

The Houston Home Journal

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EDIMGIAFAD

Volume 155 Number 27

Weekend, March 15, 2025

1 Section, 8 Pages

WORD OF THE DAY

IN THIS IS LOVE,
NOT THAT WE
LOVED GOD, BUT
THAT HE LOVED
US AND SENT HIS
SON TO BE THE
PROPITIATION FOR
OUR SINS.
1 JOHN 4:10
(NKJV)

SPORTS



REGION OPENER PAGE 8A

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GOT NEWS?

Submit your news tips to
newsroom@hhjonline.com
or call us at 478-987-1823.



PERIODICAL

'All-hands working'

Perry Fire responds to blaze at BP Food Mart



Courtesy: Kirk Crumpton

Crews respond to a fire at the BP on Sam Nunn Boulevard Tuesday, described by the department as an "all-hands" event.

By **SANDRA HERNANDEZ**
HHJ Staff Writer
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PERRY — The Perry Fire Department responded to the BP Food Mart at 1501 Sam Nunn Boulevard on Tuesday, March 11. Fire crews received a call at approximately 2:11 p.m. for a reported structure fire, according to Assistant

Fire Chief Kirk Crumpton.

Crumpton said when crews departed, they could already see smoke coming from the building. When they arrived, they saw heavy smoke and flames coming from the rear side of the structure. Crews arrived in approximately four minutes and were on scene for just under three hours.

The Houston County Fire

Department also responded to assist. The building suffered heavy interior smoke, fire and water damage.

"It doesn't appear that way from the outside but it got very hot in there. Our crews, when they made their first entrance to the front door, it was extreme heat and smoke to the floor [and] zero visibility condition," Crumpton said.

"Kind of one of those not so great scenarios for our firemen, but that's why we train what we do. When that does happen, we don't want that to be an unfamiliar experience,"

The department has 13 personnel on staff. Everyone had a task on scene, including Fire Chief Lee Parker and Crumpton, who said he was immensely proud of the

team.

"It's what we call an 'all-hands working' event. Everybody was busy doing something. We train for that. We often have to do a lot with little. We're ready for that," he said.

The cause of the fire is unknown at this time, but is under investigation. No injuries were reported.

Local students serve as Pages at Georgia Capitol

By **BRIANNA SMITH**
HHJ Managing Editor
brianna@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Houston County students stepped into the heart of Georgia's legislative process on March 4, serving as Pages at the State Capitol.

The Page Program, designed for students ages 12 to 18, gives young people a behind-the-scenes look at government while assisting lawmakers by delivering messages and important information to the House Chamber.

NAACP President Jonathan Johnson, who helped coordinate the students' participation, emphasized the value of the program and several students reflected on their experience.

Ava Bones described the day as both fun and educa-



GA General Assembly

Students meet State Rep. Shaw Blackmon (far left) and Speaker of the House Jon Burns (far right) at the Georgia Capitol on March 4, 2025.

tional.

"We got a tour afterwards and they explained to us different things around the Capitol," she said.

Craig Latimore shared a similar sentiment, expressing gratitude for the oppor-

tunity.

"Other kids should get involved because it's bigger than yourself. It's helping the community," he said.

Zion Jones enjoyed the experience, especially visiting Atlanta and seeing

government in action. He encouraged other students interested in politics to try it out.

"There are a lot more jobs in the government than I thought there was," he said.

See PAGES page 3A

Man sentenced for 2019 Warner Robins nightclub shooting

By **OWEN JONES**
HHJ Staff Writer
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HOUSTON COUNTY — Morgan Baker, 29, was convicted of Voluntary Manslaughter in the Houston County Superior Court for his involvement in the 2019 shooting death of Tarmarco Head at Club Boss in Warner Robins.

According to a media release, Baker was sentenced to 20 years with the first 15 years to be served in prison.

"The Voluntary Manslaughter conviction was entered pursuant to a negotiated guilty plea with the State. Baker was set to begin a re-trial on murder charges in this case on the morning of his plea," the release said.

The shooting at Club Boss, formerly located at 532 N. Davis Drive, happened around 2 a.m. on July 6, 2019. The release said Baker was part of an entourage for rapper "NoCap", who was performing that night.

"After the performance, Baker and an unidentified individual got into an altercation with security. A few minutes later, Baker and his accomplice went to a Sprinter van, obtained firearms and began shooting towards the entrance of the club," the release said. One of the bullets struck the victim Tamarco Head, killing him.

Baker was originally tried on the case in February 2022. A Houston County jury found him guilty of Malice Murder and was sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

See SENTENCED page 7A

Reynolds man convicted for 2023 shooting

By **BRIANNA SMITH**
HHJ Managing Editor
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HOUSTON COUNTY — A man involved in a 2023 shooting was sentenced earlier this month, the Houston County District Attorney's Office announced.

According to a release, Anthony Jones, 27, of Reynolds, was sentenced on March 7 to life in prison with

the possibility of parole after a four-day jury trial and two hours of jury deliberation. Jones was convicted of Felony Murder, Aggravated Assault, and Terroristic Threats.

The charges stem from an Oct. 13, 2023 shooting. The release said Jones entered a Warner Robins house and shot Demarion Harris, 19, with a 9mm pistol as he lay in bed.

See SHOOTING page 7A



Owen Jones/HHJ

The Board of Education meets amid Board Appreciation Week, marked by gifts, while also taking the time to honor employees and student champions.

Board of Education honors employee service, congratulates State winners

By **OWEN JONES**
HHJ Staff Writer
owen@hhjonline.com

PERRY — The Houston County Board of Education recognized many employees who have been a part of the Houston County School District for 30 and

35 years.

"It is my privilege to recognize each of you for reaching this incredible milestone of 30 and 35 years of service. Your dedication to our students in our District has played

See BOARD page 7A



She Means BUSINESS

Local women making an impact

Perrydise Nutrition keeps customers energized, healthy this Women's History Month



Courtesy: Perrydise Nutrition

Perrydise Nutrition is located at 1203 Sunset Avenue.

By **SANDRA HERNANDEZ**
HHJ Staff Writer
sandra@hhjonline.com

PERRY – Many female-owned businesses throughout Houston County are worth highlighting during Women's History Month. One of those is Perrydise Nutrition, which energizes and provides healthy options for the community.

This July, Perrydise Nutrition will have its third anniversary and in August, Owner Laura Hester will reach her second anniversary. She bought the business in Aug. 2023.

Perrydise Nutrition has various Herbalife products. The business sells meal replacement shakes, energy teas, and overall, health-based products. Hester said their shakes have less than

250 calories with 24 to 27 grams of protein.

The business also has protein iced coffees and energy drinks, which come in different options, including loaded teas, beauty teas, and specialty teas. The loaded teas have 200 milligrams of caffeine, 24 calories, and no sugar.

The beauty teas include biotin and collagen, and 115 milligrams of caffeine. Biotin is a B vitamin needed for metabolism, and collagen is a protein needed for structural support of skin, bones, and tendons.

The specialty tea, a customer favorite, according to Hester, includes 17 grams of protein plus biotin and collagen. It also includes 115 milligrams of caffeine. Hester said there's healthy options for everybody.

Hester has been involved

in the medical field for the majority of her life, previously working at a cardiology office. She considers her business as a way to keep educating customers about a healthy lifestyle.

For example, a common demographic is customers with diabetes. She still helps them with their goals by providing diabetic friendly options.

"I still get that medical part of me, that I absolutely love, but I also get to teach them about our products and how safe and healthy they are for people," she said.

Hester frequented a similar store in Warner Robins. One day, she was talking with another woman, who encouraged her to open up a store and sell products that can be used at home. Now, Perrydise has a "preferred member"

option, where customers can have products shipped directly to their home for a discounted price.

A couple of years ago, Hester had surgery and was in recovery for three months. She then told her husband she didn't want to return to her day job.

Her husband was shocked by her decision, but then she told him about Perrydise Nutrition opening up in Perry. He supported her dream to start learning more about the store and the business world.

Hester was the manager of Perrydise Nutrition during her first year and she prayed she could one day take over. Finally, the door to her dream opened and she purchased the business in August of 2023. She describes her experience since then as absolutely amazing.

She shared her favorite part of owning a business is meeting new people and being able to educate them and support their health goals.

"Strangers off the street become friends and then they become like family. Then, you learn about their families," she said.

