart of their business.

Today, Albany Air is a third-generation family-owned company with more than 100 employees, providing residential and commercial HVAC services throughout Southwest Georgia, Alabama and Florida. They are also proud to be the oldest air conditioning and heating contractor in Albany and a long-standing Carrier Factory Authorized Dealer.

We also want to congratulate Albany Air on their newly renovated space! This exciting update reflects the company’s continued growth while providing an improved environment for their team and customers.

From their humble beginnings in 1949 to their continued growth today, Albany Air remains committed to serving the community they call home.

The Star Business of the Week is presented by WALB News 10 and Fleming & Riles Insurance with treats provided by Ellianos Coffee Albany.

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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): A sense of greater buoyancy and freedom could land today, almost like a dark cloud moved somewhere else. It could be easier to teach than to learn, but don't discount the value of broadening your understanding.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your financial picture looks like improvements could be on the way, but don't let stubbornness or inner blocks effect a detour. Social media bringing a viral moment could be part of a new influx.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): A satisfying conclusion to a project or just on completion of your daily routine could be gratifying. Your thoughts and words could reflect a release of anxiety and more feelings of ease.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Creators could find near-magical inspiration today, as both needed resources and play tee up an opening. Better economic decisions could become possible as you move into greater trust in the Universe.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your vibe could feel more solid now, concerns could have overshadowed joy for a few days. With a home matter potentially tucked away you might have space to express through art, crafts, or music.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Today's a day to notice roots and wings. Grounding into your roots can allow ambitions to soar and objectives to be met. Anchor your feet, tether to the cosmos. Self-work could begin to feel lighter.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A friendship could move from centering on anxieties and into a happier and more carefree vibe. Childlike communication could be met with a weighty response, or a flighty one.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): While you could be making progress in financial healing, there could be mixed influences impacting your efforts. Determination and visibility can help, being at cross-purposes will not.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Engaging with the world from a place of innocence and trust can be very beguiling. Don't be afraid to be the solution for someone. Move past any fear or resistance to offering your knowledge.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Open to a deeper understanding of yourself. There are buried gifts to be unearthed now which could really change the game in your favor. Finances could begin to feel more stable.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A relationship could feel more settled; any anxieties should begin to fade. Time with friends can bring more than just fun, you could find yourself pointing at least partially in a helpful new direction.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Putting your heart into your work not only brings forth a finer product, it consistently brings more personal satisfaction. Do it for yourself, it's not about them. Efforts could bring greater results now.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Today is the pivot point, when 2026 really turns around for you. Previous challenges and anxieties may now clear — your personal old year ended last night, and your new year began this morning. Take a breath, spread your wings, and give thanks. Gifts should land in early October, possibly things you worked hard to tee up for yourself. Expect powerful ideas and action items to clarify in your mind while gifts of artistry, charm and abundant cash flow arrive at the same time. Run with this, it's a powerful combo. Late October, you could be presented with a test — blind faith versus sovereignty. Check things thoroughly and choose wisely. Mid-November could be a real bonanza for you. All kinds of abundance could drop in — what's needed, what's wanted, and what you didn't even dare to dream of.



- 1000** - Hungary is established as a Christian kingdom by Stephen I of Hungary.
- 1855** - The American Civil War is formally declared over by U.S. President Andrew Johnson
- 1910** - The Great Fire of 1910 burns approximately 3 million acres in Northeast

- Washington, Northern Idaho and Western Montana
- 1975** - NASA launches Viking 1 to orbit around Mars
- 1988** - Black Saturday of the Yellowstone fire in Yellowstone National Park
- 1988** - A ceasefire is agreed to during the Iran/Iraq War after eight years of war.

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- International Day of Medical Transporters
- Lemonade Day
- National Bacon Lover's Day
- National Chocolate Pecan Pie Day
- National Radio Day
- Virtual Worlds Day
- World Mosquito Day

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"My future starts when I wake up every morning. ... Every day I find something creative to do with my life.

Miles Davis,
musician (1926-1991)

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

It's good to know there are real journalists around who don't fall for the social media bull that's printed by individuals with axes to grind who make up lies in an effort to generate attention. My best advice: Do like me. Don't waste any of your valuable time reading this crap online.

Lockheed, Raytheon, Gen Dyn, Northrop, L3Harris, BAE, AeroVironment, Patriot, THAAD, AMRAAM, GMLRS, 155MM, Pac-3 ... fuel, drones, personnel, \$8B, \$35B, \$22B, 14G to 1,000 G/mth, 13G to 25 G/mth, \$5B fuel. \$2T at the command of a madman and impotent Congress. All and only to kill, destroy, consume the productive capacity and GDP of the country, add to its deficit and plunge the U.S. into global political and economic disaster. There is no gain or reason. It's sheer madness.

This community is doomed with the current leadership at the city and county level.

Every single apartment complex in Albany has vacancies. Every. Single. One. Don't let these con artist commissioners convince you that we need to build even more. They are just looking to make money for themselves and their crooked friends. It is all a scam. No more apartments.

The worst-kept secret in Albany for the past 10 years has been these "churches" fleecing our community out of property tax revenue through apartment scams. Poorly maintained buildings where low-income families are forced to live, while "pastors" drive fancy cars instead of paying taxes. Albany simply can't afford for the GBI and authorities in Atlanta to ignore this any longer. Taxpayers' wallets are empty.

I thought a goat was a furry, smelly, but cute animal, not a bald, smelly, liar who tries to stir up trouble for people gullible and stupid enough to pay any attention to his wicked bull.

How appropriate that the Herald's one-two punch of truth about the Lee County School System came just as the system was recognized for its way-above-the-state-average test scores. People who listen to liars and egocentric individuals in this community are wasting their time.

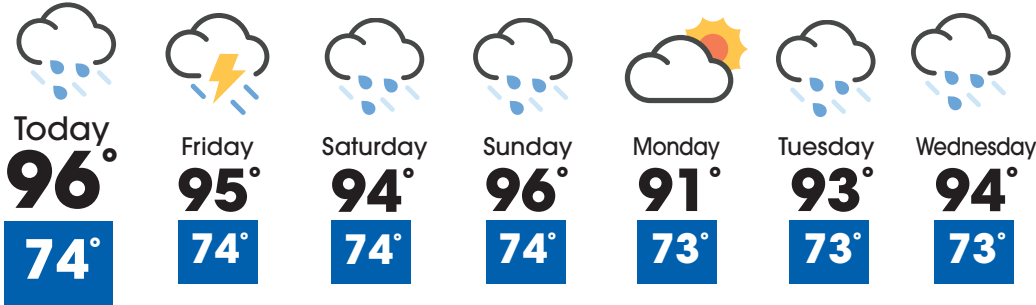
For at least two months I have had a pile of yard clippings and household trash (including a toilet) in front of my house. I put them there with the expectation that they would soon be picked up. When brought to the attention of the city manager, he waxed nostalgic about trash collection in the good ole days. The days before him? According to the manager, such a situation would not have occurred before Waste Management took over trash collection. On the other hand, perhaps we need a new and younger city manager.

It's so funny listening to people in this community argue in favor of politicians by repeating the same drivel that is in the very unprofessional and lousy TV ads that the millionaires are putting out. Find out something meaningful by doing a little research of your own.

I enjoy reading Mr. Nader's articles on the editorial page. He tells the truth.

ADS: Advertising can be placed by phone, email and/or in person Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am - 5 pm or call 229-888-9300. For classifieds and display/public notices/code ads email Phil Cody at phil.cody@albanyherald.com or call 229-888-9300. Our office is at 306 W. Broad Ave., Albany, GA 31701. **BILLING:** Business hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5 pm, contact number: 229-888-9300.

Weather Forecast



Daily Bridge Club

Louie's painful deal

By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

I sat down to kibitz Unlucky Louie's penny game. "How goes it?" I asked. "Pain and suffering," he groaned.

NORTH			
♠ A			
♥ K 6 4 3			
♦ K 10 9 4			
♣ A 8 6 3			
WEST			
♠ J 4			
♥ A J 10 8			
♦ 6 3			
♣ Q J 10 7 4			
EAST			
♠ K Q 10 9 8 6			
♥ 9			
♦ J 8			
♣ K 9 5 2			
SOUTH			
♥ 7 5 3 2			
♦ Q 7 5 2			
♠ A Q 7 5 2			
♣ None			
East	South	West	North
2 ♠	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	4 ♥	All Pass	Dbl
Opening lead - ♣ Q			
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Cy the Cynic was Louie's partner. "Pain is inevitable," Cy said. "Suffering is optional."

In today's deal, East opened two spades, and after two passes, Cy balanced with a double. Louie jumped boldly to four hearts, and West led the queen of clubs. Louie played low from dummy, ruffed in his hand and led a trump: jack, king, nine.

SECOND TRUMP

Dummy then led a second trump, and East's discard was excruciating. West took the eight and ace and led another club. Louie took the ace and started the diamonds, but when West waited to ruff the fourth diamond, dummy was left with two club losers. Down two.

Bad breaks are painful — inevi-



Frank Stewart

table if you're Louie — but he self-inflicted the suffering. After the king of trumps wins, Louie must abandon trumps. He ruffs a club, goes to the ace of spades, ruffs a club and leads diamonds. West gets only his three trump tricks.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: S A H K 6 4 3 D K 10 9 4 C A 8 6 3. Your partner opens one heart. The next player bids one spade. What do you say?

ANSWER: Partner is unlikely to have spade honors. If he has a minimum such as 765, AQ952, A2, KJ5, six hearts should come home. Many players would start with a two-spade cue bid. Others would jump to three spades, a "splinter bid" to show a heart fit, spade shortness and slam interest. Some players would not splinter with a singleton ace.

East dealer
N-S vulnerable

Advice Columnist

Friends' prejudiced thinking leads to social isolation

By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: I have never had patience for prejudice. I grew up in a household where it simply wasn't practiced, and it wasn't until I went to college in the 1980s that I realized some people harbor dislike for others without reason. To this day, I still don't truly understand it.

I am quick to distance myself from anyone who openly practices prejudice. As a result, my social circle is extremely small. Now that I am 61 and retired, I find myself with very few friends. I have frequently "ghosted" long-term acquaintances for using derogatory language, as I feel they aren't worth the time it takes to provide an explanation.

How does one navigate these waters?

— One Close Friend

Dear Friend: While it isn't your job to correct people's behavior, as a friend you have the opportunity to let these people know that what they're saying isn't right and you expect more from them. If no one ever says anything to them, their prejudiced thinking could go unchallenged, and they may never afford themselves the opportunity to widen their perspective.

Now, you write that you feel these acquaintances aren't worth the time to provide an explanation. So, could it be that the foundation of the relationship was shaky to begin with? If you don't see them as people who merit discussion, maybe you and they weren't well-matched to begin with.

You might look at how you're meeting people and ask yourself if there are ways of connecting and building relationships with people whose worldview

more closely aligns with your own. You could volunteer for a cause in which you believe or join a club that focuses on one of your interests and see if friendship blooms from there.

Sometimes finding our people takes a little bit of detective work. Think about what you want your social circle to look like and what kind of people you'd like to be in regular contact with and seek them out.

Dear Eric: A close friend of 45 years has been married to an alcoholic for more than 20 years. She lives in a different state. After he lost his job and spent his days at home drinking, she stopped working so she could "watch him and keep things under control." He has never acknowledged his alcoholism or sought help.

He has serious health problems that doctors attribute to alcohol abuse, and he has been hospitalized several times. She no longer travels with him because he embarrasses her, and she is afraid to leave him alone for any length of time.

My friend is financially secure, has no children, and is estranged from her family, likely in part because of him. Over the years, I have encouraged her to seek help, consult a lawyer, and make an exit plan for herself or for him.

Recently, she told me she spoke to a lawyer and was unwilling to give up the comfortable lifestyle she had grown used to because she would have to give him half of everything. Yet I know she lives very frugally and has told me about her substantial assets, including money her father left her that her husband cannot access.

Exasperated, I finally asked her, "Are you really saying your lifestyle matters more than



Eric Thomas

your sanity in the years you have left?" She hung up on me.

Recently she texted me, acting like nothing happened. What do you advise?

