



Perspectives
DICK YARBROUGH
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Top player
Dougherty's Joyner
shines
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ALBANYHERALD.COM

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2026

Weather conditions, water usage lead to dried-up Radium Springs



Staff Photos: Tara Fletcher
Sections of Radium Springs in south Dougherty County had completely dried up before soaking rains came to the area over the weekend. Fish and other wildlife are dying, and the water at Radium Springs had reached dangerously low levels before weekend rains brought some relief to drought conditions in southwest Georgia.



By Carlton Fletcher & Tara Fletcher
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ALBANY -- With experts at the United States University offering the warning that "the world has entered an era of global water bankruptcy" and that "human demand has

permanently exceeded nature's ability to replenish freshwater systems," the virtually dried run of Radium Springs in south Dougherty County, once lauded as one of Georgia's "Eight Natural Wonders," takes on an even more ominous tone. And while local experts like

Flint Riverkeeper board member emeritus and retired engineer David Dixon and Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division Fisheries Supervisor Rob Wueller say the occurrence is not exactly something new, they do note that issues that lead to the ab-

sence of water at Radium are preventable. "The loss of water is typical of what happens when there is a dry spell or a drought -- and we are in a drought right now, despite the recent rain," Dixon, who has extensive knowledge of the history and natural fac-

ulties of the waterway, said. "The last one I can remember the springs being dried to that extent was around 2011. "We have to deal with the fact that we are in a drought, and farmers are still irrigating with water from the Floridan aquifer and Procter & Gamble

is using a lot of water from the aquifer." Wueller, who said changing weather patterns also play a part in the loss of water at Radium, was reluctant to place blame on any specific group, but he said the loss of water is

See **RADIUM**, 2A

Lee County schools seek higher property taxes:

The costs, choices and questions ahead

By Kathryn Crockett
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LEESBURG — Lee County property owners face a proposed school tax increase that district leaders say would restore savings, help replace expiring sales tax revenue and cover rising costs. For residents preparing to speak at public hearings, the decision involves both protecting school services and understanding how much additional money is needed now. The school board proposes raising its operating rate from 15.96 to 18.96 mills, an increase of 3 mills, or about 18.8%. On a property with \$100,000 in taxable assessed value, that would add \$300 to the annual school operating tax, assuming the taxable value remains unchanged. The advertised 28.7% increase uses a different comparison: the proposed rate against the 14.732-mill rollback rate, which adjusts for reassessment

increases in existing property. Neither percentage predicts every taxpayer's bill, which also depends on assessed value and exemptions. The operating rate is the one school tax voters do not decide directly. Georgia's constitution lets a school

board set it on its own, up to 20 mills. **What voters already approved** The operating tax proposal is separate from the education sales taxes and construction borrowing voters

See **TAXES**, 2A



File Photo
The Lee County Board of Education office in Leesburg is where residents can attend public hearings on a proposal to raise the school operating tax rate from 15.96 to 18.96 mills.



Staff Photo: Alan Mauldin
United Way of Southwest Georgia President and CEO Orson Burton Jr. addressed the Dougherty County Commission on Monday.

United Way seeks funding from county for summer program

By Alan Mauldin
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ALBANY — In the wake of its first year of providing summer activities to Dougherty County youngsters, the United Way of Southwest Georgia is seeking to line up funding for 2027. On Monday, the agency made a pitch to the Dougherty County Commission for \$100,000 for next summer. "We are here today because we are starting to serve families for 2027," United Way President and CEO Orson Burton

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Periodical — Mail Label

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From 1A

RADIUM

mostly a “man-made” issue.

“I’ve only seen the springs dry up like this three or four times,” Wueller said. “There was another where there was a fish kill like we’re seeing now around 2008, and I think there was extreme drought in 2015. Weather patterns have changed, and that’s part of it. We’re still getting the same amount of rainfall, but it’s coming at different times.

“Certainly, farming use and the use by companies that get their water from the Floridan are part of the issues, but I hate to point fingers. Some of the possible influence here could come from miles away.”

Radium Springs was purchased by DNR after the Flood of 1998, the second “500-year flood” that hit the area in a

four-year period.

Dougherty County Public Works Director Chuck Mathis said the initial concern around the springs drying up, a fish kill that left a large number of residents of the springs’ cold waters dead, had, as DNR officials had predicted, taken care of itself.

“(DNR) said fish and other scavengers would eat the dead fish, and that’s what’s happened,” Mathis said. “That issue has been cleared up. But seeing the springs pretty much dried up is an ongoing concern.

“The primary underlying issue here is water usage from the Floridan Aquifer. We’ve got to address issues like this, especially in drought conditions. We need to use this as an educational opportunity.”

The U.S. Drought Monitor notes that Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah and New Mexico are currently experiencing fresh water shortages, while several

other states -- including Georgia -- are seeing much lower levels of fresh water. In September, Drought.gov reported that 59.38% of the lower 48 states are in drought, including 33% of Georgia.

“Extreme heat and widespread drought are a problem all over the world, including the U.S.,” officials with the Yale Climate Connection note. “These things cause depleted groundwater supplies, with the remaining water supplies increasing in temperature, which causes the chemistry of the water to change, leading to contamination.”

DNR’s Wueller says that despite the optics at Radium Springs now, there is no reason to panic.

“If we get a significant amount of rain, the Springs will bounce right back,” he said. “And, if conditions allow, it won’t take long for the Springs to return to normal.”

From 1A

FUNDING

Jr. said. “Next summer, we are looking to reach at least 2,500 with a goal of 3,000. We wanted to come to y’all early to see if it was your pleasure to (participate).”

The city of Albany provided the bulk of funding for 2026 in the amount of \$350,000. The County Commission did not contribute, but the Dougherty County Sheriff’s Office did increase the number of participants in its annual summer program to help offset the loss of the National Youth Sports Program, which had operated at Albany State University for much of five decades.

During the first summer, the United Way program reached 2,140 youngsters, with 1,860 formally enrolled and representing 1,281 families, according to the agency. Of those, 280 were experiencing homelessness.

Out of those served, 643 received fee subsidies that totaled

\$40,312, and nearly 60,000 meals and snacks were served. The program lasted for 10 weeks and included physical and educational activities.

For the effort, the United Way worked with 18 area organizations, including some that have previously offered summer activities. Among those was Swim For Life, a program initiated by Dougherty County Coroner Michael Fowler which had its 11th season this year.

Commissioner Victor Edwards said that he does not want the summer initiative to duplicate services that were already being provided.

“One hundred thousand (dollars) ain’t even where I am,” he said. “We have Swim For Life that we fund. I don’t need you to charge me \$100 to oversee Swim For Life. I don’t need your oversight for the sheriff’s office.”

Responding to a question from Edwards, Burton said that the administrative costs for the 2026 program were 14.1% of total costs.

The numbers indicated that

a good portion of total spending did not go to the various camps supported by the initiative, Commissioner Russell Gray said, with administrative, enrollment and other costs eating into the total spent directly on programs.

“At the end of the day, I think we need to find another way to more efficiently get funding to youth,” Gray said.

The expenditures included grants to camps to allow them to expand their programs as well as the subsidies provided to students to allow them to afford the program, Burton said.

“United Way of Southwest Georgia was not a beneficiary of the administrative and operational funds,” he said. “We spent the bulk on programs.”

For next summer’s program, the agency plans to request funding from the city for a second year of operation as well as the Dougherty County School System, Burton said. Burton addressed the Albany City Commission on Tuesday to give the final report for the summer’s activities.

SCAN CODE TO
VIEW SPORTS ONLINE



From 1A

TAXES

previously authorized. Those existing obligations do not disappear because a renewal fails.

An education special-purpose local-option sales tax, commonly called E-SPLOST, adds 1% to taxable purchases and supports authorized capital projects and eligible debt. Its proceeds cannot cover ordinary operating expenses such as teacher salaries.

“Salaries? No,” Lee School Superintendent Kathleen Truitt said in an interview with The Albany Herald. “You can buy buses, buildings, parking lots, capital things.”

Voters approved E-SPLOST V in 2016, authorizing up to \$19.5 million. The district’s project schedules show it paid for:

New buses, \$4.19 million, and

air-conditioning retrofits for existing buses, about \$490,000.

Flooring and bathroom work at Lee County High School, \$4.08 million.

A track, \$3.13 million, initially estimated at \$1 million, and tennis courts, about \$1.51 million, initially estimated at \$600,000.

Paving the bus yard, \$2.49 million.

Kinchafoonee Primary School renovations, including a new roof, \$1.26 million.

High school athletic facilities, about \$3.1 million in Fiscal 2024, following about \$344,000 in earlier work.

Smaller items, including \$166,363 in technology, \$65,940 at Lee County Middle School West and a \$13,425 livestock trailer.

About \$2.88 million in interest and costs on bonds repaid with the tax.

Those cost differences warrant explanations of changes in scope, bids and funding sources. They do not, by themselves, establish improper spending. Several projects cost more than their ballot estimates. The schedules note that project spending can include state money and local property taxes as well as sales tax.

Voters approved E-SPLOST VI in 2020, authorizing up to \$25 million. Collections began Oct. 1, 2022. Under the special education tax, the district completed Lee County Primary School renovations and a bus loop for the Ninth Grade Campus at a reported cost of \$20.19 million, compared with an original \$13.5 million estimate.

Its Fiscal 2025 schedule also lists a \$13 million high school gym with an estimated October 2026 completion date.

The state audit reports that the district sold \$10.63 million in previously authorized bonds in August 2025 for the gym and expected about \$1.2 million in state assistance.

Why losing the sales tax matters

On May 19, voters rejected a renewal that would have continued the tax for up to five more years, raised up to \$38 million and allowed up to \$10 million in new bonds.

The existing tax continues until it reaches its authorized limit. Through September, E-SPLOST VI had collected about \$21.1 million, and at its recent pace of roughly \$493,000 a month, the district expects collections to end in May or June 2027 after reaching the \$25 million cap.

“When you hit your 25 million, you’re done,” Truitt said.

The district projects about \$4 million in lost collections during the gap, even if voters approve another sales tax in November 2027.

“We are set to lose eight months, or \$4 million of revenue,” Truitt said.

She said the proposed tax increase would replace part of that amount and cover higher fuel costs.

The district’s own worksheet, based on last year’s usage, projects bus fuel would run \$195,831 over budget if diesel averages \$5 a gallon and \$494,163 over if it averages \$7.

The district has not said how much of the \$3.48 million raised by the proposed 2.15 mills would go to building projects and how much to operating costs such as fuel. The difference matters because E-SPLOST money can be used only for construction, equipment and debt payments, not day-to-day expenses like fuel. A future E-SPLOST could support authorized construction and equipment, but it could not replace fuel spending.

Truitt argues that sales taxes spread costs beyond property owners to shoppers and visitors.

“When you have E-SPLOST, everybody who spends a dime in Lee County helped pay for that,” she said. “Our revenue funds locally are limited to property tax and E-SPLOST, and so without one, you only have the other.”

Property taxes place the direct bill on property owners, although tenants can also bear costs through rent. Sales taxes reach more purchasers, including residents who do not own property. The choice affects how costs are distributed as well as how much revenue is collected.

Rejecting the renewal removed a proposed revenue source. It did not approve the current property tax proposal or settle which future projects should proceed, be delayed or be reduced.

How the district gets to 18.96 mills

The district’s own breakdown

has four parts:

14.32 mills, about \$23.2 million, to fund the 2027 budget adopted in June.

2.02 mills, about \$3.3 million, to rebuild reserves after refunds tied to a 2025 assessment error.

2.15 mills, \$3.48 million, to partly replace lost E-SPLOST money and cover higher fuel costs.

About 0.46 mill, roughly \$748,000, for the 2.5% fee the county charges to bill and collect the tax.

The district also cited a \$500,000 special education need, which is not included in that total.

Reserves, staffing and the meaning of a budget cut

The refund behind the second item totaled \$3.28 million. Reserves help pay salaries and other bills while the district waits for tax revenue, and provide a cushion for emergencies. In business terms, they serve as working capital, helping the school system avoid short-term borrowing and keep services running.

How much to keep and how quickly to restore it are separate decisions for the school board.

Georgia law now caps a school system’s statutory reserve account at 25% of its annual budget, following a 2026 change from 15%. That is a ceiling, not a requirement to maintain that amount, and the district’s own policy sets a goal of at least 7% of spending. Neither requires the district to rebuild its balance in a single year.

The published Fiscal 2027 budget planned to use about \$7.7 million of general fund balance after transfers, starting from an assumed \$14 million. The district’s subsequent Fiscal 2026 financial statement reports a general fund ending balance of about \$11.56 million.

Those figures reflect an earlier budget assumption and a later financial report, rather than an updated forecast under the proposed tax rate. The district would need to reconcile them to show its expected available balance, cash-flow needs and the amount it proposes to restore.

Truitt said declining enrollment had already led the district to reduce teaching positions.

“When enrollment went down, we needed 11.6 less teaching positions, and so we reduced those,” she said. “But then the cost of benefits went up in the state, so that we can’t control.”

Reducing positions does not necessarily reduce total personnel spending. It lowers salary costs from what they otherwise would have been, but higher insurance and retirement contributions can offset those savings. Likewise, a smaller overall budget can reflect the completion of a construction project while everyday operating costs continue to rise.

The HVAC decision and existing balances

One major need is replacing much of the high school’s heating and air-conditioning equipment. Truitt said the system still works but is nearing the end of its expected life.

“It’s not that we’re sweating over there right now,” she said. “You can delay it till it breaks. And then there is no choice.”

Truitt said delaying one repair can push back others.

“If you spread out the funds that you need for air conditioning at the high school over five years, then I’ve kicked that roof project five years too late,” she said.

Replacing equipment before it fails can help avoid emergency work and classroom disruption. Evaluating the timing requires a condition assessment, expected remaining life, project schedule and cost of alternatives.

The state does not set a schedule for replacing school air-conditioning systems or other building components. It does require local participation funds to be available when a district submits a state capital outlay application, and regular state entitlements accumulate from year to year. Those rules alone do not establish a deadline for this particular project; that depends on its application and funding conditions.

For the Lee County High School HVAC project, the state would pay \$2,065,801 and the district \$5,909,346, based on an architect’s estimate of \$7,975,147.

Waiting does not automatically forfeit state money. Each district’s state construction credit builds up year to year, and the district can draw on that credit later for eligible projects. But if the local money isn’t ready when the district needs to apply, the project and the state’s share wait with it.

The district’s Fiscal 2026 statement reports about \$17.53 million in capital projects fund balance and \$10.05 million in debt service fund balance. Those amounts are not automatically available for HVAC. The capital fund received construction bond proceeds during the year, while the debt service fund supports repayment obligations. Existing sales tax proceeds must also follow their authorized purposes.

