

TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

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The Georgia Forestry Commission implemented an emergency burn ban for the first time in its history, affecting 91 counties in South Georgia. These counties are also under a state of emergency by executive order from Governor Brian Kemp/Special Photo

GA Forestry Commission issues mandatory burn ban across South Georgia region

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) issued the first mandatory ban on outdoor burning in the agency's history on April 22 to prevent wildfires amid statewide drought conditions.

"We need everyone to take this situation seriously," said Georgia State Forester and GFC Director Johnny Sabo in a press release accompanying the ban. "GFC's wildland firefighters are responding daily to a near-record number of wildfires. It's critical to remember that just one spark or ember can ignite a life-threatening wildfire."

According to the GFC, 98 percent of the total land area in Georgia is "currently in moderate to exceptional drought conditions" resulting in a greater number of wildfires in April than Georgia's five-year average.

The ban will apply to 91 counties south of the metro Atlanta area for up to 30 days, unless the ban is extended by the commission. The ban's area reaches as far north as Columbia County, along the Alabama state border up to Harris County and along the Florida state line.

The order prohibits prescribed burns and agricultural burns, as well as the burning of leaf piles or yard debris. The ban will apply "regardless of whether such activities require a permit from the State Forestry Commission."

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp issued an accompanying executive order declaring a state of emergency for Georgia wildfires. According to the order, "assistance from the state is necessary to prepare for and respond to the evolving threats and circumstances in connection with existing wildfires and enhanced fire risks, as well as the corresponding hazardous conditions and anticipated impacts."

BURN BAN
Continued on page 2

Soperton resident alleges police misconduct at council meeting



Soperton resident Al Harden speaks to the Soperton City Council on April 20 regarding allegations of misconduct from Soperton police officers following an altercation on April 5/LOGAN REYNOLDS

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

A Soperton resident accused the Soperton Police Department of misconduct during the Soperton City Council's monthly meeting on April 20.

During public participation, Al Harden spoke to the city council regarding a confrontation he claimed occurred on the afternoon of April 5 at Alabama Avenue.

"I thought I'd ride over to my other place on Alabama Avenue, just to sit back and listen to a little Johnny Taylor," Harden said.

According to Harden, while walking around his property, a neighbor accused him of trespassing on their property. Harden claimed the man aggressively asked him to leave, including using racial slurs and grabbing Harden's shirt.

"That surprised me, pissed me off," said Harden during the meeting. "I wasn't there to start trouble, and I didn't start any trouble."

Harden claimed he then returned to his home before driving back up the street in his vehicle. He alleged the man kicked and dented his car door before retrieving an assault rifle from his own home, which spurred Harden to call the police.

According to Harden, the man's mother convinced the man to put away the weapon before a Soperton police officer arrived. He also said the man and his family lied to the officer regarding a fence, which they claimed Harden had built one foot over the property line.

Harden then claimed the officer sided with the man's story over his own and disregarded his allegations at the time.

"The police officer acted like I didn't even exist," said Harden.

He also claimed he spoke with Soperton Police Chief Brian Scott regarding the incident, but was dissatisfied with Scott's handling of the situation, as the police chief had asked if the assault rifle was actually pointed at Harden.

"I'm thinking that when I see police officers, what's [written] on it is 'to serve and protect,'" said Harden. "I wasn't served, and I wasn't protected."

The city council did not discuss Harden's allegations during the meeting, but Soperton Mayor John Koon said the city would respond to Harden with a letter within 30 days.

In action items, the council opted to advertise bids for a new contractor to cut grass at Westview Cemetery.

The council had recently passed new ordinances rendering the city

not liable for damages to headstones, monuments and other non-city property. Since the current contractor's term expires in May, they opted to re-bid the service to find a contractor with general liability insurance to cover damages.

"If we do re-bid it out, we can give the ordinance so they'll know we're not responsible for anything," said City Clerk Samantha Richards.

The contractor would be required to cut the grass at Westview Cemetery twice per month from March to September, which is the grass growing season, and then cut as needed from October to February. The contract would last for one year.

Council member Kendra Madison-Harswell offered a motion to place the contract out for bid, which passed unanimously.

Council member Xandra Brown offered a motion to implement flex cards for city employees, to be used to purchase fuel for vehicles and equipment while on official city business. The motion passed unanimously.

Council member Madison-Harswell also offered a motion to advertise hiring for a part-time maintenance position for the recreation department, which passed unanimously.

Alamo City Council gathers information for police department closure decision

Periodical — Mail Label

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

The Alamo City Council decided to begin gathering information regarding the potential closure of the Alamo Police Department during their monthly meeting on April 20, in preparation for the official decision in November.

Council Member Steve Jones asked for the discussion on the police department's closure to be added to the meeting's agenda during approval. During the meeting he proposed the council should "start the process, negotiations, whatever it takes to make it go that direction."

Council Member Patricia Woodard reiterated her stance that the council should wait until Nov. 1 before making a decision on the department, as a closure before then could interfere with the city's ability to receive grants. In addition, she argued the extra time would allow the city to explore other solutions and ensure the accuracy of its internal records.

"My biggest thing is it gives us time to just do some troubleshooting and have some open forum meetings," said Woodard.

Woodard's suggestion was to form a committee of council members and Alamo residents to "hash things out" before Oct. 31, so the council could make a more informed decision when the time came.

"I don't want to make a concrete decision to say, 'Let's turn it over to the Sheriff,' until we have done more research, more outreach, just more work on it," said Woodard.

Council Member and Mayor Pro-Tem Geoffrey Villegas came to Jones' support, saying the council should begin the process of making the decision. According to Villegas and Jones, that beginning does not involve a vote, but rather direct conversations with the Wheeler County Sheriff's Office.

"I feel what Mr. Steve was trying to say is, 'Let's start trying to talk to the sheriff to see what it entails to get started,'" said Villegas. "I don't think he's trying to vote tonight."



Alamo City Council began gathering information regarding the potential closure of the Alamo Police Dept. /SPECIAL PHOTO

I think he's trying to really, really talk, instead of hinting around at it."

Ultimately, the council decided the police committee would be best suited to gather all the relevant information on the matter. Council members agreed to consolidate information and schedule an independent meeting to review said in-

formation while residents attend.

In late 2025, the Alamo City Council considered closing the police department entirely to save on costs, turning the responsibility of law enforcement fully over to the Wheeler County Sheriff's Office. The push for closure was spearheaded by Jones during the council's November meeting.

Jones argued the council should move forward with the merger in order to save approximately \$51,000 annually. While the council had delayed an official decision in favor of receiving input from residents, Jones cited recent voting numbers to argue residents were unengaged and uninterested with the council's actions.

"What I'm saying is they are not interested in what we're doing," said Jones during the November meeting. "We need to do what we need to do for the city of Alamo, saving money if we can. We can use it somewhere else, and I just think

ALAMO CITY COUNCIL
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BURN BAN

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The state of emergency applies to all 91 counties listed in the GFC's ban, referred to in the executive order as the "Affected Counties," and will last for 30 days unless extended.

The order directs "all resources of the state of Georgia" to assist in preparation, response and recovery activities, including the activation of the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan and the Georgia State Operations Center; state agencies' coordination with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency; the Georgia Departments of Transportation and Public Safety expediting movement of equipment and personnel across the state; the deployment of up to 150 Georgia National Guard

Troops and a prohibition on price gouging of goods and services "necessary for preparation, response and recovery activities for this state of emergency."

