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Hop On Down to the *Fourth Annual Spring Into Good Health* This Weekend

By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

PEACH COUNTY, Ga. — A popular community event that focuses on public health is hopping back into Peach County this weekend. The Fourth Annual Spring into Good Health will be hopping into Peach County this upcoming Saturday, March 7, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Marvin Crafter Festival Park in Fort Valley.

Millicent Jordan, the Customer Service Representative Supervisor of the Peach County Health Department, spoke with The Leader Tribune about the 2026 Spring into Good Health and



what the community can expect from this year's event.

"The event is designed to be a fun, engaging, and resource-filled day for the entire Peach County Community. The community can expect free health screenings, local organizations and vendors sharing valuable resources related to physical and mental health, children's services, senior support, education, and much more," Jordan said.

Jordan explained that Spring Into Good Health is an opportunity for the Health Department to be out in the community, encouraging education on public health and providing

essential resources to keep one happy and healthy.

"The Health Department hopes the community will recognize that prevention, education, and early detection are essential to living healthier lives. One of the most valuable aspects of the event is helping the community understand where and how to access beneficial resources," Jordan said. "It is crucial that we ensure everyone knows that support is available to all, and that trusted professionals and organizations stand ready to provide guidance and

**SPRING INTO GOOD HEALTH
CONTINUED PG 6A**

City of Fort Valley Faces Questions on Financial Oversight Following Finance Contract



By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

FORT VALLEY, Ga. — The mayor and city council of Fort Valley are at odds over their interim finance director's contract

and his paycheck.

Danny Lemonte of Municipal Central was hired on Aug. 21, 2025, to handle the day-to-day financial operations of the city, essentially being named Fort Valley's Interim Finance Director. The original contract, signed by then City Administrator Gary Lee, called for 24 hours of work per week at \$110 per hour for six months, totaling \$68,640.

By February, Lamonte's paycheck had almost tripled in size at nearly \$188,000, according to billing records provided to

The Leader Tribune by Mayor Shakenna Reeves. According to Reeves, the increase in pay had not been brought before the city council for a vote, nor was it authorized by said council.

Lamonte's original contract included a provision allowing the city administrator to authorize additional hours beyond the 24 hours a week, should the need arise.

However, on Sept. 19, 2025, only a few weeks after the original contract was signed, a contract amendment was created and signed by Lee and Lamonte,

without a full mayor and council vote.

The contract amendment added bank reconciliations for fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025, at a reduced rate of \$75 per hour, to be performed by a junior staff member at Municipal Central. The total estimated cost for that additional work was around \$14,625, based on an estimated 195 hours across three fiscal years, or roughly 65 hours per year.

The contract amendment required that Lamonte provide detailed journal entries, sup-

porting schedules, and process improvements. However, according to the obtained billing records, none of the invoices provided an hourly breakdown.

During the City of Fort Valley's February board meeting, on Thursday, Feb. 19, the Mayor and Council asked Lamonte for an explanation of the increased hours and pay, when his contract originally had his team slated for up to 24 hours a week.

Lamonte spoke with the council about Fort Valley's financial situation being worse than he originally thought, with unrecconciled bank accounts, IRS compliance issues, and years of missing financial records. Lamonte stated that these issues took more time than originally anticipated and that the extra work was necessary and fully authorized by Lee.

Following Lamonte's statements, and after a lengthy discussion, the council renewed his contract with a 4-3 vote, with council members Juanita Bryant, Laronda Eason, Alton Howard, and Henry Howard voting in favor, and council members Donald Williams, Sandra Marshall, and Mayor Reeves voting in opposition.

Councilwoman Bryant defended the decision to extend Lamonte's contract, arguing that he had delivered significant results for the city regarding their financial issues with the IRS and helping to recover funds.

Roughly a week after this decision was made by the council, Mayor Reeves sent out a written statement about financial oversight and accountability in the City of Fort Valley on Wednesday, Feb. 25. In her statement, Reeves says that after taking a closer look at the city's financial records, it raised questions about where the money actually went.

According to Reeves's written statement, a vendor activity report dated Nov. 24, 2025, shows \$59,930 in payments attributed to Municipal Central, but a review of bank statements shows that those ACH transfers were drawn from the city's General Fund and deposited directly into a Business Central Solution account.

Reeves also stated that Lee's assistant, Keisha Baldwin, confirmed she executed financial transfers under direction and authorization from the city administrator, despite Baldwin not being an authorized signer under the City Charter.

Duck Donuts Waddling to Middle Georgia with Byron Location



Co-owners Ron Harris (right) and Naomi Smith (left) are preparing to offer a unique experience in donut-making. Duck Donuts opens on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Sandra Hernandez
For the Georgia Trust for Local News

BYRON, Ga. — A husband-and-wife duo has bought a piece of North Carolina to middle Georgia. Duck Donuts gave everyone something to quack about when the business officially opened on Saturday, Feb. 28.

The grand opening included multiple giveaways. The first guest in line received a special gift basket and one free dozen donuts per month for a year. The next 50 guests received a coupon for a free dozen donuts and coffee. All guests received a thank-you offer while supplies last, and proceeds will be donated to local charities.

Byron is the third location in

the state. The business is based in Duck, North Carolina, and has several locations throughout the country.

Duck Donuts offers customers the option to create their own donuts made fresh in front of them, creating an interactive experience. There is a wide variety of coatings, toppings, and drizzles to choose from to suit their preferences.

When preparing the donuts, there is a glass wall between the employees and customers so they can watch their order being prepared.

The business is also decorated with duckies everywhere, which children love, co-owner Naomi Smith shared. There are also plushies of their mascot, Ollie

the Duck.

"You actually get to enjoy the process with us. You're watching us, and we're interacting, and they're talking to you while topping your donuts. It's just a fun experience for the families," she said.

There is a wide variety of beverages to start the day off right, including coffee, which co-owner Ron Harris described as "top notch." There will also be non-coffee options, including lemonade and lemonade refreshers, with customers able to add popping bubbles.

The business also offers all-day breakfast, donut-topped milkshakes, donut sundaes, donut ice cream sandwiches and small bites like donut hole dippers.

Customizing their donuts is what stood out to the couple when they first visited a Duck Donuts.

Harris and Smith were on vacation, celebrating her birthday, when they discovered the business. Harris shared that they were in Florida when the name caught his attention.

"When I walked in, everything just hit me. I was like, 'Wow, this place is nice.' It was colorful, everybody was friendly," he said.

Since then, the family has not stopped trying Duck Donuts. As soon as they came back home, the duo started looking for franchise opportunities.

The couple has been working

**DUCK DONUTS
CONTINUED PG 3A**

**FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT
CONTINUED PG 2A**



Connection as Medicine: During Macon stop, former U.S. surgeon general talks loneliness crisis, points to solutions

By Joshua Wilson, Executive Editor of The Macon Melody

When Dr. Vivek Murthy talks about loneliness, he does not describe it as a fleeting emotion or a private struggle. He describes it as a public health crisis hiding in plain sight — one with consequences as severe as smoking or obesity.

Murthy, who served as the 19th and 21st surgeon general of the United States, was in Macon this week to discuss his work addressing what he has called a national loneliness epidemic. His visit included an exclusive interview with The Macon Melody, conversations with community members and a question-and-answer session about his work with Georgia Supreme Court Justice Verda M. Colvin of Macon.

The visit was organized around The Together Project, an initiative Murthy launched to strengthen social connection and rebuild community. The project is supported in part by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which has designated Macon as a Knight City — one of 26 communities nationwide where the Knight brothers once owned newspapers.

Murthy said what he has seen locally reinforces his belief that solutions to loneliness do not begin in Washington, but in communities willing to take responsibility for one another.

"I love the time I've had in Macon," Murthy said. "It's partly because people are incredibly nice and hospitable, but it's also actually because this incredible innovation that I'm seeing here in Macon when it comes to building community."

What the loneliness epidemic is Loneliness, Murthy said, is often misunderstood. "Loneliness is a subjective term," he said. "It's when the connections we need in our life are greater than the connections we actually have, and in that gap, we experience loneliness."

That definition is distinct from isolation, he said, which measures how many people someone is physically around. Many people who feel lonely are surrounded by others — students on college campuses, workers in busy offices or parents embedded in school communities — yet still lack meaningful connection.

"If you don't feel like the people around you know you, that you can be yourself around them, that they understand you, that they might show up for you in a crisis, then you can feel lonely, even though you're surrounded by lots of people," Murthy said.

The health consequences are no longer theoretical. Murthy pointed to research showing the mortality impact of social disconnection.

"That means the life-shortening impact of social disconnection is on par with smoking and obesity," he said.



Photo by Jason Vorhees for The Macon Melody
Vivek Murthy, who served as U.S. surgeon general under three presidents, was in Macon this week to discuss the national loneliness epidemic, which he has described as a public health crisis. He pointed to Macon as an example of how local communities can work to rebuild social connection.

Loneliness is associated with a doubling of the risk of depression, increased anxiety and suicide risk, and elevated rates of physical illness, Murthy said. People experiencing loneliness face nearly a 30% increased risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke, and a 50% increased risk of dementia among older adults.

"The more we understand about the consequences of loneliness, we realize it's telling us that social connection is a fundamental human need," Murthy said.

How the country got here Murthy said there is no single moment that caused the crisis, but rather decades of social change that have slowly pulled people apart.

"We move around a lot more," he said. "We move for school, move for work. That's great in some ways, but the consequence we haven't quite mitigated for is the fact that that means we leave communities behind."

Participation in institutions that once anchored social life — faith organizations, service groups, recreational leagues — has declined, Murthy said, weakening the informal networks that once sustained connection.

Technology has also reshaped daily life in ways that were not fully anticipated.

"I don't think we recognized just how profound the unintended consequences of technology

would be, and specifically to our connection with each other," he said.

Social media, in particular, has shifted people's focus from the quality of relationships to the quantity of them, Murthy said, replacing in-person connections with online interactions that often lack depth.

"What it has ultimately ended up doing for too many people is it has replaced their in-person connections with online connections, and the quality of those connections is not the same," he said.

For young people, Murthy said, constant exposure to curated images online has fueled comparison and eroded self-esteem, making real-world connection harder.

"I feel good about my life until I check out my feed on social media, and then I realize my life isn't so good," he said, describing a refrain he heard repeatedly while traveling the country.

What can be done Murthy said communities like Macon are demonstrating that addressing loneliness does not require sweeping legislation or large institutions.

"Community is a place where we know each other, where we help each other and where we find purpose in lifting each other up," he said.

During his visit, Murthy said he met residents organizing mental health programs, men's groups, interchurch partnerships and informal parent networks — often without pay or formal recognition.

"They're doing it because they have an interest in figuring out how to make their community stronger," he said.

The Together Project, Murthy said, aims to elevate that work, direct more resources to grassroots efforts and help community builders learn from one another nationwide.

"We want to make sure that investing in and building community has to be one of our top priorities," he said. "It affects our health, our economy, our educational outcomes and ultimately our sense of social cohesion."

He praised Macon's use of small grants to support neighborhood-level ideas, noting that many effective solutions begin with modest investments.

"A lot of people have a lot of good ideas for how to help their neighborhood," Murthy said. "If you can give them a small grant and enable them to get started, that can make a really big difference."