Existing debt and when the bond tax could rise

The state audit reports \$17.23 million in outstanding bonds as of June 30, 2025, before the gym bond sale: \$6.49 million on 2014 bonds, with a final payment in February 2034, and \$10.74 million on 2022 bonds, with a final payment in February 2030.

E-SPLOST pays those bonds first. If it falls short, the audit says, the debt “will be satisfied from a direct annual ad valorem tax levied upon all taxable property within the school district.” That bond tax is separate from the operating rate now under consideration. For the 2024 tax year, it was 0.80 mill and

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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Today could be a powerful day for a relationship but only with this caveat: Don't begin anything new that you want to last. Stars dip below zero tomorrow, impacting the future timeline of anything started today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Since tomorrow's day score slides below zero, today's the last decent day of this business week. Do it today or wait until mid-next week for better odds. Employ creative solutions to get things done.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Creativity could remain enhanced for several more days but the quality of the inspiration might not continue the whole time. To paraphrase Dolly, figure out who you are and do it on purpose.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Home and roots can provide the foundation from which you can soar. If you didn't get a solid childhood, you can still build a strong base for yourself, it's never too late. Foundation is the first step to freedom.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Financial fears don't bring abundance but don't beat yourself up if you have them. It takes a lot of self-work to shift frequency enough to trust and be magnetic. Keep doing the work, give the Universe time to catch up.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): When you finally land on your truest presentation of self, anxieties fall away. Alignment is like that — when you're truly there, doubts can't continue. Trust that you can bring it all together and bring it all home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Fears chase you if you run but can dissolve under the clear light of inner attention and scrutiny. When you see the truth of who you are, you can begin to live in accordance with your authenticity.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A brief concern about a friend or about a friendship could be fading, which could be a relief. When you unearth a new understanding, take time to see how its full effect

ripples outward.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A career worry could have already peaked and begun to dissolve. When you bring your best self to something, inner gratification can be the reward even if others don't see your contribution.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): If an online organization or social channel stirs your fears, it's not helping you and it could be manipulating you. Fearful people are easy to control. Learn to do critical thinking and only take on board what can help you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Financial decisions made today could be overly influenced by assumptions or anxiety, and with stars sinking tomorrow also, a money move is not recommended now. Stage for later this month.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Clarity is the first step. Waiting for right timing is the next step. While you may see the solution, wait a few weeks to roll it out. You might make a deeper than usual connection with someone close today.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Saying 'goodbye' to what's gone before in 2026 will probably be a relief, more good is likely to come along for the remainder of the year. Your clarity and insights could be top tier now, note down anything and everything. If asked to join anything belief-based, consider carefully beforehand. Early November could bring a new opportunity worth consideration or improved income from something existing. Think it through before you go with it. Also in November, don't, do not, make a dummy move that could tempt you for a nanosecond. A nice windfall could drop just after. Early December could put this holiday season over the top, as many needed resources could drop, including plenty of money. When it's time, the Universe brings everything you need. The month, and the year, end with resolution and healing, and rising to your highest potentials.

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

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

"OY T GLPABD CTUXA OD VKL CBBIA
TDI UOAVLDA NTPLYJUUZ, KL NTD
ULTPD WBPL VKTD CKTV OA OD
QBBXA." — RLBPRL CTAKODRVBD
NTPMLP

Previous Solution: "I don't think anyone ever knows what's going to be good television ... I do what I do because it interests me." — Christopher Guest

TODAY'S CLUE: 1 sjenbe 0

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CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

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

"GH GUG TVB V BEZRYI GUG VZP BWI
... RVOI SM WIX PXIVGB AU GVJI BSXI
BWI FUSYP AVJI GI AU GH VSPEAEUZZ
VZP BSMMLUXA GI." — VZRIYEZV NUYEI

Previous Solution: "If a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books." — George Washington Carver

TODAY'S CLUE: 1 sjenbe 3

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Another flaw in the human character is that everybody wants to build and nobody wants to do maintenance."

Kurt Vonnegut,
writer (1922-2007)

CORRECTION

This newspaper is committed to publishing fair and accurate information. Errors should be brought to the attention of Editor Carlton Fletcher at (229) 888-9300. Corrections or clarifications will appear in this space.

SQUAWKBOX

squawkbox@albanyherald.com

I love downtown, but it is ridiculous that our mayor, city manager and commissioners can't understand why the Civic Center doesn't make money. Albany's law enforcement agencies aren't visible in our community daily, much less at large events. They have given weak "slap-on-the-wrist" responses to crime episodes for 10 years. Criminals know you can get away with most anything in Albany. Just look at the behavior across the street from APD headquarters. This is failed leadership at its worst.

Why would the city of All Benny need to build a new conference center? All Benny has a civic center that can't be filled.

I don't really hold their illegal thieving against our elected officials. They're like the scorpion in that old story: It's what they do. What's more sickening to me are the people who make excuses for them, even when they know they're thieving, because of political party, race or church affiliation.

Construction of a new Civic Center is about the dumbest idea this commission has. suggested in years, and that is saying something.

Great article on county taxation, who pays and who doesn't. Given the facts, will we see less criticism of the county commission? Particularly noting that it isn't Heard's church that receives the greatest no-tax benefit? I doubt it, as facts and truth don't matter to some. Just their ax to grind.

The psychology department of Albany State University belongs in Allied Health, not Social Science.

If your pastor is telling you who to vote for, consider that a huge red flag. Mr Pastor really just wants the cash in your wallet. And the commissioner they tell you to vote for is going to take it from you. Just look at the scammers yelling at each other on the county commission. You are better off thinking for yourself, and switching to a church that doesn't steal from you.

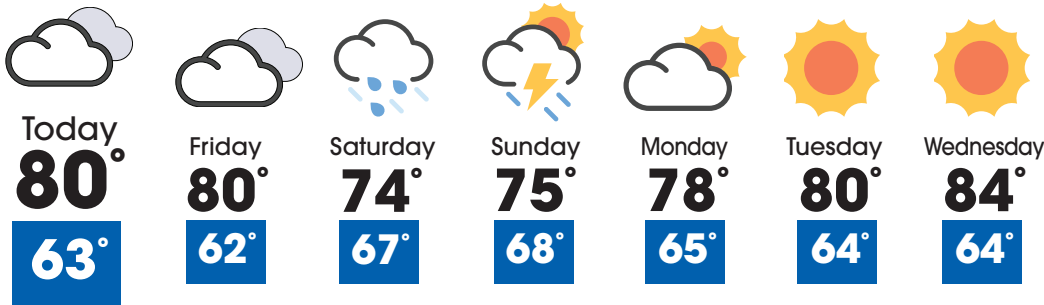
I have watched Sydney Sweeny's new TV commercial several times and still don't know what she is advertising.

No one can afford to cruise Slappey now. Trump's fake war has gas prices way too high.

Does anybody know how much money the city is wasting on the Civic Center, Civil Rights Museum and the RiverQuarium?

Here is a crazy one. Some people are so upset that immigrants are coming to America that they actually say if there was a country they could move to that did not take immigrants they would move there. First, no such country exists. But most of all, you would be considered an immigrant if there was such a country which, would not allow you to live there.

Weather Forecast

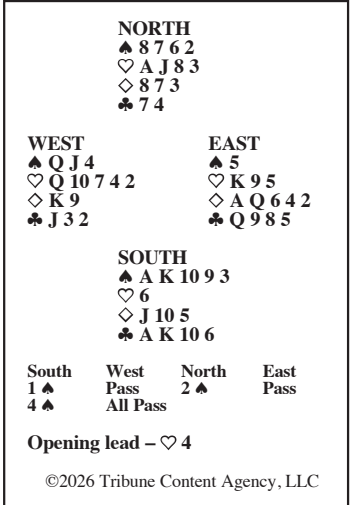


Daily Bridge Club

Insurmountable?

By Frank Stewart
Tribune Content Agency

"We are confronted with insurmountable opportunities."
-- Pogo.
Declarer's task at today's four



Frank Stewart

spades seems insurmountable: He has three diamonds and a trump to lose. A diamond opening lead would let the defense prevail, but West isn't up to leading the king from K-9; he leads a low heart.

In my club's penny game, South took the ace of hearts and cashed the A-K of trumps. East discarded, so South went down one. Could he surmount his problem?

COMPRESS

South can compress his four losers into three. He must ruff a heart at Trick Two, then cash the the top trumps. When East shows out, declarer takes the A-K of clubs, ruffs a club in dummy, ruffs a heart and leads his last club.

West can't gain by ruffing with

his high trump -- dummy would pitch a diamond -- so West discards, and dummy ruffs. South has won nine tricks. He ruffs dummy's last heart, winning his 10th trick when West must follow. The defenders' trump trick and diamond tricks clash on the last three tricks.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: S 5 H K 9 5 D A Q 6 4 2 C Q 9 8 5. The dealer, at your left, opens one spade. Two passes follow. What do you say?

ANSWER: You must not sell out to one spade; your side may have a makeable partscore or game. Double. A few players would double one spade in the direct position, but in the "balancing" position, to double is clear. Partner must realize that you may have stretched to act to prevent the opponents from buying the contract cheaply. South dealer Both sides vulnerable

Advice Columnist

Florida heat might cause wife to leave husband

By Eric Thomas
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: I have been in central Florida for more than 26 years, and it has become unbearable to me. There's the brutal heat; the skin destroying UV-rays of that miserable, scorching, eye-blinding sun; the constant allergy/sinusitis issues that NEVER let up; the smothering humidity. The sun is here all year.

If you dare to venture out for a walk during the day, you have to wear long sleeves, long pants, a big, brimmed sunhat, a face full of sunscreen and carry a sun umbrella. This is paradise?

It's impossible to talk about it to my husband of 51 years; he is always cold, puts the A/C at 80 degrees in the house, and walks around with a sweatshirt or flannel shirt on.

I have a 12-year-old rescue dog, a big black German Shepherd. I have limited income and want to move much further north, but I don't want to jeopardize the stable home I can give her here.

I am at the point that I dread waking up every morning only to see that intense Florida sun that keeps me in the house most of the day. I could leave my husband, but I CANNOT leave this vulnerable, loyal, loving creature that is by my side 24/7.

Because of my limited income, it would be rough finding a place that is safe and secure for me and my dog.

I'm basically a very friendly, outgoing person, and living here is like being under house arrest. What should I do to preserve my health and sanity until such time that I can get a car and drive out of

this place?

— Too Hot

Dear Hot: While you technically can't outrun the sun — it does have a way of finding us — and the impacts of climate change are being felt the world over, it may help to attack this issue in pieces.

First, some immediate relief: is there a friend or relative who lives in a cooler place and would let you and your dog visit for a week or more? As fall progresses, this might be the perfect time to get away for a bit to clear your head. This wouldn't require you to leave your home or your marriage but could turn the heat down on the problem for a moment.

Consider talking to your husband about whether he actually likes Florida or just likes warm weather. If it's the latter, there might be other places that suit you both better.

Lastly, if you do decide you need to make a permanent move, look seriously at your finances and perhaps enlist friends or relatives to help you find a suitable place to live in a cooler climate. Without knowing what your income is or what your living situation is in Florida, I can't say for sure that there are similar places in other parts of the country for you and your dog, but it's true that people of all income levels afford lives with pets in every state. So, it may take some creative thinking, but it is possible to find a new home, if you need to.

Dear Eric: I am writing in reference to the letter by "Mourning Mom", whose son said he wouldn't honor her burial wishes.



Eric Thomas

A possible solution to her problem could be a prepaid funeral. If she has a trusted funeral service provider, she can set up a contract and prepay for her funeral. These contracts allow you to stipulate your preferences as to cremation or another type of service.

As to the cremation you can decide if you want a "direct to cremation." This means your remains are collected from the hospital and taken directly to the crematorium. There is no embalming or casket.

Or, you can also choose to have an open casket for visitation and viewing with cremation following the service. In this instance you can rent a casket for the viewing.

The contract also allows you to choose your urn for cremation, location of the service, location of the burial, the songs you wish sung, the person you wish to perform the service and any other items you wish to state. You can even write your own obituary for the mortuary to keep on file.

You pay up front and the money is invested by the mortuary. Depending on the length of time between when you sign the contract and pay and the time it is used, your money collects interest. If there is any money left over it is turned over to the estate. This could avoid problems with the location of a will in time so that your wishes would be carried out.

— I'm All Set

Dear All Set: This is very comprehensive and quite helpful. A great option for the letter writer and, I'm sure, other readers as well.

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

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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

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LOCAL NEWS

TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

Psalms 62:5

COLUMNIST ■ MARC HYDEN

Data center disinformation proliferates across Georgia

Georgia recently emerged as one of the country's fastest growing data center markets, and Atlanta in particular has the second-biggest market. Only Northern Virginia surpasses it, but maybe not for long. Developers are slated to build several new, massive data centers in Georgia, and the outrage is as palpable as it is misinformed.

Data center opponents raise numerous concerns, ranging from the projects allegedly using too much water, increasing residential electricity rates and not giving enough back to communities. Some complaints even border on the absurd, including claiming data centers cause diabetes. They don't, by the way.

The rhetoric ratchets up as data centers scale up. As it stands, "Georgia has 227 tracked data center facilities and projects: 114 operational, 17 under construction, 88 planned, 1 paused, and 7 inactive or historical," according to U.S. Data Center Map.

Over the summer, OpenAI announced plans to build a \$20 billion data center campus in Effingham County. On the same day, official paperwork disclosed plans for a \$13 billion data center in Clayton County and a \$1 billion data center expansion in LaGrange. Not long after, Columbia County approved Google's proposed \$17 billion data center investment.

Sure, this sounds like a lot. In some ways it is, but these increasingly seem more like life rafts than millstones. Thanks to the Effingham County agreement, "OpenAI is projected to become the county's largest taxpayer," according to the Atlanta Journal Constitution.

The Columbia County deal is poised to do even more. "Columbia County has approved a memorandum of understanding for the project, which officials say could eventually help eliminate [the county] portion of homeowners' property tax bills," according to a report.

So data-center development has the potential to eliminate certain taxes, subsidize taxpayers and help fund essentials, like public schools. Data center dis-senters often downplay those tidbits, but raise other issues, like energy and water usage.

One of the top concerns is that residential electricity ratepayers will have to subsidize the buildout of new power plants to run data centers. They do, after all, consume a lot of electricity, and I presume few ratepayers would agree to underwrite data centers' energy needs. The Legislature has debated measures to impose ratepayer protections, and the good news is that data centers increasingly want to build their own power plants, including one in Newton County.

Even without these private pop-up power plants,

data centers are poised to bring electricity rates down. Georgia Power projected that the addition of large energy users like data centers will result in residential ratepayers seeing up to \$180 in savings annually by 2029. This is consistent with national data too.

