

# The Houston Home Journal

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## Perry Council appoints city manager, recognizes local veterans at meeting



Carey Washington was selected to ride alongside Mayor Randall Walker during the Cherry Blossom Festival's Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 9.

By **SANDRA HERNANDEZ**  
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**PERRY** — Nominees for the Cherry Blossom Festival's Veterans Day Parade received recognition from Perry City Council. Council also approved the appointment of Robert Smith as the new City Manager and the installation of security cameras downtown during Tuesday night's meeting. The city chose Carey Washington for the chance to ride alongside Mayor Randall Walker at Macon's Cherry Blossom Festival Veterans Day Parade. Washington is a graduate of Perry High School, class of 1997. Upon graduation, he started serving in the United States Marines, where he was involved in multiple missions, including time in Afghanistan.

See **MANAGER** page 2A

## Local non-profits working together to give away spaghetti this Thanksgiving



By **OWEN JONES**  
HHJ Staff Writer  
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**WARNER ROBINS** — This Thanksgiving season, Aaliyah Cares and Daniella's House of Hope are hosting a spaghetti food drive on Tuesday, Nov. 25, from noon to 3 p.m., located at Faith Lutheran Church on 301 N. Pleasant Hill Rd. Coca Kleckley, CEO of Aaliyah Cares, said she has always wanted to do community outreach. "With the recent events of SNAP being up in the air and federal employees losing their income, everything happened so abruptly. I kind of just jumped into action and just wanted to feed my community," she said. "People are working so hard these days, and I feel like they don't have

the time to cook a warm meal. I wanted to give away something that is ready to enjoy." Daniella Edmund, CEO of Daniella's House of Hope, said they wanted to do something different this Thanksgiving. With both Kleckley and Edmund loving spaghetti, the idea just clicked. "A nice baked, warm spaghetti will last a family pretty long if you come and get it," Edmund said. This is the first event in collaboration with Aaliyah Cares and Daniella's House of Hope, and this is the first food drive hosted by Aaliyah Cares. Edmund's non-profit is no stranger to community outreach, as they do annual events.

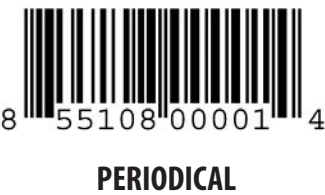
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## Man sentenced to prison for insurance payment scheme

By **BRIEANNA SMITH**  
HHJ Managing Editor  
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**PERRY** — A former owner and repeat winner of "Insurance Agent of the Year" of a Warner Robins insurance company was sentenced to federal prison for an insurance payment scheme he conducted to win the award and its benefits, according to a press release by the Department of Justice. Jeremy Lasseter, 44, of Perry, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Marc Treadwell on Nov. 19 to 27 months in prison and over \$221,000 paid in restitution to the victim. Lasseter pleaded guilty to one count of bank fraud on Aug. 27. According to court documents and statements, Lasseter owned the Alfa Insurance Agency group in Warner Robins. He had been selected as Alfa Georgia's "Insurance Agent of the Year" for four years in a row. Starting in March 2020, Lasseter told a victim, a customer of his, to make payments to her premium but didn't apply them to her policy. Instead, he used her payments towards other customers without her knowledge or consent. Lasseter would sometimes tell the victim to pay cash or make checks payable to him rather than Alfa Insurance, saying it was better for taxes. In total, the victim made \$221,515 in payments that were applied to other policies. The prosecution argued Lasseter conducted the fraud to maintain his "Insurance Agent of the Year" title, an honor that granted perks and status. The case was investigated by the FBI. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Howard is prosecuting the case. "The money taken from the victim has had a significant negative impact

See **SCHEME** page 2A



PERIODICAL

## Commissioners hear Fiscal Year 2026 financial report, resolve old business

By **OWEN JONES**  
HHJ Staff Writer  
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**WARNER ROBINS** — The Houston County Commissioners heard from Chief Financial Officer Danyelle George as she presented the first FY26 financial report for July to September.

ARPA and SPLOST funds were not covered in the financial report. George said this is because the county is preparing a five-year capital plan, which will be presented at a later date. In George's report, the General Fund for this quarter increased \$1.3 million from

See **REPORT** page 7A



## Hot off the presses!

## Press room insert machine sets Houston Home Journal print shop up for growth

By **BRIEANNA SMITH**  
HHJ Managing Editor  
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**PERRY** — Did you know The Houston Home Journal has an in-house printing press? An updated piece of equipment is setting the shop up for continued success amid growing print demands. The press room has recently

acquired an insert machine. The machine, a Mueller Martini 227, is a much-needed upgrade from the former 1970s-era inserter. Valued at about \$35,000, it has eight available slots for inserts, the flyers inside the newspaper from stores and businesses. The press room began operating the new machine on Nov. 12.

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### Word of the Day

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. — Romans 12:10 (NKJV)

### Inside

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# COMMUNITY

## Thanksgiving food giveaways in Houston County

As the holiday season begins, local organizations are reaching out to give resources to those in need. Here are some local events and pantries feeding Houston County for Thanksgiving:

**Feed the City — Drive-thru Thanksgiving Food Giveaway**

Sat., Nov. 22: 10 a.m. – noon

Hope Church: 204 Sullivan Road, Fort Valley

**Shiloh Baptist Thanksgiving Food Box Giveaway**

Sat., Nov. 22: 10 a.m. – noon

Shiloh Baptist Church: 205 Second Street, Elko

**Humanitarian Gang & Warner Robins Housing Authority — Drive-thru Food Giveaway**

Sat., Nov. 22: 10 a.m. – noon

Arlington Court: Warner Robins

**AFGE Local 987 & ASPIRE Foundation — Bagged Food Drive Distribution**

Sat., Nov. 22: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

1764 Watson Boulevard, Warner Robins

**Hazy Daisy Farm Community Food Pantry**

Drive through, open 24/7

120 E Flourney Road, Hawkinsville



**Highly Favored Ministries Drive-Thru Turkey Giveaway**

Sat., Nov. 22: 11 a.m.

Solid Rock Christian Church: 237 North Davis Drive, Warner Robins

**Aaliyah Cares & Daniella's House of Hope Spaghetti Giveaway**

Tuesday, Nov. 25: noon – 3 p.m.

301 N. Pleasant Hill Road, Warner Robins

**Trinity Vision Global Thanksgiving Food Giveaway**

Wednesday, Nov. 26: 3 p.m.

No Limit Baptist Church: 1352 Radio Loop, Warner Robins

**Middle Georgia Community Food Bank — Holiday Boxes & Pantry Sites**

Date & Time Varies by agency; many offer special holiday pickups  
Multiple agencies across Bibb & Houston County  
Offering pantry pickups, food boxes, occasional holiday extras, registration varies by site  
Contact mgcfb.org or 478-742-3958

### MANAGER

From page 1A

During his service, he was the recipient of multiple awards, including the Department of the Army Superior Civilian Award and a Joint Civilian Service Commendation Award. After his service, he returned to Perry and became the owner of a small cleaning service business.

Walker said they had a great time during the parade.

“It was really inspiring to see the number of people who came out and really gave honor to our veterans,” he said.

Washington also presented a token of his appreciation – a decommissioned grenade. He shared the inscription, which says: “Thank you, city of Perry for embracing me and honoring my service. I’m so proud to call Perry, Georgia my hometown.”

In August, the city urged the community to nominate local veterans for the ride-along. 11 veterans were nominated this year.

Other nominees included:  
•Grady Auman  
•James Self  
•Jason Seaman  
•Fred Bryant

Walker gave thanks to every veteran for their service.

“We cannot thank you enough for the freedoms that we enjoy in this country. It’s because of your service that we enjoy them,” he said.

Later in the council meeting, Robert Smith was named the new City Manager, a position previously held by Lee Gilmour.

Smith previously served as the Assistant City Manager and worked alongside Gilmour. As the City Manager, he facilitates effective communication between the city government, citizens, community organizations and institutions, and neighboring jurisdictions, including the state and federal governments.

Council members unanimously approved the resolution to appoint Smith.

Smith thanked Walker and council and appreciated their vote of confidence.

“[I] very much look forward to continuing doing the work of the people here at the city of Perry. It has been a tremendous experience so far and [I] look forward to working with all of you... and all of our wonderful employees and making sure that we continue to move forward here at the city of Perry,” he said. “There are a lot of exciting things, a lot of challenges, a lot of oppor-

tunities but I think we’re all up to the task. It’s very exciting and very appreciative that you all name me your next city manager.”

On the agenda, the city approved the installation of security cameras downtown. Council members also discussed this item during the Work Session on Monday night.

Police Chief Alan Everidge explained in 2023 that the city was awarded the Georgia Public Safety and Community Violence Reduction Grant. He said as part of this grant, the police department emphasized cameras in the city parks, city facilities, and areas where public events are hosted.

Due to the city hosting numerous events downtown, Everidge wants the area to remain safe. He proposed to add three cameras. Although it would not cover the entire footprint, he believes it will help deter crime.

Everidge believes the cameras could also help the police department in investigations. He said it could be used for hit-and-run or other major crimes.

The cameras will be placed at

•Corner of Jernigan Street and Carroll Street

•Carroll Street at Ball Street

•Main Street at Ball Street

“We have a safe downtown. We are always looking for ways to do more with less. We believe this is a great opportunity to put this in at no cost,” Everidge said.

The Mayor and Council will hold their pre-council meeting at 5 p.m. and the regular council meeting at 6 p.m. on December 2. Everyone is invited to attend these meetings, and the agenda can be found at <https://perry-ga.gov/subscribe-agendas-minutes>. Both meetings are also livestreamed, and the full video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/@PerryComms>.

## Warner Robins police looking for Best Buy shoplifting suspects



Courtesy: Warner Robins Police Department

Police say the two suspects walked out of Best Buy on Watson Boulevard with computers.

By **BRIANNA SMITH**  
HHJ Managing Editor  
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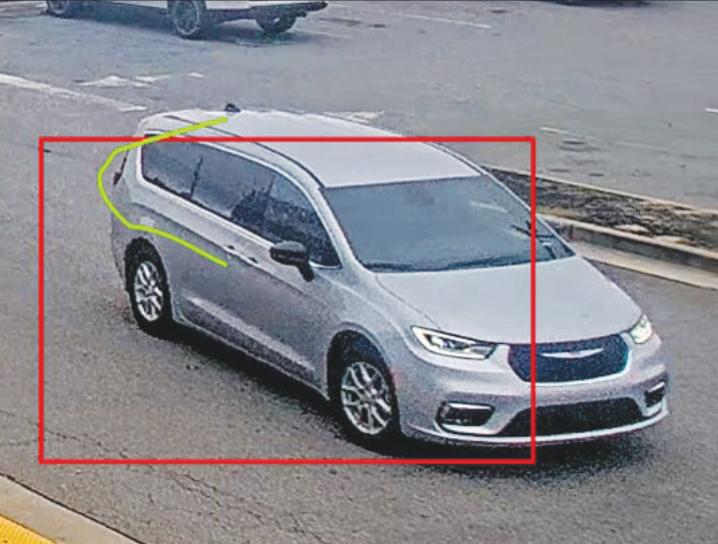
**WARNER ROBINS** — The Warner Robins Police Department is looking for two suspects caught on camera shoplifting from a local Best Buy, according to the department’s social media.

