

# The News Observer

"Local news means the world to us."

The Vienna News and The Unadilla Observer

The Legal Organ of Dooly County; serving Byromville, Dooling, Lilly, Pinehurst, Unadilla and Vienna.

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THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

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# Dooly County Not Spared from Last Thursday's Storm



Photo By Kenny Mercer  
A storage building destroyed in the Unadilla area.

By Tim Franzén  
News Observer Reporter

Dooly County was caught in the cross hairs of last Thursday's storm and portions of the area suffered severe damage as it passed through the area March 12 with over 100 mile per hour straight line wind gusts that wreaked havoc especially at the Big Pig Jig® Village. EMA Director Don Williford reported, "Widespread power outages to more than 1,200 customers of Middle Ga. EMC and Ga. Power as power lines and utility poles were damaged across the county. Crews worked through the day with officials confirming that all power was restored by 9:00 p.m. March 12th. The storm caused severe damage to the roofs of private resi-

dences, multiple commercial buildings also were busy cleaning up debris as well as several churches. Agricultural operations were also affected with reports of irrigation equipment damaged and overturned in several different locations throughout the county.

One of the hardest hit areas was the Big Pig Jig® site where those 100 mile per hour plus straight line winds caused major damage to buildings including the destruction of portions of the stage area. There is no indication that there was any rotation on radar for any of the areas that were damaged in Dooly County and all of the damage was the result of straight line wind down spouts.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Big Pig Jig® organiza-



Photo By Don Williford  
Big Pig Jig stage with twisted frame and blown out backing.

tion were at last report, assessing the full extent of the repairs that will be needed. Also, numerous power poles were also damaged at that location, but have now been restored. Emergency crews responded to numerous calls to trees and power lines blocking the roadway and forced temporary closures throughout the county.

Public Works Department teams including the Ga. Department of Transportation and Dooly County Road Maintenance along with the Dooly County Sheriff's Department teamed up to block the roadways quickly,

**DOOLY NOT SPARED  
CONTINUED PG 5A**

## Straight-Line Winds Cause Major Damage at Historic BIG PIG® Site



BBQ Community is rallying behind beloved 44-year tradition following severe storm.

Photo By Rhonda Lamb  
The iconic Big Pig Jig sign blown down from the storm.

Contributed by Rhonda Lamb

Vienna, Georgia – The Dooly County Chamber of Commerce has confirmed that the site of the beloved BIG PIG JIG® in Vienna sustained significant damage during severe weather that moved through the area on Thursday, March 12. Initial observations led many to believe the damage may have been caused by a tornado. However, Dooly County Emergency Management officials have confirmed the destruction resulted from powerful straight-line winds.

The storm caused extensive damage throughout the property, including multiple snapped power poles and downed power lines across the event grounds.

Both power utility providers have responded to the site and safely disconnected electricity while crews continue assessing the area. The City of Vienna Public Works Department also visited the property to check on conditions following the storm. Event organizers are urging BBQ teams and property holders to use extreme caution if visiting their cook sites.

"Many of the sites sustained damage, primarily loose or missing tin roofing and debris," said Rhonda Lamb, President and CEO of the Dooly County Chamber of Commerce. "With downed power lines and continued winds, the area can be extremely dangerous until crews

**STRAIGHT-LINE WINDS  
CONTINUED PG 5A**

Photo By Rhonda Lamb  
More damaged buildings from the Big Pig Jig festival grounds.

## Vienna Mayor Issues Veto,

*"Out of the city charter because the recommendation that was made by council was not valid to hire a city attorney and to put in an interim city administrator."*

By Tim Franzén  
News Observer Reporter

Mayor Pro-tem John Mathis Jr. at the City of Vienna Council Meeting Monday, March 9 made a motion to hire J. Edward Shipp LLC as city attorney and that was approved on a vote of three in favor (Tabatha Carter, Babette Lewis and John Mathis Jr.) and one against (Albert King, Sr.) A motion was made by Councilwoman Tabatha Carter to appoint City Clerk Margaret Shelley as interim city administrator. According to Councilwoman Carter,

"When I talked to (Representative Patty) Stinson, she said, we could make her interim without advertising." Following discussion, the council voted in favor of naming City Clerk Margaret Shelley as Interim City Administrator on a vote of three in favor (Tabatha Carter, Babette Lewis and John Mathis Jr.) and one opposed (Albert King Sr.) The mayor explained, "When it comes down to that position, we need to advertise."

In a statement released to the News Observer, Representative Patty Stinson responded,

"She stated that someone had informed them that advertising was not required for an interim appointment. I shared with (Tabatha Carter) that if the council intends to assign interim duties to someone who is already employed by the city, then advertising is not required. However, if they plan to bring in someone from outside the organization, the position must be advertised. When taxpayer dollars are involved, transparency and stewardship are essential.

**VIENNA VETO  
CONTINUED PG 5A**

## Dooly State Prison Fire Department to be Re-Staffed

By Tim Franzén  
News Observer Reporter

Dooly State Prison has been without a fire chief and some of the equipment had been removed as well. Mayor Myron Mixon contacted Senator Larry Walker out of Perry, Ga. Mr. Mixon commented that the state senator responded, "At the time, we didn't have a fire chief and they had another fire station within the system that put

a piece of equipment down and they sent it there until they got theirs fixed. So that fire station does a lot for us, especially on this end of the county for people with an ISO rating on your homeowners insurance, a big factor in it being as low as it is. We don't need to have it gone. So, they're going to staff it by what they said in the email and I thanked Senator Walker for his help in making sure that happened and won't be leaving."

He also provided an update on the Splash Pad, "They're getting ready to start placing the equipment on the ground and completing the foundation."

On the recommendation of the mayor, the council approved the purchase of a brand new 2024 Chevrolet 1500 V-8 single cab long bed truck for Salaythein Franklin and the city's animal control department with a

**PRISON FIRE DEPT.  
CONTINUED PG 3A**



**Correction:** In the City of Pinehurst Submitting Grant Application for Downtown Mural in 2026 story, there was an error with the wrong picture being published. We apologize for any confusion this might have caused. Photo by Tim Franzén. Pictured left to right: City Clerk Jackie Chancy, Mayor Connie Christmas, Councilman Mark Peavy and Council members Michelle Harrell and Jan Peavy.



## Byromville UMC Combating Hunger



By St. Paul Chapel Pastor Katie Griffis

The sting of hunger is an ever present reminder of how many among us suffer with food insecurity. The Byromville Community Food Pantry is a hive of industry once a month to combat hunger in Dooly County. When Jack and Sally Lester first talked about starting a food pantry, their only goal was to give back and help their neighbors in need.

On June 15, 2024, Byromville Community Food Pantry held

its very first distribution and served 24 families. Since then, God has continued to bless this mission, and just last month they were able to serve 84 families. This pantry is not part of one church, but a true community ministry, with people from many churches, organizations, and volunteers coming together to serve.

What started small has grown into something very special, and they are grateful for everyone who helps make it possible. Last year, St. Paul Chapel UMC be-

came one of the churches connecting with Byromville UMC to support this mission of serving families in our area. Let's find a place of service to show gratitude for the abundance of God's provision for us.

May we be thankful for the food we eat and our ability to share with our neighbors as we love them like ourselves. Be in prayer for those being served by this ministry as well as all those who volunteer or contribute in any way. May God continue to bless this mission.

