

TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR



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Treutlen Board of Commissioners enact business license ordinance Effective Jan. 1, all businesses will be required to apply for annual license

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners' business license ordinance will come into effect on Jan. 1, 2026.

The ordinance, which first passed in July 2024, requires all businesses within Treutlen County to apply for a yearly business license lasting from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Despite passing in July, the ordinance's implementation was

delayed so county officials could work out the official process.

Application forms can be found in-person in the Board of Commissioner's Office or online on the Treutlen County website. The form consists of one page and the application fee is set at \$25, an intentional move by the board to make the process as un intimidating as possible.

"We are not here to punish people," said County Attorney James Garner. "We want every-

one to want to have a business license."

All applications are to be delivered to the Board of Commissioner's Office where they will undergo approval in the following monthly board meeting, usually scheduled on the first Monday of a month. Garner and County Clerk Angie Hook both likened the process to the county's beer and wine license approval process.

Business owners do not need to attend the meeting to receive

approval, but may be asked to attend if the board has questions regarding the business. Following approval, Hook will create physical paper licenses to be sent to business owners.

While the ordinance will go into effect on Jan. 1, businesses may apply beforehand, and the ordinance provides a cushion time-frame of 30 days after Jan. 1 to apply for a license without penalty. Preexisting businesses are not expected to cease operation

while waiting for a license, but new businesses will be expected to wait until approval to begin operation.

"We have a moving picture here, and so we're not directing anyone to stop doing business while they're going through the process," said Garner.

Business owners may face a \$25 fine or one day of jail time for

LICENSE ORDINANCE
Continued on page 8

Montgomery County Elementary School hosts Elf Shop, Pajama Rama

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

The Montgomery County Elementary School held a week-long Elf Shop alongside a "Pajama Rama" event on Dec. 2 in the school's library and main atrium in Mount Vernon.

The school began hosting the Elf Shop, also called the Santa Shop, in 2023 following a conversation between Media Specialist Haley McKie and a representative from the school's book supplier, Turtle Books, about potential avenues for fundraising.

"The kids seem to enjoy it," said McKie. "We don't make a ton of money off of the Santa Shop for fundraising, but the kids enjoy coming."

Students could visit the Elf Shop in their free time between classes, where they could browse items geared towards family members, such as tool sets, cups, books, plush toys, STEM

kits and even dog toys.

"We try to offer a wide range of things," said McKie.

According to McKie, this was to allow kids to shop for Christmas gifts "where they don't have to ask their mom, dad, sister, aunt to take them to the store and get stuff for their family."

Item prices ranged from \$5 to \$20, which McKie noted had recently risen. Parents could give their children cash to use at the shop or use the school's website to prepay a set amount for the kids to use at the shop, similar to a gift card.

According to McKie, funds from the shop, as well as other holiday-themed fundraisers such as the book fair and candy grams, are put towards the library, used to replace books and expand the library's offerings based on the suggestions of students.

MCES

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Montgomery County Elementary School hosted an Elf Shop throughout the week and participated in "Pajama Rama" on Tuesday, Dec. 2. Families could be seen lining up outside of the school to get photos with Santa Claus and the Grinch. Media Specialist Haley McKie and her mother, Sheila Clark, can also be seen assisting students in the Elf Shop. Montgomery County Elementary School staff also read and sang along with an assembly of students at the elementary school in Mount Vernon/Photos by Logan Reynolds



Treutlen Co. Board of Commissioners consider board appointments for Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC)



Treutlen County Board of Commissioner members review their meeting packets during their monthly meeting on Dec. 1 in the Treutlen County Board of Commissioner's Office in Soperton/LOGAN REYNOLDS

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners considered board appointments for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) Area Agency on Aging and the Hospital Authority during their monthly meeting on Dec. 1 in the Board of Commissioner's Office in Soperton.

First, the board considered a seat which had become open on the HOGARC Council, which assists the county with grant writing a comprehensive plan development. However, the current occupant of the seat wanted to remain in the position, so the Board reappointed her to the po-

sition following a motion from Commissioner Thalia Gillis.

Next, the board considered two seats on the hospital authority. According to the information provided by the authority, one seat occupant wanted to remain while another seat needed to be filled.

For the latter seat, the authority sent the board three names to review, though research by County Attorney James Garner suggested the process should have been reversed, with the board sending the authority three names instead. Board members expressed confusion regarding the process, and County Clerk Angie Hooks admitted difficulty in receiving

the authority's by-laws.

Ultimately, the board decided to select a candidate from the three names provided to recommend the authority to appoint.

In chairman updates, Board Chairman Phillip Jennings suggested the board consider the bids for the renovation to the local jail's security camera system, suggested by Lieutenant Brandy Noble of the Treutlen County Sheriff's Office.

According to Jennings, out of the three bids received, the Pineland bid would be the cheapest option, around \$30,000, while also being "more extensive." The company

TREUTLEN BOC
Continued on page 8



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OBITUARIES



Marie Ruth Phillips Harvey

Funeral services for Mrs. Marie Ruth Phillips Harvey were held Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025 at 11 a.m. in the First Baptist Church Soperton with Rev. Mike Spivey officiating. Burial was in the Phillips Cemetery in Treutlen County. Mrs. Harvey died Nov. 20, 2025 in Seymour, Ind.

Mrs. Harvey, 60, was the daughter of the late Travis Bacon and Joann Cordiero. She was born in Miami, Fla. on Oct. 27, 1965 and was a high school graduate. She moved to California where she met her husband of 28 years, Wayne, and later moved with her family to Soperton in 2008 to care for her mother. A few years later, Wayne's job moved the family to Seymour, Ind. where they have lived for the past 10 years. She was a housewife, a homemaker and member of the First Baptist Church Soperton. As a cancer survivor, even through her long struggles with the treatments, she always provided for and loved her husband, children, grandchildren and entire family.

She is survived by her husband of 28 years, Wayne Harvey; three sons, Kyle Demarco, Matt Demarco and Nicolas Harvey; daughter, Kayln Clay and grandchildren, Adelaide and Elijah Clay and Hunter, Olive and Wren Demarco.

The family received friends beginning at 10 a.m. at the church in Soperton.

Higgs Funeral Home (higgsfuneralhomeandflorist.com and facebook) of Soperton had charge of arrangements.

mony, Ind. on Oct. 29, 1946, was a high school graduate and attended junior college in Illinois for a short time. Rosemary was a writer and had written a book of her hometown and early life in Maunie, Ill. She wrote many poems, some of which were published in magazines and enjoyed by many. She was a volunteer at Scott Health & Rehab for several years where she made them laugh and cry with her stories, loved to share Christ with anyone she met and she also started one of the first law enforcement support groups in the state of Georgia which was located in Adrian, Ga. She was preceded in death by her husband, James; sister, Kathy and two brothers, Jerry and David.

Survivors include her two sons, Timothy Lee (Rachel) Duvall of Scott and Tobias Duke Duvall of Phoenix, Ariz.; granddaughter, McKayla (Calvin) Lauderdale of DuQuoin, Ill. and four great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to your favorite charity in Honor of Mrs. Rosemary Duvall.

Higgs Funeral Home (higgsfuneralhomeandflorist.com and facebook) of Soperton had charge of arrangements.



Barbara Ann Roberts

Mrs. Barbara Ann Roberts, 75, beloved wife of the late Leon Edward Roberts former residents of Ailey, passed away on Wednesday morning, Dec. 3, 2025 at the Hamilton Medical Center in

Dalton, Georgia. Born in McRae, she is one of four children born to the late Dan Belvin Dykes and Lucindy Hulett Dykes. She moved to Vidalia in the mid 1980s where she worked for Oxford Industries. In the mid-90s she moved to the Dalton/Chatsworth area of North Georgia where she worked with Alltel Telephone and Shirikai Telephone Company in Dalton.

In addition to her parents and husband, she is preceded in death by her stepfather, Bill Gillis, a son in law, Dewayne Robertson, a brother Danny Dykes, a sister, Kathy Dykes and an infant grandson, Christopher Lane Roberson.

Mrs. Roberts leaves behind, her children, Shelia Adams (Tim), Lyons, Ga., Robert Roberson (Amy), Lyons, Ga., Samantha Garland (Josh), Ranger, Ga., Nicole (Nikki), Robertson, Dalton, Ga., a brother, Gary Dykes (Becky), Tarrytown, Ga., nine grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4, in the Williams Chapel of Sammons Funeral Home with her cousin, Pastor Alvin Lewis officiating.

Her family received friends on Thursday at Sammons Funeral Home from 2 p.m. until the hour of service.

Mrs. Roberts was laid to rest, beside her husband in the Nabb Cemetery, in the Bear Creek Community.

