



# The Houston Home Journal

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Weekend, January 24, 2026

## HEMA responds to recent snowfall, previews potential severe weather

By OWEN JONES  
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HOUSTON COUNTY — Last Sunday, residents of Houston County and beyond were blessed with snowfall for the second year in a row, a rare occurrence in the State of Georgia.

Houston County Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Chris Stoner said most of the response from the Houston County Emergency Management Agency was monitoring the snowfall and coordinating with the cities, county and public works.

"[We] were making sure that we had adequate supplies and prepared for the worst case scenario,"

he said. "Fortunately, we ended up with a perfect scenario as we were able to get snow but it was able to melt off before it had any negative impacts."

Stoner and his team were also checking the roadways throughout the county. He said they were very fortunate the snow came and went without any issue, unlike last year.

He pointed out that last year's temperatures stayed a lot colder for a longer period of time.

"Last year's event was a lot more crippling than this year's strictly because of the temperatures both leading up to the event and post," he said.

Residents of Houston County may be getting

another episode of winter weather this weekend as some have reported there to be an ice storm on the move to Central Georgia.

Right now, Stoner said a lot of emphasis has been made on those reports using long-range modeling. He said that this is the opposite of what they are used for.

"Long range modeling is great for being a tool, but not so much of hammering down specifics," he said. "You can't take just the model data itself and say that this is definitive, and that's what was broadcasted for this event."

Stoner did say one of those scenarios of the model

See WEATHER page 3A



Sandra Hernandez/HHJ

Residents around Houston County were blessed with a few hours of constant snowfall last weekend.

## City of Warner Robins unveils new Airman Boulevard townhomes

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ  
HHJ Staff Writer  
[sandra@hhjonline.com](mailto:sandra@hhjonline.com)

WARNER ROBINS — The City of Warner Robins Community and Economic Development Department hosted a ribbon cutting of its new Airman Boulevard Townhomes on Wednesday, Jan. 21.

The Airman Boulevard Townhomes include eight units, and each home is approximately 1,400 square feet with three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Mayor LaRhonda Patrick shared the project was made possible through a \$1.5 million Community Home Investment program grant.

The townhomes serve as an option for working fam-

ilies and individuals transitioning from renting to owning a home. Patrick said the CHIP grant was meant to decrease the homes' sale price. Individuals making \$70,000 a year can afford to purchase, according to Patrick. The approximate sale price of the townhomes are less than \$250,000.

The project is part of a plan the city made back in 2017. This plan was to revitalize neighborhoods and build quality housing adjacent to existing developments, Patrick explained.

People are already applying to live in the townhomes. Patrick shared they had over 100 people on the list but that number has since gone down.

"The process we have in place to get on the list is clearly active, and it

works," she said. She also said it is a priority in her administration to enhance and uplift homeownership in the community. Patrick believes when the COVID-19 pandemic happened, rental fees started increasing but paychecks did not.

She said those who own a home have the potential to pay less compared to a person who rents. Patrick also shared when owning a home, there will not be an unforeseen rent increase every year.

"Putting that control in somebody's hands, allowing them to get keys in their own place and have a mortgage you're paying for every month is a powerful thing," she said. "It is a

See TOWNHOMES page 3A



The City of Warner Robins hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony of its new Airman Boulevard Townhomes, located at 307 Airmen Boulevard.

Sandra Hernandez/HHJ

## Perry City Council discuss 3% rate increase in water and sewer consumption

By SANDRA HERNANDEZ  
HHJ Staff Writer  
[sandra@hhjonline.com](mailto:sandra@hhjonline.com)

PERRY — Perry City Council discussed its Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget during its latest city council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 20. Since it was the first reading, no action had been taken.

Director of Finance Mitchell Worthington explained the budget to Mayor Randall Walker and council.

The budget is divided into seven categories:

General fund  
Fire protection  
Hotel and Motel  
Water and Sewage  
Gas  
Solid Waste  
Stormwater

Worthington explained the mid-year budget adjustment is a standard process.



Director of Finance Mitchell Worthington explained the budget during the pre-council and regular council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

He said it allows city staff, mayor and council to recognize revenues and expenses that have been approved or changed throughout the year.

Water and Sewage Fund  
According to council documents, there will be a 3%

## County honors longtime service members, speak more on the potential FLOST

By OWEN JONES  
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WARNER ROBINS — The Houston County Commissioners honored a couple of county employees for their extensive service.

The Board recognized Landfill Operator Craig Duke for his 30 years of service to the Houston County

Landfill and James Moore of the Houston County Tax Assessors Office for his 40 years of service to the county.

"Craig is the senior statesman of the landfill who strives every day to best serve our customers and effectively execute his daily duties," Chairman

See FLOST page 3A



Houston County recognized Craig Duke (third from left) and James Moore (middle) for their extensive service to the county.

Owen Jones/HHJ

## Word of the Day

*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* — 1 John 3:16 (NKJV)

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- Kelly Burke

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- Billy Powell
- Don Moncrief

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- Comics
- Puzzle

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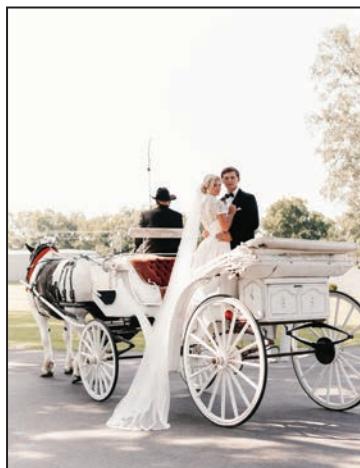
- Business, A9
- Sports, A10

# 2026 Middle Georgia's Southern Brides Cover Contestants

Pick your favorite Southern Bride by going to [HHJOnline.com](http://HHJOnline.com) and clicking the top banner to cast your vote