According to police, officers responded to the Best Buy at 3040 Watson

Boulevard. Police said both suspects entered the store, grabbed two gaming computers and walked out without paying for them.

The suspects left the scene in a silver Chrysler minivan.

Anyone with more information on the suspect’s identities is encouraged to contact Det. Elizabeth Smith at (478) 302-5380 or Macon Regional CrimeStoppers: 1-877-68CRIME.



Courtesy: Warner Robins Police Department

Police say the two suspects fled in a silver car.

### SCHEME

From page 1A

on her life. The defendant must be held accountable for defrauding her and abusing the trust placed in him by Alfa Insurance,” U.S. Attorney William R. “Will” Keyes said. “This is not a victimless crime; such schemes will not be tolerated in the Middle District of Georgia.”

“Lasseter’s actions under-

mined the integrity of the insurance industry and his deliberate scheme

to redirect premium payments for his own gain is a clear violation of the law and a betrayal of the victim’s trust,” said Paul Brown, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. “The FBI remains committed to holding individuals accountable who exploit others for personal benefit.”

December 9, 2025 Vendors Needed  
10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Jingle and Mingle  
Senior Community Fair

Resources for Senior Citizens of Houston County

Perry Events Center  
1121 Macon Road  
Perry, Ga.31069

Call 478-303-0691  
For More Information

Hawkinsville Opera House presents...

STRAIT COUNTRY

November 22, 2025 at 7:00pm - Doors open at 6:00pm

Get ready for a legendary night of music as we pay tribute to the one and only George Strait - the undisputed King of Country!

This show captures the heart, soul, and spirit of George's unforgettable sound.

Tickets can be purchased at the Hawkinsville Opera House  
[www.hawkinsvilleoperahouse.com](http://www.hawkinsvilleoperahouse.com)  
or by calling  
478-783-1884

GRAB YOUR BOOTS AND JOIN US FOR A NIGHT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

Tickets: \$30 in advance, \$35 at door (general admission)

42 S Lumpkin St, Hawkinsville, GA



CALENDAR

OBITUARIES

Thanksgiving Food Giveaway

Shiloh Baptist Church at 205 Second Street, Elko, Georgia will sponsor a Thanksgiving Food Box Giveaway, Saturday, November 22, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 12 Noon. First Come, First Serve.

Lions Interest Meeting

The Houston County Lions are sponsoring an Interest Meeting for community-service minded people who would like to join hands with others to solve problems and help people in our community. The Interest Meeting is at 7:00 pm, Monday, December 15th at the IHOP restaurant at 2710 Watson Blvd. in Warner Robins.

Perry DAR Chapter Quarterly Meeting

The December luncheon meeting of the General Daniel Stewart Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will be held at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at the Perry Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. The program, “Holiday Traditions,” will be presented by Elizabeth Walker. If you plan to attend, please email [generaldanielstewart@gmail.com](mailto:generaldanielstewart@gmail.com) or text/call 318-294-7023.

Yard Sale Fundraiser

Byron Heritage Church is hosting a Yard Sale Fundraiser on Saturday, November 22nd from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm at 103 W. Heritage Blvd in Byron. All proceeds go to support our March 2026 Red Bird Mission Trip.

Heart of GA Philatelic Society

The next meeting of the Heart of Georgia Philatelic Society (your local stamp club) will be on Tuesday, November 25, 2025 starting at 6 pm. The meeting takes place at 4088 Watson Blvd, Suite 600, Warner Robins. The meeting is open to everyone interested in stamp collecting and postal history. Every meeting features door prizes, appraisals, free magazines and other literature, and a mini swap meet where you can buy and trade stamps, covers, supplies and related materials. For more information, send an email to [chief\\_rod@yahoo.com](mailto:chief_rod@yahoo.com) or call 478-636-8684.

Community Calendar

Email your information to: [brieanna@hhjonline.com](mailto:brieanna@hhjonline.com)

Houston Home Journal

478-987-1823  
1210 Washington St.  
Perry

Christmas Bazaar Craft & Bake Sale

The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church will sponsor their annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, November 22nd., from 8:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. in the annex building adjacent to Mt. Calvary located at 390 Carl Vinson Parkway in Warner Robins. Breakfast and lunch will be available to shoppers in the Youth Diner, located inside the annex, from 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Come and browse an array of holiday items as well as other crafts and artistry and a wide selection of baked goods, including cheese straws, jams, and jellies.

Johnnie Elizabeth Hittson

Johnnie Elizabeth Hittson (Lowe) (she preferred to be called Johnna because it sounded more like a girls name,) passed away on Monday, November 17, 2025, at age 99. Born on July 19, 1926, in Summitville, Tennessee, Johnna was the daughter of Beulah Elizabeth Prater and Cecil Hall Lowe. She grew up on a farm with six siblings. She was quite a tomboy, and her favorite activities were playing in the loft of the barn, skating on the pond in the winter, grooming her pet pig, and riding the family’s mule, “Ole Blue”. Johnna was always eager to learn, and she had a passion for reading throughout her life. She graduated from Manchester Central High School during WWII. After graduation, she went to work at Camp Forrest and moved



to Nashville, Tennessee, and went to work at Phillips & Buttorff, a company that built pontoon boats for the war effort. At the end of the war, her childhood sweetheart returned home, and they began dating. She married Buford Price Hittson in January 1947, and a year later they had a daughter named Mary Elizabeth, who was always called Libby. In 1971, Johnna and her husband, Buford, moved to Warner Robins, Georgia, to be near their daughter. In

1972, Johnna went to work at Mercer University and began going to school full-time. While at Mercer, she received her bachelor’s and master’s degree cum laude. When the officials at Mercer decided to build a medical school, Johnna became the assistant to the new dean. She did the grunt work that made it possible for the medical school to become a reality. After Johnna’s retirement from Mercer, she traveled all over the United States with her daughter and granddaughter, while her husband stayed at home and cared for the all the farm animals. When her husband died in 2003, she sold their farm and moved to Perry, Georgia, to live with her daughter and son-in-law. She loved Perry and thought it was the most beautiful town in America. Johnna lived a remarkable life, but being a member of the church of Christ

gave her the greatest joy. She became a member of the church when she was fourteen years old, and she remained faithful her entire life. In addition to her husband and parents, Johnna was preceded in death by her brothers, Kenneth Lowe, Levoyd Lowe, Anthony Lowe, and her sister, Naomi Allen. Johnna’s memory will forever be treasured by her loving daughter, Libby, and her beloved son-in-law, Guy Chils; granddaughter, Amanda Crawford (Mike); and great-grandchildren, Addison Goings and Gavin Crawford; siblings; Betty Grissom and Jimmy Lowe (Gale); and a host of loving nieces and nephews. Johnna requested cremation and no funeral services. With honor, Burpee-Scott Memorial Chapel & Crematory has been entrusted with arrangements.

NOTICE

The City of Warner Robins City Council does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the City Hall Chambers on **December 15, 2025 at 4:30pm** and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year’s tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.

CURRENT 2025 PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY

H O U S T O N C O U N T Y	V A L U E	HOUSTON	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
		Real & Personal	1,953,918,351	2,241,838,118	2,510,001,921	2,888,520,362	3,367,443,852
		Motor Vehicles	20,258,660	18,082,300	17,774,780	16,254,760	14,183,190
		Mobile Homes	2,469,086	2,553,172	2,743,060	3,070,802	3,796,077
		Timber - 100%		13,850	24,057	32,792	0
		Heavy Duty Equipment	4,550	31,470	30,627	24,870	6,152
		Gross Digest	1,976,650,647	2,262,518,910	2,530,574,445	2,907,903,586	3,385,429,271
		Less Exemptions	110,538,817	129,987,066	154,482,521	187,622,150	231,019,166
		NET DIGEST VALUE	1,866,111,830	2,132,531,844	2,376,091,924	2,720,281,436	3,154,410,105
	R A T E	Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage	9.9800	9.9800	9.9800	8.9530	8.9530
Less Rollbacks (Local Option Sales Tax & Insurance Premium)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000		
NET M&O MILLAGE RATE	9.9800	9.9800	9.9800	8.9530	8.9530		
TAX	NET M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$18,623,796	\$21,282,668	\$23,713,397	\$24,354,680	\$28,241,434	
P E A C H C O U N T Y	PEACH		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	V A L U E	Real & Personal	46,555,591	59,433,245	71,480,811	94,130,047	165,160,261
		Motor Vehicles	150,990	124,600	96,250	0	70,930
		Mobile Homes					0
		Timber - 100%					0
		Heavy Duty Equipment					4,843
		Gross Digest	46,706,581	59,557,845	71,577,061	94,130,047	165,236,034
		Less Exemptions	1,181,321	1,392,073	1,498,182	1,726,393	4,095,993
	NET DIGEST VALUE	45,525,260	58,165,772	70,078,879	92,403,654	161,140,041	
	R A T E	Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage	9.9800	9.9800	9.9800	8.9530	8.9530
Less Rollback (Local Option Sales Tax)		1.0540	1.0900	1.1060	1.2840	0.7773	
NET M&O MILLAGE RATE		8.9260	8.8900	8.8740	7.6690	8.1757	
TAX	NET M&O TAXES LEVIED	\$406,358	\$517,094	\$621,880	\$708,644	\$1,317,426	
TOTAL COUNTY	TOTAL COUNTY		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	TOTAL DIGEST VALUE		1,911,637,090	2,190,697,616	2,446,170,803	2,812,685,090	3,315,550,146
	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED		\$19,030,155	\$21,799,762	\$24,335,277	\$25,063,323	\$29,558,860
	Net Tax \$ Increase			\$2,769,607	\$2,535,516	\$728,046	\$4,495,537
	Net Tax % Increase			14.55%	11.63%	2.99%	17.94%

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Warner Robins has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 15.20% in Houston County and 13.31% in Peach County.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at City of Warner Robins, City Hall Council Chambers on Monday, December 1st, 2025 at 3:00 PM.

Times and places of additional public hearings on this tax increase are at City of Warner Robins, City Hall Council Chambers on Monday December 1st, 2025 immediately following the conclusion of the Council Meeting but not before 6:00 PM and Monday, December 15 th, 2025 at 4:00 PM.

The tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 8.953 mills, an increase of 1.181 mills for City of Warner Robins properties within Houston County. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.772 mills for City of Warner Robins properties within Houston County.

This proposed tax increase for a home in Houston County with a fair market value of \$220,000 is approximately \$75.58 and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$225,000 is \$106.29.

The tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 8.175 mills, an increase of 0.960 mills for City of Warner Robins properties within Peach County. Without this tentative increase, the millage rate will be no more than 7.215 mills for City of Warner Robins properties within Peach County.

This proposed tax increase for a home in Peach County with a fair market value of \$200,000 is approximately \$53.76 and the proposed tax increase for non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$200,000 is \$76.80.



VIEWPOINTS

“One voice can make a difference”

The Houston Home Journal

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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 though 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.