— Reconnected

Dear Friend: Sometimes when people struggle with alcohol dependency, they believe that they are beyond help or there's nothing that can fix their problems. This is not true. Similarly, sometimes people who are in unhealthy or even codependent relationships with people who have alcoholism believe that there is no solution and they just have to stick it out. This is also not true.

Your friend would greatly benefit from going to an Al-Anon meeting or a meeting of SMART Recovery Family; please encourage her to look into it. You might even volunteer to go with her to a virtual meeting. She is not at fault for her husband's drinking, of course, but her thinking is part of what's keeping her captive, and it doesn't have to be this way.

Her text suggests that she's looking for support, even if she's not able to accept it in the way you want her to. Instead of relitigating the discussion about her lifestyle, you might be better served by laying out the facts to her: "You say you're unhappy; his behavior is dangerous; I'm concerned. I'm not going to give you an ultimatum, but I think you know that something has to change. Would you accept my help in finding a path forward?" One possible path might look like talking to a financial adviser or another attorney to make a better plan.

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 rerictthomas.com.

The Albany Herald

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Carlton Fletcher

EDITOR

—Georgia Trust for—

LOCAL NEWS

TODAY’S
BIBLE
VERSE

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,”

John 5:28

COLUMNIST ■ THOMAS KNAPP

Tax supporters falsely define ‘cost’ and ‘lose’

Around the U.S. this November, voters will decide a number of tax questions. In California, it’s “wealth tax” on billionaires. In Florida, it’s an increase in the “homestead exemption,” the amount of home value excluded from property taxes. In your neck of the woods, it might be a sales tax for road maintenance of emergency services.

One thing I keep noticing about these kinds of questions is abuse of the words “cost” and “lose” by proponents of tax increases and opponents of tax cuts.

Passing a tax cut, or failure to pass a tax increase, they tell us, will “cost” government — at whatever level, from local to federal — money. Government will “lose” that money.

Normally when we speak of “losing” something or “costing” something, it’s in terms of already having that thing. You lose \$50 on a bet, or a steak dinner costs you \$50.

Using the definition preferred by supporters of ever-increasing government revenue, though, I “lost” thousands of dollars yesterday when I walked past a bank instead of walking in, waving a gun at the tellers, and taking all the cash from their drawers. It “cost” me thousands of dollars. And committing to not robbing every bank I happen to walk

past in the future “costs” me, too. I’m “losing” all that money. Oh, the humanity!

Under the Florida tax cut proposal, I’m told, my county would “lose” millions of dollars that it doesn’t actually have, just by not taking quite as much of it in the future.

I’ve even seen people shill for the brand new California tax on the basis that if it fails, state government health-care organizations will be “losing” the money they’ve got big plans for. It’s not just money they don’t have, it’s money from a particular source they’ve never received money from before.

As a Libertarian, I agree with the slogan “taxation is theft.” It’s usually by extortion: “Nice house/business ya got here. Be a shame if someone stole it and auctioned it off because ya didn’t send us a check.”

But even if one supports taxation for the purpose of funding government operations, it’s beyond dishonest to claim that cutting, or just not raising, taxes is a “cost” or a “loss” to government.

Taxes are always a “cost” and a “loss” — for taxpayers, not for tax collectors and tax spenders.

Why, I wonder, do tax proponents lie about that so loudly?



KNAPP

Thomas L. Knapp is director and senior news analyst at the William Lloyd Garrison Center for Libertarian Advocacy Journalism (thegarrisoncenter.org). He lives and works in north-central Florida.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

It’s time to Activate America

To the Editor:

At a time when civic participation feels more important than ever, we each have a role to play in strengthening our democracy. Voting is one of the most direct and powerful ways individuals can make their voices heard, yet many eligible voters remain disengaged or unsure how to participate.

If you are wondering how to make a tangible difference in getting Democrats elected to office, I encourage you to look into Activate America.

Activate America (<https://www.activateamerica.vote/>) is a dedicated organization that empowers volunteers to reach out directly to voters in crucial swing states and districts, encouraging them to vote for Democratic candidates that put people first.

Activate America empowers volunteers to reach out to voters through postcards, texts, and phone calls. These personal reminders can make a real

difference in increasing voter turnout.

You do not need to be a seasoned political operative to participate. They provide all the necessary training, scripts, and mailing lists on their website.

By volunteering with Activate America, you can help elect Democratic leaders who will fight for health care, climate action, reproductive freedom and a fair economy.

You don’t need special experience, just a willingness to connect with others and support civic engagement. By encouraging friends, family, and strangers to vote, we can help ensure that more voices are included in the decisions that shape our communities.

Democracy works best when participation is broad and inclusive. Let’s do our part to make that happen.

Ron Sadler
Albany

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Integrity of presidency is larger than one individual

To the Editor:

This unprecedented, incessant, and increasingly disparaging personal attack on President Trump and his family is injurious to the country and potentially dangerous to its standing in the world, its national defense, and its financial and commercial interests. It must stop.

Convict him if the evidence and law warrant it. Impeach him if the Constitution provides grounds to do so. Censure him in Congress when appropriate. Or, if the national interest requires it, find a way to work with him. But whatever course is chosen, we must recognize that he represents the Presidency of the United States and, by extension, a position, office and institution whose dignity and

integrity are larger than any one individual.

Our political, leadership or personal disagreements do not justify conduct that diminishes the office itself or undermines confidence in the nation it represents. We should be and must be wiser in our judgment, more disciplined in our discourse, and more mindful of the significant and irreversible negative consequences of what we are doing.

This is not merely about Donald Trump. It is about the United States of America and the respect, stability, and integrity of its presidency. We must act accordingly.

Name Withheld
by Request

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS:

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COLUMNIST ■ DICK YARBROUGH

Some thoughts on love and loving well

As a change of pace, I am going to give politics and those who practice it the week off. They aren’t going anywhere, and I am tired of them and their blather. Instead, let’s talk about love. Love? Yes, love.

Bill Burch, my spiritual guide and preacher extraordinaire, whose efforts to save my soul have been commendable but remain a work in progress, recently broached the subject in his weekly post.

He said, “Life is judged by a simple question, ‘Did I love well?’ At the end of each day as we drift off to sleep, we ask, ‘Did I love well today?’ At the end of our lives as we drift off to death, we ask, ‘Did I love well?’”

How do we respond to that? As we drift off to sleep, do we say, “I’m going to bed mad and I’m going to wake up mad and I’m going to be mad all day.” Or, as we drift off to death, do we say, “I wonder if all that stuff I got mad about over the years was really that important?”

My mother had an ironclad rule about love. The last words she and my dad spoke before going to sleep at night were, “I love you.” Nothing after that. If either were to pass away during the night, the other would remember the last thing they ever said to each other.

We sometimes toss the term around like a Frisbee. We love certain TV shows. We love weekends. We love football. We love cooking out. As for me, I love banana pudding, the University of Georgia and anything Ray Charles Robinson, of Albany, Georgia, has ever sung, especially “Georgia on my Mind.”

But love is deeper than that. In the famous passage in 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says that love is patient and kind, not jealous or proud or selfish or easily angered. That is real love.

Speaking of love, it is mentioned 574 times in the new International Version of the Bible. Those of us who identify ourselves as being of the Christian faith would do well to read closely, including Christ’s admonition to love others as you love yourself. Easy to say. Hard to do. According to my mail, some self-proclaimed Christians are still at the eye-for-an-eye stage.

The author and theologian C.S. Lewis identified four types of love: romantic, affectionate, friendship and unconditional, or agape. Some other sources slice love up into seven parts, including ego, or self-love, a trait most commonly exhibited by our intrepid public servants in Washington and elsewhere.

I didn’t always treat the subject as seriously as I should. It was my very first class in college at what was then Georgia State College, now Georgia State University, in Atlanta. Fall quarter. Freshman English. 8 a.m. An environment begging for some levity.

Somehow the subject was love, although to this day I’m still not sure how love fit in among conjugating verbs and present participles. Frankly, I didn’t love either one, especially at 8 o’clock in the morning.

The professor said love could not be simply defined. I said yes it could and belted out “Love is a Many Splendored Thing.” The class thought it was hilarious. I did, too. Not surprisingly, the professor was not amused, and I was asked to gather my belongings and leave.

Great. One week in school, and I am about to be out of school and trying to explain to my parents that, unlike my straight-laced brother who had sailed through college, I didn’t last a month. Fortunately, a little humility on my part and a lot of forgiveness on the professor’s part, and I was allowed back in and decided to stick to conjugated verbs and participles, past and present, and leave the jokes to the professionals.

So here I am all these years later back on the subject of love. Wiser and more mature than the jokester in freshman English. And more serious. Today I am wrestling with the questions proposed by Dr. Burch. Did I love well today? If not, why not?

Composers Hal David and Burt Bacharach wrote, “What the world needs now is love, sweet love. No, nt just for some, but for everyone.” I agree. We need to focus on loving well. After all, “Love is a many-splendored thing.” And I love that we have had this conversation.



YARBROUGH

Contact Dick Yarbrough at dick@dickyarbrough.com or at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Ga. 31139.

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.



What to watch THURSDAY

August 20, 2026

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

Novak Djokovic: The Wolf in Winter

Prime Video

This feature-length documentary offers an unprecedented look at tennis legend Novak Djokovic, who began playing on the hardscrabble courts of Serbia, revealing the complex and polarizing figure who defied the odds to become the greatest men's tennis player in history.

NFL Preseason Football

ESPN & NFL Network, beginning at 8 p.m. Live

The Las Vegas Raiders are at the Houston Texans on ESPN and the San Francisco 49ers are at the L.A. Chargers on NFL Network in NFL preseason Week 2 games.

Celebrity Crime Scene: Princess Diana

FOX, 8 p.m.

Revisit one of history's most enduring mysteries as a revolutionary virtual re-creation unveils new perspectives on the crash that caused Princess Diana's death. This special dives into the theories that have fueled decades of speculation, examining mysterious vehicles in the tunnel, claims of powerful forces in the monarchy determined to silence Diana and allegations international arms dealers viewed Diana as a dangerous threat that needed to be eliminated. Viewers will experience the crash from perspectives never before possible, including what Diana saw as the Mercedes went into a death spiral. Kerry Daynes, Rich Staropoli and Jakson Buhaj serve as investigators.

From the editors of  TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



'Novak Djokovic: The Wolf in Winter'

PRIME VIDEO

CATCH A CLASSIC

Summer Under the Stars: Marlon Brando

TCM, beginning at 6 a.m.

The fiercely talented Marlon Brando is widely regarded as one of the most influential actors in film history. TCM honors him with another Summer Under the Stars treatment, beginning with 1953's **Julius Caesar**, featuring Brando as Mark Antony. While the lineup is devoid of his most popular roles, such as Don Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*, it reveals so much more of his depth with **The Wild One** (pictured), the 1953 motorcycle drama that helped define Brando's rebel image, and **A Streetcar Named Desire** (1951), with Brando as Stanley Kowalski opposite Vivien Leigh in the film adaptation of Tennessee Williams' play. Also featured are **The Fugitive Kind**



COLUMBIA PICTURES

(1960); **The Men** (1950), Brando's first feature film; the TCM premiere of **The Nightcomers** (1971); and **The Formula** (1980).

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



'Jojo Rabbit'

LARRY HORRICKS

Robin Hood: Men in Tights (1993, Comedy) Cary Elwes, Richard Lewis **BBC America, 6:30 p.m.**

Mortal Kombat II (2026, Action) Karl Urban, Adeline Rudolph **HBO, 7 p.m.**

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

Jojo Rabbit (2019, Comedy-drama) Roman Griffin Davis, Thomasin McKenzie **FXM, 7:15 p.m.**

Mulan (1998, Children) Ming-Na Wen, Eddie Murphy **Disney, 8 p.m.**

Speed (1994, Action) Keanu Reeves, Dennis Hopper **USA, 8 p.m.**

The Millwood Murders: Buried Truth (2026, Suspense) LeToya Luckett, Rainbow Sun Francks **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Insidious (2010, Horror) Patrick Wilson, Rose Byrne **SYFY, 9 p.m.**

The Blues Brothers (1980, Musical comedy) John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd **BBC America, 9 p.m.**

Michael (2026, Biography) Jaafar Jackson, Colman Domingo **Starz, 10:15 p.m.**

Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire (2024, Comedy) Paul Rudd, Carrie Coon **FX, 10:30 p.m.**

Set It Off (1996, Action) Jada Pinkett, Queen Latifah **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

Coyote Ugly (2000, Romance-comedy) Piper Perabo, Adam Garcia **E!, 11 p.m.**

Gone in 60 Seconds (2000, Action) Nicolas Cage, Angelina Jolie **AMC, 11 p.m.**

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What to watch FRIDAY

August 21, 2026

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

NFL Preseason Football

NFL Network, 7 p.m. Live

Week 2 of the NFL preseason continues with the N.Y. Jets at the Pittsburgh.