Please share a memory, leave a condolence message and sign the online guests register at www.sammonsfuneralhome.com.

Sammons Funeral Home, Family Owned and Operated Since 1917. Call (912) 529-4411 or (478) 455-0671.

Train up a child

By ALBERT WHITE

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

— Proverbs 22:6

In times past, I have heard people say this verse means that a person would come back to salvation. I'm going to go out on a cracked limb and say people set themselves up for a controversial disappointment with that interpretation.

You see, people have free will. That free will allows us to make a conscious decision concerning our future and preferences. As much as we would love for things to work out that way, there are stories where it didn't. Those stories cause people to believe they have found an error in scripture. They haven't. They have found an error in interpretation.

The words that are taught to our children will never leave the spiritual mind of the hearer. God's word will not return to the void. The issue is

that people can override their conviction; people do so all of the time. We hear people say they were raised in a Christian home by Christian parents. Then, they go on to tell of their own sinful appetites. A person can know to do right and not do it.

Sin is the issue. Anyone who wants to do wrong can do so. The understanding needs to be made of the cost for sin judgment from God. We have to preach salvation and repentance the entire way through. Just because I raised them right does not mean that they will necessarily default to right actions. Don't be disappointed as if you think God has forgotten your child. He has not. The issue is that we have to choose to return and lay down the transgressions that Jesus gave his life to cover. Don't be discouraged, but don't be negligent either. God's word is truth.

Albert White is the pastor of Blocker's Chapel Church on Thompson Pond Rd. in Vidalia, Ga.

PASTOR'S VIEWPOINT

By CHARLES "BUDDY" WHATLEY

We're about to begin a journey through the life of Jesus by taking a look at the eight seasons and 229 events of his life laid out across four gospels and into the book of Acts. If you put all that together, it's about 80 pages and some of it was duplicated by the gospel writers who copied from each other. If you consider the duplicated pages, you'll be left with only 20 pages and 13 of those tell the story of the last week of his life... a third of those 13 tell about what happened on Tuesday, meaning we know more about that one day than any other day in his life. But before we talk about the end of his life, let's go back to the beginning... to the Christmas story, and that begins, not with Jesus, but with John the Baptist!

It actually begins with an elderly couple named Zechariah and Elizabeth who were descendants of Aaron. So you won't be surprised to learn that Zechariah was a priest and Elizabeth was a godly wife. They'd obeyed and served God all their lives and all they'd asked in return was a child. But Elizabeth was infertile and now they were far too old to have a child, so they'd lost hope in their long unanswered prayer.

Then one day, while Zechariah was serving in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared beside the altar of incense (representing prayer) and told him in Luke 1:1-13, "Do not be

afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John." Zechariah did not laugh, as so often happens, but neither did he believe the angel. The promise from the angel described a child who would do great things for God and be filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb. He would change the world by changing people, restoring families, making the disobedient obedient, and laying down a path for the coming Messiah.

But Zechariah (meaning "God has remembered") couldn't get past the idea that an old man and his infertile old wife would bear a child. It didn't make sense to a man who had common sense. It was a crazy idea to a man who was not crazy. It was an impossible promise to a man who'd dreamed of having a child all his life... but it was simply too late. Luke 1:18 records Zechariah's words, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years."

Maybe one of your unanswered prayers has run out of time and you've given up hope. Most Advent devotionals include this story of Zechariah and Elizabeth to illustrate hope... a mixture of expectation, resilience and perseverance!

Charles "Buddy" Whatley is a retired Methodist pastor serving the Dawson Street Methodist in Thomasville, Ga.



Rosemary Attebury Duvall

Funeral services for Mrs. Rosemary Attebury Duvall were held Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025 at 11 a.m. at Anchor of Hope in Soperton with Reverend Gilbert Posey and Brother Robbie Byrd officiating. Burial was in the Carter's Chapel Cemetery. Mrs. Duvall died Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025.

Mrs. Duvall, 79, was the daughter of the late Gerald and Evelyn Pruitt Attebury. She was born in New Har-

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NOTICE Public Hearing

The Housing Authority of the City of Mount Vernon will meet **January 15, 2025 at its administrative office, 101 West Underwood Drive, 5:30 p.m. to receive input for the 2026 PHA 5-Year and Annual Plan.** This document is comprised of a five-year plan setting forth the mission and the goals and objectives of the housing authority, as well as a much more detailed annual plan. The annual plan contains specific operational information and includes the following elements:

- Eligibility, Selection and Admission Policies
- Deconcentration
- Wait List Procedures
- Financial Resources
- Rent Determination
- Grievance Procedures
- Safety and Crime Prevention
- Other Information as Required by Law
- 2025 Fiscal Audit
- Asset Management
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- Capital Improvements
- Operations and Management
- Community Service and Self-Sufficiency
- Civil Rights Certification

A draft of the PHA 5-Year and Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2026 will be available until **January 15, 2025 for review at the Mount Vernon Housing Authority's administrative office located at 101 West Underwood Drive, Mount Vernon, Georgia 30445.**

All individuals interested in sharing comments about the draft plan are invited to attend the public hearing.

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Dozing on the couch during a timeless Christmas special

Now that the halls have been decked, the mistletoe hung and the tree is fully trimmed, it's time to start another annual tradition – binge watching Christmas programs.

Fifty-six years ago this week, the holiday classic "Frosty the Snowman" first hit the airwaves. The 25-minute cartoon, based on the 1950 Gene Autry song of the same name, was the first seasonal show watched in my house this year. About half an hour is all I can seem to stay awake after I sit down on the couch. Yes, I've reached that stage of fatherhood where I near-instantly fall asleep when I try to watch television.

So don't ask me if I've

seen the latest buzz-worthy program, but I have seen the intro seven times.

"Frosty" is probably the last of the great network television Christmas specials, with "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and the original production of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" all debuting within the previous eight years. After the 1960s, small screen producers seemingly lost the ability to capture the magic and meaning of the season, though Mr. T made an impressive street Santa in 1984. He wasn't the jolly old elf people were used to. I pity the fool that don't believe in Christmas.

Speaking of the Grinch, the older I get the more I



THE NEW SOUTHERN DAD

By KYLE DOMINY

understand this beloved character. The Grinch didn't hate Christmas, he liked peace and quiet, and we all know that if there are

children around, there is little peace on Dec. 25, at least while they are awake.

As for Christmas movies, let's set the record straight:

"Die Hard" is a holiday story, and is best watched late on Christmas Eve while trying to put on the finishing touches, placing presents around the tree and doing the work that Santa Claus will take all the credit for. It is not quite Christmas without bloodying your knuckles on a present assembly project and stifling your foul language by stuffing one of Santa's cookies in your mouth. Yippee ki-yay ...

Many people flock to a production of "The Nutcracker" to mark the holidays. This timeless ballet essentially tells the tale of two spoiled children and a broken toy. The two-hour show could be cut dramatically if the father character would learn to control his

unruly son.

I've been workshopping an update to "The Nutcracker." It's set in a trailer park and instead of a rat king there's a bunch of raccoons. It will be a short show for all the dads that have trouble staying awake. I'll let you know when the casting call goes out. Rednecks need apply.

Whatever you watch this Christmas season, I hope you have a couch full of folks to watch it with. The most wonderful time of year is often the most stressful, and moments with family can be few and far between. I'll let you know what movie or television show I watch next with mine, and I promise I'll try to stay awake this time.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Did two airline CEOs settle a dispute with an arm wrestling match?

By JACK BAGLEY

For Georgia Trust For Local News

Time for that honored tradition: my annual letter to Santa Claus!

Did you know...

... you may have practiced stultiloquence? We all have, I'd guess. Stultiloquence means silly or senseless talk, or babble. (Sounds like the language of most politicians, if you ask me.)

... when a French queen got married, her husband wasn't even there? Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) was part of an arranged marriage to the man who would become King Louis XVI of France (1754-1793) as a way to seal the union between her native Austria and France. The wedding took place on April 19, 1770, but Louis wasn't there; rather, Marie's brother Ferdinand (1754-1806) stood in for the groom in a proxy wedding in Vienna. Louis and Marie held a ceremonial wedding on May 16 of that year at Versailles. (But which day was their anniversary?)

... a president of the United States was an honored guest at a circus wedding? On Feb. 10, 1863, circus dwarf "General Tom Thumb" (born Charles Sherwood Stratton, 1838-1883) married another circus dwarf, Lavinia Warren (1842-1919) in a production staged for the "Greatest Show on Earth" by circus promoter Phineas T. Barnum (1810-1891). More than 2,000 guests attended the wedding, including President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), his wife Mary (1818-1882), and Lincoln's entire cabinet. The ceremony was dubbed "The Fairy Wedding" by the press. (No word on what the couple called it.)