Hester jokingly said Thursdays are "Therapy Thursday" at the shop,

Perrydise Nutrition also provides seasonal drinks, like the Love Bug tea for Valentine's Day.

because customers see her business as a safe place. She said there is no judgment whenever a customer wants to share their story.

"It's just awesome. That's the best part about it, is just the relationships," she said.

Hester is originally from Macon but currently lives in Warner Robins, describing Perry as a great community, a different world and where everyone is spectacular. The business has received support from local schools, from Bonaire to Perry Middle Schools, Perry High School, and the local elementary schools.

Hester shared she hasn't experienced any challenges, except with advertising. She said daily, from 15 to 20 new customers didn't know how long she was in business, or the business was there in the first place.

Perrydise Nutrition's main avenue of promotion is through Facebook, Instagram, and word of mouth, with a sizable following on social media.

"It's just absolutely spectacular. I love it when somebody walks in the door and you can call them by their first name and you know what they're going to get because they get

the same thing every day," she said. "I think that just creates an awesome business owner to customer relationship because they appreciate that."

Hester's advice to local female entrepreneurs is to have no fear. Hester was initially terrified to take over the business because she had never owned one. Before the medical field, she worked in sales at the Macon Telegraph.

Thankful for her opportunity, Hester encouraged women entrepreneurs to follow their dreams, have a positive attitude, and take the risk; she said they will succeed with customers as their advertisement.

"When you love on somebody, they're going to feel it, and they're going to spread the word about you. Just go all in," she said.

Perrydise Nutrition is located at 1203 Sunset Avenue and offers free local deliveries within a 10 mile radius. They are open from Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

To keep up with Perrydise Nutrition visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/perrydisenutrition/>, or call them at (478) 919-6967.

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CALENDAR

Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball

Welcome to Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball! Join us for a night of elegance and grandeur at the Anderson Conference Center. This is a Bridgerton theme event. Get ready to dance the night away in a setting fit for royalty. This in-person event promises to be a night to remember, filled with live music, live performances, food, and unforgettable memories. Don't miss your chance to experience a taste of the royal life at this majestic ball. Get your finest Victorian (Bridgerton) attire ready and come celebrate in style at Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball!

The Ball will take place April 26th, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the 5171 Eisenhower Parkway, Macon.

20th Annual Old Book Sale

Houston County Friends of the Library is hosting the 20th Annual Old Book Sale at the GA National Fairgrounds in the Georgia Grown/Baby Barn Building from Thursday April 24th to Saturday April 26th.

Over 90,000 books in 60 categories will be in the building ready for sale.

Admission will be \$5.00 on Thursday going from 10AM to 8PM.

Admission will be free on Friday and Saturday going from 9AM to 8PM Friday and 9AM to 3PM Saturday. All items half price on Saturday!

Cash, Check, Credit, and Debit all accepted. (Convenience fee for electronic transactions.)

For more information, please call (478)-923-0128 or visit <http://houpl.org>, Click "Support the Library," then click "Friends of the Library."

M.E. Roden Library Book Sale

Hawkinsville's M.E. Roden Library, 151 Commerce Street, will hold its annual book sale Friday and Saturday, March 14 and 15th, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Hardcover books, \$1; paperbacks, 50 cents. Vintage prices may vary. Fiction organized alphabetically by author; non-fiction by subject.

PAGES

From page 1A

"It was cool learning about their jobs from them."

Christa'anna Hill called the program a great experience, adding that it gave her a better understanding of how laws are made. She said participating in the program can help other teens achieve their dreams.

"It can help you with your goals in life and it could put you on the right path," she said.

For Kalisa Medor, meeting elected officials helped her step out of her shell. She also gained perspective into how legislative decisions impact the public.

"[I liked] seeing how things really are in the real world. It kind of teaches you about how laws are passed through. And it's a bit of an insight on your daily life that you don't really think about," she said.

Students are sponsored by House Representatives, giving them the chance to meet legislators and the Speaker of the House. State Rep. Shaw Blackmon, according to

Crossroads Quilt Show

Crossroads Quilt Guild of Perry is presenting it's 30th Bi-annual quilt show on March 21-23, 2025 at "The Well at Centerville Church; 600 N Houston Lake Blvd Centerville.

There will be over 100 quilts on display made by their members.

Each quilt entered in a specified category and judged accordingly. Along with quilts there will be Vendors, demos, Raffle Baskets, and scissor sharpening vendor, so bring your scissors!

\$8 entry fee/\$1 discount coupon available at the local quilt/fabric stores"

Times: Friday and Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; noon-5 p.m.

2025 Talent Hunt Competition

Calling All High School Performers!

The Omega Gamma Gamma Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. invites Houston County high school students (grades 9-12) to showcase their talents in our Annual Talent Hunt Competition! Whether you sing, dance, act, play an instrument, or create visual art—this is your stage!

Date: Saturday, May 3, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Location: Fellowship Bible Baptist Church, Reid Building (Warner Robins, GA)

Cash Prizes: 1st Place - \$500; 2nd Place - \$350; 3rd Place - \$200

Categories: Music (Vocal & Instrumental), Dance, Theater (Drama, Comedy, Spoken Word), Visual Arts

Application Deadline: April 23, 2025, at 11:59 PM

How to Register: Download and submit both the Talent Hunt Application & Parental Consent Form to qggtalenthunt@gmail.com.

For more details, visit qggq.org. Encourage your students and friends to participate—let's celebrate the talent in Houston County!

Lenten Fish Fry

Christ The Redeemer Anglican Church invites the community for a Lenten Fish Fry on Friday, March 21, from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m., at 2815 Highway 41, Fort Valley. On the menu is fried fish, hush puppies, vegetables, cheese grits, dessert and a drink. For more information, call (478) 442-1097 or (478) 442-3585.

Johnson, is a frequent supporter of NAACP events and happily sponsored the students for this competitive program.

"He had come to a lot of our events that we have, and we had spoken to him about it, but we never had confirmed it. We confirmed he had some positions open. He was like, 'We know how hard it is to get in there,' So, he was like, 'We're going,'" Johnson said.

With Crossover Day on March 6—a crucial deadline for House legislation to advance to the Senate—the Capitol was a hub of activity. Despite the busy atmosphere, the students were thrilled to take part.

AARP Free Tax Services

AARP Tax-Aide will be offering FREE tax service @ the Perry Library on Wednesdays 12:00 – 3:00 pm and Saturdays 11:00 – 2:00pm by appointment only. Drop by the Perry Library to sign up for an appointment, we will start on February 1, 2025.

AARP Tax-Aide will be offering FREE tax service @ the Warner Robins Senior Center (152 Maple St) Monday – Friday 10:00 – 4:00 by appointment only starting February 3, 2025. Schedule your appointment at AARP.org/taxaide for the WR site or call 478-322-0269 for assistance.

AARP Tax-Aide will be offering FREE tax service @ the Fort Valley Library on Tuesdays 10:00 – 3:00pm by appointment only. Drop by the FV Library to sign up for an appointment, we will start on February 4, 2025.

We will be doing taxes each week until tax season ends April 15, 2025.

PHS Class of 1975 Reunion

The Perry High School Class of 1975's 50th Reunion Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2025, 11:30 at First Baptist Church on 1105 Main Street, Perry, GA.

Perry Class Fish Fry

The Perry High School class of 1975 will be having a Fish Fry on Saturday, March 15, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Advanced Auto Parts, 1335 Ball Street, Perry, GA. Prices are \$12 per plate and \$6 for a sandwich; cash only.

Community Calendar

Email your information to: brianna@hhjonline.com

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Johnson hopes they will apply what they learned to future aspirations, emphasizing the importance of servant leadership.

"My main goal for the kids was trying to teach them to be a good servant, to strive to have power, but don't abuse it. The power is for the people and to take care of the people," he said.

He also encouraged parents to connect with the NAACP for mentorship opportunities.

"Put them with the NAACP," he said. "We'll help get them focused so they'll be laser-sharp to succeed in college."