## Get Ready to 'Unearth a Story' at Elizabeth Harris Library



Contributed

"Unearth a Story" is the theme for the 2026 Summer Reading Program and June 3, Elizabeth Harris Library in Unadilla will feature Jerry G. White, June 10: Modern Dinosaurs, Thursday, June 18: Animal Tales (Zoo-fari

Earth) and June 24: Wildlife Wonders. Programs are free at 4:00 p.m. Julianne is holding Nagini, a ball python which will be featured in her show, Modern Dinosaurs.

We are very excited to have three animal shows and a sto-

ryteller which is the first show. Registration starts in April. Call Rhonda Bartlett with any questions at 478-627-9303. Elizabeth Harris Library is located at 312 Harman Street in Unadilla, Ga.

## Local Club Hosts Meet and Greet Author, Karter Jane Smith



Contributed

Vienna Woman's Club will host its second Meet and Greet Author event of 2026 featuring Karter Jane Smith Monday, March 30 at 4:00 p.m. at the Dooly County Library. Karter, a first grade student at Crisp Academy in Cordele, Ga. was recently honored by the Georgia Senate for her book entitled Sloth Goes to Savannah. Proceeds from the sale of the book benefit the homeless population in Savannah.

## Vienna Garden Club's Latest Beautification Project

By Marsha Mulderig

The area around these two welcome signs were cleaned and landscaped by Beverly Dail of the Vienna Garden Club to welcome visitors.



## The Great Vienna Cleanup 2026

Contributed

Give the City of Vienna a hand by putting trash in its place. Local businesses can make the extra effort to enhance the beauty of your own property by sweeping the sidewalks, maintaining attractive window displays, keeping grass mowed, removing temporary outdated signage

and debris from your property and continuing to maintain your structures.

Join the great Vienna Cleanup 2026 March 23 -April 2 from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Residents should keep property mowed, clear of debris and also continue to maintain your structures. Keep yard debris separate from

bulk items. Call 268-4744 to schedule a pickup for limbs and yard debris only.

Community groups and organizations can 'adopt' an area to clean up. Just let us know the area and the date and time you plan to work. Normal charges apply for other items.

# GIVE THE CITY A HAND

PUTTING TRASH IN IT'S PLACE  
JOIN THE GREAT VIENNA  
CLEANUP 2026  
MARCH 23rd - April 2nd

FREE PICKUP FOR LIMBS AND YARD DEBRIS ONLY  
NORMAL CHARGES APPLY FOR OTHER ITEMS

## LET'S HELP THE CITY LOOK GREAT THIS SPRING

ANY QUESTIONS? CALL CITY HALL 229-268-4744

Winter is gone. Spring is here  
It's time to make Vienna Clean as a Whistle!

How can I participate?

- **Local businesses** can make the extra effort to enhance the beauty of your own property by sweeping the sidewalks in front of your businesses; maintaining attractive window displays; keeping the grass mowed regularly; removing temporary/outdated signage and debris from your property; and continuing to maintain your structures.
- **Residents** should keep your property mowed, clear of debris, and also continue in maintaining your structures. **Keep yard debris separate from bulk items. Call 268-4744 to schedule pickup.**
- **Property owners** should keep vacant lots mowed and cleared of debris and ensure rental property structures and lawns are maintained.
- **Community groups and organizations** can "adopt" an area to clean up. Just let us know the area and the date and time you plan to work.

## PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing is scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at Vienna City Hall located at 203 West Cotton Street for the purpose of the Historic Preservation Commission receiving input and comments to discuss the following Certificate of Appropriateness request.

Tunisia Ali has filed an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace deteriorated wood railing sections on property located at 309 East Union Street.

As set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, the City of Vienna does not discriminate on the basis of disability and will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice (seven working days). The City of Vienna is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

For more information, please call 229-268-4744.

Michael Bowens  
City of Vienna

## PUBLIC HEARING

The Dooly County Planning Commission will conduct a Public Hearing at 5:30 PM on April 13, 2026, at the Dooly County Commissioners Office at 113 N. Third Street in Vienna. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to allow the Planning Commission to receive citizens' input and comments on the following zoning requests.

Request #1 – David Burk has submitted a Re-Zoning & Conditional Use application for parcel #89-20A currently zoned AG (Agricultural). The request is to Rezone the property from AG (Agricultural) to IND (Industrial). The rezoning and conditional use request is to allow the operation of a pallet company, including the operation of a sawmill for cutting lumber and manufacturing pallets on the property. The property is located at 4890 Calhoun Road, Pinehurst, GA 31070.

Request #2 – Fred Hall, Jr. has submitted a Re-Zoning & Variance application for parcel #57-34C currently zoned AG (Agricultural). The request is to Rezone the property from AG (Agricultural) to C-2 (General Commercial). The rezoning request is to allow the operation of a gasoline service station. The variance is to allow 2 - additions at the gasoline service station. These additions will encroach on the side setback from 20 ft to 8 ft and the rear setbacks from 25 ft to 10 ft. Property is located at 123 Hall Rd Unadilla GA 31091

Dooly County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. Dooly County will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice (seven working days).

For more information, contact Zoning Administrator  
Glenn A. Layson at 229-268-4228.



## Signup Date for Cooling Energy Assistance for Dooly County Residents

Contributed

Elderly residents 65 and older in Dooly County that are eligible for the Low Income Cooling Energy Assistance Program through the Macon-Bibb Economic Opportunity Council with Sarita Hill and her team, can sign up Monday, March 30 at 9:00 a.m. by calling 478-209-0958 or visit <https://mbcsth.apointment.works/ea/home>.

To qualify for appointments scheduled during April, 2026, every adult in the household must be 65 years of age or older.

Households that do not meet this requirement should call back during the week of April 27, 2026 to check when the scheduler will open for the general public. Required information for appointments (no digital copies accepted), a valid picture ID, Social Security cards for all household members, proof of income for the past 30 days, current gas and electric bill (must be printed out on paper) Households with a bill credit of \$1,000 or more are ineligible for LIHEAP benefits.

## PRISON FIRE DEPT.

CONTINUED FROM 1A

full-warranty at a total cost of \$36,500. Public Works Director Leon Lester requested and the agreed to a price of \$2,619 to purchase weed eaters and trimmers. Mr. Lester also announced that the water lines for the Splash Pad and the ball field have been completed, "And at the industrial park, we're doing a two-inch water line on a water tap as well as gas repairs."

At press time, Unadilla FireRescue had responded to a March 12 accident with no entrapment on I-75 Exit 122 Southbound as well as a tornado -weather damage assessment on Rocky Ford Road. There were 10 calls in February including an accident Feb. 3 on Pine Street at Old Holiday Foods, a Wildland fire assist at Pinehurst wastewater plant and a controlled burn Highway 230 at Snow Springs Road on that same day.

There was a call to Wildland fire on Highway 329-Mimms Road Feb. 9, a Vehicle fire and an accident-I-75 exit 118 and Exit 119 southbound, a vehicle fire I-75 Exit 122 southbound ramp Feb. 12, an EMS Medical assist support call to Arena Road and a structure fire at Mulberry Street Feb.14 and Feb. 25 to an Excavator fire Highway 230 at Dillard Moore Road. There have been a total

of 31 calls so far in 2026.

