



Photo courtesy of the Associated Press

Georgia Presidential Count Tightens in Scan of Last Ballots

By Kate Brumback
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Vote counting continued in several Georgia counties on Thursday as Americans watched to see whether the state gives Democrat Joe Biden the electoral votes he needs to become president.

The Associated Press has not declared a winner in Georgia, because the race between President Donald Trump and Biden is still too early to call. Trump had a narrow lead, but with thousands of ballots still being tallied in counties that tend to vote blue, Democrats had reason for optimism.

The secretary of state's office announced that as of 5:45 p.m. there were about 36,331 votes remaining to be counted. Gabriel Sterling, who has overseen the implementation of Georgia's new electronic voting system, said the secretary of state's office has long said counting could take several days.

During an afternoon news conference in the state Capitol, Sterling did not offer an estimate for when he expected counties to finish tabulating their results. He said officials are working diligently and he emphasized his confidence in the legitimacy of the process.

"I think if anybody was going to try to rig a system they might have seen something a little less close than this," Sterling said. "In this state in particular we take security very seriously. ... We're going to have a recount for president more than likely and the people will see that the outcome will stay essentially the same."

The roughly 36,000 outstanding absentee ballots don't include provisional ballots and ballots that need to be "cured" before being scanned. Sterling also noted that ballots cast before Election Day by military voters and citizens living overseas and received by 5 p.m. Friday will be tallied.

"I think all of us would agree that having an accurate count is much more vital — an accurate and fair count — is much more vital than having a fast one," Sterling said.

A software problem that occurred on Election Day was delaying the counting of about 6,000 ballots in Gwinnett County outside of Atlanta, county spokesman Joe Sorenson said. The error is forcing

officials to rescan roughly 80,000 ballots to identify ones where voters made errors in marking them by hand. An adjudication panel will then examine those ballots to try to determine voter intent over the next two to four days, Sorenson said. Once that's done, the outstanding ballots — mostly absentee ballots received on Election Day — can be counted.

Ballots were still being scanned in multiple other counties, including Fulton, Cobb and Clayton counties in metro Atlanta. As of Thursday afternoon, Chatham County, home to Savannah, had about 15,000 uncounted ballots, according to county election chairman Tom Mahoney. He said he expected a big chunk of those votes in the Democratic-leaning county to be posted Thursday evening.

Adjudication panels will then review any that were flagged electronically. These panels, including representatives from both the Democratic and Republican parties, study each ballot for marks indicating voter intent. After each county certifies their total, the state will perform an audit before certifying the results, Sterling said.

With margins so narrow in Georgia, Democrats, Republicans and voting advocacy groups are scrambling to encourage people to fix flaws in already submitted ballots before a Friday deadline to ensure they are counted. There are two categories of ballots where voters may need to fix or "cure" flaws.

One is in mail-in ballots, where voters may have forgotten to sign their ballot or elections workers may have decided that the signature doesn't match.

The second category is provisional ballots, where voters encountered a problem in person at a polling place and cast their vote with the understanding that officials would later determine whether it's eligible. Some will be counted without further action, but if a voter didn't present a photo identification, they will have to present ID to officials to cure their ballot. Advocates also say that in some cases, voters may need to go to a county elections office if they didn't show up on the rolls at a polling place to make sure their ballot is counted.

Cam Ashling, a Democratic activist, said she spent Thursday canvassing Gwinnett and Hall counties northeast of Atlanta door to door, although

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she said she found few voters. She said volunteers are flooding in on the Democratic side to seek out missing ballots.

"I guess they're waking up to the reality that we can flip Georgia," Ashling said.

State officials couldn't immediately provide the number of uncured absentee ballots. Provisional lists are kept at the county level, and there are thousands outstanding statewide that county officials will decide on whether to count by Friday.

With 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency, Georgia's 16 electoral votes would clinch it for the Democrats.

In Fulton County, one woman sang "All Night Long" as election workers opened, flattened, stacked and scanned ballots inside Atlanta's State Farm Arena.

Roughly a hundred Trump supporters gathered outside the arena. They carried signs that read, "Foolton County=Fraud" and chanted "God bless Trump" and "Stop the steal." Several Atlanta police officers monitored the scene.

Fulton Elections supervisor Rick Barron said any flagged ballots would be handed over to adjudication panels, which were set to review them.

On Thursday, Chatham County Judge James Bass dismissed a lawsuit by the Georgia Republican Party and the Trump campaign that essentially sought to ensure state laws are being followed on absentee ballots. The suit had raised concerns about 53 absentee ballots; county officials testified that all had been received on time.

NEWS

UWG Professor Encourages Political Advocacy

By Reilly Robbins
Contributing Writer

Dr. Karen Owen, a political science professor at UWG, is paving a strong path for women running for a political office.