... two airline CEOs settled a dispute over an ad slogan with an arm wrestling match? In 1992, both Southwest Airlines and Stevens Aviation were using the same advertising slogan: "Just Plane Smart." Rather than having to resort to lawsuits or other messy means of settling the dispute, the chief executive officer of Stevens, Kurt Herwald (born 1954), playfully challenged the CEO of Southwest, Herb Kelleher (1931-2019), to an arm wrestling match. The event took place in Dallas, and Herwald beat Kelleher in a two-out-of-three match. However, Herwald gave the slogan to Kelleher anyway, in exchange for a \$5000 donation to Herwald's favorite charity and the dropping of any legal challenges. (Beats pistols at ten paces any day of the week.)

... popcorn became a popular movie snack because of World War II? During the war, sugar

Dear Santa,

To tell you the truth, I don't want anything special for Christmas this year. I know, based my past history, that's pretty amazing, but at my age... Well, I already have everything I need and a great deal of what I want.

So if you had anything specific for me, please leave it under the tree of a deserving soul who could use it better than I. If you stop by anyway, I'll leave out the milk and cookies.

Love, Jack

shortages made candy hard to come by and expensive, sometimes too expensive for theater owners. So the owners turned to popcorn, which was cheaper, easier to prepare, and apparently sold like hotcakes – so much so that popcorn is now the best-selling movie snack. (Now, with the price of butter ...)

... Eve (of Adam and Eve) is depicted as having blonde hair for a reason? During the Middle Ages, women with blonde hair were viewed with suspicion, and by the middle of the 14th Century that suspicion had even worked its way into paintings set in the Garden of Eden. Eve was given flowing blonde locks that marked her as an evil temptress. (They don't print

enough money to make me comment on this.)

... the kiss at the end of a wedding ceremony has a historical precedent? People who study such things have said that the kiss comes from ancient Rome, where tradition had a kiss used to sign a contract. (Hard to take that back.)

... some of the sets of a classic science fiction movie are now a tourist destination? In the desert of Tunisia, in Africa, the sets of the planet Tatooine from Star Wars (1977) were built, used, and then abandoned after filming was complete. But the desert preserved the sets, and now they are a popular tourist destination in that country. You can even stay the night in Luke Skywalker's home. (The



In 1992, Stevens Aviation's CEO, Kurt Herwald, challenged Southwest Airlines' CEO, Herb Kelleher, to an arm wrestling match after both airlines were using the same slogan, "Just Plane Smart." Herwald won but gave the slogan to Kelleher in exchange for a \$5,000 donation to Herwald's favorite charity/SPECIAL PHOTO

Force may, indeed, be with you.)

... the movie Jaws inspired a widespread fear and hunting of sharks? The 1975 film, which (if you didn't already know) was about a monster great white shark attacking swimmers at a New England beach resort, caused such a backlash against sharks that they have been intensely hunted ever since. Several nations have, in fact, enacted steps

to protect sharks. Additional trivia note: In a stunning twist of irony, the man who wrote the novel Jaws, Peter Benchley (1940-2006), was a strong supporter of shark conservation.

... a World War II UFO incident was kept from the public by orders at the highest levels? It was not until 2010 that documents were released showing that British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965) or-

dered a report of a UFO incident from the early 1940s involving an unidentified pilot of the Royal Air Force to be sealed. Churchill said he was concerned the report would create a mass panic, and made the report secret after conferring with General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969). The report itself has still not been released. (The Little Green Men were pleased.)

Now... you know!

Montgomery County Board of Education Schedule of Approved Local Option Sales Tax Projects Year Ended June 30, 2025							SCHEDULE 10
PROJECT	ORIGINAL ESTIMATED COST	CURRENT ESTIMATED COSTS	AMOUNT EXPENDED IN CURRENT YEAR	AMOUNT EXPENDED IN PRIOR YEARS	TOTAL COMPLETION COST	EXCESS PROCEEDS NOT EXPENDED	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
2021 Referendum:							
(i) for the purpose of making improvements and repairs to new and existing school system facilities.	4,500,000.00	715,000.00	217,651.53	497,555.66	715,207.19	-	6/30/2025
(ii) for equipment purchases and repairs for use by students and school system staff	-	2,275,000.00	513,330.62	1,760,450.27	2,273,780.89	-	6/30/2025
(iii) purchase of textbooks and other curricular items that are eligible to be purchased by GA law through sales tax proceeds	-	130,000.00	129,902.01	-	129,902.01	-	6/30/2025
(iv) acquisition, construction, and otherwise provision of school buildings and facilities and furnishings	-	1,380,000.00	392,042.41	989,067.50	1,381,109.91	-	6/30/2025
	<u>\$ 4,500,000.00</u>	<u>\$ 4,500,000.00</u>	<u>\$ 1,252,926.57</u>	<u>\$ 3,247,073.43</u>	<u>\$ 4,500,000.00</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	
2025 Referendum:							
(i) for the purpose of making improvements and repairs to new and existing school system facilities.	6,500,000.00	2,000,000.00	-	-	-	-	6/30/2029
(ii) for equipment purchases and repairs for use by students and school system staff	-	2,000,000.00	-	-	-	-	6/30/2029
(iii) purchase of textbooks and other curricular items that are eligible to be purchased by GA law through sales tax proceeds	-	500,000.00	-	-	-	-	6/30/2029
(iv) acquisition, construction, and otherwise provision of school buildings and facilities and furnishings	-	2,000,000.00	195,059.74	-	-	-	6/30/2029
	<u>\$ 6,500,000.00</u>	<u>\$ 6,500,000.00</u>	<u>\$ 195,059.74</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	

(1) The School District's original cost estimate as specified in the resolution calling for the imposition of the Local Option Sales Tax.
 (2) The School District's current estimate of total cost for the projects. Includes all cost from project inception to completion.
 (3) The voters of Montgomery County approved the imposition of a 1% sales tax to fund the above projects and retire associated debt. Amounts expended for these projects may include sales tax proceeds, state, local property taxes and / or other funds over the life of the projects.

The Grand Ole Opry

The Grand Ole Opry has just reached the century mark, bringing forth a flood of memories of this grand event, which dates to 1925 when its inaugural show was known as the “WSM Barn Dance.”

I grew up listening to the Opry on Saturday nights and never thought there would ever be an opportunity to find my way to Nashville. And, heaven for-bid, that there would ever come a time when I would be invited backstage and meet some of the stars I had listened to over the years.

A longtime friendship with Whispering Bill Anderson became my nexus to many happy evenings backstage at the Opry, both at Opryland and a couple of times at the old Ryman Auditorium where the Opry had its beginning.

With Georgia playing Vanderbilt every year in football and basketball, my

travelogue in the late fifties was pretty much confined to Atlanta and Nashville when it came to sports and entertainment.

My first trip to Music City was to see Georgia play Vanderbilt, in the late '50s, best I recall. My mentor and friend Dan Magill, Georgia Publicist, got me a press box ticket, representing the student newspaper, The Red & Black.

From that austere beginning, I have made many excursions to Nashville for a variety of reasons. It has always been an attractive city with fine restaurants, an invigorating history, and a vibrant atmosphere. I remember spending time at “Printer’s Alley,” which is where numerous publishing houses were located.

The Alley also became a nightclub district, with several bars and restaurants. You go to one of the most popular establishments

such as the Carousel Club, where the owner, Boots Randolph, at some point would get up unannounced and perform his signature saxophone number, “Yakety Sax.” Those country music stars were like your next-door neighbors. They were stars who didn’t act like they were stars.

Kay Russell, the wife of Fred Russell, the dean of Southern sports-writers, played tennis with Minnie Pearl for years and often had lunch with this doyenne of Nashville. One of Georgia’s biggest supporters, Claude Cook from Lumber City, brought Eddy Arnold to his farm to quail hunt and to see the Bulldogs play between the hedges. When he introduced me to this country music icon, who sold over 85 million records and is ranked by Billboard as the No. 1 country artist of all time, I was overwhelmed. I listened to Eddy Arnold on a country station, WJAT out of Swainsboro, on a noon show sponsored by Purina and couldn’t believe I was in

a relaxed conversation with him.

With Georgia playing Vandy in Nashville in October several years, I watched the World Series backstage at Opryland with Roy Acuff, Little Jimmy Dickens, Hank Snow, and others. The seventies were the years of Big Red Machine, the Cincinnati Reds, who were a favorite with the Opryland fraternity. With Cincinnati being only 135 miles from Nashville, the Reds were like a hometown team to the Opry brotherhood.

It was always fun to play Kenny Rogers’s golf course in Colbert and see him and Marianne around town. It is nice that Luke Bryan hangs out in Athens for home football game weekends, and it was a signature moment to enjoy breakfast prepared by Trisha Yearwood for my wife and me a couple of years ago and talk about small-town living with her and Garth, along with her sister, Beth, and Beth’s husband, John Bernard.

