

# The Houston Home Journal

Houston County's most trusted news source since 1870

\$1.00



www.hhjonline.com

EDIMGIAFAD

Volume 155 Number 13

Weekend, January 25, 2025

2 Sections, 18 Pages

## WORD OF THE DAY

THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE LIKE SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY ARE RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL.  
ISAIAH 1:18 (NKJV)

**This is... Robins**



Check out this month's edition of **This is Robins**

## INSIDE

Editorial 4A

•Viewpoints

•Jim Balletto

Lifestyle 5A

•Don Moncrief

•Billy Powell

Puzzle 6A

Classifieds 7A

Business 8A

Sports 9-10A

## GOT NEWS?

Submit your news tips to newsroom@hhjonline.com or call us at 478-987-1823.



PERIODICAL



# Winter's surprise!

## Rare snowstorm descends on Houston County

Sandra Hernandez/HHJ

A snowstorm passes through central Georgia on Tuesday, Jan. 16, resulting in icy roads and authorities urging the public to stay indoors. See more scenes from the storm on page 2A and hhjonline.com

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ  
HHJ Staff Writer  
sandra@hhjonline.com

HOUSTON COUNTY — The county looked like a winter wonderland, filled with snowmen and snow angels after a snowstorm passed through the area on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

The Houston County Emergency Management Agency has been working non-stop to ensure safety during and after the storm. HEMA Director Christopher Stoner said their initial response was coordination and preparation with cities and county offices and departments.

Stoner also shared the department ensured adequate staff, resources and plans were in place. HEMA also made sure to have public messaging, keeping communication open with the county.

Stoner said they continued to monitor through the storm and coordinated with the Houston County School Board on closures.

After the preparation stage, Stoner said HEMA transitioned into an operational phase once it started snowing. From there, they shifted to emergency response, communication about current conditions and urging the public to stay off the roads.

See SNOW page 2A

## Man arrested after domestic dispute involving baseball bat

By BRIEANNA SMITH  
HHJ Managing Editor  
brianna@hhjonline.com

PERRY — Perry police are investigating an aggravated assault that took place late Wednesday night, the department announced Thursday.

According to the Perry Police Department, around 10:45 p.m. on Jan. 22, the department responded to the assault at Pecan Grove Mobile Manor on the 1900 block of Sam Nunn Boulevard.

They said a domestic dispute took place involving a baseball bat. The victim had a serious head injury and was transported to Atrium Health Navicent for treatment.

The suspect, Zion Lines, was arrested and charged with aggravated assault and aggravated battery. He is currently being held at the Houston County Detention Facility.

Anyone with more information is encouraged to contact Det. Conner at (478) 988-2800 or Macon Regional Crimestoppers: 1-877-68CRIME.

## Perry Town Hall — insights from council & citizens

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ  
HHJ Staff Writer  
sandra@hhjonline.com

Editor's Note: This is part two of a two-part series.

PERRY — During the Jan. 16 Perry Town Hall meeting, councilmembers introduced themselves to attendees and encouraged citizens to talk to them about their concerns and reminded them of which areas they represent.

Councilmember Dan Peterson represents district two and provided attendees with a "snapshot" of growth in the district. According to Peterson, in 2024, there were 369 permits for residential homes to be built. Out of the 369, 48% of those are located in district two. He said they are a growing area regarding commercial growth. In the area, there are 12 projects of commercial growth, for example, stores and restaurants.

Councilmember Robert Jones also represents dis-

trict two, the most spread-out district in the city. He ran for council approximately 10 years ago and is a teacher at heart. He said he wanted the town he has lived in to grow to the point where his students have options and can come back to live, work and raise a family.

Councilmembers Phyllis Bynum-Grace and Reverend Willie King both represent areas all over the city, from Morningside Drive, Highway 41 and Oldfield Lane. They also encouraged citizens to give them a call if they have any questions or concerns.

Citizen comments  
A citizen spoke with mayor and council about car accidents in the area, concerned about lack of expansion on side roads to handle heavy traffic. She then asked if there is any citizen participation concerning transportation.

Mayor Randall Walker said transportation is very



Sandra Hernandez/HHJ

Councilmembers responded to citizens concerns during the Jan. 16 Town Hall meeting.

important to them and they are planning to make major roads to take care of additional traffic. He said one concern he and councilmembers have is the Houston Lake Corridor, which runs from Kathleen to Kings Chapel Road.

Walker then shared it is under the Georgia Department of Transportation and the city

does not have jurisdiction over the road. However, they feel strongly there should be traffic controls placed along the corridor and other roads, including Langston Road and Highway 141.

Community Development Director Bryan Wood mentioned the Warner Robins Area Transportation Study,

See PERRY page 3A



Owen Jones/HHJ

Perry-Houston County Airport Manager Jim Marquardt gives the Board of Commissioners updates on the airport and a look into its upcoming projects.

## Commissioners hear updates from the Perry-Houston County Airport

By OWEN JONES  
HHJ Staff Writer  
owen@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — Before the snow started falling in Houston County, the Board of Commissioners

rescheduled their meeting to noon on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

In the meeting, Commissioners heard from Perry-Houston County Airport Manager Jim

See AIRPORT page 7A

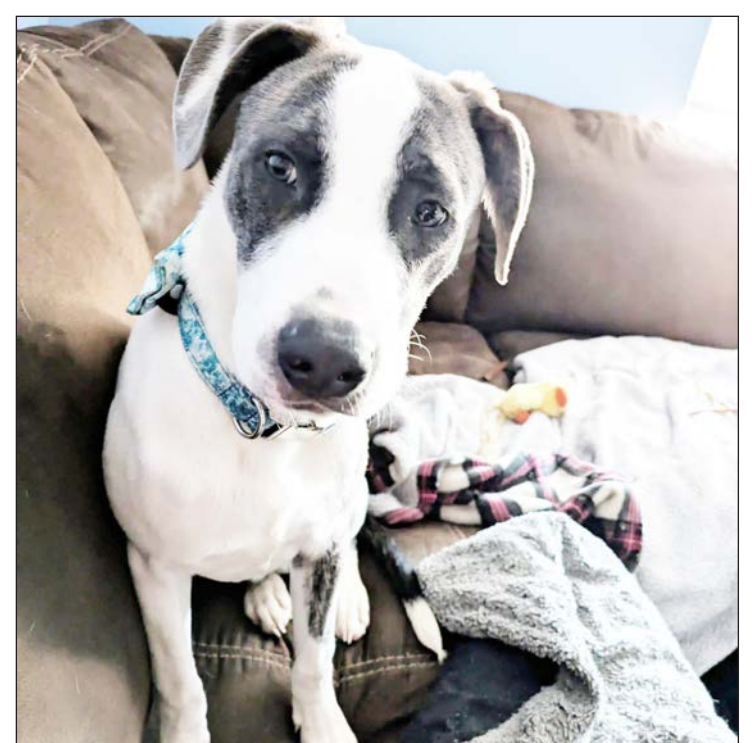
## Rewards announced for information on Christmas night shooting

By OWEN JONES  
HHJ Staff Writer  
owen@hhjonline.com

KATHLEEN — In a Facebook post by the Houston County Sheriff's Office, a reward has been announced for information about the Christmas night shooting in Kathleen which left 8 puppies dead and one survivor, Brody.

PAWS in Middle Georgia will be giving out \$500 for any tips that could result in the arrest and conviction of the suspect(s) involved.

See REWARD page 7A



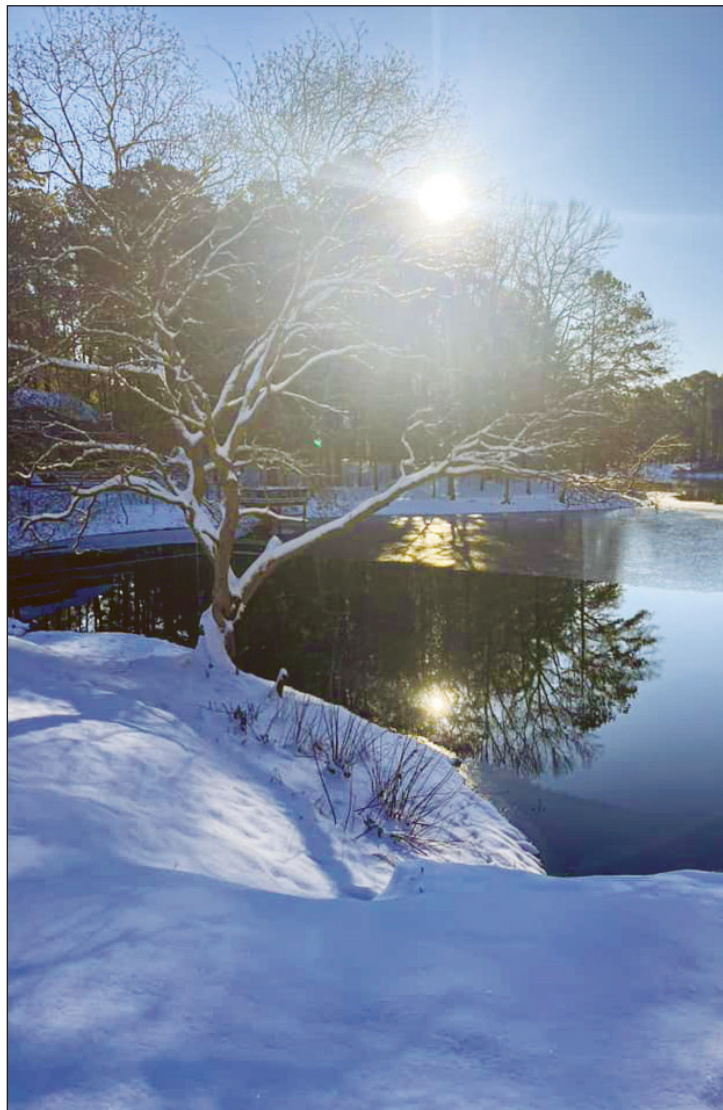
Courtesy: PAWS in Middle Georgia

Brody was the lone survivor of the Christmas night shooting that left eight puppies deceased.

# More scenes from the storm: photos by HHJ staff and submitted



Andrea Banker



Terri Dayton Hammerle



Kari Bendig



Cassandra Putnam



Stephanie Mahler Montgomery



Susan Ellis



Sandra Muñoz-Molina



Pamela Watson



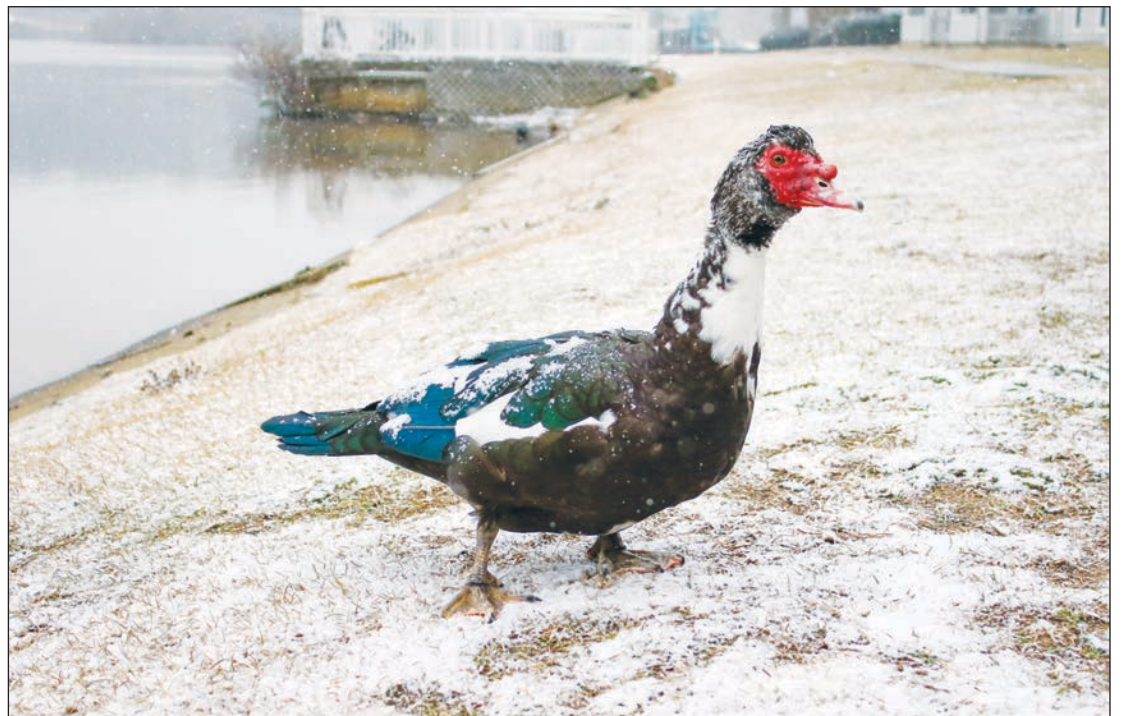
Sandra Hernandez/HHJ



Owen Jones/HHJ



Brieanna Smith/HHJ



Clay Brown/HHJ

## SNOW

From page 1A

According to Stoner, the amount of snow ranged from four inches on the north side of the county; at HEMA's office in Kathleen, they saw five inches. Going further south to Elko and Henderson, there was up to six inches of snow.

Stoner said most emergency responses were due to stranded cars or vehicles sliding into ditches. HEMA also saw traffic accidents during this phase.

He said none of the accidents were severe, but he did report a few minor injuries. Most vehicles were sliding into ditches or tractor-trailer jackknives when they folded.

Stoner said they responded to Interstate 75, which shut

down the morning after the snow, and there were still vehicles stuck. They passed out "Meals Ready to Eat" to help stranded motorists and also worked with tow trucks to remove blockages and treat roads.

Now, they are in the recovery phase, still monitoring the roads. After the snow, there were no power outages but there were traffic accidents, Stoner saying, "there were too many to count."

HEMA worked with public works across cities to make sure they were treating roads with salt or sand in high-problem areas. According to Stoner, the county had three motor graders to clear the roads the best they could.

For weather like this, Stoner recommends the public follow warnings and advice from the National Weather

Service and local emergency management agency. He also advises people to stay off the roads if they say it is unsafe.

Stoner said the last time they saw sizable snow in the county was back in 2013.

"Every five to 10 years or so we'll see something like this, but it's certainly not very common," he said.

Stoner said he was pleased with the response to the snow since it is rarely seen in middle Georgia.

"I think it went about as well as it can go. Again, just urging people to pay attention to the advisories that are out and keep people off the roadways," he said.

To keep up with HEMA on the latest updates visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HOUSTONCOUNTYEMA/>.

**BENNETT**  
FINANCIAL TAX ADVISORY

**Tax Filing Made Simple**

HASSLE-FREE TAX FILING FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME.

01

TYPE

02

SEND

03

DONE

Just text, "TAXES" to (855) 701-8177

**BEST OF GEORGIA 2024**

478-922-2506 | will@bfillc.net | Goodbyetaxproblems.com

**Healthcare Corner**

**MORE THAN A DOCTOR.**

**HOUSTON PRIMARY CARE**  
Affiliated with Southeast Medical Group

*Dr. Shetty*

**MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED**  
**SAME-DAY APPOINTMENTS**  
**NEW PATIENTS WELCOME**

**In-House Labs • Ultrasounds**  
**EKGs • Women's Health**

**24/7**  
**Telehealth**  
Online Doctor's Visits

**WARNER ROBINS**  
478-328-7674  
1719 Russell Parkway

**BYRON**  
478-956-3477  
218 N. Hwy. 49

CALL TO BOOK TODAY!

# CALENDAR

"Where to go. What to do."

## Clothes Closet Yard Sale

The Well at Centerville will hold a Clothes Closet Community Yard Sale Jan 31st and Feb 1st - 9am to 1pm both days.

Inside Fellowship Hall (Parking and entrance behind the church.)

600 N. Houston Lake Blvd.

Not just clothing! All kinds of items will be available for sale! Come seek and find!

Money raised will be used for purchasing extra needed items for the Clothes Closet such as diapers and toiletries.

Want to donate items for the sale? Please leave in the trailer behind the church by the Tom Shell building. Thank you for your support!

## Roland E. Fall to Perform at Jen's Happy Valentine's Market

Jen's Happy Valentine's Day Market will host musician Roland E. Fall for a morning and afternoon presentation of his Valentine's and Blues music. Jen's Happy Valentine's Day Market will take place on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at the Howard Community Clubhouse, 5645 Forsyth Road, Macon GA, 31210, 11am to 4pm. The public is cordially welcomed to attend this fun day of live music, shopping local artisans, eating tasty foods and having a GOOD TIME! Happy Valentine's Day!

## All Saints Wine and Cheese

All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins, is hosting our Annual Wine and Cheese on 14 Feb 2025, Valentines Day, starting at 7:00PM. Various wines and cheeses are available for tasting and enjoying. In addition, there is a Silent Auction and door prizes. This event is one of our major Episcopal Church Women's (ECW) funding sources for the many Outreach Programs sponsored by All Saints. Tickets are \$30.00 per person and can be purchased at the church office. Please contact the church office at 478-923-1791 for more information and tickets.

## Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball

Welcome to Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball! Join us for a night of elegance and grandeur at the Anderson Conference Center. This is a Bridgerton theme event. Get ready to dance the night away in a setting fit for royalty. This in-person event promises to be a night to remember, filled with live music, live performances, food, and unforgettable memories. Don't miss your chance to experience a taste of the royal life at this majestic ball. Get your finest Victorian (Bridgerton) attire ready and come celebrate in style at Queen Elizabeth's Royal Ball!

The Ball will take place April 26th, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the 5171 Eisenhower Parkway, Macon.

## Crossroads Quilt Show

Crossroads Quilt Guild of Perry is presenting it's 30th Bi-annual quilt show on March 21-23, 2025 at "The Well at Centerville Church; 600 N Houston Lake Blvd Centerville.

There will be over 100 quilts on display made by their members.

Each quilt entered in a specified category and judged accordingly. Along with quilts there will be Vendors, demos, Raffle Baskets, and scissor sharpening vendor, so bring your scissors!

\$8 entry fee/\$1 discount coupon available at the local quilt/fabric stores"

Times: Friday and Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; noon-5 p.m.

## Community Calendar

Email your information to:

[brieanna@hhjonline.com](mailto:brieanna@hhjonline.com)

Houston Home Journal

478-987-1823  
1210 Washington St.  
Perry

## PERRY

From page 1A

a group set out by the federal government to look at transportation needs in metropolitan areas. He said there is a citizen advisory committee, and everything is looked at by a group of citizens before it goes to a technical committee. It will then go to a policy committee for a decision.

Wood then shared with the citizen they are updating the 2045 Transportation Improvement plan. He said there will be citizen participation and surveys online for citizens comments on transportation in the county. The citizen wanted to find ways to do it without using a computer, since a lot of older people may not know how.

Another citizen voiced his concern with parking, especially during downtown events. He said he thinks events create great exposure for downtown, but it is also a challenge for parking.

