



SPORTS: HITTING THE MAT

Newton County wrestling teams off to favorable start
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INSIDE:

Delicious history of cheesecake, see [FOOD B1](#)
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His Word

It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

Proverbs 21:15-16, KJV

Georgia General Assembly

Power of influence

County's state senators poised to have hand in impactful legislation

By **TOM SPIGOLON**
[tspigolon@covnews.com](#)

ATLANTA — Both state senators representing Newton County will help lead committees charged with overseeing any legislative changes to Georgia's court system.



Tonya Anderson



Brian Strickland

The senators also will be part of committees that will help write the state budget and legislation filed on such controversial issues as legalized gambling and state election laws.

District 17 State Sen. Brian Strickland, R-McDonough, was named chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and vice chairman of the Higher Education Committee.

Strickland also was named to the Appropriations Committee, Ethics Committee, and Banking & Financial Institutions Committee.

District 43 State Sen. Tonya Anderson, D-Lithonia, was named secretary of the Senate Special Judiciary Committee, and a member of the Regulated Industries & Utilities; Veterans, Military & Homeland Security; Reapportionment & Redistricting; and Economic Development & Tourism committees.

Strickland, whose district includes eastern Newton, said he wants to see progress made in at least two areas on the Judiciary Committee this year.

"I am hopeful we will continue to focus on legislation concerning further reformation of our criminal justice system with a focus on revising our citizen's arrest law and addressing the disproportionate number of citizens continuing on probation in our state in comparison to other states," Strickland said.

See **POWER**, A3

36th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Observance

'I Have A Dream' Award



Marcello Banes

Trailblazer Award



Chandra Mitchell, Felicia Harris

Young Dreamer Award



Meredith McCrorey

The time is always right to do what is right.

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Four Newton County residents were honored with awards inspired by the life of the late minister and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., who was a native of Atlanta. He was shot and killed in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. He was 39 years old.

Local high school student among government, civic leaders honored

Marcello Banes receives 'I Have A Dream' Award

By **TOM SPIGOLON**
[tspigolon@covnews.com](#)

COVINGTON, Ga. — A high school student who works with special needs classmates joined sisters active in their community and a top government official in earning awards during Newton County's 36th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance.

The program was presented virtually Sunday, Jan. 17, rather than as a live event as has been done in the past. The theme was "The Urgency of Creating the Beloved Community."

Award winners for 2020 included:

- I Have A Dream Award: Marcello Banes;
- Trailblazer Award: Felicia Tuggle Harris and Chandra Tuggle Mitchell;
- Young Dreamer Award: Meredith McCrorey;

'I HAVE A DREAM' AWARD

Marcello Banes is serving his second term as chairman of the Newton County Board of Commissioners, which is the county's governing body. He was first elected in 2016 after working in the trucking industry.

Those judging the awards said, "He is recognized for his numerous and varied involvement in the Newton County community and

passion for unity since his youth. His commitment to unity and community is notable for this year's focus on the National MLK Theme of 'The Urgency of Creating the Beloved Community.'"

He also is a minister and is involved with the altar intake ministry at Springfield Baptist Church in Conyers.

"Nominators emphasized his sincere dedication and compassion to all people and peacemaker spirit which propel his dream for a beloved community of 'One Newton.'"

"He is also involved with the Early Hope Ministries, founder

See **HONORED**, A3

Georgia Supreme Court

Judge upholds Newton County man's life sentence

Decision made despite claims of unfair trial in 2016 stabbing death case

By **TOM SPIGOLON**
[tspigolon@covnews.com](#)

The Georgia Supreme Court has affirmed a Newton man's 2017 murder conviction and sentence despite his claim a judge and his attorney denied his constitutionally protected rights to a fair trial and effective assistance.

Quran Ali Knighton, 20, said a judge denied his

constitutional rights to a fair trial by twice interrupting his attorney's closing argument to give instructions to the jury.

The former Newton High School student also



Quran Ali Knighton

maintained that his attorney's failure to object to the interruptions meant he was ineffective.

Knighton is serving a life sentence in Georgia State Prison in Reidsville after being convicted on a murder charge in the 2016 stabbing death of 18-year-old Markice Harris outside a gated subdivision where Harris lived

north of Oxford.

In affirming the conviction, the justices unanimously said the trial judge generally instructed the jury correctly about the laws regarding self-defense.

They also said the judge's interruptions of the attorney to give instructions to the jury did not improperly limit his closing argument.

The justices also said he also did not prove his attorney had been ineffective by not objecting to the interruptions — in part because he had no reason to object to the judge's proper instructions about the issues the jury was to consider.

District Attorney Randy

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Inside
Ga. Southwestern, GPTC sign new program agreement

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Weather

Wednesday, Jan. 20
High: 54°; Low: 37°
Mostly sunny.



Thursday, Jan. 21

High: 55°; Low: 47°
Up to 60% chance of rain.



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Congressman backs Biden's call for \$15 wage

Johnson supports investigation of Capitol breach, says 'needs to run its course'

By **TOM SPIGOLON**
tspigolon@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — The congressman representing west Newton County is backing President Joe Biden's call for raising the minimum wage to \$15 because it "needs to happen."

However, U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Lithonia, said he supports it being phased in rather than rising to \$15 immediately.

He also wants a full investigation into the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol that left five people dead and Johnson and others trapped as rioters tried to force their way into the House chambers.

Johnson was elected to an eighth term in November to represent Georgia's 4th Congressional District.

The district includes the western half of Newton

County, including the city of Covington, as well as southern Gwinnett and southern DeKalb counties and all of Rockdale County.

Johnson said an hourly wage of \$15 equates to about \$28,000 a year that barely covers a family's housing, utilities, transportation, medical and daily expenses.

"You look at all the essentials," he said. "It doesn't go way far enough."

"(Hourly pay of) \$15 is the very least that can be done," Johnson said.

He said pay for most workers in the U.S. economy has remained flat in recent decades. Reallocation of



Hank Johnson

wealth since the mid-1970s has resulted in the highest 1% of income levels gaining significantly at the expense of the remaining 99%, Johnson said.

A 2019 study by the Federal Reserve revealed that families with net worths exceeding \$1 million owned 79% of all household wealth and the bottom half of American families held only 1.5%.

Multi-millionaires who believed lower taxes on the wealthiest Americans would encourage them to invest their tax savings in jobs and higher wages have dominated Congress in recent years, Johnson said.

He said the two Georgia multi-millionaires who lost reelection to the Senate earlier this month were examples of the "kinds of policy-makers" who helped bring about

economic inequality through federal tax policies that favored the wealthy.

"You've got people like Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue in office setting policy," he said.

Such economic insecurity among white voters led to them electing Donald Trump in 2016, Johnson said.

The same voters believed "Black and brown folks" were to blame for economic uncertainty when the "very Republicans they liked" helped bring it about with tax policies, Johnson said.

Johnson was taking part in his fourth electoral vote count on Jan. 6 since first taking office in 2007.

He said "not in my wildest imagination" did he believe rioters that day would enter the Capitol to try to stop something that typically had

been an uneventful act of Congress.

Rioters surrounding the House chambers trapped Johnson and others in a third floor gallery. Capitol Hill police fired a shot as rioters attempted to enter and one woman in the crowd was killed by gunfire.

Police later were able to lead Johnson and the others through a little-known side entrance, he said.

He said he mourned the two officers who died in the fracas — and wants to know how a mob could force their way into what is typically a heavily secured building.

"This needs to be investigated," Johnson said. "Those responsible need to be held accountable. The investigation needs to run its course."

Covington eyes new park hours to discourage 'undesirable' activities

By **TAYLOR BECK**
tbeck@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — Hours of operation for parks across the city of Covington could be getting cut.

In order to curb what Mayor Steve Horton described as "undesirable activities" from taking place in the city's parks, the council approved the first reading of an ordinance Jan.

4 to amend the park hours, among other changes.

"Recently and probably at greater times in the past, even some that I remember years ago, we've received complaints about undesirable activities taking place in city-owned parks — a lot of it after dark," Horton said.

"Some of it just people congregating, loud cars,

fast driving in and out of them — a number of different things."

