

# The Houston Home Journal

Houston County’s most trusted news source since 1870 • EDIMGIAFAD

\$1.00 • Volume 155, No. 104 hhjonline.com Weekend, December 13, 2025

## Four displaced after Tuesday morning fire



Fire crews work on scene of a mobile home fire in Byron on Tuesday, Dec. 9.

Courtesy: Shane Shifflett

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ  
HHJ Staff Writer  
sandra@hhjonline.com

BYRON — Four people are displaced after a mobile home fire in Byron on Tuesday morning. Houston County Fire Department and Centerville Fire Department responded to the fire on the 100 block of Shamrock Circle off of Emerald Boulevard. The departments received the call at approximately 9:15 a.m., Houston County Fire Chief Chris Stoner said. Stoner reported no injuries and the occupants were able to leave the home safely.

Preliminary investigation indicated the fire spread from a burn barrel in the backyard. Stoner said the investigation is in the process of being finalized. Stoner said there was heavy smoke and fire when crews arrived. Approximately half of the mobile home had extensive damage.

See FIRE page 7A

## Mann sentenced for Houston County public indecency spree

By BRIEANNA SMITH  
HHJ Managing Editor  
brieanna@hhjonline.com

HOUSTON COUNTY — A man was sentenced to prison earlier this month after a public indecency spree across the county in 2024, according to a press release from the Houston County District Attorney’s Office. Demarcus Mann, 30, was sentenced on Dec. 5 after pleading guilty to three counts of public indecency. He will face 15 years, with the first ten years served in prison. Originally a misdemeanor, public indecency becomes a felony after two prior convictions. The case was Mann’s sixth conviction. According to case evidence Mann went on the indecency spree in sum-



Mann

mer 2024, with reports coming in on June 13, July 13 and July 29. Each victim identified Mann by a tattoo of a pitchfork between his eyes. The DAs Office said Mann walked into three Houston County insurance agencies

See MANN page 7A

## Bloom Events and Marketing helps senior citizens with resource fair

By OWEN JONES  
HHJ Staff Writer  
owen@hhjonline.com

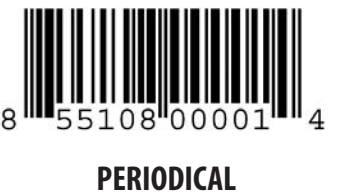
PERRY — Husband and wife duo Gayla and Joshua Germundsen created Bloom Events and Marketing, LLC, based on Gayla Germundsen’s expertise in creating community events. As part of their mission, they organized a senior resource expo on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the Perry Events Center. “[We] just want to put the information out there for not only seniors, but their children because if the seniors don’t have any resources and they need help, the children need to know what the resources are,” Gayla Germundsen said.

See FAIR page 7A



Owen Jones/HHJ

Community partners gather at a senior resource expo on Tuesday, Dec. 9, hosted by Bloom Events and Marketing, LLC.



PERIODICAL

## Board of Education recognizes more AP Scholars, presents donation to Central Georgia United Way

By OWEN JONES  
HHJ Staff Writer  
owen@hhjonline.com

PERRY — The Houston County Board of Education recognized students from Northside High School and Veterans High School who scored a perfect five on their AP exams. “Several years ago, we used to be able to have from all five high schools in one board meeting. This year, it took three [meetings] to be able to have enough space,” Superintendent of Schools Dr. Richard Rogers said. Northside Principal Dr. Dustin Dykes said the school brought 10 students last year, and the goal this year was to fill up the school bus. This year, 19 students from Northside were recognized.



Owen Jones/HHJ

The Houston County School District presents its annual donation to the United Way of Central Georgia during its Tuesday, Dec. 9 meeting.

“I’m very proud of these Eagles, and we really appreciate your continued support removing that obstacle of that financial burden for the testing,” he said.

Veterans brought 60 underclassmen who fit the criteria. Principal Dr. Amy Barbour said in 2024, 16%

See BOARD page 8A

## Houston County man convicted for possession of child sexual abuse material, methamphetamine

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ  
HHJ Staff Writer  
sandra@hhjonline.com

HOUSTON COUNTY — Bryan Travis Santiago, 43, pled guilty in the Houston County Superior Court to two separate cases on Monday, Dec. 8. He was sentenced to a total of 30 years, with the first 10 years to be served in prison, according to a press release from the Houston County District Attorney’s Office. As part of Santiago’s probation, he will have sex offender conditions as well as drug offender conditions. Upon his release from prison, he will be required to register as a sex offender. The Houston County Sheriff’s Office investigated both cases. The first case Santiago pled guilty to stems from a traffic stop that occurred



Santiago

in August 2022. Sheriff’s office deputies stopped Santiago after he was observed not wearing a seatbelt. Santiago consented to a search during the traffic stop, where Sgt. Paul Cumpton found methamphetamine and distribution paraphernalia.

See CONVICTED page 8A

### Word of the Day

He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly. — Proverbs 14:29 (NKJV)

### Inside

Opinion, 4A  
• Viewpoints  
• Jim Balleto

Lifestyle & Faith, 5A  
• Billy Powell  
• Don Moncrief

Entertainment, 6A  
• Comics  
• Puzzle

Classifieds, 7A  
Business, A9  
Sports, A10-A12

A division of The Georgia Trust for Local News



COMMUNITY

Community comes together for 'Christmas at the Crossroads' to celebrate the meaning of the holiday



Perry Methodist Church Assistant Pastor Rob Ray (holding guitar) leads the congregation in singing Christmas Carols during “Christmas at the Crossroads” on Sunday, Dec. 8.

By BRIEANNA SMITH  
HHJ Managing Editor  
brieanna@hhjonline.com

PERRY — “Our worship is not predicated on the piece of ground we stand on. Our community of faith is going to be a good community of faith to the degree where we, as the church that meets in Perry, Georgia, put Christ in the center of all we do and the way we’re unified together.” Those were words from Grace Church Pastor Don Caulley at a community worship service last Sunday night. “Christmas at the Crossroads,” an inclusive yearly event held by the Perry Ministerial Association, is typically held outside. This year, rain moved the event indoors to Grace Church, but the message of the Christmas season remained the same. The service featured pastors from several area

churches, as well as Mayor Randall Walker. Walker said the event is a chance to hear the Christmas story before the holiday hustle and bustle. He also asked attendees for three favors this year: “Be kind to each other. Help somebody that’s less fortunate than you are. And please pray for world peace,” he said. First Baptist Church of Perry Pastor Thomas West read the Christmas story from the gospels of Luke and Matthew. Perry Presbyterian Church Pastor Daniel Stanphill delivered the sermon, based on 1 Timothy 3:16, saying the heart of Christmas wonder can be linked to Christ, the heart of Christian faith. “As we think about this mystery that is at the heart of this time of year especially, we pray that You would give us ears to hear the good news of the gospel, we pray that hearts would be open and that we would behold and meditate upon the glory of our Savior,” Stanphill prayed. Stanphill hinged his message on two concepts; The first was that Jesus Christ is not optional. The second was that Jesus Christ must be welcomed. Compared to other belief systems, Christ first came down to save humanity, offering hope that is celebrated at Christmastime, Stanphill said. “Ultimately, if there’s any divine help, it’s gotta be supplemented by the effort and the work of man, but not so with the Christian faith. Christianity says unequivocally, and we feel it, especially this time of year, that God Himself has condescended to save sinful humanity. God Himself has taken the initiative,” he said. God’s method of manifestation was a method

that would have defied human reasoning, Stanphill explained. “The wisest minds in the world would have never figured out that sinners would be saved through a savior coming into the world like this, born as a vulnerable infant being manifested in the flesh,” he said. Stanphill explained that being born in the flesh meant dying in the flesh, part of God’s plan for atonement. Jesus verified the plan during His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. “No other way of salvation was possible for people in the flesh. A savior had to come in the flesh to die,” he said. Jesus’s birth, his sacrifice, and his approval by God prove that salvation



Perry Presbyterian Church Pastor Daniel Stanphill delivers the message during “Christmas at the Crossroads.”

is necessary, according to Stanphill. “Jesus was revealed as the Son of God to human eyes at his birth, but he was proven to be the Son of God at His resurrection, not only dying for sinners, not only entering the tomb, but coming out of that tomb on the third day. That tells us that the sacrifice he gave in the flesh was approved by God. It was accepted by God Himself. “What this tells us is that Jesus is not optional. He said it Himself, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’ If you would know this salvation, if you would taste and see that the Lord is good, it must be through this one who came in the flesh, who was manifested in the flesh,” Stanphill said. Stanphill said he noticed interplay between the spiritual and the human world in the Christmas story, with the angel Gabriel announcing his birth. He also said Jesus was accompanied by angels during His ascension and taken up to the right hand of the Father in glory. “This one who came as a vulnerable infant is this very moment, seated enthroned on high as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, he was welcomed back into the throne room of heaven. But the question for you tonight, right? And that’s really the question for everyone. Have you welcomed this Jesus?” The services featured traditional Christmas carols as well as fellowship.

Warner Robins announces Warming Shelter availability ahead of cold temperatures



Special to The Journal  
WARNER ROBINS — With temperatures expected to drop in the coming days, the City of Warner Robins is activating a community Warming Shelter to provide a safe, warm place for individuals in need. The Warming Shelter will be open on the following dates, beginning at 6:00 PM each evening: Sunday, December 14 and Monday,

December 15. Location: Haven Hope House, 79 Green Street, Warner Robins, GA 31088. To ensure accessibility for those without transportation, a shuttle bus will depart at 6:00 PM to bring homeless neighbors to the shelter. If you know someone in need of transportation, please contact: Brian Wise at (478) 538-5115. The City of Warner Robins

extends its gratitude to the volunteers, partners, and community members whose continued generosity makes this resource possible. Your support ensures that those facing hardship have a warm and safe environment during severe weather conditions. For additional updates, please follow the City’s official communication channels.

Heritage  
BAPTIST CHURCH

Candlelight  
Communion  
Service  
Christmas Eve,  
6:00 PM

TO BE LIVESTREAMED ON  
theheritagechurch.org

Rejoice!

257 Lake Joy Road,  
Perry, GA 31069  
Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

HOMEMADE CAKES & SHELLLED PECANS  
FOR THE HOLIDAYS!  
CHRISTMAS TREES  
COLORFUL WINTER PANSIES  
& FIREWOOD

401 S. Houston Lake Rd.-Next to Lowe Toyota



# OBITUARIES

**Christ the Redeemer  
Anglican Church**

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.

Christ the Redeemer  
Anglican Church invites the  
community to its Christmas  
events.

Lessons and Carols will  
take place Dec 17th, 7PM.

Midnight Mass will take place Dec 24th, 11PM.

Christmas Morning Mass  
will take place Dec 25th,  
11AM.

