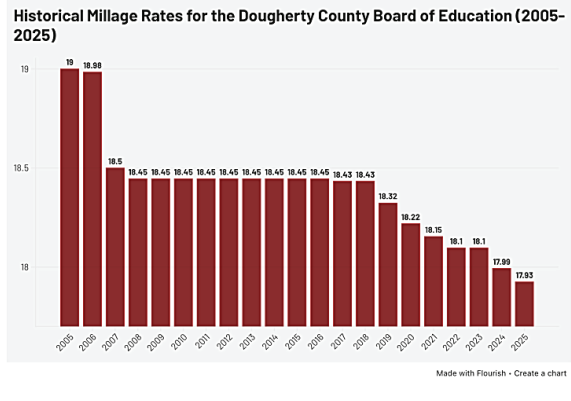




Millage (Property Tax) Rate



Graphic Courtesy of DCSS

Dougherty County School System millage rates have generally declined over the past two decades, falling from 19 mills in 2005 to 17.93 mills in 2025. District officials said Friday they expect another reduction in 2026 as property values increase.

As assessments climb, DCSS signals sizable millage cut

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — As Dougherty County property owners react to sharply higher reassessed values, school officials say the Dougherty County School System expects to substantially reduce its property tax rate for the ninth consecutive year. Superintendent Kenneth Dyer told members of the Dougherty County Board of Education on Friday that the district has not yet received the preliminary tax digest needed to calculate a proposed millage rate, but the significant increase in property values is expected to allow for a sizable reduction.

“I do anticipate a significant reduction in our millage rate because of the significant increase in the tax digest,” Dyer said. “What exactly that is, I don’t know.”

Dyer said the reduction could ultimately be the largest the district has made during its nine-year stretch of lowering the millage rate.

See **DCSS**, 2A

Dougherty County residents experience sticker shock with tax notices

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Dougherty County has completed a comprehensive reassessment of property tax values for the first time in more than a decade, and this week the notices to property owners started landing in the mailboxes of property owners.

Judging by the reaction online, the feeling



VICTOR EDWARDS

from many residents is anger, confusion and frustration. Dozens have commented on social media, and Dougherty County Commission members say they are receiving calls, texts and emails.

The volume got loud enough for Commissioner Russell Gray that he put his own response on Facebook.

“I think there’s initial outrage at seeing the magnitude of in-

creases in valuation,” he said. “I caution everyone to understand that it is not a tax bill.”

That linking of assessment value, such as the assumption that a 50% increase in value means a 50% jump in property taxes, is one that individuals commenting online are making.

Put simply, a higher property value does not equate to a bigger tax bill, the commissioner said. The amount on those bills will depend on the tax millage rates set by the County Com-

mission, Albany City Commission and the Dougherty County School Board.

Homeowners who have homestead exemptions also are further protected at the city and county levels because both governments opted into state legislation that will retain the 2024 base rate, keeping the values on those properties the same. Any increase in valuation would be limited to the amount of the

See **NOTICES**, 2A

Edreka Coleman named first female head drum major of ASU Band

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Albany State University’s Marching Rams Show Band will make history this fall when Edreka Coleman, a senior music education major from Macon, becomes the university’s first female head drum major.

Coleman, who previously served as a drum major during the 2025–2026 academic year, will lead the Marching Rams’ three-drum-major team during the 2026–2027 academic year. Her appointment marks a significant milestone in the band’s history and builds on a legacy of women who have served as drum majors at Albany State.

Previous female drum majors include Chasity Johnson (2003–2004), the late Ashley Pickney (2006–2007), Fayola Braithwaite (2011–2012) and Desiree Wesson (2016–2017). Coleman now becomes the first woman to serve as the ensemble’s head drum major, taking on the lead role among the band’s three drum majors.

“Being the first female head drum major at Albany State University is an incredible honor, but more than anything, I see it as a responsibility and a blessing from God,” Coleman said. “I

understand that I am standing in a position that represents more than just me. I am representing every woman and every young girl who has ever dreamed of stepping into a leadership position.

“I hope my leadership shows that with faith, hard work, preparation and perseverance, there is no limit to what God can do through you.”

As head drum major, Coleman will serve as the student leader among the band’s drum majors, helping provide direction, coordination and leadership for the ensemble during rehearsals, performances and appearances. While all three drum majors serve as leaders and conductors of the band, the head drum major assumes the primary leadership role and works closely with the director of bands and other student leaders to help guide the ensemble.

Coleman’s appointment comes at a pivotal time for the Albany State band, which continues to expand its presence on the national stage. This fall, the Marching Rams will make history as the first HBCU band to perform in America’s Thanksgiving Parade

See **COLEMAN**, 2A



Special Photo: ASU

Edreka Coleman, a senior music education major from Macon, will become Albany State University’s first female head drum major this fall.

Federal government completes distribution of first-year grants to bolster Georgia’s rural hospitals

By Ty Tagami
Capital Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The federal government has announced the delivery of the rest of a \$218 million award to Georgia to support rural hospitals.

The \$93.3 million in funding completes the first fiscal year of a five-year, \$50 billion national funding program approved by Congress last year.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at the money will pay for technical innovations at rural hospitals, such as surgical robotics and telehealth, plus medical training and recruitment, maternal and behavioral services, and newborn screening.

It will also help 87 rural Georgia hospitals

prepare to provide what the federal agency is calling “value-based” care.

Dr. Dean Burke, the physician who leads Georgia’s Department of Community Health, said in a statement Thursday that the program will “have decades of positive impact” on rural healthcare.

Democrats had wanted to preserve funding for Medicaid, which the bill slashed by hundreds of billions of dollars. Democrats have blasted the GOP for their approach to healthcare, blaming it for rural hospital funding shortfalls.

For instance, the state Democratic Party asserted in late-July that Rep. Mike Collins’ vote to pass “massive Medicaid cuts”

See **HOSPITALS**, 2A



File Photo

Federal funding allocated in Georgia will be used to try and help rural hospitals stay open.

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Phoebe Ortho helped a restaurateur get back in the kitchen.



Phoebe

PhoebeOrtho.com

GSW’s Information Technology program earns prestigious ABET accreditation

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

AMERICUS — Georgia Southwestern State University’s Bachelor of Science in Information Technology has been accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET, a nonprofit, ISO 9001-certified quality assurance organization. Through the accreditation of academic programs, recognition of credentials and assessment of student learning, ABET supports excellence in education worldwide.

ABET accreditation assures that programs meet standards to produce graduates ready to enter critical technical fields that are leading the way in innovation and emerging technologies and anticipating the welfare and safety needs of

the public.

“We are honored to receive accreditation for GSW’s Information Technology program,” Gaynor Cheokas, dean of the College of Business and Computing, said. “The Department of Computing has dedicated faculty who are committed to the standards of continuous improvement. This endorsement aligns perfectly with our mission of producing well-educated and skilled graduates who are prepared to meet the demands of the ever-changing field of technology.

“An IT degree opens doors to countless career opportunities, and ABET accreditation reinforces the quality and workforce readiness of our students. I am proud of our program and proud to be associated with ABET.”

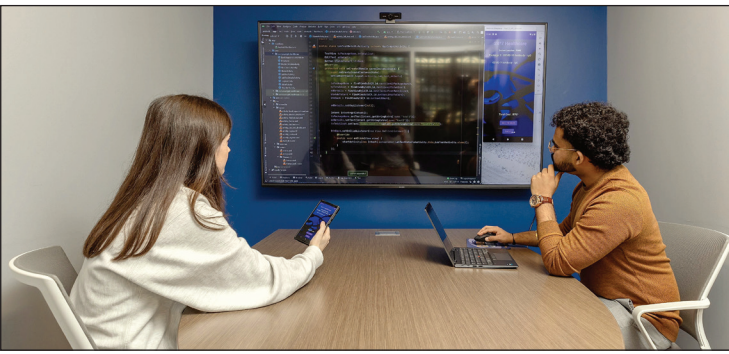
Sought worldwide, ABET’s voluntary peer-review process is highly respected because it adds critical value to academic programs in the technical disciplines, where quality, precision and safety are of the utmost importance.

Developed by technical professionals from ABET’s member societies, ABET criteria focus on what students experience and learn. ABET accreditation reviews look at program curricula, faculty, facilities and institutional support and are conducted by teams of highly skilled professionals from industry, academia and government, with expertise in the ABET disciplines.

ABET currently accredits 4,773 programs at 930 colleges and universities in 41 countries and areas as of Oct. 1, 2024.

More information about ABET, its member societies and the accreditation criteria used to evaluate programs can be found at www.abet.org.

For more information about GSW’s Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, visit gsu.edu/IT.



Special Photo: GSW
Georgia Southwestern State University’s Bachelor of Science in Information Technology has been accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET.

From 1A NOTICES

consumer price index (CPI) for the year.

The second thing to remember is that all property owners can appeal the new valuations on properties. Higher property values mean that the millage rate, which determines the actual tax bill, can be lowered.

Taxpayers can make an appeal online by visiting <https://qpublic.schneidercorp.com/Application.aspx?App=DoUghertyCountyGA&Layer=Parcels&PageType=Search>.

They also can call (229) 431-3130 to request a form by mail or by visiting the tax office at 240 Pine Ave. Appeals must be made within 45 days of the date printed on the notice, not the date of receipt of the notice.

“We’re getting a ton of calls,” Larry Thomas, the vice chairman of the Dougherty County Board of Assessors, said. “That was expected. It’s the shock value, just realizing their property has increased in value like it has.”

There have been several partial revaluations in recent years, but the 2 1/2-year effort that culminated this year is the first comprehensive review of each of the roughly 37,000 properties in the county since 2007, he said. The COVID-19 pandemic and inflation that came afterward, for example, are just now being reflected in the property values.

“Our job as assessors is to ensure the property is valued at fair market value,” he said. “That is all we do. We do not set the millage rate.”

In some instances rates may be above the fair market value, and determining that is the purpose of the appeals process, Thomas said. Since the notices started going out, he has fielded a number of calls, and individuals usually calm down once they hear how the valuation process works.

Once the appeals process is completed, the county will set the millage rate based on the amount of the budget, Gray said.

“We can’t do it (set millage) until later in the year,” he said. “We can’t do it until all the appeals are completed,

and you can imagine all the appeals that are coming in.

“There’s a lot of outrage. I hear their frustration. I’m a taxpayer, and I certainly don’t want to pay more in property taxes than the services I’m receiving. Last night, I felt compelled to put a statement out (on Facebook) encouraging everybody who feels they need to appeal to certainly do it.”

The county’s budget for Fiscal Year 2027, which began on July 1, is \$104.13 million, an increase of 2% from the previous year, and that is the amount taxpayers should be billed for, Gray said.

“We’ll set our millage rate, which in my opinion should not exceed the amount of our budget increase,” he said. “This should not be seen as a windfall.”

The increase in the budget is linked to rising costs associated with employee salaries and equipment, Commissioner Victor Edwards said.

“We have 650 employees,” he said. “You have to take it into consideration (that) employees want raises. The cost of things the county has to buy – ambulances, fire protection – people have to consider how you provide these things. The cost of providing services is getting more expensive.

“I think, for me, the thing is if you call the ambulance, they show up at your house. When you call the police, they show up at your house. Services sometimes are not important until you need them.”

Edwards said that commissioners are getting the same kind of results, as he has a property whose value increased from \$126,000 last year to \$218,000 this year.

That does not mean that taxpayers’ bills will increase by an equal amount.

“We also have the opportunity to roll back some taxes,” he said.

From 1A HOSPITALS

had “solidified” St. Mary’s Sacred Heart Hospital’s decision to close its labor and delivery unit.

The Democratic Party has portrayed healthcare in Georgia as a crisis caused by Republicans and their refusal to expand Medicaid in the state.

A recent survey conducted by the University of Georgia for the Georgia Health Initiative found rising healthcare costs to be a potent political issue, especially among Democrats.

Concerns about rising costs cross party lines, according to the UGA survey, with 54% of Democrats and 38% of Republicans saying they were very or somewhat worried

about being able to afford their monthly premiums over the next year.

The federal Rural Health Transformation Program that emerged from federal legislation is sending \$10 billion a year to the states over five years in the form of grants. Georgia’s application last year netted the seventh-largest sum nationally.

The state Department of Community Health said less than 10% of the first year of funding will go toward administrative costs.

The state budgeted \$15.6 million to help seven hospitals prepare for the new federal efficiency and accountability program, along with 80 other hospitals that were awarded money previously.

Another \$6.2 million will support a “continuum of care,” such as medical transportation, school-based health ser-

vices and newborn screening.

Eight hospitals will split a portion of nearly \$10.4 million for a dozen “telepods” for telehealth and for pediatric “telepsychiatry” training. The money also will cover other initiatives to improve healthcare access.

The second-largest amount, \$23.6 million, will go toward medical workforce development efforts, including training and nurse faculty recruitment at Georgia’s public universities.

More than a third of the funding, \$37.5 million, is for technological innovations, such as surgical robots at 13 hospitals that also will get funding for surgeon recruitment and retention. The funding also will cover a grant to Equifax for “eligibility system enhancements” to expedite “eligibility determinations.”

From 1A DCSS

The distinction is important for property owners concerned about the reassessment notices they have received.

The school system does not determine individual property values. Those assessments are established through Dougherty County’s property tax assessment process. The school board instead determines the millage rate applied to taxable property values to generate revenue for the school district.

That means a significant reduction in the school millage rate could offset at least some of the impact of higher property assessments, but it does not necessarily mean every homeowner’s school tax bill will decline.

A property owner whose taxable value increased substantially could still pay more in school taxes even with a lower millage rate, depend-

ing on the size of the reassessment, applicable exemptions and the rate ultimately adopted by the board.

Dyer acknowledged the concern surrounding the reassessments, telling board members some property values appeared to have increased significantly. He said some residents have questioned whether the new assessed values reflect what their properties could actually sell for.

“We can anticipate a ninth consecutive year, and it’ll probably be the largest rollback — the largest reduction — that we’ve seen,” Dyer said.