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Share Your Viewpoint

There are three ways to submit a Letter to the Editor: Email it to brieanna@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

Raking pine straw & other things to be thankful for

NEW  
SOUTHERN DAD

KYLE DOMINY



I’ve shook out my fair share of bales of pine straw. Shook out? Shaken? Let’s go with spread. I’ve spread out my fair share of bales of pine straw, especially at this time of year. With the onset of the holiday season, many people spruce up their front yards to impress the neighbors and family members they don’t like. Nothing tells your spouse’s family “I’m doing pretty good for myself these days. Who’s the loser now?” like paying someone to clean up the flower beds. For many years this subdivision vanity lined my pockets with cash just in time for Christmas. Of course, as a young man, while working in other people’s yards, I day-dreamed about having my own house and the disposable income to pay someone to labor for me. Such is the ignorance of youth. Now that I’ve learned a thing or two about life, I miss those days, and, sometimes, that line of work, though my back may feel otherwise. Though it can’t be worse than being hunched over a keyboard at a desk in my windowless dungeon day after day. Sweat equity means to improve the value of your property by the work of your own two hands, and I try to relive my glorious manual labor days with projects around my own home. Now instead of wishing I could afford to hire someone to do it for me, I relish a long to-do list and am thankful I’m

healthy enough to tackle it and have people to call on if I need assistance (Dad, I could use some help fixing a shower when you can spare a couple of hours). Yes, this comes with occasional frustrations and sometimes a minor injury or two, even a torrent of words you can’t, or at least shouldn’t, say in church. Once a year I even get to shake out, or rather spread, pine straw again. There are enough pine trees around the house that I don’t have to buy straw, another thing I’m thankful for. A few minutes with the rake and I have more than enough to give my home a little holiday curb appeal, though no one can see it but my family and deer that cross my front yard each night. Living in the woods is something to be thankful for. Having a family to live in the woods with ranks high on the thankful list, way above the deer, which I could take or leave. Big rats are all they are, and I hope many Thanksgiving tables are set with venison. I pile my pine straw on a big tarp and drag it around the property. My back is still a little sore, and I’m thankful for that, too. A little pain is a good reminder that I’m still alive. Wherever you find yourself, I hope it is a home, big or small, full of family, and maybe some fresh pine straw across the front, even if just for yourself. Happy Thanksgiving.

Math is fun

I went to Georgia Tech, chances are you know that. I graduated from that fine college, with five calculus courses on my academic record, but it was brutal at first. Here is the first exam at the end of week one, as best as I remember it, in a calculus course known simply as 1308. 1308 pigeons, each weighing 1308 grams, fall a distance of 1308 meters, where they impact a train moving at 1308 meters/sec. 1. Calculate the total mass of the pigeons. Easy. 2. Calculate the velocity of the pigeons at impact. Tougher. 3. Calculate the total kinetic energy at impact. What? Bonus 5 points: Within 1/10 of a degree, state the mean temperature of Boston Bay on July 4, 1976. Amazingly, in law school and my 40 years as a law-

COLUMNIST

KELLY BURKE



yer, I’ve never used differential calculus. Or came close to needing it. That being said, my computer science background at Tech was very helpful in my government career. When an IT professional told me they “couldn’t” do something, I’d tell them how to do it. They stopped telling me “no,” and appreciated that I knew exactly what I wanted and how to get there. So I get that differential calculus, or thermal dynam-

ics, or circuit analysis isn’t for everybody, but thank goodness some people are smart enough to do that stuff. Because science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is vital to our national productivity. We are seventh in the world in labor productivity, but Ireland (#1) is 50% better than we are. So call us Techies nerds if you want, but Techies invented WD-40, the NEXUS supercomputer, Google Glass, ISS (Internet

Security Systems), and hundreds of other inventions that have transformed the world. But for me, it was a rough start at Tech. I thought I was smart until I got there. Kelly Burke was born in Knoxville where he spent his younger years, followed by high school years in Atlanta where he graduated from Georgia Tech, and Mercer Law School. He has been in private practice, 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 Ramanolo named George Harrison, and spending time with their grandchildren. To see this column or Kelly’s archives, visit www.kellyrburke.com. You can email Kelly at dakellyburke@gmail.com.



Enwheel the wagons! No more snollygosters in Merriam-Webster’s new dictionary!

Simply said, there is nothing like a good petrichor to make a guy feel on top of the world. That depends, of course, on my computer’s teraflop since I’m WFH and not interested in ghost kitchens. In case you were wondering, those are among the 5,000 new words contained in the 12th edition of the Merriam-Webster collegiate dictionary coming out this week. Between you and me, I would count ghost kitchen as two words, but I’m not about to get into a disputation with Merriam or with Webster. Lexicographers can be a touchy bunch. Speaking of lexicographers, I ran this information by my friends, Barney Funk and Porter Wagnalls, for their thoughts. The boys used to put out their own dictionaries until they discovered they could make more money selling aluminum siding. They suggested I take a shot at trying to

COLUMNIST

DICK YARBROUGH



master the approximately 171,476 words currently floating around in space before I tackle 5,000 new ones (or 5,001, if you count ghost kitchens as 2 words.) Lexicographers can also be acidulous, if not downright trenchant. For Funk and Wagnalls’ information, putting out carefully-crafted, cutting-edge, jaw-dropping inciteful columns each and every week for your enjoyment and amazement is not as simple as I make it look. I use a lot of words including a bunch of nouns and verbs and an occasional

conjunction and I don’t need some pointy-heads jettisoning them just because they can. I find that so – pardon my language – inimically traducing. It seems that just as I get you comfortable with, say, “enwheel,” Merriam or Webster – I’m not sure which one – takes the word out of their dictionary and I am forced to go with the more pedestrian “encircle,” which I am sure doesn’t impress you and makes you ask yourself if this guy is really cutting-edge. After all, anybody can be encircled, but only in this

space could you ever be enwheelled. And how am I going to discuss current events in Washington or under the Gold Dome without snollygoster as a fundamental descriptor of political discourse? For those of you who haven’t been paying close attention, a snollygoster is defined – or was before Merriam and Webster decided to go all politically-correct on us – as a “shrewd, unprincipled person, particularly a politician guided by personal gain rather than principles.” When I think of snollygosters, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge jumps to mind. Who else but snollygosters would consider approving drilling for toothpaste whitener in our Okefenokee? I think you would agree the very thought of that is simply persecutory, if not downright rebarbative. See YARBROUGH page 7A



# LIFESTYLE & FAITH

## Falling out of bed

I suffered a nearly serious accident a few years ago. What was it? Well, I fell out of bed.

I was getting back into bed around 6 A.M. one morning. I removed my bedroom shoes and slid into bed. As I did, I turned my head—shifting my center of gravity—to check the time. The clock read 5:55 A.M. I wasn’t far enough on the bed, so I started sliding. I was powerless to stop it, so down to the floor I plummeted.

The mattress is about three feet from the floor. On the way down, my arm hit the lamp table and the back of my head hit the side board of bed. I landed on my backside. Beverly, my wife, rushed to me. Other than feeling like a Mack truck hit me, my head was hurting and my arm was bleeding. After Beverly helped me up, I could tell I hadn’t broken my back.

Since I take blood thinner, I was worried about internal bleeding inside my brain. Beverly urged me to go to the hospital, but I elected to monitor my condition. Beverly helped clean-up the blood on my arm and bandage my lacerations.

### PARABLES TO PONDER

BILLY POWELL



Since I made it through the next several days without ill effects, I didn’t seek medical attention.

Since this was quite a spill for an 84-year-old man at that time, I believe that God and His mighty angels superintended my fall and kept me from serious injury. In another sense, it just wasn’t my time to go. Evidently, I have more work to do. I have always believed in angels and feel these unseen creatures played a key role in keeping me from serious harm.

I searched the scriptures to find examples of angels sparing someone. I found a number of scriptural accounts. In Daniel 6 we find King Darius of Persia ordering Daniel to be thrown into the lion’s den. When the king returned the next morning, He found Daniel unharmed.

Darius asked Daniel how he escaped death. Daniel replied, “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so they could not harm me.”

King David’s life was fraught with danger and death threats. In the 23rd Psalm, David credits God, saying: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” The scripture asserts: “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.”

During the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, His disciple cut off an arrester’s ear with a sword. The Master said, “Put up your sword. I can summon the Father and He will send twelve legions of angels to defend Me.”

Imagine the awesome power of 60,000 angels!

## Say watt! LED astray by scammers

So, I got scammed. They actually targeted The Houston Home Journal but I got caught up in the crossfire due to my position.

It was like this. Several weeks ago I received a call from a young-sounding, friendly, lady.

Her: “Do you order the lightbulbs for your organization.”

Me: “I do, but I typically just run down to Ace Hardware, Lowe’s or Home Depot to get them.”

Her: “That’s fine. We just want to send you our catalog of lighting so you can see our great selection and prices.”

Me: “That’s fine.” She confirmed the address, all seemed okay.

About two weeks after that I was in Atlanta at the Georgia National Trust for Local News’s summit when I received a call. I ignored it went to voice mail.

“Hey, this is John (can’t remember his last name). I really need to get in touch with you ASAP.”

I texted back at the office to one of my coworkers.

“Hey, would you give this guy a call and see what he wants?”

She did. A text followed: “He says he needs to talk to you.”

So, we were in the process of having an insert machine delivered to us from Colorado. (Normally like \$60,000. We got it for \$4,000 and it is expected to improve our efficiency significantly. Note: It’s on station and as of Wednesday of last week was up and running.) My mind said: “This must be about the move. I need to call him.” I did.

John: “I just wanted to confirm that so and so called you and offered to send you our latest catalog.”

Me, to myself: “Crap. This is a blooming scam!”

Me: “Yes, she did.” I hur-

riedly got off the phone ... “I’ve got to get back to class ...” and thought that was the end of it.

Monday of last week I received a letter from them, Central Industries, Inc. “Dear customer, Thank you for allowing us to discuss our company’s cutting-edge products. We appreciate the trust you have placed in our company and value your decision to evaluate and hopefully purchase our product.”

For the record. None of that conversation took place.

It got worse as the letter, after continuing on in their imaginary conversation, went on to say I had approved of the order – the catalog, yes, but order, heck to the no. Further, three paragraphs in it said they were going to send me a trial order of their bulbs (complete with their 20-year extended service guarantee), six bulbs, \$119.98 apiece, \$38.05 freight and handling, for a grand total of \$757.93!

I went to the Better Business Bureau site to see what it had to say. Yep. There they were. Complaint after complaint after complaint. Same thing. Either they were victimized by opening the door by agreeing to receive a catalog or just the simple fact they talked to them was proof enough in Central Industries’ eyes to send the samples. (Per the complainants, they also don’t answer their phone or respond to emails and one who did open the box said the lightbulbs were small and looked like they

were worth \$7. Total!)

The tricky part about the BBB site was Central Industries responded to every complaint, and in every instance they tried to make it sound like, “Oh, we’re just wonderful people trying to make a living like everyone else.” Nobody was buying it – in their rebuttals to Central Industries’ responses - because obviously everybody knew they had been scammed.

Including me, because a few days after the letter came, the box came. Unfortunately, someone else signed for it, so there it was in all its lying, deceitful glory. I raced to the FedEx office but guess what? When they tried scanning it for return – multiple attempts – it kept coming back that it couldn’t be returned.

The heck you say! I wrapped it up in brown paper – it was tempting to make it holiday paper so it could be a holiday gift - put their address on it, sent it back. It better not ever show up on our doorsteps again because I’m committed to spending every bit of \$757.93 of my own playing this back and forth game if that’s what they want to do.