On a trip to Nashville in



LORAN SMITH

the eighties, Bill Anderson took me to Roy Acuff’s home on the Opryland grounds and left me with “The King of Country Music,” while he ran an errand. We sat on Acuff’s porch for an hour or so with him talking about his life in country music.

He was grateful for the good life, having grown up in simple times in Maynardville, Tenn., which is 26 miles north of Knoxville. He discoursed with abiding respect for country music and the icons he was affiliated with at the Opry. Most

of all he lamented the loss of his wife, Mildred Louise. The humility of that conversation made one aware that losing a loved one brings about painful regret regardless of a person’s station in life.

A favorite story that I’ve always enjoyed was from a good friend, Gus Manning, whose love of country music was unsurpassed. Gus was the longtime supervisor of football and basketball tickets at the University of Tennessee. He was fascinated with the long lines that developed at the old Ryman Auditorium and went to see the lady who managed tickets for the Opry. He began asking questions about how she handled certain requests and issues. She stopped him and said in her mountain vernacular, “Mr. Manning we don’t have no tickets problems here at the Opry ’cept them what sits on comps.”

There has to be a county title somewhere in her down-home verbiage.

Merry Christmas to 25 million kids across America from The Dells

I got the opportunity to take an unexpected vacation last week. A friend’s unused reservation couldn’t be moved to a new date but the cruise line would allow for a new traveler’s name to be substituted. I spent last week in various spots in the Caribbean, blissfully tuning out the political noise of the day.

Now I’m back. The unseasonable warm and dry weather I left seems to be on a vacation of its own. I was only reminded of the current season when leaving a north Florida restaurant upon my return and being a bit surprised when the hostess gave me the exit salutation of “Merry Christmas!”.

No, this won’t be the annual installment ranting against those who rant against “Happy Holidays,” though I will note Hanukkah begins on Sunday evening, Dec. 14. Our friends in Israel will celebrate their first Hanukkah in peace – tenuous though it is, as it always is there – since 2022.

Instead, today we’re go-

ing to talk about gift giving. Tis the season, and all.

One of the more substantive news stories from last week came from the business section. “Billionaires” Michael and Susan Dell have decided to give away more than 6 billion dollars to America’s children.

The gift is unique in that it’s not a pledge to give away the money when they die and thus no longer need it. Many of the uber-wealthy give themselves awards and dinners when they very publicly sign away their estates – often to foundations run by heirs.

It’s also not to an NGO or other nebulous bureaucracy that pledges to address children’s issues while perpetuating itself on its newfound capital. Nor is it to get a wing named after themselves on a prominent building nor research institution bearing the Dell name.

Instead, they’re going to give \$250 directly to as many as 25 million children under the age of 10 to start their first investment



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

account. The only stipulations appear to be that the child be a U.S. born citizen, both the child and parents have valid social security numbers, and the child live in a zip code where the median income is less than \$150,000 – about three quarters of the country.

This gift is designed to scale up a program in the recently passed reconciliation package that authorizes \$1,000 to children born after Jan. 1 of this year and will continue with current funding through 2028. Pro-

ceeds will be invested in stock based index funds so that children can be invested – literally – in our capitalist market system.

The hope is that more will pay attention to these accounts and learn from the ups and the downs. Markets, after all, involve risks. America was built and still thrives by the risk takers.

For years, even decades, we’ve been fed a steady diet of stories about wealth gaps.

Too many now believe that there is no intersection of Wall Street and Main Street.

Some would have us believe you can’t even get from one to the other.

The hope for both the “Trump Accounts” and those made possible by the Dells is that these accounts are just initial investments. They want parents, friends, employers, and eventually the children themselves to add to the accounts over time.

They want the lessons of patience and compounding to take hold before con-

sumerism takes over. Our instant gratification society has normalized getting a \$10 fast food meal delivered for \$30, and prioritized that over saving even a small fraction of each paycheck to first fund rainy day expenses, and eventually to build a real wealth nest egg.

America is the wealthiest country on the planet. Americans are among the worst developed nations when it comes to financial literacy. These two facts cannot peacefully coexist for an extended period of time.

We have dedicated groups and networks who wish to make our country a socialist nation. They love using terms like “late stage capitalism” to pretend that the fall of capitalism is near.

Michael Dell is famous for realizing while in college that he had the opportunity and skills to hustle a bit, and sell some computers from his dorm room. Too many on campuses these days would spend entire sem-

inars explaining why and how he’s somehow the bad guy in American culture. Note I put the term “billionaires” in scare quotes above because these very folks now use his hard earned title as a pejorative.

A very select few Americans will ever become billionaires. Every one of us has that path open to us, though few will even select it. Those who do will need skill, luck, timing and even a bit of help along the way to get anywhere close. But all of us have the opportunity to save a little, invest a little, and defer unnecessary expenses to put a bit aside for ourselves.

It is hard? Anything worth doing is. Sometimes, the hardest part is just getting started or even knowing where to start.

Michael and Susan Dell are taking care of that for millions of kids, as a no-strings gift. Even the biggest haters of billionaires should be able to appreciate that.

You better watch out: Santa Claus has joined the information age

I visited this topic some years ago, but things don’t seem to have changed.

Ring! Ring! Ring! “Beep! Beep! You have reached the offices of Santa Claus and Associates at the North Pole.”

“Hi, my name is Dick Yarbrough and I would like. ...”

“In order to better serve you, please listen to the following options. If you wish to place an order, please press ‘One.’ If you are calling about your current order, please press ‘Two.’ If you would like to make a payment, please press ‘Three.’”

“Actually, I just want to talk to someone about my Christmas wish list.”

“If you wish to continue this conversation in English, please press ‘Four.’ Si desea continuar esta conversación en español, presione ‘Cinco.’ Si vous souhaitez continuer cette conversation en français, veuillez appuyer sur ‘Six.’”

“English is fine, thank you, but here’s what I want to ask. ...”

“Wenn Sie dieses Gespräch auf Deutsch fortsetzen möchten, drücken Sie bitte ‘Sieben Si velis ad hanc conversationem Latine, placere premere ‘Octo.’”

“Look, I don’t speak German and the only Latin I know is ‘E. Pluribus Unum.’ I just want to talk to a live person about my Christmas



DICK YARBROUGH

wish list – Frosty the Snowman, an elf, Bing Crosby – I don’t care.”

“Your call is very important to us. Currently, all of our representatives are busy serving other customers. Please stay on the line. Your wait time is currently six hours.”

“Six hours! You’ve got to be kidding! In the past, I just called up and talked to whoever answered the phone. It looks like you have automated everything now. I’m sure it saves you money but it is very impersonal and unbecoming of Santa Claus. I would strongly suggest that you. ...”

“Your call is very important to us. Currently, all of our representatives are busy serving other customers. Please stay on the line. Your wait time is currently seven hours.”

“This is ridiculous! I have a great mind to. ...”

“Did you know you can place your orders and track

them by going to our website: www.santaclausworkshopatthenorthpole.org, backslash, ‘good little boys and girls,’ forward slash, ‘Ho. Ho. Ho.’ Or you can find us on Twitter at ‘hash tag, dash away, dash away all.’”

“I think I’ll just forget the whole thing. All I wanted was. ...”

Click! “Hello, my name is Siddharth. To whom am I speaking?”

“Thank goodness! I am finally talking to a real person! Listen, Siddharth, I need to check on. ...”

“This call may be monitored for quality assurance purposes.”

“That’s okay by me, Siddharth, but all I want is. ...”

“May I have the last four digits of your Social Security number, please?”

“Yeah, sure but all I

want. ...”

“Have you shopped with us before?”

“Well, kinda. I used to sit on Santa Claus’s knee every year and tell him what I wanted for Christmas, if you consider that shopping. Every year, I asked for a pony. I always wanted a pony but I never got one and I am hoping this might be the year that Santa Claus ...”

“Will you be paying for your purchase by credit card?”

“I haven’t decided yet if I am going to order anything, Siddharth. As I mentioned, the reason I am calling is I would like to know if. ...”

“I see here that you don’t have one of our Santa Claus Affinity Cards. You might wish to know that for every \$50 you spend, you accumulate points that can be used to purchase airline

tickets, discounts at the gasoline pump or a jet ski. May I send you a card, Mr. Yarbrough?”

