

The Houston Home Journal

Houston County’s most trusted news source since 1870 • EDIMGIAFAD

\$1.00 • Volume 156, No. 12 hhjonline.com Weekend, January 31, 2026

‘We are not going to let evil take over Houston County’

Officer, woman shot after response to a domestic disturbance on Rose Street on Thursday

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

WARNER ROBINS— An officer and woman are in critical condition after an incident on the 100 block of Rose Street on Thursday morning.

Law enforcement was on scene for multiple hours attempting to apprehend 21-year-old Rashaun Williams, who was barricaded inside the building.

According to Warner Robins Police Chief Wayne Fisher, officers responded to a domestic disturbance call. He said call takers could hear an altercation between the caller and Williams.

At approximately 8:39 a.m., an officer was shot when approaching the home. The 31-year-old woman was also shot during the altercation.

The Houston County Sheriff’s Office, members of the Perry Police Department

and Centerville Police Department responded in a unified manner, Fisher said.

When seeing the gravity of the situation, the Houston County SWAT Team was called to the scene.

At 9:07 a.m., Fisher called the Georgia Bureau of Investigations, who is currently investigating the incident. Then at 11:09 a.m., Williams was taken into custody.

The officer is 35 years old and has been with WRPD for eight years, Fisher mentioned.

“I ask for the victim’s family as well as the officer who is a victim of the situation that we as a community keep them in prayer and thoughts,” he said.

He also shared he is grateful to have a unified law enforcement. Sheriff Matt Moulton also provided his comments saying the community is shaken by the incident.

“The officer that was involved in this was doing the job that we ask him to do every day. To wake up, put his badge on, to go and face danger to protect this community. He was doing what we asked him to do,” he said.

Moulton shared they will continue to support the local police departments and the community.

“To the citizens of Houston County, I pledge that we are not going to let evil take over Houston County,” he said.

District Attorney Eric Edwards also provided his comments saying he is thankful to be a part of the effort to keep Houston County a safe place to live.

Governor Brian Kemp shared a statement on his social media:

“Marty, the girls, and I are praying for the Warner Robins Police Department



Sandra Hernandez/HHJ

There was heavy law enforcement in the area of Redmond Drive and Rose Street due to the incident.

See **OFFICER** page 2A



Courtesy: Museum of Aviation

In this month’s *This is Robins*, we highlighted the Museum of Aviation’s Run for Aviation race and fundraiser as it reaches its 30th annual this weekend. Read more about the race and fundraiser in our *This is Robins* section starting on B1.

Mayor J. Micheal Evans looks forward to first full year as Mayor of Centerville

By **OWEN JONES**
HHJ Staff Writer
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CENTERVILLE — In 2026, J.Micheal Evans will serve his first year as Mayor of Centerville.

Evans took office after he won a Special Election in June after former Mayor John Harley’s retirement. He then ran for Mayor again in November 2025 and won the race unopposed.

Since then, Evans has held true to his campaign goals, one of which was to focus on public safety. He said there was an issue in the police department as there were several openings available.

“Over the last six or seven months, Chief [Cedric] Duncan and his staff have been very successful in filling those slots,” he said. “I believe we [now] only have



Evans

one open slot in the police department.”

The same can be said for the Centerville Fire Department as Evans shared they only have one or two spots still open.

The city has also achieved and started much needed road projects during Evans’ short time as Mayor.

“We were able to pave

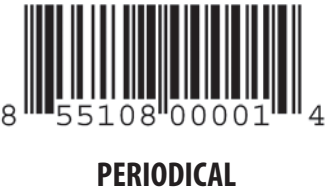
Collins Avenue all the way from Elberta Road [to] Wilson Drive all the way around Houston Lake [Road], which is an area that really needed work on,” he said. “Then you see the project that’s going on Wilson Drive as far as widening that road, and that project is well underway.”

Evans hopes the Wilson Drive road widening will be finished in the next 12 months.

Overall, Evans placed his public service to the citizens of Centerville in the highest regard. He said their biggest accomplishment over the past year was their investment in public safety.

“We want citizens in Centerville to feel safe in their neighborhoods and in the public spaces,” he said. “Making sure that

See **EVANS** page 3A



PERIODICAL

Warner Robins police seeking information on unsolved homicide from 1984

By **SANDRA HERNANDEZ**
HHJ Staff Writer
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WARNER ROBINS — The Warner Robins Police Department is currently looking for information on an unsolved homicide that happened on May 28, 1984.

A reward of \$8,000 is being offered by the Houston County District Attorney’s Office through the Macon Regional Crimestoppers.

According to a media release, officers were dispatched to North First Street, now Armed Forces Boulevard near the old train depot, in reference to a deceased person.

When officers arrived, they found the body of 67-year-old Edward

Hanley who was badly beaten. Robbery was the apparent motive for the murder.

At the time of the incident, Hanley was living at a boarding house at 106 Young Avenue.

It was discovered that Hanley had left a bar on South First Street and was likely walking back to the boarding house when he was attacked, the media release says.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact Lt. Justin Clark with the Warner Robins Police Department Criminal Investigations Division at (478) 302-5380. It is also encouraged to contact the Macon Regional Crimestoppers at 1-877-68CRIME.

Perry woman pleads guilty to possession of methamphetamine

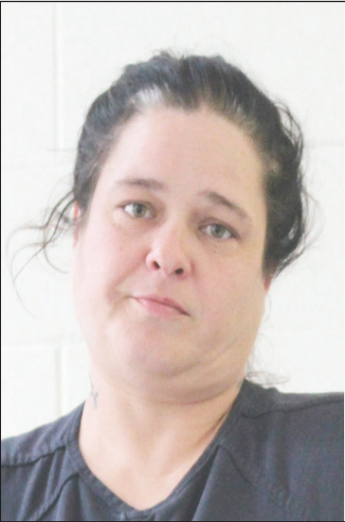
By **OWEN JONES**
HHJ Staff Writer
owen@hhjonline.com

PERRY — Kristin Nicole Smith, 39, of Perry pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute on Monday. She was sentenced to a total of 20 years with the first 12 to be served in prison.

According to a media release from the Houston County District Attorney’s Office, the case originated from an investigation by the Houston County Narcotics Division of Smith selling methamphetamine in 2023. Investigator Austin Smith conducted a “controlled buy of narcotics” from Smith at her residence in February 2023. The release said the Sheriff’s Office then issued a search warrant.

Officers on the premises located a large amount of methamphetamine, marijuana, digital scales, packaging materials among other drug paraphernalia.

“When questioned, Smith



Smith

admitted knowledge of the methamphetamine and marijuana inside of her residence,” the release said.

Smith had a total of 191.246 grams, the DA’s office said. She was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Lina Khan Leh who provided comments:

“The District Attorney’s Office would like to thank

Investigator Austin Smith and the dedicated work of the Houston County Sheriff’s Office Narcotics Division for their work on this case,” she said. “The Houston County District Attorney’s Office is committed to holding drug dealers accountable.”

District Attorney Eric Edwards also said a few words regarding the case:

“Distributing large quantities of methamphetamine causes enormous harm to individuals, families, and the broader community. This sentence reflects the seriousness of that conduct and the danger posed by high-level drug distribution,” he said. “I appreciate the work of the Houston County Sheriff’s Office Narcotics Division and the careful prosecution of this case by Assistant District Attorney Lina Leh. Our office will continue to aggressively pursue accountability for those who profit from putting dangerous drugs into our community.”

Word of the Day

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.—
Lamentations 3:40 (NKJV)

Inside

Opinion, 4A
•Viewpoints
•Jim Balletto

Lifestyle & Faith, 5A
•Billy Powell
•Don Moncrief

Entertainment, 6A
•Comics
•Puzzle

Classifieds, 7A
Business, A8
Sports, A10

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COMMUNITY

VECTR partners with national organization to offer free career transition services

By **SANDRA HERNANDEZ**
HHJ Staff Writer
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CITY — The Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center announced their new partnership with Still Serving Veterans on Tuesday. The partnership aims to strengthen free career transition services to veterans, service members and military spouses.

Still Serving Veterans is a national organization based in Huntsville, Ala.

Chief Operating Officer of the VECTR Center Don Layne met Dave Lakin, Director of Veteran Career Transitions at SSV, during an event in Columbus, Ga. After having a conversation together, Layne realized they had the same goals. They then started planning to offer SSV offices at the center. The partnership was then born.

"[Still Serving Veterans] whole goal is to help that transitioning active duty person or a veteran that is job searching [to] find that job that's right for them," Layne said. "Find the job that they need to fill and can help support their life or their family."

The event highlighted services offered by SSV including resume development, military-to-civilian skill translation, interview preparation and job search strategy, while the VECTR Center offers training and developing skills.

The center has also offered resume classes, but with the SSV taking over those services, there will be an improvement and will allow the center to focus more on

workforce development.

"We still focus on workforce development for the high needs of Middle Georgia [and] the jobs that need to be filled in Middle Georgia. Marrying those two together is just perfect," he said.

Layne shared at VECTR they train people in welding, HVAC repair, Artificial Intelligence, robotics and manufacturing. There are approximately 16 Department of War Skillbridge programs, and 11 of those are taught regularly.

"That's our goal, workforce development, by getting these veterans and active duty service members jobs," he said.

During their cohorts, students will be encouraged to visit one of the SSV offices to further help their transition into civilian life. There will also be counselors available, who are veterans as well.

Layne believes the SSV being a national organization is a benefit because most of the retiring active duty members are not staying in the area. Therefore, they will still have connections to their services.