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OBITUARIES

Ouida Rose Fleming English

January 17, 1940 – March 8, 2025

Marshallville, GA – Ouida Rose English, aged 85, of El Paso, TX passed away on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at Oaks Nursing and Personal Care Home, Marshallville, surrounded by her loving family. A Graveside Service will be held at Master's Cemetery in Ellenwood, GA at 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

Born in Griffin, GA on January 17, 1940, Ouida's beloved parents include the late Hosea McCall Fleming and the late Mary Steele McKee. On June 18, 1942, her father, Seaman Second Class, died when the S.S. Millinocket was sunk by a Nazi U-boat for which he received a purple heart a year. Just two years old, she found her mother crying after her father's death, and she poured talcum powder on her to make her feel better. A few years later, her mother married Rev. Ray Ellis Shelton, "Daddy Ray," and soon she was the older sister of two brothers - Chris and Paul, and two sisters - Lucinda and Miriam. Leaving for Carson-Newman College, Ouida inspired her siblings who, with her parents, were on the mission field in Uruguay.

Always desiring to serve the Lord, she sought preparation, graduating with a

B.S. in Home Economics at Carson-Newman College, followed by a Master's in Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. After serving briefly in church ministry and working at Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, she became a teacher in the Ysleta Independent School District, El Paso, TX, where she taught for 27 years. After retirement, she began a business called Border Crossing Fine Art, an expansion of her oil painting hobby. She was meticulous in her appearance and dress, displaying a certain flair of elegance. She was an avid oil painter and taught those skills to others. She enjoyed being a poll worker at election time and participated in community art and choral groups. Ouida was a proud "Pasoan" having lived sixty years in El Paso, TX, until moving to Georgia to be near family in August 2024 due to her declining health. Along with other themes, her oil paintings featured the indigenous women and children of the Southwest as well as several historic Spanish missions. In later years, she recreated these themes on tiles while experimenting with watercolor, pencil drawings, and other techniques.

She was a devoted Christian and an active member of Cielo Vista Church, among other things, teaching in the Awana pro-

gram for grades 1-6. She loved singing in Christmas choirs and made elaborate costumes for the Christmas programs as well as Church Banners. She shared her faith with her neighbors and made mission trips to Indonesia, Ecuador, and Cuba. She loved her family, her friends, her pets, her plants and flowers, and her home. She enjoyed collecting dolls, bells, shells, spoons, rocks, clocks, oil lamps, figurines, art books, and art supplies.

She is preceded in death by her father Hosea M. Fleming, her mother Mary M. Shelton, and her "Daddy Ray" Ray E. Shelton.

She is survived by her four siblings: Chrispian (Ellen) Shelton of Minneapolis, MN; Paul (Laura) Shelton of Via Alista, CA; Lucinda (Victor) Lyons of Pineview, GA; and Miriam (Dan) Shelton of New York City, NY; numerous nieces and nephews as well as loving cousins.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to El Paso Animal Services <https://www.friendsofepas.org> or

Cielo Vista Church El Paso <https://www.cielovista.church/give>

For those who wish to express online condolences, please visit www.hughesandwright.com. Hughes & Wright Funeral Home, Inc. has been entrusted with these arrangements.

Charles Farrell Lewis, Sr.



Charles Farrell Lewis, Sr., of Perry, Georgia, passed away on March 11, 2025, at the age of 86. Born on July 14, 1938, in Atlanta, Georgia, he was the son of the late Grady and Maude (Hamby) Lewis.

Charles graduated from Perry High School in 1958 and went on to serve his country with honor in the United States Navy, from which he was honorably discharged. He later dedicated his time to serving his community in various capacities, including as a Sergeant with the Perry Police Department, a Perry City Councilman, and Mayor Pro Tem. He also contributed to the Houston County School System as a school bus driver.

Professionally, Charles worked at Northrop and continued his career after the company merged into Northrop Grumman, eventually retiring from the organization. His dedication to service extended to Vought, which later became the Guardian Center, where he continued to work and support his community.

Charles was a proud and active member of the Kiwanis Club and the 1958

class of Perry High School Breakfast Club at Cracker Barrel. He was generous with his time and resources, always seeking ways to give back. His generosity was evident when he donated his RV to the Perry Police Department, which was used as a mobile command center. He also played a key role in supporting youth education as a member of the Perry FFA Scholarship Board. In addition, Charles owned and operated Houston Locksmith, providing valuable services to the community.

A man of deep-rooted faith, Charles loved the Lord and was a devoted member of the First Baptist Church of Perry.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife of 60 years, Loretta (Sloan) Lewis, parents, Grady and Maude Lewis, as well as his siblings Gene Lewis, Nancy (Lewis) Self, and

Gail (Lewis) Grayson.

Charles leaves behind a legacy of love and service, cherished by his family: his son Chuck Lewis (Holly), daughter Lynn Moss (Andy), daughter Cindy Middlebrooks (David), and son Chad Lewis (Lora). He was also a beloved grandfather to Alana, Heather, Noah, Melissa, and Samantha, and a great-grandfather to Nicholas, Taylor, Makayla, Maddison, Audrey, Addison, Miller, and Charley.

A visitation for Charles will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Burpee-Scott Memorial Chapel & Crematory. His funeral service will take place on Friday, March 14, 2025, at 2:00 PM at First Baptist Church of Perry. Officiating services will be led by Winfred Huff, Jim Hamlin, and Lewis Kiger.

Charles Farrell Lewis, Sr. will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to his family, faith, and community. His kindness, generosity, and service will leave a lasting impact on all who knew him.

With honor, Burpee-Scott Memorial Chapel & Crematory has been entrusted with arrangements.

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Our Goal

The Houston Home Journal is published for the citizens of Houston and surrounding counties by a division of The Georgia Trust for Local News. Our goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication towards printing the truth.

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Share Your Viewpoint

There are three ways to submit a Letter to the Editor: Email it to brianna@hhjonline.com, mail it to Houston Home Journal at 1210 Washington St., Perry, GA 31069, or drop it off at the same location between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number (the last two not to be printed). The newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject letters for reasons of grammar, punctuation, taste and brevity.

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My marriage to a manager

Being only 28, I haven't experienced everything life has to offer, but I still have my fair share of moments. One of the best and proudest things of my life is being married to my lovely wife.

She is one of the hardest workers that I know, sometimes working late into the early morning hours. On top of her work ethic, her intelligence shines constantly. With those two attributes, it's no wonder she made Managing Editor at The Houston Home Journal.

One of my favorite things is hearing about local events and daily happenings. Not only does it keep me informed, but I also love getting the inside scoop.

That's not to say these benefits don't come at a cost. Her dedication and drive often mean unpredictable hours, and it shows in the fruits of labor-erous way, but also has a downside, especially when I want quality time. I sometimes don't know how she balances work and spending time with me.

I often find myself urging her to come to bed while she types away at her laptop, music playing in the background. She always reassures me with, "I'm almost done, don't worry." But with that relentless drive comes incredible work.

Whenever she shows me an article she's proud of or tells me about an interesting interview, it makes me happy to see her skills in motion. I have overheard phone interviews, and hearing her "professional journalist" persona and her "regular" persona is such a strange but funny contrast. I like to point it out sometimes, just to

Guest Columnist



Devon Smith

mess with her.

Another aspect of seeing her and her position within the paper is her huge heart. She has a very soft and loving heart, and sometimes certain stories can weigh on her heavily, both positive or negative.

I have heard her talk about the most uplifting and beautiful acts of generosity, but also the darker side of humanity that we coexist with. She carries those stories with her because she truly cares.

If you ask me who the best person would be for this position — even in a vacuum, not including the massive love I have for her — I would still pick her. Her intelligence, heart, strong drive and faith make her one of the best.

Over the years we have experienced many hardships, brutal attacks, one after the other, often leaving us gasping for air. But it has also given us some of the most beautiful memories that we never could have dreamed of. I am grateful for those hardships. They have made us resilient, but also expectant and hopeful for the next amazing memories that lie in wait.

Being married to the Managing Editor isn't just a front-row seat to her relentless work ethic and unwavering dedication to journalistic integrity. It's also the privilege of sharing my life with my best friend: my anchor, my joy, my stability, all in perfect harmony.

Columnist Viewpoints

Join the Crowd

Have you ever joined a crowd and picketed something? Me neither. I've never been a civil disobedience guy, but maybe I still can. Some local high school kids are going to picket President Trump, protesting his policies, mostly on immigration. I'm glad to see them involved. Really, I am! Just being keyboard warriors with your circle of friends isn't involvement, so getting off their phones and pounding the pavement is a good thing. Of course, being kids, they'll probably be on their phones the whole time they are picketing, but adults aren't any better.

