Georgia Press Association
welcomes you to the 2021 Better Newspaper Contest Awards Banquet
Best Web Photo

Third Place
Curt Yeomans
Gwinnett Daily Post,
Lawrenceville

Second Place
Deborah Stewart,
The Walton Tribune,
Monroe

First Place (at left)
Emily Walker
The Newnan Times-Herald
Daily Division
Best Newspaper Website

Third Place
Brian Clark,
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Gwinnett Daily Post,
Lawrenceville

First Place
(at left)
The Albany Herald
Weekly Division
Best Newspaper Website

Third Place
The Covington News

Second Place
Springs Publishing

First Place
(at left)
Monroe County Reporter, Forsyth
Daily Division
Best Use of Graphics & Illustration

Third Place
Terry Wilson
The Brunswick News

Second Place
Terry Richards
The Valdosta Daily Times

First Place (at right)
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News
Weekly Division

Best Use of Graphics & Illustration

Third Place
Karen Webster
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

Second Place
Cody Rogers
The Northeast Georgian, Cornelia

First Place (at right)
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Best Online News Project

**Second Place**
Springs Publishing

**First Place (at bottom)**
Columbus Ledger-Enquirer

Remembering the Beauregard tornado victims
Daily Division
Best Photo Gallery on a Newspaper Website

**Third Place**
Curt Yeomans
Gwinnett Daily Post,
Lawrenceville

**Second Place**
Reginald Christian
The Albany Herald

**First Place** *(at right)*
Joshua L. Jones
Athens Banner-Herald
Weekly Division
Best Photo Gallery on a Newspaper Website

Third Place
Deborah Stewart
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Second Place
Sue Ann Kunh-Smith
Rockdale Citizen, Conyers

First Place (at right)
Connie Southwell
The Moultrie Observer
Editorial Cartoonist

Third Place
Fitzroy James
The Champion, Decatur

Second Place
Reed Allen
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

First Place (at right)
Chuck Cunningham,
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville

People Change — Statues Don’t.
Best Magazine Single Photo

**Third Place**
Zachary Dailey, West Georgia Woman Magazine

**Second Place**
Chris Martin, The Newnan Times-Herald

**First Place (at right)**
Thomas Hartwell
Marietta Daily Journal
Best Magazine Themed Issue

**Third Place**
West Georgia Magazine

**Second Place**
Lake Life

**First Place (at right)**
West Georgia Woman Magazine
Best Magazine Overall Design

**Third Place**
Lake Life

**Second Place**
LaGrange Daily News

**First Place (at right)**
The Valdosta Daily Times
Daily Division
Photo Portfolio

Third Place
Thomas Hartwell
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Joshua L. Jones
Marietta Daily Journal

First Place (at left)
Robin Rayne
Marietta Daily Journal
Weekly Division
Photo Portfolio

Third Place
Jake Cantrell
The Dahlonega Nugget

Second Place
Larry Stanford
Jackson Progress Argus

First Place (at right)
Rose Scoggins
The Elberton Star
Best Multimedia Journalism

**Third Place**
Darien Southerland
Marietta Daily Journal

**Second Place**
Adam Van Brimmer &
Mark Murphy, Savannah
Morning News

**First Place (at right)**
Mike Haskey
Columbus Ledger-Enquirer

'Story to Table' program helps feed people when there’s more month than money

BY MIKE HASKEY  JULY 24, 2020, 3:15 PM

The Food Mill, formerly Bare Roots Bibb Cafe, has partnered with the Columbus Botanical Garden in a program called #NourishColumbus to help combat food insecurity in the North Highland area. It turns fresh, local produce into healthy prepared meals.
Division A
Page One

Third Place
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

First Place (at right)
The Brunswick News
Division B
Page One

Third Place
Athens Banner-Herald

Second Place
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

First Place (at right)
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
Page One

**Third Place**
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune

**Second Place**
Mary Beth Yeary
The Tifton Gazette

**First Place (at right)**
The Moultrie Observer
Division D
Page One

Third Place
Newton Citizen, Covington

Second Place
Rockdale Citizen, Conyers

First Place (at left)
Henry Herald, McDonough
Division E
Page One

Third Place
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News

Second Place
Josh Lurie
The Baldwin Bulletin, Milledgeville

First Place (at right)
Jackson Progress Argus
Third Place
Karen Webster
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

Second Place
Rico Figliolini
Springs Publishing

First Place (at left)
Rico Figliolini
Springs Publishing
Division A
Business Writing

**Third Place**
Curt Yeomans
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

**Second Place**
Jenna Eason
The Telegraph, Macon

**First Place (at left)**
Rome News Tribune
Division B
Business Writing

Third Place
Desiree Carver
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
Michael O’Hearn & Ken Denney
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

First Place (at left)
Terry Richards
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
Business Writing

**Third Place**
Drew Davis
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

**Second Place**
Ethan Johnson
The Cherokee Tribune, Canton

**First Place (at left)**
Andrew Kenneson
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Division D
Business Writing

Third Place
Alice Queen
Rockdale Citizen, Conyers

Second Place
The Hartwell Sun

First Place (at left)
Jake Cantrell
The Dahlonega Nugget
Division E
Business Writing

**Third Place**
Rick Harris
The Journal, Buena Vista

**Second Place**
Kandice S. Eberhardt
Franklin County Citizen Leader, Lavonia

**First Place (at right)**
Kathy Mitchell
The Champion, Decatur
Division F
Business Writing

Second Place
Patrick Fox
Johns Creek Herald

First Place (at left)
John Ruch
Springs Publishing
Division A
Magazine Product

Third Place
Savannah Morning News

Second Place
West Georgia Woman Magazine

First Place (at right)
Marietta Daily Journal
Division B
Magazine Product

Third Place
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

Second Place
Valdosta Daily Times

First Place (at right)
LaGrange Daily News
Division C
Magazine Product

**Third Place**
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

**Second Place**
The Newnan Times-Herald

**First Place (at right)**
The Moultrie Observer
Division D
Magazine Product

**Third Place**
The Covington News

**Second Place**
Lake Life

**First Place (at right)**
Morgan County Citizen, Madison
Division E
Magazine Product

**Third Place**
The Georgia Post, Roberta

**Second Place**
The Leader Tribune, Fort Valley

**First Place (at right)**
The Georgia Post, Roberta
Division A
News Photograph

**Third Place**
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News

**Second Place**
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News

**First Place (at right)**
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News
Division B
News Photograph

Third Place
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times

First Place (at left)
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
News Photograph

Third Place
Max Caylor
Pickens County Progress,
Jasper

Second Place
Ron Daniel
Douglas County Sentinel,
Douglasville

First Place (at left)
Ron Daniel
Douglas County Sentinel,
Douglasville
Division D
News Photograph

Third Place
Michael Hall
The Hartwell Sun

Second Place
Josiah Connelly
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

First Place (at left)
Barry Dycus
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro
Division E
News Photograph

Third Place
Parish Howard
Jefferson Reporter News & Farmer, Louisville

Second Place
Larry Stanford
Jackson Progress-Argus

First Place (at left)
Jay Phillips
The Champion, Decatur
Division F
News Photograph

**Third Place**
Phil Mosier
Springs Publishing

**Second Place**
Denise Ray
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

**First Place (at right)**
Ben Hendren
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe
Division A
Best Magazine Original Writing

Third Place
Lindsey Adkison
The Brunswick News

Second Place
Angela Dailey
West Georgia Woman Magazine

First Place (at left)
Angela Dailey
West Georgia Woman Magazine

Living with Lupus

At age 20, Monica Ellis was a dental assistant with a 5-year child at home. She was diagnosed when she began developing extreme fatigue and began experiencing severe joint pain that affected her work. “I was told to me to pass the instruments to the dental due to my hands and hands being weaker,” she explained. “I was in a tremendous amount of pain.”

For months, she endured tests after tests as doctors searched for a diagnosis. In April 2001, she was told she had lupus, a chronic inflammatory condition that affects various membranes inside the body, according to the Mayo Clinic. Although she was initially relieved to know what she had, she did not realize lupus was a chronic, potentially life-threatening disease that can attack the skin, joints, brain, lungs, kidneys, blood vessels, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

“I had no idea what the look up was,” she says. She learned very quickly that this incurable disease was to be reckoned with and could be deadly. For 19 years, Monica’s own immune system has been attacking various tissues in her body, resulting in damage to her heart, bones and kidneys.

Lupus Symptoms
Because lupus may affect various parts of the body, it can cause many different symptoms. According to Lupus Foundation of America (LFA), the most common lupus symptoms are:
- Swelling or pain in the joints
- Extreme fatigue
- Hair loss
- Raynauds
- Swelling in the hands and feet
- Photo sensitivity to fluorescent light or sunlight
- Chest pain when breathing deeply

Many people with lupus also have issues that affect their hair and skin, such as:
- Hair loss
- Abruptly-shaped rash on the nose and cheeks
- Sores on the nose or mouth

Who is at Risk?

At least 1.5 million people have lupus in the US and approximately 100,000 new cases are reported every year. People of any gender, ages, and race or ethnic groups can develop lupus, says the LFA. There are groups who are at higher risk than others, including:
- Women ages 15 to 45
- 9 out of 10 people with lupus are women
- Certain racial or ethnic groups — including
Division B
Best Magazine Original Writing

Third Place
Jenna Oden
LaGrange Daily News

Second Place
Jay Luzardo
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

First Place (at left)
The Daily Tribune News, Cartersville

Life Stories
Bartow County residents impacted by substance dependency share their journeys
by James Swift, photos by Randy Parker
Division C
Best Magazine Original Writing

Third Place
Savannah Donald
The Moultrie Observer

Second Place
Frances Kidd
The Newnan Times-Herald

First Place (at left)
Jackie Kennedy
The Newnan Times-Herald
Division D
Best Magazine Original Writing

Third Place
Michael Hall
The Hartwell Sun

Second Place
Lynn Hobbs
Lake Life

First Place (at left)
Tia Lynn Ivey, Robin Bish
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

LOVE IN THE TIME OF COVID
After the pandemic postpones their wedding plans, a New York couple pulls together an unforgettable whimsical event while visiting family at Lake Oconee.

Walter and Dora’s-who have a wedding venue in Lake Oconee minds and created a whimsical ceremony. The couple organized a surprise wedding ceremony that was held in a private room at the Lake Oconee Resort. The couple wore white sneakers and fedora hats, and they were greeted by cheering guests who had been waiting in the cold.

The couple’s wedding was a surprise for everyone, including the guests who had traveled from all over the country to attend. The ceremony was held in a private room at the resort, and the guests were treated to a delicious meal afterwards.

“Love in the Time of COVID” is a story that highlights the resilience and creativity of those who are able to adapt to unexpected circumstances. The couple’s wedding was a testament to the fact that love can overcome any obstacle, and their story is a reminder of the power of love and the importance of coming together in times of need.

![Image of a couple getting married on a dock by the lake.](image-url)
Division E
Best Magazine Original Writing

First Place (at left)
Gary Jones
The Elberton Star

ALL CREATURES ANIMAL HOSPITAL

By GARY JONES

Well, we aren’t going to worry about that. The writer thinks, we’ll take this thing and act as if we knew how to palpate and when we know how well. We’ll know that this writer had absolutely no idea what was going to happen to us or our families. And Taylor Gaines, the vet assistant, was a calm voice in a storm.
Division A
Editorial Page

Third Place
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
The Brunswick News

First Place (at right)
Marietta Daily Journal
Division C Editorial Page

Third Place
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

Second Place
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at right)
Dean Poling & Mary Beth Yeary
The Tifton Gazette
Division D Editorial Page

Third Place
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro

Second Place
The Dahlonega Nugget

First Place (at right)
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Division E
Editorial Page

Third Place
Matt Gardner
The Blackshear Times

Second Place
The Journal, Buena Vista

First Place (at right)
The Elberton Star
Redemption Day is near

Mark Murphy

I loved Anna Brown. My mother had hired Anna as a housekeeper when I was in second grade. Apart from a couple of first grade classmates at Windsor Forest Elementary, she was the first Black person I’d ever been around on a regular basis. Her chestnut skin was barely creased with a single wrinkle. Ageless and nearly bald, she wore a spotless starched white uniform to work every day and hung her purse strap on a hook in the hall closet, like a hat. Slimy as a crowsfoot and nearly as inflexible, Anna professed nuggets of advice like a Per disseminator. Before long, she had become far more than our housekeeper. She was family, and she watched over the three Murphy children like a hawk. She loved us as her own. Anna wasn’t afraid of much. She wasn’t too fond of snakes, and she hated lightning. But the thing she was most afraid of made no sense to me; White men. Anna never liked staying at our place after dark. She wanted to be back home, at her own house off of Coffee Bluff Road, where she felt safe.