Lakin shared his excitement about the partnership and to offer their services to those who need it.

"The work that we do, our mission meshes so well with what the VECTR Center does. We're glad that they accepted us to be partners here. It was space to do what we do," he said.

As a veteran, Layne shared getting out of active duty can be one of the scariest times in their life. He said no matter their career,



Chief Operating Officer of the VECTR Center Don Layne (right) and Director of Veteran Career Transitions at Still Serving Veterans Dave Lakin (left) announcing their partnership on Tuesday.

success level or training, it is still "nerve wracking."

Lakin said people are usually nervous about the job search, especially in the current job market.

"Those are all things that we get. The best thing is the opportunity to take that weight off your shoulders," he said.

Layne said the military does not train active duty members for a civilian job or how to find a job. However, the VECTR Center and SSV will give them the skills needed to navigate the transition into civilian life.

"That's what we're here to do," he said.

The VECTR Center is located at 1001 South Armed Forces Boulevard. To find out more, visit their website: <https://gavectr.org/>.

Hawkinsville Opera House

Established 1987

Hawkinsville Public Arts Council

PRESENTS...

THE RESTLESS NATIVES

SATURDAY, FEB. 7

Macon's tribute to The Allman Brothers Band. Specializing in the early music created by the "Original 6," The Restless Natives bring a fire and energy unparalleled in tribute acts. The band was formed in 2020 by members all "native" to the Macon and middle Georgia area, and has performed dozens of festivals and special events around the southeast.

TICKETS

GENERAL ADMISSION:

\$25 in Advance

\$30 at Door

Doors open at 6:00pm

Show at 7:00pm

Tickets are available at the Hawkinsville Opera House, www.hawkinsvilleoperahouse.com or by calling 478-783-1884 • 42 Lumpkin St, Hawkinsville

OFFICER
From page 1A

Officer who was shot and injured in the line of duty this morning. Our police and first responders regularly put themselves in harm's way to protect their fellow Georgians, and it is our responsibility to support them and stand with them as they bravely

answer that call to duty."

Warner Robins Mayor LaRhonda Patrick also posted a statement on social media:

"City Council and I are lifting up one of our injured Warner Robins police officers who was injured in the line of duty today. Every day, our men and women in blue step forward with courage and

commitment to protect our community, and that sacrifice never goes unnoticed. Please join us in praying for his full and swift recovery, strength in his family, and support for the entire Warner Robins Police Department and our City of Warner Robins family."

Healthcare Corner

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CALENDAR

Perry High School
Class of 1976
Bi-Centennial
Reunion Weekend

Theme: “Celebrating 50 Years of Achievement and Excellence”

Panthers of ’76—It’s Time to Celebrate! Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of our 50-Year Reunion!

Reunion Weekend: September 11–13, 2026

Events All Weekend

RSVP by March 31, 2026

Payment Due by May 29, 2026

For more information Contact Regina Ford at 478-987-0257 or email perryhighschool76@gmail.com and visit the Reunion Social Media Page Perry High School Class of 76 Reunion News.

75th
Anniversary
Celebration

"All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins is excited to celebrate our 75th Anniversary on February 1st, 2026. The Right Reverend Robert Wright, the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta will be joining us for Sunday Worship at 10:15AM, February 1st, with Confirmation and Reaffirmation followed by a Reception in our Parrish Hall."

AARP Tax-Aide

AARP Tax-Aide will be doing free tax preparation in Perry, Warner Robins and Fort Valley. AARP membership is not required.

AARP Tax-Aide will be offering free tax service at the Perry Library on Wednesdays 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. by appointment only. Drop by the Perry Library to sign up for an appointment starting on Feb.4, 2026.

AARP Tax-Aide will be offering free tax service at the Warner Robins Senior Center (152 Maple Street) Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. by appointment only starting on Feb.2, 2026. Schedule your appointment at: AARP.org/taxaide for the Warner Robins site or call 478-322-0269 for assistance.

AARP Tax-Aide will offer free tax service at the Fort Valley Library on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. by appointment only. Drop by the FV Libray to sign up for an appointment starting on Feb.3, 2026.

Concert by
TAKE3

The Warner Robins Community Concert Association is hosting a concert featuring a genre-defying trio with a flair for the wild and unexpected (think rock meets Bach). Sunday, Feb. 1, at 3:00 p.m. Admission: Adults \$18; students are FREE! First United Methodist Church, 205 N. Davis Dr., Warner Robins 31093.

If you have any questions, please call me at 1-478-923-0787. Your consideration of our request is appreciated.

Wine and
Cheese Tasting

The Episcopal Church Women’s (ECW) at All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins, is hosting our Annual Wine and Cheese Tasting on Feb 13, 2026, starting at 7:00PM in our Parish Hall.

Various wines, craft beers, and cheeses from around the world are available for tasting and enjoyment. In addition, there is a Silent Auction and door prizes.

This event is one of our major Episcopal Church Women’s (ECW) funding sources for the many Outreach Programs sponsored by All Saints.

Tickets are \$30.00 per person and can be purchased at the church office. Please contact the church office at 478-923-1791 for more information and tickets.

Houston County Celebrates Earth
Day

PERRY, GA – Houston County will celebrate Earth Day on April 18, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Houston County Extension Pavilion in Perry. This free family event will offer learning stations, craft projects, educational exhibits, face painting, and more.

Two exhibitors will bring wildlife and be available to answer questions. Vendors will also be onsite to offer a variety of items for sale, including plants.

Morgan Grizzle, Houston County ANR Agent, said, “This all-ages event will feature fun, educational activities for the entire family! Our goal is to help our community understand how each of us plays a role in Earth’s bigger picture. Earth Day isn’t just about recycling or picking up litter, although these are important. It also includes topics like septic systems, production agriculture, invasive plants, animals, weather, and so much more. We hope everyone will join us for a fun-filled family day and leave having learned something new along the way!”

Earth Day has been observed since 1970 to promote protecting the environment and raise awareness about preserving Earth’s resources. The Houston County Extension Pavilion is located at 2030 Kings Chapel Road in Perry. For more information, call the extension office at 478-987-2028. To learn more about the UGA Extension office, visit www.extension.uga.edu.

Senior Health
Expo

Bloom Events and Marketing will be hosting Matters of the Heart, a Senior Health Expo from Feb 10, 2026, at 10 am to 1 pm at the Georgia National Fairgrounds Miller Murphy Howard Building. The event is free of charge and vendors deadline is Feb. 4, 2026. For more information, email info@bloomeventsandmarketing.com or call 478-303-0691.

Community
Calendar

Email
your
information
to:
brieanna@hhjonline.com

Houston
Home
Journal

478-987-1823
1210 Washington St.
Perry

American
Heritage Girls
Meeting

A new Chapter of American Heritage Girls has begun meeting in Perry at 208 Langston Road. Meetings are held on Mondays at 6:15 pm. AHG is a Christ-centered character and leadership development program for biological girls ages 5-18. It is dedicated to building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and nation through hundreds of badge programs. There are currently more than 1,700 chapters in the United States. For further information call or text 910-381-7419 or AHGGA0208@gmail.com

EVANS

From page 1A

we have police officers on the road patrolling and being able to respond to any calls they get is really a big accomplishment.”

Evans pointed out that with where the city is going, they have changed their mindset in customer service with their employees. He hopes that sentiment gets reciprocated by the citizens.

“If you’re working a street crew and someone comes up to and talks to you, we expect you to treat them with respect or if you’re working in the city clerk’s office or water department and somebody comes in and asks a question, we expect you to treat them with respect,” he said. “Conversly, we expect our citizens to do the same. That has been our focus, and I think we’ve been very successful at that.”

One big challenge Evans has faced is the moving of the Recycling Center. Evans said there were a lot of issues dealing with that including the city not accepting plastic anymore. He learned they were being dumped at the landfill and not being recycled, which he didn’t believe was fair to the citizens.

“Explaining that to people

and helping them understand why that decision was made has really been a challenge,” he said. “I think we’re being successful in getting the word across.”

Looking forward to the rest of 2026, Evans said the city is currently putting together their event calendar for the year. He is most looking forward to the July 4th celebration.

“Our country will be celebrating 250 years, and that’s a big deal,” he said. “We’re going to make sure that we treat it like that, and in Centerville we’re going to have a big celebration.”

Evans said the plan is to have the celebration on July 3 to not “bump heads” with nearby cities.

Evans also mentioned they have a full city council to serve the citizens.

“All posts are filled, and I’m looking forward to working with the city council on making sure that the citizens of Centerville have the services that they expect,” he said.

Making sure city facilities are at their highest quality is something Evans thinks they can build off upon. He said they want to make sure that Center Park can maintain its place in the city center for years to come.

Evans shared they also have future plans in the

SPLOST and are in talks to put an amphitheater in Center Park.

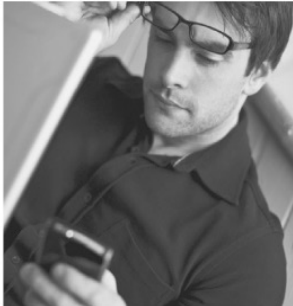
“We’re going through the design process and we’re going to have to go through a construction process, so I’m hoping that we get that started this year,” he said.

Evans mentioned the streets of Centerville could use some improvement. He said the roads are highly traveled and there aren’t many sidewalks in the city.

“[Myself] along with staff are looking for funding sources [such as] grants, or matching grants so that we can start working on those projects.”

Personally, Evans hopes to stay healthy and take care of himself in 2026 while also being able to enjoy time with his wife and family.