Horton said City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. drafted a new version of an ordinance to amend and "provide clarity" of park rules and operating hours.

If a second and final reading of the amended ordinance is approved, city parks will be open from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Currently, parks remain open to the public until 11 p.m. Parks and facilities that fall under the ordinance's jurisdiction include Academy Springs Park, Baker Field, Central Park, Conyers Street

Gym, Chimney Park, City Pond Park, Judicial Building Park, Old Cousins Gym, Pactiv Field, Rota-Dyne, Nelson Heights Community Center, Trailblazers Park and Turner Lake Park.

As for designated parking areas, which means "only the parking lots within any park designated for automobile parking and such future areas as may be cleared and provided by the city of Covington and designated as a parking area," would remain open "from 8 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. from March 1 to October 31, and from 8 a.m.

to 7 p.m. from Nov. 1 until April 30, except that designated parking area hours as to City Pond Park shall mean from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. March 1 until Oct. 31 and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 1 through April 30" under the amended ordinance. As it stands currently, there are no clear-cut limitations on parking.

Owners of any motorized vehicle left unattended or abandoned in areas not designated for parking are subject to penalties.

If passed, violators of the new ordinance would be subject to a penalty fine up to

\$1,000 and/or up to 30 days in jail.

Prior to unanimous approval from the council, Councilwoman Fleeta Baggett asked if cemeteries could be included within this ordinance. Turner said because the subject of cemeteries has its own ordinance, similar provisions would have to be amended within the respective ordinance.

The council convened Tuesday, Jan. 19, after The Covington News' deadline. The second and final reading of the amended ordinance was on the agenda.

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For the 15th consecutive year, Caldwell & Cowan Funeral Home, Covington, has been named a recipient of the National Funeral Directors Association Pursuit of Excellence Award. This Award is presented by NFDA annually to firms that have demonstrated a commitment to raising the bar on funeral service excellence by adhering to strict ethical and professional standards and providing outstanding service to families and communities.

Congratulations to the Caldwell & Cowan Staff for this achievement!

NFDA NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION Pursuit of Excellence

Troy Arthur Bledsoe
Wheeler Funeral Home

Troy Arthur Bledsoe, 84 of Social Circle, GA passed away on January 16, 2021 after an extended illness.

Troy, also known as Arthur or "TAB" was born on May 3, 1936 in Atlanta, GA before moving to St. Simons Island, GA where he graduated from Glynn Academy, Class of 1954.

Troy attended North Georgia College in Dahlonega before entering Navy Flight School in Pensacola, FL. After flight school he served one tour of duty on board the USS Leyte CV(S) 32. He then attended Georgia State University for his Bachelor's degree and received his Master's in Rehabilitation counseling at the University of Georgia - Go Dawgs!

He spent his 34 year career working in various roles within the State and Federal Government, with his favorite role being that of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor during his early years.

Troy enjoyed his years as a

OBITUARY

member and Elder at Luther Hayes Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, GA. He was also on the Newton County Planning and Zoning Commission Board for 18 years.

Troy and Betty spent many years tending to and enjoying their organic "Victory Garden" at their East Newton home. A few years prior to his retirement in 1996 he developed a love for wood turning and spent many hours enjoying his custom wood working shop. He became a Master Wood Turner and enjoyed his small consignment business that he coined "The Old Cracker Workshop". He provided personal classes in his workshop and taught for many years at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC.

Although Troy could be a private person, those that knew him knew his love for jokes, pranks and humorous stories and limericks. He loved to stir up trouble and make others laugh. He always made sure to never miss watching his favorite sports teams - the Georgia Bulldogs and the Atlanta Braves and was an avid fan.

He is survived by his loving wife of 62 years Betty Ann

Marler Bledsoe of Demopolis, Al., son Robert Bradford Bledsoe "Brad" (Lori), Rebecca Gayle Bledsoe Specht (Arthur), his brother Lee Bledsoe (Debbie), grandchildren Bradley Trey Bledsoe, Chelsie Linæ Bledsoe Johnson (Braden), Christa Waterman Gill (Mitch), Jamie Waterman and Samantha Specht, and many great grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents James Troy Bledsoe and Martha Gay Bledsoe of St. Simons Island, GA, and brother Lawrence Denney Bledsoe (Sherry).

Arrangements are being handled by Wheeler Funeral Home in Covington, GA. No services are scheduled at this time but hope to have a celebration of life at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: The Wounded Warrior Project Veterans Organization, 1349 W. Peachtree St. NE, Suite 1800, Atlanta, GA 30309 Or Luther Hayes Presbyterian Church, C/O Mrs. Mike Whatley, 7119 Golfside Dr. SE, Covington, GA 30014.

Guests may sign the online register at www.wheelerfuneral-home.com.

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11 streets part of Covington’s 2021 LMIG paving project plan

Remaining 2011 SPLOST revenue to help fund \$546,000 in street improvements

By TAYLOR BECK
tbeck@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — Using the remainder of 2011 SPLOST funds, the city of Covington has elected to pave 11 streets as part of a Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) project.

During its regular meeting Jan. 4, the Covington City Council unanimously approved the estimated \$546,394.72 project. According to City Manager Scott Andrews, the Georgia Department of Transportation will contribute \$168,968.32, leaving the city of Covington to pay the remaining \$377,426.40. A 10% contingency was included to cover “any unforeseen issue that may arise during the paving process.”

Streets included in the project are:

- Town Branch Court, from Monticello Street to the road’s end.
- Bethlehem Way, from Usher Street to Clark Street.
- Sockwell Avenue, from Floyd Street to the road’s end.
- Turner Street, from Alcovy Road to the railroad tracks.
- Griffin Lane, from Morris Drive to the road’s end.
- Malcom Drive, from Corrydell Parkway to Whispering Pines Circle.
- Whispering Pines Circle, from Malcom Drive to the road’s end.
- Malcom Court, from Malcom Drive to Malcom Drive.
- Corrydell Parkway, from Eagle Drive to the road’s end.
- South Emory Street, from Washington Street to Reynolds Street and from Reynolds Street to Ivy Street.
- McClure Street, from Leverett Circle to Malcom Drive.

All streets included will be milled and resurfaced.

Councilman Kenneth Morgan asked why Floyd Street and Newton Drive weren’t featured in the project.

Public Works Director Kevin Sorrow said the two roads were on the department’s list and upcoming, but after completing a cost estimate, his department determined it was a “substantial” project that would “far exceed” money left available in the 2011 SPLOST being used to pay for LMIG.

“Based on numbers we’ve got and used for last LMIG project, it’d be approximately \$1 million to pave that street,” he said.

Sorrow also mentioned previous discussions with city leaders about installing a new water line along Floyd Street. He said it would be best to complete that project before trying to mill and resurface the road.

“Because we sure don’t want to come in, spend that kind of money on asphalt, and then come back and have to put new water lines in,” Sorrow said.

An estimated start date for paving was not disclosed as the GDOT application process had yet to be completed and the bidding process had not begun.

Mayor Steve Horton then suggested Sorrow and his department work toward compiling a tentative list of city streets that are being looked at for resurfacing and include a timeline for when each street could potentially be completed for the public, pending financing.

“It might help people have some understanding of what’s going on and when something might happen versus not knowing at all,” Horton said.

HONORED:

Continued from A1

of the annual Newton County Family Fun Day and involved with the Domestic Violence Task force. He volunteers and assists in employing graduates of the RSAT Drug Program and volunteers with TutorMate and serves as a reading volunteer.”

The “I Have a Dream” Award winner must have given at least two years of service to the Newton County community; be a registered voter; affiliated with a church, synagogue or worship center; and made contributions to the community for which he did not receive profit, according to information from the organizing committee.

The nominee also must have been visible to the community; made nondiscriminatory contributions; models a spirit of peace and unity; is one who will initiate and support change; must be endowed with a humble spirit; must be steadfast in his or her convictions; and must be one who fosters and supports education on all levels.

TRAILBLAZER AWARD

Twin sisters Felicia Tuggle Harris and Chandra Tuggle Mitchell shared the Trailblazer Award.