“I don’t want those white men to come over here at night and take me away,” she’d say. “They know I don’t belong here. This is a white neighborhood. If they saw me here at night, they’d snatch me up and I’d be gone, just like that. And you’d never see me again.”

“But we’re white, and you’re not afraid of us,” I said, not understanding.

“I’m different. She’s different, too. She’s not afraid of me,” she’d say, hugging me with her skinny little arms. And that would end the discussion.

Anna’s been dead over two decades now. I was with her the day she passed away, in the ICU at Candler Hospital. As I grew older, I find myself reflecting on my time with her — and with that reflection has come perspective. I now understand that while Anna and I lived in the same country, we existed in parallel universes. My father was born into a poor family. They had no running water and no electricity. But Jack Murphy was recognized as being intelligent as a young child, and the educational system in Macon at the time gave him the opportunity to better himself. My father became a doctor, and the trajectory of our entire family’s life was changed. Anna’s people had no such opportunity. She was born into a segregated land, a land where ambitious Black people were ridiculed as being “uppity,” a land where opportunities for Black social and educational advancement were limited and even actively blocked by the white folks in power.

Anna’s fear of white men “taking her away” was the product of a lifetime of being told she was somehow unworthy solely because of the color of her skin — and of her knowledge that the world she lived in did not afford dark-skinned people the same protections under the law that light-skinned people enjoyed. So now, I see it: The product of centuries of second-class citizenship. Unequal treatment under the law, the abrogation of fundamental human rights, and a society that seems to resent affording one segment of our society the very opportunities for personal betterment that are the foundation of everything this country stands for.

Without question, the single most important thing my wife and I have done is to raise two sons. We raised them to be confident but not overbearing, to listen to the opinions of others but think for themselves, and to treat everyone as equals. We taught them the value of hard work. And we told them that if they did as we taught them, the world would reward them. That was always the expectation.

When I talk to Black parents of young men like my son’s age, I realize that something is fundamentally different about our perceptions of the world. Black folks don’t expect the world to be their oyster. Speaking to my Black friends, I realize that anyone who claims we are living in a post-racial world is lying. Even if discrimination is no longer codified as law, it’s certainly still out there, whether those of us who are white want to admit it or not.

We see righteous anger rolling up in the wake of the senseless deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, all of whom would likely not be dead today if they were not Black. And then I think of Anna Brown, who I loved. And I pray, as Anna might have prayed, for forgiveness, understanding — and for redemption. For as much as I would like to think otherwise, I am as guilty as anyone of racism. We all are.

And it’s high time we ended it.

Mark Murphy is a local physician and author. Contact him at heldhaug@sid.com.
Georgia Republicans overseeing elections

Brad Raffensperger is a proud Republican. He is not one of those Lincoln Project Republicans. He is a party loyalist who supports President Donald Trump. But Georgia’s Secretary of State is also a man serious about his job who has vouched for the integrity of Georgia elections.

Yes, Raffensperger has come under fire at times, especially during the rollout of the state’s new electronic voting machines, and he should have been more forthcoming about the failings of those new machines last year and more transparent about the process. But that most certainly does not mean he is in any way corrupt or runs a corrupt election.

Imagine the surprise to Raffensperger when Trump blasted Georgia elections and said the election in Georgia was being “run by Democrats.”

It seems that if something does not favor Trump, then it must be some liberal, Democrat, socialist plot against him.

Republican Gov. Brian Kemp has also been a strong supporter of President Trump.

No one could question Kemp’s pedigree as a strong, stalwart Republican.

Imagine how he must privately feel about the aspersions regarding his beloved Georgia.

There are problems—even isolated irregularities—in every election, but that does not mean there is widespread voter fraud—not by a long shot.

Irregularities should be investigated. But to be perfectly clear, there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud in the United States or in the state of Georgia.

We can all trust in the integrity of our elections, even when they do not go our way.

When President Trump won the election four years ago, he carried the state of Georgia, no one said that Georgia elections were corrupt.

All votes from registered voters must be counted in every election. That is democracy at work. Across the nation, and in Georgia, elections depend not only on professional staff but also on your friends and neighbors—Democrats and Republicans—who volunteer to help guarantee a secure electoral process.

Casting doubts on U.S. elections because you do not like the outcome of an election is about as un-American as you can get.

Whether it is the president or social media conspiracy theories, spreading lies and misleading information about our elections undermines liberty itself and makes us sound more like a banana republic than one of history’s great constitutional republics and a beacon of freedom.

Maybe you do not agree with the outcome of the election.

Maybe Georgia is changing. Maybe Georgia is purple and turning blue.

But for now, today, Georgia is a state with a Republican governor, Republican-controlled House, a majority Republican Senate and a Republican secretary of state.

Across our state, while county elections administrators consider themselves nonpartisan, it is a pretty safe bet the vast majority of them lean Republican.

In Georgia, our local elections officials have integrity.

Our poll workers have integrity.

Our secretary of state has integrity.

Our elections have integrity regardless of the eventual outcome of this—or any—election.

CNHI Director of Newsroom Training and Development Jim Zachary is the editor of the Valdosta Daily Times and president of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation.
Division C

Serious Column

First Place (at left)
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Second Place
Dink NeSmith
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

Third Place
Dean Poling
The Tifton Gazette

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There’s a reason we/info/wondering if we’ll

On the night of the last major outbreak of COVID-19, in

We didn’t believe in wearing a mask in the pandemic,

No other...
I am a four digit number with a name

Lee Coleman
The Gatekeeper
lcoleman@csmgnews.com

We have heard for months about following CDC and Public Health department guidelines on how to help mitigate the spread of the silent killer coronavirus that causes COVID-19 and has created a more than deadly pandemic worldwide. To paraphrase, wash your hands regularly, wear a protective mask, and maintain social distancing.

As your editor of the Eatonton Messenger, it is necessary for me to be out in the community and literally on the front lines of this virus. Same thing for all our staff at Smith Communications. I take every precaution I’m supposed to but as I have found out the hard way in recent days, the slightest slip will land you with COVID-19. The day before Christmas Eve, I lost a two week battle fighting a “cold” when I was confirmed positive for COVID.

Folks, I was just devastated. I even had a few tears roll down my face. Yes, I was terribly upset but as I sat at my desk in my home reading the results over and over again somehow hoping they would magically change, the cold realization really sank in.

My thoughts instantly went to the thousand plus people in our beloved county that have been stricken. Thirty one have died and at last count, 88 were being treated in hospitals. Although I then knew I was sick, I realized there were a lot more citizens here that were in worse shape than me. I’ve always said that every COVID number I write about each week all come with a name. Now, I am a number with a name. I can’t be 100 percent sure where I made contact with the coronavirus but I am certain I have it pinpointed down pretty good. I made my mistake and it is costing me.

I went to Macon recently to cover Gatewood winning its third straight state football championship. After the game, officials moved us all up to the field house area for celebration as another game was taking the field after Gatewood.

It was a mass celebration with players, parents, students and a throng of well wishers all gathered together in a pretty big pack. I stood away from the mass and watched the celebration but yet I still had some work to do. I had interviewed the coaches and needed to talk to a few of the seniors. I talked to two with my mask on but I was looking for the third. I spotted him away from the crowd for a minute and made my move. The noise from the crowd was overwhelming and I was there in two seconds.

Third Place
Matt Aiken
The Dahlonega Nugget

Second Place
Will Davis
Monroe County Reporter, Forsyth

First Place (at left)
Lee Coleman
The Eatonton Messenger
Like night and day

We grew up together. We worked on a farm and at the peanut mill from the time we were young kids. He was the athlete. I was the good student. We lived in the same room until I left for college, then lived next door to each other while we raised our children. We worked together for over 40 years.

If you know my brother, Ernest, and me, then you have already heard all this. You probably also know that while we have been connected for almost all our lives, we are not like two peas in a pod. A more apt description is probably that we are as different as night and day.

Our interests are different. Our circle of friends is somewhat different. We enjoy different music. We read different types of books, like different kinds of foods, and enjoy travelling to different types of places. To sum it up, he is a Georgia Bulldog. I am an Auburn Tiger. You get the picture.

My own children have inherited this same but different gene. Catherine and Elizabeth are the biggest blessings of my life, but they too are as different as night and day. It does not mean that I love one more than the other or enjoy the company of one more than the other. They are my precious daughters and I love them despite and because of their differences.

Our country is a place that reminds me of my relationship with my brother, and the relationship between my own daughters. Americans are different. In some cases, we are more different than you could ever imagine.

In the heat of a bruising election, we mostly self-identify as Republican or Democrats. We are white, black, Asian, Indian, Native Americans, and so many more. We are fiercely religious though most citizens do not attend church. I believe, deep in my heart, that we still have more in common than those things that divide us. I believe we love the idea of a United States of America, even though we are not united on many things. I believe that we have the capacity to love someone, get along with someone, work with someone even if they are different from us.

Our path to a reunited America does not have to be that complicated. It just involves a little give and take, a lot of trust, and a commitment to the future of our country even if that future is not exactly in keeping our own individual vision.

My family, like many across this country, has been divided throughout this election. After the second close election in a row, we have different results. No matter what your personal political feelings, I believe the election results will stand. If so, what do we plan to do? What do you plan to do? Ernest and I valued our relationship as brothers more than we valued the many things that made us so different. Almost like an old married couple, we tried very hard not to let the night close without making amends. We both have apologized when we still thought we were right. We have both agreed to something we did not like just to make peace.

We believed our company and our relationship was more important that winning an argument. Just as I believe our collective role as citizens in the future of this country is more important than who won the election.

Ernest and I could not have built a great company without compromise. We would not have been successful without reaching out to the other side, making amends, and even forgiving when it might not have been necessary.

It is time for America to reach out like you would reach out to your brother. It is time to encourage reconciliation, attempt understanding, and work together for a common cause. It is time to see your archenemy on the other side of the aisle as just a different member of your family. Your American family.

Give our family a chance to work together for a little while. We can all be as different as night and day, but it is worth the effort. If it does not work out, then we are still a family, and there is always another election.

Dan Ponder

Dan Ponder can be reached at dan@ponderenterprises.net

Third Place
Richard Harris
The Journal, Buena Vista

Second Place
Cheryl Hilderbrand
Jackson Progess-Argus

First Place (at left)
Dan Ponder
Donalsonville News
Finding our true selves in the pandemic

Faced with the COVID changes in our lives during these past months and how much time we have been left to our own without external distractions, many of us are learning a lot about ourselves. We might have discovered that we are extroverts who thrive on social interaction, or introverts who are recharged by solitude, or omniverts who are a sort of crossbreed of the two.

1. for one, have realized that I am more of an “avocado lover,” which is to say, a person who is content alone when Nothing Fun Is Going On.

Anyway, I liken this period of time to the old novelty store soap, the one that you’d wash away until it revealed a surprise figurine buried within. During these months of relative seclusion, we’ve been paring down the layers of our lives to the basics, and in so doing, finding our true selves, so to speak.

At least, I did that. I washed away the inches of my metaphorical soap until I found that, buried deep within, my surprise figurine is a person who likes monotony.

For me, this has been a time of self-awareness. I have raised my kids and had my share of experiences, and I have learned that at this point, I do not need to meet lofty goals for fulfillment. I am quite happy when my accomplishment of the day is filling the bird feeder. My goal for next week is to make a batch of hummingbird food. Every time I do start to be productive, Netflix interrupts me and reminds me to keep watching that show I started two nights ago.

Moreover, I have learned that even if all I have to do to attend a meeting is roll out of bed and logon, I will still be late.

But that’s just me.

Some of us learned that given a bit of unscheduled time, we will use it to write a book; build a treehouse, or plant corn. Some of us made best friends with the pizza delivery boy. Some of us became the pizza delivery boy.

Some of us learned to pivot, start a new business, or restart the old one.

Some of us perfected the art of making sourdough bread. Others burned our homemade biscuits, with every attempt. Some of us have learned that we can make a delicious cocktail from cucumber water and molded basil (kudos to my genius neighbor).

Some of us sent cards to friends, made sandwiches for strangers, or made masks, for both friends and strangers.

Some of us started teaching our children, and some of us discovered how much they have been learning from us, all along.

