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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026

‘It’s time to listen to us’: Lee County school tax proposal draws fire

By Kathryn Crockett
kathryn@albanyherald.com

LEESBURG — A long-time Lee County resident was among many who spoke against a proposed school property tax increase at a packed public hearing Oct. 8, questioning spending priorities and warning about the burden on families and older

residents. John Clay, whose two children graduated from Lee County High School, told board members that maintenance needs should have taken priority over recreational facilities and that taxpayers could not afford every project the district wanted.

See **LEE**, 2A



Special Photo: Gina Clay
John Clay addresses the Lee County Board of Education during an Oct. 8 public hearing in Leesburg on a proposal to raise the school operating tax rate from 15.9¢ to 18.9¢ mills.

Incumbent Bill Yearta, newcomer Mitchell Rosa vie for state House District 152 seat

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Mitchell Rosa is making his first foray into politics after learning that Georgia House District 152 Republican incumbent Bill Yearta has not faced a challenger over several elections. Yearta is looking to retain the seat he has held since he won a special election and was

sworn in on Dec. 24, 2019. The two will be on the ballot for Lee and Worth county voters, as well as for Dougherty County voters in the southeastern portion of the county, in the Nov. 3 race. “I decided to run because I saw no one’s run against Bill since 2019,” Rosa, the

See **DISTRICT**, 2A

Blackberry Smoke celebrate 25 years with tour supporting greatest hits:

‘Rattle, Ramble and Roll’



Special Photo: Andy Sapp

Area favorites Blackberry Smoke are scheduled to perform at the Albany Municipal Auditorium on Oct. 22.

By Carlton Fletcher
carlton.fletcher@albanyherald.com

When Charlie Starr, one of the founders and the lead singer of Southern rock/Americana/country warriors Blackberry Smoke, answers the phone, I break the ice by mentioning that his band’s music is popular in the Fletcher household.

“My wife was program director/

on-air personality in radio for more than 20 years, and at stations in Tifton and Albany she — and I, since she was kind enough to allow me air time — played a lot of you guys’ music ... “What Comes Naturally,” “Ain’t Much Left of Me,” “You Got Lucky,” “Keep on Smilin,” “Southern Child,” “Azalea” ...,” I say as a way to break the ice.

“That’s cool,” Starr replies. So I tell him my wife had asked

a question that’s a pretty simple, straight-to-the-point one about how Blackberry Smoke got its name.

“Chris Robinson of the Black Crowes actually gave it to us,” Starr says. “Chris was best friends with our late drummer, Brit Turner, and we were sharing rehearsal space at the time. We’d formed our band out of another band, and when we came up with a name, we found out someone else already had that name. We

were thinking about names because we’d already booked a show. Brit and Chris were talking, and Chris just says, ‘Dude, you need to call your band Blackberry Smoke.’ So we did.”

Starr and his bandmates in Blackberry Smoke, including original members keyboardist Brandon Still, guitarist Paul Jackson and bassist Richard Turner, will be in Albany Oct. 22,

See **BLACKBERRY**, 2A

Albany area election officials prepare for start of early voting on Tuesday

By Alan Mauldin
alan.mauldin@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — For some people, nothing beats the experience of walking into their polling place on Election Day and casting a ballot.

Others prefer to get the process out of the way ahead of time, either in person or by mail, or have schedules that make it difficult to get to the voting booth

on the big day.

“We think people are very excited in this (Nov. 3) election,” Lee County Election Supervisor Veronica Johnson said. “We’ve received a lot of absentee-by-mail applications. We’re getting a lot of phone calls about that, and we’ve received phone calls about when early voting starts.”

For voters statewide, the early in-person voting period runs weekdays Oct. 13-30. In addition,

two mandated Saturday voting opportunities fall on Oct. 17 and Oct. 24.

There is no voting held on the Monday prior to the election. Voters can find hours of operation for early voting precincts and other information in their county by visiting the Georgia Secretary of State’s My Voter Page at <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/s/>.

See **EARLY**, 2A



File Photo

Early voting for the Nov. 3 midterm elections will start in Albany — and throughout the state — on Tuesday.

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From 1A

DISTRICT

Democratic candidate, said. “The deadline was coming up, and I said, ‘He can’t run alone.’ I’ve seen a quote that elections shouldn’t be won before votes are cast. I just want people to have an option.”

District 152 voters will have a clear choice in the race, as the two candidates have distinctly different political takes. Rosa outlined a relatively progressive agenda that includes an increase to the state’s minimum wage.

Rosa, 25, is North Carolina native who moved to Lee County when his father was assigned to Marine Corps Logistics Base-Albany. He is currently a student at Albany State University, majoring in sociology, and is employed at Publix.

“I’ve been interested in politics (and) I’ve been staying involved in politics since (President) Trump first ran,” Rosa said. “I’ve seen not a lot of growth in the economy, and people’s wages aren’t going up. I wanted to see if I could do something about that.”

While there have been some jobs added in the district since Yearta’s time in office, those are not jobs upon

which individuals can build a career, the challenger said.

“I know a lot of people I went to school with who are making their way up towards Atlanta” seeking better jobs, Rosa said. “My biggest thing is raising the minimum wage. Georgia’s minimum wage is technically lower than the federal minimum wage.”

Nearly all workers in the state are paid at least the \$7.25 federal minimum, but there are exceptions in rare cases that allow employers to pay the \$5.15 rate.

“I’d like to see it (minimum wage) at \$20,” Rosa said. “My first thing for jobs would be raising the minimum wage.”

Other top issues for the candidate include enshrining women’s right to choose in the state Constitution, making cannabis legal for recreational purposes and reparations for slavery and the Jim Crow system.

“It just doesn’t make sense really to lock people up when other states allow it, and it’s safe and it raises revenue,” Rosa said of the legalization of cannabis. “Those are my big four. Obviously I’d like to see Georgia be better for workers, for families.

“I know Bill Yearta likes to make it better for homeowners. A lot of people my age

can’t afford a new house or to move where houses are.”

When it comes to data centers, Rosa says he favors a moratorium in order to determine what impact the facilities could have in the state. Developers and operators should also pay their fair share, he said.

For his part, Yearta thinks things are on the right track in the state and that steps that have been made over the last few years should be continued.

“I think if you look at our record, House members have done a lot for the state of Georgia,” he said. “I think Georgia is on a good footing.”

The incumbent pointed to the state’s No. 1 ranking

in 2026 as the best state for business by Area Development magazine. The ranking was the 13th consecutive year for Georgia in the top spot, and it topped Texas at No. 2, followed by Tennessee, North Carolina and Ohio.

The state also ranked first in the category of skilled manufacturing labor, cooperative and responsive government, and overall speed to market.

“Georgia was notified that it’s the best state to do business again,” Yearta said. “I think that’s a great thing. I think that has a ripple effect across the state in creating jobs.”

The fact that he has not faced many challengers over the election cycles has been



BILL YEARTA



MITCHELL ROSA

fortunate, but Yearta said that he welcomes an opponent.

“That’s what makes America

great,” he said. “I think there

See **DISTRICT**, 11A

From 1A

LEE

“You don’t spend money you don’t have funds to spend,” Clay said during a public comment period.

The proposal would raise the school operating tax rate from 15.96 to 18.96 mills, an increase of 3 mills, or about 18.8%. For a property with \$100,000 in taxable assessed value, that would add \$300 to the annual school operating tax if its taxable value remains unchanged.

The advertised 28.7% increase compares the proposed rate with the 14.732-mill rollback rate, which accounts for reassessment increases in existing property. Individual tax bills also depend on property values and exemptions.

The district’s published tax table projects an operating levy of about \$30.69 million, compared with \$23.56 million for 2025. That is approximately \$7.13 million more, or 30.25%, reflecting both the proposed rate and a larger taxable digest.

District officials say the additional revenue would restore reserves after tax refunds, help address an expected interruption in education sales tax collections and cover rising costs.

Clay questioned whether the district had adequately separated necessities from projects that could wait. During the hearing, he pointed to the high school’s heating and

air-conditioning needs, arguing those should have been addressed before spending on courts and other facilities.

He also warned that higher taxes could make it harder for long-time residents living on Social Security or stretching each paycheck to remain in the county.

“Now’s the time to act. It’s time to listen to us,” he told the board.

In an Oct. 9 interview with The Albany Herald, Clay said his criticism grew out of his attachment to the school system. He has lived in Lee County for nearly 30 years and serves on the county Planning and Zoning Commission, he said. His family moved from Albany when his children were small specifically so they could attend Lee County schools.

His son graduated in 2015 and is now a nuclear engineer in the Navy, while his daughter graduated in 2017 and works as a labor and delivery nurse at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, he said. Clay credited the school system’s teachers and staff with helping prepare them for those careers.

Now, he wants the district to take a closer look at its finances before asking property owners for more money.

“I’m hoping what will happen is that the tax increase will be voted down,” Clay said.

He called for an independent audit and said the district should make spending decisions within the resources available, much as households must.

From 1A

BLACK-BERRY

performing at the Albany Municipal Auditorium. The performance is a return for the road warriors, local favorites who’ve, for some reason, always been “too rock for country radio” and “too country for rock,” so they’ve left it to fans to find their music.

That’s been a given, as three of the band’s albums – “Holding All the Roses,” “Like an Arrow” and “Be Right Here” – have scored No. 1 chart positions on Billboard magazine’s Americana, country and folk charts. Blackberry Smoke are currently touring in support of their best-of release, “Rattle, Ramble and Roll.”

Starr took some time to talk about the band with The Albany Herald.

ALBANY HERALD: Twenty-five years (as a band) ... man, nobody stays together that long anymore. What does a milestone like that mean to you?

CHARLIE STARR: It means the world for us to kind of stand back far enough to see all that’s gone on in those years. It’s been great, but it doesn’t really feel like 25 years.

AH: Do you and the band find yourselves maybe getting a little nostalgic at times, maybe looking back over a career that’s lasted this long?

CS: There are so many things that stand out: Recording and a singing with George Jones, making music and touring

with people like Billy Gibbons, Gary Rossington, Bob Weir, Paul Riddle with the Marshall Tucker Band ... the list just goes on and on. If I sat down and made a list of all the great musicians we’ve played with, it would be truly mind-blowing.

AH: Please don’t take offense – I know you guys have a lot of fans and you’ve had a lot of success – but there are a lot of people, myself included, who feel the band should be even bigger. Are you OK with y’all’s place in music?

CS: Yeah, I’m really OK with it. Sure, I’d love to play sold-out stadiums every night and have hit songs on the radio. I remember when we made our album “Whippoorwill” with Zac Brown. Zac felt that several songs on that album would be radio hits. He actually put his radio team on it, but they just came up with every excuse why the songs wouldn’t get played on country radio. And, of course, rock radio wouldn’t play it because it was ‘too country.’ Zac really felt “Ain’t Got the Blues,” “Pretty Little Lie,” “One-Horse Town” and “Ain’t Much Left of Me” all had a chance to be hits, but he ended up just as frustrated as we were when radio just wouldn’t play those songs. We’ve learned over the years to just take it as it comes. We’re too old to change now, so we do what we do. Maybe if the suits had caught us when we were 18, we might have cut our hair and sung pop songs.

AH: I kind of put y’all’s album “You Hear Georgia” in a category with drivin’ ‘n’ cryin’s “I See Georgia,” a category

that kind of excludes anyone outside the state. Was your album intended as a tribute to Georgia?

CS: Not really. We released the album around the time of COVID (2021), and it was election time. There was a politician I heard on TV who had a Southern accent, and I thought he had some good things to say. But the people doing the interviews obviously didn’t hear what he was saying. I’m from Alabama – we’re in Atlanta now – and I’ve found that people from up North are oversensitive to the past of the South. So I’ll be asked something like, “Is everyone down here still racist?” The way I see it, you can find that stuff if you look for it, but this is the 2020s, not the 1940s. There are no more Jim Crow laws on the books. I was in the studio, working with (producer) Dave Cobb, and I came up with this idea: “You hear Georgia when I open my mouth ...” and the song took off from there. It’s an attitude people from the North have about Southerners.

AH: I’m reading a book in which Paul McCartney talks about all the songs he’s written, with The Beatles, Wings and as a solo artist. One of the things he said that struck me is that he and John Lennon started out writing what they thought fans wanted to hear and ended up writing more for themselves. What about when you write songs; who do you write for?

CS: It’s impossible for me to nail it if I try to write what I think people might like. I’ve done this thing where I’ll play a song for my wife, my best

friend and for other band members, thinking it’s something they’ll like, and they’ll be like, “OK.” Then, I’ll write something that I really feel, and they’ll get it immediately. When I was writing “Azalea,” my wife and son walked in and heard just one word, and they said, “I love that. I felt it.” I think you have to write what you’re feeling. People can sniff out a fake from a mile away.

AH: What are the best songs you’ve written?

CS: I have no idea. I never pick favorites. It changes from week to week anyway. I might go a period of time and not sing a song, and someone will request it, and I say, “Oh, yeah, I like that one.”

AH: I know you’re a musical lifer, but with any job, there are always ups and downs. Was there ever a time you wished you were doing something else? And, if so, what would you be doing?

CS: I used to work at a body and paint shop growing up, and there are times I miss that. I miss that feeling of finishing a job, getting it done. My dad and I still have a place in Alabama that we were going to do some work at, but he’s retired now, so I don’t know if we’ll ever get to it.

AH: You guys are playing Albany, in a mid-sized market. Does the size of a community or venue influence how you do your shows?

CS: No, we just play the show.

AH: And so what can fans expect when you guys play here in Albany?

CS: We’re going to give y’all a little bit of everything.

From 1A

EARLY

Local elections offices also may provide additional convenience for voters by holding special events or extended hours.

In Dougherty County, all early voting will be conducted at the Albany Civic Center. Voting hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on both weekdays and for the two Saturdays. On Sunday Oct. 25, polls will be open from 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

In addition, voting hours will be extended to 7 p.m. on two Thursdays: Oct. 22 and Oct. 29.

In Lee County, the voting office in Leesburg at 100 Starksville Ave. N. will be open for voting from 8:15 a.m.-5 p.m. on weekdays and from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on the Saturday voting days.

Pop-up voting opportunities in Lee County will be held from 2-7 p.m. on Oct. 19 and Oct. 20 at the Bindery, 445 Oakland Parkway, and the same hours on Oct. 21 and Oct. 22 at the Redbone Fire Station at 1286 Graves Springs Road.

“Most of the voting population of Lee County is south of Leesburg, so we do two days on the east side and two days on the south side,” Johnson said. “We’ve had a lot of success doing that. It’s just another opportunity for people to go vote after school pick-up or after work. That’s what we’ve done the last several years. The citizens are very supportive of it.”

In addition to convenience, early voters can help reduce lines on Election Day. What-

ever method voters choose, Johnson said, the office will be ready to handle the number of voters who turn out.

The county has about 25,000 registered voters.

“The more people we have that vote early, the smoother Election Day goes,” Johnson said. “It’s just a win-win for us, not only the voters. Lee County continues to grow. We have several subdivisions being developed right now, so our voter rolls continue to increase.”

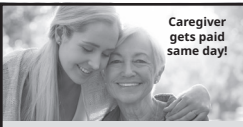
Voters also can make the voting experience easier by visiting the My Voter Page and examining the candidates. Those documents can be printed, and voters can make selections before going to the booth.