"Increasing electricity demand has gone hand in hand with lower electricity prices, and a doubling of data center capacity has been estimated to reduce residential electric rates by 4%," my R Street colleague Josiah Neeley wrote. That's because they spread out the price of stranded costs among more users.

Perhaps naysayers will concede this point, but they quickly pivot to data center water usage as if they are on the precipice of creating a post-apocalyptic waterless wasteland. Some data centers use quite a bit to cool their systems, but maybe not as much as you think.

"California's almond farms consume 4.2 billion gallons of water per day [...] Data centers consume just 46 million gallons per day. Those numbers will certainly rise over time, but compared to all the other things that use water — golf courses account for 1.4 billion gallons per day — it's just a drop in the bucket," Yahoo! News pointed out. Despite this, nobody is calling for a moratorium on almonds or golf courses, nor should they.

Data center water usage might soon become a non-issue anyway. Other cooling systems exist, like closed-loop systems that reuse the same water and gel-cooled systems that need minimal water. Dozens of other data centers use reclaimed wastewater for coolant, leaving the clean water supply entirely intact. These could become the norm.

The data center industry receives ample criticism, but the biggest problems surrounding it, other than the rampant disinformation, stems from misguided government regulation. This is not unique to the data center industry, but is pretty consistent across all industries. Government loves to meddle in private enterprise and isn't very good at it.

These are the things for policy nerds like me to mull, but data centers are indispensable to virtually every single one of my readers. If you use a bank, social media, Google or Apple maps, email service providers like Yahoo! or Google, or any number of other pedestrian activities, then you rely on data centers, which some people demonize even as they use them.

Data centers are vital, and as the research suggests, they might also lower your property tax and utility rate exposure and don't give you diabetes. That sounds like a pretty good deal.



HYDEN

COLUMNIST ■ RALPH NADER

What will it take to convince Trump to resign if Democrats take Congress?

It is hard to read Trump's mind, what with his chronic lies, delusions, and fake promises. His incentives to finish his term are numerous — pomp and ceremony, daily vengeance, judicial immunity, Democratic leaders, for now, opposing impeachment and immensely enriching himself using the punishing or rewarding powers of the presidency.

The rewards are insatiable. This failed businessman, riven with debts and losses, revealed in his 2025 financial disclosures a profit of \$1.1 million an hour on a 40-hour week. He probably will reap more dollars in 2026, which he has ensured would be non-taxable by his captured IRS.

Then, what could be the counter factors in his mind for resignation? Foremost, he is exhausted physically and mentally, declining at an accelerating rate, worrying his physicians and family. Over 30 prominent mental health professionals — some with expert witness credentials in courts — and physicians have observed his deterioration in a disciplined statement read into the Congressional Record on April 30 by Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse and Jack Reed. Trump yearns for more R&R and golf and less grueling travel requirements.

Second, he would avoid the many investigations the Democrats would launch against his administration, coupled with negative headlines, disclosures by whistleblowers, congressional subpoenas, and charges of contempt of Congress.

Third, it resolves a messy presidential primary race by installing J.D. Vance, his present choice as successor, as a president who would maintain a compliant Department of Justice and, crucially, maintain loyalty to Trump across the board in his regime. This continuity might mitigate his base blaming him for November's losses, since he demanded that the GOP candidates pretend that he is on the ballot. Trump cannot stand the shrinking of his MAGA base, plus the departure of his bone-tired, super loyal personal staff.

Fourth, his military intelligence and domestic advisors are briefing him on what is likely to

come. Troubling scenarios would land on his desk for responses and decisions. They include the arrival of deadly drones, runaway AI Frankensteins, a possible pandemic, more intensive storms, floods, droughts and mega wildfires, all pressures that he can try but not succeed in avoiding.

Moreover, there is a broad consensus that his deficits and national debt are surging from runaway military spending, corporate welfare, giveaways, huge tax reductions, and evasions by the super-rich and mega-corporations that will raise the hated interest rates everywhere.

Fifth, he is confident he can declare victory on every front, domestic and foreign, with rhetoric that he has been honing for years. He can say he has accomplished his pledges to the American people, showing his list of "promises made and promises kept." He can claim that it is time to hand the great future of America to a younger generation of Republicans led by a new president, J.D. Vance, who is in his 40s.

Though contrary to his past boasts of being in "excellent health," he could invoke "Drs. Orders" and wanting to spend more time with his family. Melania would certainly not object to this kind of resignation. She has not liked at all the limelight of being the first lady and knows that the coming two years are going to be much more stressful for her and her husband.

Trump, having lost much of his leverage, knows he can't even appear to accomplish much in 2027 and 2028, in addition to having lost his power to nominate toady judges through a Democratic Senate. Just as the obstinate Richard Nixon saw his Republican base shrinking in Congress, for a sliver of the serious impeachable offenses that Trump commits daily and boastfully. Remember Nixon resigned in 1974, saying he had lost his base of protection in Congress.

Given Trump's propensity to double down on his crazed, often violent provocations abroad and in American cities, his base in Congress may similarly diminish and make a resignation of lame duck Donald involuntary.



NADER

COLUMNIST ■ DICK YARBROUGH

Okefenokee mining controversy hasn't gone away

A bit of an update: It has been a little more than two months since the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site and to my knowledge, the United Nations has not installed a One World curriculum in the Charlton County school system or begun microchipping stray cats in Ware County.

In fact, a check of other cities in the U.S. that have World Heritage Sites seem to indicate they have successfully resisted a U.N. takeover, although there are rumors that the local buffalo in Yellowstone have been acting a bit strangely lately. You just never know what buffalos might be up to.

As for the Okefenokee, all seems well except that the issue of mining the area for titanium dioxide so that the world never runs short of toothpaste whitener still remains a possibility. We seem to be in a temporary timeout.

Much will depend on how important the issue is to our new governor, be it Republican Rick Jackson

or Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms. Neither has mentioned mining the Okefenokee thus far that I am aware of. I hope someone will remember to ask them.

The key, of course, is the Legislature. How much pressure will they feel from pro-mining or from anti-mining forces? I remind you that in a democracy, all political decisions are made with either the application of pressure or its absence. So far, it has been a stalemate. In a clumsy effort to absolve themselves of having to take the heat, legislators tried to cop out from making a decision by claiming it was for the bureaucrats in the state Environmental Protection Division to decide. Your reaction, along with many others, put the heat right back where it belongs, on the people we elected, not unelected bureaucrats.

Bipartisan efforts to institute a permanent ban or even a temporary moratorium on drilling were bottled up in the House Natural Resources Committee and never saw the light of day, thanks to its

chair, Lynn Smith, R-Newnan, who never saw fit to respond to your questions as to why. Thankfully, she is history. The Sphinx has retired.

"Chairwoman Smith has established a legislative legacy that will safeguard the environment and natural treasures across our state for future generations to cherish," intoned House Speaker Jon Burns. Oh, please. Tell that to Pogo the Possum.

Advocates for a permanent ban on drilling aren't taking any chances. For them, the beat goes on. On Oct. 16, the College of Coastal Georgia in Brunswick is hosting a day-long Okefenokee science symposium featuring a number of scientific speakers on all aspects of the swamp. You can find more information on the College of Coastal Georgia website.

On Oct. 17, Georgians for the Okefenokee along with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light and Adamah

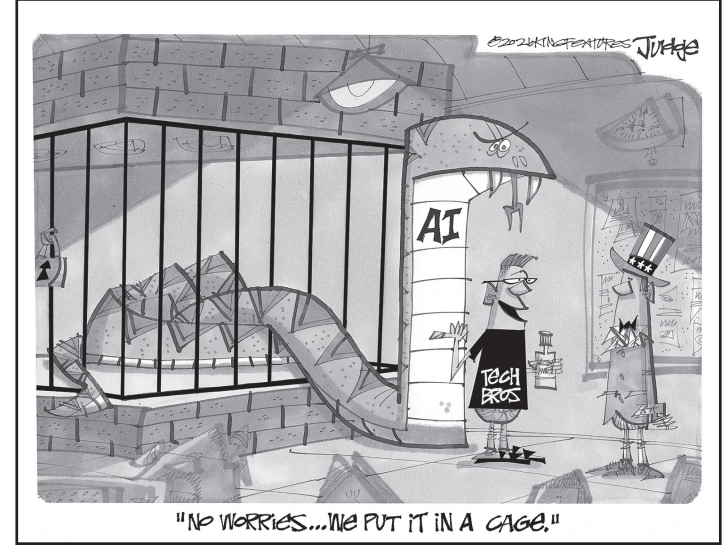
ATL are co-hosting Sabbath at the Swamp, a multi-faith prayer service at the swamp's edge. It will be followed by a catered, working lunch and then a boat tour of the swamp. For details, go to the website of the Georgia Interfaith Power and Light.

And then there is the Student Swamp Coalition, a consortium of undergraduate and graduate students from 10 schools in the state including UGA, Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, Georgia Southern University, Coastal College of Georgia, Kennesaw State University, Columbus State University, Emory University, The Galloway School, and Summerour Middle School.

They are focused on big corporations, including Home Depot, Procter & Gamble, Mondelez, Chemothers and others that either use titanium dioxide or sell products that contain the mineral, asking



YARBROUGH



What to watch THURSDAY

October 8, 2026

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

Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage

CBS, 8 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

The *Young Sheldon* spinoff is back for Season 3 with “Feminine Wiles and Some Tire Thing in Lubbock.” Tensions rise when Mandy (Emily Osment) and the family side against Georgie (Montana Jordan) in his fight with Mary (returning guest star Zoe Perry).

Scrabble

The CW, 8 p.m.

Contestants hope their strong wordplay can help navigate them toward the final round and the \$10,000 prize in the new episode “X Marks the Bonus Square.” Craig Ferguson hosts.

Hell’s Kitchen

FOX, 8 p.m.

After an intense dinner final, the teams get a break with a day full of waterslides and burger sliders. The fun soon turns into a fierce slider stakeout competition judged by Paul Wahlberg, cofounder of Wahlburgers.



CBS

Eternally Yours

CBS, 8:30 p.m. ■ **New Series**

The creators of *Ghosts* sink their teeth into another comedy winner, hilariously sharing modern-day family life for a coven of vampires. After meeting her passionate vampire lover Charles (Ed Weeks) in 1526 Austria, mortal Liz (Allegra Edwards) begged him to turn her into a vampire so they could spend eternity together. Well, be careful of what you wish for, because living with someone for 20 years — let alone 500 — certainly takes some patience, and Liz has had just about enough. Thankfully, their extended coven that includes their daughter Emma (Helen J Shen) and trusted fitness-guru friend Jesse (Parker Young), along with his twin sons and elderly, non-vampire wife Phyllis (Rose Abdoo), provides plenty of distractions in their present-day Seattle habitat.

Elsbeth

CBS, 9 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Elsbeth (Carrie Preston) crosses paths with renowned marriage counselor Serena Collyer (guest star Nicole Scherzinger), whose cool demeanor hides a murderous and messy passion. Gloria Reuben also reprises her guest role as Claudia Payne in the Season 4 premiere “Crazy in Love.”

Trivial Pursuit

The CW, 9 p.m.

A world traveler explores the six iconic Trivial Pursuit categories in hopes of winning \$20,000 in the new episode “On the Road Again.” LeVar Burton hosts.

Law & Order: Special Victims Unit

NBC, 9 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Mariska Hargitay returns as Capt. Olivia Benson for a heart-pounding 28th season of the longest-running scripted primetime drama series in television history. J. Smith-Cameron (*Succession*) has a recurring role this season as jury consultant Gwen Sharpe.

Cupertino

CBS, 10 p.m. ■ **New Series**

This new legal drama comes from the power producers of *The Good Wife* and *Elsbeth*. Set in the heart of Silicon Valley, the drama follows a lawyer (Mike Colter, *Evil*) who is being cheated out of his stock options by his former employer, a tech startup. Refusing to back down, he joins forces with another recently fired attorney (Rachel Keller) to represent those taken advantage of by the tech elite and help them fight back in a high-stakes battle against the Goliaths controlling Silicon Valley. Also stars Busy Philipps.

Law & Order

NBC, 10 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

The venerable crime drama starring Hugh Dancy, Tony Goldwyn, Maura Tierney and David Ajala is back for a 26th season. James Badge Dale (*Hightown*) is joining the main cast, while Reid Scott, who starred as Senior Detective Vincent Riley, appears in a few episodes this season to wrap his character’s story.

From the editors of
TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



MELINDA SUE GORDON

Thor: Ragnarok (2017, Action) Chris Hemsworth, Tom Hiddleston **FX, 6 p.m.**

The Watch (2012, Comedy) Ben Stiller, Vince Vaughn **FXM, 6:05 p.m.**

Hotel Transylvania 2 (2015, Children) Adam Sandler, Andy Samberg **NICK, 7 p.m.**

The Devil’s Rejects (2005, Horror) Sid Haig, Bill Moseley **IFC, 7 p.m.**

The Rock (1996, Action) Sean Connery, Nicolas Cage **SYFY, 7 p.m.**

Oppenheimer (2023, Biography) Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt **USA, 8 p.m.**

The Copycat Killer (2026, Suspense) Melissa O’Neil, Greyston Holt **LMN, 8 p.m.**

First Sunday (2008, Comedy) Ice Cube, Katt Williams **BET, 9 p.m.**

The Mummy Returns (2001, Adventure) Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz **Paramount, 9 p.m.**

3 From Hell (2019, Horror) Bill Moseley, Sid Haig **IFC, 9:30 p.m.**

Aliens (1986, Science fiction) Sigourney Weaver, Carrie Henn **FX, 10 p.m.**

Night Swim (2024, Horror) Wyatt Russell, Kerry Condon **SYFY, 10 p.m.**

Black and Blue (2019, Suspense) Naomie Harris, Tyrese Gibson **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

Carrie (2013, Horror) Chloë Grace Moretz, Julianne Moore **AMC, 11 p.m.**

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What to watch FRIDAY

October 9, 2026

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

College Football

CW, ESPN & FS1, beginning at 7 p.m. Live

Friday night college football action features Florida State at Louisville (ESPN), Iowa at Washington (FS1), Washington State at Utah State (The CW) and Iowa State at BYU (ESPN).

Sheriff Country

CBS, 8 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Sheriff Mickey Fox (Morena Baccarin) struggles to process a shocking revelation about her family in the Season 2 premiere “Cyclone.” Mickey also races to save a troubled young woman whose descent into a dangerous criminal operation uncovers a growing threat to all of Edgewater. Ben McKenzie, Baccarin’s husband, guest-stars as a sheriff from a neighboring town.

JAY-Z IN 8

HBO, 8 p.m. ■ **Series Finale**

Director Rick Rubin closes out this deeply revealing documentary portrait of JAY-Z and his work, exploring the influences and inspiration that shaped both the man and his music.

CATCH A CLASSIC Boorman and the Devil

TCM, 8 p.m.