Amber & Andrew Barker



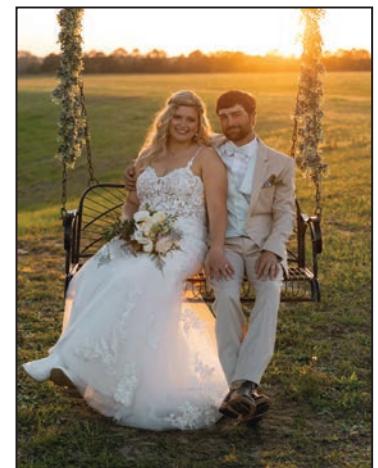
Maddie & Toxland Brannen



Heather & Clay Duckworth



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Haylie & Foy Evans



Allison & Grayson Giles



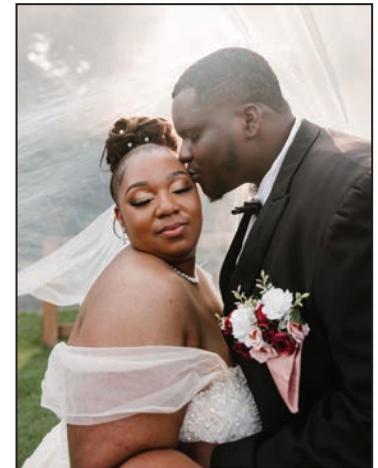
Julia-Anne & Bailey Godwin



Megan & Tyler Goubeaux



Brianna & Justin Hall



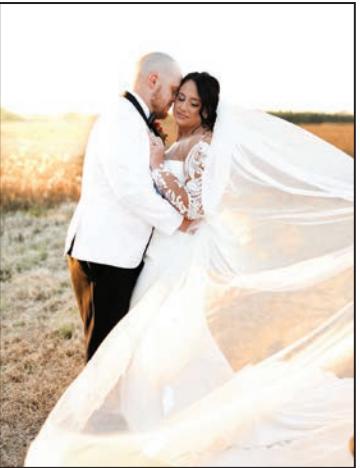
Tiffany & Jeremy King



Kaylee & Mark McCleskey



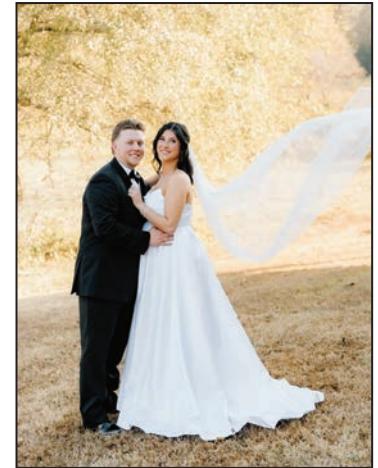
Sophie & John Michael McNeal



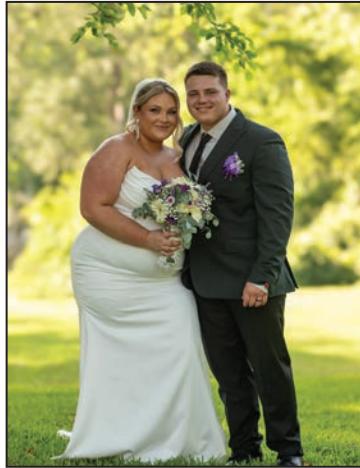
Storm & Trey Morse



Chelsea & Blake Mueller



Tierra Jade & Chase Padgett



Abigail & Caden Pollack



Katelyn & Peyton Ridings



Caroline & Landon Ritchie



Emma & Evan Stewart



Erin & Bryan Woodard

Middle Georgia's

*Southern Bride*  
2026

ENTRIES  
ARE IN!

Voting is open for the 2026 Southern Bride Magazine Contest!

Go to our website, [HHJOnline.com](http://HHJOnline.com), and click the top banner to vote for your favorite Southern Bride!

Voting closes at NOON on January 30th.



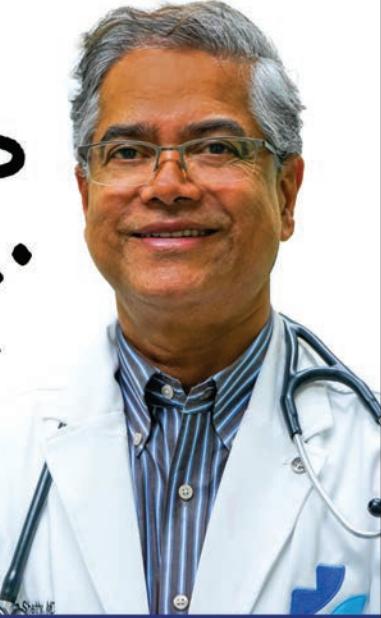
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# CALENDAR

## Perry High School Class of 1976 Bi-Centennial Reunion Weekend

Theme: "Celebrating 50 Years of Achievement and Excellence"

Panthers of '76—It's Time to Celebrate! Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of our 50-Year Reunion!

Reunion Weekend: September 11–13, 2026

Events All Weekend

RSVP by March 31, 2026

Payment Due by May 29, 2026

For more information Contact Regina Ford at 478-987-0257 or email [perryhighschool76@gmail.com](mailto:perryhighschool76@gmail.com) and visit the Reunion Social Media Page Perry High School Class of 76 Reunion News.

75th

## Anniversary Celebration

"All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins is excited to celebrate our 75th Anniversary on February 1st, 2026. The Right Reverend Robert Wright, the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta will be joining us for Sunday Worship at 10:15AM, February 1st, with Confirmation and Reaffirmation followed by a Reception in our Parish Hall."

## Senior Health Expo

Bloom Events and Marketing will be hosting Matters of the Heart, a Senior Health Expo from Feb 10, 2026, at 10 am to 1 pm at the Georgia National Fairgrounds Miller Murphy Howard Building. The event is free of charge and vendors deadline is Feb. 4, 2026. For more information, email [info@bloomeventsandmarketing.com](mailto:info@bloomeventsandmarketing.com) or call 478-303-0691.

