

TRI-COUNTY CONNECTOR

The Montgomery Monitor | The Soperton News | The Wheeler County Eagle

\$1

Vol. 138 No. 15

Vol. 112 No. 15

Vol. 103 No. 15

April 9, 2026

Block grant offered to farmers affected by Hurricane Helene

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

The Georgia Department of Agriculture announced the Georgia Hurricane Helene Block Grant, a relief fund grant aiming to provide financial aid to farmers, ranchers and foresters still affected by Hurricane Helene.

"We invested thousands of hours into this process to ensure we brought the maximum amount of funding to Georgia while covering as many commodities and loss types as possible," said Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler J. Harper in a press release. Originally announced in Sep-

tember 2025, the block grant aims to distribute \$531,236,000 to members of Georgia's agricultural sector, specifically for commodities and losses not already covered by a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program.

According to the press release, these losses can include "timber, infrastructure, poultry, beef cattle, dairy cattle, milk loss, dairy feed loss, pecans, blueberries, citrus, nursery, plasticulture and bare ground practices."

Payments will vary based on the commodity being paid for. Payments for timber will be based on the pre-storm values of the

damaged timber stands, while payments for blueberries, citrus and nurseries will be based on future production losses.

Potential applicants may apply anytime between March 16 and April 27, providing the department with the applicant's name, tax identification number, gate card number, physical location of the applicant's farm, USDA farm number, 2024 tax assessment, deed and lease.

The press release notes several documents applicants must provide as proof of their losses, such as timber loss documentation; acreage reports; crop insurance

records; veterinarian records; poultry loss production cycles; damages to trees, bushes, nurseries and buildings; receipts for medications; records of milk production; numbers of animals before and after the storm; expense invoices; sales and trucking receipts; repair and demolition bills; reconstruction and replacement invoices and photographs, including aerial photography.

The release also notes the list of documents is not comprehensive, encouraging applicants to submit any documents they believe may support their application. The required forms can be found on the

Georgia Department of Agriculture's website.

In 2024, University of Georgia Extension agents worked in collaboration with the university's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Forestry Commission and the office of Governor Brian Kemp to produce a damage assessment to Georgia's economy. According to the report, Hurricane Helene cost the Georgia economy "at least \$5.5

BLOCK GRANT
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Fuzzy's Family Restaurant: Nearly a decade of community connection in downtown Mt. Vernon

By **LOGAN REYNOLDS**
Staff Reporter

Fuzzy's Family Restaurant celebrated nine years of operation under its current owners on April 1, acting as a community fixture and a way to keep one family together.

Rosalie Selph has worked in food service since she was 11 years old. Originally from Tampa, Florida, she moved to Mount Vernon following her marriage to Mike Selph in 1982, where she has lived ever since.

"So, 44 years of being up here, I have no desire whatsoever to move away," she said.

While she eventually moved from food service to the postal service, Selph began to desire a business which would allow her and her five children, four daughters and one son, to remain together. She also wanted to provide her children flexible work hours to spend time with their own children, informed by her own experiences juggling

work and parenthood.

"I had raised five children, and I wanted them to have the opportunity to spend time with their kids," said Selph. "So, I felt like if I took the sacrifice and bought the business and did the brunt work, we could make hours where they could be parents, and then the kids could have their parents at home and not at work all the time."

Originally, Selph had been offered another location to purchase, but the building was sold out from under her. Then, she received a message asking if she would be interested in purchasing the local restaurant Fuzzy's.

"It actually got sold out from underneath me," said Selph.

However, after a few months, the new owner reached out to Selph to ask if she was still interested in purchasing the restaurant, to which she agreed. The deal was finalized on April 1, 2017.



Marie Sharpton, Rosalie Selph, Magen McLendon and Michelle Selph in front of Fuzzy's Family Restaurant on Wednesday, April 1 in Mount Vernon. April Fool's Day also serves as the anniversary of the Selph's purchase of the restaurant, with 2026 marking nine years under their ownership/LOGAN REYNOLDS

"We bought it back in 2017 - April Fool's Day," said Selph. "Tricked all the kids, they thought, but the joke was on them, because they're still having to work."

Selph opted to keep the Fuzzy's Family Restaurant name, as to her, Fuzzy's was a community staple rather than just a simple restaurant.

"The community knows it was Fuzzy's for a very long time, even though it went through a few owners," said Selph. "I just didn't want to take away from that."

All of Selph's children contributed to the business. Her son performed maintenance, and her daughters

served as wait staff, with one daughter also assisting with the restaurant's finances.

At first, they only made a few changes to Fuzzy's pre-established menu, changing the recipes and introducing side items such as mac-and-cheese, potato salads and cabbage. Accord-

ing to Selph, they focused on providing more vegetables as other local establishments did not.

The restaurant would also stop serving a wide selection of wings in favor of only one flavor, as to

FUZZY'S
Continued on page 5

SNAPSHOTS: PEARL AVENUE UNDERGOES ROADWORK

Workers pave a section of Pearl Avenue in front of the Wheeler County Courthouse on Tuesday, April 2 in Alamo/LOGAN REYNOLDS

Periodical — Mail Label



Barons split doubleheader

By **RYAN FEASTER**
Brewton-Parker Christian University

MOUNT VERNON - The Brewton-Parker Christian University (BPCU) Barons baseball team split a conference doubleheader on the road on April 4, 2026, against the Skyhawks of Point University. The Barons took the early game, 9-6, in the seven-inning contest and lost game two, 18-17.

The Barons controlled the opener with an early surge and timely insurance. Michael Son doubled during a three-run first inning that gave Brewton-Parker a 3-0 lead, and the Barons never gave it back. Point answered with two runs in the bottom of the second to trim the margin to 3-2, but Brewton-Parker created separation again in the fifth. Jeremi Lara delivered the biggest swing of game one with a two-run home run as part of a three-run inning, stretching the lead to 6-2.

The Skyhawks scored three times in the bottom of the fifth to make it a one-run game, and Brewton-Parker had to answer. Caleb Strott doubled home a run

in the sixth as the Barons pushed the lead to 8-3, then added another insurance run in the seventh. Brewton-Parker finished with 13 hits, while Lara led the offense by going 2-for-2 with three RBI and a homer. Fred Diaz added two hits and an RBI.

Game two turned into one of the day's most chaotic stretches. Point struck first with three runs in the opening inning, then Brewton-Parker erupted for nine runs in the second to seize control. Strott fueled that inning with two home runs, including a three-run shot, and the Barons built a 9-3 advantage. Even after Point answered with a five-run fourth to cut the deficit to 12-8, the Barons kept producing offense. The Barons scored three in the fourth, two in the fifth, and three more in the seventh, the last on Lara's three-run homer to left-center that made it 17-14. The Skyhawks would rally in the bottom of the ninth to walk off the game after manufacturing four runs off RBI singles to take the game 18-17 and win the series.



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OBITUARIES



Alma Brantley McDonald

Funeral services for Ms. Alma Brantley McDonald were held Saturday, April 4, 2026 at 2 p.m. at Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Treutlen County with Rev. Marty Beacham officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery. Ms. McDonald died Wednesday, April 1, at her home.

Ms. McDonald, 88, was the daughter of the late Joseph T. and Curlie Powell Tyson. She was born in Waynesboro, Ga. on Aug. 25, 1937 and attended school in Burke County. She was a resident of Adrian, Ga. until her marriage to Marcus Brantley in 1968 when she became a farmer's wife and homemaker in Treutlen County. After his death in 1999, she was married to Mr. John C. McDonald until his death. She also worked at Soperton Manufacturing Company and was a founding member of Faith Missionary Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by her two husbands; her daughter, Angela Brantley Tanner; son, Allen Brantley and her seven brothers and five sisters.