Go behind the scenes of one of Hollywood’s most infamous sequels with the TCM premiere of **Boorman and the Devil**, David Kittredge’s 2025 documentary about the making and reception of John Boorman’s **Exorcist II: The Heretic** (1977, pictured), which follows. Airing next are three more films directed by Boorman: the semi-biographical wartime drama **Hope and Glory**



SEACIA PAVAO, CBS

Fire Country

CBS, 9 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Max Thieriot is back as firefighter Bode Leone as Season 5 of the action drama debuts with “Founders’ Day.” As Edgewater celebrates its annual Founders’ Day festival, a catastrophic sinkhole opens beneath Main Street, trapping residents underground and forcing Station 42 into a high-stakes rescue.

Scariest House in America

HGTV, 9 p.m.

Retta’s journey to find scary takes her to the mysterious Midwest, where four homes contend for a chance at a makeover by designer Alison Victoria. It’s between a ghostly home with a history of squatters, a Victorian full of ghosts and dolls, a historical haunt from the 1800s, and a large, creepy home that’s bananas.



WARNER BROS.

(1987), the tough crime thriller **Point Blank** (1967) and the South Africa-set drama **In My Country** (2004). It is a full night devoted to Boorman’s ambitious career.

The UnBelievable With Dan Aykroyd

History, 9 p.m.

A bleeding house. A near-boiling river. A desert of unexplained encounters. OK, History, you have us on that bleeding house (no thanks on being neighbors to that!). Dan Aykroyd continues his exploration of some of the most peculiar places on Earth in the new episode “Peculiar Places.”

Austin City Limits

PBS, 9 p.m.

Singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo performs highlights from her 2026 album *You Seem Pretty Sad* for a *Girl So in Love*.

Boston Blue

CBS, 10 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

The *Blue Bloods* spinoff returns for Season 2 with “The Crash,” as Danny and Lena (Donnie Wahlberg and Sonequa Martin-Green) race to stop a copycat killer inspired by the Boston Strangler.

Great Musicians of Our Time

PBS, 10 p.m. ■ **New Series**

This documentary series features six of the most influential and celebrated classical music artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. Witness Itzhak Perlman’s inspiring journey from young prodigy to icon in the premiere episode “Itzhak Perlman: Virtuoso Violinist.”

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



KIMBERLEY FRENCH

Coming to America (1988, Comedy) Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall **BET, 6 p.m.**

I Know What You Did Last Summer (1997, Horror) Jennifer Love Hewitt, Sarah Michelle Gellar **WE, 6:45 p.m.**

Con Air (1997, Action) Nicolas Cage, John Cusack **SYFY, 7 p.m.**

Halloween (1978, Horror) Donald Pleasence, Jamie Lee Curtis **AMC, 7 p.m.**

Dancing With the Devil (2026, Suspense) Krystal Ellsworth, Stephen Tracey **LMN, 8 p.m.**

Forrest Gump (1994, Comedy-drama) Tom Hanks, Robin Wright **SHO, 8 p.m.**

The Shawshank Redemption (1994, Drama) Tim Robbins, Morgan Freeman **TBS, 8 p.m.**

Hocus Pocus 2 (2022, Family) Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker **Freeform, 8:35 p.m.**

Beast (2026, Action) Daniel MacPherson, Bren Foster **Encore, 9 p.m.**

John Q (2002, Drama) Denzel Washington, Robert Duvall **TBS, 10:45 p.m.**

House of Wax (2005, Horror) Elisha Cuthbert, Chad Michael Murray **WE, 11 p.m.**

Antlers (2021, Horror) Keri Russell, Jesse Plemons **FXM, 11:35 p.m.**

From the editors of
TV Weekly and tvinsider.com



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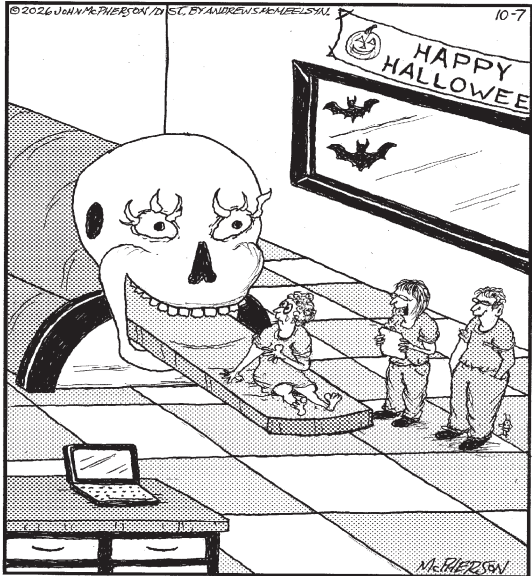
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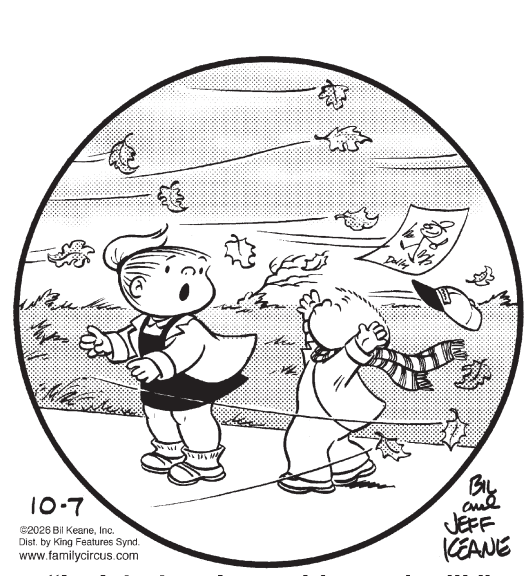
TV - What to watch

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



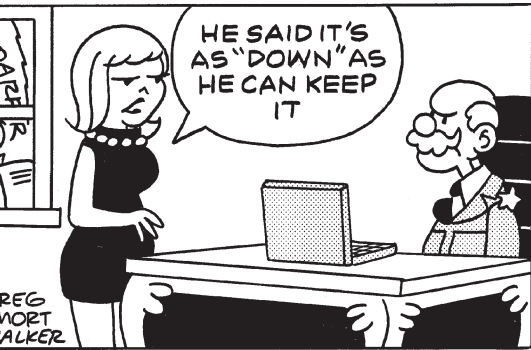
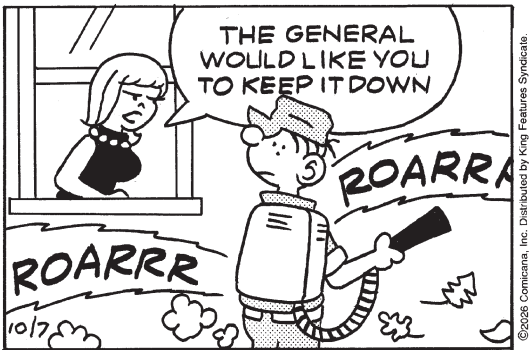
"We hope you like our Halloween decorations, Mrs. Lutz. Now, if you'll just lie back and relax, we'll get you scanned in a jiffy."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane

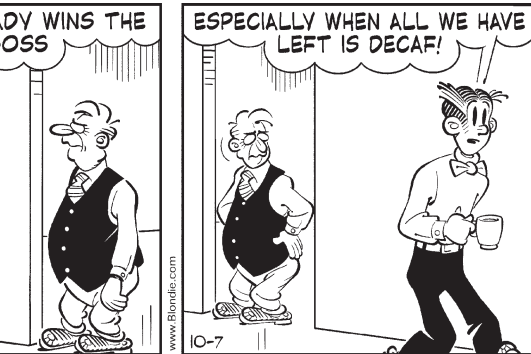
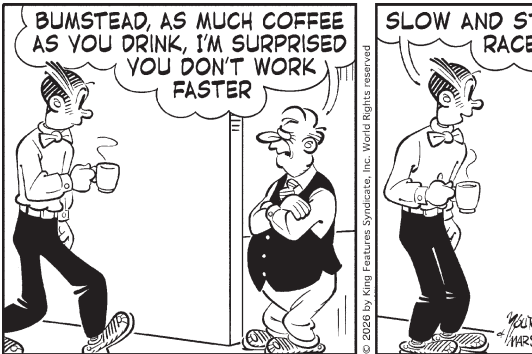


"I wish the air would stand still."

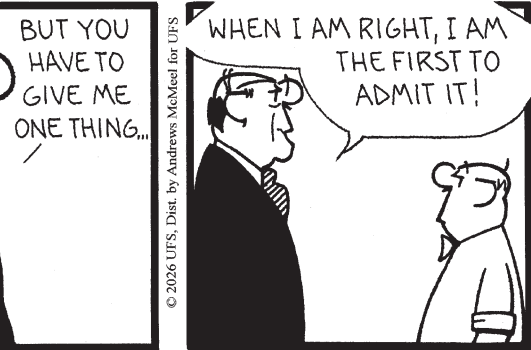
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



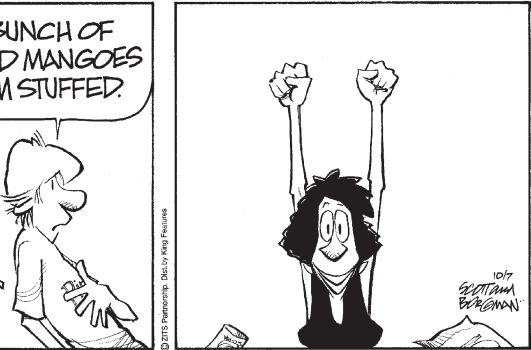
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



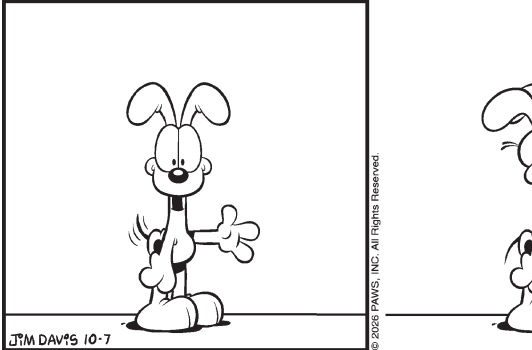
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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

10/7

WHATZIT?

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

SYMPHON

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: Unfinished Symphony

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

1 Built (on)
6 Many an A-lister
11 Swing's path
14 Cartoon canine who speaks with an "R" consonant mutation
15 Level
16 "Argo" org.
17 Ruin the Olympic Games?
19 Every last bit
20 Tammy Duckworth's title, briefly
21 Merry-go-round music
22 Bas-
24 Like many dirt roads
26 Home of Hawaii's Merrie Monarch Festival
27 Destroy casual chitchat?
32 Tennis great Andre
35 Georgia airport code
36 "If you ask me ..."
37 Massage
38 Super vision?
39 Polite title
40 A in geometry
42 French wine classification
43 Annette of "Virgin River"
46 Wreak havoc on origami supplies?
49 Forever and ever
50 Repeat for emphasis
54 "Who ___!"
57 Burlesque bit
58 Light touch
59 Sometimes called, for short
60 Lay waste to a dairy product?
63 Virginia Woolf's "___ Dalloway"
64 "___ mañana"
65 A-list
66 Light touch
67 Elizabeth who plays the Scarlet Witch
68 Trig ratios

DOWN

1 Common voice for an opera villain
2 Colorado town near Snowmass
3 Curling piece
4 "___ tu": Verdi aria
5 Brunei money
6 Orchard fruit
7 Congeal
8 Viscous goo
9 Having one's day in court?
10 Deal in, as vintage clothing
11 Breakfast bowl berry
12 Annoy but good
13 Baby camel
18 Africa-to-Asia land bridge
23 Trickster in Norse mythology
25 Jr. officers
26 URL starter
28 Invites to one's apartment, say
29 Childish comeback
30 Get just right
31 Giant oceanic surface current
32 Part of UAE
33 Hindu mentor
34 Lie for, say
38 Goes astray
41 Las Vegas WNBA team
42 Primary
43 ___ nerve
44 Shows signs of growth?
45 Hockey Hall of Famer Bobby
47 Top dog
48 Three-time Super Bowl-winning quarterback Troy
51 Saved on supper, perhaps
52 Sample size?
53 Stage combat props
54 Not quite dry
55 Sticky pod
56 From Perth to Sydney
57 Make full
61 Curvy letter
62 Yale grad

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

10/07/26

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			

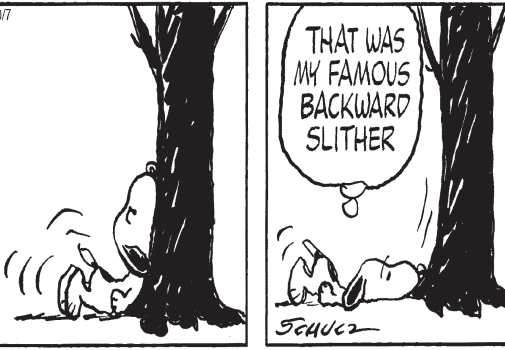
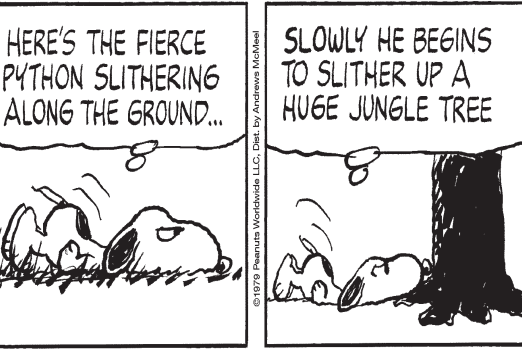
By Robin Stears
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10/07/26

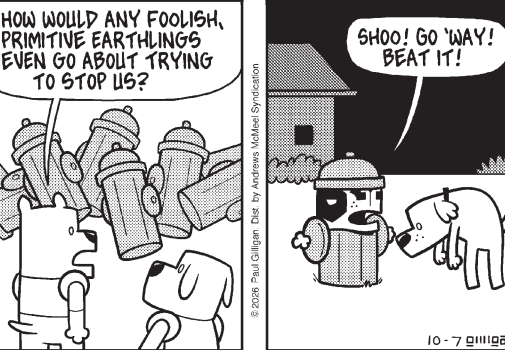
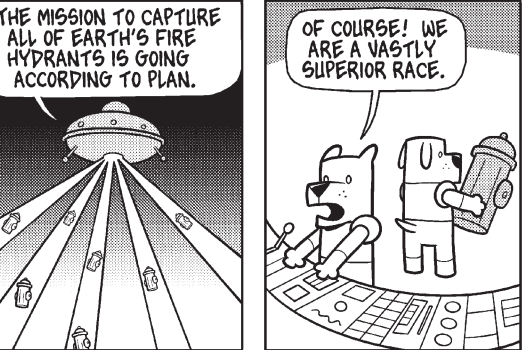
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

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

RUMBLE BOXING

Solution: 5 letters

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

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Body, Calories, Circuit, Classes, Coach, Endurance, Energy, Exercise, Fight, Fitness, Focus, Gloves, Gyms, High-intensity, Inspire, Instructor, Interval, Jabs, Kick, Legs, Lights, Mats, Mind, Music, Playlist, Plyometrics, Power, Pump, Punch, Resistance, Shorts, Strength, Studio, Sweat, Timer, Training, Trendy, Uppercuts, Weights, Workout

TODAY'S ANSWER: Hooks

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



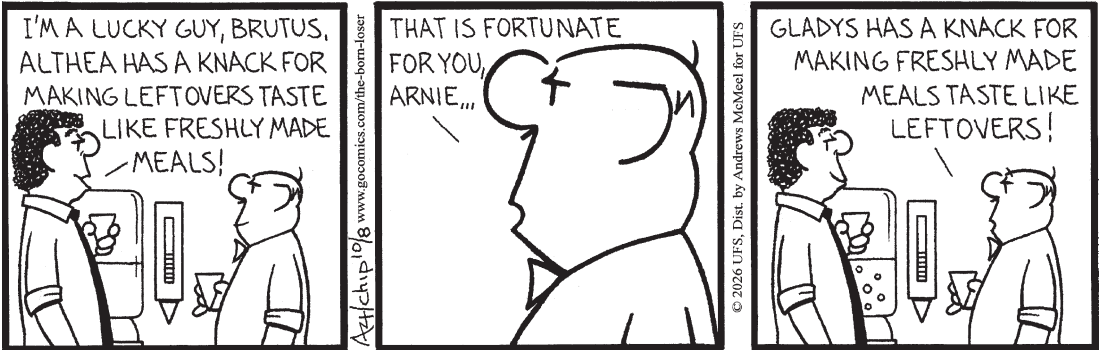
BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

WHATZIT?