Christ the Redeemer  
Anglican Church is located at  
2815 US-41, Fort Valley, GA.

## All Saints Christmas Services

All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins invites all to our annual Christmas Services.

Advent Program: Thursdays, December 4, 11, 18. Starting at 5:45PM with a service in the Sanctuary, followed by a light potluck and our program "The Will to Dream" in our Parish Hall at 6:00PM.

Christmas Eve Services: 5:30PM Family Christmas  
Eve Worship. 8:00PM Musical Introit followed at 8:30PM  
Festal Christmas Eucharist

For more information, please contact the church office at 478-923-1791.

# Community Calendar

Email your information to:  
**brianna@hhjonline.com**

# Houston Home Journal

1210 Washington St. Perry, GA 31069

478-987-1823

Courtney Hodges  
Mason

Not everyone born in a town as small as Perry, Georgia, has the privilege of a long life enriched by many varied and rewarding experiences, both in this country and elsewhere in the world. But Courtney Hodges Mason was one of those people.

Born on June 9, 1924, to Thomas Dovert Mason and Edna Hodges Mason, Courtney Hodges Mason was named for his uncle, General Courtney Hicks Hodges, a decorated senior officer in the United States Army who served in World Wars I and II. Like his uncle, Courtney also served in World War II. After attending Gordon Military College, he joined the military and flew B-24 Liberators and B-25 Bombers with the Tenth and later Fourteenth

Air Force, completing airlift missions over "the Hump" in the Himalayas from Assam, India to Kunming, China. Those crews flew four trips over the Hump to acquire supplies (mostly fuel) necessary to make one bombing run. The canyons through which they

*Edward LaCounte  
Sallette*

Mr. Edward LaCounte Sallette, age 89, passed away December 5th, 2025. Edward had a calm spirit and a very positive outlook on life and was devoted to his Christian faith and family. He was a pleasure to talk to and laugh with and he loved spending time with his special "lake" friends during their Thursday night meals.

Edward was born on November 16th, 1936, to the late Edward LaCounte Sallette, Sr. and the late Louise Jones Sallette in Ludowici, GA. He graduated from Savannah High School and then attended Clemson University, where he



flew were shrouded in fog, with only charts, speed and headings to guide them through the soup. One day, Courtney flew through the canyons without the fog and was astounded to see how close they had come to the mountain walls. Yet his recollection was that they would have fought for the chance to do it all over again. He also flew B-29 Superfortress aircraft later in the war.

In his civilian life, Courtney was a restaurateur in Fort Worth, Texas. He recalled that Billy Graham and Pat Boone were among his patrons—before they became famous. Undoubtedly, this culinary experience fostered his talent as a superb cook. His

earned a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. While at Clemson he

earned a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. While at Clemson, he married his bride of 64 years, Mrs. Dianne Neeley Sallette, who passed away in 2021. He was employed as an engineer at Robins Air Force Base (civil service) in Warner Robins, GA until his retirement in 1995. During that time, he enjoyed coaching youth sports and volunteering at their church, Shirley Hill Baptist. Upon retirement, Edward and Dianne retired to their new home on Lake Sinclair where they both lived for the duration of their remaining lives. During that time, Edward was a faithful member of Friendship Baptist Church and Crossroads Baptist

pastries and yeast rolls were legendary and always coveted at family gatherings. From 1968 to 1994, Courtney was a rural carrier for the United States Postal Service, after which he retired. Although he was plagued with macular degeneration, he never let it stop him—still continuing to cook, watch Gunsmoke, be a great husband and father, and function as fully as possible. Courtney was a long-time member of First Baptist Church in Perry, where he taught Sunday school for many years.

Courtney was married in 1964 to his beloved Juanita May Satterfield Mason, and they had a son, Dr. Stephen D. Mason. He became the devoted stepfather of Linda Satterfield Corbett (Jim) of Atlanta and Janice Satterfield Vandergrift of Elko. He was predeceased by his brothers, Thomas Doyert Mason, Jr., and Edward Mason, both of Perry, and his son-in-law, Dr. Bill Vandergrift of Elko. Although his dear wife predeceased him in 2013, he is survived by his son and two stepdaughters. Courtney is also survived by numerous extended family members.

for whom the memory of  
their years with him will  
forever be cherished.

Courtney fought a brave fight at the end of his life, battling numerous conditions associated with his longevity. To the end of his life, he maintained his sharp intellect and wit. He passed away peacefully at Summerhill Nursing Home in Perry.

Visitation will be Friday, December 12, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at McCullough Funeral Home. Courtney will be laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery with a graveside service at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, 2025.

Flowers will be accepted or donations may be given in memory of Courtney to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org) - Donate or Tunnels to Towers Foundation, <https://t2t.org/donate/>

Go to [www.mccullough-fh.com](http://www.mccullough-fh.com) to sign the Online Registry for the family. McCullough Funeral Home and Crematory has the privilege of being entrusted with these arrangements.

Savannah Sallette. One great-grandchild: Harper Jane Southerland (Bryce and Kate). One nephew, Michael Sallette (Pat) and a special cousin, Chrystal Long (Jerry).

The family would like to express a special thank you to Homespun Hospice and Tapestry Hospice for their special care and support. In addition, the family would also like to thank Williams Funeral Home of Eatonton, GA for their services.

A memorial service is scheduled for 1:00 PM on Saturday, December 13th, 2025, at Crossroads Baptist Church, 106 S. Wesley Chapel Road, Eatonton, GA. The family will receive friends from 12 noon until the service begins.

**We're freezing  
base rates for the  
next 3 years.**

Everywhere you look, costs are climbing, making it harder to plan and budget. We all need relief, so that's why we are freezing our base rates for the next three years. While fuel and storm recovery costs will be adjusted in 2026, current projections suggest these changes could result in a decrease to your overall bill.

Whether you're managing a household or running a business, you can count on a stable, predictable energy budget through 2028.

We're here for Georgia, and we're here for you.

For more information, visit [georgiapower.com/ratefreeze](http://georgiapower.com/ratefreeze).





VIEWPOINTS

“One voice can make a difference”

The Houston Home Journal

See us online at  
www.hhjonline.com  
A division of the Georgia Trust for Local News

DuBose Porter  
Executive Director  
Pam Burney  
General Manager

Don Moncrief  
Publisher  
publisher@hhjonline.com

Brieanna Smith  
Managing Editor  
brieanna@hhjonline.com  
Lori Kovarovic  
Advertising Director/Sales  
lori@hhjonline.com

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

Our Goal

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

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

Share Your Viewpoint

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

Don’t sue me Santa! Make sure you clean up before Christmas

NEW SOUTHERN DAD

KYLE DOMINY



It was the night before Christmas, and I was asleep on my back, But someone was prowling, a fat guy with a sack. He broke into my house to spread Christmas cheer But what happened instead is still a little unclear. While creeping across to the living room tree To leave a present, or two, or three, Santa must have fell over something, or his feet lost their grip, For he shouted and stumbled as he took a big slip. As he fell to the floor there arose such a clatter. I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter. I pulled on my clothes as I walked through the door And there was the jolly old elf, sprawled out on the floor. I ran to his side to see what shape he was in Santa shouted, “I’ll sue your ass to debtor’s prison.” I helped the man up and dusted off his coat. He huffed and puffed and cleared his throat. “Now calm down, man, don’t be so hasty, You’re supposed to be jolly, not hateful and nasty,” I said to the elf who invaded my house And by then he’d also awakened my spouse. “My knee,” moaned Santa, “my Anterior Cruciate! I tripped over your furniture, clearly meant to aggravate.” I knew this event was nothing but tragic. Then Santa disappeared with some holiday magic. The last thing I heard as he flew out of sight, Was, “Merry Christmas you jerk. Get a lawyer

tonight.” There is no shortage of attorneys in this great state of ours. Those lawyers, apparently, have massive advertising budgets. You can’t view content on television or online, without a guy in a suit asking you if you’ve been in an accident or hurt at work. Our roadways are lined with billboards, with large headshots, phone numbers and slogans showing tough guys in suits ready to get you “what you deserve.” One such billboard, several really, caught my attention recently while driving along I-75. The massive advertisement, towering above several lanes of traffic in Macon and Atlanta, depicted Santa Claus, sitting awkwardly on the floor, disoriented and injured. The sign advertised the “premiere fall attorney,” or something along those lines. Forget peace on Earth, good will toward men, even Santa will take you to court. Leave it to a lawyer to come up with something like that. I hope that guy, whoever it was, ends up on Santa’s naughty list, though I’m sure he’s not afraid to file litigation whenever he finds his stocking empty on Christmas morning. My mother always told me that Santa didn’t come to a dirty house, and every Christmas Eve my brother and I were handed a long list of chores to be completed by supper time. I always thought mama was just using the jolly fat man as an excuse to get a little help around the house, but it seems she was covering her bases. Don’t sue me Santa, I’ll make sure the floor is clear before you come to my house.

The war on Christmas

COLUMNIST

KELLY BURKE



Yes, I’m for a war on “Xmas.” Not a war on Christmas, of course, but I don’t care for the lazy and demeaning use of Xmas to denote the birth of Jesus. A learned friend (well, can you really be learned if you went to Florida State?) recently opined that Xmas wasn’t a problem because it means the birth of Christ in ancient Greek. First, I’m not in ancient Greece. Second, even Greeks don’t use the Xmas term. They use Χριστούγεννα, or “Christmas.” Can one make the case for Xmas? It’s tortured, but yeah, it’s possible. I’m not really interested in writing a dissertation on the use of Xmas, so an abbreviated explanation follows. In the Greek language, the character “X” can refer to Christ, so Xmas would be Christ’s birth. The ‘X’ comes from the Greek letter Chi, which is pronounced like the letter “K,” followed by a vowel sounding like “eye,” thus, like “Kai,” which is the first letter of the Greek word Christós (Ancient

Greek: Χριστός, romanized: Khristós, literally ‘anointed, covered in oil’), which became Christ in English. The defenders of Xmas point out that its usage goes back to the Middle Ages, but so does the bubonic plague and I don’t hear anyone calling for its return. Lazy is lazy. Xmas may not technically be a war on Christmas, but it is to me. There isn’t a “Merry Xmas” greeting card or ornament ever being generated at the Gallaher-Burke household. Incidentally, I’ve never written about “AP style,” but I try to follow it, except when I don’t. My sister, Kathy, does my editing, mainly because I missed

the day in school when the proper use of commas was discussed. For her, she relies on AP style, or technically, the Associated Press Stylebook. Sometimes she’ll tell me what AP style says about some aspect of my writing, and sometimes I’ll follow it. But not always. But the AP agrees with me. “Never abbreviate Christmas to Xmas or any other form.” They go on to give additional journalistic advice. “Christmastimeisone word.” “Capitalize Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.” “Lowercase seasonal greetings (except for Christmas): Have a happy new year, wishing you a merry

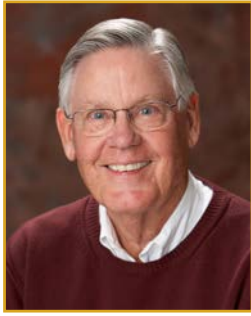
Christmas, happy holidays from the team.” So I’m wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy new year. Err, nope. I’m wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I’ve always capitalized that. Not going to change now. But I will never, ever, use Xmas. Kelly Burke was born in Knoxville where he spent 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.