Survivors include her daughter, Vickey (Wayne) Thomas of Rentz; son Steven (Dee) Brantley of Cedar Grove; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren and numerous nieces/nephews and great-nieces/nephews.

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



Carolyn Ricks Elrod

Carolyn Ricks Elrod, 91, of Buford, Georgia, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a legacy of love, dedication, and service.

Born in Soperton, Georgia, Carolyn was the cherished daughter of the late Morris and Zelma Ricks. She was preceded in death by her brothers, Morris Ricks and William "Bill" Ricks, and her beloved son, Kevin Elrod. She is survived by her brother, Dale Ricks.

Carolyn was a proud graduate of Mercer University and devoted her life to education as a dedicated school teacher, shaping the lives of countless students with her kindness, patience, and wisdom. She was also a

faithful and active member of the Order of the Eastern Star, where she formed many lasting friendships and served her community with compassion and commitment.

She is lovingly remembered by her children, Karen Bolin and Keith Elrod; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson. Her family was her greatest joy, and she treasured every moment spent with them.

In accordance with Carolyn's wishes, no formal service will be held. She gently asked that each who knew her remember her in their own personal way, for the relationships she cultivated throughout her life were as a field of wildflowers—each one unique, beautiful, and deeply meaningful in its own way. She will be laid to rest in Westview Cemetery beside her parents and brothers, returning to the place of her roots and heritage.

Carolyn will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her. Her warmth, strength, and unwavering faith leave a lasting imprint on the hearts of those she touched.

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



Deborah Louise Stephens Hughes

Ms. Deborah Louise Stephens Hughes died Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at Glenwood Health/Rehab after an extended illness.

Ms. Hughes, 69, was the daughter of the late R.L. and Gladys Barnes Stephens. She was born in Dunwoody, Ga. on Aug. 12, 1956, was a housewife and homemaker and later became an LPN. She was a former resident of Laurens County and later due to illness became a resident of Glenwood. She attended Faith Tabernacle Church in Treutlen County for several years and was a member of Cedar Grove Pentecostal Church. Ms. Deborah loved her family and all of her friends and everyone will miss her very much.

Her husband, Thomas Hughes Sr., preceded her in death.

Survivors include three sons, Charles (Alicia) Gravitt, James (Melissa) McDaniel and Thomas (Stephanie) Hughes Jr.; two daughters, Michelle (Nick) Knight and Rhonda Hardin; brothers, Chuck Stephens, Jeff Melpass and Benjamin McKinney; sisters, Vicki Bartholf, Sheila Summers, Barbara Buckley, Marrie Stevens, Elaine Mazych and Marie Bailey; 16 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

The family will have a private memorial service at a later date.

Higgs Funeral Home

(higgsfuneralhomeandfloxist.com and facebook) of Soperton has charge of arrangements.



Katherine B. McLendon

Mrs. Katherine B. McLendon, 87, beloved wife of the late George L. McLendon of Soperton passed away peacefully on Wednesday afternoon, April 1, 2026 at Treutlen County Health and Rehabilitation Center in Soperton, with her family by her side.

Born in Treutlen County, she was the only child of the late Sallie Mae Carter. A lifetime resident, she was a graduate of Soperton High School, Class of 1955. A short time later, she met and married George L. McLendon in 1957. The newlyweds made their home on the family farm where they built a beautiful life and family together for fifty-four years.

Mrs. McLendon had a love for fashion which inspired her to open Katherine's Dress Shop for twenty-one years. She also was a rural route carrier for the United States Postal Service until retiring in 2010.

She and her husband were active members of the community; him as the Chairman of the County Commissioner and County Board of Education and her as a member of the Eastern Star, and the Million Pines Garden Club.

Mrs. McLendon was an avid reader and was always up for a good round of mahjong, or bridge with her friends.

She had been a longtime member of Rosemont Baptist Church and in recent years she had attended Anchor of Hope Worship Center.

In addition to her mother, she is preceded in death by her husband, who passed away in 2011.

Affectionately known as "Kat Kat", she leaves behind her children: Teresa McLendon Hayes, Soperton, Ga., Tracy McLendon Claxton (James), Wrightsville, Ga., George McLendon (Laura), Soperton, Ga.; four grandchildren, Jennifer Rogers (Joey), Soperton, Ga., Amanda Heath (Derek), Soperton, Ga., Mallory Taylor (Matt), Vidalia, Ga., Madison Barwick (Holt), Soperton, Ga.; eight great-grandchildren, Jarret Rogers, Jacob Rogers (Kaley), Jada Rogers, Brody Heath, Paxton Heath, Tatum Taylor, Beckham Taylor, Mack Barwick; two great-great-grandchildren, Kasen Rogers, Kenli Anderson and special friends, Barbara Mullis, Janice Tapley and care giver Sharon McCloud.

Funeral services were conducted at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 4, in the Williams Chapel of Sammons Funeral Home with Pastor Gilbert Posey officiating.

Her family received friends on Saturday, at the funeral home, from 1 p.m. until the hour of service.

Serving as pallbearers were her grandsons and great grandsons.

Mrs. McLendon was laid to rest, beside her husband, in the Fowler Cemetery.

Her family wishes to extend their thanks to the staff of Treutlen County Health and Rehabilitation for the care extended to Mrs. McLendon while in their care.

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

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Protecting worship

By ALBERT WHITE

And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel?

— Joshua 22:24

In the text, the people got upset about an altar being raised in the tribes outside of the promised land because they thought they were going to pollute worship. I personally can see their point of concern. They gathered all of the leaders and went to talk and even warn against the idea of polluted worship. We are blessed today to no longer be required to worship in one place. The conversation was different than people expected. It was never done to pollute worship but rather to cause the young people who had not seen it to not become disconnected from the covenant with God. It was not the altar of worship. Sacrifices were not going to be offered on it. The idea was to use it to teach the children to worship. The explanation was that the altar was witness to the covenant.

I must say I love that altar worship was so important to the leaders of these two tribes that they would put in the work to train the youth of the promises of God. Today we build multipurpose buildings and youth rooms. We build youth sanctuaries because God is still leading us to teach our youth the importance of worship. These buildings and worship areas along with the continuance of praying around the altar is witness between the youth and the church of the covenant we have with Jesus. We don't do animal sacrifices anymore. Jesus replaced that with his once and for all offering at the cross. We were getting ready to celebrate that on Easter Sunday. Bring the kids to church. Teach them the Bible. Let them see you worship Jesus. Teach them the message of the cross. Teach them the power of resurrection. Let the altar continue to be witness to the power of our God.

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

PASTOR'S VIEWPOINT

By CHARLES "BUDDY" WHATLEY

Maybe you remember Lee Strobel was a hard-driving atheist and award-winning legal editor at The Chicago Tribune until his wife Leslie met a neighbor who introduced her to Jesus. Then he did the only thing he knew how to do; he investigated her faith with the goal of leading her back to atheism, back to their once-happy marriage. He spent the next two years investigating the historical evidence for Christianity and in 1981, moved by Leslie's changed life and convinced by the evidence, he became a follower of Jesus.

The first part of his conversion story was the change in his wife Leslie as she became more loving, more peaceful and more grounded. In the second part of his story, he summarizes "the four e's" of the resurrection.

1.) Execution: The Journal of the American Medical Association says Jesus was dead even before they stabbed him in the side with a spear. Multiple sources confirm his death, and even skeptical scholars call Jesus' execution and death "indisputable."

2.) Early Accounts: Stories of the resurrection appear immediately after his death; legends or myths take time to develop. And the resurrection creed in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 is dated by scholars within months of Jesus' death and resurrection.

3.) Empty Tomb: Not a single ancient source denies the empty tomb; they try to explain it, but they cannot and do not deny it.