He suggested as more businesses come downtown, they implement parking and share parking maps online and social media, especially for those from out of town. As a former downtown business owner, he spoke of the parking challenges for his customers.

Walker clarified the city has no intention of developing a parking lot at Ball Street and Main Street, despite rumors of the development. He also reminded the audience Facebook can be a source of misinformation.

Bill Delrow, a concerned citizen, also spoke up during the meeting. Delrow said he requested the town hall meeting 10 months ago. His concerns involved the land use map and sharing it with developers who want to continue building homes. He also asked if the infrastructure is ready for the ongoing growth and the cost of the development.

"I think it's important that we understand the cost of all of this development, and it's tailored into the plan so that it's not just a free for all," he said.

He also spoke of the cost it will take to fix the Sadie Heights floodplain issue. He asked city council to be thoughtful on what they are allowing to be developed to avoid an issue like Sadie Heights in the future. Delrow has the concern of the city losing its "small town charm," which he felt when the New Perry Hotel was demolished.

He believes the city must

grow but must be controlled and contained, which the city vows to do.

"Maybe there should be limits as to how much growth we're going to allow, so that we're not just building and Perry, as everyone here loves it, is lost," he said.

Later in the meeting, Jones said the map is a guide. He said if a request for annexation on any area is brought forward to mayor and council, they will consider cost and infrastructure before making a decision.

Jones told Wood to provide any concerned citizens with a list of subdivisions that have been approved, and which ones have been denied.

Another citizen also spoke about her concerns relative to the Sadie Heights floodplain and said it is not represented on the land use map. She also spoke about her concerns about sidewalk connectivity and ensuring surveys are targeted towards citizens. The citizen, and another citizen, Jim Lay, voiced concerns on traffic, especially log trucks, and speed limits needing to be lower.

They believe trucks going through downtown are a safety hazard for citizens and there should be an extension for log trucks.

Moody addressed the concerns, saying most of the streets are under GDOT and it is difficult to work with them, but they are trying. He also said sidewalks are expensive, but it is one of their priorities to have connectivity. He suggested viewing their website to see where they plan to bring sidewalks. To see the plan, visit: <https://www.perry-ga.gov/perry-pathways>.

Moody also said one of his pet peeves is traffic and would like to get log trucks off city streets. He hopes once Perry Parkway is completed, it will help with their problem.

Two residents also spoke their concerns about a no-kill dog shelter close to their homes. One of the residents said they support the shelter, but does not want animals near a residential area. Both residents also expressed con-

cerns about noise.

Another resident said she just moved into her home two months ago and is worried her property value will go down. As a person who owns animals, she is worried there will be fleas and mange due to the shelter. She is also worried if illegally surrendered animals go into her property.

Councilman Darryl Albritton said he will be in contact with one of the residents soon. Moody said no one spoke in opposition of the animal shelter during the Planning Commission meeting. He assures them nothing is happening "under the table" and everything is transparent.

"That's one of our values is transparency, trust, respect, accountability, compassion, integrity and transparency," he said. "If you ever feel like we have failed you on any of those values, call us out on it. Let me know, let the mayor know, let any of my esteemed colleagues know and we'll fix it for you."

A resident of the Oldfield Lane neighborhood brought up the discussion on improving the neighborhood. The resident asked for an update on the process and about improvements to the historic Houston County Training School.

Walker said City Manager Lee Gilmour is working on a report on where they are in the small area plan, and they will receive an update soon.

King encouraged the citizens to speak up if they have any ideas on how to improve the community. He also believes the city needs to grow for future generations to feel safe in their community.

King also reminded people to speak before they say something and to be aware of misinformation on social media. He also believes they need to bring more transportation options especially for older citizens.

Finally, Peterson encouraged the audience to visit the city's website to stay informed.

To see the Town Hall's agenda and minutes, visit: <https://perry-ga.gov/subscribe-agendas-minutes>.

## Georgia December unemployment a mixed bag

By DAVE WILLIAMS  
Bureau Chief  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia's unemployment rate held steady last month at 3.7%, four-tenths of a point lower than the national jobless rate, the state Department of Labor reported Thursday.

The number of jobs rose by 9,900 in December to a record-high 4,994,900, just short of the 5 million mark.

"Georgia is just 5,100 jobs away from making history," said Louis

DeBroux, the state's interim labor commissioner. "This historic milestone is undeniable proof of the strength of our economy."

Job sectors with the most month-over-month gains included health care and social assistance, which created 5,500 more jobs; information - which includes the motion picture and sound recording industries - with a gain of 3,300 jobs; and retail trade, which gained 2,900 jobs.

On the down side, jobs in durable goods manufacturing fell by 1,800 last

month; followed by the local government sector, which lost 1,500 jobs; and non-durable goods manufacturing, which was down by 1,400 jobs in December.

Georgia's labor force declined last month for the first time in 12 months, falling by 4,875 jobs to 5.4 million.

The number of employed Georgians also fell by 4,973 to 5.2 million, while the number of unemployed increased by 108 to 198,492.

Initial jobless claims rose by 11,727 in December to 31,046.

## Notice of Public Hearing

Perry Historic Preservation Commission will hold a public hearing in the City Hall Council Chambers at 808 Carroll Street on February 11, 2025, at 6:00 pm, for public comment on the proposed ordinance providing for designation of the Swift Street Historic District, consisting of these properties: 1100 through 1407 Swift St.; 1006 First St.; 1006 through 1008 Second St.; 1000 through 1007 Third St., except 1004 Third St.; and 1303 through 1311 Houston Lake Dr. Documents related to this proposal are available for review at the Community Development office located at 741 Main Street during regular business hours or <https://perry-ga.gov/historic-preservation-commission>.

**TANNERS SERVICE PLUMBING**  
Servicing Wilkinson, Twiggs, Bleckley, Laurens and part of Houston county.

*We are a locally owned small family business looking to serve our local communities with affordable prices and guaranteed leak free connections.*

Cody Tanner 912-592-5414

**GEORGIA PUBLIC NOTICE.COM**  
IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW.

**All of Georgia's Legal Notices on ONE Website**

**400,000**  
*Legal notices a year*

**One-stop site to search**  
*Public Hearings • Foreclosures • Election Notices  
Construction Bids • And more right at your fingertips*

*Public Notice is for you – when you need to know.*

PROVIDED BY:  
**GEORGIA PRESS ASSOCIATION**

# VIEWPOINTS

"One voice can make a difference"

## The Houston Home Journal

See us online at  
www.hhjonline.com

A division of the Georgia Trust for Local News

DuBose Porter Executive Director Pam Burney General Manager Caleb Slinkard Executive Editor

Don Moncrief  
Publisher  
publisher@hhjonline.com

Brianna Smith Managing Editor briananna@hhjonline.com  
Lori Kovarovic Advertising Director/Sales lorikhjads@gmail.com

Diana Busby Legals, Classifieds & Circulation diana@hhjonline.com  
Clay Brown Sports Editor clay@hhjonline.com

### Our Goal

The Houston Home Journal is published for the citizens of Houston and surrounding counties by a division of The Georgia Trust for Local News. Our goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication towards printing the truth.

The Houston Home Journal is a periodical, mailed (ISSN 471) in Perry and is published Wednesday and Saturday by Houston Home Journal P.O. Box 1910, Perry, GA 31069; 478-987-1823  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: P.O. Box 1910, Perry, GA 31069.

Subscription Rates:  
In county - \$88  
Senior Citizen (60) - \$78  
Out of County or State - \$98  
Online Access only - \$58

### Share Your Viewpoint

There are three ways to submit a Letter to the Editor: Email it to briananna@hhjonline.com, mail it to Houston Home Journal at 1210 Washington St., Perry, GA 31069, or drop it off at the same location between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number (the last two not to be printed). The newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject letters for reasons of grammar, punctuation, taste and brevity.

P.O. Box 1910  
1210 Washington Street, Perry, GA 31069  
478-987-1823

## Some Facts of Life for a New Great-Grandson

Dear Samuel Knox Wansley:

Who are you and who am I? The answer is that you are the youngest member of the family still awaiting your first birthday and I am your great-grandfather who doesn't have that many birthdays ahead of him. So, I thought we should have this conversation while I am still able to write it and hope that one day you will choose to read it.

There is a good chance I won't be in your memory bank as you get older. Not many people ever knew their great-grandparents, including me. There is also the risk that anything I share with you today will be totally irrelevant by the time you reach adulthood. But it is a risk I am willing to take because even as the world seemingly changes at warp speed, I am convinced that certain fundamental principles remain inviolate.

Let me start with a painful truth: Life is not fair. It never has been and it never will be. What is important is how you deal with it. And how you deal with it will be determined by who you are. What you stand for. Your value system. As you add years, that will emerge.

You will be influenced by family. Fortunately, you have a good one, loving and caring and secure. You will be influenced by friends. Pick them carefully. You may also be influenced by strangers — people whose actions you observe and choose to emulate or to reject. Just remember that people will be watching you, as well, for the same reasons. Set a good example.

In the end, who you are depends on you. The great English playwright William Shakespeare said it best, "To thine own self be true." He wrote those words some 400-plus years ago and the advice is as relevant today as it was in his time. No one will ever know you as well

### Columnist



Dick Yarbrough

dick@dickyarbrough.com

as you know yourself. Be true to your beliefs, whatever they may be, and don't compromise them just to go along and get along. You will think less of yourself, as will others.

Don't be afraid to stand up for what you believe in but don't feel threatened if someone disagrees with you. Sometimes, by listening to a different viewpoint, you may learn something you didn't know. But whatever you do, stay away from politics and religion. Those are generally no-win discussions.

Don't believe everything you read, see or hear. Get as much factual information as you can and make an informed decision based on a variety of sources. Technology can help, but it is not the answer, just a means to the answer. While you can get information much faster than could my generation, faster is not necessarily better. Some of the best things in life are best observed slowly, like a sunset or the mist on a mountaintop after a rain.

Be the best you can be at whatever you do, be it academics, sports, music or just being a good son, brother and friend. You may not always succeed, but you can lay your head on your pillow at night knowing you gave it your best shot.

Take life seriously, but not too seriously. Have a sense of humor. Laughter has been referred to as good medicine and studies have shown that it is. You will find plenty of absurdity in this world worth a laugh. That's a given.

See YARBROUGH page 7A

# Columnist Viewpoints

## Midnight Rider

### Columnist



Kelly Burke

www.kellyburke.com

I'm going to fess up to another gaffe in my past, as the statute of limitations has long since passed. And it's sort of funny, if speeding more than 40 years ago will garner your forgiveness. If not, you might want to go read the latest Southern Living magazine article about magnolia tea.

Okay, you are still here. I had a 1967 MGB in college and law school, and its ferocious horsepower pushed maybe 94 horses.

Maybe. If you don't know much about horsepower, my Nissan minivan has 260 horses, and it's a minivan. MGBs were never meant to be muscle cars though. They

were touring cars, meant for enjoyment. I enjoyed mine immensely, although the top speed was about 85 mph.

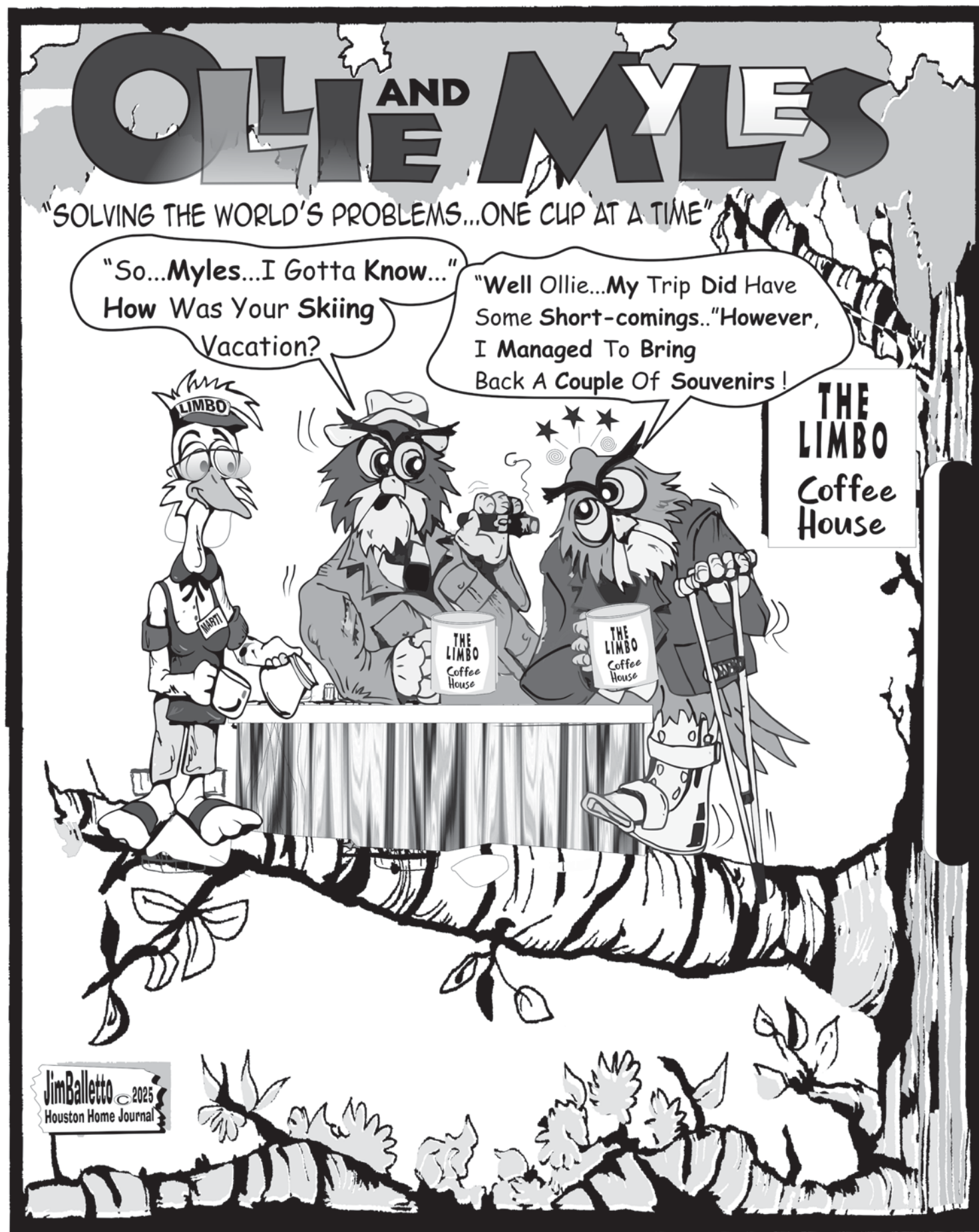
Alas, the non-synchronized transmission went kaput. Not finding a suitable MGB tranny, I put a readily available Datsun 5-speed gearbox in its place. It had a different gearing ratio that gave my MGB better speed. Way better.

One late night I was driving to Statesboro to pick up

my sister, Kathy, at Georgia Southern. I was on I-16 before it was the crowded super highway it is today. In fact, it was desolate. I had the top down on this warm, moonlit night, and I'm sure I was jamming to some tunes.

I was going pretty fast when I saw the trooper, but it was too late. I didn't even wait for the blue lights, I just pulled over. The nice trooper pulled up and did,

See BURKE page 7A



## Snake boots'll do: An experience with snow

The snow started falling early Tuesday afternoon. Though the weather reports had forewarned that such a meteorological event could occur, I stared out of the window in a state of wonder and disbelief. I can count on one hand the number of times I've seen little flecks of frozen water softly drifting from the atmosphere.

Not that I'm not well travelled. I've been to New York at Christmastime, when snow is common but is quickly pushed to the side by plows or trampled by the endless parade of people and becomes a grey sludge piled in gutters and the corners of busy sidewalks. I've been in the deserts out west, where even in the late spring the temperature drops well below freezing as the sun sets. You wake up to a dusting of snow and ice but quickly shed your coat and scarf as the sun peeks above the horizon and

### New Southern Dad



Kyle Dominy

k.i.dominy@gmail.com

quickly heats things up.

They say it's a dry heat, but so is my oven. One hundred degrees is 100 degrees.

But this kind of snowfall is a rare experience. I was still at the window, slack jawed, pondering if I could believe what I was seeing, while my family was already donning jackets and hats. If seeing isn't believing, feeling certainly does the trick. I snapped from my stupor and followed them outside. To a child unaccustomed to winter precipitation, snow is nothing short of a miracle. It's something

See DOMINY page 7A



Lily, Trevor, Kyle (and their dog Zelda,) show off their snowblob, Monticello.

LIFESTYLE & FAITH

# When Heaven's Door Slams Shut

The scripture states that once a man accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior, that he becomes a new creature in Christ, one who repents of his past sins and vows to turn his life around. Should this man fall prey again to the corruptible temptations of the flesh that previously drug him down and refuses to take steps to overcome his addictions, he thereby commits spiritual death and is in danger of hell's fire.

Dr. J. Harold Smith in his famous sermon, "God's Three Deadlines," states that such a person is guilty of "sinning away his day of grace" and is beyond forgiveness. "When the individual continues in grievous sin, the day will come when God will knock for the last time. He will make His last plea," cautioned Dr. Smith. "Then He will take flight and leave that person desolate, doomed, and damned forever." When God withdraws His grace, according to Dr. Smith, the individual will be "turned over to the devil for destruction of the flesh."

Hebrews 6: 4-6 issues a

Parables to Ponder



Billy Powell

billypow@aol.com

parallel warning: "For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who were once enlightened, those who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of God's word and the powers of the age to come. If they abandon their faith, they are crucifying the Son of God again and exposing Him to public shame." This passage is saying that the man who has experienced the immeasurable relief of receiving the free gift of God's forgiveness is without excuse if he returns to the truly vile sins that once characterized his life. "If we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins," asserts Hebrews 10: 26.

It is bad enough when a

church member falls into egregious sin and brings shame to himself and discredit on his church, but it is worse when he crucifies Christ afresh by refusing the atoning power of the Savior's blood shed for him. According to Hebrew 6: 7-8, the fate of unrepentant sinners is the same as unproductive crops that produce thorns and thistles: "God blesses the land which has drunk the rain that falls upon it and brings forth vegetation to those who cultivate it; but if it produces thorns and thistles, it is in imminent danger of God's curse and will be destroyed by fire."

There is another belief that "once saved, always saved," meaning that one who has accepted Christ cannot lose his salvation. This belief had its origin in 16th century Calvinism. Contrarily, the Catholic Catechism 161-162 declares that the precious gift of salvation can be lost. Christians who have returned to "walking with the devil" should take heed before Heaven's Door Slams Shut.

## My wife to be ... When you snow, you snow

"We got snow!" No. I mean, no offense, but ...

