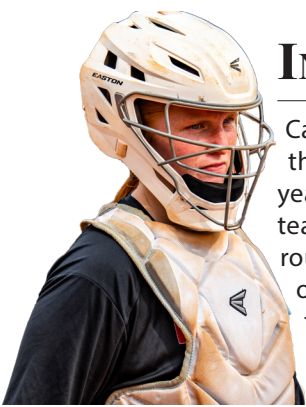


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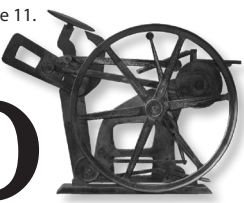


INSIDE

Catcher Abby Jones is the only senior on this year's OCHS softball team, but she's surrounded by experience on the girls basketball team.

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To start your subscription or to donate to The Oglethorpe Echo, see Page 11.



THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Volume 149, Number 41 July 13, 2023 Oglethorpe County, Georgia \$1

Sheriff is investigating antisemitic notes in bags

By Julianne Akers
The Oglethorpe Echo

Lexington's Bob Henkel was on his morning walk where Old Stephens Road becomes Gilmer Street on July 4, when he saw the first bag.

"Then, I turned left onto Boggs Street, and I saw another one there. And then as I wandered up and down Church Street, I saw them over there as well," he said.

Small bags filled with graphics resembling antisemitic symbols and links to websites related to white supremacy have been scattered throughout driveways and yards in Oglethorpe County this month.

The bags contain paper printed with phrases like "It's okay to be white," and were filled with wood pellets, which Oglethorpe County Sheriff David Gabriel said he thinks were used to weigh them down.

The other side of the note includes the name of a group: Aryan Freedom Network, a neo-Nazi group based in Texas, and a website URL.

It was thought the baggies were filled with rat poison, but the contents proved to be wood pellets. Gabriel added that littering is the only charge his office would be able to give the disseminators of the bags.

"It's just the topic of it. It's concerning," he said. "We want to find out what's

See ANTISEMITIC, Page 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bags filled with hate messages and weighed down by wood pellets have been found in driveways around Lexington and other parts of the county.



LANDEN TODD/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Paul Thiel, who graduated from Oglethorpe County High School, steps into the role of director of operations for the school system.

Thiel moves into new role

Longtime school employee is first director of operations

By McCain Bracewell
The Oglethorpe Echo

Paul Thiel describes himself as a technology specialist, farmer and philosopher.

He works for Oglethorpe County Schools in the day, tends to his family's cattle on TLC Ranch in Colbert in the afternoons and enjoys studying new technologies, educational research, philosophy and trends in the cattle industry in his freetime.

"And then I pretty much go to bed and I wake up the next day," he said.

Thiel's mother, Corrine Thiel, owns the ranch. They moved there in 1991 from Miami Beach.

"People always ask me what (TLC) stands for, but it all depends on the time of day," Thiel said. "It could be tough luck charlie or tender love and care or Thiels Limousin Cattle."

Thiel, who attended Oglethorpe County High School and has worked for Oglethorpe County Schools since 2004, is moving into a new role as the director of operations for the

INSIDE

Zachary Holtzclaw is Oglethorpe County School System's new director of transportation.

... Page 2

school system.

He will oversee the maintenance, technology, custodial, transportation and finance departments within the school system as the director of operations. Thiel will report directly to Superintendent Beverley Levine.

"That's the joke, right? Somebody will manage special education and someone will manage instruction and I'm going to manage everything else," Thiel said. "We'll see how that goes."

He earned his undergraduate degree in early childhood education and a master's degree in instructional technology from the University of Georgia. He said he was

among one of the first technology specialists in 1998.

He taught in Athens-Clarke County for six years before moving to Oglethorpe County in 2004. Thiel was the technology coordinator after the previous coordinator retired last April.

The idea for the new position started after the central office flooded last December. Thiel said Levine realized she didn't have a point person to handle crises like that. There was no one to address communication between the insurance company, the maintenance crew and the custodial crew.

The board approved the new position, but Levine had full charge over who she appointed. The board was informed Thiel would take the position in the May 23 personnel report.

Thiel said Levine offered him the position, but he turned it down at first. There were several people who applied and interviewed for the position, but those applicants

See THIEL, Page 2

Broadband installation slowly expanding

By Julianne Akers
The Oglethorpe Echo

Broadband internet installation in Oglethorpe County — deriving from the \$7.9 million in funds Spectrum received in January — is in the "very early stages of engineering," said Oglethorpe County District 4 Commissioner Will Brown, who is chair of the Economic Development Authority.

Spectrum received the funds — in partnership with the county — from Georgia's Capital Projects Fund Grant Program to provide broadband internet to 2,972 locations in Oglethorpe County, 55% of which is without broadband.

"If anybody sees a Charter/Spectrum vehicle around looking at telephone poles and whatnot, they're trying to map out everything, determine all the costs, figure out how they're gonna bring the wire to every-

body's house...," Brown said.

He said Spectrum hasn't given the county a specific date when the project will be complete, but he expects that it will be near the deadline of Dec. 31, 2026.

"They're not sure which other county they're gonna start on, or what the plan exactly is. They've got other projects in the county that were awarded to them via RDOF (Rural Digital Opportunity Fund)," Brown said. "That's a FCC program. So they have to weed some of those in there, too."

Brown reminds residents that communities across Georgia received funds from this grant, meaning it might take a while for installation to begin.

"It's not just Oglethorpe, it's the whole state that got a lot of funding. So they're stretched pretty thin, I'm sure," he said. "We told them (Spectrum) that we'll do whatever we can to speed up the process

and not hesitate to reach out to the county. We'll do what we can."

Coverage areas

He said the locations were determined by the Georgia Technology Authority, and "all the bidders for that grant had to bid based on the fact that they would supply to every single one of those locations."

"The majority of this will cover the south and west sides of the county," Brown said. "So that top northeast quadrant of the county is more sparse, and won't be as covered in this particular grant."

Future expansion

Residents might have also seen Kinetic by Windstream trucks around the

See BROADBAND, Page 5



DINK NESMITH/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Arthur Burt works in a Kinetic by Windstream truck in Oglethorpe County earlier this month. Kinetic workers are installing optical fiber in Crawford and Lexington.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pageants are a family affair for the Raines family. The support for Madalyn (front left), who is 12 years old, and Isabella (front right), who is 5, includes (from left) Brandy, Grayson and Chris (Madalyn's mom, brother and dad), and Ian and Megan (Isabella's mom and dad).

Raines duo adds national pageant titles to resumes

By Jesse Wood
The Oglethorpe Echo

Madalyn Raines, who is 12, always finds herself peeking around the corner at her 5-year-old niece, Isabella Raines, while she prepares for a pageant. Isabella shows her support for her aunt by taking a seat in the crowd to cheer on Madalyn. "Isabella will typically be done when Maddy goes on and will be in the crowd saying, 'Go Maddy,' 'Go Auntie,'" said Megan Raines, Isabella's mother. Maddy and Isabella, who live in Colbert, have competed together in pageants since 2021. The pair have a bond that is unbreakable; they are more like sisters than anything. "They love doing pageants to-

gether and cheering each other on," Megan said. Their preparation includes working with Amber Poindexter, a former pageant star, who coaches the girls four times a week, in addition to purchasing and storing outfits for them. The duo added to their titles when Isabella won the title of America's Majestic Miss National Jr. Princess and Madalyn won America's Majestic Miss National Preteen at the pageant from June 28-July 2 in Franklin, Tennessee. "When they called my name as America's Majestic Miss Preteen, I started crying and thinking about all of the fun I was about to have," Madalyn said. Madalyn and Isabella won the state title for America's Majestic

Miss last September and immediately began preparing for the national level pageant, in addition to competing in other pageants. Madalyn's favorite part of the pageant world is the way she can express herself through her bold fashion on stage. "I love fun fashion," she said. "I get to show my spunky and sassy personality." The pageant world has boosted Isabella's confidence significantly. Her favorite parts about pageantry is giving her introductory speech on stage and having fun with her "sister queens." "I hope that this pageant world takes her places," Megan said. "It's definitely boosted her confidence. She talks to everyone and loves everyone."

ANTISEMITIC, FROM PAGE 1

going on to make sure nothing else more serious is happening." Gabriel said his office, which will continue to investigate the situation, has received calls about bags also being spread along Elberton Road and in the Wesley Chapel area. These bags mirror a larger trend

throughout Georgia. There were 63% more antisemitic incidents in Georgia between 2021 and 2022, with numbers nearly quadrupling since 2020, according to an Anti-Defamation League release in March. The U.S. also experienced an all-time high of 3,697 incidents re-

ported to the Anti-Defamation League in 2022. Henkel was frustrated to see this kind of message spread in the community. "It was kind of disappointing that it was in Lexington, because that's not who Lexington is," he said.