The underestimated antidote Asked what people most underestimate in their ability to reduce loneliness, Murthy did not point to technology, therapy or formal programs.

"We underestimate how powerful service is as an antidote to loneliness," he said.

Small acts — checking on a co-worker, helping a neighbor, calling a grieving friend — help forge connections while restoring a sense of personal worth, Murthy said.

"One of the great dangers of loneliness is that it can erode our sense of self-worth," he said. "Service helps us understand our worth and helps us build a connection to other people."

Even something as simple as smiling, Murthy said, can make a difference.

"Smiling quite literally changes our mood, and it also has a positive impact on the people that we smile at," he said.

At a time when many feel overwhelmed by the scale of national problems, Murthy said the path forward begins locally — and immediately.

"All of us have the power to start building the community that we seek," he said. "That means we can start today."

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

CONTINUED FROM 1A

In her written statement, Reeves stated that Lamonte had signature authority on city bank accounts, allowing him to write and sign checks payable under his own contract, a setup in which one person controlled both sides of the transaction. Reeves stated that this setup is a direct violation of the separation of duties, which has been repeatedly cited in the city's prior audits over the years.

According to Reeves's written statement, purchase orders were created retroactively, after payments had already been processed, bypassing the city's standard approval process. In governmental accounting, purchase orders are made to ensure money cannot leave an account before it has been properly ap-

proved by elected officials.

According to records from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Lamonte was arrested on Jan. 4, 2024, and charged with theft by conversion; a charge that alleges he knowingly converted funds belonging to another person or entity for his own use in violation of an agreement.

Fort Valley hired Lamonte only four months after that case was resolved.

According to Reeves's written statement, she says the city is pursuing state and federal support to conduct a comprehensive forensic audit, an independent, line-by-line review of every financial transaction tied to the contract. She is also pushing for a comprehensive plan to collect property taxes, stating

that Fort Valley does not operate its own utility system and has limited revenue streams.

"Strong internal controls, effective governance, and strategic planning are not optional; they are essential," Reeves said in her statement. "The City cannot sustain itself if we allow weak oversight, unauthorized transactions, and patterns of bypassing accountability to continue unchecked."

At this time, the City of Fort Valley is withholding Lamonte's final check of \$8,252, citing breach of contract, according to Reeve's written statement.

The renewal contract is now a 12-month contract, double the length of the original, which went into effect on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026.

Congressman Bishop Invites Students To Participate In 2026 Congressional Art Competition

By the office of Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

ALBANY, Ga. — Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02) invites high school students from Georgia's Second Congressional District to participate in the 2026 Congressional Art Competition.

"I am happy to announce that my office is now accepting entries for this year's Congressional Art Competition," said Congressman Bishop. "This annual competition is an excellent opportunity to highlight artistic talent throughout the district. I

look forward to seeing the creativity of our gifted 2nd Congressional District high schoolers and recognizing them for their hard work!"

Participants will be invited to attend a reception at the Albany Museum of Art, located at 311 Meadowlark Dr., Albany, GA 31707, where submissions will be on display and a winner will be announced.

This is the 45th anniversary of the annual competition which is sponsored by the Congressional Institute. The winner will have their artwork on display for one year in the Capitol complex in

the passageway between the Cannon House Office Building and the U.S. Capitol.

All artwork must be submitted to Congressman Bishop's office at 323 Pine Avenue, Suite 400 in Albany, Georgia, by Thursday, April 2, 2026, at 5:00pm ET.

For more information about the Congressional Art Competition and to view the official rules, please visit: <https://www.house.gov/educators-and-students/congressional-art-competition>.

JOB OPPORTUNITY FORT VALLEY FINANCE DIRECTOR

The City of Fort Valley is seeking a qualified professional to serve as Finance Director. This position oversees the City's financial operations, budgeting, payroll administration, and property tax functions, ensuring accurate and timely processing of financial transactions. The Finance Director ensures compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and advises the City Council, City Administrator, and department heads on financial matters.

Qualified applicants must possess a bachelor's degree in accounting, Finance, Public Administration, or a related field (master's degree preferred) and at least five (5) years of progressively responsible experience in government finance, including payroll and property tax administration, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Candidates must possess or be able to obtain a valid Georgia driver's license and all required professional certifications. A Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO), or equivalent certification is preferred. The ideal candidate will demonstrate strong knowledge of governmental accounting, budgeting, and auditing standards; effective leadership and supervisory skills; and sound analytical, decision-making, and communication abilities.

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will receive all application materials and conduct initial screening. Interested candidates should email a cover letter, resume, and three references by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, or until the position has been filled, to:

Middle Georgia Regional Commission
Attn: Keristen Layrock
Klayrock@mg-rc.org
3661 Eisenhower Parkway, Suite MB102,
Macon, Georgia 31206

For additional information, contact Keristen Layrock at 478-751-6160.

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Only top candidates will be interviewed. The City of Fort Valley reserves the right to reject any or all applications.

The City of Fort Valley is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLIC NOTICE

City of Fort Valley – Planning & Zoning Committee Board Openings

The City of Fort Valley is currently seeking dedicated and community-minded individuals to serve on the Planning and Zoning Board.

This board plays a vital role in shaping the future growth and development of our city by reviewing zoning requests, land use proposals, and planning matters that impact our community.

If you are interested in serving, please submit a strong letter of interest outlining:

- Your background and qualifications
- Relevant experience in planning, development, construction, real estate, or community service
- Your vision and commitment to the responsible growth of Fort Valley

Letters should clearly express your desire to serve and your understanding of the responsibilities of board membership.

Please submit your letter of interest to Mrs. Diane Brown, City Clerk, at the Fort Valley City Hall-204 West Church Street or email to dbrown@fortvalleyga.org

We encourage residents who are passionate about the future of our community to apply.

Police Beat

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
of an arrest or citation report is not evidence of a crime. All persons named in the reports are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Some minor violations that do not threaten public safety are not included.

The information below is provided by local law enforcement agencies, who are solely responsible for the accuracy of the information. These reports are published for information purposes only. Publication of an arrest or citation report is not evidence of a crime. All persons named in the reports are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Some minor violations that do not threaten public safety are not included.

Byron Arrests/Citations

Clayton, Jonquavious Keonte, 26, Vienna, GA: Criminal Trespass

Grinnage, Darien Haashim, 24, Macon, GA: Driving With Suspended License, Knowingly Driving With Suspended/Canceled Registration

Hollis, Brandon Travis, 27, Warner Robins, GA: Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits, Driving With Suspended License

Kellam, Jaime Donnell, 52, Perry, GA: Window Tint Violation, No Brake Lights Or Working Turn Signals, DUI - Alcohol Less Safe

Kilbert, Lloyd Harvey, 24, Madison, IL: Driving W/O Valid License, Possession Of Marijuana, Less Than 1 Oz, Open Container Possession (City Ordinance), Following Too Closely, Reckless Driving, Loitering Or Prowling

Lewis, Traquon Marquis, 26, Perry, GA: Failure To Appear

Mathis, Temarius Alrese, 22, Byron, GA: Fail To Dim High Beams, Driving With Suspended License

Middlebrooks, Jocelyn A, 29, Morrow, GA: Failure To Appear

Owens, Alston Gregory, 28, Byron, GA: Speeding In Excess Of Maximum Limits, Driving With Suspended License, DUI - Combo Any Combination Of A1/A2/A3

Ramirez, Karen, 21, Warner Robins, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Sanders, Tyshon Jamarcus, 23, Macon, GA: No Insurance, Driving With Suspended License, Knowingly Driving With Suspended/Canceled Registration

Shears, Ashley Nicole, 35, Warner Robins, GA: Probation Violation (When Probation Terms Are Altered) - Misdemeanor

Valle, Ricardo Tapia, 50, Lawrenceville, GA: Driving Without A Valid License, Taillights/Tailight Lenses Required

Wedig, Megan Lea, 39, Venice, FL: Criminal Trespass

Whigam, Walter Douglas, 47, Macon, GA: Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance, Possession Of Firearm By Convicted Felon, Possession Of Firearm Or Knife During Certain Crimes, Safety Belt Violation For 18 YOA And Older, DUI - Alcohol Less Safe

Fort Valley Arrests/Citations

Chapman, Brad Jeremiah, 21, Warner Robins, GA: Possession And Use Of Drug Related Objects, Manufacture/Deliver/Distribute/Administer/Sell/Possess W/Intent To Distribute Controlled Substance

Griggs, Benjamin Marselus, 32, Macon, GA: Failure To Appear - Misdemeanor

Shorter, Dequerrion Keitovavius, 20, Omaha, GA: Criminal Trespass

Peach County Sheriff's Office

Arrests/Citations

Baldwin, Elizabeth Ann, 44, Byron, GA: Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance

Howard, Ronald Edward, 49, Byron, GA: Receipt, Possession Or Transfer Of Firearm By Convicted Felon Or Felony First Offender, Illegal Possession Of Controlled Substance

Hudson, Jamarkus Marquez, 27, Albany, GA: Failure To Appear - Felony, Failure To Appear - Felony

Mangham, Alex Marqueze, 44, Warner Robins, GA: Obstructing Or Hindering Law Enforcement Officers, Disorderly Conduct

Perez, Melissa, 47, Macon, GA: Theft By Taking - Felony, Willful Obstruction Of Law Enforcement Officers - Misdemeanor

Wells, Jennifer Renee, 37, Byron, GA: Harassing Phone Calls

Houston County Sheriff's Office

Arrests

Jones, Samuel Lee, 66, Warner Robins, GA: Failure To Register As Sex Offender/Failure To Comply With Requirements/Provided False Information

GSP Perry Arrests

McMillian, Dontavian Lavant, 23, Eastman, GA: Hit And Run; Duty Of Driver To Stop At Or Return To Scene Of Accident, Impeding Traffic Flow

Peach County Community CALENDAR

email: news@theleadertribune.com



CALLED BOARD MEETING - MARCH 6

Peach County Board of Education
The Peach County Board of Education will hold a called board meeting on **March 6, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.** The meeting will be held at the Peach County Board of Education office, 900 Campus Drive, Fort Valley, GA.

NOTICE PUBLIC MEETINGS City of Fort Valley Mayor & Council Meetings

Location: City Hall 204 W. Church St., Ft. Valley, GA 31030
WORK SESSION MEETING Tuesday, March 10, 2026 Time 06:00 P.M.
Join Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 848 3046 0283 Passcode: 396617

CITY COUNCIL MEETING Thursday, March 19, 2026 Time 06:30 P.M.
Join Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 832 3457 1063 Passcode: 262368

City of Fort Valley PUBLIC NOTICE Effective Immediately. The Mayor's Monday Briefings have been cancelled until further notice. Thank you for your understanding.
Madam Mayor
Shakeena B. Reeves

March 9 FVUC Monthly Meeting Notice
FVUC will be combining the Public Work Session and Monthly Regular meeting for the Fort Valley Utility Commission on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 6pm at 500 Anthoine St.

Peach County Schools Pre-K Registration 2026-2027
Pre-K Registration will be Open, Monday, February 9, 2026 to Friday, March 27, 2026.