Apparently the kids don't feel safe anymore. Apparently, Trump's crack-down on illegal immigration is their beef. I understand their point; they like the status quo and are concerned that they, their families, or their friends and classmates

Columnist



Kelly Burke

www.kellyburke.com

might get deported. President Trump was largely elected on this issue, and elections have consequences. Yet I'm glad to see them taking a stand.

I was picketed one time when I was DA. We had two mistrials on a young man for a drug case, so I said we'd try him again. The first trial, prosecuted by ADA George Hartwig, was 10-2 for conviction. George wasn't able to try the second case, so I did it and the jury deadlocked 11-1 for conviction. So I figured the State was trending in the right direction.

The young man's family picketed, saying that two trials were enough. They had a point. So they picketed. They had a pop-up tent, I think, and little kids carrying signs. Local television stations covered it. The local papers covered it. I sent down drinks for them one day. They picketed for a few days, which I admired.

I was a stubborn prosecutor, though, and simply wanted the young man to accept responsibility. I wasn't looking for a lot of prison time, so the judge talked some sense into the young man, and I think he did a short-term stay in a diversion center. I hope he's leading a good life now and that he realizes what his family did on his behalf.

But no, I've never been a picketer. However, if the right cause came along, I would. I have a long history of writing letters to the editor voicing my displeasure with things, start-

ing in law school. Years later, Danny Evans, then-owner of the Houston Home Journal, let me start writing a column when I was District Attorney back in the late 1990s, and I've been griping ever since.

If the picketing kids will allow me to join them and ask them questions for an upcoming column, you might see me on Watson soon.

Kelly Burke was born in Knoxville where he spent his younger years, followed by high school years in Atlanta where he graduated from Georgia Tech. He then graduated from Mercer Law School. He has been in private practice, a magistrate judge, and an elected district attorney. He writes about the law, politics, music and Ireland. He and his wife enjoy gardening, playing with their Lagotto Ramanolo named George Harrison, and spending time with their grandchildren.

OLLIE AND MYLES
"Solving The World's Problems...One Mug At A Time"
Saint Patrick's Day.. Monday, March 17th
Clancey's Tavern
"May Your Beer Glass Always Be Full.
May The Roof Over Your Head Be Strong
.....And May You Be In Heaven Before The Devil
Knows You're Gone!"
"Amen To That!"
"Erin go Braugh" (Ireland Forever)
A Little Bit Of Irish Humor
JimBalletto c 2025
Houston Home Journal

Crazy Uncle Kyle's ABCs part 2 – A literacy primer

Welcome back kids. Are you ready to learn a little bit more of the crazy little thing we call the alphabet? Well, you better be because Uncle Kyle is in no mood for your nonsense. You can go back to Snapchats and TikToks later. There's plenty of time for big corporations and countries, foreign and domestic, to steal your information. Let's pick up where we left off...

H is for helium, that gas that makes balloons float. If you inhale some it makes your voice sound funny, but they say it's bad for your brain. My cousin Geech was killed by helium. He wasn't breathing it; it was in a tank and a gang of out-of-work party clowns beat him to death. It's called the economy, and it's tough on everybody.

I is for ice cream. Always eat your ice cream first.

New Southern Dad



Kyle Dominy

k.l.dominy@gmail.com

Dessert doesn't ruin your supper, but that green stuff certainly will. In fact, secretly feed all your vegetables to the dog (if it managed to find its way home, that is), or just toss them out the window, then mommy and daddy will praise you for cleaning your plate and give you a double serving of delicious, healthy ice cream.

J is for juggling. That's what we're going to learn to do with those shiny knives from the kitchen. How long do you think you can keep them in the air? It looks so

easy on the internet.

K is for kite. See how the colorful kite sails on the breeze. Do you think you could fly if you tied yourself to a kite? That's just stupid enough that it's got to work. Let's try it from the roof...

L is for Lenny. Lenny is one of Uncle Kyle's alley friends. Stay away from Lenny. He cheats at dice, and he stole my lighter, my good Bic lighter with the monkey on it. That one was my favorite. He says he gave it back, but I know he has it.

M is for money. The love of money is the root of all evil, but money also makes the world go 'round. Mommy and daddy work hard to make money to buy you video games and ice cream. You should do everything you can to help them save a little money, so they can buy more video games and ice cream. Maybe give

yourself a haircut?

N is for Nigerian prince. Posing as one is a great way to get more money. Set up a fake email and send a message to everyone in your dad's contacts. Pretend to be a big shot in Nigeria who wants to send his riches to the United States. All the people have to do is front a few thousand dollars in "legal" fees. Rich people will do anything to get more money, and it's only smart for you to take advantage of that. Then you can buy your own video games and ice cream. Just don't forget your ol' Uncle Kyle, unless the police show up.

OK kids, that's all for now. Uncle Kyle is getting bored. And what's the best part of being an uncle? That's right, telling you to hit the road.

LIFESTYLE & FAITH

Was John 21 an afterthought?

Chapter 20 appears to mark the ending of John's gospel. In fact, the last two verses of chapter 20 concludes the gospel with this passage: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."

Just when it appears that the book of John is coming to a close, the reader is surprised to turn the page and learn there is yet another chapter. I refer to Chapter 21. Many Bible scholars consider this chapter to be an "appendix" to John's original gospel.

Although Jesus had already commissioned the disciples, in chapter 21, we find them fishing at Lake Tiberias rather than witnessing for Jesus—a directive for which they had been tasked.

One possibility for this added chapter may have been to demonstrate Jesus' high regard for Peter and John. In this con-

Parables to Ponder



Billy Powell

billypow@aol.com

nection—in chapter 21—Jesus asked Peter three times: "Do you love Me?" After Jesus' third question, Peter replied, "Lord, You know I love You." Jesus lastly instructed Peter, "Feed my sheep." In theory, the Master was designating Peter as the foundation upon which He would build His Church.

The second interchange occurs when Peter questioned Jesus about the disciple John. Peter's exact words to Jesus were "What about this man?" Jesus responded, "What is it to you (Peter), if I want him (John) to live until I return?" By this statement, Jesus seemed to imply that John might still be alive when He returned. Historically, there was no doubt that the early church expected the imminent return of Christ.

The original gospel of John (chapters 1-20) was written around 80 A.D., a half century after the resurrection of Jesus. Its reputed author was the Disciple John who was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, John 19:26, and 21:7). John was the son of Zebedee and the brother of James. John was the last surviving disciple. He was an old man when the gospel was written. Peter was martyred in Rome around 64 A.D.

In summary, it is unlikely that the author who composed the original gospel of John wrote Chapter 21. Was this latter chapter an afterthought? Few authors, if any, write a book and later decide to republish the book with an appendix. Scholars suggest that chapter 21 was not written by its original author, but was composed by a follower of John or an elder in the Johannian community.

Medical error, a leading cause of death

It shocked me years ago when I read the article in the Wall Street Journal on medical error statistics, "Medical errors kill enough people to fill four jumbo jets a week." The interview was conducted with Dr. Marty Makary, a surgeon at John Hopkins, and author of the book, "Unaccountable: What hospitals won't tell you and how transparency can revolutionize healthcare". The results of a study published in 2016 from John Hopkins university had an estimate of approximately 251,454 deaths annually, which would position Medical Error, as the 3rd in the leading causes of death behind heart, disease and cancer.

To be fair, even though medical error is one of the leading causes of death, the medical field also saves a lot of lives, especially through critical trauma care and intervention. The medical field has had a lot of growth pressure over the years and has been impacted by an aging population, as well as many that put their dependency and reliance on medicine instead of personal responsibility and lifestyle habits. We have a lot more time to take personal responsibility for our health than our doctor or healthcare staff does and should care more than they do about our own health and well-being.

Where we go wrong, is being led to believe that we need to constantly be tethered to the healthcare system through check-

Your Health



Wade Yoder

ups, screenings, vaccinations and office visits without good reason and solid research behind what we are consuming or injecting. The medical industry has wrongfully stepped into the shoes of prevention and into a very lucrative business called, "managed care." The many different medicines and screenings can in-and-of-itself cause a new side effect, chronic disease or simply be something you pick up from the medical practice or hospital. If we could spend an equal amount of time trying to set up or reinforce healthy lifestyle habits it just might give our body the tools it needs to become and stay healthy.