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

**CASANOVA
TORN
DON JUAN**

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:

Torn between two lovers

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Chatter
4 Washday need
8 Mafia bigwig
12 — Wan Kenobi
13 Therefore
14 Track shape
15 Totality
16 Cease
17 Traditional learning
18 River mouth
20 "Right away!"
22 Sweet potato
23 Run hither and —
24 Carelessness
28 Used a keyboard
32 Revered one
33 Flag holder
35 "Cakes and —"

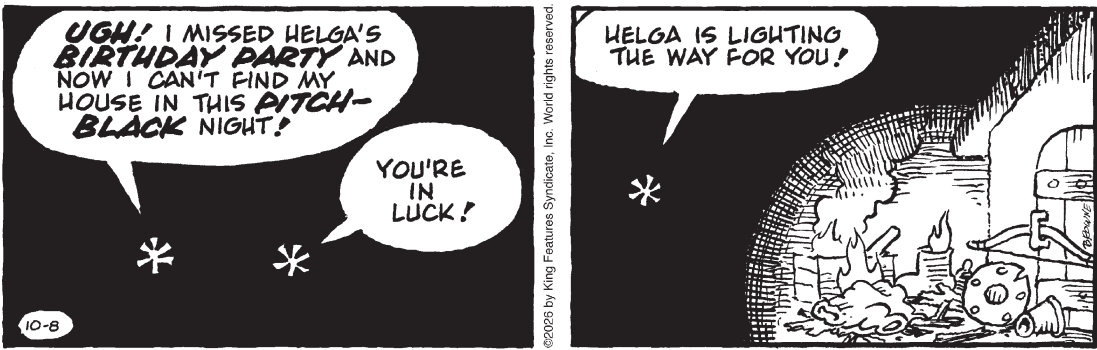
DOWN

1 Prod
2 Competent
3 Ornery farm animal (2 wds.)
4 TV's "— Street"
5 Scrap
6 In the past
7 Red flower

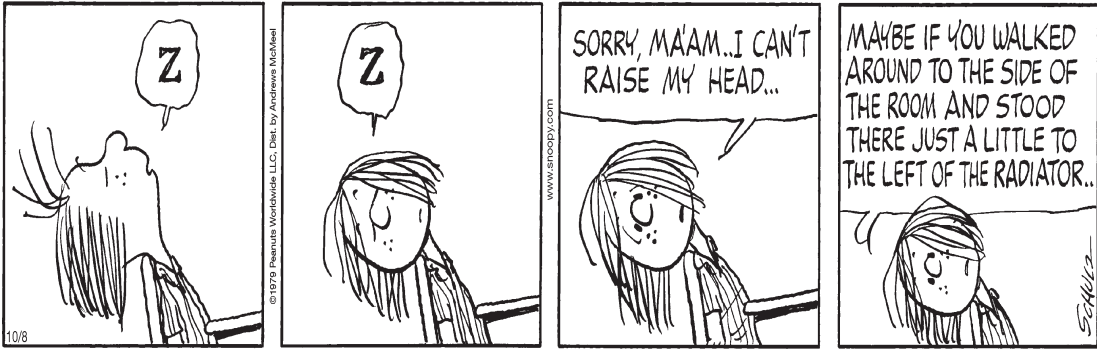
TODAY'S SOLUTION:

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

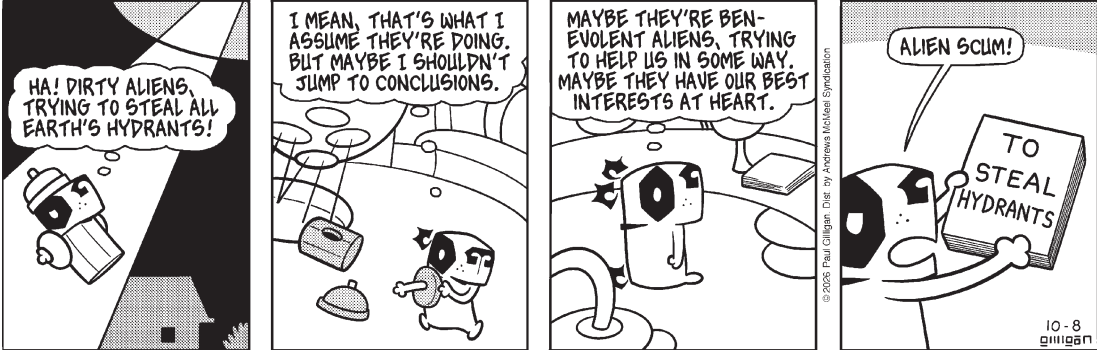
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



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.

WIND CREEK CASINOS

Solution: 5 letters

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

TODAY'S ANSWER: Poker

State cuts foster children’s autism therapy payments by 30%

By **Ariel Harn**
Georgia Recorder

Krystina McQueen’s severely autistic foster son — who is prone to biting and hitting — has made big strides in his few weeks in specialized behavior therapy. He’s in it at the crucial time to learn basic skills, as he’s about to turn 3.

But last week the Hall County foster mom got a call from the therapy provider. The business said it may not be able to afford treating him, after Georgia Medicaid abruptly slashed the reimbursement rate by 30% in their policies for foster kids.

Her provider has already stopped accepting new patients at that rate, she was told. Other providers are doing the same, or have even dropped existing patients.

Georgia’s Department of Community Health administers the state’s Medicaid health insurance programs, and it has put rate decisions for foster children in the hands of the insurance company Amerigroup, an insurer in the Elvance family along with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia. Georgia outsources its Medicaid insurance work to three insurance companies and has decided for the population of foster children it covers that the contractor will be Amerigroup.

The notice from Amerigroup to clinics said the rate cut is “intended to better align reimbursement across autism services.”

In an email from Amerigroup to the state obtained by the Georgia Recorder, Amerigroup said it would raise rates instead for the work that clinicians do training parents on the therapy strategies, calling the new rate structure “a more targeted and clinically defensible approach.” Therapy advocates say that training parents and caregivers in the strategies to deal with the child is important but that parents can’t take the place of the trained clinicians.

A spokeswoman for Amerigroup said that medically necessary services are still being covered, and that patients should keep up with appointments and follow the treatment.

The state, in a statement from spokeswoman Lauren Williams, said that “in those instances where an in-network provider is not available, Amerigroup is required to secure services with an out-of-network provider” for each individual patient case. Whether patients know to ask

for that is an open question; McQueen said she’s not heard anything from Amerigroup.

Clinics that provide the therapy that McQueen’s foster son was getting, called applied behavior analysis therapy, say that a letter arrived out of the blue in August announcing that the 30% payment cut for the therapy would start Sept. 1.

Georgia state Rep. Lee Hawkins, a Gainesville Republican, chairs the House committee on health. He’s been hearing about the issue from both Amerigroup representatives and those who run the clinics. The industry representatives have told him that among those they’ve surveyed, 75% of clinics that provide the therapy report that within three months they will have to reduce or stop serving the state’s foster children at that rate. More than 90% said they would reduce or stop taking new patients, he says.

That means not only treating fewer patients, but laying employees off. The clinics are not facing the same dilemma for the patients whom Anthem insures under its more commercial plans like Blue Cross. At a recent conference in Atlanta, the president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia, Amanda Free, said she only oversees commercial plans and couldn’t comment on the therapy cuts.

Therapy advocates argue that in the long term it’s economically more sensible to invest in therapy up front, and hope the patient needs less assistance later in life.

The actions by Amerigroup follow other attempts to scale back spending on the specialized therapy by the other two insurance companies that serve Georgia Medicaid patients. Only Amerigroup serves foster children.

Applied Behavior Analysis therapy is meant to teach skill sets to those who don’t learn in a traditional way, and autistic children represent a big portion of ABA patients. Advocates say the therapy can unlock critical life skills and vibrant futures for some severely autistic children, though they concede it doesn’t work for every child with autism.

Anna Bullard, an activist for the therapy, acknowledges legitimate concerns with fraud and overbilling in some quarters.

“Every one of those (Georgia insurance contractors) is trying to mitigate the significant rise in autism costs for therapy by cutting rates,”



Special Photo Courtesy of Ava Bullard, via Georgia Recorder
Ava Bullard, who is the namesake of a 2015 Georgia law that will impact needed treatment of autistic children, was diagnosed with severe autism as a toddler. Bullard graduated in December from the University of Georgia with a major in biology and now has a job in the medical field.

Bullard said. “Again, my argument to them is, but we’re still not dealing with the issue of ensuring that kids get access to quality care where they need it.”

If a child’s physician determines that they are a candidate for the therapy and an analyst agrees, then a trained technician or therapist is assigned to the child and puts the analyst’s plan into action. They break down the basic path of learning into miniscule parts, and sometimes spend enormous energy teaching the child just one step and rewarding them for it. For example, just the act of walking into the bathroom.

Step by step, over time, the child is rewarded in the way that matters to them when they perform the step. As success in one step becomes more natural, the reward for it fades. The goal is to connect the complete chain of steps.

Foster children are just one group that’s affected. All three of the insurance companies that Georgia chose to administer its Medicaid programs have shaken up their applied behavior analysis therapy policies within the last year.

Hawkins, the state lawmaker, says the concern seems to be that the newfound popularity of the therapy is bringing in a lot more patients for the pricey therapy and potentially making the Medicaid contracts a money loser for the companies. Foster kids can’t drop Amerigroup, but many other Medicaid patients can choose between the three: Amerigroup, CareSource and Peach State. In some cases, changes have been proposed but scaled back. Amerigroup acted quickly though, and the cuts are in effect.

A key policy official at Georgia Medicaid, Stuart Port-

man, told the Georgia Recorder there was little they could do until they see what damage is done.

“Our ability to review things is much more on the back end,” he said. “However, we are engaging as early on as

we can to make sure that the care to the beneficiaries is being provided.”

Mental health advocate Roland Behm argues that the state actually has the ability and the obligation under a federal law to review the potential impacts to network adequacy before approving the rate change. He says the state doesn’t assert it.

Practitioners and families are concerned about a potential lifelong cost to the children if they miss out on certain types of therapy in the crucial window.

Katie White is a guardian ad litem for the state, appointed by courts to watch over the interests of children in court cases, who has multiple high-needs children of her own. She has been raising her 14-year-old adopted son since she became his foster mom at 7 months old. She said he’s got so many issues as a medically fragile child that she only just learned he was autistic when he was 12. Waitlists are already always

long for ABA therapy slots, but his wait time was especially long because of his age. She searched for a year for a healthcare provider who would give her son Applied Behavior Analysis therapy despite his starting out at an older than typical age.

But in mid-September, they called her.

“He lost his services after only being in it about six weeks,” she said.

As an attorney who represents kids in the juvenile justice system, White said she thinks of those foster kids who need to keep their Medicaid as they’re reunited with their parents. Those social skills are important for keeping the family together, she said, and a high percentage of them have autism.

“Depending on where they fall on that spectrum, they need those services desperately,” she said. “And you know, I’m just not sure what it’s going to look like if we don’t have providers.”

Congress Votes

By **Targeted News Service**

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

Along with its roll call votes, this week the Senate also passed: the Common Cents Act (H.R. 10167) to direct the Treasury Department to stop minting the penny, change the authorized composition of the nickel, and authorize cash transactions to be rounded up or down to the nearest 5 cents; the Falun Gong and Victims of Forced Organ Harvesting Protection Act (S. 4009) to provide for imposing sanctions with respect to forced organ harvesting within China; the Making America’s Food Safer Act (S. 4974) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to food safety; the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (S. 4395) the Bankruptcy Threshold Adjustment Act (H.R. 7730) to modify certain bankruptcy eligibility requirements.

There were no key votes in the House this week.