If you were anywhere in the vicinity of Veterans High School and said, "We got rain," I'd believe you. It never failed in my short time as a radio celebrity (in my own mind) and we were covering a Warhawks baseball game that the sky would open up at some point during the broadcast and leave us scrambling to cover up the equipment and/or head for shelter. It could be as dry as a desert anywhere in Houston County, but you could bet, Veterans - all those along that crazy weather pattern that continues today as far as I know - was going to get it.

If you said, "We got tornadoes," and you were standing outside anywhere in Oklahoma, I would agree. I spent a number of months at the University of Oklahoma and it seemed like not a day went by we didn't see some kind of windy, inclement, weather threat.

But snow? In Houston County? Please.

Snow is ... Being stationed at Loring Air Force Base in Maine for eight years. Snow is being right in the corridor where clouds would go over Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron and pick up plenty of the wet stuff it could use to blanket us. Blanket us to the tune of an average of seven and a half feet to nine feet (per weather data).

Snow is ... Seeing it on the ground in October and then seeing it on the ground in November, December, January, February, March, April, May and even one year in June. (Although, you actually prayed you would see it on the ground "every" month. When the snow went away, the black flies came, and those bad boys

Publisher



Don Moncrief

publisher@hhjonline.com

- and girls - could bite!

Snow is ... A rinse-repeat of Mother Nature dropping you three-feet overnight. Then the next morning you would shovel an approximate three-foot wide section from your front door to the sidewalk so you could go to work. And then you would do the same thing the next day, and the next and the ... On really lucky mornings, a snow plow - they were like the ghosts from Pac-Man, always on the prowl - would come by when you were about 99 percent done and throw it all back where it came from. (I kid you not!)

Snow is ... Playing "king of the hill" with your two small boys. You pretend they're strong and one of them throws you off the hill and down to the bottom. Then he heaves a giant snowball after you and it hits you on top of the head. Only ... It turns out there was a huge chunk of asphalt inside of that giant snowball (true story) and even with a super-thick beanie from L.L. Bean on, you now have a giant goose egg on top of your head, a slight cut and a huge headache.

Snow is ... Driving on roads that make the sounds of crunching and grating and scratching and gnashing. The sounds are your tires rolling over salt mixed with tiny, tiny rocks. Hence, snow is seeing your only two years old Chevy Blazer - made in Mississippi but with no undercoating - turn from a red and white beauty to something that looked like metal-eating caterpillars

had made dinner of it.

Snow is ... Returning from vacation in Warner Robins. Reaching Bangor, Maine and seeing it looks just like Houston County looked Wednesday. Then you leave and three miles up the road you can no longer see the road because of the blinding snow. The only chance you have, if you avoid snow blindness, is the hope somebody went ahead of you and you can barely see their tracks. (Another true story. I experienced it at least three times; the point being how quickly the landscape changed as you went further up north.)

Snow is ... That, and so much more. (Being in a military community, there's probably some "Why not Minot?" folks out there that know what I'm talking about.) That's what snow is.

Okay. I'm over myself now.

The truth you know. We "did" get snow.

The further truth is, had it not been for snow I would have probably never met my wife. It was after a snow day in 1974 - the skies dropped pretty much the same amount we got Tuesday - that my buddies and I were walking across the field that belonged to Green Acres Baptist Church. She was there with her friends. They were engaged in a snowball fight. For some reason I felt the intense urge to join in. So I grabbed a handful of that white fluffy stuff, packed it real good and tight and hit her right in the face with it.

Hot chocolate followed soon after. A friendship formed, love bloomed, blossomed, marriage, kids, the Air Force, assignments across the world and of course the hardships - and joys - of Loring AFB and knowing true meaning of what "snow is."

## Examining my artistic influences amid the Georgia snowpocalypse

We've made it through the snowpocalypse!

Being from Colorado, snow isn't a rare sight, but I'll admit I missed it here. I hadn't seen snow in five years, and I was excited to play outside and unlock the childhood wonder I had while building snowmen and pelting my brother with snowballs. That lasted about five seconds, then I remembered I had heat and warm soup inside.

While I was in the house, I started thinking about my last column. Excited to create, I asked Google Gemini (my AI art critic) for inspiration. It knows me so well. It suggested pulling inspiration from my dreams. I wish I hadn't listened to that advice. I made a painting of a fish with Buzz Lightyear's face.

So it seems I'm still into surrealism, and it got me thinking, do my favorite artists align with my surreal style? My college years,

The Editor's Experience



Brianna Smith  
HHJ Managing Editor

hhjeditor@gmail.com

where I had most of my training, had lessons in art history, exposing me to plenty of famous artists and inspiration.

So, I compiled a list of 10 that I'm currently into (you'll notice some popular names and a few obscure ones, but all of them create amazing pieces that are worth experiencing.)

My all-time favorite artist is Salvador Dali, known for the melting clock painting: The Persistence of Memory. It's no mistake he was eccentric, but I think the best artists have a little touch of that. His work to me is unique, thought-provoking, and weird, but so very beautiful. It's no surprise to me

that I have so much surrealism in my body of work, and that is largely attributed to Dali's influence.

In no particular order, my other nine favorites are:

Kasey Golden: a YouTuber who creates whimsical, cartoonish and colorful illustrations of people, animals and mythical creatures.

Frida Kahlo: a renowned painter who primarily created self-portraits that explored her identity, pain and the female experience, influenced by Mexican folk art.

Kiakshuk: an influential figure in Canadian Inuit art, whose prints and sculptures depicted Inuit life, mythology and hunting.

Yayoi Kusama: considered one of the most influential living artists, known for her use of polka dots in paintings, sculptures and installations.

Roy Lichtenstein: a painter and a central figure in the 1960s pop art movement.

See SMITH page 8A

## The Bonus Payout from Manual Labor

Physical activity at work (at your paying job) is something I've thought a lot about over the past years, and I see the value even more as the warnings continue to come out about sedentary lifestyles, setting still for extended periods, and last but not least, mental stress when not combined with its healthy counterpart which is physical stress. Yes, that's correct... mental stress without physical stress to counter it becomes toxic in the erosive effects it has on the body.

Inactivity is linked to most

Your Health



Wade Yoder

chronic disease, (heart disease, cancer, diabetes) and oft times, results in obesity and decreased muscle tone and physical capabilities. If we can counter chronic disease by getting more active, doesn't this include physical work at our job as well?

Whenever I hear of a company that pays their

employees for their gym time, I automatically think, "smart company," and I can tell it makes the employee feel really good that their company cares about their health and fitness! A company allowing an employee to go to the gym while on the clock, to exercise, improve health, fitness, shape while getting paid, sounds pretty good to most people that care about their health!

However, if we have a physically exhausting job, carpentry, plumbing, fabrication, waitressing, janitorial and other manual labor

See YODER page 8A

**STOP CRIME NOW 742-2330**

 <b>AMBLER, JAMES</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY TAKING.	 <b>BARRETT, KANETRI</b> WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY SHOPLIFTING.	 <b>BOECK, MICHAEL</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR PUBLIC INDECENCY.	 <b>CARMONA, MIGUEL</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED STALKING.
 <b>CULLER, BOBBY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT/SIMPLE BATTERY - FAMILY VIOLENCE/ THEFT BY TAKING - FELONY.	 <b>DUMAS, BILLY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL IDENTITY FRAUD.	 <b>GREEN, CHRISTOPHER</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY SHOPLIFTING.	 <b>GREEN, SHERLONDA</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR THEFT BY SHOPLIFTING.
 <b>HICKS, EDDIE</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT/ POSSESSION OF FIREARM BY CONVICTED FELON/ POSSESSION OF FIREARM DURING COMMISSION OF A CRIME.	 <b>HOWARD, TODD</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED CHILD MOLESTATION/CHILD MOLESTATION.	 <b>MARTINEZ, DIEGO</b> WANTED BY THE BIBB COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CHILD MOLESTATION.	 <b>MURPHY, ELIJAH</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL TRANSACTION CARD FRAUD.
 <b>ROGERS, ANGELO</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR VIOLATE FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDER.	 <b>SALAS, ABEL</b> WANTED BY THE BALDWIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED CHILD MOLESTATION/CHILD MOLESTATION.	 <b>PAUL, TEDDIASIA</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY - 2ND DEGREE/ FALSE IMPRISONMENT / OBSTRUCTION OR HINDERING PERSON MAKING EMERGENCY PHONE CALL	 <b>SPALDING, MARY MARGARET</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR POSSESS WITH INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE SCHEDULE I OR II CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE / TRAFFICKING HEROIN

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO PULL CRIMINALS OFF OUR STREETS! Macon Regional Crimestoppers is a local non-profit serving the Bibb, Baldwin, Houston, Jones, Twiggs, Crawford, Monroe, and Peach regional areas. Through our deployed systems as well as the cooperation local law enforcement agencies and the 911 Center, citizens in our community have a safe, secure, and confidential means to report crimes. IF A "TIP" RESULTS IN AN ARREST - A REWARD WILL BE PAID TO YOU CONFIDENTIALLY AND ANONYMOUSLY!!

**If You Have Information On The Whereabouts Of An Above Shown Individual, Call Our Tip Line at 478-742-2330 or 1-877-68CRIME**

# ENTERTAINMENT

## The Astrograph

By Eugenia Last

Head in a direction that offers positive change and incentives to excel. Change what you don't like about how you look or live. Restructure your routine and revise how you use your skills. Plant your feet firmly on the ground and demand change. Take responsibility for your life and make choices that satisfy your needs.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)** — You can improve your living space without going into debt. Consider what will make your life easier and lower stress. Self-improvement will motivate you to help others. Incorporate something you enjoy into your daily routine.

**PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20)** — Think before you speak or act. Emotions will surface, and situations will escalate quickly. Find an outlet for excess energy; blowing off steam will help you put things in perspective.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)** — Learn as much as possible before accepting a challenge or letting someone dictate your actions. Anger will mount if you stick your nose in someone else's business. Focus on expanding your awareness.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)** — Refuse to let stubbornness hold you back. A change will be beneficial, so don't fight against what's good for you. Put your energy, thoughts and skills to work for you, and you'll be happy with the results.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)** — You'll make a good impression on someone who needs your input or skills. Take your time and get to know who you are dealing with before you make a decision that has long-term effects. Walk away from emotional manipulation.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)** — Scouring job postings will give you a better idea of what's available and how to set yourself up to get what you want. Don't hesitate to make an offer or send out your resume. Control your emotions and utilize your skills.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)** — Rethink your relationships with others; consider who is draining you and who builds you up. Surrounding yourself with positive energy will affect how you look and feel. Lend a helping hand.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)** — Monitor what's happening around you. A relationship problem will grow if you don't address issues head-on. Once you know where you stand, it will be easier to adjust your life accordingly. Do what's best for you.

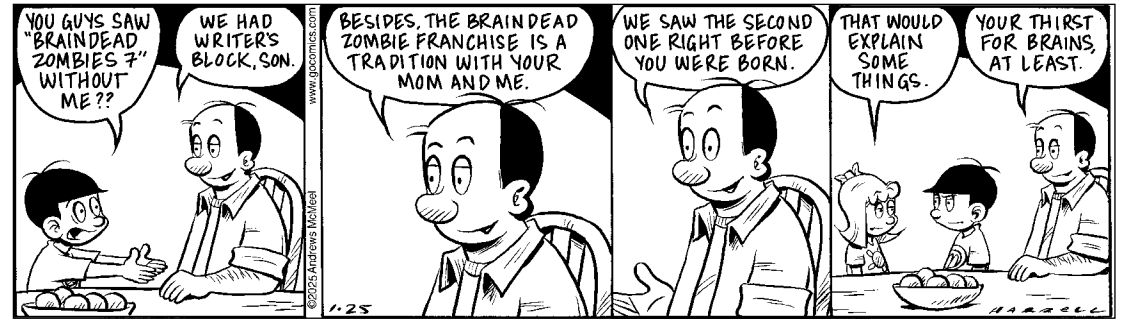
**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** — Expand your awareness and participate in events requiring mental and physical strength. Put your pent-up energy to work for you. Steer clear of anyone looking for a fight. Choose progress over discord.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)** — Think, plan and make your dream a reality. Call on experts and prepare for success. Networking, engaging in social activities and testing your skills and strengths will pay off.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21)** — Pay attention, take notes and gather facts and verify information. Try to find common ground with someone. Getting along with neighbors and those you reside with will be mandatory if you want to enjoy your day.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)** — You are overdue for a change. Challenge yourself; sign up for an activity that gets your blood flowing and your mind racing. Take on a task that requires your undivided attention, ingenuity and skill.

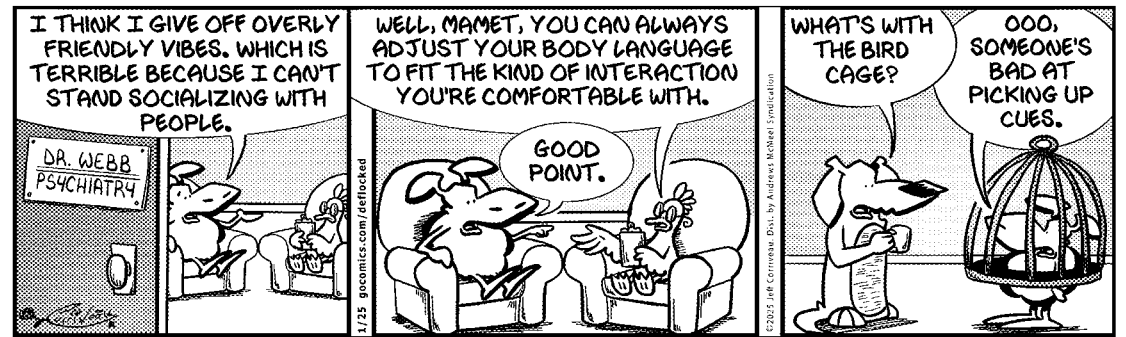
### Adam@Home, by Rob Harrell



### The Born Loser, by Chip Sansom



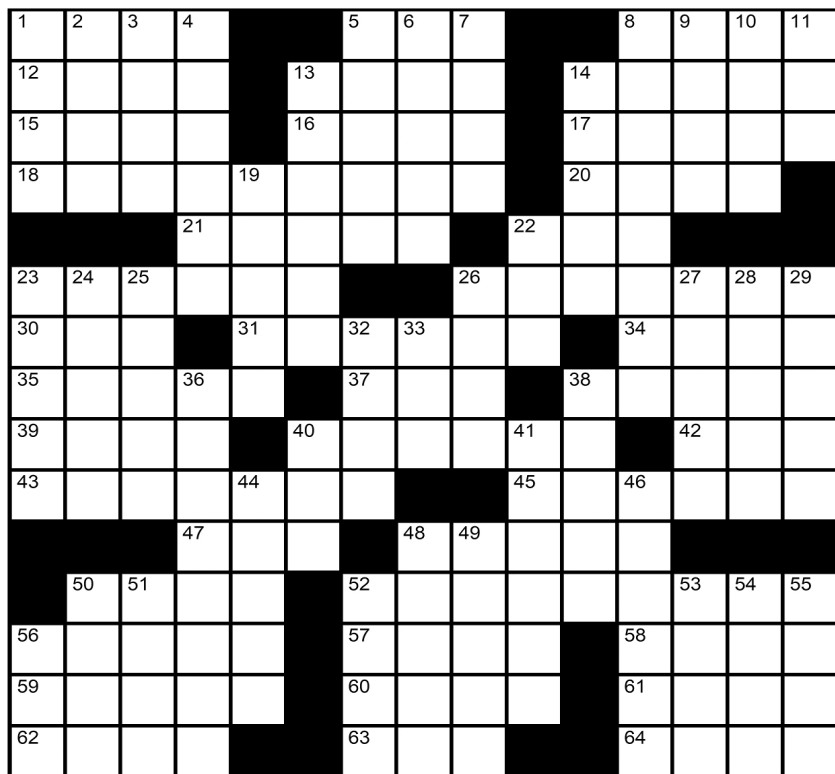
### DeFlocked, by Jeff Corriveau



### Rip Haywire, by Dan Thompson



## CROSSWORD 1-25-25



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Past participle of spit
- 5. King Kong, e.g.
- 8. Greek portico
- 12. Not to be mentioned
- 13. Congeal
- 14. \_\_\_ cell carcinoma
- 15. Top of Kilimanjaro, e.g.
- 16. Periods of time
- 17. D-Day beach
- 18. \*Holiday the day before Valentine's Day
- 20. Shade of beige
- 21. Quantities on doctors' prescriptions
- 22. Not amateur
- 23. \*Letters to Juliet destination
- 26. Come to final conclusion
- 30. \*Ultimate Valentine's vow?
- 31. Purchaser
- 34. Zelensky's capital
- 35. Move a plant
- 37. High-\_\_\_, as in an image
- 38. Tubular pasta
- 39. Not Visa or MC
- 40. \*Moving Valentine's Day date option
- 42. "Annie get your \_\_\_"
- 43. a.k.a. ladybird
- 45. Maximum
- 47. "Rub A Dub Dub" vessel
- 48. Suburb of Dallas

- 50. Skunk's defense
- 52. \*Sweet Valentine's gesture
- 56. Long stories
- 57. Rhythmic way of talking
- 58. Yours and mine
- 59. Send, as payment
- 60. The E of B.P.O.E.
- 61. A bit of water
- 62. Biblical paradise
- 63. Elf in
- 64. Sign of boredom

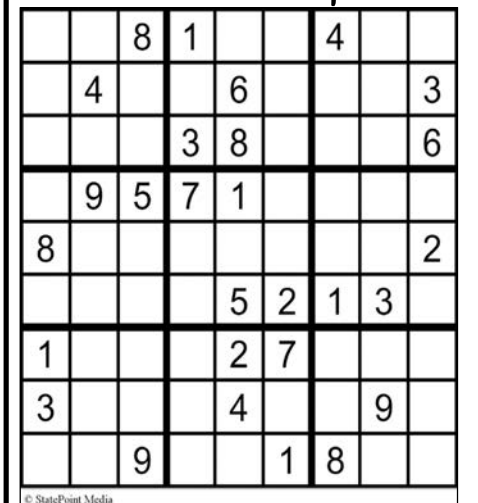
### DOWN

- 1. Doe's mate
- 2. One of Three Bears
- 3. Cain's brother
- 4. Prom night garb
- 5. Bird of prey's nest
- 6. \*Make them in advance of Valentine's Day
- 7. "Or \_\_\_?"
- 8. \*"Cupid" singer (2 words)
- 9. Russia's Terrible one, e.g.
- 10. Pearl Harbor island
- 11. Between Fla. and Miss.
- 13. Ship's floating wreckage
- 14. Afrikaners' ancestors
- 19. Group of nine singers
- 22. For each
- 23. All over the internet
- 24. Possible allergic reaction

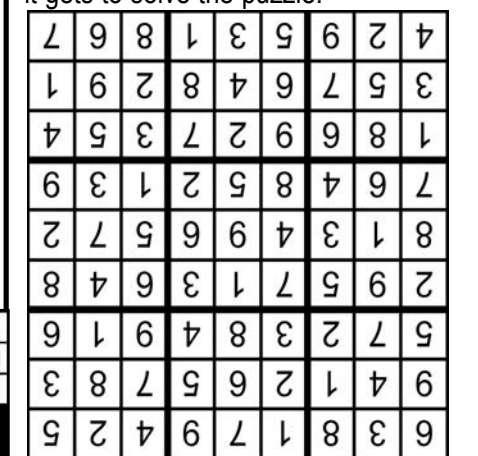
- 25. Lassoed
- 26. \*Baby's breath's partner
- 27. Texting vocabulary, e.g.
- 28. \*Cupid's mom
- 29. Black tie \_\_\_
- 32. Snob
- 33. Gymnast's goal
- 36. \*a.k.a. "love hormone"
- 38. Deck alternative
- 40. Chicago baseballer
- 41. Defrauds
- 44. Explosion
- 46. Pleasing notes succession
- 48. At the same time
- 49. Too much egg middle
- 50. Newspaper piece
- 51. Five and \_\_\_
- 52. Staff leader
- 53. Heavenly glow
- 54. Think, archaically speaking
- 55. Sport spectator's TV acronym
- 56. Before, old English



## SUDOKU



Here's How It Works:  
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Sudoku answer featured above. Crossword answer featured to the left.