4.) Eyewitnesses: 1 Corinthians lists more than 500 people who saw Jesus after the crucifixion. Lee Strobel discovered nine ancient sources inside and outside the New Testament that affirm those post-resurrection appearances. Finally, Lee Strobel concluded that if the resurrection is true; our faith is true, but if the resurrection is false, our faith is false and we are left with nothing.

It all started with Jesus' baptism! Suddenly, heaven breaks open! Mark uses a strong word meaning "torn open." It's as if God can't wait any longer to introduce his Son to the world. Now I hope you'll notice that before Jesus called the disciples or before he preached or before he healed anyone, the Father appears saying, "You are loved! You belong to me! I delight in you!" And God is saying that to you, if you'll listen.

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

HERE'S A TIP!

By JOANN DERSON
King Features

* When your cut up fruit is about to expire and you don't think you'll be able to eat it in time, just freeze it for smoothies. Lay it out in a single layer and pop it in the freezer. When it's frozen you can put it in a zip-top baggie for easy storage.

* If it's garage sale time, try this trick: Wrap a picture frame tightly with tulle. Then you can hang earrings from the tulle. Maybe someone will think it's so cute that you'll sell the frame!

* "Do you have a lot of coffee mugs? Maybe it's time you show them off! My granny has so many coffee mugs from trips and that she got as presents. My daddy put up five long shelves in one wall of her kitchen. They are the perfect place to line up and display all the mugs, and each one has a story, which is fun to hear."

* "My wife saw a picture of a narrow shelving unit on wheels that fits in the space between your fridge and the wall. It's really cool, and I made it for her. It's so handy that I made another one for my shop. I can store cans and small containers of shop supplies, and I repurposed her spice rack for my most-used hardware."

* "I have three girls and one bathroom, so there's no way anyone gets "ready" in front of the bathroom mirror at my house. Instead, all the girls have a hanging shoe rack on the back of their door for makeup and hair supplies, and a mirror on the wall."

* Stubborn stains in the toilet? Try dropping in a few denture tablets in the evening before bed, then scrub and flush in the morning.

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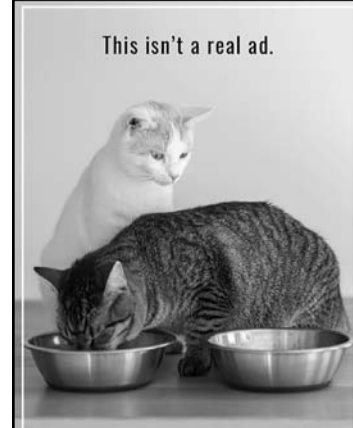
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DID YOU KNOW ...

By JACK BAGLEY
Georgia Trust For Local News

So, how did you do? Last week was the annual April Fool edition of this silly column, wherein I set three items that were totally false, and you had to figure out which ones they were. You probably said, "He'll just tell me next week," and went on with your day. You were right:

The liter was not named after a person. The story about Claude Émile Jean-Baptist Litre was created in 1978 by a student at the University of Waterloo – to justify using a capital "L" to denote the unit of measurement.

Bagpipes are not a Scottish invention. Instruments similar to the pipes have been recorded in Middle Eastern nations during the earliest part of the modern era, long before they arrived in Scotland.

The Morse code for "SOS" does not mean anything specific. It's simply three dots, three dashes, and three dots, and very quick and easy to send repeatedly.

Did you know ... why fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico were upset with McDonald's? Up until 1984, the popular restaurant chain offered straws for beverages in yellow and red. That year, they changed the color scheme to yellow and brown, and that's what upset the fishermen. The older colors made great bait for Spanish mackerel. According to Mental Floss, fishermen noted that a single straw could last for three lures, and could catch five times as many fish as any other tool. (It helps if they use a Filet-O-Fish as bait.)

... you might have created a paraph? At least once, anyway. A paraph is a flourish at the end of your signature. It is said that they originated as a check against forgery. (And they looked really keen, too!)

... many performers insure parts of their bodies? For example, actress Julia Roberts (born 1967) has insured her

smile for \$30 million. Singer Mariah Carey (born 1970) has her legs insured for \$35 million. Dolly Parton (born 1946) has had her bosom insured for \$600,000. And it's not a new practice, either. Bette Davis (1908-1989) had her waist insured for \$28,000; Jimmy Durante (1893-1980) had his famous nose insured for \$50,000; and Jennifer Lopez (born 1969) has had her backside insured for \$300 million. (I'd love to know what the premiums on such policies are, wouldn't you?)

... a baseball star and the actor who played him in a movie had a previous connection in their lives? In 1925, New York Yankees baseball star Babe Ruth (1895-1948) became ill with a stomach condition that many believed at the time was caused by an excessive consumption of hot dogs and soda, provided mainly by the team's batboy, William Bendix (1906-1964). Rumor had it that Bendix brought Ruth 30 hot dogs and 12 bottles of soda, rendering him unable to play that day – or any day for several weeks. The Yankees fired Bendix as a batboy after Ruth took ill, but today it is known that Ruth had an intestinal abscess, and that was what kept him out of the lineup. Twenty-three years later, Bendix - who went on to become an award-winning actor - would portray Ruth in the movie *The Babe Ruth Story*. Additional trivia note: At the time the movie premiered, Ruth – who had wanted to star in it himself – was dying of cancer. He reportedly saw the movie but became uncomfortable and left before it was over. Bendix' portrayal of Ruth was variously called "dreadful," "amateurish" and "wrong from start to finish."

... the composer of the Confederacy's "song" was from the North? Daniel Decatur Emmett (1815-1904) composed the song "Dixie" – or to use its full title, "Dixie's Land" – in 1859. Emmett was born and raised in Mount Vernon, Ohio, which remained loyal to the

Union during the Civil War. It was said that the songwriter was disgusted by the popularity of the song in the Confederacy. (You would think he'd have been happy about the royalties, though.)

... none of the members of the Beatles could read music? All four – John Lennon (1940-1980), Paul McCartney (born 1942), George Harrison (1943-2001) and Ringo Starr (born 1940) – were able to play guitar, piano and drums very well, but never learned to read music. (But they loved you, yeah yeah yeah.)

... timing really is everything? Actor and rapper Will Smith (born 1968) was in debt to the Internal Revenue Service for some \$2.8 million and was on the verge of declaring bankruptcy when he was signed to star in a new comedy series, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, for NBC. Smith had already had many of his possessions taken by the IRS and what income he was making from his rap music was being garnished when the 1990 deal to star in the series was reached.

... the person who would be Emperor of Korea had a very menial job? Yi Won (born 1962) is the great-grandson of Gojong (1852-1919), the first Emperor of Korea, and is head of the Imperial House of Yi. Until 2005, Yi was general manager of Hyundai Home Shopping in Seoul. Active in the drive to restore at least a constitutional monarchy in Korea, Yi would be Emperor of both North and South Korea if the effort is successful, though the North Koreans would not recognize his position. The actual Korean Empire was abolished in 1910 when Korea was basically annexed by Japan. (Good luck, Your Majesty!)

... croissants are not from France? True, the name "croissant" means crescent in French, and the rolls are shaped like crescents, but the flaky roll actually was invented in Vienna, Austria. (How nice!)

Now... you know!

Midlife moon crisis: Is there really life on Mars?

The average lifespan of an American male is 75.8 years according to the latest medical research. The distance between this big blue marble we call home and its moon is about 238,900 miles. That's according to NASA and I guess we'll just have to take their word for it, because they are the only people who've ever been there.

What do these two numbers have in common? I'm still trying to figure that out myself, but maybe we can sort it out together.

Next month, if I manage to survive another 45 days or so depending on when you are reading this, I'll turn 41 years old. That means I have more years behind me, on average, than I do left to live. To be honest, I never thought I'd make it this long. I never thought I wouldn't, but when you're young and have the bull that is life by the horns you don't think about waking up middle aged with all of the cares and/or worries that come along, such as watching your cholesterol, making sure your kids are at least trying to make decent grades at school and cutting grass ... again.