SENATE VOTES:

STATE RULES FOR COLLEGE SPORTS: The Senate has approved an amendment sponsored by Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., to the Protect College Sports Act (S. 4668) that would bar states from adopting measures that conflict with the bill. Baldwin said that without the amendment, “the NCAA and athletic conferences could argue that state health and safety protection for athletes conflict with and prevent compliance with this bill.” The vote, on Sept. 28, was 96 yeas to 1 nay.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

SPORTS ADMISSION PRICES: The Senate has rejected an amendment sponsored by Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., to the Protect College Sports Act (S. 4668) that would have capped year-on-year ticket price increases for a college sports event at 4%. Kennedy said: “Let us do something for affordability for a change.” The vote, on Sept. 28, was 42 yeas to 54 nays.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA

YEAS: Warnock D-GA

HEALTH INSURANCE IN COLLEGE SPORTS: The Senate has rejected an amendment sponsored by Sen. Cory A. Booker, D-N.J., to the Protect College Sports Act (S. 4668) that would have raised caps on funding for health insurance and catastrophic



Jon Ossoff



Raphael Warnock

injury treatments for college athletes. Booker said it “will provide greater resources to address athletes’ long-term injuries without placing additional financial burdens on schools.” The vote, on Sept. 28, was 49 yeas to 50 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

PAY FOR COLLEGE SPORTS COACHES: The Senate has rejected an amendment sponsored by Sen. Cory A. Booker, D-N.J., to the Protect College Sports Act (S. 4668) that would have restricted the ability for coaches to change schools and restricted pay for coaches. Booker said limits the bill applied to student athletes should also apply to coaches. The vote, on Sept. 28, was 47 yeas to 52 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

REGULATING COLLEGE SPORTS: The Senate has passed the Protect College Sports Act (S. 4668) sponsored by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, to establish various measures regulating college sports, especially limits concerning name, image, or likeness contracts. An opponent, Sen. Christopher Murphy, D-Conn., said the bill was essentially “taking a system that the Supreme Court said could not persist under our law, and we are changing the law to allow that illegal system to persist.” The vote, on Sept. 28, was 77 yeas to 22 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA

NAYS: Warnock D-GA

HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGES: The Senate has rejected a motion to proceed to a bill (S.J. Res. 197) sponsored by Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis. The measure would have cancelled a Department of Health and Human Services rule issued this May allowing a wider range of health insurance plans to be sold on individual insurance exchanges. Baldwin claimed that keeping the rule would result in “more Americans buying worse care that does not cover necessary services, from routine checkups to life-threatening emergencies.” The vote to proceed, on Sept. 29, was 48 yeas to 51 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

ISRAEL AND HUMAN RIGHTS: The Senate has rejected a motion to discharge

from its Foreign Relations Committee a bill (S. Res. 852) sponsored by Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., to request information from the State Department on Israel’s human rights practices, especially the alleged killing of nine U.S. citizens by Israelis in the past five years. Van Hollen said the report would work toward receiving accountability from Israel for the deaths, and thereby discourage future human rights abuses against both Americans and Palestinians. The vote to discharge, on Sept. 29, was 47 yeas to 51 nays.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

INSIDER TRADING AND CONGRESS: The Senate has rejected cloture on a motion to proceed to the Stop Insider Trading Act (H.R. 7008) sponsored by Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Wis., to bar members of Congress and their spouses and dependent children from buying publicly traded stocks, and require prior public notification for their planned sales of stocks. Another bill provision would require voters in federal government elections to provide photo identification of themselves at ballot sites. An opponent, Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., said: “This bill creates superficial changes to ethics standards while undermining the right to vote.” The vote, on Sept. 30, was 53 yeas to 47 nays, with a three-fifths majority required.

NAYS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

ELECTRICITY COSTS: The Senate has rejected cloture on a motion to proceed to the Ratepayer Protection Act (H.R. 9340) sponsored by Rep. Gabe Evans, R-Colo., to require state regulators to consider implementation of a federal standard for assigning electrical generation and grid costs to large-load customers. An opponent, Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., said: “This is nothing more than a messaging bill on the eve of an election. Rather than voluntary pledges or vague suggestions to states, Congress needs to pass a law with real teeth.” The vote, on Sept. 30, was 57 yeas to 43 nays, with a three-fifths majority required.

YEAS: Ossoff D-GA, Warnock D-GA

Obituary

announcements

Remembering loved ones and honoring their memories

To place an obituary announcement in the Albany Herald, go to <https://legacy.memoriams.com/network/albanyherald/obituary>
Fill out form online and submit payment.
WE DO NOT ACCEPT OBITUARIES & PAYMENT BY PHONE.



Special Photo: Brett Davis, Imagn Images

Los Angeles Dodgers starter Yoshinobu Yamamoto delivers against the Braves on Tuesday night in Atlanta. Yamamoto struck out 10 and allowed one run over seven innings in the Dodgers’ 3-1 victory.

Dodgers take NLDS lead over Braves

By Curt Weiler
Field Level Media

ATLANTA — Enrique Hernandez and Freddie Freeman each homered in the fourth inning, and Yoshinobu Yamamoto delivered seven strong innings to hand the Los Angeles Dodgers a 3-1 win and a 2-1 series lead over the Atlanta Braves in their National League Division Series Tuesday night.

Yamamoto (1-0), making his first postseason start since he was named the 2025 World Series MVP, allowed just one run on four hits, walking one while striking out a postseason-career-high 10 batters.

Tanner Scott followed with a scoreless eighth, and Edwin Diaz worked around a leadoff double from Ozzie Albies in the ninth to toss a scoreless ninth and secure the save.

The Dodgers, looking to become the first National League team to win three straight World Series, can advance to the NL Championship Series with a win Wednesday night.

After the Dodgers wasted prime scoring chances in two of the first three innings, Hernandez followed Andy Pages’ leadoff single with a 406-foot homer to left off Chris Sale, the 17th of his postseason career, to make it 2-0.

One out later, Freeman added a solo homer in his first postseason game back in Atlanta, where he played his first 12 seasons and ended his tenure with the 2021 World Series championship. The 18th home run of his postseason career moved Freeman into a tie for 10th in major league history.

Sale (0-1) ground through five innings, allowing three runs on seven hits and

striking out seven.

The left-hander navigated early traffic, stranding two runners in the first and leaving the bases loaded in the third, when Mauricio Dubon also robbed a would-be two-run homer from Freeman, before Los Angeles jumped in front in the fourth.

The Braves had a chance to fight back in the fifth when they loaded the bases with one out and the top of the order up. However, Yamamoto limited Atlanta to one run on Drake Baldwin’s groundout to first, then induced Ronald Acuna Jr. to ground out to second to end the inning.

Four Atlanta relievers tossed a scoreless inning apiece to keep the game in range for the offense, which managed just five hits and two walks. The Braves struck out 12 times and finished 0-for-6 with runners in scoring position.



Special Photo: Reginald Christian, ASU

Albany State quarterback JD Davis will lead the Golden Rams offense this week, but head coach David Bowser is hoping the running game will be more effective Saturday now that two starting offensive linemen have returned to the lineup.

Five games, one path for ASU

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — The math is messy. David Bowser’s message is not.

Win the next five games and let the SIAC sort itself out.

Albany State enters the second half of its season with a 2-3 overall record, one conference loss and no guarantee of anything beyond the five Saturdays remaining on its schedule. Yet Bowser remains convinced the Golden Rams can still reach the SIAC championship game—and perhaps the NCAA Division II playoffs.

The road is narrow, but it remains open. “We handle our business, and we have a chance to get to the championship game and the playoffs,” Bowser said.

The next step comes Saturday, when Albany State hosts Lane College at 1 p.m. in its Homecoming game at the Albany State Coliseum.

Before looking at Lane, though, it helps to understand why Bowser remains so optimistic.

The Golden Rams are 2-1 in conference play. Winning their remaining games against Lane, Tuskegee, Benedict, Clark Atlanta and Fort Valley State would leave them 7-1 in the SIAC.

That alone might not be enough. Kentucky State owns the head-to-head advantage after beating Albany State, and unbeaten Edward Waters currently sits atop the conference standings. If both teams win out, the Golden Rams cannot reach the championship game.

But six SIAC teams have one conference loss, and many of those contenders still must play one another. Albany State gets its own opportunities against Tuskegee and Benedict. The Golden Rams do not face Edward Waters, Central State or Miles, but those teams cannot all continue winning because their schedules cross.

In other words, somebody has to lose.

Albany State’s job is to make sure it isn’t Albany State.

Bowser also believes the SIAC has earned enough national respect to place multiple teams in the Division II playoffs, creating another possible route into the postseason.

“Last year, three SIAC teams got into the playoffs, and a fourth—Edward Waters—was sitting in a good position and almost got there,” Bowser said.

A strong schedule could help the Golden Rams, but only if they finish strongly enough for that schedule to matter. Bowser believes three or even four SIAC teams could make the playoff field. Albany State intends to spend the next five weeks forcing itself into that conversation.

To do so, the Golden Rams must become the team Bowser believes they can be rather than the inconsistent one they have been.

The first priority is rediscovering the running game.

Albany State managed only 81 rushing yards

Friday night five: Joyner is Player of the week

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

Just one.

The Dougherty sophomore completed 12 of 13 passes for 271 yards and five touchdowns, leading the Trojans to a 45-0 victory over Shaw and earning Albany Herald Friday Night Five Player of the Week honors.

Joyner completed 92.3% of his attempts and averaged more than 20 yards each time he put the ball in the air. He also rushed five times for 53 yards, giving him 324 yards of total offense.

David Burgess caught three passes for 77 yards and two touchdowns, while Melvin Williams turned his two receptions into 87 yards and two more scores. Alonzo Hammonds added three catches for 43 yards.

It was Joyner’s second consecutive game with at least four touchdown passes. He completed 6 of 9 attempts for 225 yards and four scores in Dougherty’s 48-0 victory over Columbus the previous week.

That gives the sophomore nine touchdown passes across two games, both Dougherty shutouts.

The Trojans are now 5-1 overall and 4-0 in region play after outscoring their past two opponents 93-0. They are off Friday before hosting No. 4-ranked Cairo in a pivotal region matchup Oct. 16 at Hugh Mills Stadium.

Here is the rest of this week’s Friday Night Five:

PASSING

Micah Joyner, Dougherty — 12 of 13, 271 yards, 5 TDs

Brandon Hemmings, Sherwood Christian — 12 of 20, 270 yards, 3 TDs



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Dougherty quarterback Micah Joyner completed 12 of 13 passes, including five touchdowns, Friday night to earn the Player of the Week honors.

Jadarian Hudson, Mitchell County — 3 of 4, 150 yards, 2 TDs

Rae’Shawn Clyde, Randolph-Clay — 9 of 14, 127 yards

Cohen Lawson, Lee County — 12 of 18, 102 yards

RUSHING

Quintin Edwards, Calhoun County — 13 carries, 333 yards, 6 TDs

Rae’Shawn Clyde, Randolph-Clay — 25 carries, 242 yards, 3 TDs

Bryse Peachey, Terrell Academy — 6 carries, 191 yards, 5 TDs

Montorie Lee, Mitchell County — 7 carries, 133 yards, 5 TDs

Walt Lee, Terrell Academy — 10 carries, 106 yards, 1 TD

RECEIVING

King Grissom, Mitchell County — 2 catches, 112 yards, 2 TDs

Hunter Gregg, Sherwood Christian — 3 catches, 103 yards, 1 TD

Melvin Williams, Dougherty — 2 catches, 87 yards, 2 TDs

Dyson Harris, Sherwood Christian — 3 catches, 81 yards, 1 TD

David Burgess, Dougherty — 3 catches, 77 yards, 2 TDs

Same schools, two sports, one big Friday

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — Sherwood Christian’s Friday will begin with Valwood across a volleyball net in Monroe and end with Valwood across a football line in Valdosta.

Same schools. Two sports. One demanding day.

The Lady Eagles will face top-seeded Valwood on Friday morning in the GIAA Class AA volleyball semifinals at George Walton Academy. Hours later, Sherwood’s football team will visit top-ranked Valwood for an important region game.

The Valwood football team is 6-1 and averaging 41 points per game. They are coming off a 52-0 win over Brookwood. The Eagles are 4-2 and are averaging 39 points per game. The Eagles lost 54-22 to Southwest Georgia last Friday night.

Sherwood athletic director Jay Flynt said the Eagles embrace opportunities to measure themselves against top competition and look forward to representing their school with excellence.

For the volleyball team, Fri-



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Sherwood Christian’s Lady Eagles celebrate Saturday’s quarterfinal victory over St. Mary’s Academy in Albany. Sherwood will face top-seeded Valwood on Friday morning at George Walton Academy, with the winner advancing to the GIAA Class AA state championship match.

day brings a familiar opponent and a season hanging in the balance.

Sherwood and Valwood do not need introductions. They have played twice this season, spent nine sets testing one another and walked away with one victory apiece.

Friday’s third meeting will settle the season series.

It will also determine who plays for the state championship. Sherwood handed Valwood

its first loss of the season in Albany. The Valiants returned the favor in Valdosta, surviving a five-set match against the Lady Eagles.

“Valwood is going to earn plenty of its own points,” Sherwood coach Briana Collins said. “We don’t need to give them away freely.”

That has been Collins’ message throughout the week as Sherwood prepares for a Valwood team that enters the Fi-

nal Four as the tournament’s No. 1 seed with a 16-2 record.

The Valiants swept Oak Mountain 3-0 in the quarterfinals. Sherwood reached the semifinals with its own straight-set victory, dispatching No. 11 seed St. Mary’s Academy on Saturday in Albany.

The Lady Eagles set the tone immediately.

Lizzie Hooks served Sherwood to an 11-0 lead in the opening set, delivering three aces during the run. Lizzy Roberts added a six-point service run, while Hooks and Melia Mallard controlled play at the net in a 25-11 victory.

St. Mary’s, which reached the quarterfinals by upsetting fifth-seeded Georgia Christian, offered more resistance in the second set and pulled even at 8-8. Sherwood answered behind another strong run from Roberts and the net play of Hooks and Justice Perryman before finishing the sweep in the third.

Now the challenge becomes maintaining that level against the tournament favorite.

From 9A

FRIDAY

“We have to minimize errors,” Collins said. “Our serve-receive team has to be moving as one and keeping the ball in system as much as possible to allow us to run a dynamic offense.”

Sherwood cannot afford to depend on one dominant hitter or one exceptional server. Collins said beating Valwood will require contributions from the entire rotation.

“We can’t rely on one or two people to win,” she said. “It will take every person showing up at 100% to do their job.”

The Lady Eagles have spent the week working to eliminate unforced errors and create what Collins calls “runs of three.” Three consecutive points can turn a deficit into a tie, a tie into a lead or a close set into one controlled by Sherwood.

“Earn three points in a row and you control the momentum of the game,” Collins said.

Just as important will be Sherwood’s response when that momentum shifts. Collins has emphasized a “next-ball mentality,” encouraging her players not to carry one mistake into the next point. “Mistakes will happen,”

she said. “We say forgive and forget.”

The Lady Eagles will not enter Friday intimidated by Valwood’s record or top seed. They already know they can beat the Valiants because they have done it. They also understand how narrow the margin can be after falling in five sets on Valwood’s home floor.

That combination has brought a different energy to practice.

“We’re pumped,” Collins said. “There’s a level of excitement and intensity going into this week that I haven’t seen yet.”

Collins also wants her players to remain loose. The Lady Eagles, she said, are at their best when intensity does not come at the expense of enjoyment.

“My team plays much better when we’re having fun,” she said. “There’s a level of focus and fun that happens at practice to keep us loose and playing hard.”

By Friday night, Sherwood’s football players will have their opportunity against Valwood beneath the lights in Valdosta.

Before then, the Lady Eagles will try to deliver the first statement of the day—and earn the right to play for a state championship.

Whatley Fountain finds another gear

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

Deerfield-Windsor cross country coach Jake Clawson knew Whatley Fountain needed something he wasn’t getting at home.

Someone to push him.

So Fountain headed north Saturday to compete in the Alexander (Brian Robinson) Invitational at Foxhall Sporting Club in Douglasville, one of the largest and most competitive cross country meets in Georgia.