## FLOST

*From page 1A*

Dan Perdue said. "He is a great motivator and example to younger employees with his get it done attitude and loyalty to his craft. He is a large reason as to why the landfill has been such a success over the last 30 years."

Moore rose up through the ranks at the Houston County Tax Assessor's Office and currently leads the department now. Perdue said that is a great way to understand an organization and department by doing most of the jobs in it.

"You lead that department very well, they've performed great, do their jobs very well and we appreciate it," he said. "It's not always a popular job, but we appreciate the service that they offer to the people of Houston County."

In new business, the Board approved an Intergovernmental Agreement and Resolution of a potential Floating Option Sales Tax (FLOST) set to be on the ballot in May.

Perdue said this is an option since the county

## Wine and Cheese Tasting

The Episcopal Church Women's (ECW) at All Saints Episcopal Church, located at 1708 Watson Blvd, Warner Robins, is hosting our Annual Wine and Cheese Tasting on Feb 13, 2026, starting at 7:00PM in our Parish Hall.

Various wines, craft beers, and cheeses from around the world are available for tasting and enjoyment. In addition, there is a Silent Auction and door prizes.

This event is one of our major Episcopal Church Women's (ECW) funding sources for the many Outreach Programs sponsored by All Saints.

Tickets are \$30.00 per person and can be purchased at the church office. Please contact the church office at 478-923-1791 for more information and tickets.

## Houston County Celebrates Earth Day

PERRY, GA — Houston County will celebrate Earth Day on April 18, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Houston County Extension Pavilion in Perry. This free family event will offer learning stations, craft projects, educational exhibits, face painting, and more.

Two exhibitors will bring wildlife and be available to answer questions. Vendors will also be onsite to offer a variety of items for sale, including plants.

Morgan Grizzle, Houston County ANR Agent, said, "This all-ages event will feature fun, educational activities for the entire family! Our goal is to help our community understand how each of us plays a role in Earth's bigger picture. Earth Day isn't just about recycling or picking up litter, although these are important. It also includes topics like septic systems, production agriculture, invasive plants, animals, weather, and so much more. We hope everyone will join us for a fun-filled family day and leave having learned something new along the way!"

Earth Day has been observed since 1970 to promote protecting the environment and raise awareness about preserving Earth's resources. The Houston County Extension Pavilion is located at 2030 Kings Chapel Road in Perry. For more information, call the extension office at 478-987-2028. To learn more about the UGA Extension office, visit [www.extension.uga.edu](http://www.extension.uga.edu).

## American Heritage Girls Meeting

A new Chapter of American Heritage Girls has begun meeting in Perry at 208 Langston Road. Meetings are held on Mondays at 6:15 pm. AHG is a Christ-centered character and leadership development program for biological girls ages 5-18. It is dedicated to building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and nation through hundreds of badge programs. There are currently more than 1,700 chapters in the United States. For further information call or text 910-381-7419 or [AHGGA0208@gmail.com](mailto:AHGGA0208@gmail.com)

## WEATHER

*From page 1A*

may come true, but it is too early to tell as of yet if that will be the case.

HEMA does use long-range modeling as a preparation tool for a potential event.

"It's always better to be prepared and not need something then not be prepared and need it," he said. "We use [long range modeling] as a tool to help us build a plan of what we're going to do and how we're going to prepare. We rely on the short-range models a lot more to dial in on whether or not we're going to recommend closures as we will never recommend a closure solely based on long-range modeling."

According to Stoner, any ice related event in Houston

County or surrounding areas will pose a threat. He said any degree of ice above a tenth-of-an-inch will be a bad scenario due to the infrastructure and trees not being used to that type of weather.

"That added weight from the ice is going to create a lot of downed trees and power lines, road disruptions and essentially stop us to a halt as a community for a couple days," he said.

Stoner also provided some advice should any of these projections come into fruition.

"Have plenty of food and water that you can make and consume without relying on power [such as] canned goods and things like that," he said. "Make sure you have plenty of warm clothing, a way to heat your home that's not

an outdoor heat source, bring your animals and plants [inside] and except to not be able to drive for a couple days if this does happen."

Stoner also pointed out that in the event of a potential power outage to fully charge all mobile devices and try to stay off of them as much as possible.

"If we need to put out more important messaging and are capable of doing such, you have a way of receiving those messages," he said.

To keep up to date on the latest on the potential ice storm this weekend, visit the Houston County Emergency Management Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/HOUSTONCOUNTYEMA](https://www.facebook.com/HOUSTONCOUNTYEMA)

## TOWNHOMES

*From page 1A*

priority for council and I to see more opportunities [and] connecting people in need with the ability to own their own home."

Deep South Construction partnered with the city to build the townhomes. According to Owner Michael Ware, it took 90 days to complete the project.

"Projects like this truly matter. They're just not about concrete, lumber and timelines; they're about people," he said.

Ware shared from day one, their goal was to build quality homes designed for homeownership.

"Today's ribbon cutting isn't really marking the completion of a construction project. It is really about opening doors to homeownership, to opportunity

and to a stronger Warner Robins," he said.

The townhomes are located at 307 Airman Boulevard. Those interested in applying are encouraged to contact Community and Economic Development Director Kate Hogan at (478) 293-1012 or Assistant Director Kim Mazo at (478) 302-5514. From there, they will direct individuals on how to get on the list.

## COUNCIL

*From page 1A*

for the average customer.

Worthington explained the fund includes the sewer connection fee approved by city council in December.

Worthington shared that on the revenue side they are recognizing an increase in the city's base charge collection. He estimated they will collect \$109,000 more.

He explained it'll help cover the increase in debt service from the AE Harris Reclamation Facility, which is anticipated to be fully operational in March. He also mentioned it'll cover the operating costs of the facility.

Worthington said in the budget they will recognize the operating expenses of the facility which is estimated at \$150,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year. The management expenses are an estimated \$115,000, according to Worthington.

