

# The Macon Melody

Friday, Nov. 15, 2024

Bibb County's local source for community news

Vol. I, No. 21

## Macon honors veterans



Jason Vorhees & Matt Odom / The Melody

**Above:** The Cherry Blossom Festival hosted a Veterans Day parade in downtown Macon Sunday featuring military units, marching bands and floats. **Right:** Maconite and retired Sgt. Jimmie Orange conducts the ceremonial placing of the wreath at this year's Veterans Day celebration at Linwood Cemetery.

**Below:** Victor Medrano performs Taps during a Veterans Day ceremony at Coleman Hill on Monday.



## Bishop, Scott talk future of Middle Ga.

Laura Corley  
Macon Melody

Hyper-partisanship, politically polarized national TV news and finger-pointing between parties has made it harder for Macon's congressional representatives to do their jobs.

That's what Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Columbus, and Rep. Austin Scott, R-Tifton, said last week at an Eggs & Issues forum hosted by the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce.

"The middle is where most Americans are and that is where we have to find ourselves in order to get things done," Bishop said. "Our government was structured by our founding fathers based on compromise ... We have to struggle and do what we have to do to make that happen."

Scott said social media is helping fuel division and hyperpartisanship, which is disrupting congress's

See **FUTURE**, Page A3



## Reg Murphy dies at 90

Caleb Slinkard  
Managing Editor

J. Reginald "Reg" Murphy, a former journalist, newspaper executive and Mercer University trustee, died Nov. 9. He was 90 years old.

Murphy was born in 1934 in Hoschton, Georgia and grew up in Gainesville. He attended Mercer University, working his way through college as a reporter for The Macon Telegraph, which launched his career in political reporting.

"Journalism is, in my mind, sacred," Murphy said last year. "It is a sacred trust to tell the truth and

See **MURPHY**, Page A3

Periodical — Mail Label

## Bibb County Schools discusses closures

Casey Choung  
Macon Melody

After forming a committee to consider possible school closures.

More than 70 teachers, parents and school district officials gathered at the Professional Learning Center off of Riverside Drive Thursday evening to discuss what Bibb County School resources should be prioritized and what to expect from a possible consolidation.

Constituents at the consolidation town hall meeting were broken up into groups that identified concerns, needs and answered questions regarding consolidation.

The school district has not yet announced which schools could be closed.

"We broke this (discussion) up into four different areas of purposes so that we can look at safety, security, transportation, academic

programs ... this feedback will go into the deeper dive we're doing," Deputy Superintendent Katika Lovett said.

Prior to group discussions, the district outlined the consolidation timeline and read its latest enrollment figures.

The process is currently in phase three of four, where the district collects community input already gathered data on finances, facility needs, resource allocation and student support.

Enrollment numbers showed a capacity deficit of 3,000 students, with 2,000 square feet of space available in elementary schools.

Discussions about closures arose in the face of declining enrollment and budgetary needs, Superintendent Dan Sims said, and these discussions predated his tenure.

Lower enrollment num-

See **SCHOOLS**, Page A2

## Examining the tech impact on the 'Anxious Generation'

Evelyn Davidson  
Macon Melody

Ginny Smith Younce — Stratford Academy alumnus and Penguin Random House executive editor — recently spoke about the negative effects of social media on youth and how to combat it in the second of a two-part book study hosted by Stratford.

Younce, a Macon native who now lives in Nashville, talked with Stratford parents about how the concepts in Jonathan Haidt's bestselling book "The Anxious Generation" — which she edited — can be applied in schools and at home.

At the heart of Haidt's book is the idea of promoting independence in young children while also putting up guardrails around technology and the media. He advocates for parents to restrict their kids from social media until 16 and not give them phones until high school.

Haidt originally set out to write a book about the effects of social media on American democracy and the strain it puts on finding a shared language, Younce explained.

In the process of writing, she said, Haidt became stuck on the topic of the deteriorating mental health of Generation Z. Haidt

argues overprotecting children and not allowing them to develop their own skills independently, combined with an under-protective approach to kid's use of technology, has led to the current mental health climate for Gen Z.

Haidt's research points to alarming statistics representing Gen Z's mental health. In his book, he highlights a 145% increase in depression for teen girls in the U.S. since 2010.

"All of a sudden somebody going through a cognitive critical period of early puberty, — ie. middle school — had a super-computer engineered by the greatest minds on earth in their pocket," Younce told Stratford parents.

As a young girl, she recalled comparing herself to peers in her school; today, teen girls have a whole online stratosphere to compare themselves to.

"I think this is absolutely urgent. I think we have to act right now," she told The Melody. "My own kids are 10 and 8 and I want a different world for them."

The Stratford administration plans to meet next week to examine how to open the conversation up to parents, head of school Rachel Adams said, and how to tackle the

See **STRATFORD**, Page A2



\$2.00



Evelyn Davidson / The Melody

Penguin Random House executive editor Ginny Smith Younce speaks at Stratford Academy last week. Younce was the editor for Jonathan Haidt's bestselling book "The Anxious Generation."

### Stratford, A1:

problem differently for each grade level.

"The way you approach this with a 5-year-old, and the way a parent of a 5-year-old is going to feel about it, is going to be very different from the parent of a junior," she said.

Currently, Stratford middle school students are required to turn in their phones for the entire school day and high school level students are permitted to have their phones on them but not visible during the school day.

"That's what we're wrestling with is at what age do we give them the autonomy to start making those choices," Adams said. "So that we're not graduating them as seniors having had no access to anything and unready for the world."

Adams also noted the value of having parents voluntarily working together to set boundaries.

One father of two, Charles Causey, suggested Stratford parents pledge not to allow certain apps on their children's phones.

He hopes bringing awareness to technology's negative impact on youth will bring about real change. The depression, attention and relationship issues parents have noticed in their children, Causey asserted, are being validated by studies like the ones found in Haidt's book.

"Awareness breeds improvement," he told The Melody.

Haidt's emphasis on the importance of reintroducing kids to free play also struck a chord with many parents. Free play allows young folks to explore independently, experiment, learn and make mistakes on their own.

Younce shared her own experience as a parent of young kids — allowing her 10-year-old daughter to explore the mall independently.

"She thought it was the greatest thing, she ran so fast away from me to go and just explore and be on our own. And she was so proud of herself when she came back," Younce said. "That's what we're aiming for here. They don't have to climb Everest by themselves. It was 30 minutes in the Nashville Mall."

The Stratford administration will begin looking at practical and easy to implement solutions, according to Adams, such as offering the opportunity for parents to drop their students off at the playground before school starts, instead of the car line.

"The idea of free play that we experienced as children is definitely something that kids need," Stratford father of two Robert Betzel said. "For me it's going back to giving our children more freedom to explore, to engage and to be able to learn. Technology can get in the way of that."

### Schools, from A1:

bers are a product of several factors, including transience and new charter schools, he said.

"It's important to bring data to people and get their response," he said. "We don't want to do this independent of data and people."

Over the course of an hour, participants rotated around to different poster boards, adding their own ideas and concerns to questions like, "what academic programs are most important to preserve or expand?"

Diona Clyde, an arts teacher at Central High School, said she came in expecting to hear about which schools would be closed, and the process is "something that scares [her] a little bit."

Although no announcements were made about which schools were going to be affected, Clyde said the town hall was nonetheless a

good opportunity to share her thoughts.

"I'm kind of curious about what economic issues that students face that they may bring into other schools and how it might affect that school system," she said.

Thomas Duval, a literacy advocate, said he came to the meeting because he was concerned about L.H. Williams Elementary School being closed.

He graduated from the elementary school, and said he hopes through the consolidation process that the school district takes into account the cultural and historical significance, not just the business components.

"We have a rich African-American history and culture here that can be used to get our kids to read at grade level," he said. "If they read at grade level, Macon will become the place people come from all over the United States."

## Macon Note-ables Cindy Gonzalez

Cindy Gonzalez moved from Texas to Macon with her husband and two children in 2004. Today, her son works for Historic Macon and her daughter is the middle school principal at Mount de Sales Academy. Gonzalez currently works at MD Exchange and Bolingbroke Antiques & Mercantile, where she has an antiques booth.



Cindy Gonzalez

### Q: What brought you to Macon?

A: We moved from Waxahachie, Texas, to Macon for my husband's business. He's in the packaging business and we package kaolin clay.

This is a big kaolin area, and so we decided we needed to be here closer to where he works instead of him traveling all the time.

### Q: What's your favorite thing to do in Macon?

A: Probably antique shop because that's ageless. Anybody can go shopping in an antique shop. Can't always go to the cute clothing stores, but you can go to all the antique shops. That's my favorite thing.

My mom and I started an antique business in 1984. We're originally from Oklahoma and we grew up in Oklahoma. And then I had a store here in town for about seven years — an antiquing gift shop. That's what I love to do.

### Q: What's one thing someone couldn't guess by looking at you?

A: That I'm a Christmas psycho, that I love Christmas. I'm probably down to 17 full-size Christmas trees a year now, but I used to put up to 27 Christmas trees a year in my house.

I've done it since we lived in Waxahachie, Texas. Our house was on the candlelight Christmas tour for a few years and that's where I learned to put a Christmas tree in every single crevice of my house.

### Q: Where would you take someone visiting Bibb County for the first time?

A: I do that a lot with my family that live in Kentucky and different places, and we will go straight downtown. We'll go to Society Garden, we'll go to

any place that has a music venue or a good place to eat. We just skip around. Last time anybody came, we went to Grant's Lounge and listened to a band that my son loved. My son is an incredible music lover and a lover of Macon, Georgia. He's our tour guide every time somebody comes.

### Q: What's one thing about our community that you want changed or fixed?

A: Probably the negativity that I hear sometimes of people saying, "Oh, downtown Macon is dangerous or this or that." I have lived downtown. I have worked downtown. My son works downtown, his girlfriend works downtown.

He's with Historic Macon and she's with Visit Macon. We love downtown. It's changed so incredibly for the better since 2004 and I would just say people need to come really check it out. Quit saying that it's a negative place to come. It's a wonderful experience downtown. With all the music venues and everything that comes to this town, it's the place you want to be.

RIVER NORTH COUNTRY CLUB



## Come experience what we have to offer!

- New Tifeagle golf greens!
- New 6 pickleball courts!

### Plus:

- New pro-shop merchandise from Ping, Callaway, Footjoy and Titleist.
- 8 clay court tennis courts
- Golf, social, and corporate membership packages available.
- Activities for the entire family.



For Details:

Call Membership Director, Brittany Montgomery at 478.743.1495 option 3

## TRANQUILLITY HOME HEALTH CARE



Needing Home Care Service?  
We would love to hear from YOU!

- Skilled Nursing Care
- Personal Care
- Housekeeping
- Sitter/ Companion

• Business: (478) 474-0014 • (912) 344-5800  
• Fax: (478) 477-0538 • Toll Free: (855)-227-3077

www.tranquillityhomecarellc.com



Grant Blankenship / GPB News  
U.S. Rep. Austin Scott, R-Tifton, and U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Columbus, discuss the political landscape at The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce's "Macon & Eggs" event at Wesleyan College on Nov. 7.

## Future, from A1:

"ability to get things done." He is also concerned about how social media is affecting his children.

"All of this vitriol with the Facebook and everything, that is just pitting American against American," Scott said. "It's bad for not just America. It's bad for the world."

The forum at Wesleyan College comes two days after Bishop, who has represented District 2 for 32 years, was re-elected for a 17th term and Scott, who has represented District 8 for 13 years, was re-elected for a seventh term.

Despite sitting on opposite sides of the aisle, Bishop and Scott say their healthy working relationship makes bipartisan efforts in Georgia easier.

The pair of congressmen is united in its support of the national park initiative for the Ocmulgee Mounds, a designation that would expand the park, honor the Muskogee (Creek) people and likely boost tourism that could help Macon's economy.

A hearing on the matter is scheduled later this month, Scott said, but the designation "should not have taken as long as it has."

Scott said he has been negotiating with fellow Re-

publicans who are against expanding federal land because of the vast acreage in their home states.

"Some of those members have pledged not to increase the federal footprint of land by one single acre," Scott said. "They're people that I've had to go to and say, 'Hey, well, if you can't support it, can you? Can you not be against it?' And so it's half a vote at the time, sometimes kind of like the last election."

Bishop said he decided in his first or second term that he was determined to lift up the Muskogee people, preserve the mounds and restore the "broken relationship that was created with the Trail of Tears" when the opportunity presented itself.

"It goes beyond the Muskogee Creeks. It goes back to the Ice Age," Bishop said. "This is a very, very special site, archaeologically, and it's worthy of preservation and is worthy of tourism. ... It certainly will mean a lot for Middle and Southwest Georgia and for Georgia itself."

Other topics discussed included the farm bill as it relates to relief for timber losses from Hurricane Helene and the National Defense Authorization Act as it relates to improvements at military installations like Robins Air Force Base.

# Community celebrates Veterans Day at Linwood

Evelyn Davidson  
Macon Melody

Cars zipped along Walnut Street and a layer of mist settled over nearby headstones as folks gathered in Pleasant Hill's Historic Linwood Cemetery for the annual Veterans Day ceremony.

Pleasant Hill native and retired law enforcement officer Phill Sullivan spoke about the sacrifices veterans made and the importance of honoring their service.

"While we slumbered and slept, they were serving," he said.

Stanley Stewart, District 3 Commissioner for Macon-Bibb County, also took a moment to honor the veterans and reflect on Linwood as a place for community.

"It's a collective effort that makes us go forward and there's a fine line that connects us all through history," Stewart, who has a great-grandfather, grandmother and other relatives buried in Linwood, said.

Not far from the Veterans Day gathering, Rodney M. Davis — Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and former Pleasant Hill resident — is laid to rest in Linwood.

Captain Robert Strong and Sergeant Benjamin Dishmond, two members of the Macon-Bibb Fire Department performed the presentation of colors. Carliyah Payne, 14, from Ballard Hudson Middle School and the Bibb County 4-H Club sang the national anthem.

Sullivan honored several veterans who were asked to stand and be recognized.

"I'll be thinking about my fellow soldiers. Thinking about my dad — my dad was a soldier," U.S. Army Specialist 4 Greg Whithy told The Melody.

Monday is also a time to celebrate freedom in the United States, said Whithy, who served in the U.S. Army from 1978 to 1982.

Maconite and retired Sgt. Jimmie Orange placed the ceremonial wreath. Orange served in the medical company with the National Guard, but went back to service after 9-11. He retired in Augusta but comes to Macon every Veterans Day.

"All the soldiers — past present and future — I give them all the respect I can give them," he said, hoping those folks are never forgotten.

## Obituaries



Charlie Curtis  
Smith Grisamore

May 1, 1928 – November 8, 2024

Charlie Curtis Smith Grisamore, 96, of Macon, died Friday, November 8. Services will be held Thursday, November 21, at 11 a.m. at Vineville United Methodist Church in Macon, with the Rev. Rick Burnett officiating.

Charlie was born May 1, 1928, and was named after her father, who died of pneumonia seven months before she was born. A girl with a boy's name was almost unheard of in those days and led to many interesting and entertaining stories over the years.

Her mother remarried, and her parents were school teachers in Middle and South Georgia for more than 40 years. She graduated from Fitzgerald High School in 1945, where she won the state literary competition in vocal and drama her senior year. She was a soloist in 17 weddings.

Charlie attended North Georgia College in Dahlonega and was voted "most popular female on campus" as a freshman. She graduated with a degree in home economics from Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville. She did her student teaching in Washington, Ga., and taught high school home economics at Hawkinsville, Americus and Druid Hills High in Decatur.

In June 1952, she became a stewardess for Delta Airlines. In those days, stewardesses were required to wear wool uniforms, hats, high heels and white gloves, and to call every passenger by name. There were no non-stop flights, and she made many trips from Atlanta to Dallas on the "puddle jumpers" across the South. One of her passengers was Adlai Stevenson, the U.S. Senator from Illinois, who was the Democratic nominee for President in 1952.