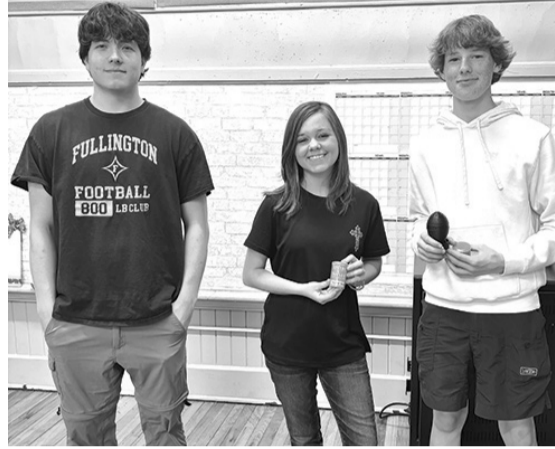
Mayor Myron Mixon announced that the, "City's natural gas department placed natural gas safety notices on doors, a part of the city's public awareness to inform the citizens of what the gas system consists of including service line and contact information. The public service commission requires the letters be sent twice a year. No action needs to be taken. The Unadilla Meat Market has opened up for business and would like the city to hold a grand opening with a tentative date of Saturday, March 21. I attended the funeral of Mrs. Alice West who lived to be 100 years old and she hit it with dignity and pride. I was proud to be a part of that. She was relevant with everybody around her, young, old and all people."

City Clerk Kim Doster informed officials that the annual audit is nearing completion, "And I have provided copies of the financial statement and corrective action for addressing the findings."

A contract with Johnson Controls was given the OK to provide a security system with cameras and server.

In other news: Dooly State Prison requested and it was granted, usage of the open air pavilion next to 67 Diner March 20 and April 11.

## Fullington Academy STEM Rocks



Contributed

Robin Dorman and Michelle Hughes' 'Senior Scientists' collaborated in order to break out of an escape room themed

"The Cold War". Credited with creating the Cold War escape room and overseeing it's activities, are Senior Scientists Aiden Hill, Brooklin Cromer, Rylee Reed and Kaitlyn Bloodworth. Special recognition went to Eighth grader Colt Hughes for creating the missile prizes on his Three-D printer.

The History Meets STEM activity required the participants to complete the following within a 10 minute countdown. Apply velocity and distance to solve for time in order to predict how long it would take a rocket to reach the moon during the Space Race. Solve an equation to figure mass and apply that information to determine how large the rocket would be in grams. Convert Fahrenheit to Celsius and Celsius to Kelvin to ensure that the rocket wouldn't burn up as it re-entered the atmosphere.

Determine how long it will

take an ICBM, launched from Cuba, to reach the US target. Solve to determine the mass of the missile then the rate of acceleration over distance while also figuring in drag. Solve for Fahrenheit to Celsius to Kelvin to represent the overheating of the nuclear rods at Chernobyl. Balance an equation using U(uranium)+ H2O + Pu (plutonium) = O2+HU+PU.

Then solve back from Fahrenheit to Kelvin to discover the temp the rods should be kept at in order to prevent a future melt down. Way to go FA.

## Dooly County JROTC Represented

Contributed

Cadet Command Sergeant Major Evelyn Diaz and Cadet Corporal Jocelyn Woodson were in attendance at a Dooly County High School JROTC event for the upcoming ninth grade class held back on Tuesday, March 10.



## Young Authors Shine at Chatt-Flint RESA

Contributed

Congratulations to Rae'li Merrell (fifth Grade) and Sa'Riya Johnson (sixth Grade) for being recognized Monday, March 9 at Chatt-Flint RESA for their outstanding writing. Both scholars received Honorable Mention and were celebrated during today's Young Georgia Authors Recognition Program. We are incredibly proud of Rae'li and Sa'Riya for representing Dooly K-8 Academy so well and showcasing their creativity, voice, and talent through writing. Their achievement reflects the hard work of our students and the strong literacy foundation we are building in Bobcat Nation.



Rae'li Merrell

Photo Contributed



Sa'Riya Johnson

Photo Contributed

## Career Expo at Dooly County K-8 was Phenomenal

Contributed

Students in third through eighth grade had the opportunity to explore a wide variety of careers and interact with over 25 vendors who came out to share information about their professions.

This experience allowed our students to ask questions, learn about different career paths, and begin thinking about the possibilities for their futures.

A special thank you to Ms. Eliza Bryant and Ms. Brianna James for organizing such an impactful

event for our students.

Their leadership and planning helped create a meaningful experience that connected our students to real-world opportunities. Events like this are important because they help our students begin dreaming about their

futures and exploring the careers they may one day pursue.

At Dooly County K-8 Academy, we are committed to career connections that inspire our students to believe that anything is possible.

## Dooly County Community CALENDAR

email: [thenewsobservereditor@gmail.com](mailto:thenewsobservereditor@gmail.com)



### Christ Chapel Unadilla Food Pantry - MARCH

CCU has two food pantry dates scheduled this month on Saturdays March 14 and March 21 at the church. Pantry hours are 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. with volunteer check-in from 9:30 a.m.-9:45 a.m.

For more information, contact Christ Chapel Unadilla 400 Jeannette Street in Unadilla, Ga. at 478-627-9352.

### Christ Chapel Bingo Night in Byromville

Enjoy Bingo Game night on the second Thursday of every month starting at 6:00 p.m. in the Byromville Municipal Complex. This is for individuals 55 and older. Free entry-fellowship-games and prizes.

### Town of Dooling Meeting

The Town of Dooling-Town Meeting will now be held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month starting at 6:00p.m. (Except for the months of July & Dec. when no meeting will be held.) If you plan to bring an issue to the board, please contact the Mayor in writing a week before the town meeting to be placed on the agenda.

### Dooly County

### Library

1200 East Union St., Vienna Mon. - Thurs. 9AM-6PM Fri. 9:30A.M. - 4PM.

Closed Saturday.

**Thursdays - COLOR & CHAT.** Color books and colored pencils will be provided or you can bring your own. For more information contact Jill Kloberdanz, library manager library at 229-268-4687.

### The Elizabeth Harris Library

Unadilla Location:

Tues-Thurs 8:30AM-6PM

Friday 9AM-4PM

Saturday 9AM-12PM Noon

Byromville Location:

Tues-Thurs 2:30PM-5:30PM

### "An Hour of Encouragement"

Pastor Dean and the New Poplar Spring Baptist Church would like for you to join us every Wednesday night @7pm for "An Hour of Encouragement" on our Conference Call line. Please dial (253) 993-3761. (TFS)

### Bethlehem Baptist Church

Worship With Us Each & Every Sunday. Worship starts at 11:00am. Bible Study on each Sunday at 5:00pm. Jerry Jamal Sanders, Sr., Pastor. (TFS)

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

**Athens Hill Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-4883  
**AOH Church of God** Vienna, GA 229-268-1903  
**Bakersfield Baptist Church** Vienna, GA  
**Bay Point CME** Byromville, GA  
**Bethel Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-2848  
**Bethlehem Baptist Church** Byromville, GA 229-433-2102  
**Big Poplar Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA  
**Brown Chapel Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA 478-627-9466  
**Byromville Baptist Church** Byromville, GA 229-433-2505  
**Byromville Methodist Church** Byromville, GA 229-321-9292  
**Camp Creek Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA 478-627-3929  
**Vienna Church of Christ** Vienna, GA 229-268-1994  
**Vienna Church of God** Vienna, GA 229-268-1404  
**County Line Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA  
**Destiny Worship Center International Ministries** Vienna, GA (478) 273-8112  
**Dooling Baptist Church** Byromville, GA  
**Double Branch Freewill Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA  
**Drayton Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-8456  
**Drayton Wesleyan Church** Vienna, GA, 229-321-9292  
**Ebenezer Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-2964  
**Evangelistic Tabernacle Church**

**NAPA Brooks Auto Parts**  
**229-268-2700**  
 313 W. Union St., Vienna  
 Open Through Lunch  
 Eddie Conner, Manager

**THE CITIZENS AGENCY**  
 "Dependable Insurance"  
 121 N. 3rd Street  
 P.O. Box 486  
 Vienna, GA 31092  
 229-268-2800