Peach County Board of Education Meeting Schedule
Fort Valley, GA - Peach County Schools
The March Board Study Session and Regular Board Meeting will be held as scheduled on March 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. and March 3, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. at the Peach County Board of Education.

The Battle of Byron Festival Board of Directors Meeting
The Battle of Byron Festival Board of Directors meet every Third Thursday of the Month at the Old Byron Train Depot at 6:30 P.M.

2026-2027 FORT VALLEY HEAD START RECRUITMENT
700 Spruce St, Ft. Valley, GA 31030. (478)825-8584.
Ages 3 -5. Required Documentation: Proof of birth, Social Security Card, Immunization 3231, Medicaid/Insurance card, Proof of income, Well child check, Dental exam, GA public health 3300 (if applicable), www.mgcaa.org

Trojan Nation TD Club
The Trojan Nation Touchdown Club is selling reserved parking for the upcoming season at a cost of \$75.00. This includes the four regular season home games plus any playoff game that We host. This offer is good as long as spaces are available. You can contact Nate Danielly at 478-957-1141 for more information.

American Legion Meetings
Veterans, consider joining the American Legion Frederick

Withoft Post 76 in Peach County, GA. We are an organization of Veterans supporting Veterans and the local community.

Regular Post Meetings are held on the Third Thursday of Every Month, Social Hour with American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Guests at 1700 (5:00pm) followed by the Meeting Start at 1800 (6:00pm) at 1212 Peach Parkway, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

We can be reached at our Facebook Page (*American Legion Post 76 - Peach County GA*) or via e-mail (*legionpost76pcga@gmail.com*). All Veterans and Spouses are encouraged to participate.

ATTENTION: Veterans

Veterans who would like to get together for brotherhood, please meet for dinner at Mi Ranchito at 311-A Vineville St. Fort Valley, GA on 12 August 2023 at 6:30 p.m./1830. Please RSVP to Ernest Cooling by emailing *ecooling79@gmail.com*. If further information is needed, please call me at (478) 955-8850.

Fort Valley Downtown Development Authority - Board Meeting

The Fort Valley Downtown Development Authority meets 1st Tuesday every month at 6pm, located at Troutman House Conference Room, 201 Oakland Heights Parkway, Fort Valley, GA 31030. Visit our website for more information: <http://fortvalleymainstreet.org>

Peach County Board of Commissioners Work Sessions

The Peach County Board of Commissioners holds **Work Sessions* on the first Tuesday of each month** at 5pm in Commission Chambers located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley.

Regular Meetings* are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm in Commission Chambers located at 213 Persons Street in Fort Valley.

The Board also conducts Public Hearings to consider zoning requests at 6:30pm during regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

*Scheduling may differ due to holidays and unforeseen circumstances. Prior notice will be given. Visit our website for more information: <https://www.peachcounty.net/board-of-commissioners.cfm>

Fort Valley Utility Commission

500 Anthoine St, Fort Valley. The Commission doors are open to customers from 8:00am - 5:00pm.

Public Work Session Meeting first Monday of every month at 4 p.m.

Regular Meeting every second Monday of each month at 6 p.m.

Kiwanis Club of Fort Valley

The Kiwanis Club of Fort Valley meets **1st & 3rd Thursdays** every month, noon at Kay Center in Fort Valley. Kiwanis is a civic group focused on helping children, and community service. Each week, members and guests enjoy lunch and a guest speaker who addresses a topic of local, state and sometimes even global interest. Come see what Kiwanis is all about and join one of America's oldest service organizations. See the Kiwanis Club of Fort Valley Facebook page for more information. (TFN)

Peach Public Libraries Board Of Trustees REGULAR MEETING THOMAS PUBLIC LIBRARY, FORT VALLEY, GA

Peach Public Libraries Board of Trustees meets the second Thursday of February, April, June, August, October, and December at 5:15pm in the Meeting Room at Thomas Public Library, Fort Valley, unless otherwise specified.

Peach County Historical Society Meeting

Meets **4th Tuesday each month at 6:00pm.** If anyone has school annuals of the past the Historical Society would like to have them. Donations welcome. Contact: Lrgiles77@gmail.com

Fort Valley Historic Preservation

The Fort Valley Historic Preservation Commission Board meeting is held on the second Mondays of the month at 6pm, located at the Troutman House 201 Oakland Heights Pkwy, Fort Valley, Ga 31030.

Peach County Retired Educators Association

The Peach County Retired Educators Association will meet on the first Monday of each month at 2pm. The meeting will be held at Trinity Baptist Church 507 State University Drive. For further info. please contact Dr. Quintin Green (478)951-1911.

Byron AL-ANON Family Group

Byron Al-Anon meets on Monday mornings at 11 a.m. in the Old Byron School, next to the Byron Municipal Complex. Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. Newcomers are always welcome. Contact Debbie Harrelson 478-714-9393.

Compassionate Friends Middle GA Chapter

We are a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping bereaved parents by providing highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing the death of a child, a brother, sister or a grandchild and helping others to better assist the grieving family. We need not walk alone.

Byron meeting: 4th Thursday of every month. 7-9pm. Byron Baptist Church 100 W White Rd, Byron, Ga 21008.

Macon meeting location for TCF: Rock Springs Church, 6601 Zebulon Rd, Macon, GA.

Please contact Chapter Leaders for more information: Karla Chidester - 478-954-4592, or Teresa Tompkins - 478-319-3526, or visit www.compassionatefriends.org.

Addiction Counseling

Narconon can help you take steps to overcome addiction in your family. Call today for free screenings or referrals. 800-431-1754

Byron Lions Club

The club meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month, the first Thursday of the month at Uncorked Event Center (behind Georgia Bobs) at 6:00PM, and the third Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM at Denny's. Anyone interested in participating is heartily invited to join us. For more information, please contact Lion Marlene Humphry at 478-918-3666, email at mhumphry@cox.net

Byron Rotary Club

Meets every Wednesday at 8:00am at Denny's.

Byron DDA/CVB

Our next meeting is at the Train Depot on Tuesday, Feb 17th at 4:00.

are the 1st Mondays of each month at 5:00 p.m., at Denny's. The CVB meetings are usually held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Byron Welcome Center at 5:00p.m.

Byron Tax Office

Opened Tuesday & Thursday 8:30am-5:00pm. Closed 12-1:00pm at the Byron Municipal Complex. All official regular meetings are in the Council Chamber at the Byron Municipal Complex, 401 Main Street, Byron, GA.

DUCK DONUTS

CONTINUED FROM 1A

hard, gearing up for the grand opening. Smith believes they are doing well in spreading the word on social media and marketing, including visiting businesses to give out samples.

"We just have a lot of different marketing efforts to kind of just bring people [and] make them aware," she said.

Harris and Smith are both from Miami, where they also run a pizzeria called Sarpinos. Harris grew up knowing how the franchise process works as his father operated three McDonald's. He spent his 20s gaining experience, which made him comfortable to start franchising as well.

The couple moved from Mi-

ami to Macon approximately 14 years ago and feel they are a part of the community. When they first came to middle Georgia, they knew no one except Harris's brother and his children. Then, their families also started moving to the area and have now made a home here.

Smith believes Byron is the perfect place to add a Duck Donuts and encourages customers to be themselves and authentic.

"We want them to have a fun vibe. We want the guest to always feel welcomed. It's going to be that fun atmosphere every time they walk in," she said.

The couple encourages the community to visit them and

guarantees customers will receive a warm welcome every time they walk through the door.

"We want to bring the community together. Everybody is different. Donuts are colorful. People are colorful. So, it all blends together," Harris said.

Duck Donuts is located at 6011 Watson Blvd, Suite 300. They are open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Fridays, they are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; on Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Finally, on Sundays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

To learn more, visit their website: <https://www.duckdonuts.com/>

Call or Text 478-955-1999



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110 Commercial Heights, Fort Valley, GA



Sunday, March 9, 2026. Move your clock one hour forward.

Celebrate Women's History Month this March



By Zoe Hammond
News Editor

March is Women's History Month, an annual observance that highlights the many contributions of women to events in history and society, with International Women's Day taking place on March 8.

According to the National Women's History Museum, Women's History Month began as a local celebration in Santa Rosa, California. The Education Task Force of Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978.

The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

In 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians – led by the National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance) – successfully lobbied for national recognition. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8, 1980, as National Women's History Week.

Subsequent Presidents continued to proclaim a National Women's History Week in March until 1987, when Congress passed Public Law 100-9, designating March as "Women's History Month." Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed additional resolutions requesting and authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, each president has issued an annual

proclamation designating the month of March as "Women's History Month."

The National Women's History Alliance selects and publishes the yearly theme. The theme for Women's History Month 2026 is "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future."

According to the National Women's History Alliance, this year's theme is set to "expand our understanding of sustainability beyond just environmental concerns. It encompasses financial sustainability, community resilience, leadership succession, and intergenerational equity. Whether developing green technologies, advancing economic justice, strengthening education systems, or building civic power – women are designing blueprints for sustainable transformation. This theme affirms that shaping a sustainable future means fostering systems that support both people and the planet."

Some of the goals of the 2026 Women's History Month include "celebrating the diverse contributions of women who are leading sustainability efforts across environmental, economic, educational, and social justice movements" and "raising awareness about the important historical and contemporary roles of women in shaping sustainable change."

Something I have noticed when it comes to historical months or retelling of significant, historical stories, is that more often than not the focus is only on the big names – those whose names became common in every household, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, Rosa Parks, and Malala Yousafzai, to name a few. All too often, those who have contributed to history, but did not do so on a global scale, fall to the wayside, with only the local community – whether that be city, county, or state – remembering their achievements.

Which is why I am delighted that the Peach County Government will be celebrating Women's History Month on their Facebook page by "highlighting the remarkable women

**WOMEN'S MONTH
CONTINUED PG 5A**

Posture and Economy of Movement



By Wade Yoder
IT Columnist

When we have a better economy of movement, it makes the things we have to do in daily living easier. And when we can balance our weight properly, it can make our weight or whatever additional weight we are carrying lighter and it will not be as fatiguing throughout our day and will keep from aging our bodies as rapidly. This applies to using proper technique in exercises as well.

In close proximity of our center of gravity, our strength and support go up, but the fur-

ther away from this that we get with whatever we're lifting or carrying, the weaker our support system gets.

Example: if you hold a gallon jug of water close to your body, it feels light, but if you hold it out at arm's length it will feel very heavy and you will tire rapidly holding it like this. This would get especially tiring if you had to walk a distance holding this gallon jug in this extended position, however if you held it against your body, the load would seem much lighter.

Next try extending your arm out in front of you and walking a distance, eventually your arms would feel like they're supporting a load of bricks compared to when they are hanging along your sides and close to your center of gravity. I'm simply using the above example to show how fatiguing it can be if our body parts are not positioned to make the most of our center of gravity and instead are positioned away from it putting

pressure on the back and causing unnecessary compression. Over a period of time this will cause wear and tear much like carrying a load of bricks on one side of a pickup bed, eventually it could cause a degenerative condition on that side or at the least a herniated tire.