Holtzclaw hired as transportation director

By McCain Bracewell
The Oglethorpe Echo

The Oglethorpe County Board of Education approved Zachary Holtzclaw as the new transportation director at its board meeting on June 15. This came after Collin Cherry's recommendation to take the position was withdrawn on June 13. Holtzclaw was the transportation routing supervisor for Jackson County School System, director of operations Paul Thiel said. "He also has experience with small fleet maintenance," Thiel said. The board plans to review letters of interest received to fill Cherry's vacant District 1 seat at its meeting on July 20. Board Chair Becky Soto said there were four letters of interest as of Tuesday morning. The District 1 vacancy no-

tice on the school system's website states those interested in the position must write a letter containing their contact information, address, information regarding the candidates' engagement with Oglethorpe County Schools and information explaining their desire to serve on the board. Those interested have until noon Friday, July 14 to send their letters to Soto, the notice states. The board has until July 22 to appoint someone to fill the District 1 seat. The state allows 60 days from the date of resignation to fill the seat. Cherry resigned on May 23. Gov. Brian Kemp has the power to step in and appoint the position if the board fails to do so. The next board meeting was moved from July 18 to July 20 at 7 p.m. to accommodate travel plans and ensure all members of the board are present.

THIEL, FROM PAGE 1

turned down the job as well. After more discussion and reorganizing of the position, Thiel accepted the position. "Originally, I didn't think I could continue to do a lot of the same things I do currently, and do that job well," Thiel said. "But in the end, I'm getting a person to replace my current position and now I feel like I can train that person to do a lot of those tasks to allow me the opportunity to do this job." Thiel will oversee construction of the new K-5 school as part of his new position. He helped with the design of the new school before becoming director of operations. "My main goal was the technical connections throughout the building and the security of the building and how to wire it for cabling," Thiel said. "But also, instructionally, what would be good spaces and a good layout to have for the building." Thiel said he likes that people can stand at the center of Oglethorpe County Middle School and see down every hallway. The new K-5 school also has this design feature. "I call it the bird's eye view approach," he said. "I like to see the bigger picture and how things will look 20 years from now. When we

built the middle school, we tried to build it so that as times changed, the building could change without having to change the whole building." Board Chair Becky Soto said Thiel's role in developing the K-5 school was limited in the beginning, but he became more involved when the conversation turned to technology and connectivity. She said Thiel has been "heavily engaged" over the past two months in the construction of the new school. "Given our small size, he will help with everything," Soto said. "He is a jack of all trades." Thiel will attend three conferences this month to prepare for his new role. The Leadership and Facilities Conference in Atlanta focuses on learning environments, specifically how to make the best educational facilities for children, the Georgia Association of Education Leaders on Jekyll Island, which he will attend with other central office employees, and the Georgia Managers and Information Systems Conference in Savannah. "I care a lot about the community and the county. It's important," Thiel said. "I want us to succeed, and us succeeding, means really stepping into that role, and I am willing to do that."

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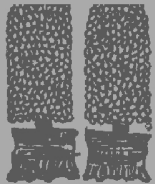
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BOC approves speed changes on Highway 22

By Garrett Kicklighter
The Oglethorpe Echo

The Oglethorpe County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved speed limit changes on Highway 22 as a part of the On System List of Roadways at Monday’s meeting.

The new speed limits on Highway 22 will be 45 mph from Highway 78 to Lexington-Carlton Road, except in the school zone, where it will be 35 mph during school hours.

From Lexington-Carlton Road to the county line, the speed limit will be 55 mph, Commission Chair Jay Paul said.

After talking with state DOT liaisons, Paul is going to trust their opinion on the speed limit change. “This is what they do for a living,” he said.

Paul’s concern about the change are cars going down “Legion Hill.”

“It’d be (really) easy for a person running past 45 miles an hour going down Legion Hill if (they’re) not trying to,” Paul said.

At the June meeting, the board approved the On System List of Roadways, which had the speed limits on Highway 22 of 55 mph to 45 mph, then to 35 mph.

After name corrections and alterations, the board hesitantly approved the new version of the list at Monday’s meeting, which included the new speed limits on Highway 22. The commission had to approve the changes so speed detection devices can be used in



SARAH COLLINS/FOR THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Sarah Collins, who lives on Harris Drive, stressed the poor condition of Harris Drive, which includes paving in need of repair and overgrown trees and brush, which need to be trimmed.

the school zones.

“I don’t know if any of us like (the changes), but we’re dealing with the state, unfortunately,” District 5 Commissioner Tracy Norman said.

Also at Monday’s meeting, the board decided to resume maintenance on Harris Drive, which is off Fairground Road in Lexington. There had been confusion over whether it was a county maintained road.

“It was just obviously a little bit of an unclear situation that had developed over the years, and now we know, and we’ll move forward

and just bring it up to speed like we do with everything else,” Paul said.

Sarah Collins, who lives on Harris Drive, said she would have kept the road maintained if the county had chosen to abandon it.

In other news:

- The board introduced new Oglethorpe County Library Branch Manager Katherine Ratcliffe.
- It approved construction of a wireless telecommunications facility and support for Verizon Wireless on tax parcel 145 027.
- It approved a rezone request from agricultural residential to single family residential for 65 Terry Dee Lane to subdivide for a family.
- It approved a rezone request from general agriculture to agriculture residential of tax parcel 071 011 to subdivide for family.
- It approved a rezone request from intensive agriculture to general agriculture for 67 Dudley Farm Road to subdivide and sell the rezoned parcel.
- The board recognized the July 4 celebration at the recreation department as a success. An estimated 2,000 people attended and 37 vendors were present.
- The board recognized Public Works Director Adam Nation and the Public Works Department for their response in cleaning up debris from the storm last weekend.

Oglethorpe County flashing stop signs

The Oglethorpe County Public Works Department installed two flashing stop signs at the intersection of Sandy Cross and Lexington-Carlton roads.

Map: Garrett Kicklighter • Source: Oglethorpe County Government • Created with Datawrapper

GARRETT KICKLIGHTER/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Flashing stop signs added at intersection on Sandy Cross Road

By Garrett Kicklighter
The Oglethorpe Echo

The county added two flashing stop signs at the intersection of Sandy Cross and Lexington-Carlton roads to help mitigate the increased traffic there, Commission Chair Jay Paul said.

He added it seems GPS is sending passenger vehicles and tractor trailers through the intersection after having them turn off Highway 22 and head toward Centerville Road and eventually, Highway 78.

Paul cited an accident with an empty tractor trailer that happened at the intersection last year as part of the reason why the flashing stop signs were added.

“They went through the speed bumps, they went through the stop signs, (then) they barreled right into the side of an 18-wheeler,” he said.

No one was hurt in the accident. “Knock on wood, we’ve been fortunate, very fortunate, that we haven’t had a fatality (at that intersection),” Paul said.

The tractor trailer was from California, Paul said.

“I laughed and wondered, ‘How did they make it here from California? Because they can’t figure out what a stop sign means,’” Paul added.

Paul hasn’t heard any complaints from residents about the flashing stop signs and he thinks they’re encouraged by efforts to make the intersection safer. He said the out-of-county and out-of-state traffic is the problem for nearly all of the accidents at that intersection.

“The local people aren’t the problem; they actually know what stop means,” Paul said.

The Georgia DOT is “probably” going to install traffic counters on both Sandy Cross Road and Lexington-Carlton Road, Paul said.

“If the trend continues, (the intersection) may become a four-way stop.”

The county has work on the DOT’s schedule, so Paul hopes they will install the traffic counters soon. He isn’t sure how long the DOT plans to keep the counters on the road.

“I would think that a week would be a pretty good sample timeframe,” Paul said.

OBITUARIES

MARTHA EDNA BULLOCK



Martha Edna Bullock, 99, of Crawford, passed July 7, 2023. She was the daughter of the late Edgar Floyd & Ita Price Morgan; also preceded in death by a husband, James Loden Bullock.

She was also preceded by sisters and brothers, Gladys Scarborough, Floyd Morgan, Argus White, Taylor Morgan, Mary-roxy Scarborough, Albert Morgan, Evans Morgan and Edward Morgan.

Funeral services were at 11 a.m.

Monday, July 10, 2023 at Corinth Baptist Church with the Rev. Wayne Phillips officiating. Mrs. Bullock was to lie in state from 10 a.m. until the service. The interment will be in the church cemetery.

Survivors include: Daughter and son, Rose (Carlo) Bullock and James “Jim” (Delphine) Bullock, Jr.; grandchildren, Melanie (Alex) Wood, Alicia (Chris) Bullock, Jason Hill, and Matthew (Steffanie) Bradshaw; great-grandchildren, Brianna (Devin) Bryant, Bradley Wood, Rachel Bullock, Levi Bullock, Brody Casper; and a great great granddaughter, Alayna Bryant.