Our body's internal doctor (our immune system) is constantly going through a system of checks and balances, checking for errors, infections, muscle breakdown, bone density etc. and it comes back with a report of the list of things needed and oft times this is a very simple list of needs, (cleaner oxygen, staying hydrated, a more balanced diet, regular exercise, de-stressing regularly and getting good deep rest).

Our body has a similar reaction to a car when we let the fluids get out of whack, or when we put

in fluids it doesn't like or recognize; It will simply not run properly and if we don't start using the right fluids, something a lot worse will happen such as engine or transmission failure.

We are in an era where the healthcare system has a lot more new people entering due to the aging baby-boom population, so doing everything we can to lessen reliance is key! One offset that we have that can help us counter the limited access to healthcare is our easy access to information and the internet to research whatever health issue we may be facing. As many of us as possible should try to learn how to use the internet for health research, it is a powerful diagnostic tool and unlike your doctor it will allow you unlimited amounts of time (for free) to ask health and medical questions.

Example: for foods that are best for a diabetic, I type the following into the search bar, "best foods for a diabetic, or diabetic diet" then I click on the link that looks the most informative for what I'm researching and continue narrowing my research from there. You can also watch videos on your health topic by entering YouTube at the end of your question. Example: "Diabetes YouTube" Pick videos that have a large number of views (this usually shows that it's probably a credible source that has a large following).

On death, thinking about my 'boo'

Will I be Casper? If you read my last column, you will remember I said I was thinking about what it would be like to row, row, row my boat, or rather let Charon captain/take his boat with me on it across the Styx, to the land of Hades. Or better put, I said I was going to write a series on "death". A light-hearted - intended to be, anyway - irreverent collection about a most mysterious subject.

Last week it was what I want done with my body when I die. I landed on either prop me up in a chair so I could watch soap operas all day or give me a big, big funeral while I am still alive. This week it will be about what I will become. Even John the apostle puzzled over this ... "My dear friends, we are now God's children, but it is not yet clear what we shall become." (1 John 3:2) ... so I am in good company.

So, Casper? Well, I do have the body type - squishy, big head, lack of hair - but I hope not. I have been meek and timid and gentle my whole life. I do not have to tell you. Most people think meekness is a weakness, not a strength. Regardless, I do not want to be a "friendly" ghost. I want to be a scary ghost. Something out of The Shining or The Changeling or Poltergeist or The Conjuring or Insidious or the Thirteen Ghosts. Well, maybe not that scary. I am a bit of hide-under-the-blanket during the blood-curdling scenes. It scares me just thinking about being that scary.

So, maybe I'll settle on someone like the Flying Dutchman ghost from Spongebob. "Insulting a man's ship be worse than insulting his mother." See. That is scary. Anyway, I just want to be a ghost that can scare the press crew on a daily basis. (Maybe Nathan Mathis in advertising.) They already claim it is haunted back there anyway.

Perhaps I won't be "above ground", you might say. You might be in "Sheol" (the Hebrew word) or "Hades" (the Greek word), meaning the "abode of the

Publisher



Don Moncrief

publisher@hhjonline.com

dead", the "underworld", the "pit". If that is the case, you can be sure I will still haunt you and others. I will simply incessantly poke my broom handle (pitchfork handle?) up into the earth's crust while hollering out: "Will you people be quiet up there! I am trying to sleep!" (Provided I am not judged as being really, really, really bad (hopefully good column writing isn't a criteria) and I am not way, way, way down under, like in the inner core.)

Perhaps I will be reincarnated (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Journalism [just making sure you're still paying attention]). If that were the case, I would want to be a mosquito. The punchline is obvious - payback - but I would also be helping out all those traditions that believe they need to pack/leave you food for your journey. "That will not be necessary, thank you. I will be eating fast-food (aka people sitting in their lawn chairs believing it is going to be a great evening taking in that sunset)."

This is an interesting possibility. The Caddo, a native people from what is now eastern Texas, believe there is no such thing as "true" death. That our spirits just go away ... I do not know, shopping at the Iran Mall maybe (the biggest, at 21 million square feet) ... and then return after a spell (aka when you can't carry anymore shopping bags).

The story goes that there were too many babies being born. The world was getting overpopulated. (Hmm. Where have I heard that before?) To accommodate, senior citizens were sent away (aka: died for a period of time). (The origin of the nursing home, maybe?) But people missed them. Wanted them back. (Probably because they were the ones paying the rent, elec-

tricity, gas/water, buying the groceries/food ... Or at least that is why mine would want me back.) So, they set up a huge "medicine house" where priests could call them back.

Only ... It did not work out so well. From the get-go. When the first person died, after 10 days they began to call him back (for some reason the Skeksis from the movie The Dark Crystal comes to mind). Suddenly, a whirlwind showed up on the distant horizon. Surely this was him! It got closer and closer and closer and ... and then ... "Wham!" ... a coyote - he had come to all the tribal meetings, so he was aware of what was going on - slammed the door on the medicine house at just the last second. His spirit was denied. He was forced to wander the prairie land forever. In fact, if you are out there in Texas one day and see one of those dirt tornadoes, know there are spirits in there just trying to get home.

So, that would be rough. To end up like that. But it could be worse. Per the Betsileo of Madagascar, how would you like to die, then wake up right in the middle of a bull fighting contest? I do not mean like in the arena/stadium and you have a sword (an "espada"). I mean you are unarmed and there are bulls running wild all over the place and they are attacking you from all directions.

Or how would you like to wake up in the middle of an orgy (also from the Betsileo)? An orgy where you're blindfolded and all normal constraints and taboos are tossed right out that old proverbial window. "I mean, if I have to," you say sheepishly (but that devil on your one shoulder is like ...) Well, you would not find it so inviting/tempting if, when you take off your blindfold you find out the one you have been making whoopie with this whole time was your brother or sister! (See: "... normal constraints and taboos ...")

I might not be Casper but assuredly I would be as white as a ghost if that turned out to be my great death revelation.



AMBLER, JAMES
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING.



ATES, LAWRENCE
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FAILURE TO REGISTER AS A SEX OFFENDER AND CHILD MOLESTATION.



BANKS, KYMRICK
WANTED BY THE U.S. MARSHAL'S TASK FORCE OFFICE FOR 2 CTS. OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULT FV, AND TERRORISTIC THREATS AND ACTS.



BENNETT, SONNY
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR SUP. CT. VOP. O.C BEING GIVING FALSE INFORMATION TO L.E. AND THEFT BY TAKING (M).



CROSS, KENNETH
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY - FV, AND CRIMINAL TRESPASS - DAMAGE TO PROPERTY. ALSO, THIS FUGITIVE IS WANTED BY THE ALBANY PD FOR THEFT BY TAKING - FELONY.



DUPREE, JIMMY SCOTT
WANTED BY THE CRAWFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CRIMINAL ATTEMPT TO COMMIT A FELONY AND POSS. OF SCHEDULED II CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE. ALSO WANTED BY THE BYRON PD FOR TRAFFIC OFFENSES.



FULLER, BRANDON
WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FAILURE TO REPORT AS A SEX OFFENDER.



GREEN, SHERLONDA
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY SHOPLIFTING.



HICKS, EDDIE
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT/ POSSESSION OF FIREARM BY CONVICTED FELON/ POSSESSION OF FIREARM DURING COMMISSION OF A CRIME.



HIGHTOWER, TAYLOR
WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING.



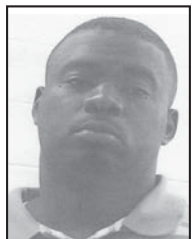
JONES, JESSICA
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BURGLARY WITH INTENT TO COMMIT A FELONY.



MORRISON, RUDOLPH
WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FAILURE TO REPORT AS A SEX OFFENDER. ALSO, THIS FUGITIVE IS WANTED BY THE W.R.P.D. FOR DRIVING WHILE L.I.C. SUSPENDED AND IMPROPER HEADLIGHTS VIOLATION.



MOSS, CURTIS
CRUELTY TO PERSON OVER 65/SIMPLE BATTERY/TERRORISTIC THREATS AND ACTS - FELONY



MURPHY, ELIJAH
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL TRANSACTION CARD FRAUD.