The GFC's order also prohibits counties under the ban from enacting their own burn bans. However, some communities put their own burn bans in place prior to the GFC.

The Soperton City Council enacted their own emergency burn ban on April 20 during their monthly meeting. This ban would have lasted for 60 days unless extended, and threatened violators with up to \$1,000 in fines and up to 12 months in jail.

"It's just an emergency ordinance so that somebody doesn't accidentally ignite everything on fire around here," said City Attorney Paul Calhoun. "Everything's really, really dry."

The Treutlen County Board of Commissioners implemented its own emergency burn ban on April 21, also lasting for 60 days.

On April 22, the GFC responded to 34 wildfires which burned 75 acres statewide. In addition, firefighters have contended with two large wildfires in Clinch County and Brantley County.

"I want to thank Director Sabo, Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper, Georgia EPD, and all those working to address the impacts of this critical drought," said Governor Brian Kemp in the GFC's press release. "Georgia Forestry responders are working hard to battle the wildfires caused by these dry conditions, and I'm encouraging all Georgians to do their part in helping them by adhering to this burn ban."

ALAMO CITY COUNCIL

Continued from page 1

we need to move on with it, start the process."

Jones offered a motion to begin the process of Council Member Dondrea Geter called Jones' proposal "tasteless" and "classless", but Jones' motion to begin the process passed in a majority vote.

In the following December meeting, the Wheeler County Sheriff's Office presented a proposal detailing how the office would take over the department should the process be completed.

The proposal estimated the current average annual cost for the department would total \$326,828, with a six year total cost of \$1,960,968. Under the sheriff's office, the cost to the city would fall to \$274,653 annually, resulting in annual savings of \$51,828 and \$310,968 over a six year period.

According to the proposal and the sheriff, while costs would be reduced, the sheriff's office would still have to staff four full-time officers to maintain full coverage.

Council Member Woodard argued against closing the department during

the meeting, citing a \$246,000 grant the city had received to pay for officer training and equipment which will remain active until Oct. 31, 2026. Closing the department would require the city to return the grant, which would provide logistical hurdles and damage the city's ability to receive future grants.

Woodard offered a motion to suspend any action regarding the department's closure until Nov. 1, 2026. The vote was a tie ultimately broken by Mayor Pamela Lee in favor of the suspension.

"At this time, I don't feel like we've done our due diligence in what we need to do, so I vote with the yays," said Lee during the meeting.

To attempt to alleviate the staffing issues, Woodard offered a motion in the council's January meeting to raise the starting salary for Alamo Police Department officers from \$18 to \$20, which passed unanimously.

Jones offered a motion to officially revisit closure of the police department during the January meeting, but the motion was denied in a 2-4 vote.

In other business, the council re-

ceived only one bid for its 2025 Local Road Assistance (LRA) project, which included parts of Lucille Avenue, Lakeview Drive and Nellie Street, totalling \$65,500. As the original LRA grant provided \$42,907.55 in funds, the excess money will be paid out of the city's TLOST account.

Council Member Woodard offered a motion to accept the bid, which passed unanimously.

The council also received one bid for its 2025 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) project, including parts of Lucille Avenue, Pearl Avenue and Slaton Street, totalling \$43,500. The city was also required to provide a 10 percent match, as per their grant agreement.

Council Member Villegas offered a motion to accept the bid, which passed unanimously.

The council also entered into an executive session, resulting in motions to appoint Blake Oliver to interim street supervisor with a pay of \$16 per hour, and to appoint Roy Adams as interim chief of police. Both motions passed unanimously, with Adams subsequently sworn in by the city attorney.

Mt. Vernon Garden Club April meeting

SPECIAL TO TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

After club president Susan Beard opened the April 14 meeting of the Mt. Vernon Garden Club, members soon learned that the April birth flowers are the daisy and the sweet pea. The daisy stands for innocence and purity, while the sweet pea symbolizes pleasure and gratitude. Vice President Kathy McCall recognized one member's April birthday. She along with Kirstin Brown were the hostesses for the month. Gail McDaniel gave a very meaningful devotional before a buffet meal was served and, as always, it was delicious. The club is so thankful to Brewton Parker Christian University for allowing the members to meet in the Garden Room located in the Student Center.

Following the meal, guest speaker Debbie Evans was introduced. Debbie is with the Greater Vidalia Chamber of Commerce. She gave an overview of the Chamber's mission, which is to develop and promote businesses in the community for economic growth in the Greater Vidalia area. Debbie did mention the Adult Lead-



Mt. Vernon Garden Club welcomed Debbie Evans with the Greater Vidalia Chamber of Commerce/SPECIAL PHOTO

ership Class, along with the Youth Leadership Class, in which four or five members of that recent class were from Montgomery County, stating that there are wonderful things going on in Montgomery County. Also, a boot camp is going to be held in June at the Greater Vidalia Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. It is a one day intensive workshop designed to assist those who want to bring their ideas to something bigger. The chamber is here for businesses and to help people who want to start a business. So thankful to Debbie

for taking the time to share with the club members the various programs available through the chamber. For more information about the programs available through the chamber, they are on Facebook.

A business meeting followed the special program. Some of the items discussed were the damage done to the community house in Mt. Vernon and the city is looking at a USDA grant to redo the community house and keep with the rustic theme. Scholarship applications are still being accepted with a deadline of April 27. The

Mt. Vernon Christmas Parade will be on Saturday, Dec. 12 and the garden club will have its own booth.

It was brought to the club members attention several months ago that BPCU has a pantry, where individuals can bring personal hygiene items and/or food for students who have no means to pay. Members of the club donated items and brought them to the April meeting. Many of the students are from foreign countries and have no way to get these items without the help of donations.

The meeting ended with a discussion of April 24 being Arbor Day and a suggestion was made to plant a tree in recognition, sometime in late fall or early winter. There was also a suggestion that members agree to cleanup around their neighborhood, calling it Operation Helene. This year, as in the past few years, garden club members will be volunteering at the Vidalia Onion Festival Arts & Crafts - working the ticket booths at the front and back gates. There will be no official meeting in May. We will go out to lunch and take a tour.

Light and darkness

By ALBERT WHITE

And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

- John 3:19-20

Darkness and light are comparisons to the presence of God and the absence of the same. Now, the word hate used here is strong to us because of our cultural vocabulary. It simply means to love less. So the text is not saying that a person who loves to sin distains the presence of Jesus, only that the person with the thirst for sinful pleasures loves that sin more than Jesus. It also implies that the reason for the thirst for sinful desire is the condition of the soul.

Our deeds are an outward manifestation of the interior of our spirit. People love sin. It is no surprise that we all battle with sin. Adam and Eve gave all of mankind the knowledge of good and evil. To think that a person doesn't realize that they are doing wrong things is absurd especially since they hide in dark and unseen places to act out on the matters of their heart. We have to first be honest with ourselves about our desires for right and wrong living. Jesus sends a message for us to turn to him, the light and our deeds would be reproved. That is a little bit hard for us to swallow. Reproved is corrected. We don't like to be corrected. That is a part of the sin thirst. Sin wants to be uncontrolled because it is spiritual. That is why the text says that a person needs to be born again. Simply said, have your desire changed.