Exactly how far the board can reduce the rate will depend on more than the amount of local property tax revenue generated. Dyer said the district must also protect its eligibility for state equalization funding, which provides additional state dollars to school systems with comparatively lower property wealth.

Georgia requires districts receiving equalization funding to maintain a certain level

of local tax effort. Dropping the millage rate too far could potentially cost the district state funding.

“We have to be very careful in our calculation to ensure that we don’t change our millage rate to the fact that we go underwater,” Dyer said.

District finance officials are expected to analyze the preliminary digest once it becomes available before presenting a specific millage recommendation to the board.

The discussion came during a meeting in which auditors also presented a favorable assessment of the district’s finances.

Hope Pendergrass of the Mauldin & Jenkins CPA firm told board members DCSS received an unmodified opinion on its Fiscal Year 2025 financial statements, the highest level of assurance an independent auditor can provide.

“That’s what you want,” Pendergrass said. “That is an unmodified opinion. That’s the best that you can get.”

The district reported approximately \$145 million in total net position as of June 30, 2025, along with a governmental fund balance of about \$52.8 million.

DCSS ended the fiscal year with approximately \$53 million in cash and reserves equal to roughly 12 weeks of operating expenses, according to the audit presentation.

Pendergrass said the district also finished approximately \$8.5 million better than originally anticipated when comparing its budget with actual financial results.

The reserve balance prompted discussion about how much money a school district should keep available rather than spend immediately.

Pendergrass pointed to rapidly increasing costs that local school systems have limited ability to control. Dyer said maintaining healthy reserves allows the district to absorb unexpected expenses, funding changes or economic pressures without immediately turning to substantial budget cuts.

“We are in a very strong position,” Dyer said. “Not all school systems can say that. Not all governments can say that.”

For taxpayers, the next major number will be the district’s proposed millage rate.

Until DCSS receives the preliminary tax digest and calculates that rate, the precise impact of the countywide reassessment on individual school tax bills will remain unclear.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

UPCOMING ACCREDITATION REVIEW VISIT

BY THE ACEN

The Albany Technical College Practical Nursing Program wishes to announce that it will host a site visit for continuing accreditation of its Practical Nursing program by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

You are invited to meet with the site visit team and share your comments about the program in person at a meeting scheduled at 2:15 pm on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, in room 174 of the Phoebe Living & Learning Community, located at: 1000 N. Jefferson Street, Albany, GA 31701

Written comments are also welcome and should be submitted to the ACEN via email at public.comments@acenursing.org or to the ACEN office:

Attn: Accreditation Services Accreditation Commission for Education Nursing 3390 Peachtree Rd NE, Suite 1400 Atlanta GA, 30326

You must identify the full name of the program in your comments. All written comments should be received by the ACEN by September 29, 2026.



From 1A COLEMAN

in Detroit as part of the parade’s 100th anniversary celebration. The band also is scheduled to perform in the 2026 Legends at Legion Field HBCU Battle of the Bands, adding to a growing list of high-profile performances.

Recognized as one of the nation’s premier HBCU marching ensembles, the band is known for its dynamic performances, precision and electrifying sound. Under the leadership of Director of Bands William Brooks, the program has experienced significant growth and increased national recognition since 2023, including appearances at the National Battle of the Bands and recognition as an ESPN “Band to Watch.”

During Brooks’ tenure, the band has grown from 26 musicians to 160 members, reaching a major enrollment goal in just four years.

“Edreka represents the leadership, discipline and excellence that we want to see throughout the Marching Rams Show Band,” Brooks said. “We are extremely proud of her and the example she is setting for our students

and for young women who aspire to lead. Her appointment comes at an exciting time for this program.

“We have grown tremendously, and our national opportunities continue to grow with us. As we prepare for historic performances this fall, having strong student leaders like Edreka at the forefront is an important part of our continued success.”

Coleman’s journey as a drum major reflects both her individual accomplishments and the evolving leadership legacy of the Marching Rams Show Band. As a music education major, she is preparing for a career in music and education while gaining first-hand experience in leadership, performance and ensemble management.

Her appointment also underscores the continued opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through participation in Albany State’s renowned band program.

As the Marching Rams prepare for a landmark 2026–2027 performance season, ASU officials said, Coleman will lead alongside her fellow drum majors as the band takes its signature sound and Golden Ram pride to audiences across the country.

Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Next Monday is the first decent day for taking action or initiating anything including a meetup or conversation. Work on projects but re-check everything, the poorest Universal stars drive the most errors.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your warmth brings magic to many situations though poor Universal stars could stall out some overdue applause or recognition. Be patient. Creative inspo could be lacking for the next week.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): An old family situation could weigh on you, but you could make progress within yourself. It's definitely not the time to try to deal with a sensitive matter with others now. Focus on small improvements at home.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): An alliance could be beneficial despite underwater stars but don't make any kind of commitment for at least a week. Develop an idea and refine it but wait for better stars before you introduce it to the world.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): A career connection could be important but try not to schedule a first in-person meeting until next week. First meetings create Ruling Charts and today would not create a chart that could support anything good.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): While something new could appear fresh and on point, or someone new could seem like a kindred soul, first impressions could be distorted by today's swamp-level Universal stars. Take your time to assess anything or anyone new.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): No matter how attractive the offer, don't sign up or sign on or sign anything at all. New beginnings when stars are this low usually lead to an epic fail. Invest in yourself, that's the springboard for everything else.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A partner could be bulwark against a difficult week if your relationship is strong

and supportive. Quality friendships can offer much the same benefit. Be grateful for the good relationships in your life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): While Universal stars might not be helping, someone close might pitch in to help you get things done now. Do what's expected and don't rock any boats in the workplace for the next week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): If your creativity is flowing, do what you can with it. Stars are poor for outer-world actions, but some private artistry could still emerge. Skepticism could be appropriate for a week or so.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): There could be some nice shared understanding in your living space despite today's very poor day score — if you live alone, things could still feel more peaceful than usual today.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): While things could feel right for an important conversation, it could derail quickly. Table anything that stops being constructive and starts digging a deeper hole. Next week brings better odds.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: The remaining months of 2026 should be easier to navigate for you than the preceding ones. The best gift for your birthday month could be enhanced use of your mind, expect to see improvements in both cognition and discernment. October brings highest-level insights which could change the game for you, followed by an opportunity for more cash flow, don't let self-sabotage push this away—it's important that you believe in what you are doing. A nice surprise could land fairly early in November, and this could be the precursor to even more blessings landing later in the month. A lot that you've been waiting for, including more money, could flow in at this time. December might ask you to accept the non-conventional before it brings its own big gifts of resolution, healing, and reaching your personal potential.



- 1897** - The Boston subway opens as the first underground rapid transit system in North America
- 1923** - A 7.9 earthquake devastates Tokyo and Yokohama, killing over 142,000
- 1939** - Switzerland proclaims neutrality in World War II
- 1939** - Nazi Germany and Slovakia invade Poland and begin the European phase of World War II
- 1951** - The United States, Australia, and New Zealand sign the ANZUS Treaty, a mutual defense pact
- 1952** - The Old Man and the Sea, a novel by Ernest Hemingway is first published and would go on to win a Pulitzer Prize

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- Building and Code Staff Appreciation Day
- Chicken Boy Day
- Emma M. Nutt Day
- Ginger Cat Appreciation Day
- National Cherry Popover Day
- National No Rhyme Nor Reason Day
- National Tofu Day
- Pink Cadillac Day
- Save Japan's Dolphins Day
- Toy Tips Executive Toy Test Day
- Waffle Day
- World Letter Writing Day

QUOTE OF THE DAY

There is no such thing as "fun for the whole family."

Jerry Seinfeld,
comedian (1954-)

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

Oh, my goodness! I loved the story about Cruising Slappery. That took me back to the '70s when my friends and I used to put on our Cruising Clothes just about every Friday and Saturday night. What a fun read.

Gloves off: Bullsh-- ad valorem property tax valuations are ludicrous and unacceptable, an affront to overtaxed citizens by an irresponsible governmental leadership in the face of the beginning and sure catastrophic economic crisis unlike any seen since the great depression. When our own government is no longer representative, it becomes our taxpayers' only recourse: OPEN REVOLT in public and legal protest.

Mr. Bookman and Mr. Nader are right: We will be surprised after the November election.

I just got my new home tax assessment from the Dougherty County Board of Tax Assessors. It seems my home's value went up 89% since last year. The board will scream "homes have not been reassessed in many years," but no real estate in Albany has gone up 89% in value in 40 years. Maybe that board of assessors' member that had to go to jail for fraud had something to do with this new assessment. Or maybe preacher Lorenzo and his little followers are behind all of this. Get ready for a revolt

More than 90 cities across the U.S. have begun removing Flock cameras from their communities after allegations of abuse. Should Leesburg and Albany do the same?

Why is it that our politicians all seem to be glorified welfare recipients? No jobs, just living off the government.

Good article in Tuesday Herald about Dr. William Anderson. Me being an older white man, I would have gone to Dr. Anderson in a heartbeat if I needed a surgeon. When he came along, to become a surgeon there was no affirmative action, racial quotas, nor favoritism given because of race. No points given on certification exams; no lowering of any of the standards because he was a black man. Albany also had a surgeon that everyone trusted because of the same standards, Dr. Carl Gordon.

Every time I ride down Slappery now, I think about those days when we used to Cruise on the weekends. It was a simple pleasure, but boy did we have fun.

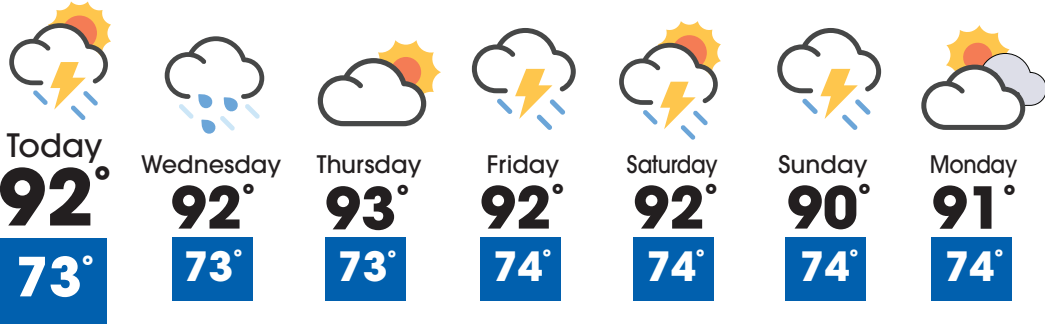
Why is the Herald posting columns by this guy Knapp? Libertarians are out of touch with reality.

You misinformed squawkers are picking on a man who doesn't deserve it. Clinton Johnson didn't do anything wrong. Yes, he charged liquor and a \$500-plus hotel room to a county credit card -- which, technically, is against the law. But the commission chairman said it was OK. If he has our illustrious chairman's blessing, Mr. Johnson did nothing wrong.

Prepare for a run on toilet paper. The paper used to make it comes from Canada. And, of course, the idiot in the White House has used his tariffs to "punish" Canada for not doing what he wanted and he's throwing another of his childish tantrums. You people who support this clown are as pathetic as he is.

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/online 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

Just for amusement

By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

Cy the Cynic is way overweight. He got on a drugstore scale, and a voice said, "One at a time, please."

NORTH ♠ 10 9 4 ♥ 6 4 2 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ 8 7 4 3			
WEST ♠ 6 2 ♥ Q J 10 8 ♦ J 10 6 2 ♣ K J 5		EAST ♠ A 5 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ K 9 5 4 ♣ Q 9 6 2	
SOUTH ♠ K Q J 8 7 3 ♥ A K 5 ♦ Q 8 ♣ A 10			
South 2 ♣ (!) 2 ♠ 3 ♠	West Pass Pass	North 2 ♡ 2 NT 4 ♠	East Pass Pass All Pass
Opening lead - ♥ Q			
©2026 Tribune Content Agency, LLC			



Frank Stewart

"Take better care of yourself," I pleaded. "Think of your body as a temple."

"It's more an amusement-park funhouse," the Cynic said.

Cy was unamused after today's deal. He was North. At four spades South took the king of hearts and led the king of trumps, winning. East won the next trump and led another heart, and South lost a trick in each suit.

"We are not amused," Cy growled.

ENTRIES

South needs two diamond tricks, so two dummy entries to lead toward his queen and to take the ace. At Trick Two South leads the eight of trumps to dummy's nine.

If East ducks, dummy leads a

diamond. East takes the king and leads a second heart. South wins, unblocks his queen of diamonds and leads the seven of trumps: six, ten, ace. The defense cashes a heart, but South wins a club shift, leads his three of trumps to the four and pitches his club loser on the ace of diamonds.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: S A 5 H 9 7 3 D K 9 5 4 C Q 9 6 2. Your partner opens one diamond, you raise to two diamonds and he next bids two hearts. What do you say?

ANSWER: Partner thinks you may have a game; he is looking for the best spot. Since you have a maximum hand for your single raise, you must not only cooperate but make sure game is reached. Bid three clubs. If partner bids 3NT next, fine; if he returns to three diamonds, bid three spades or 3NT.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

Advice Columnist

Widower finds love with married friend

By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: My wife of 44 years passed away after a 6-year battle with cancer. During that time, she said that with all the billions of people on the planet, I could surely find someone else to love. And that I had her permission.

After an appropriate time of mourning, I went on a dating site and met a lot of lovely women. One in particular has worked out splendidly for the past 15 years. We are very happy.

Now, the problem. About six or so years ago I met another woman. She lights up my life, but she is married.

One afternoon I told her that I loved her, but would not advance it in any way, not wanting to wreck her marriage. I love my significant other, but I can't stop thinking about this new love, day and night. My partner and I see her and her husband socially, but I never let on.

Am I nuts to think I could love two women equally?

— Lots of Love

Dear Love: Sure, it's possible to hold love for both of these women, but it's not clear from your letter whether the other woman is interested in pursuing anything. It's also not clear if you plan to pursue something, or if this is a question about emotional capacity. Even if you and she do want to pursue something, you owe it to your significant other to first have a conversation about what's happening and what the shared agreements of your relationship are.