Vienna, GA  
**Evergreen Baptist Church** Pinehurst, GA 229-645-3476  
**Faith Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-2798  
**Forest Chapel Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA 478-645-3476  
**Harmony Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA  
**Healing and Deliverance Church** Unadilla, GA  
**Liberty Baptist Church** Pinehurst, GA 229-645-3584  
**Lilly Baptist Church** Lilly, GA  
**Macedonia Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-1582  
**Little Poplar Baptist Church** Byromville, GA  
**Living Water Baptist Church** Unadilla, GA  
**Mars Hill Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-6795  
**Midway Independent Methodist**

**Akin Insurance Agency, Inc.**  
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 229-268-4751 • Vienna

**IF YOU NEED TO ADVERTISE EMAIL**  
 Phyllis Keaton  
[phyllis.keaton@yahoo.com](mailto:phyllis.keaton@yahoo.com)  
 (229)938-6253

**Pleasant Hill Baptist Church** Byromville, GA  
**Richwood Baptist Church** Vienna, GA  
**Pleasant Valley Baptist Church** Pinehurst, GA 229-645-3713  
**Reedy Branch Baptist Church** 740 Church Avenue Byromville, GA  
**Riverview Baptist Church** Vienna, GA  
**Shady Grove CME Church** Vienna, GA  
**Shiloh Methodist Church** Vienna, GA  
**Smyrna Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-6852  
**Snow Methodist Church** Unadilla, GA 478-627-3615  
**Unadilla United Methodist Church** Unadilla, GA 478-627-3330  
**Vienna Congregation** Vienna, GA  
**Vienna First Baptist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-4386  
**Vienna Methodist Church** Vienna, GA 229-268-4207

BILLY POWELL  
Columnist

## Parables To Ponder LET GO OF THE CONTROLS

A young female pilot was making a training flight. Since she always seemed to panic during engine stalls, her instructor asked her to attempt another stall recovery. Determined to get it right this time, she cut the engines. The next thing she knew her Cessna 150 was hurtling toward earth in a twisting, wing-over-wing spin. As she wrestled with the controls, she remembered her instructor's words, "If you ever get into a spin in a Cessna 150, just let go of the controls. It's built to pull out of a spin on its own." Yet she was still fighting the controls with all her strength and wouldn't release her hands. In desperation, she shouted to herself, "let go!" but her hands still clutched the controls. Calling on God and using every ounce of will power, she finally threw her hands up in the air and held them there. After some wild yawing and pitching, the aircraft straightened out and returned

to level flight. She had fallen nearly half a mile, but she was safe—because she had let go.

Just as the pilot recovered from the tailspin, God is always in control even when things seem to be spinning out of control. The trials and tribulations of life are many. People universally face disappointment, rejection, sorrow, grief, and frustration. A young man I knew received the dreaded pink slip. His company was downsizing and he got caught in a reduction in force. He was crushed, despondent, and didn't know which way to turn. I advised him to aggressively seek reemployment with other companies with all the resources he could muster. I also cautioned him that he would surely hit brick walls along the way, but when that happened to turn every thing over to God for only He could move brick walls. I further stressed that he seek God's will for God had a good and perfect plan for his

life.

When we go through difficult times in our lives, we, too, need to let go of the controls. As the old saying goes, we need to "let go and let God." That's exactly what God said through the Psalmist in verse 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God." In this passage, God is urging us to cease striving on our own, to trust Him in difficult situations, to let go, and to let Him handle things. We can do that with assurance because Psalm 46:1 declares: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble."

Jesus knew that John would face martyrdom and need a special grace when it occurred. The Master told John, "Truly, truly, I say to you when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." Jesus then said to John, "Follow me." There will be times in life when we must travel a path that we prefer not to take. It is then that we must turn to Jesus and follow him.

spring, often blooming in late winter (February) before its leaves appear. It thrives in diverse conditions, from wet, low-lying areas to dry, rocky uplands.

**Flowers:** Features distinct, small red flowers that appear in clusters before leaves, providing early nectar for native bees.

**Appearance:** Known for its brilliant red, orange, or yellow fall foliage. It is a medium-to-large tree, typically growing 40–60 feet tall.

**Adaptability:** Very resilient, with a strong ability to thrive in a wide range of soil moisture levels, including swampy areas.

**Wildlife Value:** A crucial species for early pollinators and a larval host for various moths and butterflies.

**Growth Rate:** A relatively fast-growing tree, adding 12 to 18 inches of height per year.

Sometimes considered the most spectacular of the native, flowering trees, flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is a 20-40 ft., sometimes taller, single- or multi-trunked tree with a spreading crown and long-lasting, showy, white and pink spring blooms. A lovely, small, flowering tree with short trunk and crown of spreading or nearly horizontal branches. Graceful, horizontal-tiered branching, red fruits, and scarlet-red fall foliage are other landscape attributes. Flowering dogwood is deciduous.

Flowering Dogwood is one of the most beautiful eastern North American trees with showy early spring flowers, red fruit, and scarlet autumn foliage. The hard wood is extremely shock-resistant and useful for making weaving-shuttles. It is also made into spoons, small pulleys, mallet heads, and jeweler's blocks. Native Americans used the aromatic bark and roots as a remedy for malaria and extracted a red dye from the roots.

I hope you have enjoyed brushing up on your knowledge of these early spring bloomers.

*Tim Lewis is a Georgia Green Industry Association Certified Plant Professional, gardening writer, and former Perry High School horticulture instructor. He can be reached at (478)954-1507 or timlewis1@windstream.net.*

NEIL JOINER  
Columnist

## Joiner's Corner SCRIBBLED NOTES 2 - FODDER

The quest continues to shorten my stack of scribbled notes. I started at the top with aspirations of hitting bottom.

After he read "Round Tuit" Jim Hamrick sent me a real one, plus its cousin the stick tuit. Jim suggested it might be fodder for another column, noting, "It's not every day you get a chance to use the word fodder." That sounds like something his father, Mr. Harry Hamrick, would have said in his weekly feature *Whatcha Callit*.

Earl Nightingale was referenced on scribbles from 2023. I was reminded of him that day by an article at Denison's Forum. Mr. Nightingale's syndicated radio program of decades ago encouraged high moral and ethical standards. Maybe it's time for reruns.

A memo from March 2023 was about a chance meeting with Dooly County farmer Ronnie Bledsoe. During our short visit he reminisced about playing basketball barefooted on a dirt court at Sandy Mount School. At a Vienna game the country boys learned shoes were required on the wooden floor. Ronnie and a teammate shared a pair as they rotated hoops play.

Ronnie also talked about the role Hispanics played in cotton harvesting before mechanical pickers came along. His father and Mr. Ed Chancy went to Mexico in 1952 in a big truck with benches and brought back 70 workers. I didn't pick much cotton, but it was enough to help me appreciate the people who did. Hand picking on our farm ended when Daddy bought a tractor-mounted rig. My elation has been kept secret until now.

I used to help Daddy weigh hand-picked cotton in the field. Burlap sheets, tied at their corners, were hooked to a scale attached to a seven-foot sapling pole. Two people would lift the cotton off the ground. Daddy would write the weight and the name of who picked it so he could settle up. The cotton was then hauled on a four-wheel wagon to Mr. Earnest Taylor's gin. If nobody was ahead of us we'd unload it under the suck pipe.

Only a few farmers from Ronnie's generation are still active in local agriculture. They are the ones who experienced the full evolution from hard manual labor to six-row machines. Harvesting technology may have peaked, but there's no

telling. As Bobby Bare said in a song, "Things change."