The result was the fastest 5K of Fountain’s career.

Fountain finished ninth in the championship boys race in 15 minutes, 25.64 seconds, slicing more than 10 seconds off the personal best he established just two weeks ago.

“He needed to go to a bigger meet to be pushed,” Clawson said. “Our home meet is the biggest meet in this area, but no one even tried to challenge him.”

This time, Fountain had plenty of company.

Witt Windham won the championship race in 14:58.61, setting the pace for a field that

included some of the state’s top runners. Fountain stayed among the leaders and crossed in ninth, only 27.03 seconds behind Windham.

The performance represented another significant step forward for the Deerfield-Windsor standout.

Fountain entered Saturday with a personal best of 15:36.44, the time he ran while winning the Deerfield-Windsor Invitational on Sept. 19. Saturday’s 15:25.64 lowered that mark by 10.80 seconds. MileSplit had Fountain seeded fourth entering the Alexander meet based on that previous personal best.

“That is the best meet in the state,” Clawson said. “A big-time run for Whatley.”

There is plenty to support Clawson’s assessment. MileSplit billed the Alexander Invitational as the biggest meet of the year in Georgia, with 4,524 athletes entered, and 150 teams were registered across the various races and divisions.

For Fountain, however, the trip wasn’t about the size of the meet as much as the quality of the runners around him.



Special Photo: Submitted

Deerfield-Windsor’s Whatley Fountain celebrates after finishing ninth in the championship race at the Alexander Invitational. Fountain ran a personal-best 15:25.64, trimming more than 10 seconds from his previous best.

Two weeks after running away from the field on his home course, Fountain finally got the challenge Clawson

believed he needed. And he responded by running faster than he ever had before.

From 9A

ASU

in its loss to Kentucky State, continuing a problem compounded by injuries along the offensive line. The open week came at a welcome time, allowing starters Ty’Orice Brown and Stanley Tolbert to work their way back.

Their return should give Albany State more stability up front and, Bowser hopes, restore some balance to the offense.

Quarterback JD Davis has completed between 71% and 75% of his passes, but Bowser does not want the Golden Rams asking their quarterback to carry the entire attack. He would prefer Davis throw 15 to 20 times while the running game controls possession and keeps Albany State’s defense on the sideline.

Bowser’s ideal opening quarter would see the Golden Rams possess the ball for 10 to 12 minutes. That would mean sustained drives, a rested defense and control of the game before the opponent has time to settle in.

It would also provide relief for a defensive front that has absorbed two significant losses. Junior defensive tackles Monteale Burton of Raleigh, North Carolina, and Jalen Woodard of Jacksonville, Florida, both need season-ending surgery.

Those injuries make the development of Albany State’s younger players more than a long-term project. It is an immediate necessity.

The Golden Rams have 52 true freshmen and 28 redshirt freshmen on the roster. During the open week, Bowser used scrimmage periods to evaluate third- and fourth-team players who could be one snap away from larger roles.

The week was also spent cleaning up the smaller problems that have produced larger consequences. Albany State committed seven penalties against Kentucky State, the sort of undisciplined football that can erase good drives and extend bad ones.

Now comes an opponent whose record could invite exactly the kind of lapse Bowser is trying to eliminate.

Lane is 0-6. Albany State beat the Dragons 47-6 last season. Homecoming will bring a festive crowd and all the distractions that come with one of Albany’s largest annual celebrations.

Bowser wants his players ignoring all of it.

He saw something in Lane’s 9-6 loss to Miles that the Dragons’ record does not show. Lane forced four turnovers and held Miles to 86 yards.

“I saw a major stride in the way they played defense on Saturday,” Bowser said. “They are playing with more confidence, so we have to take care of the football and manage the field position. I was impressed with how they played defense last Saturday.”

That performance has made ball security a constant point of emphasis in Albany State’s preparation. Bowser has reminded his players to cover the football, get down when necessary and resist the temptation to turn every play into something spectacular.

Four turnovers mean four extra possessions. Give a struggling opponent that many chances and its confidence can change quickly.

“All it takes is one week of momentum, and it can flip,” Bowser said.

That is true for Lane. It may be even more true for Albany State.

The Golden Rams began the season with high expectations, stumbled three times in their first five games and reached the midpoint facing questions about what remains possible.

Bowser’s answer is simple: plenty.

But possibility now comes with a condition. Albany State must stop giving away yards, possessions and opportunities. It must run the football, protect it and play with the discipline expected of a championship contender.

Bowser also has one request for the thousands of people expected to fill the campus Saturday: Enjoy the tailgates, enjoy the reunions—but come inside when the game begins. “These players are wanting to put on a real good show,” Bowser said, “so come into the stadium and support these young men who love this institution just as much as you do.”

Albany State’s season has reached the point where every Saturday matters.

The first of those five Saturdays is Homecoming. And for the Golden Rams, the celebration will feel much better if it includes a victory.

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ATHENS — There are not many places left in college football that can make No. 2 Georgia look like the challenger.

Tuscaloosa is one of them.

The Bulldogs will arrive at Bryant-Denny Stadium on Saturday undefeated, averaging more points than any team in the country and ranked four spots ahead of Alabama.

ESPN’s Football Power Index still gives Georgia only a 47.3% chance of winning.

Alabama is the favorite because Alabama remains Alabama—and because Tuscaloosa has been a house of horrors for the Bulldogs.

Georgia has not won there since 2007.

That victory came when Matthew Stafford found Mikey Henderson for a 25-yard touchdown on Georgia’s first offensive play of overtime, giving the Bulldogs a 26-23 victory. Mark Richt’s team went on to finish 11-2 and win the Sugar Bowl.

Since then, Georgia has played at Alabama three times and lost all three. The Bulldogs fell 41-34 in their most recent visit in 2024 after rallying from a 30-7 halftime deficit to briefly take the lead.

Carson Beck’s 67-yard touchdown pass to Dillon Bell put Georgia ahead 34-33 with 2:31 remaining. One play later, Alabama answered with Jalen Milroe’s 75-yard touchdown pass to Ryan Williams.

The comeback was magnificent. The ending was familiar.

Alabama leads the all-time series 45-27-4 and owns a 9-2



Special Photo: Kameron Taylor

Georgia wide receiver Thomas Blackshear holds onto the ball as he is brought down during Saturday’s victory over Vanderbilt in Athens. The second-ranked Bulldogs travel to No. 6 Alabama this Saturday seeking their first win in Tuscaloosa since 2007.

advantage in games played in Tuscaloosa. Georgia is 2-7 against the Crimson Tide under Kirby Smart.

The Bulldogs did remove at least some of the weight from the rivalry in December, beating Alabama 28-7 in the 2025 SEC Championship Game. Georgia shut out the Crimson Tide through three quarters and won its second consecutive conference championship.

That result proved Georgia can beat Alabama.

Saturday offers a chance to prove it can do so in Tuscaloosa.

Smart is not interested in discussing ghosts, percentages or what happened 19 years ago. His attention is on an Alabama team that has scored at least 45 points in every game this season.

“They have an extremely physical football team,” Smart said. “They’re playing really high-level football right now. I was super impressed with both sides of the ball and special teams.”

Both teams are 5-0 over-

all and 3-0 in the SEC. Georgia leads the conference with 51.4 points per game. Alabama ranks second at 49.6.

Georgia has outscored its opponents 257-67 and has not trailed this season. Alabama has outscored its opponents 248-104.

Something will have to give.

Much of Smart’s concern begins with Alabama quarterback Keelon Russell, a gifted young passer who has become more comfortable with each start.

“I knew he was an elite player, probably the best quarterback in the country coming out,” Smart said. “He’s unbelievable—savvy, arm strength, pocket awareness.”

Russell’s mobility adds another complication, though Smart cautioned against describing him as simply a running quarterback.

“He doesn’t run unless he has to, and he can,” Smart said. “He scrambles to throw, scrambles to run. He’s accurate and smart. He’s very talented.”

Georgia counters with Gunner

Stockton, a fifth-year quarterback who has started 20 college games and owns a 17-3 record. Stockton ranks third nationally in passing efficiency and has completed 75.5% of his passes for 1,049 yards, 13 touchdowns and one interception this season.

Smart believes experience matters, particularly in an environment expected to include more than 100,000 fans and the ESPN “College GameDay” crew.

“I’m certainly very happy and pleased with where Gunner is as a player,” Smart said. “I think experience helps. I think experience matters. I think how people play around you matters.”

Stockton will also have something Georgia did not consistently possess last season: continuity in front of him. Earnest Greene III, Dontrell Glover, Drew Bobo, Zykke Helton and Juan Gaston Jr. have started every game along the offensive line.

They will face their greatest challenge yet against an Alabama defensive front Smart described with two words: “Size and physicality.”

Georgia has beaten Alabama for a national championship. It has beaten Alabama for an SEC championship.

But this is Tuscaloosa, where the Bulldogs have won only twice and not since Stafford’s overtime pass landed in Henderson’s hands 19 years ago.

Saturday night offers Georgia a chance to show that one of the final barriers from Alabama’s long reign no longer stands.

Atlanta pounds Saints on the ground

Field Level Media

Bijan Robinson rushed for 145 yards and two touchdowns, Brian Robinson Jr. ran for three scores and the visiting Atlanta Falcons defeated the New Orleans Saints 45-24 on Monday night.

Bijan Robinson set the tone with a 59-yard touchdown run on the third play from scrimmage, deflating a sellout crowd that was celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Saints’ 23-3 Monday Night Football victory over the Falcons in the first game in the Superdome after Hurricane Katrina.

Brian Robinson added 62 rushing yards for the Falcons (2-2), who had a second consecutive lopsided road victory, 11 days after a 35-14 win against Green Bay.

Tyler Shough passed for 286 yards but needed 48 attempts to do so as the Saints (1-3) failed to score through the air until

the final two minutes.

The Saints received the second-half kickoff and produced a 13-play drive before stalling at the 8, and Daniel Carlson kicked a 27-yard field goal to cut the Falcons’ lead to 24-10.

Atlanta answered with Brian Robinson’s 8-yard touchdown run to push the lead to 31-10 at the end of the third quarter.

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Alvin Kamara ran 5 yards for his second touchdown in the fourth, but New Orleans had just 50 yards on the ground against the Falcons’ top-ranked run defense.

Michael Penix Jr., who com-

pleted 15 of 20 passes for 223 yards, threw a 31-yard touchdown pass to Jahan Dotson, and Brian Robinson ran 11 yards for Atlanta’s final score. Shough threw a 3-yard touchdown pass to Devaughn Vele with 1:13 left.

After Kendre Miller’s fumble on the Saints’ third possession, Bijan Robinson ran 4 yards for a touchdown and a 14-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

Shough’s 44-yard pass completion to Chris Olave on the penultimate play of the first quarter led to Kamara’s 3-yard touchdown run on the first play of the second quarter, trimming the Saints’ deficit to 14-7.

The Falcons answered on the ensuing possession with Brian Robinson’s 4-yard scoring run to regain a 14-point lead. Nick Folk added a 29-yard field goal to extend the lead to 24-7 at halftime.

From 2A
TAXES

brought in about \$890,000. Ending sales tax collections does not automatically create an immediate bond tax increase; existing debt service balances and remaining collections also affect the financing need. The bond tax could rise in situations like these: The sales tax stops. Payments on the two older bond issues alone total about \$15.9 million from July 2026 through 2034, before any gym bond payments. Once collections end, the \$10.05 million debt service balance and remaining collections must cover them, and any gap falls to property owners. A renewal fails again. The rejected renewal listed repaying “previously incurred general obligation debt” among its uses. Without a new sales tax, that job shifts to the bond tax. Sales slow down. A downturn that cuts monthly collections leaves less sales tax money for debt payments. A separate Nov. 3 referendum would exempt qualifying homeowners 67 and older from school bond taxes. It would not exempt them from the proposed school operating tax or eliminate the district’s debt.

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What comes next Truitt described the current situation as unusual but was cautious about promising a future rate.

“I think the one-time situation is a one-time situation,” she said. “I can’t promise anything,” she added, saying she could not speak for how the board will vote. “I also don’t know what’s coming ahead.” But for Truitt, future decisions will always begin with the conditions children need to learn.

But for Truitt, future decisions will always begin with the conditions children need to learn.

“If they’re not fed, if they’re not safe, then they can’t learn,” she said. “Whether right, wrong, or indifferent, government and society has put an increasing burden

of responsibility on a school system to meet the needs of children, regardless of what community they’re in, and regardless of what resources that community has. We take that very seriously.

“The burden that we carry is in doing that and making the right choices, so that children have what they need. It’s not about wants. It’s 100% about needs. ... That is our sole purpose for existing.”

The hearings are scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, 11:30 a.m. Friday and 6 p.m. Oct. 15, at the Board of Education office, 126 Starksville Ave. N. in Leesburg. The board is scheduled to set the rate at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 15.

To comment, residents can sign up at the venue immediately before each hearing begins. Speakers are generally allowed up to five minutes to address the board as a whole. Digital media presentations are not permitted, and any handouts must be given to the board secretary before the meeting starts.

Obituary
announcement

Beverly Clay Hocutt
February 20, 1941 - October 2, 2026

Beverly Clay Hocutt, our dearly loved “Memaw”, passed away peacefully at home on October 2, 2026.

As we mourn her loss, we also celebrate the love, joy, and generosity of a remarkable woman. We will remember her as a loving mother, a doting grandmother and a kind soul.

Beverly Jean Clay was born on February 20, 1941 in Atlanta, the youngest of four children born to Eugene Lee Clay and Grace Stewart Clay.

It was graduation day on June 4th, 1959 at Southwest High School in Atlanta, when Beverly Jean Clay walked across the stage and imagined a life of dreams that lay ahead. She didn’t have to wait long.

That same month, after a courtship of writing love letters back and forth, she married Ralph Agrippa Hocutt Jr. and left Atlanta for Birmingham, Alabama.

She was shy and he was gregarious. She was a great cook and he was a great eater. For years, she would make his breakfast while he read her the morning paper. They were made for each other.

In their first three years of marriage, they had three children: Catherine Ann Hocutt, David Lee Hocutt and Rhonda Faye Hocutt. Motherhood became her expertise, and she tended to her family with great care, love and devotion.

After a move to St. Louis, the family settled in Albany in 1967, in a home Beverly loved and lived in for nearly 60 years. She enrolled in nursing school and became an L.P.N. caring for patients at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital.

In 1992, she and Ralph had the joy of filling their empty nest with daughter Rhonda and oldest granddaughter Megan Piper. Beverly rejoiced in and embraced motherhood all over again.

She was blessed with three more grandchildren: William Isern, Hannah Cain (Coty) and Shayna Rix (Brandon). Megan White (Greg) gave her four great-grandchildren: Cooper, Amelia, Graham and Evelyn White.