Councilmember Dan Peterson shared his concern saying there has been a 7% increase each year. He said he would not like to burden ratepayers.

City Manager Robert Smith also provided his comments saying they have shifted a number of costs out of the water fund.

"There are numerous avenues through which we believe we'll be able to further diversify revenues in a way that will benefit the current ratepayers," he said.

Smith said the AE Harris Reclamation Facility is an asset and leverage to the city. He hopes it will mitigate future rate increases to a certain extent for ratepayers.

Fire Protection

Worthington then explained the fire protection fund saying the only change in revenue is a reduction of \$90,700. He clarified there will not be an increase in the fire protection fee.

He said when the original budget was adopted for

FY 2026, it assumed a 10% increase in the fire protection fund. Worthington shared through negotiations and discussions, it was reduced to a 2% increase instead of 10%.

He explained the \$90,700 represents the difference they will not collect because of the fee increase.

Walker clarified they will be moving money from the General Fund to the fire fund due to it being underfunded by approximately \$708,000, according to Worthington.

Worthington said the fire fee is not projected to bring enough revenue to fully cover the cost of the city's fire protection services. He shared there will be a \$323,500 increase from the General Fund to cover costs. Walker said property taxes will be paying the difference between the \$708,000 and \$323,500.

During the regular council meeting, Peterson asked Worthington what causes the increases. Worthington replied saying each year there are increases and expenses in the fire protection fund.

He shared the main expense in the fund is the firefighters' salaries and benefits. Worthington said they have to go up each year to keep up with inflation. He explained they budget 2% each year for salary increases. He also shared in the last few years, health insurance has increased dramatically.

Smith also responded to Peterson's comment. He said they are aware of personnel costs. He explained they have multiple mechanisms in place such as career tracking, in classification adjustments and tuition reimbursement programs. He shared they have been successful, however, they are looking at options to limit the use of those programs. Smith anticipates they will not experience drastic increases in personnel costs each year.

Solid Waste Fund In the solid waste fund, Worthington mentioned the city's switch to Ryland Environmental as their provider. He shared that the contract is more than what their previous provider charged. The total amount of both contracts is approximately \$418,000, according to Worthington.

This increase will be covered by the city's general fund, therefore, will not affect ratepayers.

Councilmember Amy Fouse shared her thoughts saying the city's expenses are not covered by what they are bringing in.

She said it is not best practice to use property tax dollars to subsidize water, however, the city is using the general fund to subsidize solid waste.

"I appreciate the effort to not raise the solid waste [fee]...I think we need more conversation around how we're addressing these before we get to our second reading of this budget," she said.

## General Fund

Worthington highlighted the bigger changes made in the budget. One of those changes in the general fund was the actualization of their property tax collection.

Worthington explained since the city did not rollback the millage rate, property tax collection is projected to be \$1.4 million more than the original budget called for.

To view the full FY 2026 operating budget, visit the council agenda on the city's website: <https://pub-perry.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=18260>.

The Mayor and Council will hold their pre-council meeting at 5 p.m. and the regular council meeting at 6 p.m. on Feb. 3. Everyone is invited to attend these meetings, and the agenda can be found at [perry-ga.gov/escribe-agendas-minutes](http://perry-ga.gov/escribe-agendas-minutes). Both meetings are also livestreamed on YouTube: [youtube.com/@PerryComms](https://youtube.com/@PerryComms).

County Courthouse on Perry Parkway. The full agenda of this meeting can be found at [www.houstoncountyga.gov/minutes/2026-01-20%20Head's%20Agenda.pdf](http://www.houstoncountyga.gov/minutes/2026-01-20%20Head's%20Agenda.pdf)

## Community Calendar

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

## Houston Home Journal

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and all three municipalities opted into the floating homestead tax exemption policy.

Your property values are not allowed to be the amount that is taxed on those values and are not allowed to rise any faster than general inflation," he said. "Since the county and all three cities opted in, that opens up the possibility to go to voters, so this is not a done deal, and will be something on the May 19, 2026, general primary ballot."

The FLOST is a 1% sales tax with all revenues going to offset property taxes paid in Houston County, Perry and Warner Robins.

Property tax payers will see that rollback of the millage rate directly on their tax bills, and there will be a partial rollback beginning in 2027 representing three months of collection that may begin in October of 2026," Perdue said. "In years going forward after 2027, you would see a full rollback representing the total value that was generated."

Perdue also pointed out that the FLOST is different from SPLOST and use tax be imposed for five years within Houston County with the proceeds

and the recently passed E-SPLOST. He said those are used for capital projects only. The FLOST is used directly to rollback the millage rate in the County and the cities within.

That rollback would be equivalent to 3.54 mills at \$41.5 million, and you would see that rollback both on your county tax bill and on your city tax bills," he said. "This is an opportunity for the citizens of Houston County to trade sales tax for property tax. We've heard a lot of feedback, rightly so, about property tax in Houston County."

Commissioner Mark Byrd said "opportunity" is a great word to describe the FLOST. He also read from the actual resolution.

"Item A-2 says, 'Clearly the proceeds of such tax are to be used for the exclusive purpose of reducing property taxes imposed by the county and municipalities,'" Byrd said.

Byrd also pointed out the resolution itself does have the ballot question which says:

"Shall a special 1% sales and use tax be imposed for five years within Houston County with the proceeds

used exclusively to reduce property taxes imposed by Houston County and the municipalities of Warner Robins, Perry and Centerville".

In other new business, the County approved the appointment of Ellie Loudermilk as the County Historian.

He said when the original budget was adopted for

who has invested more time in the history of this community than you have," Perdue said. "We are honored to have you serving in this role, and I have all the confidence in your ability to do the job."