Man is born into sin, without coming to a point of repentance and being redeemed from the process of the flesh we will just go on sinning unchecked. Some people like that approach to life. The church body, the born again group, they have learned to trust Jesus. They are not perfect, and they still have a sin struggle, but they have given themselves over to be corrected by the spirit of the Lord. They love righteousness more than separation, so they allow Jesus to convict their hearts when they do fall short. To be a Christian who is saved by grace does not mean that we walk around everyday on pins and needles worrying if we would sin and fall for some foolish reason. It means that I trust Jesus with my soul and I allow him the ability through the Holy Spirit to redirect me and lead me in repentance and be changed by the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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

PASTOR'S VIEWPOINT

By CHARLES "BUDDY" WHATLEY

Have you noticed all the wedding venues springing up around us? There is one, maybe the best one, just down the road from where we live. Now imagine during a wedding weekend, they ran out of wine or food although I can't imagine it would ever happen... it would be a disaster for the venue and for the wedding party. But something like that did happen in Cana of Galilee.

"Two days later (after Jesus' encounter with Nathaniel) there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine had given out, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They are out of wine.' 'You must not tell me what to do,' Jesus replied. 'My time has not yet come.' Jesus' mother then told the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'"

Jesus and Mary walked the five to 10 miles north from Nazareth to Cana of Galilee as guests at a wedding. I say five to 10 miles because there are two possible sites for Cana of Galilee. It's about five miles to Kafr Kanna which is the traditional site, although there is very little evidence that it's the actual site. It's about 10 miles to Khirbet Qana which is the more likely site. Kafr Kanna was likely chosen because it's closer to the tourist routes and it's an easier trip for the tourists.

But what I really want you to notice is the small conversation between Mary and Jesus. It's a model prayer. Rosalyn Rinker wrote a small book about "conversational prayer" in which she says prayer is really a "conversation with God." Mary begins, "They are out of wine." Not make some wine, just "They are out of wine." Jesus responds, "Don't tell me what to do." There is the key to prayer, and we need to remember it when we talk about healing prayers. Mary tells Jesus there is a problem and then she leaves it with him, although she does tell the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

The first thing we learn is to be honest with God; "they are out of wine." The second thing we learn is to obey God, "Fill these jars with water." And the third thing we learn is to wait and expect the best, "...you have kept the best wine until now." The Son of God at the wedding in Cana of Galilee is the same God who fills our lives and our sanctuaries with "the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God the Father, and the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit." (2 Corinthians 14.13)

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

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Wheeler County, in partnership with the cities of Alamo and Glenwood, is beginning the process of updating its Joint Hazard Mitigation Plan. We invite all community members to attend the first Public Hearing to learn about the update process and share your feedback on local safety and emergency preparedness.

Time: Tuesday, May 12th, at 2:00 p.m.
Location: Alamo City Hall, 7 West Main Street, Alamo, GA 30411

Your input is vital to creating a safer, more prepared community. All interested parties are encouraged to participate. For more information, please contact the Wheeler County Board of Commissioners at (912)-568-7135, or Anna Weaver, Planning Director with the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, at 912-292-9028.

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DID YOU KNOW...?



Guy Fawkes (1570 - 1606) /SPECIAL PHOTO

Was the execution of a legendary celebrated British criminal botched, but carried out with anyway?

By JACK BAGLEY
Georgia Trust For Local News

May day! May day! No, I'm not signaling distress. I'm simply noting that this week we move on to the fifth month of the year, and the first day is - you guessed it - May day. Later in the month we get Cinco de Mayo (May 5), Mother's Day (May 10), and Memorial Day (May 25). Busy month, eh?

Did you know...

... the star of a classic monster movie had to be lied to in order for her to accept the role? While pre-production of 1933's iconic King Kong was underway, director Merian Cooper (1893-1973) convinced actress Fay Wray (1907-2004) to star in the film by promising her "the tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood." Wray was convinced she'd be paired with someone like Cary Grant (1904-1986) but when she arrived on the set, Cooper pointed to the giant ape and said it was the "tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood." (Well, he wasn't exactly wrong, you know.)

... a popular children's literature character debuted under a different name in the United Kingdom? When the first book in the Curious George series by H.A. Rey (1898-1977) came out in the U.K. in 1941, the mischievous monkey was renamed Zozo. Why? Because it was felt there was a level of disrespect with the monkey sharing the name of the country's King, George VI (1895-1952). (I doubt His Majesty really would have minded.)

... the Viking Age lasted a bit over 275 years? Historians say the Viking Age - the period of time during which Scandinavian seafarers roamed the coastlines of Europe, plundering and conquering - began about 790 AD. It came to an end in 1066, when William I (1028-1087), Duke of Normandy, was crowned King of England. (I'm not sure why a French nobleman taking over England ended the Viking age, but there you are.)

... a liquid exists which can be breathed? Called perflourohexane, animals submerged in the liquid are able to survive without drowning. The liquid has sufficient oxygen in it for respiration to continue, but research is still going on concerning its use with humans beyond temporary "partial liquid ventilation." The liquid is used to treat burn victims, whose lungs can be filled with perflourohexane while burned lung tissue heals. Pulmonary edema has been shown to be suppressed by the liquid, scientists say. (I think I saw that in a movie.)

... one of England's most celebrated bad men had his execution botched - but they went ahead with it anyway? Guy Fawkes (1570-1606) was sentenced to death for his role in the Gunpowder Plot, an attempt to blow up Parliament and assassinate King James I (1566-1625). Fawkes was, in fact, sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered - a particularly painful and messy way to die. But Fawkes got the last word, escaping from the guards and jumping from the gallows. He managed to break his neck on landing, but the executioners decided to do their jobs anyway. They couldn't do the hanging, of course, but they did do the drawing and quartering, cutting Fawkes' corpse into four pieces and sending them to the four corners of the kingdom as a warning not to do stuff like he did. (I guess it worked - it hasn't happened since.)

... alcohol was available by prescription during Prohibition? During the period from 1920-1933, the manufacture, sale or consumption of alcohol was forbidden under the terms of the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. But the U.S. Department of the Treasury authorized physicians to write prescriptions for "medicinal" alcohol. While Prohibition was the law of the land, doctors would advise their patients to take doses of booze to stave off a number of ailments, including cancer, indigestion, and depression. (Clever. Very, very clever.)

... a woman once claimed that her chicken laid eggs prophesying the end of the world? In 1806, Mary Bateman (1768-1809) of Yorkshire, England, who was a con artist of the first order, said her chicken laid eggs with words written on them telling of the coming apocalypse. She charged people a penny to see the three eggs, but when the hen was taken away, no more message-laden eggs were laid. Turns out the hen laid normal eggs, Bateman would write the messages on the shells, and then stuff them back into the bird to be laid once again. Bateman would meet her end after being convicted of poisoning several people and being hanged. (Ugh.)

Now... you know!

All the things I worried about

I like to think that I am a calm, relaxed person. No matter what life throws my way, I want to believe that, and I certainly do try, I can roll with the punches, as they say, and not let anything get me down.

Well, I have been lying to myself. While sometimes I handle the stress and uncertainty of life with the composure of a well-practiced monk or the most stoic of philosophers, clinging to the words of the old hymn, "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow," most of the time I am worried about something. In fact, you can call me a worrywart.

