

THE TALBOTTON NEW ERA

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CENTRAL HIGH TEAMS RETURN TO ACTION - The Central Elementary-High School basketball teams have taken some time off to enjoy the holidays but returned to action this week. This Friday, Jan. 9, the teams will travel to Preston to play Webster County High. The Lady Hawks will take to the court at 6 p.m. and the Hawks will play at 7:30 p.m. On Saturday, Jan. 10, the teams will travel to Butler to play Taylor County High with the Lady Hawks tipping off at 2 p.m. and the Hawks taking to the court immediately after the Lady Hawks' game. On Tuesday, Jan. 13, the teams will host Crawford County with the Lady Hawks scheduled to play at 6 p.m. and the Hawks at 7:30 p.m.

Rain and Cooler Weather Predicted

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

Editor's Note: This is a weather forecast and is subject to change. Please make sure to check for weather updates.

The Talbot County area can expect rain and cool temperatures over the next week. Here are the weather predictions for the upcoming week.

Today, Thursday, Jan. 8, skies are expected to be partly cloudy with a warm high temperature of about 74 degrees and the low temperature expected to be around 59 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the Southwest at a speed of about 10 miles per hour.

Friday, Jan. 9, patchy rain is expected for the area with a 57% chance of showers. The high temperature is expected to reach about 74 degrees and the low temperature is expected to be around 59 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the Southwest at a speed of about 10 miles per hour.

Saturday, Jan. 10, patchy rain is expected to continue in the area with a 56% chance of showers. The temperatures are expected to be



lower with the high temperature expected to reach about 55 degrees and low temperature is expected to be around 42 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the Northwest at about 15 miles per hour making the temperature feel a little cooler.

Sunday, Jan. 11, the skies are expected to be clear and sunny with a high temperature of only about 49 degrees expected and the low temperature is expected to be around 36 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the North Northwest at about 13 miles per hour.

Wednesday, Jan. 14, skies are expected to remain sunny with the high temperature reaching about 58 degrees and the low temperature is expected to be around 37 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the South Southwest at about seven miles per hour.

Monday, Jan. 12, the skies will be cloudy and the high temperature is expected to reach about 50 degrees and the low temperature around 32 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the East at about seven miles per hour.

Tuesday, Jan. 13, skies are expected to be sunny and the temperatures are expected to be around 53 degrees and the low temperature is expected to be around 41 degrees. Winds will be coming out of the Southwest reaching speeds of 15 miles per hour.

Rental Changes Made For Community Building

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

The Talbot County Parks and Recreation Department has announced changes for rentals of the Community Building.

According to Parks and Recreation, effective Jan. 1, the Parks and Recreation Department will introduce new policies and extended hours for community building rentals.

"These changes aim to improve accessibility and better serve the needs of our residents," the Department stated in a news release.

Updated Rental Fees

- Rental Fee:** \$200 per event - Out-of-Town Fee: Additional \$50 for non-residents

- Refundable Deposit:** \$100

Extended Hours

Community buildings will now remain open until 11:00 PM, providing more flexibility for evening events.

Special Repass Service for Local Residents

To support families during difficult times, local residents will receive 4 hours complimentary for repass services, with no fee associated. This offering is first-come, first-served, and if a paid booking exists for that day, the renter will have priority.

"We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we implement these improvements," according to the press release. "For reservations or more information, please contact the Parks and Recreation office or visit our website."

High-Speed Chase Leads To Arrest in Harris County

By JACK BAGLEY

A high-speed chase that began early Sunday morning in Harris County ended in Columbus with the arrest of the driver.

Harris County Sheriff's Deputies attempted a traffic stop on a Honda Accord on Interstate 185 southbound near mile marker 23 early on Sunday morning, but the driver - identified as Arrison Scott Rahming, 26 - accelerated away, beginning the pursuit. Deputies requested assistance from the Georgia State Patrol, and

Troopers joined the chase.

Troopers said Rahming allegedly operated the vehicle recklessly on the highway, exiting onto Georgia 315 before returning to the interstate. Rahming also reportedly crossed the median and drove south in the northbound lanes, then went back into the proper lanes.

Rahming exited onto Smith Road, then traveled south in the northbound lanes of Veterans Parkway in Columbus before being stopped by Troopers with a "Pit" maneuver. Rahming

then exited the vehicle and fled on foot, pursued by Troopers into a wooded area. Troopers requested and deployed a K-9 unit and Rahming was taken into custody without further incident.

Rahming was taken to the Harris County Jail, where he was booked on charges of reckless driving, fleeing or attempting to elude, and aggressive driving. He also had outstanding felony warrants from several jurisdictions, and also allegedly was a felon in possession of a firearm.



Photo Courtesy NewsBreak

SIFTING THROUGH - Harris County firefighters sift through the remains of a Cataula home following a New Year's Eve fire that left a woman dead.

New Year's Eve Fire Claims Life of Harris County Woman

By JACK BAGLEY

A Harris County woman was killed in a house fire New Year's Eve.

According to reports, the Harris County 911 Center was called on December 31 at around 9:30 p.m. by a woman who told them her house was on fire. Emergency Management Director Melissa Price said

officials had to use Rapid SOS, a GPS software, to locate the residence after the victim was unable to say her name.

The blaze was at a residence on Macon Road off U.S. 27 in Cataula, and when firefighters arrived the house was fully involved. After the fire was extinguished, the body of Ursula Macon was discovered in

the residence. Family members said they knew Macon was at home but were unable to contact her, and firefighters attempted to enter the residence to find her but were unable to do so.

Macon's body was sent to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Lab for an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

Talbot Alumni Association to Meet

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

The Talbot County Schools' Alumni Association has announced its monthly meeting date.

According to Dexter Williams with the Alumni

Association, the Alumni Association will hold its monthly meeting on Jan. 24 at 2 p.m.

The meeting will be held at New Salem Baptist Church located at 2060 Geneva Highway in Talbotton.

According to Williams, everyone is welcome to attend and be a part of this great organization.

"We look forward to seeing you there," Williams said.

For more info please call Dexter at 706 315-4143.

Woman Dies in Automobile Accident

By JACK BAGLEY

A Waverly Hall man was one of two drivers involved in a December 20 traffic accident in Lee County, Alabama, that left an elderly woman dead.

According to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the accident took place at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 20, on U.S. 280 in Lee County near the 103 mile marker. Troopers said Betty E. Burke, 81, of Opelika was driving a 2015 Hyundai Sonata when she

reportedly attempted to turn onto Lee Road 72 when her car ran into a 2021 GMC Yukon driven by Jarrod M. Thorne, 37, of Waverly Hall.

Burke was transported to the University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital for medical treatment, but died of her injuries on Monday, December 22.