You’d better watch out: Santa Claus has joined the information age

COLUMNIST

DICK YARBROUGH



I visited this topic some years ago, but things don’t seem to have changed. RING! RING! RING! “Beep! Beep! You have reached the offices of Santa Claus and Associates at the North Pole.” “Hi, my name is Dick Yarbrough and I would like. ...” “In order to better serve you, please listen to the following options. If you wish to place an order, please press ‘One.’ If you are calling about your current order, please press ‘Two.’ If you would like to make a payment, please press ‘Three.’” “Actually, I just want to talk to someone about my Christmas wish list.” “If you wish to continue this conversation in English, please press ‘Four.’ Si desea continuar esta conversación en Español, presione ‘Cinco.’ Si vous souhaitez continuer cette conversation en Français, veuillez appuyer sur ‘Six.’” “English is fine, thank

you, but here’s what I want to ask. ...” “Wenn Sie dieses Gespräch auf Deutsch fortsetzen möchten, drücken Sie bitte ‘Sieben.’ Si velis ad hanc conversationem Latine, placere premere ‘Octo.’” “Look, I don’t speak German and the only Latin I know is ‘E. Pluribus Unum.’ I just want to talk to a live person about my Christmas wish list – Frosty the Snowman, an elf, Bing Crosby – I don’t care.” “Your call is very important to us. Currently, all of our representatives are busy serving other customers. Please stay on the line.

Your wait time is currently six hours.” “Six hours! You’ve got to be kidding! In the past, I just called up and talked to whoever answered the phone. It looks like you have automated everything now. I’m sure it saves you money but it is very impersonal and unbecoming of Santa Claus. I would strongly suggest that you. ...” “Your call is very important to us. Currently, all of our representatives are busy serving other customers. Please stay on the line. Your wait time is currently seven hours.” “This is ridiculous! I have a great mind to. ...”

“Did you know you can place your orders and track them by going to our website: www.santaclausworkshopatthenorthpole.org, backslash, ‘good little boys and girls,’ forward slash, ‘Ho. Ho. Ho.’ Or you can find us on Twitter at ‘hash tag, dash away, dash away all.’” “I think I’ll just forget the whole thing. All I wanted was. ...” CLICK! “Hello, my name is Siddharth. To whom am I speaking?” “Thank goodness! I am finally talking to a real person! Listen, Siddharth, I need to check on. ...” “This call may be monitored for quality assurance purposes.” “That’s okay by me, Siddharth, but all I want is. ...” “May I have the last four digits of your Social Security number, please?” “Yeah, sure but all I want. ...” “Have you shopped with us before?” See YARBROUGH page 5A



# LIFESTYLE & FAITH

## Graves burst open... dead came forth


During the mid-1940s, a group of young teenagers decided to enliven a dull downtown Perry on New Year's Eve. To celebrate, they set off a package of firecrackers near the confederate monument. Within moments, policeman 'Cap' Arnold came roaring down Carroll Street with his sirens blasting and spotlight scanning. (Perry only had two permanent police officers: Captain Arnold and Police Chief J. B. Hawkins). The teens hid in the shrubbery at the old county courthouse until Cap passed through town. Then, they made a mad dash toward Evergreen Cemetery where they hid among the darkened tombstones until Cap returned to the police station.

I wondered how frightened the boys would have been, after entering the cemetery, if one particular Biblical event had taken place. I refer to Saint Matthew's account of Jesus' death on the cross in chapter 27: 50-54.

After Jesus expired at 3 p.m. Friday, it reads: "The tombs broke open, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised to life; they came out of the tombs after his

PARABLES TO PONDER

BILLY POWELL



resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many."

The graves burst open, because an earthquake shook the landscape after Jesus expired. Some commentators believe the saints immediately went into Jerusalem. Others contend the saints did not enter the Holy City until Jesus arose 30 to 36 hours later. (Note: Jesus was buried just before 6 P.M. Friday and arose Sunday morning before daybreak. The Jewish day started at 6 A.M. and ended at 6 P.M.).

Theresidents of Jerusalem were terror stricken. They may have thought the resurrected individuals were the initial residents of the "Kingdom of God," to which Jesus spoke of many times.

You will recall the mother of James and John came to Jesus and requested He appoint her two sons

as co-leaders of His coming kingdom (Matt 20: 20-28). The citizens of Jerusalem could have regarded this bodily resurrection as a signal the earthly kingdom was about to be created.

It goes without saying that those who saw the formerly dead individuals were scared beyond measure—as if they had seen a ghost.

If this had occurred in the Perry cemetery, the young boys would have dropped dead of fright. Did these saints eventually die again? Well, Lazarus did, Jairus' daughter did, and the son of the Nain widow did, so these saints of Jerusalem probably died again too.

I close with this prayer for you and for me: "Dear God, it is our most fervent hope that someday we might share in the glorious resurrection of Jesus, that we too might have eternal life and dwell forever with You."

## An attempt at en-'light'-enment

It's amazing what a difference a little light can make.

When I was a teenager and before I came to know my wife as girlfriend, my buddies and I were some mischievous fools in the dark. We would creep through the neighborhood and steal Christmas lights.

Just "one," meaning we would sneak up, take it out and run away, and in most cases that one light missing would make the whole thing go dark.

Well, there was this one house I remember well. It had a huge cedar bush right out by the street. It was fully decorated in those approximate one-inch screw-in type bulbs. I snuck up. I removed one. It went dark as we ran away laughing.

The next night, we just happened to be out after dark when we happened by the same house again. The bulb had apparently been replaced, because it was in full bloom again.

A "light" (bulb) came on: "I wonder how they would respond if it happened a second day in a row?"


I sneaked. I loosened ... careful... careful... lights went out. We ran for all it was worth.

Day three. You're thinking: "No way are you that stupid." I'm thinking: You don't know me. Even with the thoughts of sugar plum ... no, wait ... even with the thought the owner might be waiting for me with a shotgun, I snuck. I loosened. The lights went out and we ran.

Fast forward to 10 years later. I'm married to my

HHJ PUBLISHER

DON MONCRIEF



wife. We're sitting around the dinner table at her parents' house. It's Christmas time. The conversation is going here and there and everywhere and then all of a sudden it gets mentioned that someone back in the day "stole" their Christmas lights.

Not only that, but the did it "three straight days!" I don't know if a neon light came on flashing "guilty" above my head, or I just had that look on my face, but my wife looked at me and she didn't balk for a second: "Do you know something about that?"

I confessed. I lived to tell the tale, but it took some time to earn back their trust.

This holiday season don't steal anybody's lights (metaphorically and physically). It may come back to haunt you like the ghost of Christmas past one day.

We have a new (old) insert machine. You probably read about it last week. During Thanksgiving week, we crammed five days of printing into three. We ran that thing pretty much constantly, with twice as many flyers due to holiday sales.

Every now and then

something would go wrong and this tiniest of red lights would come on. When it did everything would stop and it would not go green until whatever happened – jam, thrown out clutch, et cetera – was fixed.

It hampered, slowed down, stopped and frustrated what we were trying to do.

This holiday season don't let red lights stop you. (Except traffic stops, you silly goose!) Fix what needs to be fixed ... relationships, anger, bitterness, thanksgiving shortsightedness, et cetera ... so that you can get your life back where it needs to be, moving forward toward happiness and joy.

Jesus said, "A city on a hill cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14b)." Some scholars believe he was seeing in his mind's eye the city of Sepphoris, how when he was a young child living in his hometown of Bethlehem he could look out and "Herod's jewel" lit up the night sky from afar.

This holiday season don't let your light be hid under a bushel (Matthew 5:15 and Luke 8:18). Help those in need. Love. Give. Sacrifice. Be the light!

## Santa, Coke and Charlie Brown

It's nearly impossible to imagine the festive season without the sight of Santa Claus's cheerful, cherry-red suit, or a holiday advertisement featuring the iconic, refreshing taste of Coca-Cola. While many believe the brand's association with Christmas began with the charming polar bears, the truth is that the history between the soft drink giant and the jolly gift-giver runs much deeper—and it's a history driven by a cold, hard business problem.

As early as the 1910s, Coca-Cola faced a major conundrum: how to convince customers that soda was a year-round pleasure, not just a summer thirst quencher.

"During the chilly winter months, the company faced a major problem: how do you convince customers that soda is not just a summer beverage, but should be enjoyed year-round?" states a curator from the National Museum of American History, where a 1929 Coca-Cola Santa ad is set to feature in the new American Enterprise exhibition.

The company's solution was brilliant: leverage the most popular winter figure available, Santa Claus, to forge an unbreakable link between the beverage and the holiday spirit.


While Santa Claus had already evolved significantly in American culture—from the "little old driver" described in Clement Clarke Moore's 1822 poem to the human-sized character popularized by cartoonist Thomas Nast in the 1860s—his appearance still varied widely. Artists occasionally tweaked the color of his robes and the amount of "girth" around his middle.

The defining transformation came in the early 1930s when Coca-Cola commissioned artist Haddon H. Sundblom of the D'Arcy Agency to design a new Santa.

Sundblom redrew Santa Claus as the quintessential Christmas figure we know today: a plump, cheer-

ALL ABOUT ANTIQUES

JILLINDA FALEN





ful man with snow-white hair, based initially on his friend, retired salesman Lou Prentiss. Crucially, Sundblom dressed him in red and white—colors already associated with Santa, but which perfectly complemented Coca-Cola's signature brand identity. He even created a Mrs. Claus, modeled after his own wife. The result was an overwhelming success.

Today, it is Sundblom's Santa who graces everything from Coke cans to Christmas sweaters and home décor, solidifying a worldwide image of Santa Claus—all thanks to Coca-Cola's campaign to boost winter sales.

Coca-Cola's influence on the American Christmas tradition didn't end with Santa's redesign. In 1965, the company's sponsorship helped birth one of the most beloved holiday specials of all time: A Charlie Brown Christmas.

The show's creators, Charles Schulz and Lee Mendelson, had struggled to find a network buyer for a story about the Peanuts

gang. However, that summer, Coca-Cola reached out, challenging them to produce the special in the tight six months remaining before December 25th.