“I encourage everybody to go to the My Voter Page and download a sample ballot and decide who they want to vote for,” Johnson said. “They can print them out and bring that with them so they have a ‘cheat sheet’ when they vote.”

In Dougherty County, where there are nearly 66,663 registered voters, the election crew is ready, Election Supervisor Ginger Nickerson said. Sixteen voting machines will be available, and 23 workers are scheduled to be on hand at the early voting precinct.

“We welcome them to come out,” Nickerson said. “We know that, generally, most elections people wait until the last week and lines are heavier.

“To me, it doesn’t really matter how they show up. I just want them to show up. We have staff, and we are ready. It will be the same on Election Day; the precincts will be fully staffed.”



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Daily Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Underwater Universal stars combined with a tendency to make a poor or reactive choice make today a very poor day for a financial decision, agreement, or a major purchase. Tomorrow brings you much better odds.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Someone close could fall to their lowest nature instead of rising to their highest and best self for a few hours. Or this could be you. Be patient with a partner, do your best to be your best today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Today and tonight could precipitate actions or behaviors which could have consequences, there's a self-sabotage possibility and impulsivity could also emerge. Stay grounded, think carefully, tread lightly.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't even begin for one instant to go down the path of 'hold my beer and watch this,' a push to show off could create plenty of problems. Also, don't jump into anything spontaneously today or this evening.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Listen to the angel on one shoulder, not the gremlin on the other today. It would be too easy to head down the wrong path today, especially in your home life. Hold off at least one more day on something you want to say.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Financial decisions, big purchases, and investments are a very poor idea for today. These same moves could rock tomorrow if your personal money transits are also helpful and strong. Wait at least one day.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Remember that who you are is for you, how they respond is about them. This is no excuse for bad behavior, ever, just a reminder that people will believe what they want to believe; understand what they want to understand.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Changes you're making deeply and internally will likely appear on the horizon of visibility withing another

couple of weeks — be ready. Stay on the straight and narrow today to avoid a critical error in judgment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A sense of inner upheaval could persist for several hours today, ride it out without making any decisions. Impulsivity is not your friend today or tomorrow. Get support from a friend.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Tread gently in the workplace or out in the world today, odds just aren't great on below-zero days. A friend could go off on a tangent of self-sabotage, help them avoid this if they will listen.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keeping yourself under the radar today is a very wise idea wherever you are. Disruptive energies aren't working in a positive way now. Say little and do needed tasks without fanfare.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): For today at least, the trend is not your friend — don't go along with advice that could create downstream issues in your life. Avoid financial agreements even if you think you have a comprehensive, global understanding.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Expect some nice openings and fewer stresses for the remainder of 2026 — more good should flow. A chance to revise your belief systems could ready you for new growth. About early November, a new opportunity could arise that brings more than just an increased income stream — you could also enjoy increased attractiveness and charm. Your communication skills could be highlighted along with your thinking capacity. Then, a chance to integrate something in the past could free you. Early December could bring a happy surprise, followed by a goodie train of benefits — help, ideas, time, energy, and more money. Use these resources to construct the next levels of your ambitions, hopes, and dreams. A chance to heal something, self, spirit, health, or a relationship could arrive spontaneously. Expect recognition early in the new year.



- 1269** - The Westminster Abbey church building is consecrated
- 1775** - The Continental Congress establishes the Continental Navy with was later the United States Navy
- 1792** - The cornerstone of the United States Executive Mansion is Washington D.C. is laid. In 1818, the building would be known as the White House
- 1843** - The oldest Jewish services organization in the world, B'nai B'rith is founded in New York City
- 1923** - Ankara becomes the capital of Turkey
- 1943** - During World War II, Italy officially declares war on Germany
- 1972** - Aeroflot Flight 217 crashes outside Moscow, killing 174 people
- 1972** - Uruguayan Air Force

- Flight 571 crashes in the Andes mountains with twenty eight people on board surviving the crash. They are not rescued until December 23rd and sixteen remain alive.
- 1977** - Lufthansa Flight 181 is hijacked by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
- 1983** - The first U.S. cellular network in Chicago is launched by Ameritech Mobile Communications
- 2010** - After a record 69 days underground, all 33 trapped miner in Copiapo, Chili are rescued
- 2013** - During the Hindu festival Navratri, a stampede occurs in India killing 115 and injuring more than 110
- 2016** - The Maldives announce their decision to withdraw from the Commonwealth of Nations

CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

- Ada Lovelace Day
- English Language Day
- Good Samaritan Day
- Own Business Day
- Silly Sayings Day
- Treat Yo' Self Day
- US Navy Birthday
- World Child Development Day
- World Thrombosis Day

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Success isn't permanent, and failure isn't fatal."

Mike Ditka, football coach (1939-)

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

Saying the quiet part out loud: Kemp's endorsement commercial of the billionaire who never served a day in any public service position for the next governor is laced with old Southern Jim Crow charm. He wants Jackson to be the next governor because as he says, "He will preserve our way of life in Georgia."

We got to vote blue all the way through.

I wish the absolute best for ASU students. However, I wonder if two solid weeks of homecoming celebrations is the best use of educational funding. That is far more than UGA or VSU. Tuition could be lowered, or those dollars used for career training resources and job search efforts. The job market is extremely competitive, and the world is growing expensive. My heart goes out to students in debt, and I hope administrators are making right decisions for the students and not themselves.

Albany citizens ask for more police patrol to crack down on crime and for cleaner streets. We get higher taxes and brand new gyms that no one asked for. Goes great with an empty bus station and community centers. Should we just assume that our tax dollars are going directly into the wallets of contractors with the right friends? At least try to be discreet about it next time.

My pharmacy for the last eight years is one reason I'm back on Xanax. I think this is an example of irony. That Man Without a Family

One has to wonder who is thinking for our Albany/Dougherty so-called leaders. Spending a ton of money on more gyms is not the answer to crime and low school performance. Maybe all of these preachers, at least they say they are preachers, should start with the their flock. Maybe these preachers should preach a little about family values and responsibility.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

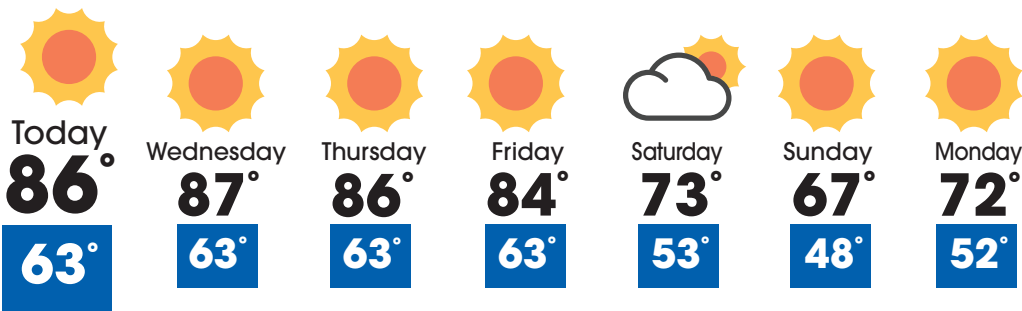
Think about this the next time you buy gas or go to the grocery store after having someone tell you how great they are and how they are doing this for you. That same person, in a job that pays \$500k a year, gifted another \$1.2 billion dollars. So when you fail to make ends meet, think what it would be like to earn \$\$576,923.08 per hour on a 40-hour work week. Now how great do you think he is again? Go ahead, it worked so well the first two times, elect another billionaire to show you the same level of love.

I don't care if Syndey Sweeney was advertising Tidy Bowl, I'd watch that ad over and over and over. That you're upset about it says a lot about you.

So Orlando and Chris and the others didn't meet required deadlines, and instead of cancelling the (taxpayer funded) loan, the city manager says the city will give them more time to do the paperwork. Here was a perfect opportunity to "stop the steal," but our brilliant city officials are doing all they can to enrich these know-nothings with our money. I'm sick of it.

I think the Braves' season was a successful one, and Atlanta's pitchers all went toe-to-toe with the Dodgers' aces. It was the Braves hitters who were atrocious: Olson, Acuna, Baldwin, Dubon, Riley (.000 batting average!!), Thomas, et al. Pitching ain't great, but hitting is pathetic. That's where the most help is needed.

Weather Forecast



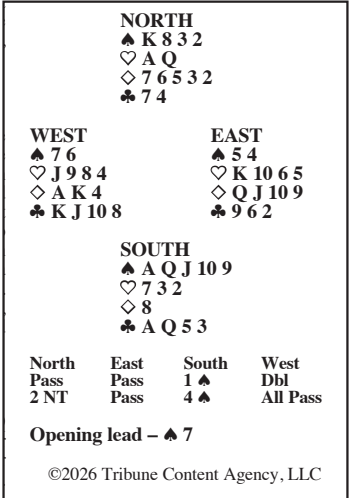
Daily Bridge Club

The whole loaf

By Frank Stewart

Tribune Content Agency

Cy the Cynic says that half a loaf is better than no idle time at all. Cy is like many players: As declarer, he is lazy; he adopts



Frank Stewart

the first line of play he sees, especially if it looks easy.

In my club's penny game, Cy played at four spades. West led a trump, and Cy won with dummy's king and led a club, finessing with his queen. West took the king and led a second trump.

The Cynic won and tried a heart to dummy's queen. That finesse lost also, and Cy finished with only nine tricks: five trumps in his hand, a club, a heart and two ruffs in dummy.

EFFORT

Cy makes his game with more effort. At Trick Two he must concede a diamond. He wins the trump return in dummy, ruffs a diamond and finesses in hearts, losing. If East returns a club, Cy's

queen loses to West, but Cy wins the heart return with the ace, ruffs a diamond, ruffs a heart in dummy and ruffs a diamond.

Cy can then take the ace of clubs, ruff a club and cash dummy's good fifth diamond for his 10th trick.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: S K 8 3 2 H A Q D 7 6 5 3 2 C 7 4. The dealer, at your left, opens one heart. Your partner doubles. The next player passes. What do you say?

ANSWER: If you held K832,32,AQ532,74, you would jump to two spades to invite game with nine useful points. After the opening bid at your left, your queen of hearts may be useless. Bid one spade. An "advance" of 1NT would show some strength, but your hand will almost surely play better at spades.

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

Advice Columnist

New work friendship sends mixed messages

By Eric Thomas

Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: I am a male, a new female coworker started around Halloween 2025, and I introduced myself on day one. The next week she comes over to my work area and asks me why I am so quiet and then she asks me a lot of personal questions and I answer only a few.

Later, she tells me she is good at stalking people, and she looked me up online. I laughed it off and said, "thanks for the honesty."

She tells me she has no friends and I say I don't either.

Around the holidays, I gave her a Christmas gift, and she was so thrilled and happy. Then I gave her my phone number around New Year's because I had a promo code for streaming that I was not gonna use. She was happy. We had talked about watching a DVD or a movie on streaming together.

I reminded her in January of her offer to watch the streaming service together. She seemed nonchalant but also unsure. I text reminded her a couple days later, she replied she has been seeing someone and does not know how he would feel about me being in her house.

So, the months go by and we are very friendly and cordial. She had her birthday recently and told me she was going to see family. There has never been any indication of a boyfriend, she carools sometimes with other coworkers, and they have never mentioned her having a boyfriend. I am sure she lied to me about having a boyfriend. Why would she lie about that?

We are close coworker/friends; it seems real, she is not a fake person. She is very friendly with everyone but more joking with them and more serious with me.

I enjoy being her friend, but I'm confused about what kind of relationship she wants.

— Work Friends

Dear Friends: I think there might be some misread cues here that are tripping you up. Suffice it to say, it's best to treat this friendship as platonic. Whether or not your coworker has a boyfriend isn't relevant and it would be best to drop it. If it was a lie, it could be that she was trying to ensure that this friendship didn't cross over into a romantic place or she simply wanted to set a barrier between her work and personal life.

I know that the beginning of the friendship may have had some moments that seemed especially personal — like the questions she asked and the discussion about watching a film together. There's nothing wrong with following up about those plans, as you did. But for now, take the "no thank you" as the final word.

And if you're uncomfortable with some of the more personal aspects of your work friendship, it's OK to say so, too.

Dear Eric: My husband and I have known a couple for 25 years, and we had a lot of fun times together. I have always been the person who hosts dessert after every occasion over the past 23 years plus many dinners.

They participated occasionally in the first few years but do nothing now. I have begun to pull away from them, and



Eric Thomas

they just keep trying to make plans with us.

I'm tired and disgusted with myself for allowing this to go on for so long. It seems petty to me to say anything about it, but surely, they know they have really taken advantage of the situation. Should I say why to them?

— Party Planner

Dear Planner: It's not petty; it's just the truth and the truth is going to keep you from developing deeper resentment. It's natural for even the most willing social planner to get tired of holding on to that responsibility after a while. And every friendship goes through changing stages, especially after decades. So, it should come as no surprise to your friends that things have shifted for you.

If you want to pull away, that's fine. But it seems worth a conversation to see if you can shift things in this longtime friendship. It may be possible to make it work for everyone.

You can tell them how you feel simply. "In the past, I've organized our plans, but it has started to feel like a burden rather than a joy. Can you take on the responsibility of hosting dessert from now on?"

Ideally, even if they are aware they've been taking advantage of you, they'll quickly agree to pick up the slack. It's also possible that they don't see the arrangement as them taking advantage of you. Often, when one person or one couple in a friendship is adept at planning, others assume that they just love to do it and neglect to ask if the role has become a chore.

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

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Perspectives

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Carlton Fletcher
EDITOR

—Georgia Trust for—
LOCAL NEWS

TODAY'S
BIBLE
VERSE

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
Matthew 5:3*

COLUMNIST ■ JAY BOOKMAN

Is Jackson’s plan another attempt to kick Medicaid expansion down the road?

Georgians strongly support Medicaid expansion to provide health insurance to their lower-income neighbors, and they have for years.

Yet somehow, their clear policy preference has not yet been translated into action. The state remains one of only 10 that have not accepted the federal government’s offer to expand coverage.

How do we know that public support for expansion is real?

Well, repeated polls have shown that between 70-75% of voters support extending coverage to hundreds of thousands of Georgians – most of them working people – who are currently uninsured. (Expansion would also draw billions of additional federal dollars to the state, strengthening our healthcare system and bolstering rural areas where doctors and hospitals are struggling to stay afloat.)

We also know Medicaid expansion is popular because for several years now, Republicans have offered lip service to some form of expansion, but without actually ever delivering it. Judging by their rhetoric, their internal polls deliver much the same message as public polls: Georgians believe access to healthcare is a right and see government as a legitimate, necessary means of providing it.

But it never happens. The taboo against “Obamacare” remains too strong.

Consider Gov. Brian Kemp’s Georgia Pathways to Coverage program, which he touted as a conservative alternative to Medicaid expansion that would be so effective that it would serve as a national model for other red states.

But if Pathways had been an actual healthcare proposal, you would have to consider it an expensive failure. Almost seven years after Kemp announced it, and three years after he signed it into effect, Georgia still has the second-highest uninsured rate in the country, behind only Texas. (Not coincidentally, Georgia also has the fifth-highest level of unpaid medical debt, which is a burden on patients and providers both.)