We'll close with a mention of Luther Story. I crossed the Flint River for decades without knowing why a bridge was named after him. In April of 2023 I saw an Associated Press release with some history and a new development. Nearly 73 years after the young soldier went missing in the Korean War, his remains had been identified. A memorial service was scheduled that May for Andersonville National Cemetery, not far from his Americus home.

Story was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1951. With personal injuries that would have hindered his fellow soldiers' escape, the wounded corporal sent them on as he stayed behind to fight. I'd love to know how his selfless courage impacted the lives of those he helped save. I hope they had a chance to thank his family. Crossing Luther Story Bridge feels differently now than it did before. He was 19 years old.

My stack of scribbled notes didn't go down enough today to measure, but I'm confident one day I'll hit bottom. I don't know how to wrap up such a rambling column, so I'll borrow a clever line from Jim Hamrick's letter. "It's not every day you get a chance to use the word fodder."

*joinerscorner.com  
neiljoiner@gmail.com*

TIM LEWIS  
Columnist

## In The Garden With MORE EARLY SPRING BLOOMERS

Last week in this space we looked at some early spring blooming flowers, shrubs, and trees—all which gloriously signal the end of the winter and have the ability to delight us out of our winter gloom. This week we examine a few more of these early spring bloomers.

First up is the Eastern Redbud. The Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) is a premier early-spring, native, deciduous tree in Georgia (Zones 6-8), renowned for its vibrant, magenta-pink flowers that bloom on bare branches from February to April. It is highly adaptable to Georgia's red clay and diverse soil types, thriving in full sun to partial shade.

**Bloom & Appearance:** Flowers bloom before the heart-shaped leaves emerge. The tree grows 12–25 feet tall and 10–20 feet wide, making it ideal for small yards.

**Popular Cultivars:** 'Forest Pansy' (wine-red foliage), 'Merlot' (drought-tolerant with dark purple leaves), and 'Ruby Falls' (weeping form) are popular choices.

**Planting:** Performs best in well-drained soil, though it tolerates various soil conditions.

**Maintenance:** While generally hardy, it can be short-lived and susceptible to pests like scale and diseases like *Botryosphaeria* canker.

**Wildlife:** It is a vital early food source for pollinators, specifically bees.

The ever-dependable camellia is next. Early spring-blooming camellias in Georgia (late winter to April) are dominated by *Camellia japonica* and various hybrids, which thrive in zones 6-9 and offer large, showy, cold-hardy flowers. Recommended, long-blooming varieties for the region include 'Kramer's Supreme,' 'Debutante,' and the 'April' series.

April Series ('April Blush', 'April Dawn', 'April Tryst'). Extremely cold-hardy (Zone 6) and ideal for North Georgia.

'Kramer's Supreme' (Japonica). Features large, fragrant, peony-form red flowers. 'Debutante' (Japonica). A classic, heat-tolerant shrub with soft, light-pink peony-style blooms.

Native from Virginia and Florida west to Arkansas and east Texas and south to Guatemala, Carolina Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) is a twining, evergreen vine, 10-20 ft. long, that will climb trees, scramble over fences and structures, or develop a mound of tangled stems if left to its own devices. Lustrous, dark-green foliage develops a slight yellow or purple cast in winter. Axillary clusters bear very fragrant, yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers. The fruit is a 1 1/2 in. long capsule.

This high-climbing vine is very common in parts of the South, frequently found in abandoned fields and climbing high into the canopies of pine forests. It is quite adaptable and tenacious, with no serious disease or insect problems. These qualities, along with its glossy, evergreen leaves and waxy, trumpet-shaped flowers, have made it a mainstay of the suburban landscape in the Southeast. The flowers, leaves, and roots are poisonous and may be lethal to humans and livestock. The species' nectar may also be toxic to honeybees if too much is consumed and honey made from Carolina Jessamine nectar may be toxic to humans. Rankin's Yellow Jessamine, also known as Swamp Jessamine (*G. rankinii*), with odorless flowers, occurs in swamps from North Carolina to Florida.

The Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) is a highly adaptable, native Georgia tree that signals the very beginning of

DR. LANIER ROBERTS  
Columnist

## Writings From The Heart SOME MORE OF THESE

1). I got upset again with Satan this morning after church service. I had just preached my heart out about Paul preaching and winning souls in the wicked city of Corinth and how God had told Paul he would not be hurt or beaten while doing his work in that city. I was informing the people how God was there with us and taking care

of us and would help us as He did Paul. Lo, and behold, Satan attacked one (while he and his wife were kneeling and praying at the altar) of their members with a physical ailment and an ambulance had to be called. We don't know yet what transpired, but the old devil tried to interfere with a worshipful church service. He might have

disrupted that one service, but he loses in the end. HE WILL BE GOING TO HELL, and there is no two ways about it! He's going there. The message came from Acts 18:1-17. AMEN.

2). I'm praying for the farmers who have various crops (especially peaches) already budding and in many cases blooming this time of year. For ours too. We have 2 orange trees blooming, two peaches, 7 plums (all blooming), and others. PLEASE Lord, hold off the hard freeze. Amen.

3). Hey, Christians, ALWAYS remember, Jesus loves us to heaven and back. Until next time.

## Big changes coming to Georgia General Assembly in 2026 elections as lawmakers leave office

By Mark Niese  
Staff Writer

Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — With legislators running for higher office, longtime lawmakers retiring, and many challenges to incumbents, the Georgia General Assembly is set for high turnover after this year's elections.

Control of the state House and Senate is at stake as Republicans are defending the majorities they've held in both chambers for over 20 years.

Eighteen senators and representatives signed up to run for higher offices before candidate qualifying ended last week, leaving behind districts where they would have been incumbents seeking reelection. In the contest for lieutenant governor alone, five senators are competing against each other.

And many new challengers entered the fray. A total of 537 candidates are running for 236 seats in the General Assembly.

To take control of the House, Democrats need to flip 10 seats. Republicans currently hold

a 99-77 advantage, with four Democratic-leaning seats vacant. Democrats have already secured two of those seats because no Republicans are running.

"The wave is building, and Georgia can feel it," said House Minority Leader Carolyn Hugley, D-Columbus. "We are within striking distance of the majority, and this qualifying period has made one thing absolutely clear: House Democrats are not just competing — we are coming to win."

Republicans hold firmer control of the Senate, where they have a 32-23 advantage, with one GOP-leaning seat vacant.

Republican Party Chair Josh McKoon said Georgia remains a center-right state, but no election can be taken for granted.

"Republicans have been great stewards of the public trust. When you look at the Republican record, it's really striking how they've made Georgia such an engine of economic growth," McKoon said. "Voters will continue to reward Republicans for that record."

Despite the flood of candidates, some incumbents lack any challengers, especially in deeply conservative or liberal districts.

There are 54 seats where only one candidate filed to run for election, effectively winning their races before a vote is cast.

Besides candidates running for higher office, retirements and resignations also created openings.

The nine retiring legislators include House Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones, R-Milton; House Natural Resources Chair Lynn Smith, R-Newnan; Sen. Ed Harbison, D-Columbus; and Sen. Elena Parent, D-Decatur.

Three Democrats left the House after facing federal charges for COVID-19 unemployment fraud. Reps. Karen Bennett, D-Stone Mountain, and Dexter Sharper, D-Valdosta, resigned from office. Rep. Sharon Henderson, D-Covington, was suspended from the House by Gov. Brian Kemp, and she's running for state Senate.

Deadline for legals submission is Friday Noon prior to First publication. Email word document to legals@gtln.org

# LEGALS

Please enter "LEGAL NOTICE" in the email subject headline. Please be sure to have your contact information listed. Most legal notices run \$15 per 100 words Per publication. Plus a \$10 affidavit fee.