Troopers did not report if Thorne was injured in the accident.

No charges were reported to have been filed, and the accident was still under investigation by Troopers at last report.



KEEPING GEORGIA HIGHWAYS SAFE - The New Year's Holiday travel period saw law enforcement out in force to make sure Georgia roads stayed safe. During the travel period, the Georgia Department of Public Safety said they responded to hundreds of incidents, including several fatal crashes. Across the state's highways and interstates, state troopers pulled over 368 drivers for driving under the influence and responded to 333 crashes across Georgia.



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Things to Do In and Around Talbot County

Alum Meeting

The Talbot County Schools' Alumni Association has announced its monthly meeting date. According to Dexter Williams with the Alumni Association, the Alumni Association will hold its monthly meeting on Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. The meeting will be held at New Salem Baptist Church located at 2060 Geneva Highway in Talbotton. According to Williams, everyone is welcome

Autos For Sale

Wide Variety To Choose From

14 Ford F-150, Crew Cab, Black, \$11,900
 16 Dodge Ram, 4 Door, 4x4, Red, \$10,400
 17 Jeep Wrangler, 4 Door, Gray, \$12,400
 19 Chevy Equinox, Silver, \$8,400
 14 Ford Mustang, Gray, \$6,200
 16 Chevy Colorado, Ext. Cab, White, \$10,400
 18 Honda Civic, Black, \$9,600
 15 Honda Pilot, Silver, \$8,900
 14 GMC Sierra, 4x4, Double Cab, Maroon, \$13,400
 20 Kia Sedona, Gray, \$8,900
 15 Ford Explorer, Blue, \$6,900
 11 Jeep Wrangler, Black, \$8,900
 19 Kia Optima, Blue, \$7,200
 21 Chevy Malibu, White, \$9,400
 15 GMC Terrain, White, \$6,900
 14 Dodge Challenger, Blue, \$7,400
 18 Jeep Cherokee, White, \$7,900
 17 Chevy Equinox, White, \$7,400
 17 Dodge Ram, 4 Door, Gray, \$10,900
 18 Dodge Journey, Red, \$7,900
 19 Chevy Equinox, White, \$10,400
 22 Nissan Altima, Gray, \$10,400
 18 Jeep Renegade, Gray, \$7,900
 16 Chevy Trax, Blue, \$6,400
 17 Nissan Frontier, Ext. Cab, White, \$7,900
 16 Honda CRV, Blue, \$10,600
 17 Ford Explorer, Blue, \$8,900
 17 Chevy Equinox, Gray, \$8,400
 17 Ford Expedition, Black, \$8,900
 14 Ford F-150, 4x4, Crew Cab, Gray, \$13,400
 16 Jeep Renegade, White, \$7,400

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WOODLAND BUDGET HEARING

The City of Woodland will hold a **Public Hearing for the Proposed FY 2026 Budget at the Woodland City Hall located at 49 East Main Street, Woodland, GA, on Monday, January 12, 2026, at 6:15 PM.** The Regular Council Meeting will be held immediately after the Public Hearing for the Mayor and Council. The public is invited.

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Things to Do In and Around Talbot County

to attend and be a part of this great organization. "We look forward to seeing you there," Williams said. For more info please call Dexter at 706 315-4143.

Pastor Anniversary

The Friendship Baptist Church family invites everyone to join them as they celebrate the 17th Pastoral Anniversary of Pastor Cedric and First Lady Karon Stanford on Sunday, Jan. 25 at 11 a.m. Be inspired as Minister Antarius Harvey delivers the message. At 2 p.m. there will be a Celebration Service - The celebration will continue with Pastor Kenneth R. Parker of New Salem Missionary Baptist Church of Talbotton bringing the message. This momentous occasion honors 17 years of faithful service, visionary leadership, love and dedication to God's people. Come and experience an atmosphere filled with praise, inspiration, and thanksgiving as we celebrate all that God has done - and all that is yet to come. All are invited to come celebrate this joyous and memorable occasion!!

Outreach Program

Fishing For Youth of America was founded in memory of Richard Nash's mother and father. The program provides fishing supplies for our youth. It is the hope of FFYA to encourage our youth to fish and do other wholesome activities and to stay away from drugs, guns, gangs and violence. If we can get our youth to appreciate the outdoors they make better young people. If you know of a child or grandchild that could benefit from this program we would love to hear from you. It's also a program that benefits children that would otherwise not get anything for Christmas. If anyone would like to support this cause you can give in Honor or in Memory of someone. For more information on how you can be a part of this much needed outreach you may call Richard 478-998-2996.

Gospel Singing

New Providence Baptist Church in Buena Vista invites you to start the new year right with a night of worship with the community! They invite you to their Congregational Hymn

Singing on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, beginning at 6 p.m. The singing will be led by Silas Fuller. New Providence Baptist Church is located at 197 Providence Church Road in Buena Vista.

New Life Services

New Life Community Church invites everyone to fellowship with the church family on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. The church is located at 9108 GA HWY 85 in Waverly Hall at the City Hall building. Rev. Desmond Thornton and associate pastor Rev. Solomon Terry presiding.

Church Pickup

Friendship Baptist Church located in Woodland is offering a Transportation Ministry free to any person who would like to attend the church. The transportation service will be available every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. For more information please contact Clarence Leonard at 706-427-3443 or Scott Hope at 706-573-8231. A mask is advised and social distancing is required.

Free Produce

Geneva Baptist Church will be giving away free produce to everyone every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. Produce will be given away while supplies last from FTV Food Bank.

Let Us Help You

Christ the King's Outreach Ministry welcomes Harris and Talbot County residents in need of short-term assistance with groceries, utility bills and rental payments and do what the church can to help. Christ the King's Outreach Ministry office is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Appointments can be made by calling the Ministry at (706) 663-0090.

Clothing Center

New Beginnings Outreach Ministry of Woodland has a special clothing center. All items are from community donations. We also have household items, baby accessories and furniture. **EVERYTHING IS FREE.** For more information contact Bro. Richard Crawl at 706-977-5469 or Pastor Searcy at 706-601-6776.

Free to Needy

Pastor William Searcy of The New Beginnings Church of Woodland announces that their Outreach Ministry's Center will be open two days a week from nine to five on Monday and Friday. This will be the last week. **EVERYTHING IS FREE.** They have clothing, miscellaneous items, including furniture. Remember, this is **FREE** to the public. Call 706-601-6776.

Change of Service

Valley Grove Baptist Church, Manchester (Tax), will have services on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. until further notice.

Help for Elderly

The River Valley Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging is ready to help senior citizens. If any senior citizen in the Talbot County Region has problems or needs help with utility bills or more, please call Woodland Mayor and Board Member of River Valley Regional at 706-256-2900 or 706-256-2928 or Katie Howard at 706-256-2910.