You aren't trapped, but you need to communicate clearly with the other people involved and be as sure as possible about

what you really want to happen.

It may be that this other woman doesn't need to be a romantic partner at all, but rather a close friend. Defining for yourself and with your partner what your wants are and what your boundaries are is going to help you a lot here.

Dear Eric: My wife and I are having a very hard time processing our feelings about two uncles and two aunts left out of our 41-year-old's recent wedding celebration.

These folks include my sister, two brothers and a beloved SIL, all who've been a loving part of our 41-year-old's life since birth. They live in our city where the reception was held.

Wedding festivities took place over four days and began in a city hundreds of miles away, to which my wife and I traveled. Many family members of the fiancé, including a number from halfway around the world, attended. We were thoroughly welcomed and are so happy to have gotten acquainted with such fine folks. Many of them then traveled to our city for the civil ceremony and reception. Also at the reception were a number of the fiancé's friends who came from over a thousand miles away.

Seeing all the fiancé's extended family in our city for the civil ceremony and reception and friends at the reception put a very poignant sting in our hearts for the four local family members who weren't included.

We just don't understand the exclusion of these four local, loving family members whom our 41-year-old knows well and loves, while we witnessed the importance of "honoring and including family members" over several days and two states of



Eric Thomas

ceremonies and celebrations. It was sad for us to shed tears after getting home from the reception.

How do we navigate these feelings, Eric? We don't want an "explanation" for the exclusion from the couple.

— Hurting Parents

Dear Parents: While an explanation may not assuage the hurt and confusion you're feeling, a conversation really is going to be the best path forward. Talking with your child about the experience that you had and the way you felt will open the door for your child to share his or her perspective and perhaps give context that you don't have right now.

And yet, it still may not solve the problem. That's the job of acceptance. Acceptance isn't condoning; it isn't explaining away. It isn't always understanding. But as you and your wife navigate these feelings, it will be healthy for you to acknowledge to yourselves, and perhaps to your child, that you wish things had gone a different way.

Acceptance will also start to clear the path for you to release this. You didn't have control over the wedding invitations; your 41-year-old and the new in-law made the decisions that they deemed best at the time. Their intentions may have been benign, or even good somehow. Whatever they were, they were their intentions, over which you didn't have a say.

Talking about it will help this from curdling into resentment; accepting that your child made a decision with which you didn't agree will help you leave the hurt in the past.

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.

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Carlton Fletcher

EDITOR

—Georgia Trust for—

LOCAL NEWS

TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

1 Corinthians 2:9

COLUMNIST ■ MICHAEL FERGUSON II

School is in session, Part I: The numbers matter

Editor's Note: First in a three-part series.

The educational system was, in many ways, my introduction to many of you in the media space. Time has passed, circumstances have changed, and another assessment is in order.

My earlier writings challenged the Dougherty County School System because I believed our children deserved better and, just as importantly, because I believed this community was capable of delivering better. That belief has not changed.

Accountability should never be confused with opposition. Sometimes expecting more from an institution is one of the strongest expressions of belief in what that institution can become.

This is not a fluff piece. I have researched the data myself, and my intention is to be thorough in presenting the facts to you, the reader. There will be numbers, comparisons, context and conclusions drawn from the record. Some of it will be encouraging. Some of it may be uncomfortable. All of it deserves to be examined.

If you are not up for an article with some meat on the bone, you may want to rejoin me after this three-part series. For everyone else, school is in session.

This series is intended to provide an accurate snapshot of where we are today,

recognize the progress that has been made and offer a path forward toward making the Dougherty County School System a model for others across Georgia and, ultimately, the nation. That may sound ambitious, but our expectations for our children should be ambitious.

Numbers have a way of bringing clarity. In education, they show us where students are succeeding, where progress is taking place and where continued investment and attention can produce even greater results.

Georgia measures school performance through the College and Career Ready Performance Index, commonly known as CCRPI. The accountability system considers content mastery, progress, closing gaps, readiness and, at the high-school level, graduation rate. Content mastery reflects performance in core academic subjects including English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Dougherty County still has room to grow in several academic areas, but the broader picture also reflects meaningful progress and important strengths that deserve recognition. Start with graduation. For the Class of 2025, the Dougherty County School System posted a four-year graduation rate of 89.6%, compared with Georgia's statewide rate of 87.2%. That marked the fifth consecutive year DCSS exceeded the state graduation rate.

Westover Comprehensive High School posted a graduation rate of 95.1%, while Monroe Comprehensive High School reached 88.7%, and Dougherty Comprehensive High School reached 88.5%. Westover has exceeded the state graduation rate for 10 consecutive years, Dougherty High has done so for three straight years, and Monroe for two. Those are accomplishments worth recognizing.

The Class of 2025 also left DCSS with achievements extending beyond the traditional high-school diploma. Seven students earned associate's degrees; another 135 earned technical college Certificates of Credit; more than 400 earned industry recognized credentials, and 664 completed a Georgia Career, Technical and Agricultural Education pathway.

Those numbers tell a larger story. DCSS is not simply moving students across a graduation stage. The

system is helping many young people leave high school with credentials, technical preparation and identifiable pathways into college, employment and additional training. In a community where workforce development and economic opportunity remain important priorities, that educational value should not be overlooked.

The 2025 Georgia Milestones results also showed encouraging movement. Student proficiency either improved or remained stable in 13 combined end-of-grade and end-of-course assessment areas. Third-grade English language arts tied a previous district high; sixth-grade mathematics reached an all-time district high; fifth-grade mathematics exceeded its 2019 level, and fifth- and eighth-grade science also produced encouraging results.

One of the more important aspects of the current picture is that progress is not confined to a single school or grade level. Across the district, we are seeing examples of academic growth, strong graduation outcomes and schools beginning to change their trajectories.

Robert A. Cross Middle Magnet has long demonstrated strong academic performance, while Lake Park and other campuses have shown what can be accomplished within the Dougherty County School System. Those successes should not simply be admired from a distance. They should be studied, adapted and, where appropriate, replicated. A successful school system learns from what works within its own walls.

The realities facing many Dougherty County students outside the classroom must also be part of a serious assessment. Poverty, student mobility, disability and family instability do not disappear when a child enters a school building. Those circumstances become part of the educational environment and often affect the amount and type of support necessary for that student to succeed.

Georgia's own "Beating the Odds" methodology recognizes that reality by considering demographic factors when evaluating school performance. In the 2025 analysis cited by DCSS leadership, 17 of 20 rated Dougherty County schools met or exceeded statistically expected performance after those factors were considered. Eleven exceeded expectations, and six performed within the expected range, representing roughly 85% of rated DCSS schools.

That is significant because it provides another lens through which to evaluate the district. It does not suggest that the work is finished or that academic expectations should be lowered. It tells us that DCSS has a foundation upon which something greater can be built.

Dougherty County is graduating students above the state average. Many schools are meeting or exceeding expected performance when demographic realities are taken into account. Several academic areas are improving, individual campuses are demonstrating strong results, and some schools that historically struggled are beginning to change their trajectory.

Progress should never cause us to lower expectations. It should encourage us to raise them. Success gives us something to build upon; measurable results give us something to replicate, and accountability provides the discipline necessary to keep moving forward.

School is in session, Part II is about money; not simply how much we spend, but what happens when we place resources where our children need them most.



FERGUSON

COLUMNIST ■ YONATAN HAMBOURGER

The garment is not the person

One morning, after years in prison, Joseph was summoned before Pharaoh. Before he entered the palace, the Torah pauses to tell us something that seems almost unnecessary:

"So Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they rushed him from the dungeon. He shaved and changed his clothes, and came to Pharaoh." (Genesis 41:14)

Of course he did.

Anyone suddenly brought from a prison cell to appear before a king would prepare himself accordingly. Joseph could hardly enter Pharaoh's court wearing the garments of a prisoner.

So why does Scripture bother to tell us? Jewish tradition teaches that the Torah wastes no words. Even an apparently ordinary detail may reveal something essential. Joseph changed his clothes because his circumstances had changed. What he did not change was himself.

By the end of that day, Joseph would no longer be an anonymous prisoner. After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and proposing a plan to save Egypt from famine, he would be elevated to the highest levels of power. Pharaoh would place his own ring on Joseph's hand, dress him in fine linen, hang a gold chain around his neck, and appoint him second in command over Egypt.

Almost everything about Joseph's outward life would change. His position changed. His responsibilities changed. His language, surroundings, and public appearance changed. Yet Joseph did not confuse the garments of power with the person wearing them. He put on Egyptian clothing without putting on an Egyptian soul.

That may be one of the hardest forms of integrity. It is relatively easy to remain ourselves when life remains familiar. The greater test comes when circumstances change and a new role begins making new demands upon us.

A promotion brings influence, a public office brings recognition, and success opens doors that were once closed. Even honorable roles can slowly become identities. The title ceases to describe what a person does and begins to determine who the person believes he is.

The same danger appears in reverse when the role disappears. Consider a man who has spent 40 years running a business. He opened the doors each morning, knew every employee by name, answered every important question, and became known throughout the community by the company he built.

Then retirement comes. The keys are handed to someone else. The telephone rings less often. Decisions that once required his judgment are now made without him. For the first few weeks, the freedom may feel welcome. Before long, however, a more unsettling question can emerge: Who am I now that I am no longer the man in charge?

The problem is not retirement itself. The problem is having mistaken a role for an identity. A person who believes, "I managed a business," can enter retirement with gratitude and purpose. A person who believes, "I am the business," may experience its loss as the loss of himself.

Joseph offers a healthier way to understand the positions we occupy throughout life. Roles are garments. Some fit for decades, others for only a season, and each should be worn responsibly. But

no garment is the person beneath it.

Joseph's life made that truth visible. He wore the colorful coat his father gave him. He wore the rough clothing of a slave. He wore the garments of a prisoner. Later, he wore the royal robes of Egypt. The wardrobe changed; the man did not.

But Joseph's story teaches something more demanding than simply remaining unchanged. Integrity does not mean resisting every adaptation. Joseph did not refuse to shave because shaving was Egyptian. He did not insist on entering Pharaoh's court dressed like a prisoner to prove that prison had not broken him. He learned the language of government, understood the customs of the palace, mastered the administration of a vast economy, and accepted the responsibilities of high office. He adapted because the new role required it.

Yet when Pharaoh told Joseph that he had heard of his ability to interpret dreams, Joseph answered, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (Genesis 41:16) That sentence reveals the boundary Joseph would not cross. He would change his clothing and his manner of presentation. He would learn Egypt's systems and speak in terms its ruler could understand.

But he would not pretend that his gift originated with him. He would not trade humility for influence. He would not surrender truth in exchange for acceptance.

Some people treat every adjustment as compromise. They refuse to learn new customs, hear unfamiliar viewpoints, or alter old habits because they fear that any outward change threatens their identity. Others travel in the opposite direction. They adapt so completely to every environment that nothing stable remains. Their convictions shift with the room, their speech with the audience, and their standards with the opportunity.

Joseph followed neither path. He was flexible without becoming hollow. He respected Pharaoh without worshiping power. He entered Egyptian society fully enough to save it, but never allowed Egyptian society to determine his deepest loyalties.

That balance requires discernment. A new workplace may require learning a different style of communication, but it should not require dishonesty.

The hardest question is seldom whether we should change. The harder question is what kind of change is being asked of us. Is this merely a garment, an outward form suited to a new responsibility? Or is it something closer to the soul?

Joseph knew the difference. He could exchange prison clothing for royal linen without confusion because neither garment told him who he was. His identity came from a place deeper than circumstance, approval, failure or rank.

Wisdom lies in knowing what may change and what must not. Clothing may change. Responsibilities may change. Customs, schedules, methods and outward forms may change. But honesty is not a garment. Compassion is not a garment. Humility, loyalty, reverence, and moral courage are not garments.

Those belong to the person underneath.



HAMBOURGER

COLUMNIST ■ WAYNE FOWLER

Finding solutions through self-examination

I've spotted a common theme among the various cultural voices demanding our attention. It seems everybody has their own take on what's wrong with the world today and what the solution is.

Here is a recap of some of those voices. The problem is capitalism, which concentrates wealth and leaves people behind. The solution is socialism. The problem is racism. The solutions are reparations and denouncement of privilege. The problem is politics. The solution is to vote for the other party. The problem is injustice. The solution is to supplant equal opportunity with equal outcome. The problem is oppression.

The solutions are reimagining laws, law enforcement, social welfare, healthcare, corporations, and immigration.

The common theme is the call for other people to change their minds. To denounce others is far easier than the bitter task of self-examination. With a beam in your eye, you'll never see the problem or the solution.

G.K. Chesterton agrees. He once responded to The Times in his typical paradoxical wit. "Dear Sirs," he wrote, "Regarding your article 'What's Wrong with the World?' -- I am."

The Biblical word for mind change is "repent." In Jesus' day, a tower fell and killed 18 people. To those who presumed the victims were the problem and deserved their fate, Jesus said, "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:5)

Jesus helped them see the pressing issue: Repentance is personal. It starts with me.

When it does, it means I accept responsibility for my misdeeds and do my part to restore what is broken, rather than goading others. It means the greatest problem is neither economics, politics, nor social issues, but my personal moral responsibility before God.

For the believer, it means participating in the divine enterprise, "that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations." (Luke 24:47)

Thank God for the gift of forgiveness accessed by faith. The good news is that the repentant life is possible. By God's grace solving the world's problems can happen, starting with me.



FOWLER

What to watch

TUESDAY

September 1, 2026

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

Kitchen Nightmares: ‘Golden Girls’

FOX, 8 p.m.

In tonight’s new episode, two best friends are put to the test after they become owners of Golden Girls Restaurant, a struggling diner in a small town. Gordon Ramsay steps in to help them discover a recipe for success.

9/11: United We Stand — 25 Years Later

ABC, 9 p.m.

Led by *Good Morning America* coanchor Michael Strahan, this special explores how sports, music, Broadway, the media and comedy helped a grieving nation begin to heal and rediscover joy in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Beat Shazam

FOX, 9 p.m.