Want to get this newspaper delivered to your home? Call us at: **478-987-1823** for a Subscription!



## BONNIE "MICHELLE" SMITH, Esq.

DOING WHAT IS RIGHT AND FAIR ALWAYS MATTERS.  
EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING.

MICHELLE SMITH  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
P.O. Box 8633  
WARNER ROBINS, GA 31095

(478) 953-3661  
MSMITH158@JUNO.COM  
WWW.BONNIEMICHELLESMITH.COM

**AIRPORT**

From page 1A

Marquardt. He presented the Board with updates on the airport and some upcoming projects.

"We have a South Apron and Taxi Rehab rejuvenation project that should kick off in March. It's a \$956,000 project and will completely rejuvenate and resurface part of our older apron and would give us another eight parking spaces for aircraft," Marquardt said. "It will also refurbish and extend the life of the asphalt around some of our older T-hangars."

Also, in March,

Marquardt said they will be constructing 14 new T-hangars that will cost up to \$1.1 million.

"The county graciously gave us \$1 million into that project, and we're very thankful for that and we couldn't do it without it," he said.

Marquardt added the airport is also contributing \$100,000 of its own towards this project.

"The great thing about that project is it's going to push us over 100 aircraft as we currently have 88," he said. "More than 100 [aircraft] puts us in a higher category with both GDOT and FAA for funding."

Marquardt also men-

tioned the airport's Taxiway Alpha is coming apart; The asphalt is sliding and has become high priority. He said repairs are coming in July.

In October 2024, Marquardt said the month was a record-setting fuel month for the Perry-Houston County Airport with 31,000 gallons pumped.

"The big deal there is that fuel is one of our revenue sources, and the fact that we're pumping more fuel than ever before, obviously, it's increasing our sales," he said. "Over 62% of that fuel was jet fuel, so we're doing well."

The airport is also constructing a new corporate

hangar. Marquardt said this hangar would bring 15 jobs to the airport.

"It's an engineering company, SAC, and they should have their hangar finished probably by the end of February," he said.

He then mentioned the airport also has two more corporate hangars in the works as well that should start construction this year.

"Thank you for the update, as it sounds like things are progressing with continued growth at the Perry-Houston County airport, and I appreciate the service you provide to the community," Chairman Dan Perdue said.

"We appreciate all the good the commission does for us as well," Marquardt said.

In new business, the Board approved personnel requests for the Houston County Fire Department, Roads and Bridges Department and the District Attorney's Office.

The Board also approved a bid for a new 2023 Dodge Durango from Woody Folsom Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, Inc. of Baxley, Georgia, for use as the Administration SUV at the Detention Center. According to the agenda, this purchase will replace a vehicle that was damaged in an accident.

"We certainly prefer local dealers and local dealerships but when you're trying to replace a vehicle damaged in an accident, you need to move quickly. I appreciate the Purchasing Department for finding an in-stock vehicle," Perdue said.

The next Houston County Commissioners meeting will be held on Feb. 4, at 9 a.m. located at the Houston County Courthouse on 201 Perry Parkway.

The full agenda of this meeting can be found at [www.houstoncountygga.gov/minutes/2025-01-21%20Department%20Heads.pdf](http://www.houstoncountygga.gov/minutes/2025-01-21%20Department%20Heads.pdf)

**BURKE**

From page 4A

in fact, turn on his blues, but there was nobody on the road. He came up and asked me if I knew how fast I was going. Trick question, I know.

My answer surprised the wily trooper. "Well, just at 100 miles per hour, because if I go over 100, this car is so light that the front end comes off the ground and I can turn the wheel but still go straight. So I don't know for sure, but it wasn't more

than 100."

Laughter ensued. We spent the next 20 minutes talking about cars, his and mine. It was a most pleasant conversation and ended with the simple admonition to slow down. "A little, at least," he said.

I normally just received a citation as a youngster who drove too fast, but on this gorgeous, moonlit night, GSP wasn't in the ticket-writing mood.

Life is good.

Kelly Burke was born in Knoxville, Tennessee,

where he spent his younger years, followed by his high school years in Atlanta, where he graduated from Georgia Tech, followed by Mercer Law School. He has been in the private practice of law, a magistrate judge, and an elected district attorney. He writes about the law, politics, music, and Ireland. He and his wife enjoy gardening, playing with their Lagotto Ramagnolo named George Harrison, and spending time with their grandchildren.

**REWARD**

From page 1A

According to the Sheriff's Office, Macon Regional Crimestoppers also has a reward issued. The amount has not been confirmed at this time.

Those with information can call (478) 542-2125 or the Houston County Sheriff's Office. The post said the reward will be handled anonymously.

Brody is still recovering from the traumatic event. To donate to his recovery

effort, go to [www.pawsinmidga.com/donate](http://www.pawsinmidga.com/donate)

To read to full article about this incident and Brody's recovery, go to [hhjonline.com/christmas-night-shooting-leaves-eight-puppies-deceased-one-survivor/](http://hhjonline.com/christmas-night-shooting-leaves-eight-puppies-deceased-one-survivor/)

**YARBROUGH**

From page 4A

Love and be loved. It is easy to love those who love you. But what about those we don't particularly like? Should we love them, too? The Bible says to love everybody as you love yourself. No exceptions. The Bible doesn't say you have to like them. There is a difference. And there is nothing wrong with loving yourself. It's called

self esteem and in moderate amounts it is helpful.

Finally, there are two things in this world we can't change. Yesterday and tomorrow. What has happened has happened and we can't undo it. We can learn from it but yesterday is gone and isn't coming back. As for tomorrow, we have no guarantees there will be a tomorrow. And yet, we spend most of our time grinding over yesterday and fretting over

what could happen tomorrow. Live in this day. Life is fragile. Don't take anything for granted.

That's it. Just some thoughts from an old man who had to learn life the hard way. May your journey be a smooth one.

Love, Pa.

You can reach Dick Yarbrough at [dick@dickyarbrough.com](mailto:dick@dickyarbrough.com) or at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Georgia 31139.

**DOMINY**

From page 4A

only seen in movies or TV shows, hyped up to have magical effects on the environment. My two kids certainly didn't waste time enjoying this phenomenon. Like prisoners escaped from the darkest dungeon, they ran around wildly, arms outstretched, faces turned up catching the cold specks on their cheeks and tongues.

We watched the snow until our noses turned red and fingers ached from the cold. An hour or so later, warmed and rejuvenated, we ventured back

out. A second miracle had happened: the snow was beginning to accumulate. There was now enough to make snowballs, which I was pelted with. Another first for me I believe. The weather revealed no sign of weakness, no hint of giving up and we took full advantage, even scraping up enough for a little snowman. More of a snow blob really. We called it Monticello.

I learned that snake boots double well as snowshoes. A #10 scoop makes a great snow shovel and further proves itself as the most versatile piece of equipment in my shop.

As day gave way to

night, the snow continued to pile up. There was as much as three inches in some places, based on the imprint of my snake boot. Standing alone in the darkness, I took advantage of the quiet, lifting my face towards the sky to feel the still falling snow.

I'm writing this early Wednesday morning. It's about 5:30 a.m. and it's dark and quiet. All work must be done quickly, because when the dawn breaks we're going to have another first for my house – a snow day.

**THE CLASSIFIEDS THAT CLICK**

Classified Deadlines: MON & THURS by 9AM • Place your classified ad by Calling us at 1-478-987-1823 or email: [diana@hhjonline.com](mailto:diana@hhjonline.com)

Get more exposure by placing your ad

online [www.hhjonline.com](http://www.hhjonline.com)



Covering Houston County Since 1870

**Miscellaneous For Sale**

25-114

**FOR SALE**

**176 FACTORY-BOUGHT VHS TAPES: DISNEY & STAR WARS COLLECTION.**

**INCLUDES 6FT TALL STORAGE CABINET.**

**\$150.**

**Phone 478-929-5952 after 4 PM.**



**“Something Was Missing. I just didn't know how much until Sissy made walking in the front door the best part of my day. The Houston Home Journal Pet News Pages led to a better life for both of us.”**

- Carol M.

**Houston Home Journal**

[www.hhjonline.com](http://www.hhjonline.com)  
**478-987-1823**

**ADVERTISE HERE**  
-JOBS -YARD SALES  
-RENTALS -SERVICES

**APARTMENTS FOR RENT**

**Pinebrook Apartments**

715 Mason Terrace, Perry, Ga. 31069

**1 & 2 Bedroom Apartments Available.**

**COME BY THE OFFICE & APPLY TODAY!**

**1-Bedroom 1Bath**

\$666-\$701/ \$200 deposit

**2-Bedroom 2-Bath**

\$760- \$795/ \$200 deposit

For more information, please call 478-987-7215 or email: [pinebrook@cahecmanagement.com](mailto:pinebrook@cahecmanagement.com)

**LOCAL MATTERS**

We don't knowingly accept advertisements that discriminate, or intend to discriminate, on any illegal basis. Nor do we knowingly accept employment advertisements that are not bona-fide job offers. All real estate advertisements are subject to the fair housing act and we do not accept advertising that is in violation of the law. The law prohibits discrimination based on color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status.

STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 12/22/24

**CELLULAR**

Consumer Cellular - the same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest carriers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees and activation is free. All plans feature unlimited talk and text, starting at just \$20/month. For more information, call 1-833-446-1847

**HEALTH CARE**

MEDICARE PLANS HAVE CHANGED!!! Make sure your plan will meet your needs in 2025. Our licensed agents can review the changes, address your needs and make sure you aren't overpaying! For a free quote, Call now! 1-866-307-5406

Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-877-871-3210

HEARING AIDS!! High-quality rechargeable, powerful Audien hearing aids priced 90% less than competitors. Tiny and NEARLY INVISIBLE! 45-day money back guarantee! 866-797-5642

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-844-592-3697

**Georgia**

**STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS**

Publish your classified ad in more than 60 Georgia newspapers for only \$350.

Call Georgia Newspaper Service: 770-454-6776



Stroke and Cardiovascular disease are leading causes of death, according to the American Heart Association. Screenings can provide peace of mind or early detection! Contact Life Line Screening to schedule your screening. Special offer - 5 screenings for just \$149. Call 1-855-391-2065

**HOME IMPROVEMENT**

ELECTRICAL SERVICES: Reliable & experienced. Competitive rates. From simple household problems to installing a brand new electrical system, we can take care of it all! Call now and have the zip code of the service location when you call! 1-877-551-4766

NEED NEW FLOORING? Call today schedule a FREE in-home estimate on Carpeting & Flooring. Call Today! 1-877-771-6882

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-877-735-0477.

Prepare for power outages with Briggs & Stratton PowerProtect(TM) standby generators - the most powerful home standby generators available. Industry-leading comprehensive warranty - 7 years (\$849 value.) Proudly made in the U.S.A. Call Briggs & Stratton 1-855-883-2938.

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material - steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer - up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-866-939-2151

PEST CONTROL: PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termites, Spiders

and other pests. Locally owned and affordable. Call for service or an inspection today! 1-877-548-7945 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-844-592-3921

Safe Step. North America's #1 Walk-In Tub. Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our FREE shower package and \$1600 Off for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call Safe Step 1-855-646-1303

HOME BREAK-INS take less than 60 SECONDS. Don't wait! Protect your family, your home, your assets NOW for as little as 70¢ a day! Call 1-833-888-2038

**MISCELLANEOUS**

When you want the best, you want Omaha Steaks! 100% guaranteed and delivered to your door! Our Butcher's Deluxe Package makes a great gift and comes with 8 FREE Burgers ONLY \$99.99. Call 1-844-532-0002 and mention code 77318DBH or visit [www.omahasteaks.com/Deluxe9674](http://www.omahasteaks.com/Deluxe9674)

BANKRUPTCY RELIEF! Help stop Creditor Harassment, Collection Calls, Repossession and Legal Actions! Speak to a Professional Attorney and Get the Help You NEED! Call NOW 855-968-5222

BEHIND ON YOUR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS? Threatened with foreclosure? Denied a loan modification? Let us help! Call the Homeowner Relief Line to speak with a mortgage specialist. 844-797-7162

Wesley Financial Group LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019.

Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 866-411-5215

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS. Unable to work? Denied benefits? We Can Help! Strong, recent work history needed. Call to start your application or appeal today! 877-627-2704

Moving Out of State? Licensed and insured, full-service nationwide movers. Call now to get a free, instant price quote on your next move. 1-866-590-6443

**TV/INTERNET**

Get DISH Satellite TV + Internet! Free Install, Free HD-DVR Upgrade, 80,000 On-Demand Movies, Plus Limited Time Up To \$600 In Gift Cards. Call Today! 1-866-369-1468

COMPUTER ISSUES? FREE DIAGNOSIS by GEEKS ON SITE! Virus Removal, Data Recovery! 24/7 EMERGENCY \$20 OFF ANY SERVICE with coupon 42522! Restrictions apply. 844-739-4842

**WANTED**

We Buy Houses for Cash AS IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy three step process: Call, get cash offer and get paid. Get your fair cash offer today by calling Liz Buys Houses: 1-877-399-2113

We buy 8,000 cars a week. Sell your old, busted or junk car with no hoops, hassles or headaches. Sell your car to Peddle. Easy three step process. Instant offer. Free pickup. Fast payment. Call 1-833-702-1961

TOP CASH PAID FOR OLD GUITARS! 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg. And Gibson Mandolins / Banjos. 1-877-548-8134

## BUSINESS & FINANCE

### Please have backups, y'all!

Having servers or main computers go down is always a nightmare. Having a snow storm on top of it? Boy does it get messy. So why should you have a disaster recovery (DR) plan in place regardless of your business or home size?

For instance: a nice snowy day like we had recently, with 2-6 inches of fresh snow and black ice. Behold, the lone IT guy traveling from the main office to the desolate branch office. Given the keys to the kingdom, or in this case, branch office, he journeys into the desolate wintery office and finds the server off after a power outage.

Pressing the button, he sees the server come up and then he returns back to the main office. A few minutes later, the server goes back offline. This IT guy, whom we shall call Steve, did not do the proper procedures for if a system is offline, nor does he have a printed DR plan on file.

So, what does Steve do? The opposite of what he is supposed to do for our case. He turns the server on and returns to the main office before the branch office opens. A few hours later, the server still reports offline after Steve traveled on-site for over an hour. There is money being lost by the company; and management wants this resolved.

What Steve should have done was set up a DR plan that involves a 3-2-1 method of backup, as well as an urgency scale: 1 being

#### Tech Talk



David Cline

Central Computer Services

severe, 2, being major, 3 being minor, 4 being low, and 5 being informational. Steve should have also configured a service level for each of those emergencies. Steve should have also calculated "worst case scenarios" for if the systems went down, which he did not do.

With a 3-2-1 method of backup, Steve could have remotely started up a virtual machine that emulates the server so that the branch office can work without issue, while he figures out what is going on with the main server. Alas, our friend did not.

So why are backups important? Let us paint a picture: you own a business, you make \$1 million in revenue, and you require your main production server to be backed up. Your \$1 million in revenue company is doing great! Bills are paid and vendors are happy, and services are rendered to your customers and clients. Paychecks arrive on time, which means happy employees and your e-commerce website is going strong with an inventory management tool that constantly updates from your warehouse inventory scanners. Then, your server

dies.

Every minute your server is down it loses money. Dividing your \$1 million revenue by 525,600 minutes in a year is \$1.90 per minute. What is the average down time of a server without proper backups? According to Queue-it, 48 hours. (<https://queue-it.com/blog/cost-of-downtime>).

There are 2,880 minutes in 48 hours. So, you are losing \$138,240. This may be your annual salary, your building rent, your bills. (This is a rough estimate and should not be used and this is not a tell-all formula, rather this is used to illustrate by examples the necessity of having a DR plan. We use this formula as a rough-in estimate for designing a plan and implementing a goal.)

You will also need to calculate the amount of time it takes to either rebuild or fix the server and pay employees to play catch up on their work.

This scenario happens quite often: from Steve in IT driving in the snow, to ransomware attacks brick servers (or even workstations), to even enterprise level downtimes that costs millions of dollars in lost revenue and more millions to fix and correct.

You may be asking yourselves, "why am I throwing numbers at you?" Backups are not a joke, they need to be made, (and in an attempt to sound hip and cool), "like, now."

### BBB Tip: How to recognize phony debt collection calls and texts

Debt collection scams can be one of the most frightening and persistent scam types. Victims often report that scammers harass them or their family members for weeks or even months, both at home and at work, trying to get them to pay a debt they don't even owe. BBB receives numerous reports of con artists changing tactics just to get the information necessary to collect information or cash.

Typical scenarios report scammer calls or texts that says that they work for a loan company, law firm or government agency, and claims to be collecting an overdue payment for you or a family member. After replying that you or your family member don't owe money, the "debt collector" starts threatening to file a lawsuit, have wages garnished, request an arrest warrant, or arrange for a court appearance thousands of miles from home. All of these claims are nerve-racking, leaving the person answering the phone not even sure they owe money in the first place.

One consumer reported their experience with a debt collection scam to BBB Scam Tracker: "Family member was contacted being told that this company was looking for me to deliver papers to me. I contacted the company and was told that a loan from [company name redacted] had been taken out in my name back in Nov 2012. I had no clue about this loan but was told that I was going to be served with papers and have a class three felony on my record if convicted of defrauding a bank institution if I didn't settle the matter today." This consumer reported losing \$1,489.

Another consumer shared, "Scammer contacted my ex-father in law numerous times explaining there was a federal matter. Once I (victim) contacted them, they had all of my personal info (ss#, address, previous job) and claimed I had an outstanding loan from [company name redacted] back in November 2015."