WNBA Basketball

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

A regional game on ION presents either the Minnesota Lynx at the Washington Mystics or the Golden State Valkyries at the Chicago Sky, followed by a national TV game with the Portland Fire at the Toronto Tempo.

9/11 Reunited

Nat Geo, 8 p.m. ■ New Docuseries

This emotionally moving docuseries starts in Manhattan in 2026, sharing the stories of 9/11 survivors, many of whom reunite for the first time since that day, and who look to say thank you, pass on a message or ask questions that they felt unable to ask, until now. All three episodes air tonight.



'9/11 Reunited'

VIRGINIA SHERWOOD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Great Performances at the Met

PBS, 9 p.m.

Soprano Asmik Grigorian returns to the Met as Tatiana, the lovestruck young

heroine in "Eugene Onegin," Tchaikovsky's opera adaptation of Alexander Pushkin's novel. Baritone Igor Golovatenko reprises his portrayal of Onegin, who realizes his affection for her all too late. Tony Award nominee Deborah Warner directs.



RKO RADIO PICTURES

CATCH A CLASSIC

Summer Under the Stars: Marie Windsor

TCM, beginning at 6 a.m.

Marie Windsor makes her Summer Under the Stars debut with a lineup that leans into the crime films, films noir and B-movie gems that made her a favorite among clas-

sic movie fans. Windsor's sharp presence is front and center in 1952's **The Narrow Margin** (pictured), the lean, suspenseful train-set thriller that remains one of her signature films. The day also features **Force of Evil** (1948), with John Garfield in a tough crime drama about rackets and corruption; Stanley Kubrick's **The Killing** (1956), where Windsor is unforgettable as Sherry Peatty, whose betrayal helps set the heist plot in motion; **Song of the Thin Man** (1947); and **The Sniper** (1952).

MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



'Bridesmaids'

SUZANNE HANOVER

Beetlejuice (1988, Comedy) Michael Keaton, Alec Baldwin **Sundance, 6 p.m.**

Raya and the Last Dragon (2021, Children) Kelly Marie Tran, Awkwafina **Disney, 6:10 p.m.**

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

Bridesmaids (2011, Comedy) Kristen Wiig, Maya Rudolph **IFC, 6:30 p.m.**

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (2015, Children) Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke **NICK, 7 p.m.**

Jurassic World Dominion (2022, Action) Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard **TBS, 8 p.m.**

Scarface (1983, Crime drama) Al Pacino, Michelle Pfeiffer **AMC, 8 p.m.**

The Caretaker Next Door (2026, Suspense) Eve Mauro, Colin Egglesfield **LMN, 8 p.m.**

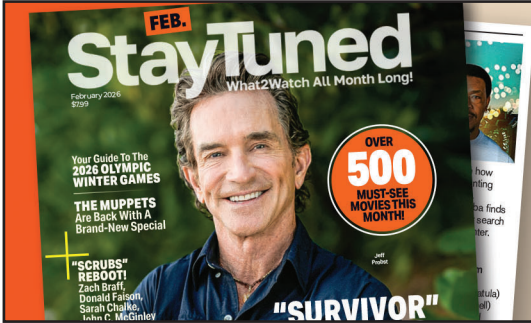
The Martian (2015, Science fiction) Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain **TNT, 8 p.m.**

Down to Earth (2001, Comedy) Chris Rock, Regina King **BET, 9 p.m.**

Superbad (2007, Comedy) Jonah Hill, Michael Cera **IFC, 9:30 p.m.**

My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3 (2023, Comedy) Nia Vardalos, John Corbett **E!, 11 p.m.**

From the editors of  TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



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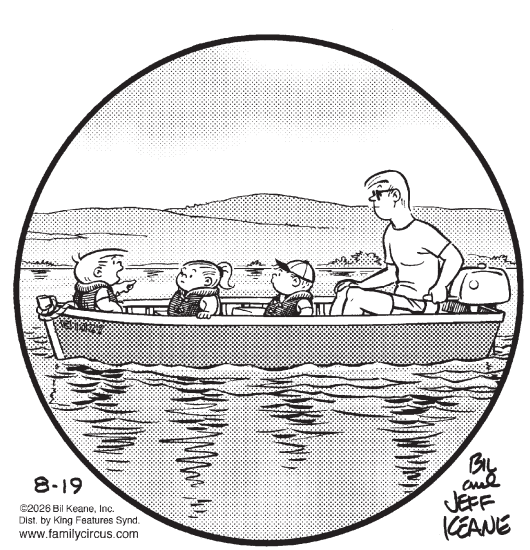
TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



“So, Heather, if you are NOT home by midnight, this video of your dad will be sent to ALL of your Facebook contacts at 12:01!”

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



“Daddy doesn't need a life jacket 'cause the captain has to go down with the ship.”

BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



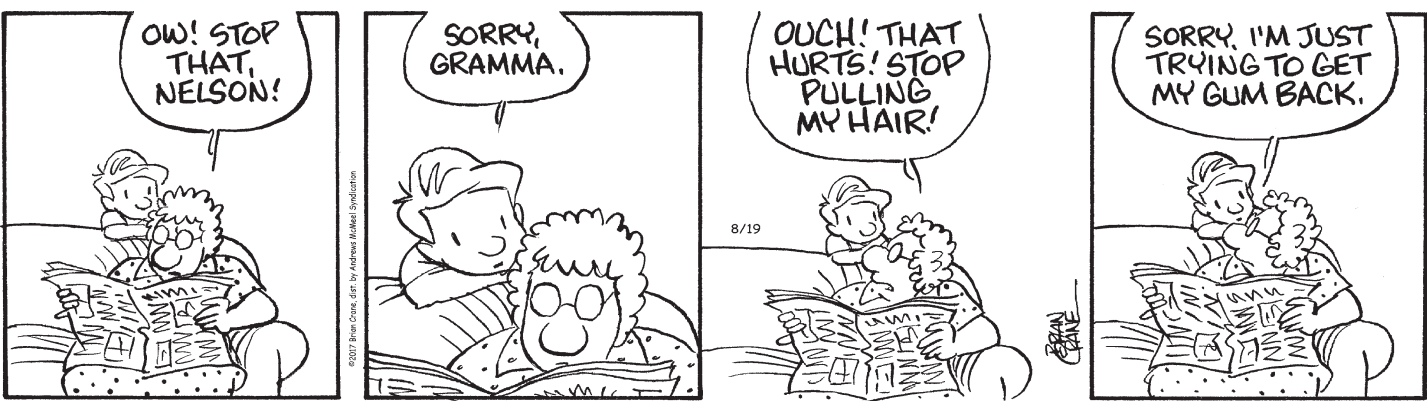
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane

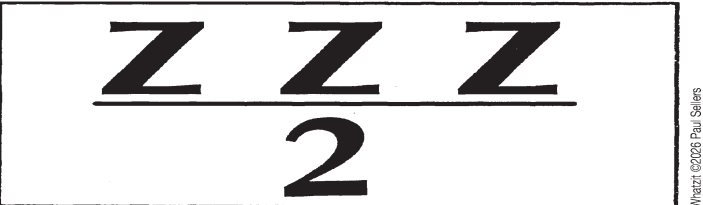


SUDOKU

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

WHATZIT?

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



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

TODAY'S WHATZIT SOLUTION:
Half asleep

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

- ACROSS**

 - 1 Cherubic god
 - 2 Spot for pore strips
 - 10 Jumbled mess
 - 14 Stunt show setting
 - 15 Significant work
 - 16 Syllables for a stage magician
 - 17 Social pariah
 - 19 Social media spammers
 - 20 Rectitude
 - 21 In flight
 - 22 Union agreement?
 - 25 “All Eyez on Me” rapper
 - 28 Film technique derived from the French for “to assemble”
 - 30 “Not answering email,” briefly
 - 31 Foxy
 - 32 Capitol canvas for “The Apotheosis of Washington”
 - 33 Jilt
 - 35 Laughs during an “SNL” appearance, say
 - 42 Settle, as a debt
 - 43 Vibe
 - 44 “Future Nostalgia” singer Lipa
 - 47 Some Eng. degrees
 - 48 Truly fiendish
 - 51 Drawing toy that uses aluminum powder
 - 54 Opening day pitcher, typically
 - 55 SAT prep subj.
 - 56 “Thus with a kiss I die” hero
 - 58 Tirade in the Times, say
 - 59 Fast-food chain that began as a hot dog cart, and what this puzzle’s circled letters do?
 - 64 Antler point
 - 65 FX drama about New York City’s ball culture
 - 66 Magazine release
 - 67 Has a meal
 - 68 Serve a meal to
 - 69 Like a toddler mid-bath
- DOWN**

 - 1 Zin alternative
 - 2 Link destination
 - 3 Storied cause of royal insomnia
 - 4 Progress slowly
 - 5 Actress Fanning
 - 6 Pessimist’s words
 - 7 “Fire Shut Up in My Bones,” e.g.
 - 8 Litigate
 - 9 Ability to see what others can’t
 - 10 “Se _____ español”
 - 11 Paperless reads
 - 12 Foxy
 - 13 Bakery offering
 - 18 Nesting cozily
 - 21 Now, in Nicaragua
 - 22 Cinephile’s site
 - 23 Cuckoo clock part
 - 24 “I’ll pay this time”
 - 26 Manilow’s “hottest spot north of Havana,” familiarly
 - 27 Like a gooseberry
 - 29 Feature of some happy and sad emoji
 - 33 Slow to open up
- 34 Org. for Sarah Strong and Hannah Hidalgo**

36 Shish _____

37 Ice bath spots

38 Bourbon barrel

39 Protein in some melts

40 Comedian André

41 “RuPaul’s Drag _____”

44 Dedicate, as time

45 Harmonious society

46 Brogue, for one

48 Amped up

49 Peak

50 Grad school hurdle

52 Disney villain with hair of blue flame

53 Wipe

57 Quite a bit

59 Tanning oil letters

60 Weeding tool

61 Red _____ beet

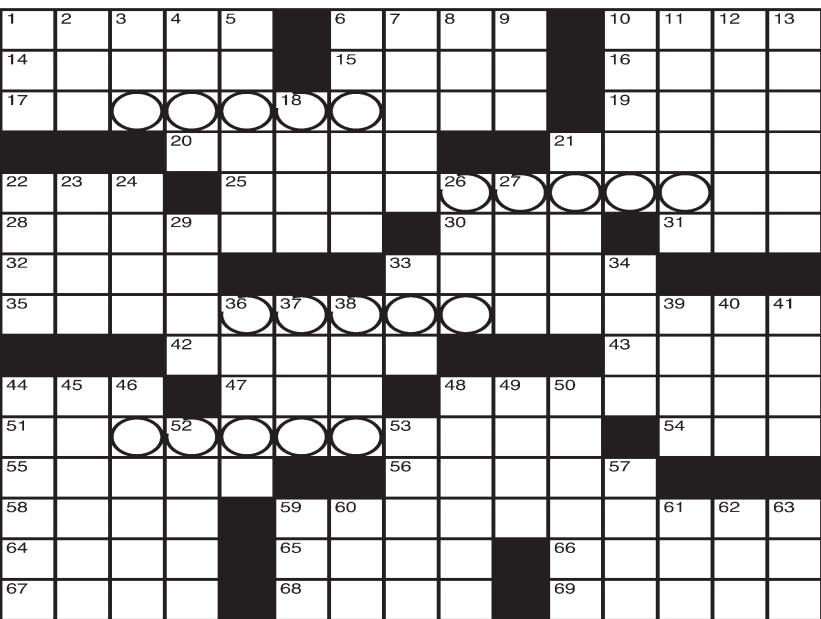
62 Chalice, e.g.