Some of us prayed, and some of us are still praying.

Some of us learned exactly which kind of Scrabble player we are. (We are either the type of player who can only come up with 3-letter words, or we are that formidable opponent who can form “isomer” without breaking a sweat and garner 48 points with a single well-placed “X.”)

Some of us read, some of us listened, some of us watched. Hopefully, all of us learned.

Some of us made night after night of delectable meals and yet resisted the temptation, every time, to post photos of them on Instagram.

But through it all, I think we have also learned an important commonality: in that no matter who we are and where in the world we live, given the chance to work from home, most of us would rather do so in our underwear.

Robin’s Nest
Robin Conte lives with her husband in an empty nest in Dunwoody. To contact her or to buy her column collection, “The Best of the Nest,” see robinconte.com

Third Place
Hans Appen
Appen Media Group

Second Place
George Fox
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

First Place (at left)
Robin Conte Isaf
Springs Publishing
Editor’s Note

No Place Like Home

This was going to be a very different editor’s note. In fact, it was already written. I shared some personal tidbits about my house and some gingers about shiplap. It was light — and fairly short, because while I do own one. I’m not a big “home” person. I’m really not into decor or renovations and my “garden” consists of about four potted plants, two of which are more brown than green.

But recently, we’ve all become “home people” of sorts. As of the time of this writing (and we’ve certainly learned how fast things can change), our houses have become much more than a collection of rooms, doors and a few windows. They’ve become fortresses designed to keep the unknown away from what we love most in this world — our people.

While no one enjoys being confined against one’s will, the practice of social distancing has reinforced the value of homes, not as pieces of real estate, but as sanctuaries.

These are the places we run to when uncertainty and fear gather on the horizon like legions of an invading army. Currently, they are the only real line of defense against a virus that has decimated areas of the globe and changed so many things about our lives.

I sincerely hope that by the time you read this, things are drastically better, but I can’t be sure of that. If this coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that there are truly no certainties. Nothing is guaranteed in this life. Dangers are real and can easily visit us at our doorsteps.

But while these are unprecedented, and granted, pretty terrifying times, there’s one thing that hasn’t changed — love lives inside these four walls. And while it’s been hard, like HARD, to stay put and be calm and patient with the chaos raging outside, the one thing that lessens the burden is love and we’re fortunate enough to be engulfed in it daily. Our spouses, our babies, our parents, and our pets have been with us through these dark days. And we are so very, very fortunate that they are, because as we’ve seen all over the world, they can so easily be snatched away.

Learning to love is the only way we’ve made it this far and it’s going to be the best way to move forward. So while it may be tough to embrace the physical flaws of your house — the cabinets that need painting or the floors that need replacing — I think that we can all agree now more than ever that there is truly no place like home.

Stay safe and be grateful for the space that keeps you that way.

All my love —
Lindsey Adkison

Third Place
Katy Ruth Camp
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Katy Ruth Camp
Marietta Daily Journal

First Place (at left)
Lindsey Adkison
The Brunswick News
Division B
Best Magazine Commentary

Second Place
Jenna Oden
LaGrange Daily News

First Place (at left)
James Swift
The Daily Tribune News, Cartersville
Love in the Shape of a Bobblehead Gunslinger

My family got back to the lake not long ago for a mini-vacation. It was our first time going down to Lake Lanier, near Milton, GA. It’s a beautiful lake and peaceful, just what we needed.

While we were there, my son ran up to the Walmart one evening to get some cards and whatever. When he came back to our condo, he had a Doc Holiday figure in the bag. He said he had gotten it for me. It looks like a bobblehead doll that doesn’t bobble. That’s the best way I can describe it. I’m sure it has a name, but I don’t know.

It’s the Doc Holiday from the movie “ Tombstone.” A few years ago, we were having a movie weekend at the house. I told my son he should watch “Tombstone” with me, as it is the greatest movie ever. Better than if you fast forward through the love story scenes.

My son brings me that Doc Holiday figure. I was able to appreciate more to me than it could have imagined. It probably only cost him $10 but, like the old credit card commercial, it seemed priceless.

That $10 figure showed me we’re raising thoughtful kids. He’s not old and saw something someone else would like, and he bought it together.

The fact that it’s just for my sense of taste means he knows me well. How lucky things like that. When you live in the coolest man ever because of the rodeo décor I’ve collected over the years.

This Doc Holiday figure will always have a prominent place on a prominent shelf. Right now, it’s sitting on the right side beside my bed.

It reminds me of my son’s thoughtfulness. It reminds me of the man’s mother and it smiled. It reminds me of the way the world has embraced an old movie. It reminds me of this being something I loved and having it myself. Even if it’s just a silly old western with a bunch of unnecessary love scenes.

It made me think of my late parents’ house and how cluttered everything is up there. We have quite the task ahead of us, cleaning out their house to get it ready to sell. They had four sons, seven grandchildren, and countless other people who saw them as either bonus parents or grandparents. All of these people came with their own version of a Doc Holiday bobblehead.

How can you get rid of something someone gave you? Something thoughtful? They couldn’t do it. And neither could I. I really hope never land in a retirement home. But if I do, it’s pretty sure there will be a small Doc Holiday figure—somewhere in that room—serving to remind me of a random trip to a random lake way back in 2020. And how much I love my family.

Southern born and Southern bred, Toby Nix is a local writer who works in law enforcement.
Division D
Best Magazine Commentary

**Third Place**
Kathy Wright
Lake Life

**Second Place**
Mark Smith Jr.
Lake Life

**First Place (at left)**
George Heiring
Lake Life

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Pandemic Antics

By George Heiring

You may not be felling it yet, but the air is getting a bit sticky. The days are getting longer, and the sun is shining brighter. It’s a sure sign of spring, and you can feel the warm weather just around the corner.

As the temperature starts to rise, so do the hopes of outdoor activities. The days are getting longer, and the weather is getting warmer. It’s the perfect time to get out and enjoy the great outdoors.

But as we look forward to the warmer weather, we also need to be mindful of the ongoing pandemic. The days of social distancing and masks may be behind us, but the risks are still present.

As we venture out, we must remember to practice good hygiene and follow the guidelines set forth by health officials. With a bit of caution, we can enjoy the beauty of nature and the return of warmer weather.

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Unfortunately, the exact content of the image is not clear due to the quality of the scan.
Dispatcher: ‘What was he doing wrong?’

911 calls raise more questions about Satilla Shores shooting

By LARRY HOBBS
lhobbs@thebrunswicknews.com

Moments before Ahmaud Arbery was shot dead on a public street on a Sunday afternoon in February, 911 dispatchers received the first of two calls about his presence in the Satilla Shores neighborhood.

Fifty seconds into that call, the dispatcher interrupted the man with a pressing question.

“I just need to know what he was doing wrong,” the dispatcher said to the caller at 1:08 p.m.

Shortly afterward, retired Brunswick Judicial Circuit District Attorney investigator Gregory McMichael and his adult son, Travis McMichael, armed themselves and pursued Arbery down Satilla Drive in a pickup truck, according to a Glynn County police report. A block away at Satilla...
Division B Enterprise Story

Third Place
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
Marc Weiszer
Athens Banner-Herald

First Place (at right)
Stephanie Allen & Michael O’Hearn
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

Area agencies seek to make homelessness ‘rare, brief and non-recurring’

BY MICHAEL O’HEARN
THE TIMES-GEORGIAN

West Georgia has several resources working toward the common goal of finding affordable housing for homeless individuals, including nonprofits, coalitions and faith-based organizations.

While the issue of homelessness may never be eradicated, these community leaders said they are trying to lessen the impact across the region by providing transitional programs for the homeless.

Kathy Parsons is the founder of Impact West Georgia, a nonprofit fighting to help the homeless and other underprivileged communities. Since the organization opened its doors in Carrollton in 2004, the nonprofit has helped transition numerous homeless people from central and west Georgia into homes.

SEE AGENCIES/PAGE A10
Employees walk out over COVID concerns

After finding out about an employee's positive COVID-19 test result, employees at Elite Comfort Solutions didn't want to go into the facility until they felt it had been thoroughly sanitized.

BY SARAH FAY CAMPBELL
sarah@newnan.com

Monday morning, a large number of employees at the Elite Comfort Solutions plant on Herring Road refused to go into work out of concerns that the plant wasn't cleaned properly after a co-worker tested positive for COVID-19.

Employees, who asked not to be named for fear of losing their jobs, said that they gathered outside to hear from management, and were later told to leave the property if they weren't going to come into work. They estimated over 30 people left.

Employees said they were told the plant was sanitized Saturday, but workers who arrived on Saturday said they didn't see that happening.

Earlier in the pandemic, the plant shut down for a week after several employees tested positive. One elderly employee later passed away, and two are still undergoing physical therapy as part of their recovery from the illness, according to employees.

Recently, one worker was tested because the worker's close relative had tested positive. The worker's boyfriend, who lives with her and also works at the facility, continued coming to work until the girlfriend's test came back positive, according to the employees. They found out about the positive test Sunday night.

"We did not want them to work," one employee said. After the plant reopened, one employee had a fever and was sent home, then came back, saying it was only allergies. She later tested positive, the employee said.

Employees said they and their coworkers are fearful, and they think many of those who went to work on Monday only did so because they were afraid of losing their jobs.

"They are mad at us because we are concerned about our safety," the employee said. There are crews assigned to do sanitizing, but it's mostly just wiping doorknobs, she said. There are hand sanitizer stations, but they aren't always filled. Hand sanitizer isn't always by the time clocks or the snack machines.

The company operates on a "no-fault" point system, employees said, the people receive points when they don't, whether or not they are sick. "They are basically scaring people into working," the employees said.

Company spokeswoman, Valerie Glaze, who is based in Missouri, said Tuesday that Elite Comfort Solutions has a "robust system of procedures designed to educate employees and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within our workplaces."

The company has a flexible attendance policy and employees who report symptoms or who are staying home because of possible COVID-19 exposure are not assessed attendance points and they are asked to self-isolate for 14 days or as instructed by their health care provider, Glaze said.

Employees wear masks and the facility
Marking history

County takes initial steps to place Gath'er's at Myrtle Creek Farm on National Registry

by Tom Spigolon
The Covington News

COVINGTON, Ga. — An effort to place a historic cemetery on a national registry could lead to bigger things for the county-owned facility on which it is located, a historian said.

Newton County is considering applying for grants and working with the nonprofit Preserve Black Atlanta on an effort to place a slave cemetery at the county-owned Gath'er’s at Myrtle Creek Farm on the National Register of Historic Cemeteries.

County commissioners recently approved a resolution to allow Chairman Marcello Barnes to work with the nonprofit on beginning the process of placing the site on the National Register.

The slave cemetery has remained “untouched and undisturbed for more than 150 years,” according to the county government website.

Barnes told county commissioners Sept. 13 the cemetery site is covered with vegetation and fallen trees.

“That cemetery needs some attention,” he said.

Atlanta historian Kershell Stin-Awadito, who operates Preserve Black Atlanta, told

The Covington News

Third Place
Debbie Lurie-Smith
The Jones County News, Gray

Second Place
Taylor Beck
The Covington News

First Place (at left)
Tom Spigolon
The Covington News
How cities are planning to spend CARES Act funding

DeKalb to share $32.6 million with cities

BY ASIA ASHLEY
Asia@dekalbcampaign.com

DeKalb County commissioners’ decision to share federal CARES Act funding with its cities is helping many of the cities avoid revenue losses and budget shortfalls caused by COVID-19 expenses this year.

The county received $125 million of CARES Act funding in April, and unlike in some counties, county leaders elected to share some of it—26 percent, or about $32.6 million—with its cities.

Most cities will use funds to reimburse some expenses that have already been used toward unforeseen COVID-19 costs and programs. The county set a deadline in the cities’ intergovernmental agreement for the funds to be used by Dec. 20, 10 days before the federal deadline.

The county used a formula based on population to determine how much of $32.6 million to allocate to each city. While many of the cities’ leaders have not officially approved a budget for how to spend their share of CARES Act funds, below is a summation of each of the cities’ tentative plans:

Avondale Estates- $354,891
On Sept. 16, the city commission gave the go-ahead to move forward with using the city’s portion of CARES Act funding to reimburse ongoing costs for PPE equipment, COVID-19 related administrative leave expenses, to offset the cost of police patrol, and relocate court services from city hall to an annex location that allows more space for social distancing.

The funds also will be used to construct a payment window at the court to protect staff and public from potential transmission of COVID-19.