Exercise can help strengthen our posture, but we also need to address something else that we do not hear much of and that's muscular balance. This is fairly easy to keep in balance by making so an even amount of exercise is distributed between pulling and pushing exercises. We see this imbalance often in someone that puts primary focus on exercises for chest and abs which will eventually pull the shoulders forward because of the amount of muscle on the front side vs. the back side. A good way to check to see if there is an imbalance in strength is to see if you can pull the same amount of weight that you can push.

We can keep ourselves aligned with our center of gravity and improve our posture by keeping our head level with our ear lobes lined up with our shoulders and our shoulders lined up with our hips. This will help with standing or sitting posture and will position us much stronger against whatever weight we carry whether our own bodyweight or additional weight we have to carry. When we keep bad posture, we can expect it to eventually accumulate into degenerative disks, knee and hip problems and at the least miserable bone, joint and spinal conditions!

If we can lighten the load we carry 30%, (by keeping good posture) would it not be worth it, if we were 30% less tired at the end of the day and have 30% less wear and tear on our skeletal structure? This can help us have a much better power and economy of movement in our youth and quality of life in our Golden Years as well!

The machinery of voter suppression



By Chris Denson, GA Public Policy Foundation

In the running debate over Georgia's inflated housing prices, there are the usual suspects: high interest rates, the cost of building materials, Wall Street investors. But while Georgians seek to assign blame for why "starter homes" are increasingly unattainable, a lesser known culprit remains the cost of time.

Across the state, research shows that the cost of regulatory delay is no longer just a bureaucratic headache for builders; it has a direct impact on the bank accounts of families trying to purchase a home. Unfortunately, the sheer length of time it takes to gain approval has become a significant tax on new homeowners.

For a typical single-family home in Georgia, the average cost of permitting delays is less than one percent of the final purchase price. But on a \$350,000 home, even that 0.8% equates to a "waiting fee" of \$2,800. This is money unavailable to be spent on brick facades, sturdier foundations, or even energy-efficient windows

– it is wasted capital.

To understand why time is so expensive, consider how a house actually gets built. Most developers rely on construction loans to fund their projects, which accrue interest the moment the first dollar is drawn.

For context, Georgia law currently requires local governments to approve a building permit within 45 days. But when a local government sends required changes back to the builder or developer, this "shot clock" resets – even, or especially, if not all departments involved in reviewing the plan have seen it yet. As a homeowner once told me, "I build in five metro Atlanta counties. In one county, I can break ground within two days of submitting my permit. In another, it takes seven months."

Advocates for reforming this process aren't seeking to decrease the timeframe, just to enforce it.

Cities and counties note these delays are often due to incomplete permit applications. Builders and developers counter that some of these resubmissions

occur unnecessarily, like when one city or county department demands changes to the building plan that are in conflict with another department's directive.

Regardless, the interest keeps building on the construction loan – not to mention any fees paid to the engineers and architects to make the requisite alterations. All of these costs are ultimately passed on to the homebuyer.

The solution isn't to eliminate oversight, but to make it more efficient. And yet, what may seem like a straightforward call for good government can often get lost in the dynamics that accompany the politics of housing.

That is why it is important to note that reforming this process is separate from zoning decisions, like approving a new subdivision. These permitting delays are costs accumulated after the community has weighed in, policymakers have made their decision, and the builders are simply waiting for the local government's green light to break ground.

Critics also argue that any attempt to accelerate this process is an attempt to bypass environmental protections or erode safety standards. This is a misnomer; streamlining this process is not a way to cut corners.

Clarity and consistency are the goals, not the erosion of consumer protections. A home would still need to meet the International Building Code,

it would still need to be structurally sound and fire-resistant and it would still need to meet all of the existing environmental standards. This would also ensure that a builder knows exactly what the requirements are and that the government provides an acceptance (or denial) in weeks instead of months.

Fortunately, addressing this situation has received bicameral support so far in the General Assembly.

HB 812, sponsored by Representative Mike Cheokas, and SB 447, sponsored by Senator Clint Dixon, both seek to tighten the 45-day approval process, provide clarity on the requirements for a complete application on the front end and reasons for denial on the back end. Local governments which process more than 250 permits in a year are also required to provide real time status updates on a public website.

Both bills have passed out of committee in their respective chambers and are awaiting a floor vote.

While the state and local governments cannot control the Federal Reserve's interest rates or the impact of tariffs on building materials, they can help prevent costs from unnecessary delays.

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

Question To Candidates: How Will You Actually Represent Us?

Charlie Harper
Guest Columnist

Our half-century long cold war with Iran entered a hot stage over the weekend. Every major leader of Iran's government and military who was in place on October 7th 2023 has been eliminated, along with most of those who led their terrorist proxy organizations. Who and what replaces them remains an open and defining question.

Here at home, it is qualifying week for Georgia politicians. While many campaigns have been announced for a year or longer – with some surprising recent entries keeping things from getting stale – candidates are officially paying their qualifying fees to put their name on ballots for primaries that will be held in May.

In addition to open contests for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and four of Georgia's fourteen seats in Congress, Georgians will have a hotly contested race for U.S. Senate. Every other member of Congress must stand for re-election, with Congressman David Scott facing at least three announced primary challengers in a relatively newly redrawn district which is vastly different than the one he represented for most of his two

decades in Washington.

Every State Senator and State Representative will have to defend their current seat. Announcements for those not running for re-election picked up last week, as is custom. A few more usually happen the week of qualifying.

And within all of this backdrop of future plans, we must deal with current business. Friday March 6th is "Crossover Day", a self-imposed deadline by the legislature where a bill must pass one chamber to be considered by the other in this year's session.

The General Assembly has scheduled their final day – Sine Die – for April 2nd. Georgia's primary elections are scheduled for May 19th, with run-offs as necessary on June 16th. To paraphrase the guys from Bull Durham's famous pitching mound scene, "We're dealing with a lot."

The truth is, we always are. Sometimes many things crash our headlines at the same time. We as citizens and voters can easily get overwhelmed trying to figure it all out.

This is a good time to remind ourselves why we have representative government. It's almost become a partisan thing to say unfortunately, but there is a dif-

ference between a pure democracy and a republic.

We elect people at all levels of government to be the stewards of most of these policy decisions. In an age where social media goads us into believing we must have an opinion on everything – and then pretends every opinion is equally valid – we don't have the time nor do many have the wisdom to craft long term solutions to all of these problems.

Elections are important because this is where we select the people who are supposed to make the time for understanding what the problems are before they happen, having proper policies in place to prevent them in advance or correct them if they do, and ultimately, do what is in the best interest of all of us. This is a high bar that too many fail to meet, but it is the perspective we must maintain and enforce if our republic is to succeed.

We're going to hear a lot about the President from both parties in the next seven months, in both the primaries and the general election. He is perhaps the biggest lightning rod of a leader in modern history, eliciting strong opinions in both directions.

Many Republicans will claim allegiance to him and his agenda. Many Democrats will pledge

to stop anything he proposes or anyone that aligns with him. This is how the game is currently played.

No matter which side of the partisan aisle you fall – or remain somewhere in the middle – some perspective and outright skepticism of this approach is in order. We maintain divisions between the federal, state, and local governments for a reason.

We then have checks and balances between legislative, executive, and judicial to ensure that the collaborative approach to a republic is maintained. Our founders avoided anything that resembled an all-powerful central government nor a single executive consolidating power.

There's perhaps an even more critical point here, especially for those who truly believe the President fully matches their own interests or none of them. He will only be President for two more years. If we're electing someone whose entire message is to support or block him at every juncture, what is their plan to represent you and us after his term expires?

Campaigns are job interviews. We understand candidates come prepared with planned answers

**HARPER
CONTINUED PG 5A**

The Leader Tribune

A division of the Georgia Trust for Local News

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OUR GOALS

The Leader Tribune is published proudly for the citizens of Fort Valley, Byron & the surrounding area and its goal is to produce quality, profitable, community oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and a strong dedication toward printing the truth.

HOW TO SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage readers to submit letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. All letters printed in The Leader Tribune will appear with the writer's name and hometown – we do not publish anonymous letters. The newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject letters for reasons of grammar, punctuation, taste and brevity. Letter writers are asked to submit no more than two letters per person per month. We cannot guarantee that a letter will be printed on a specific date. The Leader Tribune prefers that letters be typed. Letters to the editor are published in the order they are received as space permits. There are three ways to submit a letter to the editor

E-mail it to news@theleadertribune.net, mail it to The Leader Tribune at 109 Anderson Ave, Fort Valley, GA 31030, or drop it off at 109 Anderson Ave in Fort Valley – Monday through Friday.

OUR POLICIES

Signed letters to the editor welcomed. Please include address and phone number. Liability for an error will not exceed the cost of space occupied by the error. We cannot be responsible for return of pictures or material unless stamped, return addressed envelope is included.

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Atheists In Foxholes



By Billy Powell
Parables to Ponder
LT Columnist

"The heavens declared the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork," yet "the fool has said in his heart there is not God," wrote the Psalmist. The atheist concludes that the universe is simply an accident that happened—that its vastness, precision, order, and complexity do not suggest a governing Intelligence. There have been many avowed atheists in history—philosophers like Voltaire, Diderot, Feuerbach, Darwin, Freud, and even C.S. Lewis before he became a Christian.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was an out-and-out unbeliever. He wrote that the "concept of God was a fairy tale of religion." He asserted the religions of man-

kind were mass delusions and that the scriptures "are full of contradictions, revisions, and falsifications." He wondered if "Jesus Christ was not "a part of mythology" or merely "a deluded creature." Freud proffered two arguments against the existence of God: (1) belief in God is a merely a projection of powerful wishes and inner needs for something beyond ourselves, and (2) a loving God would not allow us to suffer.

At the low end of creation is the unseen microcosmic world of the atom with its core of protons and neutrons and orbiting electrons. At the upper end is the macrocosmic world of the universe, its solar systems, galaxies, and black holes. Since man stands at the center of creation, he cannot comprehend its extremes; yet he can marvel at the majesty of a flower, the mystery of a spider spinning a web, and the splendor of the mountains and oceans. It is ironic that those who contend there is no God begin praying once their lives are in jeopardy. As the saying goes, there are no atheists in foxholes.

For philosophers who say that a random collision of atoms produced matter in the universe and later gave life to one-celled

organisms that evolved into humans, we must ask how they account for the "space" wherein the solar systems and galaxies swirl and the "time" that chronicles their movement? Did space and time materialize without origin? We must conclude that the universe is the work of Intelligent Design. The starry sky above and the moral law within are signposts of a Supreme Being. To believe contrary is to accept the premise that a tornado could pass through a junkyard and leave in its wake a fully equipped and functional Boeing 707 jetliner.

The Biblical account of creation begins with "God created the heavens and the earth." During the six days of creation, God created our earth, its seas, plant life, animal life and finally man. Into Adam's inert body God "breathed the breath of life" making him a living soul. Romans 1:20 clearly states that unbelievers are without excuse to deny the existence of God: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

Just Because They Bleed Does Not Mean They Will Die



By Jeff Cook
Extension Agent

You don't die every time that you get a cut and bleed and your muscadines won't die either. However if you don't see them bleeding you won't be able to enjoy one of the South's many treasures. Muscadines/Scuppernongs are truly a fruit for the south. They were discovered here by the early colonists and have been a favorite fruit of southerners since. Although muscadines can be grown successfully in most parts of the state, they are best adapted to

the Piedmont and Coastal Plain areas.