She is currently gaining a regional and national reputation for her experience in political science and gender issues. Owen attributes her interest in politics to her grandmother.

“My grandmother was an avid political TV watcher,” said Owen. “We watched Regan’s second inauguration ceremony together and remember becoming fascinated with how someone was talking about wanting to change the country.”

Owen was involved in political science even during her teenage years. When Owen was fifteen, she went on a trip to Washington, D.C., and was able to participate in the law-making process.

“That is when I fell in love with everything politics and political,” said Owen. “I was captivated by everything I saw.”

As Owen became older and was deciding what career she wanted to pursue, she did not see herself going into the political arena despite her love for it. Instead, she went to the University of Georgia (UGA) to study biology in hopes of becoming a doctor. While studying at UGA, Owen enrolled in a political science course which ignited her passion for the field of study once again.

After graduating from UGA in December of 2001, Owen went to work the following month as a legislative analyst for the Governmental Affairs office at Ford Motor Company in Atlanta. Within her position, she tracked legislation and oversaw what candidates received donations. After a year she went back to UGA to receive her master’s degree in public administration.

After working for Nathan Deal as a legislative assistant in Congress for two years in Washington, D.C, Owen headed back to Georgia where she worked at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and

Prevention. While at the CDC, she prepared briefing materials to take to congress.

While being a professor, Owen has also written a book, *Women Officeholders and the Role Models Who Pioneered the Way*, which she uses for material in her gender and politics course. Currently, she is working on her second book, *Special Elections: The Back-Door Entrance to Congress*, where Owen and Dr. Charles S. Bullock of UGA focus on special elections in the U.S. House from the end of World War II to the end of 2018.

Although Owen has been involved in many things, she continues to work hard for her goals. In July she started a nonprofit called VoteHer. The goal of the newly founded organization is to encourage women to run for office and voice their opinions.

“VoteHer is focused on educating, encouraging and engaging women to get involved in politics,” said Owen. “VoteHer is focusing on four main areas: getting more women in voting, advocating about policy, running for office and serving on boards and commissions.

“My work in VoteHer is really an extension from my academic pieces,” continued Owen. “A huge priority of mine is to get all of my students, male or female, to get involved politically.”

As a mother of two, Owen is passionate about getting her children involved. She tries her best to teach her kids about the political process and what she is doing as a political advocate.

“I explain to my daughter that I am doing this for her,” said Owen. “VoteHer is for her. I want her to see that she has a role and that politics is not just for boys. It is for her as well.”

Throughout her journey in political research, Owen has always had mentors who have inspired her to be better at what she does. Because of this, she has a desire to mentor others as well.

“It is very rewarding for me when my students ask me to be their mentor,” said Owen. “That is really my goal for my entire life, whether it is as a professor or with VoteHer, is to be the right mentor to individuals and help them on their journey.”



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ENTERTAINMENT



Photo courtesy of UCM

CSI Provides Over-the-Weekend Entertainment to Students

By Alma Beauvais

Contributing Writer

Since early October, the Center for Student Involvement (CSI) has held several movie screenings over the weekends as part of the Weekends West Georgia (WWG) Cinema selection in the Townsend Center.

“As an organization, we are hoping to instill a spirit of positivity, engagement and some form of relief by screening movies usually based on thematic elements such as action, nostalgia or holiday-oriented movies,” said WWG Assistant Emuesiri Emereje.

The WWG team collaborated with the Townsend Center staff and various other on-campus organizations such as Housing and Residence Life, UREC and the Admissions Department to promote the student experience.

AnneMarie Reed, the CSI’s acting supervisor at the time presented the overall idea. Emereje, then took part in the planning of the initiative in September.

So far, CSI has shown *Bad Boys For Life*, *Toy Story 4* and *It 2* during Homecoming week for Halloween. The films are designed to provide students with fun weekend events and entertainment.

“Weekends West Georgia was created to showcase, engage and provide engagement opportunities within the UWG community and the Carrollton regions,” said Emereje. “We show the movies typically three times over the course of a weekend. This has allowed various amounts of students to have multiple means for exposure to the film and for them to fill their weekend time effectively.”

CSI provides a safe movie-theatre environment. The Townsend Cen-

ter staff continuously checks before, during and after each film screening to ensure that spaces are cleaned effectively, groups are seated accordingly and there is sufficient time between projections to avoid risks and maintain safety. These measures include either blocking off several seats or completely isolating rows. It is also mandatory for guests to wear a mask. If an individual does not have one, then they can receive one from the Townsend Center staff.

“These are difficult times we currently live in, and we have done our best to ensure that we are effectively making sure our students and community are safe,” said Emereje.

Student turnout for the screenings has been increasing with each event. CSI plans to showcase one last movie before the end of the semester. Information about the next film screening will be announced through email and social media.