The Pathways program has been so ineffective – in part because of what appears to be purposeful bureaucratic neglect – that the Kemp administration



BOOKMAN

recently announced that it may abandon it altogether. The number of Georgians enrolled in the program has never come close to initial promises, and the program has long been expensive to run.

However, the more accurate way to understand Georgia Pathways is as a distraction, as a proposal invented to sell an illusion of Medicaid expansion to voters, but without actually doing so. On those terms it has been somewhat of a success. No, it hasn’t reduced the demand for Medicaid expansion in Georgia; to the contrary, that demand has increased over the years.

But it has succeeded in kicking the can a little bit farther down the road.

So is Rick Jackson just another can kicker?

Like Kemp, the Republican candidate for governor balks at simply expanding Medicaid as federal law allows. Like Kemp, he’s telling Georgia voters that he has an even better idea. He’s not just offering an alternative to Medicaid expansion, he’s offering an intelligent alternative to Medicaid expansion.

Who could be opposed to that? It’s intelligent!

However, if you unwrap the intelligently tied bow from the intelligently gift-wrapped box and peer inside, what do we find? Honestly, not much. The Jackson campaign provides few details of its proposal. The plan is to use “better technology,” “cut out the middlemen” and “make Georgia a national model for high-quality, accessible and affordable healthcare.”

So intelligent.

To be fair, a big part of Jackson’s argument is that as someone who has made billions of dollars as a profitable “middleman” in the healthcare industry, he has special insight into how to do it better and cheaper. That’s certainly plausible.

It’s also plausible that the skill set, instincts and values required to wring billions from the system are different from those required to improve it. Those are two very different areas of expertise. And as demonstrated in our ongoing experience at the national level, government by billionaire doesn’t always work as well in reality as its paid advocates would have us believe.

Jay Bookman covered Georgia and national politics for nearly 30 years for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, earning numerous national, regional and state journalism awards. He is also the author of “Caught in the Current,” published by St. Martin’s Press.

COLUMNIST ■ THOMAS KNAPP

Election 2026 enters the ‘spoiler’ whining hour

“A vote for the Libertarian,” Madison Cerey tells the Washington Times, “or a protest vote from any Republican who sits this one out, is a vote to hand the U.S. Senate to the Democratic socialists.”

Cerey, a spokeswoman for Ken Paxton’s U.S. Senate campaign in Texas, is responding to a Rasmussen poll that shows Paxton trailing Democratic candidate James Talarico by 1%, with 5% of likely voters undecided ... and 4% planning to support Libertarian Ted Brown.

It’s not just Texas. In Kansas’s Senate race, Libertarian David Graham also draws 4% in polling, with incumbent Republican Roger Marshall trailing Democrat Adam Hamilton by 2%. In Montana’s 1st U.S. House district, Libertarian Nick Sheedy enjoys 5% support, with Republican Aaron Flint enjoying a razor-thin 1% lead over Democrat Sam Forstg.

In every election cycle, Republicans and Democrats start playing the “spoiler” card whenever a race looks uncomfortably close.

Usually, it’s Republicans griping about Libertarians and Democrats griping about Green Party candidates, on the supposition that those two “minor” parties’ voters would, in the “normal” course of things, vote Republican and Democrat respectively.

That supposition is probably incorrect – many third-party voters simply won’t vote if they don’t see options they prefer on their ballots, and others might vote opposite the assumptions of the big players’ strategists.

The incorrectness doesn’t bug me nearly as much as the arrogance.

For more than a century, the Republican and Democratic parties have used ballot access laws and debate exclusion criteria to rig elections, making it as difficult and expensive as possible for “third-party”



KNAPP

and independent candidates to even appear on ballots.

Then when Republicans and Democrats lose, or look like they may lose, the whining begins.

“Why, the nerve! How dare anyone but us seek political office? Those other guys can’t win – we’ve busted our butts to make sure of that! But here they come, ‘stealing’ our votes and ‘spoiling’ the rightful outcomes! There oughta be a law! Oh, wait, there is ... why isn’t it working?”

Note to political candidates:
Votes don’t belong to you, and aren’t “stolen” by other candidates.

Votes belong to voters and have to be earned – in those voters’ judgment – by you or by those other candidates.

Additional note to the Texas GOP:

You nominated a guy who was impeached on 20 counts by a legislature controlled by your own party. Those counts included abuse of office and accepting bribes. You nominated a guy who plea-bargained his way out of a felony indictment for securities fraud. You nominated a guy who committed voter fraud at least twice by voting “from” an address he didn’t live at.

Stop blaming the Libertarian for your nominee’s deservedly poor standing with the voters. James Talarico may not deserve to win the race, but Ken Paxton definitely deserves to lose it. Texas could, and unfortunately almost certainly will, do a lot worse than Ted Brown. If he saves you from six years of Paxton, he deserves a medal.

Stop whining about “spoilers” already and start trying to earn support instead of just demanding it.

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

COLUMNIST ■ YONATAN HAMBOURGER

When prayer becomes procrastination

Sometimes the most respectable way to avoid a decision is to keep thinking about it.

We tell ourselves we need more information. Another conversation. Another night’s sleep. Perhaps one more opinion from someone we trust. None of these things is foolish. Important decisions deserve reflection.

But there comes a point when deliberation stops producing wisdom and starts producing delay.

The book of Exodus contains an astonishing version of that moment. The Israelites have escaped Egypt only to discover themselves trapped. The sea lies ahead. Pharaoh’s army is approaching from behind. Panic spreads through the camp. Moses does what a person of faith would naturally do.

He turns to God. And God responds with words that seem almost incomprehensible: “Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the children of Israel and let them journey forth.” (Exodus 14:15) Why would God object to prayer at precisely the moment when prayer seems most appropriate?

The Torah does not diminish prayer. Jewish life is built around it. Moses himself repeatedly turns to God in moments of crisis. Yet here, with an army behind him and a sea ahead, he is effectively told: This is not the moment for more prayer. Move.

Jewish tradition adds a dramatic detail. According to the Talmud and Midrash, while the people hesitated at the water’s edge, Nachshon ben Aminadav, a leader of the tribe of Judah, entered the sea. He continued until the water threatened to overwhelm him. Only then did the waters divide.

Whether we focus on Moses receiving the command or Nachshon entering the water, the tension is the same. The people had reached a point at which no additional reflection could change what was required of them.

They already knew the direction. That distinction matters because indecision rarely introduces itself as fear. It often sounds like responsibility.

Consider someone who has known for months that a difficult conversation must take place. Perhaps an employee is failing and needs honest feedback. Perhaps a friendship has been damaged by something neither person will name. The person thinks carefully about what to say. Seeks advice. Rehearses the conversation. Waits for the right moment.

All of that may be wise. But eventually another week of preparation adds nothing except another week without the conversation. The difficulty is that preparation and procrastination can look almost identical from the outside. Both involve thought. Both can involve consultation. Both can be defended as caution.

The difference is whether we are still trying to discover what is right – or trying to postpone the cost of doing what we already know is right. That is a much harder distinction to make.

There are decisions we should delay. Impulsiveness can destroy lives. New information can alter

moral judgments. Humility sometimes requires admitting that we do not yet know enough to act. But caution has a shadow side. We can continue gathering information long after the essential facts are clear because information feels safer than commitment. We can seek another opinion not because we need

wisdom, but because we hope someone will relieve us of responsibility.

Even prayer can be used that way. That possibility is what makes God’s question to Moses so arresting. Prayer is among the highest expressions of human dependence upon God. Yet in this particular moment, prayer could not substitute for the responsibility already placed before him.

“Why do you cry out to Me?” Not because prayer is unimportant. Because sometimes we ask God for guidance after the guidance has already come.

This is also why the story of Nachshon needs to be read carefully. It would be comforting to turn it into a formula: Take a courageous step and the sea will always part. Life makes no such promise.

People act courageously and still fail. They tell the truth and lose the relationship. They begin worthy ventures that collapse. They make principled choices and live with painful consequences. Faith is not a technique for forcing God to produce the outcome we want.

Nachshon’s courage lay elsewhere. He moved without possessing the guarantee. That is very different from assuming that courage guarantees success.

Most of us will never stand before a literal sea with an army approaching. Our moments are quieter. A phone number we have avoided dialing. An apology we have composed but never delivered. A decision we have researched past the point of usefulness. A responsibility everyone agrees is important but no one wants to own.

Often the question is not whether we have thought enough. It is whether thinking has become the place where we hide from acting.

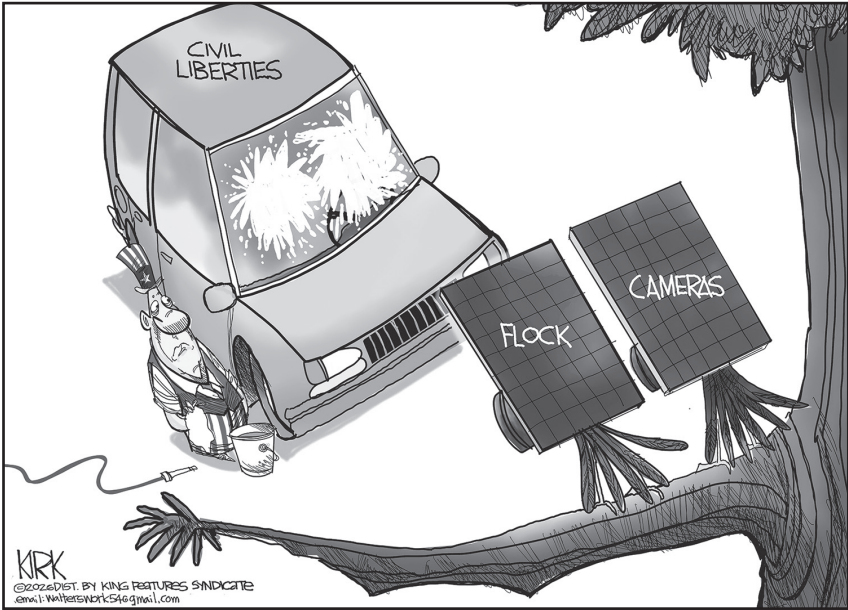
There is a time to seek counsel, a time to reconsider, a time to pray, and a time to wait. Wisdom requires all of them. But there is also a moment when waiting becomes its own decision. At the Red Sea, Moses wanted God to intervene. God’s answer was not that human beings could save themselves. Moses would raise the staff; God would divide the waters. Divine help and human action would meet in the same moment.

But the order mattered. “Let them journey forth.” The path did not become safe before they were asked to take it. Perhaps courage is not moving because we know what will happen next. It is recognizing when we already know what must happen next – and accepting that certainty about our responsibility may have to be enough. There are moments when the most faithful prayer is the one we finish by getting up



HAMBOURGER

Yonatan Hamburger is a rabbi, teacher, and author of Echoes From Sinai: A Torah Voice for All Who Seek. He welcomes questions and comments at y@TasteofTorah.org.



What to watch TUESDAY

October 13, 2026

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

NHL Hockey

ESPN, beginning at 6 p.m. Live

ESPN gives hockey fans a big Tuesday night NHL tripleheader with the New Jersey Devils at the Detroit Red Wings, the Colorado Avalanche at the Dallas Stars and the Boston Bruins at the San Jose Sharks.

NCIS

CBS, 8 p.m.

When a man is murdered after a neighborhood dinner party, the team discovers every guest is lying about what transpired in the new episode “Clean Slate.”

Best Medicine

FOX, 8 p.m.

In the new episode “No Place Like Om,” Martin (Josh Charles) desperately tries to leave Port Wenn for a weekend trip to Boston, but he must first investigate the extremely strange behavior of three patients who have all recently visited a meditation retreat.

A Very Haunted Renovation

HGTV, 8 p.m.

And then there were three! For the first time in this new series hosted by Anna Camp, the three remaining designers tackle a space of their own as they transform Bihl Manor’s neglected exterior in “The Exterior Exorcism.” Battling the spirits and the elements, they’re aiming to give the grounds a glow-up worthy of the judges.

NCIS: New York

CBS, 9 p.m.

In the new episode “Family Business,” the team is called in to find the suspect behind a deadly jewelry store robbery that involved military explosives.



‘Best Medicine’

FOX

Doc

FOX, 9 p.m.

Amy and Ben (Molly Parker and Blair Underwood) are at odds when their cancer patient demands the impossible and Sonya (Anya Banerjee) grapples with the weight of life-changing news in the new episode “Great Expectations.”

R.J. Decker

ABC, 10 p.m.

In the new episode, “Better Luck Tomorrow,” R.J. (Scott Speedman) and his dad must discover who has been gaslighting the caretaker at a senior living community and unwind a murderous scheme that has R.J.’s client convinced he’s living the same day in a loop.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Laraine Day Birthday Tribute

TCM, beginning at 7 a.m.

TCM celebrates Laraine Day’s birthday with films spanning more than a decade of her career. The day begins with **Calling Dr. Kildare** (1939), one of several entries in which Day played nurse Mary Lamont. Other highlights include Alfred Hitchcock’s **Foreign Correspondent** (1940), the 1942 wartime drama **Journey for Margaret** (pictured), **Mr. Lucky** (1943) with Cary Grant and the psychological noir **The Locket** (1946). The film tribute closes with **The Woman on Pier 13** (1949), which was originally titled *I Married a Communist*.

NCIS: Origins

CBS, 10 p.m.

In the new episode, present-day Gibbs (returning guest star Mark Harmon) returns to civilization and calls in a favor from old friend Woody (guest star Bobby Moynihan). In 1992, the team bands together to help Woody when he’s accused of murdering a bowling rival.

Frontline

PBS, 10 p.m.

The new episode explores the changing views and experiences of Americans from the 2020 election to today, revealing how the hopes and fears of voters first filmed six years ago have changed amid another polarizing election season.



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MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



DAVID BLOOMER

Just Go With It (2011, Romance-comedy) Adam Sandler, Jennifer Aniston **Paramount, 6 p.m.**

Hocus Pocus (1993, Family) Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker **Freeform, 6:20 p.m.**

Deadpool (2016, Action) Ryan Reynolds, Morena Baccarin **FX, 6:30 p.m.**

Fuze (2025, Action) Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Theo James **HBO, 7:20 p.m.**

Halloween II (2009, Horror) Malcolm McDowell, Tyler Mane **SYFY, 7:30 p.m.**

First Sunday (2008, Comedy) Ice Cube, Katt Williams **VH1, 8 p.m.**

Thirteen Ghosts (2001, Horror) Tony Shalhoub, Embeth Davidtz **AMC, 8 p.m.**

Blended (2014, Romance-comedy) Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore **TNT, 9:30 p.m.**

Trading Places (1983, Comedy) Dan Aykroyd, Eddie Murphy **BBC America, 9:30 p.m.**

Ghost Ship (2002, Horror) Julianna Margulies, Ron Eldard **AMC, 10 p.m.**

Secrets on Greek Row (2023, Suspense) Lucy Loken, Grace Patterson **LMN, 10 p.m.**

Thor (2011, Action) Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman **FX, 10 p.m.**

Evil Dead Burn (2026, Horror) Souheila Yacoub, Tandi Wright **HBO, 10:20 p.m.**

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MOVIES TV GRIDS BEST BETS

What to watch WEDNESDAY

October 14, 2026

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

Scrubs

ABC, 8 p.m.

In the new episode “My Chief,” J.D. (Zach Braff) discovers that Turk (Donald Faison) made a costly mistake and has to decide whether to report it or let it slide.

