



## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

### AFGE offers virtual workshops

By AFGE Leadership

Every March, we collectively celebrate the many contributions of women throughout history and across all facets of our society.

What began in 1982 as Women's History Week has grown into a month-long recognition of women and the integral ways they work and have worked to build and sustain families, communities, and this nation.

In 1974, AFGE's Women's Department was established to improve the status of women and their families and to eliminate artificial barriers to the progress of women in government service.

This historic milestone not only created history in our union but has served as a catalyst to help ensure that women will have a voice, a seat, and a space in all aspects of the work that we do to promote civil, human, women's and workers' rights on behalf of federal and DC government workers.

We are excited to invite you to celebrate Women's History Month with us through some exciting virtual workshops:

**Women in Law Enforcement Panel**  
March 24, from 7-8:30 p.m.

**Women's Mental Health**  
March 27, from 7-8:30 p.m.

Visit [afge.org](https://afge.org) to sign up.

## Remembering the life of Cesar Chavez

By AFGE Leadership

Now, more than ever, it is essential that we as a movement look back on the leaders who have brought us to where we are today as we prepare for the fight ahead.

The inspiring stories of yesterday will empower us for the challenges of tomorrow.

Understanding this, AFGE HISCO will be dedicating time to remembering the exceptional life story of American labor leader and civil rights activist Cesar Chavez. Chavez is an undeniably powerful role model for activists across the labor movement today, and AFGE HISCO wants to make sure we continue to tell his

story.

With the help of WFP, AFGE HISCO will give an informative presentation on the life and legacy of Cesar Chavez, the impacts of his work today, and how we can remember him going forward in the fight for civil and workers' rights.

This year, on March 31, the day of our event, Chavez would have turned 98 years old.

Visit [afge.org](https://afge.org) to sign up. Don't forget to register for this important presentation:

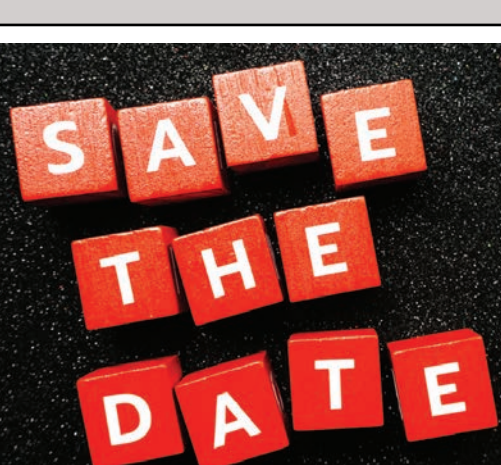
**Remembering the Life of Cesar Chavez**  
March 31, from 7-8:30 p.m.

Visit [afge.org](https://afge.org) to sign up.

### Call to action

**We must urge Congress to immediately call on the Trump Administration to reverse its decision to rescind the collective bargaining agreement for TSOS and to cosponsor and pass the Rights for the TSA Workforce Act (H.R. 2086 and S. 997). This legislation would give frontline TSOs the same workplace rights and protections afforded to other federal workers under Title 5 of the U.S. Code.**

Visit: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/urge-congress-to-stand-with-transportation-security-officers?>



### Membership meeting

**Local 987 will have a membership meeting March 20 at 5 p.m. It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. As always, membership will be verified before admittance into the meeting. You can make updates to your contact information - address, phone, email - by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at [linda@afgelocal987.org](mailto:linda@afgelocal987.org) or Jeanette McElhaney at [jmac@afgelocal987.org](mailto:jmac@afgelocal987.org).**

# Local 987 holds first Lunch, Learn of 2025

By DON MONCRIEF  
Editor, The Union Advocate  
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Building 125. They're coming for you.

The same goes for Buildings 645 and 640, AFRC and some others. They're coming for you.

That's not a threat. That's actually a promise from the staff of AFGE Local 987. A promise the next time they hold Lunch and Learns on Robins

Air Force Base you'll be on the agenda. (Note: They are hoping, planning and preparing for that to be next month.)

This time around, this past Monday through Thursday, it was to visit those in Buildings 140, 169, 2390, 110, 91, 670, 364, 20036 44, 300, 301, CE, DeCA, DLA and At-Large areas.

"People were very receptive and they were glad we were coming back and show-

ing them," said AFGE Local 987 Trustee/Treasurer Jeanette McElhaney. "Because they were saying, 'Y'all haven't been out here in a long time.' So, it was very well received."

So, there was the "lunch" – a free meal of chicken. The "learn" part, McElhaney said, was to learn "AFGE is still here. We still have their interests at heart."

There was also some specifics to that. For one, McElhaney

said, they were working hard to get member to change over from payroll to direct dues. Benefit Architect Nick Wells was also there, she told them, to inform them of the "pros and cons" of that, she said.

For Vice President At-Large Mike Ferguson, he along with Vice President of Maintenance James Watson and VP of DLA Alexandra Williams played key roles in this round of Lunch and

**See LUNCH, LEARN, page 3**

# Rally for respect



**Above: AFGE Local 987 Trustee/Treasurer talks to one of the rally attendees. Signs are made available for attendees. More photos page 6. (AFGE Local 987 photos/Don Moncrief)**



By DON MONCRIEF  
Editor, The Union Advocate  
[don.moncrief@afgelocal987.org](mailto:don.moncrief@afgelocal987.org)

AFGE Local 987 hosted a rally in front of its headquarters at Union Hall off Watson Boulevard March 6. Approximately two dozen – including staff members, District 5, representatives for the Central Labor Council and concerned community members turned out to display signs of support for federal workers.

"It's a way for us to come together and say, 'Hey, we need help,'" said AFGE Local 987 Acting President Ron Hill, to WMAZ-TV. "We're reaching out to everybody, the congressmen, senators and to everybody that is willing to help."

"It's the voice that sooner or later will be heard. We'll find ways to go out and try to reach out to people to come in and help. Every voice counts."

"It shows the community," added AFGE Local 987 Trustee Jeanette McElhaney, "what's going on with federal employees. And how it's affecting ... not just the federal employees at Robins (AFB), but all federal employees in the state of Georgia."

"All of this," she said, referring to announced plans to cut approximately 8 percent of the federal workforce, according to media sources – some have it higher and deeper as they report it seems to be fluid and changing day-by-day – is affecting Robins, but as I've said it in the past, it affects all federal employees.

"Robins Air Force Base might be the largest group of federal employees, but they're not the only federal employees. And it stretches throughout the state of Georgia."