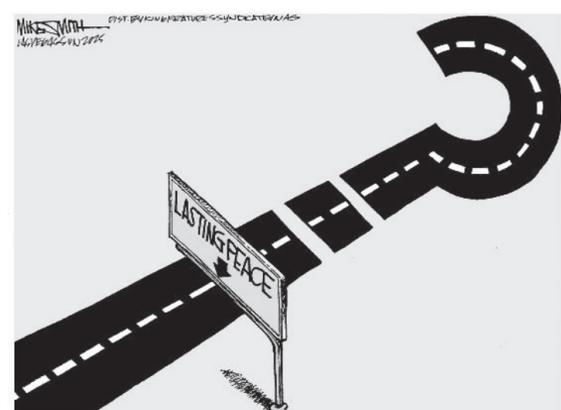
“It’s ‘Yarbrough,’ Siddharth, and the answer is ‘no.’ All I want is. ...”

“It has been a pleasure talking to you, Mr. Yarbrough. Please stay on the line for a short customer survey that will enable us to

serve you even better in the future. Have a nice day and thank you for choosing Santa Claus at the North Pole.” Click!

“Hello? Hello? He’s gone! Rats! And I never even got to speak to Santa Claus! All I wanted to know was if this was the year when I might finally get my

~^#@!# pony!”



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Looking back with gratitude and moving forward with purpose

There's a certain clarity that comes at the end of the year, especially a year like 2025. As families across Georgia sit down to stretch their paychecks and figure out how to make Christmas special despite rising costs, it's impossible not to feel the weight of the moment we're living in. Washington may be content with runaway spending and unstable leadership, but here in Georgia, we're determined to chart a different course.

Representing the people of Middle Georgia comes with a responsibility I don't take lightly. While debating legislation and casting votes are part of the job, the real work happens in the conversations at kitchen tables, local businesses, farm shops and church pews. This year, you've told me what's working, what's not and what you expect from your state leaders.

Over the last 12 months, Senate Republicans stayed focused on conservative, commonsense policies that strengthen our workforce, improve school safety and protect consumers from practices that drive up the cost of living. In a year when every dollar matters, we delivered meaningful tax relief and upheld Georgia's long-standing commitment to responsible budgeting. Our investments in education, public safety and health care, while lowering taxes, aren't abstract accomplishments. They're making a difference in real homes and real communities.

Our law enforcement officers and first responders are better equipped to keep our schools secure. Farmers and agribusiness owners have more protection for the tools they rely on to feed our state. Small

businesses are getting relief from lawsuit abuse that has driven up insurance premiums. Families are keeping more of their hard-earned money due to our income tax reduction.

As proud as I am of what we've done, I'm even more mindful of the challenges ahead. Rural health care remains a challenge. Workforce shortages continue to burden small towns and local economies. Affordable housing is slipping further out of reach for too many young families. Agriculture, the backbone of our economy, continues to need long-term, strategic support to remain competitive in a rapidly changing world.

In the upcoming legislative session, my priorities remain in advancing policies that help Georgians thrive, strengthening the industries that drive our

UNDER THE GOLD DOME



By STATE SEN. LARRY WALKER

state and pushing back against personal agendas that threaten to make life harder for working families. Before we talk about new programs or new spending, we must first ask whether we are protecting taxpayers and preserving the values that built this state.

As the Christmas season arrives, I hope you're able to find time for rest, gratitude, and the people who matter most in your life. I remain deeply thankful for your trust and your willingness to stay engaged in the work happening under the Gold Dome. If my office can

ever help you, whether you have an idea for legislation or need assistance navigating a state agency, please don't hesitate to reach out. We work for you year-round.

I wish you and your family a joyful Christmas and a hopeful, prosperous New Year. I look forward to all we will accomplish together in 2026.

Sen. Larry Walker serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Insurance and Labor. He represents the 20th Senate District, which includes Bleckley, Dodge, Dooly, Laurens, Treutlen, Pulaski and Wilcox counties, as well as a portion of Houston County. He may be reached by phone at (404) 656-0095 or by email at Larry.Walker@senate.ga.gov.

State. Sen. Walker, local leaders and community stakeholders partner up to host Middle Georgia Listening Day

SPECIAL TO THE TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

Sen. Larry Walker, III (R-Perry) joined community leaders, local officials, educators and economic development partners from across Middle Georgia for a Regional Listening Day hosted by the Heart of Georgia Regional Commission. The event brought forth meaningful dialogue centered around local needs, opportunities and priorities ahead of the 2026 Legislative Session.

Joined by Representatives Matt Hatchett (R-Dublin), Butch Parrish (R-Swainsboro) and Danny Mathis (R-Cochran), Sen. Walker opened the program with remarks emphasizing the importance of direct engagement with local leaders and the role these conversations play in shaping responsive policy at the State Capitol.

"It was a great day in Middle Georgia," said Sen. Walker. "Conversations like this fuel our work and shape real, meaningful progress for our state. Our communities face urgent challenges every day, and they deserve solutions that actually work for the people we serve. Good government starts with listening, and hearing directly from Georgians who live and breathe these issues every day keeps me inspired as we head into the next legislative session."

Throughout the morning, the delegation met with representatives from various organizations, including Trinity Christian School, Laurens County Commission, Bleckley-Cochran Industrial Development Authority, Dublin-Laurens Development Authority, Oconee Fall Line Technical College, Eastman-Dodge Chamber of Commerce, Middle Georgia State University, and representatives from multiple county commissions and chambers of commerce. Conversations centered on workforce development, school safety, infrastructure needs, economic competitiveness and tools required to support sustained growth across Middle Georgia.

Sen. Walker also extended his appreciation to the

Heart of Georgia Regional Commission for organizing the event. "I want to thank Brett Manning and his team for putting together such a productive day. Their leadership helps keep this region moving forward, and I am grateful for our part-

nership."

Sen. Larry Walker serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Insurance and Labor. He represents the 20th Senate District, which includes Bleckley, Dodge, Dooly, Laurens, Treutlen, Pulas-

ki and Wilcox counties, as well as a portion of Houston County. He may be reached by phone at (404) 656-0095 or by email at Larry.Walker@senate.ga.gov.

CITY OF SOPERTON
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
ADOPTION NOTICE
PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGETS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

A copy of the proposed operating budgets will be available for public review at Soperton City Hall between the hours of 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for holidays and weekends, December 1, 2025 December 31, 2025.

First Public Hearing
Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.
City of Soperton, Council Chambers, 1973 MLK, JR. DR

The purpose of the meeting is to receive public comments on the proposed City of Soperton Municipal Operating budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

Budget Adoption
Monday, December 15, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
City of Soperton, Council Chambers, 1973 MLK, JR. DR

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact City Hall at 912-529-6713.

TREUTLEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHEDULE OF APPROVED LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX PROJECTS YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025							
PROJECT	ORIGINAL ESTIMATED COST (1)	CURRENT ESTIMATED COSTS (2)	AMOUNT EXPENDED IN CURRENT YEAR (3)	AMOUNT EXPENDED IN PRIOR YEARS (3)	TOTAL COMPLETION COST	EXCESS PROCEEDS NOT EXPENDED	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE
SPLIST II							
Adding to, renovating, repairing, improving, demolishing, furnishing and equipping existing School District buildings and facilities		7,783,558.00	3,127,051.54	4,754,726.59	0.00	0.00	June 30, 2026
System-wide technology improvements		8,295.64	0.00	8,295.64	8,295.64	0.00	Complete
Acquiring new school equipment, including safety and security equipment		29,978.00	0.00	29,978.00	29,978.00	0.00	Complete
Acquiring new school buses and vehicles		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Complete
Acquiring land and any necessary real and personal property in connection therewith		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Complete
Repaying principal and interest on Treutlen County School District General Obligation Bonds for such capital outlay projects.	1,875,585.15	1,960,221.27	70,297.96	960,613.95	0.00	0.00	October 1, 2029
TOTAL SPLIST II	1,875,585.15	9,782,052.91	3,197,349.50	5,753,614.18	38,273.64	0.00	
SPLIST III							
Retiring general obligation debt of the Treutlen County School District previously incurred with respect to capital outlay projects of the School District	2,727,792.00	2,727,792.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	October 1, 2029
SPLIST IV							
Retiring general obligation debt of the Treutlen County School District previously incurred with respect to capital outlay projects of the School District	2,300,000.00	2,300,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	October 1, 2029
SPLIST V							
Adding to, renovating, repairing, improving, and equipping existing school buildings, school district facilities, including, but not limited to HVAC and athletic facilities	1,300,000.00	1,300,000.00	0.00	0.00	---	---	June 30, 2026
Acquiring textbooks, e-books, e-book readers, computers, laptops, tablets, and peripherals for the School District		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Complete
Acquiring school buses and transportation and maintenance equipment		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Complete
Pay a portion of principal and interest on General Obligation School Bonds Series 2010, not to exceed \$2,200,000	2,200,000.00	2,200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Complete
Acquiring miscellaneous new equipment, fixtures and furnishings for the School District, including but not limited to technology equipment and safety and security equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	October 1, 2029
TOTAL SPLIST V	3,500,000.00	3,500,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Retiring previously incurred general obligation debt	925,000.00	925,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	October 1, 2029
Pay a portion of the principal and interest on the general obligation bonds issued June 18, 2025	5,075,000.00	5,075,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	October 1, 2047
Acquiring or purchasing school buses and vehicles, and a portion of the costs of capital outlay projects not paid for with proceeds from general obligation bonds	0.00	0.00					Ongoing
TOTAL SPLIST VI	6,000,000.00	6,000,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL ALL PROJECTS	\$ 16,403,377.15	24,309,844.91	3,197,349.50	5,753,614.18	38,273.64	0.00	

(1) The School District's original cost estimate as specified in the resolution calling for the imposition of the Local Option Sales Tax.
 (2) The School District's current estimate of total cost for the projects. Includes all cost from project inception to completion.
 (3) The voters of Treutlen County approved the imposition of a 1% sales tax to fund the above projects and retire associated debt. Amounts expended for these projects may include sales tax proceeds, state, local property taxes and/or other funds over the life of the projects.