63 Decryption need

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

08/19/26



By Max Schlenker
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08/19/26

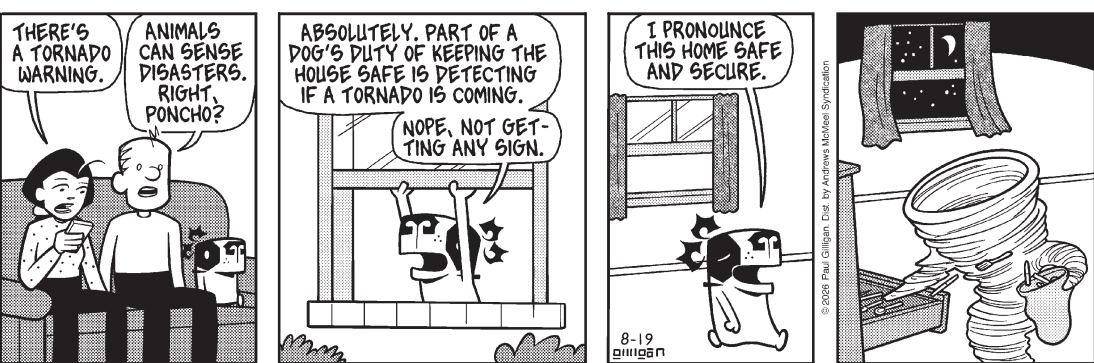
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

THE WORLD OF CHEDDAR CHEESE Solution: 10 letters

A	E	E	I	R	E	T	U	C	R	A	H	C	E	G
V	P	L	Q	U	E	S	A	D	I	L	L	A	H	R
T	E	P	O	L	J	S	R	E	K	C	A	R	C	A
I	S	R	E	R	M	A	G	C	F	A	Z	Z	I	P
U	M	M	T	E	N	L	U	D	L	I	M	U	E	
C	O	C	R	O	I	S	S	A	N	T	A	A	Q	S
S	K	Ⓚ	Y	P	N	Z	S	S	P	C	H	V	S	S
I	E	Ⓛ	P	G	C	T	E	A	A	E	C	A	O	H
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8/19

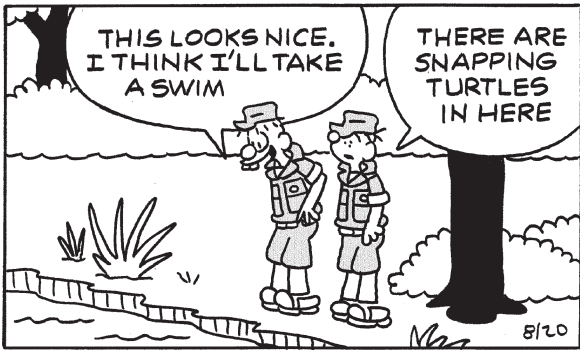
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TODAY'S ANSWER: Mac N Cheese

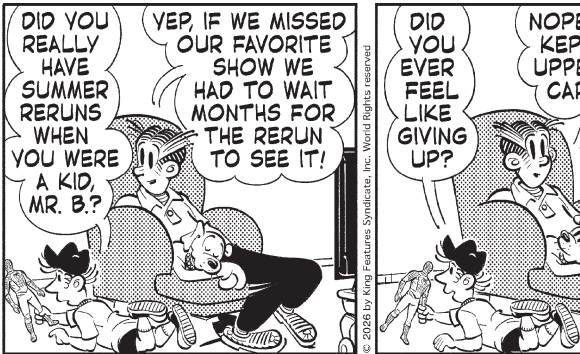
CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



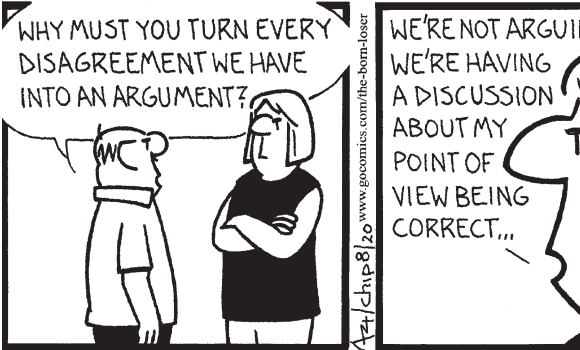
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



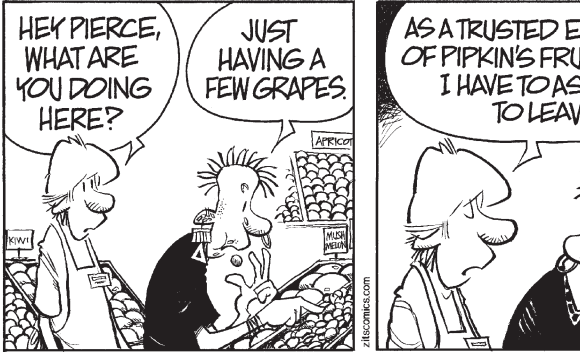
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

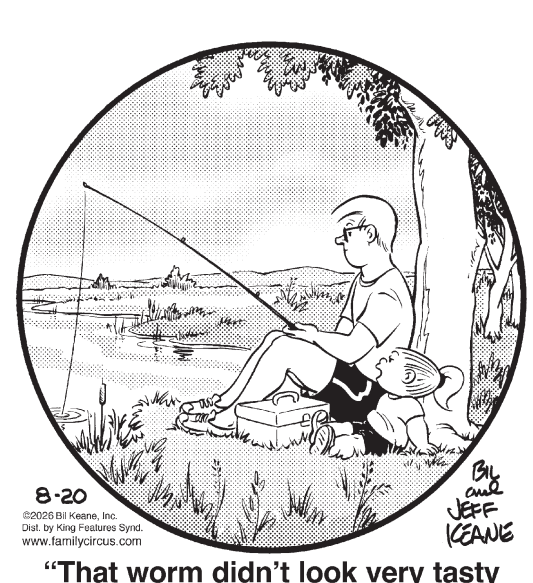
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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8/20

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



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“That worm didn't look very tasty to me either.”

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CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sixth sense, for short
 - 4 Grasp
 - 8 Flexible tube
 - 12 — & Perrins steak sauce
 - 13 “Livin’ la Vida —”
 - 14 Top
 - 15 Actor — Mineo
 - 16 Sign of things to come
 - 17 — avis
 - 18 “— Gantry”
 - 20 Logo
 - 22 “Don’t mind — do”
 - 23 Miscellany
 - 24 Wild horse
 - 27 Crowd
 - 31 Colony member
 - 32 Gaelic
 - 34 Tavern
 - 35 Knight’s title
- DOWN**
- 1 Otherwise
 - 2 Marine creature
 - 36 Walk
 - 37 Blackbird
 - 38 Fashion
 - 40 Word in a thesaurus
 - 43 Charity
 - 45 Come to a conclusion
 - 46 Toy for an infant
 - 49 Coral island
 - 52 Leave out
 - 53 “The — Hunter”
 - 56 Once called
 - 57 Angry
 - 58 Concerning (2 wds.)
 - 59 Holiday time
 - 60 River in France
 - 61 The elderly
 - 62 Compass pt.

TODAY’S SOLUTION:

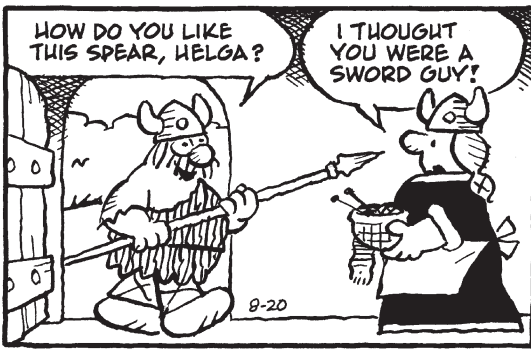
R	I	D		D	E	G	V		R	E	S	A
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X	E	V		V	O	C	O	L		A	L	E
O	S	E		H	O	P	R	I	G	R	E	S

- 3 Fortune-telling variety**
- 4 Singer — Estefan**
- 5 CD- —**
- 6 Frost**
- 7 Group of experts**
- 8 Refuge**
- 9 Fall birthstone**
- 10 Dried out**
- 11 Test**
- 19 Newt**
- 21 “Three Blind —”**
- 23 Fiona from “Shrek”**
- 24 Bulk**
- 25 Module**
- 26 After deductions**
- 28 Marooned**
- 29 Countless**
- 30 Proper**
- 33 Secret agent**
- 36 Vend**
- 39 — Day Saints**
- 41 Came close to**
- 42 Prov. in Canada**
- 44 TV, radio, etc.**
- 46 Pink**
- 47 Singer Tori —**
- 48 Retread**
- 50 Son of Jacob and Leah**
- 51 Wanton look**
- 54 School subj.**
- 55 “Able was I — ...”**

8-20

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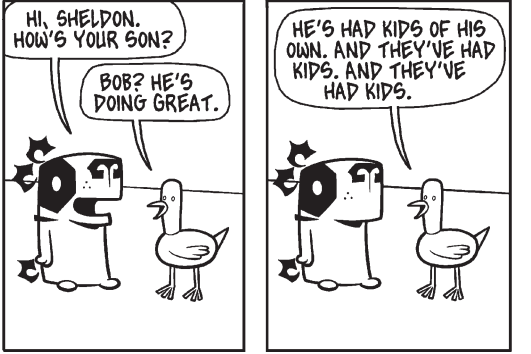
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

NBA CHAMPIONS: NEW YORK KNICKS

Solution: 7 letters

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

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Achiuwa, All-Star, Alvarado, Assist, Bridges, Brown, Brunson, Captain, Clarkson, Coach, Dadiet, Division, Dunk, Finals, Gotham, Hart, Jordan, Jose, Josh, Karl Anthony, Landry, Manhattan, McBride, Mikal, Mike, Miles, Mitchell, New York, OG Anunoby, Pacôme, Precious, Rings, Robinson, San Antonio, Shamet, Shoot, Team, Three-pointer, Towns, Victory

TODAY’S ANSWER: Dribble

Dougherty County 4-H-er selected as 2026–2027 health and wellness ambassador

By Jennifer Edwards
Special to The Albany Herald

ALBANY -- Dougherty County 4-H has announced that Darius Greene has been selected as a 2026-2027 Georgia 4-H Ambassador in the area of Health and Wellness. Darius is a 10th-grade athlete at Byne Christian School. The Georgia 4-H Ambassador program provides students with an opportunity to explore their interests and develop leadership skills through one of five specialized tracks: STEM, animal science, health and wellness, wildlife, and pollinators. Following a competitive application and selection process, ambassadors participate in an intensive two-day training at Rock Eagle 4-H Center. Throughout the program year, ambassadors take what they learn and share it with their communities through educational activities and presentations. Greene has committed to completing six learning hours and six sharing activities during the 2026–2027 program year. The Byne student already has made an impact through his Health and Wellness Ambassador activities. This summer, he presented “The Importance of Hydration and Heat-Related Illnesses” to members of Byne Christian School’s Summer Running Club. He also shared the presentation with 17 4-H Cloverleaf campers at Jekyll Island 4-H Center, helping young people understand the importance of staying hydrated and recognizing the risks associated with excessive heat. His learning experiences have extended beyond presentations. Greene has been gaining hands-on knowledge about nutrition and agriculture by learning how to grow and properly harvest fresh vegetables from the raised garden beds at Friendship Baptist Church. Under the guidance of local gardener Jammie Shotwell, he learned about soil composition, the importance of fertilization, and companion planting. Greene also expanded his knowledge of food safety by participating in a Food Handler for Kids class taught by Rebecca Manville, a family and consumer science agent, at the Dougherty County Extension Office. In addition, through completion of a Teens as Teachers Survey, Greene assessed his abilities to teach and serve others while demonstrating a positive self-image and strong character. As a Health and Wellness Ambassador, Greene is developing valuable leadership, communication, teaching and service skills while encouraging healthy choices among youths in his community. Dougherty County 4-H is excited to see the continued impact Darius Greene will make throughout Dougherty County, the Southwest District, and beyond. For more information about 4-H or to request Darius as a youth speaker, contact the Dougherty County Extension Office at (229) 436-7216.