Besides looking up every now and then on a clear night, I've never thought much about the moon, but suddenly going to outer space is very interesting to me. As I hammer this out on a keyboard, four astronauts are preparing

THE NEW SOUTHERN DAD



By KYLE DOMINY

to make the more than a quarter-million-mile flight to the moon and back. If successful, it will be the longest crewed space flight in history (as far as we know) and the first to travel close to the moon since 1972.

The ultimate goal of the 10-day Artemis II mission and its four team members is to pave the way for future moon landings and hopefully establish long-term bases for deeper space travel, and more importantly, lunar exploration and extraction of valuable minerals to make the computer chips needed for the further development of artificial intelligence.

There are still people who believe the moon landing was faked. Can

you imagine if that happened in the world of AI? With just a few clicks and a simple prompt you can make a picture of anybody on any planet and folks will argue its validity on the internet for days.

The idea of living in outer space just may well be right around the corner, and the adventure of the unknown is calling out to me. I want to experience the thrill and danger of doing something to advance human history. I want to break the shackles of the cubicle in my windowless dungeon and launch myself into something new and exciting, like discovering life on Mars.

Or I'm having a mid-life crisis.

It's a shame that I can't afford a sports car.

The Courier Herald



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The Pecan

The pecan is the state nut of Alabama, Arkansas, California, Texas, and Louisiana, but Georgia is the top pecan producing state in the United States—and has been since the early 1800s—with more than 170,000 acres planted in pecan trees. State pecan growers annually produce one-third of all the pecans in our country.

(In 2020, Gov. Brian Kemp declared the pecan as the official state nut of Georgia.)

The U.S. produces 50 to 60 percent of the world's pecans, which are a tasty treat whether you crack them out of their shells and consume them raw or find them in all kinds of desserts. Nothing



LORAN SMITH

like pecan pie to top off a meal.

Statistics provided by the University of Georgia confirm that an annual pecan harvest in our state is 80 to 100 million pounds. Most of the production takes place in the middle of the state to the south, with

some orchards measuring several thousand acres.

Growing up, my mother's pecan pie was the greatest treat. I didn't care that it was loaded with sugar. A single slice of an average pecan pie will have 30 to 50 grams of sugar, which would make a registered dietitian recoil in horror.

No nutrition therapist would recommend that you eat dessert to begin with, and they would be appalled if you ordered pecan pie at a popular restaurant in the heart of pecan country in South Georgia.

When you have had a delicious vegetable plate for lunch and then are blessed with pecan pie for dessert, who cares about what the dietitians and nutritionists say.

Internet research confirms that there are countless pecan treats, from the traditional pie to praline pecan French toast, to butter pecan ice cream sandwiches.

I'll bet you don't know just how many eyebrow-raising pecan dishes there are: red cabbage with cider and pecans; chicken salad with grapes and pecans; and brussels sprout slaw with apples and pecans.

My favorite pecan treat, which came about in the fall years ago, was when the pecans fell from the trees to the ground and we could gather a handful, crack the soft shell, and enjoy the tastiest snack.

The pecan is the only native nut in North America and (sugar content not-

withstanding) contains more than 19 vitamins and minerals—which means pecans can help lower your cholesterol. It can also aid in weight loss, according to the Georgia Pecan Growers Association.

Bobby Walden, who was the last great punter of the Wallace Butts—UGA era, honed his superb punting skills by kicking a football into the pecan trees in his yard to shake loose the pecan clusters, causing them to fall to the ground.

Harvesting pecans was a bit of a challenge since most homeowners of those times did not own any mechanical devices to release the pecans from their host trees. You might ride by a neighbor's house and see him with a long cane fishing pole, trying to knock pecans

loose from their bunches.

I will always maintain a great affinity for pecan trees, which provided the greatest shade in an era when there was no air conditioning. I could stuff a Crocker sack with leaves to fashion a pillow and lie down under those pecan limbs and read books—my favorite pastime.

Casual research will connect you to the most interesting facts about pecans which were a staple of the diets of the native Americans, dating back to the 1600's.

Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson planted pecan trees on their plantations. The pecan has been important to our nation for a long, long time.

Artificial intelligence will continue to proceed with or without us

"What are you going to be when you grow up?" is perhaps the worst question adults ever ask a kid. In some ways it may encourage them to hope and dream. In most cases – especially as the child becomes an adolescent deep into high school, the question becomes more about rote conversation between two people who have no idea what to say to each other. It's a rhetorical gap filler, almost devoid of meaning.

Among the many problems with this question is it presumes at some point someone will ring a bell and say "Time's up. You're an adult now. We need a final answer."

This is where we bring adults into this same conversation. Perhaps we adults need to be asking ourselves this question despite its inherent faults too.

Some of us find our vocations and avocations to be the same. They're the lucky ones who get paid to do what they love.

Some of us had to figure out how to separate them. Some activities pay the bills. Some give us meaning, fulfillment, and happiness.

Adults need to be able to pay bills. Adults also need to have some sense of gratification and fulfillment in life. These need not come from the same activities, but the latter is generally better accomplished if the former is secure.

Artificial Intelligence has become a bit of a boogeyman in this conversation for adults and adolescents alike. It's presented as an opportunity to some, but received as an excuse and scapegoat for change by many others. For those looking at current and future careers, it's probably best viewed as an accelerator pedal. It's going to take a lot of current technology's progress arc, and step on the gas.

Change is coming, with or without AI. This is just a truism in life.

Some of us deal with change better than others.



CHARLIE HARPER
GEORGIA POLITICS

When we're constantly told our ability to pay bills or even find a job is at risk, our resistance to that change increases exponentially.

We're now seeing that resistance pop up from the usual suspects who want to tell you not only that we can stop change, but that we should reject what is new (and is thus perceived as dangerous). They have little to stop the development of the software stack or chip

designs making great leaps in AI, so they're targeting data centers.

There may be legitimate reasons to block the construction of a data center in a specific location. Zoning laws do exist, after all.

Pretending that slowing down the development of data centers will solve the problems associated with AI will have the same result as pretending suburban sprawl can be stopped with impact fees, building design standards, and random rezoning moratoriums and/or rejections.

Change will still happen. It will just be more disorganized and more expensive.

How we individually and as cities, counties, states, and a country prepare for it will determine its impact on our lives and our economy. It's important that we approach the topic not with a view that AI is good or bad, but rather, that is "is".

AI exists. Under the umbrella of this term lies many new technologies that can

and will affect the way we work and live. It will affect our vocations and our avocations. Attempts to stop this change by slowing it down will only make the outcomes more disjointed and expensive, while also likely allowing foreign adversaries to take the lead in what and how these technologies are developed.

So back to the question, "What do you want to be doing now as a grownup?". This is a question we all should be asking ourselves, and it deserves a mature, grownup answer.

Those of us not yet retired need to understand that employers pay us for the value we can create for them. AI will likely replace many tasks we currently perform for our wages.

There are two broad options for those in and those soon to be in the workforce to deal with this. We can learn and use these tools to become more efficient and

thus more productive. Alternatively, we can choose jobs and career paths that are harder to replace with technology alone.

There are no easy answers. The truth is, however, there never has been.

Whether in an agrarian economy that was largely dependent on the weather, an industrial revolution that forced changes in labor and pollution standards, or the advent of computers and software, workers have always had the uneasy challenge of figuring out how to adapt to what initially looked like a scary new world.

We can pretend it's not happening and try to hide from what is likely inevitable. Or, we can do what grownups must do, and plan for adjustments now to ultimately ensure we are among those rewarded from change that will happen with or without our participation.