The next Houston County Commissioners meeting will be held on Feb. 3, at 9 a.m. at the Houston

County Courthouse on Perry Parkway. The full agenda of this meeting can be found at [www.houstoncountyga.gov/minutes/2026-01-20%20Head's%20Agenda.pdf](http://www.houstoncountyga.gov/minutes/2026-01-20%20Head's%20Agenda.pdf)

County Courthouse on Perry Parkway. The full agenda of this meeting can be found at [www.houstoncountyga.gov/minutes/20](http://www.houstoncountyga.gov/minutes/2026-01-20%20Head's%20Agenda.pdf)

# VIEWPOINTS

## The Houston Home Journal

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### Our Goal

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

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### Share Your Viewpoint

There are three ways to submit a Letter to the Editor: Email it to [brianna@hhjonline.com](mailto:brianna@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.

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## Editorial Policy

All columns, letters to the editor and cartoons are of the express opinion of the author and NOT the Houston Home Journal, its sister newspapers or the Georgia Trust for Local News unless otherwise expressly stated.

We welcome all letters to the editor, and authors may write about any subject. However, we reserve the right to refuse to publish letters that may be offensive or break our editorial guidelines. We also reserve the right to edit letters for grammar, spelling or style, but we will not purposely change the author's intended meaning.

Letters specifically endorsing a candidate or berating a candidate will not be published; however, letters critical of elected officials are allowed if they fall within common decency and local interest.

Letters should be no more than 500 words and should include the author's name, address and phone number. (Only the author's name and city of address will be published.) Unsigned letters and pen names will be rejected. Authors must be the original creator of the letter; no one may submit a letter on behalf of another person. Writers may only submit one letter every month. If a writer is critical of a subject that you, a reader, takes issue with, please write a responding letter to the editor. You may mention the other letter, but letters should focus on issues rather than writers.

To submit a letter to the editor, email [hhjeditor@gmail.com](mailto:hhjeditor@gmail.com) or send it to Houston Home Journal, 1210 Washington St., Perry, GA 31069.

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in the  
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Journal

# The Great Ice Storm of 1973

The pandemonium created by the prediction of a historic ice storm, or maybe it just rains, in Middle Georgia reminds me of the craziest winter storm of my life. And no, I didn't live in Middle Georgia in February of 1973 during the last historic winter storm.

On Sunday, January 7, 1973, a freezing rain began to fall in picturesque Avondale Estates. Pine needles began to take on ice like I'd never dreamed. As the afternoon wore on, tree branches began to sag as the ice piled up. But there was no threat yet, I was just hoping that school would be canceled on Monday.

I slept on the top bunk in my bedroom. I watched as the night sky lit up with blue light from the exploding power lines as the freezing rain fell all night. Trees and limbs came crashing down for hours. It was fantastically incredible to this 14 year old; not realizing that my lovely home would be powerless for a week.

We had a fireplace that was largely ornamental because when the mean temperature is 95 degrees, what's the point of a fire. But the fireplace came in

handy as the only source of heat for our family of five. We cooked meals over the fire and heated the living room where we all slept for the next week as temperatures never broke freezing. The pioneer aspect of cooking over a wood fire was fun. Scavenging for wood was an adventure too.

Monday morning's early light showed the devastation in my neighborhood. DeKalb County police estimated 90% of the county residences were without power. Trees were down everywhere. The roads and yards had inches of ice on them. Our pool froze over. Everything looked like a Crystal Palace. It was magical to kids.

For more than a week, no school, no work, no going to the store to get groceries. We lived off what we had.

but a brief time. My magical story doesn't do justice to the scores of people who helped neighbors, carried meals to others, or even behemoth Georgia Power helping families with food losses that were beyond their ability to cope. We were fine. We stayed warm, had food, no one was injured, and we were blessed.

Atlanta has had Snow Apocalypses, but the Great Ice Storm of 1973 remains unrivaled as ice storms go in Georgia.

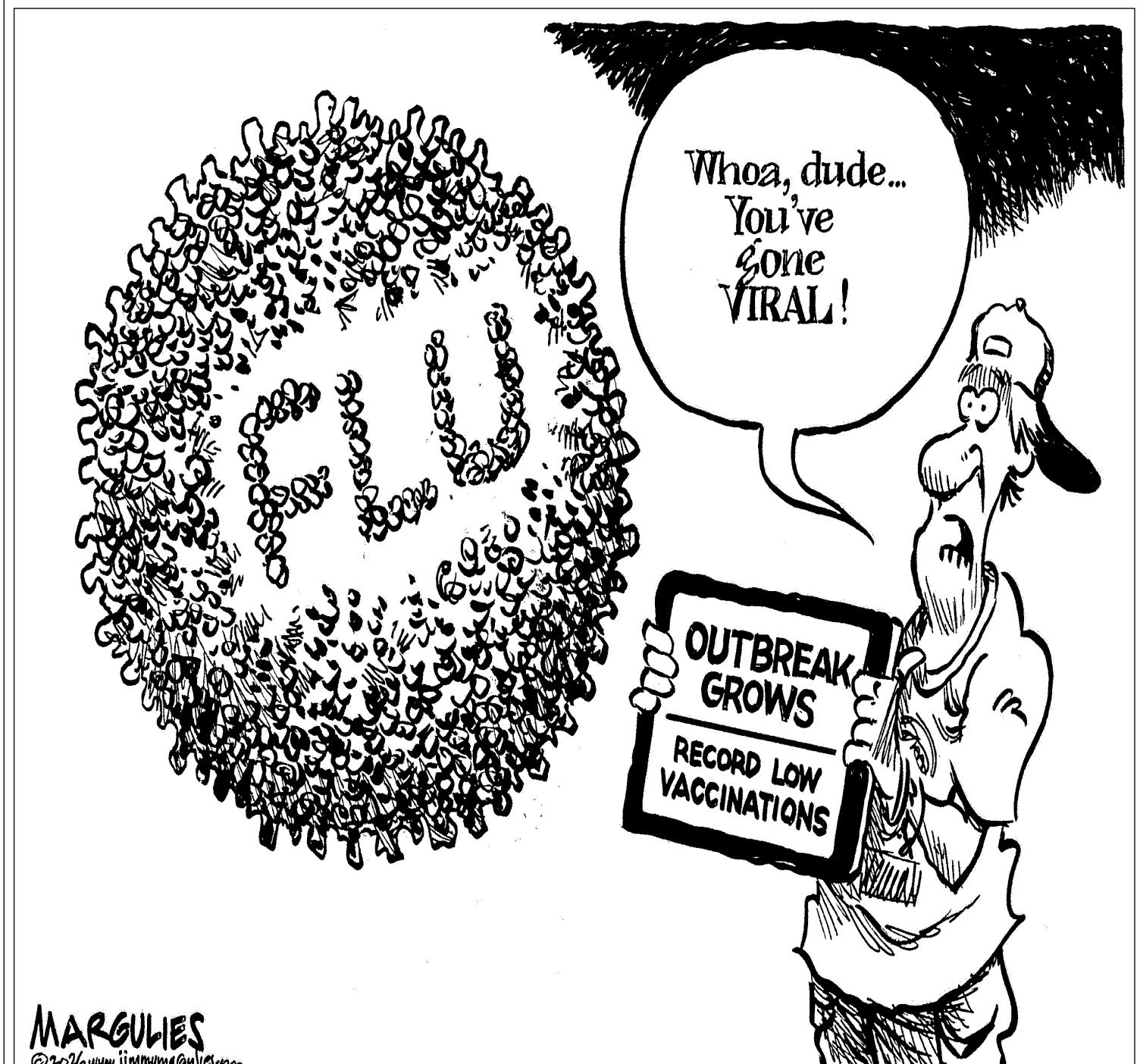
Kelly Burke was born in Knoxville where he spent his younger years, followed by high school years in Atlanta where he graduated from Georgia Tech, and Mercer Law School. He has been in private practice, a magistrate judge, and an elected district attorney. He writes about the law, politics, music, and 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.kellyburke.com](http://www.kellyburke.com). You can email Kelly at [dakellyburke@gmail.com](mailto:dakellyburke@gmail.com).