Pallbearers are Steve Wood, Matt Bradshaw, Bradley Wood, Jim Bullock, Chris Casper, and Devin Bryant.

Lord & Stephens Funeral Homes, East, Athens, is in charge of arrangements.

EARL LASHLEY

Earl Lashley, age 81 of Monroe, passed away on July 3, 2023. He was born in Edmondson, Kentucky, on Jan. 14, 1942, to the late



Sylvia McGrew Lashley and the late Miles Mitchell Lashley.

He was preceded in death by his son, Kevin Lashley.

Surviving are, wife, Diane Hunter Lashley; Karen Lashley Bone and two other daughters; two sons; Brittany Bone Wheeler, Brianna Bone and 14 grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on Friday July 7 at 2 p.m. at Annie Mary Baptist Church with the Rev. Buster Brown officiating. Interment followed at Annie Mary Baptist Church Cemetery.

Meadows Funeral Home, Inc. was in charge of arrangements.

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Policies and Deadlines

■ The Oglethorpe Echo encourages readers to submit items of community interest. Submissions for community news, obituaries, classifieds, and other sections are due by Monday at 5 p.m., on a week of normal publication schedule. Holiday events often cause an earlier deadline.

■ Submissions can be mailed to: Editor, P. O. Box 268, Lexington, Georgia 30648 or emailed to editor@oglethorpeecho.com, along with a name and phone number for more information.

Accuracy Policy

■ The Oglethorpe Echo strives to produce error-free news reporting. When mistakes occur, it is our policy to correct them as soon as they are brought to our attention.

■ To request a correction, contact the editor at editor@oglethorpeecho.com or 706-743-3111.

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Maxeys mayor warns about ATVs on streets

By Avni Trivedi
The Oglethorpe Echo

Maxeys Mayor Warren Gilson warns residents to stop riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on streets and roads, as they can lead to dangerous situations for both the rider and other vehicles.

“They are dangerous vehicles to ride,” he said. “We’re treating them like they’re a tricycle, and they shouldn’t be treated that way.”

Oglethorpe County Sheriff David Gabriel said ATVs being driven on roads is an issue throughout the county. Gilson said he hears about ATVs with five people on board, riders not wearing helmets and driving recklessly on streets.

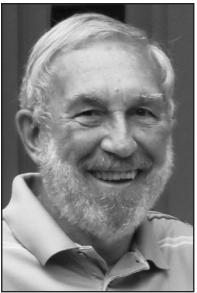
“It’s a safety issue,” he said. “I would hate for somebody to get hurt.”

Gabriel said law enforcement officers respond based on complaints they receive.

If deputies see ATVs on the road, they tow the vehicle and write the driver a ticket.

One individual, who Gabriel said is potentially “causing most of the issues” in Maxeys, has been issued several tickets.

Deputies are put on extra patrols



Warren Gilson

in the areas where most ATVs are being driven in an attempt to be proactive. Gabriel said dozens of ATVs were towed, along with numerous tickets around the county.

However, he said it’s hard to catch people in the action as deputies can’t be there all the time and riders are only in the area for a few minutes.

“We’re aware of the situation and we’re trying to address it appropriately, but the whole trick is just getting there,” Gabriel said.

In order to help with the issue, Gabriel encourages people to call the Sheriff’s Office when they spot an ATV on the street.

People can ride their ATVs on their own property or on off-road trails designed for the vehicles.

BROADBAND, FROM PAGE 1

county. They are preparing to run optical fiber “for nearly 200 households in the Lexington area and 315 households in the Crawford area,” said Gerry Harrington, a representative for Kinetic by Windstream.

“We expect the Lexington-area households will be ready for fiber broadband by the end of this month and the Crawford-area households by the end of August,” Harrington

said. “As part of the work, we’re trimming back some trees.”

Brown said the county is working to find additional grants, like the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program to expand internet access across the entire county.

“We’re researching future grants to get the other parts of the county that aren’t going to be covered by this,” he said.



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Coroner caseload on par with past

By Avni Trivedi
The Oglethorpe Echo

Summer usually results in a lighter caseload for Oglethorpe County Coroner James Jackson, with the winter and spring being the busiest times of the year.

“Especially for the older generations that have health problems, weather really plays a factor in that,” Jackson said.

Jackson has handled 25 cases in 2023, just shy of the office’s half-way point of 30 cases last year.

“It’s been fairly steady,” he said.

Most of the time, the cases come from a 911 call or from the hospital, where the individual died. In some cases, Jackson said they receive calls from private family members inquiring about the services of the coroner’s office.

Jackson said his office had one private case this year, but he usually refers those to a pathologist who performs private autopsies.

He has had more help this year with the addition of two assistants: Jason Lewis and Robert McCurley. They assist Jackson in responding

to calls, investigating deaths and working with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the medical examiner’s office and the Oglethorpe County Sheriff’s Office.

Jackson is still looking for a van or former ambulance to purchase to assist the team in transporting bodies to the morgue or crime labs.

He told The Oglethorpe Echo in May that his office has been borrowing or renting vehicles since the county’s emergency services needed the retired ambulance he had been using.

LETTERS TO THE ECHO

Make sure to get facts straight about taxes, new school funding

Editor,
Scott Pettis wrote that it’s “Time for Commissioners to stand up to BOE” (June 22).

In his letter, he cited the authority of the county commissioners to adjust the millage rate and stop the “Taj Mahal elementary school.”

Pettis’ basis for his argument is “Georgia Code Title 48.” I didn’t need to read the hundreds of pages of Title 48 to know Pettis has his facts wrong.

The residents of Oglethorpe County approved the new elementary school bond overwhelmingly in a March referendum vote.

Mr. Pettis, your neighbors and all people in our county overwhelmingly said they value education.

Article VIII, Section VI, Paragraph I (Constitutional provision for Board of Educations to levy tax):

“The board of education of each school system shall annually certify to its fiscal authority or authorities a school tax not greater than 20 mills per dollar for the support and maintenance of education. Said fiscal authority or authorities shall annually levy said tax upon the assessed value of all taxable property within the territory served by said school system, provided that the levy made by an area board of education, which levy shall not be greater than 20 mills per dollar, shall be in such amount and within such limits as may be prescribed by local law applicable thereto.

“The county levies a tax for the support and maintenance of ed-

ucation and does so through the board of commissioners. But in this activity, the board of commissioners has no discretion; its action is ministerial. The amount of the levy is discretionary with the board of education (within limits fixed by the Constitution of statute), and duly determined it is mandatory.” See Georgia Constitution., Article VIII, Section XII, Paragraph I (Code 2-7501).

The facts about the new elementary school: the bond issue for the new school is \$23 million. These bonds will be paid back with a mix of SPLOST and property tax. The school bond reflected on the tax assessments is the current bond, not the new one.

This bond will be paid off this year and will be replaced with the new elementary school bond. The new bond will be less than the current one. The county is building a new school with a price tag of \$45 million at a local cost of a little more than \$22 million.

The remaining amount is coming from the Department of Education by way of low wealth district funds.

Yes, Mr. Pettis, ironically (using your derogatory term) all the “carpetbaggers” in Georgia are helping to pay for our school; sounds like a good deal. If you took an interest in any of the decisions the school board makes, you would know that the process for funding anything in the school system is open to the citizenry.

Hundreds of hours over two years with numerous meetings guided this process to fruition. Issues were vetted in an open forum. Were you present to voice

your objection during this process or is this an after-the-fact rant?

Our elected board of education members struggle to provide a balanced fiscal solution to the needs of our children and our county. Your letter made no cogent fact-based points other than, after reading your letter, it is clear we need to put more money into the education process.

— Dr. Daniel and Joyce Sniff, Arnoldsville

Follow the flag code when displaying the American flag

Editor,
Thank you for including the full page picture of the American flag on the back page of The Oglethorpe Echo.

Too many people seem to pay no attention to the flag or what it means these days. However, I wish someone had verified the flag code before posting it.

"When the flag is displayed against a wall, the union (aka the stars) should be situated to the uppermost left corner, or the flag's own right. The same goes for when it's displayed in a window — the union should be to the left of the observer."

— Elizabeth D. Smith, Gainesville

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- Land Listings
- *2.06 acre residential lot in Oconee County. Nice hardwoods with an established well, septic tank, shop and paved driveway. \$150,000
 - *13.46 acres on New Hope Vesta Rd, ready for your dream home or as a recreational getaway! \$94,220



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Notice of Oglethorpe County Board of Education's intent to appoint a District 1 Representative to the Oglethorpe County Board of Education to fill the vacant seat for a District 1 ending December 31, 2024.