“From a city perspective, my New Year’s Resolution and ours as a whole is to make sure that Centerville is an environment that is inviting, attractive, a place that people want to come to enjoy the amenities and live in,” he said. “Also, that we make sure to take care of our city employees and make sure that they take care of the citizens.”



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The Houston Home Journal

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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 though hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication towards printing the truth. The Houston Home Journal is a periodical, mailed (ISSN 471) in Perry and is published Wednesday and Saturday by Houston Home Journal P.O. Box 1910, Perry, GA 31069; 478-987-1823 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: P.O. Box 1910, Perry, GA 31069.

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Georgians are subsidizing an uneven data center boom



For years, Georgia leaders have boasted that a major reason the state became a hot spot for artificial intelligence data centers was a generous tax break passed in 2018. However, a new state audit tells a different story — most of those data centers would have come here, anyway. According to the report, only about 30% of Georgia's data centers can be traced to the tax break. The other 70% were already likely to be built, drawn by cheap land, access to relatively inexpensive power and Georgia's geographic location. Even so, taxpayers are losing nearly half a billion dollars a year to keep the unnecessary, ineffective incentive in place. In other words, we're overpaying, and it will cost us. Data centers offer a complicated financial calculus. During the construction phase, those in the building trades are the big winners. However, once the massive edifices are built, employment opportunities evaporate. Buildings dedicated to towers of computer servers and the transfer of electronic information require only a skeleton crew to maintain. Instead of people, what data centers do need — forever — are enormous amounts of electricity and water. Because of their need for so much power, Georgia is now planning for thousands of megawatts of new demand largely to serve these facilities. Instead of funding tax

breaks to create jobs, everyday Georgians are instead footing the bill through higher power bills, dramatically increased water rates, louder neighborhoods, fewer trees and more strain on aging water systems — but the burden will not be shared evenly. As those along the I-20 corridor can attest, many of the fastest-growing data center projects are being built in Black communities and in rural areas. Those who know Georgia's history surrounding land-use decisions know several of these places have historically dealt with the effects of toxic landfills, warehouses and other heavy industries. Residents often learn about new projects late in the process, when decisions are already made. The limited jobs promised rarely meet the pledges — but the impacts linger. Democracy is not simply found in the act of voting. Voting is a mechanism through which we demand representative leadership make good decisions on our behalf — and invest our resources wisely. The reflexive tendency to spend billions for headlines and yield little for communities is not right. It violates the intention of an effective democracy. We cannot justify bad deals under the vague, unproven promise of growth. If the state is giving away hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate welfare, the public should see and feel the benefits.

See ABRAMS page 8A

One Year to Live

“One voice can make a difference”

COLUMNIST

KELLY BURKE

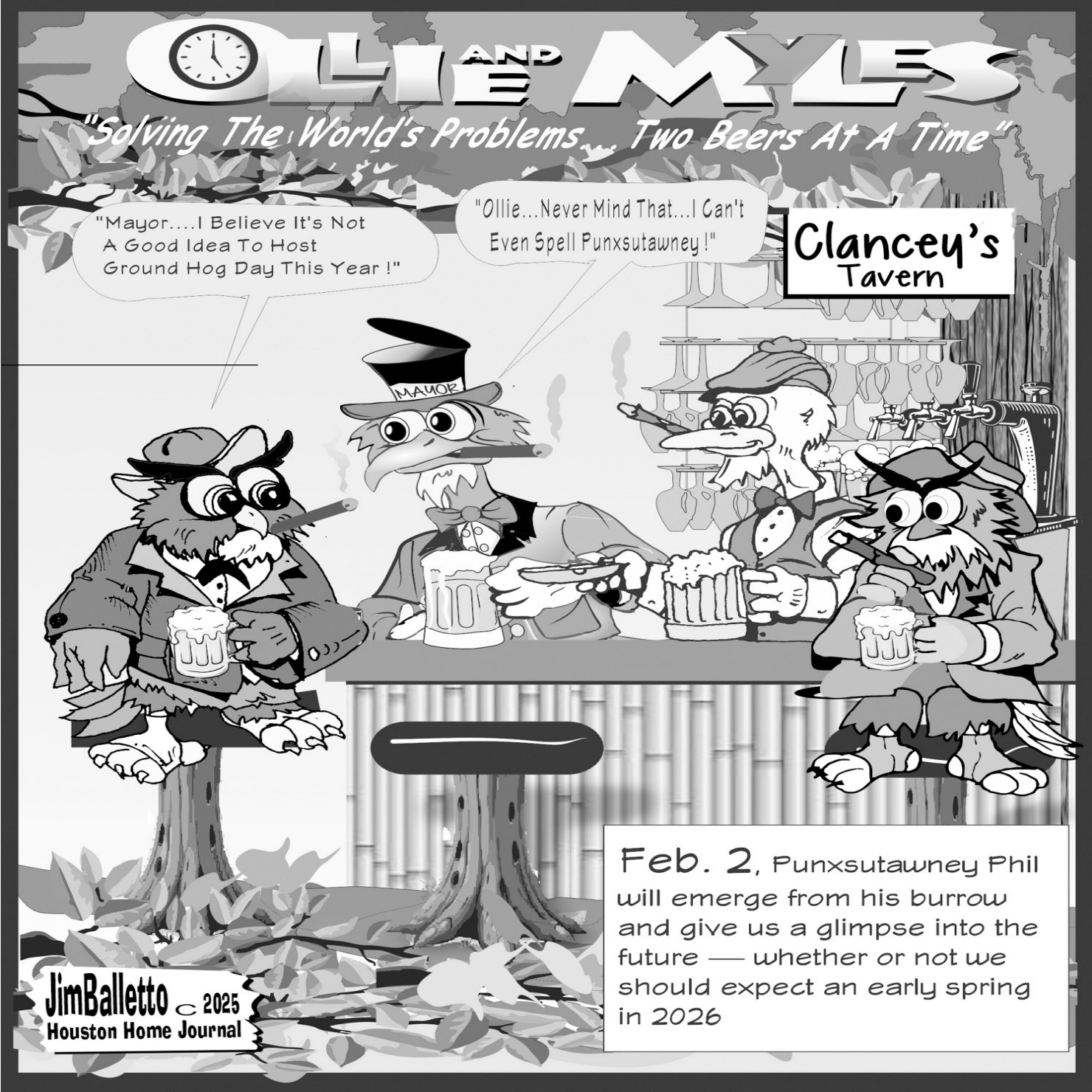


As this new year unfolds, what would happen if you knew it was your last? Doctors are nowhere near this accurate, but if they were able to tell you precisely when you will die, and there's no wiggle room, no magic drug, what would you do? For the sake of discussion, you have sufficient funds on hand to do any of the following. If the doctors say you have one year to live; what would you do? Would you live out a bucket list? A week in Key West watching the gorgeous sunsets. A week in Iceland watching the Northern Lights. Maybe a safari. Travel and splurge. Good for you. Then... How about if they told you that you had a month to live? There'd be time for at least one bucket item. Then time to gather the family and revel in the glorious life you've had. Say your good-byes. Dispose of property. Then... Your time left is one week? Maybe you freshen

up your estate plan. Maybe you plan your departure ceremony. Gather the family. Lots of hugs. Then... What if you had one day to live? I met such a man. He knew his body was going to fail him on Monday. He called me to prepare his will. It was interesting. His kids and grandkids were milling about, his hospice care nurse was on standby, but he was very lucid and matter of fact about it. He did pass away on Monday. But for many, it'd be gather the family around, give “old person” advice like work less and love more, enjoy a last meal if able. Then... What if the doctors told you that you had one

hour left? There's time to embrace your loved ones around you. Maybe a few phone calls. But no time to worry about property. Then... When you have one minute to live, and that's all, do you complain to God? Or bless God for the joyful abundance? Call upon Him for eternal salvation? Because it's never too late. If you get one minute. Then... Slip away. From there, we know little about anyone's particular destination. We want to believe the best, but we don't know. Believers know that Christ awaits them. Buddhists and Hindus believe in rein-

carnation. Atheists believe that darkness is the result. Agnostics don't know what happens. I pray that you have many years left on this earth to do everything you wish. I can say this. I've never met an elderly person who wanted to live forever, although they exist I'm told. So live now. Life is good! 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, and 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. To see this column or Kelly's archives, visit www.kellyrburke.com. You can email Kelly at dakellyburke@gmail.com.




Talking about past experiences with my son

What other interesting stories do you have?" my son asked me while we were riding home one recent evening. I have never considered myself an interesting person. My life, as good as it is, is pretty routine and mundane, especially since becoming a parent. So, to answer his question, I had to think fast and dig deep in my memory to a time before school schedules and extracurricular activities dominated my calendar. This conversation was prefaced by telling him about an encounter with a friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Not a costumed superhero, but a literal man climbing around the roof of the building that holds the windowless dungeon that is my cubicle. A few of us confronted the stranger, who seemed innocent enough and was quite friendly as he talked while collecting debris and muck from the roof. "I'm drawn to clogs. I can feel them," he said. And sure enough, there was a clog in the gutter. When we stopped him from entering the building's attic,

he shimmied down the wall and swung to the sidewalk via a gas line. He disappeared down the street, never to be seen again. He was some kind of guru for sure, and we just let him walk away. Back in the car with my son, I asked, "Have I ever told you about the Tibetan monks?" I hadn't. So, I shared this tale: About 15 years ago, a group of Tibetan monks visited Atlanta, which is home to the North American Drepung Loseling Monastery, sister Buddhist center of the monastery of the same name in India that houses the famed Dalai Lama and other monks, exiled from their homeland when Tibet was claimed by China. The monks brought along an exhibition of sacred relics, bone fragments, beads and scraps of cloth, remnants of past Lamas, some a thousand years old. I covered the visit and exhibition for the newspaper I worked for. I met the monks and talked, via an interpreter, about their experiences and the effort to keep their culture alive.