Beverly loved gardening in her tree-filled yard, her dogs and the quiet solitude and wild-life of the mountains. For many years, she and Ralph spent time together in their cabin in North Georgia and generously shared it with friends and family.

After her beloved Ralph died in 2021, Beverly could often be found sitting and talking with her daughter and best friend, Rhonda, or on her front porch, marveling at her life.

After living out that life she imagined and more, having had all of her dreams come true, now she is with Ralph again. Breakfast is on the stove, he is reading to her, and she is listening, just as she always did.

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7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES **SOLUTIONS**

1 reaching great heights (7) _____
2 soft and fluffy (7) _____
3 whittling (7) _____
4 cozy goat wool (8) _____
5 giant pine species (9) _____
6 cure-all (7) _____
7 sounding like Hook’s nemesis (7) _____

POND	RVI	PI	SOA	WY
RING	HME	TI	NG	ER
CA	OSA	RE	LLO	NAC
PA	ING	EA	CK	CAS

Tuesday’s Answers: 1. DUSTERS 2. TOUGHER 3. EASILY 4. PANES 5. GUARDS 6. PASTEUR 7. NATURAL 10/7

7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES **SOLUTIONS**

1 warnings (6) _____
2 what wide receivers receive (6) _____
3 a deep narrow gap (5) _____
4 common spider descriptor (5) _____
5 Ludlum and le Carré forte (9) _____
6 ticker (6) _____
7 like cobbler’s kids, maybe (6) _____

SH	AL	MS	ONA	CH
GGY	CH	NOT	UN	PA
ON	SS	GE	AR	PI
ES	OD	ES	LE	YR

Wednesday’s Answers: 1. SOARING 2. PILLOWY 3. CARVING 4. CASHMERE 5. PONDEROSA 6. PANACEA 7. TICKING 10/8

General
Election

NOTICE OF GENERAL ELECTION

VOTERS WHO WISH TO OBTAIN AN ABSENTEE BALLOT BY MAIL FOR THIS ELECTION MAY SUBMIT AN **OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION** TO THE ELECTIONS OFFICE, P.O. BOX 1827, ALBANY, GA 31702. FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2026 IS THE LAST DAY THAT AN ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION MAY BE SUBMITTED.

EARLY VOTING WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THREE WEEKS, BEGINNING TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026 AND CONTINUING THROUGH FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2026. THOSE VOTERS WHO WISH TO VOTE EARLY MAY DO SO AT THE ALBANY CIVIC CENTER, 100 W OGLETHORPE BLVD., FROM 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 5:00 P.M.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22ND AND OCTOBER 29TH VOTING HOURS WILL BE EXTENDED 9:00 A.M. UNTIL 7:00 PM.

SATURDAY VOTING WILL BE HELD ON OCTOBER 17TH AND OCTOBER 24TH FROM 9:00 AM UNTIL 5:00 PM.

SUNDAY VOTING WILL BE HELD ON OCTOBER 25TH FROM 1:00 PM UNTIL 5:00 PM.

POLLS WILL BE OPEN ON ELECTION DAY FROM 7:00 AM UNTIL 7:00 PM. IF A RUNOFF ELECTION IS REQUIRED, THE DATE OF THAT ELECTION WILL BE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026 AND THE VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR A FEDERAL RUNOFF CONTEST WILL BE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2026.

Release Date: Thursday, October 8, 2026

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

1 Hydrocortisone target
5 Glissade garb
9 “Wanna hear a secret?”
13 Animated blue tang of film
14 Heavy burden
15 Behind schedule
16 Christ the Redeemer veneer material
18 Gets lawyers involved
19 Sound heard around a crib
20 Places that are all fun and games
22 Verbal finger wag
24 Hoppy brew with a low ABV
27 Cut with an axe
28 Tree in the name of a Bay Area city
29 Palindromic family member
30 Line of symmetry
32 Palindromic family member
34 Part of a routine
37 “Why must you overcomplicate everything?,” or what can be said about 16-, 24-, 49-, and 58-Across
41 Perceived
42 Instrument in a “Baker Street” riff
43 Body image?
44 Brain scan letters
46 Spider’s spinning
48 5G predecessor
49 Contents of a cheese pull, often
53 “You know it!”
54 Surf shop?
55 “Well, whaddaya know!”
57 ___ Whip: frozen pineapple treat
58 Genre originally known as the West Coast sound
63 College town in Iowa
64 Figs. that may be delayed by weather
65 Territory “where America’s day begins”
66 Lean to one side
67 Glim

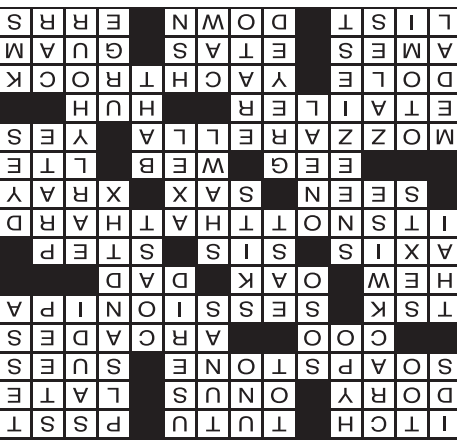
DOWN

68 Blows it
1 Cards at a casino?
2 Also
3 Act the class clown
4 Prefix with -dermic or -thermic
5 Little one
6 Spanish one
7 Bluefin, yellowfin, and blackfin
8 Password preceder
9 Texting etiquette?
10 Riyadh resident
11 Pricey
12 Thompson of “Hedda”
17 Not great, not terrible
21 Take the path of least resistance, say
22 Pad see ew cuisine
23 Suggestive messages
25 Only cardinal direction not in a state name
26 Funny sketches

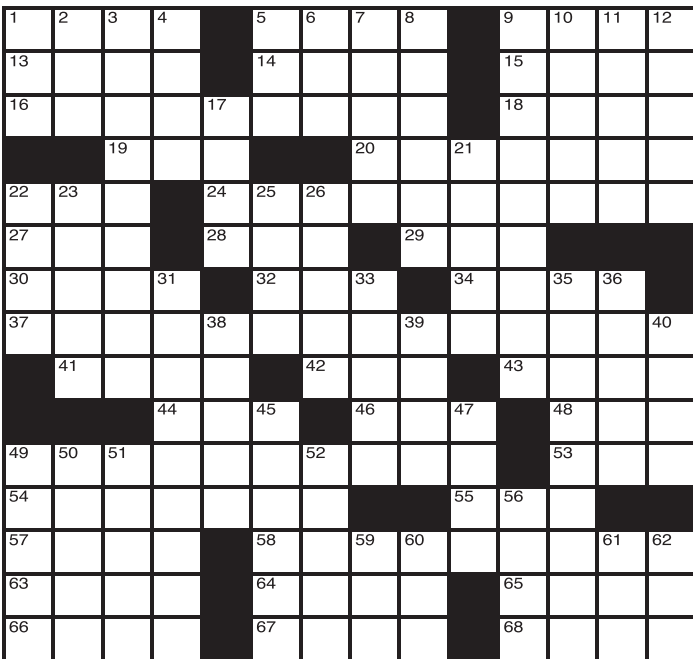
31 Most susceptible to collecting dust?
33 Prayer ___
35 Four or five, maybe
36 Ramble on
38 Lakers legend Shaquille
39 Rink leap
40 Lends color
45 Lost colour
47 22-Down currency

49 Wearable prize
50 Some indigenous Mexicans
51 Diamond chain
52 Muse of poetry
56 Spur to action
59 Murder-ous cry
60 Sales channel
61 Vehicle that may be self-driving
62 Tour de France distances, informally

ANSWER TO TODAY’S PUZZLE:



10/08/26



By Rebecca Goldstein
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Albany Unity in the Community event scheduled for Oct. 24

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — The Albany Recreation and Parks Department is bringing its first-ever Unity in the Community event to Albany in October, with a day of food and activities including blacktop basketball and a softball game featuring special guests.

“We’re going to take over the park for a whole day for people to enjoy,” Recreation and Parks employee Kenji Harris Sr. said. “We’re just trying to bring unity for the community.”

The event kicks off at 9 a.m. on Oct. 24 at the Gordon Sports Complex on Willie Pitts Jr.

Road with blacktop basketball. A Kid Zone will open at about noon with activities and free food for youngsters. Activities will include bounce houses, miniature golf and a video game truck.

Food trucks will be on hand for adults, and the celebrity Stop the Violence Softball Game is scheduled for 2 p.m.

The Recreation and Parks Department is teaming up with the Albany Police Department, Albany Fire Department and other first responders in the community to put on the event, Harris said.

“This is the first one we’re doing,” he said. “We’re hoping to make it an annual thing.



File Photo
The Albany Recreation and Parks Department, along with the Albany Police Department, Albany Fire Department and others, are hosting a Unity in the Community event at the Gordon Sports Complex on Oct. 24.

SIP & SCREEN

Enjoy refreshments and get your screening mammogram!

Routine screening mammogram appointments will be offered during special evening hours, along with prizes, breast health information, pink lemonade and a sweet treat.

October 8 & 22 | 4 - 7 p.m.
PSMC Mammography Department | Phoebe Sumter Medical Center
Call 229-931-1375 to schedule.

Phoebe Sumter

Special Illustration: Phoebe Sumter

Phoebe Sumter encourages women to prioritize breast health at Sip & Screen events

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

AMERICUS — Phoebe Sumter Medical Center is making breast cancer screening more convenient and encouraging women to take charge of their health through its upcoming Sip & Screen mammography events on Thursday and Oct. 22 from 4-7 p.m. in the PSMC Mammography Department.

make it as easy as possible for women to access this important preventive care,” PSMC Chief Nursing Officer & Chief Operating Officer Kelsey Reed said. “Our Sip & Screen events offer flexible evening appointments for women who may find it difficult to schedule screenings during regular business hours.”

The special after-hours screening events are designed to provide women with a comfortable and welcoming opportunity to complete their annual mammogram while enjoying light refreshments. Early detection remains one of the most effective tools in the fight against breast cancer, and regular mammograms can help identify cancer before symptoms appear.

“Breast cancer screening saves lives, and we want to

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Phoebe Sumter encourages women to talk with their health-care providers about recommended screening guidelines and to make breast health a priority.

“We are thrilled about the ability to do an event like this and truly want it to be successful,” Reed said.

Women interested in participating are encouraged to schedule an appointment by calling (229) 931-1375.

Fall Frolic returns to Georgia Ag Museum at ABAC

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON — Fall Frolic returns to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture Oct. 10, continuing a year-long celebration of the GMA’s 50th anniversary.

Fall Frolic is a festival featuring family-friendly activities, entertainment, shopping and seasonal attractions. The GMA transforms its grounds into a celebration of autumn with a variety of attractions and activities from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Admission to Fall Frolic is \$12 for adults and \$9 for children ages 4 to 15. Tickets can be purchased at the Country Store.

Festival highlights include:

- Artisan market featuring locally made goods;
- Picking on the porch of the Gibbs House, hosted by Song Farmers;
- Hayrides through the museum grounds;
- Animals on parade featuring the museum’s new baby goat, Dora;
- Hands-on and creative activities;
- Demonstrations at the museum’s steam-powered cotton gin;
- Stilt walkers and jugglers roaming the festival grounds;
- Festival food favorites, including boiled peanuts, popcorn, hand-dipped ice cream



Special Photo: Georgia Ag Museum

Fall Frolic, a festival featuring family-friendly activities, entertainment, shopping and seasonal attractions, returns to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture Oct. 10.

and floats, cotton candy, and pork skins cooked over an open fire;

“Tapestry: The Tuesday Colorists” exhibition in the gallery.

“Fall Frolic is a wonderful opportunity for the commu-

nity to come together and enjoy a full day of seasonal fun while experiencing the unique attractions and history of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture,” event organizers said. “Whether visitors come to shop from

local artisans, enjoy live performances, take a hayride, sample food from local vendors, or simply spend a fall day with family and friends, Fall Frolic offers something for everyone.”

Remaining special events for 2026 are the museum’s Haunted Trail, Oct. 29-30; Cane Grinding and Syrup Cooking Festival, Nov. 14; Go Native! Dance and Encampment, Nov. 20-21; and Christmas Tales: All Aboard, Dec. 2-5 and Dec. 9-12.



Special Photo

Andreaus Benard Oliver Jr.’s residence in Cordele served as an illegal drug conversion lab.

Cordele man sentenced in probe of illegal drugs from China

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATHENS — A southwest Georgia man was sentenced to serve 14 years in federal prison for distributing synthetic drugs from China, while his father, incarcerated at a state transitional center during the crime, received more than 17 years in prison last month for his role in the organization.

“Those who traffic fentanyl and other dangerous drugs from China into southwest Georgia will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” U.S. Attorney Will Keyes said. “This Homeland Security Task Force investigation shows the strength of our collaboration with law enforcement at every level.”

-- Andreaus Benard Oliver Jr., aka “Dray Oliver,” 27, of Cordele was sentenced to serve 168 months in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release on after he previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance. This sentence will be served consecutively to the undischarged prison term in Crisp County.

-- Andreaus Benard Oliver Sr., aka “Doomie Oliver,” 43, of Cordele was sentenced to

serve 210 months in prison to be followed by six years of supervised release, after he previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance. The sentence will be served consecutively to the undischarged prison term in Crisp County Superior Court.

-- Devito Duran Young, aka “Big” aka “Big Man,” 45, of Macon State Prison and Marietta, was sentenced to serve 327 months in prison to be followed by eight years of supervised release, after he previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance.

-- Trace Davrin Works, 29, of Mableton was sentenced to serve 262 months in prison to be followed by eight years of supervised release, after he previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute fentanyl.

Two co-conspirators were charged by a federal indictment and remain at large:

-- Xin Wang, 28, of China, is charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and one count of conspiracy to distribute a

controlled substance. She faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison with a mandatory minimum of five years in prison and a \$5 million fine for the fentanyl charge and a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine for the conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance charge.

-- Gao Yong, 29, of China, is charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance. He faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine.

U.S. District Judge Tilman E. Self III is presiding over the case. There is no parole in the federal system.

Young and Works are being held accountable for trafficking 2,610 fentanyl pills weighing 279.64 grams, and Young is being held accountable for trafficking 5,502.55 grams of MDMB-4en-PINACA, a new synthetic cannabinoid.

The FBI and the United States Postal Inspection Service investigated the case, with assistance from the GBI and Georgia Department of Corrections Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Peach is prosecuting the case for the government.

October 31st

5 pm - 6:30 pm

TRUNK OR TREAT

306 West Broad Ave. - Albany
(In the parking lot next to Albany Herald)

KIDS HALLOWEEN COSTUME Contest with prizes

FREE TO THE PUBLIC