The tables are turned as teachers take the test in the new episode “Who’s Getting Schooled?” Jamie Foxx hosts with cohost and deejay Corinne Foxx.

Hard Knocks: Training Camp With the Seattle Seahawks

HBO, 9 p.m. ■ Season Finale

The Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks wrap up their training camp in Renton, Washington, and gear up for the regular-season kickoff as this edition of the HBO and NFL Films documentary series concludes.

From the editors of  TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



TLC

1,000-Lb. Sisters

TLC, 9 p.m. ■ Season Premiere

Tammy and Amy Slaton are back and ready to embrace new opportunities, personal growth and major life changes. As Tammy and her partner Andrea navigate relationship growing pains, questions about independence and winning over Andrea’s friends, Tammy is also determined to keep pushing herself outside her comfort zone,

taking on memorable new experiences, including horseback riding and other exciting firsts. Amy is focused on creating the life she’s always dreamed of. As she continues to lose weight, pursues skin-removal surgery and learns how to drive, she discovers a passion for songwriting, transforming her poetry into original songs with the help of AI-generated songwriting and vocals while dreaming of one day performing them in her own voice.

CATCH A CLASSIC

TCM Spotlight: Swashbucklers

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

TCM celebrates the golden age of Hollywood swashbucklers with a lineup of high-seas action, secret identities and daring heroics, anchored by tonight’s first feature, 1938’s **The Adventures of Robin Hood** (pictured), filmed in the early days of Technicolor. Errol Flynn gives the definitive performance of Robin Hood in this film that’s considered the gold standard of the swashbuckler genre, with dazzling colors, witty banter, legendary sword fighting and an Oscar-winning score. Next up is **Captain Blood** (1935), in which an Irish doctor (Flynn) turns pirate, leads a rebellion and fights to win back his freedom alongside his love interest Arabella (Olivia de Havilland). The film, which was nominated for five Oscars, made Flynn and



WARNER BROS. / PHOTOFEST

de Havilland superstars and set the tone for classic Hollywood action, adventure and romance. Also featured are **The Scarlet Pimpernel** (1934), in which an English nobleman (Leslie Howard) secretly risks his life to rescue French aristocrats from execution during the French Revolution; **The Prisoner of Zenda** (1937), another tale of hidden identity featuring a legendary sword duel between Ronald Colman and Douglas Fairbanks Jr.; **The Prince and the Pauper** (1937); **The Three Musketeers** (1935); and **Treasure Island** (1934).

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



RICHARD CARTWRIGHT

The Wedding Singer (1998, Romance-comedy) Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore **Paramount, 6 p.m.**

Shooter (2007, Action) Mark Wahlberg, Michael Peña **AMC, 7 p.m.**

Signs (2002, Suspense) Mel Gibson, Joaquin Phoenix **SYFY, 7:30 p.m.**

Thor: Ragnarok (2017, Action) Chris Hemsworth, Tom Hiddleston **FX, 7:30 p.m.**

Hancock (2008, Action) Will Smith, Charlize Theron **VH1, 8 p.m.**

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

The School of Rock (2003, Comedy) Jack Black, Joan Cusack **Paramount, 8:30 p.m.**

Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009, Comedy) Kevin James, Jayma Mays **Encore, 9 p.m.**

Scream (1996, Horror) Neve Campbell, David Arquette **Starz, 9:05 p.m.**

Romancing the Stone (1984, Adventure) Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner **BBC America, 9:30 p.m.**

30 Minutes or Less (2011, Action) Jesse Eisenberg, Danny McBride **VH1, 10 p.m.**

Comedian CP: Sunday After Six (2025, Comedy) **BET, 10 p.m.**

Knight and Day (2010, Action) Tom Cruise, Cameron Diaz **FX, 10:30 p.m.**

The Fifth Element (1997, Science fiction) Bruce Willis, Gary Oldman **Sundance, 11 p.m.**

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MOVIES TV GRIDS BEST BETS

What to watch

WEDNESDAY

September 2, 2026

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

MasterChef

FOX, 8 p.m.

The top five home cooks battle for a place in the finale by trying to match pace with chefs Gordon Ramsay and Tiffany Derry as they re-create their signature dishes in real time in the new episode “Keeping Up With Gordon and Tiffany.”

Nation’s Dumbest

FOX, 9 p.m.

In the new episode “Not a Clue,” the final four inch closer to winning the Nation’s Dumbest trophy. The dumb answers continue, and the celebrities wonder whether it was actually a good idea to come on this show. Jack Whitehall hosts.

Alone

History, 9 p.m.

As the Arctic cold pushes the final three survivalists to the brink, a series of critical medical checks threatens to end their journeys just short of the finish line. Battling the effects of prolonged isolation and starvation, each competitor must make desperate choices simply to survive another 24 hours.

Botched Homes

HGTV, 10 p.m. ■ New Series

Fed up with disastrous work that leads to unsafe, unlivable and unbelievable homes, contractor Charlie Kawas and his crew make it their mission to fix what others got horribly wrong. Whether it’s inferior craftsmanship, wonky layouts or mind-boggling finishes, Charlie and his team will right the wrongs of shoddy contractors and DIY projects gone awry, bringing function, flow and beauty to clients’ spaces in disrepair.

From the editors of  TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



HGTV

Resolve to Solve With Miles O’Brien: ‘Preserving Nature in Argentina and Antarctica’

PBS, 10 p.m.

In Argentina’s Iberá Wetlands, conservationist Kris Tompkins has dedicated her life and

fortune to rewilding a landscape where jaguars, giant river otters and other keystone species were hunted nearly to extinction. Journalist Miles O’Brien then joins an international expedition to Antarctica’s rapidly collapsing Thwaites Glacier, where scientists are exploring one of the most controversial proposals in climate science: building a massive underwater sea curtain to hold back the warm ocean currents eating away at the ice.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Starring Susan Sarandon

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

Over five decades in Hollywood, Susan Sarandon has moved effortlessly between genres — from the wide-eyed innocence of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to the smoldering intensity of *Bull Durham* and the unflinching resolve of *Thelma & Louise*. Tonight, TCM showcases some of Sarandon’s more dramatic work, beginning with 1980’s **Atlantic City** (pictured) and its portrait of the fading glamour of a New Jersey boardwalk, for which Sarandon earned her first Oscar nomination playing a casino worker learning to open up oysters as well as her heart. Next up is a trip to the minor leagues for **Bull Durham** (1988), a smart, sexy classic with Kevin Costner and Tim Robbins (who became Sarandon’s partner of over 20 years) that reshaped the romantic comedy and gave us one of



PARAMOUNT PICTURES

film’s most memorable sports muses. Sarandon won her only Academy Award for **Dead Man Walking** (1995), based on the deeply moving true story of compassionate Sister Helen Prejean, who offers spiritual redemption for death row inmate Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn) as he faces execution for murdering a pair of teenagers. The lineup concludes with **The Front Page** (1974), a dark comedy costarring Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, and **The Hunger** (1983), with Sarandon as a scientist drawn into a dangerous relationship with an ageless vampire (Catherine Deneuve) and her centuries-old companion (David Bowie).

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



LAURIE SPARHAM

Beauty and the Beast (2017, Children) Emma Watson, Dan Stevens **Freeform, 6 p.m.**

Speed (1994, Action) Keanu Reeves, Dennis Hopper **FX, 6:30 p.m.**

Alien: Covenant (2017, Science fiction) Michael Fassbender, Katherine Waterston **SYFY, 7 p.m.**

Trouble Man (2025, Action) Michael Jai White, Cliff “Method Man” Smith **Starz, 7:30 p.m.**

Much About Love (2026, Romance) Niall Matter, Ashley Williams **Hallmark, 8 p.m.**

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

Unstoppable (2010, Action) Denzel Washington, Chris Pine **AMC, 8 p.m.**

Practical Magic (1998, Comedy) Sandra Bullock, Nicole Kidman **TNT, 8:30 p.m.**

Top Gun: Maverick (2022, Action) Tom Cruise, Miles Teller **Paramount, 9:30 p.m.**

Les Misérables (2012, Musical) Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe **HBO, 10 p.m.**

Panic Room (2002, Suspense) Jodie Foster, Forest Whitaker **VH1, 10 p.m.**

Blended (2014, Romance-comedy) Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore **TNT, 10:45 p.m.**

Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance (2011, Action) Nicolas Cage, Idris Elba **SYFY, 11 p.m.**

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MOVIES TV GRIDS BEST BETS

TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



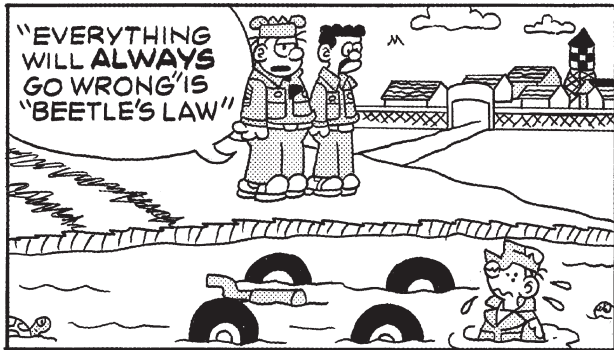
"I finally cut a deal with them. We will leave a pound of birdseed on the back porch every Friday, and they won't touch the feeders."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane

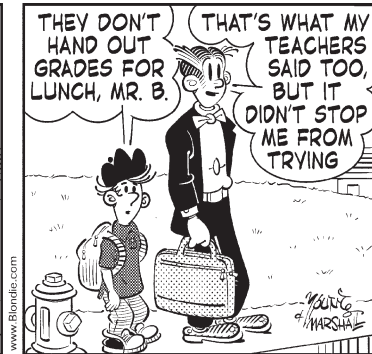
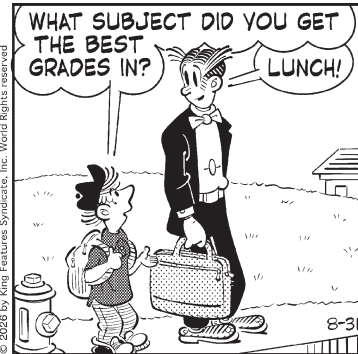
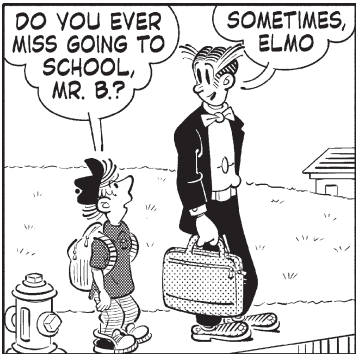


"Hey! That would make a good book!"

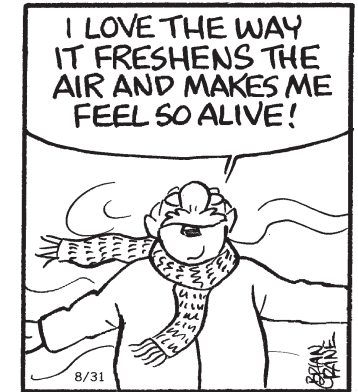
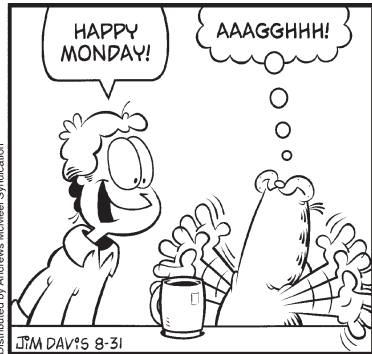
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

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

COULDN'T CARE

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: Couldn't care less

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

- Confess (to)
- at the moon
- 23-Down fig.
- Extract, as minerals from soil
- Gobi Desert continent
- Egg cells
- Avian scavengers with red heads
- Tread the boards
- Feathery neckwear
- Smitten Kitchen blogger
- Perelman
- Some QB protectors
- Neatens up text boxes, say
- Hungry plea
- Demo release
- Secretly included on an email
- Pop singer Carly Jepsen
- "The Incredibles" supersuit designer Mode
- Portuguese phone greeting
- Health retreat
- Recipe amt.
- Addams cousin
- Gambling town near Tahoe
- One of eight on an octopus
- Supple
- Paperwork for leisure travelers
- Nonprofit journalism agcy.
- Most civil
- Rotten
- 20-vol. lexicon
- Karate rank
- Dallas City Hall architect I.M.
- Part of speech that requires a direct object
- Enter a race
- Benefit
- Baking tool with holes
- Actress Adams of "The Muppets"
- Fairy tale opening
- Screen found in many a living room, or what 16-, 29-, 49-, and 63-Across can be called

DOWN

- "I do" location
- Card with two pips
- "Knives Out" protagonist
- "Grody!"
- Hitchcock film with nonhuman villains
- Capital of Cuba
- Columbus sch.
- Untamed suffix
- Penalties for missing due dates
- favor: "please," in Spanish
- Indulged too much
- May, in June
- Bear who steals "pic-a-nic" baskets
- Eats: DoorDash rival
- Upper house of Congress
- Cell service initials
- High-end camera, for short
- Language ending
- Large cask
- Running tally of drinks at a pub

- Pharaoh played by Elizabeth Taylor
- Puzzle
- Collects \$200 in Monopoly
- Class with easels
- Least fancy
- Valuable excavation find
- Team VIP
- Real or ideal suffix
- Cry of victory

- Antiseptic fluid
- Czech or Pole
- Olympic swords
- Start a tennis rally
- Neighbor of Nepal
- Gorilla researcher Fossey
- Indefinite amount
- Nervous twitch
- "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" aunt, familiarly

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

L	E	S	A	L		E	O	N	O		A	W	V	
E	A	E	I	S		N	I	V	G		N	N	H	
B	H	E	A	E	A	I	L	I	S	N	V	H	L	
I	E	A	N	V	D	D	E	O	D	V				
L	S	E	L	I	T	O	d		S	M	E	N	d	V
			S	V	S	I	A	L	S	I	H	N	O	L
E	H	L	I	P	S	L	V	P	S	O	T	V		
V	N	O	D	E	E	V	H		D	E	C	C	B	
N	O	I	S	H	E	A	T	V	I	H	L			
E	W	D	E	E	F		S	N	G	I	T	V	E	H
S	L	H	B	E	D		V	O	B		L	C	V	
S	E	H	N	L	T	N	A	E	X	H	N	L		
V	A	O		V	I	S	V	H	O	V	E	T		
T	O	P		T	M	O	H		L	I	W	D	V	