That isn't to say Robins AFB isn't important – extremely important to this community, McElhaney said. "Robins is the backbone of this community. Because even though we have people at Robins who travel from Albany. We have some who come from Columbus. Even though those places have bases, they were able to get jobs here."

"We have people coming from Dublin here. We have a VA system in Dublin where we have federal employees. So, you're still looking at Robins who employes them."

The rally, she said, was well-received. People blew their horn. People stopped and asked questions or verbally provided support. In fact, she said, two "ladies I didn't know just showed up and asked if they could be a part (of it)."

There was also the question of whether or not they were going to do another one, she said. The answer was they were looking into doing just that;

**See RALLY, page 6**

# Judge rules probationary workers were illegally fired

By AFGE Leadership

March 17, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, presided over by Judge William H. Alsup, granted a Preliminary Injunction broadening a temporary restraining order against the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and its Acting Director, Charles Ezell, finding the termination of probationary federal employees illegal because OPM had no authority to order it.

The judge ordered immediate reinstatement of terminated probationary employees of the Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Interior, Energy, Defense, and Treasury departments, and these agencies must cease termination of probationary employees, effective immediately. The judge also forbade OPM from giving any guidance to federal agencies on which employees should be terminated. The agencies also must provide a com-

pliance report to the court. The judge also authorized depositions and ordered further briefing on whether the administrative channel for fired workers is actually available, or if it has been destroyed by firings of appeals board and office of special counsel personnel.

The plaintiffs in this case consist of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE); American Federation of State, County

and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); the Main Street Alliance; the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks; the Common Defense Civic Engagement; the Western Watersheds Project; AFGE Local 1216; AFGE Local 2110; VoteVets; CommonDefense.us; and United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP), American Public Health Association; American

**See RULES, page 3**



# Robins AFB welcomes software directorate, appoints leader



**Bobby Hager, Air Force Sustainment Center Software Directorate director, gives remarks during an appointment of leadership ceremony held Feb. 26 at the Robins Air Force Base Museum of Aviation. Robins AFB was chosen as the headquarters locations due to its culture and its efforts in recruiting the future software engineering force. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tommie Horton)**

By **LAUREN BOGGS**  
78th Air Base Wing  
Public Affairs

Robins Air Force Base marked the beginning of an era as it was named as the headquarters location for the Air Force Sustainment Center Software Directorate during a ceremony at the Museum of Aviation, Feb. 26.

Lt. Gen. Stacey Hawkins, AFSC commander, appointed Bobby Hager to lead the organization. He cited her mission-focused skills that make her the ideal fit for the directorate.

“We needed a leader who has the temperament to understand how to bring this group together, the collaboration skills to build

not formal, but informal teams, the vision to imagine what doesn’t yet exist and the technical expertise to understand the business behind the technology,” said Hawkins.

Before beginning the ceremony, Hager was promoted to the ranks of Senior Executive Service. During her ceremony, Air Force and community leaders, AFSC Civic Leader Program members and software professionals from across the Air Force, heard appreciation for the trust and confidence placed in her to lead the directorate.

Hager is tasked with leading the over 5,500 software professionals across the three software engineering groups and 11 operating locations. It’s a crit-

ical mission for strategic competition in the rapidly evolving cyberspace landscape.

“Every system we develop, every line of code, every capability we enhance, directly impacts national security,” Hager said. “As we look ahead, our mission is clear. We must continue to accelerate the software development for our agile technologies and leverage modern technologies to deliver cutting-edge capabilities.”

The 76th SWEG at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, the 309th SWEG at Hill AFB, Utah and the 402nd SWEG at Robins AFB, Georgia, are all joined under the AFSC/SW Directorate to create a unified software entity as part of the Air Force’s efforts to achieve a more competitive posture through organizational alignment and enterprise solutions.

The reorganization focuses on mission readiness by eliminating stovepipes and delivering cross-functional and lethal combat capabilities in strategic environments.

“Our warfighters depend on us to provide software that is not only reliable but also adaptable to the ever-changing modern warfare landscape,” Hager said, sharing her goals for the directorate. “Together, what I set out is to drive innovation. I hope that we will push together and push the boundaries of what is possible.”

Hawkins said Robins AFB was chosen to headquarter the directorate because of the base’s focus on mission, people and culture.

“There’s a movement happening in Middle Georgia where you’re not just waiting for the next generation of talent to come to you, but you’re going to it,” said Hawkins, highlighting the community recruitment efforts by the 402nd SWEG. “It’s a powerful model that we can continue to exploit here at Robins and also scale across the Air Force.”

# WR-ALC achieves success through Art of the Possible

By **JOSEPH MATHER**  
78th Air Base Wing  
Public Affairs

The Art of the Possible keeps the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, at the forefront of Air Force innovation and process improvements.

A key factor contributing to its success is the WR-ALC Art of the Possible office, led by J.R. Russell, the complex’s subject matter expert for AoP. In his role, Russell oversees implementation and maturation of AoP principles across the WR-ALC, driving operational performance and excellence.

AoP is a constraint-based management system designed to create a workforce culture focused on efficient process execution. The system, which establishes a standardized set of operating principles, was established as the universal management system within the Air Force Sustainment Center in 2012 when the Air Force had been looking for better ways to do business.

“The AoP SME’s mission is to apply this system that merges methods like Theory of Constraints, Lean, Six Sigma and Operations Management,” said Russell. “This powerful process management system drives action, focusing efforts on processes and constraints that give the highest return on investment. As Lt. Gen. Stacy Hawkins, the Air Force Sustainment Center commander, has stated, ‘AoP is not what we do, it is how we do. It is the playbook that allows us to operate as one team across each of our 27 operating locations.’”

Russell performs his mission by advising the WR-ALC commander on AoP implementation and assessing AoP application and maturity.

“AoP teaches leaders to manage their bandwidth and control works in progress, leading to increased throughput and reduced flow days,” he said. “The WR-ALC has adjusted to this lesson by constantly monitoring work in process levels and ensuring that work is fully supportable before beginning the task or operation.”

The AoP office also provides training to the complex and AFSC members, including multiple AoP courses, to grow and mature AoP processes and AoP-minded leaders.

According to Russell, the office has seen immediate results, with some units experiencing success soon after applying AoP principles.