NEW SOUTHERN DAD

KYLE DOMINY



During the visit to the monastery to view the relics, I was given a container of holy water, water tinted yellow with saffron and blessed by the monks. I did not intend to participate in a religious ceremony outside of my own customs, but I certainly didn't want to offend my hosts, so I accepted the vial and slipped it in my pocket. Later, back in my small apartment, I fed the sacred liquid to my pet bearded dragon. To cut a long story short, that lizard defied conventions for captive bred reptiles and lived an extra-long life of about 17 years, two more than the high end of their life expectancy. I think it was the holy water. The lizard is buried on my property, at the edge of the woods under a sweetgum tree. My son said he remembers the funeral we had for it. I don't doubt him. "Did the holy water really make the lizard live longer?" he asked. He's 12 years old now, and there is still a sliver of magic left in the world. "I have no reason not to think that," I answered, pulling the car under the garage. Then the day went back to the regular and mundane, but for a brief moment I was able to relive a past experience with someone I hope has a lot of adventures to come.

LIFESTYLE & FAITH

Never Ever Give Up

During a World Series game in which the Atlanta Braves were losing, the TV camera caught several Braves players in the dugout laughing and joking. At the time the New York Yankees were beating them pretty badly. It bothered me that these players could have a cavalier attitude, particularly since they had already played 164 games to win their division, beat Houston in 6-games to win the National League and now were playing for the championship of the world. How could they be smiling and displaying such levity?

True competitors do not take losing lightly. Vince Lombardi, the great Green Bay Packer coach said, “Show me someone who doesn’t hate to lose and I will show you a loser.”

Bear Bryant, the famous Alabama Crimson Tide coach said, “ Winning isn’t everything but it beats anything that comes in second.” And this writer once said, “ The game is not lost until the fat lady sings and, if she purses her lips to sing, slap her face.”

I have never enjoyed losing any contest, whether it be a game or another type endeavor. I played basketball at Perry under legendary Coach Eric Staples who was a fierce competitor. Ask any of his former players if they ever saw Coach Staples smile when Perry was behind. In fact, I never saw him smile when we were ahead. He was

PARABLES TO PONDER

BILLY POWELL



always intense, striving for perfection, never being satisfied with anything short of total effort and unyielding determination.

I have played a lot of backyard basketball. We would choose sides before playing. I was always happy to be chosen on the same team with Larry Bailey. Larry was the one of the best backyard players I have ever seen. That’s because no opponent had a stronger will to win than he. If his team lost, he didn’t get over it soon either. He was always ready to play another game for redemption. Larry for some reason never went out for basketball in high school, but were I in a position to play for all the marbles in basketball, I would want Larry Bailey on my team. He had the will to win and never, ever gave up. I admire that.

The will to win is important, but more important is the will not to sin. Every person has a temptation level at which he or she will succumb to the enticements to sin. That level varies from individual to

individual depending upon the closeness of his or her walk with the Lord. In Romans 7, Paul speaks of two opposing forces warring within us—the desire to sin and the will to be righteous. He laments the fact that we sometime fall captive to sin.

Joseph is an example of one who overcame great temptation. His brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites, who carried him to Egypt. There he became a servant of Potiphar, an officer of the king, who placed him in charge of his household. Because Joseph was young and handsome, Potiphar’s wife lusted after him and sought to go to bed with him.

He refused. One day she made a sexual advance, grabbing his robe. Joseph ran unclothed from the house. Potiphar’s wife claimed attempted rape, so her husband dealt harshly with Joseph, sending him to jail. But God looks after His own. Later, Joseph interpreted the king’s dream and was restored to great power as the Governor of Egypt.

The Rise, Fall, and Enduring Legacy of Kodak: A Cautionary Tale of Innovation

We are working on an estate sale that has a wonderful selection of antique cameras and antique photos. I thought I would research the Kodak company and I learned quite a lot and thought that our readers would enjoy a brief history lesson about Kodak as well! I hope you will dive deeper into the history of the founder, George Eastman, he was a hard-working and interesting gentleman!

A giant of industry, once synonymous with photography itself, has seen its capital dwindle, but its legacy remains indelible. Kodak, the company that almost single-handedly brought photography to the masses and enabled the golden age of Hollywood and home video, now witnesses its own dramatic downfall – an ironic victim of the very technology it invented: the digital camera.

The illustrious history of Kodak dates back to 1880 and the age of innovators like Thomas Edison. Visionary George Eastman, founder of the Eastman Dry Plate Company, began with an invention using photographic emulsion on paper. His relentless pursuit of advancements led to the critical merging of ideas from Hannibal Goodwin and Emile Reynaud, which formed the basis of the first mass-market rolls of film.

In 1888, Eastman trademarked the simple, meaningless word "Kodak," which quickly became one of the world's most recognizable brands. The release of the first Kodak camera, pre-loaded with film for 100

ALL ABOUT ANTIQUES

JILLINDA FALEN



photos, democratized the craft and gave birth to the "amateur photograph." The subsequent 1900 release of the 'Brownie' camera was so quick and easy to use that it inspired a new word: "snapshot."

Fueling Hollywood and History

Kodak's innovation didn't stop at amateur photography. Collaborating with the legendary Thomas Edison, Eastman helped trim film stock to the 35mm standard, instrumental in the development of Edison's Kinetoscope and the broader film industry.

Further R&D success came in 1935 with Kodachrome, a mass-market hit for its ability to capture rich color. This iconic film, beloved by photographers like William Eggleston and Steve McCurry, became a staple for both amateurs and Hollywood filmmakers until its discontinuation in 2009.

The company's impact extended beyond Earth: in 1969, Kodak produced the camera hardware used by Apollo 11 astronauts on the Moon, capturing history with images like the first photo of Earth from deep space.

The Digital Paradox

In 1975, Kodak engineer Steve Sasson invented the first digital camera, a 3.6kg device storing images on a cassette tape. Kodak continued to innovate in the digital sphere, developing the world's first camera-size megapixel sensor in 1986 and the first digital SLR in 1991.

However, the company's fatal flaw was its failure to fully commit to the digital revolution it initiated. While competitors like Nikon and Canon rapidly seized the market, Kodak, despite being the largest U.S. digital camera seller in 2005, saw its market share plummet

Due to massive financial losses, Kodak ceased selling 35mm color film in 2009 after 74 years of production, a move that dismayed the photographic community. Though it has since revived some film production after selling off key assets, the company has fallen from grace.

Despite the recent struggles, Kodak's legacy endures. We have Kodak to thank for enabling countless individuals to capture the moments that define their lives, and for some of the most beautiful and iconic images of the 20th century.

A friend like an oxpecker

The oxpecker. Described on rhinos.org (because everybody is just dying to go to rhinos.org) as a “cheeky little bird that sits atop the snout of a rhinoceros, feasting on insects, parasites, ticks” and the sort that would otherwise irritate the snot – literally I suppose - out of this great beast.

Granted I don’t want anybody sitting on my nose (although it is pretty big so it could probably handle it), but that’s the kind of friend I want.

Whenever those pesky people show up. The ones who claim to be my friend but give me the feeling - real or perceived – they would stab me in the back any chance they get,

I want my friend to swat them away like flies.

Whenever those spam calls come in (I swear since my wife and I set about to buy a new house several months ago they tripled) “... this message is from the loan department. We have a pending offer of \$70,000 in the form of an unsecured loan ...” I want my friend to consume them, devour them, pig out on them, gobble, gobble, gobble.

Whenever those blood-sucking virus types strike. Which oh by the way they just did. I received an email from what appeared to be a

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DON MONCRIEF



high-ranking official in Houston County’s judicial system. It was someone I had emailed back and forth with on more than one occasion, so it didn’t appear conspicuous. It was where you’re like: “Well, nobody’s going to send them a virus, because it’d be like walking into the courtroom and saying,

“Here I am. I did it. Throw the book at me.” Naïve as ever, however, I clicked on the .pdf attachment. I found out soon after that it grabbed all of my email addresses. I know this because I had a slew of them – I mean all the way up my chain of command - emailing me asking me why I was inviting them to a Zoom meeting.

So, for the blood-sucking virus types. I want my friend to pluck them off, drop them to the floor and step on them so they make the most wonderful “pop” noise as they explode.

Not only that, but the oxpecker, per rhinos.org (now your favorite website in all of the world), serves as an

alarm system for the poorly-visioned rhino. (Did I mention I was near-sighted?) Whenever danger approaches, the oxpecker creates a loud commotion, which in turn warns the rhino something big is about to happen. That is unless he tucks his tail and runs away from the lion or hyenas or whatever it is. I’m not the kind to run into a burning building (that I know of), but I do know if I’m warned I will be the fastest to run away from danger.

That’s the kind of friend I want. That’s also the kind of friend I want to be. Like the oxpecker. One who takes care of trouble and prevents it as well. In Swahili “the rhino’s guard.” In my world, the friend who guards me.

Or better put. In the world of humanity (if a bird can do it why not us) someone like this:

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” – Proverbs 17:17.

If that’s not an oxpecker, I don’t know what (who) is.

Water and Cold Weather are Free Fat Burners!