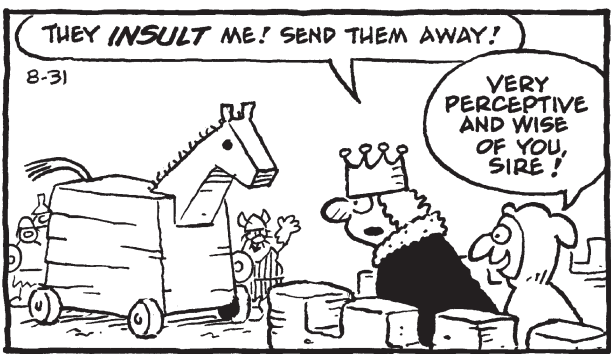
08/31/26

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	
13						14					15			
16						17				18				
19					20			21				22		23
24			25				26		27		28			
			29				30							
31	32	33					34				35			
36				37	38	39		40		41		42		
43			44		45		46			47	48			
49				50				51	52					
53							54					55	56	57
58			59		60		61				62			
	63		64				65				66			
	67					68				69				
	70					71				72				

By Justin Werfel
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08/31/26

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER

Solution: 5 letters

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

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8/31

Achieve, Adapt, Advance, Authority, Business, Coach, Collaborate, Data, Detail, Development, Duty, Education, Evolve, Exceed, Experience, Goal, Independent, Jobs, Learn, Level, Motivate, Professional, Progress, Relations, Responsible, Role, Smart, Steps, Strategy, Success, Supervisor, Team, Title, Training, Upward, Value, Vision

TODAY'S ANSWER: Build

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



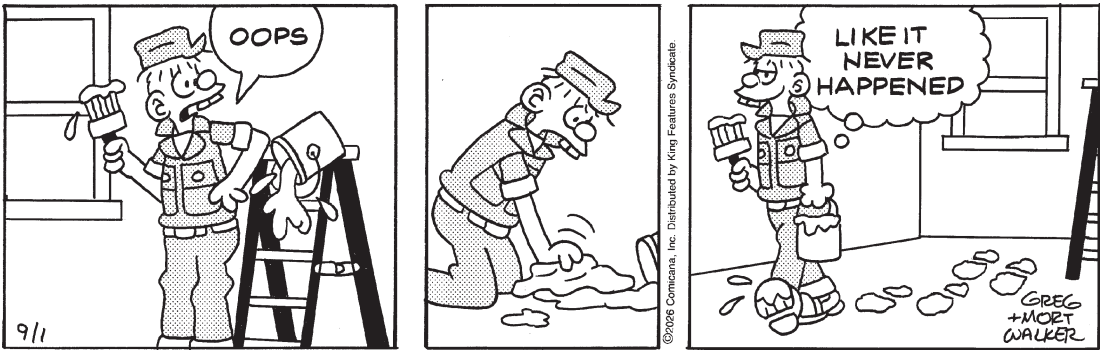
"Without overwhelming you with a lot of messy details, let's just say there was quite a turn of events during your autopsy!"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane



"PJ is in there all alone wastin' some of his smiles."

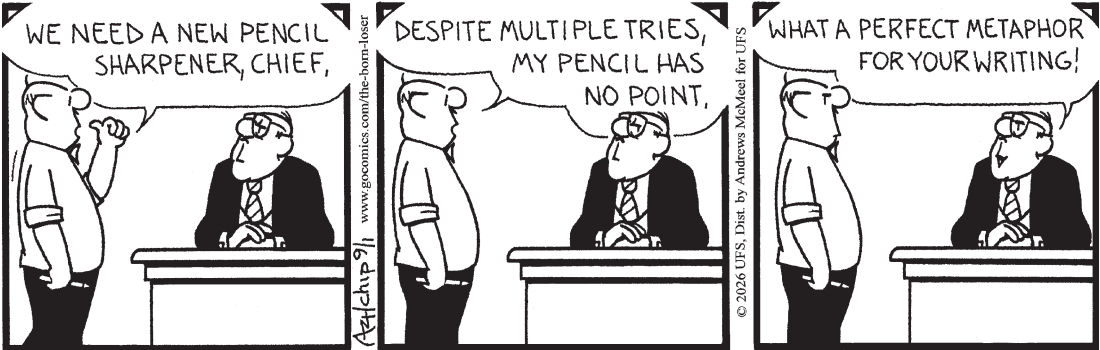
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



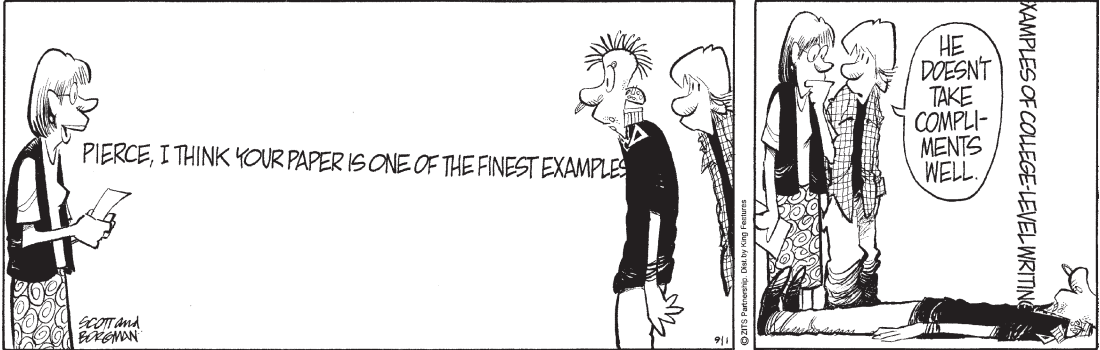
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



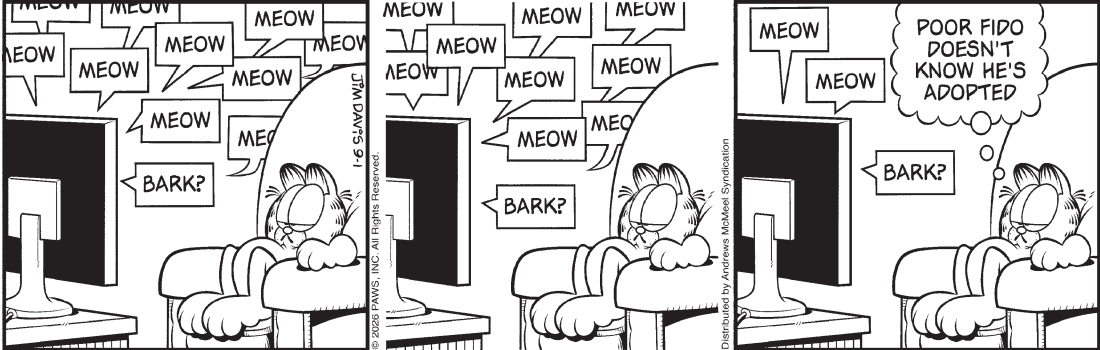
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



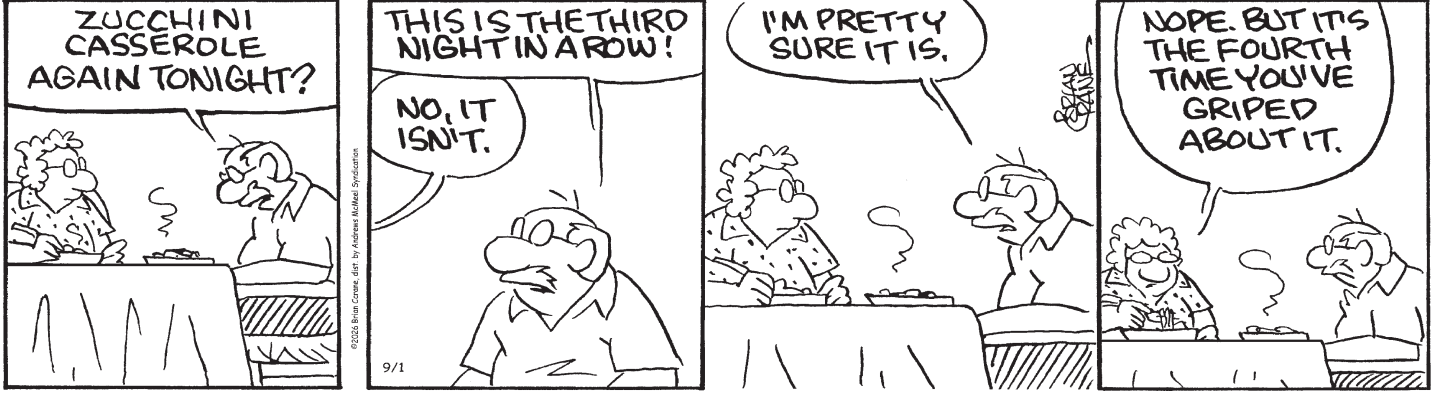
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

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

UR

W

N

E

S

MIND MY

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:

You are always on my mind

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 "— To Get Away With Murder"
4 Container
8 Jazz phrase
12 Lawyers' org.
13 Bedouin
14 Footnote abbr.
15 Costa del —
16 Puerto —
17 Container weight
18 Tea variety
20 Fastened firmly
22 Get on in years
23 Run hither and —
24 Word-for-word
28 Bare
32 Hurt
33 Challenge
35 Mineral suffix
36 Bovine sound

DOWN

1 Lock part
2 Woodwind
3 Fundraising event
4 Life's work
5 Journalist — Melber
6 Plant pouch
7 "— and Ivory"
8 Eye part

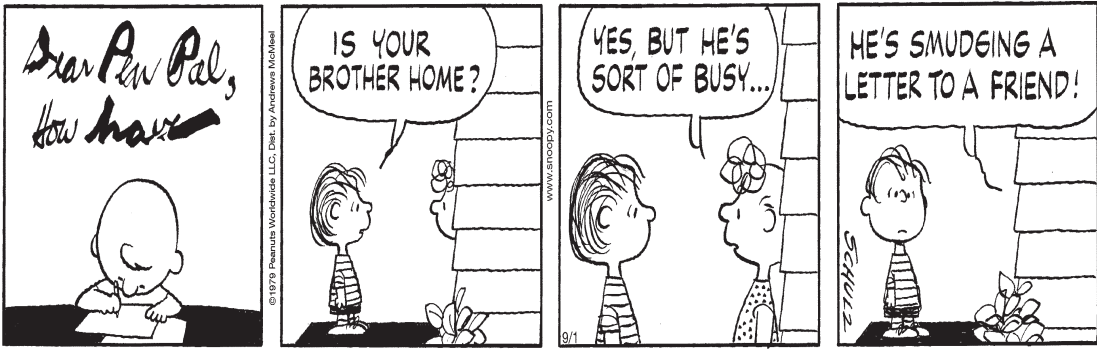
TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

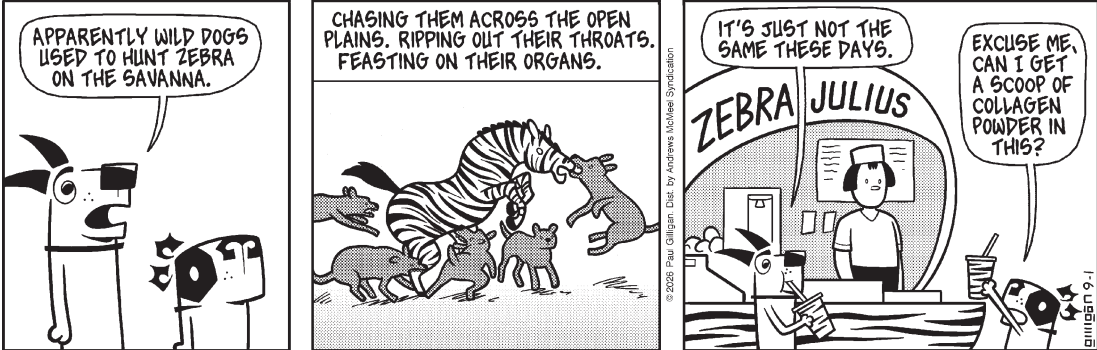
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

ANCIENT INDIGENOUS ARTWORK

Solution: 5 letters

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

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Amulet, Ancestor, Antler, Bone, Carving, Clay, Cosmology, Cultural, Dots, Drum, Etching, Feathers, Heirloom, Heritage, Hide, Indigenous, Kiva, Legacy, Longhouse, Masks, Mound, Nomadic, Ochre, Pieces, Puebloan, Rock, Sacred, Sand, Show, Sinew, Sovereignty, Spiral, Spirit, Stylized, Symbols, Talisman, Textile, Tones, Totem, Visionary, Weaving

TODAY'S ANSWER: Motif

Albany to unveil TextMyGov service

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY – Residents across Albany will receive a text message from the city of Albany on Thursday.

City officials say they are excited to introduce TextMyGov, a convenient and smart text messaging service. This service will let residents eas-

ily receive important notifications about what is happening in town.

The city will officially launch the new text messaging system Thursda . Residents may receive a text message from 91896 from Albany initiating the service. You can opt out at any time by texting STOP.

If you don't receive the ini-

tial message, you can choose to opt-in by texting the keyword "ALBANYGA" to the number 91896. After sending the initial keyword, you will be asked to reply "YES" to confirm opt-in. Residents may receive notifications for events, major notices/announcements, press releases, etc. For specific text alerts, text one of the follow-

ing keywords to the number 91896:

- Text ALBANYGA to 91896 for major notifications or announcements.

- Text ALBANYEVENTS to 91896 for notifications about city events.

- Text ALBANYPR to 91896 for press releases.

Anyone who received the



Special Logo

initial text message and did not opt out is already signed up for the major notifications. You can opt in to the other notification groups at any time.

The city's use of this technology is another example of how our community enhances resident services by implementing 21st-century solutions.