The Georgia Constitution requires that an elected school board oversee each school system. Members of a local school board are to “manage and control” and to make decisions on almost every aspect of public schools. Each school board — as a whole board — serves as the governing body. Individual board members have no authority outside of the board room. School board members make decisions that impact the entire school system, not just the area they represent. It is important that candidates know that the work of school boards impacts all students in the district and that candidates must carefully consider their platforms for campaigning. <https://gsba.com/advocacy-communications/board-candidates/>

The day-to-day operational responsibilities are delegated to the superintendent as chief executive officer. However, responsibilities of a public-school board also include, but are not limited to some duties that cannot be delegated, such as:

- Buying and selling school property
- Calling elections to authorize Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) and bond elections to authorize the issuance of bonded debt
- Making policies and rules necessary to govern the school system
- Reorganization and consolidation of schools within their control
- Authority to hire employees based on the recommendation of the superintendent

Interested parties must meet the following qualifications according to Georgia law:

- Be willing to serve
- Are eligible to vote
- Be a qualified voter
- Reside within the school district's political boundaries

Provisions in the Georgia Law that address what disqualifies an individual from serving on the school board:

- Not a resident of Georgia
- Under the age of 21, unless lowered to 18 by local act
- Not a resident in the school district in which the individual is seeking office for 12 months prior to the election or appointment
- A holder or receiver of public money that has refused to, or failed to, account for it or pay it over when asked
- A convicted felon who has not been pardoned nor has his/ her rights restored
- Serving on the governing body of a private elementary or secondary educational institution
- Employed by the Georgia Department of Education or serving on the State Board of Education
- Employed by the board of education the individual is serving on
- The holder of another county office or on the city council if an independent district
- Of unsound mind or unable to discharge the duties of the office because of advanced age or bodily infirmity
- Holding any office of profit or trust under the government of the United States other than that of postmaster or member in the Reserves
- A publisher of schoolbooks, an agent of schoolbook publishers, or someone with a financial interest in the sale of schoolbooks
- Or, if the individual has an immediate family member (spouse, child, sibling or parent, or spouse of a child, sibling or parent whose employment began on or after January 1, 2010) sitting on the local board or serving as superintendent, principal, assistant principal, or system administrative staff.

All parties wishing to be considered for this position should submit their request to be considered via a letter addressed to the Board Chair Rebecca Soto that includes the following information:

- Name, physical address, contact phone number and email address
- Information regarding the candidate's engagement/involvement with Oglethorpe County Schools
- Information explaining the candidate's desire to serve on the Oglethorpe County Board of Education.

Letters must be received by Friday July 14, 2023 at noon.

- Letters can be delivered via email to rsoto@oglethorpe.k12.ga.us or
- Mailed to Rebecca Soto, Board of Education Chair Oglethorpe County Schools 735 Athens Road Lexington, GA 30648

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AROUND THE COUNTY

SPECIAL DAY



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The “War Room Show” with Delbra D & Sharon C, along with Pastor Willie Kendrick and Cora Barnett, made a live appearance and performed at the Oglethorpe County Senior Citizens Center on Monday. The “War Room Show” is performed on Facebook Live on Tuesday nights.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Have you...

- Won an award?
- Caught a huge fish?
- Been recently recognized for an achievement or promoted at work?
- Created a new program or addressed an area of need for your community?

Send us photos and details for possible publication in The Oglethorpe Echo. Please identify everybody in the photos (using first and last names) by row and going from left to right. Please include city/town of residence, email address and phone number.

Email photos to editor@oglethorpeecho.com

BIG CELEBRATION



The American Legion had a visible presence at the Oglethorpe County Rec Department’s July Fourth Celebration at Bryan Park, including (from left) Cheryl Sackett, Donna Churchill, David Churchill, Ken Pagel, Commander Carol Eidson and Sue Robertson. An estimated 2,000 people attended the festivities, which ended with a fireworks display.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



TANYA EIDSON/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO
Brenda Gresham and Nylah Hill attended the celebration.



TANYA EIDSON/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO
Hazel Sanders, Angel Kelley and Rhett Webb were all smiles.



TANYA EIDSON/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO
Trista Shelton and Andy Shelton were in attendance.



TANYA EIDSON/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO
Mike Eidson and David Churchill took it easy.



TANYA EIDSON/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Eddie Sackett, Joe Brehm, Shaylynn Stevenson, Carol Eidson and Chuck Burroughs were among the American Legion Post 123 contingent at the July 4 celebration at Bryan Park.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

American Legion Post 123, which was responsible for shooting the fireworks at the July 4 celebration, shows off part of the collection that lit up the night last week. The crew included (from left) Greg Gabriel, George Gray, Eddie Sackett, Joe Brehm, Billy Shellnut, Chuck Burroughs and Emmett Gabriel.

We'll be there, so you can be there, too!



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Morgan Hardy
Digital Producer



Julianne Akers
General Assignment



Andy Johnston
Editor

Since 1874, *The Oglethorpe Echo* has been the community's most reliable source of news and information. There's a multitude of sources for news outside Oglethorpe County, but our focus is here. Why? Because 'local matters.' In 2021, your newspaper partnered with UGA's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. It's a win-win partnership. Oglethorpe County gets expanded news coverage and Grady's aspiring journalists benefit from a real-world experience. You — *The Oglethorpe Echo's* readers — are the reason we are here.

- Andy Johnston, Editor, *The Oglethorpe Echo*



LOCAL MATTERS

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Shanna Reynolds

Growing Oglethorpe

Does your drinking water pass the test?

In rural areas like Oglethorpe County, many homes rely on private water supplies to fuel their need for our most vital resource. When you fill a glass from the faucet, hopefully it appears clear and tastes great. But, does that mean it's safe to drink? There are many sources of water contamination along with naturally occurring elements that may affect your health. How can you know for sure? No government agency monitors the safety of drinking water from private well sources. If you are one of the roughly 1.7 million Georgians with a private well, you alone are responsible for the drinking water quality. If you live within a municipality's water system, there are fewer concerns about water quality or safety. These systems are routinely tested and treated according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. However, it's possible that water meets the required standards when it leaves a public water treatment plant and doesn't meet the standards once it reaches your kitchen faucet. For example, if you have an old house, water could travel through lead pipes and be contaminated in the home. A nationwide study several years ago showed one of every five private wells tested contained at least one contaminant with concentrations above the EPA's benchmark for human health. In addition, approximately one-third of wells in the study had microbial contamination. Although I haven't conducted field study or data analysis for Oglethorpe County wells, my experience tells me these percentages would be similar locally. There are various types of water tests available through our Extension office. We help clients fulfill home loan closing requirements, alleviate concerns from a possible contamination source and have general peace of mind that their water is safe to drink. When someone comes in to test their water, I generally ask "what are we testing it for." Almost always, they reply "everything." Unfortunately, we don't have that type of test. We have to pin-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Water that meets EPA standards when leaving the treatment plant can become contaminated on the way to your home by factors like old lead pipes.

point the search and then UGA labs can run specific procedures to test for the presence or absence of the specific item. There are, however, common tests we can recommend for general peace of mind. A properly constructed and maintained well should theoretically not allow any bacterial contaminants into your drinking water, yet we find many. Sometimes, these are an easy fix, and other times they require more expense if the problem is recurring. If you discover a problem with your drinking water quality by testing it yourself, our office may be able to recommend an economical solution before jumping straight into installing a new filtration system. If you are testing to get a baseline of your water quality without any specific concerns or symptoms, I would recommend a Total Coliform Test (\$36) and the Expanded Basic Water Test (\$60). The Total Coliform Water Test will indicate the presence or absence of disease-causing bacteria. The Expanded Basic test will give you several mineral profiles, the pH, the total hardness and several other useful pieces of information about your drinking water.

If you experience abnormal water smells, tastes or sediment, we can help determine other tests that may be useful, depending on your specific situation. UGA recommends having private wells tested annually. Here are other times when we would also recommend a water test:

- When a new well is installed.
- Someone has consistent gastrointestinal problems.
- During pregnancy.
- There are infants or elderly members of the household.
- There are noticeable differences in your water following a heavy rain.

Various size test bottles are available at our office and can be picked up at no charge. You pay for water testing services when you return with your water samples. We are open normal business hours Monday-Friday and are located at 55 Oglethorpe Drive in Crawford.

Shanna Reynolds is the county extension coordinator for the Northeast District of the University of Georgia Extension. Her email is shanna.reynolds@uga.edu.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

UPCOMING

St. John Church will hold its indoor yard sale from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 15 at 632 Crawford-Smithonia Road. Items include: couches, love seats, chairs, coffee tables, end tables, TV stands, entertainment centers, bookshelves, home decor, dishes, clothes, shoes and more. Call 706-202-6707 for more information.

Norma Rae will perform at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, July 15 at No. 3 Railroad Street in Arnoldsville. Subsequent concerts include Henderson and Williams at 7 p.m. Saturday, July 22 and Scarlet Stitch at 7 p.m. Saturday, July 29.