**NO26-004**  
**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**IN RE: ESTATE OF LORAN GLENWILL HARRIS, DECEASED**  
**ESTATE NO. 26-0005**  
**PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION**

**TO: All Interested Parties** and to whom it may concern: **CHRISTY INEZ HALL** has petitioned for **CHRISTY INEZ HALL** to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of **LORAN GLENWILL HARRIS** deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.  
 Rooney Bowen III  
 Judge of the Probate Court  
 Dwayne Forehand  
 Clerk of the Probate Court  
 Dooly County Probate Court  
 104 South Second Street  
 Vienna, GA 31092  
 (229) 268-4217  
 March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 2026

**NO26-006**  
**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**IN RE: ESTATE OF DENAJAH L ASKEW, DECEASED**  
**ESTATE NO. 26-0008**  
**PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION**

**TO: All Interested Parties** and to whom it may concern: **MONYIA ASKEW AND DOROTHY BRYANT** has petitioned for **MONYIA ASKEW AND DOROTHY BRYANT** to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of **DENAJAH L ASKEW** deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.  
 Rooney Bowen III  
 Judge of the Probate Court  
 Denal Fluellen  
 Clerk of the Probate Court  
 Dooly County Probate Court  
 104 South Second Street  
 Vienna, GA 31092  
 (229) 268-4217  
 March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 2026

**NOTICE**  
 TO: All Interested Parties and to whom it may concern: **MONYIA ASKEW AND DOROTHY BRYANT** has petitioned for **MONYIA ASKEW AND DOROTHY BRYANT** to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of **DENAJAH L ASKEW** deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before **April 6, 2026**. **BE NOTIFIED FURTHER:** All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled later. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.  
 Rooney Bowen III  
 Judge of the Probate Court  
 By: Denal Fluellen  
 Clerk of the Probate Court  
 Dooly County Probate Court  
 104 South Second Street  
 Vienna, GA 31092  
 (229) 268-4217  
 March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 2026

**NO26-002**  
**NOTICE TO FORECLOSE RIGHT TO REDEEM**

**KEVIN SELPH**, as Heir-at-law of **WILLIAM WESLEY QUICK**, Judge Sarah S. Harris, **BIBB COUNTY PROBATE COURT**, Judge **Rooney L. Bowen, III DOOLY COUNTY PROBATE COURT**, and **Paula M. Smith, DOOLY COUNTY TAX COMMISSIONER**, their heirs and assigns, all residents/occupants/tenants, and any and all persons and entities holding any right, title, or interest in or lien upon the below described property **TAKE NOTICE THAT:** The right to redeem the following described property, to wit:

All and only that parcel of land designated as Tax Parcel 10B-5, lying and being in Land Lot 48 of the 9th Land District, Dooly County, Georgia, being Lot 33, Sportsman Subdivision, shown in Plat Book 5, Page 184, described in Deed Book 305, Page 105, the description contained therein being incorporated herein by this reference, known as **676 Drayton Loop**. will expire and be forever foreclosed and barred on and after April 27, 2026. The tax deed to which this notice relates is dated November 5, 2024 and is recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Dooly County, Georgia, in Deed Book 694, Page 267. The property may be redeemed at any time before 5:00 PM on Monday, April 27, 2026, or thirty (30) days after legal service of this Notice pursuant to O.C.G.A. 48-4-46, whichever is later, by payment of the redemption price as fixed and provided by law to the undersigned at the following address:  
 Balvinder Singh Johal c/o Hayden H. Hooks Arnold & Hooks, LLC PO Box 6540 Americus, Georgia 31709 (229) 389-2045 Please be governed accordingly.  
 HayowidH  
**HAYDEN H. HOOKS** Georgia Bar No. 786812  
 Arnold & Hooks, LLC  
 PO Box 6540  
 Americus, Georgia 31709 (229) 389-2045  
 March 5, 12, 19, 26, 2026

**NO26-009**  
**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**IN RE: ESTATE OF MADISON CHERIE ADAMS, DECEASED**  
**ESTATE NO. 25-0012**  
**NOTICE**

**IN RE: Petition for Discharge of Personal Representative (Christopher Wade Adams)**  
**TO: All Interested Parties**  
 This is to notify you to file an objection, if there is any, to the above-referenced petition, in this Court on or before **April 6, 2026**.

**BE NOTIFIED FURTHER:** All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.  
 Rooney Bowen III  
 Judge of the Probate Court  
 By: Denal Fluellen  
 Clerk of the Probate Court  
 Dooly County Probate Court  
 104 South Second Street  
 Vienna, GA 31092  
 (229) 268-4217  
 March 19, 2026

**NO26-000**  
**NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS**

Undersigned, **Rebecca Willingham Worley and Larry Taylor Willingham**, Co-Executors of the Estate of **Rebecca Taylor Willingham**, hereby gives in terms of establishment comprising Section 53-7-41 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated notice to all creditors and claimants of the above named decedent's estate to render in an account of their demands, properly attested, to said Co-Executors and all persons owing to said estate are required to make prompt payment to said Co-Executors having postal addresses of 620 Bedgood Road, Arabi, GA 31712, and 3921 West Road, Byromville, GA 31007, respectively.  
 Rebecca Willingham Worley and Larry Taylor Willingham  
 Co-Executors  
**LAW OFFICE OF NICHOLSON C. EDWARDS, LLC**  
 Attorney for Co-Executors  
 March 5, 12, 19, 26, 2026

**NO26-008**  
**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**IN RE: ESTATE OF**

**EDWIN KEITH LINDSEY, DECEASED**  
**ESTATE NO. 26-0010**  
**PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE**  
**TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES** and to whom it may concern: **TERESA L POOLE** has petitioned for **TERESA L POOLE** to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of **EDWIN KEITH LINDSEY** deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before **April 6, 2026**. **BE NOTIFIED FURTHER:** All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.  
 Rooney Bowen III  
 Judge of the Probate Court  
 By: Denal Fluellen  
 Clerk of the Probate Court  
 Dooly County Probate Court  
 104 South Second Street  
 Vienna, GA 31092  
 (229) 268-4217  
 March 19, 26, April 2, 9, 2026

**NO26-003**  
**NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS**

Undersigned, **John C. Scott and Jerry Thomas Scott**, Co-Executors of the Estate of **Janet B. Scott**, hereby gives in terms of establishment comprising Section 53-7-41 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated notice to all creditors and claimants of the above named decedent's estate to render in an account of their demands, properly attested, to said Co-Executors and all persons owing to said estate are required to make prompt payment to said Co-Executors having postal addresses of 2014 Laurel Drive, Perry, GA 31069, and P. O. Box 81, Unadilla, GA 31091, respectively.  
 John C. Scott and Jerry Thomas Scott  
 Co-Executors  
**LAW OFFICE OF NICHOLSON C. EDWARDS, LLC**  
 Attorney for Co-Executors  
 March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 2026

**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF DOOLY COUNTY**  
**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**ESTATE NO. 26-0009**  
**IN RE: ESTATE OF JAMES LEE BURTCHIN, DECEASED**  
**NOTICE**  
**IN RE: the petition to probate will (and Codicil(s)) in Solemn Form in the above-referenced estate of having been duly filed.**  
**TO: Brandon Hittle, Blake Burtchin, Virginia Gross, Matthew Burtchin, Joseph Money Jr., Steven Hittle.**  
 This is to notify you to file objections, if there is any, to the petition to probate will in solemn form, in the Court on or before April 20, 2026.  
**BE NOTIFIED FURTHER:** All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objection are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.  
 Rooney Bowen III, Judge of the Probate Court  
 by Denal Fluellen, Clerk of the Probate Court  
 104 2nd Street S, Vienna, GA 31096  
 229-268-4217

## DOOLY NOT SPARED

CONTINUED FROM 1A



Photo By Kenny Mercer

An irrigation pivot that was overturned during the storm

clear debris and reopen those roads to traffic as soon as possible. We would like to urge all residents that these storms can pop up rapidly and you need to monitor your local weather radio stations and weather Apps." There were also reports of damage in Northern Dooly County around Unadilla. Mr. Williford also commented that if you have any questions, feel free to call him at 229-947-0705.