The Floor

FOX, 8 p.m.

A millionaire champion takes the Floor by surprise before a David vs. Goliath battle reduces the champion to tears in the new episode “The Quiet Achiever.” Rob Lowe hosts.

Pawn Stars

History, 8 p.m.

In the new episode “Fangs for the Memories,” Rick Harrison checks out some basketball cards that reheat the Magic Johnson and Larry Bird rivalry; he and Chum take a field trip to look at some high-end watches; and rare books expert Rebecca Romney sinks her teeth into a first printing of *Dracula*.

Nature

PBS, 8 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

Join Elmo and the *Sesame Street* gang on a once-in-a-lifetime African safari adventure in this episode presented in collaboration with Sesame Workshop. After adopting an orphaned elephant online, Elmo, Abby and Nina travel to Kenya to meet the young elephant and the keepers who care for her. They’ll also see some of nature’s most iconic wildlife, including lions, zebras, giraffes and hippos.

Abbott Elementary

ABC, 8:30 p.m.

Gregory (Tyler James Williams) juggles the demands of his two roles, while Jacob and Melissa (Chris Perfetti and Lisa Ann Walter) struggle to compromise in the new episode “Check-Ins.”



‘The Lowdown’

FX

The Lowdown

FX, 9 p.m. ■ **Season Premiere**

When Ethan Hawke’s Lee Raybon, Tulsa’s “truthstorian,” returns for Season 2 of Sterlin Harjo’s unique noir, he’s getting a bit too much praise for the murder mystery his investigative journalism solved in Season 1. Lee is having “an existential crisis about the meaninglessness of ‘success,’” says Hawke. “He has a desire to blow it up.” He distracts himself by helping public defender Ginger (Betty Gilpin) locate a missing client. “Lee is an unreliable friend, but he’s the only friend she has,” Hawke notes. Also exciting: Actor Tommy Lee Jones steps in as Hawke’s on-screen father, Lee Raybon Sr.

CATCH A CLASSIC

Monty Python Triple Feature

TCM, beginning at 8 p.m.

Spend the evening with the Monty Python troupe and three of its feature films. The 1975 film **Monty Python and the Holy Grail** (pictured) sends King Arthur and his knights on a wildly silly quest. **Monty Python’s Life of Brian** (1979) follows a man born next door to Jesus who is repeatedly



EMI FILMS

mistaken for the Messiah. The night ends with **Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life** (1983), an irreverent series of sketches about life, death and nearly everything in between.

Chicago Fire

NBC, 9 p.m.

In the new episode “Rattle the Cage,” Violet and Novak (Hanako Greensmith and Jocelyn Hudon) grow suspicious of a mental health facility after treating an escaped patient.

NOVA

PBS, 9 p.m.

NOVA presents this fascinating five-part series about evolution. Each episode is rooted in the remarkable story of a different animal and uses it as a jumping-off point to chronicle how Earth’s inhabitants — including humans — have changed over eons. The premiere, “Brain Power,” traces the development of the brain, following the dolphin from 3 billion years ago to becoming one of the smartest animals alive today. It’s all enhanced by cinematic photography and animations of long-lost ancestors.

Chicago P.D.

NBC, 10 p.m.

A significant turning point in Atwater’s (LaRoyce Hawkins) life prompts him to make a decision about his future in the new episode.

Secrets of the Dead

PBS, 10 p.m.

Built between the 11th and 15th centuries, Great Zimbabwe was one of the most prominent ancient civilizations of the African continent. It was the thriving capital of a massive trading empire, but for hundreds of years, Great Zimbabwe was dismissed by European explorers. The archaeological discoveries revealed in this new episode, “Africa’s Golden City,” show the true scope of the ancient city’s global importance.

MOVIES YOU’LL LOVE



ABBOT GENSER

Forrest Gump (1994, Comedy-drama) Tom Hanks, Robin Wright **Paramount, 6 p.m.**

Little Fockers (2010, Comedy) Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller **TNT, 6 p.m.**

In the Grey (2026, Action) Jake Gyllenhaal, Henry Cavill **Starz, 7:15 p.m.**

Halloween (2018, Horror) Jamie Lee Curtis, Judy Greer **SYFY, 7:30 p.m.**

Christine (1983, Horror) Keith Gordon, John Stockwell **AMC, 8 p.m.**

Escape Room (2019, Horror) Taylor Russell, Logan Miller **VH1, 8 p.m.**

The Spirit of Halloween (2026, Romance) Meghan Ory, Valentina Capetola **Hallmark, 8 p.m.**

Addams Family Values (1993, Comedy) Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia **Freeform, 8:55 p.m.**

Ocean’s Eleven (2001, Comedy-drama) George Clooney, Matt Damon **Paramount, 9:30 p.m.**

Big Lies in a Small Town (2022, Suspense) Rhonda Dent, Kristina Paras **LMN, 10 p.m.**

Trick ’r Treat (2007, Horror) Anna Paquin, Brian Cox **BBC America, 10 p.m.**

Adventureland (2009, Comedy-drama) Jesse Eisenberg, Kristen Stewart **VH1, 10:30 p.m.**

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

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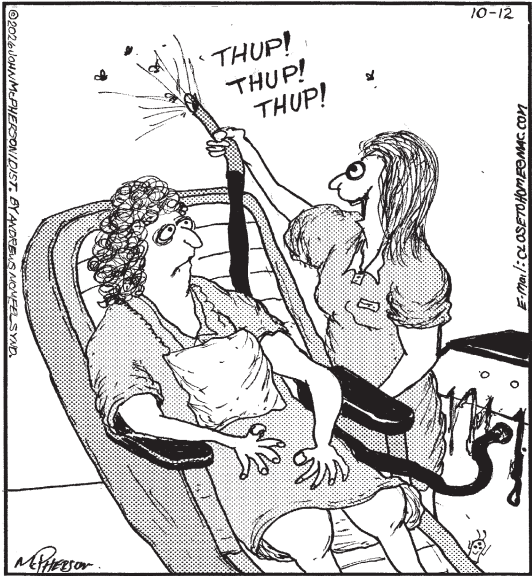
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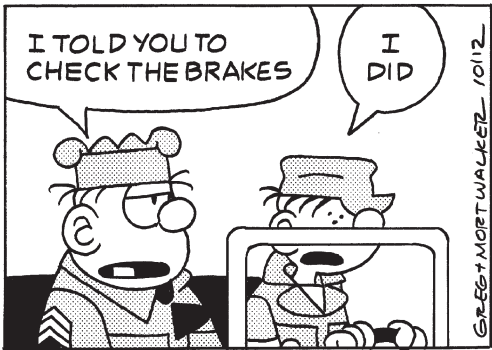
MOVIES TV GRIDS BEST BETS

TV - What to watch

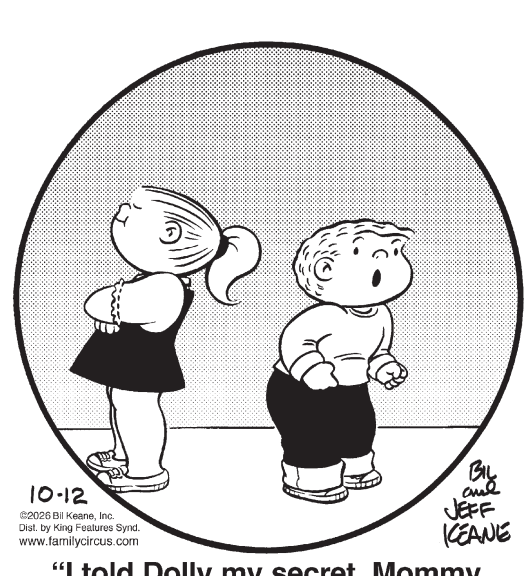
CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson



BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bill Keane



BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



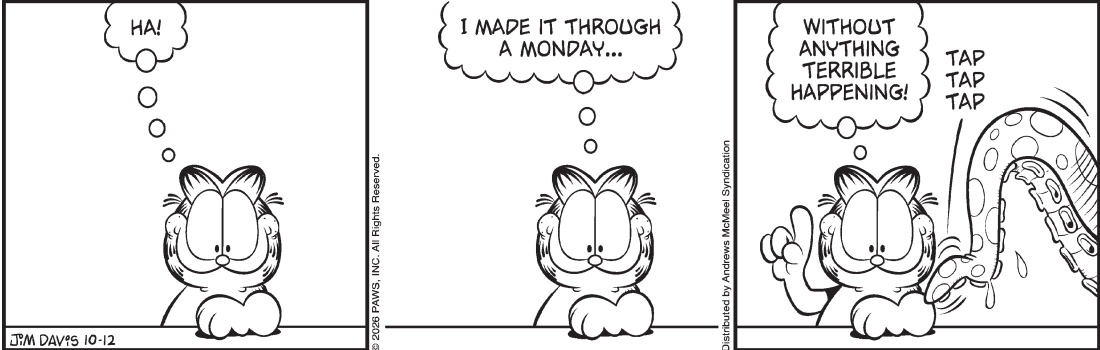
THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



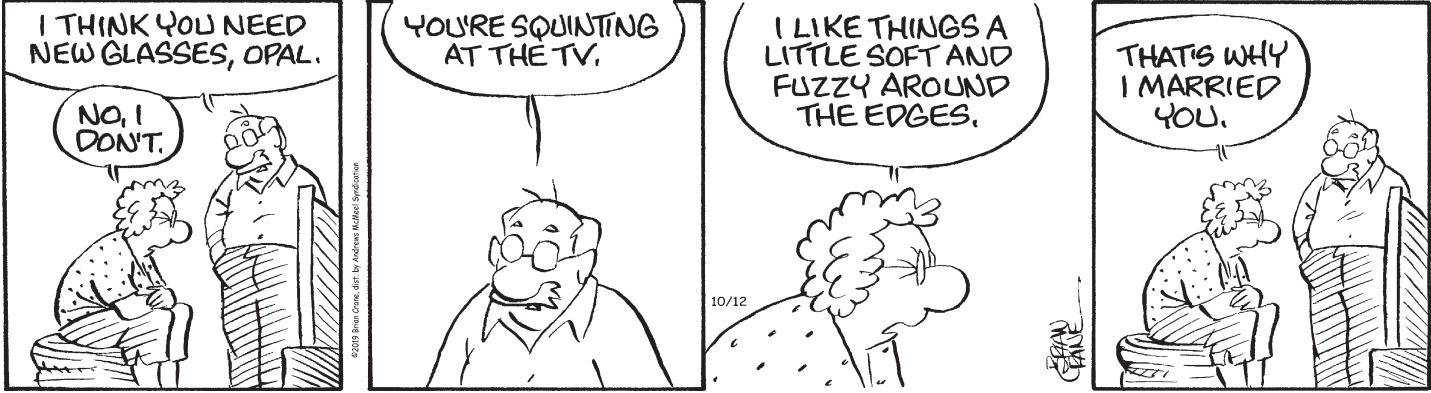
ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

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

WHATZIT?

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

inferno + fuel

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:

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

- Tenant farmers of the early Middle Ages
- "Who's there?" response
- Contingencies
- Bird-related
- "Unbelievable!"
- Spanish cheer
- Liquid that can relieve muscle cramps
- Minuscule
- gin fizz
- Long-lasting hairdo
- Offering little comfort
- " is not a drill!"
- Bassinet occupant
- Filling a friend's car with balloons, e.g.
- Flats or heels
- Go on an ocean voyage
- Dubai's fed.
- Doily fabric
- Attention-grabbing feat
- Opinion survey
- Cameron who voices Fiona in the "Shrek" franchise
- Diminishes
- Reward or punishment that may be ironic
- Chitchat
- Pig sound
- Perch for a pigeon
- Chicken sound
- Alan of "M*A*S*H"
- "Of course, mon ami!"
- Cozy garb in some family photos, or what can be found in 17-, 27-, and 43-Across?
- Victoria's Secret garment
- Tierney of "The Affair"
- Sire
- Pine- : cleaning brand
- Liability's opposite
- South American barbecue

DOWN

- Ones easily duped
- Malicious
- Puerto
- Greenery that doesn't need water
- Lorne Michaels' long-running NBC show, for short
- Just for laughs
- Sightseer's booking
- Move like a fish
- Big : fast-food classic
- Give a very close look
- "Thanks so much!"
- Pest on a pet
- Hide-and-
- Large-scale tale
- Pres. between JFK and RMN
- Gives birth to
- Worm on a hook, say
- Call unwittingly
- Japanese truckmaker
- Tuna container
- Leafy vegetable in a green smoothie

- Morays, e.g.
- Try and fail to walk on ice
- Saintly ring
- Unable to go to school, maybe
- Mahal
- Amazon deliveries
- Tough decision
- Come in first
- Playground game
- "Your point being?"
- Polynesian carving

- Arcing tennis shots
- Currency in 21 countries
- Air conditioning figs.
- Land parcel
- Links org.
- Provided music for a party
- On the topic of
- Batteries for some noisy toys
- Clippers' org.

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

O	D	V	S	V		I	E	S	S	V		T	O	S
L	E	G	E	B		V	R	N	V	W		V	R	B
S	r	d	g	N	I	H	O	L	V	W		I	N	O
V	d	r	v		K	M	V	B		E	g	O	E	T
				K	N	I	O		K	T	V	L		
			E	O	I	L	S	r	O	I	L	E	O	d
S	E	N	V	W		Z	V	I	D		K	T	I	
T	T	O	d		L	N	L	S		E	O	V	T	
E	V	N		T	I	V	S		S	E	O	H	S	
E	K	O	r	T	V	O	I	L	O	V	B			
			A	B	V	B			S	I	H	L		
K	V	E	T	B		W	H	E	d	E	O	T	S	
E	E	M		E	O	I	N	r	E	T	K	O	I	d
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S	F	S		I		E	M	S	T	I	S	E	R	S

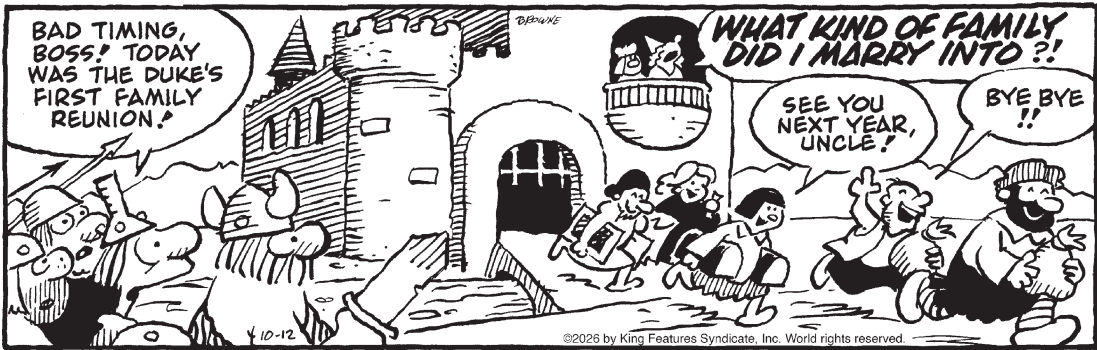
10/10/26

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					
								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				