Cold water, cold weather, cold showers, and cold plunge's effect on the metabolism is intriguing to me. Very likely the reason we do not hear more about this, and other benefits is it is not easily duplicated in a resell-able form.

Foods we consume are measured by calories and when we eat extra calories beyond the fuel we need for energy, our body will simply store these for later use in our fat cells. Calories are simply units of heat/energy and are relied on for energy in our body whether it's for our daily activities, digestion, or temperature control. There are certain things that have a thermogenic effect in our body that will cause the body to release this stored energy (body fat) as usable heat/energy.

Water has ZERO calories, but the body must expend units of heat (calories) to warm up this water, which can lead to a thermogenic (fat releasing) effect on our fat cells causing them to release energy.

A large portion of our required daily calories are used for controlling temperature, whether it's to cool us, or to heat us and our body will work hard to keep our thermostat at 98.6 degrees.

Example: according to the American Council on exercise, you can burn up to 400 calories an hour from shivering. The way I would interpret this is, if there are not enough calories from

YOUR HEALTH

WADE YODER



food in the digestive system, this shivering is causing a thermogenic (fat burning) process, causing a release of energy from our fat cells for heating purposes.

A similar process happens for the sweating process when the body is pumping water through our cooling system, and this is what keeps us from overheating. Our body when given enough water during times of heat, is really good at pushing this heat out and it burns lots of calories keeping our temperature where it's supposed to be!

Each pound of fat holds approximately 3,500 calories, and when these units of energy are released whether for heating the body, cooling the body or for daily activities and exercise, it works like the energy we get from food except it has the slenderizing effect many of us are looking for.

A study that was published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism showed that drinking about 2 cups of water increases metabolism by 24 %. That sounds like a lot to me, and I don't know

exactly how the groundwork was laid to arrive at this percentage, but when you figure that every single action and reaction in the body is reliant on hydration, this could be a very reasonable increase.

Water has been shown to increase the metabolism even when water was 98.6 (normal body temperature), however, if you want to increase the thermogenic (fat burning) effect it has on the body, drink it cold. Your body must burn calories (units of heat) to get cold water's temperature up to body temperature at 98.6 degrees, so the colder the water, the more calories (units of heat) our body must burn to get it to body temperature.

If we know how good clean water tastes to the trillions of cells in our body, it should make a difference in us enjoying it plain without additives and sugar!

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ENTERTAINMENT

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
POPEYE
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

SOMEONE IS HERE SEEKING POWER AND AID, SEA HAG.

EXCELLENT! ANOTHER WILLING SAP TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF!

IT'S HAM GRAVY.

IT'S NO FUN WHEN THEIR SPIRIT IS PRE-BROKEN.

HAM GRAVY! I HOPED I'D SEEN THE LAST OF YOU.

SEA HAG, I'M BEGGING YOU TO GRANT ME THE POWER TO DEFEAT POPEYE!

I NEED REVENGE FOR HIM STEALING OLIVE, MY ONE TRUE LOVE!

YOU HIT ON ME THREE TIMES WHILE WAITING FOR SEA HAG.

SO YOU'RE A CREEP AND BAD AT CONTEXT CLUES, GREAT.

I KNOW IT'S A WASTE OF TIME, BUT I'LL HELP YOU. ALL I NEED IS TEN THOUSAND UP FRONT.

BUCKS?!

NAW, FOREHEAD KISSES.

OF COURSE BUCKS!

I WAS HOPIN' SINCE YOU'RE A WITCH, I COULD JUST GIVE YOU MY FIRSTBORN.

FIRST, I'VE RAISED ENOUGH KIDS, SECOND?

IT FEELS LIKE YOU WANNA HURT MY FEELINGS.

AW, HAM. IT'S SO CUTE YOU BELIEVE I THINK YOU HAVE FEELINGS.

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

OW!

THAT'S FOR INSULTING MY WIFE!

THAT'LL BE TWENTY BUCKS...

WHAFIA VERK!

A BIG MOUTH!

YUCKS YUCKS

ANOTHER SHOW, ANOTHER PUNCHLINE FOR MARTY JACKLIN, INSULT COMIC

HOCUS - FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Lower: 6. Stove hood is wider. 3. Collar is missing. 4. Burner is missing. 5. Refrigerator handle is different. 1. Back of chair is different. 2. Box is different.

CROSSWORD 1-31-26

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	
11					12				13	14		
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	50	51				52				53	54	
55						56				57		58
59						60				61		
62						63				64		

CLUES ACROSS

1. Action word

5. Sierra Nevada, e.g.

8. Do like Lindsey Vonn

11. Sheltered, nautically speaking

12. a.k.a. Daminozide

13. a.k.a. tangelos

15. Ladder crosspiece

16. Rigatoni relative

17. Earth tremor

18. *Buchanan's or Lincoln's birth place (2 words)

20. Odds' partners

21. Completely dedicated (2 words)

22. Street in France

23. *The Era of Good Feelings president

26. Ground red peppers spice

30. Paleozoic or Victorian, e.g.

31. Talking pet

34. Flock's affirmation

35. Phonograph media

37. It doesn't mix with water

38. Key, in Spanish

39. Letter before kappa

40. Conjured

42. Bathtub hooch

43. "You don't bring me flowers ____"

45. Silvery-white, in heraldry

47. The night before

48. Add something extra (2 words)

50. Eye rakishly

52. *Millard's last name

55. Unwelcome software message

56. Double reed woodwind

57. Actress Sorvino

59. Carell on "The Office"

60. Falling out

61. Grand in scale

62. *Buchanan who ran for president in 1992 and 1996

63. Dental school alternative to MCAT

64. Tiresias in "Oedipus Rex," e.g.

CLUES DOWN

1. Variable, abbr.

2. Twelfth month of Jewish civil year

3. *Attorney General under Bill Clinton

4. Panhandler

5. "My wife can vouch for me", e.g.

6. Ancient Romans' language

7. Julia Roberts' Academy Award-winning role

8. Went down slippery slope

9. Gene Simmons' rock band

10. Belief or philosophy

12. Popular flowering shrub

13. Deplete (2 words)

14. *Eisenhower or Grant, pre-presidency

19. Horse hoof sounds

22. One in Dean Martin's pack?

23. Means of mass communication

24. Belted starman

25. Highly unpleasant

26. *Between Tyler and Taylor

27. Visual representation

28. Macaulay Culkin's famous character

29. Beside, archaic

32. *Karl ____, "The Architect" of George W. Bush's campaigns

33. Grande or Bravo, e.g.

36. *Nickname for Kennedy's presidency

38. Read-only memory device

40. Before, old-fashioned

41. Aerie baby

44. Blatant

46. Mythological garden guardians

48. Fibula's partner

49. Marriott hotel brand

50. "Blackfish" (2013) subject

51. Small cave

52. *Model T namesake or U.S. President

53. Ready for picking

54. Lake north of Cleveland

55. Clairvoyance

58. Acronym, abbr.

SUDOKU

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

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!

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

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

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Popular and political support growing for ban on cellphones in Georgia high schools

By **TYTAGAMI**
Bureau Chief
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia high school sophomores are looking ever more likely to lose their phones during the school day in their senior year, as lawmakers consider expanding a ban on personal devices.

New surveys suggest overwhelming support for the idea from parents and teachers. A ban from kindergarten through middle school takes effect next fall after state lawmakers passed it last year.

Now, the author of that law has legislation that would extend the ban to high schools starting in fall 2027.

Rep. Scott Hilton, R-Peachtree Corners, said he expects House Bill 1009 to get a first hearing in a couple of weeks.

Hilton said he had heard universal support from parents and teachers about his K-8 ban. Although the prohibition will not be enforced statewide until the fall, many schools have voluntarily banned phones ahead of schedule. He said he expects an expansion to high school to be similarly popular, with some caveats about logistics for older students.

"The concerns I've heard thus far are more around scheduling, you know, after school activities, things like that," Hilton said.

New surveys indicate broad support for phone-free schools.

More than two-thirds of the roughly 3,000 administrators, teachers and other educators surveyed in 176 school districts by Georgia's largest teacher association liked the idea, according to results out this week. High school teachers were even more enthusiastic, with 83% calling for a cellphone ban.

"Why do they want these bans? Because they believe that phones are very disruptive," said Margaret

Ciccarelli, director of legislative services for the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, which surveyed its members last fall.

Similarly, a survey released this week by the Emory Center for Child Health Policy found 71% of responding Georgia parents want the K-8 cellphone ban extended to high schools.

Their answers in the survey, also taken last fall, indicate that they believe a ban would lead to more learning and social interaction and would improve mental health.

The 29% of parents who opposed a high school ban were mostly concerned about being disconnected from their child during a school emergency.

"Parents' concerns about emergency access are valid and understandable. However, effective cellphone policies can address this by establishing rapid parent notification systems and guaranteed access to phones when needed," Julie Gazmararian, professor of epidemiology at the Rollins School of Public Health, wrote in a report about the survey. "Strong support for high school cellphone bans among parents suggests broad public readiness for policy action."

Safety experts have testified at the Capitol that a phone in a student's hand during an emergency can be a dangerous distraction from safety instructions given by teachers and emergency responders.

But Layla Contreras, 24, said people who think high school students do not need their phone in an emergency have never lived through one.

Her sister, Sasha, is a senior at Apalachee High School in Barrow County and texted her when a gunman entered the school in September 2024, killing four.

Contreras said her sister, 17, texted her to tell her the

emergency was real — and that she loved her.

Layla Contreras said the school was locked down again last week after a false alarm. Sasha texted her that time to relay the news, too.