“Felicia and Chandra are extremely active in their beloved Newton County community. They have taken the foundations of service implanted in them by their parents and church and spread it throughout the community.

“They are constantly serving others in the community without the pursuit of accolades but from the pure desire to use their gifts and energy to serve others.

“From actively serving in their church, Mt. Zion AME (Mansfield) as lay and/or youth leaders, to the elderly in the community, or other youth in the National Action Network or Newton County School System, these twin sisters definitely share a gene of community servants to all for the betterment of their beloved community.”

YOUNG DREAMER AWARD

Meredith McCrorey, who is a senior in the STEM program at Newton College And Career Academy, earned the Young Dreamer Award award for her advocacy for special needs students.

McCrorey, who is a member of FFA, is the founder of Unique Kids Showing Pigs that encourages special needs students to learn to present livestock in shows.

“She has worked hard as a member of the FFA showing livestock, learning leadership skills, and serving her community.

“Meredith has always had a heart for other children. She first demonstrated this when she organized a backpack drive for financially less fortunate students while she was in elementary school.

“Due to relationships with family friends with autism and Down’s Syndrome, Meredith has a passion for those with special needs or disabilities. Since middle school she has worked to educate classmates about the hurtful use of the ‘R-word’ and has encouraged them to get to know their special needs classmates.

“During her freshman year, she took a floral design class that included eight special needs students. One of the students with special needs began telling Meredith she wanted to show a pig ... Unfortunately, Meredith knew her classmate’s physical and behavioral disabilities would prevent her from participating in a traditional livestock show.

“Meredith began researching opportunities for the special needs community to show livestock. Finding none, she set out to create one. Meredith worked with the special education department to make sure the program was safe and engaging for the participants. She raised money from the community to allow each exhibitor to show a pig without paying an entrance fee, and to receive a T-shirt and medal to commemorate their experience.

“In January 2019, Newton County hosted the first special needs livestock show in Georgia. The show, Unique Kids Showing Pigs, hosted 15 exhibitors. Each exhibitor was assigned a pig and a buddy who worked with them in the show arena.

“In 2020, the show grew to 40 special needs exhibitors from pre-K to high school. The exhibitors represented all races and genders, and varying socioeconomic backgrounds. The exhibitors saw themselves included in something never before available to them, and the buddies learned that the abilities of these special needs students are greater than their disabilities. Meredith’s goal is for the program to continue in Newton County and to help expand it to other counties while in college.

“Meredith has made a huge impact on special needs students who have traditionally been overlooked, ignored, or disadvantaged, in the spirit of Dr. King and his work for accessibility for the disabled members of our beloved community.”

Main speaker Sonya Tinsley-Hook introduced the various parts of the program, including a choreographed dance by sisters Star and Sarai Baker to the song “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” and music by Antwon Barr.

A series of speakers brought the message to those watching online during the half-hour event.

They included high school student Kaegan Hill; activist Tyler Still; UGA alumna Toi Banks; entrepreneur and activist Timothy Birt; and educator Kenneth Hardeman.

Hannah Bodus also was a speaker. She earned the Oxford College of Emory University Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship and was a 2020 graduate of Newton High School.

POWER:

Continued from A1

“I hope to continue working on reforming our mental health system as we continue to work to address the high number of citizens that need mental health services that find themselves in our prisons instead of a facility where they can get the help that is needed,” he said.

The Judiciary Committee also will be working to address issues related to “getting the justice system moving as we continue to deal with COVID” through support of legislation to help relieve “the backlog of cases in our courts as a result of the delay in grand jury proceedings and the inability to conduct jury trials,” Strickland said.

Anderson, whose district includes western Newton, will be an officer on the Special Judiciary Committee which acts as a support panel for the Judiciary Committee on legislation related to the courts in both civil and criminal law, according to the Senate website.

In addition, she will serve as chairman of the 65-member Legislative Black Caucus.

She did not return a call for comment about her committee assignments.

Strickland said his main priorities as vice chairman of the Higher Education Committee will be in two areas.

“While the legislative branch does not have the authority to set tuition rates, we have the ability to work with our Board of Regents and higher education institutions to make certain that we continue to do everything we can to keep the cost from continuing to rise and become a greater barrier to access to education,” he said.

“The other priority for me is to continue to make certain that our high school students are able to continue to pursue a head start towards their careers through dual enrollment programs and college and career academies.

“Both of these issues increase the ability of our students to have access to the higher education they will need in order to be prepared for the jobs of the 2020s,” Strickland said.

He will be a member of the Appropriations Committee that is responsible for reviewing and approving both the 2022 state budget and midyear changes in the 2021 budget.

Meanwhile, Strickland also will be part of the Ethics Committee that could see legislation to make changes in the state’s absentee voting process that President Donald Trump often criticized as being open to fraud during this year’s campaign.

Anderson, meanwhile, could see legislation seeking to legalize some form of gambling in Georgia, such as online sports betting, in her spot on the Regulated Industries committee.

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CITY OF OXFORD MUNICIPAL GENERAL ELECTION NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-2-131(a)(1)(A), notice is hereby given that on Tuesday, the 2nd day of November 2021, a General Election will be held in the Community Center at 110 West Clark Street, Oxford, Newton County, Georgia, for elections to fill City Council Posts 4, 5, and 6 for 4-year terms.

Qualifying fees were set on January 11, 2021 by the Mayor and City Council at their Special Called Meeting. Qualifying fees have been set at \$144.00 for each Council Post.

Qualifying will be held at Oxford City Hall, 110 West Clark Street, Oxford, Newton County, Georgia. Qualifying dates and times are Monday, August 16, 2021 through Friday, August 20, 2021 beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m. each day.

CITY OF OXFORD
ELECTION QUALIFYING OFFICER

Tom Spigolon news editor

Kemp should get credit for changing tone after Trump’s loss

“It’s time to put our differences aside. Put 2020 in the rearview. Let’s stand together as Georgians and clear the destruction caused by the storms of life.” Those were the words of Gov. Brian Kemp as he sought to lower the temperature in his first State of the State address last week.



He basically summed up a year in which a pandemic fully shut down Georgia 10 months ago, rioting raged in response to police shootings eight months ago, and a mob failed to halt Congress from doing its sworn duty 14 days ago.

I believe the governor has shown the leadership Georgia needed to guide us through this pandemic and the economic meltdown it caused after inheriting it from a federal government which shirked its duty in providing a national response.

Though Democrats, of course, will disagree, more Georgians than just the Republicans still supporting him may be looking at Kemp for reelection in 2022.

In my opinion, before Nov. 3, most Republicans and a few Democrats believed he earned another term for his management of the state’s response to the pandemic.

Then the 2020 presidential election happened and the governor had the unmitigated gall to follow the constitution he swore to uphold and not change the state’s election results — which went through two recounts and a GBI signature audit — simply because the person in the White House told him to do so.

I will admit I didn’t agree with Kemp’s approach to campaigning in 2018 when he served as the chief election official while his name was at the top of the ballot.

Two days before the 2018 election, Kemp’s office announced it was investigating opponent Stacey Abrams’ campaign for allegedly hacking into voter registration systems. The attorney general’s office found no evidence of wrongdoing 16 months later, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

I also believed Kemp should have governed from the middle after his narrow win over Abrams. A conservative candidate squeaking by a liberal opponent told me almost half of the

electorate did not take the same far-right approach to governing that Kemp did and he should consider moderating his views.

Anyway, if there’s anyone who could make you look good, it’s Donald Trump.

Kemp and other governors refused to violate their oaths by not changing the vote count in their states’ elections to favor Trump. Despite intense pressure from Trump and his blind followers in Georgia, Kemp didn’t violate his oath and left the electoral vote count alone.

And the governor still called for the General Assembly to consider changing the way absentee voting is done in Georgia — at the proper time during its 2021 session after the election.

If done before the Electoral College met as Trump wanted, such an action could have caused widespread chaos similar to something seen in a third world country.

All of this earned Kemp derision from former supporters for not doing the bidding of a spoiled loser intent on taking down the nation’s electoral system because it didn’t produce a victory for him.

Kemp’s State of the State

address did not address abortion or gun rights or illegal immigration of any of the far-right issues he began his term with.