Plus, and it’s beyond me why they haven’t already been investigated and shut down, I’m going to send a copy of this column to all of the 25 newspapers we print throughout the state.

They say they’re all about light, well, I’ll give them what they want and shed a little bit of it on them. Free of charge.

### HHJ PUBLISHER

DON MONCRIEF



## Mysterious & alluring cameos

From the opulent salons of Victorian England to the sun-baked sands of ancient Egypt, one piece of jewelry has remained an enduring symbol of status and beauty: the cameo. These miniature sculptures, typically featuring a figure or scene in relief against a contrasting background, hold a history as intricate as their carving. But what truly makes a desirable cameo, and how did a simple carved shell become a must-have accessory for a Queen?

The very origins of the word “cameo” remain elusive. Some suggest it’s Italian, or perhaps stems from the Old French camaieu or the Old Latin cammaeus. Even the ancient Arabic word for amulet, khamea, has been proposed. While etymologists debate its parentage, the popularity of the physical object is indisputable.

The earliest known cameos predate written history. As far back as five thousand years ago, ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians were crafting these tiny reliefs from stone and glass. Later, the Roman author Pliny the Elder even noted the existence of glass cameos as costume jewelry—the accessible alternative for those who couldn’t afford pieces cut from precious gems like agate.

While stone and glass held ancient precedence, the lighter, more dramatic shell cameo—prized for its naturally occurring layers of contrasting color—found its true zenith much later. Emerging in popularity during the Renaissance, the art exploded into a worldwide phenomenon in the Victorian era.

British Victorians, particularly, were utterly captivated by all things Italian. The era’s essential journey for the elite—the “Grand Tour”—ensured that travelers returned home with one indispensable souvenir: an

### ALL ABOUT ANTIQUES

JILLINDA FALEN



Italian-carved cameo. Even Queen Victoria herself routinely adorned herself with the pieces, instantly cementing their status as a necessary accessory for every middle- and upper-class woman on both sides of the Atlantic.

The archetypal Victorian cameo is the profile of a woman, often with elaborately styled hair. The most coveted pieces were those that depicted the figure with jewelry—a necklace, earring, or diadem—known as habillé (meaning “dressed” or “clad”). Collectors should look closely at the details. Cameos with round cheeks and an aquiline (Roman) nose are typically 19th-century. Those with prominent cheekbones and a pug nose often signify 20th-century origins. Whether shell, hardstone, or glass, the finer the features and sharper and deeper the detail, the better the cameo.

Beyond the common shell, cameos were carved from a dazzling array of materials, each prized for different qualities:

- Hardstone Cameos: These pieces, typically smaller and cut from materials like banded agate or sardonyx, yield spectacular, high-contrast images. Sardonyx, in particular, with its parallel layers of brown/red alternating with white/black, allows master carvers to expose multiple color gradations, creating astonishing depth.

- Lava Cameos: These simple, monochrome pieces, often made of igneous rock,

were easily carved and less expensive than shell or hardstone, making them a popular souvenir of a traveler’s Italian trip. Unfortunately, their fragility means fewer have survived to the modern day.

- Monochrome Marvels: Materials like coral (especially the red Corallium rubrum favored by Victorians), jet, and ivory were used to create striking single-color pieces.

Today, collectors face a new challenge: distinguishing a unique, hand-carved piece—which can take a carver months to complete—from a mass-produced duplicate.

Since the mid-20th century, the process of ultrasound cutting has become widespread. While technically still cameos, these pieces are made from a hand-carved template and are mere clones.

A jeweler’s loupe provides the definitive clue:

- Hand-Carved: Reveals growth lines, tool marks, and undercutting—a technique that adds dimension and depth.

- Machine-Made: Displays uniform, parallel striations or tracks across the entire surface, lacking the nuanced depth of human artistry.

The market is flooded with these mass-produced pieces often sold as authentic. As one expert notes, unless one seeks an inexpensive novelty, “make sure you are not paying hand-carved prices” for a clone that was completed in minutes rather than months. Happy Collecting!

MACON REGIONAL  
**CRIMESTOPPERS**

**STOP CRIME NOW**  
742-2330

<div><b>BENNETT, SONNY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR GIVING FALSE NAME. DOB. ADDRESS TO OFFICER ST. CT VOP./THEFT BY TAKING.</div>	<div><b>BROOKS, DEWEY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR VIOLATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDER.</div>	<div><b>BROWN, SHANNON</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S FOR DRIVING WHILE LICENSE/SUSPENDED OR REVOKED (MISD)/ WILLFUL OBSTRUCTION OF LAW/ ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.</div>	<div><b>COLEMAN, RANDY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR SALE METHAMPHETAMINE/ VIOLATION OF STREET GANG TERRORISM AND PREVENTION ACT.</div>
<div><b>DUMAS, BILLY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL IDENTITY FRAUD.</div>	<div><b>CROSS, KENNETH</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE/CRIMINAL TRESPASS /DAMAGE/ VIOLATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDER.</div>	<div><b>GRANT, JOHN</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR ILLEGAL ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN DRUGS/SUP. CT. VOP.</div>	<div><b>GRAY, ARCHIE</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BENCH WARRANT/ FAILURE TO REPORT/ SIMPLE BATTERY.</div>
<div><b>HANNA, JOSEPH</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT - FELONY/CRUELTY TO CHILDREN - 3RD DEGREE/ SIMPLE BATTERY - FAMILY VIOLENCE</div>	<div><b>HARDEE, ASHLEE</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CRUELTY TO CHILDREN/ FAILURE TO REPORT/SUP. CT. VOP.</div>	<div><b>HARRIS, STEVEN JR.</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AENTERING AUTO/ FAILURE TO REPORT/ SUP. CT. VOP.</div>	<div><b>PRAJAPATI, JAYDEEP</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED CHILD MOLESTATION.</div>
<div><b>RICHARDSON, COURTNEY</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FALSE IMPRISONMENT/ SUP. CT. VOP.</div>	<div><b>SHOFNER, JUSTIN</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR 4CTS. - 1ST DEGREE FORGERY/ 4CTS. - FALSE STATEMENTS AND WRITINGS/4CTS. - FELONY IDENTITY FRAUD.</div>	<div><b>THOMPSON, JACOB</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE/CRIMINAL TRESPASS /DAMAGE/ CRUELTY TO CHILDREN - 3RD DEGREE</div>	<div><b>WILSON, CEDRIC</b> WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR POSSESSION OF FIREARM DURING COMM. OF A FELONY/SALE MARIJUANA (PARTY TO CRIME)/ SALE OF MARIJUANA/VIOLATION OF STREET GANG TERRORISM AND PREVENTION ACT.</div>

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**

57-807-45



ENTERTAINMENT

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
**POPEYE**  
By RANDY MILHOLLAND

THE GOD OUR ANCESTORS CONDEMNED US TO TRY TO EAT US. NOW HE'S GONE. ALL WE'VE KNOWN IS SERVING HIM. NOW WHAT?

I HEAR THERE'S A CULT THE COUNTRY OVER LOOKIN' FOR NEW RECRUITS.

YOU ELEVATE NOT LEARNING LESSONS TO A SUPERPOWER.

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
"SHADOW OVER FIN'S SOUTH" PART 1  
SHIPWRECKED IN A COASTAL TOWN, POPEYE DEFEATED THE EVIL GOD WHO CURSED THE POPULACE. ALTHOUGH THEY REMAIN HEXED, MEANWHILE, POPEYE'S PAL BILL BARNACLE HAS ARRIVED.

THERE YA BOTH ARE!  
THANKS FER COMIN' T' GIT US, BILL!  
YOU'RE THE BEST!

PARDON ME, BEFORE YOU TWO GO, WE WANT TO APOLOGIZE.

WE SHOULD HAVE NEVER USED MAGIC TO WRECK YOUR SHIP BUT WE WERE DESPERATE TO END THE CURSE. STILL, IT WAS WRONG.

YOU CAUSED THE WRECK?!

I KINT PRETEN' I AINTSK MAD, YA ENDANGERED ME OLIVE, BUT YA FELT TRAPPED, AN' I BELIEVES IN FERGIVENESS.

SO I HOPES YA KIN FERGIVE ME FER NOT BEIN' ABLE T'STOP WOT'S 'BOUT T'HAPPEN.

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?  
I GUESS HE THINKS KARMA IS REAL.

REALITY HASN'T HIT HIM YET.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Club is missing. 2. Man has less hair. 3. Cap is different. 4. Nose is different. 5. Shoe is different. 6. Golf bag strap is different.

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

CROSSWORD 11-22-25

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10
11					12				13	14	
15					16				17		
	18			19					20		
			21					22			
23	24	25				26			27	28	29
30				31		32	33			34	
35			36			37			38		
39				40				41		42	
43				44				45		46	
				47				48	49		
	50	51				52				53	54
55						56			57		58
59						60			61		
62						63			64		

- CLUES ACROSS
1. Shapeless form

5. Hot springs resort

8. Not square

11. Private theater box

12. Relating to ear

13. Rome's Colosseum, e.g.

15. I \_\_\_\_ you so!

16. \*The opposite of a store the day before Christmas?

17. \*\*"Auld Lang Syne" poet

18. \*Partridge's perch (2 words)

20. Vegas numbers

21. New Zealand's indigenous people

22. Fuss
23. Tabby's favorite herb

26. More so than swell

30. Big-headedness

31. Resembling an ape

34. John Wayne Gacy's \_\_\_\_ the Clown

35. Photographer Dorothea of "Migrant Mother" fame

37. Type or kind

38. Like a sheep after a haircut

39. D'Artagnan's weapon of choice

40. Superlative of #33 Down

42. U.S. central bank

43. Wilma and Fred's hometown

45. \*Latke's main ingredient

47. Word of possibility

48. Turning token taker

50. Exclamation of sorrow

52. \* \_\_\_\_ Odbody of "It's a Wonderful Life"

55. Raspberry drupelets

56. Sainly glow

57. Letter opener

59. Hunts for food

60. Banana leftover

61. Guesstimate phrase

62. \*Color on a Kwanzaa flag

63. Not divisible by two

64. Scholarship criterion

CLUES DOWN

1. Deli acronym

2. Chicago's central district, with The

3. Gawk at

4. Wish harm upon, arch.

5. One of The Beatles

6. Pileus, pl.

7. "The Road Runner" corporation

8. Group of cows

9. Bed-and-breakfast alternative, pl.

10. \*\*"The Nutcracker" step

12. Certain cephalopod, pl.

13. It's sometimes humble

14. \*Chuck Berry's "Run, \_\_\_\_, Run"

19. Reason to strike

22. Grass bristle

23. Famous one, slangily

24. Open-mouthed

25. Like a well-defined muscle

26. Hot alcoholic beverage

27. Washing sponge

28. Type of heron

29. Rondeau, alt. sp.

32. \*Santa's beverage of choice

33. Not well

36. \*Original home of Christmas tannenbaum

38. Fur shawl

40. Extremely unfriendly

41. Plane trick

44. Reprieve in a desert

46. Muscle to bone connector

48. Skidded

49. Weighed

50. 4,840 square yards

51. Told an untruth

52. Head of family

53. Wrap in waxy cloth

54. Comfort

55. Financing acronym

58. Stewart of "Maggie May" fame

SUDOKU

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

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!