Muscadine fruit are produced on new shoots arising from last year's growth. That is why we have to prune back the canes/vines that grew the previous year to about 3 inches from the main vine. That 3 inch section is referred to as the spur. You have a few more weeks to prune but you should expect the vines to bleed, or ooze sap, excessively. This is ok and should not result in any problems for the vines. I pruned some vines last week and sap was dripping on the ground before I got to the end.

If vines are not pruned the results are: no fruit development or too much fruit causing quality problems. Another problem with overgrown vines is the lack of air circulation within the canopy. This can increase both insect and disease problems as fruit begin to mature. Overgrown vines remain both cooler and wetter which is a great envi-

ronment for things like macrophoma rot, black rot, bitter rot, and ripe rot. The spotted wing drosophila is a sporadic fruit pest that loves muscadines and prefers cool damp environments as well.

Don't forget that muscadines also require a good bit of magnesium (Mg). You can supply this nutrient along with a little bit of sulfur by sprinkling a tablespoon of Epsom salts around each vine. This should be done every year.

So, if you want to enjoy muscadines this summer go out there and make them bleed. If you really enjoy watching unsightly vines grow then go find some Kudzu and let it go. It is much easier to prune and I know where you can get a recipe for kudzu quiche. I guess another southern treasure. Contact me with questions of comments at 478-862-5496, 478-825-6466 or mackiv@uga.edu

Byron Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

Contributed

One of the biggest events of the year in Byron is the very popular Byron Lions Club Annual Jethro Johnson Pancake Breakfast coming up on March 22 at the Mickey Fuller Masonic Lodge #720 at 106 Galan Drive (behind Rooks Funeral Home). For only \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids (ages 3-12) you will get a full pancake breakfast accompanied by scrambled eggs and sausage, with coffee, orange juice, and milk for the kids.

There may be some new additions to the menu! Come and see!!! Plus, you'll be supporting your community, as all proceeds help the Lions help others.

The breakfast is held each year on a Sunday in early spring in honor of Jethro Johnson, who was a long-serving member of the Byron Lions Club, and a community leader. Breakfast will be hot and ready to eat before church, starting at 7:30 AM, or come hungry up until 1pm. Tickets are available from

any Lions Club member or at the door.

The club meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month, the first Thursday of the month at Uncorked Event Center (behind Georgia Bobs) at 6:00PM, and the third Thursday of the month at 8:00 AM at Denny's. Anyone interested in participating is heartily invited to join us. For more information, please contact Lion Marlene Humphry at 478-918-3666, email at mhumphry@cox.net

Spring Is Just Around The Corner!

Contributed

It won't be long till the peach blossoms, cherry blossoms and Bradford pears are in bloom. In fact, some of them already are blooming! It is a beautiful time of year.

The Byron Lions Club has a way to make your home/porch/deck even more beautiful. We are again selling absolutely gorgeous hanging baskets—both flowering and foliage. There are seven varieties of 10 inch foliage baskets available for \$20.00 each—Spider Plants, Purple

Wandering Jews, Variegated Swedish Ivy, White Wandering Jews, Bridal Veils, Bolivian Jews, and Green Swedish Ivy.

There are seven varieties of blooming 10 inch baskets available—Petunia, Geranium, Fuchsia, New Guinea, Verbena, Scaveola, and Lantana. They are very hardy as well as beautiful. They are \$20.00 each. You can also order a 14 inch wire Cocoa basket filled with a variety of flowers for \$40.00. DEADLINE TO ORDER IS MARCH 14. We won't know for sure when de-

livery will be until we place the orders. (We have asked for delivery on April 10th.)

Baskets will be delivered to you as soon as possible after we receive them. To order call either Frany Washko at (478) 396-0131 or Marlene Humphry at (478) 918-3666, or see any Byron Lions Club member. Don't miss this opportunity to help the Byron Lions provide needed services in the community and add natural beauty to your home at the same time.

a true understanding of how they make hard decisions when times get tough.



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

email: news@theleadertribune.com

LENTEN SCHEDULE

ST. ANDREW'S & ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

Please join us - All are welcome! 6:00pm Thursdays during the Lenten Season. Covered Dish, Presentations, Evening Prayers Beginning at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 309 Central Avenue, Fort Valley. Thursday, March 5 - Richard Barrett, Truckstop Ministries, Inc.

Thursday, March 12 - Ann McGehee, Women's Bible Study Leader & Host

Then at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1000 State University Drive, Fort Valley

Thursday, March 19 - Anna Holloway, Author of "Be Sure to Wave," Her Latest Book

Thursday, March 26 - Julie Groce, Canon for Special Projects

Friday 6:00pm February 27-March 27 Stations of the Cross in St. Andrew's Church St. Andrew's & St. Luke's wish you a Holy Lenten Season

USHER'S TEMPLE CME CHURCH

411 Railroad Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030. 478-825-5106.

Join us each Sunday morning with Pastor Tawanna B. Harris and members at 9:30am for Sunday School followed at 11:00am with holy worship service. You may join us virtually via Facebook Live and Youtube. Bible study is each Wednesday in person at 12:00 and virtually at 7:00pm via Zoom.

FOOD PANTRY DISTRIBUTION AT ST. PETER A.M.E. CHURCH ANNEX

Food Pantry Distribution at St. Peter A.M.E. Church Annex, 502 State University Drive, Fort Valley, GA.

Fourth Thursday of each month (January-October) and Third Thursday of November and December. Call (478) 825-8452 for details.

BAHA'I COMMUNITY OF PEACH COUNTY

The Baha'i Community of Peach County warmly invites you to an interfaith devotional and discussion via Zoom on the second Wednesday of each month, 7:00 - 8:00pm. The purpose of the gathering is to build friendship and unity. No contributions are solicited or accepted. If you're interested, email us at peachcobahais@gmail.com, and we'll send you an invitation!

COME PRAISE THE LORD OVER ZOOM

Sundays 10am - 12noon. Wednesday nights 7pm-8:30pm. Meeting# 2059432744 Code 7Sb6h8 Host James Manning (Elder)

CHRISTIAN FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

"Connecting People to Christ" Rev. Bobby J. Roberson, Pastor 478-822-9897. 1735 Hwy 341 North, Fort Valley, GA 31030

FORT VALLEY METHODIST

CHURCH

301 W. Church Street (478)825-2762

Join us each Sunday at 10:55AM for Christian fellowship and a spirit-lead service with our pastor, Rev. Herb Flanders. Sunday School for all ages begins at 9:45AM. Nursery is available for infants and younger children.

FT VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (behind Courthouse)

Come & worship in a casual atmosphere at 5:00pm each Sunday. Our weekly pastor will be the Rev. Dr. Bryan Whitfield, a Presbyterian minister who also teaches at Mercer University. For any interested, we will have weekly Sunday School Bible Study starting at 4:00pm in the room off the sanctuary. Come and join us for an exciting summer. Brenda Rackley 478-283-1356.

FRIENDSHIP MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

2560 Willow Lake Road, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

GRACE HOUSE COMMUNITY FOODBANK

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays. 9:00am - 12:00pm. Located behind Fort Valley Court House, 203 Central Ave., Fort Valley. Phone: 478-825-2562 (TFN)

GREATER FAITH BABIES MINISTRIES

1000 Tulip Drive, Fort Valley. Sunday School at 8:30am Morning Worship at 10:00am Wednesday: Free Fellowship Meal at 6pm 60 Minutes Bible Study from 7:00pm -8:00pm Come and fellowship with us!

HOSTING ANGLICAN INQUIRERS' CLASS

Led by Father Matt Harlow Learn the basics of the Christian Faith while enjoying a meal and fellowship. We will cover theology, history, liturgy, and more! To register contact Fr Matt at harlowmattthew@gmail.com https://www.middlegaanglican.org

THE LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

Looking for a church? Pastor Tony Wood invites you to come visit us. Bring the kids for Children's Church! Sunday School at 9:30. Sunday Worship at 10:30.

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SAINT ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH located at 309 Central Avenue, Fort Valley, GA 31030. The Rev. Harriette Simmons Ballard. Services every Sunday at 9:00am with Coffee Hour following in Robinson Hall.

ST. JULIANA'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

804 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Phone:(478) 825-7127 Sat., 7:00pm Spanish Mass Sun., 9:00am English Mass;

BAHA'I FAITH

"The world of humanity has two wings - one is woman and the other is man. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly."

Baha'u'llah

For more information peachcobahais@gmail.com www.bahai.us

11:00 am Spanish Mass
Weekday Mass: Tues., - Thurs. 6:30pm
Confessions: Thurs., 6:00pm; Sat. 6:30pm; Sun. 10:30am
Adoration: Thurs., 7:00pm; Sat. 8-9am; Sun. 6:00pm

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1000 State University Drive across from the first entrance to FVSU.

We hold morning prayer services, at 10:15am Sundays. Eucharist (Communion) is on second Sundays at 11am.

Please donate to our Little Free Pantry on Charlesvoix St. behind the church (or take food if you are in need). For more info, go to our Facebook page or contact Anna Holloway 478-397-4678 and leave a text message.

SAINT PETER A.M.E. CHURCH 502 State University Drive, Fort Valley GA 31030

Join us for a rewarding Worship Experience at "The Rock" each Sunday at 10:00AM. Our pastor is Rev. Anthony Dixon. You may also join us via YouTube and Facebook. Weekly Bible Study every Wednesday at 7:00p.m.

Bianca Ballard (478)825-8452.

SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH OF FORT VALLEY

1101 East Church St, Fort Valley, GA 31030

Please join us as we continue to seek to save them that are lost! Our weekly schedule is:
Sunday School at 10:00 A.M.
Sunday Worship at 11:15 A.M.
Bible Study at 7:00 P.M. - Tuesdays

To contact us, please leave a message at (478) 825-7581 or send email to secretary@shilohbaptistfortvalley.org or write us at the above post office box.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH

505 State University Drive, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

Trinity Baptist Church welcomes you to join us in holy worship service each Sunday morning at 11:00 am. Sunday School is scheduled at 9:30 am. and Bible Study at 7:00 pm. on Wednesday, currently on Zoom. (Contact us at the above number for Zoom access information.)

Also, we invite the participation of children in our Godly Girls and Champs Ministries. Godly Girls, ages 8-15, meets Wednesday at 5 pm; Champs on Thursday at 6 pm. in Church Annex. Transportation is available. We look forward to having you join us soon!

For additional information, call 478-825-7349.

WOMEN'S MONTH

CONTINUED FROM 4A

across the State of Georgia whose contributions have made a difference in history, education, public service, business, and beyond."

Their first highlight is Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts of the USA, and a trailblazer through Georgia's history. Low founded the Girl Scouts in 1912, creating an organization dedicated to building courage, confidence, and character.

In a similar vein to what

they did in honor of Black History Month, the Peach County Government Facebook page will also be featuring members of the Peach County team who have chosen to share their stories and experiences serving our community, something I am greatly looking forward to reading.

If you would like to know more about Women's History Month, the National Women's History Museum has plenty of resources, and they

can be found at https://www.womenshistory.org.