Schulz insisted on two non-negotiable terms: the inclusion of a minute-long reading of the Nativity chapter from the Gospel of Luke and the casting of real children for all character voices. Coca-Cola agreed.

In an astounding three months, A Charlie Brown Christmas was completed. When it aired on CBS for the first time on December 9, 1965, nearly half of America's television audience tuned in, instantly establishing another powerful, Coca-Cola-sponsored Christmas tradition.

The holiday season is now intrinsically linked with the red-and-white branding of both Santa and the famous soft drink. What began as a strategic business move to solve a winter sales slump ultimately gave the world its most recognizable Christmas icon and helped launch a timeless holiday classic. Happy Collecting!

### YARBROUGH

From page 4A

"Well, kinda. I used to sit on Santa Claus's knee every year and tell him what I wanted for Christmas, if you consider that shopping. Every year, I asked for a pony. I always wanted a pony but I never got one and I am hoping this might be the year that Santa Claus ..."

"Will you be paying for your purchase by credit card?"

"I haven't decided yet if I am going to order anything,

Siddharth. As I mentioned, the reason I am calling is I would like to know if. ..."

"I see here that you don't have one of our Santa Claus Affinity Cards. You might wish to know that for every \$50 you spend, you accumulate points that can be used to purchase airline tickets, discounts at the gasoline pump or a jet ski. May I send you a card, Mr. Yardburger?"

"It's 'Yarbrough,' Siddharth, and the answer is 'no.' All I want is. ..."

"It has been a pleasure talking to you, Mr. Yardburger. Please stay on

the line for a short customer survey that will enable us to serve you even better in the future. Have a nice day and thank you for choosing Santa Claus at the North Pole." CLICK!

"Hello? Hello? He's gone! Rats! And I never even got to speak to Santa Claus! All I wanted to know was if this was the year when I might finally get my ~^#@!# pony!"

You can reach Dick Yarbrough at dick@dickyarbrough.com or at P.O. Box 725373, Atlanta, Georgia 31139.

## Battling against water retention


Most of us have probably had this come up either personally or with someone we know. Water retention is something that, if we can bring it back into balance, can yield fairly rapid weight loss. But when it is done in a forced or unhealthy manner, it will not look good and certainly will not be healthy.

There is always an underlying reason behind the retention of fluid, and it should be addressed rather than simply pitting laboratory-designed chemicals against our body's natural hormonal and chemical regulatory systems.

There are a few important

YOUR HEALTH

WADE YODER



things we should look at to help keep fluid levels in balance naturally, and two of the main ones are:

- 1.Staying hydrated
- 2.Keeping our sodium and potassium in balance

When we get dehydrated, the body activates survival mechanisms to protect our

fluid levels. It concentrates the urine (making it much darker) to conserve water for blood plasma and cellular activity.

The pituitary gland monitors our plasma levels, and if they drop—often along

See YODER page 4A

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

All of Georgia's Legal Notices on ONE Website

400,000  
Legal notices a year

One-stop site to search

Public Hearings • Foreclosures • Election Notices  
Construction Bids • And more right at your fingertips

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

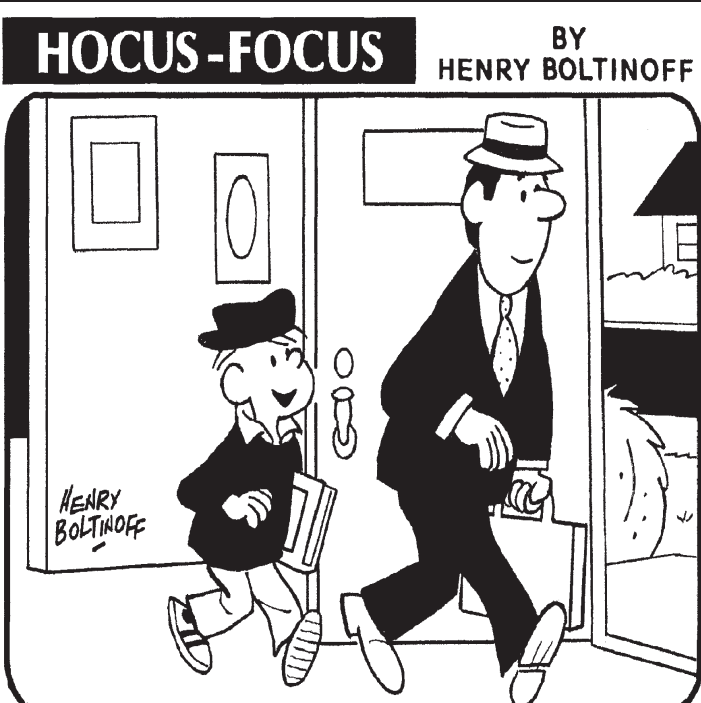
PROVIDED BY:  
GEORGIA PRESS ASSOCIATION



TORRE



# ENTERTAINMENT



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

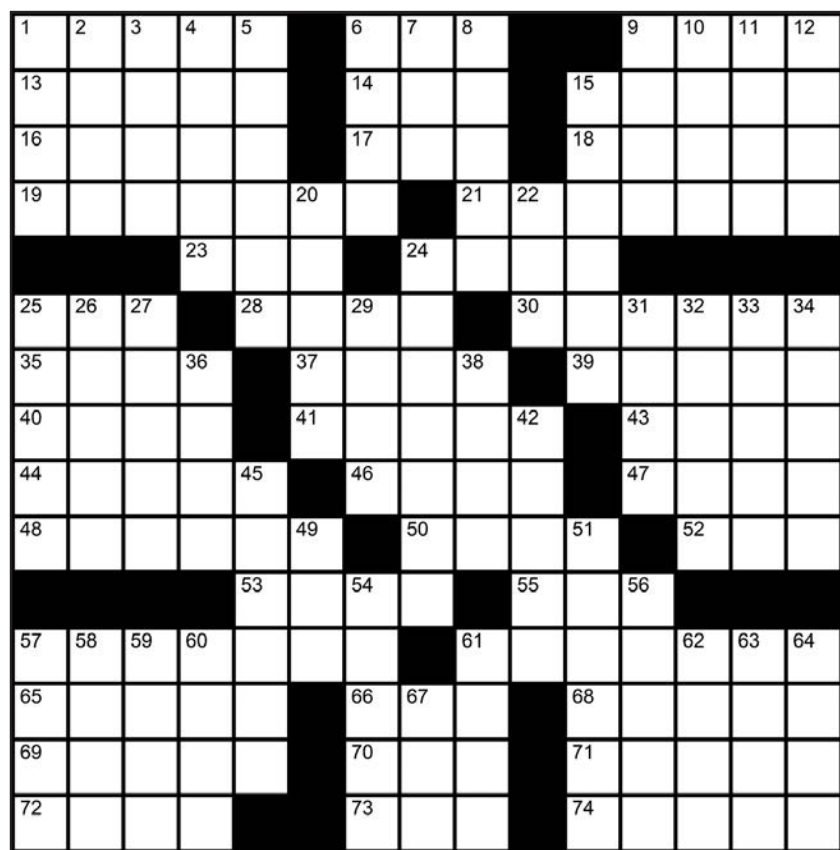


Differences: 1. Picture frame is higher. 2. Doorknob is larger. 3. Hand is moved. 4. Collar is missing. 5. Stripe is added to sleeve. 6. Book is smaller.

by Gary Kopervas



## CROSSWORD 12-13-25



## CLUES ACROSS

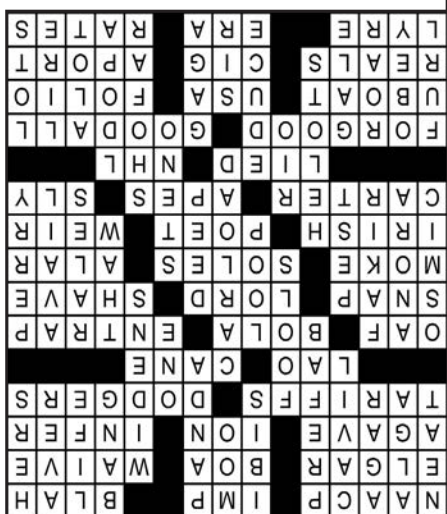
1. W.E.B Du Bois' org.
6. Rascal
9. Ho-hum
13. "Pomp and Circumstance" composer
14. Tropical constrictor
15. Forgo
16. Tequila source
17. + or - atom
18. Reason by deduction
19. \*Trade war "weapon," pl.
21. \*2025 MLB World Series winners
23. \_\_\_\_-tzu
24. C&H crop
25. Dunce
28. Western necktie
30. Catch in a snare
35. Ginger cookie
39. Use a razor
40. British slang for donkey
41. Arch and ball locations
43. Winglike
44. March celebrants
46. \*Arthur Sze, 2025 \_\_\_\_\_ Laureate
47. Dam-like structure
48. \*Beyoncé's "Cowboy \_\_\_\_\_," 2025 Grammy winner
50. King Kong and Curious George, e.g.
52. Like a fox
53. What Pinocchio did
55. \*Florida Panthers won this org.'s '25 championship
57. \*"Wicked: \_\_\_\_\_"
61. \*Late environmentalist and chimpanzee expert

- 65. German submarine destroyer
- 66. \*2025 Ryder Cup loser
- 68. Manuscript sheet
- 69. Brazilian coins
- 70. Roll-your-own one, for short
- 71. To the left, on a boat
- 72. Orpheus' instrument
- 73. Geological time period
- 74. They are cut by Federal Reserve

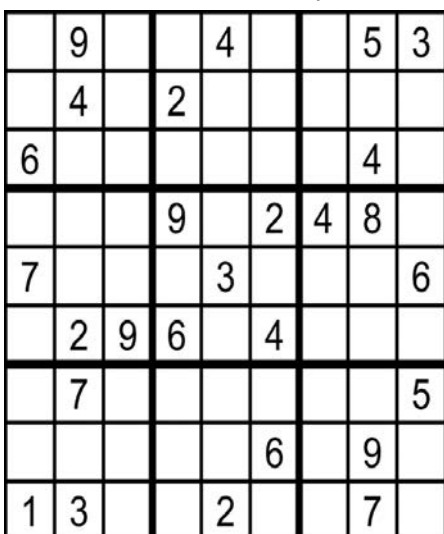
## CLUES DOWN

1. At room temperature, bar order
2. Algae, sing.
3. Petri dish filler
4. Raise trivial objections
5. Ready to be assembled
6. Avian wader
7. Farm sound
8. China's goodwill " \_\_\_\_\_ diplomacy"
9. Collision, onomatopoeically speaking
10. \*Taylor Swift's "The \_\_\_\_\_ of a Showgirl"
11. Affirm solemnly
12. Third-person possessive pronoun
15. Makes broader
20. Why do they fall in love?
22. \*Aryna Sabalenka's seed
24. Auto contents
25. Pertaining to osmium
26. \*2025 Academy Awards Best Picture winner