"We're excited about this new way of communicating with residents and look forward to sharing important city notifications," city officials said in a news release. "Other governmental entities across the country are utilizing this system with great success. Stay informed, stay ahead."

Albany Area Arts Council to present GSW art faculty exhibit 'Collegium'

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

Editor's Note: "Collegium" will be the first in a new back-to-school series featuring the art faculty of the region's colleges and universities.

ALBANY -- The Albany Area Arts Council opens "Collegium: A Georgia Southwestern State University Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition" on Thursday, the first in a new back-to-school series featuring the art faculty of colleges and universities across southwest Georgia.

A collegium is a group whose members hold roughly equal standing and work together for the common good. The word was chosen deliberately. The exhibition offers an overview of the creative practice of the Georgia Southwestern faculty, in ceramics, glass, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture.

"The title of this show describes well the community and culture of the program; seeing each other more as family than colleagues, they are able to nurture, challenge, and encourage each other in both the classroom and studio," the faculty wrote in a group statement. "We hope you will enjoy this exhibition in the spirit it was created, and we welcome you into our expanding Collegium."

Exhibiting faculty are Lau-



Special Photo: Justin Hodges

Glass work by Charles Wells will be among the pieces on display as the Albany Area Arts Council presents "Collegium: A Georgia Southwestern State University Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition" starting Thursday.

rel Robinson, Keaton Wynn, Charles Wells and Justin Hodges.

The Arts Council plans to feature a different regional university each fall, both to bring the region's art faculties together and to give Albany audiences and students a look at the work being made across southwest Georgia.

"There are remarkable faculty teaching across south Georgia, and few occasions for them to be in one room together," Nicole Willis, the

council's executive director, said. "Our goal is to create regular opportunities for camaraderie and professional inspiration among the many people and institutions driving creative work across our region."

Collegium runs Sept. 3 through Oct. 29 in the gallery of the historic Carnegie Library. The exhibition and its opening reception, set for Thursday from 6-8 p.m., are free and open to all, with support from the city of Albany.

EXHIBITION DETAILS
Exhibition: Collegium: A Georgia Southwestern State University Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition

On View: Sept. 3 to Oct. 29. Free and open to the public.

Gallery Hours: Noon-4 p.m., Monday through Thursday; closed holidays. Viewing also available by appointment.

Opening Reception: Thursday, 6-8 p.m.

Location: Albany Area Arts Council, historic Carnegie Library, 215 N. Jackson St.



Special Graphic

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia has announced a partnership with Powerhouse Automotive Group to drive membership and brand awareness goals in south Georgia.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Powerhouse Automotive plan 'Power Her Future' campaign

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia has announced a partnership with Powerhouse Automotive Group. This campaign drives membership and brand awareness goals in south Georgia and is the foundation of the collaboration between the two groups.

For the next several weeks, local citizens will see a pink Girl Scout and Powerhouse co-branded 2025 Ford Bronco driving across south Georgia and beyond. Viewers will have the opportunity to sign the vehicle while sharing their own Girl Scouts story. Everyone has a connection with Girl Scouts, officials said, whether they were a member in their youth, their mother and grandmother were volunteers with the organization, or they're a fan of the annual Girl Scout Cookie program.

The custom wrap for the

Power Her Future car will be unveiled at a ribbon-cutting for

Powerhouse Automotive Group's new Sylvester location (1006 W Franklin St, in Sylvester) on Thursday, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., where Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia will be on site with a membership booth and activity station.

Those who would like to share their Girl Scouts story may visit the Girl Scout DreamLab at 2825 Ledo Road in Albany, inside Walmart, to record their story in a sound booth or make a mark on the road around town when you see the pink Bronco.

For more information or to request a visit to a specific location, interested persons may contact Cullena Morman, the community engagement manager, at cmorman@gshg.org, call (888) 689-1912, or visit <https://www.gshg.org/en/support-us/power-her-future.html>.



Equal opportunity and decisions based on merit are fundamental values of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The TCSG State Board prohibits discrimination on the basis of an individual's age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status ("protected status"). No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any TCSG program or activity because of the individual's protected status; nor shall any individual be given preferential treatment because of the individual's protected status, except

ATC offers a wide range of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, including:

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- Accounting
- Business Healthcare Technology
- Business Logistics Management
- Business Management
- Commerce
- Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism Management
- Marketing Management
- Quality Assurance Six Sigma Green & Black Belt
- Computer Information Technology
- Computer Programming
- Computer Support Specialist
- Cybersecurity
- Design & Media Production Technology
- Networking Specialist
- Information Technology Professional
- Video Game Design
- Construction Trades
- Air Conditioning Technology
- Alternative Energy
- Building Maintenance
- Carpentry
- Green Building Technology
- Electrical Systems
- Masonry
- Plumbing
- Residential Energy Efficiency
- Welding and Joining Technology

- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Civil Engineering Technology
- Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology
- Electronics Technology
- Engineering Graphics
- Mechatronics Technology
- Precision Manufacturing
- Wireless Engineering Technology

General Studies

- Allied Health Professions
- Early College Essentials
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Technical Studies

Healthcare

- Dental Assisting
- EMT / Paramedicine
- Health Information Management
- Healthcare Assistant
- Medical Assisting
- Nurse Aide Accelerated
- Associate Degree Nursing (ADN)
- Pharmacy Technology
- Phlebotomy
- Practical Nursing
- Radiologic Technology
- Surgical Technology

Professional Services

- Addiction & Substance Abuse Counseling
- Barbering
- Cosmetology

- Culinary Arts
- Early Childhood Care & Education
- Horticulture
- Public Safety**
- Criminal Justice Technology
- Cyber Crime Investigation
- Fire & Emergency Services Occupation
- Law Enforcement Preparatory Certificate
- Professional Firefighter / Fire Science Technology

Transportation

- Auto Collision Repair Technology
- Automotive Technology
- Commercial Truck Driving (CDL)
- Diesel Equipment Technology

ADMISSIONS CONTACT:

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS
Albany Technical College
1704 S. Slappey Blvd.
Albany, GA 31701
229.430.3520
admissions@albanytech.edu



For more info about programs and admissions criteria, visit www.albanytech.edu/areas-of-study

Albany Technical College offers additional services to students with limited English language skills or with disabilities so that they may benefit from these programs. Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission in any CTE Program.

Non-Discrimination Contacts:

Faculty & Staff Inquiries: Trenna Marshall, HR Coordinator 229.430.3619 tmarshall@albanytech.edu
Student Inquiries: Beth Davis, Assistant VP for Student Affairs 229.430.0607 bdavis@albanytech.edu
Section 504 Inquiries: Regina Watts, Special Needs Coordinator 229.430.2854 rwatts@albanytech.edu



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ATC ofrece una amplia gama de programas de Educación Técnica y Profesional (CTE), incluyendo:

Tecnologías Empresariales

- Contabilidad
- Tecnología en Administración de la Salud Empresarial
- Gestión de Logística Empresarial
- Administración de Empresas
- Comercio Electrónico
- Gestión Hotelera/ Restaurante/Turismo
- Gestión de Mercadeo
- Cinturón Verde y Negro de Six Sigma de Aseguramiento de Calidad
- Tecnologías de la Información**
- Programación de Computadoras
- Soporte Técnico
- Ciberseguridad
- Tecnología de Diseño y Medios
- Especialista en Redes
- Profesional en Tecnología de la Información
- Diseño de Videojuegos
- Oficios de Construcción**
- Tecnología de Aire Acondicionado
- Energía Alternativa
- Mantenimiento de Edificios
- Carpintería
- Tecnología de Construcción Verde
- Sistemas Eléctricos
- Albañilería, Plomería
- Eficiencia Energética Residencial
- Soldadura y Tecnología de Unión

Ingeniería y Manufactura

- Tecnología de Ingeniería Civil
- Tecnología de Ingeniería Eléctrica e Informática
- Tecnología Electrónica
- Gráficos de Ingeniería
- Tecnología de Mecatrónica
- Manufactura de Precisión
- Tecnología de Ingeniería Inalámbrica
- Estudios Generales**
- Profesiones en Salud Aliada
- Fundamentos Universitarios Tempranos
- Estudios Interdisciplinarios
- Estudios Técnicos

Salud

- Asistencia Dental
- Paramédico/EMT
- Gestión de Información de Salud
- Asistente de Salud
- Asistencia Médica
- Asistente de Enfermería Acelerado
- Enfermería Asociada
- Tecnología en Farmacia
- Flebotomía
- Enfermería Práctica
- Tecnología Radiológica
- Tecnología Quirúrgica
- Servicios Profesionales**
- Consejería en Adicciones y Abuso de Sustancias
- Barbería
- Cosmetología
- Artes Culinarias
- Cuidado y Educación Infantil Temprana

Horticultura

Seguridad Pública

- Tecnología en Justicia Criminal
- Investigación de Delitos Cibernéticos
- Servicios de Bomberos y Emergencias
- Certificado Preparatorio de Cumplimiento de la Ley
- Bombero Profesional / Tecnología en Ciencias del Fuego

Transporte

- Tecnología de Reparación de Colisiones Automotrices
- Tecnología Automotriz
- Conducción de Camiones Comerciales (CDL)
- Tecnología de Equipos Diésel

CONTACTO DE ADMISIONES:

OFICINA DE ADMISIONES
Albany Technical College
1704 S. Slappey Blvd.
Albany, GA 31701
229.430.3520
admissions@albanytech.edu



Para más información sobre estos programas y los requisitos de admisión, visite www.albanytech.edu/areas-of-study

Albany Technical College ofrece servicios adicionales para estudiantes con habilidades limitadas en el idioma inglés o con discapacidades, para que puedan beneficiarse de estos programas. La falta de dominio del inglés no será una barrera para la admisión a ningún programa CTE.

Coordinadores de No Discriminación:

Consultas del personal y profesorado: Trenna Marshall, HR Coordinator 229.430.3619 tmarshall@albanytech.edu
Consultas estudiantiles: Beth Davis, Assistant VP for Student Affairs 229.430.0607 bdavis@albanytech.edu
Consultas sobre la Sección 504: Regina Watts, Special Needs Coordinator 229.430.2854 rwatts@albanytech.edu

FAMU shuts down Albany State, 20-7

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Albany State's defense gave the Golden Rams a chance Saturday night.

Their offense couldn't take advantage. And nowhere was the problem more glaring than on the ground.

Albany State finished with just three net rushing yards as Florida A&M pulled away for a 20-7 victory at Ken Riley Field at Bragg Memorial Stadium.

For an Albany State team coming off a 12-win season, an SIAC championship and one of the best seasons in program history, that number told much of the story of a frustrating opening night under first-year head

coach David Bowser.

The Golden Rams trailed only 7-0 at halftime and 10-0 entering the fourth quarter despite struggling to move the football.

FAMU finally created some breathing room with 10 fourth-quarter points before Albany State put together its best drive of the night.

Backup quarterback Vinson Berry directed a 14-play, 74-yard march and capped it with a 7-yard touchdown pass to Exavior Sherrod with 4:20 remaining.

By then, however, the Rattlers had built a 20-point advantage.

The loss dropped Albany State to 0-1 and gave former Golden Rams coach Quinn Gray a victory in his debut as FAMU's head coach.

Former Albany State quarterback Isaiah Knowles, who followed Gray to Tallahas-

see after last season, started for the Rattlers against many of the same teammates he helped lead to an SIAC championship a year ago.

Knowles struck first.

FAMU marched 76 yards in 12 plays on its second possession, with Knowles finishing the drive with a 2-yard touchdown pass to Jaquan Lee with 4:26 remaining in the first quarter.

Then Albany State's defense dug in.

The Rattlers didn't score again before halftime, leaving the Golden Rams only one touchdown behind despite ASU's offensive struggles.

Those problems were especially pronounced on the ground. Albany State had eight net rushing yards at halftime and finished with

only three.

Still, the defense kept the Golden Rams within striking distance.

FAMU drove 68 yards in nine plays late in the third quarter, but Albany State kept the Rattlers out of the end zone. Emilio Bacardi kicked a 17-yard field goal for a 10-0 lead.

Bacardi added a 37-yard field goal early in the fourth before FAMU finally delivered the decisive touchdown, pushing the advantage to 20-0.

Berry and the Golden Rams answered with their lone scoring drive, but there wasn't enough time to overcome the deficit.

Albany State now turns its attention to the HBCU Hall of Fame Classic, where the Golden Rams face Johnson C. Smith on Sunday in Canton, Ohio.

Lee County stuns No. 11 Carol City with second-half comeback

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

LEESBURG — For one half Friday night, Carol City looked every bit like the No. 11 high school football team in America.

Then Lee County locked the door.

No first downs.

Not one.

No trips across midfield.

Not one of those, either.

And by the time a packed Trojan Stadium realized what was happening, a 12-point halftime deficit had disappeared and one of the nation's top teams was headed back to Miami with a loss.

Lee County stunned Carol City 23-20, rallying from a 20-8 halftime deficit behind a remarkable defensive performance and sending a sold-out crowd into celebration.

"The crowd was unbelievable," Lee County coach Dean Fabrizio said.

It was likely the biggest crowd in Leesburg since a cold December night in 2017, when the Trojans won the first state championship in program history.

They got another night to remember Friday.

Early on, however, the night belonged to Carol City.

The Chiefs struck three times in the first half, including a pair of touchdown passes to five-star receiver Nicholas Lennear, a University of Miami commitment.

Lee County's only touchdown before halftime came from its defense.

Defensive back KJ Streeter stepped in front of a Carol City pass and raced 47 yards for a



Special Photo: Jim Griffith

Lee County linebacker Gregory Batson, 19, lies over a Carol City player as teammates Trey Bush, 3, and Montravius Clay, 2, close in during Friday night's 23-20 victory over Chiefs in Leesburg.

pick-six. Jordyn Bush added the two-point conversion, but the Trojans went to the locker room trailing 20-8.

Something changed in there. "The coaches did a really good job at halftime making adjustments, and we just told our kids we had to keep our composure," Fabrizio said. "Keep fighting and stay the course."

What followed was domination.

Carol City had scored three times in the first half.