St. John Church will hold its 7-Up Program at 3 p.m. Sunday, July 16. There will be seven speakers with seven topics, speaking for seven minutes each.

Burts Methodist Church will open its food pantry at 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, July 19. The church is at 77 Veribest-Enterprise Road off the Elberton Highway.

Arnold Grove Baptist Church will host a program for the pastoral anniversary of the Rev. A. R. Wymbs. The program will start at 7 p.m. Friday, July 21 with Pastor Timothy Starks from Kingdom Baptist International. On Sunday, July 23, the Rev. Jason Haynes from Salem Missionary, Liburn, will speak at 11 a.m., and Pastor Christopher A. Wimberly, Hunter Hill First Missionary Baptist Church, Atlanta, will speak at 2:30 p.m. Dinner will be served following the last service at the Depot in Crawford.

Antioch Baptist Church of Stephens will celebrate its 210th anniversary on Sunday, July 23. Andy Perryman, director of missions for the Georgia Baptist Association, will be the guest preacher at the 11 a.m. service. There will be a potluck meal after the service.

Antioch Baptist Church of Stephens will hold three revival services at 7 p.m. July 24-26. Each night will feature a different guest pastor.

- Monday, July 24: Rev. Mike Thigpen, pastor of Beulah Baptist Church, Tignall
- Tuesday, July 25: Rev. Mark Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greensboro
- Wednesday, July 26: Rev. Scott Smith, from the Georgia Baptist Mission Board.

The Rev. Robert Robinson from West End Baptist Church, Greensboro, will be the worship leader for the week, and the pianist will be Lisa Harrison Ramey.

The adult Open Book Club will meet at the Oglethorpe County Library at 1 p.m. Tuesday, July 25. This month's book will be "Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone" by Benjamin Stevenson.

Wesley Chapel Fire Department will have a car wash from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, July 29 in the parking lot of Carquest Auto Parts (beside Subway). Donations are accepted.

The Oglethorpe County Community Day & Family Movie Night at Sunset is scheduled for Bryan Park on Saturday, Aug. 5. The community day is scheduled for 6:30-8:30 p.m. with the movie to start at sunset. Activities will include vendors, a video gaming truck, children's games, food trucks, gifts and drawings. For more information, contact Jeanne Jones at oglethorpecommunity-day@gmail.com or 678-779-5437.

The Oglethorpe County Republican Party will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 8 at the Oglethorpe County Library. The guest speaker will be determined. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Countryside Manor will hold an open house from noon-4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 12. There will be a tour of the venue, complimentary sparkling wine, food tasting, music and giveaways. RSVP by email at countrysidemanorinfo@gmail.com or call 404-422-4573.

Burts Methodist Church will hold its Homecoming at 11 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 13 with special guests, the Rev. Wiley Carney and music by the 3T's. A meal will follow the service in the annex.

The Oglethorpe County Library will host Ashley Simp-

son for a talk titled Back 2 School, based on her work as part of the Digital Atlas of Historic Oglethorpe County Project. The event will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 26 at the library meeting room and will focus on their findings of early schools in the county.

REGULAR MEETINGS

The Rotary Club of Oglethorpe County meets every Friday, starting with coffee at 7 a.m., at the Farm Bureau in Crawford. This week's program on July 14, features Rob Fisher, director of partner for People & Place, which works in Haiti to improve rural livelihoods with reforestation, sustainable farming and economic development.

The Oglethorpe County Chamber of Commerce holds a networking breakfast at 8:30 a.m. on the second Wednesday of every month.

The Oglethorpe County Chamber of Commerce holds an after hours networking event at 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month.

The Oglethorpe County Library holds story time for toddlers and pre-K children from 10:30-11:15 a.m. every Wednesday. Stories, rhymes and take-home crafts are provided.

American Legion Post 123 hosts a veteran's breakfast buffet the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 9-10:30 a.m. The breakfast is free to veterans and open to the public for a donation. Everyone is invited.

The Oglethorpe County Senior Center provides meals and activities for anyone 60 years old and older. The center is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. Here's the schedule:

- Thursday, July 13: Georgia Cares Medicare Presentation; lunch: beef meatloaf, mashed sweet potatoes, sauteed peppers and a chocolate chip muffin, or jerk chicken breast, mashed sweet potatoes, sauteed peppers, plantain and banana pudding.
- Friday, July 14: Bingo; lunch: honey-wheat english muffin, fried eggs with black pepper, fire roasted potatoes with onions and peppers and blueberry fruit spread, or blackened tilapia, rosemary potatoes, broccoli, green beans, yellow carrots, red peppers and a mini cornbread loaf.
- Monday, July 17: Bingo; lunch: grilled chicken strips, whole wheat rotini pasta, kale pesto sauce, and green peas, or chicken tenders, mashed cauliflower and pickled peaches.
- Tuesday, July 18: Cards; lunch: creamy chicken tortilla soup with cheddar cheese and cilantro lime pinto beans, or charbroiled beef patty, black pepper gravy, white rice with a blend of broccoli, cauliflower and carrots.
- Wednesday, July 19: Sign language with Debbie; lunch: sliced turkey breast, provolone cheese, wheat bread, green leaf lettuce, Baked Lay's potato chips and mixed fruit cup.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mentors are needed for the Oglethorpe County School System's STAND (Students Taking A New Direction) mentoring program. If interested, email vhunter@oglethorpe.k12.ga.us or text 706-248-1101. This is a year-long commitment for the 2023-24 school year for students K-12.

Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. announces home heating and water help for elderly and medically homebound Oglethorpe County residents. Every member of the household must be 65 years and older or medically homebound for health reasons. If so, the household can apply for assistance with their heating and water bills. All eligible applicants should call Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. at 855-636-3108 or go to ndo.apointment.works/ea.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Update from Arnoldsville

Everyone has the right to be stupid. It's just that some people abuse the privilege. We are so glad and thankful to have my sister-in-law, Veronica, at home now. She had spent several days in the hospital after having multiple health problems. She is still weak after being in bed so long, but she is looking forward to a recovery soon. Our love and prayers go out to Veronica, Tommy and family. I enjoyed several days last week at the lakehouse with Jen. We had several work projects. It's always better when you work together. We enjoyed the Fourth of July on the dock with John, Merry and Ladonna. We have learned to stay off the water in boats on holidays. We just eat a lot and float around in the water with floats. On July 2, several of our family and friends enjoyed a great fireworks show in between the storms that came our way. The guys did a great job. I enjoyed having Beverly Gabriel and Sandra Fulgrum visit me for the show. We decided to ride the golf cart over to visit Mar-

tha before the fireworks. We started to head home as the clouds came in, but we didn't make it. Riding on a golf cart in a storm with three old ladies was quite a sight to see. If we had that filmed, I know we could sell the event. After getting back to the house, we put on bath robes and enjoyed pizza and a salad, and just laughed the night away. I'm thankful for the friends I have. Last Sunday we enjoyed a great lunch at Arnoldsville Baptist Church after our service. The ribs and mac and cheese cooked by Jerry and Margie at Countryside were so good. We had a nice time of fellowship and games after lunch. I enjoyed seeing David and Laura Underwood and their boys last week. They were visiting John and Merry for a few days. They came over to our house and helped us move a big table. Laura reported that Jean and Gilbert Underwood were doing pretty good now. Our love and prayers go out to them.

— Jean Fleming

Early voting is popular in Georgia

By Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgians have taken to early voting in a big way. The Peach State ranked second in the nation for early voting last November, according to a study released by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

The report found that 58% of Georgia voters cast their ballots before Election Day, up from 48% in 2018.

“Georgia leads the nation in voter access, election security, and innovation,” Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said. “Georgia voters have the confidence that they can cast their ballot easily, and that their vote will count.”

Raffensperger famously refused then-President Donald Trump’s request to “find” enough votes to overturn Georgia’s presidential election results in January 2021. Democrat Joe Biden had carried the state the previous November by 11,779 votes.

Since then, Raffensperger has defended the security and accuracy of Georgia elections and backed innovations to further improve the voting process.

In May, he announced the state will conduct “health checks” in all 159 Georgia counties. The health checks will examine election management systems, ballot marking devices, and scanners to verify that the software used in last year’s elections has not been changed.

The new study found that Georgians voted early last year more than any other state except Texas. At the same time, only 6% of Georgia voters cast their ballots through the mail, returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Only about one-third of voters waited until Election Day to cast their ballots in person, which kept lines at the polls short or nonexistent in most precincts.

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Headmaster’s Corner
By Steve Cummings

SILENCING THE OPPOSITION

On July 4, a federal judge issued an important ruling that addressed the most wide-ranging effort to silence free speech in the history of our country.

According to the ruling, several government agencies have been working with big tech companies to silence any speech that did not align with the messaging and policies coming out of the White House.