As power was restored to the main lines, the issue for us was that a falling branch had pulled our power lines off the house, so we were several more days without power compared to some of our neighbors.

The resulting thaw made the Great Ice Storm of 1973

COLUMNIST

KELLY BURKE



## Can I get a hand, please?

I lost my wedding ring several years ago.

I blame the pandemic. Back in the days of shutdowns and social distancing, I was sitting in the driver's seat of my beautiful car when, having just interacted with someone outside my family circle, I reached for the heavily recommended hand sanitizer. At the time a bottle of this clear, often scented goop was like money in the bank. Everyone desired it, but only a few could find it on store shelves.

To properly clean my hands, I removed my wedding band and set it aside. After rubbing alcohol into my skin, I reached for the symbol of wedding vows. My still damp fingers failed to grasp the tungsten carbide; thus it slipped and fell into the recesses between the seats.

And there it remains to this day.

I'm beginning to think there is a black hole to the

darkest depths of the universe on my Honda's floorboards, because several things have been lost down there over the years, and no expedition or treasure hunt has ever been able to recover anything of value. I have found half-eaten crackers and broken crayons aplenty, but never my lost jewelry. A bounty still stands on the lost item. I told my children that whoever recovers and returns the ring will be entitled to a \$20 bill.

Still nothing.

The problem is that there are so many dark crevices along the seats that no amount of light can shine

in every corner, and even if it could, the human hand is not dexterous enough to reach in every hole. My ring, most likely, will go to whomever I sell my car to whenever I decide to finally upgrade. We can just keep that between us. I have started wearing cheap rubber wedding bands, so it's no big deal if I make a habit of dropping things.

The solution to my problem, though, is currently being developed by a team of scientists in Sweden.

Researchers are developing a robotic hand that will surpass the functionality of a biological one. What's the

problem with hands? A real one can only pick up one or two things at a time. This machine one, however, can maneuver and grasp multiple items at one time, with each finger operating semi-independently of others and bending in all kinds of ways our meat-and-bone phalanges cannot.

Furthermore, the hand is detachable from the host and can crawl around, much like the Thing in the Addams Family franchise. The implications of such a device are phenomenal. Besides benefitting the injured or handicapped, the robot hand could be the perfect tool for working in tight and/or dangerous spaces. From retrieving a dropped screw in ductwork to repairing industrial machines, this thing could make life easier for a whole lot of people.

All I want to know is, can I borrow one for a little while? I want it to root around under the seats of my car and see if it can find my wedding ring.

There's \$20 in it if it can.

NEW  
SOUTHERN DAD

KYLE DOMINY



## LIFESTYLE &amp; FAITH

## Encounter with a Guardian Angel

A relative of mine told me of an encounter he had with an angel. He was at sea sailing from the Bahamas to Florida. This passage from his letter sets the stage for the surprise encounter: "The lights of Freeport had long disappeared. It was a gorgeous night as the sailboat was responding to the balmy southeast breeze, moving smoothly and quietly through the water. Down below in the cabin, all the guests were sleeping soundly. As the autopilot handled the boat, I fought off fatigue by searching the horizon for signs of human kind. Occasionally a wave splashed over the bow and the water, full of phosphorus, glowing in an eerie way as it made its way down the boat and dripped back into the ocean. I was comfortable, lying partially down in the cockpit with my head propped on a pillow and positioned with a clear view of the water ahead as well as the boat's instruments. The Dramamine taken hours earlier added to my comfort but had not caused any drowsiness. A check of the instruments reflected we were about 50-nautical miles northeast of Miami and moving at a speed of 5-knots. The time was 3 AM in the morning."