The National Women's History Alliance, which sets the theme for the year and provides toolkits for those interested, can be found at nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org.

"The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity," Amelia Mary Earhart, aviation pioneer (July 24, 1897 - January 5, 1939).

HARPER

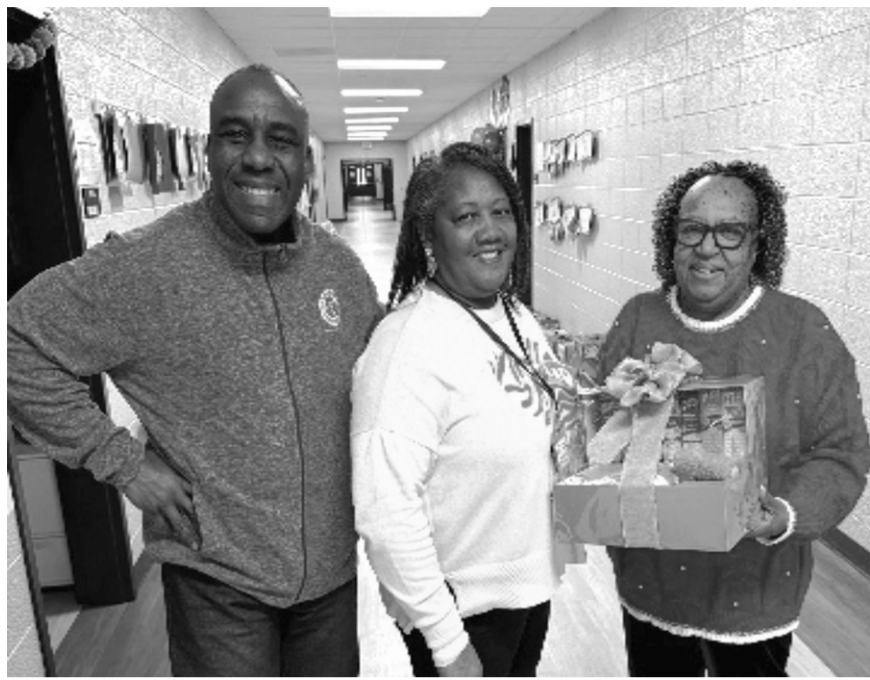
CONTINUED FROM 4A

for the easy, expected questions.

We're also hiring leaders for the long haul. At some point

they too will be dealing with a lot. We need to push them beyond platitudes and pledges of loyalty or opposition and get

PCREA Honors Faculty and Staff with Perfect Attendance



Annette Williams – Byron Elementary

Photo Contributed



Annie Ruth McKenzie Fort Valley Middle School

Photo Contributed



Leslie Rogers – Kay Road Elementary

Photo Contributed



Rodney Hester and Reginald Cuthpert, Peach County Achievement Academy

Photo Contributed



Christie Moss – Peach County High School

Photo Contributed



Deidre Hammock – Byron Middle School

Photo Contributed

By Hope Giles, PCREA

The Peach County Retired Educators Association recognized faculty and staff with perfect attendance from August to December by giving them gifts. Honorees include An-

nette Williams (Byron Elementary), Deidre Hammock (Byron Middle), Christie Moss (Peach County High), Principal Rodney Hester and Reginald Cuthpert (Achievement Academy), the Head Custodial Engineer (Fort Valley Middle), and Leslie Rogers (Kay Road Elementary).

SPRING INTO GOOD HEALTH

CONTINUED FROM 1A

assistance.” According to Jordan, this year’s event will feature over 40 vendors, each with a shared commitment to promoting health and wellness as well as demonstrating strong community support.

Those who have been to a Spring Into Good Health event in the past couple of years can expect to see some familiar organizations.

The North Central Health District will be returning, and this year, they will be introducing their new DPH Home Visiting Program, which provides supportive services to expectant mothers from pregnancy through their baby’s first year of life. Services are delivered by Public Health Nurses and trained staff and include ongoing newborn and infant support throughout the first year, including breastfeeding guidance.

In addition, Babies Can’t Wait, Children 1st, First Steps, and Sake Kids Central Georgia will provide items for the Community Baby Shower, which will take place during the event, helping to support and celebrate families with young children.

The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, a platinum

sponsor for the fourth consecutive year, will be in attendance to provide substance abuse prevention and education resources. Peach Concerned Citizens will be returning as well to provide resources to the community.

This year’s Spring Into Good Health will have a new resource by a familiar organization. Atrium Health Navicent’s Mammography Coach will be present this year and will be offering mammograms during the event. There is still space available, so those interested can register by calling the Health Department for an appointment. The service is offered to the insured and the uninsured.

In addition to the Mammography Coach, Dental Care of Bonaire will also be in attendance and plan to offer dental screenings and oral cancer screenings.

Jordan and the Peach County Health Department are hoping that Spring Into Good Health will continue to bring the Peach County community together to raise awareness as well as provide education and resources to the public.

“Our hope is that Spring Into Good Health

brings the community together in a positive and supportive environment centered on overall wellness. We want the event to do more than simply provide information. We aim to create a lasting impact,” Jordan said. “Our greatest hope is to empower individuals and families to take charge of their health, increase awareness of available local resources, and strengthen partnerships among community organizations, healthcare providers, and the families they serve.”

When asked if she had anything she would like to say to the citizens of Peach County, Jordan wanted to emphasize the importance of personal health and community wellness.

“Your health matters. Your well-being matters. Your family matters. This year, we are especially proud to share that we have received our highest level of sponsorship support to date, reflecting the

growing dedication and investment in the health of our community. Community wellness is a shared responsibility, and we grow stronger when we come together. We encourage you to come out, take advantage of the free services and resources. See firsthand the strong commitment our local partners have toward improving the health and well-being of Peach County,” Jordan said.

The Peach County Health Department is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They offer over 30 free and low-cost programs for our community, including family planning, immunizations, child health screenings, breast and cervical cancer screenings, environmental health services, WIC, and much more. The Peach County Health Department can be reached by phone at (478) 825-6939.

Sen. Steven McNeel Officially Sworn In as Georgia State Senator

By GA Senate Press Office

ATLANTA (February 25, 2026) — This week, Sen. Steven McNeel (R-Macon) was officially sworn in as a member of the Georgia State Senate during a ceremony at the Georgia State Capitol. He now represents the 18th Senate District, which includes all of Crawford, Monroe, Peach and Upson counties, as well as portions of Macon-Bibb and Houston counties.

“It is a profound honor to take the oath of office and represent the citizens of the 18th Senate District,” said Sen. McNeel. “Middle Georgia is built on faith, personal responsibility and a strong work ethic. I come to the Senate committed to defending those values, supporting our agricultural community,



strengthening our local economy and ensuring that state government remains accountable to the people it serves. While the legislative session is already underway, I am prepared to get to work immediately on behalf of the families, farmers and small businesses who call our district home.”

Sen. McNeel was born and

raised in Georgia and is a graduate of the University of Georgia, where he earned his B.A. in Political Science and met his wife of 20 years, Mollie. He then attended the Mercer University’s Walter F. Georgia School of Law, where he obtained his J.D. He practices law at Buzzell, Welsh & Hill in Macon, Georgia, focusing on representing injured persons and their families. Sen. McNeel also manages his family’s timber farm located in southwest Georgia.

He is a member of Tall Timbers, the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association, Longleaf Alliance, Georgia-Alabama Land Trust, Georgia Forestry Association and Georgia Agribusiness Council.

Atrium Health Navicent eases masking and visitor policies amid decline in respiratory illnesses

By Atrium Health Navicent

MACON, Ga., Feb. 24, 2026 – After observing a steady decrease in respiratory illness cases among our patients and teammates, beginning 7 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 25, all Atrium Health Navicent locations are lifting temporary masking and visitor restrictions in place since December. Additionally, children 12 and under will again be able to visit area hospitals.

Masks are optional and continue to be available for visitors. The following exceptions remain in place: Anyone with respiratory symptoms, fever or a rash should not visit and masking is required for all indi-

viduals in high-risk patient areas when indicated by signage and for symptomatic patients if outside their patient room.

“With respiratory illness rates continuing to decrease over the past several weeks, we’re easing temporary restrictions, while staying ready to respond to any potential changes,” said Dr. Katie Passaretti, chief infection prevention officer for Advocate Health, of which Atrium Health Navicent is a part. “Our priority is safe, effective care, and while we are easing these restrictions, we continue to remind our communities about the importance of staying home when showing signs of illness. Together we can

keep more people healthy and limit the spread of illness.”

To reduce the chances of getting sick from respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, flu or RSV, clinicians recommend taking simple actions, like practicing good respiratory etiquette, including frequent handwashing, with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands, and stay home if you feel sick. Atrium Health Navicent continues to encourage all patients and the community to speak with their provider to stay up to date with all recommended vaccines.

Free Health Screenings
Free Food
Community Baby Shower
Live Cooking Demo

Line Dancing
Door Prizes
And More!

7th March 11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Marvin Crafter Festival Park
(310 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Fort Valley, GA)

Logos include: DPH Georgia Department of Public Health North Central Health District, The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, Peach County Fort Valley USA, PAUSE, Middle Georgia Wound Solutions, Peach Concerned Citizens Inc., Amerigroup RealSolutions in healthcare, Peach County Health Department, YATES Healthcare Consultants, LLC, U.S. AGRI BUSINESS, and DBHDD.

Legals

Legal Advertisements
E-Mail: legals@theleadertribune.com
E-Mail Attachments: Word Text Format
Legal Fax: 478-825-4130
AD DEADLINES: Friday's at 12:00 Noon
Information concerning legals call: 478-825-2432

of times the notice is inserted. All rates are set by the Georgia General Assembly.
For billing purposes, every word shall be counted as one word including words such as; the, of, a, etc. Grouped numbers shall be counted as one word.
The deadline for foreclosure notices and tax sales for disposal is Thursday the week before the first publication.
Incorporation Notice - These are notices concerning a business which is to be incorporated with the office located in Peach County. Related incorporation notices can include an intent to dissolve a corporation, a name change of the corporation and mergers of a corporation. These notices typically run two weeks at a cost of \$40.00.
Driving Under the Influence - State law requires publication of a picture and a brief notice of anyone convicted in Peach County of a third Driving Under the Influence charge. The fines and related matters of settlement are included. The fee for these

ads is \$25 each. These ads run one time and typically come from the Peach County State Court or the Municipal Court of incorporated cities.
Jue nile Matters - This broad category can include notices such as adoption, custody, jue nile court actions and contemporary custody. These matters frequently run from two to four times, depending on the order. Some of these issues come from the Peach County Jue nile Court, others from the Peach County Probate Court.
Domestic Matters - These include notices for change of name and for divorce. When one of the parties cannot be located locally, both of these items run four times.
Notice of Sale or Foreclosure Notice - These notices typically run the four Wednesdays prior to the first Tuesday of the month when the sales are held at the Peach County Courthouse in Fort Valley. The fee for these notices is \$15 per 100 words per insertion.
Publisher's Affidavit fee is \$10.

Legal Advertising Information

Legal advertisements are published each Wednesday in The Leader Tribune newspaper, the designated legal organ of Peach County and the City of Fort Valley, City of Byron.
For information concerning billing, please contact The Leader Tribune at (478)-825-2432. Notices cancelled after 12:00 Noon on Friday will be billed for insertion in that edition.