If you receive a phone call like this, the first thing to

#### BBB Tips



Kelvin Collins

BBB of Central Georgia

do is to stay calm. Despite these threats, these "debt collectors" don't have any legal power. In most cases, the alleged overdue loan doesn't even exist. Don't give in and pay the money you don't owe, otherwise, they'll call back for more.

The "good cop" version:

An unsolicited call comes through from a debt collection agency. The caller claims there is an unpaid debt from long ago that is about to go to court. The person speaking is polite at first and appears to have your best interests at heart. They seem like they sincerely want to help avoid the court date. To fix the situation, all you need to do is make a reasonable payment, perhaps even divided up into several installments.

No matter how kind the caller seems, don't fall for it. If you make the payment, the person you spoke to on the phone will take the money and disappear. Any future efforts to contact them will be in vain.

Tips to spot this scam:

- Ask the debt collector to provide an official "validation notice" of the debt. Debt collectors are required by law to provide this information in writing. The notice must include the amount of the debt, the name of the creditor, and a statement of your rights. If the self-proclaimed collector won't provide the information, hang up.

- Ask for proof of the debt and of the agency calling. If you do owe money and aren't sure if the caller is real, ask for their name, company, street address, and telephone number. Do not provide any bank account, credit card, or other personally identifiable information over the phone. If the collector is legitimate, they should have details on the accounts in question.

- Stay calm. Debt collectors are not allowed to

harass people even if they do owe money.

Protect yourself:

- Just hang up. If you don't have any outstanding loans, hang up. Don't press any numbers or speak to an "agent."

- Never provide payment to someone you don't know. If you're being urgently asked to provide payment over the phone to someone you don't know, hang up. Scammers often ask for payment through wire transfer, prepaid gift cards, or digital wallet apps. Take these as red flags for a scam.

- Reach out to your loan providers to verify the information. If you currently have loans taken out and aren't sure if the caller is real, call the banks or loan companies on your own and verify if what the caller states is true. Be sure to look up their customer service phone numbers on your own and never use a phone number that a potential scammer is using or provides you with.

- Check your credit report. Check with one of the three national credit reporting companies (Equifax, TransUnion, Experian). You can obtain a report at AnnualCreditReport.com. This will help determine if there are outstanding debts or if there is suspicious activity.

- Place a fraud alert on your credit report. If the scammer has personal information, place a fraud alert with the three national credit reporting companies.

If you need to contact a collection agency to dispute a debt, request a debt validation letter or ask the collection agency that all communication be in writing, use these templates on Consumer.gov.

Remember that while most debt collection agencies are legitimate, there may be times when a scammer is phishing for information. For more information on how to avoid this scheme, visit [BBB.org/AvoidScams](http://BBB.org/AvoidScams). If you've been targeted by a debt collection scam, be sure to report it to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](http://BBB.org/ScamTracker).

### Spherion Staffing and Recruiting in Middle GA welcomes new ownership, office location

#### Special to The Journal

WARNER ROBINS — Spherion Staffing and Recruiting (Spherion) is proud to announce a leadership transition for its Middle Georgia office, now located at 2811 Watson Boulevard, Suite 6, in Warner Robins. After more than 14 successful years of ownership, Michael Chalmers has passed the torch to Nicole Crofutt, who served as vice president for the Middle Georgia office for six years.

"I'm honored to continue building on the foundation Michael has established in the community," Crofutt said. "His invaluable mentorship has shaped me into the leader I am today. This role is about making a real difference in people's lives. I'm eager to carry forward his dedication to serving Middle Georgia's businesses and workforce and excited to create new opportunities that contribute to the community's growth."

Crofutt's new role represents a culmination of her career-long passion for cultivating meaningful partnerships with clients and the community. She joined Spherion after meeting Michael at a chamber of commerce event in Warner Robins. Her passion for the

staffing industry grew as she developed her management style and remains rooted in the belief that a strong leader helps their team thrive.

Crofutt's husband, Jimmy, will also join the business, focusing on back-end operations to support the team's continued success.

"Nicole has been an integral part of the success of this office and my personal accomplishments as a franchise owner," said Michael Chalmers. "It's been an honor to watch her grow as a professional over the years, and I can't think of anyone better suited to take this office into the next chapter. I'm incredibly grateful to the community for embracing me over the last 14 years and I look forward to seeing how the Spherion legacy will continue to grow in Middle Georgia under Nicole's leadership."

The Middle Georgia office will maintain its focus on general staffing, providing temporary, temp-to-hire and direct-hire services. Crofutt will also continue strengthening the office's existing partnerships with local organizations that were established under Michael's leadership, including the office's

10-year-long partnership with the Salvation Army. Both Crofutt and Chalmers have dedicated themselves to serving the community through the chamber of commerce, Happy Hour Service Center, the Macon Re-Entry Coalition and more. Every year, Spherion Middle Georgia hosts a back-to-school philanthropic event to award students and teachers with essential supplies for the upcoming school year. Crofutt plans to continue this annual tradition.

Crofutt and her team are also excited about their new office location in Warner Robins, which offers increased visibility and accessibility for job seekers and businesses alike. The move represents the start of an exciting new chapter for Spherion Middle Georgia.

Each Spherion office enriches its community by connecting and facilitating employment opportunities every day—and when successful, the office and its investments flow back into the neighborhoods it serves. The power of Spherion is in its local roots.

To learn more about Spherion Middle Georgia, visit [www.spherion.com/warner-robins](http://www.spherion.com/warner-robins).

### YODER

From page 5A

jobs, we oftentimes tend to look at it different than when we exercise in a gym or have paid exercise time from our employer. It's not so different, especially if you can work fast enough to get your heart rate up for an extended period and can go through a variety of movements, such as lifting, pulling, pushing, squatting, and walking.

With all the environmental toxins, food additives and stress, combined with a sedentary lifestyle or job, we increase our chances of a buildup of pending side effects that can really position us at the losing end of the stick, (in future health-care costs, down time, premature aging and chronic disease).

It makes perfect sense that our intake of fast food, processed food, as well as loads of sugar, combined with lifestyles that are inactive, are exactly what is

setting this perfect storm for a massive era of death by chronic disease. We can change this by following 3 words: changing lifestyle habits.

There are many health benefits in a job that requires physical output, and this physical activity can have great immediate and long-term benefit.

Here are a few: increased muscle mass and tone, increased cardio endurance, better cardiopulmonary circulation, increased bone density, better detoxification and regular bowel movements, physical fatigue from activity or exercise relieves mental stress, lower body fat and last but not least, you get a workout while making money!

How to get a workout on the job: when you see a stretch of work that might last 20 minutes or longer, increase the speed that you do it to get your heart rate up, (this helps burn body fat and build cardio endurance). If you want to build

muscle density, increase the load or speed of movement.

If you have a desk job: stand up and move around whenever you get a chance. You can do some rapid squat thrusts, jumping jacks, or pushups whenever you take a restroom break, (if you take 5-10 breaks, this will add up). If you do an exercise that activates most of your muscles, you can do a lot in one minute of rapid, intense exercise.

When we look at the health benefits of a body that keeps in motion and realize that health will be tomorrow's currency, our appreciation can grow for a job (or daily activities) that keep us on the move and can make us feel like we're accomplishing two things at one time! After all, it's pretty neat if you can work and make a paycheck from your employer while getting exercise at the same time!

Sorta reminds me of a quote from Yogi Berra: "They give you cash, which is as good as money."

### SMITH

From page 5A

widely known for paintings based on comic strips.

Frank Moth: a creative duo based in Greece that creates surreal photocolages, combining vintage imagery, geometric shapes and vibrant colors.

Bob Ross: a painter and television personality who made art more accessible to the masses through his famous TV show "The Joy of Painting."

Vincent van Gogh: considered to be one of the most influential figures in Western art history, famously known for his iconic "Starry Night" painting.

Melanie Willhide: a photographer known for pieces that are digitally manipulated. Her exhibit "to Adrian Rodriguez, with love" resulted from corrupted photos after her computer was stolen.

Of course, I had to ask Gemini which styles of art they fell under and some were tagged under multiple movements and styles.

Four artists were considered surrealists: Dali, Kusama, Moth and

Willhide. It's important to note that Kahlo was considered a surrealist, too, but she rejected the label.

Three were considered pop art: Kusama, Moth and Lichtenstein.

The rest were a mixed bag of movements: from cartoons to magical realism, post-impressionism, naturalism and Inuit art. I wanted to dig even further into what appeals to me, so I picked five of my favorite works from each artist and asked Gemini to analyze them.

Most of the pieces, surprisingly, came from the 2010s and the 1960s. I think Golden and Moth have a lot to do with that since they currently create art. Other popular decades were the 1980s (thanks to Kusama and Ross) and the 1880s (due to van Gogh.)

As a painter, it's no surprise my favorites were mostly paintings (28 pieces out of 50.) Quite a few were digital as well (once again, because of Golden and Moth.)

And to nobody's surprise, 15 pieces were tagged with surrealism, nine with pop art and five as impressionism.

Gemini describes surrealism as "an art and cultural movement that emerged in Europe in the 1920s," focused on the unconscious, dreamlike imagery and challenging conventional notions of reality.

Gemini says pop art is "an art movement that emerged in the mid-20th century, primarily in the United Kingdom and the United States," that uses images from popular culture, bold colors and satire.

Finally, Gemini labels impressionism as "a 19th-century art movement that revolutionized painting," with heavy emphasis on light and atmosphere, visible brushstrokes and everyday subjects, like people, landscapes and cityscapes.

Once again, I was blown away by how much my AI art buddy knew about all of this, and I was confident that I was indeed a surrealist. I'm thinking about incorporating more pop art into my style now that I've discovered how much I like it. Maybe I was onto something with the Buzz Lightyear fish.

## Ranking Houston County teams' region contender status

By **CLAY BROWN**  
HHJ Sports Editor  
clay@hhjonline.com

There hasn't been much actual basketball to talk about this week, so instead I've decided to go through and rank each of Houston County's teams and their status as contenders in their regions.

Here are the four tiers I've decided on: Out of the running, Fighting to stay alive, Aiming for the top and Favorites.

These are pretty self explanatory, but I'll explain them as we go:

### Out of the running

The teams in this tier are pretty much guaranteed to be left out of this year's playoffs. Each region determines how four of their teams will advance to the state tournament — a single elimination tournament is the most popular in my experience.

So theoretically, there is a chance for these teams, but it's unlikely.

### Houston County Girls - Region 2-5A

The Lady Bears are without a region win as of Jan. 23 (0-6, 6th), and with Coffee, Lee County and Veterans still left on the slate it's going to be tough for them to get out of sixth place. They are 5-15 overall this season and on a seven-game losing streak.

The focus for Dani Wright in her first year at HoCo has been improvement every day and the implementation of basic basketball concepts, which doesn't usually translate to wins in year one. There has been improvement, but this was not the year the Lady Bears were going to make noise in the postseason.

### Perry Boys - Region 1-4A

The Panthers have had a rough go of it in the 2024-25 season. They hit the reset button and are using this year to find their building blocks for the future, like freshman Kam Thomas.

But, currently, Perry is on a 10-game losing streak dating back to Dec. 20, 2024 and are without a region win at 0-6 (6th). Their closest region game so far was a 49-46 loss at Wayne County, which is the most winnable game left on their schedule at home on Jan. 31.

The Panthers are 3-17 overall, and are not likely to make much noise as they embrace the youth and look to the future.

### Fighting to stay alive

The teams in this tier are doing just as the name suggests — fighting to stay in the playoff conversation. This could mean they're in fourth place holding off the bottom two teams, or it could mean they are on the outside fighting to get in.

Either way, these teams will need the ball to bounce their way in the last few games of the season.

### Northside Boys - Region 2-5A

Northside (9-9, 2-4 Region, 4th) is one of the harder teams to pin down this season.

On one hand, they're definitely better than I expected in the first year with a new coach, but on the other hand they are in the first year with a new coach.

They've had good moments like their clutch-time win against New Faith Christian Academy and their second game against Houston County (still a loss), but they've also been inconsistent.

Considering the teams



Clay Brown/HHJ

**The Warner Robins Demonettes have separated themselves as favorites in Region 1-4A.**

above and below them, they seem more likely to move down than up if they move at all.

Veterans has already beaten them once and has a better regular season record for the tiebreaker even if the Eagles take the second game. Thomas County Central (5th place) is only 1.5 games behind them with the regular season record tiebreaker, and still a game to go in the matchup.

Time will tell where Northside ends up, but

year under ChoRhonda Gwaltney-Harris, but as she's said multiple times, they are not close to where they want to be.

### Westfield Boys - GIAA District 5-3A

Where Westfield sits now there's a lot of "what if" scenarios.

What if they didn't go cold in the first half in their loss to Calvary Christian? The Hornets outscored them 27-18 in the second half, it's not outrageous to say they could have won that game

weeks of the regular season.

There are some teams here that were almost put in the last tier, but for one reason or another they ended up here.

### Perry Girls - Region 1-4A

The Lady Panthers had a great start to the season but have fallen down to Earth a bit since region play started.

They're 2-3 in the region which is good enough for fourth place, and they're 12-6 overall. That being

when I think of this tier.

They're 3-2 (3rd) in the region and 1.5 games ahead of fourth place, with wins against the bottom three teams.

Realistically their only way to move is up, so they'll take aim at Houston County (17-4, 6-0 Region, 1st) and Lee County (14-5, 4-1 Region, 2nd).

It's going to be an uphill battle; The Warhawks lost to Lee County by 28 points the first time around and to HoCo by 17 points.



Clay Brown/HHJ

**The Houston County Bears have separated themselves as favorites in Region 2-5A.**

they're putting up a fight in year one under Buck Harris.

### Northside Girls - Region 2-5A

There is a very clear separation between the top three teams in Region 2-5A and the bottom teams.

Lee County, Coffee and Veterans are all 4-1 in the region, and the Lady Eagles are 3-3 sitting in fourth place.

The girls have more separation from the bottom two teams than the boys do with Thomas County Central sitting at 1-4 in the region, so even if the Lady Eagles lose to Lee County, Coffee and Veterans, the Lady Yellow Jackets will have to make up a lot of ground to overtake Northside.

The Lady Eagles are also ahead of schedule at 8-10 overall in their first

otherwise.

What if they flipped a close 53-48 loss to Brookstone? With those two scenarios they'd be sitting at 3-1 second only to St. Anne-Pacelli.

But, those things didn't happen, and instead Westfield is 1-3 (4th) in the district and 6-9 overall.

The good news is that the GIAA seeds their playoffs 1-12, and the Hornets are sitting at 11 ahead of teams with worse records and worse strength of schedules.

Unless they lose out, it would be pretty hard for Westfield to fall out of the top 12, but it's still a possibility.

### Aiming for the top

The teams in this tier have somewhat separated themselves from the bottom of their regions, and are looking to improve their positioning in the final

said, it would be almost impossible for them to not make the state tournament this year because of the five-team region.

Below Perry is one team — a 2-12 (0-5 Region) New Hampstead team that the Lady Panthers have blown out twice.

So the Lady Panthers have nowhere to go but up, and they are half a game behind 12-6, (2-2 Region) Wayne County and one game behind 17-4 (3-2 Region) Ware County.

Whether or not they can overcome their double-digit losses to each of those teams is to be seen, but there is plenty of opportunity for Perry to improve their position in the standings.

### Veterans Boys - Region 2-5A

Veterans is exactly the team that comes to mind

### Veterans Girls - Region 2-5A

Some people might be confused by the Lady Warhawks' placing in this tier, but the race at the top of the region is far to close to call anyone a favorite.

When Veterans beat Coffee in overtime I thought they might be the favorite, but since then they've lost to Lee County and some other non-region teams, calling that into question.

Now there is a three-way tie at the top with each team having a 4-1 region record.

The Lady Hawks have their rematch with Coffee coming up, but their game against Lee County was rescheduled to Feb. 7.

### Warner Robins Boys - Region 1-4A

I almost placed the Demons in the "Fighting to

stay alive" tier, but ended up placing them in this one.

It's not so much that they've earned the benefit of the doubt thus far, it's more so that Wayne County and Perry don't pose a threat to them.

Splitting their series against Ware County wasn't too surprising, although their loss to New Hampstead was.

So now Warner Robins is 0.5 games behind New Hampstead with a 3-2 (4th) region record. It seems like it could go either way for them, but in all likelihood the Demons will tread water or move up slightly.

### Westfield Girls - GIAA District 5-3A

The Lady Hornets (8-7, 3-2 District, 2nd) could be placed in the "Favorites" tier but that wouldn't really be true to the name.

Currently, undefeated St. Anne-Pacelli is the favorite, but Westfield has knocked off every other team and put themselves in control of their own destiny.

Their chance of overtaking the Lady Vikings is almost zero considering the discrepancy in their regular season records, but a win against them would help them move up from the five spot in the GIAA 3A rankings nonetheless.

The top four seeds get a bye in the first round, and the Lady Hornets are sitting just outside that bubble. They do have the second hardest strength of schedule in 3A according to MaxPreps, so that could be something that moves them into the top four as the season winds down.

### Favorites

The name is the explanation for this tier (kind of like all the others). The teams in this tier are more than likely going to win their region, and it would take a lot to dethrone them.

Not a lot to say about the teams in this tier, they usually let their performance on the hardwood do the talking.

### Houston County Boys - Region 2-5A

HoCo has hit their stride in their fourth year under Buddy Bivins.

They are 17-4 overall with close losses to some good teams, and 6-0 in the region.

Their 50-48 win at home against Lee County solidified their favorite status. Assuming they close out the season well, even a loss to the Trojans in the rematch wouldn't unseat them from first place.

### Warner Robins Girls - Region 1-4A

The Warner Robins Demonettes (19-0, 5-0 Region, 1st) have a good chance of going undefeated in the regular season.

I don't want to jinx them, but they are the best girls basketball team I have ever covered. That's more the standard at Warner Robins than it is a surprise, but still.

The thing that solidified it for me was their tournament in Orlando, Florida where they came out on top in all three games.

Against some of their best competition they always find a way to grind out close wins, while also putting away lesser teams without giving them a chance.

Their last four opponents all lost by 30 or more points the first time around, so assuming the Demonettes maintain the status quo they'll easily be the Region 1-4A champions.

# Georgia snowmageddon 2025 postpones basketball games

By **CLAY BROWN**  
HHJ Sports Editor  
clay@hhjonline.com

Unless you had your curtains drawn and were passed out asleep for the last week, Houston County (and much of the southern United States) got some snow.

Houston County got as much as 5.3 reported inches of snow on Tuesday according to the National Weather

Service, which saw Houston County schools shut down on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the time of writing.

So, obviously, there was no basketball on Tuesday and those games have been postponed. Those makeup dates are listed below:

Houston County: No game scheduled for Tuesday.

Northside: No game scheduled for Tuesday.

Perry: Home game ver-

sus Benedictine moved to Monday, Jan. 27 at 6 p.m.