Food Talk Series

UGA Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is offering free virtual and in-person classes with a series of sessions featuring meals in minutes called "FoodTalk." If you are interested or if you have any questions, please contact Erica Chaney at 706-665-2397 or Erica.Chaney@uga.edu. You can also visit the Talbot County Extension Office at 401 S. Washington Ave. in Talbotton.

How to Submit Items

The Talbotton New Era gladly prints items of interest for the community as well as local church news and events by non-profit organizations. Please note the deadline for items for the community and church events section of the newspaper must

be received by 12 noon on Monday, prior to run date to be printed in that week's issue. Items received after the Monday deadline will not appear until the following week. Please do not send items more than once. Items will continue to be printed in the newspaper until the event is over.

Sorry no flyers, items written in all capital letters or items sent as pdf files are accepted. Please

email items as an attached on a Word document or as email body copy. Jpegs, pdfs, etc. can not be used by the newspaper for news copy.

Please do not indent or double space between paragraphs and sentences. Please do not use 2025 or spell out months of the year, simply use Sept. 10. Do not use times in this manner 5:00, please use 5 p.m.

Photographs can only be accepted in jpeg format and as an attachment to an email. Please do not attach them to Word documents. Such photographs do not work well.

Please note the newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject any submission for the things to do section.

Thank you for your continued support of the New Era.

CARD OF THANKS

Betty Anne (Walton) Jones

August 6, 1963 - December 25, 2025
 Dedicated to Service in Healthcare



Mrs. Betty Anne (Walton) Jones, 62, of Macon/Lizella, Georgia, peacefully left her earthly home on December 25, 2025, surrounded by the warmth and love of her family and friends.

Born in Hamilton, Georgia, on August 6, 1963, she was the cherished daughter of the late Eddie Richard Walton and Henrietta (Willis) Walton. At a young age, Betty dedicated her life to Christ, becoming a member of Powell Baptist Church. She graduated from Central High School (Talbot County) in 1981 and continued her education at Columbus Tech earning her Associate Degree, and later at Central Georgia Technical College earning medical administration certifications. Betty's compassion and commitment were evident through her dedicated service at the Atrium Health Navicent Hospital in Macon, where she worked with a heart full of pride and care.

In a beautiful celebration of love, Betty married David Jones of Warm Springs, Georgia, on October 6, 1984, and honored their covenant for 41 years. Together, they raised three wonderful sons and instilled in them gratitude, discipline, hard work, and confidence.

Betty had a deep passion for sports, generously giving her time as a team mom for youth sports and leading the Central High School (Macon) basketball and baseball Booster Club's, while being her sons most faithful cheerleader. She was also undoubtedly the Atlanta Falcons #1 fan.

She was preceded in death by her loving parents and six brothers: Richard, James, Franklin, Jammie, Eddie, and Johnnie; as well as her sister-in-love, Patricia Willis and brother-in-law, Kenneth Jones.

Betty leaves behind her devoted husband, David Jones; her three sons, Cedric Jones and Bryan (Lilinton "Sha") Jones both of Macon, Georgia, and Marcus (Jasmine) Jones of Atlanta, Georgia; her treasured grandchildren, Jordynn, Cameron, and Mya. She is also lovingly remembered by her two brothers, Freddie of Talbotton, Georgia, and Tommy (Stephanie) of Decatur, Georgia.

Additionally, she is survived by a wealth of relatives, extended family and friends who will forever cherish her memory. Homegoing Services and repast were held at the Powell Baptist Church on January 3, 2026 at 1:00 pm.

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**STACEY
 ABRAMS**

How Breaking Government Breaks Democracy

When most people hear "authoritarianism," they tend to imagine tanks in the streets or elections being canceled overnight.

But democracy is usually undone more quietly — through budget cuts, layoffs and the slow dismantling of the institutions we rely on every day. One of the fastest ways to weaken a democracy is to break the government from the inside. You target the people who make it work and make those who rely on them suffer by default. When people no longer trust that the government will serve them, democracy becomes expendable.

This is Step 4 in the autocrat's playbook. And in few places is the destruction more visible than at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Tens of thousands of Georgians work at the CDC or support its directive to protect the lives of Americans. They're our neighbors. They are parents picking up kids from school. They're scientists who keep us informed during illnesses. They track outbreaks and help local health departments do their jobs.

When Albany, Georgia, became a COVID-19 hotspot in 2020 — holding the No. 5 spot in coronavirus cases and deaths — it was the role of the CDC to understand how to defend lives in the region.

Whether it was the coronavirus or the bird flu, Georgians knew that the medical knowledge was centered right up 75 and 85. Yet now, the vital charge of the CDC — and the livelihoods of those who serve the public good — is being deliberately hollowed out by the Trump administration.

Step 4 in the authoritarian playbook is simple: break the government by breaking the people who make it function. You don't have to abolish agencies outright. You just take away their funding, politicize them and push out anyone who won't comply.

That's what we're watching with the gutting of the CDC and the broader federal workforce.

What began with the CDC is spreading. In a few weeks, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs plans to slash 35,000 health care jobs, including here in Georgia, a state where 7.6% of the population — or nearly 700,000 residents — are veterans.

Despite being chronically understaffed, the VA, like the CDC, will be asked to do critical, life-saving work with fewer people, fewer resources and fewer backup plans.

When Republicans eviscerate funding, freeze hiring, conduct mass firings or shut down the government entirely, they are sending a message: Do not trust us. Public service doesn't matter. The needs of the people don't matter. Only power does.

For Georgia, the stakes are enormous. The CDC helps protect us from outbreaks of measles, flu, food-borne illnesses and emerging diseases. It supports state and county health departments — especially in rural communities that already struggle to get basic care.

Given that agriculture is an economic engine, we have long relied on the CDC to spot problems before they can ravage communities. So, when the CDC is

weakened, Georgians pay the price first.

Now, with cuts decimating veterans' health care, the harm will spread — and the solutions will be even harder to come by. But that's the point.

Authoritarians want the government to fail in visible ways so people stop believing it can help them at all. When inspections slow, data disappears and responses lag, people understandably ask, "Why doesn't government work?"

When those who defended our nation cannot get a doctor's appointment or a prescription, they will wonder if their sacrifices were in vain. Yet most good people won't blame sabotage — they will simply believe democracy failed to deliver because it's useless.

They won't use the words, but the sentiment will take root. Disappointment becomes disengagement, and shared trust in the social contract transforms into disbelief that it's worth the fight.

What's happening now builds on years of attacks — politicizing public health, demonizing scientists and using budget battles as leverage to further erode services. This Republican authoritarian regime has been explicit about their goal: dismantle government and remake it into a hotbed of privatization and corruption.