Special Photo: Dougherty 4-H

Dougherty County 4-H announced that Darius Greene has been selected as a 2026-2027 Georgia 4-H Ambassador in the area of Health and Wellness.



Special Logo

Lee Chamber seeks sponsors for annual ‘Burg Bash

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

LEESBURG -- The Lee County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the city of Leesburg, has begun preparations for the 5th annual ‘Burg Bash on Oct. 17 from 2-10 p.m. in Leesburg. This family-friendly festival is free to the public and will feature something for everyone, including:

- Kids’ activities
- Food vendors
- Arts & crafts
- Live Music
- Fireworks

The event will be held at 288 Smithville Road North. Event planners are currently seeking sponsors to help make this year’s ‘Burg Bash a success. Community support will help provide an exciting, memorable event for families and our community while giving businesses valuable exposure to event attendees, officials said.

Colquitt Regional President/CEO Jim Matney among ‘240 Community Hospital CEOs to Know’

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

Hospital Review’s prestigious list of “240 Community Hospital CEOs to Know” for 2026. The national recognition honors healthcare leaders who are making a significant impact through strategic leadership, clinical excellence, innovation, and a commitment to improving the health of the communities they serve. Matney was recognized for transforming Colquitt Regional Health System into a thriving independent rural health system and teaching institution. Under his leadership, the organization has expanded access to specialty care, significantly grown its physician workforce, developed multiple graduate medical education programs, and strengthened healthcare access throughout south Georgia. Becker’s also highlighted Colquitt Regional’s nationally recognized employee engagement, the health system’s continued commitment to patient safety and its investment in the future of rural healthcare through physician training and residency education. “This recognition is a tremendous honor, and I’m grateful to Becker’s for including me among this year’s community hospital leaders,” Matney said. “But more than anything, I see this recognition as a reflection of the incredible team at Colquitt Regional. It takes the dedication and commitment of our physicians, nurses, employees, board members, volunteers, and community partners to build a health system that people trust and choose for their care. “I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished together and honored to be part of a team that continues to make Colquitt Regional the first choice for so many across south Georgia.” Since joining Colquitt Regional, Matney has led significant growth across the organization, including the recruitment of numerous specialists, the expansion of clinical services, and the development of residency programs in Family Medicine, Psychiatry, General Surgery, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. These initiatives have strengthened access to healthcare while helping address physician shortages across rural Georgia. Under his leadership, Colquitt Regional also has earned national recognition for patient safety, quality, workplace culture and clinical excellence. “Jim’s vision and leadership have transformed not only our health system, but healthcare throughout our region,” Hospital Authority Chairman John Griffin said. “He has remained committed to ensuring our community has access to advanced healthcare services that are often only found in much larger cities while also investing in the next generation of physicians through graduate medical education. We are proud to see his leadership recognized on a national stage.” According to Becker’s Hospital Review, the executives included on this year’s list are “community stewards, strategic visionaries and patient advocates” who are expanding access to care, strengthening their organizations, and developing long-term strategies that improve the health of their communities. Leaders are selected through a combination of nominations and independent editorial research. Matney has previously been recognized as the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals’ CEO of the Year and received the W. Daniel Barker Leadership Award from the Georgia Hospital Association. He currently serves on the board of the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals and has played a key role in advancing medical education throughout south Georgia. For more information about Colquitt Regional Health System, contact the marketing department at (229) 890-3552.



Special Photo: Colquitt Regional

Colquitt Regional Health System President and CEO Jim Matney has been named to Becker’s Hospital Review’s 2026 list of “240 Community Hospital CEOs to Know.”

cluding me among this year’s community hospital leaders,” Matney said. “But more than anything, I see this recognition as a reflection of the incredible team at Colquitt Regional. It takes the dedication and commitment of our physicians, nurses, employees, board members, volunteers, and community partners to build a health system that people trust and choose for their care. “I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished together and honored to be part of a team that continues to make Colquitt Regional the first choice for so many across south Georgia.” Since joining Colquitt Regional, Matney has led significant growth across the organization, including the recruitment of numerous specialists, the expansion of clinical services, and the development of residency programs in Family Medicine, Psychiatry, General Surgery, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. These initiatives have strengthened access to healthcare while helping address physician shortages across rural Georgia. Under his leadership, Colquitt Regional also has earned national recognition for patient safety, quality, workplace culture and clinical excellence. “Jim’s vision and leadership have transformed not only our health system, but healthcare throughout our region,” Hospital Authority Chairman John Griffin said. “He has remained committed to ensuring our community has access to advanced healthcare services that are often only found in much larger cities while also investing in the next generation of physicians through graduate medical education. We are proud to see his leadership recognized on a national stage.” According to Becker’s Hospital Review, the executives included on this year’s list are “community stewards, strategic visionaries and patient advocates” who are expanding access to care, strengthening their organizations, and developing long-term strategies that improve the health of their communities. Leaders are selected through a combination of nominations and independent editorial research. Matney has previously been recognized as the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals’ CEO of the Year and received the W. Daniel Barker Leadership Award from the Georgia Hospital Association. He currently serves on the board of the Georgia Alliance of Community Hospitals and has played a key role in advancing medical education throughout south Georgia. For more information about Colquitt Regional Health System, contact the marketing department at (229) 890-3552.

Anime, cosplay, guests highlight ABAC’s fourth ThunderCon

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON — ThunderCon at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will return Sept. 19, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Gressette Gymnasium. The event brings fans of comics, anime, videogames, science fiction and pop culture together for a day of panels, vendors, cosplay and special guests. Now in its fourth year, ThunderCon has experienced significant growth since its launch in 2023. The event has expanded to include a cosplay contest, a VTuber Meet & Greet, an Itasha car show and, this year, a VIP wrestling show and The Fallout Xperience. The event also will feature a VIP wrestling show presented by Tifton’s Kraken Pro-Wrestling that evening. General admission and VIP tickets are available at link.abac.edu/thundercon2026. ABAC students receive free general admission to ThunderCon as well as free admission to the VIP wrestling show. Special guests for ThunderCon 2026 include voice actors Chris Teragliafera, Patrick Pedraza and Shawn Gann. Teragliafera is known for roles including Capitano in “Genshin Impact,” Gundham Tanaka and Ryoma Hoshi in “Danganronpa 2 & 3,” and Muhammad Avdol in “JoJo’s Bizarre Adventure: Stardust Crusaders.” Pedraza has voiced characters including Scaramouche in “Genshin Impact,” Good Luck Bear in the 2018 “Care Bears” series, Yun in Crunchyroll’s “Onyx Equinox,” Sandy and Gus in “Brawl Stars” and Carlos Kitbash in “Rescue Heroes.” Gann is a voice actor and casting director whose credits include “My Hero Academia,” “Dragon Ball Super,” “Attack on Titan,” “One Piece,” “Fruits Basket,” “Ranking of Kings,” “Radiant,” “Ensemble Stars” and “Wind Breaker.” Other special guests include Power Rangers suit actor Romy Sharf, who portrayed Alpha 5 in seasons one and two of “Mighty Morphin Power Rangers,” and actor Ann Marie Crouch, who played Princess Shayla in “Power Rangers Wild Force.” ThunderCon also will feature cosplay guests Golden Spirit Cosplay, Hallow.Eve. Cosplay and Raenisa Elavaris Cosplay; literary guest Chris Garrett; and a VTuber Meet & Greet with Ghosted Vixen, Agari_Uchu and Rainboba. A featured addition this year is The Fallout Xperience, a traveling immersive cosplay exhibit created by cosplayers and prop makers who celebrate the “Fallout” franchise. The exhibit will feature hand-made props, backdrops depicting iconic locations from the games, and a life-sized Deathclaw statue. Visitors also may see members of the group dressed as Vault Dwellers and Wastelanders. The group accepts donations for entry to the exhibit and directs those donations to charities and causes. The cosplay contest will return for its third year. Participants can register at link.abac.edu/cosplay. “All levels of cosplay are welcome at ThunderCon,” Shawn Burnette, the coordinator of Student Activities at ABAC, said. “Cosplayers of any experience are welcome to participate in the contest. We have seen some amazing entries over the years, including an intimidating Big Sister from the ‘BioShock’ franchise, a decked-out Deku from ‘My Hero Academia’ and a realistic Chewbacca from ‘Star Wars.’ If you are interested in competing, make sure to preregister using our link because spots are limited, and entries fill up fast.” ThunderCon offers ABAC students and the Tifton community a unique opportunity to experience an event that celebrates interests and passions beyond ABAC’s traditional campus activities. “ABAC is known for amazing campus events, from our rodeos and truck and tractor pulls to our career fair,” Alan Kramer, assistant vice president for Student Affairs and dean of students, said. “ThunderCon is a venue for students who may not be interested in traditional agriculture-based events and allows them to express themselves in their other interests.” Kramer said the event creates opportunities for students to connect with fellow fans, community members, alumni and entertainment professionals. ThunderCon’s community connections are strengthened through support from local partners, including Gray Ghost Comics and Kraken Pro-Wrestling. Tickets for ThunderCon are available at link.abac.edu/thundercon2026. For event updates, visit ThunderCon’s Facebook or Instagram.



Special Photo: ABAC

ThunderCon at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will return Sept. 19, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Gressette Gymnasium.

ThunderCon at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will return Sept. 19, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Gressette Gymnasium.

Saturday could settle Rams' QB battle

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — David Bowser has six quarterbacks on his Albany State roster.

He won't have six for much longer.

Four received significant playing time in the Golden Rams' first preseason scrimmage Saturday, and Bowser said Monday that two have begun separating themselves from the competition.

Who are they?

Bowser isn't saying just yet. He wants the players to hear it from him first.

"The difference is those two showed more composure and made the right calls to put us in a better position to be successful," Bowser said.

The competition moves another step closer to a conclusion Saturday night when Albany State holds its second preseason scrimmage

at 7 p.m. at the Albany State Coliseum.

This one will be more game-like than the first.

And by the time it's over, Bowser could be considerably closer to deciding who takes the first snap when the Golden Rams open the season Aug. 29 at Florida A&M.

That first assignment comes with a familiar face waiting on the other sideline.

Quinn Gray, the former Albany State head coach, is now leading the Rattlers. Bowser's first game as head coach of the Golden Rams will come against the man he replaced.

And Bowser knows what Gray can do with an offense.

"Coach Quinn Gray is an offensive-minded genius," Bowser said.

The best way to deal with an offense like that?

Don't give it the football any more than necessary.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

The Albany State Golden Rams will hold a free, open-to-the-public scrimmage Saturday night at the Albany State Coliseum. With a "Meet-the-Rams" option, the ASU Volleyball team and the Women's Cross Country team, will give fans a chance to take photos and meet players. The event begins at 7 p.m.

"We can't give them any extra possessions because we turn the ball over," Bowser said. "We've got to be able to manage the clock and keep them off the field as much as possible ... and we can't turn the ball over."

That's one reason Bowser's quarterback decision involves more than finding the player capable of making the spectacular throw.

Composure matters.

Making the right call matters.

Protecting the football matters.

Those were among the qualities that allowed two quarterbacks to move ahead of the pack in the first scrimmage.

While the quarterback competition remains unsettled, Bowser came away from Saturday feeling considerably better about his defense.

For now, that side of the football appears to be ahead.

"The defense did an outstanding job," Bowser said. "The defensive front has really improved. I was really pleased with the interior line play."

Preseason All-American Derrick Drayton of College Park and De'Avery Weeks of Jacksonville have helped lead that group, along with two transfers who have made an impression during camp.

Bowser also singled out Cameron Watts of Tyrone for his work in the secondary.

"Cameron Watts from Tyrone was excellent in the defensive backfield," Bowser said.

There has been plenty of Southwest Georgia representation among Albany State's camp standouts as well.