The judge’s ruling put a halt to this deplorable conduct.

The fact that censorship was happening is not news. The fact that a federal judge looked into the evidence and concluded that this type of censorship violates the free speech rights of many Americans IS big news.

Why would our government want to silence the “opposition?” It’s not hard to figure out.



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Community Church Directory





ARNOLD'S GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

CHURCH OF THE WEEK

"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction."

Psalms 1:6 NIV

<p>Antioch Baptist Church 135 Railroad Rd., Stephens, GA 30667</p> <p>Arnold's Grove Baptist Church 625 Wolfskin Rd, Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>Arnoldsville Baptist Church 240 Yancey Rd., Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>Athens Friends Meeting Quakers 2092 Athens Road Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>Baird's Baptist Church 1031 Community Drive, (physical address: 42 Bairdstown Loop) Union Pt, GA 30669</p> <p>Bethany Baptist Church 3193 Centerville Rd., Lexington, Ga 30648</p> <p>Born Again Church 1180 Athens Road Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Burts United Methodist Church 77 Veribest – Enterprise Road, Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Clarke Grove Baptist Church 726 Crawfordville Hwy., Stephens, GA 30667</p> <p>Cloud's Creek Baptist Church 274 Cloud's Creek Rd, Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Collier Baptist Church 115 Collier Church Rd., Comer, GA 30629</p> <p>Corinth Baptist Church 2040 Belmont Road Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>County Line Baptist Church 3248 Walker Road Rayle, GA 30660</p> <p>Crawford Baptist Church 124 Church Street, Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Crawford Church of Christ PO Box 76, 979 Athens Rd., Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Crawford Pentecostal Church 804 Athens Rd., Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Fork Bethel Baptist Church 3003 Centerville Road Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Friendship Baptist Church P.O. Box 47, Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Genesis Church 520 North Street, Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Gholston Baptist Church 45 Gholston Church Rd., Comer, GA 30627</p>	<p>Glade Baptist Church 1742 Lexington – Carlton Rd., Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Glade United Methodist Church 1735 Lexington Carlton Rd Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Grove Chapel Church 136 Grove Chapel Church Rd Winterville, GA 30638</p> <p>Harmonia Baptist Church 324 Church Street, Maxeys GA 30671</p> <p>Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses 585 Elberton Road Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Lexington Baptist Church 103 West Church Street, Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Lighthouse Evangelical Church Elberton Rd, Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Living Water Baptist Church 734 Yancey Road Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>Love & Action United Church 1071 Athens Road, Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Maxeys Christian Church 160 Church Street Maxeys, GA 30671</p> <p>Millstone Baptist Church 479 Gene Smith Road Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Mt. Olive Baptist Church P.O. Box 42, Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Mt. Pleasant Community Church 1244 Comer Rd., Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>Mt. Zion Baptist Church 388 Stephens Salem Road, Stephens, GA 30667</p> <p>New Anon Grove Baptist Church 24 Fairgrounds Rd., Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>New Bethlehem Baptist Church 1108 Lexington-Carlton Rd, Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>New Hope Baptist Church 383 New Hope Vesta Rd., Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>New Life Church 1186 Athens Road Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>New Springhill Baptist Church 2491 Crawfordville Rd., Philomath, GA 30660</p> <p>New Zion Church 735 Smokey Road, Crawford, GA 30630</p>	<p>Oconee Baptist Church 58 Lower Wire Bridge Road, Stephens, GA 30667</p> <p>Palmetto Chtistian Church 884 Arnold Caldwell Rd Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Pentecost Chapel Congregational Holiness Church 389 Stephens Grove Church Road Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Piney Grove Baptist Church 241 Piney Grove Rd., Comer, GA 30629</p> <p>Pleasant Hill Baptist Church 338 Collier Church Road, Comer, Ga 30629</p> <p>Rocky Branch Baptist Church 58 Millstone Church Rd., Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Salem Baptist Church 694 Salem Church Rd., Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Sandy Cross Baptist Church 791 Lexington Carlton Rd., Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Sonlight Baptist Church 1134 Hargrove Lake Road Colbert, GA 30628</p> <p>Springhill Baptist Church 187 Old Springhill Church Rd., Rayle, GA 30660</p> <p>Springs of Life Fellowship 217 Arnoldsville Road Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>St. James AME P.O. Box 37, Arnoldsville, GA 30619</p> <p>St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church 632 Crawford-Smithonia Rd., Crawford, GA 30630</p> <p>St. Paul CME Church 660 Comer Rd., Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Stevens Grove Baptist Church 707 Stevens Grove Church Rd., Lexington GA 30648</p> <p>Thankful Baptist Church 1218 Union Point Rd., Stephens, GA 30667</p> <p>Thankful Grove Baptist Church 2026 Lexington Carlton Rd., Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>The Light of the World Church 714 Washington Road Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>Vesta Baptist Church 35 New Hope Road Carlton, GA 30627</p> <p>Welcome Avenue Congregational Holiness Church 1140 Crawford Smithonia Road Crawford, GA 30630</p>	
<p>Oglethorpe Children's Academy</p> <p></p> <p>Callaway Drive, Crawford 706-743-7400</p>	<p>TOM THON PHOTOGRAPHER LEXINGTON GEORGIA</p> <p>TOM.THON@GMAIL.COM</p> <p>678-923-6324</p>	<p></p> <p>740 Athens Road, Lexington, GA 30648</p> <p>706-743-8352</p> <p>M-F: 7:30 am - 8 pm • Sundays: 8 am - 8 pm</p>	
<p>NATURE'S HARVEST</p> <p>Your farm-fresh meat market</p> <p>(706) 743-5876</p> <p>16 Buddy Faust Road, Crawford, GA 30630</p>	<p>FOOD STORE</p> <p>Serving breakfast, lunch and supper</p> <p>Colbert, GA 30628</p>	<p>PATRIOT FARM SUPPLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poultry House Equipment• Installation & Construction• Sales & Service <p>764 Athens Road Lexington, GA 30648 706.743.6135 Mon.-Fri. 8-5 pm</p>	<p>OGLETHORPE ANIMAL CLINIC</p> <p>706-743-8021</p> <p>1562 Athens Road Crawford, GA 30630</p>

Sheriff's Report

Staff Report

All information is from the Oglethorpe County Sheriff's Office arrest/booking reports and miscellaneous incident reports. All defendants are presumed innocent.

ARRESTS

■ Jose Cruz Casillas-Martinez, Spartan Cove, Gainesville, was arrested July 3 and charged with driving without a valid license — misdemeanor, and speeding.

■ Cedric Fleming, Hargrove Lake Road, Crawford, was arrested July 3 and charged with rape and kidnapping.

■ Alex Christopher Doyle, Martello Road, Pooler, was arrested July 4 and charged with adult restraint law seat belt and DUI — driving under the influence of drugs.

■ Cheyanne Barry Graham, Hardwood Lane, Carlton, was arrested July 4 and charged with open container in vehicle, speeding and DUI — driving under the influence of drugs.

■ Miranda Yumika Mitchell, First Street, Athens, was arrested July 4 and charged with possession of a schedule I controlled substance and marijuana — possess less than 1 ounce.

■ Kenderkis Dantrell Henson, Athens, was arrested July 5 and charged with two counts of probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge.

■ Tiffany Alexis Hiett, Roase Paddle Lane, Ellijay, was arrested July 5 and charged with theft by taking — felony.

■ Brittany Wheeler, Sandy Cross Road, Carlton, was arrested July 5 and charged with cruelty to children in the third degree and simple battery — family violence.

■ Jose Ignacio Borrego, Forest Court, Statham, was arrested July 6 and charged with probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge.

■ Charles Michael Johnson, Lakeview Drive, Crawford, was arrested July 6 and charged with

failure to appear for fingerprintable charge — misdemeanor.

■ Oscar David Flores-Mendez, Firewood Street, Athens, was arrested July 7 and charged with two counts of criminal trespass, and livestock theft greater than \$100 — felony.

■ Kaitlyn Newsome, Childers Road, Colbert, was arrested July 7 and charged with probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge.

■ Sandra Lovell, Sandy Cross Road, Lexington, was arrested July 8 and charged with driving while license suspended or revoked — misdemeanor, and speeding.