Even as a kid I could always find something to fret about, and like most worries, they never came to pass. I shudder to think of the hours wasted, staring into space or lying awake at night on time wasted thinking about things that really did not matter.

Now, as an adult facing the real struggles of life, like the rising cost of living; making sure my own children are taken care of; and trying to figure out the source of that new strange noise my car is making, it's fun to remember the things that worried younger me.

Here are some of them:

Quicksand: The world was allegedly full of this natural booby-trap, and there wasn't a children's book, cartoon or video game that didn't have the protagonist struggling to pull themselves free from a patch of quicksand. If you didn't act fast, a body could be sucked into the earth and never seen again, leaving only a hat comically floating on the surface.

Quicksand can occur in the United States, but typically only

THE NEW SOUTHERN DAD



By KYLE DOMINY

on beaches and coastal wetlands. While I've been stuck in the mud, walking or driving too close to a body of water, I've never seen or heard a credible account of quicksand.

Mad cow disease: In the early 1990s you could not turn on the news or pick up a newspaper without seeing something this strange ailment killing cows. As it turns out, if you feed a cow food made from other cows, which used to be a common practice, it could develop bovine spongiform encephalopathy, a deadly degenerative infection of the central nervous system.

The BSE crisis was mostly a European problem, but the effects were felt worldwide as people became afraid of eating possibly tainted beef. This, and the under-cover reports on unsanitary conditions of meat processing and packing plants that were popular

at the time, forced my parents to convince me that every hamburger set before me was fully cooked and safe for consumption. I wasn't the only person with that fear though. Remember when the Texas beef industry sued Oprah?

The hole in the ozone: Another fear established by sensational reports and children's programming. We should all be fried to a crisp by now thanks to Styrofoam coolers and hairspray releasing chemicals into the atmosphere that eat away at the Earth's natural barrier, the ozone layer, against the sun's harmful rays.

Captain Planet had me convinced that we were all doomed, but the ozone is on the mend and now the World Meteorological Organization predicts the ozone will be whole again in 40 years. As long as people don't go back to 80s hairstyles.

DIVAS ON A DIME



A bubbling dish of chicken queso fundido, loaded with flavor and perfect for sharing/SPECIAL PHOTO

By PATTI DIAMOND
King Features

Pollo Queso Fundido

Yield: 10+ appetizer servings

Total Time: 45 mins

Ingredients

2 poblano peppers, optional but highly recommended
2 pounds chicken breast
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 (16 ounce) bag of frozen onion and pepper blend
16 ounces salsa verde
2 tablespoons butter
1 yellow onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup whole milk or half and half
8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
3 1/2 cups cheddar and monterey jack cheese blend, shredded, divided
Green onion, cilantro and tomato for garnish
Serve with tortilla chips, bell pepper and celery for dipping
Roast poblanos (if using) according to directions above. Peel, dice, set aside.

Instructions

- 1.) Bake the chicken: Preheat oven to 350 F and grease a 9"x13" baking dish with cooking spray or olive oil.
- 2.) Cut chicken into big chunks and place in baking dish. Toss with salt, pepper, cumin and garlic powder. Add frozen peppers and onions, pour in salsa verde, cover with foil and bake 22-25 minutes until cooked through. While this bakes, make the queso.
- 3.) Make the queso: Melt butter in a large skillet. Cook diced onion until soft. Add garlic; cook briefly. Stir in flour and cook 1-2 minutes. Add milk, stirring until thickened. Add cream cheese and melt. Stir in 3 cups shredded cheese, one handful at a time, until melted. Mixture will be thick.
- 4.) Combine: By now the chicken should be done. Shred the cooked chicken in the pan. Add the entire mixture - the whole shebang! (chicken, veggies and salsa) -- to the queso. Stir in half the poblanos.
- 5.) Finish (optional but worth it): Transfer to baking dish, top with remaining cheese and bake for 10 minutes, until bubbly. Broil briefly for a golden top if desired.
- 6.) Garnish and serve: Artistically top with remaining poblanos, green onion, cilantro and tomato. Serve hot with chips and veggies.

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Paul Cramer

* Editor's Note: This column was originally published in the April 30, 2025 edition of the Tri-County Connector.

Paul Cramer, a native of Clifton Park, N.Y., arrived in Athens in 1995, to finish building The Classic Center and start a convention hub and theater business from scratch.

It wasn't long before he realized that what he and his family were experiencing in Athens was an amazing community for visitors and residence alike. However, he did get an offer back in his home state which turned his head – at least initially.

When he discussed the opportunity with his wife, Stacey, she was very plain-spoken and informed Paul that he could return to the Empire State but she was staying in the Empire State of the South. It turned out that Stacey's influence became an inspiration for him and the family.

"We had never lived in a college town, and we realized just how much Athens-Clarke had to offer. There were big time sports at the University of Georgia which had a glowing academic reputation, there were two great hospitals, there was an art, music, and cultural influence, and a prestigious country club with a layout designed by the famous architect Donald Ross.



LORAN SMITH

Athens' location was spectacular, less than an hour to the North Georgia Mountains, and an hour and a half to the largest international airport in the world, and only a short ride to the coast.

One of the first passionate advocates of Athens to welcome him to town was the late E.H. Culpepper, a "Damn Good Dawg," and lawyer who appreciated, early on, Paul's creative vision for the community. The two of them established a rapport and friendship right away. "E.H. saw what Athens meant not only to Northeast Georgia but also to the entire state," Paul says.

When he arrived, the first phase of The Classic Center was getting underway, making Paul realize that big things could happen for the city and region. Focused on fulfilling the mission of serving the region as a civic, cultural and

social center while maximizing the economic impact of tourism, Paul and The Classic Center Authority Board expanded The Classic Center four different times, each time bringing new and larger groups to Athens.

The board challenged Paul and his staff to maximize the impact which led to a study about the arena. In addition to conventions and concerts, the arena would bring in various sporting competitions. Paul wanted to complement the Athens sports scene—not compete with the UGA teams—and sensed that ice hockey would be appealing to the community.

He had learned the game in his hometown with pickup games on the Mohawk River when it froze over in winter and knew that an upscale arena would not only enhance the sport but would provide conference and convention opportunity for the city.

The "Ice Dawgs" were a hit, but Paul had greater plans in mind.

Simply fast forward and you have the Athens Rock Lobsters competing in Akins Ford Arena which seats 5,500 with a max capacity of 8,500. The arena was designed to host a variety of events from concerts to sports tournaments to trade shows. It is spanking new, clean, kempt and refreshing. It provides a wholesome atmosphere and environment for families.

Paul is a man who is always thinking about how to improve

downtown Athens and remains open to ideas. He has always sought to connect with the right support groups and people. Casual conversation with Brad Akins of Akins Ford in nearby Winder evolved into a partnership that has "look beyond the horizon" implications.

"Brad's business is certainly regional and his business footprint is expanding," Paul says. "He is community oriented with an emphasis on good relationships in business with an underscoring of seeing his communities prosper. He is a great partner for us."