Veterans: Home game versus Lee County moved to Friday, Feb. 7 at 6 p.m.

Warner Robins: At the time of writing, the Demons are waiting for their away game against Wayne County to be rescheduled by the Yellow Jackets.

Westfield: Home game versus Brookstone moved to Thursday, Feb. 6 at 6 p.m.

# Mid-Week at the PGA Show

What a week to be in Orlando, FL. No, I did not make the trip this year, but for northerners in the industry, this is the one week in the winter we all looked forward to. This week, we all gather at the Orange County Convention Center to take in a massive amount of information with exhibitors from all over the world presenting new product for the upcoming season. For those in the north it is an escape from deep winter and a chance to play some golf again in the warm Florida weather. Well, normally, it is warm.

The PGA Show has come a long way from the groups that met in the parking lot and showed products out of the trunks of cars and trucks to a handful of PGA Merchandisers. Now it takes multiple days and long hours to attempt to see everything. The massive circular range at

Guest Columnist



**Ryan Carpenter**

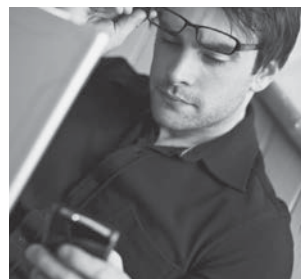
Owner, P45 Knuckle Down Golf

Orange County National offers people and pros alike the chance to test out new equipment from hundreds of companies who set up tents showing everything new for 2025. This is the very first chance for most of us industry professionals to see and hit these new technological advances, from drivers to putters.

At the facilities I operated in the past I always asked my members for some ideas or things they might be interested in for the upcoming season. While we can't house everything that exists in our little golf shops, we can still find items wanted

and develop relationships with the vendors to get special orders and more. So be sure to mention any ideas you may have to your pros in the golf shop. I loved taking my list with me and hunting down these sought out products.

Every year the PGA Show has hundreds of new companies entering the golf merchandise industry. There are easily over a thousand companies now on display and around 40,000 people attend this weeklong event. It is an eye-popping surprise for apprentices and anyone who sees it in person for the first time. Of course, the parties, educational gatherings, and networking events add another layer of enjoyment as well. My crew always crammed in as much in two days as we could, so we could travel the state and play some great golf courses as well. The 2025 golf season is coming up fast, enjoy!



Go online and click on the Services tab at the top navigation bar

## Today's News ...and yesterday's too.

Looking for something you saw in last week's paper? With an eEdition subscription, you can revisit your favorite features, photos and special sections with the click of an Archive button.

### The Houston Home Journal eEdition

www.hhjonline.com

**What's New in Sports?**

We'll keep you posted!

Call today to start your subscription!

**Houston Home Journal**  
1210 Washington St., Perry  
478-987-1823 • hhjonline.com

**BEYOND the BROADSHEET**

Check out the newest Houston County sports action – in audio form – with our new podcast.

Available on Spotify, Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

**HHJ SPORTS**

**MIDDLE GEORGIA Lit Fest 2025**

Celebrating the stories that bring Middle Georgia together.

**About**

The Middle Georgia Lit Fest 2025, hosted by *Between Friends Coffee* and *Between Friends Publishing* in partnership with the *City of Warner Robins* and *Visit Warner Robins*, is a vibrant celebration of creativity and storytelling. Featuring talented authors, poets, illustrators, literary vendors, and artists, this event is a platform for sharing passion and showcasing incredible talent.

Best of all, the festival is free and open to the public, creating a welcoming space for families, book lovers, and creatives alike. While you explore the author and vendor showcase, enjoy delicious food and coffee from local vendors to make your festival experience even more special.

**Services**

Local and national authors, illustrators, artists, schools, libraries, designers, literary merchandise creators, publishers, agents, narrators, non-profits, and more!

**Partners**

- Between Friends Coffee
- Between Friends Publishing
- City of Warner Robins
- Visit Warner Robins

**Contact Info**

478-951-6172  
CALL/TEXT US

hello@betweenfriendspublishing.com  
EMAIL US

**Event Info**

Saturday, February 8th, 2025  
12:00pm - 4:00pm

North Houston Sports Complex  
900 N Houston Road  
Warner Robins, GA 31093

Interested in showcasing your work?  
midlegalitfest.com/#register

# This is... Robins



Volume 7 Number 2

February 2025

1 Section, 8 Pages

## Eyes from the sky: A spotlight on the base's Full Motion Video team

By **BRIANNA SMITH**  
HHJ Managing Editor  
brianna@hhjonline.com

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE** — When disaster strikes or when working with dignitaries, a team of six in the 52nd Combat Communications Squadron

at Robins Air Force Base stands ready to be a critical source of information.

The squadron's Full Motion Video team quickly responds to areas needing surveillance. SSgt. Diahmond Richards, a team supervisor said their primary objective is to pro-

vide information, assurance and awareness feeds: video recorded from a jet and sent to an external website for review.

"Whatever the camera from the plane sees we would receive that and then upload it to a website, so that everybody else can

see it," Richards said.

Observers can then access the government-run website, keeping watch for anything out of the ordinary.

"It essentially allows a room full of analysts to watch the video we send and make sure that nothing

crazy is going on," Airman First Class Ethan Miller, a technician on the team, said.

Richards said much of the team's work centers around the president. Their latest undertaking was 2024's NATO Summit. The team also worked during former president Joe Biden's inauguration in 2021 and provided assistance during State of the Union addresses.

The team also stands ready to provide support and ensure safety during natural disasters.

"We also have the capability of doing that globally, deploying out and doing that, but we're mainly focused on presidential support, right now. Whenever they would need us, they would call us out," Richards said.

Providing this kind of support involves working with a vast array of technology, like cameras, satellites and radios. Miller said their main equipment is a ROVER 6 Transceiver, responsible for taking video feeds and decrypting them, ensuring they are visible and available to upload.

Richards said joining the team requires knowledge of setup and maintenance. Miller said this training is hands-on.

"At home, we have our own transmit side, so we have everybody set up the receive and transmit side,

make sure they know how to set up both sides and make sure they can receive data," Richards said, adding later. "[If] one way of receiving data goes down, we have a backup — or a backup to a backup."

Richards said the team responds to events after receiving a prepare-to-deploy order. The team decides which kits and which members are going, inspects the equipment to ensure it's operational, packs it up, and travels to wherever they're needed. Miller added every piece is airline-cleared, so the team can fly commercially, if needed, ensuring setup within 24 hours.

"It's super simple: make sure the kit's working, get up, and then pack it up and get out there as soon as possible," Richards said.

Miller said the team exchanges information with pilots and ground crew, then waits for the plane to take off and reach its point of surveillance.

"We've got the antenna pointed up at the sky, and sometimes we'll have a radio set up so we can actually talk to the guys in the plane. When they get up there, we'll have the video feed and send it up. We can see it on our end; it's pretty interesting," Miller said.

Richards said the team is smaller but close-knit. Miller added the missions assigned to the team carry a great deal of meaning and each member has a specialty.

"It's high-level event stuff, presidential-level stuff, or natural disaster response. So, to me, that's some security in knowing that I'm actually the good guy here. I'm helping protect people, in a way," Miller said.

As technology evolves, the team is preparing to use multi-purpose technology. Systems to capture video feeds are also being updated for higher video quality and compatibility with communication systems like Starlink, a satellite-based internet system.

"[Starlink] is a lot easier than setting it up the old way, the analog way, if you want to call it that. If people can see our squadron and how great it's working for us, I'm sure it'll get adopted DoD wide in no time," Miller said.

Richards said overall the team is on the mission of providing awareness and assessment, serving as the base's "eyes from the sky." Miller said protecting people is the main goal.

Miller said, "We want to make sure that everybody can do their job to the best of their abilities, and if that means protecting high level people, presidents and ambassadors, or if it means helping somebody find somebody trapped in a house somewhere in Virginia, helping people, helping maintain integrity of equipment, that's saving lives and saving money for the Air Force."



U.S. Air Force photo by Kisha Foster Johnson

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.** — Airman First Class Grant Dolgoff, left, 52nd Combat Communications Squadron Full Motion Video technician, troubleshoots an issue with Senior Airman Kedrick Wright, 52 CBCS FMV technician, as they perform a preventative maintenance inspection on FMV kits at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, March 1, 2023. The 52 CBCS FMV team performs the ground element of video surveillance by gathering live video from overhead aircraft covering an area.



U.S. Air Force photo by Kisha Foster Johnson

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.** — Airman First Class Isaiah Coody, 52nd Combat Communications Squadron Hammer Adaptive Communications Element technician, sets up a Tampa Microwave satellite terminal in preparation to perform a preventative maintenance inspection at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, March 1, 2023. Frequent maintenance is completed on all HACE equipment, because the team must be ready to respond to any Department of Defense or Department of Homeland Security emergencies at a moments notice.

# CMSAF visits MAKOS

By Maj. William-Joseph Mojica  
482nd Fighter Wing

HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE, Fla. (AFNS) --

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi visited Homestead Air Reserve Base to discuss reoptimizing for Great Power Competition and the role of the Air Force in ensuring U.S. national security objectives during a town hall, Jan. 11.

"The National Defense Strategy is our guiding set of principles telling the Department of Defense and the Department of the Air Force what we

need to do, and what forces we need to present, in order to protect our nation and to project power aligned with our nation's objectives," Flosi said. "That will continue to be our North Star and that's what we're applying our reoptimization efforts against."

Flosi's visit emphasized the Air Force and Space Force commitment of ensuring U.S. national security and their role in GPC. As the highest-ranking enlisted member of the Air Force, his insight provides a unique perspective that is of value to the service's Airmen.

"There are four major priorities from the secre-

tary [of the Air Force] and the chief [of Staff of the Air Force] as we are continuing this transition to reoptimize for Greater Power Competition," he said, which include developing people, developing capabilities, generating readiness, and projecting power.

As the Air Force continues to focus on Mission Ready Airmen, cultural shifts toward a continuous readiness posture to meet the challenges of the strategic environment remain pertinent.

"This is an exciting time to serve in our Air Force. We are at the forefront of transitioning to a future force, a necessary change

to stay relevant, competent, capable, and maintain our position as the premier Air Force worldwide," Flosi said.

Given operations the Air Force and Space Force missions encompass, Flosi emphasized the importance of global partnerships, and the strategic implications associated with relationships with allied partners.

"As you can imagine, we don't just fight across the joint force, but in a contested environment, on the other side of the world, we absolutely need relationships with our joint force allies," he said. "We are working very hard to ensure those conditions are set now, so

that when our nation needs us to go into that environment, we are ready. We are the most trusted, capable and competent Air Force in the world. Our allies and partners rely on us. The American public relies on us, where we demonstrate the competence and capability every single day. We are the premier Air Force."

While addressing the entire 482nd Fighter Wing, Flosi made it a point to also address the next generation of Airmen in the audience, the 482nd FW Development and Training Flight, which is composed of Airmen who are in the accessions pipeline and getting ready for basic military training.

"Thank you for taking the first steps but know that the nation demands a lot of us. Our Air Force is very busy, and the world is a very complicated place and it's our job to ensure our nations values are protected and we continue to live the free lifestyle and liberties that we all believe in," he said. "The contributions of every single Airman in our service make us the most lethal and capable Air Force in the world, meaning we have to bring our best every single day. Do your absolute best in the tasks you're assigned and in turn we're going to do our best to set those conditions for you to be successful."



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nickolas Swanson

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi speaks with members of the 482nd Fighter Wing during a town hall at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., Jan. 11, 2025. Flosi discussed how the Air Force is reoptimizing for Great Power Competition and the importance of national security objectives.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Lionel Castellano

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi speaks with senior noncommissioned officers and first sergeants during lunch at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., on Jan. 11, 2025. The lunch provided an opportunity for enlisted leaders to ask questions and receive answers directly from the Flosi.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nickolas Swanson

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi walks with Chief Master Sgt. Jeremy Allen, 482nd Fighter Wing, at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., Jan. 11, 2025. Flosi emphasized the role of Airmen in meeting the challenges of reoptimizing for Great Power Competition.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Lionel Castellano

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi walks with Col. Brandon M. Kelly, 482nd Fighter Wing commander, shortly after arriving at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., on Jan. 11, 2025. Flosi visited Homestead ARB to meet with Airmen and discuss the importance of readiness and resilience in support of the Air Force's mission.

**LET US BE YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS, WE CAN MANAGE YOUR HEALTHCARE NEEDS**

PRIMARY CARE	WEIGHT LOSS
Diabetes High Blood Pressure Cholesterol Thyroid Problems ADHD Obesity Chronic Pain Anxiety and Depression and More	Talk to us about our specials for Weight Loss  Semaglutide  Tirzepatide  Lipo-Mino

BIO-IDENTICAL HORMONE REPLACEMENT	IV INFUSIONS
<b>MEN RELIEF FROM</b> Fatigue Disturbed Sleep Reduced Libido Erectile Dysfunction	<b>WOMEN RELIEF FROM</b> Poor Concentration/Memory Lapses Reduced Libido Hot Flashes Night Sweats

**ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS!**  
**WALK-INS WELCOME!**  
 CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT  
**(478) 666-3377**  
 530 S Houston Lake Rd, Warner Robins, GA 31088

**TELEHEALTH**  
 Online Doctor's Visits

## RETIRED?

GET A DISCOUNT ON HOME INSURANCE JUST FOR BEING YOU.

Insure your home through AAA and save on your premiums just for being a retired homeowner who is at least 55 years old.

Contact me for a quote or details about our **RETIRED HOMEOWNER DISCOUNT.**

Agent AAA Georgia - Berkner Insurance Agency  
 email: hdberkner1@acg.aaa.com  
 478-216-5454

EXPECT SOMETHING MORE™

Discounts and savings opportunities are subject to eligibility requirements, terms and conditions. Insurance underwritten by one of the following companies: Auto Club Insurance Association, MemberSelect Insurance Company, Auto Club Group Insurance Company, Auto Club Property-Casualty Insurance Company, Auto Club South Insurance Company, Auto Club Insurance Company of Florida, or non-affiliated insurance companies. ©2018 The Auto Club Group. All rights reserved. 18-IA-2302D GA/TN LC 9/18

# A lasting impact built on dedicated service, impactful leadership



U.S. Air Force photo by Brian Dietrick

Ronald Ratton, command counsel, Headquarters, Air Force Materiel Command, poses in the AFMC Law Library at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, January 13, 2025. Ratton is scheduled to retire February 2025 after nearly 40 years of service as an Airman and then a member of the Senior Executive Service. In December 2024, Ratton was awarded with the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award for his unwavering integrity and long-term accomplishments in providing exceptional service to the American people.

By Brian Dietrick  
Air Force Materiel Command

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio - For more than 40 years, Ronald R. Ratton's career has been defined by dedication, service, and a passion for both the law and the military. His journey has spanned multiple continents, roles, and career milestones, offering valuable insight into leadership, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to the mission of the Department of the Air Force.

Ratton's professional performance was recognized in December 2024, when he was honored with the prestigious Meritorious Presidential Rank Award, a testament to his exceptional, sustained leadership and contributions to the Air Force.

Selected by the President of the United States, Presidential Rank Awards are presented to civilian senior executives in recognition for their unwavering integrity and long-term accomplishments in providing exceptional service to the American people.

In an Air Force press release, Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall said, "Winners of this award have consistently demonstrated a remarkable blend of initiative, professionalism, and dedication as they have propelled our Air Force and Space Force forward in protecting our nation against

all threats."

"I am incredibly honored and humbled by this award," Ratton said. "It is really a team award, and I have been blessed with incredible teammates in the Air Force Materiel Command Legal Office. They do the hard work and deserve all the credit."

Ratton is scheduled to retire in February 2025 and offers a look back at his time in uniform, his contributions to the Senior Executive Service, and the professional and personal highlights that occurred along the way.

A spark for service Since February 2014, Ratton has served as the Command Counsel for Headquarters AFMC, but his military journey began in 1981 when he first stepped into the halls of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

"I was very interested in joining the military after graduating from high school," Ratton recalls.

Upon graduation from USAFA in 1985, Ratton was commissioned as an intelligence officer, a position he thoroughly enjoyed. Yet, his passion for the law began to take shape early in his career, and he knew that was the career field to pursue.

"I really wanted to go to law school and was fortunate enough to be selected for the Funded Legal Education Program after five years of service," Ratton said.



Courtesy photo

Ronald Ratton, center, command counsel for Headquarters, Air Force Materiel Command, is promoted to lieutenant colonel by the U.S. Embassy Rome Sending State Office commanding officer, left, and Ratton's wife, Julie, February 1, 2002. Ratton is scheduled to retire February 2025 after nearly 40 years of service as an Airman and then a member of the Senior Executive Service. In December 2024, Ratton was awarded with the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award for his unwavering integrity and long-term accomplishments in providing exceptional service to the American people.

This was the turning point that would allow him to combine two of his greatest passions: the military profession and the law.

A rich history of experience

Ratton served 29 years on active duty, amassing a wealth of memories, many of which had a lasting impact on his personal and professional growth. His time as a uniformed judge advocate stands out as especially rewarding, offering him the chance to serve alongside "fabulous colleagues and mentors," while tackling a variety of work ranging from legal assistance to litigation.

Ratton's international assignments were another highlight, with he and his family experiencing overseas tours at Royal Air Force Fairford in the United Kingdom, the U.S. Embassy in Rome, and Yokota Air Base, Japan.

Ratton cherishes those experiences and emphasizes how these roles not only shaped his career, but also broadened his worldview and deepened his appreciation for global service.

"It taught me a lot," Ratton said. "I learned the importance of being positive and setting a professional example in demeanor, appearance, and in how one approaches tasks."

After serving as staff judge advocate for the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency, and later as the AFISRA vice commander, he concluded his military career as the staff judge advocate for Headquarters, Air Force Global Strike Command at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana.

A strategic shift in service After decades of military service, Ratton considered

the next phase of his career. Serving at AFMC while on active duty led him to develop a deep admiration for its mission and culture. This experience led him to pursue a position within the Senior Executive Service in 2014, shortly after retiring from active duty.

"I had previously served at AFMC and really embraced the mission and culture here," Ratton says. "When an SES position was advertised, I decided to take a chance and apply."

His transition from military service to the civilian sector was seamless, as his uniformed career equipped him with the leadership skills necessary to thrive in the SES role.

"I was fortunate enough that my time in uniform prepared me for greater responsibilities as a member of the SES community," Ratton said.

Empowering others and leading with integrity

Ratton's leadership style is shaped by a core belief in empowering others.

"Leaders should enable others by removing obstacles, providing resources and training, delivering clear intent, and then smartly delegating," he said.

His leadership philosophy was influenced heavily by his second assignment as the staff judge advocate at Yokota Air Base, Japan, where he learned to delegate, empower, and leverage the diverse talents of his team. Additionally, his time at AFISRA instilled the ideals of servant leadership, mission focus, and compassion.