SMITH, CHRISTOPHER
WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR GIVING FALSE INFORMATION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OBSTRUCTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT.



TOMS, BRITTANY
WANTED BY THE CRAWFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING - FELONY.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO PULL CRIMINALS OFF OUR STREETS! Macon Regional Crimestoppers is a local non-profit serving the Bibb, Baldwin, Houston, Jones, Twiggs, Crawford, Monroe, and Peach regional areas. Through our deployed systems as well as the cooperation local law enforcement agencies and the 911 Center, citizens in our community have a safe, secure, and confidential means to report crimes. IF A "TIP" RESULTS IN AN ARREST - A REWARD WILL BE PAID TO YOU CONFIDENTIALLY AND ANONYMOUSLY!!

If You Have Information On The Whereabouts Of An Above Shown Individual, Call Our Tip Line at 478-742-2330 or 1-877-68CRIME

ENTERTAINMENT

The Astrograph

By Eugenia Last

Focus on socializing and physical activity. Make health and fitness a priority. Reach out to like-minded people. Choose activities that reflect the lifestyle you want to adopt, and it will be easier to stick to your game plan and reach your objective.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) — It's up to you to implement change. Look around you, and if something doesn't feel right or suit your needs, make adjustments and carry on. If doubt sets in, take a pass.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Look for the good in everyone you deal with today. A smile or kind gesture will take you further than will making demands. Pay attention to detail when dealing with institutions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Improve your living space, lifestyle or relationships with associates. Keep the peace, regardless of how others react. A financial opportunity can free up accumulated debt.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — Consider what makes you happy and follow the path that will take you there. Refuse to let anyone goad you into something you don't want to do. Don't give in to guilt tactics.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) — Pay attention to what others expect of you and what's at stake. Less complaining and more action will help you dodge negativity and outside interference. Put your emotions on the back burner and do your best.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Stay on top of matters, go directly to the source and interact with people who can help you get things done. Be accommodating, but set boundaries that ensure you don't have to give up what's important to you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — A change of scenery will do you good. Whether you travel to your old stomping grounds or to places you've never been, you can spark your imagination.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Live and learn. Look around and consider ways to improve your surroundings, relationships and lifestyle. Set personal goals and build a routine around whatever lowers stress and helps you build strength.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) — Participating, being active and mingling with people who share your interests will help you find your desired happiness. Don't sit idle when there is so little time and much to explore.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) — Take what others say with a grain of salt and refuse to become unnerved or respond unnecessarily. Concentrate more on yourself and your environment.

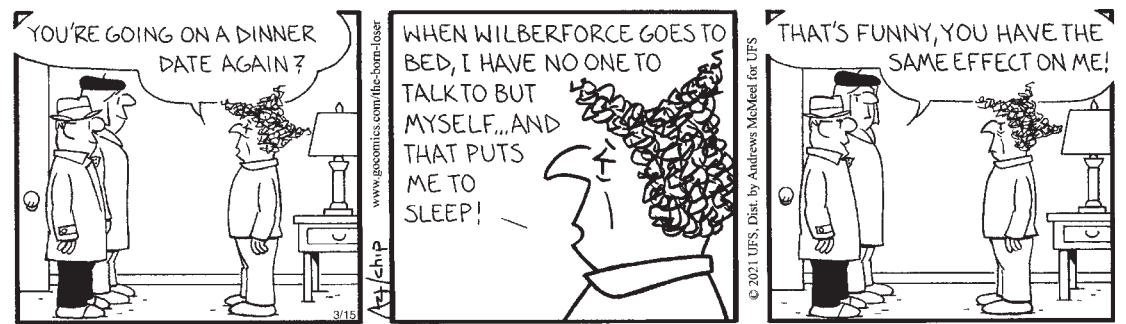
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Travel, attend a reunion or revisit something you must address before you can feel comfortable moving forward. Anger doesn't solve problems, but rational alternatives can.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) — Invest more time and money in your surroundings, your skills and the prospects that interest you. A financial gain is possible if you build equity instead of spending money on things that offer only momentary joy.

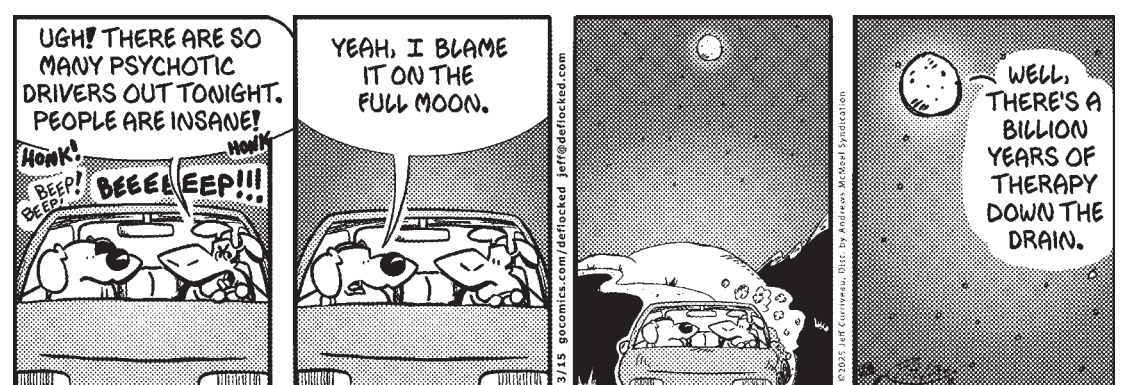
Adam@Home, by Rob Harrell



The Born Loser, by Chip Sansom



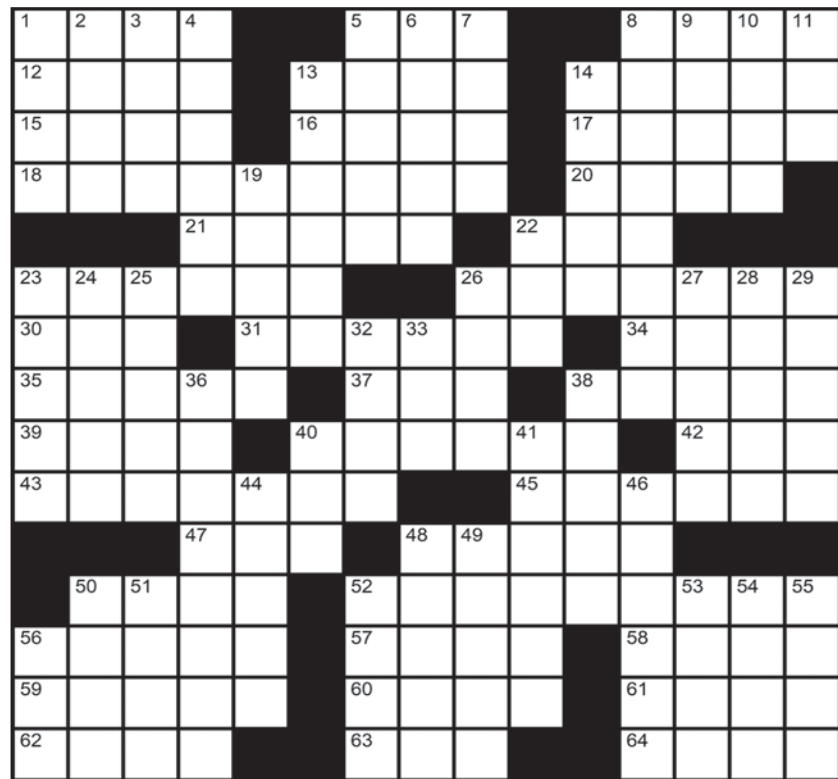
DeFlocked, by Jeff Corriveau



Rip Haywire, by Dan Thompson



CROSSWORD 3-15-25



CLUES ACROSS

1. Aladdin's find
5. Reggae precursor
8. "Lights out" signal
12. Not good
13. Flock's echo
14. ___ diet, a.k.a. caveman diet
15. Kind of jerk
16. *Southern and Southwestern U.S. region: Sun ___
17. Financial backer
18. *Switzerland's skiing destination (2 words)
20. Ivan the Terrible, e.g.

