



>> GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## State passes Distraction Free Education Act



**Shadimon Smith**  
The Baldwin Bulletin

Georgia's Senate passed House Bill 340, the Distraction Free Education Act, in a 54 to 2 vote on Tuesday, March 25.

According to Bill Track, a search engine for state and federal legislation, the bill is sponsored by Carter Barrett, Houston Gaines, Scott Hilton, Jan Jones, Carmen Rice, Will Wade and Jason Anavartate.

According to the bill, the public schools of Georgia for kindergarten through eighth grade would be required to prohibit students from accessing personal digital devices from the sound of the first bell starting school until the last bell ending school. This would include any and all school activities such as assemblies, transitions or breaks.

The bill defines a "distraction-free education" as a

learning environment where access to personal electronic devices is restricted to minimize distractions, improve academic outcomes, and increase meaningful interactions and focused learning experiences.

If signed into law, public schools have until Jan. 1, 2026, to create procedures for storing devices, managing emergency communications, and establishing consequences for policy

violations. These devices are defined as smartphones, smart watches and tablets.

California, Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia and Minnesota are the nine states that have officially banned or restricted phone access during school days.

Each state has gone about the ban differently, but, in

MORE PHONES >> A6

>> LAFAYETTE

BICENTENNIAL

CELEBRATION



Baldwin County Board of Commissioners Chairman Andrew Strickland shakes hands with Lafayette re-enactor Charles Wissinger after reading the proclamation deeming March 26 "Lafayette's Farewell Tour of Georgia" Day.

CONTRIBUTED

## Milledgeville honors anniversary of Lafayette's Farewell Tour

**Bailey McCully**  
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Dr. Jeff Wells, vice president of online academics and professor of history at Georgia Military College serves as chairman of the Baldwin County Lafayette

Bicentennial Celebration Committee, which hosted the 200th Anniversary Celebration of General Lafayette's visit to Milledgeville on Wednesday, March 26.

Gilbert du Motier, known as the Marquis de Lafayette, was a

French nobleman and military leader who fought in the American Revolution at the battles of Brandywine in Pennsylvania and Yorktown, Virginia. Forty years later, he returned to the United

MORE LAFAYETTE >> A7

>> BUSINESS

## 'Da Spot' set to open, add to city's nightlife

**Drew Hill**  
The Baldwin Bulletin

Milledgeville's nightlife scene is set to become more vibrant with the arrival of "Da Spot," a new bar that promises to be the go-to destination for both locals and visitors seeking a unique and lively experience. Located in the heart of downtown at 125 S. Wayne St., Da Spot is poised to offer an inviting atmosphere where patrons can unwind and socialize.

Da Spot employee Chase Skyler provided some insight on what she hopes will make Da Spot stand out among other bars in Milledgeville.

"What the bar brings to Milledgeville is another place for students and locals to be able to relax and have fun," said Skyler. "Da Spot also wants to make it a spot for people to be able to grab something to eat, have a nice night out, or get out of their house. Da Spot brings a fun and friendly atmosphere that anyone can enjoy."

The bar's interior boasts a modern yet cozy design, with comfortable seating arrangements and ambient lighting that sets the perfect mood for an evening out.

In addition to its impressive drink selection, Da Spot offers a menu of delectable appetizers and light bites, ensuring that guests have a variety of options to complement their beverages. The establishment also plans to host themed nights and special events, adding an extra layer of excitement to Milledgeville's social scene.

Milledgeville residents have been buzzing about Da Spot since its opening last Tuesday. Georgia College student Maddy Thorpe says it will be her new favorite bar.

"I'm excited about something new and different to bring to my nights out. My friends and I have been anticipating the opening of a new bar for a long time, and it came just in time for our senior year," Thorpe said.

Da Spot is open from 9:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This flexibility

MORE SPOT >> A3



CONTRIBUTED

L-R: GMC Senior Vice President and Superintendent of Cadet Crop Nelson Kraft, Milledgeville Mayor Mary Parham-Copelan, Lafayette re-enactor Charles Wissinger, Governor Troup re-enactor Rick Joslyn, GCSU President Cathy Cox, and Executive Director of American Friends of Lafayette Chuck Schwam look on as the National Anthem and French National Anthem are played.

**BIRTHDAY**  
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**WEATHER**

**91** HIGH  
Partly Cloudy  
**63** LOW

Detailed forecast / B8

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>> GEORGIA MILITARY COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

# GMC Prep whips Wilkinson on senior night



Skyla Morris  
The Baldwin Bulletin

The GMC Prep varsity baseball team dominated senior night Mar. 27, with a 15-0 shutout of Wilkinson County. The Thursday-night victory improved the Bulldogs to 11-10 overall, ranking them third in Georgia 1A D2 Region 5.

GMC Prep quickly turned up the heat on the Warriors, scoring five runs in the bottom of the first inning. The matchup concluded in the bottom of the fourth inning after GMC scored its 15th unanswered point.

"I challenged the guys to come out and start from the very beginning and jump on them early, and that's exactly what they did," Bulldogs head coach Kyle Redmond said. "So, I'm very proud of them for doing what they should do."

GMC continued its rally throughout the game, scoring one run in the second inning and six in the third. They later scored three final runs in the fourth inning to seal an outstanding performance. According to Redmond,

the Bulldogs faced some "really tough competition" at the beginning of the season. With the win over Wilkinson, they now have a five-game winning streak.