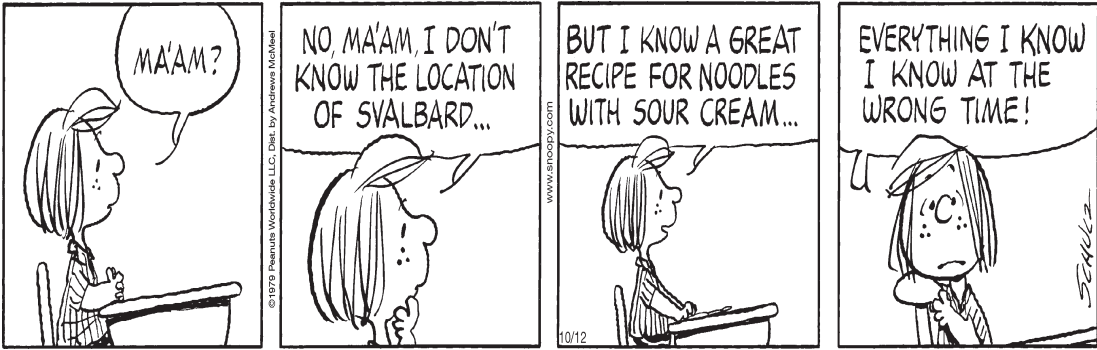
By Kyle Dolan
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10/12/26

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.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Solution: 9 letters

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

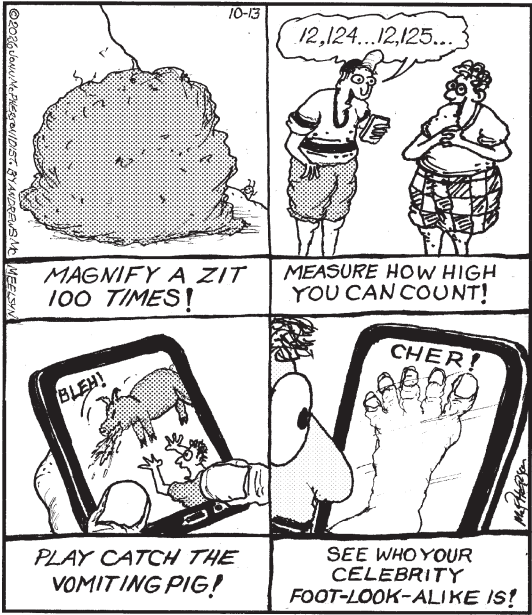
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10/12

Active, Adopt, Apply, Authority, Benefits, Birth, Canada, Certificates, Community, Document, Education, Embassy, House, Identification, Immigration, Income, Inherit, Jobs, Land, Laws, Lineage, Live, Local, Marriage, Nation, Oath, Office, Photo, Privilege, Proof, Spouse, Territory, Test, Travel, Union, United States, Visa, Vote, Work

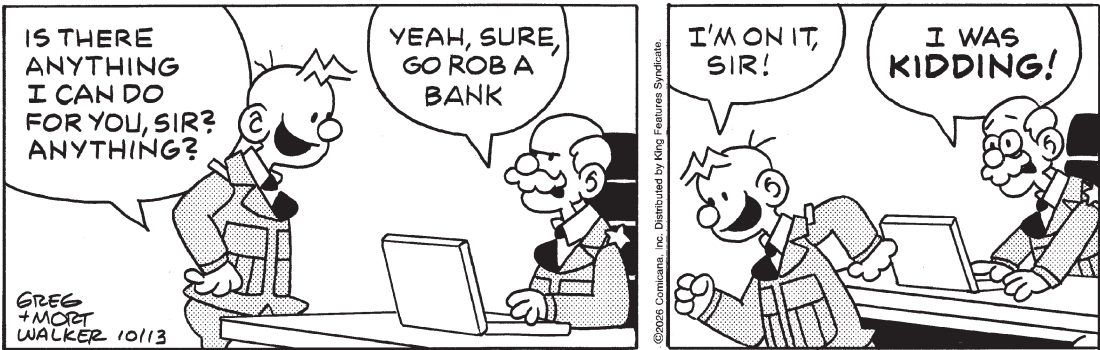
TODAY'S ANSWER: Passports

CLOSE TO HOME John McPherson

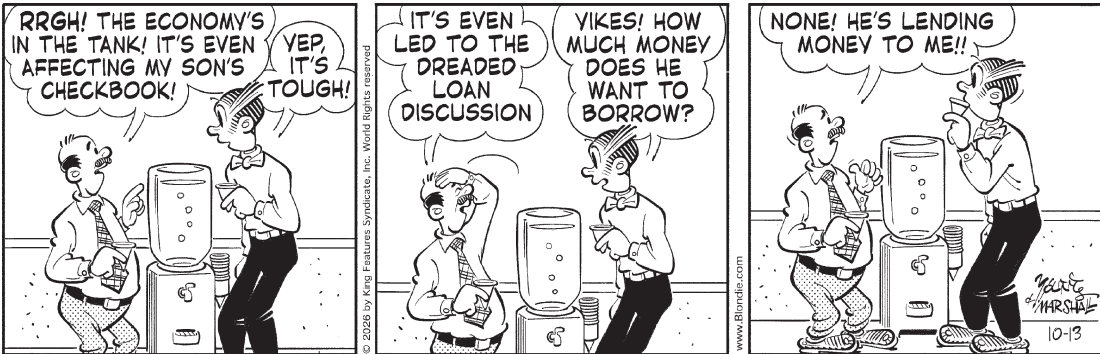


Worst apps of 2026.

BEETLE BAILEY Mort & Greg Walker



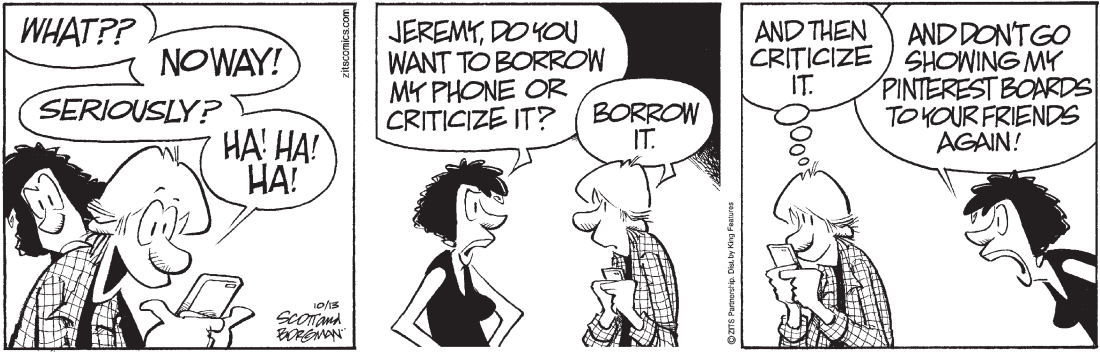
BLONDIE Dean Young & John Marshall



THE BORN LOSER Art & Chip Sansom



ZITS Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



GARFIELD Jim Davis



PICKLES Brian Crane



SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

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

WHATZIT?

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

MARRIAGE
ALCATRAZ
GIBRALTAR

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:

Marriage on the rocks



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Deprivation
- Watch pocket
- Blemish
- Director — Reitman
- Clean-air org.
- Actor — Malek
- Greek cheese
- Swelled
- Arduous journey
- Pub order
- Compass heading (Abbr.)
- Rapture
- Health resort
- Fibbed
- Functions
- Magical drink
- Demonstrate
- Watchful
- Plug's place
- Smell strongly

39 Aquatic bird

- Genetic letters
- Defraud
- Spigot
- Noah's boat
- Evaluate
- Wonderful
- Fortitude
- Bewildered
- Put a stop to
- podrida
- Bring up
- Paved ways (Abbr.)
- Bridge charge

DOWN

- Hoist
- Above
- Satisfy fully
- Serpent
- Calendar abbr.
- Narcotic
- Narrative song
- Move to and —
- Grassy area
- "You said it!"
- Broad
- French article
- Coagulate

TODAY'S SOLUTION:

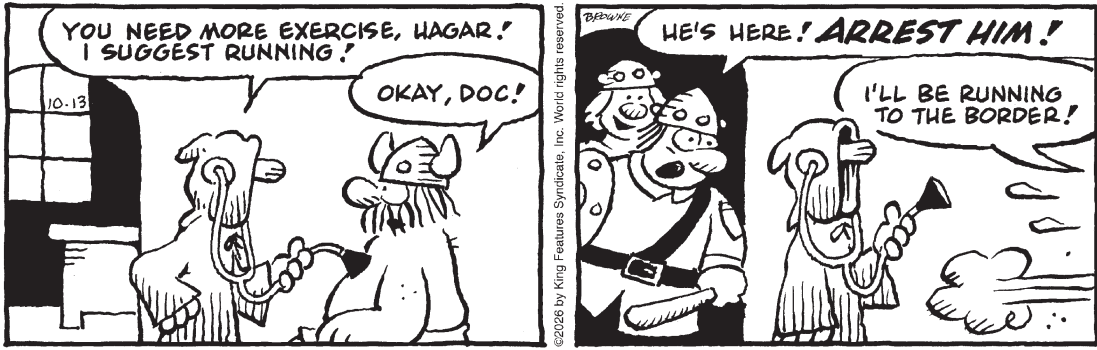
T	L	O	L		S	D	R		R	V	E	R
V	T	L	O		D	N	E		V	E	S	V
T	I	R	G		D	I	D		N	E	T	S
E	T	V	R		K	R	V		A	P	T	
				E	L	D	N	I	M	S		
V	N	D		T	T	U	G		K	E	E	R
T	E	T	L	U	O				T	R	E	V
E	V	O	R	P				N	O	I	T	O
S	E	S	U	S	D	I	T		P	A	S	
				Y	S	V	E	C	S			
E	N	N										
D	E	M	O	L	L	B						
I	M	V	R	A		E	P		N	V	A	I
W	L	A			F	O	B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

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				
57					58				59			
60					61				62			

10-13

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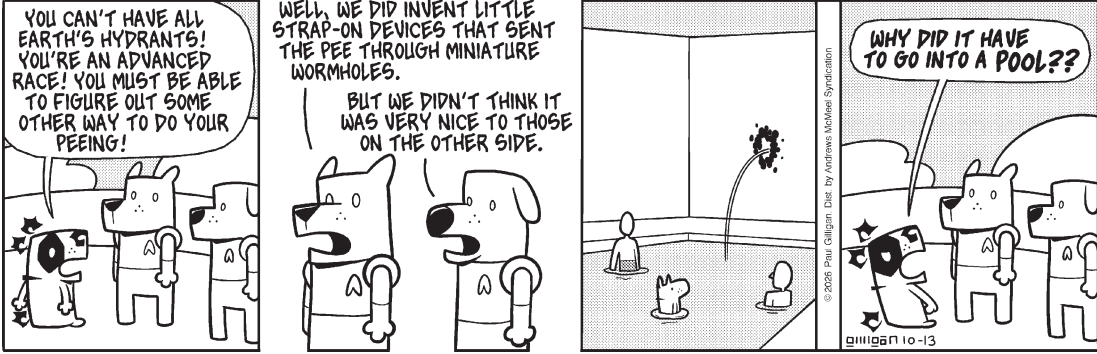
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE Chris Browne



PEANUTS Charles M. Schulz



POOCH CAFE Paul Gilligan



WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

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

USING FUCIDIN

Solution: 10 letters

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

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10/13

Abrasion, Acne, Agent, Antibiotic, Apply, Bacteria, Body, Care, Chin, Cream, Dressing, Eczema, Face, Gentle, Germs, Hands, Healing, Impetigo, Improve, Injury, Layer, Manage, Medication, Moisturize, Mouth, Nose, Patch, Pores, Potent, Prescription, Psoriasis, Rash, Scab, Scrapes, Sensitive, Skin, Spots, Tablet, Topical, Treat

TODAY'S ANSWER: Dermatitis

GSW invites community to homecoming and family weekend festivities

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

AMERICUS — Georgia Southwestern State University will welcome alumni, students, families, friends and community members to celebrate homecoming and family weekend starting Oct. 12. The weeklong celebration will feature a variety of activities for all ages, including a downtown parade, athletic events, alumni gatherings, family activities and tailgating.

Events during the week include:

Oct. 14

Halloween Havoc | 6 p.m. | Road between softball and soccer fields. Get into the Halloween spirit with free cotton candy, face painting and spooky season fun.

Women's Soccer | 7 p.m. | Hurricane Field | Cheer on the Lady Hurricanes as they take on Lander University. Admission is free.

Oct. 15

Homecoming Parade | 7 p.m. | Downtown Americus. GSW's Homecoming Parade returns to downtown Americus, featuring decorated vehicles from student organi-



Special Photo: GSW

The annual GSW Homecoming Parade in downtown Americus is just one of the events during Georgia Southwestern State University's homecoming celebration.

zations, athletic teams and special guests. Community is encouraged to line the streets and show their Hurricane pride as the parade rolls through downtown.

Oct. 16

Family Weekend Drop-In | 4-6 p.m. | Horne Pecan Company. Hurricane families arriving for the weekend are invited to stop by Horne Pecan Company, a GSW alum-

ni-owned and locally-owned business, to pick up a Homecoming & Family Weekend schedule and receive a voucher for a complimentary coffee or specialty drink. Families also are encouraged to explore downtown Americus and enjoy dinner at one of its local restaurants.

Softball scrimmage | 5 p.m. | Hurricane Field | Come support the Lady Hurricanes as

they face Gordon State College in a scrimmage.

Canes Brew Crew | 6 p.m. | Icehouse Beer Garden. GSW alumni are invited to a Homecoming Social featuring live music by Joey Recker and Patrick Cobb. Alumni are encouraged to register in advance to receive exclusive Brew Crew pint glasses and perks, available to the first 50 alumni who register.

Oct. 17

Canes Family Brunch | 10 a.m.-noon | Private Dining Hall, Marshall Student Center. Alumni, students and their families are invited to enjoy brunch together on campus. Admission is \$11 per person, payable at the door, and no reservation is required. Current GSW students may use their meal plans. Parking is available in the lots adjacent to the Marshall Student Center.

Canes Bingo | 2-3 p.m. | Student Success Center Conference rooms near Chick-fil-A. Families are invited to join the fun with an afternoon of bingo and chances to win exciting prizes as part of the Family Weekend celebration.

Homecoming Tailgate | 5 p.m. | Road between softball and soccer fields

Alumni, families, organizations, businesses and community members are invited to join the Homecoming Tailgate festivities. Attendees are welcome to bring tents, chairs, grills, food and drinks to create their own tailgate experience. Set-up begins at 8 a.m., with direct vehicle access available until 10 a.m. Spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and reservations are not required.

The road and softball parking lot will close to vehicles at 3 p.m., after which all tailgating supplies must be carried in.

Canes Chili Cookoff | 5 p.m. | Alumni Association tent next to soccer field

Bring the heat to Homecoming. Participants are invited to compete in the Canes Chili Cookoff, with prizes awarded for overall winner and people's choice. Advance registration is required for competitors. Tailgate attendees are encouraged to stop by, sample the entries and vote for their favorites.

Men's Soccer | 7 p.m. | Hurricane Field. Cheer on the Hurricanes as they take on the University of North Georgia. The 2026 Mr. and Miss GSW will be crowned during halftime. Admission is free.

Additional student activities throughout the week include the flag football championship game, Blue & Gold Picnic, IFC tailgate, silent headphone party and parking lot party.