However, the most insidious truth is that the damage is not always immediate or dramatic. The CDC will still issue reports, but the science is sketchy. VA offices will stay open, but getting an appointment takes even longer. Public service will feel more broken due to teacher shortages at Head Start and a lack of help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Fewer people will be willing to speak up when something's wrong. Over time, competence drains away, and trust follows. Eventually, a small "d" democratic government stops being something that serves everyone and becomes something that only serves the powerful.

That's why defending good government matters and why speaking up for civil servants and bureaucrats is an act of bravery. Making sure democracy delivers is not a talking point; it's a matter of self-interest.

These workers are scientists, nurses, inspectors, veterans and public servants who chose stability over profit because they believed in serving the public. Attacking them is attacking Georgia families and our future.

If Trump and Republicans succeed, the consequences ripple outward and include weaker public health, fewer protections, more privatization and a public that's been taught not to expect anything from democracy at all.

That's the warning — and Georgia is once again on the front lines.

Stacey Abrams is a bestselling author, entrepreneur and host of the podcast "Assembly Required." She previously served as minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives. This column was originally published in her "Assembly Notes" Substack newsletter.

Opinions & Ideas

PAGE 3-A - THE TALBOTTON NEW ERA - THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

THE TALBOTTON NEW ERA

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Looking Back to Look Ahead

I was going through some old columns of mine, looking for some kind of spark to touch off a new one for this week, when I came across the one I'd written in January of 2021 regarding predictions for the future.

You have to remember the time we were in: Covid was raging, we were all staying six feet apart and wearing silly masks, most if not all places that weren't deemed "essential" were closed, and the government wasn't sure what to do next. So the only thing we could hope for in that year was that the virus would subside (which it did) and that life would return to normal (which is just a setting on your dryer).

I took a look at some of the predictions for the future that had been made, and shared ten of them with you. If you don't remember - and I have no idea why you even would try to - here they are, as I presented them five years ago:

I have a 100% accuracy rate as far as predictions go - I am consistently wrong. So I'm not going to stick my neck out and try to guess what the next twelve months hold in store for us. What I will do, however, is look up some of the earlier predictions for this new year, and put them forth here. You can keep this column and, one year hence, see which were right and which were wrong.

1. Apes will serve humans as chauffeurs. According to the RAND Corporation in 1994, there was a plan to breed an intelligent species of apes, and we would be able to use them to work for us - those of us that didn't have access to the robots we were already supposed to have. I could make a comment about some apes driving better than some humans I know, but you've probably already thought of it, so I won't.

2. We'll be living in flying houses. Yes, that was a prediction made by science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke. He suggested that our boring Earth-bound homes would be replaced by this point with flying houses. Heck, I'm still waiting for the flying cars *The Jetsons* said we'd have by now!

3. Everybody will have their own personal helicopter. Okay, if we can't have the flying cars, maybe we can all get around in our own personal helicopters. This prediction comes to us from *Popular Mechanics* magazine, and it was made in 1951 - so you can forgive the over-optimism of it, I guess.

4. The letters C, X and Q will be dropped from the alphabet. That prediction comes from 1900 and *The Ladies' Home Journal*, which



Jack Bagley
Musings of
An Aging
Mind

decided that those three letters would be deemed extraneous and quite considerable for eradication. (See what I did there?)

5. We will have both telepathy and teleportation, or so said Michael O'Farrell of The Mobile Institute. He called it part of the "nanomobility era" that was supposed to dawn in 2020. (We all know what happened with that, right?)

6. Nobody will work and everybody will be rich. I wouldn't touch this prediction, made in 1966 in *Time Magazine*, with a ten-foot pole ... not in today's economic morass, I wouldn't.

7. We'll all be voting electronically from home. Another prediction I will withhold comment on, since the 2020 election was such a screwed-up mess. That one comes to us from *Wired Magazine* in 1997.

8. Everyone will stop drinking coffee and tea. Hold it right there - that ain't gonna happen. Not in a million years, much less in this year. Nikola Tesla may have been a brilliant scientist and inventor, but he has no idea what he's talking about here. He said it in 1937, if that makes any difference.

9. Everyone will be a vegetarian, but eating won't even be necessary. The first part of this one comes from 1913 and the American Meat Packers' Association, and the other half is from 2005 and a futurist and computer whiz named Ray Kurzweil. Both are wrong, just plain wrong!

And finally, number ten: There will be no need for futurists to predict the future.

I'll let you figure out how that one would work.

I don't have too much to add to that, except to say that people who try to extrapolate what the future holds are little more than guessing based on what they know today. It's worth noting that, while the science fiction of the 1940s through 1960s did predict a lot of what we have today, they all - all of them - missed the one thing that no business could operate today without, and most homes are in the same boat: the home computer. Nobody predicted that.

So I won't try to predict what 2026 may hold. I'll just sit back and enjoy the ride.

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Traffic Not the Only Reason to Stay Out

Some of the members of my Dad's family lived in the Atlanta area when I was growing up. I hated making the trip there then and I still hate to make a trip there today.

I had cousins that lived in the Atlanta area when I was growing up. To say they were mean spirited and had a way of finding trouble would be an understatement. Every time we would visit and leave to return home, my father would always look at my sister and I and say, "That's why we live in Harris County." He would then add, "I'd take a belt to those kids. They need discipline."

He was right about that.

Once in my life, I was offered a job in Atlanta. The pay was really good, the benefits were good, but the location (in my opinion) not so much. The more I thought about having to deal with the traffic, etc. it was easy to say, "Thanks, but no thanks," to the job offer.

Traffic is a big issue for me in Atlanta. Mainly because half the folks who live there drive like they are in a NASCAR race and don't mind cutting you off, etc.

But that is only one rea-

son I want to stay out of Atlanta. The other is that

crime there, especially violent crime and thefts, are far too prevalent for my taste.

On Monday, while watching FOX 5 news, the news team reported on five different shooting incidents in the Atlanta area and all of them occurred during the late Sunday, Dec. 28 and early Monday morning, Dec. 29 hours.

These are the shooting incidents reported on during the Monday news cast. I'm sure there were others because these were all Atlanta Police Department cases except for one and it was in DeKalb County, and lots of other crimes were probably not considered important to report. Why would you report a burglary when you can report on five different shooting incidents?

As a news person I can tell you, even though people say they don't want to read or hear bad news, don't believe it. If our front page has a murder story racks sales go out the roof. If the headline is something that happened in the community that is a good thing. Sales are moderate. That is just the plain truth



John Kuykendall
Publisher &
Editor

and the way it is today.

Below is some information about the shootings that occurred.