“The C-5 enterprise team, for example, reduced



**J.R. Russell, Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex Art of the Possible deputy director, welcomes WR-ALC newcomers to the complex familiarization tour at Robins Air Force Base Feb. 6. The tour taught new employees the mission of each group and how each unit contributes to the overhaul and repair process of Department of Defense aircraft sustained at Robins. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather)**

flow days to produce a C-5 aircraft going through Programmed Depot Level Maintenance by 508 flow days, earning them the DoD Mason Award. The C-130 enterprise team sold a record 50 PDM/D-check aircraft through strict adherence to AoP principles in fiscal year 2024.”

Russell said his experience with AoP has been exciting, as he has used his knowledge to teach, mentor, and help other organizations across the WR-ALC and 78th Air Base Wing at Robins AFB.

“I have seen a culture of change throughout the WR-ALC, with units embracing AoP principles and striving for continuous improvement,” he said. “The AoP will be a force multiplier in strategic competition, as it teaches leaders to look for ways to use existing continuous improvement, along with innovation tools and methods to build, solve, and/or improve processes necessary to meet today’s demanding requirements and tomorrow’s threats.”

# FTC releases top 2024 frauds, reports record losses

The Federal Trade Commission’s Consumer Sentinel Network is a database that receives reports directly from consumers, as well as from federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, Better Business Bureau, industry members, and non-profit organizations. More than 20 states contribute data to Sentinel.

BBB is proud to be a longstanding contributor to the Consumer Sentinel Network, as the information aids in the FTC’s analysis of fraud trends and their comprehensive approach to detect, halt, and deter consumer fraud.

Freshly unveiled data from FTC reveals that consumers were swindled out of more than \$12.5 billion in 2024—a staggering new record that represents an increase of 25% over 2023 losses.

The number of fraud reports hasn’t increased, but the percentage of fraud reports that came from individuals with financial losses grew tremendously – with 38% of people reporting losses versus 27% in 2023.

Investment scams topped the list of frauds with the highest reported financial losses - \$5.7 billion in 2024. Consumers reported losses of \$2.95 billion to impostor scams in 2024, with government imposter scam related losses soaring by more than 600% from \$171 million into \$789 million in just the past year.

Your BBB offers tips to help you recognize and avoid these frequently reported frauds:

**Seven red flags of cryptocurrency investment scams:**

Deals involving little-known cryptocurrencies

Requests to share your cryptocurrency wallet with someone you don’t trust completely

Strategies offering “guaranteed” returns

An investment that takes little effort or time to pull off

Someone offering their secret strategy and discourages your research into their claims



**Kelvin Collins**

Too-good-to-be-true claims

A stranger who suddenly wants to befriend you

**Five tips to avoid impostor scams:**

**Verify directly with the agency.** If someone claims to be from a government agency, contact the agency using its official website or phone number to verify if they have attempted to reach you. Never use the contact information provided by the caller or emailer.

**Know how government agencies operate.** Legitimate agencies like the IRS and Social Security Administration will not demand immediate payment, threaten arrest, or ask for sensitive information over the phone, email, or text.

**Beware of unusual payment methods.** Requests for payment via gift cards, cryptocurrency, or peer-to-peer payment apps are a clear sign of a scam.

**Protect your personal information.** Avoid sharing sensitive details like Social Security numbers, bank account details, or passwords unless you initiated the contact with a verified agency.

**Check email extensions.** Official government correspondence usually comes from “.gov” or “.mil” addresses. Messages from Gmail, Yahoo, or similar domains claiming to be government-related are scams.

If you’ve been victimized by fraud, you can report your experience with the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) and the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center at IC3.gov. We hope you’ll also share information on BBB’s Scam Tracker Page at bbb.org/scamtracker to keep others aware of fraud targeting our community.

## Medal of Honor spotlight

# Army Sgt. 1st Class Sammy Davis

By **KATIE LANGE**  
DoD News

When a huge wave of Viet Cong troops threatened to overwhelm Army Sgt. 1st Class Sammy Lee Davis’ battalion at a small fire base in Vietnam, he jumped into action to fight back. Despite suffering several injuries,

Davis traversed a river to save three of his comrades and did what he could to stop the onslaught. He received the Medal of Honor for his efforts.

Davis was born on Nov. 1, 1946, in Dayton, Ohio, to Robert and Bonnie Davis. Due to his father’s job, his family moved around a lot, and he was raised mostly outside of Stockton, California.

Davis went to Manteca High School in Manteca, California, where he played football and was on the diving team, according to a 2010 article in the town’s local newspaper, the Manteca Bulletin. When his family moved to Indiana in his senior year, he decided to enlist in the military. So, in September 1966, after graduating from Mooresville High School, he joined the Army just as the war in Vietnam was escalating.



Photo courtesy defense.gov  
**Army Sgt. 1st Class Sammy Davis**

At the time, Davis said he felt like he needed to do his part because everyone else in his family had. His father served in World War II and his grandfather served in the Spanish-American War. One of his three brothers, Buddy, served in Korea, while another brother, Darrell, was already serving in Vietnam, he told the Manteca Bulletin.

Davis became a cannoneer and was assigned to Battery C of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division. In March of 1967, his unit was sent to Vietnam.

By November 1967, the enemy had extended the Ho Chi Minh Trail south from North

Vietnam through Cambodia and Laos so they could attempt to enter far South Vietnam along the Mekong Delta, an area known for its vast maze of rivers, swamps and islands surrounded by rice paddies.

On Nov. 18, Davis was in that area at a remote support base, Firebase Cudgel, located among a reed-filled plain with little islands toward its middle. His battalion had been charged with trying to find enemy units hiding in the area.

Around 2 a.m., the base came under heavy mortar attack. About 30 minutes later, a Viet Cong battalion of about 1,500 troops launched a fierce ground assault. They managed to push in close enough, with only a small river about 35 meters wide separating the enemy from the fire support base.

According to Davis’ Medal of Honor citation, Davis grabbed a machine gun and blasted it at the enemy to cover for his artillery crew as they tried to fire their howitzer. In the middle of that attempt, an enemy recoilless rifle round landed a direct hit on the howitzer, causing a blast that blew the gun crew away from the weapon and tossed Davis into a foxhole about 8-10 meters away.

The blast caused dozens of injuries to Davis’ back and legs and it knocked him out. He woke up when other U.S. soldiers fired a beehive round, which contains thousands of smaller projectiles that look like small arrows that expand outward when fired. The round was meant for the enemy, but

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Please submit articles, photos, etc to don.moncrief@afge-local 987.org. For questions about story content, to pass on story ideas or to request coverage, please contact the aforementioned.