27. Faquir, alt.spelling
29. Pilot's stunt
31. Spring event
32. Pneumonia symptom, pl.
33. Be of use
34. \*Blue Origin's 2025 singing passenger
36. Boll weevil, e.g.
38. \* \_\_\_\_ Seek
42. Shorthand typist, for short
45. Serfs
49. 2016 Olympics host, for short
51. Ram's horn at a synagogue
54. Draw a conclusion
56. Parkinson's disease drug
57. Roll up
58. Heed
59. Lion sound
60. Dorothy's last name
61. \*Lady of "The Mayhem Ball"
62. Tons (2 words)
63. Lira, pl.
64. Land parcels
67. \*Gary Oldman received this honorific in 2025



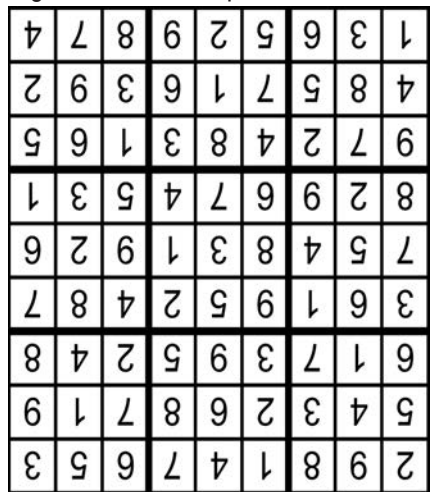
# SUDOKU



© StatePoint Media

## Here's How It Works:

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



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

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



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

# BONNIE “MICHELLE” SMITH, ESQ.

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

(478) 953-3661  
MSMITH158@JUNO.COM  
NIEMICHELLESMITH.COM

WWW.BONNIEMICHELLESMITH.COM



AgGeorgia Farm Credit grant helps Thomson Middle School FFA grow community garden project



Courtesy: AgGeorgia Farm Credit

**Special to The Journal**  
**PERRY**— Students at Thomson Middle School are getting hands-on experience in agriculture and community service thanks to a project supported by AgGeorgia Farm Credit’s Community Mission Fund. The school’s FFA chapter received a \$5,000 grant in 2024 to establish a community garden designed to educate students about sustainability, teamwork, and healthy living while providing fresh produce to those in need.

Located in Centerville, Ga., Thomson Middle School serves approximately 800 students in grades 6–8 and is home to a thriving FFA program with about 270 members. The FFA chapter’s mission is to foster agricultural education, leadership, and personal growth through real-world learning opportunities.

With the support of

AgGeorgia’s grant, the Thomson Middle School FFA completed the development of its community garden, which now serves as a living classroom. Students have gained hands-on experience planting, cultivating, and harvesting a variety of fruits and vegetables while learning the importance of food production and environmental stewardship.

Beyond the classroom, the garden has had a positive ripple effect throughout the local community. Fresh produce grown by the students is shared with area food banks, supporting local families and reinforcing the value of service. The project also brought together students, teachers, and community members, fostering a stronger sense of connection and collaboration.

“Our community garden has become so much more than a teaching tool—it’s a place where our students

can grow as leaders and learn the impact of giving back,” said Kenneth Ford, Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor at Thomson Middle School. “AgGeorgia Farm Credit’s support helped us create a lasting space for hands-on learning that benefits both our students and our community.”

In total, AgGeorgia Farm Credit awarded \$53,800 in 2024 through its Community Mission Fund to twelve nonprofit organizations across Georgia. Launched in 2023, the grant program supports projects that promote the future of agriculture and enhance the quality of life in rural communities, with grants of up to \$5,000 awarded per project.

To learn more about AgGeorgia’s Community Mission Fund and explore past and current grant recipients, visit [www.aggeorgia.com/community-mission-fund](http://www.aggeorgia.com/community-mission-fund).

**FIRE**  
**From page 1A**

Fire crews worked into Tuesday morning extinguishing hot spots. The Red Cross has also been notified

to assist the displaced residents.

Stoner believes fire crews did a phenomenal job in their response.

“Unfortunately, the fire had gotten to the point where half [of the] home is

damaged but I think the response aspect went very well,” he said.

Stoner said his thoughts and prayers go to the household as they try to rebuild and recover.

**FAIR**  
**From page 1A**

Partners in attendance included Pruitt Health, Senior Living, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Resources for Medicare and Medicaid, and the Department of Public Health.

“We are just giving [seniors] the resources that they need and things they didn’t know that were out there because it’s not like they have the Yellow Pages anymore and they can’t look it up,” Gayla Germundsen said. “They are not computer savvy, so how are they going to find the resources?”

With this event, Germundsen said this fair provided community and socialization, with it being more catered to the older population.

“It’s all the things that we have gotten away from behind the screen because you have a whole gener-

ation that wasn’t raised that way and they haven’t embodied the screen in front of them,” she said. “We have to get back to face-to-face communication as building relationships in the community is so important.”

Joshua Germundsen said he had an experience firsthand around 12-13 years ago when his mother was going through hard times. He said he didn’t know where to get the resources. He mentioned he had to go to almost every nursing home in Middle Georgia to find someone who could help.

“I didn’t have the help for her and I to get the information to us, so that’s what [we] want to do,” he said. “We’re getting everything together where if somebody calls us and says they need anything we can [provide that].”

This event was just a soft opening, according to the Germundsens.

They have a bigger event planned in February. Gayle Germundsen said there were several other businesses that couldn’t attend the expo on Tuesday but are likely to attend in February, such as the VA clinic and Moody and Associates.

“We felt like this would be a good soft opening because people are not used to having all these types of resources,” she said. “It’s important for all of us to network, but it’s also important for them to have a space to know where to get the resources.”

Their bigger resource fair will take place at the Miller Murphy Howard Building at the Georgia National Fairgrounds on Feb. 10, 2026.

To contact Bloom Events and Marketing, LLC, call (478) 303-0691. To learn more, go to their Facebook page: “Bloom Events and Marketing, LLC”.

**MANN**  
**From page 1A**

under the pretense of conducting business. In each location, he would start a conversation with a female employee, then expose himself in their presence and begin masturbating.

He left each scene after calls to law enforcement were made, and was arrested two days after the third offense on July 31, 2024.

Ofc. Cory Bard of the Centerville Police Department, Det. Elizabeth Smith of the Warner Robins Police Department, and Sheriff Matt Moulton, serving as Investigations Captain, of the Houston County Sheriff’s Office, investigated the case. Mann was sentenced by Judge G.E. “Bo”

Adams and prosecuted by District Attorney Eric Edwards.

Edwards provided comments on the case:

“This defendant repeatedly targeted women in their places of work and subjected them to degrading, traumatic conduct that no one should ever have to endure. Although Public Indecency is often dismissed as a ‘minor’ offense, this case demonstrates precisely why repeat behavior of this nature is treated as a serious felony under Georgia law. Mr. Mann was not deterred by prior convictions, and his conduct escalated into a pattern of predatory behavior that posed a real threat to the safety and sense of security of people across Houston County.

“I am grateful to the Centerville Police Department, the Warner Robins Police Department, and the Houston County Sheriff’s Office for their coordinated investigative work that brought these cases together and allowed us to present the full scope of this defendant’s criminal conduct to the Court. Most importantly, I commend the victims for coming forward. Their courage ensured that this behavior was stopped and that Mr. Mann is now being held fully accountable. Our office will continue to take crimes of this nature seriously and pursue meaningful prison sentences for repeat offenders who refuse to respect the safety and dignity of others.”

View the classifieds on our website at [www.hjonline.com](http://www.hjonline.com)

**THE Classifieds**

*Covering Houston County Since 1870*

**Merchandise**

**HOMES**

**JOBS**

**SERVICES**

**Georgia**

**LOCAL MATTERS**

**STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS**

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

**Call Georgia Newspaper Service: 770-454-6776**

**GNS**

GEORGIA NEWS ASSOCIATION

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

**STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 12/14/25**

**CELLULAR**

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

**HEALTH CARE**

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

**ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS!** Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-833-661-9339

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

just \$149. Call 1-855-391-2065

**HOME IMPROVEMENT**

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

**BATH & SHOWER UPDATES** in as little as ONE DAY! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-833-781-0206

**WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP:** A small amount of water can lead to major damage to your home. Our trusted professionals dry out the wet area and do repairs to protect your family and your home's value! If you have water in your home that needs to be dried, call 24/7: 1-633-871-2090. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!

**ELECTRICAL SERVICES:** Reliable & experienced. Competitive rates. From simple household problems to installing a brand new electrical system, we can take care of it all! Call now and have the zip code of the service location when you call 1-833-399-6566

**NEED NEW FLOORING?** Call today schedule a FREE in-home estimate on Carpeting & Flooring. Call Today! 1-833-641-6602

**PEST CONTROL: PROTECT YOUR HOME** from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termites, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned and affordable. Call for service or

an inspection today! 1-833-406-0231 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

**HOME BREAK-INS** take less than 60 SECONDS. Don't wait! Protect your family, your home, your assets NOW for as little as 70¢ a day! Call 1-833-890-1269

SunSetter: America's Number One Awning! Instant shade at the touch of a button. Transform your deck or patio into an outdoor oasis. Up to 10-year limited warranty. Call now and SAVE \$350 today! 1-877-740-0337

**MISCELLANEOUS**

When you want the best, you want Omaha Steaks! 100% guaranteed and delivered to your door! Our Butcher's Deluxe Package comes with 8 FREE Omaha Steaks. Smash Burgers ONLY \$89.99. Call 1-866-411-5403 and mention code 797972ED or visit [www.oma-hasteaks.com/Deluxe2795](http://www.oma-hasteaks.com/Deluxe2795)

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

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

Wesley Financial Group LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019. Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 866-411-5215

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

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

**DONATE YOUR CAR TO KIDS.** Your donation helps fund the search for missing children and preventing abduction. Accepting Cars, Trucks and Vans. Fast Free Pickup - Running or Not Maximum Tax Donation - Call (888) 515-3813 Buys Houses: 1-877-399-2113

**TV/INTERNET**

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

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

**WANTED**

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

**TOP CASH PAID FOR OLD GUITARS!** 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg, And Gibson Mandolins / Banjos. 1-833-641-6792

**MACON REGIONAL CRIMESTOPPERS**

**STOP CRIME NOW 742-2330**

**BENNETT, SONNY**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR GIVING FALSE NAME, DOB, ADDRESS TO OFFICER ST. CT VOP/THEFT BY TAKING.