Throughout his career, Ratton faced many challenges, but he credits his ability to navigate these hurdles to one key quality:

self-awareness.

"The biggest challenges I have faced have been self-imposed," Ratton admits. "The remedy has been to develop the self-awareness to recognize my weaknesses and develop strategies to mitigate them."

This approach to self-reflection and continuous improvement is a cornerstone of his leadership style.

Mentorship: A vital ingredient for growth

Ratton's career was shaped by the invaluable mentorship he's received from commanders, colleagues, and JAG Corps leaders. Over the years, he says he was fortunate to work with leaders who influenced his growth as a leader, including previous AFMC commanders, Gen. Ellen M. Pawlikowski and Gen. Arnold W. Bunch, and the current commander, Gen. Duke Z. Richardson. He says their guidance, along with the support of his team at AFMC, was instrumental to his development.

"I'm grateful to them and my teammates on the headquarters staff for guiding, challenging, and mentoring me to be a more effective leader," Ratton said.

Looking back, Ratton says the most rewarding aspect of his current role at AFMC is the people.

"I have many wonderful teammates on the headquarters staff, and I genuinely admire and appreciate the amazing professionals I work with every day in the AFMC Legal Office," Ratton said. "Working with such talented colleagues continues to be a source of pride and motivation for me, especially as I look back on my career."

Reflecting on his upcoming retirement, Ratton

says he is motivated by the legacy he hopes to leave behind and emphasizes the importance of collaboration and empowerment in leadership.

"I hope to be remembered as someone people enjoyed working with, and as a good teammate who enabled and empowered others," Ratton said.

For young Airmen aspiring to follow in his footsteps, Ratton offers simple advice: Capitalize on the steps necessary to acquire training, education, and experience to achieve success. This advice, he believes, applies regardless of the chosen career field.

"At the end of the day, there is no single path to follow. Work ethic, integrity, and the ability to work well with others are essential to success," Ratton said.

Looking to the future After decades of distinguished service in and out of uniform, Ratton is ready to take a well-deserved break to focus on life outside of the office.

"I'm going to follow my own advice and take a break from work for at least several months," Ratton said. "My wife, Julie, and I hope to take a long overdue trip to Europe, and I plan to spend time with family, and begin several projects on our new home."

Reflecting on the importance of a healthy work/life balance, Ratton acknowledges that while his work has been fulfilling, his family is the cornerstone of his success.

"Throughout my career, I've preached the importance of having balance moments, but I haven't always succeeded and probably spent too much time at work at the expense of what's really important... family," Ratton said. "Thankfully, I have an amazing wife of 38 years who compensated for my shortcomings."

Leaving a legacy

As Ratton looks toward the next phase of his life, his legacy of service, mentorship, and leadership will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the Air Force. His career has been a model of dedication, and his commitment to the mission, to his teammates, and to the values of the Air Force will continue to inspire future generations of leaders.

For Ratton, it's not just about the missions accomplished, but the people empowered along the way. And that, perhaps, is his greatest achievement.

"I believe in the Air Force," Ratton said. "It is an institution that embraces its core values, gave me incredible opportunities, and made me a better person."



Courtesy photo

Ronald Ratton, center, command counsel for Headquarters, Air Force Materiel Command, poses for a group photo with his teammates at the Air Force Global Strike Staff Judge Advocate Office during his tour there in 2013. Ratton is scheduled to retire February 2025 after nearly 40 years of service as an Airman and then a member of the Senior Executive Service. In December 2024, Ratton was awarded with the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award for his unwavering integrity and long-term accomplishments in providing exceptional service to the American people.

# This is... Robins

A PUBLICATION BY THE HOUSTON HOME JOURNAL  
A DIVISION OF THE GEORGIA TRUST FOR LOCAL NEWS

DuBose Porter Executive Director Pam Burney General Manager Caleb Slinkard Executive Editor

Don Moncrief  
Publisher  
publisher@hhjonline.com

Brianna Smith  
Managing Editor  
brianna@hhjonline.com

Lori Kovarovic  
Advertising Director/Sales  
lorikkhads@gmail.com

Diana Busby  
Classifieds, Legals & Circulation  
diana@hhjonline.com

## OUR GOAL

The Houston Home Journal is published for the citizens of Houston and adjoining counties by a division of the Georgia Trust for Local News. Our goal is to produce quality, profitably, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and a strong dedication towards printing the truth. This is Robins, is a monthly publication, published by The Houston Home Journal and distributed on Robins Air Force Base. Also inserted into the last Saturday edition of the month in The Houston Home Journal.

The Houston Home Journal, is a periodical, mailed (ISSN 471) in Perry and is published Wednesday and Saturday by Houston Home Journal P.O. Box 1910, Perry, GA 31069; 478-987-1823

Subscription Rates:  
In county - \$88  
Senior Citizen (60) - \$78  
Out of County or State - \$98  
Online Access only - \$58

1210 Washington Street, Perry, GA 31069  
478-987-1823

## USAF delivers first EPAWSS-modified F-15E Strike Eagle

By *Fighters and Advanced Aircraft Directorate*

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio – The F-15 Eagle Passive/Active Warning and Survivability System (EPAWSS) program achieved a major milestone when it delivered the first F-15E Strike Eagle equipped with the world's most advanced Electronic Warfare (EW) suite to RAF Lakenheath, England, on Jan. 16.

F-15 EPAWSS replaces legacy technology developed to counter Cold-War era threat systems with a next-generation EW system, which enables the F-15 to operate in a modern threat environment.

F-15 EPAWSS substantially improves pilot situational awareness with the capability to autonomously detect, identify, and locate threat systems, and then deny, degrade, and disrupt those same threats.

"I'm proud of the entire government and industry team for their commitment, drive, and outstanding work on this critical program," said Brig. Gen. Jason Voorheis, Program Executive Officer for the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center's Fighters and Advanced Aircraft Directorate, which is leading the effort to field the new system. "It has taken us a long time to get to this point, but this system is vital to our 21st century fighter force structure. EPAWSS significantly

improves the survivability and lethality of the F-15E Strike Eagle and F-15EX Eagle II, and the fact the first modifications are delivering to our front-line fighters at RAF Lakenheath is even more critical. Not only does this system keep our most lethal fighter in the modern fight, it's an incredible deterrent in our Great Power Competition initiative."

"This first delivery is the culmination of 11 years of extremely hard work by a lot of great people within the government and our Boeing/BAE Systems industry partners," added Lt. Col. Matt Heil, Materiel Leader, F-15 EPAWSS. "This system is a critically-needed capability for F-15 aircrew, Air Combat Command, and the Nation. Furthermore, the system architecture enables us to keep advancing the capability for many years via continual software updates and improvements. EPAWSS is a game-changer."

BAE Systems manufactures and Boeing integrates EPAWSS at their facilities in Nashua, N.H. and San Antonio, Texas. Boeing manufactures the F-15EX Eagle II in St. Louis, Mo., which includes EPAWSS.

The delivery of the first F-15Es with upgraded EW capabilities marks a major step forward in the Air Force's effort to modernize these fourth-generation aircraft and prepare them for engagements against an advanced adversary.



Boeing photo

An F-15E on a flightline in San Antonio, Texas. The aircraft was recently upgraded with Eagle Passive/Active Warning and Survivability System, advanced electronic warfare system.

# Accelerating Support Equipment Readiness to Meet the Demands of Great Power Competition



U.S. Air Force photo by Photo by Senior Airman Corey Kellen

Tech. Sgt. Morris Phillips and Staff Sgt. Byron Baker, members of the 440th Supply Chain Operations Squadron, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., conduct an Equipment Warfighter Support Visit at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Sept. 5, 2023.

By *440th Supply Chain Operations Squadron*

JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, Va --

In today's rapidly changing global landscape, the United States is called upon to sharpen its strategic advantage amidst Great Power Competition. This competitive environment demands an agile and prepared force, equipped to respond to global threats with speed and precision. At the heart of this readiness effort is our approach to managing support equipment, the assets essential to maintaining mission generation and ensuring U.S. forces are fully prepared to fly, fight, and win. To respond to the challenges of GPC, the 440th Supply Chain Operations Squadron at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., declared 2024 as the 'Year of Accelerating Support Equipment Readiness.'

To accelerate, the squadron launched the Equipment Warfighter Support Visit initiative, aimed at validating support equipment requirements. EWSVs are an innovative, multifaceted program integrating training, oversight, and authorization management to accelerate support equipment readiness across the Department of the Air Force. The primary mission of the engagements is to

ensure units account for and are equipped to meet their mission requirements. EWSVs are the enterprise solution to drive change across the portfolio.

"Support equipment is the backbone to our ability to fly, fight and win. The 440th SCOS set out in '24 to 'Accelerate Support Equipment Readiness' and delivered ... big time!" said Lt. Col. Greg Swendsen, 440th SCOS commander. "We delivered a game-changing, enterprise solution. Within the last 10 months, we were able to assess, validate and resolve over \$370M in equipment requirements, while saving the logistics community over 50,000 man-hours through our initiative. With the solution in hand, the squadron is now razor-focused on the pursuit of 'Relentless Readiness' in 2025."

EWSVs: Today's Enterprise Solution to Accelerate SE Readiness

EWSVs are designed to go beyond traditional oversight. The engagements aim to provide solutions to address equipment gaps impacting mission readiness through validating support equipment requirements, closing critical training gaps, and enhancing data integrity and reliability. This ensures equipment is in the right place, to employ the right capabilities at the

right time.

Key components include:  
1.Reducing Overages and Equipment Gaps: EWSVs focus on assessing equipment overages, shortages, and malpositioned assets, which are assets not authorized with an open requirement elsewhere within the enterprise. Through an analysis of data and face-to-face engagements, EWSVs identify equipment imbalances, redirecting overage assets to areas with a validated and authorized need. This not only ensures efficient asset use but enables continued global power projection.

2.Training and Oversight Integration:During EWSVs, the squadron provides stakeholders tailored on-site over-the-shoulder training to empower them with requisite knowledge for maintaining authorization compliance while sharing reports and tools to circumvent or navigate discrepancies. EWSVs also offer valuable enterprise oversight by allowing the squadron to identify and address data/process inconsistencies directly with affected major commands.

3.Authorization Management: EWSVs place significant emphasis on managing and validating equipment authorizations. Each asset must have an authorization, aligned with the unit's tasked mission.

Through EWSVs, the squadron reviews and validates authorizations to prevent overages or malpositioned equipment, ensuring every asset serves a definitive operational need.

4.Data Integrity and Reliability: Accurate data is the foundation of informed decision-making. EWSVs assess and correct discrepancies within the support equipment Accountable Property System of Record and the Defense Property Accountability System, maintaining data accuracy across platforms. This enhanced data integrity enables leadership decisions at the speed of relevance.

5. Accelerated Readiness: By integrating training, oversight, and authorization management, EWSVs are accelerating support equipment readiness. This ensures units are ready to meet the demands of Great Power Competition. The outcome is a reliable, mission-capable force, backed by a solid support equipment framework.

Preparing for the Future Force

"This is just the beginning," said Equipment Readiness Flight Chief Jason Brown. "The actions we are taking today to drive SE readiness will have ripple effects for years to come."



*As a special thank you we would like to extend the following special offer to all active-duty and retired military personnel .*

**\$75 for 1 year Subscription!**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Houston Home Journal 1210 Washington Street, Perry 478-987-1823**

# 559th AMXS earns Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence

**By Joseph Mather**  
78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. --

The 559th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex was presented the Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence during the 2024 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Symposium at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence recognizes exceptional quality and achievement in Department of Defense depot-level maintenance programs. It is awarded for outstanding mission accomplishment, effective support to warfighters, and innova-

tive logistics processes.

Col. Joshua De Paul, 402nd Aircraft Maintenance Group commander, said winning the Robert T. Mason Award is an amazing honor for the U.S. Air Force and Team Robins.

"We are extremely proud of the men and women of the 559th AMXS for their hard work and dedication to enhancing readiness across the U.S. Air Force organic industrial base," he said. "This prestigious award not only spotlights our team as a standout unit within Air Force Materiel Command but recognizes them as a world-class depot maintenance unit across the entire joint force."

According to De Paul the 559th AMXS provided support to all Air Mobility Command's C-5 aircraft and

increased aircraft availability enabling the C-5 aircraft fleet to generate 63,000 sorties (202,000 hours), transporting 100,000 passengers and 194,000 tons of cargo in 2024 to U.S. and allied forces across the globe.

"They aligned with mission partners to spearhead a multiyear depot maintenance recovery effort in support of the Air Force's 'Drive to 55' aircraft availability campaign," he said. "With a relentless focus on Art of the Possible (AoP), a constraints-based management system designed to create an environment for success in which the squadron reduced flow days 59% from 908 days in fiscal year 2022 to 770 in 2023 to 491 in 2024 and produced seven of seven aircraft two years in a row.

"Additionally, they reduced queue days 13%, generated \$348 million in revenue, netted \$958 thousand, reduced budget overruns 52%, produced 380,000 man-hours across 16,000 complex operations, sustained a 92% quality assurance pass rate, and reduced acceptance inspection deficient reports by 90%," he continued.

John Kieweg, 559th AMXS director, said teamwork with both the 559th AMXS and the C-5 enterprise team, is why they won the Robert T. Mason award and turned the C-5 aircraft production line around.

"In the first edition of the AoP handbook, Sept. 1, 2014, the last paragraph is titled 'Culture of Believers.' Some version of the word 'believe' is used seven times

in five short lines," he said. "When the C-5 enterprise started to believe in what we were trying to accomplish, you could see the powerful change in culture permeate throughout the hangar and into the hearts of everyone who was part of this endeavor."

Kieweg said the squadron did a total turnaround from where we were three years ago.

"We have pride in the aircraft we produce," he said. "Our mission partners are onboard with our plans, and our customers trust us when we tell them a C-5 aircraft is complete and on its way back to home station."

Kieweg said the men and women in the C-5 enterprise are a team to be reck-

oned with, and they don't back down from a challenge.

"I am beyond proud of my team and the entire C-5 enterprise," he said. "Specifically, in the 559th AMXS, we have men and women that work through the heat, the cold and the rain to produce the largest aircraft in the inventory. They often come in to work two hours early, as well as go home late, and some consider Saturday a workday.

"They spend more time together as team 559th than most get with their own families," he continued. "They have proven to be outstanding civilian Airmen who embody our Air Force core values. So, as well as being proud, I believe they earned it."



U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – A group of aircraft maintainers with 559th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex work on a C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft as it goes through the Planned/Scheduled Depot Level Maintenance process at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Oct. 15, 2024. The 559th AMXS aircraft maintainers provided overhaul and repair to the C-5M aircraft which is the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory and the Department of Defense.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Gracie Lee

Salt Lake City, Utah – Brig. Gen. Jon Eberlan, Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex commander, left, Lt. Gen. Stacey Hawkins, right, Air Force Sustainment Center, and the 559th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron team accept the Department of Defense Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence at Salt Lake City, Utah, Dec. 11, 2024, on behalf of their unit with the WR-ALC stationed at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. The unit was recognized for outstanding mission accomplishment, effective support to warfighters and innovative logistics processes.



courtesy

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Alton Floyd, left, and Joseph Johns, both 559th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, production sheet metal work leaders, with the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex, ensure proper warning tags are removed before beginning task verification on the flight deck of a C-5M Super Galaxy as it undergoes Planned/Scheduled Depot Level Maintenance at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Oct. 15, 2024. The maintainers checked off task during verification of each tag on the aircraft flightdeck during its six-year P/SDLM.



U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Michael Swain, 559th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron jet engine mechanic, with the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex, safety wires a filter to a directional pilot valve on a C-5M Super Galaxy aircraft during its Planned/Schedule Depot Level Maintenance at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Oct. 15, 2024. The aircraft was in the depot for its six-year P/SDLM which included a full overhaul and repair of the aircraft.



U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Members of the 559th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron stand with the Department of Defense Robert T. Mason Award for Depot Maintenance Excellence at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Dec. 20, 2024. The unit was recognized for outstanding mission accomplishment, effective support to warfighters and innovative logistics processes.

# Newly minted warrant officers discuss significance of selections



U.S. Air Force photo by Melanie Rodgers Cox

Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, Maj. Nathaniel Roesler, Warrant Officer Training School Commandant, and Senior Master Sgt. Jarvis Wilson, WOTS Senior Enlisted Leader, present a WOTS class 25-01 diploma to Chief Warrant Officer 2 Richard Barragan at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, Dec. 6, 2024. This historic cohort of 30 graduates marks the reintroduction of Warrant Officers to the Air Force following the dissolution of the Warrant Officer Corps in 1958. The inaugural class consisted of 22 Active Duty, 6 Guardsmen, and 2 Reservists.

By Mark Wyatt  
66th Air Base Group  
Public Affairs

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass. -- For the first time in 65 years, 30 Air Force warrant officers, including two assigned here, have graduated from the U.S. Air Force Warrant Officer Training School.

The graduation ceremony, held Dec. 6, 2024, marked a historic moment for the Air Force as it works to address critical operational needs in an era of Great Power Competition.

"You are going to establish the value that warrant officers bring to our service," said Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall in his address to graduates. "The school has pre-

pared you well, and I am absolutely confident you're ready to go do that."

Among the graduates were Chief Warrant Officer Richard Barragan and Warrant Officer Cooper Zartman.

The eight-week program included coursework in technical fields such as cyber operations and intelligence analysis, as well as general training in strategic planning and operational integration.

"Our training emphasized not just technical expertise, but also leadership and mentorship," said Barragan. "We've been prepared to step into these roles with humility and a commitment to serving those around us."

The warrant officer

corps, originally phased out in 1959 and now reinstated, establishes a vital link between enlisted personnel and commissioned officers.

"We are here to be a bridge, to mentor enlisted personnel and to assist officers in executing commanders' directives. That dual role is what makes this opportunity so unique and vital," said Zartman.

Historically, warrant officers served as technical experts and advisors. This new cohort will fulfill similar roles, particularly in specialized domains such as cyber, intelligence, and space operations.

The decision to revive the warrant officer corps reflects the Air Force's strategic focus on address-



U.S. Air Force photo by Melanie Rodgers Cox

Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, Maj. Nathaniel Roesler, Warrant Officer Training School Commandant, and Senior Master Sgt. Jarvis Wilson, WOTS Senior Enlisted Leader, present a WOTS class 25-01 diploma to Warrant Officer 1 Cooper Zartman at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, Dec. 6, 2024. This historic cohort of 30 graduates marks the reintroduction of Warrant Officers to the Air Force following the dissolution of the Warrant Officer Corps in 1958. The inaugural class consisted of 22 Active Duty, 6 Guardsmen, and 2 Reservists.

ing complex challenges.

"Our information domain is the most contested environment we operate in today," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David Flosi. "Your technical competence and commitment to serving others is a critical component of our national strategy."

The graduates' technical fields underscore the Air Force's emphasis on emerging and critical domains.