She met and fell in love with Jennings Melvin Grisamore, a young physician doing his residency at Grady Hospital in Atlanta. She called him "Gris." During their courtship, he asked her to hike with him to the top of Stone Mountain on a Sunday afternoon. She didn't realize she was being "tested," but she passed and Gris later proposed.

They were married at First Baptist Church of Hawkinsville on August 7, 1954. They had five children — Ed, Gay, Susie, Sally and Charles — and lived in Atlanta, LaGrange, Portsmouth, Va., and Jacksonville, Fla., and Sandy Springs. When Gris was a physician in the Navy, he served his country in Vietnam in 1967-68 as the chief of surgery at the Naval Support Activity hospital in DaNang.

They moved from Atlanta to Macon in 2002 and bought a house on Stanislaus Circle. Gris died in 2006, and Charlie moved to Carlyle Place in 2011.

She was a devoted wife, sister, mother, aunt, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. She was a devout Christian woman who loved to read and travel. She once rode a camel at the pyramids in Egypt, walked on the Great Wall of China, climbed a volcano in the Galapagos Islands, went swimming in the Dead Sea, picked a flower in Monet's garden in France, took communion on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and petted penguins from a rubber raft in Antarctica.

Wherever she lived, she was active in book clubs, garden clubs, civic organizations and her church. She loved and served the Lord. She was tolerant of other beliefs and religions. As a teenager, she adopted the "three S's" as her philosophy for a good life — "Spirituality, Simplicity and Sincerity."

She was predeceased by her husband, Dr. J.M. Grisamore, father Charlie Curtis Smith, mother Madge Onys Richards and stepfather, W.E. Richards.

She is survived by her sister, Mary Foster, of Roswell; sons Ed (Delinda) Grisamore, of Macon, and Charles (Holly) Grisamore, of Senoia; daughters Gay (Jack) Hall, of Savannah, Susan (Eric) Kasiski, of Woodbridge, Va., and Sally (Alan) Davis, of Marietta; nieces Nancy Agans, of Garden City, Mo., Beth (Ron) Fincher, of Roswell, and Becky (Rick) Burnett, of Cookeville, Tenn; nephews Philip (Donna) Grisamore, of Macon, Mo., and Stephen (Michelle) Grisamore, of Columbia, Mo.; grandchildren Eddie Grisamore, Grant (Summer Sterling) Grisamore and Jake Grisamore, all of Macon; Jack (Taryn) Hall and Hannah (Matthew) Ambrosy, both of Savannah, Curtis Kasiski, of Woodbridge, Va., Julia (Kevin) Barwick, Sarah Davis and Mary Davis, all of Marietta, Kyle (Meredith) Grisamore, of Buford, Ryan Grisamore, of Atlanta, and Paige Grisamore, of Athens; great-grandchildren Brewer Grisamore, Sterling Gray Grisamore, Ginny Pope Grisamore and Bennett Grisamore, all of Macon, JJ Ambrosy and Jack Hall, both of Savannah, Thomas Barwick and Evelyn Barwick, of Marietta.

Memorials can be made to Crossroads Community Church, P.O. Box 205, Baxter, Tenn. 38544.

The family would like to express its appreciation to the staff of Carlyle Place and Pine Pointe Hospice for their love and care.

Hart's Mortuary, 765 Cherry Street, Macon, Ga., has charge of the arrangements.



Photo courtesy Christopher Ian Smith

Reg Murphy and wife Diana Murphy in front of the Reg Murphy Center for Collaborative Journalism on Dec. 8, 2023 in Macon. Murphy died Saturday at age 90.

## Murphy, from A1:

to try to give people enough freedom to be able to find the truth and then pursue it."

In 1955, he opened The Macon Telegraph's Atlanta Bureau, covering state politics for both the Telegraph and the Macon News.

"My specific instructions from the newspaper were that, 'Everybody accuses the Atlanta newspapers of lying. You go up there and just figure out what's real and just report it. Whatever it is,'" Murphy said in a 2010 interview with Bob Short. "And I went to the Capitol and began to report. And I discovered that not only were they not lying, it was the politicians who were lying."

Murphy was named a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in 1959 and became the Atlanta Constitution's political editor in 1961. Following a stint at Atlanta Magazine, Murphy succeeded Ralph McGill as editor of The Atlanta Constitution in 1968.

In 1974, Murphy was kidnapped, purportedly by a right wing militia as part of a campaign against "liberal" news media. Murphy was lured from his Atlanta home, blindfolded and held for 49 hours before the Con-

stitution paid a \$700,000 ransom.

About five hours later, FBI agents arrested William A.H. Williams, who was later convicted in two separate trials and sentenced to 50 years in federal prison. Williams served nine years in prison before he was paroled.

"It was the most trying thing a man can go through," Murphy said in 1974, adding he thought he was going to be killed. "They frightened my family very badly, they frightened me very badly."

Murphy left the Constitution in 1975 to become editor of The San Francisco Examiner, where his newsroom covered the kidnapping, arrest and trial of Patty Hearst, the daughter of Examiner owner Randolph Hearst.

"I decided that, and I told Hearst, I could either make [the Examiner] into a really quality newspaper, or I would leave if he wanted to change that attitude," Murphy recounted late last year. "And he said, no, that he would like me to stay."

From 1981-90, Murphy was the publisher of The Baltimore Sun, overseeing the Sun's transition to printing color photographs and the newspaper's sale to the Times Mirror Co. as part of a \$600 mil-

lion deal. Murphy became executive vice president of the National Geographic Society in 1993 and served as the organization's president and CEO from 1996-98.

Murphy received an honorary doctorate from Mercer in 1975 and served five terms on the university's board of trustees. In 2023, Mercer named the Center for Collaborative Journalism — which houses The Macon Melody newsroom — after him.

"Reg Murphy led an extraordinary life. He was a successful business executive and publisher, but most of all, he was a journalist," Mercer President William D. Underwood said. "Reg was also a loyal supporter of the university, describing Mercer as a place where he learned the who, what, where, why and how of journalism."

Murphy leaves behind Diana, his wife of 32 years. A memorial service will be held Nov. 19 at 1 p.m. at St Simons Presbyterian Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Second Harvest Food Bank of Brunswick, Toys for Tots Brunswick, Marine Corp Reserves and the College of Coastal Georgia Athletics Program.

# Opinion

## The joys of teaching journalism, declining media literacy and taking on a role in Macon's future

The first college class I taught was a Journalism 101 class at Texas A&M University-Commerce (which was recently renamed East Texas A&M, to the delight of all alumni).

I was a senior and I had some decent experience as editor of my school paper, The East Texan, and reporter for the local daily paper. I'd somehow never taken the J-101 course and I needed it to graduate.

The course's instructor was coming in late after visiting his son in California, and he asked me to lead the first day of class: take attendance, go over the syllabus, answer any questions. It all went smoothly, even if I got some strange glances the next week when I switched from temporary instructor to student.

When I ran the Norman Transcript, I was an instructor at the University of Oklahoma's college of mass communication, teaching a survey course. My students were usually freshmen or sophomores. A few wanted to be journalists, but most were in advertising or creative media productions. I even had a few creative writing majors (sweet kids, but awkwardly out of place amongst



Caleb Slinkard

PR and journalism students).

I loved teaching college students. Most had a wonderful energy, an honest desire to learn (or, at the very least, pass the class) and unique perspectives on the world. Generally, they were far more emotionally mature and empathetic than my generation.

I was often reminded that though they were technically adults, they still had some growing up to do. Once it rained, and half of them came into the class shivering and dripping wet (I sent them all home). I had a student who came to class obviously very ill. She hadn't seen a doctor yet, because she was waiting for her mother in Texas to make an appointment (I sent her to the campus health clinic).

One of my favorite student interactions was with a young man named Alex. He was popular on campus, amiable, funny and quick to smile. I gave my students the customary "man on the street" assignment — go talk with 10 strangers and ask them a set of questions. This standard J-school assignment is designed to provide students some familiarity with walking up to

strangers and interviewing them, a key skill for reporters.

Alex texted me about 30 minutes before class started. He hadn't done any of his interviews.

"What should I do?" he texted.

"Panic," was my one word response.

"Already on it."

Hard not to like Alex, huh? I gave him an extension to finish the assignment. He got an A in my class.

\*\*\*\*\*

I teach practicum students at Mercer University each semester. It's a great way for students to get practical newsroom experience and I'm able to build relationships with young journalists. One of my former practicum students, Micah Johnston, is The Melody's sports editor.

I was able to work with Micah for three years before he graduated through practicum courses, internships and the general osmosis that comes from housing a newsroom in a building with journalism professors and classes.

Mary Helene Hall is another Mercer graduate who was able to take advantage of practicum and intern opportunities and gain some real world experience as editor of the Mercer Cluster. She now works for The Melody and is the editor for

our sister paper, the Times Journal Post.

Student journalists are incredibly important, both to our current journalism infrastructure and for our future. Everywhere I've worked, I've built relationships with student media. Though the majority of students who work for the college newspaper or radio station don't enter the field of journalism, it's a wonderful way for them to become media literate in a world that is trending in the opposite direction.

Media literacy is rapidly declining across the country. How folks consume information has rapidly evolved. The proliferation of smartphones and the accompanying apps has made us more passive than active in news consumption. News (and a lot of misinformation and disinformation) is now filtered through memes, dances and 15 second reels. Legacy media companies are struggling mightily to find a business model that allows them to survive, striving between the proverbial rock and hard place of hedge fund ownership and dissolving revenue streams.

But that's a column for another time.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tuesday afternoon I spoke to

Professor Thomas Ellington's Local Democracy Lab class at Wesleyan College. I was struck again by how exciting it is when young people begin thinking about their community like reporters. They're curious and engaged. They want answers to important questions. They want to understand why things are the way they are and what can be done to make them better, more equitable, more consistent.

I hope what The Melody does each day is inspiring you in a similar way. Macon has a fascinating future ahead of it. But it's easy to be distracted. It's simple to allow inertia to build up, to believe things have to stay the way they are.

We collectively have a tremendous amount of power to shape what Macon looks like in the next year, five years, 25 years. It will take an active, engaged community and leaders who aren't intimidated by roadblocks and who genuinely want to make Bibb County a better place to live for everyone in it.

I see that energy all the time in my students. It's time for the rest of us to rediscover it.

Caleb Slinkard is the managing editor of The Macon Melody. Email him at [caleb@maconmelody.com](mailto:caleb@maconmelody.com).



## Trouble in God's Country: Following a big loss, time for a Democratic autopsy?

In the wake of Mitt Romney's loss to Barack Obama in the 2012 presidential race, a dumbstruck Republican National Committee commissioned a post-mortem aimed at figuring out what had gone wrong and how to fix it.

The result was a 100-page report whose recommendations included embracing comprehensive immigration reform to appeal to Hispanic voters; improving outreach to minority communities, women and young voters; softening the GOP's tone on social issues; addressing the perception that the party favors the wealthy, and investing in data analytics and digital campaigning.

Then came Donald J. Trump.

Overall, his reaction to that fabled autopsy can be fairly summarized as "pffft." In his first campaign, he vowed to build a wall across the southern border with Mexico (and, of course, have Mexico pay for it) and has pledged this time around to execute the "largest deportation operation" of illegal immigrants in history. Putting a cherry on top of that pile of hot rhetoric, a comic who was part of the warm-up act at Trump's recent Madison Square Garden rally called Puerto Rico "an island of garbage."

He said in the 2016 campaign that "there has to be some form of punishment" for abortions, and he's delivering on that one. Thanks to his U.S. Supreme Court appointments and their decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, pregnant women have died for lack of reproductive healthcare and physicians are afraid of being criminally charged if they perform abortions.

As for changing the perception that the GOP favors the rich, that was always going to be a stretch — but Trump once again tacked against the wind with new vows to give America's billionaires more tax breaks and to bring Elon Musk, the world's richest man, into his administration as "secretary of cost-cutting".

It's not exactly obvious that Trump's counterintuitive strategies hurt him at the polls in Tuesday's election. Indeed, he appears to have improved on his 2020 performance in every area of the state, if only in tiny numbers. Even, for example, in Super-MAGA Brantley County, in deep southeast Georgia, he upped his share of the vote to 91.1% from 90.2% for years ago and squeezed another 548 votes out of that small rural county.

The same was true in Democratic strongholds. In DeKalb and Clayton counties, both deeply Democratic and heavily Black, he increased his share of the vote by 1.4 and 1.0 percentage points, respectively, and, in the process, added more than 5,000 votes to his 2020 totals for the two counties combined.



Charles Hayslett

What this means, of course, is that Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, lost ground on President Joe Biden's 2020 performance, and this is a matter of no small irony. The Harris team ran what would ordinarily be considered a textbook-perfect campaign.

Here in Georgia, she beat Trump in fundraising and had 24 field offices, approximately 200 paid staff and an unbelievable 35,000 volunteers. The Democrat's campaign claimed to have knocked on more than a million doors in Georgia and made more than two million phone calls to voters. In the final week of the campaign, her campaign spent a reported \$2 million a day on advertising.

The only thing she failed to do was get enough voters to the polls. This turnout difference between predominantly White Republican counties and heavily Black Democratic counties was obvious in the early voting data, and Harris failed to close the gap in Tuesday's election-day voting.

The state's 30 predominantly Democratic counties, most of them heavily populated urban and suburban areas, are home to substantially more registered voters than the 129 mostly rural and sparsely populated counties. But the voters in those GOP counties turned out at an average rate of 75.2% versus 71.5% for the Democratic counties, according to data from the Secretary of State's office. That 3.7-point difference was more than enough to tip the political algebra in Trump's favor.

One big political irony in all this is that the anti-Trump wing of what's left of the old Republican Party had been predicting that his loss would clear the way for a rebuilding process. Instead, it appears the Democratic Party is the one left in a shambles and will now have to be rebuilt, pretty much from the ground up.

First, though, maybe they should conduct an autopsy.

Charlie is the scholar in residence at the Center for Middle Georgia Studies at Middle Georgia State University. Based in Watkinsville, the former political journalist and public relations professional now studies major economic, political and health issues affecting rural Georgia. He shares his research through statewide speaking engagements, regular columns appearing in publications across the Georgia Trust for Local News and his blog, Trouble in God's Country.

## The Macon Melody

Bibb County's Community News Source

1675 Montpelier Ave., Macon, Georgia 31201  
478-200-7403 | [news@maconmelody.com](mailto:news@maconmelody.com)

**Executive Director** — DuBose Porter | [dubose@maconmelody.com](mailto:dubose@maconmelody.com)  
**Executive Editor** — Caleb Slinkard | [caleb@maconmelody.com](mailto:caleb@maconmelody.com) | 478-200-8750  
**Sr. Development Director** — Dave Hedge | [dave@maconmelody.com](mailto:dave@maconmelody.com) | 478-200-2419  
**Sports Editor** — Micah Johnston | [mjohnston@maconmelody.com](mailto:mjohnston@maconmelody.com) | 478-200-7893

To submit a letter to the editor or guest column, email [caleb@maconmelody.com](mailto:caleb@maconmelody.com), mail it to our office or drop it by our front desk. The Macon Melody is located in the Reg Murphy Center for Collaborative Journalism in Mercer Village (1675 Montpelier Ave.). Our office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Macon Melody is a community newspaper that connects Maconites to all the stories of Bibb County. Our staff lives, works, and plays here. We know Middle Georgia, and our reporting illuminates and celebrates what makes this area special.

The Melody is part of the Georgia Trust for Local News a subsidiary of the National Trust for Local News, the nation's largest nonprofit newspaper company. We build stronger communities by protecting and growing community news across Georgia. Our 19 newspapers serve one in 10 Georgians.