It couldn't get a first down in the second.

Every possession ended on the Chiefs' side of midfield as Lee County's defense completely shut down an offense loaded with talent.

And with each stop, the Trojans crept closer.

Quarterback Cohen Lawson found Destin Bell for a 27-yard touchdown pass, and Amari Weston added the two-point conversion.

Suddenly, it was 20-16.

Trojan Stadium was alive. The defense kept Carol City pinned down, and eventually Lee County finished the comeback.

Running back Dominique Ball scored the go-ahead touchdown, turning a 20-8 halftime deficit into a 23-20 Lee County lead.

Then it was up to the defense.

Carol City never answered.

Lawson finished 9 of 15 passing for 145 yards and a touchdown. Jaden Upshaw caught five passes for 58 yards, while Ball carried 12 times for 50 yards and the game-winning score.

But the numbers that defined Friday night belonged to the defense.

Zero second-half points.

Zero second-half first downs.

Zero trips across midfield.

Against the No. 11 team in the country.

Earlier this summer, Lee County senior Carter Blackwell was asked what people should expect from this year's

Trojans.

The Clemson commit didn't offer a long explanation.

"Just wait and see," Blackwell said.

Friday night, a sold-out Trojan Stadium got to see.

Blackwell caught two passes in the victory, but this wasn't about one player. It was a Lee County team that absorbed the best punch from one of the nation's top programs, went to halftime trailing by 12 and came back out refusing to give up another inch.

For Fabrizio and the Trojans, there was something else at stake.

South Georgia pride.

"We really wanted to represent South Georgia tonight," Fabrizio said. "We know that the best football, top to bottom, in the nation is right here in South Georgia, and we wanted to go out and show everyone that."

They showed them.

Still, Fabrizio wasn't going to let his team celebrate for long.

"After the game I told them what a great win it was, and I told them how proud I was of them," Fabrizio said. "But also, we have to refocus now because we've got a long trip next week to play a really good Sequoyah team."

Lee County heads to Canton next week to face a Sequoyah team that is 2-0 after victories of 36-7 and 45-7.

That challenge can wait a few days.

Friday night belonged to Lee County — to a sold-out stadium, to a defense that refused to budge and to a group of Trojans who spotted the No. 11 team in America a 12-point halftime lead.

Then took it all away.



Special Photo: Liberty University

Former Dougherty High star Kam Davis speaks during a Liberty University football press conference earlier this week. Davis, who transferred to Liberty after two seasons at Florida State, is preparing for his first season with the Flames.

Kam Davis finds his footing at Liberty

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

LYNCHBURG, Va. —

There was a time when it was difficult to keep the football out of Kam Davis' hands.

At Dougherty High School, that was pretty much the point.

Davis played quarterback for the Trojans, although calling him a quarterback didn't adequately describe what he did. He ran it. He threw it. He accounted for 8,762 yards and 75 touchdowns during a career that made him one of Southwest Georgia's most celebrated recruits.

He committed to Florida State as a sophomore and never wavered.

Then he got to Tallahassee and discovered something most highly recruited football players eventually discover.

College football doesn't particularly care what you did in high school.

Two years later, Davis is starting over.

The former Dougherty star is now a running back at Liberty, where he was among the players featured in the Flames' preseason press conference as they prepare for their Sept. 5 opener against James Madison.

And the 20-something Davis describes himself somewhat differently than the teenager Albany last knew.

"This year I'm the most confident version of myself," Davis said.

There was plenty of confidence surrounding Davis when he left Dougherty.

His freshman season was shortened to five games by COVID-19, but the Trojans went 10-3 and reached the state quarterfinals his sophomore year and followed with a 9-3 season when Davis was a junior.

An injury curtailed his

senior season, but by then everybody knew who he was.

Davis was a four-star prospect, an Under Armour All-American and an AJC Super 11 selection. He was rated among the nation's top running back prospects despite playing quarterback at Dougherty.

Florida State, however, never became quite the showcase Dougherty had been.

Davis appeared in 13 games over two seasons with the Seminoles, carrying 60 times for 224 yards and a touchdown. He rushed for 173 yards as a freshman, second-most on the team, before seeing a reduced role the following season.

Then came the transfer portal.

And Liberty.

Davis said the Flames' history of productive running backs caught his attention. Something else did, too.

The recruiting pitch wasn't coming only from coaches.

"The players were recruiting me more than the coaches were," Davis said.

Now he's one of them.

Liberty has a crowded running back room, and Davis isn't promising that he's arrived to take every carry. During the press conference, running backs coach Travis Pearson talked about using multiple backs and keeping them fresh over the course of the season.

But Davis enters the season on the Doak Walker Award watch list, an indication that there are expectations surrounding his arrival.

The move has also brought changes that have little to do with carries.

Liberty makes no secret of its Christian identity, and when Davis was asked about his spiritual growth since arriving in Lynchburg, the former Dougherty star said the environment has

See **DAVIS**, 10A

Team Motion bringing ABA basketball to Albany

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Albany basketball fans will have a new team to call their own this fall.

Albany Team Motion is preparing for its inaugural season in the American Basketball Association, with home games scheduled to be played at the Albany Area YMCA on Gillionville Road.

The team will make its home debut Sunday, Oct. 11, with tipoff scheduled for 2:30 p.m. The gym will open at 2 p.m.

Team Motion is coached by Rabren Pittman, with Willie Burke serving as assistant coach, and the organization is assembling a roster featuring players with college and professional basketball experience.

Among the newest additions are Mike Isler and Rabren Pittman Jr., who will be formally introduced as part of the organization's signing day as Team Motion continues building its roster for the upcoming season. Isler played high school ball at Westover and college basketball at Presbyterian College. Pittman played for the

Dougherty Trojans and then spent two years at Southern Crescent.

The ABA name is one familiar to longtime basketball fans. The original American Basketball Association operated from 1967-76 and featured stars such as Julius "Dr. J." Erving before four of its franchises joined the NBA. The current ABA, which began play in 2000, adopted the historic league's name and red, white and blue basketball while operating as a professional minor league.

For Team Motion, however, the emphasis will be on establishing something new in Albany.

The organization hopes to combine competitive basketball with an affordable, family-oriented atmosphere while building a team with strong ties to the community.

Playing at the Albany Area YMCA gives Team Motion a familiar local home and provides basketball fans an opportunity to watch professional-level competition without leaving Southwest Georgia.

The Oct. 11 opener will provide the first look at what Pittman



Special Photo: Submitted

Signing with Team Motion earlier this week were, from left, Michael Isler and Rabren Pittman. Both played high school basketball here in Albany before competing on the college level. Now they are back in Albany to compete for Albany's newest basketball team.

and his staff have assembled.

Team officials say the roster will include a combination of former college players and athletes with professional experience, with additional details expected as the season approaches.

The organization is also hoping to build a fan base from the beginning.

General admission tickets for the opener are \$10, while VIP passes are available for \$15 and include an enhanced game-day experience.

Georgia has No. 1 roster in College Football

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ATHENS — Georgia’s football program has spent years stacking highly rated recruiting classes on top of one another.

The result, according to 247Sports, is the most talented roster in college football.

The Bulldogs are No. 1 in the newly released 2026 247Sports Team Talent Rating, which evaluates current college rosters based on how players were rated as high school prospects. Georgia leads the nation with 978.37 points, comfortably ahead of No. 2 Oregon at 947.40. Alabama is third at 941.30, followed by Texas at 935.15 and Ohio State at 923.22.

The numbers offer another

illustration of the recruiting machine Kirby Smart has built in Athens.

Georgia has 105 rated players included in the ranking, with 12 former five-star prospects and 57 four-stars. The Bulldogs have an average player rating of 91.35, and 69 of their rated players arrived at college as either four- or five-star recruits.

Oregon, Georgia’s closest challenger, has 60 former four- and five-star prospects among its 88 rated players.

Two of Georgia’s defensive standouts sit at the very top of the recruiting scale. Defensive lineman Elijah Griffin and cornerback Ellis Robinson IV each received a perfect 100 rating from 247Sports coming out of high school.

And Georgia is No. 1 re-



Special Photo: Camille Menzies, UGAAA

Georgia players go through a preseason practice in Athens. The Bulldogs rank No. 1 in 247Sports’ 2026 Team Talent Rating, with 12 former five-star prospects and 57 four-stars on the roster.

gardless of which 247Sports measurement is used.

For the first time this season, 247Sports has separated its own high school player

evaluations from its traditional industry-generated Composite rankings. Georgia leads the new proprietary Team Talent Rating with 978.37

points and also ranks first in the Composite version with 1,003.67 points and a 91.97 average player rating. Texas is second in the Composite at 985.17.

The formula is designed to measure more than sheer numbers. A team’s highest-rated prospects receive the greatest weight, with the value gradually declining farther down the roster. That rewards programs for both elite talent and depth without simply giving an advantage to teams with more rated players.

There is, however, an important distinction.

The ranking measures recruiting pedigree, not current performance.

Players retain their original high school recruiting ratings even after transfer-

ring. An overlooked three-star who develops into an All-American remains valued as a three-star in the calculation, while a former five-star who hasn’t lived up to expectations retains his elite recruiting grade.

So the ranking doesn’t necessarily mean Georgia has college football’s best team entering the 2026 season.

It does demonstrate the extraordinary collection of talent Smart and his staff have assembled.

When college football rosters are judged by the recruiting credentials players brought with them to campus, nobody has more than Georgia.

The Bulldogs open the season Saturday in Athens against Tennessee State.



File Photo

Atlanta Braves catcher Drake Baldwin rounds the bases. Baldwin made history Thursday when his leadoff home run provided the only run in the Braves’ 1-0 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Baldwin’s leadoff homer is one-of-a-kind

By Manny Randhawa
Braves.com

A catcher hitting in the leadoff position in the lineup is rare. What’s even rarer?

A catcher hitting a leadoff home run

That’s exactly what Braves All-Star backstop Drake Baldwin did on Thursday night in Atlanta’s series finale against the Dodgers at Truist Park. And it proved to be historic.

The Braves won the game to sweep the two-time defending World Series champions, and the only run of the contest from either side was Baldwin’s leadoff homer.

With that, Baldwin became the first catcher in the Modern Era (since 1900) to lead off a game with a home run that proved to

be the only run in a 1-0 victory, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

“I was not looking for a splitter on the first pitch of the game; I’ll just say that,” Baldwin said. “But it worked out well.”

The 1-0 win on a leadoff homer is also the first for the Braves since at least 1900. And the occasion marks only the 33rd across the Majors in the Modern Era in which a leadoff homer proved to be the only run scored in a contest.

Leadoff homers are always special. They’re even more special if they represent the only run in a game. And a catcher belting a leadoff shot in a 1-0 game? That’s something else altogether.

He got hurt. He went to Florida State. The carries didn’t come in bunches. He entered the portal and moved hundreds of miles north to Virginia.

Now there is another season and another opportunity.

Liberty opens Sept. 5 against James Madison, and Davis will be part of a running back room the Flames believe can be one of the strengths of their offense.

How large his role becomes remains to be seen.

But the former Dougherty quarterback who once seemed to have the football in his hands on every important play sounds as though he’s comfortable with where the journey has taken him.

“I’m the most confident version of myself,” Davis said.

For Kam Davis, perhaps that’s a pretty good place to start.

From 9A DAVIS

affected him.

“Just going to church, going to Convocation, being around people that are closer to God has helped me get closer to God,” Davis said. “It’s made me a better man.”

He also acknowledged that Lynchburg offers fewer distractions than some of the places he’s been.

For a young man whose football life once seemed remarkably straightforward, that’s another part of growing up.

At Dougherty, Davis was the star quarterback who could change a game every time he touched the football. He committed to Florida State before most high school sophomores have figured out where they want to go to college and spent years knowing exactly where his football career was headed.

Then football became less predictable.

Controversial ad costs Good Good partnerships

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

Callaway Golf Company severed ties with Good Good Golf after backlash over a video meant to promote a driver co-branded by the two companies, Sports Business Journal reported Thursday.

Soon after, Good Good stepped away as the title sponsor of a new PGA Tour fall-series event in Austin, Texas.

“We recognize that we have work to do as an organization, and our focus right now is on our team, our culture and ensuring we learn from this situation,” the brand posted on social media. “We are grateful for our relationship with the PGA Tour and appreciate their partnership over the years. We remain committed to earning back trust, and we hope to work together again in the future.”

Good Good co-founder Garrett Clark apologized Wednesday night, saying he hopes “we can move on” from a deleted video meant to advertise the club.

Less than 24 hours after the Good Good apology, Callaway said it was ending the partnership citing the backlash over a video that it said trivialized violence against women and issued its own apology.

The 60-second video in question was posted Aug. 21, depicting Clark running and shoving Good Good’s Alexis Miestowski to the ground as she went to pull the club out of his bag. Clark then said, “Do not touch my new driver,” while standing over her.

The club at the center of the advertisement is a Callaway Quantum Driver with a portion of the Good Good logo emblazoned on the bottom.

The ad drew immediate backlash with claims it depicted violence against women, and Good Good quickly removed it. The company issued an apology on Saturday, and Clark added a personal apology in a video posted to his social me-

dia Wednesday night.

“I personally want to apologize for playing a role in the skit, in this ad, at the magnitude that I did,” Clark said. “And then on Good Good’s behalf and on Good Good marketing team’s behalf, I wanted to say an apology as well because this is not at all what we stand for. The way that this ad was received is not how Good Good is, and it’s not what we stand for, once again.

“I want everyone to know that I do not support (domestic violence) abuse or any of that of any kind.”

Callaway, based in Carlsbad, Calif., announced it will donate \$1 million to causes dedicated to preventing violence against women or entities that support women who have been victims of domestic violence.

In the statement to Sports Business Journal, Callaway said: “Over the last several days, we have listened and reflected deeply on the hurt and disappointment caused by the video we re-posted. We heard from individuals who shared personal experiences related to violence against women, and their stories were powerful reminders that this issue touches the lives of far too many people. Unequivocally, violence against women is unacceptable and should never be trivialized, normalized, or used as entertainment.