## LUNCH, LEARN

From page 1

Learns, it was an opportunity to hear about some of the issues – biohazards for one – the employees feel they are facing. From that standpoint, he and McElhaney said, it was just as beneficial to them coming over as it was to those they came to see.

“A lot of them,” he said, “wanted to be stewards and didn’t know how to go about that. We also had a chance to not only talk to older ones but younger ones too. They expressed appreciation for us doing this and also wanted to join in the YOUNG (Young

Organizing Unionists for the Next Generation) part of AFGE. Quite a few expressed an interest in that as well.”

“Not because they were in trouble or were looking to get out of trouble,” added McElhaney. “They want to become stewards so they can help their coworkers.”

Other topics talked about included volunteering and coming to the member meetings. Especially, but not withstanding, the latter.

“It’s their meeting,” she said, “and if they’re not there to be a part of it then their opinions won’t be expressed. So we invited them to come to the meeting and told them the meetings were held at ‘their’

building. Because, if you remember, we obtained dues and paid, especially if you’ve been a member a long time, you paid for this building. So, it’s actually your building.”

All in all, she said, “We were able to meet with a mass of people but we were also able to do a lot of one-on-one. Just having people come by. A lot of times people want to come by here, but if they’re in a carpool or something like that, they might not have access to coming over here (to Union Hall). Coming to them, they were able to express that.”

So, again, Building 125 and other employees, you’re next. Hopefully in June or July, McElhaney said. “(We need

just enough time to plan and look at what’s happening. Look in the system.

“Especially if something comes up and they cut off payroll deductions. We’ve got to find these people and get them on direct dues.

“And if they take away official time. That’s one of the big things. The stewards will become important then. And our retirees will be extra important at that point, because we will have to utilize them. That’s why we encourage them to come out and be involved.”

And why Lunch and Learns and other avenues – i.e. The Union Advocate - are so important for getting that word out, she said.

## RULES

From page 1

Geophysical Union; the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO; Climate Resilient Communities; and Point Blue Conservation Science. The plaintiffs are represented by the law firm of Altshuler Berzon LLP and the State Democracy Defenders Fund (SDDF). The state of Washington is represented by the Washington Attorney General Nick Brown.

The plaintiffs had the following responses to the decision:

“AFGE is pleased with Judge Alsup’s order to immediately reinstate tens of thousands of probationary federal employees who were illegally fired from their jobs by an administration hellbent on crippling federal agencies and their work on behalf of the American public,” said Everett Kelley, National President of the American Federation of Government Employees. “We are grateful for these employees and the critical work they do, and AFGE will keep fighting until all federal employees who were unjustly and illegally fired are given their jobs back.”

“Public service workers are the backbone of our communities in every way. Today, we are proud to celebrate the court’s decision which orders that fired federal employees must be reinstated and reinforces they cannot be fired without reason. This is a big win for all workers, especially AFSCME members of the United Nurses Associations of California and Council 20 who will be able to continue their essential work at the Department of Agriculture, Veterans Affairs Department and other agencies,” said AFSCME President Lee Saunders.

“The mass firing of public service employees is a direct assault on the environmental justice movement and will harm people living in heavily polluted communities. Today’s decision represents a key win for our movement because our lifesaving work cannot proceed without the vital infrastructure and support of our federal employees,” said Violet Wulf-Saena, Founder and Executive Director of Climate Resilient Communities

“Government employees don’t work in a vacuum. Their efforts—especially those at the SBA—touch the lives of millions of small business owners everyday. So an attack on government workers is an attack on the American economy as a whole,” said Richard Trent, Executive Director for the Main Street Alliance. “Today’s ruling brings a bit more stability to a business ecosystem that’s been upended and thrust into chaos over the last two months.”

“Today’s ruling by Judge Alsup is an important win for National Park Service employees who were wrongfully terminated,” said Phil Francis, Chair of the Executive Council of the Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks. “These probationary employees must now be reinstated immediately and can return to the important business of protecting the irreplaceable resources and stories found at over 430 units of the National Park System. We know there are more fights ahead and we are grateful for the continued dedication and passion of our NPS employees who continue to protect our parks for future generations.”

“The recent mass layoffs have disproportionately affected Veterans, leading to job losses

and increased uncertainty. This ruling is a win for the Veterans who have been impacted and rely on federal employment for stability, and these cuts have disrupted their livelihoods,” said VoteVets Action Fund Chairman Major General (Ret.) Paul Eaton.

“Science depends on dedicated professionals who devote themselves to robust discovery and inspired solutions. Today’s ruling recognizes their critical role in our world. We look forward to continuing to fight for the federal workforce and that OPM’s direction of their terminations has significant and far-reaching harmful impacts on communities across the country that depend on their work.” – Statement by American Geophysical Union

“These mass-firings of federal workers were not just an attack on government agencies and their ability to function, they were also a direct assault on public lands, wildlife, and the rule of law,” said Erik Molvar, Executive Director of Western Watersheds Project. “This is just the first wave of assaults in a broader campaign by the Trump administration and its DOGE cartel to sabotage our government and dismantle protections for America’s lands and wildlife. But through the federal courts, our coalition has repelled this attack, and the judge has now ordered the federal agencies to re-hire the workers that were fired illegally. We will continue to strike back — relentlessly — against assaults on western public lands and wildlife.”

“This is a win for the thousands of public servants who keep our country running, for veterans and their families who rely on the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies, and for the millions

of Americans who depend on critical government services,” said Jose Vasquez, Executive Director of Common Defense. “The court’s decision stops a blatant power grab that threatened to gut essential services, from veterans’ healthcare to disaster relief. Today, justice prevailed, but our fight continues to ensure no administration can ever again play politics with the livelihoods of those who serve our country and our communities.”

“The law is clear that OPM has no authority to order the federal agencies to fire their employees. Today’s ruling is an important first step in holding this administration accountable for these unlawful acts,” said Danielle Leonard, Altshuler Berzon, representing the plaintiffs.

“Today’s decision is an important victory for the rights of federal workers. The work done by the plaintiffs, led by public service unions along with small business, veterans, and conservation organizations, has been extraordinary and tireless,” said Norm Eisen, executive chair of State Democracy Defenders Fund. “Together, we’re going to keep holding this administration accountable whenever and wherever they try to undermine the rights of the people of the United States under the cynical guise of reform.”