According to FOX 5, on Sunday afternoon around 4:10 p.m. at an address on Broad Street SW, a 20 year-old man was shot and transported to an area hospital. The case is still under investigation.

Also Fox 5 reported, that on Sunday night, a man was hospitalized at Grady Hospital with a gun shot wound at around 8:49 p.m. The shooting reportedly occurred in the Roy Street SW and McDaniel Street SW area. The case remains under investigation.

On Sunday night around 11:49 p.m., in an apartment complex in DeKalb County, police responded to East Ponce Village Apartments on Wood Bend Drive in Stone Mountain when a 22 year-old

man was shot by police after he was determined to have a firearm. According to FOX 5, the man is expected to survive.

On Monday morning around 1 a.m., it was reported that a man was hospitalized and in critical condition after being shot in southwest Atlanta on Pineview Terrace SW. The 39 year-old victim was transported to an area hospital suffering from multiple gun shot wounds. It was determined the shooting occurred at another location. The case remains under investigation.

On Monday around 1:22 a.m., police responded to a shooting on Cologne Drive SE where a 48 year-old man was found deceased after receiving multiple gun shot wounds and a 21 year-old man was found also with a gun shot wound. The report did not indicate the condition of the 21 year-old.

Nothing against Atlanta itself, I feel the same way about every large city in the United States. They have too much traffic, too much crime and too much hate for me. I prefer the rural seating we all enjoy. Simply put, it's just an easier lifestyle.

Don't Believe Everything You Read

Your pennies are still legal tender and will remain so.

We have come to a point in time when news articles, on paper or electronic screen, often cannot be trusted anymore. In one recent case an online "news article" featured a headline claiming banks would quit accepting pennies.

The headline was click-bait, designed to get generate clicks. And it was untrue.

When it comes to the lowly penny, here is the truth.

The US Treasury has stopped making pennies because the cost to produce a penny significantly outweighs its value. Pennies will remain in circulation and likely for a long time. Pennies are still legal tender. They can be used anywhere you spend money so don't allow some low-intelligence clerk at a store tell you otherwise.

However, because they are no longer being made, and some people are hoarding them, pennies might become scarce at times.

The penny is not the only coin, the US Treasury has stopped producing. It has simply generated an abundance of attention.

In the history of the US, there has been a half-cent

coin, two-cent coin, trime or three-cent coin, three-cent nickel, half-dime, twenty-cent coin, gold dollar coin, quarter-eagle coin, three-dollar coin, five-dollar coin, ten-dollar coin and twenty-dollar coin. Production of all of them has long ceased but they are still legal tender if you have any.

More recently other coins stopped being produced such as the Morgan dollar coin, Eisenhower dollar coin, Susan B. Anthony dollar coin, and the Sacagawea dollar coin. While no longer produced for circulation, they remain legal tender and can be used.

Many people will remember quarters that highlighted states. Those quarters have not been produced since 2008, yet remain in circulation and are still legal tender.

Denominations of paper money have also stopped being printed such as three-cent, five-cent, 10-cent, 15-cent, 25-cent, and 50-cent denominations. Those have long gone out of circulation with most of those remaining now being in the hands of collectors. More recently there have been \$500, \$1,000, \$2,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$100,000 denominations that

have been discontinued. If you have any of these denominations, they are still legal tender.

SO what has caused all the consternation regarding the penny?

The root of the issue is that too many people no longer think for themselves. They have become so accustomed to believing others, they automatically do so no matter how outlandish the subject is.

In today's industrialized societies, instead of using cash most people pay for goods, services and bills with debit cards, credit cards, or electronic online transfers. Not having pennies, or any other coins or cash is not an issue.

On those occasions when cash is used and pennies are not available, the sale amount will inevitably be

rounded up or down to the nearest nickel. That will likely create some issues so smarter retailers will attempt to keep some pennies in cash registers.

In 2024, there was an estimated 250 billion pennies in circulation, or about 700 pennies for each person in the US. A large percentage of those are thought to be in collection jars in homes until they are taken to coin machines or rolled and taken to banks.

There are sufficient pennies to last multiple lifetimes and beyond, and while they are no longer being produced the Federal Reserve has said they will continue recirculating pennies for "as long as possible", which means banks will accept and distribute pennies - provided they have them.

THE lowly penny will be around for a long time so perhaps we should worry less about the inevitable demise of the penny, and more about the massive financial fraud involving social services.

That's my opinion.

A newspaper columnist for over 35 years, Andy Kober can be reached by email at andykober@hotmail.com

* New Year Flight 2026 Now Boarding *

Greetings and Happy New Year! Thank God for those who made it over but unfortunately and most regrettably many who boarded Flight 2025 is not here to board New Year Flight 2026.

In fact, some bought tickets; some got to the airport, some even to the boarding gate, close enough to literally see the airplane, but didn't live to board. And for those of us, who made it over and boarded; be humbly thankful, eternally grateful and fervently praise God for His amazing sustainable grace and mercy. However, there are appropriate and necessary flight procedures to follow, figuratively and literally to help us on this obvious challenging New Year flight. Of course, I have again thoughtfully redacted this familiar story, hopefully to help us fly and land successfully. "Flight 2026 Instructions..." Good Morning, hello and welcome

to Flight 2026. We are prepared to take off into the New Year. Please make sure our Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position. All self-destructive devices: pity, anger, selfishness, pride, and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt, and discouragement should be put away. Should we lose our Positive Attitude under pressure [which we normally do] during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayer will automatically be activated by Faith. Once our Faith is activated, we can

assist other passengers who are of little faith. There will be NO [unnecessary] BAGGAGE allowed on this flight 2026 (bitterness, anger, backbiting, malice, unforgiveness or any other ungodliness). So please leave all the mess and junk behind).

Actually, it's okay to pack abundant patience and sincere love!

God, our Captain, has now cleared us for take-off.

Destination-GREATNESS!

He wishes us a Happy and

Blessed New Year (flight)

filled with new HOPE, new

JOY, new BEGINNINGS and

BLESSING!!

Furthermore, here are some essential New Year

2026 wishes and blessings for

all of us as we land.

12 Months of Happiness,

52 Weeks of Laughter,

365 Days of Good Health,

525,600 Minutes of Blessings and

31,536,000 Seconds of Joy."

Rightly so, please apply this

Serenity Prayer to your

unseen daily situations and

circumstances, "God, grant

me the Serenity (calmness of

mind) to accept the things I

cannot change, Courage

(mental strength) to change

the things I can and Wisdom

(knowledge) to know the dif-

ference. Living one day at a

time; Enjoying one moment

at a time; Accepting hard-

ships as a pathway to peace;

..." And start each day say-

ing, "Thank You Lord, that

nothing is going to happen

today that You and I together

</div

The "Lighter Side" of the News

Lost - One Teddy Bear

Officials at Norfolk International Airport in Virginia are attempting to use social media to find the owner of a special piece of lost and found property: a teddy bear.