Then he penned this incredible narration of what happened next: "I turned to one side and there stood Henry Braswell, your uncle, who had been dead for over

## PARABLES TO PONDER

BILLY POWELL



20-years. He was dressed in dark pants and white shirt. He revealed he was my guardian angel and related that he had been with me at the bar back in Freeport where a huge Bahamian had violently attacked a friend of mine. I had interceded to keep the Bahamian from doing bodily harm to my friend. When the large man came toward me in great anger, he suddenly stopped in his tracks. At the time I didn't know why. But, now I knew. Henry Braswell was standing behind me. And believe me no one would want to contend with Henry Braswell in a bar room as a real man or an angel."

My relative then recounted this conversation with my Uncle Henry: "He told me that your mother and daddy were very happy with their assignments in heaven. Henry stated that your mother was in charge of welcoming women to heaven who earlier had lost their husbands and had encountered the same problems and illnesses that she had on earth. He continued that your father, who had mechanical knowledge

and was fascinated with scientific advancements, was working with computers in heaven. As Henry was speaking of the beauty of heaven, I heard a loud splash that startled me. I shrieked, 'Henry, that was a big fish!' But suddenly I was alone. Henry Braswell was gone. The ship's clock now read 4:02 A.M. Was I dreaming? I honestly don't know, but this was one of the most memorable experiences of my life."

The Bible speaks of different categories of angels: seraphim that attend the throne of God, cherubim who guard the entrance to the tree of life, archangels like Michael, messengers of God such as Gabriel who proclaimed Jesus' birth and guardian angels who assist, protect and deliver God's people. I have felt the presence of angels when I watched my grandmother Powell breathe her last, when my mother slipped into eternity, and when heaven's chariots came for my beloved wife Beverly. Jesus said that resurrected believers will "become as the angels of God in heaven." (Matt 22: 30)

## When bad days come, take the plunge

It's going to be one of those days."

How many times have we said that?

Case in point. Wednesday got to work. Sat down to write my column. With no thoughts of what it might be, went to open up a website that has a host of illustrations. Used to use it for sermon prep back in the day. Now turn to it to maybe inspire what I'll write about here.

Wouldn't let me log on. Wouldn't accept my password. Go to "forgot password." It sends me a link in my email to change my password. I do. It still doesn't let me log on. Go through the same steps three times, then give up. (Did I mention this is the third time in two weeks I've played this round-and-round on this particular website? I would cancel my subscription but: see won't let me log on.)

Prior to that I go to make a cup of coffee. K-cup machine won't come on. Go to the bathroom. My toilet won't flush. In fact, panic sets in as it runs over the edge a little.

A coworker shows up. Her car's in the shop. Her bank card's been hacked. One of the lights in her home wouldn't come on leaving her in the dark. She didn't say it, but her facial expression did: "It's going to be one of those days."

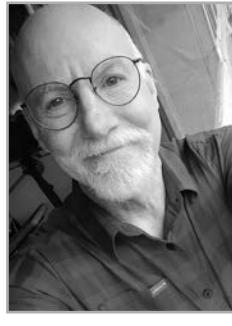
We all have them, for sure. (In fact, it's been part of our Western culture for decades.) The internet is full of ways to deal with them. From a number of sources:

-Recognize the situation. Acknowledge it's just a day and that things will improve.

-Practice mindfulness. Take some time to breathe

## HHJ PUBLISHER

DON MONCRIEF



deeply and connect with what's going on with your body, in particular your mind.

-Seek support. Talk to friends or family about what's going on.

-Focus on the positive. Identify areas where you can make a positive impact and take action on that/them.

-Reframe your thoughts. Look for opportunities in the situation and focus on what you can control.

-Get some exercise. It releases endorphins which naturally elevate your mood and the effects last for hours. If you do it outside (yes, I know it's cold) you get the health benefits of sunshine. The all-important Vitamin D for one.

-Ask yourself: Is it the day that is a problem, or is it me?

-Release your pent-up emotions.

The last two are from "Little Buddha's" website. To be honest. I'm not sure if they'll help me cope with a bad day as much as they'll leave my self-esteem poured out all over the floor (because undoubtedly I'm going to conclude it's "me") or leave me physically jumping up and down on my desk screaming.

The internet also offers a number of "wisdom" sayings from throughout the ages to deal with "one of those days."

"Storms make trees take

deeper roots" ...

"The more humble a person is, the freer and stronger he is" (okay, whatever that means) ...

"Hard times lift the seeking souls to higher realms" ...

You can do a search for more, but for me, and I suspect a good number of you, the best answer(s) come from scripture.

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I (Jesus) have overcome the world." - John 16:33

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." - Romans 8:28

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." - Psalm 46:1

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." - James 1:2-4

There. That's better. I'm feeling the effects, their power, already. Uplifted. Renewed. I don't need an illustration so forget about that website. I don't need coffee when water will do, and I don't need a bathroom when ... wait ... where's that plunger ...

## Vintage View Masters

My sister and I used to spend hours looking at our view master reels back in the day. I recently came across one as we prepared for an estate sale and it brought back some great memories! View-Master, a beloved device that has offered generations a window into 3D worlds, debuted at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Initially conceived as a more engaging alternative to the scenic postcard, it was first sold in camera, drug, and gift stores, as well as at popular tourist attractions like the Carlsbad Caverns and the Grand Canyon. Its introduction at the "Building The World of Tomorrow" themed fair resonated deeply with a public eager for hope after the ravages of World War I and the Great Depression.

The onset of World War II nearly halted View-Master production due to material shortages. However, the device found an unexpected, crucial role: the U.S. military commissioned 100,000 Model B viewers and six million reels for identifying airplanes and ships. This vital wartime contract ensured the View-Master's survival, pivoting it from a leisure item to a strategic training tool.

After the war, View-Master broadened its appeal beyond scenic views, introducing a popular series

## ALL ABOUT ANTIQUES

JILLINDA FALEN



of children's fairy-tale reels featuring intricate clay figures. A pivotal moment came in 1951 with the acquisition of rival Tru-Vue, which granted View-Master the coveted license to produce reels featuring Disney characters. This strategic move cemented its place in popular culture, leading to countless reels showcasing beloved cartoon and character favorites, from Barbie to G.I. Joe.