“The many agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services offer direct and ongoing lifesaving support for the American people,” said Georges C. Benjamin, MD, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association. “We are hopeful that the judge will also include all HHS agencies as requested by APHA and counsel at the hearing.”

Anyone who sees footage of the Medal of Honor ceremony might recognize it as a scene from “Forrest Gump.” That portion of the ceremony was used in the Academy Award-winning movie, having replaced Davis’ head with that of actor Tom Hanks.

In the decades since receiving the Medal of Honor, Davis has been an advocate for Vietnam veterans, fighting to gain compensation and medical assistance for those affected by Agent Orange. He also organized and participated in welcome home parades for Vietnam veterans years after the war ended to give them the happy homecoming they never received. Davis attends speaking engagements with troops and various other groups to talk about his experiences.



### Ossoff, Warnock oppose Republican-backed spending bill

by Dave Williams | Capitol Beat News Service

Georgia’s two Democratic U.S. senators voted Friday against advancing a temporary spending bill to keep the federal government open through September, charging Republicans with ramming through a harmful “continuing resolution” without consulting Democrats.

Sens. Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, however, were on the losing side, as nine Senate Democrats and one independent joined Republicans in a 62-38 vote to move forward with the bill. The measure was expected to gain final passage Friday night.

Warnock said Republicans put Democrats in an impossible position in forcing the Senate to vote on a bill that already had passed the House without a single Democratic vote.

“Instead of working together to actually improve people’s lives, craven politicians shut the door on bipartisan conversation and reemerged with an ultimatum: vote for a partisan government funding package or let the government shut down,” Warnock said.

“Make no mistake, this government funding bill is bad policy: it would spike grocery prices, cut investments in education and health care, and defund care for servicemembers exposed to burn pits.”

Ossoff suggested a better alternative for Republicans would have been to negotiate a 30-day stopgap funding bill to avoid a shutdown, giving Congress time to work out a bipartisan budget.

“The House bill ... irresponsibly fails to impose any constraints on the reckless and out-of-control Trump administration,” Ossoff said. “The administration is gutting the CDC (the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and the VA (Veterans Administration) while destabilizing the economy. Both parties in Congress must fulfill our constitutional obligation to check the president.”

Senate Democrats who voted to advance the bill – spearheaded by Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York – argued that a government shutdown would have played into President Donald Trump’s hands by allowing the president and advisor Elon Musk even freer rein to further dismantle federal government agencies and fire thousands of workers.

### Legislature considers increased compensation for families of teachers killed at school

by Ty Tagami | Capitol Beat News Service

A Georgia Senate committee advanced legislation Wednesday that would double the amount of money that families of teachers and other public school employees would receive when their loved ones are killed at school.

House Bill 105 would double to \$150,000 the compensation for victims of violence “in the line of duty,” putting it in parity with the indemnification for police officers killed on the job.

It is an acknowledgement of the increasing risk of death in schools, such as the mass shooting last fall at Apalachee High School in Barrow County, said Sen. Bo Hatchett, R-Cornelia, who presented the bill to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

“Through this legislation, our state will be able to better support families who have lost loved ones in their service of our children. We live in a scary world and unfortunately this is a necessity,” Hatchett said. “We hope and pray it’s never used, but if and when it’s needed, it’s there.”

The measure by Rep. Will Wade, R-Dawsonville, would increase the \$75,000 indemnification established in 2000, a year after the mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, which at the time was seen as a shocking and extreme development.

The payout would cover any school employee killed while working at school.

The compensation to families of police officers was raised from \$100,000 in 2017 to the current \$150,000. The money comes from a trust fund of about \$3 million.

HB 105 would not increase the \$75,000 payout to school employees who are permanently disabled by a shooter or other assailant at school.

The measure passed the House of Representatives 168-0 last month and passed the Senate committee by a unanimous vote. It now goes to the Senate Rules Committee before a possible vote by the full Senate.

### State House OKs \$37.7 billion fiscal ’26 budget

by Dave Williams | Mar 11, 2025 | Capitol Beat News Service

The Georgia House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed Gov. Brian Kemp’s \$37.7 billion fiscal 2026 state budget Tuesday, a spending plan that prioritizes prisons and education.

The budget, which cleared the House 171-4, is smaller than the record \$40.5 billion fiscal 2025 mid-year budget lawmakers passed last week, which used \$2.7 billion of the state’s \$16 billion surplus. The 2026 spending plan, which takes effect July 1, does not count on surplus funding, a recognition that economic headwinds likely lie ahead.

“Things are tight,” House Appropriations Committee Chairman Matt Hatchett, R-Dublin, told his legislative colleagues before Tuesday’s vote. “The needs are great, and many worthy causes are competing for the same limited resources.”

The 2026 budget includes \$250 million in new spending on Georgia prisons, the subject of a federal audit last fall that criticized the prison system for failing to protect inmates from violence. To reduce the ratio of inmates to correctional officers, the spending plan authorizes hiring more than 700 guards, while providing pay raises to the current correctional staff.

The House version of the budget added \$98 million in education spending above the spending recommendations Kemp presented to the General Assembly in January. Most of that increase would go toward student safety and mental health in the wake of last September’s mass shooting at Apalachee High School in Barrow County.

“School safety and mental health go hand in hand,” Hatchett said.

The budget provides \$62 million for a new program called “Student Support Services.” Of that total, \$19.6 million would go to hire mental health counselors for middle schools and high schools, and \$28 million would go to school districts to help low-income students.

The spending plan also includes \$10.8 million to hire 116 literacy coaches. Georgia students’ poor reading scores have prompted the legislature in recent years to emphasize improving literacy.

With such a large budget surplus, Kemp and the General Assembly were able to authorize a series of building projects in the current budget to be financed with cash rather than the usual practice of borrowing the money. The fiscal ’26 budget continues that practice for \$545 million in projects, but the House spending plans calls for funding an additional \$321 million in building projects through bonds.

## HONOR

From page 2

it struck Davis, too, because his fellow soldiers didn’t realize he was still alive.

Davis struggled to his feet and went back to the damaged, burning howitzer from which he had been blown away. Despite taking on continued enemy fire, he rammed a beehive shell into the gun and fired. The artillery piece rolled backward and knocked Davis to the ground again, breaking his third lumbar vertebra, according to his first-person interview with the Indianapolis Star in 1988.

Davis got back up and returned to the weapon, firing again just as an enemy mortar exploded within 20 meters of him. Davis suffered more painful injuries, but he kept going. He loaded and fired the howitzer four more times.