Layla Contreras said high school students need their phones in an emergency and should be taught how to use them responsibly the rest of the time.

"We need to teach our kids more discipline and more responsibility rather than just taking it away, because when they enter the workforce," she said, "they're not going to take away their phones."

The ban expansion has high-powered support. House Speaker Jon Burns, R-Newington, said in early January that he expected a "lively discussion" about banning cellphones in high school, acknowledging the competing views of those who see devices as a liability on regular school days versus those who see them as an asset during a crisis.

"Some of that communication certainly is good for the parent to understand that the child is safe," Burns said, "but it also interferes with the safety protocols in the schools."

On the Senate side, a bipartisan study committee empaneled by Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, a Republican, recommended a ban on cellphones in high schools.

And in a hearing last week, Richard Woods, the state superintendent of schools, asked lawmakers for such a ban. The Republican elected official said his teacher and student advisory councils, the latter including a student shot at Apalachee High, rank mental health as the top concern for students.

Studies show the negative academic impact and emotional strain of screen time, Woods said. "This is both an academic and a mental health issue."

Test-run of outdoor classrooms in Georgia schools clears General Assembly

By **MARK NIESSE**
Staff Writer
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Students in Georgia schools could soon have more opportunities to study outdoors instead of inside a classroom.

The state Senate gave final approval Wednesday to a bill that calls for a pilot program that incorporates outdoor learning spaces at K-8 schools chosen by the state Department of Education.

The vote was unanimous,

and the bill now heads to Gov. Brian Kemp after it previously passed the House.

"I was able to benefit greatly from an outdoor classroom at North Habersham Middle School," said state Sen. Bo Hatchett, R-Cornelia. "Today's students should also benefit from that same opportunity."

State Sen. Sheikh Rahman, D-Lawrenceville, said time away from the confines of school buildings

will help students.

"Our kids now, they spend so much time on the computer. They don't go outside," Rahman said. "The whole idea is getting children to spend more time outside with nature. It's good for obesity and mental health. There will be a lot of benefits."

Under Senate Bill 148, the outdoor education pilot program will last at least three school years, and then state legislators will evaluate its impact.

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26-132

NOTICE OF ELECTION OF OCMULGEE RIVER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR
February 1, 2026

To all qualified voters in Houston County:
Notice is hereby given that on November 3, 2026, a non-partisan election will be held to elect 1 supervisor(s) for Houston County in the Ocmulgee River Soil and Water Conservation District. District Supervisors serve as unpaid state officials who represent their counties in support of soil and water conservation activities.
March 6, 2026, is the last day on which nominations for candidates for the election will be accepted. The signatures of at least 25 qualified electors of the county are required to nominate a candidate. Candidates must also be qualified electors of the county. Nominating petitions must be received in the office of the Houston County Election Superintendent at 2030 KINGS CHAPEL RD, PERRY GA, 31069, no later than 12:00 noon on March 6, 2026. Petitions may be obtained from the Conservation Commission at the address below, from the Commission's website at <https://www.gaswcc.org/> or from the Election Superintendent of Houston County.
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BUSINESS & FINANCE

BBB Offers Tips on Choosing a Tax Preparer

The IRS will begin accepting 2025 tax returns on Monday, January 26th, and the filing deadline will be Wednesday, April 15th. If you need help with your tax preparation, now is an ideal time to ensure you've secured the services of a trustworthy tax professional.

For many people, major life changes, business ownership, or simply a lack of knowledge about the ever-changing tax laws make finding a reliable tax preparer a good idea. That said, not all tax preparers have the same level of experience and training. BBB offers tips for finding someone you can trust with your finances and sensitive personal information.

First, it's important to understand the different types of tax preparers and their qualifications. Only enrolled agents, certified public accounts, and attorneys may represent their clients to the IRS on matters such as audits, collection issues, and appeals.

Enrolled Agent (EA): An EA is a tax preparer who has been approved by the IRS to represent taxpayers. An EA must either have prior qualifying employment with the IRS or pass an intensive two-day exam on federal taxation and complete a background check. To maintain EA status, they must complete a specified number of credit hours each year of continuing education in accounting methods and tax regulations. An EA may work independently or as part of a firm and specialize in specific areas of tax law.

An EA is a good option if you have a more complex tax situation. However, you'll want to make sure their area of expertise applies to your personal situation. Fees and availability may vary, but you can expect an EA to charge less than a CPA. An EA is also qualified to help you with financial planning and give you tips that could help you reduce your taxes in the future.

Certified Public Accountants (CPA): CPAs have a college degree (or the equivalent in work experience). They are licensed after passing a state professional qualifying exam.



They are highly skilled in accounting. This makes them good candidates for complex tax planning and preparation if they are experienced in handling tax matters and enrolled in continuing education programs that keep them abreast of the constant changes to tax laws. If your return is quite complex, a CPA may be your best choice for tax preparation, but keep in mind they will charge much more than basic tax preparers.

Attorneys: Tax attorneys often charge the highest fees as tax preparers. For taxpayers looking to shelter part of their income legally or for those who need specialized advice on municipal bonds, estate planning, and similar items, hiring a tax attorney is a good option.

Non-Credentialed tax preparers: There are about 700,000 people who work as non-credentialed tax preparers in the United States. They often work part-time or only during the tax season. These preparers must have an active preparer tax identification number (PTIN) through the IRS, but beyond that, regulating tax preparers is done at the state level.

Most tax preparers are legitimate and competent, but it's important to conduct a thorough interview with a tax preparer before you hire them. When it comes to choosing the right kind of tax preparer for you personally, much will depend on the complexity of your tax situation.

After you've decided what qualifications your tax preparer needs, the following tips will help you choose someone who is trustworthy and competent:

Review the tax preparer's credentials. EAs, CPAs, and tax attorneys are all qualified to represent their clients to the IRS on all matters. Other preparers can help you with forms

and basic matters but cannot represent you in case of an audit. Don't be afraid to ask about these or other qualifications before you hire someone.

Be wary of spectacular promises. If a tax preparer promises you larger refunds than the competition, this is a red flag. Many such tax preparers base their fees on the amount of your return and may be likely to use questionable tax preparation tactics. In addition, it's wise to avoid tax preparers who offer "refund anticipation loans" as you'll probably lose a large percentage of your return to commission fees.

Get referrals from friends and family. One of the best ways to find a trustworthy tax preparer is to ask your family and friends for recommendations. Once you have a few options, check BBB.org, paying careful attention to other consumers' reviews or complaint details. This will give you a clear view of what you can expect. You can also find a BBB Accredited tax preparer near you on bbb.org.

Think about availability. If the IRS finds errors in your tax forms or decides to perform an audit, will your tax preparer be available to help you with the details? Find out whether you can contact the tax preparer all year long or only during tax season.

Ask about fees ahead of time. Before you agree to any services, read the contracts carefully and understand how much the tax preparer charges for their services. Ask about extra fees for e-filing state, federal, and local returns, as well as fees for any unexpected complications.

For additional information, please check BBB's Tax Tips and Resources.

ABRAMS

Technology has been an economic engine for Georgia — from financial tech founded in Columbus to startups powering metro Atlanta. As a legislator, I supported both, and as an author, I have explored the promise and challenges of AI in my books.

I know we don't have to be anti-tech to be pro-accountability.

During my time under the Gold Dome, I supported tax incentives tied to real prosperity and voted against

boondoggles that benefited the wealthy and powerful. Using its authority to protect Georgians, the General Assembly must tighten these tax breaks, require proof of real job creation, demand transparency about water and power use, and give communities a real voice in the process before projects are approved.

Right now, too many Georgians are paying the costs of the AI boom, but they're not reaping much benefit.

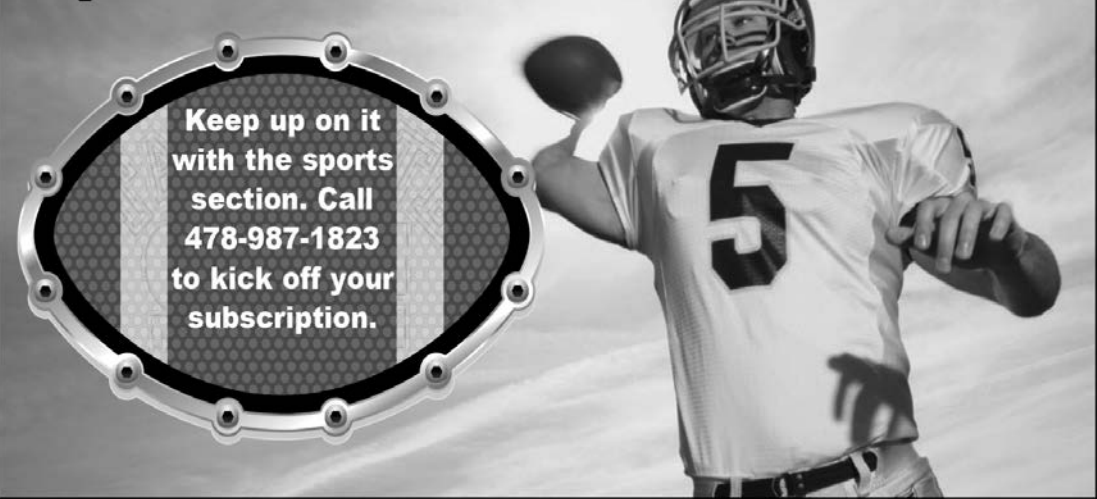
We don't need ChatGPT or Gemini to tell us that the math doesn't add up. Old-fashioned calculators work

just as well — and also consider the bipartisan rebuke to the state's Public Service Commission last November.