Legal ads may be sent via a Federal Express for Saturday delivery. Legal ads may be sent via email to legals@theleadertribune.net, please use word document or typed text. Many legal notices are billed at the rate of \$15.00 per 100 words or a portion thereof for each insertion for the first four insertions. Some specific types of ads, such as divorce, articles of incorporation, articles of merger, petition to adopt, name changes and DUI notices have fees set based on the number

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7231
IN RE: ESTATE OF ARTHUR FELCH WILLIAMS JR., DECEASED
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE
TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

and to whom it may concern: SHANNON DANIELLE WILLIAMS has petitioned for SHANNON DANIELLE WILLIAMS to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of ARTHUR FELCH WILLIAMS JR., deceased, of said County. (The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted. All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before MARCH 11, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing. KIM WILSON, Judge of the Probate Court
By Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court
205 West Church Street
Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 3/18, 2026 3692

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
IN RE: Estate of Nick Strickland, Jr.

All creditors of the Estate of Nick Strickland, Jr., deceased, late of Peach County, Georgia are hereby notified to render in their demands to the Executrix named below according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to said Executrix. Demands and payments may be sent to counsel for the Executrix Donna J. Culpepper, P. O. Box 1788, Byron, Georgia 31008.
This 2nd day of February, 2026.
Sylvia Strickland, Executrix
2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 2026 3676

DEBTORS AND CREDITORS STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF PEACH

All persons having claims against Jimmie Arlene Amerson and her estate are required to present the same to the undersigned, properly itemized and prove, within the time required by law. And

all persons indebted to said deceased, or her estate, are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This 10th day of February, 2026.

Angela Spinks, Executor
Attorney: Patrick C. Smith, Jr.
349 Margie Drive, Ste. 120
Warner Robins, GA 31088
Estate of: Jimmie Arlene Amerson
2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3689

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2026-YS-7236
IN RE: DEVIN LEMOINE HILL, DECEASED
NOTICE OF PETITION TO FILE FOR YEAR'S SUPPORT

The petition of KIMBERLY HILL, for a year's support from the estate of DEVIN LEMOINE HILL, deceased, for decedent's (surviving spouse) (and) (minor children), having been duly filed, all interested persons are hereby notified to show cause, if any they have, on or before MARCH 17, 2026, why said petition should not be granted.

All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed on or before the time stated in the preceding sentence. All objections should be sworn to before. A notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel or the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed the petition may be granted without a hearing. Kim Wilson, Judge of the Probate Court
By: Katrina Corbin, Clerk of the Probate Court
205 West Church Street, Fort Valley, Georgia 31030
478-825-2313
2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 3/18, 2026 3691

GEORGIA, PEACH COUNTY NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the Estate of SUSAN M. JOHNSON, deceased, of Peach County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said Estate required to make immediate payment.
This 4th day of February 2026.
Stephanie J. Harris, Executrix
c/o Rebecca C. Moody, Esq.
MOODY AND ASSOCIATES LAW FIRM, LLC
P.O. Box 422
Perry, GA 31069
478-988-0238
2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 2026 3677

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY, GEORGIA

IN THE INTEREST OF: JUVENILE FILE #7471-J C. J., SEX MALE, AGE <1, DOB 10/24/2025, CASE

#111-2026J-001
CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, CATHERINE JOHNSON; JERMEL TANEHILL; ANY UNKNOWN PUTATIVE FATHER(S), AND ANYONE ELSE CLAIMING A PARENTAL INTEREST IN THE ABOVE CHILD.

You are notified that a Dependency Petition with Custody Placed with Maternal Grandparents was filed against you in said court on February 10, 2026, and an Order for Service by Publication was entered on February 9, 2026.

YOU ARE COMMANDED AND REQUIRED TO BE AND APPEAR before Peach County Juvenile Court, held at Peach County Courthouse, Ft. Valley, Georgia on 2/24/26 at 9:00 o'clock a.m., and on 4/14/26 for a hearing following publication. Serve an answer on Petitioner's Attorney, James E. Patterson, P. O. Box 1006, Forsyth, Georgia 31029. You may obtain a copy of the petition by contacting Peach County Juvenile Court Clerk.

WITNESS the Honorable Judges of this court, this 10th day of February, 2026.
Whitney Nelson, CLERK,
PEACH COUNTY PEACH COURT
2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3687

LT26-003
APPLICATION TO REGISTER A BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED UNDER TRADE NAME, PARTNERSHIP OR OTHERS STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF Peach

The undersigned does hereby certify that Jose Romero conducting a business as Macon Trading Co in the City of Byron, County of Peach in the State of Georgia, under the name of Macon Trading Co and that the nature of the business is Retail and that the names and addresses of the persons, firms or partnership owning and carrying on said trade or business are Jose Romero
3025 Barnett Rd Byron, GA 31008
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24 day of February, 2026
Andrea Youngblood
Notary Public
Filed in office, this 24th day of February, 2026 at 9:55A.M.
Book B
Phillis L. Ballow
Clerk Superior Court, Peach County, Ga.
March 4, 11, 2026

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the Estate of Arlis Turner, deceased late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.
Allison R. Heard, Administrator
c/o Becky Wilcox
Attorney At Law
P.O. Box 303
Byron, GA 31008

2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 2026 3681

LT26-004
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: JOHN WILLIAM FLOWERS, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 2026-YS-7235
NOTICE OF PETITION TO FILE FOR YEAR'S SUPPORT

The petition of TRACY J. FLOWERS for a year's support from the estate of JOHN WILLIAM FLOWERS, deceased, for decedent's (surviving spouse) (and)(minor child(ren)), having been duly filed, all interested persons are hereby notified to show cause, if any they have, on or before MARCH 25 2026 why said petition should not be granted.

All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed on or before the time stated in the preceding sentence. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed the petition may be granted without a hearing.
Kim Wilson
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Katrina Corbin
Clerk of the Probate Court
205 WEST CHURCH STREET
FORT VALLEY GA 31030
478-825-2313
March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the Estate of Frank Leroy Tracy, deceased late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.
Micheal Leroy Tracy, Administrator
c/o Becky Wilcox
Attorney At Law
P.O. Box 303
Byron, GA 31008
2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 2026 3683

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA CIVIL ACTION FILE NUMBER 26-V-0068

IN RE THE NAME CHANGE OF NICHOLAS HARPER, PETITIONER.
NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME OF ADULT
Nicholas Harper filed a petition in the Peach County Superior Court on February 6, 2026, to change the name from: Nicholas Alexander Harper to Damu Akbar Manetane. Any interested party has the right to appear in this case and file objections within 30 days after the petition was filed.

2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3684

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2026-PRO-7229
IN RE: ESTATE OF A.J. RILEY, DECEASED
NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS
Re: Estate of A.J. Riley

All creditors of the Estate of A.J. Riley, deceased, late of Peach County, Georgia, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said Estate are required to make immediate payment to me.
This 10th day of February, 2026.
Tara Tourville, Esq.
Attorney for Estate of A.J. Riley
446 S. Houston Lake Road
Warner Robins, GA 31088
(478)333-6502
2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 2026 3685

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA ESTATE NO. 2019-ADM-6173

IN RE: ESTATE OF TERNONIO RAHEEM COLEMAN, DECEASED
NOTICE
IN RE: Petition for Discharge of Personal Representative
TO: ANTONIO COLEMAN and (all and singular the heirs of said decedent,)(the beneficiaries under the will,) and to whom it may concern:
This is to notify you to file an objection, if there is any, to the above-referenced petition, in this Court on or before March 11, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.
Kim Wilson, Judge of the Probate Court
By Katrina Corbin, Clerk for the Probate Court
205 West Church Street, Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-2313
2/25, 3/04, 3/11, 3/18, 2026 3690

LT26-001
IN THE PROBATE COURT OF

PEACH COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF JUDITH LOIS HOLLY, DECEASED
ESTATE NO. 2026-ADM-7238
PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: ANY AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES and to whom it may concern: JEFFREY SCOTT HOLLY has petitioned for JEFFREY SCOTT HOLLY to be appointed administrator(s) of the estate of JUDITH LOIS HOLLY deceased, of said county. (The petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond, waiver of reports, waiver of statements, and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. § 53-12-261.) All interested persons are hereby notified to show cause why said petition should not be granted. All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before MARCH 18, 2026.

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a probate court clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact probate court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be scheduled at a later date. If no objections are filed, the petition may be granted without a hearing.
Kim Wilson
Judge of the Probate Court
By: Katrina Corbin
Clerk of the Probate Court
205 WEST CHURCH STREET
FORT VALLEY GA 31030
478-825-2313
March 4, 11, 18, 25, 2026

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the Estate of Susan Betty Turner, deceased late of Peach County, are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.
Allison R. Heard, Executor
c/o Becky Wilcox
Attorney At Law
P.O. Box 303
Byron, GA 31008
2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/04, 2026 3682

LT26-002
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:

1973 Altair Mobile Home, VIN# 62A3702456 pursuant to Order in case Breckenridge MHC LLV d/b/a Grove Estates v. Zelda Thomas, Case No.: 25-1855FC on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 beginning at 10:00 AM at 4001 US Highway 41 N, Lot 87, Byron, GA. 31008. Turner Padgett Graham & Laney, P.A., c/o James S. Murray, PO Box 1495, Augusta, GA. 30903. 706-722-7543.
March 4, 11, 2026

END LEGALS

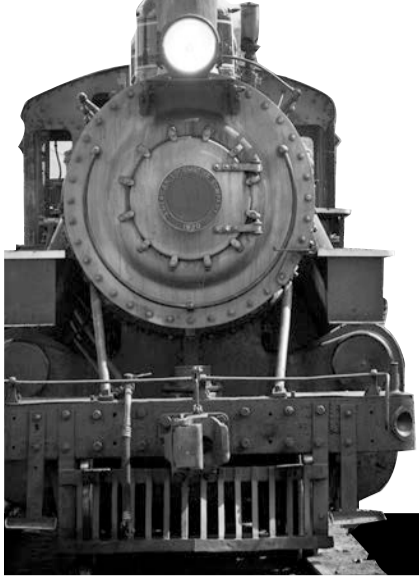
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News Match

- Donations made between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31 by individuals will be matched dollar for dollar by NewsMatch.
- Checks dated between the campaign dates can be made to Georgia Press Educational Foundation with "Capitol Beat" in the subject line and mailed to Georgia Press Association, P.O. Box 4003, Marietta, Ga. 30061
- Donations can be made via a cell phone with the QR code seen above or online

As a nonprofit news organization operated by Georgia Press Educational Foundation, Capitol Beat exists solely through the financial backing of individuals and organizations who support its mission to provide thorough, unbiased coverage of state government that news consumers can trust. Capitol Beat provides gavel-to-gavel coverage of Georgia General Assembly sessions and year-round coverage of the governor's office, statewide elected officials, legislative committee hearings, state agencies and the Georgia Supreme Court.