The arena and the convention center improved an area which was the site of the old rail center and abandoned warehouses which made it a busy business hub in its day. Now the site hosts over 700 events a year and drives \$90 million in economic impact. Drive by the convention center and the Akins Ford Arena and you will likely flash a thumbs up. It makes you proud to see how The Classic Center Authority has transformed this old rail yard into a vibrant place for the community to enjoy.

The Classic Center Authority in 2014 formulated the plan for development of the building and got underway with a \$34 million grant from SPLOST. Bond funding was needed as growth was experienced. Savvy marketing by The Classic Center team has enabled the authority to meet all due bills, making continued solvency a

high priority.

There is a study committee evaluating future development, working to bring about a connection between Akins Ford Arena and the convention center with the attractive greenway in the area and the Oconee River.

"It can be like what the battery has become with the Atlanta Braves being its centerpiece. There will be shops, restaurants, and game attractions – a retail and sports entertainment core, all connected to the river," Paul says.

With smooth and laid-back sales and promotional style, Paul Cramer can get more done over a meal and hockey game than some executives can get done in half dozen hard driving caucuses.

His team suggested that the new hockey ownership should solicit community input to obtain a name for the new hockey team. Spinning from Athens' rich music history, the name Rock Lobsters was suggested, and when the B-52's endorsed it, the name took off. It soon had over 9,000 votes from the community which confirmed that Paul and the Rock Lobster Hockey team had hit the jackpot.

From the moment he became entrenched into the daily function of the Classic City, Paul Cramer sought to make the Classic City a destination for tourism and entertainment and give downtown Athens an uptown image and reputation. I'd say he has succeeded.

About the election: An undecided voter is not an uninformed voter

Early voting for Georgia's partisan primaries and judicial elections has begun. The polls that ask "If the election were held today" now matter, as the election is being held most days in person and each day by mail between now and May 19th.

Many of the polls we've seen thus far show "undecided" is either winning or showing a strong placement in the top contests. Tens of millions have already been spent, and a lot of voters thus far are just struggling.

Consultants will tell those who asked these may be "low propensity voters" who may not even show up at the ballot box. They will also suggest they'll break mostly in line with those who already have formed an opinion. What they will never say is that these voters haven't seen a message that engages them where they are, how they live, and that addresses the problems

they actually face in their daily lives.

Every credible campaign has a plan, and a message. They then devote their resources to amplifying that message. In primaries, that message is crafted to reach "the base". Those who consider themselves in that prized voter group know their value, and treat it somewhat like a negotiating position, and somewhat like a hostage situation.

During each election, "the base" has more and more demands of those who seek their votes. The result is that the hardcore members of each party move the goal posts further and further from the middle.

"Undecided" shouldn't be interpreted as "uninformed", as the hard core partisans usually dismiss them as being. A voter who mistakenly tells an activist that they're undecided will usually get a bit of a con-



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

descending lecture on their candidate's talking points, as if the undecided voter just arrived here from Mars yesterday.

There's almost never a question prior to that such as "what do you know about the candidate or their positions?" They give no thought to ask "what concerns do you have about this race that would help you

make up your mind?"

The folks who move the goal posts are so invested in the game that they've forgotten that the "normies" who eschew cable news and/or social media and just want to live their lives might have unaddressed concerns of their own. In addition they may actually be turned off by much of the red meat rhetoric being served by the campaigns and their surrogates.

Undecided voters are often looking for something to vote for. This is complicated by today's default position of negative campaigning. One need to look no further than the Republican side of the Governor's race, where the top two contenders have spent tens of millions to tell us what a horrible person the other is.

Candidates need to be reminded that the public already has a low opinion of the political profession be-

fore the mudslinging even starts. A constant negative drumbeat that "the other guy is bad" just drags down the image for all, rather than elevating the accuser above the fray.

Then there's the "I'm going to change the way Washington (or Atlanta) works pitch. The Governor, as head of an executive branch, can actually do that. Washington, however, is filled with Senators and Congressmen who promised to go up there and fix things. Literally no one who thinks this promise through believes someone with 1 of 100 votes or 1 of 435 votes is going to change the way Washington works as a freshman member. By the time they have enough seniority to do that, they'll more likely be part of the system than a conduit to changing it.

The "undecideds" have seen and heard all of this before. Meanwhile, the is-

ssues of the campaigns have become more focused on partisan fever dreams and their promises have become hyperbolic if not farcical. The premise that an undecided voter isn't paying attention needs to be turned on its head.

Many of my professional, working adjacent to politics friends are undecided on several of the major races. They're not undecided because they aren't paying attention. They're undecided because they are, and do not like what they see.

Many members of "the base" of each party will vote early. The race between now and May 19th is to convince and convert undecided voters. I suggest candidates and campaigns start listening to the citizens who aren't yet in their camps, rather than pretending another few million spent on what they're already doing will convince them.

Don't look now, but the political silly season is currently upon us

Welcome to Silly Season when our intrepid public servants, as well as those who would wish to be, dominate our TVs with their ads, clutter our street corners with their yard signs, show up to press the flesh while we are trying to eat breakfast at our favorite diner, flood our mailboxes with flyers and go online to hit us up for dough.

As your modest-yet-much-beloved servant, I am duty bound to cut through all the noise for you by analyzing all the campaign promises being made by all the candidates for all the offices in both parties. Have pen and paper ready.

Without exception, all of them will: Lower our taxes. Reduce crime. Shrink the size of government. Create jobs. Stand up to powerful special interest groups. Fight bureaucracy. Secure our borders. Take care of our veterans. Improve education. Fix Medicare. Write it down.

As they seek our vote, in no way will they stoop to attack ads against their opponents during Silly Season unless forced to do so by their opponents who are using attacks ads against them. So, golly, they have no choice.

I ran all of this by Junior E. Lee, general manager of the Yarbrough Worldwide Media and Pest Control Company located in Greater Garfield, Georgia, to get his opinion.



DICK YARBROUGH

Junior is not only one of the most respect media analysts in the business, he is also a pest control professional, something that neither the snoots at Fox News nor the New York Times can claim. If you don't believe me, call Sean Hannity at Fox or David Brooks at the Times and ask them how to treat Rhipicephalus sanguineus. (Hint: That's a dog tick and topical options containing permethrin seem to be effective.) Now, you see why Junior E. Lee is in a league of his own.

Politics is a blood sport and can get mean but I don't think I've seen one quite as mean as the race between businessman Rick Jackson and Lt. Gov. Burt Jones vying for the Republican nomination for governor. It has gone way beyond up-close-and-personal. Junior says the two remind him of the time a couple of bulls got loose over at Arveen Ridley's place and tore up the

pasture butting each other to see which one would be dominant. They were trying to impress all the cows who were watching. I assume Jackson and Jones are trying to impress us. I think there is a better way to do it.

Nothing quite says Silly Season quite like an ad from State Sen. Greg Dolezal, R-Cumming, who is one of a hoard running for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor replacing Jones. In the ad, Dolezal is standing near a hijab-wearing cut-out strapped with explosives and warns they "steal our elections, hate our way of life and want Sharia law, not law and order" and asks, "You want jihad against America?" He then urges us to "blow up the system because you save America by saving Georgia." I am going out on a limb here, but

I don't think that's a job for the lieutenant governor of Georgia. That role belongs to the federal government, senator. And tell your consultants not to insult our intelligence.