To subscribe to The Melody, email [suscriptions@maconmelody.com](mailto:suscriptions@maconmelody.com), call us at 478-200-7403, visit our website at [maconmelody.com/subscribe](http://maconmelody.com/subscribe) or come by the office. Print editions of The Macon Melody are delivered via the U.S. Postal Service on Fridays.

Digital subscription..... \$6.99/month, \$69.99/year  
Print subscription..... \$9.99/month, \$99.99/year  
Print + Digital bundle.....\$14.99/month,\$149.99/year

THE MACON MELODY Issue 21, Volume 1, (ISSN# 93-4710374) is published weekly on Fridays for \$99.99 a year by Georgia Trust for Local News. Periodicals Postage Rate paid at Macon, GA 31201.

# Honoring my mother, who gifted me the words of life

*You may have tangible wealth untold.  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.  
Richer than I you can never be  
I had a Mother who read to me.  
— Strickland Gillilan, "The Reading Mother"*

I never would have become a writer had I not been a reader. And I never would have been a reader had it not been for my mother.

She gifted me with words. She read me stories when I was a child. I read her the stories I wrote.

Her maiden name was Smith, so I guess I'm a wordsmith off the old block.

Mama died last Friday. She was 96. My family was blessed to have her in our lives.

Her legacy will be her deep love and appreciation for the written word. She was the most prolific reader I have ever known. She would read two or three books a week, not counting the Bible. Everywhere she lived, she belonged to a book club ... and sometimes more than one.

"Books have always been a special love of mine," she once said. "They are as essential to me as breathing."

She preferred reading to watching television. When I would go to see her, she often would read aloud something she had bookmarked. The pages of her books had more dog ears than the Westminster Kennel Club.

She reveled in the feel of a book in her hands. She loved fiction, non-fiction, poetry, history, classics, biographies and mysteries. Jane Austen was one of her favorites. She once stood, with reverence, at Austen's grave inside Winchester Cathedral in England, as if she was on sacred ground.

Her horizons were wide, from the Holy Land to the Great Wall of China to the ice and

snow of Antarctica. In her travels, she left footprints on six continents. And everywhere she could not go, a book would take her there.

She was the author of her life. She was named after her father, Charlie Curtis Smith, who died of pneumonia before she was born. Answering roll call with a boy's name was an adventure. She was once assigned to a men's dormitory at the University of Georgia. She would get phone calls from Army recruiters.

Mama started first grade when she was 5 years old. Her teacher read to the class for an hour at the end of every school day.

She spent summer nights at her grandmother's house in Bainbridge, listening to stories being swapped to the rhythm of rocking chairs and passed down from front porch swings.

At the age of 10, she would sit for hours in the gazebo next to their home in Rebecca, holding hands with Nancy Drew, Elsie Dinsmore and the Bobbsey Twins. In the seventh grade, she pretended to be sick so she could stay home from school and finish Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind."

Every week, she would take her five children to the library in LaGrange. We would walk out the door with as many books as our arms could carry. She volunteered with a local Girl Scout troop for underprivileged girls, many of them the daughters of poor mill workers. She tutored them in reading and helped raise money to buy them books. She later taught English to international students at her church in Atlanta.

Some of my strongest childhood memories were her reading to me, my three sisters and my brother. She helped us find our



Ed Grisamore

window to the world in the pages of a book. The year my father was in Vietnam, we would crawl in her four-poster bed at night. She would read "The Little Lame Prince," one of her childhood favorites. She read "Charlotte's Web," "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," "James and the Giant Peach" and "Pippi Longstocking" long before they were made into movies. When we lived in Jacksonville, she and I took turns reading "Pudd'nhead Wilson" and "True Grit" aloud to each other.

She was proud to have followed the footsteps of Flannery O'Connor and attended Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville. She introduced me to the works of Truman Capote, Pat Conroy, Eudora Welty, John Irving, Ferrol Sams, Ann Lamott, Bill Bryson, Terry Kay, Shel Silverstein, David McCullough and Sam Pickering. She opened my eyes to gifted newspaper writers like Paul Hemphill, Russell Baker and Celestine Sibley.

Her books were usually stuffed with yellowed newspaper clippings. In 1979, she stood in a long line to get me an autographed copy of Lewis Grizzard's first book because she knew I was one of his biggest fans.

Whenever I put words on a page, she was my most ardent cheerleader. She encouraged my writing from the time I was 7 years old and published my own family newspaper on Blue Horse notebook paper.

In college, she cross-stitched the advice of Mark Twain — "ESCHEW SURPLUSAGE" — to omit unnecessary words in your writing. I still have it framed on my desk. As I write this tribute, I am studying her red-and-black threaded handiwork.

She was proud of my writing career. She

read most of the more than 4,000 newspaper stories and columns I have written. She had a front-row seat at my book signings.

I think one of my mama's proudest moments was in 2008 when I was selected to cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the new Barnes & Noble bookstore at The Shoppes at River Crossing. I regret that she was unable to attend a ceremony in Athens this past April when I was presented with a lifetime achievement award from the Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication at the University of Georgia.

She was a passionate letter writer. She sent thank-you notes and cards of encouragement. Although she read thousands of books, she wrote only one ... her autobiography. I asked my parents to write their memoirs after a woman in Perry told me she wrote her life story because "nobody should die with the music inside of them."

Not only did Mama inspire her children to become lifelong readers, she fostered that love in her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I had tears in my eyes three years ago when I watched our oldest granddaughter read to my mother from the same book my mother had learned to read in 1934.

The day after Mama passed away, that same great-granddaughter appeared in a school play with her sister and two brothers.

She was cast in the lead role of Matilda, the story of a book-loving child prodigy who read the classics from "Jane Eyre" to "Oliver Twist" to one of my favorites — Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea."

My mother would have loved it. If there are holes in the floor of heaven, I'm sure she was looking down with a smile of satisfaction.

## AI in education has potential to transform classrooms, support teachers, empower students

AI Joe (Joe Finkelstein) has been a technology educator in Bibb County Schools for over 20 years.



Joe Finkelstein

Artificial intelligence is making its mark in classrooms worldwide, reshaping the way educators teach and students learn. With its ability to adapt to individual learning styles, automate routine tasks and provide insights, AI holds the potential to create more personalized, efficient, and engaging learning experiences. However, alongside these benefits, AI in education also introduces challenges around privacy, equity and the balance between technology and human interaction.

### Enhancing learning experiences

AI is increasingly playing a role in making learning more interactive and adaptive. Many classrooms are now using AI-powered platforms that respond to students' individual learning needs in real time. Tools like Quizlet and Duolingo, for example, use algorithms to customize exercises based on a student's current performance, providing targeted practice and feedback. When a student makes an error, these platforms generate similar questions to help the learner understand the concept, creating a form of digital tutoring that can reinforce learning outside traditional teacher instruction.

Other AI-based tools gamify learning, transforming exercises into interactive challenges that encourage students to engage more deeply. This form of learning is particularly beneficial for younger students, as it often provides instant feedback, positive reinforcement and a reward-based approach, making the process feel more like a game than a lesson. These tools can also help students retain information better, focusing less on memorization and more on comprehension.

### Personalizing education

One of AI's most promising contributions to education is its ability to tailor learning experiences to individual students. In any classroom, students' comprehension and mastery levels vary. Traditional methods may struggle to meet every student's needs, but AI has the ability to offer personalized support.

For instance, adaptive learning platforms like Khan Academy assess a student's understanding in real-time and adjust content accordingly. If a student excels in algebra but needs additional support in geometry, the platform can customize activities to address those gaps, ensuring more productive, targeted learning.

Beyond subject-specific adaptations, AI can support students with learning disabilities by providing tools that align with their unique requirements. Text-to-speech functions, customizable lesson formats, and interactive exercises can help students overcome challenges and engage with material at their own pace.

These personalized resources are enabling more inclusive classrooms, allowing all students to progress at levels suited to their individual abilities and learning preferences.

### Supporting teachers with AI tools

For teachers, AI offers tools that streamline tasks, allowing them to focus more on teaching and less on administrative duties. One of the most time-consuming responsibilities for educators is grading assignments and man-

aging feedback. AI-driven assessment tools can automatically grade multiple-choice tests, written responses and even essays to some degree, providing students with immediate feedback and allowing teachers to use that data to identify common areas of difficulty.

Furthermore, AI can assist teachers by tracking student performance over time, detecting patterns and making predictions about who might need extra support.

For example, if an AI tool flags that several students are struggling with a particular concept, teachers can intervene with additional instruction or alternative teaching methods. By supporting teachers in these ways, AI becomes a valuable assistant, helping educators allocate time and resources more effectively.

### Challenges and ethical concerns

Despite the clear benefits AI can bring, it also introduces new challenges that educators, students, and parents must consider. Privacy and data security are significant concerns, as AI tools often collect a large amount of student data, including performance history, learning preferences, and areas of struggle. Schools and technology providers must ensure that this data is securely stored and used responsibly, with clear guidelines to protect students' personal information.

Equity is another issue. Not all schools have the same level of access to advanced technology, and without it, some students may miss out on the benefits AI can offer. Disparities in access to AI tools could potentially widen the achievement gap, particularly for students in under-resourced schools.

To make AI in education effective and fair, policymakers and educational leaders must address these divides, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality resources.

Finally, there is a question of balance. While AI can enhance learning, it's crucial to consider the value of human interaction in education. Teachers play an essential role in fostering critical thinking, empathy, and social skills—qualities that AI, for all its capabilities, cannot replicate.

Over-relying on technology risks diminishing these aspects of learning, which are vital for students' development. For AI to be a positive force in education, it should be integrated thoughtfully, complementing rather than replacing human guidance and interaction.

### The future of AI in education

Looking ahead, AI's role in education is likely to grow, and with advances in technology, we may see increasingly sophisticated AI tutors, virtual classrooms, and personalized content systems. These tools have the potential to not only address academic needs but also to cultivate broader skills like problem-solving, collaboration and creativity. Imagine a classroom where each student has an AI-powered "learning companion" that adjusts to their emotional state, offers resources tailored to their interests and supports collaborative projects that build essential life skills.

For questions or comments, you can email [AIJoe.superhero@gmail.com](mailto:AIJoe.superhero@gmail.com).

## Local Knowledge: Fountains, Raines, railroads and The Rock

Ed Grisamore  
Melody Columnist

You may know Westgate Mall in Macon was the first enclosed mall in Georgia. And you would be correct if you already know Macon's Otis Redding was ranked No. 21 on Rolling Stone's list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time. But neither is on this week's Local Knowledge trivia test. Sharpen your pencils.

### 1. What is the largest industrial complex in Georgia?

- (A) Robins Air Force Base
- (B) Georgia National Fairgrounds
- (C) YKK
- (D) Buc-ee's

### 2. The eight-story Massee apartments on College Street were Macon's first residential high-rise and were designed by famous architect Neel Reed. They were built in 1924 by co-owner William Jordan Massee Jr., and are observing their 100th anniversary this year. Massee was a close friend of playwright Tennessee Williams and was said to have been the inspiration behind which character in one of Williams' plays?

- (A) Rev. T. Lawrence Shannon in "The Night of the Iguana"
- (B) Big Daddy Pollitt in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"
- (C) Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire"
- (D) Tom Wingfield in "The Glass Menagerie"

### 3. How did the community of The Rock in Upson County get its name?

- (A) Everyone in the town is hard-headed
- (B) The 1,250-acre Rock Ranch was started there by Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy
- (C) Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson turned it into a retirement community for former professional wrestlers
- (D) In the old days, mail was delivered to a large rock, where a secret hole was covered by a flat stone. The mail was deposited there by stagecoach drivers

### 4. Which of the following is NOT true about famed Macon aviator Hazel Raines?

- (A) She was the first woman in the state to earn her pilot's license and was known as Georgia's "First Lady of Flight"
- (B) She was one of the South's premier stunt pilots and one of the first female pilots in the Air Force
- (C) She auditioned for the role of "Rosie the Riveter" but did not get the part
- (D) She graduated from Wesleyan College and the church library at Vineville United Methodist in Macon is named in her honor

### 5. What downtown Macon attraction opened in 1999 and is the largest of its kind in the nation?

- (A) Skateboard park at Carolyn Crayton Park
- (B) Slide on Coleman Hill
- (C) Georgia Sports Hall of Fame
- (D) Cherry Blossom Festival Headquarters

### 6. A fountain once located in the old Cotton Avenue Park near City Hall became a center of controversy in 1918. What was in the fountain that caused such a hissy fit?

- (A) Three coins
- (B) Four bitcoins
- (C) Russian submarine
- (D) Statue of a naked lady

### 7. What is the origin of the historic SAM Shortline Railroad in Cordele?

- (A) It was the Sandersville, Albany & Macon Railway
- (B) It was the Savannah, Americus & Montgomery Railway
- (C) It was the Snellville, Athens & Marietta Railway
- (D) It was commissioned to show patriotism to Uncle Sam

### 8. What is staurolite?

- (A) The official state mineral of Georgia
- (B) A propane school bus manufactured by Blue Bird in Fort Valley
- (C) A hybrid of Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet constellation system
- (D) A hops-free light beer brewed in Perry

### 9. The Soperton News — one of the Melody's sister newspapers under the Georgia Trust for Local News — was the first newspaper in the U.S. to print on what material?

- (A) Tea leaves
- (B) Pine pulp
- (C) Aluminum foil
- (D) The back of a cereal box

### 10. Actor Pernell Roberts was best known for his roles as Adam Cartwright in the TV series "Bonanza" and Dr. John McIntyre in "Trapper John M.D." Where was Roberts born and raised in South Georgia?

- (A) Waycross
- (B) Valdosta
- (C) Leesburg
- (D) Ashburn

ANSWERS: (1) A. (2) B. (3) D. (4) C (5) C. (6) D. (7) B. (8) A. (9) B. (10) A.

GRADING: (9-10) High Octane (7-8) Diesel (5-6) Ethanol (3-4) Gasohol (0-2) Electric charging station

## Spider bros and arachnophobia

Kyle Dominy  
The Courier Herald

Back in my landscaping days, yes, when I had a real job, there was a property our crew frequented that was rife with spiders.

Each year after the shrubs shed their magnificent blooms, the landscapers were called in for annual pruning. The job was tedious, strenuous and less than enjoyable.

For starters because such large tasks can be daunting, and second, the azaleas were home to countless yellow garden spiders.

I'm not opposed to befriending a "spider bro," the internet trend of allowing a spider to co-exist in my environment because it is more useful than harmful.

I've learned that my son has developed a good case of arachnophobia. When or how this fear developed is a mystery. When I was a kid, I was terrified of "E.T.," the family-friendly movie about kids befriending an alien, so what do I know? If spiders are the only thing he has to be afraid of, then that seems like a pretty good life. I'm sure he'll get over it as he gets older. Then again, I've never watched "E.T."

# Historic district guidelines catch property owners off guard; tree removals on Vineville, Cherokee Heights

**Liz Fabian**  
The Macon Newsroom

Homeowners who failed to get necessary approvals for work in historic districts were the focus of Tuesday's meeting of the Macon-Bibb County's Planning & Zoning Commission.

At 144 Beverly Place, new homeowner Jordan Graham installed a six-foot privacy fence across the back of her driveway without realizing the Vineville Historic neighborhood required a certificate of appropriateness.

Upon learning of the regulations, Graham contacted P&Z to file an application.

Although the fence follows the guidelines for size and location, nextdoor neighbor Tracy Archer couldn't access the side of her garage and filed a P&Z complaint.

Archer's garage was built on the property line before regulations required a building setback designed to prevent such dilemmas. She wanted Graham to shift the fence to allow maintenance on the side of the garage.

On Nov. 4, the Design Review Board determined that neither property owner was in violation

since the garage was grandfathered in under the current guidelines.

"Fences do not have a setback from the side property line at all," P&Z Zoning Director Butch Sementilli told Archer and her daughter. "If your accessory building were damaged, it would have to be moved five feet. Her fence is correct."