City Manager Patrick Bryant said CARES Act funds allow the city to prevent revenue loss and move forward with planned merit-based raises for city employees.

Brookhaven- $6,300,934
Receiving the largest amount among DeKalb County cities, Brookhaven plans to use $1.8 million on salaries and benefits for the police department that have accrued since the beginning of Georgia’s state of emergency in mid-March. The city plans to spend $1.1 million to provide rent/utility payments for residents in need, and another $1 million for the resumption of business activities through Brookhaven Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The city also plans to help Children’s Hospital of Atlanta with its incurred COVID-19 expenses using $988,000 in CARES Act funds. Another $700,000 is budgeted for IT expenses related to telework and IT infrastructure; $550,000 for sanitizing buildings and public areas; and other amounts for PPE and upgrading HVAC systems in city buildings.

The council was expected to take an official vote at its Sept. 22 meeting, after The Champion’s deadline.

Chamblee- $3,437,420
City officials elected Aug. 13 to use all its share for reimbursement expenses of public safety personnel. City Manager Jon

SEE CARES ACT ON PAGE 10

Division E

Enterprise Story

Third Place
Parish Howard
Jefferson Reporter & Farmer, Louisville

Second Place
Asia Ashley & Jay Phillips
The Champion, Decatur

First Place (at left)
Asia Ashley
The Champion, Decatur
Division A - Spot News Photo

**Third Place**
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News

**Second Place**
Thomas Hartwell
Marietta Daily Journal

**First Place (at right)**
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News

'**SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE**'

An officer with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Bomb Disposal Unit unloads a remote controlled robot used to investigate a suspicious object under a vehicle in the 900 block of Union Street Sunday.
Division B - Spot News Photo

**Third Place**
Jay Luzardo
Times-Georgian,
Carrollton

**Second Place**
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times

**First Place (at right)**
Joshua L. Jones
Athens Banner-Herald

Protesters form a human chain around Broad Street in front of the University of Georgia Arch late in the evening in downtown Athens, Ga, on Sunday, May 31, 2020. The protest was organized to demonstrate for the death of George Floyd who died in police custody in Minneapolis, sparking demonstrations and riots around the country. (Photo/ Joshua L. Jones, Athens Banner-Herald)
Third Place
Damon Howell
Pickens County Progress, Jasper

Second Place
Ron Daniel
Douglas County Sentinel, Douglasville

First Place (at right)
Clay Neely
The Newnan Times-Herald

Crews utilize a ladder truck to help battle a house fire on East Reynolds Street. Investigators are still unsure what started the fire.
Division D - Spot News Photo

Third Place
Will Davis
Monroe Forsyth Reporter, Forsyth

Second Place
Grayson Williams
The Hartwell Sun

First Place (at right)
Michael Hall
The Hartwell Sun
Third Place
Len Robbins
The Clinch County News, Homerville

Second Place
Jay Phillips
The Champion, Decatur

First Place (at right)
Richard Harris
The Journal, Buena Vista
Division F - Spot News Photo

Second Place
Phil Mosier
Springs Publishing

First Place (at right)
Mark Green
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

Green snaps ‘magnificent dive’
It was an overcast July morning on Lake Petit, and there were very few people on the lake. While kayaking, we decided to head towards Eagle Island to see if we could see our favorite raptors. We were almost there when one of our adult bald eagles flew over to a pine tree on the northwest side of the lake. I said “He looks like he’s going hunting!” We paddled in that direction and sure enough a few moments later the majestic eagle took off on a bee line towards the water. He made a first pass a few feet over the lake which gave me a few extra seconds to get ready. Then he circled back and made a magnificent dive and powerfully snatched a really big trout! I got the entire sequence on camera, which was a really wonderful break. I felt like this image was the best one of the group. I especially like the water splashes and the spray which lend a sense of movement to the image. This has been my most “liked” image on social media ever, garnering over 1500 positive reactions on various platforms. PHOTO BY MARK GREEN
Division A
Lifestyle Coverage

Third Place
Rome News Tribune

Second Place
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

First Place (at right)
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C Lifestyle Coverage

**Third Place**
Rebecca Leftwich & Clay Neely
The Newnan Times-Herald

**Second Place**
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

**First Place (at left)**
Kandice Bell
The Newnan Times-Herald
Third Place
Rockdale Citizen, Conyers

Second Place
Newton Citizen, Covington

First Place (at left)
White County News, Cleveland
Division E Lifestyle Coverage

Third Place
The Braselton News

Second Place
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News

First Place (at left)
Gale Horton Gay
The Champion, Decatur
Division A
Religion Writing

Third Place
Shannon Ballew
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Lindsey Adkison
The Brunswick News

First Place (at left)
Marie Nesmith
The Daily Tribune News, Cartersville

Churches Livestream Services Amidst COVID-19 Outbreak
Division C
Religion Writing

Third Place
Sarah Gove
The Blackshear Times

Second Place
The Dahlonega Nugget

First Place (at right)
Beth Sexton
Rockdale Citizen, Conyers

‘NEW NORMAL’
Keeping people connected online, local churches respond to COVID-19 issues

By Beth Sexton, Rockdale Citizen

The coronavirus pandemic has all but dissolved with people showing up at churches on Sundays. Everyone knows online because church can be anytime, thanks to technology, and a volunteer now to questionable demands. While most patrons in recent weeks and Rockdale counties are typically good about the business of quickly resuming, volunteering and retiree, but those in need, to

On the scenes: A look at how the pandemic is affecting churches and communities in the first time reaching into human and beyond

Photo: Pastor Daryl Hooper of the Church at Covington leads a family service at First Presbyterian Church at Covington. Below: The Rev. R. M. Miller is pastor at Shady Grove Baptist Church in Covington.
Division A
Best Magazine Cover Design

Third Place
West Georgia Woman Magazine

Second Place
West Georgia Woman Magazine

First Place (at left)
The Brunswick News
Division B
Best Magazine Cover Design

Third Place
Amanda M. Usher, Derek Schaper
Valdosta Scene

Second Place
Jenna Oden
LaGrange Daily News

First Place (at left)
Ken Denney
Times-Georgian, Carrollton
Division C
Best Magazine Cover Design

Third Place
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

Second Place
The Post-Searchlight, Bainbridge

First Place (at left)
The Newnan Times-Herald
Division D
Best Magazine Cover Design

Third Place
John Bynum
The Dahlonega Nugget

Second Place
Lake Life

First Place (at left)
Danielle Hawkins, Deborah Johnson
Morgan County Citizen, Madison
Division A
Breaking News Writing

Third Place
Chamian Cruz
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

Second Place
Larry Hobbs
The Brunswick News

First Place (at right)
Larry Hobbs
The Brunswick News
Division B
Breaking News Writing

Third Place
LaGrange Daily News

Second Place
Karen Gunnels
The Griffin Daily News

First Place (at left)
James Swift
The Daily Tribune News, Cartersville
Division C
Breaking News Writing

**Third Place**
Stephen Milligan
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

**Second Place**
Jill Holloway
The Post-Searchlight, Bainbridge

**First Place (at right)**
Ron Daniel
Douglas County Sentinel, Douglasville
Division D
Breaking News Writing

Third Place
Grayson Williams
The Hartwell Sun

Second Place
Debbie Lurie-Smith
The Jones County News, Gray

First Place (at right)
Monroe Forsyth Reporter, Forsyth
Division E
Breaking News Writing

Third Place
Shane Scoggins
Franklin County Citizen
Leader, Lavonia

Second Place
Alex Buffington
The Braselton News

First Place (at right)
Enoch Autry
Sylvania Telephone
Division A
Best Magazine Photography

Third Place
West Georgia Woman Magazine

Second Place
The Brunswick News

First Place (at left)
Marietta Daily Journal
Division B
Best Magazine Photography

Second Place
Jay Luzardo
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

First Place (at left)
Jenna Oden
LaGrange Daily News
Division C
Best Magazine Photography

Third Place
Jackie Kennedy
The Newnan Times-Herald

Second Place
Chris Martin, Sarah Campbell
The Newnan Times-Herald

First Place (at left)
Jill Stringfellow, Bryce Ethridge
The Moultrie Observer
Division D
Best Magazine Photography

Third Place
George Dissmeyer
Lake Life

Second Place
Mark Smith Jr.
Lake Life

First Place (at left)
Jarrod Brock
Morgan County Citizen, Madison
Division A - Headline Writing

**Third Place**
Dean Poling
The Valdosta Daily Times

**Second Place**
Kristen Hansen
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

**First Place (right)**
Marietta Daily Journal
Division C - Headline Writing

**Third Place**
Kevin C. Hall
The Moultrie Observer

**Second Place**
The Tifton Gazette

**First Place (at right)**
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Shaken, barely stirred

Earthquake - Some residents say they feel NC-centered temblor

David Clemons

Sparta, North Carolina, and near the Virginia border. Preliminary reports put the magnitude at 3.1, which is typically enough to cause considerable damage. The quake was first thought to be 3.7 kilometers (about 2.3 miles) below the surface. The U.S. Geological Survey received citizen reports from across the Southeast. There were several reports from the Walton County area of people feeling the temblor. Sparta is about 235 miles from Monroe as the crow flies. A 2.6 magnitude quake was reported several hours earlier in Sparta.
Division D - Headline Writing

**Third Place**
The Hartwell Sun

**Second Place**
Jeremy Johnson, Justin Hubbard
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville

**First Place (right)**
Monroe County Reporter, Forsyth
Division E - Headline Writing

Third Place
Shane Scoggins
Franklin County Citizen Leader,
Lavonia

Second Place
Richard Harris
The Journal, Buena Vista

First Place (right)
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News
Division A
Feature Photograph

Third Place
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News

Second Place
Terry Dickson
The Brunswick News

First Place (at left)
Bobby Haven
The Brunswick News
Division B
Feature Photograph

**Third Place**
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times

**Second Place**
Joshua L. Jones
Athens Banner-Herald

**First Place (at right)**
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
Feature Photograph

Third Place
Larry Cavender
Pickens County Progress, Jasper

Second Place
Stephen Milligan
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at right)
Blake Moss
Pickens County Progress, Jasper

Most students spend their entire school career dreaming of their senior prom, and many do their dress and suit shopping months prior to the date of prom itself. One couple, PHS seniors Shannon Johnson and Zak Price, still had their photo shoot and spent the day together, but with extra precautions of course. Now school administrators are working to salvage graduation plans and say prom is not totally off the table for discussion.
Division D
Feature Photograph

**Third Place**
Carrie Dawn Roy
The Dahlonega Nugget

**Second Place**
Bill Powell
The Hartwell Sun

**First Place (at right)**
Michael Hall
The Hartwell Sun

BULLISH IN BOWERSVILLE
Division E
Feature Photograph

**Third Place**
Sarah Gove
The Blackshear Times

**Second Place**
Gary Jones
The Elberton Star

**First Place (at right)**
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News

Ahhhh . . .
Division A
Special Sections

**Third Place**
LaGrange Daily News

**Second Place**
The Brunswick News

**First Place (at right)**
Marietta Daily Journal
Division C
Special Sections

**Third Place**
The Northeast Georgian, Cornelia

**Second Place**
The Post-Searchlight, Bainbridge

**First Place (at right)**
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup
Division D
Special Sections

Third Place
The Covington News

Second Place
White County News, Cleveland

First Place (at right)
Michael Prochaska
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Division E
Special Sections

Third Place
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News

Second Place
The Baldwin Bulletin,
Milledgeville

First Place (at right)
The Elberton Star
Division F
Special Sections

**Third Place**
Appen Media Group

**Second Place**
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

**First Place (at right)**
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe
Division A - Feature Writing

Third Place
Curt Yeomans
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

Second Place
Jenna Eason
The Telegraph, Macon

First Place (at left)
Tim Chitwood
Columbus Ledger-Enquirer
Division B - Feature Writing

Third Place
Terry Richards
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
Jay Luzardo
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

First Place (at right)
Stephanie Allen, Ken Denney, Michael O’Hearn
Times-Georgian, Carrollton
Division C
Feature Writing

Third Place
Ron Daniel
Douglas County Sentinel, Douglasville

Second Place
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at left)
Rebecca Leftwich
The Newnan Times-Herald
Division D - Feature Writing

**Third Place**
Lauren Malek
The Eatonton Messenger

**Second Place**
Tia Lynn Ivey
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

**First Place (at right)**
Julia Fechter
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Division E
Feature Writing

Third Place
Larry Stanford
Jackson Progress-Argus

Second Place
Sarah Gove
The Blackshear Times

First Place (at right)
Shane Scoggins
Franklin County Citizen Leader, Lavonia
Division F Feature Writing

**Third Place**
Barbara Schneider
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

**Second Place**
Anita Rosen
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

**First Place (at right)**
Springs Publishing
Division A
Lifestyle/Feature Column

Third Place
Damon Poirier
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Dean Poling
The Valdosta Daily Times

First Place (at right)
Larry Hobbs
The Brunswick News

Golden Isles History/Larry Hobbs
A weekly series taking a closer look at the history that shaped the community we know today.