**BROOKS, DEWEY**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR VIOLATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDER.

**CROSS, KENNETH**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE/ CRIMINAL TRESPASS / DAMAGE/ VIOLATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDER.

**COLEMAN, RANDY**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR SALE OF METHAMPHETAMINE, VIOLATION OF THE STREET GANG TERRORISM AND PREVENTION ACT.

**DAVIS, MAKHI**  
WANTED BY THE FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPOS POLICE DEPT. FOR BURGLARY- 2ND DEGREE, CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY/2ND DEGREE, AND CRIMINAL TRESPASS.

**DUMAS, BILLY**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FINANCIAL IDENTITY FRAUD.

**GRANT, JOHN**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR ILLEGAL ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN DRUGS/SUP. CT. VOP.

**GRAY, ARCHIE**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BENCH WARRANT/ FAILURE TO REPORT/ SIMPLE BATTERY.

**HANNA, JOSEPH**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT - FELONY/CRUELTY TO CHILDREN - 3RD DEGREE/ SIMPLE BATTERY- FAMILY VIOLENCE

**HARDEE, ASHLEE**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR CRUELTY TO CHILDREN/ FAILURE TO REPORT/SUP. CT. VOP.

**HARRIS, STEVEN JR.**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR ENTERING AUTO/ FAILURE TO REPORT/ SUP. CT. VOP.

**MAYS, III, REX**  
WANTED BY THE PEACH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FLEEING / ATTEMPT TO ELUDE LAW ENFORCEMENT.

**RICHARDSON, COURTNEY**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR FALSE IMPRISONMENT/ SUP. CT. VOP.

**SHOFNER, JUSTIN**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR 4CTS. - 1ST DEGREE FORGERY/ 4CTS. - FALSE STATEMENTS AND WRITINGS/4CTS. - FELONY IDENTITY FRAUD.

**THOMPSON, JACOB**  
WANTED BY THE HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR BATTERY FAMILY VIOLENCE/CRIMINAL TRESPASS / DAMAGE/ CRUELTY TO CHILDREN - 3RD DEGREE

**WILSON, CEDRIC**  
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.

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**

8897-48







# BUSINESS & FINANCE

## Robins Credit Union donates \$25k to support local college scholarships



Ljubica Quinn with Robins Financial Credit Union presents a scholarship check to Zechariah Haskell, student at Central Georgia Technical College.

**Special to The Journal**  
WARNER ROBINS — Robins Financial Credit Union recently donated \$25,000 to support scholarships at four local colleges, reinforcing the credit union’s commitment to education and community growth.

The funds were distributed to the following institutions: Middle Georgia State University, Central Georgia Technical College, Fort Valley State University, and Georgia Military College.

“At Robins Financial, we believe that education plays a vital role in shaping strong communities,” said Christina O’Brien, President & CEO of Robins Financial Credit Union. “We’re proud to invest in the future of our students and to give them the opportunity to achieve their dreams.”

These contributions will help provide financial assistance to students as they pursue their academic and career goals.

“This scholarship from Robins Financial Credit Union has contributed to my educational success as an aspiring IT Cybersecurity Specialist, giving me financial security,” said Zechariah Haskell, recipient from Central Georgia Technical College. “This scholarship will allow me to focus on my courses instead of how I will pay for them.”

Robins Financial Credit Union is honored to partner with these local institutions to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students across Middle Georgia.

## Kemp: November tax revenues up 0.9%

**Special to The Journal**  
ATLANTA – The State of Georgia’s net tax collections during the month of November totaled almost \$2.4 billion, for an increase of \$22.4 million, or 0.9%, compared to FY 2025, when net tax collections approached \$2.38 billion for the month. Year to date, net tax revenue collections totaled nearly \$13.28 billion, for an increase of \$262.7 million, or 2.0%, compared to November 2024, when net tax collections approached \$13.02 billion.

Year-to-year comparisons were affected by the motor fuel tax suspension due to Hurricane Helene in October 2024. Net of motor fuel tax changes, revenues for the month of November were down 2.1% from the same month a year ago, while year-to-date collections were up 1.4%.

The changes within the following tax categories account for November’s overall net tax revenue increase:

- Individual Income Tax: Individual Income Tax collections during November totaled roughly \$1.13 billion, which was down from a total of \$1.18 billion in fiscal year 2025, for an overall decrease of \$46.7 million or 4.0%.
- The following notable components within Individual Income Tax combine for the net decrease:
  - Individual Income Tax refunds issued (net of voided checks) increased by \$3.8 million or 5.5%
  - Income Tax Withholding payments for November decreased by \$39.9 million, or 3.4%, from FY 2025
  - Individual Income Tax Return payments declined by \$5.2 million, or 15.3%, compared to FY 2025
  - All other Individual Tax categories, including Non-Resident payments, were up a combined \$2.2 million
- Sales and Use Tax: Gross Sales and Use Tax collections in November totaled \$1.64 billion, for an increase of \$38.6 million, or 2.4%, over FY 2025. Net Sales and Use Tax increased by \$23.5 million, or 3%, compared to last year, when net Sales Tax revenue totaled \$791 million. The adjusted Sales Tax distribution to local gov-

## Tips for dealing with holiday pop-up shops

BBB TIPS

KELVIN COLLINS

During the holidays, many retailers set up temporary pop-up shops or booths to sell their merchandise. This allows shoppers to browse unique holiday gifts and other merchandise in person. However, alongside the holiday cheer, BBB hears from consumers who run into problems with these temporary retailers.

The BBB receives complaints each year about temporary retail locations and pop-up shops. Consumers report everything from poor-quality merchandise to online purchase scams when ordering from the pop-up retailer’s website. They also report having difficulty obtaining refunds after temporary stores have closed their doors.

Pop-up shops can be fun, but keep these tips in mind if you choose to buy from one of them:

- Ask how long a store will operate. If you are buying from a seasonal store, ask whether it will be open after the holiday and whether it will accept returns when the season is over. If not, consider buying elsewhere or taking more time to be sure the item is exactly what you want before making the purchase.
- Review purchase policies. Determine the company or vendor’s refund and return policies before you buy. If pop-up shops cannot offer concrete commitments on how they will handle any potential problems you may have with their products or services, reconsider doing business with them.
- Be careful when placing orders. If the pop-up shop offers to place a special order for an item you’re looking for, take extra steps to ensure it is legitimate. Before placing the order, ask the seller for their contact information and confirm it works. Get details

on how you will receive the order and when you should expect it to arrive and ask for a receipt and/or a copy of the order confirmation. Pay with a credit card so you have additional protection in case you never end up receiving the item.

- Pay attention to quality. Occasionally, pop-ups sell counterfeit products, so be cautious when purchasing designer goods or the latest “must-have” gifts. Prices that are dramatically lower than regular retail stores may be a red flag that the items are either stolen or counterfeit.
- Know the terms of any product or service guarantees. If you are purchasing anything that comes with a manufacturer’s warranty, ask how you will be able to get the product serviced if needed.
- Guard your personal information. For small items, you might be better off paying in cash, so you don’t have to share any personal information. Just be sure you understand that you probably won’t have any recourse if something is not right. For larger items, paying with a credit card can provide additional protection if there are problems and the retailer disappears. Make sure you hang on to the receipt to match it against your credit card statement.
- Consider whether the gift is for a hard-to-please recipient. If you are planning a gift for someone who

might need or want to return it, consider buying from a retailer with a long-standing business, strong reputation, and well-established return policies, instead of a pop-up shop. Look to BBB Accredited Businesses to shop from a vetted, trusted business. When possible, ask for a gift receipt that would make a return or exchange easier, if necessary.

- If shopping online, do your research first. If you are interested in trying a new or unfamiliar online merchant, do your research. Ask the company for its physical location (address and phone number) so you can check its BBB Business Profile at BBB.org. Check to see if the business is BBB Accredited so you know whether dealing with a trustworthy business. Online purchase scams are very common during the holidays, so if you’re unsure about a retailer, look for online reviews and search for any scams. Remember that deals that seem too good to be true are often scams.
- Shop around. Pop-ups often focus on unique or high-quality gifts that you may not find elsewhere, but some are simply mini versions of discount retailers, offering holiday-themed goods that may be available for less at a traditional retailer.

For more BBB holiday tips, visit our BBB Holiday HQ at BBB.org.

ernments totaled \$820.7 million, for an increase of \$18.6 million, or 2.3%, over last year’s adjusted distribution total of \$802.1 million. Sales Tax refunds declined by \$3.5 million compared to FY 2025.

Corporate Income Tax: Corporate Income Tax collections for November declined by \$38.3 million, or 130.4%, compared to last year, when net Corporate Tax revenues totaled \$29.3 million.

The following notable components within Corporate Income Tax make up the net decrease:

- Corporate Income Tax refunds issued (net of voids) were up \$24.8 million, or 78.9%, over FY 2025
- Corporate Income Tax Return payments decreased by \$8.3 million, or 48%, from FY 2025
- All other Corporate Tax payments, including Estimated Tax payments, were down a combined \$5.2 million
- Motor Fuel Taxes: Motor Fuel Tax collections for the month increased by \$70.2 million compared to last year, when Governor Kemp’s Executive Order to suspend motor fuel tax collections in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene was in effect over a two-week period beginning October 3rd, thereby reducing state motor fuel tax receipts in November.
- Motor Vehicle - Tag & Title Fees: Motor Vehicle Tag & Title Fee collections for November declined by \$4.1 million, or 13.4%, compared to last year’s total of \$30.5 million, while Title ad Valorem Tax (TAVT) collections increased by roughly \$3.7 million, or 5.1%, from fiscal year 2025’s total of nearly \$73 million.

The Real Estate Connection & Apartment Locator

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.

WHERE YOU ADVERTISE MATTERS!

Market your home where locals look. Reach potential buyers when you advertise with The Houston Home Journal.

call 478-987-1823 www.hhjonline.com

If you would like to place a real estate ad call 478-987-1823 or email Lori@hhjonline.com

Pacific Park Apartments

1205 Leverette Road, Warner Robins, GA  
1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments  
Low-Income Tax Credit Multi-Family  
Accepting application for the waitlist  
Affordable Units Only  
Income restrictions apply.  
478-923-4886

Happy Holidays

from

Foxwood Apartment Townhomes

\$300 Off First Month Rent!

Move in By 12/23/25

Or

Inquire about Our Preferred Employer Program

1436 Watson Blvd. 64,  
Warner Robins, GA. 31093

Apply Online: [www.foxwoodtownhomes.com](http://www.foxwoodtownhomes.com)  
Call: 478-929-1984  
(M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.)