Affordable choices for constituents make up the "real stuff" of democracy. As the legislative session heats up and politicians start jockeying for a return trip this coming election season, remember to tell those who speak for you to listen up.

Stacey Abrams is a best-selling author, entrepreneur and host of the podcast "Assembly Required." She previously served as minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives.

The Latest Sports Action!



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Resistance to data centers fuels flood of Georgia bills targeting the industry

By MARK NIESSE
Staff Writer
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Anger and opposition to the rapid rise of data centers across Georgia has led to a surge of bills that would clamp down on the resource-consuming industry.

Georgia legislators have proposed seven bills regulating data centers by eliminating tax breaks, prohibiting costs from being passed on to residential electricity customers, or temporarily barring their construction entirely.

Data centers — hulking industrial buildings that power artificial intelligence and technology companies — have emerged as one of the hottest topics at the Georgia Capitol this year as they've proliferated across the state's landscape in recent years. There are over 200 data centers in Georgia, according to Baxtel, a data center industry research firm.

State Sen. Matt Brass, the chairman of the powerful Senate Rules Committee, said residents are worried about the impact of large data centers being built in their communities.

Brass proposed Senate Bill 410, which would end Georgia's sales tax exemption for new data centers but preserve it for existing facilities. Gov. Brian Kemp vetoed a bill in 2024 that would have eliminated the tax break entirely, citing concerns it would undermine business investment in the state.

"It started with concerns from folks back home. There's a lot of angst over it," said Brass, R-Newnan.

Data centers will still invest in Georgia even if they don't get a tax break, Brass said, citing the state's energy rates, business climate, weather and property

values. "There's all these reasons they want to come here, and the tax incentive I don't believe is one of them," Brass said.

Georgia taxpayers effectively gave away \$474 million to data centers during the fiscal year that ended in July, according to a recent report by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts.

Data centers produced 8,505 construction jobs and 1,641 operations jobs with a combined \$1.2 billion added to the state's economy, according to the department's summary of the report.

The Data Center Coalition, a trade association that includes Amazon, Google and Meta, said Georgia has become the fastest-growing data center market in the country.

"Data centers are committed to being responsible neighbors that pay their full cost of service for the energy they use," said Khara Boender, director of state policy for the Data Center Coalition. "We will continue to work with stakeholders at the state, local and industry level to strike the right balance that maximizes the benefit to Georgia taxpayers, protects against rate increases, and ensures data centers are a net positive for the state."

Rising energy costs and data centers have become a major campaign issue this year after two Democrats unseated Republican incumbents last fall in elections for the Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities.

State Rep. Ruwa Romman, D-Duluth, proposed a moratorium on new data center construction until March 1, 2027 in House Bill 1012.

"Before we permanently alter the landscape of our

state, we have an obligation to properly regulate and assess both the benefits and impacts of these data centers on our communities," said Romman, a Democratic candidate for governor. "They come to the table with all these promises, and when those promises don't come true, it's too late."

Another bill that would protect residential customers from electricity costs of data centers is already advancing through the legislative process this year. Senate Bill 34, sponsored by Senate Finance Chairman Chuck Hufstetler, R-Rome, was debated last year but is being revived in committee hearings this week.

Other legislation calls for local governments to make public data centers' water and electricity usage.

Data center bills pending in Georgia

SB 34: Prohibits costs associated with data center fuel generation and transmission from being included in residential electricity rates.

SB 408: Sunsets Georgia's sales tax break for data centers on Jan. 1, 2027.

SB 410: Eliminates sales tax exemptions for new data centers.

SB 421: Requires local governments to disclose data centers' water and electricity usage.

HB 528: Requires data centers to report their water consumption, electricity usage and community impacts.

HB 559: Sunsets Georgia's sales tax break for data centers on Dec. 31, 2026.

HB 1012: Bans new data center construction until March 1, 2027.

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<div>DAVIS, MAKHI WANTED BY THE FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPOS POLICE DEPT. FOR BURGLARY- 2ND DEGREE, CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY 2ND DEGREE, AND CRIMINAL TRESPASS.</div>	<div>DAY, MARIAH WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FELONY THEFT BY CONVERSION.</div>	<div>GRANT, JOHN WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR ILLEGAL ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN DRUGS/SUP. CT. VOP.</div>	<div>HINTON, AKBAR WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED STALKING/ BATTERY - FAMILY VIOLENCE.</div>
<div>HOWARD, TODD WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING- FELONY.</div>	<div>JOHNSON, CEDRIC JR. WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR ENTERING AUTO.</div>	<div>LOVETT, THURSTON WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE.</div>	<div>PEREZ, JUAN WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR 2ND DEGREE BURGLARY.</div>
<div>SAMAYAO-GOMEZ, OSBELI WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CHILD MOLESTATION.</div>	<div>SPALDING, MARY WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR POSSESSION W/ INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE SCHEDULE I OR II CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE.</div>	<div>THOMPSON, JACOB WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE/CRIMINAL TRESPASS /DAMAGE/ CRUELTY TO CHILDREN - 3RD DEGREE</div>	<div>WILLIAMS, MARCUS WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR INTERFERENCE WITH GOVERNMENT PROPERTY AND SUP. CT. VIOLATION OF PROBATION.</div>

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

54800-1



2025 | ANNUAL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT (CCR)

WATER QUALITY REPORT

WSID #1530007

Este informe contiene información muy importante. Tradúzcalo o hable con un amigo quien lo entienda bien.

CONTAMINANTS + WATER QUALITY

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the **Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791)**. The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water **before** we treat it include:

- **Microbial Contaminants** such as viruses and bacteria which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife.
- **Pesticides and Herbicides** which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff and residential uses.
- **Inorganic Contaminants** such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban storm runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.
- **Organic Chemical Contaminants** including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff and septic systems
- **Radioactive Contaminants** which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

SPECIAL POPULATION ADVISORY

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons, such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS, or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/Center for Disease Control guidelines on how to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791.)

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. We treat our water according to EPA's regulations. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

WATER QUALITY DATA

The tables in this report list all the drinking water contaminants we detected during the 2025 calendar year unless otherwise noted. The presence of these contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. The State of Georgia requires us to monitor for certain contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants are not expected to vary significantly from year to year. Some of the data, though representative of the water quality, is more than one year old.

The following tables contain scientific terms and measures, some of which may require explanation.

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Action Level Goal (ALG)—The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. ALGs allow for a margin of safety.

Action Level—The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

BDL—Below Detection Limit

Avg—Regulatory compliance with some MCLs are based on running annual average of monthly samples.

Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL—The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Level 1 Assessment—A level 1 assessment is a study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal or MCLG—The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Level 2 Assessment—A level 2 assessment is a very detailed study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why an E. coli MCL violation has occurred and/or why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system on multiple occasions.

Maximum Residual Disinfection Level (MRDL)—The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

Maximum residual disinfection level (MRDLG)—The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.


N/A—not applicable

mrem—millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)

ppb—micrograms per liter or parts per billion—or one ounce in 7,350,000 gallons of water

ppm—milligrams per liter or parts per million—or one ounce in 7,350 gallons of water

Treatment Technique (TT)—A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water



YOUR WATER MEETS ALL FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS FOR WATER QUALITY

THE CITY OF WARNER ROBINS IS PLEASED TO PRESENT TO YOU THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT.


This report is a snapshot of the quality of the water we provided during the year 2025. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.

We are committed to providing you with the information because we want you to be informed. For more information about your water, contact Laura Wilder, Water Operations Supervisor, at 478-328-4400.

WHERE DOES MY WATER COME FROM?

Your water comes from Cretaceous Sand Aquifer known as the Tuscaloosa Group, which is a classification of rock formation in the aquifer. Source water assessment information may be obtained from Georgia Geologic Department. Contact Sandra Robertson at 404-656-3214.

Some areas of Warner Robins are serviced utilizing water produced by Houston County, Georgia. Information regarding the quality of water produced by both Warner Robins and Houston County is included in this 2025 Water Quality Report.



YOUR WATER IS SAFE TO DRINK!

WARNER ROBINS GEORGIA

Water testing and the water quality data included in this Consumer Confidence Report was performed January 1 through December 31, 2025.


We are here to **help** or **answer your questions**.


Keeping our valued customers informed about their water utility is a top priority. If you have questions about this report or concerns regarding your water utility, we are here to help. Please contact Water Operations Supervisor Laura Wilder at 478-328-4400 for assistance.

If you want to learn more, please attend any of our regularly scheduled meetings.