The airport said in a Facebook post that the teddy bear, which appears to be a custom-made plushy from Build-A-Bear, was turned into the ORF Lost & Found about 4 p.m. Tuesday.

"Can you help me find my owner?" the post said, along with a photo of the misplaced toy.

Airport officials said they are hoping the bear might be registered with its owner's name at Build-A-Bear.

Some People Have All The Luck

A Maryland man who won a \$250,000 prize from a scratch-off lottery ticket returned to lottery headquarters eight years later to collect a \$50,000 Powerball prize.

The Prince George's County man, who nicknamed himself "The \$50,000 Man," told Maryland Lottery officials he bought his Powerball ticket for the Oct. 18 drawing from the Exxon at 6500 Suitland Road in Morningside.

He visited lottery headquarters in Baltimore on Friday to collect a \$50,000 prize from matching four white balls in the drawing.

"I would have been a little happier if I had matched one more number, but this is still a great prize," the federal employee said.

The winner, who previously won \$250,000 from a scratch-off ticket in 2018, said he was shocked to discover he had scored big for a second time.

"I found out I won by scanning the ticket on the app," he said. "When I saw \$50,000, I had to check the numbers again. I just didn't believe it."

The winner said his previous prize went toward a new car and boosting his savings. He said he does not yet have any plans for his latest windfall.

So That's Where It Ended Up

A pair of rings accidentally thrown into the trash at an Iowa hospital were recovered thanks to medical staff, maintenance workers and a portable X-ray.

Susan Sinnwell said she didn't realize until the day after having an X-ray performed on her hand at Grundy County Memorial Hospital that she had thrown the napkin containing her grandparents' wedding rings into the trash.

"When I threw the napkin away, it sounded funny when it hit the garbage," Sinnwell told Iowa's News Now. "But I didn't think anything of it at the time."

Maintenance crews set about the process of searching for the rings, and discovered the trash in question had been mixed with several days worth of waste and put through a compactor.

They went through 50 to 60 trash bags using a metal detector, but had no luck.

Craig Buskohl, imaging manager at the hospital, brought a portable X-ray machine to the hospital's ambulance bay to more quickly search through the garbage.

He said it took about 45 minutes and 35 images to locate the rings.

"It was really rewarding," Buskohl said. "Honestly, I didn't think we were going to find them -- but we did."

Sinnwell was grateful to have the rings returned to her.

"From the moment I connected with the team at GCMH, I felt reassured by their calm, caring approach," she told hospital officials.

Chilly Dip Record Attempt

A Washington city may have broken a Guinness World Record by gathering nearly 5,000 people to take a "polar bear dip" into frigid water at the same time.

The Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce, Blaine Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2 and Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism teamed up to organize an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the largest polar bear dip.

The record stood at 2,461 participants when the attempt was announced, but was broken Dec. 13 in Sola, Norway, when 3,134 people took a cold water plunge.

The Thursday attempt in Birch Bay had 6,213 registered participants, of which 4,917 were officially counted going into the water by Pacific Multisports.

Guinness World Record adjudicator Brittany Dunn said the record-keeping organization is still reviewing the official numbers, as there were some issues during the count.

Lost And Found Indeed

A British bus company revealed the most unusual items to wind up in its lost and found last year included a box of fortune cookies and an inflatable dinosaur costume.

The Oxford Bus Company said its customer service department logged a total 4,387 lost and found items in 2025, and 1,013 of those items -- about 23 percent -- were returned to their owners.

The transit company said the most unusual items to cross the customer service desk included a bag of rubber ducks, a box of fortune cookies, an inflatable dinosaur costume, a baby bonsai tree, a potato with googly eyes, a jar

of pickled onions, a bicycle tire, a 22-pound bag of rice, several Nerf guns and a yoga mat covered with inspirational quotes.

"Essentials such as keys, mobile phones, umbrellas, purses and wallets are among the most common items, but there are also several unexpected ones, too," Andy Morison, head of digital & customer experience at Oxford Bus Company, said in a news release.

"Misplacing a personal item can be a stressful experience, so we use technology to help make it easier for people to get their belongings back," he said. "We use the end of the year to highlight the unconventional ones and remind people that we keep lost items."

Morison said any items lost on Oxford buses can be claimed in person or sent to their owners in the mail.

"We encourage people who misplace their items to use our NotLost service via the website which has helped us effectively manage lost property and minimize stress to affected passengers," he said.

Items that go unclaimed are donated to local thrift stores.

Some of the more bizarre finds in 2024 included a suitcase full of retro adult magazines, a jar of raw chicken and a snooker cue. Previous years have seen items left behind including a bar stool, a roll of Donald Trump toilet paper, a guitar, skis and a wet floor sign.

Numbers, Please

A number-obsessed Maryland woman said her fixation on digits led to her winning a \$50,000 top prize from a Bonus Match 5 lottery drawing.

The Baltimore County woman told Maryland Lottery officials she takes special note of number combinations she sees every day.

"I see numbers everywhere," the player said. "Numbers by themselves, series of them -- everywhere I look."

The woman said she frequently studies combinations of winning lottery numbers and uses them to play Bonus Match 5.

"For some reason, the numbers and combinations that come to me have worked best with Bonus Match 5, so that's what I play," she said.

She bought a ticket for the Dec. 23 Bonus Match 5 drawing at Compass Beer Pump on Compass Road in Middle River. The ticket turned out to be a \$50,000 top prize winner.

"I said to myself, 'It finally worked,'" the winner recalled. "I've won plenty of times these last years, but this is my biggest ever."

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Black-Eyed Peas: The History of a Humble Good Luck Charm

Being a Southerner by birth, lineage and residency, I've eaten a lot of black-eyed peas over the past few days.

Actually, I'll partake in this humble food stuff, which is really a type of bean and not a pea, any time of year, but they are a staple for New Year's celebrations, along with greens and cornbread. They allegedly bring good luck, and though I don't really believe in that sort of thing, I'm not letting a Jan. 1 pass by without gobbling up as much as I can.

Remember that board game Hungry, Hungry Hippos? The one where you make toy hippopotamuses eat marbles? That's me on New Year's Day. I always win. You didn't finish yours? Dump 'em on my plate. I'll take all the help I can get for 2026.

Black-eyed peas also ward off the evil eye, according to West African tradition, so just having them around the house is a good idea. That's where the legume originated and is still a popular item for marking momentous events. They are served during the observances of both births and deaths, as well as any other special occasion families and friends deem fit to gather.

