

# The Madison County Journal

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## ACCIDENT

### Driver in fatal wreck faces charges

**By Zach Mitcham**  
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Warrants have been issued for a Madison County woman who pulled into the path of a truck last week on Hwy. 98 in a wreck that killed her infant son and seriously injured her other two children, ages 5 and 8.

The 5-year-old is being treated at Scottish Rite Hospital in Atlanta with life-threatening injuries.

Arrest warrants were filed last week in the Madison County Magistrate Judge's office for Tela Wood, 34, Hull. Wood, who was also injured in the accident, faces a charge of homicide by vehicle in the first degree for the death of her 5-month-old son, Charles M. Wood Jr. She will also be charged with two felony counts of serious injury by vehicle, misdemeanor driving under the influence (DUI)/drugs and failure to yield the right of way.

Captain Jimmy Patton with the Madison County Sheriff's Office said Wood has been released from the hospital and is in Atlanta with her injured child.

"We are working to set up a time to turn herself in," he said.

The accident occurred shortly after 3 p.m. Nov. 19 when Wood turned her 1998 Toyota 4Runner in front of a 1998 Peterbilt truck driven by a Carlton man, who was not injured in the accident.

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### MAILING LABEL

## MADISON COUNTY JOBS



**Lt. Jason Ring begins his shift Nov. 14 for the Madison County Sheriff's Office.**

## Day in the life

### Strapping in and riding along on patrol in Madison County

**By Zach Mitcham**  
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We sit at a long flat stretch off Hwy. 72 and look at the west-bound traffic coming our way toward Athens. It's cold but not cold enough for snow, though it sure feels like flakes could drop at any moment, the way the gray blankets the sky on Georgia/Auburn week, around that time when winter seems to break in its teeth. The radar on the left corner of Jason Ring's dash is showing the speed of the oncoming traffic. Georgia law requires him to give motorists 500 feet of sight distance.

"The state patrol, they can hide, but not us," said Ring, a lieutenant with the Madison County Sheriff's Office, who has been with the department since 2001. Ring is waiting on a speeder, but the numbers popping up on the radar so far aren't warranting a stop. He's got Copenhagen between his gum and lip and spits into one of two empty Monster Energy drink cans in the cup holders.

"I wish I could quit this," says Ring of the dipping. "But then deer season comes along."

Ring enjoys hunting and fishing and just being outdoors. He said his 8-year-old son also enjoys hunting. And he's proud of the fact that his son isn't into video games and enjoys being outdoors instead.

"It's all about getting him one (a deer)," he said.

We talk about speeding. Ring stopped at the county farm when we first got in the car and he showed me the 40-mph and 25-mph tuning forks he must ping before and after his shift to make sure the radar calibration is right. If the radar is off, all tickets must be thrown out and the radar must be taken out of commission. In case you're wondering, if you pass a patrol car going the opposite direction, yes, they can read your speed. I ask him what people are like when he pulls them over for speeding.

"They're usually honest about it," said Ring. "They know what they did. You get some you pull over who will argue with you all day long. I'm like, look, this is what court is for, just show



**The test kit is positive for methamphetamine.**

up."

I'm thinking about what he's saying but also remembering what's in his patrol-car trunk — a bullet-proof vest for me if I need it. He showed it to me before we got in the car. I think about that. What could happen? What will I see? Will I actually need that vest? Unlikely, sure. But not out of the question, right?

That's a daily risk assessment for anyone getting in a patrol car — probably not today, but maybe. I realize as we ride that this fact is abstract until you're in the car. Then, it becomes objectively real.

Ring has never been shot, but a few years ago in a call in the northern part of the county, that seemed like a real possibility. In retrospect, Ring said the man was attempting suicide by cop. But no shots were fired. Ring ended up Tasing the man and cuffing him.

"You see a guy walking out carrying three firearms walking down the road at you, not listening," he said. "It puts you on edge. You got to take care of you, number one. You get behind cover and all that stuff, but you also got to get out there, too. You can't go hide behind a big tree and not be seen. You got to get out there and deal with him. But you got to be smart about it. You can't let him get away and hurt somebody else."

**See Day, page 2A**



**Lt. Jason Ring and Cpl. Josh Smith type in their reports at the Madison County Sheriff's Office.**

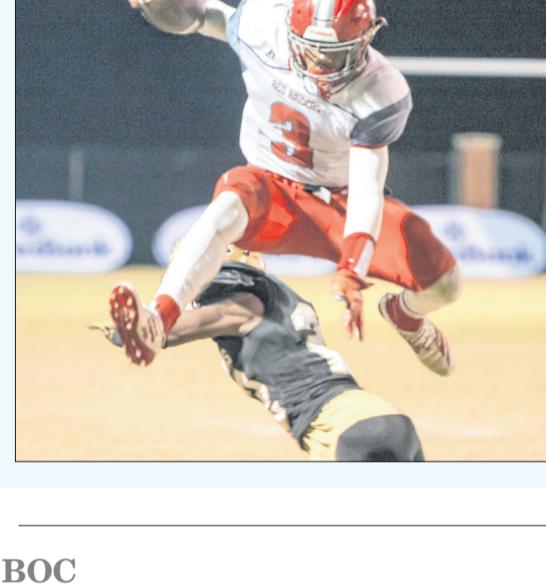
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## Historic win!

Madison Co. trounces Mary Persons to advance to state quarterfinals

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## BOC

### Singleton named to assessor board

**By Zach Mitcham**  
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Madison County commissioners named Steven Singleton to the board of assessors Monday evening. He will replace Lynn Hix, who is stepping down from the board at the end of the year.

Commissioner Lee Allen thanked Singleton for his willingness to serve on the assessor board. He said he spoke with three people who said they weren't interested in the position. Commissioner Brian Kirk said he spoke with two people who were recommended to him, but who also weren't interested.

"Somebody who wants to be there is a good sign," said Kirk.

Singleton runs the Madison County meat processing plant started by his late father, Greg.

### QUALIFYING FEES

County commissioners approved qualifying fees

**See BOC, page 2A**

## ENVIRONMENT

### Clean Power Coalition to meet December 5

The Madison County Clean Power Coalition has announced plans for a public informational meeting on the possible risks of burning used railroad ties by Georgia Renewable Power's biomass power plant in Colbert.

The meeting will be held Dec. 5 at the Madison County High School from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The Clean Power Coalition was recently formed by local residents who are upset by the change in fuel being burned at the power plant to include used railroad ties. According to Colbert resident Cheryl Adams, "The smell and smoke seeps into my house,

**See Power, page 2A**

## FESTIVITIES

### Strickland named grand marshal of Comer Christmas Parade

The 2019 Comer Christmas Parade Grand Marshal is Michelle Strickland.

Strickland recently retired after serving the citizens of Madison County for over 34 years as the Clerk of Superior Court. She was hired in 1979 by the former Clerk of Superior Court, Syble E. Sheets, and when Sheets retired in 1984, Michelle ran for the office and was elected.

The responsibilities of the Clerk of Superior Court are varied and wide ranging. While most citizens associate the office with maintaining court records for criminal and civil court cases, few realize that the office also maintains records for juvenile court. In addition the responsibility of the office to properly administer a jury pool is critical to

**See Strickland, page 2A**