Our City Council meets the first and third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall. Your participation is welcome at these meetings.

www.wrga.gov

WARNER ROBINS WATER SYSTEM											
COLIFORM BACTERIA											
MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL GOAL	TOTAL COLIFORM MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL	HIGHEST NO. OF POSITIVE	FECAL COLIFORM OR E. COLI MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVELS	TOTAL NO. OF POSITIVE E. COLI OR FECAL COLIFORM SAMPLES	VIOLATION (Y OR N)	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION					
0	5% of monthly samples are positive	1		0	N	Naturally present in the environment					
LEAD AND COPPER											
LEAD AND COPPER	DATE SAMPLED	MCLG	ACTION LEVEL (AL)	90TH PERCENTILE	# SITES OVER AL	UNITS	VIOLATION (Y OR N)	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION			
Copper	2023	1.3	1.3	0.288	0	ppm	N	Naturally present in the environment			
Lead	2023	0	15	1.4	0	ppb	N	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits			
REGULATED CONTAMINANTS											
DISINFECTANTS AND DISINFECTION BY-PRODUCTS	COLLECTION DATE	HIGHEST LEVEL DETECTED	RANGE OF LEVELS DETECTED	MCLG	MCL	UNITS	VIOLATION (Y OR N)	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION			
Chlorine	2025	1.38	0.44-1.38	MRDLG=4	MRDL=4	ppm	N	Water additive used to control microbes			
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM)	2025	5.4	1.3-5.4	No goal for the total	80	ppb	N	By-product of drinking water disinfection			
HAA5 (Halo acetic Acids)	2025	BDL	N/A	0	60	ppb	N	By-product of drinking water disinfection			
INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS	Inorganic Contaminants										
Barium	2025	0.0064	0.0064	2	2	ppm	N	Discharge of drilling wastes; Discharge from metal refineries; Erosion of natural deposits			
Chromium	2025	0.50	0.50	100	100	ppb	N	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; Erosion of natural deposits			
Fluoride	2025	0.73	0.11-1.42	4	4.0	ppm	N	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories			
Nitrate [measured as Nitrogen]	2025	1.43	0.605-1.43	10	10	ppm	N	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits			
RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS	Radioactive Contaminants										
Gross alpha excluding radon and uranium	03/14/2023	9.9	9.9	0	15	pCi/L	N	Erosion of natural deposits			
HOUSTON COUNTY WATER SYSTEM											
INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS											
CONTAMINANTS	MCLG or MRDLG	MCL, TT, or MRDL	DETECT IN YOUR WATER	RANGE		SAMPLE DATE	VIOLATION (Y OR N)	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION			
Fluoride (ppm)	4	4	0.86 AVG	0.17	1.18	2025	N	Erosion of natural deposits; water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories			
Nitrate (ppm)	10	10	0.61	0	2.1	2025	N	Erosion of natural deposits			
MICROBIOLOGICAL CONTAMINANTS											
Total Coliform (RTCR)	NA	TT	N/A	N/A	N/A	2022	No	Naturally present in the environment			
E. coli (RTCR) in the Distribution system	0	Routine and repeat samples are total coliform positive, and either is E. coli-positive or system fails to take repeat samples following E. coli positive routine sample or system fails to analyze total coliform positive repeat sample for E. coli	0	N/A	N/A	2022	No	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits			
RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS											
Combined Radium	0	5 pCi/L	4.03	0	6.87	2022	No	Erosion of natural deposits			
Gross Alpha	0	15 pCi/L	4.75 AVG	0	9.30	2022	No	Erosion of natural deposits			
LEAD AND COPPER											
Copper – Action Level at consumer taps (ppm)	1.3	1.3	90th% 0.2	0	24	2021	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits;			
Lead – Action Level at consumer taps (ppb)	0	15 ppb	90th% 0 ppb or ug/L	0 ppb or ug/L	4.2 ppb or ug/L	2021	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives			
DISINFECTANTS AND DISINFECTION BY-PRODUCTS (There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants)											
Chlorine (mg/L)	MRDLG 4 ppm	4 mg/L	1.00 AVG	.54	1.33	2022	No	Water additive used to control microbes			
TTHMs (Total Trihalomethanes)	N/A	80 ppb (.08 mg/L)	N/D	—	—	2022	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination			
HAA5 (Halo acetic Acids)	N/A	60 ppb (.06 mg/L)	N/D	—	—	2022	No	By-product of drinking water chlorination			
 Infants and young children are typically more vulnerable to lead in drinking water than the general population. It is possible that lead levels at your home may be higher than at other homes in the community as a result of materials used in your home's plumbing. When water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap from 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for cooking or drinking. If you are concerned about elevated lead levels in your home's water, you may wish to have your water tested. Additional information is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).											



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Lee County's second-chance points put them ahead of Houston County in contested region battle

By **CLAY BROWN**
HHJ Sports Editor
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Houston County (16-6, 7-1 Region 2-5A) had an 11-point lead in the third quarter, but Lee County (13-9, 6-2 Region) had the last laugh in the 64-61 final after more than 10 ties or lead changes in the fourth quarter.

The first go-round between the Bears and the Trojans ended in a four-point HoCo victory in Leesburg — the first time they've won in the series on the road since 2017. It was actually the Bears' fifth all-time win against Lee County in the MaxPreps era.

HoCo couldn't get the regular season sweep on Tuesday, which would have been their first in series history according to MaxPreps.

The primary factor in that was the Trojans winning the boards.

Rebounding has been an on-and-off problem for HoCo throughout the season. Earlier in the year head coach Buddy Bivins described it as purely an issue of effort, and it was clear Lee County gave more.

Several of their bigger forwards like Trecori Green, Josiah Franklin and Tremayne Johnson constantly crashed the glass. If they didn't outright come away with the rebound they wrapped up the Bear that did.

Even as HoCo tried to attack the paint on offense the Trojans walled up, and in several cases stripped the big man posting up.

In a game that came down to single possessions, giving Lee County extra punished them.

"We stopped rebounding and gave them too much second-chance points," Bivins

said. "We kind of seen that in the first half a little bit, but it definitely took precedence in the second half. We stopped rebounding 50-50 balls, it became 100% them. Which gave them second shots, third shots...We got to a point where we started trading baskets until they got one more than we did."

Green in particular was a pain in the Bears' side. He had 30 points on the night, by far the game-high, and was responsible for 18 of Lee County's 25 first-half points.

According to MaxPreps, Green had only taken four three-pointers all year and made one before this game. He hit two and several more long two-point shots on Tuesday, and that was what made him dangerous.

Guarding his interior game is hard enough. He navigates the paint well and knows how to get around defenders for cleaner shots. But the threat of an outside jumper it made it more difficult to guard him, especially in space for players as big as Braylin Mills.

"He started hitting shots. When he started hitting shots

he got in a rhythm," Bivins said. "He was another one that was on the glass getting second-chance points. So on top of him hitting shots and getting to the rim he was getting second-chance points, he was just being very active. We had a hard time controlling him tonight."

HoCo held a three-point lead entering the fourth quarter, and Green's second triple of the night tied the game at 48. From there the game was tied or the lead exchanged hands 10 times in the first four minutes of the quarter.

Mills had his best offensive quarter, scoring seven points, but outside of a three-pointer a piece from Josh Jackson and Malik Gillespie the Bears couldn't get much to go.

The offense devolved into taking treys early in the shot clock, something Bivins expressed disapproval of previously and on the sideline Tuesday.

It was a second-chance shot that sealed HoCo's fate. Franklin picked up a loose ball under the rim with just

under two minutes to play and put it through.

Karon Plummer's corner three-pointer missed with about 60 seconds left, and Gillespie's, too, missed in the final 20 seconds of the game.

The Bears are still the

top team in the region as the only club with one loss. Lee County lost to Thomas County Central early in the region schedule for their second loss.

UP NEXT
HoCo will travel down to

Thomas County Central on Saturday, Jan. 31 to play at 3:30 p.m.

Lee County's next game is in a week when they come back up to Warner Robins to play Northside on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Turnovers snowball in Lady Bears' 61-22 loss to Lee County

By **CLAY BROWN**
HHJ Sports Editor
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Houston County (0-20, 0-8 Region 2-5A) started Tuesday's contest against Lee County (16-7, 7-1 Region) looking like they were ready for a competitive game, and hopefully their first win.

But soon their turnovers went from troublesome to overwhelming, and the Lady Bears lost in a lopsided 61-22 final.

Felicity Curtis slipped a pass through the middle of the Lady Trojans' defense to a cutting Olivia Buffone for the first score of the game.

They navigated the press fairly well in the opening minutes. Everyone was positioned more or less where they were supposed to be, and they zipped the ball away from pressure enough to advance it past half court.

There were still some unsavory turnovers, but they appeared ready to remain competitive and give Lee County their trips' worth.

It started to snowball after Taliyah Porter's fast break layup put the Lady Trojans

See more photos at
hhjonline.com

ahead by 10 with 2:33 to go in the first quarter.

The number of errors steadily increased, and it didn't take long for Lee County to start taking those giveaways into transition for easy scores.

Mishca Jones nailed a mid-range jumper before the first quarter buzzer to bring HoCo within single digits again, but their first turnover in the second quarter went the length of the floor for two points.

The Lady Bears scored one point in the second period largely because of the flurry of takeaways soon to come.

It started with the Lady Trojans picking off passes easily within their reach or jumping the occasional passing lane. But as the deficit mounted the ball moved quicker and the time to make the correct reads and decisions sharply fell.

Lee County was free to be more aggressive. They blitzed ball handlers before they had a chance to breathe

and easily took it the other way for an easy score.

The Lady Bears' halftime deficit was 27, triple as much as it was eight minutes before.

The highlight of their night was a 7-2 run in the third quarter on which they scored on three straight possessions.

Trinity Brown got the first bucket to go to put HoCo in double digits with 4:01 to go until the final period. Sameena Khan's three-pointer fell through the next on the next possession and Jada Stokes received a pass from the corner, turned and put the ball through to cap the run.

They still trailed 47-16 after that, and by the start of the fourth the 49-16 margin was too much to overcome.

UP NEXT
HoCo's last non-region game of the season is on Thursday, Jan. 29 at 5 p.m. against West Laurens.

Lee County will take the rest of the week off from games before coming back up to Warner Robins to face Northside on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 6 p.m.



Clay Brown/HHJ

Lee County forward Trecori Green (1) had 30 points in the Trojans' road region win over Houston County.

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