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

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

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REPORT

From page 1A

last quarter. For expenses, George said no department in the county is over budget. Total expenditures are a total of \$17 million this quarter, compared to \$19.6 million last quarter.

For E-911, revenue was down about \$2 million, with expenditures being at \$1.1 million. George said the fire revenue is almost the same as last quarter, with expenditures increased to \$1.8 million compared to \$1 million last quarter.

Water fund revenue increased from \$3.6 million to \$4.1 million. George said they expected to see an increase due to the increased water rates.

The revenue in the solid waste fund is down to \$1.1 million, compared to last quarter at \$1.6 million. George said the reason for this is due to county residents picking the services of their choice.

“A lot have picked just the basic service, so it has cost them less and our revenue has gone down because of that in tune of about \$425,000,” she said.

George added that their landfill use revenue has increased due to a rise in landfill fees.

“I think it’s a very good quarter, especially because none of our departments are over budget,” she said.

Chairman Dan Perdue said this is the first time the coun-

ty has presented a quarterly financial report in a public meeting.

In the old business, the Board took action on two annexations that were tabled at the Nov. 4 meeting. Both of these annexations take place on Lake Joy Road, the first being 7.45 acres on Lake Joy and Duskmoore Drive.

Commissioner Shane Gottwals made a motion to non-concur with this annexation, due to density concerns and the change of zoning from existing to commercial.

“To be clear, this will give more time to find the best solution,” Gotwals said.

Perdue pointed out that the county has combined ordinances, making commercial development very difficult.

“The county restricts commercial access from primarily residential roads which Duskmoore is, and the city does not desire any more curb cuts along Lake Joy which is understandable,” he said.

“That would restrict commercial access to this piece of property which then, in turn, may conflict with the fire code which would necessitate access in an easier fashion into a possible commercial development.”

The Board voted unanimously to non-concur with this annexation.

One citizen spoke against the annexation and said that the neighborhood had no reason to deny any residential development on the property; however, the commercial aspect of the development is not something they agree

with.

“I am very grateful for you wanting to take more time and consider this. We really appreciate it,” the citizen said.

The Board concurred with a similar annexation on Lake Joy Road containing almost 26 acres.

Commissioner Tal Talton said the stipulations would be that the City of Warner Robins would sign an infrastructure agreement, a water study done to ensure the water mains are correctly sized for the delivery of fire flow, a traffic study to determine the impacts to Lake Joy Road and Beulah Church intersection, and all county utilities would stay with the county.

Gottwals expressed support for the annexation, saying it was a best-case scenario.

“This is just one of those things where a lot of work went into it since it was brought forward, and this is an example of getting to the best outcome possible,” Gottwals said. “On the surface, the vote isn’t the favorable one for many, but I am very confident that this is the best outcome for this property.”

The next Houston County Commissioners meeting will be held Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 9 a.m., located at the Houston County Courthouse. The full agenda of this meeting can be found at [www.houstoncountygga.gov/minutes/2025-11-18%20Department%20Head%20Copy.pdf](http://www.houstoncountygga.gov/minutes/2025-11-18%20Department%20Head%20Copy.pdf)

PRESS

From page 1A

The insert machine provides a more efficient way to insert flyers. HHJ Publisher Don Moncrief said on average, inserting two or three flyers previously took nearly an hour and a half for the press’s largest publication, The Albany Herald. With the new machine, production has been shortened to 30 minutes.

“This equipment will complement our press in providing the highest quality product our customers and readers across the state could receive,” he said.

The National Trust for Local News, the HHJ’s parent company, bought the insert machine and had it delivered from Nebraska. Moncrief said the former inserter was too difficult to maintain.

“Our old machine was

so outdated we couldn’t get parts for it or have maintenance done to it,” Moncrief said.

The Houston Home Journal currently prints 23 publications in its press shop, and with print shops closing down, demand is growing for the Perry press.

“We have also been approached by a number of other newspapers who have requested we print their newspapers. This will allow us to take on and print those newspapers,” Moncrief said.

He said the purchase reflects the Trust’s commitment to supporting local journalism.

“Being a part of the Georgia Trust for Local News, which is, along with the Colorado Trust for Local News and the Maine Trust for Local News, a part of the big picture — the National Trust for Local News — this demonstrates their commitment

to not only sustainability for local newspapers, but also growth,” he said.

More upgrades are budgeted for the press room. In the meantime, Moncrief said the people working the press, and the newspaper as a whole, are the bread and butter of the HHJ’s success.

“Equipment is one thing, but it’s [our employees] who are actually our reason for success — not just from a press room standpoint, but also our news and our advertising and our layout and administrative folks. They are truly remarkable to see in action,” he said.

Moncrief said the press is open to tours.

“If any school classrooms or church groups, or whoever, want to tour our facility, please give me a call,” he said.

For more information, contact the Houston Home Journal at (478) 987-1823.

SPAGHETTI

From page 1A

“Partnering with [Kleckley] and seeing her drive and what she wants to do, gave me back life. I just told her, ‘Tell me your vision, and I can make anything that comes to your mind a reality,’” Edmund said. “We have stuff planned together up until 2027.”

Kleckley thinks it is important to help those in need during this holiday season and said it’s most important to reach out in her community and do God’s work. She believes that with every-

thing going on in the world right now, it is a time to look inward and be empathetic to the less fortunate.

“He says that we give honor to Him by taking care of each other as ourselves and as Him, so we’re all one,” she said. “I wasn’t hungry, but I knew people were hungry and on the brink of going hungry and that affected me.”

Edmund shared the same sentiment and said it takes a village to help out your community.

“If somebody in your village is in need, we come together to make sure the mothers,

fathers and the children have something to eat or clothes to wear,” she said. “We’re going to help them this holiday season and even when it’s not in season, and we’re going to be there for them because with the time and day that we’re in, we have to stick together.”

So far, the food drive has had seven monetary donations totaling \$345. Both expressed thanks to everyone who donated.

For those interested in donating to the spaghetti drive, go to [www.gofundme.com/f/give-hope-help-us-feed-and-clothe-families](http://www.gofundme.com/f/give-hope-help-us-feed-and-clothe-families).

YARBROUGH

From page 4A

So, out with the old words and in with the new. The new Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary has added within its pages such terms as “adulging” (the act or practice of attending to the ordinary tasks required of a responsible adult) which no one in Washington seems capable of doing these days. And there is “rizz” (romantic appeal or charm), “doomscroll” (excessive time online scrolling through news or other content that makes one feel sad, anxious, angry, etc.) and “dad bod” (slightly overweight and not extremely muscular.) But nothing about “mom bod” which I think Merriam and Webster both decided would

get them the “side eye,” (a sidelong glance or gaze of scorn, suspicion, disapproval) from the Woke crowd.

With all due respect to Merriam and to Webster, too, chances of seeing these new words in this space are pretty doggoned dubitable. I don’t know what was wrong with the old ones. I don’t feel the need to be trendy or to use big words to try and wow you. That would be mendacious and I am sure you would find it eristical.

Besides, it doesn’t take multi-syllable words to get the wingnuts on both sides of the political spectrum in a tizzy which gives meaning to my life. Without humorless RITNOs (Republicans in Trump’s Name Only) and liberal weenies who think for some reason that boy prisoners should be allowed

to be girl prisoners and vice versa, I would be just another fallow belletrist. Perish the thought.

By the way, if it slipped past you in the opening paragraph, petrichor is a pleasant odor after a rainstorm. Teraflopp is a unit of measure for calculating the speed of a computer. WFH means working from home and ghost kitchens are facilities that prepare foods to be eaten off the premises. But I suspect you already knew that. You, dear reader, are as perspicacious as you are fervid. That’s a simple fact.

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

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

## Perry and Robins Chambers welcome Ciao Bella Market



*Robins Regional Chamber of Commerce*  
**A taste of Italy has come to Houston County! On Nov. 13, Ciao Bella Market celebrated its grand opening with the Perry Chamber and Robins Regional Chamber with a ribbon cutting. Whether it's home goods, treats or a selection from the deli, the market has something for every taste. See our coverage of the ribbon cutting on hhjonline.com.**

## Pinnacle Financial Corporation and Morris State Bancshares jointly announce partnership to form a leading Georgia community bank

**Special to The Journal**  
ELBERTON & DUBLIN — (BUSINESS WIRE) — Pinnacle Financial Corporation (“Pinnacle”), the holding company for Pinnacle Bank, and Morris State Bancshares, Inc. (“Morris”) (OTCQX: MBLU), the holding company for Morris Bank, jointly announced today a strategic combination of two of Georgia’s strongest community banks. Based upon each company’s financial condition as of September 30, 2025, the combined company will have \$3.8 billion in assets, \$3.3 billion in deposits and \$2.8 billion in loans, and will operate 35 branches throughout many of Georgia’s fastest growing markets.

Commenting on the announcement, Jackson McConnell, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pinnacle, said, “We are excited to announce the combination of Pinnacle Bank and Morris Bank. As we unite our two institutions, we strengthen our ability to serve people and businesses in communities across the state of Georgia. After years of knowing one another and working together on industry issues, we are thrilled to bring our teams together. More than ever before, this partnership allows us to focus on continued growth by sharing our core banking services with more community customers.”

Spence Mullis, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Morris, said, “I’ve known both Jackson McConnell and David Voyles for more than 20 years and have watched

them build and grow a great community bank in their markets, while we’ve done the same with Morris in our markets. Over the years, we’ve often compared notes, sharing strategies and philosophies on how to keep our communities and customers at the heart of everything we do. Our leadership teams have weathered all types of economic cycles, including the Great Financial Crisis, often conferring and collaborating along the way, which has strengthened both of our organizations. I am truly excited to now bring our two teams together under one new name and brand, solidifying our shared values and long-standing relationship. Together, we’ll be a leading Georgia community bank the entire state can be proud to call its own.”

**Transaction Details:**  
Under the terms of the definitive agreement, which has been unanimously approved by the Boards of Directors of Pinnacle and Morris, each outstanding share of Morris common stock will be exchanged for the right to receive 0.1095 shares of the combined company’s common stock. Additionally, Morris’ shareholders will receive a one-time special cash dividend of \$0.54 per share prior to the closing of the transaction. As a result of the combination, Pinnacle’s shareholders will own approximately 54% of the outstanding common shares of the new company, and Morris’ shareholders will own approximately 46% of the outstanding common shares of the new company.

**Name, Branding, Headquarters and Markets:**

The companies plan to unveil a new unified name and logo for the combined bank and company prior to the closing of the transaction. Upon completion of the merger, the combined company’s common stock will begin trading on the OTCQX under a new ticker symbol to be determined at a later date.

The combined organization’s corporate headquarters will be located in Elberton, Georgia. Executives and team members of both companies will continue to operate from their existing offices.

The combined bank’s footprint will include Pinnacle’s 26 branches serving the northeast and eastern side of the state including Elberton, Gainesville, Athens and Augusta. The combined footprint will also include Morris’ nine branches in central and southeastern Georgia markets including Dublin, Macon, Houston County and Statesboro.

**Timing and Approvals:**  
The transaction is expected to close at the end of the first quarter or early second quarter of 2026, subject to satisfaction of customary closing conditions, including the receipt of required regulatory approvals and approval from Morris shareholders.