21. Clint Eastwood's "Play ___ for Me"
22. One in a pod
23. Wear out
26. Masculine
30. *Princess' turf
31. Makes a sum (2 words)
34. "He's Just Not That ___ You"
35. Dionysus' pipe-playing companion
37. Choose
38. Provide food
39. Answer from a tunnel
40. Virtual you
42. ___ Scare

43. Prickly plant
45. *Second "National Lampoon's Vacation" destination
47. Biblical Adam's partner
48. Cause and effect cycle?
50. Goals
52. *Jamaica and Cayman Islands location
56. Bert's sidekick
57. Poet Pound
58. Hay bundle
59. "The Great Gatsby" author
60. Billiards relative
61. Theories
62. ___-deaf
63. Boar's mate
64. Reason to cram

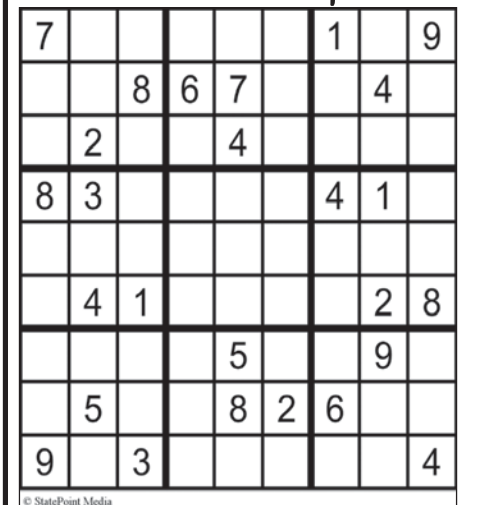
DOWN

1. Not more
2. Swear, not curse
3. Between mini and maxi
4. Bodily fluid
5. Small silvery fish
6. ___ G. of "SpongeBob SquarePants"
7. Aardvark's repast
8. *Serengeti National Park location
9. Aquatic plant
10. Pressure inducer
11. *Costa del ___, Spain
13. Humiliated
14. Eucharistic plate

19. Fretted instrument
22. OB-GYN test
23. Balance sheet item
24. *Coastal destination
25. Policeman's club in India
26. Cockapoo or Puggle, e.g.
27. Foreword
28. Make tea
29. Vast multitude
32. Peace symbol
33. *Rest and relaxation destination
36. *El Capitan and Half Dome location
38. Pigeon food?
40. Brewery order
41. Acrobatic move
44. Living room centerpiece?
46. Velveteen creature
48. Type of membranophone
49. Cupid's ammo
50. Gas station brand
51. Aware of a secret (2 words)
52. Porcinos
53. "At ___, soldier"
54. Charitable contribution
55. Hawk's aerie, e.g.
56. Time in NYC

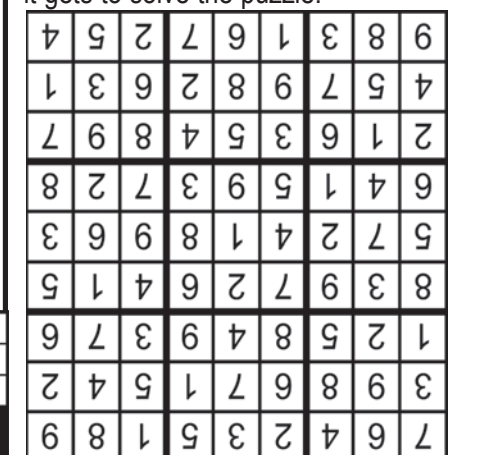


SUDOKU



Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Sudoku answer featured above. Crossword answer featured to the left.

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Legislature considers increased compensation for families of teachers killed at school

By **TYTAGAMI**
Staff Writer
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — A Georgia Senate committee advanced legislation Wednesday that would double the amount of money that families of teachers and other public school employees would receive when their loved ones are killed at school.

House Bill 105 would double to \$150,000 the compensation for victims of violence “in the line of duty,” putting it in parity with the indemnification for police officers killed on the job.

It is an acknowledgement of the increasing risk of death in schools, such as the mass shooting last fall at Apalachee High School in Barrow County, said Sen.

Bo Hatchett, R-Cornelia, who presented the bill to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

“Through this legislation, our state will be able to better support families who have lost loved ones in their service of our children. We live in a scary world and unfortunately this is a necessity,” Hatchett said. “We hope and pray it’s never used, but if and when it’s needed, it’s there.”

The measure by Rep. Will Wade, R-Dawsonville, would increase the \$75,000 indemnification established in 2000, a year after the mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, which at the time was seen as a shocking and extreme development.

The payout would cover any school employee killed while working at school.

The compensation to families of police officers was raised from \$100,000 in 2017 to the current \$150,000. The money comes from a trust fund of about \$3 million.

HB 105 would not increase the \$75,000 payout to school employees who are permanently disabled by a shooter or other assailant at school.

The measure passed the House of Representatives 168-0 last month and passed the Senate committee by a unanimous vote. It now goes to the Senate Rules Committee before a possible vote by the full Senate.

SHOOTING

From page 1A

Two individuals witnessed the shooting, including Jones’ estranged wife, before Jones fled the scene. Jones was found two weeks later at a residence in Thomaston.

Jones was sentenced by Judge G.E. “Bo” Adams, and prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Alicia Gasset and Chief Assistant District Attorney Gregory W. Winters. Gasset and District Attorney Eric Z. Edwards commented on the case.

“I am thankful for the Warner Robins Police

Department for doing an outstanding job investigating this case and bringing Jones to justice. I am thankful for our jurors who did their due diligence in listening to the evidence and reaching a verdict that held Jones accountable for taking the life of Demarion Harris,” Gasset said. “I hope and pray that this sentence will bring his family peace and closure.”

“This is the second murder conviction in Houston County this week stemming from a domestic situation. Uncontrolled anger directed at domestic partners continues to take lives and leave families shattered. Anthony

Jones made a deliberate choice to enter that home, gun in hand, and take the life of a young man who was laying in bed. His actions have now, thankfully, cost him his own freedom,” Edwards said. “I want to thank the Warner Robins Police Department for their dedicated work in tracking Jones down and bringing him to justice, as well as ADA Alicia Gasset and Chief ADA Greg Winters for their hard work in securing this conviction. My heart goes out to the family of Demarion Harris, and I hope that today’s verdict brings them some measure of justice.”

SENTENCED

From page 1A

“On appeal, the Georgia Supreme Court overturned the conviction in March of 2024, ruling that evidence presented at trial of a rap video featuring Baker and demonstrating his relationship with NoCap had been improperly admitted, and sending the case back to the Houston County Superior Court to be re-tried,” the release said.

Houston County District Attorney Eric Edwards pro-

vided comments about the sentencing.

“This case is a stark reminder of the unjustifiable violence that too often follows disputes in nightlife settings. Morgan Baker escalated a minor altercation into deadly gunfire, costing Tarmarco Head his life and devastating his loved ones. While the Georgia Supreme Court overturned Baker’s original conviction on evidentiary grounds, the facts of this case remained clear: he played a direct role in an act of senseless violence that led to a man’s death. Rather than facing another trial, Baker

has now accepted responsibility through this plea and will spend the next 15 years in prison as a result,” he said.

Edwards thanked Assistant District Attorneys Sandra Matson and Justin Duane for their hard work on the case. He also thanked the Warner Robins Police Department and Georgia Bureau of Investigation for their thorough investigation.

“Our thoughts remain with the family of Tarmarco Head, and we hope this resolution brings them some measure of closure,” he said.

BOARD

From page 1A

a vital role in helping us achieve our mission of high achievement for all and continuous growth,” Assistant Superintendent Christopher Brown said. “Remaining in one District for so many years speaks volumes about your commitment to our community, and the impact you’ve had on students and colleagues alike is truly immeasurable. On behalf of the Houston County community, I want to express our deepest gratitude for the years of service you have given.”

The list of the employees honored can be found on hhjonline.com.

“On behalf of our entire Board of Education, you have our deepest appreciation for your countless hours, days, weeks, months and years that you have served our school system, and we genuinely appreciate everything that you’ve done for the students and staff of the Houston County School District,” Board Chair Helen Hughes said.

The Board also heard from their guests in attendance, including Matt Arthur Elementary, Houston County High School, Huntington Middle, Quail Run Elementary and WIN Academy. Each school principal highlighted a few star students and their Teacher of the Year.

“Thank you to all of our guests and for the inspiration you give to each of us,” Hughes said.