"Our job is to ensure our expertise enhances mission readiness and operational success. We're here to lead and solve problems," said Barragan.

Zartman highlighted the importance of collaboration.

"The Air Force needs

leaders who can integrate seamlessly across domains, and that's what we're here to do," he said.

Maj. Nathaniel Roesler, Warrant Officer Training School commandant, emphasized the historical significance of the moment and urged graduates to set a high standard for the generations of warrant officers.

"Those skills will serve you well as you blaze a trail for all future warrant officers in the Air Force," said Roesler. "We'll need your technical expertise, your leadership, your humility, and your continued dedication to excellence."

The graduates will report to their duty stations early this year, applying their training to real-world chal-

lenges.

Their leadership will also set the stage for future cohorts, with the next class scheduled to graduate in March 2025.

"We're building something that will last, something that will enhance the Air Force's ability to adapt and succeed in the most demanding environments," said Barragan.

Both graduates agreed that the warrant officer program will strengthen the force's capabilities, ensuring it remains ready for any challenge in an increasingly complex global environment.

"It's an honor to be part of this," Zartman said. "We know the expectations are high, and we're ready to exceed them."



U.S. Air Force photo by Trey Ward

Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall with the group of the new Air Force Warrant Officer Training School students after their graduation ceremony at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, Dec. 6, 2024. Today marks a historic milestone for the Air Force with the reintroduction of the Warrant Officer Corps in its inaugural class, consisting of 30 total candidates, 22 Active Duty, 6 Guardsmen, and 2 Reservists.

## DAF to launch National Mentoring Month panels, programs, events

Secretary of the Air Force  
Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS) --

The Department of the Air Force Mentoring Program is launching a series of events throughout January 2025 marking National Mentoring Month. First launched in January 2002, National Mentoring Month is a call to action for all Airmen and Guardians to engage in mentoring relationships, both as mentors and mentees.

NMM introduces the Total Force to a series of panels, events and interactive discussions on mentoring as an enterprise imperative, ensuring greater awareness of the mentoring opportunities available to all

Airman and Guardians and empowering them to reach their fullest potential.

The Department of Defense 2025 theme for NMM is "Mentoring tomorrow's leaders today." Aligned under this is the DAF NMM theme for 2025, "Transforming lives... strengthening the force... finding common ground through mentoring."

This year's theme highlights the crucial role mentorship plays in preparing and strengthening our Total Force for potential challenges in an era of Great Power Competition.

Mentoring is a personal partnership that facilitates the sharing of knowledge, experience and wisdom. A men-

tor is someone who offers guidance, support and advice, helping to shape the career and development of their mentee. A mentee is an individual who seeks growth, learning and is open to receiving guidance to enhance personal and career growth. This reciprocal relationship is fundamental in fostering a productive mentoring environment within the Air Force and Space Force, and provides benefits felt not only on an individual basis but throughout the entire DAF.

Mentoring can take many forms, and for NMM 2025, U.S. Space Force and U.S. Air Forces Europe are leading the way in organizing "reverse mentoring" events aimed at bridg-

ing the generational and experiential divide between "junior mentors" and "senior mentees." The virtual and in-person forums are highly interactive, with topics selected by junior mentors ranging from the impact of physical fitness on Guardian readiness to gaining an edge in the era of GPC.

Mentoring can be a catalyst in advancing key DAF strategic initiatives, invigorate innovation and foster life-long relationships between mentors and mentees. The relationships formed through mentoring ensures knowledge and experience is shared amongst all generations working within the DAF. It also allows generational groups who may leave the

force in the next 10 years the ability to leave their legacy through mentoring future DAF leaders.

"We are extremely excited to launch this year's National Mentoring Month and have strategically put together a calendar of events in January, open to all of DAF members, to help build the leaders of tomorrow that prepare our workforce with the tools and resources for mentoring to grow people, drive innovation and change and encourage inspirational relationships," said Director of Force Development Crystal Moore. "We want to encourage everyone to get a mentor and be a mentor in 2025!"

DAF members can find a mentor and become

a mentor through MyVector Mentoring, an online platform designed to match members with mentors and facilitate mentoring relationships across the DAF. MyVector Mentoring offers a range of tools to support the mentoring process, including profile creation, and the ability to set goals, track progress and engage in meaningful discussions on personal and professional development. MyVector can be accessed here.

DAF personnel interested in getting involved with NMM events can find more details here, and additional information on DAF mentoring can be found at <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Mentoring2/>.

# 5th CCG supports Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation



Members of the 51st and 52nd Combat Communication Squadrons pose for a photo with their Peruvian partners during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in Lima, Peru, Nov. 16, 2024. The inclusion of a Language Enabled Airman Program Spanish speaker allowed the combat communication Airmen to better integrate with local communities and partners, which led to strengthened partnerships and ties.

By Patrick Sullivan  
78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

LIMA, Peru -- Ten Airmen from the 5th Combat Communications Group, located at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, were selected to support Air Force Southern's efforts at Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in Lima, Peru, Nov. 5-20, 2024.

AFSOUTH was named lead component for APEC, supporting the U.S. government's involvement and the U.S. president's engagements during the event.

The 5th CCG Airmen, from the 51st and 52nd Combat Communications Squadrons, were called upon by the 474th Air Expeditionary Group to support 24-hour operations and a requirement for uninterrupted, simultaneous command and control capabilities across multiple locations.

"Since AFSOUTH does not organically possess a robust expeditionary C2 capability to support the multiple on-demand locations that required support, they called upon the 5th CCG to bridge their communications gap," said Maj. Nicholas Riascos, 52nd CBCS director of operations.

"The 5 CCG's reputation and mission set of being a world-wide deployable unit that can project expeditionary communications and enable combat support whenever and wherever, across the full spectrum of operations for the nation, really made us a go-to when the AFSOUTH staff was looking for a key teammate," Riascos continued.

The team's mission involved establishing communications on the Peruvian air base and setting up reliable networks in non-standard locations, such as hotel conference rooms, to support operational needs.

This required meticulous planning and flexibility as the team responded on short notice to support the exercise, taking what normally entails months of planning, and mobilizing in just a few weeks.

"One of the biggest challenges we faced was navigating the logistical constraints of transporting our equipment," said Master Sgt. Paul Visico, the mission's senior enlisted leader and 51st CBCS operations superintendent. "Unlike our usual practice of flying military air, this mission required us to fly commercially. To overcome this,

we embraced flexibility, meticulous planning and a proactive mindset. The team's positive attitude and adaptability were crucial in meeting tight deadlines and

ensuring mission success." The adaptability of the team was further demonstrated by their ability to integrate with a variety of entities, including Special

Operations Southern Command, the United States Secret Service, the White House Military Office, and U.S. embassies in Peru and Brazil.

According to the team, a key component of the mission's success was the inclusion of a Language Enabled Airman Program Spanish speaker, Riascos, whose cultural and linguistic skills aided in efforts like clearing customs, sorting transportation, and accessing the local military installations.

"I grew up with that background and that heritage. It's very close to me. So a lot of the cultural-isms are familiar, and I helped the team kind of bridge that," said Riascos. "So, it really helped that in speaking Spanish, we improved the team, because I was able to cut through a lot of the language barriers and built a relationship very, very quickly."

Having a native language speaker also helped to create positive interactions with local partners, developing relationships that extended beyond the mission.

"Outside of being great teammates to our U.S. Air Force and sister agencies, we leaned forward heavily and strengthened our partnerships and ties with our Peruvian partners," said Riascos. "We played the Peruvians in a friendly U.S. vs Peru soccer match. Our teams joined in a friendly, yet competitive match and later exchanged

patches and laughs, and strengthened our bond during our time."

The team left Peru with not only a successfully completed mission, but with new milestones and expanded capabilities.

"The team achieved historic milestones, including the groundbreaking commercial transport of 43 Pelican cases of communications equipment - a first for the 5th Combat Communications Group," said Riascos. "Their exceptional technical expertise and leadership enabled the rapid configuration of secure communications, providing C2 capabilities within 30 minutes for senior leadership."

The 5th CCG's performance during the APEC summit highlighted their readiness, adaptability and professionalism, solidifying their role as a key expeditionary communications unit capable of supporting diverse operational requirements.

"As a combat communications unit, our training prepares us to provide communications anytime, anywhere," said Visico. "This mission exemplified that by requiring us to set up communications in non-standard locations, highlighting the adaptability we develop through our training."



MIDDLE GEORGIA  
**Lit Fest**  
2025

Celebrating the stories that  
bring Middle Georgia together.



## About

The Middle Georgia Lit Fest 2025, hosted by *Between Friends Coffee* and *Between Friends Publishing* in partnership with the *City of Warner Robins* and *Visit Warner Robins*, is a vibrant celebration of creativity and storytelling. Featuring talented authors, poets, illustrators, literary vendors, and artists, this event is a platform for sharing passion and showcasing incredible talent.

Best of all, the festival is free and open to the public, creating a welcoming space for families, book lovers, and creatives alike. While you explore the author and vendor showcase, enjoy delicious food and coffee from local vendors to make your festival experience even more special.

## Services

Local and national authors, illustrators, artists, schools, libraries, designers, literary merchandise creators, publishers, agents, narrators, non-profits, and more!

## Partners

- Between Friends Coffee
- Between Friends Publishing
- City of Warner Robins
- Visit Warner Robins

## Contact Info

478-951-6172  
[CALL/TEXT US](tel:478-951-6172)

[hello@betweenfriendspublishing.com](mailto:hello@betweenfriendspublishing.com)  
[EMAIL US](mailto:hello@betweenfriendspublishing.com)

## Event Info

**Saturday, February 8th, 2025**  
12:00pm - 4:00pm

**North Houston Sports Complex**  
900 N Houston Road  
Warner Robins, GA 31093

**Interested in showcasing your work?**  
[midlegalitfest.com/#register](http://midlegalitfest.com/#register)





# DAF Safety announces updated guidance for maintenance NDAs



U.S. Air Force photo by Roland Balik

**U.S. Airman 1st Class Hector Huerta, 736th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron aerospace propulsion journeyman, performs an inspection on a C-17 Globemaster III engine at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, Oct. 15, 2024. Huerta and other maintainers performed the task as part of a C-17 Home Station Check which is accomplished every 180 days.**

**By Air Force Safety Center  
Public Affairs  
Air Force Safety Center**

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. --

As part of an ongoing effort to address aviation maintenance-related mishaps and provide authorized Air Force maintainers with privileged

safety briefings, the Air Force Safety Center announced an update to how Privileged Safety Information training, also known as safety privilege training, and Non-Disclosure Agreements will be completed and collected.

To address an uptick in aviation maintenance related mishaps, Maj. Gen. Sean

Choquette, Department of the Air Force chief of safety and AFSEC commander, announced in August the current program used in the aircrew community of providing privileged safety briefings and recurring safety briefings would be expanded to include maintainers.

"In the past, PSI training has been done on an ad hoc basis for maintainers and other career fields when warranted but has never been normalized across a career field, other than aircrew, until now," Choquette said. "This is a focused effort to expand PSI access in order to provide recurring safety privilege training and privileged safety briefings across the maintenance community. Our maintainers have a critical role in flight line mishap prevention, and this is significant improvement in how we share lessons learned."

In order to receive privileged safety briefings, personnel must first receive safety privileged training and sign an NDA. The training helps personnel understand what PSI is and how it works to protect national security and save lives and resources. The NDA is the understanding and agreement to the rules for its use.

The updated guidance is focused on changes to how

the PSI training and NDA signature are executed. To achieve maximum participation, units will now be able to complete the process using a phased approach. While training must be accomplished now, training methods will be flexible with a mix of in-person and virtual training options to best accommodate unit missions and ops tempo. Additionally, rather than requiring the PSI training and signing the NDA simultaneously, authorized personnel will need to sign an NDA prior to their first privileged safety briefing, greatly reducing the administrative burden of training and collecting signed NDAs in a short period of time.

Expanding the current program to include maintainers is part of DAF Safety's Strategic Plan.

"One of my goals since becoming Chief of Safety has been to incorporate Risk Management principles into the training provided to Airmen," said Choquette. "The more information we can give to our Airmen, the better prepared they will be to make good, risk-informed decisions and ultimately, prevent mishaps."

The process to access PSI is documented in DAFI 91-204 and has remained consistent for almost two

decades. After receiving training on proper use and protection of PSI, maintainers will be able to receive privileged safety briefings. This initiative introduces a recurring requirement for Air Force safety offices to provide maintenance focused mishap presentations to the aviation maintenance force. Annual safety privilege training will be provided to allow continued access to mishap data and ensure proper protection of PSI. Installation safety shops will manage the process and ensure maintenance-related mishaps and trends relevant to the unit's mission or aircraft are shared.

While maintainers are not required to have PSI access, the intent is to have maximum participation to better understand how to protect mission readiness and national security by preventing future mishaps and keeping themselves and other Airmen safe. Without signing an NDA, maintainers will not be allowed access to PSI or privileged safety briefings which impedes Air Force efforts to equip maintainers with information that will help them make better risk decisions.

PSI is U.S. Supreme Court-recognized, and unique to DoD safety investigations. PSI includes mishap factors, findings, causes, and rec-

ommendations determined through analysis by safety investigators and statements made under the promise of confidentiality. It is protected from being released outside of safety channels, even within DoD, or from being used for any purpose except DoD mishap prevention. It is a valuable tool in the Safety community and is critical to mishap prevention and combat readiness. It gives Airmen and Guardians confidence in the safety investigation process and recommendations because it protects open discussion and deliberation.

Additionally, when promised confidentiality by a safety investigation, Airmen and Guardians are protected from any adverse personnel action based on their confidential statement to safety investigators. This allows safety investigations to move rapidly toward root cause determination and recommendations to address it. Should PSI be leaked, it could erode trust in this crucial element of the safety process.

Major mishaps are often also the subject of a publicly released Accident Investigation Board report, which is not privileged, and presents all the factual details about a mishap, as well as that AIB's analysis of the cause of the mishap.

**NAR**  
FEDERAL BENEFITS EXPERTS  
And protectors too!  
<https://www.narfe1020.org>

Roses are red, violets are blue, we're wishing  
Happy Valentine's Day to you!  
**CENTRAL COMPUTER SERVICES**  
Keeping You & Your Business Safe  
478.224.8888 | [ccsperry.com](http://ccsperry.com)  
1109-B Washington St, Perry (Appointment only)

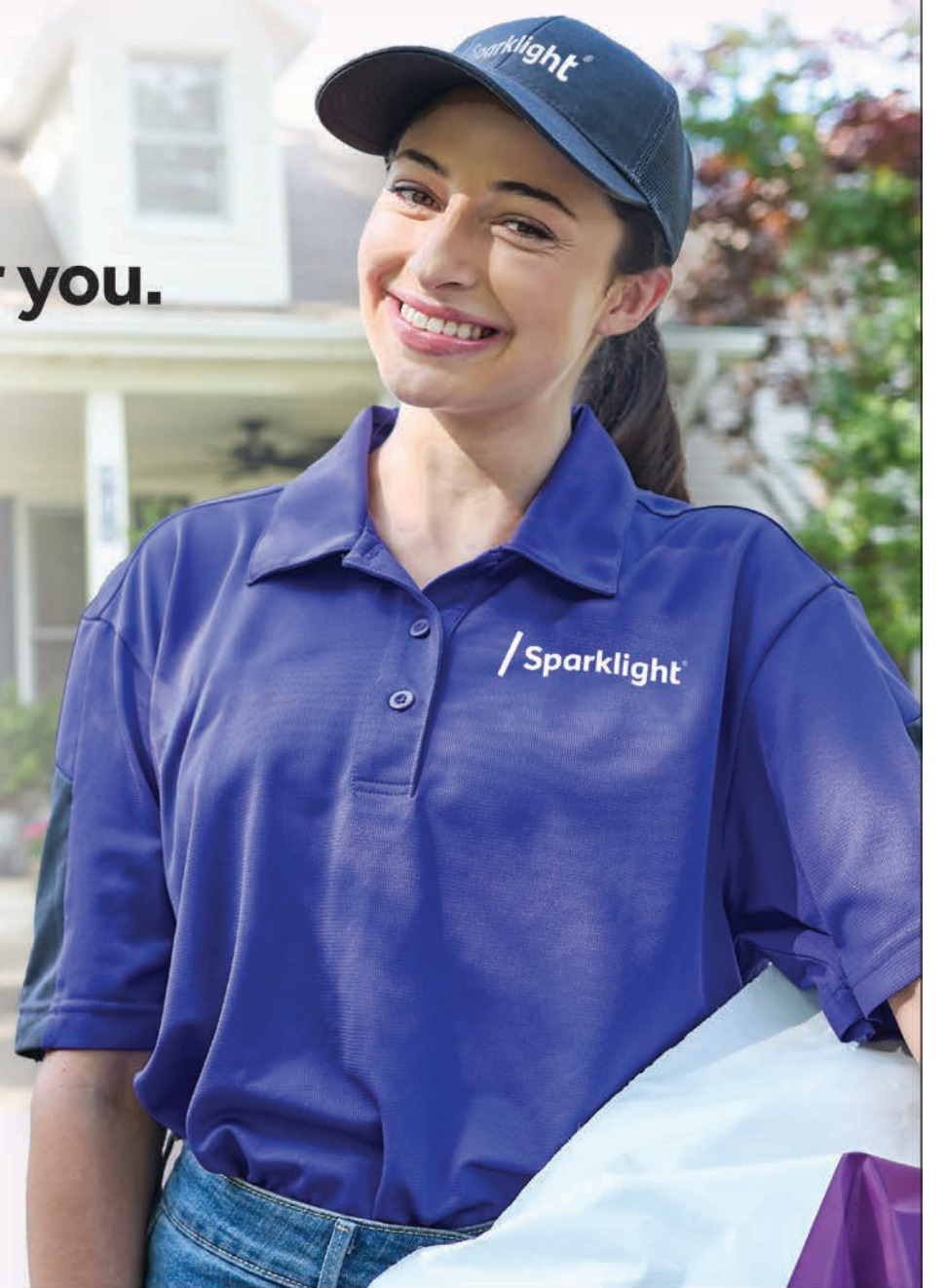
PREMIER-SCREENS.COM  
**Premier Screens, LLC**  
CUSTOM MADE WINDOW SCREENS & RESCREENING SERVICES  
SERVICING CENTRAL GEORGIA  
MOBILE SERVICE  
We Come to You!  
(478)244-3885

# Hargray is now Sparklight.

Internet that's always working for you.

Say hello to Sparklight, formerly Hargray! Same great team, new promise: "Always working for you." We pioneered internet for small towns and cities. Now, with our new name, we're all about advanced technology, top-notch customer service, and unbeatable connectivity.

We believe connection makes a house a home. As our network grows, we're more dedicated than ever to delivering fast, reliable internet for years to come.



Call **855.525.3947** to learn more.

**HARGRAY IS NOW**  
**Sparklight**