**Advisors:**  
Piper Sandler & Co. acted as exclusive financial advisor to Pinnacle. Fenimore Kay Harrison LLP acted as legal counsel to Pinnacle. Keefe, Bruyette and Woods, A Stifel Company, acted as financial advisor to Morris and delivered a fairness opinion to its Board of Directors. Alston & Bird LLP served as legal counsel to Morris.

## BBB offers top tips to outsmart porch pirates and delivery scams

The holidays are fast approaching, and with that comes spikes in reports to BBB Scam Tracker regarding delivery-related scams and “porch pirates” – thieves who brazenly steal delivered items right off your front step or porch.

Con artists are aware that many people anticipate package deliveries during this season, making them less likely to question messages about delivery issues. Additionally, thieves recognize that more packages will be left unattended on home porches and steps. These scenarios make people more vulnerable to package and delivery scams during the holiday season.

Fortunately, your BBB has several tips to help you identify and avoid delivery-related issues so you can focus on enjoying the holidays with family and friends:

Watch for phishing texts or emails claiming to be from delivery companies. It can be hard to tell a valid delivery text from a bogus one, but there are common red flags to watch for. The bogus messages usually claim that the shipper is having difficulty delivering a package or needs an update to your delivery preferences. In either case, a “tracking link” is included, and that’s where the issues come in.

By clicking on a link in a message from an unknown or unexpected sender, you could be taken to a form that’s designed to gain personal information and steal your identity. A link could also lead you to a site that downloads malware onto your computer or phone without you detecting it. This could include a virus or even spyware that allows scammers to gather your keystrokes. As you log into your accounts, including your bank accounts, they could be tracking your login information.

Beware of fake “missed delivery” tags or similar calls. With these scams, someone places a note on your door that claims they’re having challenges delivering a package to you. They ask you to call a phone number or visit a website to reschedule your delivery, but it’s actually another trick to deceive you into sharing your personal information.

In similar cases, you might receive a phone call from someone claiming to be with a legitimate delivery company. Your caller ID could even show that they’re calling from a well-known delivery business - but a delivery company will rarely call you. Caller ID spoofing apps are readily available and often used by scammers to change their info and trick you into believing

BBB TIPS

KELVIN COLLINS

ing you’re being contacted by a trustworthy company.

You can take several precautions to ensure a safe delivery of your orders and gifts:

Always get delivery tracking numbers and check the shipping progress periodically. If you’ve ordered gifts that will be delivered to your home or directly to family and friends, be sure you always get delivery tracking numbers and check the shipping progress periodically. You only want to check by using what you’ve confirmed is a valid website for the shipper that is providing delivery.

As noted above, another issue shoppers face is package theft. According to a Security.org study, package thieves stole more than \$18 billion in merchandise over the last year.

Many consumers have had their packages stolen before they arrive home from work. Thieves also snatch packages from doorsteps or lobbies of apartment or condo complexes. Criminals even follow delivery and postal trucks. As soon as a truck leaves, the crooks move in and grab the parcels.

To help minimize the chance of having your packages hijacked, consider taking one or more of the following steps:

Don’t leave unattended packages. When possible, do not leave delivered packages unattended for long periods. If you are expecting a package, attempt to schedule its delivery when you know you will be home. Ask trusted neighbors to pick up and hold a package(s) for you, especially if you plan to be gone for an extended time. Also consider having the package delivered to your workplace or directly to the address of a trusted friend who you know will be home.

Sign up for notification services: Most retailers provide tracking details with links to delivery services; some even send their own emails to let you know when something has landed on your stoop. Opt-in to shipping-related emails. Set up your own notifications with your smartphone or app to remind you of the date and time of expected delivery.

Use a security camera. Installing a home secu-

rity system with cameras or a video doorbell is a great way to deter package theft, especially when highly visible. You can also set up camera alerts, so you know exactly when the package is delivered. Consider including a sign that specifically states that the residence is under surveillance.

Even if a package is stolen from your porch, the video evidence will help law enforcement track down the thieves.

Require a signature. Many delivery companies include the option to require a signature before leaving a package, letting you take physical possession of the item as soon as it is delivered. While this option works well for those often at home, especially for expensive items, it may create difficulties in receiving packages if your schedule and the delivery service differ. Be sure to check with the delivery company on their policy for packages that are not signed for, as they may return it to the sender after a certain number of attempts.

Ship to store or a designated delivery location. If you’re purchasing an item from a retailer with a physical location near your home, consider shipping it there instead. Retailers will require proof of purchase or identification before releasing packages they have received, and this is a sure way to avoid porch pirates.

Consider a package receiving service. Some major retailers, such as Amazon, offer secure package-receiving locations away from your home that you can access with a key or code. Some independent businesses also specialize in this service, allowing you to designate a different delivery location for your packages and the ability to pick them up on your way home.

P.O. Box rental: If porch pirates are often in your area and you are planning to do quite a bit of online shopping, you may want to consider renting a P.O. Box to receive package deliveries. The cost may outweigh the headaches.

For more information about shopping and safety during the holidays, visit BBB’s holiday HQ at bbb.org/holiday.

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## BASKETBALL

### Veterans' Francesca Jones, Warner Robins' Gavyn Williams among others facing new, elevated roles after key departures

By **CLAY BROWN**  
 HHJ Sports Editor  
 hhjsports@gmail.com

The nature of high school sports is that there's constant turnover as players come in, reach their peak and graduate, leaving others to fill that void and go through the same cycle.

With basketball that effect can feel exaggerated because of the roster size.

Football can have nearly 100 participants on varsity alone. Baseball and softball, while having more players on the field at once, can have anywhere from 15 to almost 30 players.

A high school basketball team is lucky to have a full 15, much less that many to actually play on varsity.

One player graduating can shift the dynamic of an entire team, much less multiple.

Francesca Jones and the Veterans girls are feeling that the most after losing four starters and five players over the offseason.

Jones mostly served a bench role last year, helping to keep things running smoothly while Nariah Nelson, Jessie Ortiz and the other starters were off the floor.

Now as one of the most experienced players on the team she (as well as Ayonna Scott) will be asked to do much more.

"We've both seen what it's taken to go to state playoffs," Jones said of her and Scott. "I would say we've both had to step into bigger roles this year and just lead the girls as far as on and off the court. Showing them where to go and what to do."

One of the differences the two noted, though, was that the team will operate different from last year.

The Lady Warhawks relied heavily on the scoring output of Nelson, the three-point shooting and ball handling of Ortiz and defense and rebounding from Addyson McClendon.

This year, Scott and Jones believe, will be more of a

round table with everyone contributing.

"Last year we was all really depending on one of our key players, but this year is different because we have to work together," Scott said. "The younger girls, they're really not used to playing with someone who scored a lot of points, so it's kind of easier for them to understand versus us, we had to get used to it."

"I would say we definitely had to depend on some key players last year. But this year it's more of a unit I would say," Jones said. "It's not like one person doing this on the court, but rather five strong players on the court. We all have to be playing together and feeding off of each other. That includes being able to execute an offense because there won't always be a game where we can have one person just go and drop 30 [points]."

The Warner Robins boys are going through a similar transition with the losses of Gabe Jacobs, Trey Bradley and Justin Hill who were just a few of eight graduating seniors.

For the last several years the Demons have had an "alpha" entering the season. Cam Perkins and Jay Johnson served that role in 2023 and Jacobs in 2024. Now they don't have that firm hierarchy, but they do have players fighting for that top spot.

The two players head coach Jamaal Garman brought with him to the Houston County Basketball Media Day were senior Gavyn Williams and junior Tyler Harris.

Both were complimentary players last year, with Williams playing primarily as a Three-and-D guard and Harris as a wing defender around the basket.

They have acknowledged that this year they will have much more asked of them not just on the court, but as leaders and examples off the court.

"Now all the young boys look up to me so I gotta make sure I'm doing right by [the

coaches] and right by me," Williams said. "Every day I come here and represent that Demon head in the middle of the floor."

"I've been staying in the gym. I worked on my shot a lot because last year I had a role where I didn't need to take as many shots, but I know this year that I have to shoot the ball," Harris said. "So I've been working on my shot a lot, my basketball IQ, still staying with my rebounding and my defense. So I've been in the gym."

The Veterans boys, too, are getting a facelift as Brandon Driggers takes over the program and they lose Tristan Abner, Aiden Sweenor and others.

In the last two years Houston County has seen six new head coaches take over programs. As they transition, players will have to learn and adapt, too.



Jones



Dawson



Williams

### Houston County schools have exciting young players coming through the basketball pipeline

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

Although select upper-classmen like Houston County's Malik Gillespie and Veterans' Francesca Jones might dominate the narrative this season, there are plenty of up-and-coming young players to keep an eye on as the year progresses.

Some, like Perry's Kam Thomas, got a lot of playing time last year due to necessity. Head coach Mark Gainous isn't afraid to put younger players on the court especially if they show

a commitment to basketball like Thomas has.

"Kam has really improved. He'll have a chance to be the starting point guard for Perry High School as a sophomore and I credit the AAU organization Warner Robins All-Stars for developing those guys," Gainous said. "I've seen a big difference in Christian Grant and Kam Thomas."

Warner Robins, who has historically been the premier program in the county, will have to start leaning on some youth this season too.

Last year's roster had eight seniors. The year before that had six. This

year it's just Gavyn Williams and Rykeem Ashley who both served bench roles last year.

Tristan Warren and Kam Schmitz are two names that have been circulating since last season and now their varsity readiness will be put to the test as they'll be asked to soak up real minutes.

The Perry girls program has a trio of freshmen coming in from Perry Middle School's eighth grade championship last season. They were a suffocating defense down the street and have

See **PLAYERS** page 10A



Thomas



Schmitz

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Rogers

PLAYERS  
From page 9A

potential to blossom if coach Austin McIntyre's culture of intensity and competitiveness takes in the Panther Pit.

Rhazyiah Oliver, Jakayla Keene and Layla De Jesus are three names to keep tabs on this year.

Houston County, who's been challenging the Demons for best boy's program in recent years, has some players coming in from Feagin Mill Middle School that Buddy Bivins thinks can make contributions right away with football players and injuries forcing the Bears to reach deeper into their bench.

Keelyn Johnson impressed Georgia Middle School Hoops with his all-around skillset last year and Bivins said he'll be thrown into the fire.

Damin Blasingame surprised Bivins with how he came out during training camp, and he could see the floor early. Kell Stevens was another name mentioned for HoCo.

Across the region the Veterans girls are leaning heavily on young players with the loss of five players including four starters.

Sophomore Kiersten Rogers might be the most interesting with her athletic ability, but she will be out early from an off-season injury.

Camila Vicioso, though she's a junior now, showed potential as a forward who could handle the ball last season. She'll be in a much bigger role this year.

Then there's the Northside boys. They have five seniors this year and return three starters from their best season in about a decade, but they also have some exciting young prospects.

Caden Lowe is the biggest name, he's turned heads with his athletic ability and defensive talent since he was at Thomson Middle School.

Assistant coach Anthony Stewart said Lowe is already one of the better defenders in the program, and is physically ready to be implemented right now.

Freshman Kingston Allen transferred from Central Fellowship Christian Academy over the summer and has garnered praise for his attitude and coach ability.

There are a lot of upperclassmen that will bear the brunt of their team's expectations, but Houston County has plenty of young, exciting talent coming through the pipeline.