Brewton-Parker Christian University's basketball team takes down the Skyhawks with 73-68 victory

SPECIAL TO THE TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

The Brewton-Parker Christian University Barons triumphed in a thrilling conference basketball game against the Point University Skyhawks on Dec. 6, at the West Point Park Gymnasium. The Barons took down their opponents with a 73-68 victory, showcasing strong offensive and defensive plays on both ends of the floor.

In the first half, the Barons took an early lead, with Jadon Melvin hitting a pivotal three-pointer and Abraham Garjah scoring multiple layups. Notable defensive plays included Melvin's steal and layup, which helped the Barons build an 11-point lead before the half ended, leading 34-31.

As the game continued into the second half, the Skyhawks initially rallied with Kenton Steele hitting a game-tying three-pointer. Nonetheless, Garjah's dominance was unwavering as he maintained scoring consistency, helping to keep the Barons in front.

Solid defensive plays led to valuable steals and blocks, pushing their lead to nine points at its peak. The final score had the Barons up 73-68, taking the win.

The Barons' leading performer, Abraham Garjah, finished with an impressive stat line of 19 points and five assists, with Jayden Hill grabbing 11 boards. Additional contributions from players like Jadon Melvin, with 12 points, helped carry the Barons to the victory.

Head Coach Leonard Epps shared his thoughts following the game. "Proud of how our guys fought through some adversity on the road. A ton of credit to Point; very tough team. We look forward to playing back at home on Wednesday."

Looking ahead, the Barons, now holding a commendable 8-2 overall record and 2-1 in conference play, will face the Baptist University of Florida on Dec. 10 at Gillis Gymnasium. This upcoming game promises another chance for the Barons to keep their strong season rolling.



Brewton-Parker Christian University defeated Point University in Saturday night's basketball game with a 73-68 victory/SPECIAL PHOTO



The Lady Barons dominated Point University 75-47 on Saturday, Dec. 6 at West Point Park Gym/SPECIAL PHOTO

BPCU Lady Barons dominate Skyhawks

SPECIAL TO THE TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

In a thrilling conference clash, the Brewton-Parker Lady Barons clinched a dominant 75-47 victory against the Point University Skyhawks on Dec. 6, 2025, at the West Point Park Gymnasium. This win gives the Lady Barons their first of the year, improving their season record to 1-9 overall and 1-1 in the conference.

The game started strong for Brewton-Parker, with Chasity Degale and Ja'Ka'yah Draughn putting early points on the board, helping the Lady Barons to a 7-point lead by the end of the first quarter with a score of 22-15. The momentum continued in the second quarter, with Adrian Stewart's performance dominating, giving the team a 40-30 halftime lead. Brewton-Parker's defense was dominant, with multiple steals contributing to their solid lead.

The third quarter saw Brewton-Parker expand its lead by 20 points, spearheaded by standout plays from Stewart and Degale. The team's effective fast-break execution and sharp

shooting pushed the score to 60-40 by the end of the third. The final quarter saw the Lady Barons not only maintain but also further extend their lead, closing the game 75-47.

Top scorers for the Lady Barons included Adrian Stewart with 17 points, followed by Jakayla Peoples with 14, and Ja'Ka'yah Draughn with 13. Andranique Stewart led the rebounds with eight, while Shamiha Webb topped the steals with three.

Head Coach Steve Edwards reflected on his team's performance. "Proud of our group. Road games in our league are never easy. It was good for this group to finish a game and experience some success. We have a long way to go, but we are locked into the process."

The Lady Barons start preparation for their next opponent, Jacksonville State, on Dec. 9, in Jacksonville, Ala. The Lady Barons look to use the momentum from this win to snowball to the remainder of their schedule as they prepare for the last non-conference games before conference play takes over.

SPORTS QUIZ

By **RYAN A. BERENZ**
King Features

1. What New Orleans Saints receiver crashed helmet-first into a sideline TV camera during a 1971 win over the Dallas Cowboys?
2. What three events make up horse racing's Canadian Triple Crown?
3. What women's pro tennis tournament was first played in 2021 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania?
4. At the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games, what country's basketball team forfeited their gold medals after it was revealed that most of their players had no mental or physical handicap?
5. What Major League Baseball team owner claimed to have engaged in a fistfight with two fans in a hotel elevator during the 1981 World Series?

Answers

1. Danny Abramowicz (his cracked helmet is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame).
2. The King's Plate, Prince of Wales Stakes and Breeders' Stakes.
3. The Transylvania Open.
4. Spain.
5. New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner.

The Courier Herald



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Legals

Treutlen Co. Legals

S25-072
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF TREUTLEN COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF GLORIA JEAN MOYE, DECEASED
ESTATE NO: 25-P-57
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom It May Concern
and to whom it may concern: Alfreda Marcella Levette Moye to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of Gloria Jean Moye, deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before Dec 23, 2025.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be (held on to be determined, 20____)(scheduled at a later date). If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Tiffany W. McLendon
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Clerk of Probate Court
650 Second St
Soperton, Ga. 30457
Address
912-529-4320
Telephone Number
November 27, December 4, 11, 18, 2025