■ Raymond Louis Yager, Faust Farm Road, Arnoldsville, was arrested July 8 and charged with theft by taking — misdemeanor, theft by taking — felony, two counts of willful obstruction of law enforcement officers by use of threats or violence, two counts of willful obstruction of law enforcement officers — misdemeanor, parole violation, and possession of a schedule II controlled substance.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

Doublewide Manufactured home, MUST BE MOVED.
1993 Model, 27 ft. x 72 ft. \$10,000 or best offer. 706-254-0937
July 13-Aug. 3

FOR LEASE

Want to lease pasture for cattle. 706-474-2427
June 29-July 20

HELP WANTED

American Legion Post 123 is looking for a part-time steak cook to begin immediately. Hours would include every Thursday night. Must have experience in cooking steaks. Please call the Post for more details 706-743-8267 or message us through our Facebook page.
TFN

HELP WANTED

American Legion Post 123 is looking for a short order cook to begin immediately to work every Friday night and two Saturday evenings per month. Some experience necessary on the grill. Please call the Post for more details 706-743-8267 or mes-

sage us through our Facebook page.
TFN

HELP WANTED

Quiet Oaks Health Care has immediate day and night time openings for LPNs to work 12-hour shifts with every other weekend off. The hours are 6:45 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. and from 6:45 p.m. to 6:45 a.m. There are also immediate openings for CNAs to work DAY shift from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. We are offering a new higher pay rate and after 90 days benefits, including insurance/sick pay. Fax resumes to 706-743-5455 or email to quietoak-shealthcare@gmail.com or come by 125 Quiet Oaks Drive, Crawford, GA 30630. Criminal background and drug screen required. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.
TFN

HELP WANTED

Quiet Oaks Health Care has positions available in Dietary, Laundry, and Housekeeping. Different departments have different schedules. After 90 days benefits include health and dental insurance and sick pay. Fax resumes to 706-743-5655 or email to quietoakshealthcare@gmail.com or come to 125 Quiet Oaks Drive, Crawford, GA, to complete an application. A background check and drug screen are required. We are an equal opportunity employer.
TFN

LEGALS

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY OF OGLETHORPE

By virtue of a Power of Sale contained in that certain Security Deed from Rodney Lee Stephens to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Paramount Equity Mortgage, LLC, dated December 23, 2016 and recorded on January 3, 2017 in Deed Book 68, Page 578, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, said Security Deed having been given to secure a Note of even date, in the original principal amount of Two Hundred Forty Thousand and 00/100 dollars (\$240,000.00) with interest thereon as provided therein, as last transferred to PennyMac Loan Services, LLC, recorded in Deed Book 99, Page 457, aforesaid records, will be sold at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the courthouse door of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, or at such place as has or may be lawfully designated as an alternative location, within the legal hours of sale on the first Tuesday in August, 2023, all property described in said Security Deed including but not limited to the following described property: All that tract or parcel of land, together with all improvements thereon, situate, lying and being in Crawford (13303rd) District, G.M., Oglethorpe County, Georgia, and containing 3.57 acres, more or less, being bounded, now or formerly, as follows: on the North by Lakeview drive and by C.C. Brooks, on the East and South by C.C. Brooks; and on the West by Jere Dellinger. Said tract is more particularly described as to courses, distances, metes and bounds by a plat entitled, "Survey for C.C. Brooks", dated February 20, 1990, by James M. Paul, Registered Land Surveyor, and recorded in Plat Book 20, Page 205, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, reference to which is hereby made for a more particular description of the property herein conveyed.

Said property may more commonly be known as 320 Lakeview Dr, Crawford, GA 30630.

The debt secured by said Security Deed has been and is hereby declared due because of, among other possible events of default, non-payment of the monthly installments on said loan. The debt remaining in default, this sale will be made for the purpose of paying the same and all expenses of this sale, including attorney's fees (notice of intent to collect attorney's fees having been given).

The individual or entity that has full authority to negotiate, amend and modify all terms of the loan is PennyMac Loan Services, LLC, 3043 Townsgate Rd., Westlake Village, CA 91361.

Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse against the above-named or the undersigned. The sale will also be subject to the following items which may affect the title: a) zoning ordinances; b) matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or by an inspection of the property; c) any outstanding ad valorem taxes, including taxes, which constitute liens upon said property whether or not now due and payable; d) special assessments; e) the right of redemption of any taxing authority; f) all outstanding bills for public utilities which constitute liens upon said property; g) all restrictive covenants, easements, rights-of-way and any other matters of record superior to said Security Deed. To the best of the knowledge and belief of the undersigned, the owners and party in possession of the property are Rodney Lee Stephens and or tenant(s). The sale will be conducted subject to 1) confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy code and 2) final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Security Deed. PennyMac Loan Services, LLC as Attorney-in-Fact for Rodney Lee Stephens Contact: Padgett Law Group: 6267 Old Water Oak Road, Suite 203, Tallahassee, FL 32312; (850) 422-2520
July 6-27

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Arnoldsville, Georgia will hold a public meeting on July 20, 2023 at the hour of 8:30 p.m. at the City Hall of the City of Arnoldsville, Georgia for the purpose of hearing comments and objections, if any, to a petition for an amendment to the Zoning Map and re-zoning of the property located and described in Book 00177 Page 00840 of the records of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Said Property is presently zoned Agricultural/Rural Residential pursuant to the zoning ordinance(s) of The City of Arnoldsville. Application has been filed for an amendment of the Zoning Map of the City of Arnoldsville and re-zoning of said property from Agricultural/Rural Residential to Suburban Residential pursuant to the zoning code of the City of Arnoldsville, Georgia. Following the public meeting, the Planning

and Zoning Commissions recommendation(s) will be heard by the Mayor and City Council Members for their decision concerning said map amendment and re-zoning. All parties at interest and citizens shall have the opportunity to be heard at said time and place relative to said application for Amendment of the Zoning Map and re-zoning of said property.
By: Planning and Zoning Commission
City of Arnoldsville, Georgia
Attest: Dana Player
City Clerk
City of Arnoldsville
June 29-July 20

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of Janie Lee Sanders, late of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to the law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.
This the 16th day of June, 2023.
Bettina Odister Allen
273 Gordon Street
Elberton, GA 30635
June 29-July 20

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of Robert Edward Thornton, late of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to the law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.
This the 20th day of June, 2023.
Timothy A. Paulishen
706-296-8579
June 29-July 20

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

All creditors of the estate of Clarence John Fleming, Jr., late of Oglethorpe County, Georgia, deceased, are hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to the law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.
This the 10th day of July, 2023.
Dorothy Jean Fleming
28 Creek View Drive
Winterville, GA 30683
July 13-Aug. 3

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

State of Georgia
Oglethorpe County
All creditors of the estate of John Clayton Wetherington, Sr., deceased, are hereby notified to render their demand to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This day, July 11, 2023.
Karen M. Wetherington, Administrator with the Will Annexed of the Estate of John Clayton Wetherington, Sr., Brad Sperr, Attorney, 2350 Prince Ave., Ste. 21, Athens, GA 30606.
July 13- Aug. 3

NOTICE OF PETITION TO FILE FOR YEAR'S SUPPORT

The petition of Luisa Nieves Castro, for a year's support from the estate of Bolivar Morales Gonzalez, deceased, for decedent's surviving spouse, having been duly filed, all interested persons are hereby notified to show cause, if any they have, on or before July 27, 2023, 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.
Kayla H. Grier
Judge of the Probate Court
PO Box 70
Lexington, GA 30648
706-743-5350
June 29-July 20

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom it may concern: CINDY WILLIAMS PHELPS has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of RONALD GEORGE PHELPS deceased, of said county. (The peti-

tioner 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 July 17, 2023.

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.
Kayla H. Grier
Judge of the Probate Court
PO Box 70
Lexington, GA 30648
706-743-5350
June 22-July 13

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom it may concern: TRACY MICHELLE HARRIS TOWNSEND has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of VIOLET GAIL HARRIS 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 July 17, 2023.

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.
Kayla H. Grier
Judge of the Probate Court
PO Box 70
Lexington, GA 30648
706-743-5350
June 22-July 13

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July 1, 2023
per the State of
Georgia:
Legal ad rates
increased from \$10
per 100 words to
\$15 per 100 words.

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PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom it may concern: MARY E. HUGHES has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of CHARLES JERMAINE HUGHES 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 July 24, 2023.

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.

Kayla H. Grier
Judge of the Probate Court
PO Box 70
Lexington, GA 30648
706-743-5350
June 29-July 20

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO: Whom it may concern: TINA RENAY TRUMAN has petitioned to be appointed administrator of the estate of LINDA SUE MOTICHEK 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 August 7, 2023.

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.

Kayla H. Grier
Judge of the Probate Court
PO Box 70
Lexington, GA 30648
706-743-5350
July 13- Aug. 3

Make yourself a Will . . . while you still can.

Dennis Peter Helmreich

Attorney-at-Law
120 W. Main Street
Lexington, Georgia 30648
706-743-3410

THE GROVE

Saturdays, 10 - 2

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Fresh veggies from my field to your fork!