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# AVOID OVEREATING BY TAPPING INTO CHILDHOOD FOODS & HABITS

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**grain bread:** Add avocado for a boost of healthy fats that improve heart health, among many other benefits.

**• PB&J on whole-grain bread with sliced bananas:** This extra source of potassium in your sandwich can significantly help improve blood pressure, heart health, and digestive health.

These changes enable you to enjoy the foods you used to while supporting your long-term health.

**1. Pay Attention to Natural Hunger Cues**

Children are pros at intuitive eating, and you can be, too. When eating, slow down and pay attention to subtle signals from your body: Perhaps your next bite doesn't taste as exciting, your stomach feels comfortably full (not overly so), or you find yourself pausing between bites. Using smaller plates or serving yourself smaller portions, setting your fork down while you're chewing, or sipping water can help you check in with your body before you go back for seconds.

**2. Reimagine Nostalgic Foods**

All your favorite childhood meals, like grilled cheese and PB&Js, don't have to be a thing of the past. With just a few tweaks, you can make them nourishing everyday meals. Consider:

- **Grilled cheese using whole-**

**5. Rethink Snacking as Intentional Fuel**

When you were a kid, snacks were more structured. You'd have a snack in between classes as a way to reenergize yourself, or a snack before homework when you got home from school. You can adopt this style of snacking and consider them as mini meals throughout the day. Consider snacks that are high in protein, like cheese and crackers, vegetables with hummus, or fruit with peanut butter. Snacking this way helps keep your energy levels up and prevents mindless grazing that can lead to overeating.

**Simple Eating, Long-lasting Joy**

Going back to childhood eating isn't about reliving the past; it's about reintroducing simplicity and balance to your diet. By paying attention to your body, reinventing nostalgic foods, and eating with joy, you can avoid overeating and feel more satisfied after every bite. If you take the time and make the effort to eat more intentionally, meals become less about habit and more about health, happiness, and connection.

**3. Make Eating Playful Again**

Food used to be fun, whether that meant enjoying backyard picnics or colorful lunchbox snacks. Bring that sense of playfulness back to your meals by adding fun and colorful fruits and veggies to your dishes, experimenting with new flavors, or arranging your food in creative ways. Eating with joy takes the focus away from cravings and any negative emotions, making meals something to look forward to again.

**4. Make Comfort Foods Gut Friendly**

Gut health plays a big role in healthy digestion, your immune system, and mood, and is even more important the older you get. Satisfy your cravings while ensuring your gut microbiome stays healthy and balanced. Choose to eat:

- Creamy oatmeal topped with cinnamon, apples, and walnuts

Yogurt parfaits with fresh berries and granola

Sandwiches with a scoop of sauerkraut (or kimchi for a burst of tang and spice)

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# Arnold AFB discoveries support AFMC History and Heritage Program

By Brad Hicks  
AEDC Public Affairs

ARNOLD AIR FORCE BASE, Tenn. --

By anyone's best guess, the pair of aircraft canopies were most likely slated to be pelted with propelled poultry at Arnold Air Force Base.

Fate had other plans. Instead, the two F-16 Fighting Falcon cockpit covers, along with a fractured F-4 Phantom II canopy and a drone engine from the 1980s, were boxed up and kept in a warehouse at Arnold AFB, headquarters of Arnold Engineering Development Complex.

The items remained in storage, days turning to weeks, weeks to years and years to decades.

Recently, though, the materials found a landing spot beyond warehouse shelves and crates encapsulating them for so long. Several of items were shipped to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, headquarters of Air Force Materiel Command, to be maintained by the AFMC History and Heritage Program.

Katy McCown, senior logistics analyst for the AEDC Test Operations and Sustainment contractor, became aware of the items several years ago, as they were listed on a spreadsheet she received upon taking over test material storage at Arnold. The items were held in the warehouse used to store test materials where they had presumably been kept since the late 1980s or early 1990s.

When McCowan first learned of the existence of these items, there was ample space in the facility, so those responsible for management of the warehouse left the materials be. Team members again encountered the items recently while cleaning out some space in the warehouse.

The spreadsheet previously provided to McCowan provided no specifics on the intended purpose of the items, and no such information was found within the boxes containing them.

"To the best of our knowledge, the canopies may have been slated for the 'chicken gun' testing," McCowan said.

The S-3 Bird Impact Range at Arnold, more famously known as the "chicken gun," was used to test windshield materials and full-scale canopies for various military and commercial aircraft. Chicken carcasses were fired at the range to simulate in-flight bird strikes to test articles. Such tests were conducted to research the damage caused by avian collisions and to prevent harm to aircrew members.

The chicken gun was first fired in 1972. The last tests involving it occurred in the early 2000s.

McCowan said she and other Materials Management personnel



Courtesy photo

**An F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft canopy is pictured in a warehouse at Arnold Air Force Base, Tenn. It is believed the canopy was slated to be used in bird strike testing at the S-3 Bird Impact Range at Arnold, more famously known as the "Chicken Gun," but the canopy ended up not being used in such testing. Several canopies and a drone engine from the 1980s stored in the warehouse since the late 1980s to early 1990s were shipped this summer to the Air Force Materiel Command History and Heritage Directorate for possible display.**

could offer no conjecture on the intended purpose of the drone motor. The broken F-4 canopy, referred to by those involved as the "Romero canopy" due to the "Capt. Romero" marking on its frame, appears to have either been salvaged from an ejection or, more likely, represents the remnants of chicken gun testing.

There was never a threat of the items being relegated to the scrap heap, as test materials are not disposed of without proper due diligence and approval. On top of this, each item had been marked with a message to keep it for the AEDC Museum.

This planned museum, however, had failed to materialize in the years since the items were first placed in the warehouse and designated for future display.

Seeking guidance on what could be done with the materials, McCowan reached out to AEDC Historian Kenneth Sloat.

"Since the AEDC Museum has not come to be and these items have been stored since the '80s, I decided to take a chance on calling the historian for any other ideas," McCowan said.

Sloat, who has been an Air Force historian since 2007, used his knowledge of historic property management to look for avenues to display the items. The Air Force Materiel Command History Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, materialized as the "perfect solution" for some of the items, as the office has been working to continually improve its heritage displays, Sloat said.

"It's always great to see historic items used to tell our story," Sloat added.

"These links to our heritage are a great way to give people a physical representation of the history. It's not just listening or reading, it's seeing, and that translates to an experience."

The items were shipped to the AFMC History and Heritage Directorate over the summer. Sloat said the team there accepted all of the items and relayed their intent to use several of the items in hallway and lobby displays, particularly the drone motor because of its size and link to both the past and the future.

"I love that a piece of our history here at AEDC is going to be displayed," McCowan said. "I'm glad this worked out so well and I was part of the process."

McCowan said Materials Management team members are continuing to excess and clean up old materials located in Arnold warehouses and laydown yard to prepare for future growth at the base. She is calling on personnel across Arnold to aid these efforts should materials team make contact. The knowledge shared may give additional articles discovered new life as well.

"There are so many items that have been forgotten by time," McCowan said. "Unfortunately, listed contacts for these materials have retired or moved on. We are doing our best to find people who can help us, but it can be a struggle."

"Our biggest request is that if someone in Materials Management reaches out to you for assistance, please respond to us and be willing to help in our ongoing effort."



Courtesy photo

**A drone engine from the 1980s is pictured unboxed in a warehouse at Arnold Air Force Base, Tenn. This motor and several aircraft canopies stored in the warehouse since the late 1980s to early 1990s were shipped this summer to the Air Force Materiel Command History and Heritage Directorate for possible display.**

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# Air Force validates reliability, readiness of ICBM force with Minuteman III test launch



*U.S. Space Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Draeke Layma*

*An unarmed Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile launches during an operational test at 01:35 a.m. Pacific Time Nov. 5, 2025, at Vandenberg Space Force Base, Calif. ICBM systems require regular testing to verify system performance and identify any potential issues. Data gathered from Glory Trip 254 helps to identify and mitigate potential risks, ensuring the continued accuracy and reliability of the ICBM force.*

**By Air Force Global Strike  
Command Public Affairs**  
Air Force Global Strike  
Command

BARKSDALE AIR  
FORCE BASE, La. --  
Air Force Global Strike  
Command conducted a  
test launch of an unarmed  
Minuteman III interconti-  
nental ballistic missile from  
Vandenberg Space Force  
Base, California, on Nov. 5,  
2025. This test, designated

Glory Trip 254, evaluated the ongoing reliability, operational readiness and accuracy of the ICBM system, a cornerstone of America's national defense.

A team of AFGSC Airmen with the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron, employing the Airborne Launch Control System from aboard a U.S. Navy E-6B Mercury aircraft, initiated the launch, testing the effectiveness and

continuous availability of the ALCS, a backup command-and-control system for the ICBM force.

"GT 254 is not just a launch - it's a comprehensive assessment to verify and validate the ICBM system's ability to perform its critical mission," said Lt. Col. Karrie Wray, commander of the 576th Flight Test Squadron. "The data collected during the test is invaluable in ensuring the

continued reliability and accuracy of the ICBM weapon system."

The Western Test Range at Vandenberg SFB serves as the testing ground for this critical effort. This launch is part of a series of routine and periodic activities crucial to assessing and validating the Minuteman III's capabilities. These tests, conducted with stringent safety protocols, allow AFGSC to collect valuable

"This test validated the reliability, adaptability, and modularity of the weapon system," said Col. Dustin Harmon, 377th Test and Evaluation Group commander. "Through this comprehensive assessment, conducted by a dedicated team of AFGSC Airmen, we ensure the highest standards of integrity and reliability for the nation's ICBM system."

The 377th Test and Evaluation Group, the Air Force's only dedicated ICBM test organization, oversaw the meticulous planning and execution of the test launch.

The unarmed ICBM's reentry vehicle traveled approximately 4,200 miles to the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command's Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site at the Kwajalein Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The Reagan Test Site is equipped with advanced sensors, including high-fidelity metric and signature radars, optical sensors, and telemetry, and collected critical data during the terminal phase of flight. RTS team members analyze this data to evaluate system performance and support the research, development, test and evaluation of America's defense and space programs.

Airmen with all three AFGSC missile wings made up the task force supporting the test launch, while maintainers from the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, provided essential maintenance support. This collective effort underscored the commitment and expertise of the Airmen who maintain and operate this vital weapon system.

As the U.S. Air Force modernizes its ICBM force with the LGM-35A Sentinel weapon system, maintaining the readiness of the existing Minuteman III remains a top priority.

"As we modernize to the Sentinel weapon system, we must continue to maintain the readiness of the existing Minuteman III fleet. GT 254 helps fulfill that commitment, ensuring its continued accuracy and reliability," said Gen. S.L. Davis, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command.







# AQIC accepting applications through Jan. 30

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Details: <https://www.afmc.af.mil/Careers/AQIC/>



*Nominations are open through Jan. 30, 2026 for Class 26B of the highly-competitive Department of the Air Force Acquisition Instructor Course.*

**By Marisa Alia-Novobilski**  
Air Force Materiel Command

WRIGHT-PATTERSON  
AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio --

Nominations are open now through Jan. 30, 2026 for the next cohort of the highly-competitive Department of the Air Force Acquisition Instructor Course.