The proposal may be cheap, however the commitment is not

If you are looking at how oil at \$110 per barrel and gas approaching \$5 per gallon will Make America Great Again, I refer you to the Trump Toadies on Fox News. I am sure they can explain it. They might even possibly believe it.

On the other hand, if you think boys-turned-into-girls should be allowed to compete in women's sports – an issue that affects a whopping 0.002% of U.S. college athletes – then you need to go to Weenie World, aka, MS NOW. No question they do believe it.

However, if you are seeking some juicy inside information to share at your next Sunday School social or cocktail party – or both – and wow the crowd, you have come to the right place. Making you the envy of the neighborhood is my sacred duty.

For example, did you know that Chick-fil-A is the No. 1 choice of Georgia men who would consider proposing in a fast food restaurant? That comes from Ace.com, a social casino website. They say they surveyed 3,020 men as to which fast food chains they believe give them the best odds of hearing "yes."

The premise is that with the cost of living being so high these days, a candlelit dinner – once the gold standard for asking the question – is increasingly being swapped out for proposals over fries and a soft drink.

More than one in three Georgia males admit that rising dining costs make them more likely to consider a budget-friendly venue – suggesting romance is increasingly being balanced



DICK YARBROUGH

with practicality. ("Darling, two questions: Will you marry me and are you going to finish those fries?")

They also asked 100 women what they thought of the idea. 49 percent said it would be funny but memorable and 24 percent said they would find it romantic. That tells me 76 percent don't

find it romantic and would prefer a candlelit dinner with wine in a glass and not a vanilla milkshake with a straw. So, if I were the guys, I would think that proposal idea over very carefully.

Why Chick-fil-A? Ace.com says the chain is known for its "relentlessly polite service and calm, family-friendly atmosphere. For many Georgia men, it feels like the place where the odds quietly tilt in their favor without trying too hard." It is also where the staff always says, "My pleasure" instead of "No problem." I hate "no problem." I don't care if it is a problem or not. That's their problem. Not mine.

I didn't propose to the Beloved Woman Who Shared My Name at a fast food restaurant. I proposed to her in a chateaux

and black Ford Fairlane. It wasn't a surprise and, frankly, not particularly romantic. We knew we were getting married. She had already picked out the ring and I had bought it with money I made carrying mail over the Christmas holidays. I don't think fries and a Coke would have made much of a difference, except it would have been like me to spill the Coke in the front seat and get fussed at.

There is no chance I would have proposed at a local Chick-fil-A because it didn't exist then. Our only option would have been the Dwarf Grill on Central Avenue in Hapeville, down from the train depot. It was run by a gentleman named Truett Cathy. The place was very small – hence the name Dwarf Grill – and kind of smoky. Mr. Cathy's wife,

Jeannette, taught the Beloved Woman Who Shared My Name in a girl's Sunday School class at Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church and Mr. Cathy taught the boys. They also served really good hamburgers as I recall.

Somehow, between frying hamburgers and praising the Lord, Truett Cathy found a way to create a chicken sandwich and an international restaurant chain with more than 3,000 stores and \$22 billion in annual revenue. A long way from the Dwarf Grill. By the way, if you plan propose at your local Chick-fil-A, make

it sometime between Monday and Saturday. They aren't open on Sunday.

Ace.com says Georgia boys have named other alternate chains where they would consider popping the question, like Dairy Queen, McDonald's and Taco Bell. That is all well and good but it's not where you propose that counts, be it a fast food restaurant or a chateaux and black Ford Fairlane. It is the commitment you are about to make. It's not cheap. It is for a lifetime. Think carefully and don't bite off more than you can chew.



Tri-County Connector

Published every Wednesday
by the Georgia Trust for Local News

DuBose Porter, Publisher Emeritus
Pam Burney, General Manager
Kyle Dominy, Weekly Managing Editor
Logan Reynolds, Staff Reporter

The Official Legal Organ of
The Montgomery Monitor
Mt. Vernon, GA 60445 - (USPS 362-220)
tricoconnector@gmail.com
Periodicals postage paid at the Mt. Vernon, GA Post Office
and at additional mailing offices.

The Soperton News
Soperton, GA 30457 - (USPS 501-500)
tricoconnector@gmail.com
Periodicals postage paid at the Soperton, GA Post Office
and at additional mailing offices.

The Wheeler Co. Eagle
Alamo, GA 30457 - (361-220)
tricoconnector@gmail.com
Periodicals postage paid at the Alamo, GA Post Office
and at additional mailing offices.

478-272-5522

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One Year in County \$31 - Senior in County \$29
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BLOCK GRANT
Continued from page 1

billion in agricultural and timber losses,” with \$1.28 billion coming from timber losses alone.

The storm also destroyed an estimated 32.6 percent of cotton crop, 25 to 30 percent of vegetable crops, and disrupted farming operations focused on pecans, citrus, blueberries, soybeans and livestock. Georgia’s tobacco crop was also affected, but tobacco farms were also recovering from a previous storm, Hurricane Debby, which destroyed 45 percent of their crop.

“While this relief will not make impacted producers 100 percent whole, it will go a long way to help farm families get back on their feet after the devastation of Hurricane Helene,” said Harper.

The grant program was spearheaded by Senators Reverend Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff in the United States Senate. According to a press release from Senator Warnock, the funds were received following “months of bipartisan efforts” during which multiple government representatives asked for disaster relief funds.

“Now, over a year late, USDA is finally getting those funds to Georgia farmers,” said Senator Ossoff. “I am glad Georgia farmers are getting the help they’ve long deserved.”

FUZZY’S
Continued from page 1

not compete with the local T-Byrds Foods.

“It’s not dog-eat-dog around here,” said Selph. “We’ve had each other’s back, and so I go there to eat, they come over here to eat.”

COVID-19 provided the business with a unique challenge, stressing supply lines and raising prices of goods. Because of the pandemic, Selph was forced to drop a number of menu items, such as catfish.