The Board congratulated a plethora of State Winners, including DECA State winners.

Haydn Hardegree and Caidence Scott from

Veterans High School placed first in Buying and Merchandising Team Decision Making. James Osborne from Northside High School placed first in Retail Merchandising and Darshan Patel, also from Northside High School, placed first in Buying and Merchandising Online Testing.

All-State Band Members from Houston County High School, Perry High School and Veterans High School, and State Champions in wrestling were also recognized.

Mikayala Williams from Houston County High School placed first in the 5A 110 pound class and Matthew Kholman of Perry High School placed first in the 4A 113 pound class.

During Board Member comments, Jon Nichols provided comments centered around the retirements. He said it was shocking to see the amount of retirements and transfers they had.

“While looking at the number that will be leaving us this year I thought, ‘do they really know how much we appreciate them and how much we will miss their smile, hugs, advice, discipline and their willingness to serve,’” Nichols said. “There is no way I can express my gratitude for you and all that you did for me in all of my years. The magnitude of your lives put onto me can never be put into words. May we always take the time to remember our teachers and never miss a chance to say thank you for everything.”

This week is Board Appreciation Week and Hughes said they get an overwhelming form of appreciation each year.

“We don’t do this job for

any accolades or anything like that, but thank you from the bottom of our hearts,” she said.

The Superintendent’s Report led by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Scott touched on their recent Teacher Recruitment Fair held on Feb. 22, at Veterans High School. He said there were over 430 applicants in attendance. Those interested in teaching in Houston County can visit www.hcbe.net/teachhouse.

Scott also highlighted the Perry Area Chamber and Robins Regional Chamber Star Students and Teachers.

“The program recognizes the students with the highest SAT scores at each of our high schools. The students select their Star Teacher for the contributions they made to their academic success,” he said.

Congratulations were also made for the Literary Region Champions of Houston County High School and Perry High School as well as the Warner Robins High School boys basketball team for winning region and the basketball teams Bonaire Middle School 7th grade girls, Huntington Middle 7th grade boys, Perry Middle School 8th grade girls and Feagin Mill Middle School 8th grade boys for winning their championships.

The next Houston County Board of Education meeting will be on April 8, at the Board Office in Perry.

The full agenda to this meeting can be found at simbli.boardsolutions.com/SB_Meetings/ViewMeeting.aspx?S=4089&MID=124244.

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Perry Baseball

Panthers' mistakes continue to compound in region-opening loss to No. 3 Wayne County

By **CLAY BROWN**
HHJ Sports Editor
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PERRY — The Perry Panthers (3-5, 0-1 Region 1-4A) have had several games get away from them because of defensive mistakes, and those issues continued to compound as they lost their region opener to the Wayne County Yellow Jackets (11-2, 1-0 Region) 6-2.

Three observations from Tuesday's game:

When the wheels fell off

The 6-2 final paints a pretty comfortable win for the Yellow Jackets, but Perry played 4A's No. 3 team close for the first five innings.

Connor Langdon pitched another gem for the Panthers, with nine strikeouts and no earned runs through five innings.

But, down 2-0 after five, Wayne County opened the game up with a four-run sixth inning after the pitching change.

A walk and a hit-by-pitch set up an RBI single, and then with the bases loaded, the Yellow Jackets emptied the bases with a ground ball into left field and put them up 6-0 with one out.

Although the Panthers added two runs before the final out, it wasn't enough



Clay Brown/HHJ

Jackson Thompson follows through on a big swing at the plate.

as coach Denny Bryant's team fell in their first region competition.

"I thought our guys competed. We didn't give up in the end," Bryant said. "It's just one of those things when you start playing good teams, you can't dig yourself a hole. We can't use the youth card no more, we're in region play. We gotta find ways to guys to get the job done. So that's what our goal is, just keep getting better."

A change behind the plate

Passed balls have been a big issue for Perry to start the year, and they made a change at catcher late against Wayne County.

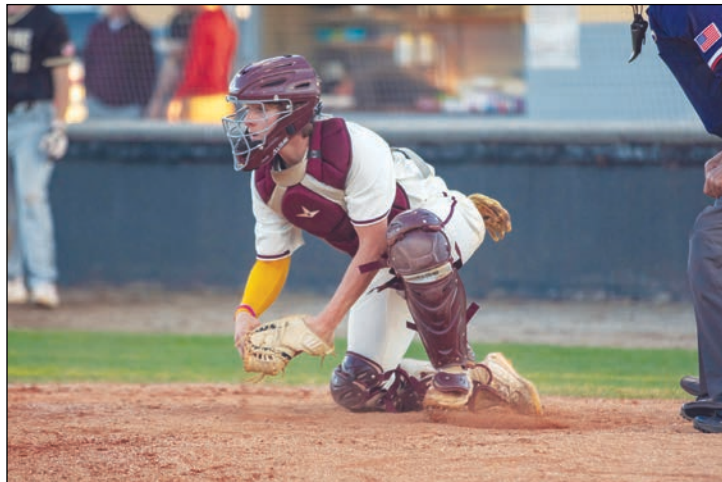
Their two runs given up in the first five innings were from passed balls, and this isn't the first time

it's happened.

In the series against Veterans, against Thomas County Central and Luella, it's consistently been one of the biggest defensive issues.

"Connor Langdon pitched another gem. He had eight or nine strikeouts, no hits through five innings but they end up scoring two runs on him with no hits," Bryant said. "This comes from walks and then extra bases [like] passed balls. When you give a team like that extra bases, they scored two runs without putting the ball in play, and that's something you can't do."

But the Panthers made a change in the last couple of innings, putting sophomore Tyson Peters in behind the plate.



Clay Brown/HHJ

Tyson Peters subbed in at catcher for the Panthers during their region opener against Wayne County.

He did a good job, especially considering Kam Vandersee had trouble keeping the ball up in the sixth inning.

He was also responsible for Perry's only two runs with a two-RBI double in the bottom of the sixth.

It's unclear what the catcher position will look like in the near future, but Bryant made it very clear that Peters will get a shot to keep his spot.

"I will say that we put Tyson Peters, a sophomore, in right there at the end and he had no passed balls. So he's gonna get his opportunity," Bryant said. "We're just trying to find guys that's going to be able to produce, and he actually had his own two-out RBI, he had the only RBIs for us. He's going to get an

opportunity to play again."

Defense wasn't the only issue

As much as the defense can be harped on, it didn't get much help from the offense.

Peters drove in the only runs in the sixth inning, and outside of that it was fly ball after fly ball brought down by the Yellow Jackets.

The Panthers did have runners in scoring position in the first and second innings, but left them stranded.

"We didn't advance any bases. We had a lot of bases, we had more base runners than they did," Bryant said. "But they didn't give up the freebies and we did early, and it came back to bite us, and that's just something that

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we've got to get better."

The offense, despite putting up 30 runs two weeks ago and 15 last week, has not had the best showings when not aided by walks.

Nate Sullivan has been spectacular with a .444 average and .515 on-base percentage (Jackson Thompson is also batting .435 with a .548 OBP), but outside of that there's not much to speak of at the moment.

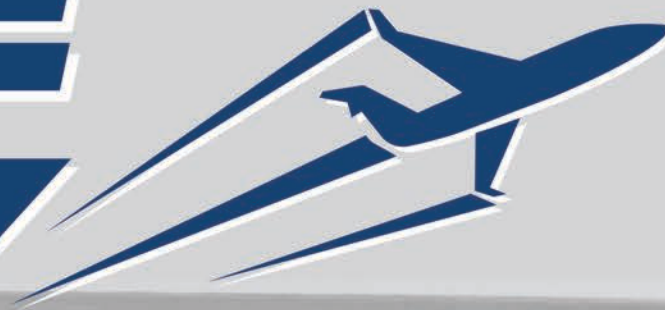
Without putting up consistent offensive numbers, the sixth inning was a death sentence rather than a setback.

"The big inning is just kind of a, they got bases on, come up with some hits, but we didn't put enough pressure on them offensively," Bryant said. "We had opportunities, had runners in scoring position, couldn't get no two out hits early. I thought [Wayne County] did a very good job of eliminating our chances, and we didn't do a very good job early on giving up two runs with no hits."

UP NEXT

Perry will travel down to Jesup for the doubleheader on Friday, March 14 at 4 p.m.

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