The program is open to uniformed and civilian acquisition professionals from both the Air and Space Forces who are looking for an opportunity to improve their leadership, instructor skills, operational acquisition capabilities and program office integration skills. Class 26B will be held from July 6 to Dec. 12, 2026.

AQIC features cross-functional academics, experiential assignments, practical exercises and more to ensure students gain the skillsets to navigate and exploit acquisition policy in support of warfighter requirements. Students are in temporary duty status at

Wright-Patterson AFB for the duration of the course, with extensive travel to various locations across the country.

Graduates are expected to contribute to the acquisition community and schoolhouse, with the opportunity to fill specific positions at diverse developmental levels throughout the Department. All graduates earn a Special Experience Identifier and incur a three-year service commitment.

Applicants must possess a final Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) clearance that is valid for the duration of the cohort.

For information on program eligibility and requirements, individuals can visit the AQIC Sharepoint Site (CaC Required). The page includes a program overview, application requirements, sample nomination forms and more.

Additional information is available at <https://www.afmc.af.mil/Careers/AQIC/>.

# Brig. Gen. David Miller to command Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex

**78th Air Base Wing  
Public Affairs**

ROBINS AIR FORCE  
BASE, Ga. --

Brig. Gen. David Miller, formerly Director of Logistics and Engineering, Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, assumed com-

mand of the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex from Brig. Gen. Jon Eberlan during a change of command ceremony at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Nov. 4, 2025.

The private ceremony, held at the Museum of Aviation's Century of Flight Hangar, was presided over by Lt. Gen.

Stacey Hawkins, Air Force Sustainment Center commander. Hawkins oversaw the passing of the unit guidon, a tradition symbolizing the transfer of positional authority from Eberlan to Miller.

Miller's previous role involved leading over 350 professionals, integrating strategy and resources for

over 12,800 personnel across maintenance, munitions, supply and other logistics fields. He also oversaw critical national security assets, including nuclear weapons storage and command systems, and performed lead command functions for key bomber, missile and helicopter fleets.

Miller received his com-

mission through the ROTC program at the University of Nebraska and held various staff and command positions, including commanding the 377th Air Base Wing at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. He is a graduate of the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies and holds master's degrees from George

Washington University and  
Air War College.

Eberlan, who enlisted in the Air Force in 1990 and earned his commission in 1998, will transition to become the Director of Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

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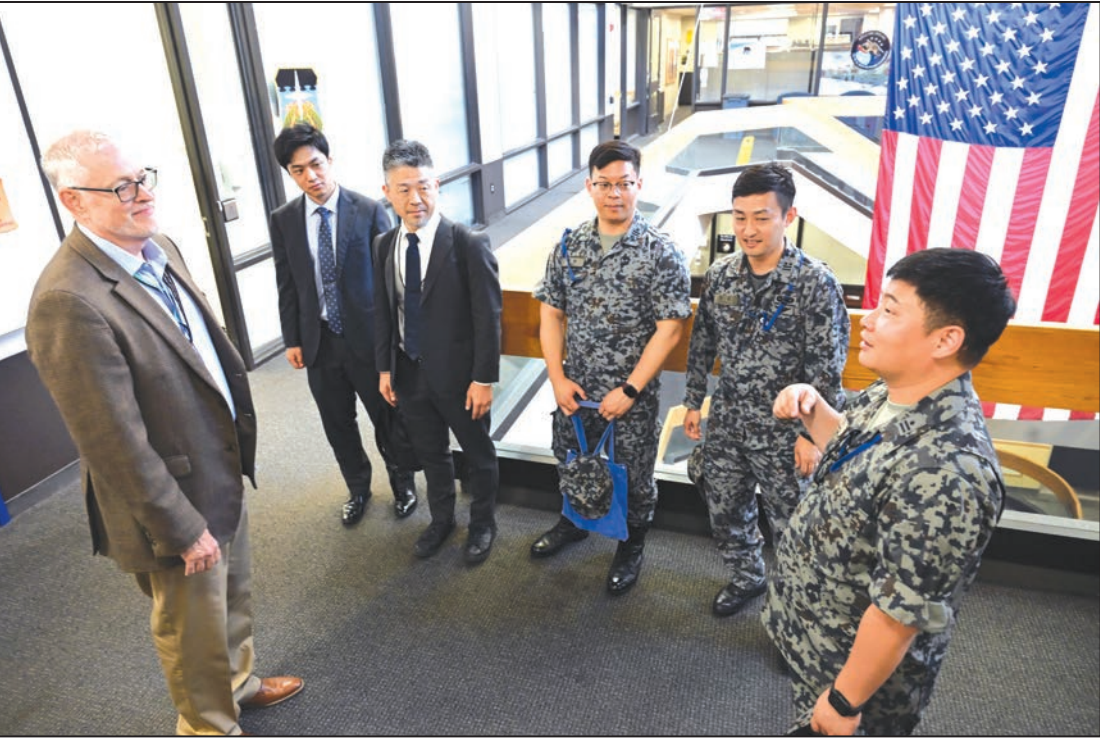
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# C3BM leaders host Japanese delegation, discuss DAF BATTLE NETWORK integration



*Official Air Force Photo by Richard Blumenstein*  
**Vince Ross, meets with Japanese Air Self Defense Force delegates here, Sept. 29, 2025. The delegates traveled to Hanscom Air Force Base to learn about the Department of the Air Force's Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications and Battle Management's divisions and how they connect into the DAF BATTLE NETWORK. Ross is the Aerial Networks Division's deputy.**

**By Richard Blumenstein**  
DAF PEO C3BM Public Affairs

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass. -- The seamless integration of technologies between the U.S. and its allies is paramount to prevail in or deter the next major conflict. To further that interoperability, delegates from the Japan Air Self-Defense Force met with leaders in the Department of the Air Force's Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications and Battle Management to learn about DAF BATTLE NETWORK capabilities, here, Sept. 29, 2025. The delegates received in-depth briefs from C3BM's Aerial Networks Division and Kessel Run. Division leaders explained key DBN programs to help the Japanese

partners understand where further integration is possible. "It is our duty to meet with people and have discussions on site so we can understand what the objectives are, what the milestones are, and report back to our leadership to further mature our programs," said Maj. Nichinari Yamashita, a JASDF action officer, through a translator. Aerial Networks Division deputy Vince Ross briefed with a focus on future interoperability and Joint Force decision advantage. The division is responsible for delivering, sustaining, and supporting combat-effective, multi-domain communication capabilities integrated into various Air Force weapon systems. "Visits like these are crucial to understanding our

partners' requirements and how they intend to interoperate with us," Ross said. "Because the nature of what we do is so complicated, we have face-to-face meetings to talk through and get to the real nuanced details of their questions." Similarly, Kessel Run senior materiel leader Col. Richard Lopez briefed the delegates on KR capabilities they deliver and how they handle software acquisition and development. KR delivers resilient command and control and targeting software capabilities that provide warfighters with decision advantage. It architects and acquires the means to connect weapon systems with warfighters and decision makers to enable the Joint Force to win. "The visit to Kessel Run was very beneficial because



*Official Air Force Photo by Richard Blumenstein*  
**Col. Richard Lopez poses for a photograph with Japanese Air Self Defense Force delegates, here, Sept. 29, 2025. The delegates traveled to Hanscom Air Force Base to learn about the Department of the Air Force's Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications and Battle Management's divisions and how they connect into the DAF BATTLE NETWORK. Lopez is Kessel Run's senior materiel leader.**

right now we do not have any sort of facility like this," said Lt. Col. Toshifumi Sunaga, a JASDF air staff officer, through a translator. "It was fruitful to hear how their organization has changed over the last several years, and what kind of capabilities they deliver." The U.S.-Japan Alliance is the cornerstone of peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. The visit served to enhance modernization efforts in interoperability and strengthen combined capabilities.

"Whenever we do things in the Indo-Pacific region, we have to do them in concert with our partners there, and that's why it's so important that we meet with them," Ross said. "Any threat in the region isn't going to just require a response from us, but from all of our partners in the region." The JASDF is responsible for air and space operations within the Japanese Self-Defense Force. The visit was organized by C3BM's Aerial Networks International Branch Tokyo Office,

which supports networking interoperability between Japan and the U.S. through the Foreign Military Sales program. C3BM is responsible for designing and delivering the DAF BATTLE NETWORK. The DAF BATTLE NETWORK is the integrated system of systems connecting sensor, effector, and logistics systems providing better situational awareness, faster decisions, and decisive direction. In short, resilient decision advantage to the Joint Force.

PICTURES WITH SANTA

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# MDS Airman earns recognition for volunteer leadership in the community



**U.S. Air Force photo by Jerry Saslaw**

**Senior Airman Ma'Kaila Eckermann, 66th Medical Squadron oral preventive assistant, prepares dental instruments for use at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., Sept. 30. Eckermann has been recognized by base officials for her volunteer efforts after leading and coordinating local community and on-base professional events.**

**By Mark Wyatt**  
66th Air Base Group  
Public Affairs

**HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, Mass.** – A member of the 66th Medical Squadron has been recognized by base officials for her volunteer efforts after leading and coordinating local community and on-base professional events.

Senior Airman Ma'Kaila

Eckermann, an MDS oral preventive assistant, was recently named as the 66th Air Base Group's volunteer of the quarter for her work supporting a humanitarian effort in Connecticut, organizing a Community College of the Air Force graduation ceremony, and serving as a ceremonial guardsman.

ceremonial guardsmen.  
 "Senior Airman  
 Eckermann's dedication to  
 volunteerism demonstrates

the whole Airman concept in action," said Chief Master Sgt. Jason Vollmer, installation command chief. "Her efforts show the importance of giving back to the communities we live and serve, and she is a great example of the impact we can have when doing so."

Earlier this year, Eckermann led the coordination of four MDS Airmen participating in a



*U.S. Air Force photo by Jerry Saslaw*

*Senior Airman Ma'Kaila Eckermann, 66th Medical Squadron oral preventive assistant, is presented an award by Col. Jorge Jimenez, left, installation commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Jason Vollmer, installation command chief, during a staff sergeant promotion release event at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., Sept. 30. Eckermann has been recognized by base officials for her volunteer efforts after leading and coordinating local community and on-base professional events.*

Connecticut-based humanitarian mission. The Hanscom AFB off-duty team volunteered to assist with providing free dental care to underserved communities across New England.

"They performed everything from extractions to cleanings and made an impact in the local community across the region," she said.

In addition, Eckermann volunteered this past spring to help lead the installation's first CCAF graduation ceremony since 2022. The event recognized enlisted Airmen who completed associate degrees.

She also volunteered as a ceremonial guardsman for the Patriot Honor Guard.

As the only active duty installation in the seven-state northeast region, honor guard members support military funerals and other events throughout New England and New York.

Eckermann, who entered the Air Force in 2019, has served in a variety of roles within the squadron's dental flight, including her current position as sterilization technician and as a unit safety representative.

She was promoted to staff sergeant earlier this year.

Originally from San Antonio, Texas, and raised in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Eckermann has been stationed at Hanscom AFB for more than six years. She is scheduled to transfer to Colorado Springs, Colorado, in January.

"Every opportunity to volunteer, whether in the clinic, the honor guard, or in the community, has been meaningful," she said.

For others seeking volunteer opportunities in the local community, visit <https://www.hanscom.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/3990341/volunteer-opportunities>.



# PHOTOS WITH SANTA

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