He called for payments to educators, and changes to the state’s antiquated citizens arrest laws which helped lead to the death of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick in 2020.

Yes, it’s a change from his past stances. But it’s a welcome change that’s needed after Georgia voted for a Democrat president for the first time in a generation in response to Trump’s constant, confrontational approach that further divided this country politically.

Why Republicans would reject a governor who refused to violate his oath of office by breaking the law is a mystery.

In a few days, Trump will be gone for at least four years. Then, our governor can get back to the business of guiding us out of this pandemic before having to worry about re-election against a determined Democratic foe, whether Abrams or someone else.

Tom Spigolon is news editor of The Covington News. He may be reached at tspigolon@covnews.com.

Patrick Graham owner

’Bama win was blessedly normal

There is so much I could write about it when it comes to the cesspool that is national politics in this day and time.

You know what? I don’t want to write about that. I’ve been writing about that for a number of weeks now, and I just want to put it down for five minutes and talk about something else.

Instead, I’d rather talk about what I did while I put it all down for five minutes — well more like five hours — personally.

I’d rather talk about the college football national title the University of Alabama won on Monday night.

Capping a special season with a special title game performance, the Tide rolled a clearly over-matched Ohio State team 52-24 to bring home its sixth title in the Bowl Championship Series and College Football Playoff era. The win secured Alabama’s 18th title overall, and the seventh for head coach Nick Saban, who now has more titles than any coach in the college football poll era.

Don’t feel bad, Buckeyes fans. Everyone Alabama played this season was overmatched. That was the beauty of this particular team, along with the incredible perseverance it took for them to accomplish what they accomplished.

With the backdrop of COVID-19 and all the disruptions that came with it, Alabama is the first team in SEC history to go 10-0 in an all-conference schedule. The Tide pounded all comers from the West, and then beat all the best teams in the East, capping it with a win over Florida, the top team in the East, in the SEC title game.

Alabama carried that 11-0 record into the college football playoff, where it dispatched Notre Dame in the semis and then Ohio State for the title.

In between all the wins, Alabama players took home just about every national award you can, including the Heisman. And what a deserving winner ol’ second-and-26 DeVonta Smith was for the Tide.

Smith bookends Alabama’s last two national titles with his walkoff catch to beat Georgia as a freshman to his record-setting season and title game against Ohio State as a senior. That guy will be an Alabama legend forever.

Yes, I put down work, politics and everything else that weighs on me to watch the title game and bask in the glory afterwards. I fully took advantage of the 24-hour rule the next day to watch the wall-to-wall coverage and celebrate the Tide and all of its accomplishments.

Really, whether you are an Alabama fan or not, isn’t that what college football itself does for all of us this fall no matter who you pull for? Despite wondering for months if we were even going to have a season and then the starts and stops along the way, didn’t it give us five minutes, or an afternoon, each week to put everything down and just enjoy a little bit of normal this fall?

Wasn’t that absolutely the best? And could anything else even provide that brief moment of peace?

I don’t know, for me the answer is pretty simple. Roll Tide.

Patrick Graham is owner of The Covington News and a graduate of the University of Alabama.

Rev. Lyn Pace columnist

Time is now for mercy, justice, love

The Feast of the Epiphany in the Christian tradition, celebrated on Jan. 6, fell on the same day this year that rioters attacked the United States Capitol. Epiphany commemorates the Magi’s visit to the baby Jesus as well as the baptism of Jesus. The word itself clues us in to our understanding of the theological significance of the holiday.



An epiphany is a revelation. The revelation in the Christian tradition is of how Jesus is manifest in the world. As the gospel of John tells us, the word was

made flesh and dwelled among or with us.

In its short two-week life span, 2021 has been a revealing year. Unlike what some hoped for, COVID did not magically disappear. We are experiencing it worse now than ever across the United States and especially in Georgia. Our greatest fears of a false narrative about the national election played out in a dramatic and violent scene on Epiphany. I could go on.

I had the opportunity to lead an opening reflection the other day for our staff and spoke about Epiphany. I invited those gathered on the zoom call to consider the question, “What is being revealed to you in this new year?”

One of my clergy

friends recently shared on her Facebook feed the practice of “star words.” A popular practice associated with Epiphany and the start of a new calendar year, my friend invited her church members and Facebook friends to accept a star (with a word already printed on it) that she chose for them at random. You can find lists of epiphany star words on the internet, but some examples are patience, joy, and restraint. The word becomes something you focus on in the year ahead. It invites you to consider its meaning, especially as it relates to your life. What is being revealed to you through this word in the year ahead?

The Magi in the biblical story followed a star, which led them to a baby who would turn things upside down in their world. Valleys were lifted up and mountains made low. Rich men were told to sell all their possessions. People from across borders were meant to be neighbors, not enemies. In this new realm, that Jesus was ushering in, lions and lambs would lie together in a peaceable kingdom. The one to whom the Magi brought their gold, frankincense, and myrrh revealed new ways of living in the world.

We likely have a tough few months ahead with the health crisis of COVID, continued political unrest, and living with the ongoing sin of white supremacy and racism. Not to mention economic woes that further reveal the hunger and poverty all around us. A good question I am keeping

in front me is — what will it all reveal to me and how will I be changed for the better?

I am writing this article on the day that Martin Luther King Jr. was born, Jan. 15. This morning, I re-read King’s “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” which reminds me, a white clergyman from the South, of my own need for repentance around racism. It also continues to draw me in to be a part of the change I want to see in the world.

I decided to meditate on the passage and see if I might find my own star word. The word that would not let me go was “wait.” King implored the white clergymen to whom the letter is addressed not to wait. He writes, “Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, ‘Wait.’”

That is a searing message to people like me, a person in a place of great privilege.

“Wait,” my star word, will challenge me in a variety of ways. Ultimately, though, it reveals to me why, in some instances, waiting can be harmful.

The time is now for mercy, justice and love. These are not feel good sentiments but actions to be deployed like an army of compassionate neighbors into a world that God still loves.

Rev. Dr. Lyn Pace is a United Methodist minister and college chaplain who lives in Oxford, Georgia with his spouse and 8-year-old.

The Covington News

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LEGALS

Public Notices

Abandoned Vehicles

PURSUANT TO OCGA 40-11-1(1), Shenitra Motley states that the following vehicle has been abandoned (abandoned February 2020) and will be sold at a later date.
2003 ACURA MDX Touring
VIN # 2HNYD18953H536758

SHENITRA MOTLEY
215 BETTY Ann Ln,
COVINGTON, GA 30016
(770) 713-2306

PUBLIC NOTICE # 117765
01/13,20

Adoptions

TO: TERRY Ray Drake and Unknown Putative Father Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §19-8-12(c)(3), you are hereby notified that on the 6th day of January, 2021, James Franklin Ricks filed a Petition to Adopt a minor male child. The case is known as In the Interest of: Dilynn Ray Drake, Newton County Superior Court, Civil Action No.:2021-A-1-1. A hearing to finalize the adoption shall be held at 9:30 a.m. on April 12, 2021, at the Newton County Superior Courthouse, 1132 Usher Street, Covington, Newton County, Georgia 30014. Pursuant to Georgia law, you shall lose all rights to the child and will neither receive notice nor be entitled to object to the adoption of the child unless, within 30 days of receipt of such notice, you file: (1) A Petition to Legitimate the child pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 19-7-22 or an Acknowledgment of Legitimation pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 19-7-21.1; and (2) Notice of the filing of the Petition to Legitimate or Acknowledgment of Legitimation with the Clerk of the Superior Court of Newton County, Georgia and to Petitioners.

ATTORNEYS, RUSSEL Davis Moore V, Nation, Moore & Assoc. LL., 770-922-1818

PUBLIC NOTICE #118822
01/20,27-02/3,10

Bids

ADVERTISEMENT FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR QUALIFICATION-BASED BIDS

DESIGN-BUILD SERVICES FIRE STATION NO. 4 – 1200 HIGHWAY 213, COVINGTON, GA 30014
LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS UPGRADES
NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RFP#RFB #21-13401
SEPARATE SEALED Qualification-Based Bids for Construction services related to construction of a new Fire Station No. 4 to be located at 1200 Highway 213, Covington, Georgia 30014, on behalf of the Newton County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the Newton County Board of Commissioners will be received by Newton County via

BONFIRE'S ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION PORTAL until 11:30 A.M., E.S.T. on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. Refer to RFP Exhibits A & B for specific scope of work.