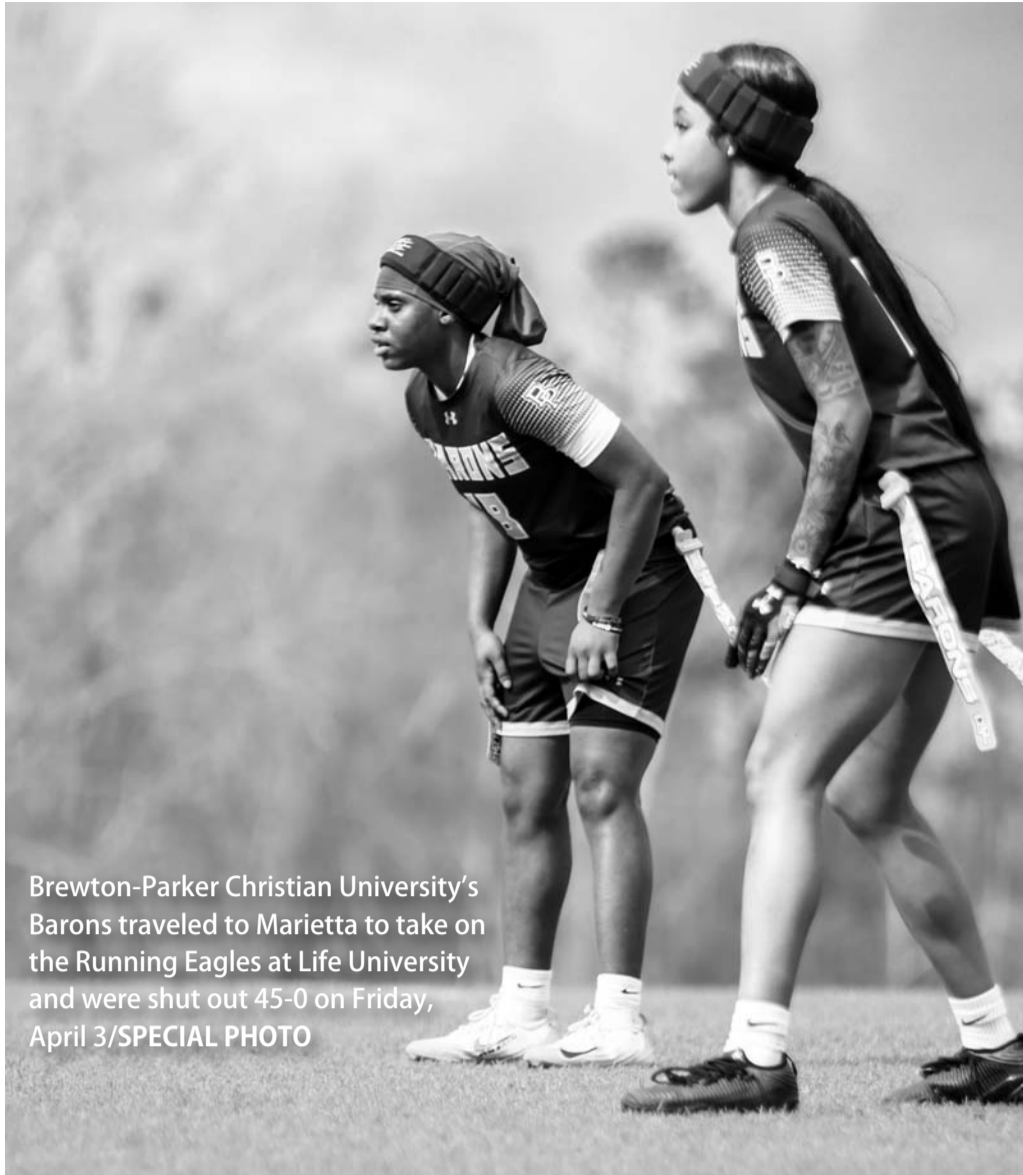
However, Selph says Fuzzy’s was able to avoid closing and raising its prices during COVID-19 due to a preemptive purchase from their suppliers. She likened the experience to the biblical story where Jesus Christ multiplies bread and fish to feed a large crowd.

“I had good vendors that said, ‘This is fixing to go up, Rosalie,’” said Selph. “I went, I bought freezers, filled them slap full of what he told me was fixing to go up, and just like the fish and the bread, it made it through.”

Hurricane Helene also affected the restaurant, destroying sections of the back of the building. However, Selph’s family, including her son and son-in-law, who are both carpenters, came together to repair the restaurant and remain in business.

According to Selph, the business has proven a success in its original goal of keeping her family together for the past nine years.

“If it’s not successful in anything else, it keeps families together,” said Selph. “We have a good old time up here.”



Brewton-Parker Christian University's Barons traveled to Marietta to take on the Running Eagles at Life University and were shut out 45-0 on Friday, April 3/SPECIAL PHOTO

Barons fall to Running Eagles

By **RYAN FEASTER**
Brewton-Parker Christian University

MOUNT VERNON – The Brewton-Parker Christian University (BPCU) Barons flag football team traveled to Marietta, Ga., to take on the Running Eagles of Life University. Despite a strong effort, the Barons were shut out by the Running Eagles, 45-0, on April 3, 2026.

Life struck first at the 7:26 mark of the opening quarter when Cheyenne Brooks connected with Elora Niederpruem for a 19-yard touchdown. Brooks and Niederpruem hooked up again with 4:42 left in the quarter, this time on a 28-yard scoring play that pushed the margin to 13-0. Brooks added another touchdown with 53 seconds remaining in the first quarter, giving Life a 20-0 advantage before Brewton-Parker could settle in.

The lead grew to 26-0 in the second quarter on another short-yardage touchdown by Brooks with 2:01 left be-

fore halftime. Life kept the pressure on after the break. Brooks scored again at 9:50 of the third quarter, then found Latoya Mitchell for another touchdown with 1:50 left in the quarter as the home team extended the margin to 39-0. The Running Eagles would score again in the fourth quarter to extend their lead to 45-0 and take the game.

Brewton-Parker was held to 124 total yards on 41 plays and managed six first downs. Kashauna Gusby completed 13 of 29 passes for 82 yards and rushed nine times for a team-high 46 yards. Defensively, the Barons did produce a fourth-quarter takeaway when Kennedy Osborn intercepted a Brooks pass and returned it 10 yards to the Brewton 15 with 6:05 to play.

The Barons will turn their focus to their final regular-season game as they prepare to host the Night Hawks of Thomas University on April 11.

Barons drop series opener vs Skyhawks

By **RYAN FEASTER**
Brewton-Parker Christian University

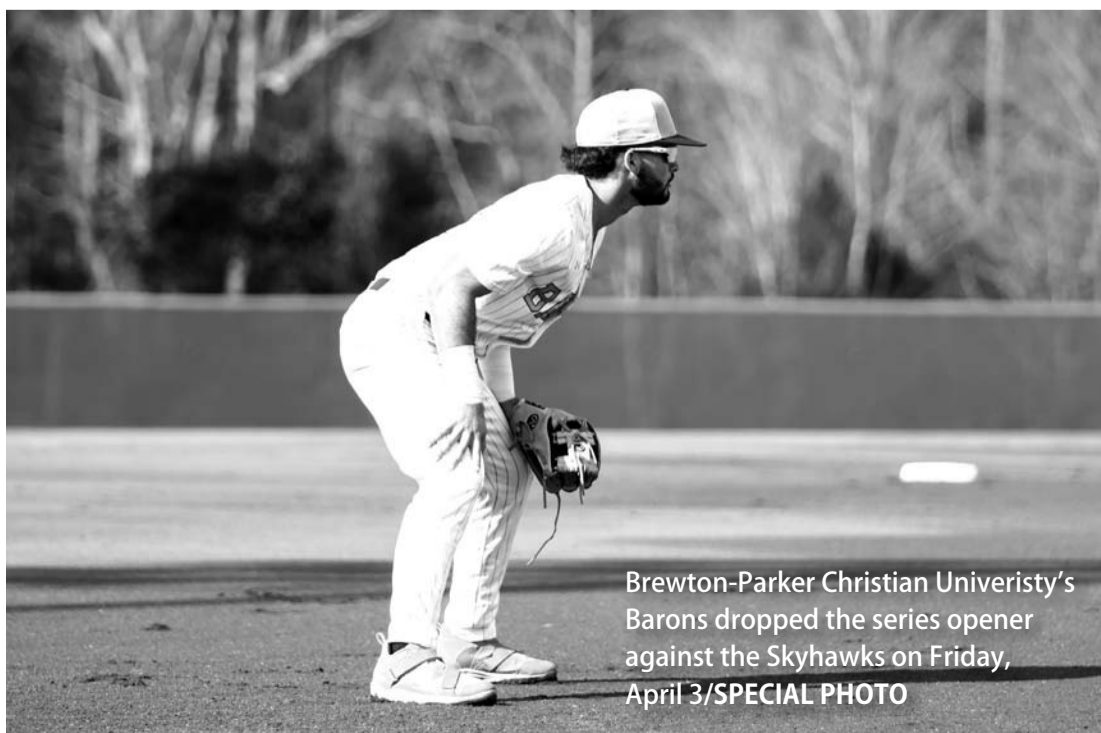
MOUNT VERNON – The Brewton-Parker Christian University (BPCU) Barons baseball team dropped the series opener on the road against the Skyhawks of Point University on April 3. The Barons fell behind early and were unable to overcome the deficit, dropping the game 11-5.

Point set the tone in the first, taking a 2-0 lead, scoring on a wild pitch and an RBI groundout. The decisive stretch came one inning later. The Skyhawks would add a three-run double to right field during the surge, and later in the inning, a two-run homer as Point built a 9-0 lead after two innings.