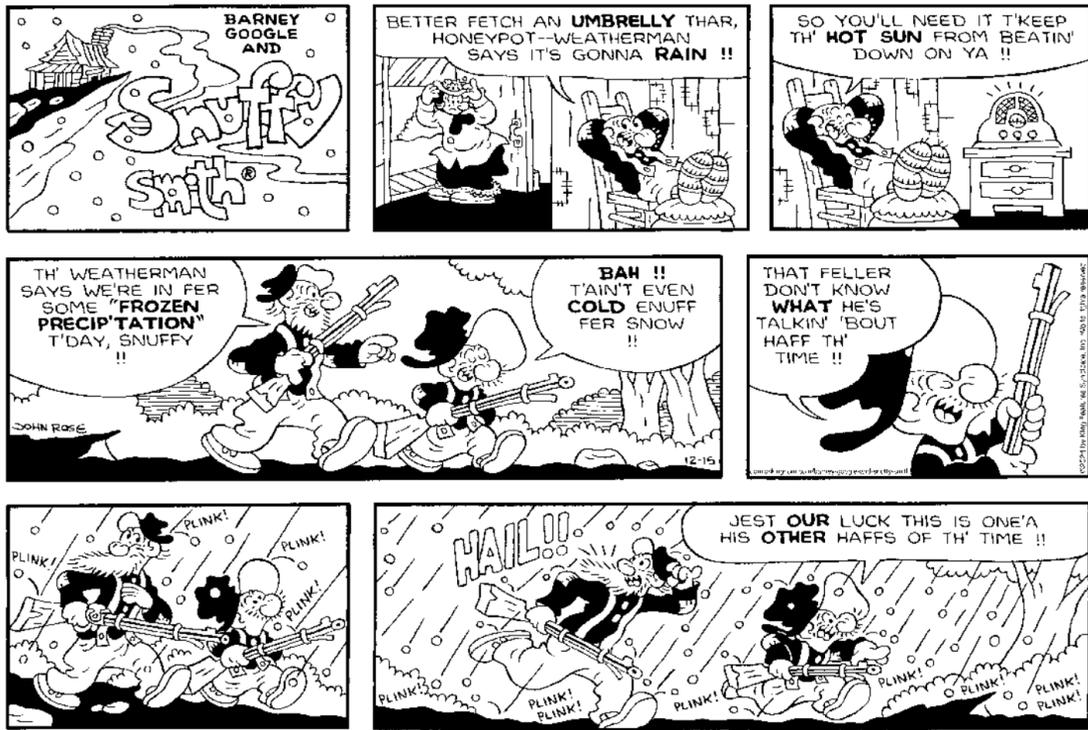
S25-074
NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER
STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF TREUTLEN
By virtue of a Power of Sale contained in that certain Security Deed from James Arthur Conner to MORTGAGE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION SYSTEMS, INC., AS NOMINEE FOR SIERRA PACIFIC MORTGAGE COMPANY, INC., dated January 23, 2025 and recorded on February 6, 2025 in Deed Book 25001, Page 160, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Treutlen County, Georgia, said Security Deed having been given to secure a Note of even date, in the original principal amount of One Hundred Thirty-Six Thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$136,000.00) with interest thereon as provided therein, as last transferred to NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, recorded in Deed Book 25001, Page 1219, aforesaid records, will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the courthouse door of Treutlen County, Georgia, or at such place as has or may be lawfully designated as an alternative location, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in January, 2026, all property described in said Security Deed including but not limited to the following described property:
All that tract or land lying and being in the 1763rd G.M. District of Treutlen County, Georgia, containing 5.0 acres, more or less, as shown on a plat of survey prepared by Marvin D. Clements, Registered Surveyor, from survey dated July 18, 1991 and recorded in Plat Book 6, Page 509, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Treutlen County, Georgia, which plat and record thereof are incorporated herein by reference into this description and deed, said tract is bounded, now or formerly as follows, to wit: Northeast by land of Thurman Salter; Southeast by land of Federal Forestlands, Inc., land of James H. Gross, III, and land of Allen and Denise Fields; West by the right of way of County Road No. 8; and North and Northwest by land of Marcie and Sharon Salter, said plat is incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof.
Also conveyed herewith is the 1992 Harbor mobile Home VIN: GAFLM35A&B05104-HS which is permanently attached to the land and is a part of the real property.
Said property may more commonly be known as 9154 Crooked Run Road, Adrain, GA 31002.
The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, non-payment of the monthly installments on said loan. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given). The individual or entity that has full authority to negotiate, amend and modify all terms of the loan is NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, 75 Beattie Place, Greenville, SC 29601, 1-800-365-7107. Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse against the above-named or the undersigned. The sale will also be subject to the following items which may affect the title: a) zoning ordinances; b) matters which should be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property; c) any outstanding ad valorem taxes, including taxes, which constitute liens upon said property whether or not now due and payable; d) special assessments; e) the right of redemption of any taxing authority; f) all outstanding bills for public utilities which constitute liens upon said property; g) all restrictive covenants, easements, rights-of-way and any other matters of record superior to said Security Deed. To the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the owners and party in possession of the property are James Arthur Conner and or tenant(s). The sale will be conducted subject to 1) confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy code and 2) final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed.
NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing as Attorney-in-Fact for James Arthur Conner
December 11, 18, 25 January 1

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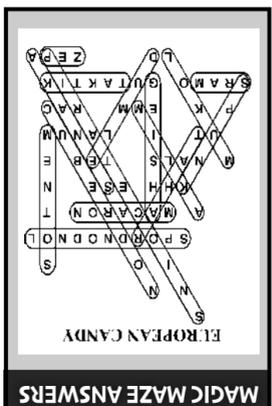
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



King Crossword

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		

ACROSS

- 1 Touse
- 5 Resistance unit
- 8 Prego rival
- 12 Bickering
- 13 Zodiac animal
- 14 Pub orders
- 15 Tabula —
- 16 Sheer fabrics
- 18 Santiago resident
- 20 Playful sea critter
- 21 Mormon church, for short
- 22 Top card
- 23 Army bigwigs
- 26 Scolding
- 30 "Humbug!"
- 31 Cooking fuel
- 32 French pronoun
- 33 Upbeat
- 36 Rose protector
- 38 Weeding tool
- 39 Spanish gold
- 40 Parlor pieces
- 43 Bar exercises
- 47 Trailblazing congresswoman
- 49 Power co. supply
- 50 Suffix for million
- 51 "Levitating" singer Lipa

DOWN

- 1 Artist Chagall
- 2 Beehive State
- 3 Spanish eyes
- 4 Stable enclosures
- 5 Killer whales
- 6 Virtuoso violinist Hilary
- 7 2001, to Cato
- 8 Traveled the rapids
- 9 Oodles
- 10 Hereditary unit
- 11 Cold War initials
- 17 Central points
- 19 Asner and Harris
- 22 Sounds of relief
- 23 Telly network
- 24 Fan's cry
- 25 Sashimi fish
- 26 Automobile
- 27 "As I see it," in a text
- 28 Fish-fowl insert
- 29 Tom Collins liquor
- 31 "My word!"
- 34 Stages
- 35 Ritz
- 36 Part of TNT
- 37 Truthful
- 39 "Holy cow!"
- 40 Con job
- 41 Columbus' home
- 42 Evergreens
- 43 Crossword hint
- 44 — Bator
- 45 Lima's land
- 46 "Shoo!"
- 48 Quirky

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MAGIC MAZE • EUROPEAN CANDY

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: Home of the U.S. Film Industry

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------|--------|--------------|
| Akanes | Kit Kat | Mars | Pirate Coins |
| Cuberdon | Lokum | Mentos | Rahat |
| Dumle | London Drops | Milka | Spunk |
| Geisha | Macaron | Pez | |

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTIKOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Picture frame is higher. 2. Door knob is larger. 3. Hand is moved. 4. Collar is missing. 5. Stripe is added to sleeve. 6. Book is smaller.

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Mark Wiggins, D.P.M.

Southeastern Technical College (STC) announces the college has received Cognia Accreditation

SPECIAL TO TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

Southeastern Technical College (STC) announced today that it has earned Cognia Accreditation for the Southeastern Technical College Academy (STCA). Cognia is a nonprofit organization that provides quality assurance for schools, school districts, and education service providers.

"Accreditation as conferred by the Cognia Global Accreditation Commission provides Southeastern Technical College Academy a nationally recognized mark of quality for our school," shared Larry Calhoun, Southeastern Technical College president. "It demonstrates to our community our commitment to excellence, our willingness to enact meaningful change based on evaluation and feedback, and our desire to be the best we can be on behalf of the students we serve."

Cognia recognizes schools across the globe that meet rigorous standards focused on productive learning environments, equitable resource allocation, and effective leadership. To earn Cognia accreditation, a school must submit to internal and external review. Earning accreditation from the Cognia Global Accreditation Commission means that the school meets Cognia Performance Standards and maintains a commitment to continuous improvement. Schools in good standing can maintain their accreditation for a six-year term.

Dr. Mark A. Elgart, president and CEO of Cognia, stated, "Cognia Accreditation is a rigorous process that focuses the entire school and its community on the primary goal of ensuring all students can flourish in engaging and equitable learning environments. We commend Southeastern Tech-

nical College for meeting high standards and making progress on key indicators that impact student learning."

Cognia is the parent organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI). Parents and interested community members can learn more about Cognia Accreditation at cognia.org.

Southeastern Technical College Expands Opportunities for Students of All Ages

Southeastern Technical College continues to broaden access to education with programs that serve high school students, adult learners, and individuals seeking career advancement. Whether learners are finishing a high school diploma, beginning college coursework, or gaining job-ready skills, STC offers multiple pathways to success.

Career Plus High School Diploma (CPH) Program

Launched in August 2024, the Career Plus High School Diploma program gives adult learners a second chance to earn a high school diploma while preparing for a career. Students complete required high school courses online through the Technical College System of Georgia and receive in-person academic support from STC instructors. Along the way, they can earn industry-recognized credentials that lead to immediate employment or further college study. The program's flexible, affordable structure helps students overcome common barriers such

as scheduling and technology access.

The Southeastern Technical College Academy serves students enrolled in the CPH program. Adult learners ages 18 and older complete nine high school credits alongside two Technical Certificates of Credit. Credits may be awarded from previously earned high school coursework, STCA's high school classes, or portions of the GED. This flexible model provides multiple entry points and individualized pacing. STCA currently holds a 100% pass rate in high school courses.

"Earning this accreditation validates what we see every day: CPH changes lives," said Daphne Scott, CPH Coordinator. "Our students gain more than a diploma—they gain confidence, purpose, and a pathway to a better future. And those outcomes ripple throughout our community and beyond—supporting local businesses, strengthening families, and expanding economic opportunity."

Traditional Enrollment at STC

STC continues to offer certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees in high-demand fields such as healthcare, business, technology, and industrial trades. Programs are developed with input from local employers to ensure graduates are workforce-ready. With affordable tuition, financial aid options, and dedicated faculty, STC provides accessible and high-quality higher education for learners seeking to enhance their skills.