BONFIRE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
PLEASE FOLLOW these instructions to submit via our online submission Portal.

1. PREPARE your submission materials as outlined in this RFP:

SUBMIT REQUESTED INFORMATION:
NAME TYPE # Files
Requirement
TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS
PDF (.pdf) 1 Combined File
Required

BID FORM PDF (.pdf) 1 Combined File
required

THE MAXIMUM upload file size is 200 MB.

THERE WILL be a MANDATORY PRE-SUBMISSION CONFERENCE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021 AT 1:30 P.M. E.S.T. at the Newton County Fire Headquarters located at 4136 US-278, Covington, GA 30014

SCOPE:

GENERAL SCOPE OF SERVICES. Includes complete General Construction services.

FIRE STATION NO. 4. (~9,150 SF Building Area, 11,784 SF Roof Area)

THREE Apparatus Bays
CASCADE Room
DECONTAMINATION

LIVING Space (Kitchen, Dining, Living, Bathrooms, and Bunk Rooms)

REFER to Attachment B – Specific Scope of Work – BID DOCUMENTS

CONSTRUCTION Budget is estimated to be \$2,500,000.00

COMPETITIVE SUBMISSIONS - KEY Engineering, Procurement, and Installation existing and planned expansion of the Law Enforcement Center Fire Alarm Systems located at 15151 Alcovy Rd, Covington, GA 30014
TuesMarch 03, 2020RFBSubmissionWednesday, February 12, 2020 1:30Law Enforcement Center located at 15151 Alcovy Rd, Covington, GA 30014NOTE: Contractor and all subcontractors must obtain a business license and be fully insured.

INSURANCE: CONTRACTOR shall maintain the following insurance:

(A) CCOMPREHENSIVE general liability, including blanket contractual, covering bodily injuries with limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and property damage with limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence; and

(B) CCOMMERICAL automobile liability, including blanket contractual, covering bodily injuries with limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and property damage with limits of no less than \$1,000,000 per accident

(C) SSTATUTORY worker's compensation insurance, including \$1,000,000 employer's liability insurance

(D) EEMPLOYEE dishonesty

Fun by the Numbers

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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

Level: Intermediate

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

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



City of
OXFORD
BIRTHPLACE OF EMORY UNIVERSITY

Employment Opportunity:
POLICE OFFICER

The City of Oxford is accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Required training and experience include a high school diploma or a GED, acceptable driving record, no felony convictions, and Georgia P.O.S.T. certification. The department requires a pre-employment drug screen, physical, background investigation, CVSA and may require psychological exam. Applications should be submitted to: Chief Dave Harvey, 110 West Clark Street, Oxford, GA 30054. Applications may be picked up at City Hall Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 to 5:00 and are also available on our website at www.oxfordgeorgia.org. Please contact Chief Harvey at 770-788-1390 with questions. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The City of Oxford is an equal opportunity employer.

2020January 15, 2021, 2019

PUBLIC NOTICE #118820
01/20

Debtors Creditors

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS

ALL CREDITORS of the estate of **JOSEPH BRADFORD WRIGHT, III** deceased, late of Newton County, Georgia are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
THIS 7TH day of January, 2021

KERRY LAU Wright
EXECUTOR OF the Estate
OF JOSEPH Bradford Wright, III
C/O ROBERT Stansfield, Esq.
GREER, STANSFIELD & Turner, LLP
P.O. BOX 1617
COVINGTON, GEORGIA 30015-1617
(770) 786-4390

PUBLIC NOTICE #117786
1/13,20,27-02/3

Foreclosures

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER POWER

BECAUSE OF a default under the terms of the Security Deed

executed by **James F. Moss, Jr.** to New Century Mortgage Corporation dated May 24, 2005, and recorded in Deed Book 1920, Page 340, Newton County Records, said Security Deed having been last sold, assigned, transferred and conveyed to Deutsche Bank National Trust Company, as Trustee, for Carrington Mortgage Loan Trust, Series 2005-NC3 Asset Backed Pass-Through

CERTIFICATES, SECURING a Note in the original principal amount of \$93,500.00, the holder thereof pursuant to said Deed and Note thereby secured has declared the entire amount of said indebtedness due and payable and, pursuant to the power of sale contained in said Deed, will on the first Tuesday, February 2, 2021, during the legal hours of sale, before the Courthouse door in said County, sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, the property described in said Deed, to-wit:

ALL THAT tract or parcel of land lying and being in Land Lot 199, 9th Land District of Newton County, Georgia, and being shown as 1.171 acres on Moss Road on that plat of survey for James F. Moss Jr. prepared by Knight Surveying, Inc. and certified by John Elwin Knight, Georgia R.L.S. No. 1945; said plat being dated February 8, 2000, revised May 30, 2000, and being recorded in Plat Book 34, Page 89, Public records of Newton County, Georgia, and said plat by reference thereto being incorporated herein and made a part hereof for a more particular description of the property hereby conveyed.

SAID PROPERTY is known as **118 Moss Road, Covington, GA 30016**, together with all fixtures and personal property attached to and constituting a part of said property, if any.

SAID PROPERTY will be sold subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, whether or not now due and payable), the right of redemption of any taxing authority, any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, liens, encumbrances, zoning ordinances, restrictions, covenants, and matters of record superior to the Security Deed first set out above.

THE PROCEEDS of said sale will be applied to the payment of said indebtedness and all expenses of said sale as provided in said Deed, and the balance, if any, will be distributed as provided by law.

THE SALE will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the secured creditor.

THE PROPERTY is or may be in the possession of James F. Moss, Jr., successor in interest or tenant(s).

DEUTSCHE BANK National Trust Company, as Trustee, for Carrington Mortgage Loan Trust, Series 2005-NC3 Asset Backed Pass-Through Certificates as Attorney-in-Fact for James F. Moss, Jr.

FILE NO. 08-003395
SHAPIRO PENDERGAST & HASTY, LLP*
ATTORNEYS AND Counselors at Law
211 PERIMETER Center Parkway,

N.E., Suite 300
ATLANTA, GA 30346
(770) 220-2535/HG
SHAPIROANDHASTY.COM
***THE LAW FIRM IS ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.**

PUBLIC NOTICE # 117716
01/06,13,20,27

Public Sales Auctions

NOTICE OF SALE

NORTON'S E-Z Storage will hold a public sale to cn'l brce a lien imposed on said property, as described below, pursuant to the Georgia Self Storage Facility Act, Georgia Code 1 0-4-213 at Norton's E-Z Storage 7101 Turner Lake Circle, Covington, GA (770) 784-9110 on Saturday, **JANUARY 30, 2021** at 10:00 A.M. Said property will be sold without warranties as to condition or **WORKABILITY. MANAGEMENT** reserves the right to refuse any bid or withdraw any unit from the sale.

UNIT # Occupant

146 ASHLEY,ANGELA

074 BRANTLEY,BELINDA

016 CULLINS,THOMAS

051 DAVIS,PATRICIA

019 FOWLER,DAVID

LLT HAROLD, TEI ESA

154 HERRING, Lendia

137 MCGUIRE, Cindy

119 PHILLIPS, Kenzy

079 RAINS, Kimberli

063 SHY, Shankia

186 SHY,SOKITHIA

191 SHY, SOKITHIA

056 ST.JOHN,QUENTISHA

109 ST.JOHN,QUENTISHA

174 STEWARD,BARRON

PUBLIC NOTICE #118821
01/20,27

Trade Names

TRADE NAME REGISTRATION AFFIDAVIT

GEORGIA, NEWTON COUNTY

TO WHOM It may Concern:
PLEASE BE advised that **CRYSTAL CAMPBELL.**, whose address is1075 Gum Creek Rd. Oxford, Ga 30054 the owner(s) of the certain business now being carried on at in the following trade name, to-wit: Southern Salvage that the nature of said business is: Secondary Metal Recycler.
THIS STATEMENT is made in conformity with O.C.G.A. §10-1-490 et seq. requiring the filing of such statement with the Clerk of Superior Court of this county.
THIS THE 7th day of January 2021

PUBLIC NOTICE #117793
01/13,20

Valentine's Date Night

Subscribe to the Covington News for your chance to Win dinner to Nagoya Japanese Steakhouse (\$50 value) and a bouquet of flowers.