Perhaps the corniest ad I have seen to date this Silly Season comes from another state senator running for lieutenant governor. Sen. Steve Gooch, R-Dawsonville, says he is not just going to cut taxes. He is going to throw them in the ol' woodchipper whereby he proceeds to toss in a bunch of logs. He also asks if you can "chip in" for his campaign. Groan.

Gooch decries "weak-kneed bureaucrats" who are responsible for spending our tax dollars. Let me remind those of you who have followed the efforts to prevent mining our Okefenokee for toothpaste whitener

that Gooch said legislative action wasn't necessary. "Those are decisions that shouldn't be made by political entities. We have to let our regulatory agencies do their jobs." Does anyone see the irony here? May his woodchipper sink in the black waters of the Okefenokee and get eaten by an alligator.

The good news is that this Silly Season will be over in November. The bad news is there is another just around the corner in 2028. Junior E. Lee reminded me and told me to tell you that it goes with democracy and as irritating as it can be, it beats having to deal with barn flies. I guess he is right but sometimes I wonder.



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Mrs. Bridge's class wins 2026 WCES March Madness Reading Challenge

SPECIAL TO TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

Wheeler County Elementary School recently wrapped up its 2026 March Madness Reading Challenge, a month-long event designed to promote reading and teamwork among students in grades 1-5. After weeks of competition, Mrs. Bridges' fourth grade homeroom was the overall winner.

The challenge, which ran from March 2 through April 5, encouraged students to earn Accelerated Reader (AR) points by reading books and passing comprehension quizzes. Students worked in teams, earning points for each successful AR test, while weekly totals were tracked and displayed in the media center to keep excitement high.

In addition to individual reading efforts, classes had opportunities to earn bonus points through group activities such as completing team research forms, decorating classroom doors or bulletin boards, and reaching 90% participation

each week. These activities promoted collaboration, creativity, and school spirit throughout the competition.

Students also enjoyed collecting basketball trading cards each time they checked out a library book, adding a fun incentive to visit the media center regularly. To tie in with the excitement of the season, teams earned additional points based on how their selected NCAA basketball teams performed during the March Madness tournament.

Mrs. Bridges' class stood out for their consistent reading efforts, strong participation, and teamwork, ultimately securing the top spot in the competition.

The March Madness Reading Challenge proved to be a great success, motivating students to read more while building enthusiasm and teamwork across the school. Wheeler County Elementary School looks forward to continuing programs that inspire a love of reading in creative and engaging ways.

BPCU sweep Night Hawks

By RYAN FEASTER
Brewton-Parker Christian University

The Brewton-Parker Christian University (BPCU) Barons baseball team hosted the Night Hawks of Thomas University in a conference doubleheader on April 24, 2026. The Barons completed the series sweep to clinch the eighth seed for the conference playoffs. Game one saw the Barons walk it off with an RBI single, taking game one 2-1 and winning game two 10-9.

Game one saw the Night Hawks take an early lead off an RBI single in the top of the third. The Barons answered in the bottom of the fourth, when Fred Diaz doubled to left and drove in the tying run. The Barons would walk it off at the bottom of the seventh when Zach Carlton came off the bench and lined a single to center to score the winning run.

Game two saw Thomas grab control early, scoring two runs in the first and adding four more in the top of the second for a 6-2 lead. The Barons answered immediately in the bottom of the second, trimming the margin with a three-run inning highlighted by Jeremi Lara's two-run double. The Barons then pulled even at 6-6 in the third when Anthony Savarese homered. The game stayed tight into the middle innings before Thomas moved back in front, 7-6, with a run in the sixth. Brewton-Parker responded again in the bottom half. Diaz, who finished with three hits and three RBI, launched a solo home run as part of a two-run inning that put the Barons ahead 8-7. Brewton-Parker added needed insurance in the seventh when Strott came off the bench and drove a two-run homer to push the lead to 10-7. The Night Hawks would strike two across at the top of the eighth to put the pressure back on, but the Barons' bullpen would rally to close out the game and take the series.



The BPCU Barons defeated the Thomas University Night Hawks on April 24/SPECIAL PHOTO

Glenwood Housing Authority will be taking bids on a 2012 GMC Sierra 1500 work truck April 27 - May 28, 2026. Gas motor with approximately 90,000 miles. This will be sold "AS IS".

You may look at this vehicle and submit bids at our office located at 69 S 1st Street Glenwood, GA 30428.

Please call 912.523.5425 with any questions.

I appreciate all the cards, calls, visits, and prayers during my sickness. I am now at home and would welcome continued prayers.

Thank you all again, Alvin Wheeler

City of Soperton – Bid Opportunity

The City of Soperton is accepting bids for grass cutting services at Westview Cemetery.

- Scope: Contractor shall provide all labor, equipment, and supervision necessary to maintain the cemetery including mowing, trimming, edging, weed control, and debris removal.
- Frequency: Twice per month during growing season (March–September) and as needed during off-season.
- Contract Term: One (1) year
- Liability: Contractor is responsible for any damage to headstones, monuments, or property. City is not responsible for damage caused by contractor.
- Bid Deadline: May 12th at 12:00 PM
- Location: Westview Cemetery, Soperton, GA

Interested parties should submit their bids before the deadline.

City of Soperton – Keeping Our Community Beautiful

Legals

Treutlen Co. Legals

S26-025
IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF TREUTLEN COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

In the Interest of:
S.A.G. and L.A.G.,
Minor Children.
CASE NOS. 140-26J-004;003
NOTICE OF PETITION FOR PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP OF MINOR CHILDREN

TO: The Unknown Biological Father(s) of S.A.G. and L.A.G., and to all interested persons.

You are hereby notified that Ruby Ann McConnell has filed a Petition in the Treutlen County Juvenile Court concerning S.A.G. and L.A.G., minor children born to Misty Larriann Gillis in 2017 and 2021. The Petition alleges that the biological father(s) of the minor children are unknown, and that their whereabouts are unknown. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §29-2-18, and the rules of the Juvenile Court of Georgia, service is being perfected by publication. A hearing on the Petition will be held before the Juvenile Court, Treutlen County, Georgia, located at 639 Second Street South, Soperton, Georgia on the 18th day of June, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. At that time, the Court will consider whether the relief requested in the Petition should be granted.

Any putative father or interested party is required to appear and show cause, if any exists, why the Petition should not be granted. Failure to appear and respond may result in the loss of parental rights or the establishment of guardianship without further notice.

This 6th day of April 2026.
/s/ Penny Manning Snipes
Honorable Penny Manning Snipes, Judge
Dublin Judicial Circuit
Treutlen County Juvenile Court
Prepared by:
Tina E. Maddox, Esq. Attorney for Petitioner
LAW OFFICE OF TINA E. MADDOX, LLC
Post Office Box 1343
Vidalia, GA 30475
(912) 537-3025
(912) 537-0264
lawoffice@tinamaddoxlaw.com

April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 2026

S26-026
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SEWERAGE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS CDBG 24p-x-140-2-6385 FOR THE

CITY OF SOPERTON, GEORGIA

Sealed proposals will be received by the City of Soperton, Georgia at Soperton City Hall, 1973 Martin Luther King Junior Drive, Soperton, Georgia 30457 until 10 a.m. local time, Thursday, May 14, 2026 at which time and place they will be publicly opened and read. No submitted bid may be withdrawn after the scheduled closing time for receipt of bids for a period of sixty (60) days. All Bidders must have a State of Georgia Utility Contractor License and must employ a state "Utility Manager" certificate holder who will have oversight of all the work. The work to be done consists of furnishing all materials, equipment and labor for the construction of:

Sewerage system rehabilitation including 238 L.F. of 8-inch dig and replace existing sewer line, rehabilitation of and 1,153 L.F. of 8-inch and 4,411 L.F. of 10-inch sanitary sewer sanitary sewer using trenchless pipe replacement, including cleaning, pre and post video, rehabilitating 22 existing manholes, 47 L.F. replace concrete sidewalk, 54 S.Y. asphalt replacement, 10 L.F. remove and replace existing curb and gutter, by-pass pumping, and appurtenances.