“These actions do not undo the harm caused or excuse our role in it. We sincerely apologize to everyone who was hurt, disappointed, or offended by this incident.”

Later, the PGA Tour confirmed in a statement it had been informed that the brand would step back from sponsoring what was being called the Good Good Championship in Austin in November.

“We agree with their decision to use this time to focus on their organization and their work ahead,” the tour’s statement said. “The PGA Tour believes in golf’s ability to bring people together and create a welcom-

ing environment for all.

“The tournament will continue as scheduled from Nov. 12-15, 2026, and we will provide an update on sponsorship plans at a later date.”

The fallout from the ad has reverberated elsewhere in the golf industry.

Golf Channel initially postponed the premiere of the reality show “Big Break x Good Good” by a week after a sponsor, Golf Galaxy, requested that its branding be removed, ESPN reported. On Thursday, Golf Channel announced on social media that the current season of the show is canceled.

“Following recent developments involving Good Good, and including the fact that the intended outcome of the series can no longer be fulfilled, Golf Channel will not be able to complete this season of Big Break as planned,” Golf Channel posted on its X account. “While we are disappointed for the 12 competitors, our production team that worked tirelessly on the season, and the show’s passionate fans, we look forward to Big Break’s return to Golf Channel in 2027.”

Dick’s Sporting Goods and Golf Galaxy are among the retailers to have pulled Good Good merchandise from their in-store shelves and online.

Good Good’s statement on Saturday read: “We posted a video to our channels that ultimately depicted actions that are not aligned with our values as a brand. We have since taken that content down and sincerely apologize. Good Good has always stood for making the game of golf more inclusive to all, and we will continue to ensure that is our mission moving forward.”

Asked if the apology was sufficient, PGA Tour CEO Brian Rupp said on Tuesday, “I think initially, no. I think what we saw was concerning, is clearly not aligned with PGA Tour values. We take it very seriously. I think their initial response was



Special Photo: Garrett Clark

Good Good Golf co-founder Garrett Clark apologized for his role in a controversial promotional video that led Callaway Golf to end its partnership with the company and Good Good to withdraw as sponsor of a PGA Tour event.

disappointing. It was a bit defensive and late.”

“We fully own that we did make a mistake. ... As the CEO of the company, the buck stops with me and we should have had better processes in place,” Kendrick said, noting the ad was supposed to be a spoof of the popular horror movie “Obsession.”

In his Wednesday video of more than eight minutes, Clark outlined how the ad was produced, sharing behind-the-scenes footage showing that he did not strike Miestowski. She played golf at Indiana University and contributes to Good Good’s women-focused YouTube channel.

Clark added that he was “cringing” once he saw the ad, and condemned those who have been sending negative messages to Miestowski on social media.

“Good Good messed up by promoting a very poor-taste ad, but, hopefully, you guys can forgive Good Good as well as myself for being a part of it,” Clark said. “Hopefully, we can move on and grow the women’s side of golf, because that is one of our huge, huge goals.”

Judge blocks SEC ban on returning athletes

Field Level Media

The NCAA can’t block a group of 41 athletes, the Southeastern Conference or SEC commissioner Greg Sankey from going back to college for one more season thanks to a restraining order signed Thursday by District Court Judge Martin Hoffman in Dallas.

The plaintiffs include three active NFL players: wide receiver Omari Evans and linebacker Wesley Bissaint, both of the Kansas City Chiefs, and Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Jordan Hudson.

Bailey Maupin, who signed a training camp contract with the WNBA’s Golden State Valkyries in April, and Christeen Iwuala, who signed a rookie scale contract with the Washington Mystics in April, are also plaintiffs in the Dallas case. Neither has played in a regular-season WNBA game.

The decision followed the NCAA implementing a new

rule for the upcoming school year that will allow incoming college athletes to compete for five seasons in a five-year window. The athletes whose eligibility expired in the last school year were excluded.

Hoffman wrote in his decision, “As long as they would have been eligible to continue playing college sports in the following semester if they had a fifth year of eligibility, they are eligible today.”

Another hearing on the order, which will be in place for 14 days, is scheduled for Sept. 11, The Athletic reported.

The SEC was joined in recent days by the Big Ten, Big 12 and Atlantic Coast Conference in announcing rules prohibiting athletes from returning to college. The SEC’s new ban affects players who declared for a pro draft and didn’t withdraw, signed a pro contract or appeared on a pro team’s roster.

The SEC also reportedly vot-

ed 15-0 on Wednesday — with LSU abstaining — to allow the league to sanction schools and coaches that add former pro athletes to their rosters.

According to multiple media reports, the SEC’s penalties will include suspending coaches for half a season, a fine equal to 50% of the university’s annual budget for the sport in question, and revoking league voting rights.

Sankey reportedly was granted authority to levy additional sanctions as needed.

Lawyer Ryan Downton, who represents plaintiffs in the Dallas case, told ESPN, “The (leagues) can’t come out and create a rule with immediate effect that has such draconian punishment that no school will take any of these players.”

Downton added to ESPN, “The SEC is singling out football. If you’re a women’s soccer player. No problem. Lacrosse player? No problem.



Special Photo: Nathan Ray Seebeck-Imagn Images

SEC commissioner Greg Sankey speaks at an SEC event. A federal judge temporarily blocked the NCAA, SEC and other conferences from preventing a group of 41 athletes from returning to college competition for an additional season.

It’s only football and men’s basketball. Why is that? And why is that appropriate? Why is it appropriate for the SEC to discriminate against one group of student-athletes and not another?



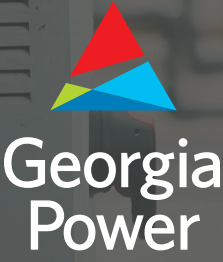
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Who am I?

I am Travis Lockhart your Independent candidate for State House of Representatives..!

Why me?

As a 9 year old child I understood that respect and relationship matters. Now I understand that I've been getting prepared for this very moment to be your State Representative.

My father told me that my great grandmother said she wouldn't pass until she seen me. And when my great grandmother laid eyes on me she said I was special, that I would be a leader amongst people.

At 9 years old my grandmother Ola would tell us, "When we see the insurance man Mr. Gene pull up to the house don't say anything to that white man, go into the backyard or go into the back room."

I always wondered why.

I used to go into the back room and listen and watch Mr. Gene's actions and how he spoke to my grandmother. Mr. Gene would call my grandmother "Ola" and she would call him "Mr. Gene," yet everyone else Black would call my grandma "Mrs. Ola." But Mr. Gene didn't.

Mr. Gene would say, "Girl, what are you cooking?" and then look into our pots. My grandma would kill us if we did that, but she said nothing to him. I didn't understand why. That made me even more confused.

So the next month, like clockwork on the second of the month, Mr. Gene pulled up and my grandma said the same thing. This time I didn't listen. I waited until she went back in the house and stayed there until Mr. Gene got out of the car.

He looked at me and said, "Boy, what are you doing?"

I said, "My name is Travis."

Mr. Gene said, "Oh okay, Travis."

I asked, "May I ask you a question?"

He said, "Yes Travis, you can."

I asked Mr. Gene why he called my grandma "Ola" and she called him "Mr. Gene" when she was older than him.

He said, "Hmm... I didn't know I was doing that, Travis."

Then I asked him why he goes into our pots without her permission.

He said, "Hmm Travis, I'm not sure."

Then the front screen door opened up to my grandma yelling at me:

"Travis leave that man alone and get in the damn house!"

Mr. Gene said to my grandmother, "Mrs. Ola, Travis is okay, we are just talking."

He then turned to me and said, "Travis, I'll see you later."

My grandmother fussed at me all day about talking to Mr. Gene like that and said I was being hardheaded.

The next month came and Mr. Gene walked into the house and said, "Hey Mrs. Ola."

She responded like normal.

Then Mr. Gene asked, "Where is Travis?"

She seemed surprised that he asked.

She said, "He's in the back room."

Mr. Gene asked her if he could see me. She called me up there.

Mr. Gene asked how I was doing and how my school year was going.

From that day on, Mr. Gene and I built a relationship out of conversations and respect. And he never went into our pots or called my grandma "Ola" again.

See, at nine years old I understood the power of relationships. Those relationships and respect taught me that it was never about color or what political party you were a part of. It was always about respect, building relationships, and treating people with decency.

I understood that Relationships matter by building a relationship with governor kemp gave me the opportunity to bring leader-together Democrats, Republicans, local business owners, supporters of Brian Kemp, and even people who disagreed with him into the same room for honest conversations and people left with newfound respect for Governor Kemp. Through conversations Because relationships matter.

Because of those relationships, New Jobs opportunities started coming to Americus.

I now understand why Mr. Marty McDonald took me to my first semi-professional baseball game and treated me with such kindness and respect amongst all the other kids that didn't look like me. He made sure that I had everything that they had throughout the baseball game. He taught me how to be respectful to people I didn't know and how to build relationships with them. Now I understand that he was preparing me to be in arenas amongst strangers and still be myself while being respected by others.

I now understand why Mrs. Juanita Wilson used to invite us to her house, have snacks for us, and lecture us about the importance of being good people and believing in ourselves. She knew those snacks would keep us there. She used those snacks to make sure we came to her house and stayed out of trouble. Now I understand that she was preparing us to understand that sometimes love, guidance, and protection comes in small acts that change lives forever.

Now I understand that I was getting prepared for who I would become.

I now understand why my mother protected me from the wrath of my neighborhood and made me stop hanging with friends that were getting into trouble. I now understand why she made sure I wasn't afraid to stand tall and speak my mind on what I thought was right.

I now understand why my grandmother would take food out of our refrigerator and send it to family in the country who didn't have food. She was preparing me to understand the importance of helping others, even though I would get mad because we would have to eat boiled chicken, rice, and bologna for the last week of the month.

Now I understand why I learned how to be a man from my best friend's father, Mr. Terrell Coley. He was preparing me to be a great father and husband to my wife and kids.

I now understand why my grandmother would say, "You just like your grandfather Buddy Bell." She would say it in a mean spirit, but it manifested into something great because my grandfather, David Sylvester Bell, was one of the best businessmen in Sumter County.

I now understand why Ms. Mansfield introduced politics to me. She was preparing me for this very moment.

I now understand why Mr. Clyde A. McGrady didn't kick me out of school for being the leader of a gang. I now understand why he said, "Take the handcuffs off of him." He said he was going to save me because I was special and he saw something in me. He was preparing me to create an alternative school for kids that were kicked out or simply needed a change of scenery.

I now understand why my wife Angela allowed me to be myself and lead our family. She was preparing me to be a leader amongst men.

I now understand why Mrs. PATRICIA Jackson would redirect me when I got upset and ready to lash out. She would say, "Find another way. You have bigger things to do. Don't let that ruin you."

Now I understand why Mrs. Wallace would say, "You are the vision." She was preparing me to lay out our plans for this very moment.

I now understand that I'm a vessel with many tentacles attached people, lessons, pain, love, correction, and preparation all connected and preparing me to be a beacon of solutions for all people.

I understand now that my entire life has been preparing me for this very moment. I understand now that God placed those people and events in my life for this purpose.

Now that I am prepared for this moment, I will lead with my skills for District 151.

And when people ask me what my plan is for District 151, I tell them this:

It's not just my plan... it's our plan.

My role is to use my values, my leadership, and my business experience to bring people together across Southwest Georgia to unite, to listen, and to build real solutions that reflect all of us.

When we plan together, we create job opportunities, we work toward lowering crime, we improve healthcare access, we strengthen education, and we support our farmers and local economy.

It's not as much about my plan...

It's about our plan to grow and move District 151 and Southwest Georgia forward together.

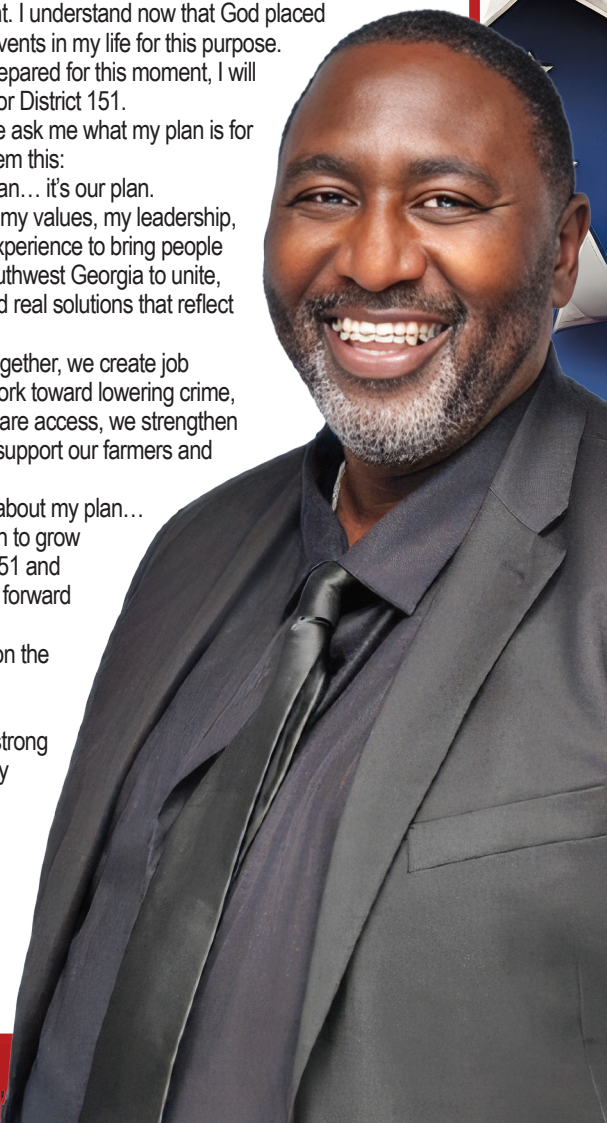
But our focus is on the people.

So who am I?

I'm the son of a strong young woman, Mary Lockhart, and Ray Bell.

And I am built to be your State Representative.

I AM TRAVIS LOCKHART.



Travis Lockhart for State House District 151 DARE TO BE DIFFERENT!!!