1 month subscription (1 chance to win).
6 month subscription (6 chances to win).
1 year subscription (12 chances to win).

\$5.00 for a 1 month subscription. \$30.00 for a 6 month subscription.
\$60.00 for a 1 year subscription.

Drawing will be held on February 4, 2021.
All subscriptions must be placed by midnight on February 3, 2021.
Valid for new and renewal subscriptions.
(Non-refundable)
This offer is valid January 5, 2021 –February 3, 2021.



The Covington News

Subscription Form:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Payment Method:

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Credit Card # _____

Name on Credit Card _____ Expiration Date _____

Bring Form to 1166 Usher Street, Covington, GA 30014.

Physical activity guide for children, adolescents, adults

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

Staying healthy is a full-time job for people of all ages.

While it might not always prove so easy to exercise or eat right, the benefits of healthy living are undeniable.

According to the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, “prevention” refers to helping people avoid getting sick or identifying diseases early so treatment can begin. Immunizations and disease screenings are two vital components of preventive care, but children, adolescents and adults can take more active roles in preventive care by embracing physical activity.

The Department of Health and Human Services notes that physical activity fosters normal growth and development and can help people feel better, function better, sleep better, and reduce their risk for a large number of chronic diseases.

Reducing risk for chronic disease keeps people out of the doctor’s office, or even the hospital, and it also can help save considerable amounts of money.

One report from the The Milken Institute estimated that high chronic disease and obesity rates are responsible for more than \$1 trillion in lost productivity in the workplace every year.

In addition, the National Commission on Prevention Priorities notes that increas-



Metro Creative Services

In recognition of the role exercise plays in preventive care, the DHHS recommends children, adolescents and adults follow these physical activity guidelines.

ing the use of five preventive services to 90% can save more than 100,000 lives in the United States each year. Such services include advising smokers to quit and offering medication or other assistance to help them and providing flu shots for people age 65 and older.

In recognition of the role exercise plays in preventive care, the DHHS recommends children, adolescents and adults follow these physical activity guidelines.

Children and adolescents
The DHHS recommends that children and adolescents between the ages of six and 17 should get 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day.

- **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least three days a week.
- **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity at least three days a week.

Adults
The DHHS advises adults to make a concerted effort to move more and sit less

Risky behavior can lead to chronic disease

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

Chronic diseases pose a significant threat to the general public. It can be easy for adults in the prime of their lives to overlook the danger of chronic diseases, especially if they feel good and aren’t exhibiting any symptoms to suggest their health is in jeopardy. But overlooking the potential dangers of chronic disease can prove deadly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Chronic diseases are costly as well, as recent reports from the Rand Corp. and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services indicate that 90% of annual health care expenditures in the United States are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

While there’s no way to guarantee a person won’t develop a chronic disease, avoiding certain risky behaviors can help adults greatly reduce their risk for various chronic diseases.

Tobacco use
The CDC notes that tobacco is the leading cause of preventable disease, and not just among smokers. While 34 million adults in the United States smoke cigarettes, 58 million nonsmokers, including



Metro Creative Services

Avoiding certain risky behaviors can help adults greatly reduce their risk for various chronic diseases.

children, are exposed to secondhand smoke, which can cause chronic diseases like stroke, lung cancer and coronary heart disease. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk of impaired lung function, acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks.

Poor nutrition
The value of fruits and vegetables is well-documented. In spite of that, the CDC reports that fewer than 10% of adults and adolescents eat enough fruits and vegetables. In addition, the CDC reports that 60% of young people between the ages of two and 19 and half of all adults consume a sugary drink on any given day. Such beverages, as well as processed foods, add unnecessary sodium, saturated fats and sugar to people’s diets, increasing their risk for chronic disease as a result.

Lack of physical activity
The Department of Health and Human Services has issued physical activity guidelines designed to help people improve their overall health and reduce their risk for various diseases. But the CDC reports that just 25% of adults and 20% of adolescents meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Low levels of physical activity can contribute to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, and obesity.

Excessive alcohol consumption
The CDC notes that excessive alcohol consumption can cause heart disease, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, and stroke. In addition, the CDC reports that the less alcohol a person drinks, the lower his or her risk of cancer becomes.

Chronic diseases are a formidable opponent. But people of all ages can reduce their chances of developing such diseases by avoiding a handful of risky behaviors.

Newton County Health Department, Piedmont Newton Hospital given Car Seat Mini-Grant

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

The Newton County Health Department was awarded the 2021 Car Seat Mini-Grant by the Georgia Department of Public Health, Injury Prevention Program. Through the Mini-Grant, the Health Department and First Steps at Piedmont Newton Hospital work together to provide car seats and education to financially eligible families in Newton County. This program is funded by the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety to help ensure Georgia’s children are safe while riding in motor vehicles.

And it works! Since 2007, the education, car seats and booster seats provided through the Mini Grant prevented serious injury or death and saved over 385 of Georgia’s children who were involved in crashes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, car seats reduce fatal injuries by 71% among infants and by 54% among children ages 1 to 4 years in passenger cars. Car seats offer the best protection for children in the event of a crash, and they are most effective when installed and used correctly. Nearly three out of every four car seats are not used properly, placing children at unnecessary risk.

“It’s our responsibility to keep our children safe,” said Missy Braden, a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician instructor at Piedmont Newton Hospital. “The Car Seat Mini-Grant is a great opportunity to help our community and help protect our children from serious injuries or death in motor vehicle crashes.”

In Newton County, Braden educates parents and caregivers on how to properly install and use car seats, offers car seat inspections and provides car seats and booster seats to financially eligible families. Through the Car Seat Mini-Grant, agencies supporting more than 120 counties are working to keep Georgia’s children safe. These programs help families get their children buckled up right, every trip, every time.

For more information about the Newton County car seat program, contact Missy Braden at 770-385-4396 or email missy.braden@piedmont.org. If you would like information regarding other counties involved in the program, please contact the Georgia Department of Public Health’s Child Occupant Safety Project via email at injury@dph.ga.gov or by calling 404-463-1487.

Construction of \$34M apartment complex ongoing after slow start

By **TOM SPIGOLON**
tspigolon@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — Developers say the “huge demand” they have seen for new apartment complexes in Covington led them to invest millions in a new project on the city’s south side. However, rain and other factors have slowed construction of the \$34 million apartment complex on Covington’s south side.

Developer Arbour Valley Communities of Birmingham, Alabama, has been doing engineering and site work for more than a year on the planned Arbours at Covington complex, said company principal Sam Johnston.

The complex on Ga. Highway 36 between Covington Bypass and Piper roads is “designed to be affordable” but is not government-subsidized, Johnston said.

Completion is set for the end of this year — depending on weather conditions, he said.

The 180-unit complex will be geared to families and include 54 three-bedroom units, with the rest being one- and two-bedroom units, he said.

Rents will be competitive with other properties in the area and range from \$800 for a one-bedroom to about \$1,100 for a three-bedroom, Johnston said.

Permits filed with the city of Covington showed that the

project is set to include eight buildings ranging in size from 14,000 to 30,000 square feet.

Johnston said his company found a huge demand for multi-family development in Newton County because of its population growth and new jobs being created.

The county’s potential for economic growth and its ongoing vibrancy — personified by the Covington Square — “impressed investors” in the project, he said. “The community has a nice vibe about it,” Johnston said. “We are delighted to be in Covington.”

Arbour Valley has developed about 20 complexes in Georgia, Alabama and Florida, Johnston said.

Its leaders began searching in 2017 for a suitable site in the Covington area before finding the 15-acre site on Ga. Highway 36.

The company then broke ground for the Arbours at Covington complex in November 2019.