Career Academy and Dual Enrollment

STC is proud to have the new EDGE College and Career Academy, a partnership with Eman-



CPH student Jessica Mack (third from left), who is pursuing Early Childhood certificates, shops for books and supplies with her daughters Joy Evines (left), a Dual Enrollment student from Emanuel County Institute, and Jada Evines, a Cosmetology student. They are assisted by Kajuanna Snell (right), administrative services technician, in the Southeastern Technical College Bookstore/SPECIAL PHOTO

uel County Schools, that allows students to earn college credit while still in high school. Through the Dual Enrollment program, students can take courses in career and technical fields, gaining hands-on experience and college-level learning without the cost of tuition. The Career Academy is designed to provide students a head start on their chosen career paths, whether they plan to enter the workforce right after graduation or continue their education.

A Place for Every Learner

Southeastern Technical College's driving force is to prepare students for success in life and work, and is proud to offer multiple pathways to get there.

Located in southeast Georgia, STC serves Candler, Emanuel, Jenkins, Johnson, Montgomery, Tattall, Toombs and Treutlen

counties. With campuses in Vidalia and Swainsboro, the college offers more than 90 programs.

About Cognia

Cognia is a global, nonprofit improvement organization dedicated to helping institutions and other education providers grow learners, teachers, and leaders. Cognia offers accreditation and certification, assessment, and improvement services within a framework of continuous improvement. Serving 40,000 public and private institutions from early learning through high school in more than 90 countries, Cognia brings a global perspective to advancing teaching and learning.

For more information about the CPH program or any opportunity at Southeastern Technical College, call (478) 289-2200 or visit southeasterntech.edu.

LICENSE ORDINANCE

Continued from page 1

each day spent in violation of the ordinance. However, Garner noted the jail penalty serves as more of a formality of a county ordinance.

"It's just sort of pro forma for a county ordinance," said Garner. "So, I mean, obviously this is something we're not trying to put people in jail for. We want them to come here, and we want them to do business and we want them to be a part of our business family."

Garner attributes the ordinance to the board's commitment to becoming more business-friendly. According to him, the licenses will provide the Board with a list of businesses in the county, allowing the county government to more effectively assist local business owners.

The list will also benefit local emergency services and even new businesses, allowing them to take advantage of present utilities and services as they establish a foothold in the area.

"I think a lot of people are ready for Treutlen County to rise up and that's what we're trying to do," said Garner.

MCES

Continued from page 1

"The ones who are avid readers, and they know what they're looking for, I'm like, 'Hey, give me some suggestions, what do you want?'" said McKie. "They recommend books to me."

The shop coincided with the school's "Pajama Rama" day on Dec. 2, where students could wear pajamas to school. After school, children and their parents could return at 5 p.m. to take photos with Santa Claus and the Grinch.

Starting at 6 p.m., families could move over to the school's main atrium to watch staff light the Christmas tree. Staff then read Christmas stories and sang Christmas songs to the children.

TREUTLEN BOC

Continued from page 1

also offered a lease option which Jennings likened to service plans already in place for a county air conditioning unit.

The lease option would cost the county \$9,000 up-front, then \$230 per month.

"I tend to like those, especially being we don't have our own IT department," said Jennings.

Commissioner Joey Powell offered a motion to accept the bid's lease option pending a review of the contract, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Gillis reported a complaint she had received to the board regarding the local senior center. According to Gillis, she had been told one of the center's four employees, who she declined to name, had allegedly been paid for hours they had not worked.

The center employs four people, two full time and two part time, whose hours are logged via time card, which County Clerk Angie Hooks noted could have been complicated by employees working for multiple departments. Chairman Jennings suggested the board could arrange an audit to determine if there were any incongruities with the time cards.

"If we've got anybody that's working in multiple departments, and those department heads aren't determining those time cards to be in agreement of it, we've got a problem," said Jennings.

The board also voted to rescind a previous motion to pay for one month of food deliveries for the center at the suggestion of Attorney Garner. The motion was offered by Commissioner Powell, which passed unanimously.

The funds were originally pledged during their November meeting due to the government shutdown, which would have deprived the center of the funds needed to pay for food to provide for 10 in-house residents and 24 deliveries. However, the shutdown ended soon after, rendering the pledged funds unnecessary.

Gillis also reported two complaints she received regarding the recreation department: one alleging a resident's grandchild signed up for the cheer team yet

did no cheering outside of practice, and one alleging a resident's grandchild signed up for the soccer team yet played no games outside of one scrimmage game against fellow Treutlen children.

Jennings offered to investigate these claims, as he is also a member of the recreation department board. He noted the department was struggling with updating its internal policies due to a multi-year shutdown and damage from Hurricane Helene.

Commissioner Rodney Meeks commented on companies driving heavy equipment, such as excavators and bulldozers, on county roads "without taking the proper precautions," causing damage to the roads.

"We're putting out a lot of money to update our county roads and make sure they're nice for our citizens and safe," said Meeks.

Meeks proposed a potential ordinance which would threaten fines against anyone who damages county roads with improper transport of heavy machinery. Jennings supported drafting an ordinance, suggesting the ordinance apply even to dirt roads.

"I don't have a problem with it at all," said Jennings. "There needs to be some deterrence."

The board elected to formally discuss an ordinance during their January meeting.

Commissioner Hollis also offered a motion to offer full time county employees a Christmas bonus of \$150 and part time employees a bonus of \$75, which is the amount the board has offered employees in the past. The motion passed unanimously.

In his manager's update, County Manager TJ Hudson returned to the request to purchase a new work vehicle for Fire Chief John Johnson. He had initially suggested purchasing a red 2025 Ford Explorer, but noted the county could opt for a red Ford F-150 to save money.

According to Hudson, the truck would cost around \$46,000 with a six to eight week turnaround time, though the Soperon City Council agreed to pay for half the cost. Commissioner Powell offered a motion to pay for the other half of the truck up to \$25,000, which passed unanimously.

Murderer's execution scheduled for next week

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Two Cobb County women lost their lives because of a few thousand dollars, and soon the man convicted of killing them and taking their money is scheduled to meet his own end.

Eighteen years ago, Stacey Ian Humphreys was convicted of murder and other crimes in the 2003 deaths of Cindy Williams and Lori Brown.

His lawyers finally exhausted his appeals in October when the U.S. Supreme Court, in a move that inspired controversy, decided against him again after twice declining to hear his earlier appeals. That was after the Georgia Supreme Court had twice issued decisions that did not go his way.

On Dec. 17 at 7 p.m., Humphreys is to become the 55th Georgia inmate to die by lethal injection. He was born in 1973, the year Georgia reinstated capital punishment after a brief pause over litigation.

He was sentenced to death for the murders of two real estate agents during the lunch hour on Nov. 3, 2003. Williams was working in a construction company's model home at a new Cobb County subdivision when Humphreys walked in.

Brown then entered during or after the attack on Williams.

The women's bodies were found near their desks. They had both been stripped and shot in the head, according to Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr's office.

Williams had been strangled with her own underwear and shot in her back and then her head. Brown had been choked or struck in the throat before she was shot.

Carr's office detailed the evidence against Humphreys.

A felon on parole, he had skipped work that day and then missed a meeting with his parole officer four days later. Police caught him in Wisconsin five days after the double killing. Blood in his Dodge Durango and on a Ruger 9mm pistol recovered

from the console contained DNA from the women.

Humphreys had gained access to their bank accounts before killing them, according to the attorney general's office. By the time police caught up with him, \$3,000 had been withdrawn from their accounts. Humphreys had deposited \$1,000 in his own account and had about \$800 in cash.

In September 2007, a jury convicted him of murder, assault, armed robbery and kidnapping. He pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a felon and was sentenced to death.

Then followed 18 years of legal maneuvers that finally ran their course on Oct. 21, when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider Humphreys' petition for a writ of habeas corpus, which had been denied by the U.S. district and appellate courts in Georgia.

The decision provoked a dissent by the three liberal justices, who said "extreme juror misconduct" had deprived Humphreys of his Sixth Amendment right to an impartial jury.

One juror had misled the court during jury selection, claiming she had been unharmed during an attempted rape but later confiding that she had, indeed, been assaulted, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in their dissent.

The other eleven jurors wanted to sentence Humphreys to life without parole, but this lone juror was relentless and her "misconduct appears to have singlehandedly changed the verdict from life without parole to death," Sotomayor wrote.

Ineffective counsel failed to raise the issue, and by the time new lawyers did, the Georgia Supreme Court and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it was too late based on Georgia law.

On Dec. 1, Cobb County District Attorney Sonya F. Allen informed Chief Superior Court Judge Ann B. Harris that all legal avenues to avoid execution had been traveled and that it was time to sign Humphreys' death warrant.