For the complete schedule of events, registration details and additional information, visit gsw.edu/Homecoming. Follow the GSW Homecoming & Family Weekend 2026 Facebook event for the latest events.

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church to host free homebuyers workshop

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY -- St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church at 2605 Sylvester Road in Albany will host an NACA Homebuyers Workshop Oct. 17, an event open to the public but especially geared to first-time homebuyers.

The free workshop will discuss a plan that calls for no down payment, no closing costs, no fees, no pri-

vate mortgage insurance, a below-market fixed rate and non-consideration of credit scores.

The workshop will be conducted from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

For additional information or to sign up for the workshop, call (425) 602-6222 or go online at www.NACA.com.

The Rev. Calvin F. Rollins is senior pastor at St. Paul Missionary Baptist.

South Georgia residents face life in prison on meth charges

Staff Reports

news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY — Two south Georgia residents are facing up to life in federal prison after admitting to distributing methamphetamine in the Valdosta community.

“Repeat felons who continue distributing deadly, addictive illegal drugs in the Middle District of Georgia will face federal prosecution, where there is no parole,” U.S. Attorney Will Keyes said. “We are working closely with our law enforcement partners at every level to identify these cases and hold repeat offenders accountable.”

Melissa Lynn James, 41, and Ryan Daniel Williams, 28, both of Naylor, each pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine before Senior U.S. District Judge W. Louis Sands. James and Williams face a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison, up to a maximum sentence of life in prison, to be followed by at least five years of supervised release, and a maximum fine of \$10 million. There is no parole in the federal system.

According to court documents and statements made in court, a Lowndes County Sheriff's Office investigator received a tip from a concerned citizen in November 2025 that Williams was distributing methamphetamine in the community. Williams, who has prior state convictions for methamphetamine

possession, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and burglary, was a fugitive at the time, wanted for a probation violation out of Glynn County.

Investigators conducted a controlled purchase of methamphetamine from Williams and James on Nov. 4, 2025, at the Big Foot Truck Stop on West Hill Avenue in Lowndes County. Williams attempted to flee when officers approached, throwing away a bag containing 11 grams of methamphetamine, but he was quickly apprehended. James, who was in the passenger seat of the car, moved into the driver's seat but stopped when ordered by deputies.

During a search of the car, officers found four plastic baggies containing a total of 81 grams of methamphetamine, along with a digital scale with methamphetamine residue, and James's iPhone. A lawful search of James's home, where Williams was staying, recovered additional methamphetamine, including two zip-lock bags in James's bedroom containing approximately 854 grams of methamphetamine, a digital scale with methamphetamine residue, and a glass smoking pipe.

The Lowndes County Sheriff's Office is investigating the case, with assistance from the District Attorney's Office for the Southern Judicial Circuit. Assistant U.S. Attorney Sonja Profit is prosecuting the case for the government.



Special Photo

Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff, left, and Republican Congressman Mike Collins came out swinging on the debate stage Thursday night.

Ossoff, Collins trade insults during U.S. Senate debate

By Ross Williams

Georgia Recorder

ATLANTA -- Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff and Republican Congressman Mike Collins came out swinging on the debate stage Thursday night, discussing topics like the economy, healthcare and data centers in between brutal insults ahead of the November election.

During an hour-long debate hosted by Atlanta News First and Atlanta-based Gray Media, Ossoff, who is facing his first re-election challenge since taking office in 2021, repeatedly hammered Collins over President Trump's tariffs, the war in Iran and a series of racist and anti-semitic statements made by associates.

“Mike Collins has brought dishonor to our state through his personal bigotry and his widely documented ties to white nationalists, and he sold out Georgia in his pathetic, childlike devotion to Donald Trump, voting for the tariffs that have sent groceries soaring, voting for the healthcare cuts that have doubled your insurance premiums and voting for the war that sent diesel to its record high,” Ossoff said.

Collins, who has represented Georgia's 10th Congressional District in the northeastern part of the state since 2023, sought to paint Ossoff as “a trust fund kid who's never had a job in his life” and criti-

cised him for what he characterized as not preventing a government shutdown last year and policies he called weak on the border.

Ossoff is the only incumbent Democratic senator up for re-election in a state Trump won in 2024, and heading into this election cycle, Republicans viewed Georgia as a good opportunity to pick up a seat and protect their Senate majority against potential losses elsewhere.

But Ossoff has maintained a steady advantage in polls and prognosticators like Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball have shifted their predictions to favor an Ossoff win. And as polling has shifted against Republicans nationwide, some in the GOP have called for resources to be moved from Georgia to other states where it could make a bigger difference. The Collins campaign denies this, pointing to million dollar-plus ad buys from Senate Republicans.

Thursday's event represented the candidates' first time facing each other on the debate stage. They are set to meet again Tuesday for the Atlanta Press Club Loudermilk-Young Debate Series. Early voting also begins Tuesday.

During Thursday's debate, the candidates were asked a series of questions by Gray Media journalists from around Georgia.

On questions of affordability, Ossoff said that if Demo-

crats control the Senate, they will work to repeal Trump's tariffs and end the war in Iran, which he blames for high gasoline prices.

“These tariffs are crushing our state, and we'll repeal those tariffs, and I'd like to hear the congressman explain why he voted for them over and over and over again,” Ossoff said. “It costs more today than at any time in American history to stock your fridge, to fill up your truck, to power your home.”

Collins put the blame for rising prices on the economic policies of former President Joe Biden.

“That Bidenomics, that Green New Deal that my opponent voted for, that's where all this inflation came from,” Collins said.

Ossoff said Democrats would work to lower healthcare costs by reversing Medicaid cuts established through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

“Mike Collins and Donald Trump passed the biggest Medicaid cut in history,” Ossoff said. “A hospital in Mike Collins' own district had to shut down its labor and delivery unit, citing those Medicaid cuts. How can a sitting congressman vote to shut down a labor and delivery unit in his own district? Delivering mothers in Mike Collins' district now have to drive an hour to get to a labor and delivery unit while they're in labor, when we already have a maternal mortality crisis.”

“The problem started way

back under Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act, y'all,” Collins answered. “I was in the private sector then. I remember that first year, my insurance going up 62%. And from that day forward, I saw our rural hospitals start to close or swap over to swing beds because they couldn't handle the mandates that were being pushed on them.”

When asked about election policy, Ossoff sought to paint Collins as an election denier “Georgia has voter ID, and that's good,” Ossoff said. “Mike Collins and Donald Trump, they're still obsessed with overturning the 2020 election. Mike Collins still believes the 2020 election was stolen. Mike Collins has supported Donald Trump's effort to overturn the election, and he wants to give your tax dollars to the violent thugs and criminals who sacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.”

Collins has previously said he believes the 2020 election was stolen but did not address the attack from the debate stage.

Collins criticized Ossoff for not supporting the SAVE Act, which would require that people provide proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote and show a photo ID before casting a ballot, among other provisions. The measure, which is a priority for Trump, has stalled in the Senate.

And he attempted to paint Ossoff as a hypocrite for requiring rally attendees to show their IDs.

Albany State storms past Lane, 51-0

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

ALBANY — Hurricane Isaias threatened to cancel Albany State's Homecoming game. By Saturday afternoon, Lane College probably wished it had.

The Golden Rams overwhelmed the Dragons in every phase, scoring on offense, defense and special teams in a 51-0 victory at the Albany State Coliseum.

Albany State improved to 3-3 overall and 3-1 in the SIAC with its most complete performance of the season.

"It was a complete game today," Albany State coach David Bowser said. "All three phases were clicking."

The numbers were merciless. Albany State outgained Lane 388-89, rushed for 245 yards and held the Dragons to minus-18 yards on 23 carries. Ten Golden Rams ran the ball, nine caught passes and three quarterbacks played.

Albany State never punted. The Dirty Blue defense set the tone immediately, sacking Lane

quarterback Crishon Overton twice on the opening possession. After a short punt, Jeffery "JD" Davis found Derrick Timmons for an over-the-shoulder touchdown.

"Our defensive front played their butts off, and blocking those punts really helped set the tone and get us going," Bowser said.

D'Avery Weeks recorded a third-down sack on Lane's next possession, and Ryder Flynn blocked the ensuing punt, recovered it and scored. Another failed punt gave Albany State possession at the Lane 20, setting up Davis' 2-yard touchdown run and a 20-0 lead before the first quarter ended.

The defense joined the scoring in the second. Derrick Drayton hit Overton as he attempted to pass, and Evan Wynn returned the loose ball for a touchdown.

Davis later connected with Cardrece Mobley for a 31-yard score, and Jonathan Rodriguez's 40-yard field goal made it 37-0 at halftime.

Davis added a 40-yard touchdown run in the third quarter



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield

Albany State's Derrick Timmons fights off a Lane defender to haul in an over-the-shoulder touchdown pass from quarterback JD Davis during the first quarter of Saturday's 51-0 Homecoming victory at the Albany State Coliseum.

before Vinson Berry directed a 52-yard drive that ended with Sincere Rodriguez's 5-yard score.

"I thought JD elevated his game today," Bowser said. "He is always good with the pass, but today he really helped our run game."

Rontavion Scott led Albany State with seven tackles and preserved

the shutout with a late interception. Weeks added six tackles, including two for losses totaling 22 yards.

Albany State travels to Tuskegee next week carrying renewed momentum — and no lingering questions about whether its running game can get going.

Lee County blows out Veterans, 49-0

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

LEESBURG — After spending much of the season trading punches with some of the Southeast's best teams, Lee County finally enjoyed a quiet fourth quarter.

The No. 3-ranked Trojans overwhelmed region opponent Veterans 49-0 Thursday night at Trojan Field, combining an explosive offense with a defense that barely allowed the Warhawks to move.

Lee County improved to 6-1 behind a nearly flawless performance from quarterback Cohen Lawson. The senior completed 13 of 14 passes for 237 yards and four touchdowns as the Trojans piled up 541 yards of offense.

Lawson spread his four scoring passes among four receivers, connecting with Carter Blackwell, Jaden Upshaw, Amari Wilson and Destin Bell.

The blowout was a dramatic departure from Lee County's recent schedule. The Trojans had faced a string of highly ranked opponents, including nationally ranked Miami Carol City, defending state champion Thomas County Central and previously unbeaten Coffee.

Lee County's defense made certain Thursday would include



Special Photo: Jim Griffith

Lee County quarterback Cohen Lawson threw four touchdown passes and completed 13 of 14 passes as the Trojans overwhelmed Veterans 49-0 Thursday night at Trojan Field in Leesburg.

no late-game suspense.

Veterans finished with only 38 passing yards and minus-1 yard rushing, giving the Warhawks 37 yards of total offense. The Trojans controlled the

line of scrimmage, took away the running game and never allowed Veterans to threaten the shutout.

Lee County was just as dominant on the ground.

Jymerion Roddy needed only five carries to rush for 125 yards and a touchdown, averaging 25 yards per attempt. Quay Sheard added 76 yards on 10 carries as the Trojans repeatedly created running room against the Veterans defense.

Senior running back Dominique Ball also returned after missing several games with a broken foot. Ball carried once and turned the opportunity into a 33-yard gain, giving Lee County another encouraging development as the regular season moves into its final stretch.

John Lane completed the rout by converting all seven of his extra-point attempts.

The game was played one night earlier than originally scheduled because of we 1ather expected from Hurricane Isaias. The change did little to disrupt the Trojans, who scored early, controlled the game throughout and earned their most decisive victory since shutting out Hapeville Charter 51-0 in the season opener.

More importantly, Lee County added another region victory and emerged from the night without the fourth-quarter drama that defined several of its biggest games.

The Trojans are scheduled to visit Northside-Warner Robins next Friday.

Berrien lands \$25,000, eyes \$1 million prize

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

NASHVILLE — Berrien High School is the only Georgia school remaining in a national competition offering a \$1 million football field renovation.

T-Mobile selected Berrien as one of 40 divisional finalists in its Friday Night 5G Lights competition, the company announced Thursday. The Nashville school advanced from a field of nearly 2,500 applicants and is one of 10 schools competing in the South Division.

Berrien will receive \$25,000 and a T-Mobile-hosted home game celebration for reaching the divisional round. The school can earn considerably more if supporters throughout South Georgia and the state help it advance.

Fans may vote once per day through Oct. 25 at FridayNight5GLights.com or through the T-Life app. A valid mobile phone number is required.

The school receiving the most votes in each of four divisions — South, East, Midwest and West — will collect \$250,000, a Gronk Fitness gym upgrade valued at \$90,000 and a \$5,000 student leadership award. Those four division champions will advance to the final round for a chance to win the \$1 million field upgrade.

Berrien is the only Georgia school to make the top 40, but the competition has already benefited three Albany schools. Westover, Monroe and Dougherty each received \$5,000 through the program's earlier \$5K Fridays sweepstakes, although none advanced to the divisional round.

Berrien will compete against schools from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas for the South Division title.

T-Mobile said finalists were selected based on community need and impact, creativity, school pride, social media participation and community engagement. Schools across the country submitted requests for projects such as replacing aging bleachers, improving stadium lighting and repairing worn playing surfaces.

"We heard from nearly 2,500 schools hoping to fix things like aging bleachers, outdated lights and worn turf," T-Mobile Chief Operating Officer Jon Freier said. "While each application reflected a unique community, they all shared a common thread — pride, need and a community ready to rally behind their team."

The four division champions will be announced Oct. 29, when another round of voting begins. Fans may vote daily through Nov. 8 to select the grand-prize winner, which will be announced Nov. 12.

Berrien can also earn bonus votes by completing social media challenges and posting school-spirit content using the hashtags #FN5GL and #Entry.

For Berrien, advancing will require support well beyond Nashville. As Georgia's final contender, the school now has an opportunity to rally high school football fans across South Georgia and throughout the state.

Carol City punished after fight at Grayson

By Joe Whitfield
Sports Editor

LEESBURG — When Miami Carol City arrived at Trojan Field in late August, the Chiefs looked like one of the most formidable opponents ever to visit Lee County.

They were nationally ranked, loaded with high-level college prospects and leading the Trojans by 20 points before the night turned.

Lee County rallied for a 23-20 victory, a signature win that pushed the Trojans into the national rankings. Six weeks later, Carol City's season has taken a much darker turn.

The Florida High School Athletic Association has barred the Chiefs from postseason competition and suspended 15 players following a post-game fight with Grayson High School on Oct. 2 in Loganville.

The altercation erupted during the handshake line moments after Grayson held off

Carol City 10-9. Video of the fight spread quickly across social media and prompted investigations by the governing associations in both states.

The FHSAA placed Carol City on restrictive probation and fined the school \$1,500 — \$100 for each suspended player. Four players were suspended for the remainder of the season, nine received five-game suspensions and two were suspended for one game. Their names were not released.

Unless the ruling is changed, Carol City will be ineligible for the 2026 Florida playoffs regardless of its final record. The school is entitled to appeal, although Miami-Dade County Public Schools had not confirmed as of Thursday whether it would do so.

Grayson also received punishment, though not nearly as extensive.

The Georgia High School Association suspended four

Grayson players for one game. They will miss Friday's Region 4-7A opener against Archer. The GHSA did not announce a postseason ban, fine or team-wide probation for the Rams.

Because the schools belong to different state associations, each organization investigated and disciplined the program under its jurisdiction.

In a joint statement, the GHSA and FHSAA called the conduct unacceptable and said it did not reflect the values of education-based athletics.