In a statement released by School System Superintendent Dr. Sherrod Williford extended his, "Sincere appreciation to (his) transportation team, parents, administrators, teachers, and staff for working together



Photo By Kenny Mercer

A roof was ripped off the top of a home near Unadilla.

to ensure students arrived safely at school. Your patience, communication, and commitment to student safety are deeply val-

ued. Moments like these remind us that it truly takes all of us working together to support our students and our schools."

## VIENNA VETO

CONTINUED FROM 1A

I also recommended that they connect with the River Valley Regional Commission for assistance with the process, and I notified the Executive Director that I had made that recommendation. As I reiterated to her, I do not involve myself in who is hired. My only role is ensuring that everyone understands the proper process and follows it, just as I previously shared with them regarding efforts to bring in another City Attorney. For reference, both the City of Cordele and the City of Americus utilized internal staff as Interim City Administrators while conducting their permanent searches."

According to the City of Vienna Charter, Department heads and officers must be by recommendation of the mayor with the consent of the council charter 2.19, even in the case of last Monday's unanimous appointment of Jeff Priest as interim public works director. Any action would be in violation of the city charter.

Vienna Mayor Eddie Daniels released a statement in regards

to the Monday, March 9 meeting, "The following day, I issued a veto out of the city charter because the recommendation that was made by council was not valid to hire a city attorney and to put in an interim city administrator. I vetoed that for a certain amount of time because the recommendation has to come from the mayor and the appointment is voted on by the council, but it has to be the mayor's recommendation. That was not what the council wanted.

The City of Vienna, if we're hiring from within, we're at a point now we don't need interim nothing that's dealing with the city's stuff. We have applied for a \$1 million CDBG grant for upgrades in certain areas of town. This type of thing that's going on now, it could waver on that. We look good with this team that just came from Washington, D.C. and we have put in the correct wording for different housing grants. But this kind of thing that's going on right now with our council (allegedly) not knowing what they're doing, could easily hurt this process.

So, I did a veto on March 10 to stop anything that was done Monday night, March 9 be-

cause it was not valid unless the recommendation was by the mayor. We will start back, I will check with attorneys and start back doing my executive orders in order to keep the city running and affluent at this time.

The Georgia Municipal Association has been notified about the situation and the first thing GMA wanted to know is what did the city administrator do to warrant him not being reappointed. I'm directly over the city administrator and city clerk, public works director and I have not had to write up these people because they are really honorable, they do their job, they keep me aware of what's going on because I'm at city hall practically everyday. It's just a case of not knowing, of educating them, but if a person does not want to be educated, you cannot educate them.

I've been doing this for 23-years-city council, mayor pro-tem and mayor, so I don't just do things on my own, I've got a team that's with me. I always check with attorneys before I do anything. We are hoping that this will end soon, so we can move on and carry on the city's business. "

In regards to the City of Vien-

## STRAIGHT-LINE WINDS

CONTINUED FROM 1A



complete their work."

The **BIG PIG JIG®**, now in its 44th year, is Georgia's longest-running barbecue competition drawing competitors and Judges from across the country and serving as a major tradition for the Vienna and Dooly County community.

"For me personally, looking out across the damage was overwhelming and heartbreaking," Lamb said. "This event has been part of our community for more than four decades and part of my own life for over

thirty six years beginning as a volunteer in 1989 and organizer for a quarter century." Despite the devastation, organizers say the response from the barbecue community has been immediate and heartfelt. "I have heard from so many members of our BBQ Family offering support, love, and help," Lamb said.

"That's exactly what makes this community so special." At this time, organizers say the most important things are prayers, patience, and safety while crews continue address-

ing power lines and evaluating the property.

Updates regarding cleanup efforts and rebuilding plans will be shared with teams, sponsors, and the public as more information becomes available.

"The **BIG PIG JIG®** has stood strong for 44 years," Lamb said. "With this incredible community behind it, we know it will stand strong for many more. We will not let this defeat us. We will rebuild, and the **BIG PIG JIG®** will continue, stronger and better than ever."

the attorney's availability and workload capacity, negotiate compensation and clearly define the scope of services and prepare a written contract or appointment resolution to formalize the relationship.

Additionally, I want to note that each called meeting carries a cost to taxpayers. It may be beneficial to address as much city business as possible during regular council meetings and reduce the number of special called meetings each month. I am currently preparing a work session focused on updating and modernizing the city charter.

There are several sections that should be brought into alignment with current governance practices to support more efficient operations. After the conclusion of this year's Legislative General Assembly Session, I will follow up with dates for council members to visit the state capitol and participate in this important work."

Despite the fact that there is no chief and currently one of-

ficer at night with the Vienna Police Department, the mayor requested an agreement with the sheriff's department to patrol, in Councilman Albert King Sr.'s words,"Until we can get some more people in here."

That motion failed due to lack of a second with one in favor and three against. Mr. King offered a motion to accept, "Mr. Verlin Jones back as our city attorney and that motion also failed due to lack of a second with one in favor and three against. Following a motion by Albert King Sr. to reappoint Mr. Michael Bowens as city administrator, it failed due to lack of a second from (Tabatha Carter, Babette Lewis or John Mathis, Jr.)

In other news: Both Attorney Maurice King, Jr. and Leslie Mathis were allotted time during citizen input to address their concerns to the council.

# DCRD 14U Basketball Team Wins GRPA State Championship

By DCRD Director  
Joe Willis

The Dooly County Recreation Department 14 and Under team won the GRPA State Championship in basketball this past Saturday, March 7. They ended the season undefeated. The championship team had season wins over Macon County and Turner County in the regular season.

They entered the GRPA District Tournament hosted by Talbot County and had a win over Talbot County 68-65 in the opening round Feb. 23. The team continued with a win over Blakely-Early County 53-52 on Feb. 28 to secure the district championship and a trip to state.

The following week, the team and fans traveled on Friday night, March 6 to state host Meriwether County to compete in the GRPA State Tournament. The first round of pool play started off with a victory over

Tallapoosa 68-31.

The next morning the bracket was set and Team Dooly faced three games between them and a state championship. In the first round, they played Manchester and won 69-30. In the second round, they played Washington County and won 53-51. In the championship game, Team Dooly faced off against state host Meriwether County. The boys from Dooly won 64-52.

Dooly County are State Champions. The team was coached by AJ Smith and Antwan Clayton. Players are Zayden Bell, Marcus Bryant Jr., Makel Coleman, Eric Ford Jr., ZaMari Furlow, Kaeden Hall, Ayden Jackson, Kyshun Jones, Amare Kelly, and Jaiden Sanders. Dooly County Recreation Director Joe Willis says, "This has been an amazing group. It's not easy getting out of our district

District 3 has some of the toughest teams in the state.



Everyone in our district is really good. This group has been special from the start. They won their first state championship in 2020 when they were just seven and eight years old.