More questions to pastor's murder

The newspaper of the day will not forget the case of the Reverend Charles S. Lee. The story of his murder has captured the attention of the local community for the last 12 years. His murder has not only shocked the community, but has also reignited the interest in the history of the church.

Lee was known for his dedication to the church and his commitment to helping those in need. His murder has sparked numerous investigations and theories about what might have happened.

The case remains unsolved, and the community is still divided on what happened. Some believe that the church was involved in Lee's death, while others believe that it was a random act of violence.

Despite the lack of closure, the community continues to gather and remember Lee's legacy. His death serves as a reminder of the importance of community and the need to come together to support one another.

He was a man of great faith and dedication, and his legacy will live on in the hearts of those who knew him.
Division C
Lifestyle/Feature Column

Third Place
Drew Davis
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

Second Place
Andrew Kenneson
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at right)
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Sweet Baby James and the lost party

James Sheppard Miner
Bentonville, Arkansas

Happy birthday little man!
It’s so hard to believe you’re a year old. It seems like no time at all since we all held our breath the day your mom — my sister — was born during what was thought to be a routine checkup with the doctor that in fact, it may well be go time.

It was. And so those plane tickets I’d purchased to be there for your big arrival meant being there for your big day of turning a week old!

We landed at the airport in a taxi that we’d need to get an Uber because your mom was taking you to the pediatrician because you weren’t eating. Oh, that seems funny now, since you’re a pretty good eater except for the love your Uncle Dave, you’re a bit picky.

It’s been so much fun to watch you grow and learn. You love books. I love to see how excited you get by someone reading to you.

You enjoy watching “Jeopardy!” with your dad when he gets home from work.

And it’s not like you’re done with this being-a-baby-thing. You’re ready to go out with it. In two years, you will, but we’ll all revel in this time a little longer.

It would have been so much fun to see you on your birthday. Your mom planned a special party for months — heck, maybe longer than a year.

“James’ First Birthday” was going to be a big deal. She figured family from several states would be flying in.

Unfortunately you weren’t the only thing to arrive in 2020. So not did the virus that later caused shutdowns that put everything on hold — even James’ First Birthday.

Your mom asked all of us to write you and talk about the world in March 2020. Well, James, I’m not sure what to say. It’s a pretty scary time and place.

They even postponed baseball. Can you imagine? I hope by the time you’re reading this, they’ve never had to consider it again.

Life has been pretty scary for everyone these last few weeks, but you did get your smash cake, and through TimeOutI saw you take a few sips the other night.

And you seemed happy, as soon as conditions are better. I’ll be in Arkansas to celebrate your first birthday — plus a couple more.

For better or for worse, you were born into tumultuous times. Thankfully you’ve got family who loves you.

We’re going to get through this.
Third Place
Seth McAllister
The Dawson News

Second Place
Whitney Crouch Sherrill
The Times Courier, Ellijay

First Place (at right)
Brando Chonoko
Tribune & Georgian, St. Mary's

Division D
Lifestyle/Feature Column

Toughest dog around, long may he run

Chance was the old dog that came home with me.
No one knew his exact age, but I’d guess he was 8 or 9, maybe older. He looked like a full-blooded white lab. His eyes had begun to gray around the edges and age had taken the bounce from his step, but he got along pretty well, like an old, dependable pickup truck that won’t win a drag race but won’t leave you stranded on the side of the road, either. Reliable, comfortable, and reasonably predictable. That was Chance.

From the moment he arrived, he was in his element. He had been abandoned at the local vet along with his brother. Both were heartworm positive. The brother panel away before we set him to be interested in taking in a dog. Funny thing about a farm, everyone thinks you just take in random dogs or will.

I cured his heartworm with drops woman and got him back in the mix. He’s friendly and comfortable with other dogs. Like a farmer’s frost slipping with ease into a well-worn boot, he seemed to know his place in the pack. He wasn’t the most social, but Chance seemed to know the farm.

We have different kinds of dogs, all five minutes in their own way: guard dogs, working dogs and laying-around type dogs... Chance was a laying-around type. He loved sleep, food and walking in the dirt trying to scratch that impossible-to-reach spot on his back.

As he got older, I worried that he wouldn’t make it through the winter. When spring came along, I worried that he wouldn’t survive the heat of summer.

This dance went on for years. Me dusting him and him paying my uncertainty. I didn’t need to worry anymore. With his own kind to eat and a large barn to sleep in and all the animals to look after, he had all that he wanted.

When you work with dogs, you get into a rhythm, even with the laying-around type dogs. It’s a beautiful thing, and when you lose a dog, that rhythm changes in a way that is profoundly heartbreaking.

On the day Chance died, I didn’t look any older than he did the day I got him, though he must have been 14 or 15. Time went by no one, not even an old dog.

As a farmer, I feel that chance in daily life as the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm.

Brandon Chonoko
The Frank Farmer
absolutely no attention. He was aloof, thriving, giving the middle finger in time. In all the years I know him, he never changed much.

When I’d bring him up to my friends, they’d say, “Omg, that dog is still alive!”

But your backyard. Still alive. Still following me around. Still eating my weight in table scraps.
Farms don’t try to flush out and eat wild rabbit. Even though domesticated and extremely well cared for, if they had no one to keep them up to flush and eat wild rabbit. Even though domesticated and extremely well cared for, if they had no one to keep them up to flush and eat wild rabbit. Even though domesticated and extremely well cared for, if they had no one to keep them up to flush and eat wild rabbit. Even though domesticated and extremely well cared for, if they had no one to keep them up to flush and eat wild rabbit. Even though domesticated and extremely well cared for, if they had no one to keep them up to flush and eat wild rabbit.

I’m not sure how many times I’ve taken Chance on a ride to the feed store in my truck. Hell, I don’t know, but it’s more than a few. Not Chance.

To say he was uncomfortable in a truck isn’t doing him justice. He was uncomfor- table, anxious, motion sick and running his home. The home he’s brought for and finally found.

After he got back from the farm that day, he no longer rode in a vehicle again. He’d seen enough to know he didn’t need to see anymore. With his own kind to eat and a large barn to sleep in and all the animals to look after, he had all that he wanted.

When you work with dogs, you get into a rhythm, even with the laying-around type dogs. It’s a beautiful thing, and when you lose a dog, that rhythm changes in a way that is profoundly heartbreaking.

On the day Chance died, I didn’t look any older than he did the day I got him, though he must have been 14 or 15. Time went by no one, not even an old dog.

As a farmer, I remember the death of my first sheep. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm. I feel that chance is the heart of the farm.

Brandon Chonoko
Tribune & Georgian, St. Mary’s
Division F
Lifestyle/Feature Column

Third Place
Joe Earle
Springs Publishing

Second Place
Jane Galvin
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

First Place (at right)
Bonnie East
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe
Division A
Layout and Design

Third Place
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
The Valdosta Daily Times

First Place (at right)
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville
Division C
Layout and Design

**Third Place**
Powell Cobb, Jill Holloway
The Post-Searchlight, Bainbridge

**Second Place**
Emily Lasher
The Newnan Times-Herald

**First Place (at right)**
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Division D
Layout and Design

Third Place
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

Second Place
The Dahlonega Nugget

First Place (at right)
Josh Lurie
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro
Division E
Layout and Design

**Third Place**
The Clinch County News, Homerville

**Second Place**
Josh Lurie
The Baldwin Bulletin, Milledgeville

**First Place (at right)**
Clayton News, Jonesboro
Division F Layout and Design

Second Place
Karen Webster
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

First Place (at right)
Springs Publishing
Division A - Photo Essay

Third Place
Joshua L. Jones
Athens Banner-Herald

Second Place
Emily Boorstein, Eli Boorstein
Marietta Daily Journal

First Place (at right)
Riley Bunch
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
Photo Essay

Third Place
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Second Place
Pickens County Progress, Jasper

First Place (at right)
Mary Beth Year, Becky Taylor
The Tifton Gazette
Division D
Photo Essay

**Third Place**
Leila Scoggins
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro

**Second Place**
Tyler Wilkins
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro

**First Place (at left)**
Michael Hall
The Hartwell Sun
Division E

Photo Essay

**Third Place**
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News

**Second Place**
The Blackshear Times

**First Place (at right)**
Wesleigh Sagon
The Braselton News
Division F

Photo Essay

Third Place
Jim Francis
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

Second Place
Jim Francis
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

First Place (at right)
Katy Ross
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Native landscaping for wildlife

BY KATY ROSS

It’s long been engrained in us that when it comes to landscaping, grass should be weed free, plants should be monitored, and our landscapes should be sterile. Insects are bad—after all, they eat our plants. Birds can exist on bird seed alone (not true), and mosquitoes and ticks are dangerous, so we need to spray our yards with chemicals to treat them through most of these chemicals, no matter how safe they claim to be, will kill all insects, including the beneficial ones.

Have I got your attention? Nobody, except the bats that rely on them, likes mosquitoes, and nobody wants an overgrown, weedy yard. But landscaping has to be more than just aesthetics pleasing to the human eye. Nature no longer can exist somewhere else. Those wild places from years ago have been paved over and are now shopping centers, subdivisions, and gas stations. In order to mitigate some of the loss of wilderness,..
Superintendent: District will slowly restore in-person instruction

By Curt Yeomans
curt.yeomans@gwinnettdailypost.com

Gwinnett County Public Schools parents who want their children back in the classroom will eventually get their wish after all.

Just not for at least the first two weeks of the school year, Superintendent J. Alvin Wilbanks announced on Tuesday.

Gwinnett County schools will still begin the school year in an all-digital format for all students on Aug. 10, but some students will be allowed to return to schools for in-person instruction starting Aug. 26.

Eventually, all students will be allowed to be in school for in-person instruction, if their families choose to do so, by Sept. 9.

“We have stated from the beginning of the COVID crisis that in-person instruction for every student is what we prefer and would work to achieve,” Wilbanks said in a letter to parents. “That remains our primary objective, and is the focus of this letter. We will begin to implement in-person instruction for students whose parents desire it, and do so as soon and as safely as possible.”

Gwinnett County Public Schools’ plans for the 2020-2021 school year have shifted a few times over the summer. Initially, the district was set to begin the school year this week with a blend of in-person and digital instruction, based on parents’ choice.

Then the start date was pushed back to Aug. 12, but still with a blend of in-person and digital instruction, before school system announced it would be an all digital start to the school year.

Now, the plan is to start out all digital and move toward the blend originally envisioned in less
‘I’m scared’
Teacher emails show fear of returning to classrooms

By Riley Bunch
rbunch@valdostadailytimes.com

ATLANTA — As politicians pushed for children to return to the classroom, some teachers and parents pleaded with them to keep school buildings shuttered until the coronavirus was under control.

In the weeks counting down to school reopenings in August, State Superintendent Richard Woods’ email inbox was filled with fears of teachers, parents and school staff — many with pre-existing conditions that could lead to a final outcomes if they contracted COVID-19.

“Scared. I’m scared,” a teacher with a pre-existing condition as well as children with health problems, wrote in one of the emails.

“That is the main adjective that describes how I feel. The other one varying for the top spot is powerless.”

Overwhelmingly, parents and teachers — from Georgia counties urban and rural — asked for delayed start dates, mandatory masks or all-virtual platforms for the 2020-21 academic year.

As state leaders deferred to local control for decisions made on how to return to classrooms, some teachers described instances where local school administrators dismissed health concerns or tried to keep COVID-19 cases under wraps.

A small portion advocated for a return to classrooms during the two-month span — nearly all parents of children with special needs who cannot adapt to virtual learning and require an in-person environment to thrive.

For this story, The Valdosta Daily Times obtained through an open records request, and reviewed emails sent to Woods from July 1 through the end of August. The emails referenced in this report are the messages received by Woods based on review of public records but the social media messages have not been independently verified.