Brewton-Parker began to chip away in the fourth. Jack Morris lined a two-run single to right to bring home a pair of runs and cut the deficit to 9-2. The Barons added another run in the sixth when Michael Son drove in Anthony Savarese with a sacrifice fly, trimming the margin to 10-3 after Point had answered with an RBI single in the fifth.

The Barons’ best late push came in the eighth. Raul Morales opened the inning with a double, one of his two doubles on the day, and Son followed with a two-run double that brought Brewton-Parker within 10-5. Point answered in the bottom half with an insurance run, ending any realistic comeback bid.

Son finished with three RBI for Brewton-Parker, while Morales went 2 for 4 with two doubles and a run scored. The Barons totaled six hits, including three doubles, and left five runners on base.



Brewton-Parker Christian University's Barons dropped the series opener against the Skyhawks on Friday, April 3/SPECIAL PHOTO

Legals

Treutlen Co. Legals

S26-020
STATE OF GEORGIA,
COUNTY OF TREUTLEN
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

IN RE: The Estate of Wesley Wadley, deceased.
All debtors or creditors of the Estate of Wesley Wadley, deceased, late of Treutlen County, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are to make immediate payment to me. This 19th day of March 2026.
Paul W. Calhoun, III
Attorney for Administrator, Krisopher Wadley
Calhoun Law Firm
P. O. Box 557
Soperton, GA 30457
March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 2026

S26-021
STATE OF GEORGIA,
COUNTY OF TREUTLEN
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

IN RE: The Estate of Paula Jean Brinson, deceased.
All debtors or creditors of the Estate of Paula Jean Brinson, deceased, late of Treutlen County, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are to make immediate payment to me. This 19th day of March 2026.
Paul W. Calhoun, III
Attorney for Executrix, Janis Cone
Calhoun Law Firm
P. O. Box 557
Soperton, GA 30457
March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 2026

S26-023
TREUTLEN COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA
TO: Heirs Known & Unknown, of KELLIE PHILLIPS, Jr., Deceased, and anyone claiming an Interest in the property described below.

Take Notice That:
The right to redeem the following property to wit:
All that certain lot or parcel of land situate, lying and being in the 1763rd G.M. District of Treutlen County, Georgia and bounded as follows: North by lands of Delphine Bostic and lands of Kellie Phillips; East by the run of a branch; South by lands of Kellie Phillips, Sr.; and West by lands of Kellie Phillips, Sr. This parcel of land is more fully shown by a plat of the same prepared by Marvin D. Clements, Surveyor, dated March 24, 1994, and recorded in Plat Book 7, Page 63, Treutlen County Records. Which plat is incorporated herein by reference for a more complete description of the property herein conveyed.
As described in Deed Book 75, Page 308. Further described as Map & Parcel 041 019E, will expire and be forever foreclosed and barred on and after the 17th day of November 2025. The tax deed to which this notice relates is dated the 5th day of October 2021 and is recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Treutlen County, Georgia, in Deed Book 168, Pages 719-720.
The property may be redeemed at any time before the 30th day of April 2026, by payment of the redemption price as fixed and provided by law to the undersigned at the following address: P.O. Box 557, Soperton, Georgia 30457.
Paul W. Calhoun, III
Paul W. Calhoun, III, LLC
P.O. Box 557
Soperton, Georgia 30457
(912) 529-3131

S26-018
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF
TREUTLEN COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF Cynthia Jackson, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 26-P-12
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: whom it may concern:
Tiffany Nicole Jackson has petitioned for Tiffany Nicole Jackson to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of Cynthia Jackson, 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 April 2, 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.
Tiffany W McLendon
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Jackie Gressinger
Clerk of the Probate Court
650 Second St, Ste 101
Soperton, Ga. 30457
912-529-4320
March 19, 26, April 2, 9, 2026

S26-022
STATE BOARD MEMBER TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARING
April 20, 2026

Mayor Matt Donaldson to Host State Board of Education Twelfth District Public Hearing

The State Board of Education will hold a public hearing for citizens in the Twelfth Congressional District on Monday, April 20, 2026. The meeting will be held from 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Warren County Schools, Career Academy, 115 Gibson Hwy., Warren, GA 30828.
The purpose of the hearing is to hear comments from interested citizens and educators within the congressional district regarding the performance and problems of public education. People wishing to speak should sign in upon arrival.
The Georgia Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities. Individuals who need assistance or auxiliary aids for participation in this public forum are invited to make their needs known to Geraldine Price at gprice@doe.k12.ga.us no later than 72 hours before the scheduled event.
April 9, 16, 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