The vegetable made its way to the United States via the slave trade, where they were cultivated in the gardens of the captive people, who carried on their traditions. During the Civil War, black-eyed peas were left behind by the Union soldiers



Kyle Dominy
New Southern Dad

fighting across the South, and they began to be served on tables everywhere. The lore behind the food grew because folks considered themselves lucky just to have something to eat.

Some people say you have to eat exactly 365 black-eyed peas at New Year's, one for each day on the calendar. I've never counted my servings so accurately and could be shorting myself a month or two. I don't think eating more than the required amounts helps, either. There's no rollover credit for 2027. You can also add a penny to the pot while cooking for added luck. Whoever finds the coin will be extra lucky in the new year. Unless they eat it, then

they'll possibly kick off January with a doctor bill. Hopefully they ate a lot of greens, too, you know, for the ensuing bill.

It's kind of like the baby in the king cake. Whoever finds the plastic toy while enjoying a slice of brightly colored dessert gets a boost of luck. That's a good back-up plan if you missed your black-eyed peas this year. Mardi Gras is right around the corner.

Other food-related good luck charms: honey, because it brings sweetness to life; grapes and pomegranates, because they are round like coins; and long noodles, because the longer the noodle, the longer you'll live.

I don't really believe in luck, but I think I'll try to eat my way to prosperity in the coming days.

Happy New Year.

You can reach Kyle Dominy at: k.l.dominy@gmail.com or write to 115 South Jefferson St. Dublin, Ga. 31021



File Photo in Public Domain
ICONIC IMAGE - The US Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, commemorates the raising of the American Flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima. The soldier on the left is Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian born this week in 1923.

This Week in History

1914 - Ira Hayes, Who Helped Raise Iwo Jima Flag, is Born

By ANDY KOBER

Here is what happened this week in American History.

• **Jan. 8.** On this day in 1950, the third Battle of Seoul, South Korea is over. While casualties among South Korean ROK, UN and US forces are relatively low, Chinese and North Korean forces had captured the city – mostly a ghost town at that point. Morale among UN forces is at its lowest point of the war. Even the vaunted US Eighth Army that had sent North Korean forces retreating to the Chinese border, is shaken. The first order of business for Gen. Matthew Ridgway is to restore the morale and fighting spirit of UN and US forces. Meanwhile, the Chinese victory is pyrrhic as the Peoples Volunteer Army has suffered massive casualties and is exhausted. The US Air Force has hammered Chinese supply lines to the point that Chinese forces cannot continue driving further into South Korea. Chinese leaders believe that UN and US forces are completely demoralized and unable to counterattack, so allow PVA soldiers a brief period to rest and recuperate, preparing to resume the attack soon.

• **Jan. 9.** In 1861, the first shots of the Civil War are fired, though not at Fort Sumter as often taught. Today, the merchant steamer *Star of the West* that has been chartered by the War Department, arrives at Charleston Harbor with supplies for Major Robert Anderson's garrison at Fort Sumter. Cadets from the Citadel Academy, manning cannons located on Morris Island, begin firing at the ship, which is struck three times. Captain John McGowan orders the ship to retreat from the harbor without unloading those supplies. These are actually the first shots of the Civil War. The *Star of the West* returns to New York Harbor. The ship will later be captured by confederate soldiers while in Matagorda Bay, Texas, and later sunk in the Tallahatchie near Greenwood, Mississippi, to block approaching Union forces. The ship is remembered each year as the *Star of the West* Medal is presented to the "best drilled cadet" at The Citadel.

• **Jan. 10.** Today in 1924, Earl Elmer Bakken is born in Columbia Heights, Minnesota. Growing up, Bakken becomes a fan of the novel *Frankenstein* and the movie that follows featuring Boris Karloff. It is not the monster that interests Bakken as much as the use of electricity to animate the monster. Bakken pursues an education in electrical engineering and becomes an inventor. He creates an electroshock weapon used for personal protection, followed by a portable pacemaker. Bakken will found the business Medtronic, initially operating out of a small garage.

• **Jan. 11.** In 1820, what will become the Great Savannah, Georgia Fire of 1820 begins about 2 am in a livery stable. Aided by an ongoing drought, the fire quickly spreads to Franklin Square, through the most densely

populated area of the city, then along Bay Street toward Barnard Street. The fire spreads to City Market on Ellis Square where illegally stored gunpowder exploded. It would be about 12 hours before the fire was completely extinguished. Much of the city, including the central business district, had burned. The level of destruction was incredible with over 460 buildings destroyed with hundreds left homeless. Only one retail store and a single wholesale store remained in business after the fire.

• **Jan. 12.** On this day in 1923, Ira Hayes is born in Sacaton, Arizona, in the Gila River Indian Community. He was often described as quiet and contemplative, learning to read and write by age four. After graduating high school, Hayes became a carpenter and was working in the Civilian Conservation Corps when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Hayes joined the US Marine Corps becoming the first Pima Indian to receive his paratrooper wings and would serve in the Pacific Theater fighting the Japanese. Hayes was in the 5th Marine Division that landed on Iwo Jima in February 1945. Hayes would be a part of the unit that raised the second, larger US Flag on Mount Suribachi and actually found the pipe from which the flag was suspended. It was the iconic photograph of this event that was taken by AP combat photographer Joe Rosenthal. Hayes survived the war and can be seen in the movie, *Sands of Iwo Jima* starring John Wayne. He suffered from PTSD and alcoholism after the war and died under suspicious circumstances in January 1955. The US Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, portrays four Marines lifting the Flag at Iwo Jima – one of those four is Ira Hayes.

• **Jan. 13.** In 1840, the paddlewheel steamship *Lexington* has left New York City heading to Stonington, Connecticut, when the casing around the ship's smokestack begins to burn. The fire quickly spreads to 150 bales of cotton onboard the ship. The *Lexington* was only four miles off Long Island when the fire started. Worse, the sloop *Improvement* was less than five miles away but the captain refused to help. Out of 143 people on the ship only four will survive the *Lexington*'s sinking, with many of the deaths caused by hypothermia attributed to the cold water.

• **Jan. 14.** Today in 1999, D'Andre Swift is born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Attending high school at St. Joseph's Preparatory School, he is a standout football player and commits to the University of Georgia. As a freshman running back, Swift trails behind starters Nick Chubb and Sony Michel and as a sophomore he splits time with Elijah Holyfield. As a junior at Georgia, Swift has five games where he rushes for over 100 yards. During his career at Georgia, Swift will rush for nearly 2,900 yards on 440 carries. He also has 666 yards receiving. Chosen in the second round of the NFL draft, Swift is still playing in the NFL.

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How many different television shows named "College Bowl" have aired in the U.S.?

By JACK BAGLEY
didyouknowcolumn@gmail.com

The New Year is more than a week old at this point, so the time has come to ask - how are your resolutions holding up?