Time allotted for construction is 180 consecutive calendar days for final completion. Proposals for the complete work in one general contract shall be made on the proposal form provided and shall contain prices in words and figures for the work bid on.

This project is funded by a Community Development Block Grant. This is a Section 3 Covered Project under the HUD Act of 1968 and Section 3 Residents and Business Concerns are encouraged to apply. The City of Soperton is committed to providing all persons with equal access to its services, programs, activities, education, and employment regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability or age. This agreement is for services related to a project that is subject to the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) requirements under Title IX of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ("IIJA"), Pub. L. 117-58. Absent an approved waiver, all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in this project must be produced in the United States, as further outlined by the Office of Management and Budget's Memorandum M-22-11, Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure, April 18, 2022. All proposals shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond drawn in favor of the CITY OF SOPERTON, GEORGIA, in the amount of at least 5% of the lump sum bid for the complete work; such Bid Bond representing that the Bidder, if awarded the contract, will promptly enter into a contract and furnish Performance Bond and Payment Bond as provided by law and approved by the Attorney for the CITY OF SOPERTON, GEORGIA. Each bid shall be equal to 100% of the contract

GBT/DOC MCS 02/24 AB-1 ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS Soperton/242722.002 amount. The Bid Bond shall be forfeited to the CITY OF SOPERTON, GEORGIA as liquidated damages if the Bidder fails to execute the contract and provide Performance and Payment Bonds within 10 days after being notified that he has been awarded the contract.

Drawings and Specifications are open to public inspection at the office of the CITY OF SOPERTON, GEORGIA and at the offices of Turnipseed Engineers in Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia.

Plans and specifications must be obtained at <https://turnipseed.com/current-projects/out-for-bid/>. One (1) digital copy of the plans and specifications and one (1) printed copy of the specifications (bid book) will be provided upon receipt of \$150.00. Upon request, one (1) printed full or reduced size set of drawings is available at no additional charge.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive informalities. CITY OF SOPERTON, GEORGIA

By: John Koon, Mayor

April 16, 30, 2026

S26-027
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF TREUTLEN COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF MARTHA JEAN KERSEY, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 26-P-18
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom It May Concern: Jeremy Shane White has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of Martha Jean Kersey, deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver 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.

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 scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Stacie Randolph
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Clerk of the Probate Court
400 South Rail Road Ave. PO Box 444
Mount Vernon, GA 30445
912-583-2681

April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 2026

of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before May 13, 2026. 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

April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 2026

S26-024
Notice to Debtors and Creditors
All creditors of the estate of Linda J. Beard late of Treutlen County, deceased, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

This 18th day of March, 2026
Name: Laura Ivy Lico
Title: Administrator
Address: c/o Meyerson Law Firm 120
Village Circle, Senoia Ga. 30276

April 9, 16, 23, 30, 2026

Montgomery Co. Legals

M26-003
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF Tashia July Baggett Stanfield, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 2026-21
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom It May Concern
June Smith has petitioned to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of Tashia July Baggett Stanfield, 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 May 15, 2026.

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 scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.

Stacie Randolph
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Clerk of the Probate Court
400 South Rail Road Ave. PO Box 444
Mount Vernon, GA 30445
912-583-2681

April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 2026

LOCAL MATTERS

Georgia

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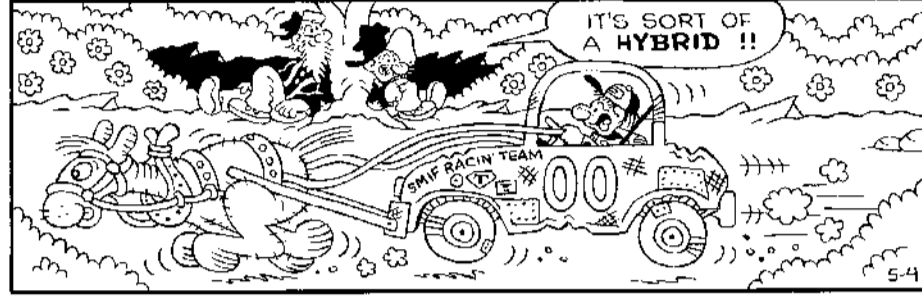
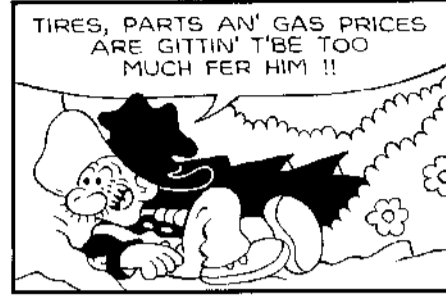
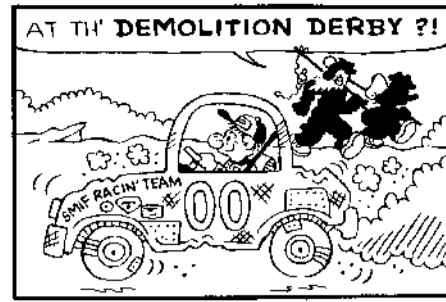
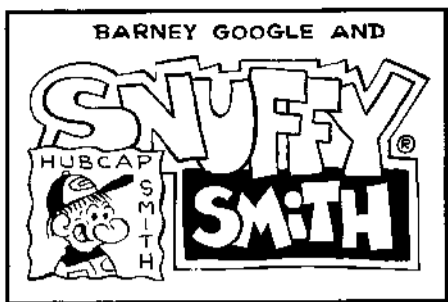
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GNS