"Both associations maintain a zero-tolerance stance toward altercations, bench-clearing incidents, and any actions that escalate into or create the appearance of a brawl," the statement said.

GHSA Executive Director Tim Scott said the investigation was complicated because the game had ended and available video did not capture the entire field. Even

so, he emphasized that the responsibility of the players did not end when the clock expired.

"The final whistle ends the competition, but the responsibility to demonstrate good sportsmanship does not end with it," Scott said.

The fallout represents a stunning change in direction for Carol City.

The Chiefs came to Leesburg on Aug. 28 ranked No. 11 nationally by MaxPreps. Carol City scored the game's first 20 points, but Lee County shut out the Chiefs in the second half and scored 23 unanswered to complete the comeback.

Carol City responded by winning three consecutive games against Florida opponents without allowing a point. That streak ended at Grayson, where the Rams built a 10-0 halftime advantage and survived Carol City's second-half rally.



Special Photo: Jim Griffith

Carol City quarterback Malik Leonard tries to get away from Lee County linebacker Jace Murray during the Chiefs' visit to Leesburg in August. Carol City had 15 players suspended, and the team was banned from postseason action after a fight last week at Grayson.

The Chiefs' official record dropped to 3-3 with the loss. An earlier victory over Mainland had already been forfeited after the FHSAA ruled that Carol City used an ineligible player.

What began as an aggres-

sive interstate schedule designed to prepare Carol City for a championship run has instead ended with the Chiefs facing their harshest opponent yet: the consequences of what happened after the game was over.

ASU volleyball wins seventh straight

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA - Albany State's winning streak reached seven matches Thursday night, and the Lady Golden Rams did not need long to extend it. Albany State swept Clark Atlanta 25-17, 25-20, 25-17 at L.S. Epps Gymnasium, improving to 16-8 overall and 10-1 in Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play. The Lady Golden Rams controlled the match with an efficient and balanced offensive attack, finishing with 43 kills and a .337 hitting percentage. They also collected nine service aces, 37 digs and six blocks while limiting Clark Atlanta to a .148 hitting percentage. Jarianis Perez led Albany State with a match-high 13 kills on 25 attempts. She committed only one attack-

ing error and finished with a .480 hitting percentage while adding nine digs, an ace and a block assist. Aleiah Carr contributed nine kills and hit .500, while Serenity Jackson recorded six kills on nine attempts for a team-leading .556 percentage. Amiria Anderson also finished with six kills and hit .385. Albany State set the tone immediately, putting down 16 kills and hitting .400 in the opening set. The Lady Golden Rams pulled away for a 25-17 victory and never trailed in the match. Clark Atlanta mounted its strongest challenge in the second set, which included nine ties and four lead changes. Albany State remained composed during the back-and-forth stretch, created separation late and earned a 25-20 win.



The Golden Rams are now 16-8 overall and 10-1 in the conference after sweeping Clark Atlanta Thursday.

The Lady Golden Rams regained complete control in the third, winning 25-17 to finish the sweep. Maya Ogbogu contributed throughout the match with four kills, four aces and two block assists. Shaniya Banks added three kills, one solo block and one block assist. Myra Lopez anchored the defense with a match-high 16

digs and served three aces. Albany State also received steady production from three setters. Liannette Burgos led the group with 19 assists, Trinity Britt recorded 13 assists and an ace, and Onyinyechi Nwosu added six assists. Kai Harris led Clark Atlanta with 12 kills, while Antonique Coleman finished with seven. Sydney Ray distributed 25

assists for the Panthers, who managed 30 kills as a team. The victory continued a dominant stretch for Albany State, which has climbed to 10 conference victories with only one SIAC loss. The Lady Golden Rams will attempt to extend their winning streak Tuesday when they travel to face Savannah State.

Special Photo: Reginald Christian, Albany State University

Nick Carroll commits to Georgia

Field Level Media

ATHENS — Georgia has added the first defensive commitment to its 2028 recruiting class, landing four-star Toombs County safety Nick Carroll. Carroll announced his commitment to the Bulldogs after considering a final group that also included Clemson, Florida, Oregon, Penn State, Tennessee and Texas Tech. He most recently visited Georgia for its game against Oklahoma. The 6-foot prospect is rated by 247Sports as the nation's No. 48 overall player in the 2028 class. He is also ranked as the No. 4 safety nationally and the No. 5 overall prospect in Georgia.

Carroll joins quarterback Jayden Wade and tight end Asa Wall as the Bulldogs' first three commitments in the cycle. His addition moved Georgia to No. 6 in 247Sports' national team recruiting rankings, one spot ahead of Florida. Although Carroll is the Bulldogs' first defensive pledge in the class, he gives Georgia an early commitment from one of the state's highest-rated players. Carroll has helped Toombs County begin the season 6-0 and rise to No. 1 in Class 3A. The Bulldogs reached the state championship game last season before falling to Worth County. His commitment continues Georgia coach Kirby Smart's emphasis on keeping elite in-state talent close to home. With the 2028 signing period still more than two years away, Georgia has assembled an early foundation featuring highly regarded prospects on both sides of the football.

MLB proposes 154-game schedule, altered playoff format

Field Level Media

Major League Baseball proposed changes to both the regular season and playoffs to the MLB Players Association on Thursday. MLB offered a revised regular-season schedule of 154 games, down from 162, that provides a standard off-day every week, beginning in the 2029 campaign. The altered slate — which was used almost exclusively between 1904-60 — would then allow for the AL and NL Division Series to expand from best-of-five to best-of-seven sets, thereby adding as many as eight more postseason games. The expanded playoffs would allow for more off-days, thereby reducing weekday daytime postseason games.



Special Photo: Troy Taormina / Imagn Images
MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred is shown during a post-season event. MLB has proposed shortening the regular season to 154 games while expanding the Division Series to best-of-seven.

Also, the proposal allows for higher-seeded clubs in the wild-card and division series to be able to select their opponents, beginning in the 2027 season. The No. 3 seed in each league would choose

its foe among the Nos. 5 and 6 seeds for its wild-card series, while the No. 1 seed in each league would select its opponent in the next round. "Returning to a 154-game schedule would allow us to

introduce a weekly off-day, which is good for player health, while also creating a new national broadcast window to showcase our most exciting teams and players," MLB spokesman Glen Caplin said. "A shorter regular season unlocks making October even better for our fans — with fewer weekday afternoon games, a longer division series and more opportunities to see the game's best pitchers on the biggest stage. And allowing the top seeds to select their opponents in the first two rounds would create compelling storylines, intensify existing rivalries and create new ones." The scheduled off-day would be every Monday, with the exception of a few games that would be shown in an

exclusive national broadcast window. Per MLB, the teams that play on Monday would then have an off-day on Thursday. "The league made multiple scheduling proposals today," MLBPA said in a statement. "We are reviewing these materials, including the proposed changes to the playoff format. Players will weigh in on these proposals and we will respond at the bargaining table. "Unfortunately, the league once again made clear that all of its proposals are contingent on players' agreement to a salary cap, a system that guts player rights and compensation, as well as its other anti-player proposals."

Jones wins Hurricane Invitational at Doublegate

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ALBANY - Jordan Jones captured the individual championship, while the No. 6-ranked Georgia Southwestern State University men's golf team finished runner-up in a nationally competitive field at the Hurricane Invitational on Tuesday at Doublegate Country Club. The Hurricanes entered the final round with a three-stroke lead before No. 8 Nova Southeastern rallied with an 11-under-par 275 to claim the team title by two shots. GSW followed its opening-round 283 with an 8-under 280 to finish at 13-under 563, just behind Nova Southeastern's 15-under 561. The 14-team field featured seven nationally ranked programs, including five ranked among the top 10 in the Bushnell/Golfweek Division II Coaches Poll. No. 4 Lincoln Memorial finished third at 2-over 578, followed by No. 20 USC Beaufort at 3-over 579. No. 9 Columbus State climbed six spots during the final round to tie Palm Beach Atlantic for fifth at 5-over 581. Continuous rain Monday caused two delays during the opening round and ultimately forced the tournament to be shortened from 54 to 36 holes. Jones led the 81-player field with rounds of 70 and 66, finishing one stroke ahead of Nova Southeastern's Ivan Ponsdomenech Kamenev. The junior opened with a 2-under 70 before firing a 6-under 66 in the second round, carding

seven birdies, including three consecutive on Nos. 7-9. Jones made the turn at 4-under 32 and added two more birdies on the back nine to secure the individual title. Sam Brown gave the Hurricanes a second top-four finisher, placing fourth at 4-under 140 (71-69). Brown opened the tournament with three consecutive birdies on Nos. 2-4 en route to a 1-under 71 before closing with a 3-under 69. He finished his second round with birdies on three of his final five holes, including the par-4 18th. Juan Velásquez continued his strong start to the season, tying for eighth at 2-under 142 with consecutive rounds of 71. The newcomer, who was named Peach Belt Conference Golfer of the Week on Monday following his fourth-place finish at The National Preview, earned his second consecutive top-10 finish. Sacha Corlouer tied for 22nd at 1-over 145 (71-74), while Elias Järn rounded out the GSW lineup tied for 62nd at 8-over 152 (76-76). Three additional Hurricanes competed as individuals, led by Stefan Rojas, who tied for 13th at 1-under 143 (74-69). Rojas bounced back from an opening-round 74 with a 3-under 69, carding three birdies during his second round. Milo Thim tied for 18th at even-par 144 after posting consecutive rounds of 72, while Luis Eboli tied for 44th at 5-over 149 (75-74). Their scores were not eligible to count toward GSW's



Special Photo: Submitted
Georgia Southwestern's Jordan Jones displays his championship award after winning the Hurricane Invitational at Doublegate Country Club. Jones shot an 8-under-par 136 to lead the 81-player field, while the Hurricanes finished second in the team standings.

team total. The Hurricanes tied Nova Southeastern for the tournament lead in par-3 scoring with a 3.02 average and ranked second in par-4 scoring at 4.07. GSW tied for fourth on the par-5s, playing those holes at 13-under with a 4.67 average, eight strokes behind Nova Southeastern. GSW finished without an eagle, while Nova Southeastern recorded two. Doublegate Country Club played as a par 72 at 7,024 yards, with the 81-player field averaging 74.14 strokes per round. Team LeaderboardPlace-MoveTeamR1R2Total 1+2Nova Southeastern (8)286275561 (-15) 2-1Georgia Southwestern (6)283280563 (-13) 3-1Lincoln Memorial

(4)284294578 (+2) 4--USC Beaufort (20)287292579 (+3) T5+6Columbus State (9)298283581 (+5) T5--Palm Beach Atlantic288293581 (+5) 7--Carson-Newman294288582 (+6) 8-1Georgia College297289586 (+10) 9--Wingate (11)297291588 (+12) T10+4Mississippi Christian301291592 (+16) T10+1Florida Southern (1)298294592 (+16) 12-4Delta State295298593 (+17) 13--Valdosta State299295594 (+18) 14-8Emmanuel (Ga.)293303596 (+20) +/- indicates movement in the team standings during the final round.

Jon Rahm will not participate in LIV Golf 2.0

Field Level Media

Jon Rahm will not be participating in LIV Golf 2.0, the vision of CEO Scott O'Neil to keep the league competing in 2027. "Mr. Rahm has independently reviewed the proposed terms of LIV 2.0 ... and has determined that those terms are unacceptable to him, and he will not be participating going forward in LIV 2.0," Rahm's attorney, John Beck, said Wednesday in the second bankruptcy hearing since LIV Golf filed a Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Sept. 8. Per Beck, Rahm and LIV are working to finalize a separation agreement by Oct. 15. Should an agreement not come to pass by that date, Beck said that "we will be back before Your Honor on Nov. 5 to address the scope and applicable provisions of any order seeking to reject Mr. Rahm's contract." Rahm, 31, is coming off his third individual season LIV Golf title in as many years since joining the league. The Spaniard signed a deal that reportedly has more than \$100 million remaining on it, and he acknowledged in May that it has multiple years remaining. LIV Golf was bankrolled by the Saudi Public Investment Fund from its inception in 2022 until this year, when the sovereign wealth fund decided to pull its financing. The league has an agreement in place with BC Partners Advisors for restructuring support. The original agreement included a condition that at least 50% of players with financial claims against the league must agree to participate in LIV 2.0 within 35



Special Photo: Jerod Ringwald / Imagn Images

Jon Rahm celebrates with a trophy during his LIV Golf tenure. The three-time individual season champion has rejected the proposed terms for the league's planned restructuring.

days of the bankruptcy filing. That group must also represent at least two-thirds of the total dollar amount of player claims. However, an amended motion filed Monday no longer mentions those specifics, instead now saying it needs a number of players "necessary to ensure the continuation of the Company Parties' business as a bona fide golf league" in order for LIV 2.0 to proceed. Ranked 15th in the world, Rahm won in Hong Kong and Mexico City this season on the LIV Golf circuit and finished runner-up four times. He is expected to compete in the DP World Tour's season-ending events in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Rahm has withdrawn from the Spanish Open as he and his wife, Kelley, await the birth of the couple's fourth child.



Staff Photo: Joe Whitfield
Albany Fire Department firefighters battle a blaze that included two structures on the 400 block of Pine Avenue just before noon Friday.

From 2A DISTRICT

are a lot of things we accomplished this year.”

The Sylvester Republican is a member of a number of committees, including Agriculture and Consumer Affairs; Banks and Banking; Economic Development and Tourism; Energy, Utilities and Communications; Small Business Development, and is a chairman of an Appropriations Committee subcommittee.

During the 2026 legislative session, the legislature enacted about a billion dollars in tax relief, the incumbent said. It also approved tax rebates totaling \$250 for single tax filers and \$500 for married couples filing jointly.

“We also lowered the income tax rate,” Yearta said.

“It was around 6%, and eventually we’re going to 3.99%. We gave the homeowners tax relief.”

This year Yearta was one of the sponsors of legislation addressing literacy, he said. The legislation was modeled on Mississippi, which has been able to make big strides in improving student performance.

“They went from dead last ... to I think in the higher states, certainly in the top middle among states,” Yearta said. “It’s so important that kids are able to read on grade level. A lot of kids currently are not able to read on grade level in third grade. (The bill) puts literacy coaches in every elementary and primary school.”

Another step made in schools was the approval of funding for school safety grants totaling \$50,000 for each school, the incumbent said. That pro-

gram has been in place for about four years. Two years ago, he sponsored legislation to put financial literacy instruction in classrooms.

“We feel like kids, even in the ninth and 10th grades, are going to work and need the financial knowledge to be successful,” Yearta said.

Agriculture is the state’s No. 1 industry, and the lifeblood of the region, the incumbent said, and among the assistance the state has provided to farmers is relief for those who were impacted by Hurricane Helene.

“I think we have a pretty good track record of doing things for the state,” he said. “We’re certainly going to continue doing things for affordability. We’re going to do what we can to keep taxes low. Economic development, healthcare ... certainly those are things we’re going to continue to work on.”

Obituary announcements



Susan Rebecca Steed Mercer
Susan Rebecca Steed Mercer went to meet her Heavenly Father on Wednesday, October 7, 2026.

Susan was born in China Lake, California, to the late Blake H. Steed, MSgt., U.S. Marines, and Jane O’Thina Tidwell Steed. As a child, she lived in California, Alabama, North Carolina, Miami, Denmark, and finally Albany, Georgia, where she and her sister, Sylvia, grew up.