Soon after, Davis noticed a U.S. soldier across the river waving his arms and asking for help for himself and others. Davis knew his injuries left him unable to swim, but he disregarded that thought and looked around to find something to help him across. When he found an air mattress, he struck out across the river to rescue his wounded comrades.

As enemy troops aimed at Davis, he hopped into the water and held onto the air mattress until he got to the wounded men. Davis told the Indianapolis Star that he threw the most seriously injured man over his back and carried the other two in his arms as he started to wade back across the river. He said as the enemy fired at them, he had to continually stop his progress to

take his gun and shoot at them before he could try to move forward again with the three men.

Finally, they made it back to the fire support base side of the river. Davis handed off the men he helped, but instead of getting medical attention himself, he tried to aide a fellow soldier with a massive chest wound before joining another howitzer crew. That team continued to fire at the Viet Cong forces until the enemy finally fled around daybreak.

Davis told the Indianapolis Star that he helped load all of the injured and fallen men into helicopters to be evacuated. It wasn’t until someone pointed out his awful leg injuries that he, too, realized he needed help.

Davis was one of 42 soldiers at the base when the fight began. Four hours later, only 12 were

left alive.

Davis was sent to Japan to recuperate from his wounds. The Army had planned to send him home, but he specifically requested to return to his unit. In December 1967, he did just that. David remained with his unit as a cook for another three months before he was finally sent back the U.S.

Davis said he later learned that all of the men who survived the fight with him recommended him for the Medal of Honor. He received the nation’s highest honor for valor from President Lyndon B. Johnson during a White House ceremony on Nov. 19, 1968. Four other soldiers received the high honor that day: Spc. 5th Class Dwight H. Johnson, Capt. Charles Liteky, Spc. 4th Class Gary Wetzel and Capt. James A. Taylor.



The vernal equinox



ARTIST’S DEPICTION - NOT TO SCALE

- The first day of spring arrives Thursday, March 20, 2025.
- This day is known as the “vernal equinox.” In Latin, *ver* means “spring,” *aequus* means “equal” and *nox* means “night.”
- On this day, Earth’s position allows the northern and southern hemispheres to receive the sun’s rays equally; night and day are nearly equal in length. Spring comes to the northern hemisphere and autumn to the southern hemisphere. – Brenda Weaver

Sources: earthsky.org, almanac.com, vocabulary.com, @NWSNorman





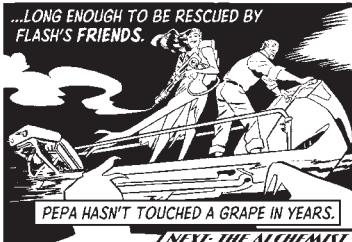
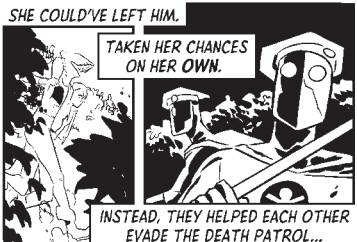
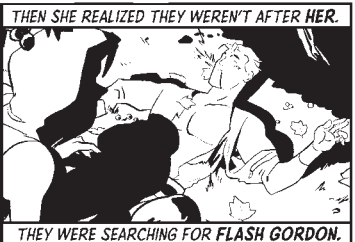
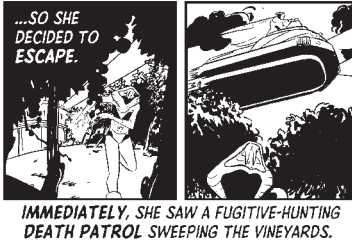
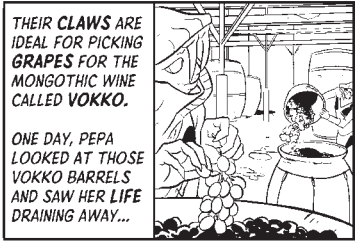
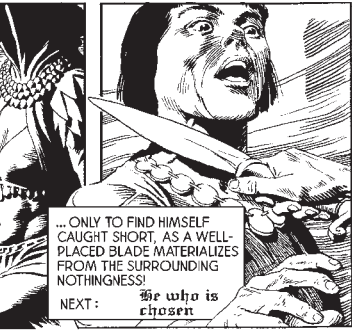
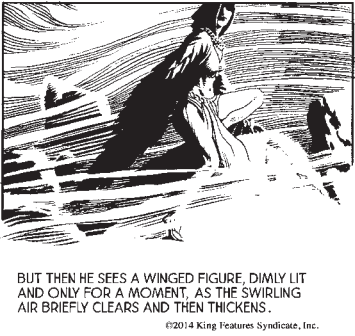
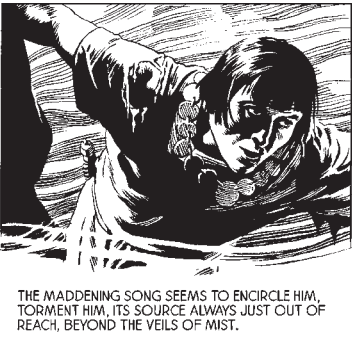
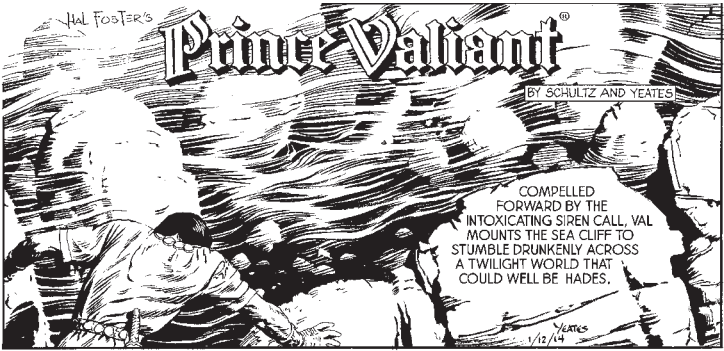
# Just for

## King Crossword

**ACROSS**  
1 Solo of "Star Wars"  
4 Dandy guy  
7 Sir's counter-part  
12 Coach Parseghian  
13 Lab eggs  
14 Mountain crest  
15 Roulette bet  
16 "Absolutely not!"  
18 Genetic letters  
19 Long journeys  
20 Informal pronoun  
22 JFK's predecessor  
23 Slightly wet  
27 Id counter-part  
29 Small burger  
31 Majestic  
34 Paris school  
35 Diocese part  
37 Iota  
38 Tennis score  
39 Author Umberto  
41 Slightly open  
45 Stand-in  
47 Japanese sash  
48 "Absolutely not!"  
52 Eggy quaff  
53 Love, Italian-style