Are you still keeping them? Or did you (as I do) just say "the heck with it" and give up on them?

Whichever you do, I am certain it's the right thing for you, and you're going to be fantastic at keeping them - or not keeping them, as the case may be.

I did keep one resolution - to bring you the finest in trivial stuff every week, and I'm going to keep doing it. So here's this week's selection of trivial stuff! Enjoy.

Did you know ...

... the nastiest place in your office may not be where you think it is? The average office keyboard harbors 3,295 germs per square inch. By comparison, the average office toilet seat has just 48 germs per square inch. (I have a line here, but it would close the show.)

... the Great Fire of 1666 in London began in a bakery? Thomas Farriner (1620-1670) was a baker to the household of King Charles II (1630-1685) and supplied the bread for the Royal Navy during the Anglo-Dutch War. The blaze, which ended up destroying most of London, started in Farriner's bakery on Pudding Lane on September 2, 1666, and was not extinguished until September 6. Almost 70,000 of the city's 80,000 homes were destroyed. Surprisingly, Farriner was not blamed for the fire, though it started in his bakery shop. A French watchman named Robert Hubert (1640-1666) gave a false confession to throwing a fire grenade into Farriner's bakery starting the blaze, which Farriner agreed to. Hubert was executed in October of that year, almost certainly an innocent man, as he was not even in London when the fire broke out. Historians now believe that the Great Fire was started accidentally. (That's a pretty hot story there.)

... you may have heard a *scroop*? If you're wondering, a scroop is the sound that silk makes when it moves. Most likely, you've heard one if you were at a dance where formal ball gowns were being worn. That's the sound the ball gown makes. (Silky, isn't it?)

... a Major League pitcher had the same number of career wins as he had career hits? Warren Spahn (1921-2003) played 21 seasons in the Majors, for the Boston/Milwaukee Braves, New York Mets, and San Francisco Giants. During his career, Spahn chalked up 363 career wins - and 363 career hits. It gets even more precise: Spahn won 356 games for the Braves, four for the Mets, and three for the Giants. He had 356 hits for the Braves, four for the Mets, and three for the Giants. (You have to admire the synchronicity of all that.)

... actor Michael J. Fox's middle name doesn't begin with a J? Fox (born 1981), who starred in the *Back to the Future* movies as well as some classic television, was born Michael Andrew Fox. He chose "J" as his professional middle initial as an homage to character actor Michael J. Pollard (1939-2019).

... more than one program called *College Bowl* existed on American television? Most readers would be somewhat



familiar with the G.E. *College Bowl*, a weekly game show pitting teams of students from colleges and universities against each other in some rather difficult quizzes. The show ran intermittently from 1953 to 1970 on CBS and NBC, hosted by Allen Ludden (1917-1981) and later by Robert Earle (1926-2019). But before that, *College Bowl* was a one-season musical program from 1950 to 1951, starring Chico Marx (1887-1961), one of the Marx Brothers. This show was set in a soda fountain, supposedly owned by Marx, next to a college campus and featured singers who came in, sat around, told jokes, and belted out tunes. The breakout star from the show was Andy Williams (1927-2012). (I get the musical aspects and all, but ... Chico Marx? Sure, he was great at the piano, but I just don't see it.)

... the symbol for the planet Pluto has a double meaning? Made up of the interlocking letters "P" and "L," the symbol is not only the first two letters of the planet, but also the initials of astronomer Percival Lowell (1855-1916). Lowell initiated the search for a planet beyond the orbit of Neptune and created an observatory in Arizona that is named for him. While working at the Lowell Observatory in 1930, Dr. Clyde Tombaugh (1906-1997) took the photographs that confirmed the existence - and official discovery - of Pluto. (And I still think Pluto should be re-classified as a planet.)

... minnows have teeth in their throats? (Well, they have to have them somewhere, don't they?)

... the first movie ever created solely with computer-generated imagery (CGI) was released in 1995? *Toy Story* had more than 800,000 hours of mathematical equations used in the creation of the computer film. That equates to more than a week of computer time for every second of the film on screen. (And you thought it was easy.)

... the umpire at a baseball game has the power to eject anyone from the game? Not just players or managers, but anyone. On June 26, 1985, at a minor league baseball game in Clearwater, Florida, the stadium organist played "Three Blind Mice" following a call by umpire Kevin O'Connor (born 1964). O'Connor was not amused, and ejected the organist, Wilbur Snapp (1920-2003), from the press box. Snapp spent the rest of the game in the stands making balloon mice for kids. *Additional trivia note:* O'Connor would go on to have a ten-year career as a Major League umpire and then became umpire evaluator for MLB. Snapp's was the only ejection in O'Connor's entire career. (Yer outta here!)

Now ... you know!
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Jupiter Shining in Morning Sky

By ANDY KOBER

With the holidays over people have gotten back to regular schedules, including rising early for work and there is something in the predawn sky to see.

About 6:30 am look a bit north of west, along a heading of about 290 degrees, and an angle above the horizon of about 25 degrees and there is the planet Jupiter.

Even with the light of a full moon, Jupiter has been clearly visible.

Commanding the predawn sky, Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system and with a good telescope one can see a few of its nearly 100 moons.

The first space launch of 2026 took place at 9:09 pm Friday, Jan. 2, with SpaceX taking an Italian satellite into space.

The launch took place from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California with a Falcon 9 rocket sending the COSMO-Skymed Second Generation satellite into low Earth orbit.

Orbiting at a distance of about 385, the satellite will be using synthetic aperture radar in various weather conditions studying cartography, forest and environment protection and other disciplines. It was also noted the satellite could be used for defense and security, and maritime surveillance.

SpaceX recorded 165 orbital missions in 2025.

Keep your eyes on the sky for passing fireballs.

Meteors can flash across the sky anytime, day or night, and extraordinarily bright meteors are often referred to as fireballs --- and they are spotted quite often.

On Wednesday, Dec. 31, two people across Georgia reported seeing a fireball.

The fireball was reported at 11:55 pm by skywatchers in Ludowici and Jonesboro. The person in

Jonesboro reported watching the fireball for about 3-1/2 seconds while the person in Ludowici reported it was visible for about 7-1/2 seconds. A skywatcher in Watkinsville reported a fireball moments later, which might or might not have been the same one.

None of the sky watchers reported hearing the fireball make noise or seeing it fragment into pieces.

Anyone seeing a fireball is urged to report the sighting to <https://amsmeteors.org>

Going outside and looking at the sky, especially the night sky, can be fun and educational for the entire family.

There are a number of free apps available to help identify stars and constellations, and some of the apps will show satellites.

Happy skywatching!



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"Now I have to go take it all back for the recall!"