During the summer months, White House Coronavirus Task Force reports listed Georgia in the “red zone” for new cases and test positivity rate. At the same time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a study detailing a COVID-19 outbreak at a North Georgia overnight camp that showed the virus spread pervasively through attendees and staff of all ages.

Nevertheless, in mid-August Gov. Brian Kemp was steadfast in his opinion that...
Schools to get $2 million in federal relief

By Savannah Donald

MOULTRIE, Ga. — On Monday, Georgia school officials agreed to distribute $411 million in federal funding to assist local school systems' budgets and programs as coronavirus continues to batter Georgia's economy.

While it is still unknown exactly what Colquitt County schools will be spending their funding on, the school board has been tentatively preparing for revenue relief for school staff, as two months' worth of employee revenue is currently unavailable.

"Colquitt County's share is $2,000,000," said Assistant Superintendent Brad Gregory. "As for what we'll do with it, we're waiting to see what our budget for the year will be like. We're planning for a 14 percent reduction in revenue, which we hope won't happen, but if that does occur, that means we'll have to use $3,000,000 of the funding to keep from having to furlough our teachers.

"Initially, we carved out about a million dollars to pay for our food service workers," Gregory said. "We lost about two months of meals and lost a lot of revenue for our school service workers because of this. We're planning on covering the gap that was created in our food service department.

"There's been talk about the possibility of spending some of the funding on technology -- Chromebooks, etc. -- but at the moment we're making it a point to see how things play out," he said. "For the most part we're worried about our budget for next year but we're looking to make sure the employees are taken care of."

This relief money comes as part of the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act, which allocated $457 million to be used for Georgia's public schools.

The money can be used for staffing expenses, school meals, online learning programs and special services for low-income, homeless, migrant or foster care students.

"We're supposed to adopt the budget in June, so hopefully we'll have those numbers and the right steps to make a decision pretty soon," said Gregory.

The state will set aside roughly $45 million for emergency use, but the bulk of the $457 million CARES act share awarded to Georgia will be divided up between nearly 200 county and city public school districts and about 30 charter schools.
Division D
Education Writing

Third Place
Stephanie Hill
White County News, Cleveland

Second Place
Sydney Criteser
The News Observer, Blue Ridge

First Place (at right)
Leila Scoggins
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro
Longtime Sound of Silver director retires

By Jason Deal
Staff Writer

Pierce County High School band director Bob Edwards will lay down his conductor’s baton and might march a bit out of rhythm after June of this year. Edwards announced in March he will retire at the end of this school year after more than four decades directing bands — including the last almost quarter century at Pierce County High School. Edwards’ resignation (retirement) was formally accepted by the Pierce County Board of Education at their March regular meeting. He has been in education for 44 years, including the past 24 years in Pierce County.
A graduate of Florida State University, Edwards taught in Florida for 17 years and in Vermont for five years before coming to Pierce County in 1996. Edwards has led band programs from the fourth grade-12th grade during Continued on Page 8

Division E
Education Writing

Third Place
Jay Phillips
The Champion, Decatur

Second Place
Kandice S. Eberhardt
Franklin County Citizen Leader, Lavonia

First Place (at left)
Jason Deal
The Blackshear Times
Division A
Editorial Writing

Third Place
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
Savannah Morning News

First Place (at right)
The Brunswick News
Division C
Editorial Writing

**Third Place**
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

**Second Place**
The Newnan Times-Herald

**First Place (at right)**
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Division D
Editorial Writing

**Third Place**
Glenn Harbison
The News Observer, Blue Ridge

**Second Place**
Michael Prochaska
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville

**First Place (at right)**
The Dahlonega Nugget

![Image of editorial article titled "State orders wrongfully overrule local rights"]
Division E
Editorial Writing

Third Place
Shane Scoggins
Franklin County Citizen Leader, Lavonia

Second Place
John Hewitt
The Champion, Decatur

First Place (at right)
Parish Howard, Carol McLeod
Jefferson Reporter News & Farmer, Louisville

Editorial
Are we there yet?

In August of 1920, women were allowed to vote. Women are 52 percent of the U.S. population. Women should have everything we want. In this country, the majority rules. At least that is what we learned in civics class.

So why has it been 100 years and so much is still the same?

There are 50 states in the Union. Only nine of those states have women governors. Additionally, the United States ranks 75th globally when it comes to women leaders of the country. The top three are Rwanda where women hold 61.4 percent of parliament seats.

Women in the United States fought for the ability to vote, not so much for the right but the chance, the opportunity. Being able to choose who represents you is a right, an inalienable right.

Women always had the right for thousands of years. We just weren’t allowed to exercise that right.

On Dec 10 of that year, Gov. Campbell officially allowed women to vote. After this, Utah, Colorado and Idaho, all territories at the time, allowed women to vote. When Wyoming made a formal request to join the country as a state, it was denied unless the legislature included women.
Division A
Humorous Column

Third Place
James Swift
The Daily Tribune News,
Cartersville

Second Place
Rome News Tribune

First Place (at right)
Joe Garrett
Times-Georgian,
Carrollton

Lost in translation

It's in the blood.
My immediate heritage stems from the soil of Randolph County, Alabama. That's where my mother was born and lived until they decided to pack their bags and move to greener pastures and big city life.

Well, the kin folks said, “Hey, move away from there — Bowdon, Georgia is the place you ought to be.”

So, they loaded up the truck and moved to the “Friendly City.”

Somewhere along the way, their Randolph pronunciation “foy-er” around these parts which brings us to the lesson of the week:

The pastor asked if anyone in the congregation would like to express praise for an answered prayer. Suzie stood and walked to the lectern.

“I have some praise,” she shouted with glee. “Two months ago, my husband Frank had a terrible bicycle accident and his scrotum was completely crushed. The pain was excruciating and the doctors didn’t know if...”
Division C
Humorous Column

Third Place
Alex McRae
The Newnan Times-Herald

Second Place
Drew Davis
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

First Place (at right)
Caleb Smith
Pickens County Progress, Jasper

Ponderings of a Simple Man
By Caleb Smith

Puppy Love

There is no greater feeling in the world than to have a dog choose you over your spouse. A few years back we bought a Yorkie to keep my wife company as she worked on schoolwork. As a lover of all animals, not just the fried kind, I was excited to have a new addition to our home.

As we drove the dog home, I imagined all the fun we would have. The rainy days where she could curl up in my lap and we could nap together while my wife worked away.

The reality turned out far different.

From the moment we brought the dog home, she had an instant and deep fascination with my wife. Every time she would get up to go to the kitchen or into the other room, our dog would jump to her feet and trot after her, following right at her heels wherever she went. She would have nothing to do with me.

I would flop into my chair, ready for a nap, and put my lap and call her name. She would turn one eye to me, staring at me incredulously before giving a dismissive little huff and turning back to gaze lovingly up at my wife. No matter how many treats, toys, or belly rubs I offered, she would always choose my wife over me.

"Nonsense," my wife would say anytime I complained about it. "She loves you just as much as she loves me."

And so the next few years passed. Sandy a constant companion for my wife and me with no one to nap with.

Then along came Toby. Toby is a little Yorkie male that we picked up on Halloween. He is long, lanky, awkward, and has a pair of ears that look like something off a monster costume.

He is also hopelessly attached to me. Where Sandy would follow my wife around the house, Toby would frantically scratch at the door whenever I would leave for work. Where Sandy would stare up at the floor at my wife in adoration, Toby will climp onto my chest just to get closer to me.

In short, I'm his favorite. My wife tells me that he’ll sit in her lap when I'm gone, but the second I walk back through front door, he’s trying to get in my lap.

"He hates me," my wife said one weekend after failing to get him to leave my lap to play with her. "He only cares about you!"

"Nonsense," I quoted back to her as I slowly and smugly petted the dog in my lap. "He loves you just as much as he loves me."

It was a lie of course. I’m his favorite, and it’s a grand feeling.

[The author is a Pickens County native who writes in finance. They can be contacted at jessieb.smith09@yahoo.com. Look for his Ponderings from A Simple Man in book form at Amazon.com.]

Are We Getting it Straight?
If you spot an error, contact our editor at dpool@pickensprogress.com
706-253-2457
Division D
Humorous Column

**Third Place**
Emory Jones
White County News, Cleveland

**Second Place**
Matt Aiken
The Dahlonega Nugget

**First Place (at right)**
Jake Cantrell
The Dahlonega Nugget

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Flag, on the sports reporter

I am 24 years old. And that may be surprising to those just becoming acquainted with my baby face and slender body, but I promise it’s the truth.

I’ve got identification that says so.

But unfortunately, having a
Division E
Humorous Column

Third Place
Richard Harris
The Journal, Buena Vista

Second Place
John Hewitt
The Champion, Decatur

First Place (at right)
Len Robbins
The Clinch County New, Homerville

Dolphins ain't no smarter than peoples

Len Robbins
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

I was in the doctor’s office recently, waiting to have a staple removed from my tongue, when I noticed an item in Cut Finsy magazine.

The story claimed that dolphins were as intelligent as humans.

“I don’t think so,” I bellowed to the woman in the crowded waiting room.

The article claimed that bottlenose dolphins have a brain mass of 1500 to 1700 grams, which is greater than that of humans (1300 to 1400 grams). The bigger the brain, the theory went, the smarter the creature.

I couldn’t believe what my ears were hearing. Sure, dolphins are cute and seem friendly enough, but so is Kellie Pickler. That doesn’t mean they are, or her, smarter than your average human toddler.

Thoroughly confused, I jumped on my laptop to do some investigative journalism on the matter, and explore and analyze the reasons why folks consider dolphins so intelligent. Here’s what I found.

• Dolphins have empathy for people.

There are all kinds of stories about dolphins rescuing people and protecting them from harm. Astor Dick Van Dyke (who’s 94 years old and still living large) has recounted a story where he fell asleep surfing (huh?), and a group of porpoises (different from dolphins, but closely related) directed him back to safety. Unfortunately, we haven’t heard about any porpoise heros since — chiefly because Van Dyke tripped all over them while trying to get back on shore.

But just because they are sociable with humans and shepherded Dick Van Dyke back to the beach doesn’t mean they possess superior intellect. Dogs do that all the time.

Humans = +1
• Dolphins are the smartest fish in the sea.

Dolphins are the only water-dwelling creatures I know of that don’t fall for that lame worm-on-a-hook ploy. For that, I give them credit, although I can’t imagine that if a pizza fell down from the sky with a hook in it, any normal person would take a bite from it. Crystal meth on a hook in West Virginia — that’s a different story.

Give the dolphins +1 since we don’t realize they’re mammals and not “fish.”

• Dolphins won’t attack humans.

Not true. They do attack humans — if you mess with them. There have been reports of dolphin attacks on people, including one that died from death in the last decade. By comparison, in the United States, the annual average of shark attacks is one. One. The shark lobby needs a new publicist.

There are 10 times more Christmas tree fatalities each year than shark or dolphin attacks on humans.

Humans, on the other hand, kill sharks, dolphins, Christmas trees, and each other wantonly. Give the dolphins +1.

• Dolphins can communicate.

So what? So can people. Dolphins use ultrasonic sound and sonar to communicate, and also use facial expressions and body language like humans. Dolphins have also been taught sign language in certain instances.

Obviously, humans have vocal chords, and thus, a little more to work with in terms of communication. Give humans +5.

• Size matters?

As stated, dolphins have bigger brains than humans. But scientists have found that humans (other than Charlie Sheen) have more brain cells. The part of the dolphin brain that processes sound is up to 200 times larger in a dolphin than a human. Big whoop — we invented fire, the wheel, and remote control. Give humans +5.

So, add up the scores, and just as I thought, humans win in a landslide. USA! USA! USA!

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Division F
Humorous Column

Third Place
Tim Sullivan
Springs Publishing

Second Place
Joe Parker
Appen Media Group

First Place (at right)
Brent Carroll
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe

“Television is boring and my fireplace gas starter doesn’t work.”

Oh, no, it’s January

The Christmas tree, once laden with chlorophyll and green as steamed spinach, with decorations bobbing and lights twinkling, now looks like a haggard cigarette smoker, all baked-brown and wrinkled.

“I’m hopin’ you are not thinkin’ of tossing hydrangeas into our nice Lake Pettit there Mr. Carroll.”

“One year I decided to stop eating red meat.”