The guidelines direct that if any renovation or repair is needed on a non-compliant structure, it must be brought into compliance during that project.

Design Review Board Chair Will Stanford suggested Archer talk to her neighbor about occasional access for repairs, but from the hearing testimony it was apparent the dispute had damaged the relationship.

When it was clear the board was going to approve Graham's fence, Archer abruptly left the hearing room.

Tuesday, P&Z unanimously affirmed the board's decision without anyone speaking in opposition.

Sementilli said it was up to Graham to decide whether she would allow Archer into her backyard.

"She doesn't have to. It's her property," he said.

Also on Tuesday's consent agenda



Liz Fabian / The Macon Newsroom

Ethos preservation consultants, who are reworking Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning guidelines for historic districts, gave an update on the project in October.

was Shandrea Walker's landscape plan for 195 Pio Nono Ave. after she removed two large trees without securing approval from the Design Review Board.

P&Z Chair Jeane Easom was familiar with the house and agreed the trees needed to be removed due to roots encroaching on the foundation and driveway.

The Design Review Board stipulated that Walker replace the trees with something suitable, but farther away from the house and driveway.

The board also agreed to Walker's planned repairs to the driveway.

Tree removals and exterior renovations need to be approved by the Design Review Board in historic districts, but many property owners

learn that after the fact. They still have to apply for approval to come into compliance by making any required revisions.

P&Z is updating its historic district guidelines. To learn more information about the project or provide feedback, visit PreserveMaconDistricts.com.

November's 5-minute meeting to approve those two items precedes a lengthy draft agenda of more than 20 items for Dec. 9, including approving the reorganization and changes to the Comprehensive Land Development Resolution that has undergone an 18-month revision process.

Other items include a veterinary clinic and Jeremiah's Italian Ice on Bass Road, downtown Macon pet shop and kennel with grooming and daycare, 68-lot residential development on Rivoli, a ready-mix concrete plant on Barnes Ferry Road, commercial truck parking on Riggins Mill Road and NE Industrial Highway, a medical clinic focusing on aesthetics and wellness, and event venues on Jeffersonville Road and Mercer University Drive.

Items are subject to change on the agenda before the Dec. 9 meeting at 1:30 p.m. at Macon Mall.

# Future murky for Fulton RICO case against president, Ga. allies after Trump's election

**Stanley Dunlap**  
Georgia Recorder

The Georgia Court of Appeals' scheduled hearing in the Fulton County racketeering indictments of President-elect Donald Trump remains on track despite the results of last week's presidential election.

The state appellate court is set to hear arguments next month on the request from the former and now incoming president and several co-defendants seeking to remove Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis from the 2020 presidential election interference case. Uncertainty has grown around the future of the case following Trump's decisive win over Vice President Kamala Harris.

Legal experts said they expect the appellate hearing to remain on schedule as the court considers the petition to disqualify Willis because of a prior romantic relationship with the special prosecutor she had hired to lead the case.

Questions linger about the felony racketeering case against Trump and his remaining 14 co-defendants, and the case has mostly been on hold until after a ruling is made on the appeal.

A U.S. Department of Justice precedent dating back to the Watergate era holds that the federal law enforcement agency can't prosecute a sitting president.

Georgia State University law professor Anthony Michael Kreis said the options for Willis are to drop the charges against Trump and proceed against the other defendants or find another legal mechanism or to wait until after Trump leaves office in 2029 before resuming the case against the outgoing president.

Any possibility of Trump's case not being prosecuted until 2029 would likely be the result of negotiations or a court order, Kreis said.

"While Donald Trump can't be tried while he's sitting in the White House, there's nothing preventing Fani Willis from pursuing the charges against everyone else," Kreis said. "That second option is unclear how it works because generally we don't let charges hold in abstinence for four years."

Former Gwinnett County District Attorney Danny Porter agreed that Willis' ability to continue prosecuting Trump is greatly limited following the election.

"I don't realistically see her going after Trump and the co-defendants," he said. "Her options to me are to dismiss the whole case No. 1, or No. 2, try the co-defendants and leave Trump for another day or not at all."

Porter said that Willis

might be able to successfully stall the case until Trump's leaves office even though Trump's lawyers would argue she was denying his right to a speedy trial. Porter is not optimistic about Willis' chances of surviving the upcoming appellate court decision, which is expected in 2025.

"I think just from looking at the way the wind is blowing I think she'll have a hard enough time not getting recused," Porter said. "I don't think she's going into a friendly court."

Trump and 18 others were indicted in August 2022 for allegedly conspiring to overturn the 2020 presidential election results. President Joe Biden's Georgia win was confirmed by multiple recounts and audits, and all court challenges to his victory were unsuccessful.

Four people have already pleaded guilty to misdemeanor or changes in the Fulton election case. Their plea agreement requires them to testify against Trump and the other 14 remaining defendants.

If Willis is disqualified, then the case would be sent to the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia for a new prosecutor to be assigned.

The appeal came from Trump and co-defendants including former Trump campaign officer Michael Roman, former Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani and ex-White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. On Tuesday, the U.S. Supreme Court denied a petition from Meadows seeking to move his charges from state court to federal court.

The Georgia Court of Appeals disqualification hearing will proceed whether Trump is part of the case or not, Kreis said.

"That'll happen no matter what because most of the co-defendants have joined in the appeal," Kreis said. "Whether or not Trump is still one of the defendants, the issue is still alive."

The push from Republican officials for Willis to drop the case intensified in the days following last week's election. Alpharetta Republican state Sen. Brandon Beach said Friday that it's time to lower the temperature in politics while also calling for an end to the Fulton election interference case.

"The American people have delivered a historically significant vote in favor of the strong leadership Donald Trump brings to the White House, signaling a rejection of politically influenced lawfare," Beach said in a statement. "Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis should follow the example set by the Department of Justice and Special Counsel Jack Smith by immediately dismissing the criminal indictments

against President Trump and other innocent persons in Fulton County."

The Nov. 5 general election also resulted in Willis easily winning a second term as the top prosecutor in the Democratic stronghold of Fulton County. Should the high-profile election interference case fail, Willis' decision to pursue the probe in the first place could come under greater scrutiny.

"There's sort of an old saying that if you get reelected, you have about a six-month honeymoon period," Porter said. "If you make a controversial decision, you have three-and-a-half years for the public to forget it. I think probably if she's going to dismiss the case then she should do it pretty early."

## Trump's federal cases hit stumbling block

When a grand jury in Fulton County indicted Trump and 18 others on racketeering and conspiracy charges in August 2023, it was the fourth case that year that pressed criminal charges against Trump.

A federal election interference case against Trump now appears to be winding down after special prosecutor Jack Smith asked a federal judge Friday to suspend case deadlines after Trump's election.

Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed Smith in November 2022 to oversee federal investigations into Trump for his connection to the Jan. 6, 2021 breach at the U.S. Capitol and for the classified documents stored at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Trump has publicly stated that after his Jan. 20 inauguration he will promptly fire Smith, who indicted Trump on charges of illegally attempting to overturn the 2020 election and for allegedly mishandling of documents marked classified.

Prosecutors have appealed a Florida judge's decision to dismiss charges related to Trump alleging he illegally removed classified documents from the White House.

In another case, a New York judge said Tuesday that he will issue a decision next week on whether Trump had presidential immunity that should have protected him from being convicted of falsifying business records by a jury this spring. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling in July asserts that presidents have immunity from facing criminal charges for acts conducted in their official capacity.

For now, Trump is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 26 on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records related to hush money payments promised to adult film star Stormy Daniels during the

2016 presidential campaign.

Kreis said there is some legal justification for pursuing co-defendants of Trump even if a president is legally shielded from criminal charges.

"I think you could make a forceful argument that it's essential that people who are subordinates and allies know they will be tried for their crimes if they assist a president in unlawful conduct," he said.

*This story originally appeared on georgiarecorder.com*

*Premier Screens, LLC*  
CUSTOM MADE WINDOW SCREENS & RESCREENING SERVICES  
SERVICING CENTRAL GEORGIA  
MOBILE SERVICE  
*We Come to You!*  
premier-screens.com | (478)244-3885

**We Buy, Sell Land & Houses**  
• Timberlands, Hunting  
• Recreation, Rentals  
• Agricultural, Farmlands  
**RENTALS LEASES**  
912-375-3366  
X306 X312 X331  
www.owacc.com ow@owacc.com

# The Macon Melody

Local News for Macon by Macon



**SUBSCRIBE AND SUPPORT THE MACON MELODY**  
maconmelody.com/membership

Bulk subscriptions available at a reduced rate. Businesses and organizations purchase a copy of The Macon Melody for your office or clients.  
**Call 478-200-2419 or email dave@maconmelody.com**



**Stay in tune with your community.**

## Events

### Happy Hour Bingo at Grant's Lounge

Thursday, Nov. 14  
5:30 p.m.  
576 Poplar Street  
Head to Grant's Lounge for happy hour drink specials and exclusive prizes for bingo game winners. Doors open at 4 p.m. Kitchen opens up at 6 p.m. with tasty treats. No cost for entry.

### Our Favorite Holidays: Past, Present and Future Flower Show

Friday, Nov. 15  
1 p.m.  
1370 Briarcliff Road  
This show is a specialty flower show which will showcase the use of real and natural materials in designs. Come and see decorating ideas for the upcoming holidays for your own home.

### UGA vs. Tennessee Watch Party

Saturday, Nov. 16  
6:30 p.m.  
3657 Eisenhower Pkwy  
Come out on Saturday for an electric UGA vs. Tennessee Watch Party presented by Atrium Health Navicent! Experience the ultimate game day atmosphere with arts and crafts, a dedicated kids zone, food trucks and more. Bring the family and enjoy a day of Bulldog football and fun

### Removal of Non-Native Invasive Plants at Amer-son River Park

Saturday, Nov. 16  
9 - 11:30 a.m.  
2654 Riverview Road  
Dress for "weed wrangling" (long pants, long sleeves, gloves, hat, boots) and bring a water bottle to help cut undesirable plants like English ivy, privet, mimosa, Bradford pear, Chinese tallow and paper mulberry from the park. Participants must be 12 years or older. Participants under 18 must have an adult participating, and all participants must sign the GNPS waiver of liability before working.

### The Imposter: An Art Show Presented by Court of Miracles

Saturday, Nov. 16  
7 p.m.  
491 MLK Jr. Blvd.  
JBA will host an art show that shines light on the dark side of the creative spirit: imposter syndrome, addiction and mental health. For information on purchasing tickets in advance, visit JBA's Facebook page. Advance ticket holders will save \$5 at the door and receive a free swag bag while supplies last.

### Kids Pottery Program

Sunday, Nov. 17  
9 a.m.  
1207 Emery Highway  
Join this fantastic group Sunday morning to learn how to make pottery using the Native American coil method! Children may create their own clay pot that they can take home.

### Mercer Women's Basketball vs North Carolina A&T Women's Basketball

Sunday, Nov. 17  
2 p.m.  
1400 Coleman Avenue  
Come cheer on the Bears as they take on the NCAT Women's Basketball team. This will be the Bears first home game in the last five days. This is a family friendly event where entertainment, food and friends all come together for the perfect mix. Hope to see you there!

### Central Georgia Cars & Coffee

Sunday, Nov. 17  
3 p.m.  
1113 Highway 96  
We're back and ready for another great CGCS event! Come on out to Central Ga Cars & Coffee over at Woodlands Coffee Roasters & Cafe! This is going to be a huge event featuring; tons of cars, food, drinks, and just an overall good time.

### Macon Mercer Symphony

Monday, Nov. 18  
7:30 p.m.  
617 Mulberry Street  
"Symphony, redesigned with you in mind. With one of the most unique regional orchestras in the country creating a powerhouse audience for "Make More Music Mondays," we've proved that the symphony can be a home for everybody. The hall is abuzz with the joy of music, the power of the Middle Georgia community, and Mercer University's McDuffie Center Young Artists collaborating with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra musicians."

## Violin, from A8:

University and is now professor of music in orchestral conducting at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

After his debut year as family and youth concert conductor of the Boston Symphony, he was named among the "Best People and Ideas of 2011" by the Boston Globe. In 2018, he received the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award from the Longy School of Music.

He was recipient of the League of American Orchestras' Golden Baton Award in 2022.

Brahms' masterpiece, Symphony No. 2 in D Major, will also be performed as part of the evening's program.

But at the forefront is Moretti's playing of Schmitz's composition.

"It's very special to get to present the piece to Macon," Schmitz said. "And especially to do it with the Macon-Mercer Symphony which has been such a fruitful collab-

oration between McDuffie strings students and members of the Atlanta Symphony who make up the remainder of the symphony."

Schmitz said this isn't the first time he's arranged for the MMSO. In one of its earliest concerts, he did the orchestral arrangements for music written and performed by participants of the Otis Redding Foundation music camp.

Schmitz said he continues to compose in two main areas: artistic work, like the "Violin Concerto" and Symphony No. 1, and educational work which is aimed at creating exercises or teaching certain principles and techniques.

Of course, he said his primary work is that of a teacher-professor and fulfilling those duties. In a normal week, he said he typically sets aside time on two days to work on compositions. And he finds Mercer and Macon an ideal spot to do it all.

"It's my 12th year at Mercer and I feel there's still so much left for me to accomplish here," he said. "I feel



Big Hair Productions

Amy Schwartz Moretti and Christopher Schmitz discuss the performance during a rehearsal of "Violin Concerto," a work written for her by Schmitz.

grateful for all the opportunities to serve students and work with colleagues. It's a very supportive atmosphere. It's funny, it's my 12th year but I don't feel like I've been here very long at all."

MMSO performances are at the Piedmont Grand Opera House and begin at

7:30 p.m. For those without season subscriptions, single tickets range from \$25 to \$35 with students offered free admission with valid ID.

For ticketing and concert information, go to www.thegrandmacon.com. For details on the McDuffie Center and more on the Townsend

School of Music, including information on Schmitz, go to mcduffie.mercer.edu and music.mercer.edu.

Contact writer Michael W. Pannell at [mwpannell@gmail.com](mailto:mwpannell@gmail.com). Find him on Instagram at [michael\\_w\\_pannell](https://www.instagram.com/michael_w_pannell).

## Community Briefs

### Piedmont Macon to present Community Hero Award

Piedmont Macon will honor a Community Hero who has made a difference in the Macon community. The Community Hero's name will be announced Friday afternoon at the event, as it will be a surprise to the recipient.

When: Friday, Nov. 15, 2024 | 1 p.m.  
Where: The Sanford Company, 4468 Forsyth Road, in Macon.

Piedmont Macon created the Community Hero Award last year to recognize members of the local community who work every day – often behind the scenes – to make Middle Georgia a better place.

### Mercer University Press publishes 'Mercer Illustrated'

Mercer University Press and the university's Marketing Communications Office have partnered to produce and publish a new coffee table book titled Mercer Illustrated: The People, Places and Experiences of a Uniquely Impactful University.

The 208-page folio of more than 250 images shot by 36 photographers from around the country, includes a foreword by President William D. Underwood and accompanying text by Dr. Gordon Johnston, professor of English and creative writing in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Mercer Illustrated highlights the places, people, spirit and experiences that collectively contribute to Mercer's impact on the world.

### Students' Clean Streets Matter artwork, essays recognized

For the fourth year, Macon-Bibb County and Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful (KMBB) celebrated student creativity at the annual Clean Streets Matter Art & Essay. This year's theme was "What I do to help keep Macon-Bibb beautiful?" and the event was held at the Historic Douglass Theatre (355 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd) on Nov. 7.

"Our departments and partners do a great job attacking things that bring down our neighborhoods, like littering and illegal dump sites, but we need to make sure our children know the importance of a clean street if we're going to make a true difference," said Macon-Bibb County Executive Director of Community Affairs Dr. Henry Ficklin. "If we can show the children of today why clean streets matter, then we can get to a day when people stop littering."