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11  
12 13 14  
15 16 17  
18 19  
20 21 22 23 24 25 26  
27 28 29 30  
31 32 33 34  
35 36 37  
38 39 40 41 42 43 44  
45 46 47  
48 49 50 51 52  
53 54 55  
56 57 58

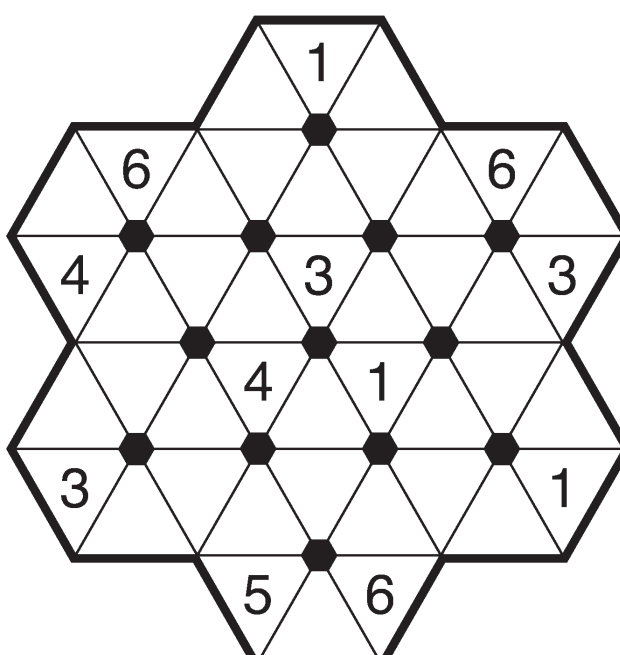
54 Indian lentil dish  
55 Citric beverage  
56 Already  
57 Magic, on scoreboards  
58 French salt  
**DOWN**  
1 Wizard Potter  
2 Sports venue  
3 Tennis star Rafael  
4 Type choice  
5 Go too far  
6 Macadamized  
7 Earth's neighbor  
8 Common verb  
9 "Lion" actor Patel  
10 Chowed down  
11 Sea, to Henri  
17 Stretches (out)  
21 Bolshevik leader  
23 Formal decrees  
24 Fuss  
25 Singer Torme  
26 Season opener?  
28 Dept. store inventory  
30 Luau souvenir  
31 Transcript no.  
32 "Awesome!"  
33 "Entourage" role  
36 Olympian queen  
37 Freight train unit  
40 Homebuyer's option  
42 Singer Nick  
43 Home  
44 Star in Orion's foot  
45 "Close one!"  
46 Holler  
48 "Terrif!"  
49 Author Tan  
50 Heavy weight  
51 — -Magnon



## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

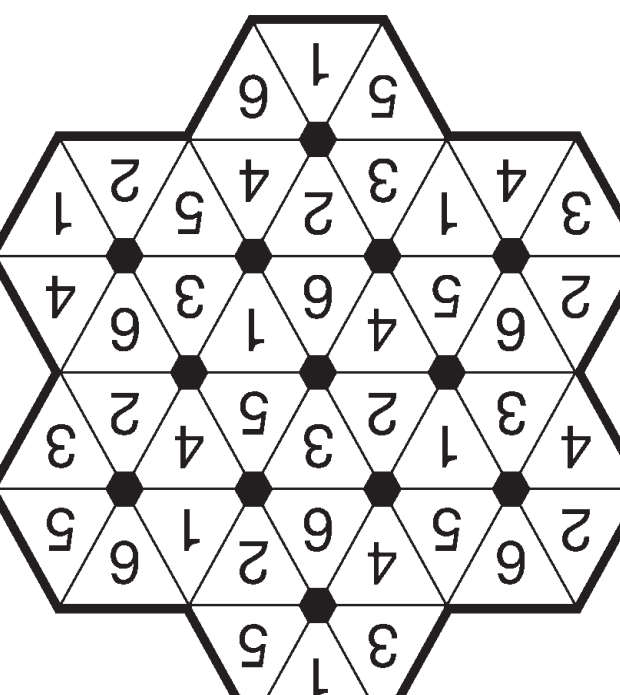
There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.



**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦

♦ Easy   ♦♦ Medium   ♦♦♦ Difficult

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## Americanisms

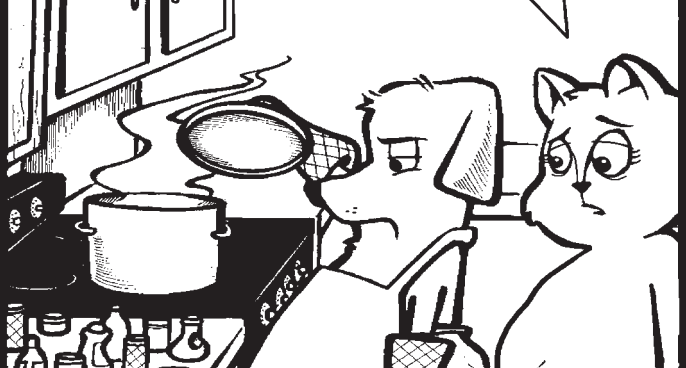
"Ireland is a land of poets and legends, of dreamers and rebels."  
— Nora Roberts

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## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

DEAR, I LOVE THAT YOU TRIED COOKING FOR ME, BUT REMEMBER, THE SAYING ISN'T "IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED JUST ADD MORE SALT."



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|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | E | L |   | R | O |   | W | N | B |
| A | D | E |   | A | D |   | E | O | A |
| G | N |   |   | C | E |   | A | H | F |
| I | O | B |   | X | O | P |   |   |   |
| A | J | A |   | O | E |   | N | I | A |
|   |   |   | T | B | I |   | S | H | P |
| E | O | L | E | C | O |   | D |   | G |
| R | E | D | E | S | L | I | D | E | R |
| P | A | M |   | D | D | E |   | L | A |
|   |   |   |   | S | K | E | T |   | R |
| R | E | V | E | R | E | N | E |   | D |
| E | A | R | E | T |   | O | V |   | A |
| M | A | D | A | M |   | F | O | P |   |

King Crossword —  
 Answers  
 Solution time: 26 mins.

## Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate   ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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## Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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



# fun

## Amber Waves

3... 2... 1... OK, DAD, READY OR NOT, HERE I COME!

WHERE COULD YOU BE? SO MANY PLACES TO LOOK. MAYBE BEHIND THE BARN?

NOPE, HMM, PERHAPS BEHIND THE HAY BALES OR IN THE PEN BEHIND THE FENCE?

OK, I'M ONLY EIGHT AND THIS IS STILL RIDICULOUS.

by Dave T. Phipps

## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

I WOULDN'T EYEBALL HIM IF I WERE YOU. HE'LL RUN UP YOUR PANT LEG AND PUNCH YOU OUT.

LEPRECON

BARNEY GOOGLE AND SNUFFY SMITH PRESENT SPARK PLUG'S GRANDSON... **LIL' SPARKY** ...AND DENNY O'DUCK!

MY FAVORITE COLOR IS **GREEN** !! WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE COLOR, LIL' SPARKY?

NEIGH-VVY BLUE !!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO CELEBRATE **SAINT PATRICK'S DAY**, LIL' SPARKY?

I ATE A FIELD OF FOUR-LEAF CLOVERS !!

DID IT GIVE YOU GOOD LUCK?

NO, DENNY--

IT GAVE ME A **STOMACHACHE** !!

WHERE'S **POPEYE**?

HE CANCELED AT THE LAST MINUTE.

HE WANTED TO TAKE OLIVE OUT ON A DATE.

YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME CANCEL POKER FOR A BROAD.

'CUZ IT'S NEVER AN OPTION FOR YOU?

CASTOR, YA CAN HAVE TRUTH OR A FACE WITH NO BLACK EYES. NOT BOTH.

WHY THE LATE-NIGHT BOAT RIDE?

I GOTTA HEAD T' GOON ISLAND FER A WHILE AN' I KNOWS YA HATES WHEN WE'RE APART...

SO I WANNA SPENDS AS MUCH TIME WIT' YA AS I KIN!

I LOVE HOW THOUGHTFUL YOU ARE.

KNOW WHAT ELSE I LOVE ABOUT YOU?

I LOVE HOW KIND YOU ARE TO ANIMALS...

I'M STARTIN' T'THINKS YA DON'TSK LIKE ME LETTIN' WIMPY TAG ALONG.

KIND AND PERCEPTIVE!

MISS OLIVE, START PLAYING AGAIN!

A WIDE ARRAY OF DELICIOUS OCEAN LIFE IS DRAWN TO THE SOUND OF ANIMALS DYING SLOWLY.

## The Spats

DID YOU HEAR THE LATEST RUMOR ABOUT BUTTER??

NO, WHAT IS IT?

I'D TELL YOU, BUT YOU'D PROBABLY SPREAD IT.

by Jeff Pickering

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

...TO EACH AND EVERY BIG GOOFY THOUGHTLESS, USELESS ANIMAL...

SOMETIMES TO YOUR OWN DETRIMENT.

HOW COULD YOU GET WORN OUT WATCHING A PARADE?

Sponsor this page. Call 478-733-9772.

**GRIN & BEAR IT**

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“Call the conference on global warming and tell them I’m running late!”

**GO FIGURE!**

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

**DIFFICULTY: ★★**

★ Moderate   ★★ Difficult   ★★★ GO FIGURE!

|    |   |   |   |    |   |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|---|
|    | + |   | - |    | = | 2  |   |   |
| +  |   | + |   | +  |   |    |   |   |
|    | + |   | x |    | = | 52 |   |   |
| x  |   | ÷ |   | x  |   |    |   |   |
|    | + |   | ÷ |    | = | 1  |   |   |
| =  |   | = |   | =  |   |    |   |   |
| 21 |   | 8 |   | 60 |   |    |   |   |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5  | 6 | 7  | 8 | 9 |

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**FEAR & KNOT**

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

TWILORHEWHINEC♥LBWOHORDIALWEP♥TWHI♥HWRTO♥NBOPOCITOLWPHEADOT

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE** ). Prepare to use only **ONE** word from any marked ( ♥ ) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥**RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART** ). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

|    |    |   |   |   |    |   |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|
|    | 60 |   | 8 |   | 21 |   |
|    | =  |   | = |   | =  |   |
| 1  | =  | 5 | ÷ | 2 | +  | 3 |
|    | x  |   | ÷ |   | x  |   |
| 52 | =  | 4 | x | 7 | +  | 6 |
|    | +  |   | + |   | +  |   |
| 2  | =  | 8 | - | 9 | +  | 1 |

answers

Go Figure!

**answer**

**FEAR & KNOT**

Future superhero who might wear a long-sleeved, belted robe instead of a cape: **Cattan Marvel**.

**CryptoQuip**

**CryptoQuip**

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: **A** equals **D**

GYNYJV EYFVJSVJQ USQ LPOSN

UVKJ K CQIO-ECVVRVA, ZVCNVA

JQZV PIENVKA QG K TKFV:

TKGNKI LKJRV.

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**HOCUS-FOCUS**

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Boy is moved. 2. Shirt is different. 3. Tail is moved. 4. Window is missing. 5. Bush is larger. 6. Dog's leg is moved.





**RALLY**  
**From page 1**

currently looking into getting their permit reissued. However, this time around there will be two time slots, she said, this due to the fact some

said they couldn't come out during the lunch period because they only got 30 minutes and that wasn't long enough to get to the rally and back on

base. That that end, they are looking to hold the next one from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – the time it was this time around – and then again from 3-5

p.m.  
Stay tuned for further details on those. (Or visit our website at loca987.com for more.)







**SIMPLIFY YOUR BENEFITS: AFGE HELPS YOU PUT THE PUZZLE TOGETHER**

- FEHB Federal Employees Health Benefits
- FERS Federal Employee Retirement System
- UNION MEMBER Life Insurance
- UNION MEMBER Dental & Vision Insurance
- UNION MEMBER Aflac Short-Term Disability Insurance

**MISSED OPEN SEASON??**

**UNION MEMBER BENEFITS OFFERED**

- ✓ DENTAL & VISION
- ✓ PERMANENT LIFE INSURANCE
- ✓ AFLAC SHORT-TERM DISABILITY
- ✓ AFLAC CRITICAL ILLNESS, ACCIDENT, & HOSPITAL INDEMNITY

**ENROLL NOW**





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nwells@benefitarchitects.com  
(478)538-1652

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