Brent Carroll

Snaps: Tales Of Big Canoe

I hate January. Always have, ever since by first high school sweetheart dumped me for him, the projected but dreamy-eyed grease-ball phenotype at Red Top Beach on Lake Allatoona, January just reminds me of her. Fiddly little thing, she was. Turned out, Elle was sort of a dilettante, treated her poorly and ultimately dumped her for Grace, two weeks later, tailândy. I’m now back on mine, but was already reconnecting with Penny. Things moved pretty fast at Cartersville High back in the 90s.

I’m over all that now. But, I still hate January. The Christmas tree, once laden with chlorophyll and green as steamed spinach, with decorations bobbing and lights twinkling, now looks like a haggard cigarette smoker, all baked-brown and wrinkled. The wrapped gifts are gone, the kids have up and left, it’s lonely here, and the leftover deviled eggs have sunk up the fridge.

And it’s dark and cold here in January. Winter’s breath makes porch shoes, golf hitting, fishing, outdoor tennis, yard work and everything else nearly impossible until spring arrives. College football is done. Television is boring and my propane gas starter doesn’t work.

But, the worst thing about January is making all those New Year’s resolutions. I can’t remember how many I’ve made over the years, but I do know I’ve kept none of them. It’s impossible, I think, last year. My resolution was to study, and understand the complete concept of gravitational singularity. Or at least find those few numbers and Lemmings in the Bible without falling asleep. One year I decided to stop eating red meat. Huh. Here’s what I had to give up: barbecue, pepperoni pizza, steak, ham, hot dogs, sausage, fish, meatballs, lamb, beef, chicken, veal, boneless chicken, veal, roast beef, pork, beef, turkey, meet sauce, bacon, sausage, onion, rabbit and honey glazed ham.

Times like chicken. My point is this, life’s too good without red meat. So, another

“I just don’t hear right at all. Me “Bour, are you playing golf today?” I say “You don’t need to know how much I weigh?” Me “No, no, I’m not asking how much you WEIGH. Are you playing golf TODAY?” I say “Are you asking me about Kap?” I say what it’s very annoying, so for both our sales, I’ll speak louder and slower.

Then our empty pill bottles. My bathroom mirrors, all six of them, are chock-full of ancient prescription bottles, many dating back to 1999. Why is that? Do I think I’ll need a refill 20 years later? It’s just bizarre. Out they go, that’ll be a dosing sort of thing for me, and I’ll have room for my Great White Snips, blood pressure monitor and Reception.

Stop worrying about the door eating my hydrogels. To do this, I simply give it a grip, turn it up and two them in Lake Pettit.

Finish writing my book. I started this resolution back in 2004 and have since completed the prologue. The story is about an ex-advertising guy who, after retirement, finds himself without much to do. So, he starts writing a book, gets into the prologue, but discovers he is nothing more than a big procrastinator. He puts his writing on hold in favor of complaining about things he has no control over: the cold November, January, cold age resolutions. Of course, this is purely fiction.

Stop being grumpy about January. It could be worse. It could be February.

Brent and Joan Carroll moved to Big Canoe in 2004. He is an award-winning writer, recognized by national news, commercial and humor columnists. Still, he is only published—on his own mind.
Division A
Sports Feature Photograph

Third Place
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

Second Place
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

First Place (at left)
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

Glynn Academy standout Zoeshia Smith does her best Lisa Leslie impression at The Glass Palace.
Division B
Sports Feature Photograph

Third Place
Jay Luzardo
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

Second Place
Joshua Jones
Athens Banner-Herald

First Place (at left)
Joshua Jones
Athens Banner-Herald

Clarke Central’s Jairus Mack (3) celebrates with his teammates after scoring a touchdown during an GHSA high school playoff football game between Clarke Central and Calhoun in Athens, Ga., on Friday Dec. 4, 2020. Calhoun won 33-14. (Photo/Joshua L. Jones, Athens Banner-Herald)
Division C
Sports Feature Photograph

Third Place
Brett Fowler
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Second Place
Brett Fowler
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at left)
Becky Taylor
The Tifton Gazette

Aerial Densmore, Daci Burley, Cali Conner, Jordan Knotts, Janie Ragsdale and Macy Weldon celebrate after defeating Lowndes 25-17 in the second set of Saturday’s region game. Tift won both sets.
Third Place
Caleb Collins
The News Observer, Blue Ridge

Second Place
Jake Cantrell
The Dahlonega Nugget

First Place (at left)
Justin Hubbard
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Division E
Sports Feature Photograph

Third Place
Scott Herpst
Walker County Messenger, LaFayette

Second Place
Enoch Autry
Sylvania Telephone

First Place (at right)
Carey Best
The Elberton Star
Division A
Sports Section

**Third Place**
Marietta Daily Journal

**Second Place**
The Brunswick News

**First Place (at right)**
Will Hammock
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville
Division B Sports Section

**Third Place**
Ryne Dennis
Athens Banner-Herald

**Second Place**
The Valdosta Daily Times

**First Place (at right)**
Kevin Eckleberry
LaGrange Daily News
Division C
Sports Section

Third Place
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

Second Place
The Newnan Times-Herald

First Place (at left)
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Division D Sports Section

Third Place
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

Second Place
Mark Turner
White County News, Cleveland

First Place (at left)
Jeremy Johnson, George Zeliff
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Dunfee, Logan up for GCCA Cheerleader of the Year Award

Thomason makes Top 30 cut for Ridgeland

By Scott Herpst

Local cheerleaders Abbey Dunfee (Gordon Lee) and Sydney Logan (Ridgeland) were recently named to the 18-member All-State Team (for Classes A-AA) by the Georgia Cheerleader Coaches’ Association (GCCA).

Those two will be among those vying for the prestigious title of GCCA Cheerleader of the Year, which will be presented during the state finals in February. A third local cheerleader, Ridgeland’s Michelle Thomason, did not make the final 18, but was one of 30 finalists.

Each year, some 200 cheerleaders from around the state are nominated by their coaches to compete for the award. The nominees are judged on things such as academics, community service, honors and other athletics.

This year’s nominees had to film a cheerleading performance for the judges, in addition to an online face-to-face interview, in order to follow COVID-19 safety protocols.

Gordon Lee cheer coach Kelley Whitman said the selection process to pare down the nominees was “very thorough”.

“It’s a very holistic process,” she explained. “You have to provide a transcript and basically a resume with all your accomplishments and

Gordon Lee’s Abbey Dunfee (left) and Ridgeland’s Sydney Logan (center) will compete for the Cheerleader of the Year Award, while Ridgeland’s Michelle Thomason (right) made it through to the final Top 30 statewide.
Third Place
John Bednarowski
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

First Place (at left)
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News
Division B
Sports Coverage Story

Third Place
Ryne Dennis
Athens Banner-Herald

Second Place
Marc Weiszer
Athens Banner-Herald

First Place (at left)
Kevin Eckleberry
LaGrange Daily News
Division C
Sports Coverage Story

Third Place
The Newnan Times-Herald

Second Place
Stephen Milligan
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at left)
Becky Taylor
The Tifton Gazette
Division D

Sports Coverage Story

Third Place
Justin Hubbard
Lake Oconee News, Greensboro

Second Place
Brad Harrison
The Jones County News, Gray

First Place (at left)
Jake Cantrell
The Dahlonega Nugget
Division E
Sports Coverage Story

Third Place
Larry Stanford
Jackson Progress-Argus

Second Place
Scott Herpst
Walker County Messenger, Lafayette

First Place (at right)
Richard Harris
The Journal, Buena Vista
Division A
Sports
Feature Story

Third Place
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

Second Place
Adam Carrington
Marietta Daily Journals

First Place (at left)
Dennis Knight
Savannah Morning News
Division B
Sports
Feature Story

**Third Place**
John Sullivan
The Griffin Daily News

**Second Place**
Ryne Dennis
Athens Banner-Herald

**First Place (at left)**
Marc Weiszer
Athens Banner-Herald

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*Former Bulldog swimmer on frontline against coronavirus in New York hospital*

By Marc Weiszer
Published Mar 26, 2020 at 2:33 PM

As a swimmer at the University of Georgia, Lauren English studied speech pathology and audiology which led her to Athens Regional Hospital. She spent time there as a student in the intensive care unit.

“I was astounded and was in awe how everyone worked together to try to get people back on their feet even from really dire circumstances,” English said.

It provided the first inspiration for her to pursue a career in the medical field, she said by phone Thursday morning from her home in Hackensack, N.J. where she lives with her boyfriend.

English, who swam for the Bulldogs from 2008-12, had just worked a 12-hour shift the day before as a nurse at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center in New York City.
Spain’s Romanos helps lift Lady Indians

By Isaiah Smith

For Tallulah Falls’ Alba Romanos, the 2018 volleyball season started differently than any other for her. In fact, there was a time that it wouldn’t be a season at all for her. It was kind of crazy. I had to expect to come to the states this year because everything with COVID-19 was kind of a mess,” Romanos said. But two weeks before I came, they told me I was going to the U.S. and I was surprised because I didn’t think I was going to do that.

After getting the go-ahead to travel to Tallulah Falls, Romanos and her teammates continued to practice together. Unbeknownst to her family, she wasn’t going to make the trip to the States.

Romanos and her teammates flew to the States and continued to practice. Romanos and her teammates continued to practice together. Unbeknownst to her family, she wasn’t going to make the trip to the States.

The trip to the States wasn’t easy for Romanos. She had to leave her family behind and travel to a new place alone. The team also had to navigate the challenges of COVID-19, which made it difficult to practice. Despite these challenges, Romanos continued to work hard and help her team.

It was true that it can be a little scary. You have to give the at-home. But it was OK,” Romanos said. “You have to give the at-home. You have to give the at-home. And it was OK.”

Once arriving at home, Romanos tried her best to adjust to being a new student in a new school. In compliance with TPS school policy, she tried to be a good student and to make new friends. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included.

“Throughout the season, everyone worked hard to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included.”

Along with getting to know the team, Romanos had the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. It was a great experience for Romanos.

“Throughout the season, everyone worked hard to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included.”

After being selected for the Lady Indians, Romanos was excited to be a part of the team. She worked hard to help her team and to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included. Romanos and her teammates worked together to make sure that everyone felt welcome and included.

Third Place
Brett Fowler
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Second Place
Rob Grubbs
The Newnan Times-Herald

First Place (at right)
Isaiah Smith
The Northeast Georgian, Cornelia
First Place (at left)
Jeremy Johnson
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville

Second Place
Scott Herpst, Walker County Messenger, LaFayette

Third Place
Grayson Williams, The Hartwell Sun

Division D
Sports Feature Story

Fight for softball team brings life-changing gratitude

By Jeremy Johnson

Editor’s note: This story is the second of a series of three stories examining the beginning of Oconee County High School’s successful softball program.

Caryle Penland walked down the path toward the bleachers situated adjacent to home plate at Oconee County High School’s softball field. She was there to watch a friend’s daughter play for the Lady Warriors in her senior season.

The high school that made the OCHS softball program possible wasn’t far from her memory. The program had come a long way from the one Penland left in 1994. That was the Lady Warriors’ first season.

A sign caught her eye.
Near the top was her name. “Caryle Penland, Class of 1995, Mercer University.”

Standing across the back of the Lady Warriors’ dress team were additions of all of the sports added.

“Here were many, if any, teams in our region at the time, so there was a real practical issue that we were concerned with,” Harden said. “Once we got through it, I did some workshops for the Georgia High School Association on implementing and how to work through it. I’m glad it happened.”

Over the next five years the school added volleyball, soccer, gymnastics to their slate. For the fast-pitch softball community it was an opportunity. Penland remembers playing little league and on the travel ball circuit. It was another experience to represent her high school and to play in front of her school friends.

“It was important for me to represent Oconee and it was nice to be the only senior and to have a sense of leadership and pride to lead those very talented athletes who followed behind me,” Penland said. “It was a very hum...
Division A
Sports Column

Third Place
John Bednarowski
Marietta Daily Journal

Second Place
Nathan Dominitz
Savannah Morning News

First Place (at right)
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

Four years later, Kaepernick finally validated
At long last, the Valdosta Wildcats finally have their man.

After months of speculation, rumor and vitriol, Rush Propst will be the next coach tasked with restoring the 'Cats to prominence.

Propst was voted in Tuesday by a 5-4 vote — the same vote that led to former coach Alan Rodemaker not being brought back. The same five voters — Warren Lee, Liz Shumpard, Tyra Howard, Debra Bell and Kelsia Brown — that voted against Rodemaker's return voted for Propst's hire.

Regardless of where you fall on whether or not Rodemaker should have been retained, the page now turns to the here and now.