They won it again in 2024 when they were 11 and 12. They have won seven district championships and three state championships during their time in Rec, while also winning

a middle school championship at Dooly County K-8.

The future is bright for Dooly County athletics and most all of them are on the A/B Honor Roll. We had a lot of good times with

these boys. Groups like this don't come through every day. We are very happy for them to go out on top as State Champions."

## Dooly's Boys Soccer Team picks up Eleventh Win

Contributed

The Dooly County Soccer teams traveled south to take on Tift County High School last Saturday and the Lady Bobcats were shutout 7-0. They fought hard until the end and we're proud of our girls for their efforts. Our boys fought hard and showed grit as they secured today's game with a score of 1-0 over Tift. Alex Mendez scored the lone goal. We're proud of our boys securing this victory.

We traveled to Alamo, Ga. to take on Wheeler County last Friday and Our girls secured their first win in this area match with a score of 3-1. They tied 1-1 in regulation and found a way to win in overtime. Yaneli Velasquez had a brace (two goals) and Sherly Sandoval had one.

They fought hard until the end we're proud of our girls for their efforts on today's win. The Dooly Boys also were victorious with a score of 8-0 over the Bulldogs. Jesus Vega had a hat trick (three goals), Dodany Mendez had a brace (two

goals). Alex Mendez, Jeremy Perez, and Grayson Hurtado had one goal each. Our Lady Bobcats dropped last Tuesday's area match versus Montgomery County with a score of 3-0. They fought hard until the end and we're proud of the girls.

The Dooly County boys secured their area game with a score of 7-0 over the Eagles. Jesus Vega and Dodany Mendez both had a hat trick (three goals) and Alex Mendez had one.

The Junior Varsity boys secured a win in last Monday's match with a score of 3-2. Christopher Velasquez, Cole Gaultney and Grayson Hurtado scored for us. We made several mistakes and we didn't capitalize on some opportunities we had, but we were relentless and were able to secure a win despite going down 2-0 early in the game. This week's schedule included a match on the road Tuesday against Hawkinsville.

Dooly County's boys at press-time had a record of 11-2 overall and were ranked 3-1 in second place in the region.

# Trojans Look to Recover After 'Disastrous' Game Vs. CA

By Head Coach  
Mike Ashley

We played Crisp Academy last Tuesday, but we only got one game in due to the weather. It was our first region game. A team that has really impressed me a lot until we play them. We started off the game by missing our starting pitcher Brantley Ross who had the flu. He's my number two hitter 20-9. We were missing our left fielder because of the flu.

Just people playing out of position, so we went into it knowing it was going to be a little bit of a challenge. The guys have been playing some pretty decent baseball, despite losing two in a row, they were close games. We put Tucker Sorrow on the mound that had been pitching pretty well for us to keep us in the game.

First pitch, get a pop-up with a chance for one pitch-one out and the catcher couldn't find it, didn't make the play on it. The very next pitch, the guy hits a lazy fly ball to center field and we didn't make the play. From there, it just went downhill and they ended up having an eight run first inning.

People that normally make the play, really step up, it was just one of those innings where it would never end. Eli Ashley had a chance to get a double-play on his own to get us out of the inning, glove side toward second base, the ball went under his glove and it was just a disastrous first inning.

I want to see how the guys would respond and Eli Ashley led off, got on base, I think he got on three out of five times which leads the team in every offensive category. We had some guys batting at the top of the order that normally don't hit



Photos by Bonnie Huesler

Tucker Sorrow and John Wilson Floyd who both stood out during the game against Crisp Academy last week.

at the top. We ended up scoring some runs, the guys didn't lie down, but we just couldn't get out of our own way that game. We put a lot of runs on the board (nine), but put up double what we put up.

John Wilson Floyd came and did a fantastic job. He threw 80 pitches and the guys were just filling up the zone and giving CA credit, I think they had 17-hits, so they were putting the bat on the ball to do what they needed to do.

We just did not step up and make the plays at all. Offensively, we put some runs up, but we still didn't hit the ball like I know we're capable of doing. We've taken more batting practice off of machines, live pitching because we throw our bullpen against live batters so both get their work in. Coaches throw BP, so it really puzzles me what's going on with these kids right now.

They didn't lie down, so I'm

proud of them for that, but we've got to do a much better job and the pitching is definitely getting a little bit better, it's just taking us a little bit longer to get up to speed than I thought it would. Clay Sangster hit the ball really well after a rough season last year, so he's stepping up and moved up in the order. Cash Greene, he does what he does behind the plate, blocking everything.

My freshmen are starting to get there, we've just got to make the routine plays. We were supposed to play them again last Thursday, but the storms rolled in and knocked the power out at the school, so we didn't have classes, so we didn't play the baseball game.

We have a tough stretch next week because we will play CA Tuesday, Wednesday and then we have to turn around and start our other region set against Westwood Thursday, so pitching is going to be stressed and

they're going to have to step up and throw strikes.

Maybe the offense will turn around and I think once things settle down, we're going to be alright. We still have a chance to win the series against Crisp Academy which I fully expect us to do. I told the guys, you have a great chance to win the region this year. I pulled up an eighth grader Mason Scarborough played second base and I batted him down in the order and did really well.

John Wilson Floyd defensively making picks at first base, he's probably one of the best in the state and if I can start hitting the ball consistently, he'll definitely be an all-state player. Looking forward to the team rebounding a little bit and once they start learning how to win together, they'll start reeling them off. We'll see what we can do this week on a pretty brutal stretch of games.

## FA Track Team Competes

Contributed

Fullington Academy's track team participated in the Viking Invitational hosted by FPD in Macon this past Thursday. All our athletes competed very well highlighted by Carson Stevens taking First place in the Pole Vault and Willa Kehayes placing Second in the Long Jump.

## FA All-Star Rylee Reed in the Spotlight



Contributed, Photo by Bonnie Huesler

Congratulations to Fullington Academy Lady Trojan Rylee Reed. She was selected to participate in the recent Georgia Independent Athletic Association All-Star game.

## Local Club Selling Commemorative America's 250th Birthday Flags

Contributed

Vienna Woman's Club members had a busy and productive meeting last week by selling 12 by 18 inch garden flags (flag holder not included) commemorating America's 250th birthday for only \$10. Proceeds will

benefit the Dooly County Veterans Museum.

Among the group's projects are the collecting of new boys and girls underwear in sizes medium, large or extra large for the Gateway Center. Also, the second event in the Meet and Greet

Author series for 2026 will feature Karter Jane Smith.

See you at the Dooly County Library on Monday, March 30 at 4:00 p.m. At the meeting, club members enjoyed a delicious supper of baked spaghetti, Caesar salad and garlic bread.

# Ja'Kayla Hooks Participates in 2026 Future Stars H.S. All-Star Basketball Game

Contributed

Ja'Kayla Hooks (Dooly County High School), 2025 Region Freshman of the Year and 2x First Team All-Region selection was chosen to participate in the 2026 Future Stars High School All-Star Basketball Game for freshmen and sophomores.

The game was played Saturday night, March 14 at Albany State University West Campus. Future stars were on display with the top freshmen and sophomores from across the region.

Later that same evening, an-

other Dooly County Bobcat was in the spotlight as Coach Brandon Dawkins, Dooly County Athletic Director and Six-Time Coach of the Year, served as the Head Coach of the 2026 Senior Girls Away Team in the 2026 Girls High School All-Star Game.

The 2026 Girls High School All-Star Game featured the top senior talent from across the region, bringing together the very best players for an exciting night of elite competition.



The dessert was an almond cinnamon cake from Café 41. Contact us via our new dedicated email address: join@gfwcvienna.org.