"We got off to a little bit of a slow start, but since about halfway through the season, we've turned it on," Redmond said. "We're playing probably our best ball right now."

GMC's rout of the Warriors featured several game leaders, including junior Eli Griffith with a pair of doubles and three runs, and junior Noah Goddard with a .667 batting average and a double. Junior Ayden Hamm, the Bulldogs' starting pitcher on Thursday night, showed out with 65 total pitches thrown and two RBIs at the plate.

Redmond said Hamm's performance has significantly improved during the 2025 season and credited the pitcher for progressing Thursday night.

"From time to time [Hamm] had trouble throwing strikes — and consistently — so I challenged him tonight to just go at the hitters, go at them and throw strikes," Redmond

said. "In the second, third, and fourth innings, he attacked the zone and had a small pitch count, which is good, so that was an improvement for him."

Overall, with the 2025 regular season nearing its conclusion, Redmond believes his defense's improvement has helped gain the trust of the pitchers, and the offense "has become more aggressive."

"Our pitchers are now trusting the guys behind them to make the plays, which takes the pressure off them," Redmond said. "We were going up to the plate early in the season, very passive and, you know, not going at the pitches and waiting for our perfect pitch. Now we're going out there, and we're getting [after] anything. So, you know, I'm proud of them for that."

The Bulldogs return to action the week of Apr. 7 with multiple matchups during GMC Prep's spring break. They will begin the series Apr. 9 with a 4 p.m. start against Westminster Christian Academy at Saint Simon's Island.

## LAFAYETTE

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States to tour all 24 states and stayed in Milledgeville from March 27-29, 1825. A historical marker for "Lafayette's Trail" stands next to Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion, where the Government House, which Lafayette stayed in, stood before the mansion was completed in 1839.

"In 1824, the United States was in the throes of a very contentious national presidential election. Our country was divided and in turmoil. President James Monroe thought it would be a good idea to bring back the last living American General from the Revolutionary War for a short tour of popular cities as a way to celebrate the nation's 50th anniversary and reignite its patriotism," states the American Friends of Lafayette website.

The American Friends of Lafayette created a bicentennial committee that consists of over 500 individuals representing all 24 states. The celebration kicked off August 16, 2024, with numerous events planned to trace Lafayette's footsteps on the exact dates and order he followed on his tour of America.

"His visit to Milledgeville in 1825 included quite the celebration that involved nearly the entire community," said Wells. "Lafayette is known as a hero in two nations, as he not only championed

the cause of freedom and human rights here in America but as he returned to his native France, he championed the cause of Freedom there as part of the French Revolution.

"He is one of the authors of the first draft of the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, a document akin to the Declaration of Independence, which secured his place amongst the great crusaders for human rights in world history."

Discussion of the Milledgeville's celebration began in winter of 2024 and planning kicked off in the spring. The celebration was held on Grant Parade Field at Georgia Military College near the Old Capital Building, where Wells stated Lafayette spoke to the community of Milledgeville 200 years before.

In attendance were Senior Vice President of GMC's Junior College Col. Nelson Craft, Georgia College President Cathy Cox, representatives from the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution, Milledgeville Mayor Mary Parham-Copelan, County Commission Chair Andrew Strickland, French attaché of the United States Delphine Jeroudi from the French Consulate in Atlanta, who represented the president and people of France, and Executive Director Chuck Schwam of The American Friends of Lafayette.

"Chuck Schwam only attended one event in the Georgia tour and decided to come to Milledgeville

because of the depth of the program," said Wells.

About 250 people were in attendance at the opening ceremony with high numbers at the following events of the evening as well, according to Wells.

"It was a true community event with representatives at each event throughout the day," said Wells.

"Revolutionaries like Lafayette are still celebrated today because they came face to face with enormous challenges and the risks associated with rebellion, but they took action anyway because their values were larger than their fears," said Cox at the community ceremony. "Liberty, equality and freedom, that's what they were fighting for, and here we are 200 years later, still amplifying that message, still remembering. Let us all continue to amplify the ideals that made him a hero and built our nation."

Parham-Copelan read a proclamation naming March 26 "Marquis de Lafayette Day," which encouraged citizens to celebrate his legacy and his farewell tour. Strickland followed her presentation, reading a proclamation deeming March 26 "Lafayette's Farewell Tour of Georgia" Day. The Marquis de Lafayette, portrayed by Charles Wissinger of Virginia, accepted the proclamations from each local leader.

Alongside Lafayette, Georgia Governor George M. Troup, portrayed by Rick Joslyn, was present

at the ceremony and The Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution wore authentic clothing "to bring history to life."

"All the questions of our future can be answered by looking in the past," said Schwam.

To honor that history, GMC Prep hosted a contest for kindergarteners called "Pronounce

Lafayette's Full Name in French." The winners were Hadley Pearce and Ziv Sigman, who received gift certificates to Dairy Queen. Their teacher, Laurie Tyson, also received gift certificates to Zaxby's.

"When the Marquis de Lafayette arrived here 200 years ago, he was warmly received ... today that same spirit of warmth and hospitality continues

to be felt," said Jeroudi. "Long live the relationship between France and the United States."

The meeting closed with a speech from Lafayette himself and later that afternoon a wreath-laying ceremony with over 100 attendees was held at the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery, where the marquis honored seven Revolutionary War soldiers at rest.

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**JULY 12** Christmas in July Event 10AM-3PM

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