Given the amount of controversy surrounding Rodemaker's non-renewal, the hire of perhaps the most controversial, polarizing coach in high school football will be a talking point for months to come.

Propst hasn't coached a high school football game since 2016, when he was fired at Colquitt County over allegations of ethics violations — a recurring theme dating back to his time at Hoover (Ala.) that saw him resign over questions of inpropriety.

In the hours following Tuesday's vote, reaction has been mostly split. On one side, a large segment of people don't believe Propst was the right man for the job. On the other side, Propst signifies the proverbial golden goose — the one coach that can evoke the glory days of Nick Hyder and Wildcat dominance.

In spite of any transgressions, Propst is a proven winner — five state titles at Hoover back-to-back state titles at Colquitt County, a career 299-92 record over 30 years.

Those chided by Rodemaker's dismissal point to the work Rodemaker did to help revitalize a Wildcats program that had not won a state title since 1990. Rodemaker went 39-17 in four years as head coach, winning a state title in his first season as head coach.

Despite advancing to the state quarterfinals each of the past two years, the 'Cats weren't able to break through and make it back to the state championship game.

There's no shame in that, although Valdosta's head-scratching 16-14 loss to Richmond Hill last year won't be easily forgotten.

Rodemaker was just the latest man to be clipped in Valdosta coaching lore. Mike O'Brien went 70-29. Charlie Greene went 17-3. It's a bit of a dark, not-so-hidden secret — coaches haven't always kept their jobs at Valdosta despite their winning records.

For the first time since Hyder, the Wildcats will have a household name roaming the sidelines in Propst.

Many coaches were interviewed — coaches that have won state championships and are proven leaders of young men, but Propst was always on the periphery. If football is able to be played this fall, all eyes will be on Valdosta High School.

Tuesday's hiring of Propst may be the most important hire at Valdosta High since Nick Hyder.

Hyder went 302-46-5 in his career while Propst's first win at Valdosta will be No. 300.

Propst's seven state titles is identical to Hyder; who won seven of his own at Valdosta with 13 region crowns to boot.

The rub is Propst's well-publicized failings compared to the legacy of enduring character and virtue Hyder's tenure left on Valdosta's program.

While it remains stunning to a lot of people that Propst still manages to get gigs as a head coach, the bottom line has always been winning.

No one can question Propst's track record to deliver the bottom line.

Expectations will surely run rampant when the 'Cats take the field Aug. 22 against Warner Robins.

Specifically, Propst will need to win right away to win over his detractors.

Given the roster coming back, the 'Cats will be favored to win state this year.

Thousands will pour into Bazemore-Hyder Stadium to see what Propst can do now that he has his dream job.

As the winningest high school football team in the nation, Valdosta now has immense pressure to not only win, but win big again.

Letting a coach like Rodemaker walk was a tremendous gamble.

By hiring Rush Propst, Valdosta just pushed its chips to the center of the table.

Shane Thomas is The Valdosta Daily Times sports editor.
Division C
Sports Column

**Third Place**
Chris Bridges
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

**Second Place**
Brett Fowler
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

**First Place (at right)**
David Johnson
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

David Johnson

Lights were a sight for sore eyes

I can’t speak for everyone else in attendance — though I think I do — but last Friday night was a thing of beauty. The skies were blue, the birds were chirping, the flowers blooming. And best of all, those glo-
Division D
Sports Column

Third Place
Greg Finan Jr.
The Dahlonega Nugget

Second Place
Jake Cantrell
The Dahlonega Nugget

First Place (at right)
The Clayton Tribune

Sign-stealing scandal ensures long year for Astros

Whoever thought baseball’s most hated team wouldn’t be the Yankees, Red Sox or Dodgers?

Spring training is usually laid-back, apart from those aspirants fighting to stay on or make a major-league roster. Hope springs eternal, at least until the realities of opening day set in.

The Washington Nationals, who didn’t even win their division last year, are the defending World Series champions. Normally, preseason chatter focuses on the champs and their chances of repeating. Not so in 2020.

Daily grenades have been lobbed at the Houston Astros ever since a sign-stealing scheme during their 2017 world title run was uncovered.

Every day someone else is venting, from opponents who felt hooched to basketball star LeBron James. Their rants, however passionate, are starting to read like a form letter.

Most of the ruckus recently has been directed not so much at the team than at the punishment from Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred, who badly underestimated player and fan reaction.

MLB stripped the Astros of four high draft picks and suspended general manager Jeff Luhnow and manager A.J. Hinch, who were later fired by the team. The club was also fined $21 million, about the salary of a middle reliever, and soft-cushion change in a business that generates gazillons.

No title banners taken down.
No playoff banishments.
No players suspended.
If this misconduct doesn’t merit player punishment, what does?

To be fair, Astro players have offered apologies, monosyllabic ones with all the passion of reciting a grocery list. If they didn’t want to be bullseyes for pitchers this season, sounding like the aggrieved instead of the contrite wasn’t the best strategy.

Someday, fans will stop discussing the scandal, but it won’t be soon. The baseball community may step up where the commissioner left off. While the Astros are stretching and getting ready in spring training, fans are limbering up their angry lungs.

The 81 road games the Astros will play this season may seem like 811, and the hostile and often infantile world of social media won’t let them off the hook anytime soon. If they’re tired of the questions already, imagine the scenes in New York, L.A., Chicago and Boston.

Truthfully, Houston is more than good enough to win many World Series without all the extracurricular nonsense.

Any manager would love to field a lineup with Jose Altuve, Alex Bregman and Carlos Correa — at least without the scarlet letter “C” for cheating super-glued to the team’s permanent record, and the specter of payback from opponents.

For this reason, Dusty Baker may have been the ideal choice as the new skipper.

As a player and manager, Baker has seen just about everything. He inherits a hornet’s nest not of his own making, but this isn’t his first time in the center of one.

Once Hank Aaron’s teammate, he saw up-close the racism and pressures surrounding the slugger’s quest to break Babe Ruth’s career home-run mark.

Baker was on deck when the Braves legend did just that in 1974. He also managed controversial stars such as Barry Bonds, Sammy Sosa and Bryce Harper.

Having already piloted the Nationals, Reds, Cubs and Giants, this will be Baker’s most demanding managerial job yet, and the regular season hasn’t even started.

If Manfred’s penalties were meant to deter cheating, I don’t see it. All I see is more overtime for Houston’s public relations department, and teams getting more clever about not getting caught.

That, and a blushed world title.
Division A
Sports Photograph

Third Place
Will Hammock
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

Second Place
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News

First Place (at left)
Derrick Davis
The Brunswick News
Division B
Sports Photograph

Third Place
Joshua Jones
Athens Banner-Herald

Second Place
John Sullivan
The Griffin Daily News

First Place (at left)
Jay Luzardo
Times-Georgian,
Carrollton
High school softball roundup

Loganville’s Brooklin Lippert makes a diving catch during the Lady Red Devils’ doubleheader with Greenbriar Thursday afternoon. Loganville split with the Lady Wolfpack, losing Game 1, 4-3, before bouncing back to win Game 2, 10-5. The Lady Devils are 3-6 on the season and 2-1 in Region 8-AAAAA play. Brett Fowler | The Tribune

Third Place
Brett Fowler
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

Second Place
Davontay Wilson
The Press-Sentinel, Jesup

First Place (at left)
Brett Fowler
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Division D
Sports Photograph

Third Place
Mark Turner
White County News, Cleveland

Second Place
Josiah Connelly
Morgan County Citizen, Madison

First Place (at right)
Grayson Williams
The Hartwell Sun
Division E
Sports Photograph

Third Place
Larry Stanford
Jackson Progress-Argus

Second Place
Victor Kulkosky
The Leader Tribune, Ft. Valley

First Place (at left)
Enoch Autry
Sylvania Telephone

Jenkins County tailback Brandon Goodman hurdles Gamecock defenders on route to his 350 yards rushing against visiting Screven County. SCHS dropped the Region 3A contest 24-0 on Nov. 13, putting the Gamecocks a must-win situation Friday night in Claxton to reach the state playoffs. [PHOTOS BY ENOCH AUTRY]
Division A
Investigative Reporting

Third Place
Mary Landers
Savannah Morning News

Second Place
Mary Landers
Savannah Morning News

First Place (at left)
Aleks Gilbert
Marietta Daily Journal
Division B
Investigative Reporting

Third Place
Desiree Carver and Shane Thomas
The Valdosta Daily Times

Second Place
James Swift
The Daily Tribune News, Cartersville

First Place (at left)
Amanda M. Usher
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
Investigative Reporting

**Third Place**
David Clemons
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

**Second Place**
Grayson Williams
The Hartwell Sun

**First Place (at right)**
Matt Aiken and Greg Finan, Jr.
The Dahlonega Nugget
Division E
Investigative Reporting

**Third Place**
Asia Ashley and Jay Phillips
The Champion, Decatur

**Second Place**
Catherine Edgemon
Walker County Messenger, Lafayette

**First Place (at right)**
Len Robbins
The Clinch County News, Homerville
Division F
Investigative Reporting

Second Place
Springs Publishing

First Place (at left)
Springs Publishing
Division A
Community Service

**Third Place**
Marietta Daily Journal

**Second Place**
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

**First Place (at right)**
The Brunswick News
Division B
Community Service

**Third Place**
Stephanie Allen, Jay Luzardo, Michael O’Hearn
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

**Second Place**
Stephanie Allen, Jay Luzardo, Michael O’Hearn
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

**First Place (at right)**
Jim Zachary
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C
Community Service

Third Place
Sarah Fay Campbell
The Newnan Times-Herald

Second Place
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

First Place (at left)
The Northeast Georgian, Cornelia
Division D
Community Service

Third Place
Tom Spigolon
The Covington News

Second Place
Taylor Beck and Tom Spigolon
The Covington News

First Place (at right)
Monroe County Reporter, Forsyth
Division E
Community Service

Third Place
David Maxwell
Donalsonville News

Second Place
The Champion Decatur

First Place (at right)
The Journal, Buena Vista
Division A
Local News Coverage

Third Place
The Brunswick News

Second Place
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville

First Place (at left)
Marietta Daily Journal
Division B
Local News Coverage

**Third Place**
The Daily Tribune News, Cartersville

**Second Place**
Times-Georgian, Carrollton

**First Place (at left)**
LaGrange Daily News
Division C
Local News Coverage

**Third Place**
Pickens County Progress, Jasper

**Second Place**
The Walton Tribune, Monroe

**First Place (at left)**
The Moultrie Observer
Division D
Local News Coverage

Third Place
Michael Prochaska
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville

Second Place
Michael Prochaska, Julia Fechter
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville

First Place (at right)
Michael Prochaska, Julia Fechter
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Division E
Local News Coverage

**Third Place**
Jackson Progress Argus

**Second Place**
Clayton News, Jonesboro

**First Place (at left)**
The Baldwin Bulletin, Milledgeville
Division F
Local News Coverage

Third Place
Springs Publishing

Second Place
Springs Publishing

First Place (at left)
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe
Division A General Excellence

Third Place
Gwinnett Daily Post, Lawrenceville
Division A

General Excellence

First Place

The Brunswick News
Division B
General Excellence
Third Place
Athens Banner Herald
Division B
General Excellence

Second Place
Times-Georgian, Carrollton
Division B
General Excellence
First Place
The Valdosta Daily Times
Division C General Excellence

Third Place

The Press-Sentinel, Jesup
Division C
General Excellence
Second Place
The Newnan Times-Herald
Division C
General Excellence
First Place
The Walton Tribune, Monroe
Division D
General Excellence
Third Place
The Hartwell Sun
Division D
General Excellence
Second Place
The Dahlonega Nugget
Division D
General Excellence
First Place
The Oconee Enterprise, Watkinsville
Division E General Excellence

Third Place
The Journal, Buena Vista
Division E
General Excellence
Second Place
Donalsonville News
Division E
General Excellence
First Place
The Champion, Decatur
Division F
General Excellence
Third Place
Appen Media Group
Division F
General Excellence
Second Place
Springs Publishing
Division F
General Excellence
First Place
Smoke Signals, Big Canoe
Georgia Press Association

congratulates all the winners in the 2021 Better Newspaper Contest!

Don’t forget to pick up second-place and third-place certificates and the contest newspaper as you leave tonight.

Visit the contest website at the link below to see the top three winning entries in every category and get contest ideas for next year. BNC results will be sent out via the GPA NewsFlash and will be posted online at the contest page of www.gapress.org.