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LOCAL MATTERS

STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 3/1/26

AUCTION

FIREARMS AUCTION LIVE, ONLINE & PHONE BIDDING
March 14th @ 10am
Military, Modern, Sporting & Classic Firearms
www.montroseauction.com
478-376-4559
Greensboro, GA
GAL 2006

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Stroke and Cardiovascular disease are leading causes of death, according to the American Heart Association. Screenings can provide peace of mind or early detection! Contact Life Line Screening to schedule your screening. Special offer - 5 screenings for just \$149. Call 1-855-391-2065

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TEEN EXPRESSIONS
A Talent Showcase & Poetry Slam
In honor of Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
March 14th, 2026 2pm-5pm
A10TION Foundation Center
1000 Tulip Drive
Fort Valley, GA 31030
Peer Performances | Free Food | Community Resources
For more info, contact
Christina at cwright@cl-sh.org or 478-731-9018
Crisis Line & Safe House of Central Georgia
Music by Dj Streetz

LSGT Business of the Month



By PCBS

The Peach County High School Local School Governance Team presented Twin Oaks Landscaping in Byron with Business of the Month for January. Twin Oaks Landscaping has supported Peach County High School by providing lunch and a goody bags for Faculty and Staff.

The Biddle family has 3 PCBS graduates! If you need landscaping services feel free to contact them for grading, irrigation, full landscape installation, retaining walls and anything that is needed with your yard. You can reach them at 478-719-0733. Pictured are Bre Biddle, Brittney Biddle and LSGT Chairman Dustin Chancellor. Thank you, Twin Oaks Landscaping, for your support of PCBS.

Byrom Middle FFA Responders Breakfast



By PCSS

The Byron Middle FFA chapter celebrated National FFA Week from February 9-13, 2026, with a variety of activities designed to involve both students and staff while highlighting the importance of agricultural education and the National FFA Organization.

One of the highlights of the week took place on Monday, February 9, 2026, when FFA of-

ficers hosted their annual drive-through First Responder Breakfast. The event was held from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. as a way to show appreciation for local first responders who serve Peach County and surrounding areas.

During the breakfast, FFA officers handed out Chick-fil-A chicken biscuits along with juice or water as a small token of gratitude. The FFA officers were proud to recognize the dedi-

cation and hard work of first responders and to give back to those who support the community every day.

National FFA Week at Byron Middle School was a meaningful celebration of leadership, service, and appreciation, reinforcing the FFA mission of making a positive difference in the lives of students and the community.

Georgia Centennial Farm Applications Open Now

Contributed

Atlanta, GA. (February 23, 2026) – Georgia Centennial Farm applications are now open to all qualifying candidates. The deadline to apply is May 1, 2026.

Farms play a pivotal role in shaping Georgia's legacy, serving as the bedrock for economic, cultural, and familial traditions for generations of Georgians. Several farms boast a legacy spanning more than a cen-

tury, and the state recognizes their historical significance through the Georgia Centennial Farm program.

More than three decades ago, the Centennial Farm program was created to draw attention to historic farms and to encourage preservation. Since 1993, the program has recognized more than 630 farms around the state.

Nominees must be working farms with a minimum of 10 acres of

the original purchase, actively involved in agricultural production, and must generate at least \$1,000 in annual farm-generated income. In addition, farms must have been continuously farmed by members of the same family for at least 100 years or must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Qualifying Georgia Centennial Farms are honored each October during an awards ceremony at the

Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter in Perry.

The Georgia Centennial Farm program is administered by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Farm Bureau Federation, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia EMC, Georgia National Fair and Agricenter, and University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

For more information, contact Rose Mayo, Historic Preservation Division Outreach Coordinator, at 770-855-2586 or outreach@dca.ga.gov. The postmark deadline for applications is May 1, 2026. Application forms are available online at dca.georgia.gov/community-assistance/historic-preservation/centennial-farms-program

Lady Wildcats Unleash Offensive Explosion in Three-Game Sweep of Benedict

By Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The Fort Valley State University Lady Wildcats softball team put on a dominant display at home this weekend, sweeping Benedict College in emphatic fashion with scores of 10-1, 22-1, and 17-1.

From the first pitch of the series, the Lady Wildcats set the tone with aggressive at-bats and lockdown defense, overwhelming Benedict in all three contests.

In Game One, Fort Valley State wasted no time building momentum, plating runs early and often en route to a 10-1 victory. The Lady Wildcats combined

timely hitting with sharp pitching to control the pace of play and keep Benedict's offense in check.

If the opener was impressive, Game Two was nothing short of explosive. The Lady Wildcats erupted for 22 runs in a commanding 22-1 win. The offense fired on all cylinders, with contributions up and down the lineup. Extra-base hits, disciplined plate appearances, and aggressive base running highlighted one of the most productive offensive performances of the season.

The finale followed a similar script. Fort Valley State completed the sweep with a 17-1

victory in Game Three, once again overpowering Benedict in every phase of the game. Strong pitching performances limited scoring opportunities, while the bats remained red-hot to seal the series in convincing fashion.

Across the three games, the Lady Wildcats outscored Benedict 49-3, showcasing both their offensive depth and defensive consistency. The sweep strengthens Fort Valley State's position as they continue conference play and build momentum for the stretch run.

With performances like this, the Lady Wildcats are sending a clear message: they are a force to be reckoned with this season.

Lady Wildcats' Season Ends in Hard-Fought Battle at SIAC Tournament

By Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The 2025-26 campaign came to a close for the Fort Valley State University Lady Wildcats on Monday night as they fell 57-52 to Tuskegee University in the opening round of the SIAC Women's Basketball Tournament.

Despite the loss, Fort Valley State showed resilience and determination, battling until the final buzzer in a tightly contested matchup.

The Lady Wildcats came out with intensity, matching Tuskegee basket for basket in the early going. Defensive pressure and disciplined half-court offense kept the game within reach throughout the contest. FVSU

fought back from multiple deficits, refusing to let the Golden Tigers pull away.

In the fourth quarter, Fort Valley State trimmed the lead to a single possession, igniting hopes of a late comeback. However, key free throws and timely defense by Tuskegee down the stretch sealed the 57-52 decision.

The loss ends the Lady Wildcats' season with a 6-21 overall record — not the outcome the team envisioned at the start of the year. Injuries, close losses, and growing pains challenged the squad throughout the season, but flashes of promise were evident.

Several young players gained valuable experience this year,

competing against some of the top programs in the conference. That development, combined with the leadership returning next season, has the program optimistic about what lies ahead.

While the record may not reflect it, the Lady Wildcats continued to compete with heart and pride. The foundation is being laid, and with offseason growth and continued commitment, brighter days appear to be on the horizon in Fort Valley.

The 2025-26 season may not have ended with a championship run, but it may very well be remembered as a stepping stone toward a stronger future for Fort Valley State women's basketball.

Peach County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jesse Davis, recently attended the NAESP



By PCSS

Peach County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jesse Davis, recently attended the NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) National School Leaders Advocacy Conference in Washington D.C.

Dr. Davis currently serves as the Federal Relations Coordi-

nator for GAEL (Georgia Association of Educational Leaders) and was among many principals and educational leaders advocating for education.

One of his numerous stops on this trip was a visit our very own Rep. Sanford Bishop (pictured) to discuss a few points of advocacy for matters that are import-

ant to public education.

NAESP shared, "How awesome it is to see so many principals from across the country advocating for education in America! Proud of the voices leading this work. Safe travels to all—and remember, advocacy doesn't end here... this is just the beginning."

Celebrating a Fort Valley Living Legend: Annual Maxine Cherry Day, since March 17, 2016

Contributed
Join us for a free community event on March 15, 2026 from 12pm to 3pm at A10tion Foundation Center, 1000 Tulip Dr in Fort Valley, GA 31030. Bring your family out to enjoy free hot dogs, a gaming truck, DJ and Maxine Cherry Day gold and black towel giveaway!



CELEBRATING A FORT VALLEY, GA. LIVING LEGEND

ANNUAL
Maxine Cherry Day
SINCE MARCH 17, 2016

Join Us For a Free Community Event:
MARCH 15TH, 2026
12PM-3PM

Bring your family out to enjoy free hot dogs, a gaming truck, DJ and Maxine Cherry Day gold and black towel giveaway!

Location:
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1000 Tulip Dr,
Fort Valley, GA. 31030
A10TIONFOUNDATION.ORG

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

#MAXINECHERRYDAY

Trojans Take Over LakePoint: Peach County Stays Hot in Non-Region Play

Chris McKenzie,
Sports Reporter

The bats were alive and the arms were steady this past weekend as the Peach County High School Trojans traveled to the LakePoint Sports Complex and delivered a dominant performance against strong non-region competition.

Peach County faced off against Lovejoy High School, Madison County High School, and Druid Hills High School—and came away with three convincing victories.

The Trojans opened the weekend in explosive fashion, dismantling Lovejoy 16-1. The offense wasted no time setting the tone, stringing together timely hits and aggressive base

running that kept constant pressure on the Wildcats. Solid pitching and defensive execution sealed the run-rule style win.

Against Madison County, Peach County continued to show balance on both sides of the ball, earning a 6-1 victory. The Trojans controlled the tempo early, capitalizing on scoring opportunities while their pitching staff limited big innings and shut down potential rallies.

The final test of the weekend came against Druid Hills, where the Trojans secured a 7-2 win. Once again, Peach County displayed depth at the plate and composure on the mound, closing out the tournament unbeaten.

The weekend sweep adds to

an already impressive stretch of non-region play. Earlier in the week, the Trojans battled Perry High School and came away with a hard-fought 7-6 victory, proving they can win tight contests just as effectively as they can dominate.

Through these performances, Peach County is executing at a high level in non-region competition. The offense is producing runs in bunches, the pitching staff is throwing strikes, and the defense is making the routine plays consistently.

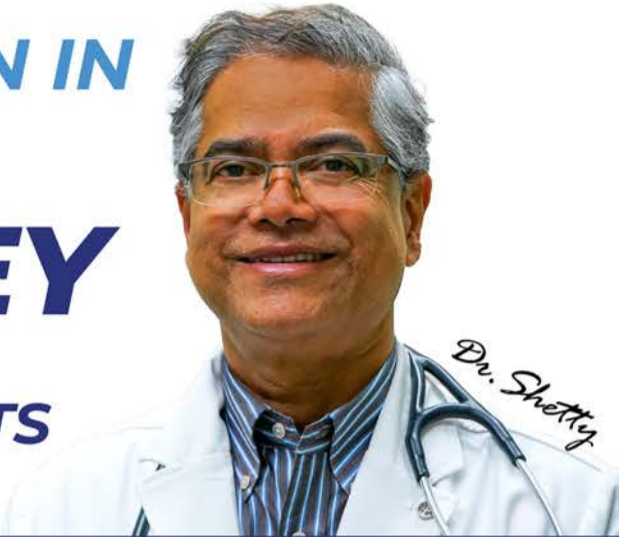
Safe to say, the Trojans are in their bag right now—and if this momentum continues, more wins are certainly on the horizon.



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6:00PM – 9:00PM
PERKINS FIELD,
105 MULBERRY ST.



EGG HUNT: 7:00PM
SEVEN AGE-DIVIDED HUNT AREAS
ALL HUNTS BEGIN SIMULTANEOUSLY



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