## Northside Basketball

# Lady Eagles 6-1 for first time since 2021 with 59-point win over Rutland

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

**WARNER ROBINS** — The Northside Lady Eagles are 6-1 for the first time since 2021 as they continue to turn the program around under head coach ChoRhonda Gwaltney-Harris.

Their 59-point, 79-20 win over Rutland (4-5) is the second this season of 50 or more points, and third of 40-plus. A five-point lead ballooned into 26 by half-time, and Northside continued to pour it on in the final two quarters as they held the Lady Hurricanes to just three baskets in the second half.

A year ago Gwaltney-Harris said their 3-0 start was not indicative of how good the team was, though she seems to feel differently this time around.

"The teams we played weren't up to par last year.

This year I feel like we're much better than we were last year," Gwaltney-Harris said. "We beat Union Grove at the very first game, that's a quality team... which was a big, big thing for us... We lost to Westside [Macon] because we didn't have enough energy, we didn't play hard enough that game... The rest of the games we've kind of ran away with."

After Forest Park (0-8) next week the schedule gets much harder, though. Perry is having a decent season under first-year coach Austin McIntyre. Valdosta comes to town and then Northside-Columbus before region play starts.

The Lady Eagles look night and day different from last year. Their fundamentals, particularly on defense are much improved. They don't foul as much playing defense nor do they have as many careless turnovers.

Several years ago

*See more photos at  
bhjonline.com*

Northside was a program that fell into the "doesn't know how to play basketball" category, but now they've clearly separated themselves from those kind of teams.

Gwaltney-Harris isn't satisfied just yet, however.

"We're not where we need to be," she said. "We're just finding our way right now, and we're working on being together as a team and rotating. Tonight we've seen a little bit of that, we got better at that...[but] we're not where we need to be."

### UP NEXT

Northside will host Perry on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 3:30 p.m. as a part of their final five region games.

Rutland will travel to Howard on Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m.



Clay Brown/HHJ

**Lady Eagles Jordyn Hicks (white, left) and Madi Burch (white, background) double team Rutland sophomore Kenya Thomas (12) on the sideline to force the Lady Hurricanes to take a timeout.**

# Northside routes Rutland at home behind defense and team-high 18 points from Elijah Patmon

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

**WARNER ROBINS** — Northside (5-2) never trailed in their 79-47 rout of the Rutland Hurricanes (1-8), marking the Eagles' best start through seven games since the 2020 season.

The defense shined, providing Northside with a bounty of takeaways and fast break opportunities that were necessary for a struggling half court offense.

That was one of the positive observations head coach Buck Harris had on a night where he wasn't pleased with the whole effort.

"Defensively we can be pretty good at times," Harris said. "We didn't do the stuff that I needed us to do, which was do the little things. Get the 50-50 ball, get more deflections, get more steals. I'm trying to get some guys to buy into what we're doing defensively, and if I can get three or four more guys to do that, I think we could be a pretty good basketball team."

Rutland was not cautious

with the ball and gifted the Eagles some turnovers throughout the game. Bad outlet passes and driving into multiple defenders were a couple of ways. But Harris gave his team some credit, too, for forcing some of those turnovers with ball pressure and aggressiveness in the passing lanes.

"I think it was a little bit of both. One of the keys on the board, I said, we got to create havoc. We got to turn them over, and I thought we could do that," Harris said. "What I try to emphasize is that if we turn them over we ain't got to come down and call plays. You get the freedom to rebound and run and go make a play for yourself or your teammates... We're trying to create an offense from my defense."

Northside found most of their early success in transition, but in the second quarter they created some separation by getting it down to Elijah Patmon in the post.

Patmon is listed at 6-foot-4 and 293 pounds, is a four-star Texas A&M commit and Region 2-5A Defensive Lineman of the Year.

That kind of size isn't something you see every day on a high school basketball court and that was apparent in the way he was able to push through and shrug off defenders at the basket.

Nine of his 18 points came in the second quarter to help the Eagles to a 39-22 halftime lead.

"He catches the ball very well, and when he decides to get off his big behind and jump he can make some layups for us," Harris said. "He told me [Monday], he said, 'I'm gonna get a double double.' I don't think [double-digit] rebounds but he had 18 points. Outside of [Houston County center] Braylin Mills he's one of the biggest guys in our region size wise... He gives us what we need down there."

Harris still wants more from his center, though, in the form of physical dominance.

"I said [to Patmon], 'I don't understand how you a football player and you don't seem very physical. Guys coming in there, you have zero fouls right now,'" Harris said. "But he gives us



Clay Brown/HHJ

**Northside's Kingston Davis (left) and Javion Williams (right) fight to steal the ball from Rutland's Richard Fisher (14) during the Eagles' 79-47 non-region win.**

a presence when [the team] understands what we need to do, which is feed him on the inside. It's gonna open everything else up on the outside. He's been a joy to

have right now."

### UP NEXT

Northside will host Perry in their first county matchup of the season on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 5 p.m.

Rutland will look to snap their five-game losing streak when they hit the road to Howard on Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m.



## EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!



YOU CAN NOW PICK UP A COPY OF

### The Macon Melody

AT **The Houston Home Journal** FRONT OFFICE!



**STOP IN  
AND GRAB  
A COPY  
TODAY!!!**

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

## Andrew Moore, Agent



**478-987-1224**  
onemooreinsurance.com  
1001 Washington St  
Perry, GA 31069





Veterans Softball

Three Lady Warhawks selected to Georgia Athletic Coaches Association All-State teams

By CLAY BROWN  
HHJ Sports Editor  
clay@hhjonline.com

Softball season may be over, but that doesn't mean the accolades are done rolling in for a few players at Veterans High School. Every year the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association

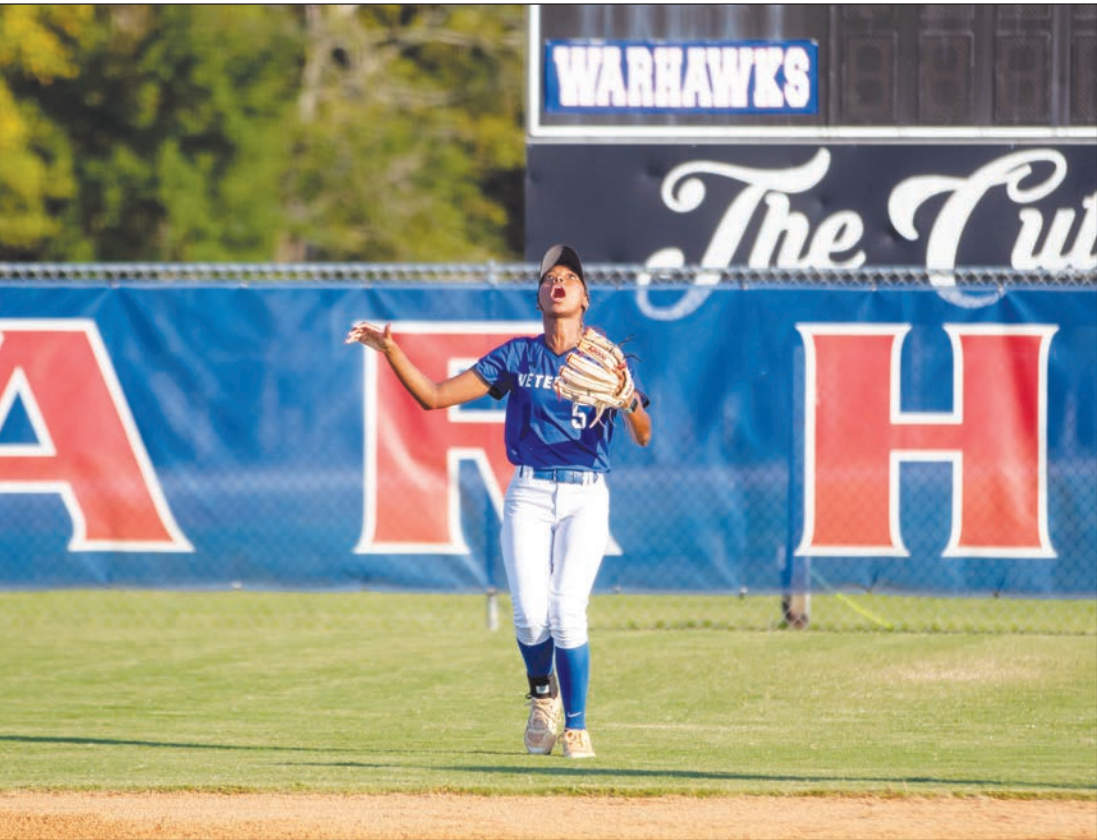
recognizes players through their All-State selections. There are usually 30 selections per classification, with a Player of the Year, Pitcher of the Year and 28 selectees split between first and second teams. This year, after a historic season, Veterans has three members on the list:

See more photos at  
bhjonline.com

Rizzy White, Senior Middle Infielder, 1st Team  
Rayven Hodridge, Senior Outfielder, 1st Team  
Caidence Scott, Junior Pitcher, 2nd Team



Senior middle infielder Rizzy White was selected to the 2025 GACA All-State 1st Team.




Senior outfielder Rayven Hodridge was selected to the 2025 GACA All-State 1st Team.



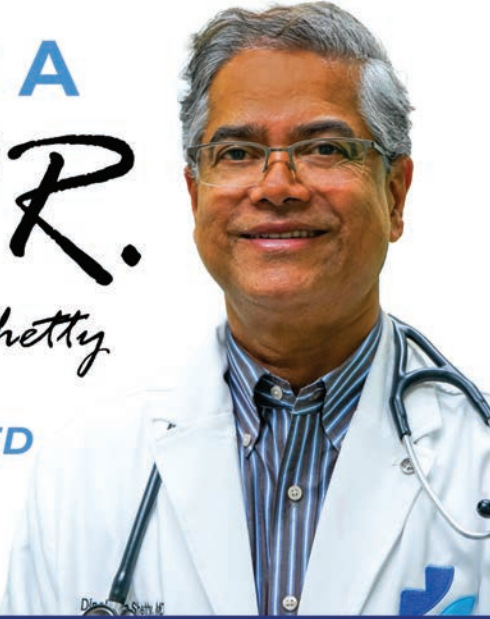
# Healthcare Corner

MORE THAN A DOCTOR.

 HOUSTON PRIMARY CARE  
Affiliated with Southeast Medical Group

*Dr. Shetty*

MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED  
SAME-DAY APPOINTMENTS  
NEW PATIENTS WELCOME



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

24/7  
Telehealth  
Online Doctor's Visits

WARNER ROBINS  
478-328-7674  
1719 Russell Parkway

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

CALL TO BOOK TODAY!

Special Content furnished to The Houston Home Journal.