"We want to encourage creative expression, critical thinking, and communication skills through a combination of visual art and written analysis," said Asha Ellen, Executive Director of KMBB. "This is a great opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of maintaining a cleaner and greener environment."

### Wesleyan College provides community service opportunities during Wow-A-Day

Wesleyan College's priority of helping local businesses and organizations was demonstrated during the semi-annual Wow-A-Day on-campus event held on Friday, Nov. 8 from 9 a.m. until Noon. This event was organized by the college to promote community engagement, positively impact the community and give back to the city.

Volunteer efforts included working with organizations such as Macon Periods Easier, Backpack Ministry, Crisis Line Statehouse and Macon Area Habitat for Humanity.

Students had the opportunity to work with these organizations alongside Wesleyan staff to assist with community needs in the area.

### Macon Music Half Marathon returns Nov. 16

It's time for our weeks and months of training to finally pay off as you get ready to cross the finish line of the Macon Music Half Marathon. In its second year, the race will take place on Nov. 16 beginning at 8 a.m. in Carolyn Crayton Park.

"We're excited to say this half marathon is back and better than ever," said Mayor Lester Miller. "Last year, at our first half marathon,

we had hundreds of people participate in this race who came from different states to be part of this, and we're looking forward to welcoming people back to our community!"

"We have a strong running community here in Macon-Bibb County, and we're hoping this will bring more people to the sport and attract more people to our city," said Macon Tracks President F.M. Barron.

The route will be similar to last year but will feature live music as you go past historic musical locations, such as the Big House Museum. This year, the finish line will be at home plate at the Historic Luther Williams Field.

Runners and their friends and families will be able to enjoy more live music from the A2Z Band on the field along with food and drinks.

The Macon Music Half Marathon is being organized by the Macon Tracks, Macon-Bibb County, Visit Macon and presenting sponsor Atrium Health Navicent.

The first year, 614 runners participated in the race from 13 states, one foreign country, and 52 counties in Georgia. It became the largest race longer than a 5K in the region.

### Lake Tobo campgrounds will be closed for major improvements

The campgrounds at Lake Tobesofkee's Claystone and Arrowhead Parks are preparing to close for several weeks to make way for about \$600,000 in SPLOST-funded improvements.

Claystone's campground closed on Nov. 4, and Arrowhead's campground will close Dec. 4. They are expected to open later in the Spring of 2025; the rest of the parks will remain open during the construction.

"This construction is going to help us attract more campers to Lake Tobo because it's going to greatly improve their experience here," says Lake Tobesofkee Director Donald Bracewell. "They'll have better access to water and electricity, and the pads will be much more durable and easier to set up on."

Both campgrounds will get new landscape timbers and gravel poured, electrical boxes and in-ground and above ground water connections. The biggest change will be replacing the asphalt pads with concrete pads. A total of nine docks will be added to the two campgrounds that will be available for campers to use.



MISTLETOE  
Market  
2024

A unique shopping experience!

November 22, 23 & 24

Friday • 9 am - 6 pm

Saturday • 9 am - 6 pm

Sunday • 11 am - 4 pm

Daily Admission \$10

Special Shopping Preview... Stroller Free Shopping!

Moonlight at Mistletoe

Thursday, November 21 • 5 until 8 pm

Advanced Tickets (\$40 each) for sale at Three's Company (Cordele), Elberta Market (Marshallville), Emma Laura (Dublin), Head over Heels (Macon), Kerri Moore Interiors, Ashley Marie's, and Meme's (Perry)

GA National Fairgrounds & AgriCenter  
Perry (I-75 Exit 135)

Sponsored by the Babraunuca Club of Perry



@mistletoemarketperry



@mistletoemarketperry

## Macon-Mercer Symphony to debut Christopher Schmitz's 'Violin Concerto' featuring violinist Amy Schwartz Moretti

**Michael W. Pannell**  
For The Melody

The Macon-Mercer Symphony Orchestra will highlight Macon composer Christopher Schmitz's "Violin Concerto" on Monday in the second of its four concerts for the 2024-25 season.

Schmitz is professor of music theory and composition at Mercer University's Townsend School of Music and he wrote the piece specifically for internationally acclaimed violinist Amy Schwartz Moretti who is director of Mercer's Robert McDuffie Center for Strings.

Moretti will perform the piece Monday with the MMSO.

The concerto is in three parts, each titled Dark, Warm and Electric.

"Like so many others, I've always been impressed with Amy's wide range of expression on violin," Schmitz said. "Her extreme technical virtuosity, emotion-filled and lyrical playing is always present whether with the well-known Ehnes Quartet, her solo performances or in guest roles with symphonies around the world. I wanted to create a vehicle that would showcase that in a variety of moods. I didn't name the movements until deep in the process of writing and decided they were more fitting than the boring, classical naming convention of using tempo designations. I think they do a better job of inviting listeners into the textural and emotional context of the piece which Amy brings out so beautifully."

In September of 2023,

Moretti, Schmitz and others traveled to the U.K. to record the "Violin Concerto" with the London Symphony Orchestra along with his Symphony No. 1 which also features Moretti. It was released in May by PARMA Recordings on their Navona Records label and placed on all the usual streaming services. Following its release, Schmitz said the recording had gotten a lot of attention on social media, with a PARMA posting surpassing 130,000 views just a month or two after its release.

"Obviously, it was an incredible experience to work with the London Symphony in their recording space," Schmitz said.

Among those traveling to make the recording was Moretti's husband, drummer/percussionist Steve Moretti, who is co-founder of Macon Pops and who served as co-producer on the album. Also along were two Middle Georgia high school and middle school music students who won the opportunity to go and observe the effort through an essay contest of sorts. They were Kaleigh Baker and Keaton Money. At the time, Baker was an eighth grader at Warner Robins' Northside Middle School and Money a senior at Central High School.

Only the "Violin Concerto" will be performed Monday, but both Schmitz and Moretti said they anticipate a local performance of Symphony No. 1 in the future.

While Schmitz speaks highly of Moretti, Moretti in turn said she appreciates the



**Michael W. Pannell / For The Melody**

Amy Schwartz Moretti will perform "Violin Concerto," a work written for her by Christopher Schmitz, during Monday's Macon-Mercer Symphony Orchestra concert at the Piedmont Grand Opera House. Here, Steve Moretti, who co-produced recordings of the work, is pictured with Amy Schwartz Moretti and Schmitz during a pre-release party at Capricorn Studios. The three, along with others, traveled to London last year to record the concerto and Schmitz's Symphony No. 1 with the London Symphony Orchestra. The project was made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of Central Georgia's Josephine Phelps Fabian Fund.

quality and emotion present in Schmitz's work.

"I'm just so glad he wrote this and entrusted me with his music," she told me following a performance last week of Mercer's Fabian (Chamber) Concert Series which she curates. The series brings some

of the world's best chamber musicians to Macon audiences, including annual performances by members of the Ehnes Quartet.

Students of the McDuffie Center are regularly selected to take the stage playing alongside the proven, world-

class musicians.

Guest conductor for Monday's concert is Thomas Wilkins. Among other roles and connections to major symphonies, Wilkins is principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, music director laureate of the Oma-

ha Symphony Orchestra and principal guest conductor of the Virginia Symphony. He has taught at North Park University, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Virginia Commonwealth

See VIOLIN, Page A7

CITY OF WARNER ROBINS PRESENTS



FOOD

TRUCK

ROUNDUP

Visit  
WARNER  
ROBINS  
GEORGIA

LIVE MUSIC | FOOD TRUCKS | KIDS ZONE

RETRO REWIND

PERKINS  
FIELD

105 MULBERRY ST.

B4Y2K

NOV 21  
2024

5:00-9:00PM

## Basketball is back!



Micah Johnston / The Melody

Southwest High School boys basketball head coach Monquencio Hardnett, left, speaks to an audience at Bibb County media night last week as his star player Chase Dupree laughs at a comment. The Patriots, with Dupree at the helm, have high expectations this season on the court. Multiple outlets ranked Southwest, a school with an illustrious basketball history, as one of the top teams in the state at the A-Division I classification.

### NOTEPAD

## Mayhem, Bears struggle

Micah Johnston  
Sports Editor

The Mercer men's team struggled in its second game of the season, falling 95-64 on the road against DePaul in Chicago Monday night.

After a blowout win over NAIA Virginia-Lynchburg in the season opener where they scored 125 points, the Bears had a game at the opposite end of the spectrum against a Big East foe.

It did not take long for the Blue Demons to get rolling, as they hit some quick threes out of the gate and never really looked back. Mercer got as close as 14-9 in the first half, but the hot shooting from deep and some Bears turnovers let DePaul pull away.

Mercer shot 39% from the field, as Alex Holt and Ahmad Robinson led the team with 12 points each. Angel Montas Jr. followed with 10 points. It was Robinson's second straight solid performance after he was arguably the team's most well-rounded player against Lynchburg. After a game Wednesday against Trinity Baptist at home, the Bears travel for their next two games against South Alabama this Saturday and South Carolina Nov. 21.

### Macon Mayhem struggle on road trip

The Mayhem continue to struggle amid a run of away games — they've played four

See HOOPS, B3

See NOTEPAD, B2

## Macon high schools set for basketball season with high expectations

Micah Johnston  
Sports Editor

High school basketball season is right around the corner, and Bibb County fans should have plenty to cheer about this year.

With some games already beginning this week, plenty of Macon teams will have a chance to make some noise this season. All 12 boys and girls basketball teams from the Bibb County School District gathered at media night last week to discuss the upcoming season.

Stealing headlines for the county — and to some extent the entire state — was the Southwest boys team. The Patriots placed first in the state's A-Division I preseason rankings, according to top Georgia high school basketball outlet Sandy's

Spiel. The Atlanta-Journal Constitution ranked them second behind only Toombs County.

Much of that expectation stems from the immense returning talent boasted by Southwest. Star player Chase Dupree, son of the school's athletic director and football coach Joe Dupree, is back for another season. Sandy's Spiel named Dupree to its preseason All-Middle Georgia team as well.

The guard was also going to be a key leader on his father's football team as the quarterback, but a finger injury before the season led to him sitting out until basketball season.

"My mom always said football makes you tougher, so I've stayed in the weight room to be tougher and stronger," Dupree said.

The guard also said his team is communicating better this season.

"We were a little too cool sometimes to talk to each other last season," Dupree said. "We've worked a lot on that and I think we're together more."

The Patriots did lose two of their seniors from last season, a year where they made an appearance in the state quarterfinals. Guard play will be crucial to the team replicating and possibly surpassing that success, according to head coach Monquencio Hardnett.

Southwest also has a 6-foot-9 player coming in who is raw but practiced over the summer, the coach said. All of these pieces together mean higher expectations for the Pats.

"Elite 8 is no longer good enough," Hardnett

## An ode to the dunk

Is it possible to watch a dunk at a basketball game and not say "Oohhhhhhhhh!" when the player slams it down? I don't think it is.

There's some ground rules to that statement, I suppose — it has to be an in-person viewing. Watching a dunk on a screen is certainly still fun, but you don't always react as viscerally or emphatically as when you're physically in the gym with a crowd.

The viewer then also has to be engaged with the game, of course. The lead-up to the dunk is half the battle, and if you're not paying attention to the floor, you miss all the moving pieces that lead up to the jam. And, most of the time, it needs to be a player on "your" team, the squad you're there to root for.



Johnston

If you're there in the flesh and rapt, though, can you keep yourself from making that round-faced "ooooohhh" sound — the dunk sound, one might call it — when a player on your team breaks away and jams?

I think not. Assuming you're a fan and not a journalist, at least, though even in a professional capacity I find it hard not to react.

If you couldn't tell, I'm very glad basketball is back on the sports schedule.

The anticipation as a player gets open on a fast break and leaps toward the hoop is, in sports, rivaled only by the moment of uncertainty waiting for a home run to land

See JOHNSTON, B2

## GHSA football playoffs set, four Macon teams in bracket

Michael A. Lough  
For The Melody

For Westside, Northeast and ACE Charter, the playoff waiting game was tolerable.

The teams knew they were getting in and — with the exception of the Gryphons — knew the playoff games would be at home. It was just a matter of opponent.

For Southwest, it was different. The Patriots had to wait to play a makeup game, then win, then wait out a computer for confirmation on the power rankings.

The four Bibb County schools will keep playing in the GHSA playoffs that start Friday throughout the state, a week later than planned because of the impact of hurricanes on schedules across Georgia.

While the GHSA gets going, the GIAA is already nearing its end,

with FPD hosting undefeated Bethlehem Christian Friday in a Class 4A semifinal.

Bethlehem Christian teamed with Brookstone to thin the field of Macon schools. Bethlehem Christian held on to beat Tattnall 21-14 and Brookstone survived Stratford's rallies in a 33-28 win.

This is the first year of the GHSA employing a formula — a power ranking system involving opponents' records and the records of opponents' opponents — to determine seedings in Classes 3A, 2A, and A-Division I.

All private schools in those classes played a regular region schedule but were pulled out to compete for a private-school state title. That opened up at-large spots in all three classes, with 18 departures in A-Division I.

Seeding priority went to the first and second-place teams in

regions confirming that all top-two region finishers got home games. Third and fourth place teams were still given automatic playoff bids — and, because of the reduced number of teams, a chance at first-round home games — but seeded in a group with the at-large teams replacing some private schools.

Westside earned an automatic spot in Class 2A by finishing third in Region 2, clinching that with a 29-23 win at Jackson on Nov. 1. The 5-5 Seminoles got the 16th seed and welcome No. 17 Spencer at Ed DeFore Sports Complex.

Spencer knows Bibb County, having competed in Region 2-2A the last two years with ACE, Northeast, Southwest, Central and Rutland. The Greenwave went 9-1 against those teams but

See PLAYOFFS, B3

## With trip to playoff secured, Mercer set to face Alabama

Micah Johnston  
Sports Editor

After several seasons where the trophy was within reach, Mercer's football team finally got its paws on a chunk of the Southern Conference title last week after defeating VMI in a sound 34-0 shutout on the road.

It's only a "share" of a conference championship, but it was a Bears milestone nonetheless. Since the program was revived in 2013, Mercer has come within a game or two of snagging a conference title a handful of times.

This season has felt different through and through, however. The Bears are 9-1 overall so far this year and 6-1 in SoCon play, a loss to Samford the only blemish on their resume. With the drubbing of VMI in their last conference away game of the year, Mercer secured a spot atop the conference.

The Bears also hold the tiebreaker over other SoCon teams that could

still match their conference mark — a tie would only be possible if Mercer loses to Furman in the final game of the year — and thus will get the Southern's automatic FCS playoff bid come season's end.

As dominant as that 9-1 record seems, things haven't always been pretty. Mercer has often fallen behind in the first quarter by multiple scores only to snag momentum with turnovers and roar back for wins.

The only comeback they couldn't manage was that Samford game, where the Bears went down 28-0 before the first quarter was even halfway through.

In some ways, though, these struggles have shown head coach Mike Jacobs what his team is made of. At Monday's press conference following the conference-clinching victory, he talked about his squad's achievement.

"We have the characteristics of what it takes to be a champion. We've

See MERCER, B3



Jason Vorhees / The Melody

Southwest running back Christian Hill weaves through defenders and blockers on a run against East Laurens in the Patriots' win last week. The 20-7 victory gave Southwest enough of a boost in power rankings to make the GHSA A-Division I playoffs.

# Schedule

**Friday, Nov. 15**  
**FOOTBALL**  
 GIAA 4A state tournament, Round 2:  
 • #1 FPD vs. # 4 Bethlehem Christian, 7:30 p.m.  
 GHSA Playoffs, Round 1  
 • #8 Northeast vs. #25 Swainsboro, 7:30 p.m.  
 • #16 Westside vs. #17 Spencer, 7:30 p.m.  
 • #18 ACE @ #15 Jasper Co., 7:30 p.m.  
 #27 Southwest @ #6 Toombs Co., 7:30 p.m.