They then were forced to work around unusually wet conditions for months in the spring to do engineering work on the site, he said.

Since then, they installed underground piping and built retention ponds, he said.

They are now installing roads and building pads, Johnston said.



Special to The Covington News

Georgia Piedmont President Tavarez Holston and Executive Vice President/Vice President of Academic Affairs Cheree Williams sign the new Long-Term Care Management program agreement.

Ga. Southwestern, GPTC sign agreement for Long-Term Care Management Program

STAFF REPORTS
news@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — Georgia Piedmont Technical College has signed a new articulation agreement designed to ensure a smooth transition from its associate degree programs to Georgia Southwestern State University’s Long-Term Care Management program.

Tavarez Holston, president of Georgia Piedmont, said the partnership with Georgia Southwestern will greatly benefit students at Holston’s institution, which has a campus in Covington.

“We enjoy creating pathways for students that will allow them to further their education without impediment,” Holston said.

“Our partnership with Georgia Southwestern State University is another example of that. I’m excited about this agreement with one of the great four-year educational institutions in our state. It will surely move Georgia’s workforce development efforts forward.”

Graduates with the Long-Term Care Management degree will have the managerial, budgetary

and communication skills critical to the health management field, a news release stated.

The degree prepares graduates to assist patients and families to connect with community resources, transition from hospital to home, and manage the care of residents in an institutional setting.

Georgia Southwestern President Neal Weaver said, “We are excited to partner with Georgia Piedmont Technical College in educating the caregivers our aging and disabled communities desperately need.”

“We hope that in simplifying the transition from institution to institution, more students are encouraged to pursue long-term care as a career.”

Georgia Southwestern Associate Dean and Professor Leisa Easom said, “Our nation has a growing number of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

“The LTCM degree addresses the multi-disciplinary elements in education and training required in the preparation of our healthcare workforce today to meet the needs of these popula-

tions.”

Unique to the Georgia Southwestern campus is the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving where the creation of this degree began.

In prior years, Easom served as the Institute’s executive director and experienced firsthand how families across the nation are struggling to connect with community resources that would enable the disabled family member to remain in their home, navigate the health care system, and/or transition from hospital to home as well as residential settings.

Georgia Southwestern, located in Americus, is a public, four-year unit of the University System of Georgia with more than 3,000 students.

Georgia Piedmont has seven learning centers in DeKalb, Newton and Rockdale counties and also specializes in customized business and industry training and workforce development through its Economic Development and Continuing Education division. For more information, visit gptc.edu.

Newton school leaders address funding needs with state legislators

By **TOM SPIGOLON**
tspigolon@covnews.com

COVINGTON, Ga. — Newton County School System leaders told state lawmakers about the need for funding public education at a higher level and addressed such issues as broadband access during a recent meeting.

School Board Chairman Shakila Henderson Baker and Superintendent Samantha Fuhrey met with members of the Newton County’s legislative delegation as part of a series of meetings with local government and utility service agencies Jan. 11.

The Covington-Newton County Chamber of Commerce organized the event at the Historic Courthouse to precede the beginning of legislative business during the 2021 General Assembly session.

Baker said she hoped the legislators — three of whom are members of the Assembly’s Republican majority — would oppose any legislation to allow vouchers to divert public funds to private school tuition.

Republicans have introduced a series of voucher proposals in the General Assembly in recent years.

“We hope you will reach out and try to see our viewpoint,” Baker said.

She said the county school system needs funding to keep operating in a manner similar to a private business.

“If you do not have the funds, you cannot run that business,” she said.

Fuhrey noted the school system saw almost \$11 million in cuts in the state’s 2021 budget.

Lawmakers approved more than \$950 million in cuts to education after the state saw a major downturn in revenues from the

shutdown of the economy because of safety concerns about COVID beginning in March.

Fuhrey also said the General Assembly needed to continue to fund equalization grants to low-wealth counties like Newton, which does not have the same level of sales and property tax revenue some neighboring counties have.

She said the county stands to lose \$21 million in revenue without the equalization funding it receives.

The superintendent said a big issue for Newton schools was lack of broadband

access in some parts of the county — which became a major issue after the school system emphasized remote learning in the wake of the pandemic.

She asked the legislators to do whatever they could to make it more accessible throughout Newton County.

The pandemic also has made students’ mental health more of an issue as they deal with its effects, Fuhrey said.

Baker and Fuhrey agreed the school system was working to have mental health clinicians available to students and families.

The state lawmakers represented districts that include parts of Newton County. Four of the six in the county’s delegation attended the series of meetings, including District 17 State Sen. Brian Strickland, R-McDonough; District 112 State Rep. Dave Belton, R-Buckhead; District 110 State Rep. Clint Crowe, R-Jackson; and District 109 State Rep. Regina Lewis-Ward, D-McDonough.

District 43 State Sen. Tonya Anderson, D-Lithonia, and District 113 State Rep. Sharon Henderson, D-Covington, did not attend.

UPHOLDS:

Continued from A1

McGinley said in a posting on Facebook he was “proud of the hard work of so many with the District Attorney’s Office and the Sheriff’s Office” in prosecuting and investigating the case.

He said Senior Assistant District Attorney Bailey Wilkinson handled the prosecution

and the appeal, including arguing the case in front of the Supreme Court.

McGinley also singled out former Deputy Chief Assistant DA Candice Branche, who is now the Newton County Juvenile Court judge, and Investigator Josh Shumate, Victim Services Director

Leslie Smith and Legal Assistant Allie Davis for their work on the case.

“Their hard work at the trial and appellate levels ensured justice was done in this case. I hope this can serve as some level of closure for Mr. Harris’s family,” McGinley said.

A Newton County

jury found Knighton guilty in October 2017 of the May 2016 stabbing death of Harris after the former friends fought outside the gated Wesleyan Subdivision where Harris lived off Boogers Hill Road.

Knighton, who was 16 at the time of the incident, was convicted of malice murder and

possession of a knife during the commission of a felony.

Superior Court Judge John Ott sentenced Knighton to life in prison, plus an additional mandatory five years for possession of a knife used while committing the crime, according to the court’s decision.

His attorney, Jeff Banks, moved for a new trial before Knighton hired a new attorney in mid-2019.

After another hearing, the Newton County court denied the motion in December 2019. Knighton appealed and the state Supreme Court heard the case on Sept. 15, 2020.

SPORTS

The Covington News

Prep Wrestling



Chris Bridges | Special to The Covington News
Following a rocky start to the year due to cancellations, Piedmont Academy has recently gathered momentum on the mat.

Mat Cougars able to compete at Westfield

By CHRIS BRIDGES
Correspondent

MONTICELLO, Ga. — Piedmont Academy’s varsity and Middle School wrestlers were able to take to the wrestling mat last week at Westfield in Perry.

With several matches cancelled this season due to COVID-19 concerns, the mat time was valuable for the Cougars.

“I thought we did well for only our second competition,” coach Kaden Miller said. “On varsity, right now Westfield is probably the best team in the GISA. We were able to compete with them though.”

In addition to the host team, Piedmont’s varsity wrestlers also faced Schley County. The Middle School

Cougars faced Southland and Crisp Academy.

Competing for the varsity Mat Cougars this season are Scott Swann (106), Daniel Joseph (113), Austin White (120), Boone Pope (120), Ray Lecroy (126), Michael Joseph (132, 138), Tanner Locklear (132), Davin Waldrop (138), Andrew Parish (145), Dalton Wallace (152), Nick Nyman (160), Jake Vaughn (170) and Mason Tanner (195).

Middle School competitors include Greyson James, Austin Anglin, Alex Statham, Jayce Daniel, Scott Swann, Daniel Joseph, Braxton Floyd, Jamus Wingate, Rayce Vaughn, Jarren Brinkley and Ryland Brinkley.

Redskin royalty

Social Circle wrestling off to scorching start



Cassie Jones | MAK Photography
Social Circle’s Will Thames (152 pounds) grapples with an opponent during a dominating performance by the Redskins at the Area 4 meet on Saturday.

By BRETT FOWLER
news@covnews.com

SOCIAL CIRCLE, Ga. — After a down year last season, it seems Social Circle is back to its winning ways on the wrestling mat.