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- Okra
- Sweet Corn

Words From The Well

A bi-weekly ministry of Living Water Baptist Church, Arnoldsville

A fear of heights is a common fear. Actually, Mister Bill doesn't like heights, although he's known to be 15-20 feet up a tree during certain seasons of the year. The Apostle John was given this invitation: "Come up here, and I will show you ..." (Revelation 4:1). God's revelation to John was glorious; I suggest we (too) hear similar invitations from the devil that result in far less than glorious endings. You see, Satan is very strategic in what lures us away from God, and quite effective at confusing our sense of direction - often confusing ascent with descent! Noah could have scratched his head in wonder at the building of an ark ... Abram might have declined the travel plans to leave home and family ... David could have winced at the odds of him versus facing Goliath. Thing is — each one of these heroes of faith dared to ascend to heights only to be achieved with God; they dared to accept His invitation of "come ... I will show you." Oswald Chambers writes, "when God elevates you by His grace into heavenly places, you find a vast plateau where you can move about with ease." God is ever calling Believers to higher levels in our spiritual lives, challenging us to find Him completely faithful as well as to a place of peace and rest among daily battles. I suspect God calls us each day to new heights and dimensions of relationship with Him through Christ. Will I, will you ... dare to ascend!

“Words from The Well” is written by Beverly F. Chandler
Read “Morning with Beverly” Monday-Friday at www.morningwith-beverly.blogspot.com.

Oglethorpe Sports



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Michael Fleming, who won the 110-meter hurdles at the GHSA state meet for the second consecutive year, is part of Oglethorpe County's AAU team this summer.



CARSON REYNOLDS/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Sydnie Henderson, a junior at OCHS, is one of the top track and cross country athletes in Oglethorpe County.

Junior Olympic team builds on county's track tradition

By Owen Warden
The Oglethorpe Echo

Oglethorpe County's strength in track and field continues. Seven youth — aged 18 and younger — from Oglethorpe County were selected to participate in the AAU Junior Olympics. The seven athletes selected were Michael Fleming, Sydnie Henderson, Ke'Mauri Brown, Cooper Davenport, Da'Nya Williams, Chase Huling and Areal Mille. They have worked with Dwight Howard Sr., head coach of Hope-Hill Elite!, an AAU traveling track team, who has coached for 35 years and attended the Junior Olympics every year from 1989 through 2020. Former Oglethorpe County High School head track coach and current HopeHill Elite! business manager Craig Huling also has worked with the seven athletes to prepare them for the event held in Des Moines, Iowa on July 28-Aug. 5. Fleming, the oldest competitor and recent high school graduate, ran a personal-best of 14.14 to win the 110-meter hurdles at the Class A Division 1 state meet in May for his second consecutive state title. Fleming will compete in the 17/18 Decathlon event. Howard said Fleming, in a recent decathlon event, won the 100 meters, the 100-meter hurdles, the high jump and the long jump. "(Fleming) is one of the best all-around track athletes in the state," Howard said. "He is exceptional. He is one of the best that I've

CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Coach Dwight Howard Sr. is looking for help to pay for the airfare to Des Moines, Iowa, the price of hotel rooms and food for the AAU

Junior Olympic participants. To help, call Howard at 404-353-0200 or business manager Craig Huling at 706-988-0456.

worked with in a while." Henderson, a junior, is a star on both the OCHS track and cross country teams. She'll compete in the 400 and 800 meters at the Junior Olympics and has caught the eye of Howard. "That young lady has Olympic potential," he said "It's just a matter of keeping her head in the right place." The final high school competitor is Brown, a sophomore who will compete in the high and long jumps. Davenport, a middle schooler, will compete in three events — shot put, mini javelin and discus. Davenport has been working with recent graduate KB Bonds, who was second at state in the discus and had a solid shot put score, but was disqualified due to his throws outside the sector. Other middle schoolers include Chase Huling — son of Craig Huling — who will compete in the long jump, as well as Miller. Miller was the first to qualify out of all seven and will compete in the 1,500-meter race walk and the shot put. "(Miller) is very athletic," Howard said. "She's tall and she's

strong. We're looking for great things out of her." The youngest competitor is Williams, who will compete in the long jump. Howard said he thinks Williams can continue to get better and better, especially as she works through her nerves. Howard has started Facebook groups and reached out to local churches for donations to cover the airfare, hotel rooms and food in Des Moines. "I've been to every practice because I love it," Howard said. "I love the results. I love to see the kids get out of their comfort zone. I love to see the parents rejoicing in knowing that their kids can do better than just average. I love every moment of it."

Junior All-Stars are second in tourney

Staff Report

Toccoa defeated the Oglethorpe County Junior League All-Stars 13-2 in the district championship game on Monday night. Team members include JW Derry, Brett Liedberg, Jake Beyatt, Hunter Hall, Jackson Tatum, Justin Wilson, Jacen Harvey, Drew Amos, Gabe Powell, Nathan McCalla, Abel Febach and Cody Tittle. The coaches are Robert Derry, Scott Liedberg and Dusty Beyatt.

There is no evaluation for 6u. The 8u players will have evaluations at 6 p.m. Aug. 8, the 10u at 6 p.m. Aug. 10 and the 12u and 14u players at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 10. Coaches are needed for all age groups. Register at oglethorperec.com.

Volleyball sign ups ongoing

The Oglethorpe County Rec Department is accepting registrations for the fall volleyball season, which includes ages 7-17. The age groups are 10u, 12u, 14u and 17u. The registration fee is \$60 for every age group. The 10u players will have evaluations at 6 p.m. Aug. 8, the 12u players at 6 p.m. Aug. 10, the 14u players at 7 p.m. Aug. 8 and the 17u players at 7 p.m. Aug. 10. Register at oglethorperec.com.

Soccer registration underway

Registration has started for the Oglethorpe County Rec Department fall soccer season for ages 4-14. The last day to register is Aug. 4. The age groups are 6u (\$50 registration fee), 8u, 10u, 12u and 14u (\$65 each).



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Oglethorpe County Junior League All-Stars lost in the district championship game on Monday night. Toccoa defeated them 13-2.

I buy land WITH CASH offers.

.....

Sam Speed

CELL:
706-510-8073



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Director of Operations | Bell's Food Stores



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No rest for Dickens with softball, basketball camps

By Owen Warden
The Oglethorpe Echo

Oglethorpe County High School volleyball and girls basketball coach Brianna Dickens has kept herself and her teams busy this offseason.

Dickens — who was recently named athletic director along with football coach Mike Holland — has kept both teams training and working out throughout the offseason. In fact, out of their own volition, both teams have worked out and lifted with each other.

Dickens is especially excited about the softball team’s training this summer.

The Patriots — who lost at least eight seniors and all but one of its starters from last season — has had nearly 100% attendance at their summer practices and scrimmages. Their level of commitment encourages Dickens.

“Just shows the standard and the accountability from the start, which is one of the big things we talked about is being consistent in what we’re doing, and they’ve really done that,” she said. “Even though some of these younger ones — it’s a little bit harder than some of the things they’ve done in the past — they continue to come back every day with a smile on their face. It’s a good sign and it brings a sense of excitement for the season.”

There’s only one senior, returning starting catcher Abby Jones, who also plays on the girls basketball team.

“(Jones) does a lot of leading by example,” Dickens said. “She’s been around for the last three years and she can know and read what I’m thinking. Sometimes she’s ahead of things before I even get a chance to.”

While Dickens’ softball starters will be more fluid, her basketball starters are set with four seniors



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Oglethorpe County High School girls basketball and softball coach Brianna Dickens has had a busy summer running youth camps for both sports.

and five key contributors.

Aariana Bell, Denim Goddard, Amber Watkins and Jones all return for their final seasons, joined by junior and fellow starter Kenzie Henderson. They led the Lady Patriots to the Region 5-A Division title and the Elite Eight last spring.

The five have been key contributors since each of their freshman years and, Dickens said, will be looked at as key pieces again this year. The four seniors hold a special place in Dickens’ heart.

“When I took this basketball position, those were the four I started with,” Dickens said. “That first year, we had seven or eight on our roster, so as freshmen, they all started. So when people

say they’re seniors, now I’m like, ‘No they’re not.’ But it’s been really cool to watch them grow over the past four years. Not only as basketball players, but as people.”

Basketball will have to wait for now. Softball practice can start on July 31 and the first game is scheduled for Aug. 4.

“They all take initiative to work hard (and) do what they’re supposed to,” Dickens said. “They’re just fun to be around. It’s a good group of kids on both sides. It makes coaching fun and exciting. It gets me excited to look towards the next season to be around them, see them work hard and see that what they do in the offseason does pay off in the end.”

LONG NIGHT



DINK NESMITH/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO



DINK NESMITH/THE OGLETHORPE ECHO

Oglethorpe County Public Works Department crews worked late Saturday night and into the early morning hours of Sunday, July 9 to clear trees and debris in several locations after storms blew down trees. There were no injuries, but crews estimated between 75-100 trees fell and needed to be cleared from Melton Road and William McCurley Road in Winterville, and Center Church Road and McWhorter Road in Stephens, said Adam Nation, the public works director.

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