**OTHER SPORTS**  
 • Mercer men's and women's cross country at NCAA South Region Championships, starts at 9 a.m.  
 • Mercer volleyball vs. Wofford, 6 p.m.

**Saturday, Nov. 16**  
**FOOTBALL**  
 • Mercer football @ Alabama, 2 p.m. local  
**BASKETBALL**  
 Boys teams:  
 • Southwest @ Laney, 4:30 p.m.  
 Girls teams:  
 • Central vs. North Clayton, 3 p.m.  
 • ACE vs. Jordan, 2 p.m.  
 College:  
 • Mercer men's basketball @ South Alabama, 4 p.m.

**OTHER SPORTS**  
 • Mercer volleyball vs. UNCG, 6 p.m.

**Sunday, Nov. 17**  
 • Mercer women's basketball vs. North Carolina A&T, 2 p.m.

**Monday, Nov. 18**

**Tuesday, Nov. 19**  
**BASKETBALL**  
 Boys teams:  
 • ACE @ Georgia Military College, 7:30 p.m.  
 • Central vs. Crawford County, 7:30 p.m.  
 Girls teams:  
 • Central vs. Crawford County, 6 p.m.  
 • ACE @ Georgia Military, 6 p.m.

**Wednesday, Nov. 20**  
**BASKETBALL**  
 Boys teams:  
 • Central @ Jackson, 7:30 p.m.  
 Girls teams:  
 • Central @ Jackson, 6 p.m.  
 College:  
 • Mercer women's basketball @ Mississippi State, 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, Nov. 21**  
**BASKETBALL**  
 Boys teams:  
 • Northeast vs. Rutland, 7:30 p.m.  
 • Mercer men's basketball @ South Carolina, 7 p.m.

# Scores

**Friday, Nov. 8**  
**FOOTBALL**  
 GIAA 4A state tournament, Round 1:  
 • #1 FPD 28, #9 Strong Rock 13  
 • #4 Bethlehem Christian 21, #5 Tattnell Square Academy 14  
 • #3 Brookstone 33, #6 Stratford 28  
 • #1 Southwest Georgia 44, #8 CFCA 7  
 GHSA:  
 • Southwest 20, East Laurens 7  
 • Jefferson County 18, Central 0

**OTHER SPORTS**  
 • Huntsville Havoc 5, Macon Mayhem 1  
 • Mercer men's soccer, Southern Conference Tournament Quarterfinals: No. 4 Furman 2, No. 5 Mercer 0

**Saturday, Nov. 9**  
**FOOTBALL**  
 • Mercer 34, VMI 0  
 • Westside-Augusta 27, Howard 3

**OTHER SPORTS**  
 • Evansville Thunderbolts 4, Macon Mayhem 3  
 • Mercer women's basketball: Florida Atlantic 58, Mercer 48  
 • Mercer volleyball: Mercer 3, Samford 0 (25-19, 25-12, 25-18)

**Sunday, Nov. 10**

**Monday, Nov. 11**  
 • Mercer men's basketball: DePaul 95, Mercer 64

**Tuesday, Nov. 12**  
 • Mercer women's basketball: Western Kentucky 78, Mercer 54

## Notepad, From B1:

road games straight and still have three more before returning home — but improved in their latest effort, a 4-3 overtime loss Saturday night to the Evansville Thunderbolts.

The margin was closer than the past losses, as the game was back and forth to start. Conor Witherspoon scored his first professional goal in the second period before the Mayhem netted two more goals thanks to power plays to take a 3-2 lead.

Evansville scored with about late in the third period, though, and eventually snagged the win in overtime.

The loss dropped Macon to 2-4-1, as it was the team's first OT loss this year. The Mayhem currently rank 10th in the SPHL, tied with the Pensacola Flyers with five points. The Fayetteville Marksmen lead the pack with 14 points.

Jake Goldowski and Tao Ishizuka are tied for the team lead with six points each. Goldowski has four goals and two assists, while Ishizuka has two goals and four assists.

The Mayhem play two games this weekend against the league-leading Marksmen in Fayetteville Nov. 15 and Nov. 16.

### Mercer volleyball looks to polish off historic season with two wins

The Bears' volleyball team plays its last two games of the regular season this weekend against Southern Conference opponents in an attempt to snag the regular season conference title.

Mercer is 12-2 in SoCon play so far with just two games left to play. Friday's matchup comes against the Bears' closest competitor, Wofford. The Terriers are nipping at Mercer's heels in the conference standings with an 11-3 record.

With a win Friday at home, the Bears would clinch the regular season title. Even with a loss, the two teams would be deadlocked, as Mercer defeated Wofford on the road earlier this year. The outcome would then depend on the Bears' final regular season game, a Senior Night matchup with UNC-Greensboro Saturday evening.

Mercer won the last match against the Terriers 3-1, storming back after losing the first set and taking the next three 25-20, 25-23 and 25-17. The bears are a perfect 10-0 at home this season.

The Wofford match Friday and UNCG match Saturday both begin at 6 p.m. in Hawkins Arena.

### Westside remains undefeated as flag football heats up in Macon

The Seminoles moved to 8-0 Monday afternoon on the gridiron, picking up a 42-0 win over Baldwin to keep their dominant season rolling.

Westside has scored 159 points this year while allowing just 24, including zero points against D1 Area 5 opponents. They sit atop the area toppings with Mary Persons.

The Bulldogs are also undefeated in area play but 5-4 overall and, notably, lost to Peach County and Warner Robins, two teams Westside was able to defeat earlier this year to remain perfect.

The standings set up an impending de-facto area title game at the end of November, as the Seminoles are scheduled to meet Mary Persons at 5 p.m. Nov. 21. Should neither team stumble between now and then, it could be a key game for Westside.

The next closest Bibb County team in the Area 5 standings is Southwest. The Patriots are 2-2 in region play and 2-4 overall. Northeast, Howard and Central round out the bottom of the standings for Bibb schools in Area 5. Rutland, in the higher class D3 Area 2, is 0-5.

## Johnston, From B1:

beyond the fence on the baseball diamond.

While I will always love that moment in baseball more since the so-called national pastime is easily my favorite sport, the dunk is a close second, starkly different though it is.

The anticipatory framework is much smaller; a basketball player, for obvious reasons, cannot hang in the air as long as a moonshot home run ball can, though that lends itself to more excitement in some ways.

Nor does the dunk tend to carry as much momentum or change the course of a game the way a home run can — although this, too, depends on the context; some dunks, surely, have changed entire franchises. Michael Jordan and Vince Carter permanently altered the NBA with slams that weren't even during games but instead part of the dunk contest.

The Mercer men's team solidified my theory about dunk reactions last week in their season opener.

It was, as is typical of early games for college basketball teams, a bit of a mismatch. The Bears went up against Virginia University-Lynchburg, an NAIA team that brought only seven players on the road trip after their head coach was let go and some players transferred out. One of the starters had just joined the basketball team a few days earlier and had come over from the football team.

Mercer won 125-54 in a lopsided tilt, although the Dragons actually proved one of my theories about the enjoyment of slam dunks wrong despite the loss — when one Lynchburg player threw down an unexpected jam on an alley-oop, even Mercer fans let out a hint of that trademark "oooh" sound.

Mercer had their fair share of slams, too, and the crowd reacted. Like I said, it's almost impossible not to when the dunk is a decent one — and really, what fun is it if you keep a round face and a closed mouth on a jam?

As much as I've espoused the dunk and its magnetism, I don't understand basketball super well.

I did not grow up with the game — aside from a brief little league hoops stint — or become infatuated with it the way I did baseball. I cannot break down plays, I cannot observe a player's skill set with a keen eye and break down his best abilities the way I can identify a contact hitter or control pitcher with ease on the diamond.

But dunks are pretty darn easy to understand. My favorite thing to cover in high school sports is the basketball state championship at the Macon Coliseum. It beats even the football title games in the Falcons' shiny new dome in Atlanta — I think the run of games in a row and the courtside row of tables at the Coliseum has more charm.

While I'll cover plenty of Mercer basketball across the next several months, that's where I'm hoping to go when this new hoops season culminates. Here's to a Macon team that can journey that far to help me out.

And hopefully some Bibb County teams can throw down some dunks on the way there.

Special Content furnished to the Macon Melody.

# HOW A HOLIDAY HOBBY COULD KEEP YOU YOUNG

Sponsored by: **Carlyle Place**  
A Life-Plan Community of Atrium Health Navicent



We've all spent decades learning for a variety of reasons, and entering retirement or older age is no reason to stop. The holiday season is the perfect time to start new hobbies that can help you stay active and engaged while you explore new pursuits related to the special foods, music, and crafts that this season offers.

### IMPORTANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

There is ample evidence that learning new skills has vital benefits for mental and physical health. It can delay the onset of diseases such as Alzheimer's, offset cognitive decline, and improve memory. Some evidence even suggests that every year of education can add half a year to your lifespan. Outside cognitive benefits, engaging with new skills is wonderful for emotional well-being. You'll feel engaged and can have more interesting conversations with new and old social circles.

According to Johnson & Wales University, lifelong learning comes in many forms. It can:

- Be formal learning from experts or casual learning alongside peers
- Take place in a classroom or out in the world
- Involve new technologies or focus on basic skills
- Be for the pursuit of money or simply for fun.

### HOBBIES AND NEW SKILLS

While any time of year offers opportunities for learning new skills and staying sharp, the holiday season is especially inviting. Many community centers offer seasonal classes, you'll be spending more time indoors, and you can use your new skills to make decorations and gifts perfect for this time of year!

### Embroidery, Crochet, and Sewing

The colder months create the perfect backdrop for staying inside to learn a new

skill and practice in the warmth of your home. Whether or not you learned to work with textiles growing up, adopting sewing / embroidery / crocheting / knitting as a hobby in your retired years is beneficial for many reasons. The repetitive work doesn't require intense focus, but your mind will stay engaged and active. If you learn quickly enough, try to create a seasonal decoration for your home. New throws, pillow covers, and table runners add a special touch of holiday charm this time of year.

### Holiday Baking and Cooking

Special recipes for the season are a staple in most households, but what about learning new traditional dishes from other families? Baking and cooking are hobbies that can be as simple or intricate as you'd like. Even if you already know the basics, pick up a holiday edition of a cookbook or magazine to try exciting new dishes. You can even challenge yourself to use some of the unusual seasonal ingredients at your local international market.



### Calligraphy

Taking up the art of calligraphy requires focus, precision, and practice. But with a little bit of hard work, you can design lovely lettering in no time. You can find instructional books at the local library or follow online tutorials to help you get started. Handmade gifts for friends and family are a great reason to show off your new skills. Create a set of hand-calligraphed note cards, a bedside calendar, or even a personalized recipe book for the special people in your life.

### Woodworking

This hobby is enjoying a resurgence among all age groups lately, so why not join the trend? Woodworking is the perfect fireside activity during the winter (that also translates well to those summer trips to the lake). All you need to start is a good whittling knife and a piece of wood, though many people like to buy beginners' kits for special tools. Try carving unique gifts for your family or making useful household tools like a spice rack or shelf to display your holiday décor.

### Singing and Theater

The holidays are the perfect time of year to try your hand at performing! With so many local churches, theaters, and community groups putting on seasonal productions, there are lots of roles to fill. Performance hobbies engage your creative side along with a physical outlet, so these activities are an excellent way to promote a healthy lifestyle as well. These are also perfect hobbies for anyone who has limited dexterity or vision and needs to avoid some of the more detail-oriented crafts. And we could all use a little extra movement during the colder holiday season!

### Painting and Drawing

Drawing and painting require you to look at the world in new ways and be open to your own creative voice. Take this time to learn traditional art techniques from the masters through online courses or just experiment on your own. Draw a childhood holiday scene from your memory as a keepsake to pass down to your grandchildren, or head outside and paint the winter landscape at your favorite nature getaway.

Whether you choose to renew your interest in old favorites or pick up an entirely new skill, your holiday learning is the perfect way to make the most of this special season.

## Hoops, From B1:

said at Bibb County's media night in East Macon last week. "Chase can be one of the best players in the state. This is a good team with expectations... I made them watch the other team celebrate when we lost the Elite 8 at home last year."

Brandon Ashley also returns for the Patriots at guard.

Southwest obviously has a reputation as a basketball school — when it used to be one of the larger high schools in the state, it regularly won titles and even had players like Jeff Malone and Norm Nixon reach the NBA.

The current Patriots have rekindled some of that magic and brought high expectations back to Southwest.

"We all want to be proud of this program again, everybody in this district. We've always been known as a basketball county. Whenever we go play somewhere else, everybody knows that. We want to play hard and make sure we know the history," Hardnett said. "We understand that heritage, but we also know that we live in a different time. It's important to enjoy these moments."

The Westside Seminoles should be another key team in Macon. The Seminoles were ranked sixth in the Sandy's Spiel preseason 2A state

rankings and seventh in the AJC preseason 2A rankings.

Led by coach Josh Grube and star player Josh Harden, another preseason all region team selection, Westside will try to continue its run of success that included a three-point loss in the Elite 8 to eventual champion Pace Academy in 2017, a Final Four appearance in 2018 and at least a playoff appearance in every year since 2011.

Grube said a team mindset was important to continuing the program's sustained momentum, but also highlighted some more team-specific goals for this season.

"We wanted to have more endurance, I don't think I've ever run a team this hard," the head coach said. "And we were short on three-pointers last year, we want to get where we need to be and hit 200 three-pointers this year."

The Seminoles find themselves in a new region with fellow Macon school Rutland, who also made the playoffs last season, along with other tough teams like Morgan County, Callaway and Baldwin.

Other intriguing Macon boys teams include Central and Rutland, who both look to improve on first-round playoff exits last year, and Northeast.

The Raiders are in a unique situation thanks to their football team, which could very well make it to the GHSA quarterfinals on the gridiron. With so many players participating in both sports, Northeast originally planned to have two key starters available to practice in the offseason.

But when one of those starters transferred to Westside unexpectedly, it left only head coach William Gordon with only one surefire returning starter: Justyn Taylor, a senior guard.

Taylor was supposed to play with his best friend before the other player transferred. Now Gordon and his lone student of the game practice for about an hour a day as they wait for the football team to finish up their year.

"We don't practice a second longer than one hour, five minutes. We keep an eye on that clock, because it's just us," Gordon joked at media night. "The teaching has been my favorite part, though. Also coaching friendship."

Taylor talked about how his game improved in the offseason.

"I would say my defense," when asked what part of his game changed most since last year. "Last year, I was a little lazy. But now I don't have a choice but to make my team



Micah Johnston / The Melody

Central girls basketball coach Tamara Bolston-Williams (middle) speaks to the media with two of her players on either side at Bibb County's media night last week. The Chargers are one of the top teams in the state at the A-Division I level after making it to the Final Four last season despite injuries.

look like something and force them to be on my level, make them put in the work I put in."

As far as outside Bibb County School District, ACE will compete in Region 2-A Division I with several Macon schools.

The Gryphons went 8-19 last season, including a rough 2-12 region record, but will look to bounce back. ACE lost lengthy center Kanyin Oni and two other seniors, but should have a decent group returning from a young team.

On the GIAA side, Stratford has been the best team in recent seasons. The Eagles secured a state championship in a thrilling game against St. Anne-Pacelli in 2022, though they faltered as the No. 2 seed in the GIAA 4A state tournament last year and lost their opening game against No. 7 George Walton.

Other playoff teams looking to replicate their success last season include Tattnall and Mount de Sales.

Rutland is the first Macon boys team with a game this season, kicking off the year with a game Friday night against Northside before the rest of the county gets in gear next week.

### Girls teams led by Central, Southwest

Central headlines Bibb County's girls teams, as the Chargers reached the Final Four last year as part of their latest great season during a

recent run of dominance.