However, what the Redskins did Saturday during the Class A-Area 4 meet at Social Circle High School was more

than just winning. Social Circle dominated the meet, winning all three matches by a final total of 252-0 to lock up the Area title.

Social Circle defeated First Presbyterian Day 84-0 in the first round, followed by another 84-0 dismantling of Mt. DeSales in the second round and capped off

with an 84-0 win over Strong Rock Christian in the Area championship.

“Can’t say I’ve seen that before,” assistant coach Nate Ethridge said on Facebook of the clean sweep in area.

Other teams at the area meet took notice as well, congratulating the Redskins on social media afterwards.

“It was scary what you guys were doing out there, lot of fun to watch,” Eagles Landing Christian Academy’s wrestling twitter page said in a reply to Social Circle’s recap of the day.

“Thanks for hosting, you guys ran a smooth day. Looking forward to individual.”

Prep Baseball



Mason Wittner | The Covington News
The Georgia High School Association baseball season officially kicked off Monday as teams around the state took to the diamond to begin tryouts and practice.



Mason Wittner | The Covington News
Following a 2020 campaign that came to an abrupt halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic, programs were left with a dissatisfied feeling this past offseason. Consequently, Alcovy, Eastside, Newton and Social Circle will be bent on returning to the field with something to prove this spring. Opening Day for GHSA baseball is Monday, Feb. 15, so keep an eye out for in-depth season previews and feature stories on each of our four local prep baseball teams in print and online at covnews.com.

Equestrian



Special to The Covington News
On Saturday, Jan. 9, the Piedmont Academy Equestrian team competed in an IEA horse show at Idlewild Equestrian Center in Buckhead. For the middle school Hunt Seat Team, Madison took first place in the beginner walk/trot. Madalynn came in third and fifth place in the beginner walk/trot, while Isabell took the second place slot in the beginner walk/trot/canter. Cora placed sixth in her novice over fences class.

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Cheesecake fans have ancient Greeks to thank for this beloved dessert.

Delicious history of cheesecake

Detailing origins of the dedecant dessert

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

Rich, creamy and decadent, cheesecake is enjoyed across the globe. There are many famous cheesecake bakeries in North America, and those who can’t resist digging their forks into this beloved dessert may assume that cheesecake traces its origins there. In fact, cheesecake traces its origins to the ancient Greeks.

The first “cheesecake” is believed to have been created from a ricotta-type cheese base on the Greek island of Samos. Excavated cheese molds were found there that dated to around 2,000 B.C. Cheesecake was considered a good source of energy and there is evidence that even Olympic athletes were fed cheesecake during the first games. Greek brides and grooms also were known to rely on cheesecake as their cake of choice for weddings.

Original cheesecakes were made from flour, wheat, honey, and cheese, then formed and baked, according to Cheesecake.com.

After the Roman conquest of Greece, cheesecake was adopted by the Romans. Their name for this type of cake was “placenta” and it was baked on a pastry base or sometimes inside of a pastry case, advises What’s Cooking America. Cheesecakes also were called “libum” by the Romans, and were used as an offering at the gods’ temples. Cheesecakes also were introduced to other areas of Europe thanks to conquering Roman armies. By 1,000 A.D., cheesecake could be found throughout northwestern Europe, England and Scandinavia.

Through the years, cheesecake’s popularity spread elsewhere. However, New Yorkers say that cheesecake was not really cheesecake until it got an Empire State makeover in the 1900s. Many New York restaurants have their own versions of cheesecake, with Turf Restaurant

laying claim to the first cream cheese-based cheesecake recipe in 1929. New York dairy man William Lawrence accidentally invented cream cheese in 1872 while trying to recreate a soft, French cheese known as Neufchâtel. Little did Lawrence know that this mistake would inadvertently revolutionize cheesecake recipes.

Cheesecake technically is a pie and not a cake, and there are versions that are baked and others that firm up in the refrigerator without having to cook a custard base. Many cheesecake aficionados have a favorite cheesecake recipe. However, this classic and iconic New York cheesecake, courtesy of Philadelphia Cream Cheese brand, is an ideal one to make your own.

New York Cheesecake

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups graham crumbs
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 5 packages (250g each) Philadelphia Brick Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4 eggs
- 1 can (19 fl. oz) cherry pie filling

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees if using a silver 9-inch springform pan (or to 300 degrees if using a dark nonstick 9-inch springform pan). Mix crumbs and butter; press firmly onto bottom of pan. Bake 10 minutes.

Beat cream cheese, sugar, flour, and vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add sour cream; mix well. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing on low speed after each addition just until blended. Pour over crust. Bake for one hour and 10 minutes, or until center is almost set. Run a knife or metal spatula around the rim of the pan to loosen cake; cool before removing the rim of the pan. Refrigerate for four hours or overnight. Top with pie filling before serving. Store leftover cheesecake in the refrigerator.



Metro Creative Services

Create memories with cookies

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

Oatmeal is a versatile ingredient found in desserts, breakfast foods, savory dishes, and so much more. While it is enjoyed in many different dishes, for cookie lovers, oatmeal shines brightest in cookie recipes.

Homemade cookies not only fill the kitchen with delicious aromas, they are a comfort food prepared and enjoyed with others. Many recipes are even passed down among generations. This recipe for “Pecan Toffee Oatmeal Cookies” from Laurie McNamara’s “Simply Scratch: 120 Whole-some Homemade Recipes Made Easy” (Avery) could become a family favorite in no time.

Pecan Toffee Oatmeal Cookies
Makes three dozen

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 3 cups old-fashioned oats
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 1 cup toffee pieces

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone liners.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt and set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and both sugars until light and fluffy, about two minutes. Add the vanilla. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing and scraping down the sides of the bowl after adding each egg. Gradually add the flour mixture until just combined.

With the mixer on low, stir in the oats, pecans and toffee bits.

Using a two-tablespoon scoop, measure out the cookie dough onto the prepared baking sheets, spacing them 1/2 inch apart. Bake for 10-12 minutes, rotating the baking sheets halfway during bake time for even baking.

Let cool on the baking sheets for five minutes before using a spatula to transfer to a wire rack. Repeat with the remaining dough.

These cookies are extra delicious when served warm.

Some foods can positively affect mood

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
news@covnews.com

No one is immune to the occasional bad mood. Whether it’s the weather, waking up on the wrong side of the bed or another variable, various factors can have an adverse affect on a person’s mood.

Food is one factor that can have a positive effect on mood. Certain foods have been found to positively affect mood, so incorporating them into your diet may help you stay positive even on those days when you get up on the wrong side of the bed.

- **Fatty fish:** A study from British researchers published in the Archives of General Psychiatry found that a daily dose of an omega-3 fatty acid called eicosapentaenoic acid, or EPA, helped patients with depression significantly reduce their feelings of sadness and pessimism. Hackensack Meridian Health notes that salmon, albacore tuna, sardines, trout, and anchovies are rich in omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Nuts and seeds:** The minerals selenium, copper, magnesium, manganese, and zinc have all been linked to mental health, and nuts are rich in each of those miner-



According to studies, fatty fish is among food items proven to have a positive impact on a person's mood upon consumption.

als. Hackensack Meridian Health notes that almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, and peanuts are particularly good sources of the immune system-boosting minerals zinc and magnesium.

- **Dark, leafy greens:** Dark, leafy greens like kale, spinach and collards are rich in iron and magnesium, both of which can increase serotonin levels and help reduce feelings of anxiety. Dark, leafy

greens also help the body fight inflammation, which can have a positive effect on mood. A 2015 study published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry found that brain inflammation contributed to certain behaviors, including low mood, that appear during major depressive episodes.

- **Dark chocolate:** Chocolate lovers may be happy to learn that dark chocolate can improve mood. A 2009 study published in the Journal of

Proteome Research found that dark chocolate helped to reduce levels of the hormone cortisol, which has been linked to stress. Hackensack Meridian Health notes that, when consumed in moderation, dark chocolate made of at least 70% cocoa can help people relax.

Various foods can have a beneficial effect on mood, potentially helping people to stay positive when doing so proves challenging.

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