Early County's Jimmyan Jones, former Dougherty standout Chancie Brown, Westover graduates Jordan

See **RAMS**, 10A



Special Photo: Adam Cairns/Columbus Dispatch

Ohio State players work during practice. The Buckeyes are ranked No. 1 in the AP preseason Top 25, while two-time defending SEC champion Georgia opens the season at No. 3.

Georgia ranked No. 3 in preseason AP poll

Field Level Media

For the first time in 65 years and only the second time ever, the Big Ten Conference boasts the top two teams in the AP preseason Top 25 poll with Ohio State ranked No. 1 and Oregon No. 2.

The Buckeyes received 40 first-place votes to gain the No. 1 spot for the ninth time overall and the first time since 2015.

The Ducks, awarded 14 first-place votes, had never been ranked as high as No. 2 in the preseason poll, having opened at No. 3 four times.

Two-time defending SEC champion Georgia did not receive any first-place votes but is ranked No. 3, ahead of Notre Dame (six first-place votes) and Texas.

Defending national champion Indiana (eight first-place votes) is No. 6, just ahead of title game opponent Miami, which received one first-place vote. Texas A&M, Ole Miss and Oklahoma round out the top 10.

The last time two Big Ten teams topped the preseason poll was 1961, when Iowa and Ohio State were Nos. 1 and 2. This year, the Big Ten will take aim at a record fourth straight national title following wins by Michigan, Ohio State and Indiana.

While the Big Ten receives the accolades, the Southeastern Conference leads all conferences with nine teams in the Top 25, including five in the top 10 for the first time since 2013.

The Big 12 has four teams

in the Top 25, highlighted by conference champion Texas Tech at No. 12. In the ACC, Miami is joined by No. 19 SMU and No. 24 Louisville.

No. 1 Buckeyes will get tested early and often. They play Texas on the road on Sept. 12 and five of their nine conference games are against preseason-ranked teams, including at Iowa, Indiana and USC and against Oregon at home. The Buckeyes then wrap up the regular season at home against Michigan.

1. Ohio State (40)
2. Oregon (14)
3. Georgia
4. Notre Dame (6)
5. Texas
6. Indiana (8)
7. Miami (1)
8. Texas A&M
9. Ole Miss
10. Oklahoma
11. LSU
12. Texas Tech
13. Alabama
14. BYU
14. USC
16. Michigan
17. Washington
18. Penn State
19. SMU
20. Tennessee
21. Utah
22. Iowa
23. Houston
24. Louisville
25. Missouri

FRIDAY NIGHT IS BACK

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL KICKS INTO GEAR ACROSS SOUTHWEST GEORGIA

FRIDAY • AUG. 21

HOME GAMES				ON THE ROAD
KING'S RIDGE CHRISTIAN — at — WESTOVER ALBANY	HAPEVILLE CHARTER — at — LEE COUNTY LEESBURG	FIRST PRESBYTERIAN — at — DEERFIELD-WINDSOR ALBANY	BROOKS COUNTY — at — WORTH COUNTY SYLVESTER	TERRELL COUNTY — at — CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTY
SOUTHWEST GEORGIA — at — TERRELL ACADEMY DAWSON	SOUTHLAND — at — BACONTON CHARTER BACONTON	CALHOUN COUNTY — at — PELHAM PELHAM	SHERWOOD CHRISTIAN — at — CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP	

Special Graphic

Georgia looks to unlock tight ends

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ATHENS — Georgia has no shortage of options at tight end.

Finding ways to get the most out of them is the challenge.

The Bulldogs enter the 2026 season with one of their deepest position groups at tight end at a time when their offense is searching for playmakers following the departure of six of its top seven pass-catchers from last season.

That would seem to create an obvious opportunity for senior Lawson Luckie and a talented collection of tight ends behind him.

Georgia coach Kirby Smart agrees — to a point.

"They've got a tremendous, talented room," Smart said. "But if you chart explosive plays, those aren't always the tight end room."

Smart's point is that Georgia's tight ends can be valuable without necessarily becoming the primary source of big plays in the passing game.

"I love our tight ends," Smart said. "We've got great tight ends. But they're not guys that are hitting 22 and 23 miles an hour. They're guys that can do all kinds of grunt work. They can catch balls in the flats, they can block people, they can play on special teams."

They may be asked to do even more this season.

Georgia lost players responsible for 67.9% of its receptions from 2025. Zachariah Branch,

Colbie Young and Dillon Bell are among the departed targets, leaving London Humphreys as the most experienced member of a receiving corps that will be relying heavily on younger players.

The tight ends provide considerably more experience and depth.

Luckie is the most productive returning player in the group and enters his senior season expecting to play a major role. He believes his versatility is one of his greatest strengths and said he added needed weight during the offseason.

There is competition behind him.

Luckie called second-year tight end Ethan Barbour one of the toughest players he has seen come through Georgia and praised the way Barbour approaches practice each day.

Smart has been similarly complimentary of Jaden Reddell, noting the work he put in during the summer was recently recognized by Georgia's strength staff.

And the list doesn't end there. Elyiss Williams, Kaiden Prothro, Colton Heinrich, Lincoln Keyes and Brayden Fogle give Georgia an unusually deep collection of options at the position.

"It is a talented room, and it's an extremely competitive room," Smart said.

The question is how offensive coordinator Mike Bobo and the Bulldogs turn all that



Special Photo: Adam Cairns/Columbus Dispatch

Georgia tight end Lawson Luckie will be one of the leaders of the tight end room for the Bulldogs this season.

talent into production.

Georgia's tight ends accounted for only 15% of the team's receptions last season, but their contribution increased when the Bulldogs created bigger plays.

Georgia completed 42 passes of at least 20 yards in 2025, and nine came from tight ends. Of the Bulldogs' 72 completions covering at least 15 yards, tight ends accounted for 14.

Smart believes creating more of those opportunities begins somewhere other than the passing game.

It starts with running the football.

A productive running game forces linebackers and safeties to respect what is happening in the backfield. That, in turn, creates opportunities for tight ends off play-action.

Georgia didn't take advantage of those situations consistently enough last season, something Smart has emphasized throughout the offseason.

There is also another part of the job he doesn't want his

See **GEORGIA**, 10A



Deerfield-Windsor’s Mary Ruth Courtney delivers a pitch during Monday’s game against Flint River Academy. Courtney had two hits, including a seventh-inning single as the Lady Knights rallied from seven runs down to force extra innings before falling 9-8.

Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Lady Knights rally from seven down

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — Three outs from another loss, Deerfield-Windsor suddenly came alive. Seven runs later, the Lady Knights had erased a seven-run deficit and given themselves a chance for their first victory of the season. They just couldn’t finish it. Flint River Academy scored an unearned run without a hit in the eighth inning and escaped with a 9-8 victory Monday after Deerfield-Windsor staged a remarkable seventh-inning comeback. Trailing 8-1 entering the bottom of the seventh, Emily Phillips started the rally with a single to left, and Mary Ruth Courtney followed with another. Jennings Curington then singled home a run, and Claire Hockman was hit by a pitch. After an out, Reynolds Bryson drew a bases-loaded walk to make it 8-3. Then the Lady Knights really got rolling. Aubrey Ross singled home two runs, and Millie Champion followed with a two-run single that suddenly cut the deficit to 8-7. Parker Bryson was hit by a pitch before Phillips, batting for the second time in the inning, reached on an error that brought home the tying run. Courtney followed with her second hit of the inning before Flint River finally es-

caped the seventh. “We were able to work some deep counts and force their pitcher to throw pitches that our hitters were looking for,” Deerfield-Windsor coach Dwayne Suggs said. “A few hits, walks and a couple of errors gave us the chance to tie it up. Our girls battled hard late in the game.” Flint River regained the lead in the eighth when Deerfield-Windsor committed an error, allowing the eventual winning run to score. Ross went 2-for-3 with two RBIs, while Courtney had two hits and struck out five in six innings of relief. The loss dropped Deerfield-Windsor to 0-4. The Lady Knights travel to Crisp Academy Thursday for a 6 p.m. game.

Fans get a vote in Heisman race

Field Level Media

Fans will cast the first vote for the Heisman Trophy this season under a new platform unveiled on Monday. The website — hopefuls.heisman.com — will include official player data and updated player ratings for the “EA Sports Football” video game. Starting on Sept. 9, visitors can cast votes daily. The results of the fan vote will be unveiled live on ESPN during the weekend of conference championship games, with the players ranked first, second and third counting as the first official Heisman ballot. “We surveyed college football fans, and they told us clearly that they want more data on more players and more ways to engage with the Heisman Trophy throughout the sea-

son,” Heisman Trophy Trust CEO Jeff Price said. While positions like quarterback and running back will naturally have more data available for voters to consider, advanced analytics are included to encourage fans to weigh players from all positions. “Every player who steps onto the field this fall begins the season as a Heisman Hopeful with the chance to earn the award on the field of play,” Price said. “This platform, working hand in hand with the schools, helps us shine a light on those players and bring their stories forward all season long.” Carnegie Mellon’s Sports Analytics Center is assisting Heisman with the platform along with Next League, Yangaroo and CLC.



The Heisman Trophy is displayed during a ceremony. College football fans will have an official voice in the voting process for the first time this season through the new Heisman Hopefuls website.

Special Photo: Lucas Boland-Imagn Images

“We’re creating a methodology to dynamically weight fan votes based on data observed throughout the season,” CMSAC director Ron Yurko said, per ESPN. “While fans will be allowed to vote each day throughout the season, CMSAC’s data-

driven approach will guide how much weight to give votes each week.” Indiana quarterback Fernando Mendoza won the 2025 Heisman Trophy. The award has been presented annually to the top player in college football since 1935.

Braves prospect Lodise stays red hot

By Tim Crowley
Braves.com

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Alex Lodise has already demonstrated plenty of power during his first full season in the Atlanta Braves organization. Now the 22-year-old shortstop is showing he can hit for average, too. Lodise, ranked as the Braves’ No. 5 prospect by MLB Pipeline, recorded four hits for the second consecutive game Sunday for High-A Rome in a 16-14 loss to Asheville at HomeTrust Park. Lodise homered in the

first inning and added three singles, continuing a torrid stretch since being promoted from Single-A Augusta in late July. His home run was his 25th of the season and fourth in 17 games with Rome. Over the final three games of the series against Asheville, Lodise went 10-for-17 with seven RBIs and 18 total bases. That included four-hit performances on consecutive days Saturday and Sunday. The hot streak has been part of an impressive August.

Lodise is batting .358 with a .444 on-base percentage and .660 slugging percentage through 13 games this month. He has produced a 1.005 OPS since joining Rome. His success at the higher level continues a breakout season that began with Augusta. Lodise hit 21 home runs and posted an .826 OPS in 94 games for the GreenJackets, including three multihomer games, before earning his promotion to Rome. The production represents a significant step forward from Lodise’s introduction to professional baseball last summer.

After Atlanta selected him in the second round of the 2025 MLB Draft, Lodise played 25 games for Rome and batted .252 with a .294 on-base percentage and .398 slugging percentage. He hit one home run and drove in nine runs. A year later, the power has become one of the defining features of his game. His recent surge suggests there may be more to his offensive profile. Lodise arrived in the Braves organization after three seasons at Florida State, where he posted a 1.003 OPS with 26 home runs in 122 games. Now, in his first full professional season, Lodise has nearly matched his three-year college home run total — and his performance since moving to High-A has given the Braves another reason to take notice of one of the organization’s top young prospects.

From 9A GEORGIA

tight ends overlooking. “At the end of the day, there has to be buy-in from those rooms, and there has to be a culture and belief that, ‘I’m 230 pounds. My advantage is I can bully people on the perimeter,’” Smart said. Do that effectively, Smart said, and Georgia’s tight ends can make life easier for everybody else. “If they use that wisely, it makes our skill players, receivers and running backs even better,” he said. That’s why evaluating the

position strictly by receptions can be misleading. A tight end who seals the edge can spring a running back. One who draws a safety toward the line of scrimmage can create space for a receiver. And once the defense begins worrying about those things, play-action can create the opportunities Georgia wants downfield. When those opportunities arrive, Luckie knows what has to happen. “It’s about just playing clean football,” Luckie said. “You can’t miss your shots when you call them.” Georgia certainly has enough tight ends to take them. Now the Bulldogs have to find ways to make them count.