Head coach Tamara Bolston-Williams has gotten one step closer to reaching the title game almost every year since taking over before the 2017-18 season.

"Despite the outcome of the (tournament) game last year, we're never changing our philosophy on defense, we're never changing the trust in our process, and we're never changing the life lessons that we always instill every year," Bolston-Williams said. "That's a part of character development. We're never changing those things."

The sophomore class will be key to the team's success this year, the head coach said — that group includes players like Kacie Reeves and Chamayah Montgomery — but the Chargers also retained a handful of impressive players from last year's run that will be seniors.

Jazlyn Johnson, an offensive weapon, and Frances Anyakudo, the team's defensive leader, stand out.

"A facet that will improve will be mental toughness, always believing in yourself and always being ready because you never know when it's your time to step up," Anyakudo said at media night. "This is our team's testimony because we watched two of our team's starters suffer season-ending injuries last year. Instead of giving up we had to step up for them and we ended up making his-

tory and taking our program farther than it's ever been."

Even with the Chargers on a roll, it will be tough to win another consecutive region title in the new, crowded Region 2-A Division I. Dodge County went 23-5 last year and made the Elite 8. Dublin, Washington County and Southwest all made the post-season last season as well.

Southwest was the second-best Bibb County School District team last season, finishing fourth in the old region with a 12-11 mark overall and an 8-6 region record. They were also unexpectedly funny, their head coach Ron Hill claimed last week.

"This team is fun. They make me laugh, I'll be the first person to tell you. But they're serious when they need to be," he said. "Our small forward is a big returning player, and we have MySaviour Darby back."

Still, the Patriots aren't necessarily thrilled to be in such a tough region, especially one with some older rivals that could be difficult opponents.

"Those rivalry games, we're not looking forward to as much," Hill quipped. "We have to play Central multiple times, these other strong teams. That's really tough."

Other coaches left an impression at the media night as well. Most teams said their team's identities would revolve around defense. Northeast girls coach Heavenly

Whitehead said her game this year will revolve around statistics more than ever.

"I'm a math teacher, so this stuff matters to me," Whitehead said with a smile. "The more we can pay attention to how we're turning the ball over, how we're getting up and down the floor on the stat sheet, the better we can get."

Outside of the school district, the ACE girls will also be in Region 2-A Division I. After losing two top players, twins Karlee and Karsyn Yates, to injury last year, the Gryphons will try and improve on last year's 12-13 finish.

The FPD girls team made noise on the GIAA side of things last season, earning a No. 3 seed and a bye before beating Tattnall in the post-season. The Vikings lost to the eventual champions, St. Anne-Pacelli.

FPD has a young team returning as well, with only one senior listed on that 2023 roster: head coach Doug Wasden's daughter, Faith. Not to worry, though, as Elly and Ava Wasden are still on the roster this season.

Other important GIAA girls teams could include Tattnall and Stratford, who both made the playoffs last season as well.

The girls basketball season for Bibb County district teams began this week.

### Macon high schools and their 2023 records

#### BOYS TEAMS

- ACE 8-19 (2-12)
- Northeast 6-19 (6-8)
- Rutland 17-12 (9-5)
- Central 8-19 (7-7)
- Southwest 19-9 (12-1)
- Howard 8-16 (3-9)
- Westside 18-11 (7-5)
- Tattnall 21-7 (4-4)
- Stratford 18-9 (7-1)
- FPD 5-20 (0-8)
- MDS 10-13 (2-6)

#### GIRLS TEAMS

- ACE 12-13 (6-8)
- Northeast 11-15 (7-7)
- Rutland 1-24 (1-13)
- Central 26-5 (14-0)
- Southwest 12-11 (8-6)
- Howard 5-19 (2-10)
- Westside 10-16 (3-9)
- Tattnall 19-11 (5-3)
- Stratford 9-19 (1-7)
- FPD 25-4 (7-1)
- MDS 3-17 (1-7)



Jason Vorhees / The Melody

Mercer football coach Mike Jacobs talks to the media at the team's Monday press conference after the Bears defeated VMI last weekend.

## Mercer, From B1:

shown that this season," Jacobs said. "I'm not always the easiest guy to play for... I'm just so proud of this

team and the fight they've shown."

At least the Bears had no need for a comeback in the win over VMI to finalize the SoCon playoff bid — Mercer put up more than 500 yards

of offense and dominated on defense once again.

The Keydets were not the premier opponent on the Bears' conference slate this year, but it was likely

Mercer's most well-rounded victory of the season other than the season-opening win over Presbyterian College and certainly the team's best over a conference opponent.

Freshman passer Whitt Newbauer started at quarterback for the entire game with junior transfer D.J. Smith still dealing with leg injuries. Jacobs said Smith would be dealing with "day-to-day" type injuries for the remainder of the season; it seems Newbauer will get the vast majority of snaps as signal caller for the Bears.

After a slow start, Newbauer settled in and led Mercer well on offense. The 6-foot-6 quarterback even made some big plays with his legs, including one rush just before half that set the Bears up for an important touchdown to take a 17-0 lead into the locker room.

"You don't always expect him to run, it doesn't look like he's all that fast, but he made some big plays for us," Jacobs said. "That scramble before the second half was important, then he really got to passing in the second half."

The most explosive of those passes went to receiver Parker Wroble, who was more crucial to Brayden Smith not playing. Wroble finished with 103 yards and two touchdowns on just four catches.

"That's a testament to our offense, there were games this year where we completed passes to something like 12 different guys," Jacobs said Monday. "They have the ability, not just to wait their turn, but when they get their opportunity they capitalize on it."

A non-conference opponent this late in the season seems, in concept, like a break for the Bears, but it's not so simple — said non-con foe resides in Tuscaloosa, as Mercer will face Alabama on Saturday.

"Most kids grow up wanting to play in the SEC or the Big 10. This gives them an opportunity to prove themselves and get on the field in that situation," Jacobs said of playing the Crimson Tide.

It's the third meeting between the two teams since Mercer brought its football program back. After a 56-0 thumping in 2017, the Bears scored a pair of touchdowns the next time around to make it a 48-14 finish in 2021. Mercer lost 20-0 in both of the teams' pre-WWII meetings.

Saturday's game in Tuscaloosa begins at 2 p.m. Fans can watch on SEC Network or listen to the radio feed and Rick Cameron on 100.9 The Creek or the Sportsmic app.

## Playoffs, From B1:

has not faced Westside since 2015.

Northeast was an early qualifier and enters as the No. 2 team from Region 2-A Division I at 8-2, the fifth straight eight-win season under Jeremy Wiggins and 10th overall. The Raiders are two victories from their first 10-win season in program history.

The eighth-seeded Raiders host defending Class A-Division I runner-up Swainsboro, in with a 3-7 record and seeded 25th. The Tigers opened the season with a 41-21 loss to Dub-

lin, the team that beat Northeast out for the Region. The Raiders also lost to the Fighting Irish in a 17-7 game on the road.

ACE Charter was projected into the middle of the A-Division I field all season and was in the hunt for a home game until a 17-14 loss to Washington County in the regular-season finale.

The Gryphons are seeded 18th and don't have a big road trip, heading to 15th-seeded Jasper County. The Purple Hurricanes are having their best year in decades at 7-3, finishing as the fourth seed in Region 4.

Perhaps waiting in the next round? Region 2 champ Dublin, seeded second and hosting No. 31 Gordon Central.

Southwest was on the outside looking in entering Friday's game against East Laurens, which was projected in the field. The Patriots bowed up with a 20-7 win to earn a spot and end the Falcons' season at the same time.

The reward is a road trip to sixth-seeded Toombs County. The 8-1 Bulldogs went 11-2 last year, and have been ranked by most polls in the top three all season. The polls, though, have nothing to do with the GHSA's postsea-

son power ranking system or formula, and Toombs County is seeded sixth.

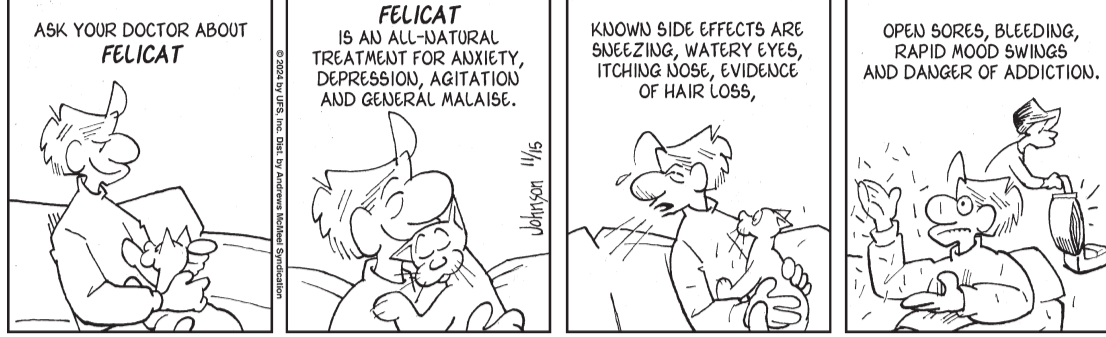
FPD and Bethlehem Christian haven't met. Tattnall ended the Knights' season last year in the first playoff game. The Vikings have won eight straight this season and are 19-4 over the past two, going 8-1-1 at home the past two seasons.

The GIAA Class 4A championship game is at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 23 at Georgia Southern. Bulloch hosts Brookstone in the other semifinal.

ADAM



ARLO AND JANIS



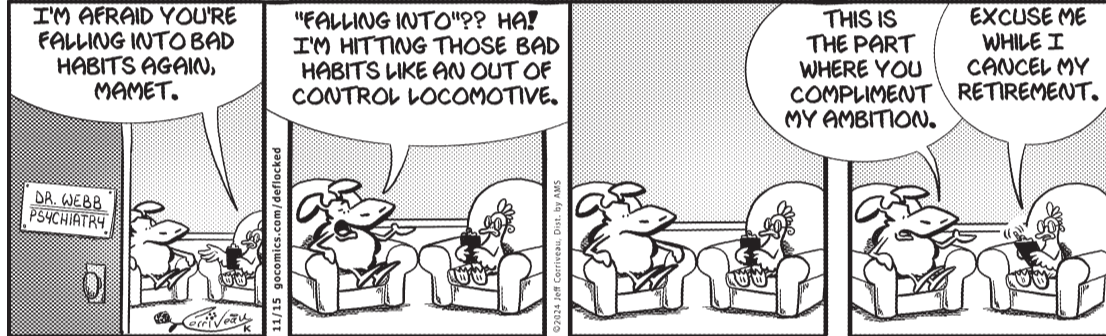
BIG NATE



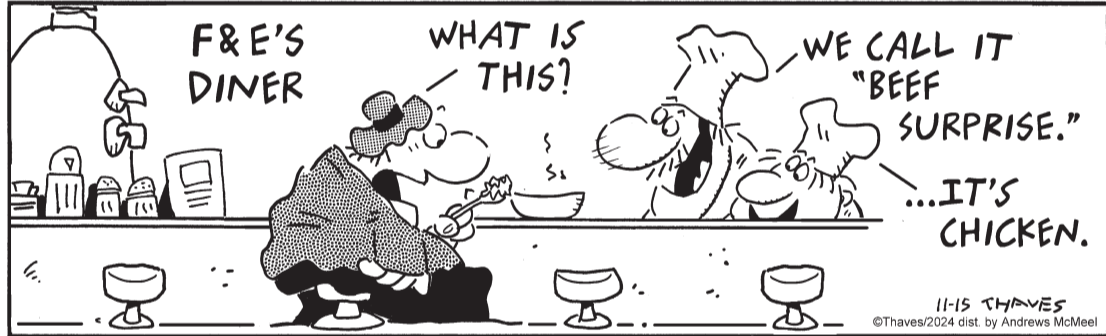
BORN LOSER



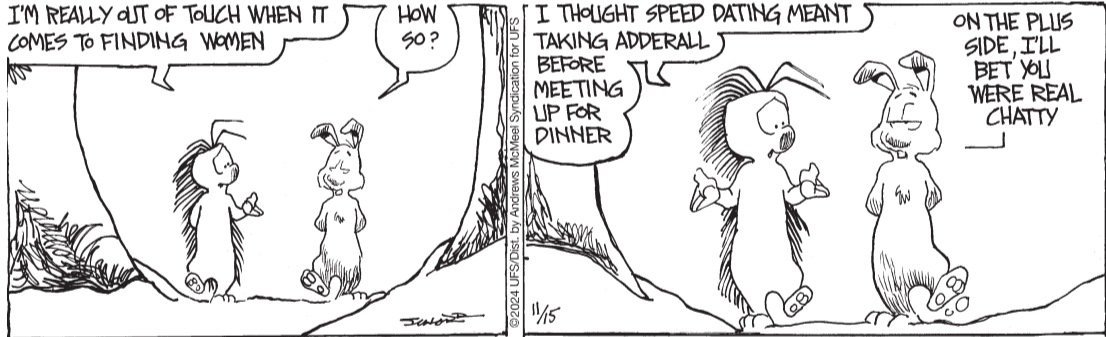
DEFLOCKED



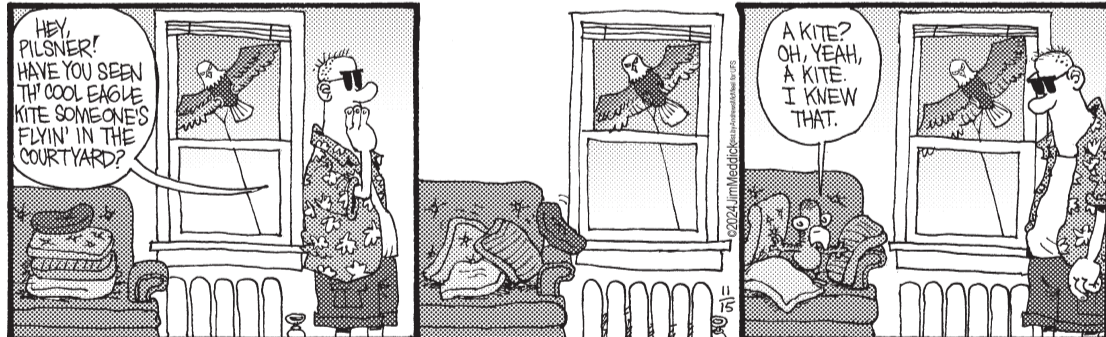
FRANK N EARNEST



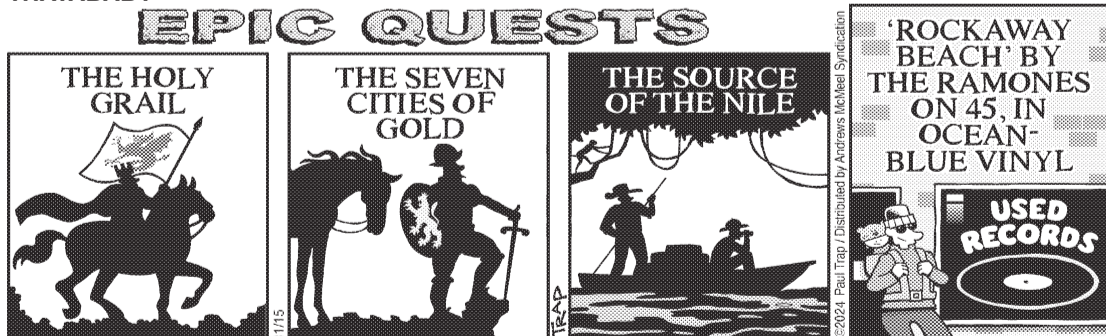
GRIZZWELLS



MONTY



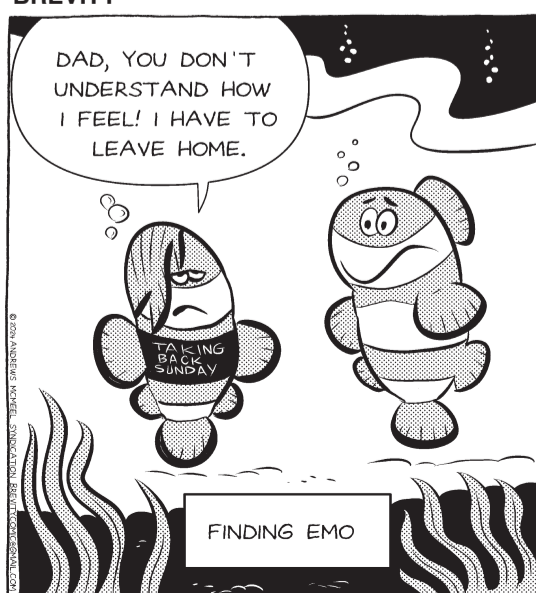
THATABABY



MODERATELY CONFUSED



BREVITY



NEA Crossword Puzzle

- ACROSS**
- 1 Poker prize
  - 4 Animal doc
  - 7 Sharp tooth
  - 11 Islander's guitar
  - 12 Discharge
  - 13 Smell
  - 14 — Fernando Valley
  - 15 About (2 wds.)
  - 16 Tibetan monk
  - 17 Port city in Australia
  - 19 Pilfered
  - 21 Friendly nation
  - 23 Feverish
  - 24 Architect Frank — Wright
  - 27 Era
  - 29 "In — honesty ..."
  - 32 Charged particle
  - 33 Pesky bug
  - 34 Drone
  - 35 Cuckoo
  - 36 Trees
  - 37 Ordinance
  - 38 — Grande
- DOWN**
- 1 "— in Boots"
  - 2 Give approval
  - 3 Watch over
  - 4 LP material
  - 5 Goof
  - 6 Casual tops
  - 7 Book leaf
  - 8 Willing to change
- 39 Cakes and —**
- 40 Fashion
  - 42 To the — degree
  - 44 Be brave enough
  - 46 Boredom
  - 49 Fun fair area
  - 53 Tiniest bit
  - 54 Fiery gem
  - 56 Tint
  - 57 Be in a rage
  - 58 Potting need
  - 59 Writer — Levin
  - 60 Rank
  - 61 Misdeed
  - 62 Render imperfect