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Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-833-781-0206</p> <p>WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP: A small amount of water can lead to major damage to your home. Our trusted professionals dry out the wet area and do repairs to protect your family and your home's value! If you have water in your home that needs to be dried, call 24/7: 1-833-871-2090. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!</p> <p>ELECTRICAL SERVICES: Reliable & experienced. Competitive rates. From simple household problems to installing a brand new electrical system, we can take care of it all! Call now and have the zip code of the service location when you call! 1-833-399-6566</p> <p>NEED NEW FLOORING? Call today schedule a FREE in-home estimate on Carpeting & Flooring. Call Today! 1-833-641-6602</p> <p>PEST CONTROL: PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned and affordable. Call for service or an inspection today! 1-833-406-</p>	<p>0231 Have zip code of property ready when calling!</p> <p>HOME BREAK-INS take less than 60 SECONDS. Don't wait! Protect your family, your home, your assets NOW for as little as 70¢ a day! Call 1-833-890-1269</p> <p>SunSetter. America's Number One Awning! Instant shade at the touch of a button. Transform your deck or patio into an outdoor oasis. Up to 10-year limited warranty. Call now and SAVE \$350 today! 1-877-740-0337</p> <p>MISCELLANEOUS</p> <p>YMT Vacations. Over 50 guided tours available. Affordable, social and stress-free travel designed for mature travelers. Our tours include accommodations, transportation, baggage handling, sightseeing, entrance fees, a professional Tour Director and select meals. For a limited time SAVE \$250 on all tours. Call YMT today. 1-855-548-2623</p> <p>BANKRUPTCY RELIEF! Help stop Creditor Harassment, Collection Calls, Repossession and Legal Actions! Speak to a Professional Attorney and Get the Help You NEED! Call NOW 855-968-5222</p> <p>BEHIND ON YOUR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS? Threatened with foreclosure? Denied a loan modification? Let us help! Call the Homeowner Relief Line to speak with a mortgage specialist. 844-797-7162</p> <p>Wesley Financial Group LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019. Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 866-411-5215</p>	<p>SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS. Unable to work? Denied benefits? We Can Help! Strong, recent work history needed. Call to start your application or appeal today! 877-627-2704</p> <p>Moving Out of State? Licensed and insured, full-service nationwide movers. Call now to get a free, instant price quote on your next move. 1-866-590-8443</p> <p>DONATE YOUR CAR TO KIDS. 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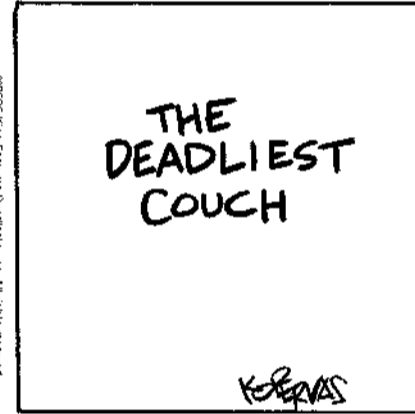


The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

MAGIC MAZE • THINGS WE MELT

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: CHEDDAR —

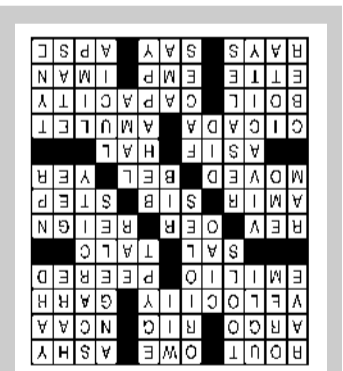
- Butter
- Candles
- Chocolate
- Copper
- Glass
- Glue sticks
- Gold
- Hearts
- Ice
- Lead
- Margarine
- Silver
- Snow
- Solder
- Wax

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

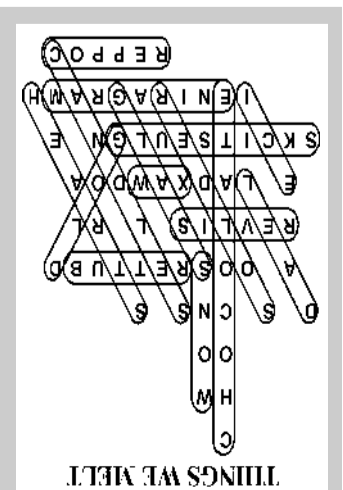


"I'm drowning in the mainstream media!"



Solution time: 24 mins.
 King Crossword
 ANSWERS

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

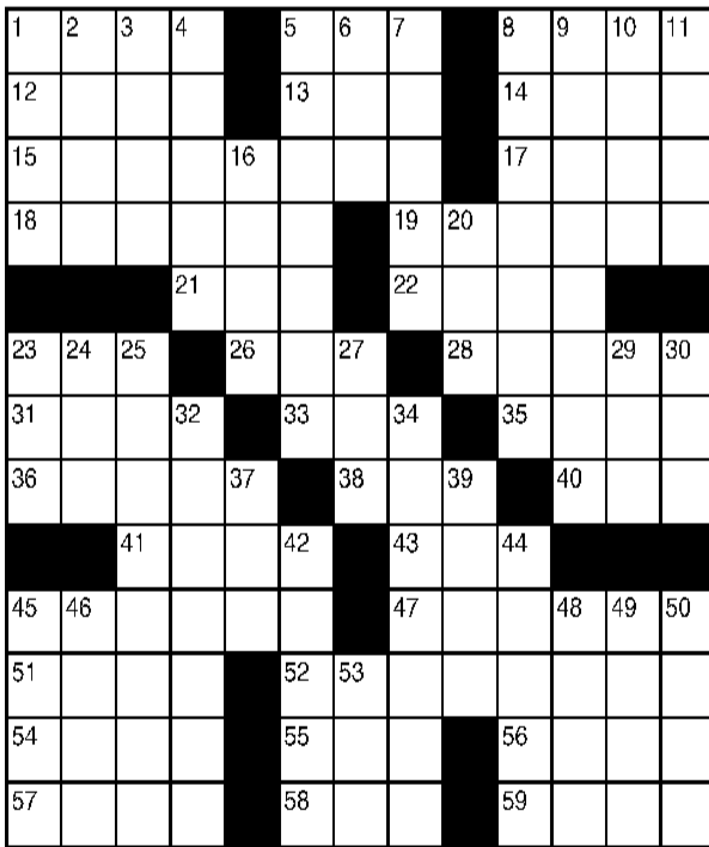


MAGIC MAZE ANSWERS

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Lopsided win
- 5 Have bills
- 8 Wan
- 12 Golden Fleece ship
- 13 Fix illegally
- 14 Final Four gp.
- 15 Speed
- 17 Teri of "Tootsie"
- 18 Actor Estevez
- 19 Looked closely (at)
- 21 Pitcher Maglie
- 22 Bath powder
- 23 Speed (up)
- 26 Poetic contraction
- 28 Period of rule
- 31 El-Masyr of "Star Wars"
- 33 Bro, maybe
- 35 Stair part
- 36 Deeply touched
- 38 Its cap. is Brussels
- 40 "— outta here!"
- 41 "Dream on!"
- 43 Actor Holbrook
- 45 Locust
- 47 Talisman
- 51 Seethe
- 52 Maximum contents
- 54 Diminutive suffix



- 55 Hirohito's title (Abbr.)
- 56 One-named supermodel
- 57 Sun beams
- 58 Verbalize
- 59 Church section
- 7 Pharaoh's land
- 8 The "A" of UCLA
- 9 Shortage
- 10 Fast runner
- 11 Lawn party site
- 16 Pisa farewell
- 20 Jug handle
- 23 Zodiac animal
- 24 Comic Philips
- 25 Liveliness
- 27 Tease
- 29 "My word!"
- 30 "Science Friday" network
- 32 Secondhand deals
- 34 "Cheer up!"
- 37 Carried out
- 39 Tibetan monk
- 42 Confronts
- 44 "— di Lammemoor"
- 45 Driver with a handle
- 46 Tiny bit
- 48 Walk unevenly
- 49 LAX guesses
- 50 Broadway actress Daly
- 53 Docs' org.

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HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Leg is moved. 2. Design on lampshade is different. 3. Club is shorter. 4. Curtain is shorter. 5. Doorway is wider. 6. Streaks on windowpane are reversed.

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