TRAIN LIKE AN EXPLORER WITH THESE 3 EXPEDITION ROUTINES



Sponsored by: Carlyle Place  
A Life-Plan Community of Atrium Health Navicent

Staying active during the cold winter months is essential, but doing repetitive workouts gets boring! Change things up this season with fun exercise routines that mimic famous winter expeditions.

These routines are fine alone, but they're best with a big group! Even though you'll be working inside with temperature-controlled rooms, you'll feel like an explorer off to discover new adventures in the Arctic.

**Sailing Across the Bering Strait**

Credited as the first Russian to "discover" the western edge of the American continent, Vitus Bering undertook a voyage in 1725 towards what is now Alaska.

He used several ships and crossed thousands of miles by land and by sea. Have fun replicating the skills needed for this journey of exploration!

- Start with a warmup that includes upper and lower body stretching.
- Time to row! Even though Bering's ships had sails, the crew needed to row during calm weather or in emergencies. Use a rowing machine for 10 minutes at your local gym, do seated rows with free weights, or use resistance bands. If you're using weights, try for three sets of 12 reps each.
- After rowing, it's time to hike. The trek included walking across rocky terrain at times, so use "high knees" during your walking time to avoid tripping over the obstacles. Try to walk for 10 minutes!
- Cool down by stretching both your upper and lower body.

**Peary's and Cook's North Pole Expeditions**

In 1908, two different expeditions headed to "discover" the North Pole. While both Cook and Peary separately claim that they reached this northernmost spot, their records are inconclusive.

- Start with a warmup that includes upper and lower body stretching.
- Time to practice compass navigation. If you need basic compass-reading instructions, this guide is great: [www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/navigation-basics.html](http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/navigation-basics.html)! Once everyone in your group knows the skill, it's time for a relay.

It's clear that both, at least, came very close! Their journey included dog sled rides and snowshoeing, so model your workout after these skills.

- Start with a warmup that includes upper and lower body stretching.
- Time to ride on the dog sled. You'll need strong legs and core muscles to guide the sled. Do a set of these four exercises, each with eight reps. Rest for 3 minutes between sets, then go again for a total of three sets:
- Squats: You can do these assisted with a chair/wall or standing independently.
- Try these three seated core exercises: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R9sfB0kGog](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R9sfB0kGog).
- After your dogsled rides, it's time to snowshoe! There are three main muscles active when you snowshoe: hip flexors, hip adductors, and glutes. Let's work all three during a slow 10-minute walk: Take wider steps than usual. Stay perfectly upright. Lift your knees up high with each step. Move your arms!
- Take wider steps than usual.
- Stay perfectly upright.
- Lift your knees up high with each step.
- Move your arms!
- Cool down by stretching both your upper and lower body.

**Winter Survival Training**

No matter the expedition, having winter survival skills was essential. Complete this fun training course to move your body and practice the activities you might need if you're trekking in polar climates.

- Start with a warmup that includes upper and lower body stretching.
- Time to practice compass navigation. If you need basic compass-reading instructions, this guide is great: [www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/navigation-basics.html](http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/navigation-basics.html)! Once everyone in your group knows the skill, it's time for a relay.

- Split into two teams and start in the center of the room. Each team gets one compass and a roll of colored tape. Keep furniture and obstacles for an additional challenge. Have a game leader call out a compass direction (use this online generator: <https://www.randomlists.com/random-direction>). The first person on each team navigates as fast as they can to that spot and puts a piece of their colored tape. The next team member from each group follows the same process, but with a new direction. Every team member should have at least three turns.
- Have a game leader call out a compass direction (use this online generator: [www.randomlists.com/random-direction](https://www.randomlists.com/random-direction)).
- The first person on each team navigates as fast as they can to that spot and puts a piece of their colored tape.
- The next team member from each group follows the same process, but with a new direction.
- Every team member should have at least three turns.
- After compass reading, it's time to strengthen the muscles for building a survival ice cave. You'll need a strong upper body and core to carve out the ice and crawl inside. Do a set of these three exercises: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyaX-Tp8iFY>, eight reps of each move. Rest for 3 minutes, then repeat the set two more times.
- Do a set of these three exercises, eight reps of each move. Rest for 3 minutes, then repeat the set two more times.
- Do this set of seated core exercises for 10 minutes: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyaX-Tp8iFY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyaX-Tp8iFY).
- Cool down by stretching both your upper and lower body.

Grab a few fitness friends, standard equipment, and enjoy working out like the great winter explorers of centuries past.



## Give Your Retirement Plan a Promotion Veterans Save 5% Off Entrance Fees

Since 2001, veterans and non-veterans alike have come to Central Georgia's only Life-Plan Community to live, learn, laugh and play on our amenity-rich campus in Macon. We call it crafting your happy.

To schedule a visit or learn more:  
478-845-6899  
[carlyleplaceinfo.org/military](http://carlyleplaceinfo.org/military)

# Carlyle Place

A Life-Plan Community of Atrium Health Navicent



5300 Zebulon Rd. | Macon, GA 31210



# Northside Basketball

## Eagles freshmen earning playing time as coach Buck Harris searches for buy-in from team

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

Northside boys head coach Buck Harris praised his team's defensive potential after their home win against Rutland on Tuesday, but also said there's a need for more buy-in on defense.

Harris has expectations for his players, and when they don't meet them that production has come from elsewhere in the early season.

"We got some guys in some areas that I thought didn't come to play tonight, but we got some other guys that stepped up and played well for us," Harris said after Tuesday's win over Rutland. "But that's why it's called team basketball and collectively, it was a total team effort. Some guys that I was counting on didn't play well, some other guys did. I'm glad we can do that."

Whenever something like that happens it opens the door for players like freshmen Caden Lowe and Kingston Allen.

Lowe played more out of the two on Tuesday, and despite fouling out, garnered praise from Harris.

“Freshman Caden Lowe played well for us with the exception of fouling out,” Harris said. “We’re still young in some areas, but we’re getting better. We just try to hang our hat on playing defense and getting better defensively each and every night.”



**Clay Brown/HH.**

**Northside freshman Caden Lowe (22) handles the ball at half court for the Eagles in his nine-point night against Rutland.**

Getting varsity minutes as a freshman is a big deal almost no matter the program, and getting Harris' seal of approval as a guard means those two provide something to the team and have great upside.

"Caden Lowe is physically ready for high school on the defensive end. He can defend," Harris said. "He's too aggressive sometimes, proved tonight when he fouled out, and he's confident, and you can't take that away. If some of my other guys were just as confident as him, ain't no telling how good we could be, because he believes he belongs on the court...He earns it every day."

Allen isn't quite the defensive stopper that Lowe is, but he provides a boost to the Eagles' offense.

“He can score the ball. He can put the ball in the hole,” Harris said. “He can shoot when he gets ready

to shoot, but it's just the mindset."

That mindset Harris is referring to is focus, which he said Allen didn't have on Tuesday. That kind of thing is what separates freshmen from upper-classmen, though Harris said he's not scared to play either Lowe or Allen despite the ups and downs that'll inevitably bring.

“Both of them are typical freshmen. It’s gonna be a roller coaster ride all year because you’re gonna be up and down,” Harris said. “Kingston Allen tonight [Tuesday], was a typical freshman. Just up and down, not ready. I told him, ‘You’re not focused, you’re not ready to play...’ I’m patient with him and I understand freshmen being freshmen, [they’re] gonna have days like that. But when they’re on and locked in they got a chance to be pretty good for us.”

## Lady Eagles still finding their way in the early season, embracing defensive culture in 6-1 start

**By CLAY BROWN**  
HHJ Sports Editor  
[clay@hhjonline.com](mailto:clay@hhjonline.com)

Behind the Northside girls' 6-1 start, their first in four years, is an improved defense that's held opponents to 20 points or less three times so far.

In those games the Lady Eagles have outscored opponents 225-52. It's not a prolific offense helping the scoring, either. They still move slowly, work the ball around and prioritize paint touches for Taylor Johnson and other bigs.

Instead their aggressive and zealous defense nets them transition opportunities and makes every basket difficult for the opposing team. Transition defense could use some work, but their rebounding (at least against Rutland) helps nullify that.

Head coach ChoRhonda

Gwaltney-Harris has preached hard work and defense since she arrived last year, and she's starting to see that culture seep in throughout the team.

"My older kids understand what I want and what I need. My freshmen, they're having trouble with the times and not making them," Gwaltney-Harris said. "My older kids from last year, they're on it. They're making their times and they're trying to do what I ask them to do on a regular basis."

Those underclassmen have gotten more on-court opportunities recently because of players missing for various reasons.

"I just got a few kids back from flag football, so they've been in and out all season," Gwaltney-Harris said. "So I don't have exactly a whole team. We had some punishments going on, some other



Clay Brown/HHJ

**Freshman center Ana'ja McClendon (34) fights for positioning under the rim with Rutland sophomore Amber Ellington (0).**

stuff, so I don't have a whole team exactly."

Freshman center Ana'ja McClendon had a double-double with 10 points and 11 rebounds on Saturday at Rutland in a 49-32 victory. Though she missed a lot of shots at the basket on Tuesday, she was still a rebounding force with Johnson off the floor or operating in the high post.

Another freshman Gwaltney-Harris mentioned was Kendall Smith, who finished with six points on Tuesday.

Her length and defensive effort made her stand out, even if she's still figuring things out.

"I call her my baby giraffe, because she don't have a clue what she can do. She gets her hands on a lot of stuff," Gwaltney-Harris said of Smith. "My young kids are coming along and they're playing better."

Some upperclassmen have proven their enthusiasm for defense, like Jazmine Burgess who picked up the ball handler at half court plenty on Tuesday.

Another thing worth noting is Johnson being much more vocal on both ends of the floor. That was one of the things Gwaltney-Harris expected of her entering the season, and in her senior season the team goes as she goes.

"Taylor was not very good on Saturday, but she was good tonight. She was poisoned, she was under control, and that's what I need from her," Gwaltney-Harris said. "That's why I told her, 'When our leader plays well we play well.' She was poisoned... she was under control and I think the rest of us followed [Tuesday]."

A festive holiday event poster for Warner Robins Georgia. The background is dark red with gold stars. The title "PHOTOS WITH SANTA" is in large, white, cursive font. Below it, the date "DECEMBER 19, 2025" and time "1:00 PM - 5:00 PM" are in white. A gold ticket-shaped box contains the text "SANTA HOLIDAY PHOTO OP", "HOT COCOA BAR & COOKIES", and "CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES". The location "TED WRIGHT PARK, 2841 MOODY RD, BONAIRE, GA 31005" is shown with a location pin icon. The bottom left features the "WARNER ROBINS GEORGIA" logo. The bottom right shows a cartoon train. The poster is decorated with two Christmas trees, nutcrackers, gifts, and a mug of hot cocoa.