Rory McIlroy walks off the course during the FedEx St. Jude Championship in Memphis, Tenn. McIlroy finished 66th at 8 over par but advanced to the BMW Championship despite saying he felt “lost” with his swing.

Special Photo: Steve Roberts-Imagn Images

McIlroy advances despite struggles

Field Level Media

Rory McIlroy left the FedEx St. Jude Championship with his place in the next round of the playoffs secure, but with considerably less confidence in his golf swing. The World No. 2 finished 66th out of 68 golfers at 8 over par after closing with a 2-over 72 on Sunday at TPC Southwind in Memphis. McIlroy posted rounds of 74, 70, 72 and 72 and never broke par during his first competitive appearance since the Open Championship nearly a month ago. McIlroy admitted his limited preparation caught up with him as the tournament progressed. “Almost felt like the more the week went on, the more I felt lost with my golf swing a little bit,” McIlroy said. “... I guess nice to shake the

rust off a little bit, but I’m going to have to work pretty hard between now and next Thursday to feel like I have any sort of golf game to compete next week.” There were at least some encouraging signs late Sunday. McIlroy made five birdies over his final 10 holes after a poor start to the round, but that closing stretch also included bogeys on Nos. 17 and 18 and did little to alter his assessment of where his game stands heading into the BMW Championship. McIlroy particularly struggled from tee to green during the week, with his normally powerful driving among the biggest problems. He said working on mechanics eventually caused him to become too focused on the swing itself rather than the shot he was trying to hit. He plans to return home and work with swing coach

Michael Bannon and caddy Harry Diamond before heading Tuesday to Bellerive Country Club outside St. Louis. McIlroy has played the course competitively once, tying for 50th at the 2018 PGA Championship. “I’m just so far away from where I need to be to even feel like I have a chance,” McIlroy said. “I’ve just got to keep working and hope it turns around a little bit.” The poor week dropped McIlroy only one spot to 13th in the FedEx Cup standings, comfortably putting him among the 50 players advancing to the BMW Championship. The field will then be trimmed to 30 for the season-ending Tour Championship. Sports News McIlroy is seeking a record-extending fourth FedEx Cup championship and his first since 2022.

From 9A RAMS

Lassiter and Tanner Turner and Thomasville’s Nigel Pittman have all caught Bowser’s attention. Saturday gives them another chance to do it. Bowser plans to make the second scrimmage resemble an actual game more closely, with special teams among the areas receiving extra attention after issues surfaced in the first scrimmage. Then the Golden Rams will begin turning more of their attention toward Tallahassee. Bowser’s message to his defense for FAMU is straightforward. “We’ve got to go down there and get hats to the ball and put ourselves in position to make the plays,” he said. Offensively, the message may be even simpler.

Don’t give the ball away. First, Albany State needs to determine who will be responsible for taking care of it. Saturday’s scrimmage is free and open to the public, with fans invited to “Meet the Rams” afterward. The award-winning Albany State Show Band will be on hand, and the school’s volleyball and women’s cross country teams will also be introduced. Supporters can also donate snacks, water and other supplies for the football program. Donations may be dropped off at Lovett Hall. There will be plenty happening at the Coliseum Saturday night. But the biggest question of Albany State’s preseason may be getting closer to an answer. Six quarterbacks entered the competition. Two have separated themselves. Soon, Bowser needs one.



Special Photo: Jim Griffith

Albany firefighters battle a weekend blaze that destroyed a historic home at 410 Jackson St. The structure had stood for 140 years.

Downtown Albany fire demolishes house built in 1885

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – A Sunday-afternoon fire destroyed a house that had stood in Albany for 140 years.

The blaze at the multi-story house at 410 N. Jackson St., located at the intersection of North Jackson and Roosevelt Avenue, was reported at around noon on Sunday.

Albany firefighters battled the fire in shifts due to the August heat, Albany Fire Chief Cedric Scott said.

“We just had to make sure to rotate firefighters in and out to make sure people could stay cool,” he said.

The source of the fire is under investigation. Since it has

been vacant for several decades at least, an electrical fire could not have caused the blaze.

“We certainly have had our share of fires downtown,” Scott said. “We look at vacant structures that are burned. You start to really place an emphasis on investigating to determine what happened.”

The house was reportedly built in 1885, and a nearby structure on the same property was built in the 1930s.

The structure was a total loss, the chief said.

“It’s just unfortunate to continue to lose these older houses that are representative and have been a fixture in our community,” he said.



Martha Emogene Akison (Howard)

Martha Emogene Howard Adkison, 89 of Albany, GA, peacefully passed away Sunday morning, August 16, 2026 surrounded by family at her home. She had struggled the last four years with severe Dementia and Parkinson’s.

Funeral services will be conducted Wednesday, August 19, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Byne Memorial Baptist Church. Rev. Mark Jackson and Rev. Charlie Brown will officiate. Interment will follow at 3:00 p.m. at Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery, 2245 Bethel Road, Sycamore, GA, 31790

Emogene was born February 22, 1937 to James (Jim) William Howard and Cora Lee Howard of Sycamore, GA after high school she met the love of her life, James Hansel Adkison and they were married on June 11, 1955.

Once married the newly weds moved to Albany, GA where she accepted a position at the Marine Corps Logistics Base where she became the supervisor of the Contract Division, where she was known as Martha, She was with the Marine Base for thirty seven years from which she retired.

In 1960 Emogene and her husband built their home which has remained as their residence while giving birth to their only daughter, Sheila Justice Adkison in 1968, Sheila was their only child who was married in 1989 and blessed them with their granddaughter, Jennifer Justice.

Emogene was a longtime member of Byne Memorials Baptist Church in Albany, GA. She was very active in the church, worked with the youth for many years, and also taught Sunday School for many years. She was very active in the Albany Exchange Club, where her husband. Hansel was a long time member.

Those left to cherish Martha Emogene Adkison’s memory include her daughter, Sheila Adkison, her granddaughter. Jennifer Justice, several nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Emogene is preceded in death by her loving husband of sixty six years, James Hansel Adkison, parents, Jim and Cora Lee Howard, three brothers, Barney Howard, Sr. (Christine) (Dorothy), Melvin Howard (Vera), Aldene Howard (Junie) and two sisters, Vera Howard Owen (Sam) and Evelyn Howard Grant (Tom) .

The family will receive friends Tuesday, August 18, 2026 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Mathews Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made in memory of Martha Emogene Howard Adkison to Byne Memorial Baptist Church, 2832 Ledo Rd., Albany, GA, 31707 or a favorite charity of your choice.



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7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 lions, tigers & bears' spots (4)	_____
2 least appealing (8)	_____
3 March or September event (7)	_____
4 British actress Olivia (6)	_____
5 shade of blond (10)	_____
6 rested on the patellas (5)	_____
7 acted the buttinsky (7)	_____

STR	UI	GR	ZO	EST
OS	LM	ME	NOX	AW
EQ	BER	AN	OSS	KN
RY	LED	ELT	DD	CO

Tuesday's Answers: 1. MINERS 2. SLUMP 3. HEALTH 4. HAWTHORNE 5. ZILLIONAIRE 6. PAULINE 7. MAELSTROM 8/19

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 cozy up on the couch (7)	_____
2 buttering up (10)	_____
3 mini burgers (7)	_____
4 Oscar-winning writer Sarah (6)	_____
5 offer sympathy (7)	_____
6 gauche (8)	_____
7 imitates Chloe Kim (10)	_____

BO	SNU	FLAT	DOLE	ERS
LL	TL	SLID	OW	TE
SN	RI	TAC	GGLE	CON
NG	ARDS	EY	PO	ESS

Wednesday's Answers: 1. ZOOS 2. GROSSEST 3. EQUINOX 4. COLMAN 5. STRAWBERRY 6. KNELT 7. MEDDLED 8/20

Release Date: Thursday, August 20, 2026

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

- Error
- Radio static sound
- Do the same as
- Peaceful getaway spot
- Hard stuff in rings
- "You said it!"
- Ignited
- Small floral bundle
- Robin Hood foe
- Hard stuff in school
- Gets even with
- Relativity, for one
- Bucks and does
- Org. that overseas food recalls
- Half a sextet
- Hard stuff in a bar
- Utterly exhausted
- "How amusing"
- culpa
- Marina __ Rey, California
- Proper
- Fuming
- Nocturnal flapper
- Word with circle and tube
- Hard stuff for a sweet tooth
- Doesn't just assume
- Licorice-like herb
- Ore-rich vein
- Appliance alert
- Numbers for letters
- Tollbooth pricing unit

DOWN

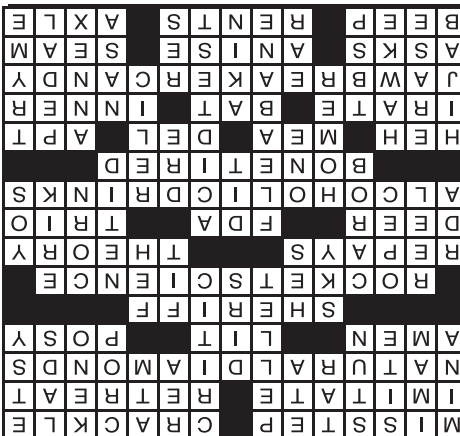
- Sports analyst
- Kimes
- Mosque leader
- Place
- Leave speechless
- Fossil-preserving gunk
- Unreliable stat from the fashionably late
- Bit of hamster food
- One who always gives star treatment?
- Belfast-born actor
- Stephen

- Bread machine
- Trim, as a photo
- Casino game
- Boys
- Marketplace with personalized gifts
- NNE, SSW, etc.
- Contrail location
- Bucks, but not does
- In shape
- Dismissive syllable
- Bit of fishing gear
- Well-financed gp.?
- Chocolate substitute
- Online access username within universities, briefly
- Grain ground to make masa
- "The Devil in the White City" writer
- Larson
- Nutritional amt.
- Casual hellos
- Flowering plant once believed to repel pests
- E, in Morse code

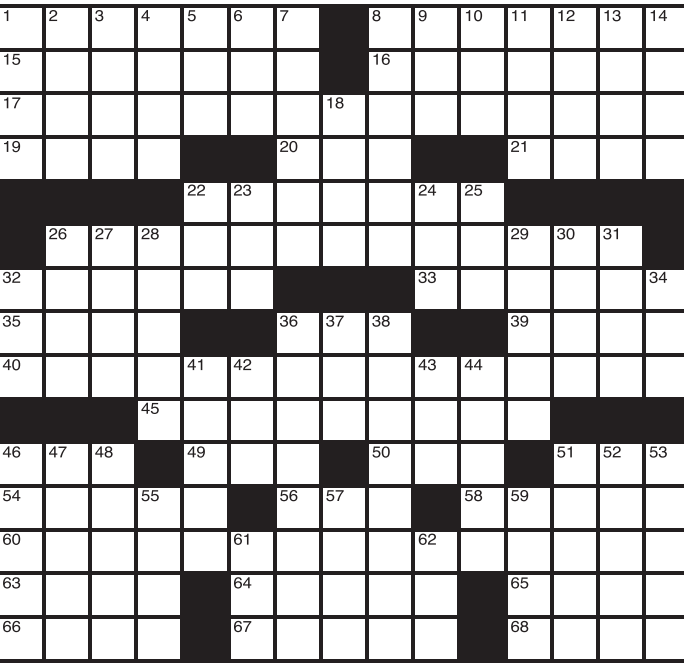
- Rigorous evaluation
- Big hit at the ballpark
- Unspecified person
- Hip-hop pioneer Dr. ____
- Thing of the past
- Muslim headscarf
- Create a clean slate?
- Ethan of the "Before" trilogy

- Secondary structure
- "Bike faster!"
- Defiant response to a threat
- Ingredient meas.
- Similar (to)
- Mars rover org.
- "My conscience whispers in your ____": "King John"
- High or low follower, in graphics

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:



08/20/26



By Jeffrey Wechsler
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08/20/26

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.