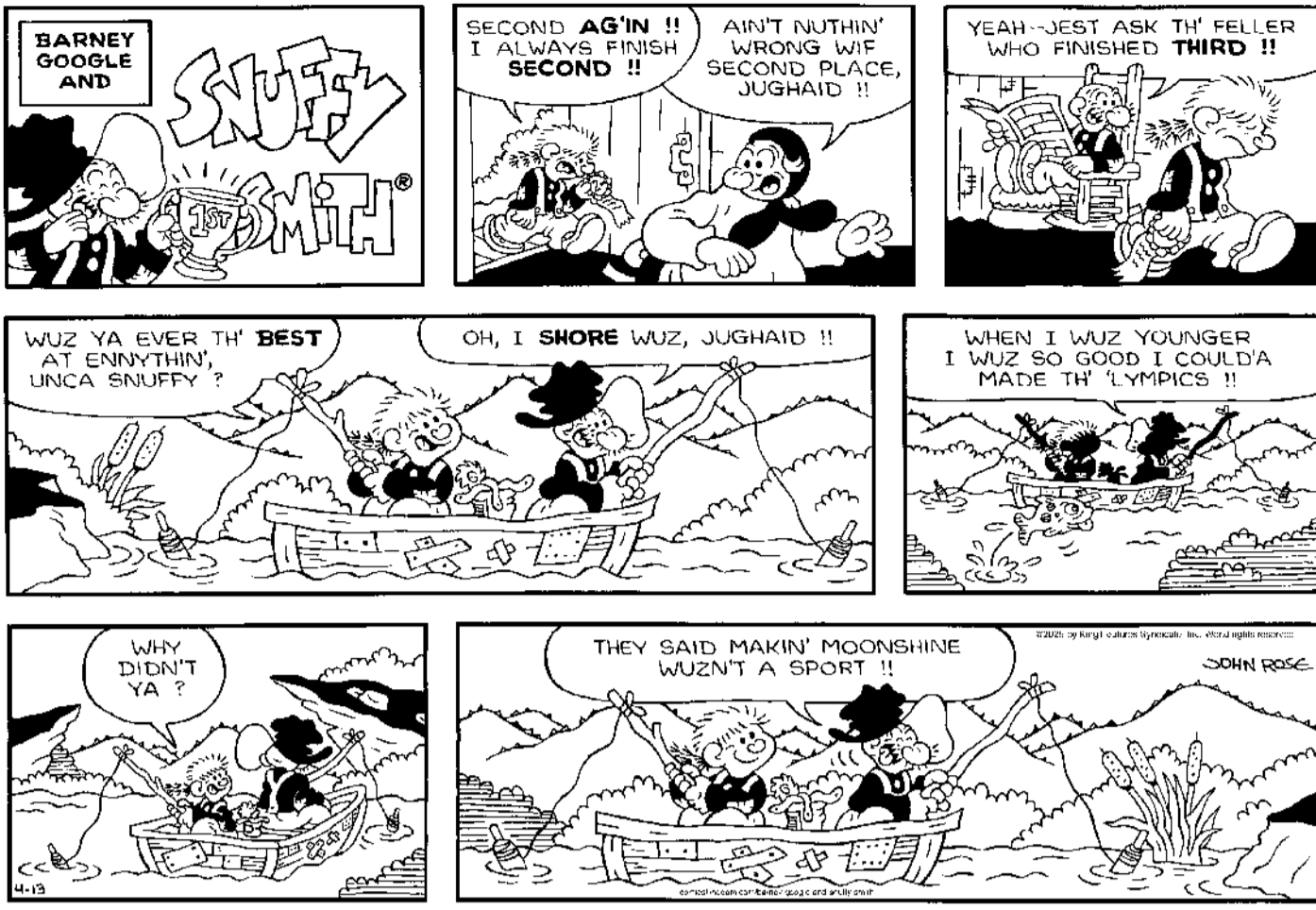
Georgia

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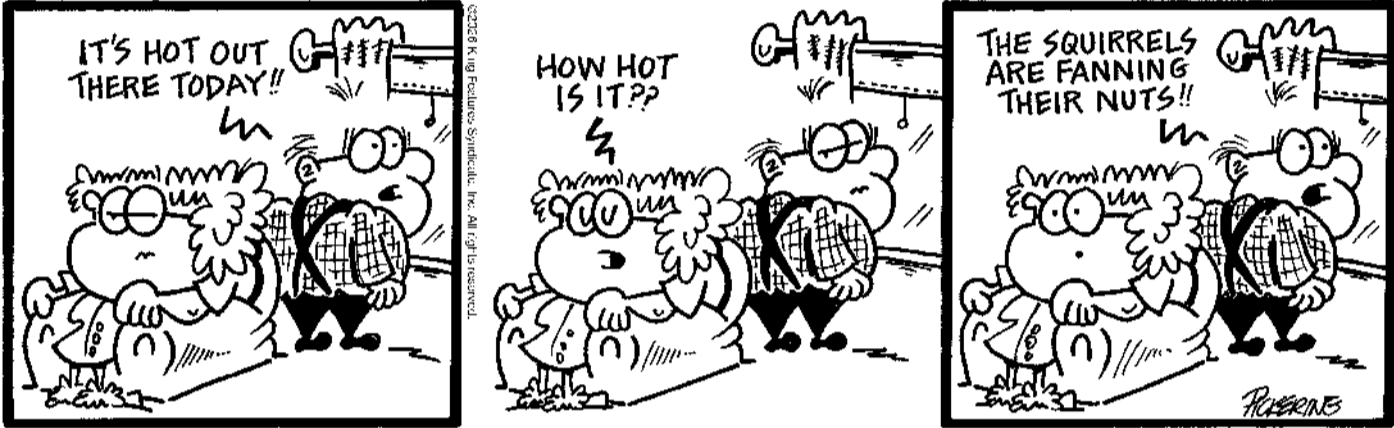
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The Spats



Out on a Limb



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Solution time: 21 mins.
ANSWERS
— King Crossword —
CROSSWORD ANSWERS

MAGIC MAZE ANSWERS

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

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 — Ark
- 6 Con games
- 11 French novelist
- 12 Heckler's weapon
- 14 "Delta Wedding" author Welty
- 15 Defeated in a footrace
- 16 Govt. stipend
- 17 Roly-poly
- 19 Roast VIPs
- 20 Golf pegs
- 22 Docs' org.
- 23 Lap dog, for short
- 24 Former First Daughter
- 26 Most sore
- 28 401(k) alternative
- 30 Med. plan
- 31 Popeye's veggie
- 35 Muslim legal expert
- 39 Centers
- 40 Possesses
- 42 Uttered
- 43 Before
- 44 "Graceland" singer Paul
- 46 The Browns, on scoreboards
- 47 Chew out
- 49 Tex-Mex treat

DOWN

- 1 Mal de mer
- 2 "Golden" tunes
- 3 Dye type
- 4 Angelic instrument
- 5 Milan's La —
- 6 Tolerate
- 7 Brilliant stroke
- 8 Invoice fig.
- 9 "Little Women" matriarch
- 10 Pancake toppers
- 11 Defeats
- 13 Start
- 18 Hollywood's Thurman
- 21 Tibia settings
- 23 Reverent
- 25 Altar in the sky
- 27 "Let me think ..."
- 29 Reach
- 31 Biblical realm
- 32 Least spoiled
- 33 Portugal's place
- 34 Sandwich meat
- 36 Glib
- 37 Inclined
- 38 Concepts
- 41 Remote locations?
- 44 Halt
- 45 iPod model
- 48 Asia's — Darya river
- 50 Keypad trio

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MAGIC MAZE • NON'S

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

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

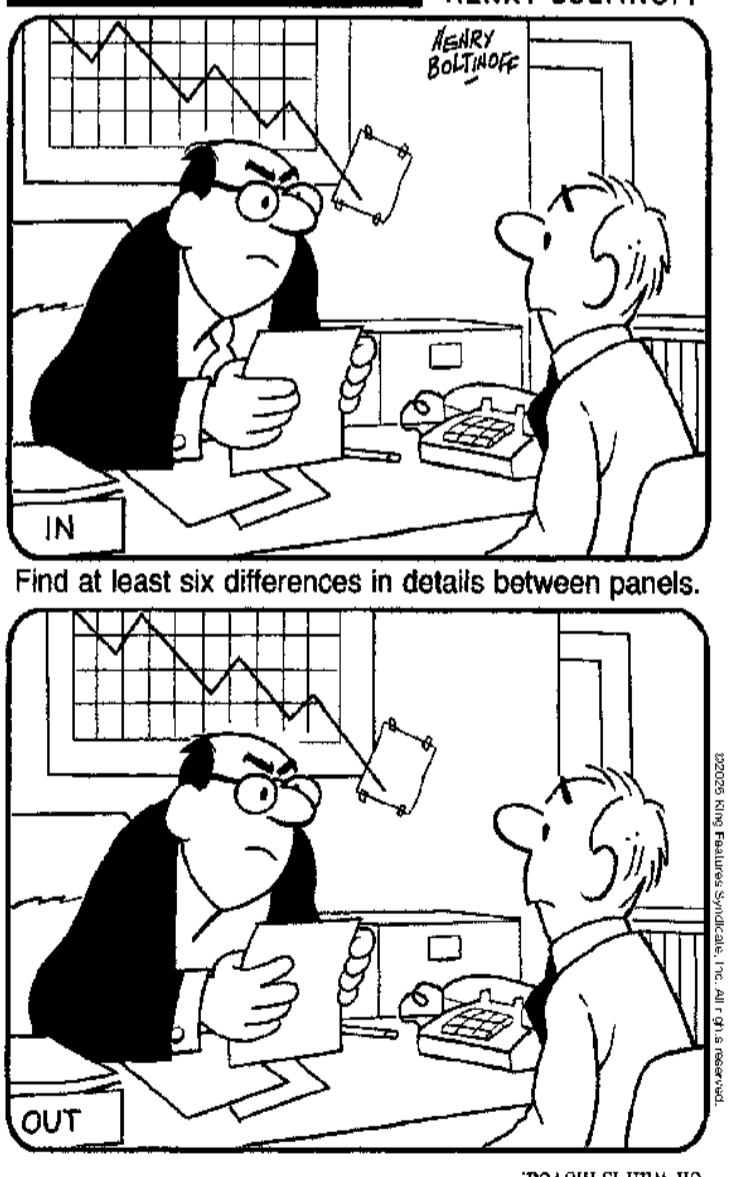
- Non-GMO
- Nonacid
- Nonaligned
- Noncom
- Nonfat
- Nonfiction
- Nonnative
- Nonresident
- Nonskid
- Nonslip
- Nonsmoker
- Nonstick
- Nonstop
- Nonsuch
- Nonunion

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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. Tie is missing; 2. Word on box is different; 3. Finger is moved; 4. Pencil is moved; 5. Wall is moved; 6. Chart on wall is moved.

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