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

- 9 Iditarod terminus
- 10 Former student
- 12 Battle-ground
- 18 Certain vote
- 20 Sharpen
- 22 Pulled one
- 24 Unreliable
- 25 Actress — Anderson
- 26 Bulbous roof style (2 wds.)
- 28 Petrol
- 30 Not fatty
- 31 Obscene
- 33 Meas. of liquid
- 36 Pacific island
- 40 Warble
- 41 Alert color
- 43 Kitchen gadget
- 45 With full force
- 46 Wilson's predecessor
- 47 Case for small items
- 48 Actress Elisabeth —
- 50 Caprice
- 51 Unseen emanation
- 52 "Man of the —"
- 55 Taro paste

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10		
11				12					13				
14				15					16				
17				18				19	20				
				21		22		23					
24	25	26				27	28			29	30	31	
32						33				34			
35						36					37		
38						39			40	41			
				42	43			44	45				
46	47					48		49			50	51	52
53						54	55				56		
57						58					59		
60						61					62		

11-15 © 2024 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication for UFS

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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

## Almanac

Today is the 320th day of 2024 and the 55th day of autumn.

**TODAY'S HISTORY:** In 1920, the League of Nations held its first assembly in Geneva.

In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt laid the cornerstone for the Jefferson Memorial during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

In 1969, Vietnam anti-war demonstrations reached a peak when an estimated quarter- to half-million protesters marched peacefully in Washington, D.C.

In 2006, the international 24-hour news channel Al Jazeera English launched worldwide.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS:** William Herschel (1738-1822), astronomer; Felix Frankfurter (1882-1965), U.S. Supreme Court justice; Marianne Moore (1887-1972), poet; Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986), artist; Ed Asner (1929-2021), actor; Petula Clark (1932- ), singer; Sam Waterston (1940- ), actor; Daniel Barenboim (1942- ), pianist/conductor; Randy Savage (1952-2011), wrestler; Jonny Lee Miller (1972- ), actor; Asia Kate Dillon (1984- ), actor; Shailene Woodley (1991- ), actress; Karl-Anthony Towns (1995- ), basketball player.

**TODAY'S FACT:** Georgia O'Keeffe was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest U.S. civilian honor, by President Gerald Ford in 1977.

**TODAY'S SPORTS:** In 2005, Major League Baseball team owners and the players' union agreed on a tougher testing policy for steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs.

**TODAY'S QUOTE:** "If you take a flower in your hand and really look at it, it's your world for a moment." -- Georgia O'Keeffe

**TODAY'S NUMBER:** 22 -- average age of a U.S. infantryman serving in the Vietnam War.

**TODAY'S MOON:** Full moon (Nov. 15).

# Invite this salad to your Thanksgiving dinner



**Lynda Balslev**  
TasteFood

There is a place for salad on the holiday table. With festive feasts that consist of meaty roasts, gooey casseroles and creamy mashes, a fresh and leafy salad is a welcome accompaniment to a celebratory meal. You could simply rely on a bowl of tossed seasonal greens as a go-to palate cleanser. Or, better yet, assemble a heartier salad, layered with sturdy greens and chicories, wintry vegetables and wholesome grains. Not only is it a vibrant and healthy bowl worthy of the season, but it's a dish that will satisfy vegetarians and carnivores alike.

Each component of this autumnal salad brings flavor and texture to the bowl: crisp radicchio shards, peppery arugula leaves, protein-rich quinoa and sweet delicata squash. Delicata is a small oblong squash with an edible green and yellow striated skin, so there is no need to peel it. It cooks quickly, and roasting is an easy method that amplifies its sweet and creamy flavor.

A rich, assertive balsamic vinaigrette coats the salad, which is then garnished with dried cranberries and pepitas.

Don't let the separate components of this recipe deter you from making it. The dressing, quinoa and squash can be prepared in advance, and the salad can be easily assembled just before serving, which is ideal for entertaining or transporting to a potluck gathering.

**Roasted Squash, Radicchio and Quinoa Salad**

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Total time: 1 hour, plus cooling time  
Yield: Serves 4 to 6

**Dressing:**  
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
1 small garlic clove, grated  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground

black pepper  
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

**Salad:**  
1/2 cup red quinoa, rinsed  
Kosher salt  
2 narrow delicata squash, about 1 1/2 pounds total  
Olive oil  
Kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 large head radicchio, about 12 ounces  
1 packed cup arugula, about 1 ounce  
2 to 3 tablespoons dried cranberries  
1 to 2 tablespoons pepitas

**Make the dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk the vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, mustard, cumin, salt and black pepper. Add the oil in a steady stream, whisking to emulsify.

Put the quinoa in a small saucepan. Cover with 1 1/2 inches of water. Bring to a boil, then simmer until the quinoa seeds release their germ (a little white tail), 12

to 15 minutes. Drain the quinoa and transfer to a bowl. Stir in 1 tablespoon of the dressing and season with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Set aside to cool.

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Cut the squash crosswise in 1/3-inch-thick slices. Scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Arrange the squash rings on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment. Brush the rings on both sides with oil and lightly season with salt and black pepper. Transfer to the oven and roast until charred in spots and tender, about 25 minutes, flipping once. Remove from the oven and cool to lukewarm or room temperature.

Halve the radicchio and cut out the core with a paring knife. Cut each half into wedges. Tear the wedges into bite-size pieces.

Spread half of the quinoa in a serving bowl. Scatter the radicchio and arugula over the quinoa and lightly drizzle with some of the dressing. Arrange the squash rings over the salad. Spoon the remaining quinoa over and around the squash. Garnish with the cranberries and pepitas. Drizzle with the remaining dressing to your taste.

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Lynda Balslev is an award-winning writer, cookbook author, and recipe developer based in northern California. Visit TasteFoodblog.com.*

### SUDOKU ANSWER

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

# What to watch FRIDAY

November 15, 2024

All times Eastern. Start times can vary based on cable/satellite provider. Confirm times on your on-screen guide.

## Silo

Apple TV+ ■ Season Premiere

Following the cliffhanger of Season 1, when Juliette (Rebecca Ferguson) left the underground silo where the last 10,000 people on Earth currently live, the second season will pick up with what she saw when she walked over the hill and the ensuing chaos that her leaving caused the inhabitants of the silo.

## Cobra Kai

Netflix ■ New Episodes

The second batch of five episodes in the sixth and final season of this series based on the original *Karate Kid* movies drops this month. The final batch of five episodes will be available sometime in 2025. Ralph Macchio, William Zabka and Martin Kove lead the cast.

## Twisters

Peacock ■ Streaming Premiere

Starring Glen Powell and Daisy Edgar-Jones, this modern follow-up to the hit 1996 storm thriller following tornado chasers makes its streaming debut after spending the summer in theaters.

## Christmas With the Singhs

Hallmark Channel, 8 p.m. ■ Original Film

Christmas is the most important time of the year for Asha Singh (Anuja Joshi). When her first family Christmas with her new fiancé (Benjamin Hollingsworth) isn't the fairy tale she imagined, they quickly discover their perfect romance is about to get a reality check.



'Silo' REKHA GARTON

## Happy's Place

NBC, 8 p.m.

In the new episode "Ladies Night," after Gabby's (Melissa Peterman) latest heartbreak, Bobbie (Reba McEntire) and Isabella (Belissa Escobedo) decide to throw a ladies night at the tavern to show Gabby she doesn't need a man to be happy, but things don't go as planned.

## Boxing: Jake Paul vs. Mike Tyson

Netflix, 8 p.m. Live

YouTube and boxing sensation Jake Paul

faces legendary former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson in a sanctioned match at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. Paul, age 27, has a pro record of 10-1 (7 KOs). The 58-year-old Tyson was in his prime in the late 1980s, and his last pro win came in 2003. In the co-main event, Amanda Serrano faces Katie Taylor in a rematch for Taylor's undisputed super lightweight championship.

## Fire Country

CBS, 9 p.m.

The teams jump into action when an airplane makes an emergency landing outside of Edgewater. Jared Padalecki guest-stars in the new episode "Edgewater's About to Get Real Cozy."

## The UnBelievable With Dan Aykroyd

History, 9 p.m. ■ Season Premiere

Host Dan Aykroyd is back for a second season of uncovering the most mysterious and truly bizarre documented occurrences in human history and delivering these stories in a way that only he can.

## CATCH A CLASSIC

### TCM Morning & Afternoon Movies: Spectral Encounters

TCM, beginning at 7 a.m.

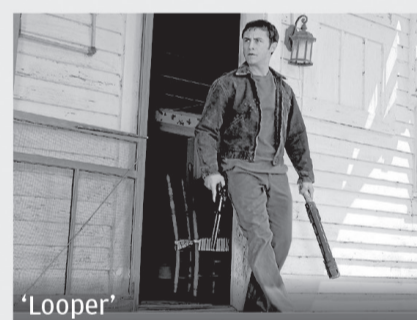
TCM will get your ghost with this morning and afternoon's lineup of mostly comedic and fantasy (and a little horror) films featuring phantoms of various types. First up is 1944's **The Canterville Ghost (pictured)**, based on Oscar Wilde's short story and led by Charles Laughton as the titular spirit, Sir Simon de Canterville. After that is **The Woman in White** (1948), a mystery starring Alexis Smith, Eleanor Parker and Sydney Greenstreet. Next is **Gildersleeve's Ghost** (1944), the fourth and last in RKO's series of comedies based on the hit radio show *The Great Gildersleeve*, with Harold Peary playing a triple role as not only Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve but also



MGM

the ghosts of two of his deceased family members! Following that is really the only movie in today's lineup that could be considered scary to any degree: **Tormented** (1960), from low-budget director Bert I. Gordon and headlined by Richard Carlson. The third and final entry in the Topper series, **Topper Returns** (1941), airs next, led by Joan Blondell and Roland Young. As the lineup winds down, you'll see the Christmastime-set fantasy **Beyond Tomorrow** (1940); co-writer/director David Lean's supernatural comedy **Blithe Spirit** (1945); and **Sylvia and the Phantom** (1946), a fantasy/comedy from France.

## MOVIES YOU'LL LOVE



'Looper' TRISTAR PICTURES / EVERETT COLLECTION

**Raiders of the Lost Ark** (1981, Action) Harrison Ford, Karen Allen **Paramount, 6 p.m.**

**Pitch Perfect** (2012, Comedy) Anna Kendrick, Brittany Snow **Bravo, 7 p.m.**

**Looper** (2012, Action) Bruce Willis, Joseph Gordon-Levitt **Showtime 2, 7 p.m.**

**Beverly Hills Cop** (1984, Comedy) Eddie Murphy, Judge Reinhold **Showtime Extreme, 7 p.m.**

**The First Wives Club** (1996, Drama) Goldie Hawn, Bette Midler **The Movie Channel Xtra, 7:15 p.m.**

**Batman Begins** (2005, Adventure) Christian Bale, Michael Caine **AMC, 8 p.m.**

**Goodfellas** (1990, Crime Drama) Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta **Flix, 8 p.m.**

**The Iron Claw** (2023, Biographical Drama) Jeremy Allen White, Zac Efron **HBO Signature, 8:25 p.m.**

**Carrie** (1976, Horror) Sissy Spacek, Piper Laurie **The Movie Channel, 9:45 p.m.**

**Erin Brockovich** (2000, Drama) Julia Roberts, Albert Finney **POP, 10:30 p.m.**

From the editors of **tv** Weekly and **tvinsider.com**

## Are You Missing Some Great Shows? Plan Your TV Time with TV Weekly Magazine

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER  
**10 weeks for just \$9.75**

Subscribe Today!  
1-855-524-6304 | [www.tvweekly.com/bestof](http://www.tvweekly.com/bestof)

- MOVIE GUIDE
- 24/7 GRIDS
- BEST BETS
- PUZZLES
- REVIEWS
- STREAMING



# People



Photos by Jason Vorhees and courtesy Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful, Abigail Gleaton / Wesleyan College, Macon-Bibb County, Bibb County Schools, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce and Matt Odom / For The Melody

**Top photos, clockwise from top left:** Lake Tobosofkee employees participated in a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday at the Claystone Park campground. Both Claystone and Arrowhead Park campgrounds will receive several SPLOST-funded upgrades, including replacing asphalt pads with concrete and adding nine docks between the two parks for campers to use. | Volunteers from AARP and the Fort-Hill East Macon Neighborhood Watch Association helped plant blueberry and blackberry bushes along with plum and loquat trees Tuesday in Fort Hill Community Park. Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful was awarded an AARP Community Challenge Grant for the project. | Campus chaplain Rachel Hartman and Wesleyan students paint the bottom floor hallway of the Olive Swann Porter Student Center on Nov. 9 during the College's semi-annual Wow-A-Day community service day. | Atrium Health Amphitheater hosted its first gospel show on Sunday. 1,000 tickets were donated by Cherokee Brick, Bibb Distributing, Butler Automotive Group, Sheridan Construction, and ICB Construction. | Burdell-Hunt Elementary Magnet School held a Veterans Day program Monday at the school. The event included speeches from students as well as performances by the school's chorus. | Wesleyan staff and students paint the bottom floor hallway of the Olive Swann Porter Student Center on Nov. 9 during the College's semi-annual Wow-A-Day community service day. | **Bottom photos from left:** 2024 Cherry Blossom Queen Remie Heide sings the National Anthem during the Veterans Day parade in downtown Macon Sunday. | Civilians wave and take pictures along Cherry Street during the Veterans Day parade in downtown Macon Sunday.

To submit photos to the People page, email them to [photos@maconmelody.com](mailto:photos@maconmelody.com)