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

Previous Solution: "If I sit down to read your book and love it, I'm going to check all over town to see if those rights are available." — Octavia Spencer

TODAY'S CLUE: 7 s i a b e h

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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.

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

Previous Solution: "I only write an album because I'm working through something big and private that I can't do without the help of my art." — Lorde

TODAY'S CLUE: 0 e q u a l s c

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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.

" P M V B S M V C K R D T S Y , R L F G Q L
A D T O T O C K O T O G R G N V . S O M C T
B G O M S B J O G Q G P S O M O K C S B S B J G K
C B L O M S B J . O M C O ' T A D T O R V . " — L G U G G B G

Previous Solution: "Sometimes the only way you can get an audience is at an audition. I'd never expect to get the role, of course." — Al Pacino

TODAY'S CLUE: 4 e q u a l s A

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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.

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

Previous Solution: "When I hear music, my body just starts to move. It has nothing to do with training or anything. That's just me." — Yoko Ono

TODAY'S CLUE: H s i a n b e x

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GSW to publicly launch ‘Rising Together, Shaping Futures’ fundraising campaign

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

AMERICUS — Georgia Southwestern State University is preparing to celebrate a defining moment in its future with the public launch of “Rising Together, Shaping Futures,” the university’s comprehensive five-year fundraising campaign.

Alumni, donors, friends and community members are invited to join GSW for a special campaign celebration Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the Storm Dome on GSW’s campus. The event will showcase the impact already being made through the campaign while unveiling exciting new announcements about what

lies ahead for GSW.

After four years of building momentum during its quiet phase, Rising Together, Shaping Futures has already raised more than \$8 million toward its \$12.5 million goal. Thursday’s celebration marks the beginning of the campaign’s public phase and an opportunity for the entire GSW community to be part of shaping the university’s next chapter.

“Rising Together, Shaping Futures reflects the incredible momentum at Georgia Southwestern and our commitment to creating even greater opportunities for our students,” GSW President Kerry Palmer said. “As we look to the future, this campaign will help us build on GSW’s strengths,

invest in our people and ensure that generations of students have the resources and experiences they need to succeed. I’m excited to invite our alumni, friends and community to be part of what comes next.”

Rising Together, Shaping Futures centers on three priorities: student success, student access, and faculty and staff excellence, each focused on creating opportunities that can transform lives.

Through student success, the campaign invests in experiences and resources that help students thrive inside and outside the classroom. Student access expands opportunities for students to pursue a GSW education by

reducing financial barriers and increasing scholarship support. Faculty and staff excellence invests in the people at the heart of the university, providing resources that strengthen teaching, mentorship, innovation and the overall student experience.

Together, these priorities reflect a shared belief that investing in GSW means investing in students, families, communities and the future of southwest Georgia and beyond, school officials said.

“This campaign is about much more than reaching a fundraising goal: It is about what becomes possible when people who believe in Georgia Southwestern come together around a shared vi-



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sion for its future,” Stephen Snyder, assistant vice president for University Advancement and executive director of the GSW Foundation, said. “Every gift creates opportunities for our students, strengthens the people and programs that serve them, and helps ensure GSW continues making an impact for generations to come.”

The Aug. 20 public launch will celebrate those who have already helped move the campaign forward while sharing

new opportunities for alumni, friends and supporters to join the effort.

The celebration is free and open to the public. GSW invites the community to come experience the excitement, celebrate how far the university has come and discover what is possible when we rise together.

Learn more about Rising Together, Shaping Futures and how to support the campaign at gsw.edu/RisingTogether.

Trio sentenced in possibly biggest Ponzi scheme in Georgia history

By Ty Tagami
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A Florida man will spend 20 years in federal prison after pleading guilty in connection with a Ponzi scheme that bilked more than 2,000 investors out of about \$380 million.

U.S. District Judge Tiffany R. Johnson sentenced Todd Burkhalter, 55, to the maximum allowed in federal court in Atlanta after he pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud in January.

Two of his associates had already been sentenced in connection with the scam, which Marlo Graham, the special agent in charge of the FBI in Atlanta, described as likely the largest Ponzi scheme in Georgia history.

Burkhalter, who is from St. Petersburg, Fla., founded and led a Georgia-based financial advisory group called Drive Planning LLC.

He and his associates used the firm to defraud investors between September 2020 and June 2024, according to a federal charging document filed in January.

“Burkhalter operated a massive Ponzi scheme in which investor funds were being used to finance a luxury lifestyle, pay off other Drive Planning investors, and make commission payments to Drive Planning’s agents,” the document, filed on Jan. 21, said.

Drive Planning offered two investment vehicles purportedly backed by wholly owned real estate. The firm claimed that the plans used investor money to make secured loans to developers, with promises of substantial returns. The biggest such vehicle, the Real Estate Acceleration Loan, promised quarterly returns of 10%, according to the federal court filing.

The firm had loaned less than

\$2 million to one well-known developer and then leveraged that to tell investors it had an enduring relationship with the developer, the charging document says. Upon discovering this, the developer, who is not identified, sent a cease-and-desist letter to Drive Planning in June 2023 and then sued two months later.

Burkhalter and his firm failed to disclose this to investors. Instead, they used money from one investor to pay off the next, encouraging people to deplete their children’s college funds, take early retirement account distributions and borrow money at high interest rates to invest in Drive Planning, Theodore S. Hertzberg, the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, said in a statement.

“Todd Burkhalter lured investors to send millions of dollars to Drive Planning for investments that he knew didn’t actually exist,” Hertzberg said.

The act that landed Burkhalter in prison was clicking send on an email on Nov. 28, 2022.

The wire fraud charge involved a message from Burkhalter to the owner of a Maryland-based financial services company in which Burkhalter mischaracterized his firm’s relationship with that developer, claiming that there existed “wholly owned real estate which serves as a collateral.”

Before he was caught, Burkhalter skimmed enough to finance a lavish lifestyle. According to the criminal charging document, he used at least \$2 million of his investors’ funds to buy a yacht called Stillwater, which he renamed Live More.

He also used more than \$2 million in investor money to buy a \$4.2 million condominium in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. He chartered private jets and luxury cars, bought a motorcoach for about \$614,000, two Land Rovers for nearly a quarter-million dollars, and at least \$320,000 in clothing, jewelry and beauty treatments.

As part of his sentence, Burkhalter was ordered to repay his victims nearly \$234 million.

The court appointed a receiver to try to recover funds and sell assets to repay victims, according to Hertzberg’s office.

Earlier this week, Johnson sentenced two Drive Planning employees: David Bradford, 53,

of Peachtree Corners; and Julie Edwards, 59, of Cumming. Bradford, the chief operating officer, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, and the judge sentenced him to four years and three months in prison.

He was ordered to pay \$4.3 million to victims.

Edwards, the chief administrative officer, pleaded guilty to laundering proceeds from the Ponzi scheme and will serve two years in prison. She was ordered to pay \$630,000 to victims.

All three also were sentenced to three years of supervised release after completing their prison terms, which will be served without possibility of parole.

Congress Votes

By Targeted News Service
news@albanyherald.com

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

Along with its roll call votes this week, the Senate also passed the Stop Secret Spending Act (H.R. 2069) to ensure that other transaction agreements are reported to USAspending.gov; the Federal Building Threat Notification Act (S. 2542) to direct the director of the Federal Protective Service to establish guidance relating to emergency protocols for buildings; the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers’ Benefit Program Expansion Act (S. 3897) to revise administrative procedures relating to public safety officers’ death benefits; the Common Cents Act (S. 1525) to direct the Treasury Department to stop minting the penny and authorize cash transactions to be rounded up or down to the nearest 5 cents.

There were no votes in the House this week.

SENATE VOTES:

RUSSIAN FOSSIL FUELS: The Senate has rejected an amendment sponsored by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia Act (H.R. 5334). The amendment would have cut from the bill a provision authorizing imposing tariff duties on countries that either purchase crude oil and natural gas from Russia or help Russia avoid sanctions. Paul said the tariff authorization “grants the executive branch the power to raise nearly \$500 billion in revenue - -in taxes,” harming Americans. An amendment opponent, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., said: “The authority in this bill to impose tariffs is very narrowly scoped, and it contains clear guardrails.” The vote, on Aug. 7, was 32 yeas to 64 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

SANCTIONING RUSSIA AND IRAN: The Senate has passed the Lindsey O. Gra-



Jon Ossoff



Raphael Warnock

ham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act (H.R. 5334) sponsored by Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif. to authorize imposing secondary tariffs on imports from countries that import fossil fuels from Russia, adopt a variety of sanctions against Russia, and extend expiring sanctions on Iran. A supporter, Sen. Dick Blumenthal, D-Conn., said “it provides a powerful pressure point in stopping buyers of Russian oil and gas from continuing to provide the essential fuel for that war machine.” The vote, on Aug. 7, was 86 yeas to 11 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA

YEAS: Warnock D-GA

EN BLOC NOMINEES: The Senate has confirmed the presidential nomination of 74 people for various government posts, including ambassadors to Australia, Brazil, Norway, and Tanzania, and six judges on the Washington, D.C., Superior Court. The vote, on Aug. 7, was 51 yeas to 47 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

REGULATING HEMP PRODUCTS: The Senate has tabled an amendment sponsored by Sen. Ted Budd, R-N.C., to the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act (H.R. 6500) that would have eliminated a bill provision extending current policy for regulating hemp products. Budd said what he called a dangerous loophole was allowing intoxicating hemp products to be marketed and sold to children, with a resulting 461% increase in instances of pediatric cannabis poisoning. The vote to table, on Aug. 8, was 61 yeas to 32 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS: The Senate has passed the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act (H.R. 6500) sponsored by Rep. Jason Smith, R-Mo., to pro-

vide funding through Dec. 11 for federal government programs. A supporter, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, cited the need to avert “a damaging shutdown that could harm vital programs and throw the lives of federal workers into disarray.” The vote, on Aug. 8, was 90 yeas to 6 nays, with 1 voting present.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Senate has confirmed the nomination of Todd Blanche to be the Attorney General. Blanche had been in the post on an acting basis in recent months while also being Deputy Attorney General; he worked as a defense lawyer in 2023 and 2024, after more than a decade at the Justice Department. An opponent, Sen. John Hickenlooper, D-Colo., said: “We need an attorney general who is loyal to the Constitution, not to President Trump. Mr. Blanche does not seem to be that person.” The vote, on Aug. 8, was 50 yeas to 49 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

VOTING AND PHOTO ID: The Senate has rejected a cloture motion to end debate on the motion to proceed to the Help America Vote Act (S. 5271) sponsored by Sen. Jon Husted, R-Ohio. The bill would require voters in federal government elections to show photo identification. Husted said the requirement would “give Americans better-run and honest and fair elections.” An opponent, Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., said the bill, by forcing mail-in voters to include a copy of their photo ID with their ballots, “would do away with secret ballots as we know it.” The vote, on Aug. 8, was 52 yeas to 46 nays, with a three-fifths majority needed.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

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Cialis 20mg	32	\$44.99	Breo Ellipta 200mcg/25mcg	90ds	\$359.99
Viagra 100mg	32	\$49.99	Multaq 400mg	180	\$499.99
Rybelsus 14mg	90	\$869.99	Pradaxa 150mg	180	\$199.99
Rybelsus 7mg	90	\$869.99	Dexilant 30mg	100	\$69.99
Jardiance 10mg	90	\$144.99	Wellbutrin XL 300mg	90	\$89.99
Jardiance 25mg	90	\$159.99	Asacol 800mg	300	\$139.99
Gemtesa 75mg	90	\$329.99	Vraylar 1.5mg	100	\$99.99
Myrbetriq 50mg	100	\$169.99	Mycobutin 150mg	60	\$299.99
Synthroid 75mcg	90	\$49.99	Stiolto Respimat 2.5mcg/2.5mcg	90ds	\$299.99
Symbicort 160mcg/4.5mcg	360ds	\$74.99			
Januvia 100mg	84	\$119.99			
Advair Diskus 250mcg/50mcg	180ds	\$149.99			
Entresto 24mg/26mg	210	\$349.99			
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Flovent HFA 110mcg	360ds	\$149.99			
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