“We are always hoping for a huge turnout and planning to serve, engage, and provide opportunities for students on the weekends here at UWG,” said Emereje. “So, we would love and are prepared for a big crowd and are more than happy to welcome anyone with a great film, cool novelties and a nice movie style treat for this screening.

“We would love to continue this and maybe see this initiative grow into a tradition or regular experience as seen on other campuses,” continued Emereje. “What this medium will look like always varies. I think that it would be cool to potentially see this as a drive-in theatre format or more love valley screenings.”

ENTERTAINMENT



Photo courtesy of Netflix

Holidate on Netflix Exposes Women's Struggles

By Terrion Newton

Contributing Writer

The new film *Holidate* released by Netflix is the spitting image of what a lot of women endure from family and friends.

The main character Sloane played by Emma Roberts is a young woman who is focused on herself and her career. She is a single woman who finds no shame in being alone. However, her family makes her feel terrible about it, as if she shouldn't be content without a male partner. Sloane can't catch a break. Those closest to her are always trying to play matchmaker and hoping she will land in the arms of her knight in shining armor. As a result of constant pressure, she arranges to have a guy pose as her partner for an entire year.

While Sloane's actual decisions in the beginning may not be relatable, her feelings of pressure to be with someone is. Working class women and even wealthy women from all over the globe have probably experienced being questioned about why they aren't dating, why they aren't married and even why they do not have or want children.

Some people may not know that their constant nagging is hurtful and annoying, while others do and just do not care. Either way, it can be very stressful and in most cases toxic. A single woman knows she is

single, she doesn't need to be reminded that she is. Children can be very active and rowdy, a woman knows this too. Stop reminding her that she doesn't have children.

Even though Sloane and her fake partner Jackson later realize they've actually fallen in love, them faking it for a whole year closely represents the mistakes women and men make when trying to please others. The couple stumbled into many unnecessary issues like compatibility and dishonesty. Granted, these issues arise in a relationship generally, but when things are rushed and lack authenticity, it makes matters much worse.

Sloane also becomes a bit insecure when her ex and his new girlfriend are expecting their first child. If you are 30 and don't have a child, the questions begin to increase. If you reach 40 and still have no children, you may as well be a foreign creature. The pressures put on women to have babies are absurd. Some women are waiting, while others simply don't want kids. Either way, it is their decision alone and should never be questioned. The film illustrated this point nicely through the plot.

While the film was comical, the more serious themes were handled well and many will surely appreciate it.

SPORTS

UWG's Homecoming Tackled COVID-19

By Lily Head

Contributing Writer

UWG's homecoming week looked a bit different than usual due to the current pandemic. Wolves spirit day and the football game celebrations were held both in-person and virtually.

Generally homecoming consists of a football game against another school, homecoming court, band performances and free food. However this year for spirit day, students were invited to the university stadium to watch the UWG football team split in half and play a scrimmage against one another.

The director of student engagement and leadership, Dr. Lakiesa Rawlinson, worked with various campus departments to curate the spirit day event. The first 500 students that attended the game wearing red attire were given free meals provided by Dine West. Non-students could also eat at the dining stations for \$8 per person. Before the game, winners of the banner competition, door competition and greekdom virtual stroll off competitions were announced. During the game, university recreation held on-field activities and gave out prizes.

"We had many moving parts from all over campus that helped the spirit day event come together," said Rawlinson.

Those coordinating the event were concerned about safety for the in-person celebrations, so certain protocols were put into place. Social distancing guidelines were enforced and students were strongly encouraged to wear masks.

A limit of 2,000 participants was

also put in place during spirit day. While most individuals enjoy tailgating before the game, it was not permitted this year. Overall, Rawlinson felt that the guidelines were followed and participants stayed safe.

"We over planned to identify all of the safeguards to put in place to create a fun and safe environment," said Rawlinson. "I think the communication before and during the event helped us create a safe environment."

Spirit day and the fall football game event was executed smoothly on the virtual side as well. The event was live streamed on Facebook for those who did not want to attend in person. Rawlinson said that the event's virtual engagement was high and that streaming it allowed the event to spread to people outside of UWG.

While the pandemic isn't ending any time soon, hybrid events will likely continue to be the new normal. Therefore, offering virtual options for events will continue to allow students to stay engaged.

"It was important for us to provide multiple platforms to allow people to participate in the way they felt most comfortable," said Rawlinson.

Besides the spirit day event and fall football game, other homecoming events were held virtually as part of UWG's "Homecoming at Home." The greekdom stroll-off took place on Tuesday, Oct. 27, and the bookstore hosted a throwback apparel fashion show on Wednesday, Oct. 28 via Facebook Live. Some more socially distanced in-person events included build-a-wolfie, where students created stuffed wolves, and the street sign event where students created street signs with the UWG logo on them.



Photo: Brittany Shivers, *The West Georgian*