She was a 1969 honor graduate of Dougherty County High School in Albany. She graduated from Valdosta State College in 1973 with a B.S. degree in biology/pre-med. In 1973, she began her teaching career in the Dougherty County School System. She met her sweetheart, Malcolm, who also taught in the system, and they were soon married in

December 1974 at First United Methodist Church in Albany. Susan later graduated with a master’s degree in science education from Albany State University.

Malcolm and Susan have two wonderful sons, Jason and Brandon. Later, they enjoyed and loved two daughters-in-law, Ashley and Julie. Most important were the five wonderful grandchildren who followed. The grands were so special to Susan, and she loved them dearly and knew each one was just perfect in every way. She celebrated their accomplishments and was so very proud of them and their loving parents.

Susan loved teaching students science. She taught science classes from grades 7 through 12 for 32 years. During her career, she had a passion for sponsoring science fair projects. Her students were recognized in local, regional, state, and international fairs. She also sponsored numerous school programs, including Beta Club, Science Club, and Lights of Love, sponsored by Phoebe Putney in Albany. Susan was the lead instructor for Merck Science Camp during the summers for 12 years. Susan was named Teacher of the Year at Albany Middle School and Westover High School.

Susan was honored to be the lead instructor for the Dougherty County High School/High Tech program. Her students in the program, over a seven-year period, were involved in many projects and adventures. These talented

students participated in numerous projects outside the science curriculum, including airplane and rocket studies and building a solar car. In July 1999, Susan and her students were selected to participate in designing an experiment to fly butterflies aboard STS-93, NASA’s Space Shuttle Columbia. With the cooperation of professors from Dalton College, Albany ARC, and Albany State, the project was completed. In May 2000, on Space Day, the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum placed the butterflies that emerged during the space flight in a permanent exhibit.

After retiring from teaching, Susan and Malcolm opened a small shop, This & That Collection, in Albany. A few years later, they moved to Statham, Georgia, to be closer to their sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. The shop also moved to The Cotton Depot in Monroe, Georgia.

Besides working and buying for the shop, Susan enjoyed playing the piano, spending time with family and their fur baby, Chloe, and watching her Georgia Bulldogs! GO DAWGS! Susan was a member of Bethlehem United Methodist Church and the Georgia Retired Teachers Association.

She and Malcolm loved spending time in the mountains and at the beach. She would want to be remembered as a Christian and a caring, loving wife, Mama, Nana, sister, and friend.

Survivors, in addition to Malcolm, include sons, Jason Chad Mercer (Ashley) and Brandon Blake Mercer (Julie); grandchildren, Avery Lynn Mercer, Austin Chad Mercer, Kelsey Jane Mercer, Mason Blake Mercer, and Nathan Ellis Mercer; and sister, Sylvia Elaine Steed Hencinski (Bob).

A Gathering of Family and Friends will be held at Bernstein Funeral Home, 3195 Atlanta Highway, Athens, on Monday, October 12, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Funeral services will follow at 2:30 p.m. in the Bernstein Funeral Home Chapel, with Rev. Frank Bernat officiating. Interment will be in Evergreen Memorial Park.

Bernstein Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Russell W Roe

Russell Wayne Roe, 70, of Albany, GA., died Thursday, September 17, 2026

at his residence. A celebration of life will be held Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at his residence.



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NO PAIN! ALL GAIN!

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

- 1 right and left (5)
- 2 range (5)
- 3 whipped up (7)
- 4 barbering tool (8)
- 5 De Niro’s acting technique (6)
- 6 “Despicable Me” prequel (7)
- 7 what IQ measures, supposedly (9)

SOLUTIONS

NDS	HA	OPE	CL	SK
WHI	IP	NIO	IN	MET
LLE	TE	SC	PE	HOD
CT	MI	NS	RS	ED

Saturday’s Answers: 1. VOWS 2. UNMASKED 3. ERIVO
4. ANDERSEN 5. MONSTERA 6. ESTIVATE 7. ODYSSEUS 10/12

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

- 1 whole (6)
- 2 opening to the wind (9)
- 3 earned (8)
- 4 maxes out an engine (8)
- 5 time between a route’s buses (7)
- 6 Arthur & Coolidge (10)
- 7 whales’ tails (6)

SOLUTIONS

MON	ING	INT	ED	UNF
URL	WAY	GAR	LI	AD
NER	TE	NES	ACT	FLU
RS	KES	VER	HE	RED

Monday’s Answers: 1. HANDS 2. SCOPE 3. WHISKED
4. CLIPPERS 5. METHOD 6. MINIONS 7. INTELLECT 10/13

Release Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2026

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Patti Varol

ACROSS

- 1 Make red-faced
- 6 Feature of some Southern accents
- 11 Bread with caraway seeds
- 14 Like unhelpful hints
- 15 Civic-minded brand?
- 16 Snakelike fish
- 17 Seth MacFarlane cartoon series
- 19 Language in which “Baw pen nyang” means “It’s nothing”
- 20 Ballpark snack
- 21 Hotel customer
- 23 Lane of “Superman”
- 26 Conversation that might involve Jordan and LeBron
- 29 Promises
- 31 Solemn acts
- 32 Letter before lambda
- 33 Moral wrong
- 34 Get a better loan rate, for short
- 37 ___ out a living
- 38 Big lottery win
- 42 ___ sum: bite-sized Chinese fare
- 43 Truly engrossed
- 45 Quaker possessive
- 46 Running track shapes, often
- 48 Seven, in Spanish
- 50 Sea cow
- 52 “Room” Best Actress Oscar winner
- 55 Take a day off, say
- 56 Baggy
- 57 ___frutti
- 59 Wine cask wood
- 60 Green Bay Packers fans, or what 17-, 26-, 38-, and 52-Across have
- 66 Carry-on screeners: Abbr.
- 67 Bridgestone products
- 68 Bright courtyards
- 69 “Charlotte’s Web” enclosure
- 70 Bowling score indicated by a slash

- 71 Used a keyboard

DOWN

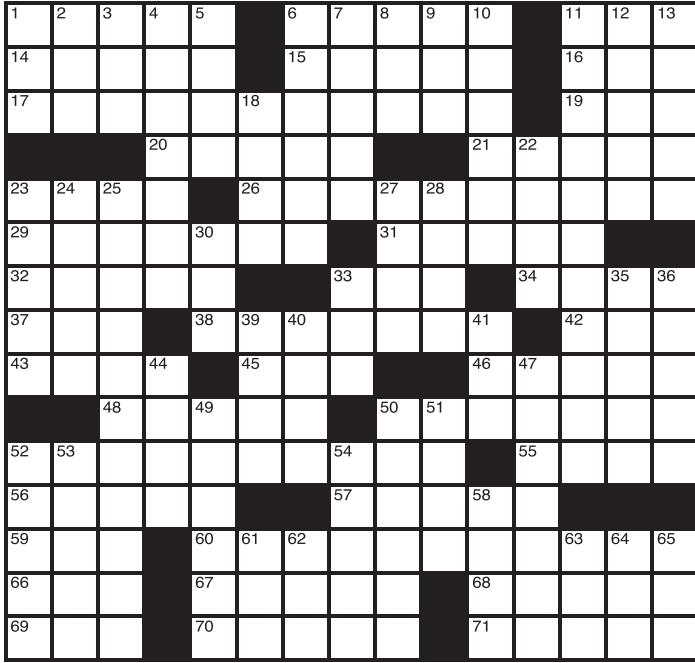
- 1 “Hacks” comedy writer Daniels
- 2 Impact sound
- 3 The “A” of A/S/L
- 4 “Let’s catch some waves!”
- 5 Whodunit suspect
- 6 Marvel villain played by Josh Brolin
- 7 Fictional chocolatier
- 8 “On top of that ...”
- 9 Secrecy doc
- 10 Gizmo
- 11 Information on a movie poster
- 12 Baker’s supply
- 13 Mexican corn dish
- 18 Bird house?
- 22 App with a Women Drivers option
- 23 L.A. NBAer
- 24 Honshu port city
- 25 Server’s query after a drink order, perhaps
- 27 Journey
- 28 T. rex, for one

- 30 TV friend of Sheldon and Howard
- 33 Cloud location
- 35 Computer folder contents
- 36 “Nothing for me, thanks!”
- 39 Flour for chapati and roti
- 40 “Believe” diva
- 41 Heavy load
- 44 Formal neckwear
- 47 Assortment
- 49 Puts in office
- 50 Styling foam
- 51 Poker stake
- 52 Rorschach test shapes
- 53 Cook in an oven
- 54 Pilot
- 58 The one there
- 61 ___hop music
- 62 Slice of history
- 63 Dada artist Jean
- 64 Monopoly cube
- 65 Melancholy

ANSWER TO TODAY’S PUZZLE:

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

10/13/26



By Zachary Edward-Brown & Shannon Rapp
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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.

“ I E E I C C A C D M D X Z N Q L C Y . M W C
Q C Y L D C Y E P E X D W C K D M Y O K V C K
T K M W . G C J D C K M C Z C H K J N G L M W
E X D M W E X H W M Y K I Q Q D C K O Y . ”
— S E N W K D S E

Previous Solution: “I want to establish a wide range and play all kinds of parts. It’s that sort of acting career I really respect.” — Tim Curry

TODAY’S CLUE: S s i e n b e A

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CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

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

“ W T V S G Q P F K S D B X P B V W T
I L Y P D G D J C C B F G P F D . Q P S M K S T D
G F L P N G B W B G L R S G P W P S X N , W B F P
L W C B F G S X G , Y P G W P G B D P G W T
Y B S M D Q L Y Q . ” — D S M M T F L N P

Previous Solution: “No one ever truly dies. The desires of our hearts make a path. We create legacy with our thoughts and dreams.” — Joy Harjo

TODAY’S CLUE: I s i e n b e A

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Area high schoolers take part in Georgia Southwestern’s Science Day

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

AMERICUS — More than 130 area high school students visited Georgia Southwestern State University recently for GSW’s eighth annual Science Day, exploring a variety of STEM fields through hands-on experiments and interactive demonstrations.

A total of 137 students and 12 teachers from six high schools participated, including Terrell Academy, Sumter County High School, Furlow Charter School, Southland Academy, Webster County High School and Chattahoochee County High School.

“GSW’s annual Science Day gives high school students from neighboring counties an op-

portunity to explore STEM and STEM-related programs through interactive demonstrations and hands-on learning,” Nedialka Iordanova, a GSW professor of physical chemistry, said. “The event also allows GSW faculty and students to showcase their knowledge and skills, serving as a valuable student learning experience and recruitment opportunity for our various STEM programs.”

Students were divided into small groups for a more personalized experience and guided across campus by GSW students. Faculty and students led the demonstrations in chemistry, biology, computer science, physics, mathematics and exercise science. Activities ranged from interacting



Special Photo
Charlie Oosterveen, a junior from Terrell Academy in Dawson, holds a snake as part of an experiment at GSW’s Science Day.

with snakes and iguanas to exploring chemical reactions and participating in biology-based demonstrations.

“It was pretty awesome. All the professors were really nice, and they had really fun experiments,” Charlie Oosterveen, a

junior at Terrell Academy, said. He reported that his favorite demonstration was “hand blaze”, a chemistry experiment led by Assistant Professor of Chemistry Beike Jia and members of the GSW Chemistry Club in which gas-filled bubbles in soapy water are ignited in students’ hands.

The event is designed to engage high school students in the sciences and teach them about the opportunities these disciplines offer for their futures.

“Science Day really broadened my knowledge and allowed me to experience multiple labs in person,” Kynslee Collins, a sophomore from Furlow Charter School, said. “My favorite part was the liquid nitrogen rocket in the water bottle.”

The day’s grand finale featured liquid nitrogen demonstrations led by Iordanova at the fountain in Centennial Plaza. Students then closed their morning of learning and scientific discovery with lunch in the GSW dining hall.

For returning schools, Science Day has become an experience students look forward to each year.

“It was amazing — our kids loved it,” Kori Gorton, a science teacher at Webster County High School, said. “This was our second year [attending], and they want to come back every year. They can’t get enough of the experiments and hands-on learning.”

Learn more about GSW’s Science Day and STEM opportunities at gsw.edu/ScienceDay.

ABAC Agripreneurs spread PBJ: Peanut butter and Jesus

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

TIFTON — Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College’s Agripreneurs and Peanut Butter & Jesus have made a perfect combination again.

September saw the Agripreneurs pack 800 bags for PB&J during its semi-annual Pizza and Packaging event.

This marks the 5th Pizza and Packaging hosted by the group, with the impactful event occurring each semester. Outside of PB&J, Pizza and Packaging has helped provide hurricane relief through local schools.

It was a reconnection between the groups, Agripreneurs Club advisor and lecturer of agribusiness Jennifer Culpepper said.

“The Ag Business Club used to volunteer with Peanut But-

ter & Jesus on the weekends,” Culpepper said. “After the success of the first Pizza and Packaging, we knew we wanted to continue our efforts to help local children.”

Before it was rebranded as the Agripreneurs, the group was known as the Ag Business Club.

Once the donations were received, the Agripreneurs put the bags together while enjoying a slice or two of pizza. Bags included juice, fruit snacks, Cheez-Its, Goldfish crackers, granola bars, Slim Jims and cookies.

PB&J is a longstanding program with branches throughout south Georgia. Once a week, volunteers deliver lunch bags throughout Tift County.

“Agripreneurs believes that it is important to help make a difference in the community, especially organizations like Peanut Butter & Jesus



Special Photo: ABAC
Members of the ABAC Agripreneurs pack bags for the Peanut Butter & Jesus program.

who help children in need,” Agripreneurs President Chloe Boatright of Baxley, said. “Being able to help in the community teaches us to not take what we have for granted and do everything we can to show kindness to those who may not receive it everyday.

“Our club is blessed to have

the opportunity and resources to collect items and snacks that are needed and donate them to Peanut Butter & Jesus. We are able to come together as one club and be reminded that our actions can work towards a greater goal of supporting our community and the people in it.”

Hyundai Transys set to bring 320 new jobs to West Point

Staff Reports
news@albanyherald.com

ATLANTA — Hyundai Transys will invest nearly \$560 million to expand its manufacturing capabilities in West Point, officials announced. The company plans to create 320 new jobs as part of its ongoing efforts to support global automotive customers with operations in North America.

Since its founding in 1994, Hyundai Transys has grown into a global automotive parts specialist, focused on advanced technology and quality powertrains and seats. The company currently supports roughly 1,250 jobs at its West Point facility.

“Over the past two decades, Hyundai Transys Georgia Powertrain and the state of Georgia have grown together, building a strong relationship of trust through continued capital investment, job creation, and talent development,”

Jaekyun Choi, president of Hyundai Transys Georgia Powertrain, said. “Georgia’s exceptional workforce development infrastructure, business-friendly environment, and unique opportunities for growth have provided an ideal foundation for Hyundai Transys to strengthen its future mobility competitiveness and pursue sustainable growth.”

Located at 6801 Kia Parkway in West Point, the expansion will include facility upgrades to plants one and two, as well as the construction of a third plant. The expansion will support added production capacity for electrified powertrains for hybrid vehicles. Hyundai Transys will hire for administrative, supervisory, and production positions, and interested individuals can learn more at www.hyundai-transys.com/en.



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