View-Master reels, each holding 14 film transparencies to create seven stereoscopic images, have always been universally compatible with any viewer produced since 1939. While designs have evolved—from early bakelite models to later character-themed viewers (like Mickey Mouse and Batman, though short-lived)—the core mechanism remains. Today, Basic Fun continues to produce viewers and a diverse range of reels, including popular contemporary titles like Minions and Star Wars, ensuring the View-Master's

legacy lives on in retail stores and online.

For collectors, condition is paramount. Mint-in-package items command the highest prices, while issues like mold, mildew, "brown foxing spots," or missing scenes significantly diminish value. Even color shifts, such as the film "going magenta" (a common issue with certain older film types, notably seen in the Dracula clay figure packet), impact desirability. Recent eBay sales highlight the enduring popularity of certain themes, with vintage Sci-Fi, television, and movie titles fetching high prices. Notably, Michael Jackson's "Thriller" reels and gift sets have seen a surge in value since 2009, with gift sets selling for over \$100. Collectors can find more information and connect with others through the View-Master Collectors Group on Facebook and the comprehensive View-Master Database. Happy Collecting!

## Your Fat Burning Environment

## YOUR HEALTH

WADE YODER



calories we have stored in our fat cells, body fat is simply stored energy.

Remember when eating lean or very low calorie for several days you should have a cheat meal, (where you eat and drink pretty much anything you want). This cheat meal simply helps reset your metabolism at a higher level.

1. Our Calorie Sources: the choices we make for our calories dictate to the body our intention for our energy needs. This is why, when we eat or drink something that absorbs rapidly, it puts a lot of glucose/sugar in our blood for energy. If this energy is not needed due to inactivity, our body will store this extra energy in our fat cells causing them to get bigger. And since our body burns off sugars first, it will not release stored fat into our blood to burn until our sugar is low enough to switch energy sources.

When we eat excess calories, especially the fast-absorbing ones and we don't burn this extra off through exercise or activity, our insulin if working properly will remove it from our blood to keep from a sticky mess happening in our blood supply and our body parts!

The neat thing about our body is that it knows how to release an energy snack into our system when we need it badly enough and it does this by releasing the

fitness lifestyle can be of big benefit not only to us, but it can have a ripple effect on the ones around us! We gradually become like our environment, so it's very important to keep things and people around that have a positive impact and not a negative one on our fitness goals!

Surrounding ourselves with foods such as fish, chicken breasts, turkey, (occasional good quality red meats), eggs, beans, dark colored vegetables, sweet potato, quinoa, brown rice, whole grain pasta, fermented vegetables and snacks such as apples, nuts, peanut butter (without the bread), and water as primary hydration source, simply crowds out a lot of other things that are not conducive to building health or physique!

Water note: Drink enough water that urine is pale in color. Cold water helps your body burn more calories.

When you combine a cleaned-up fitness environment, active lifestyle, and good dietary choices with water as a fluid of choice you have a fat burning tool chest that helps turn that stored energy (body fat) into a burnable fuel!

## LOOK HERE!

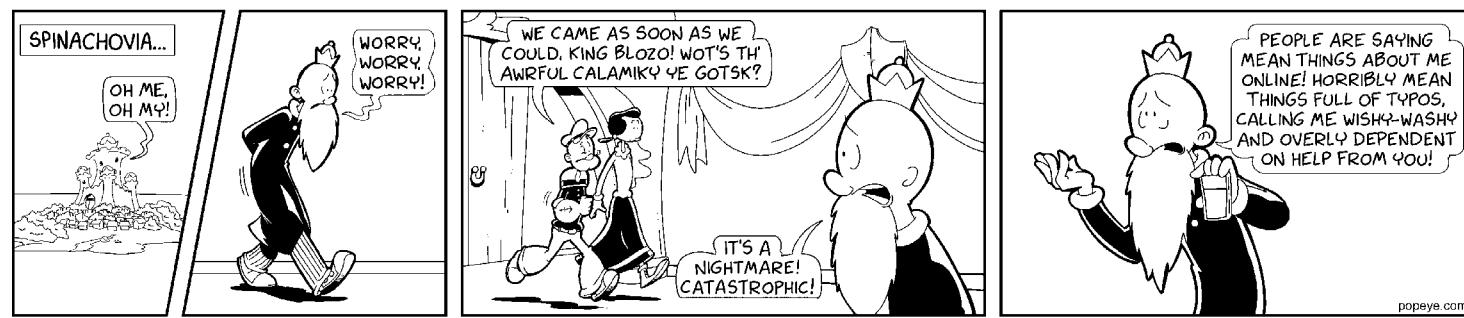
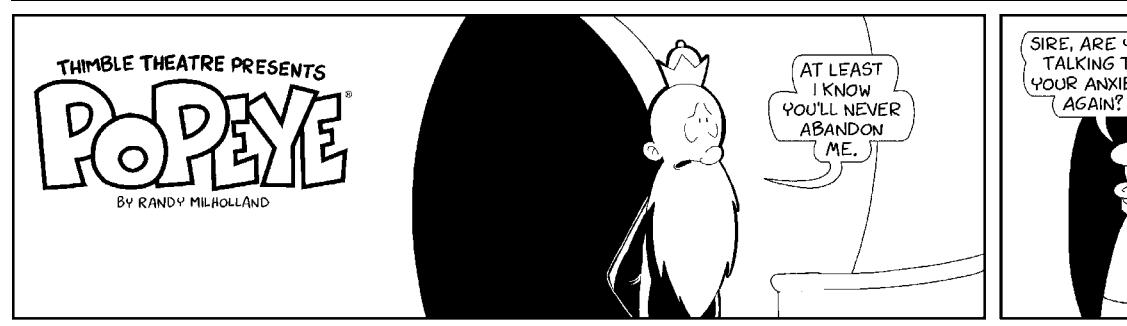
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## ENTERTAINMENT



Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



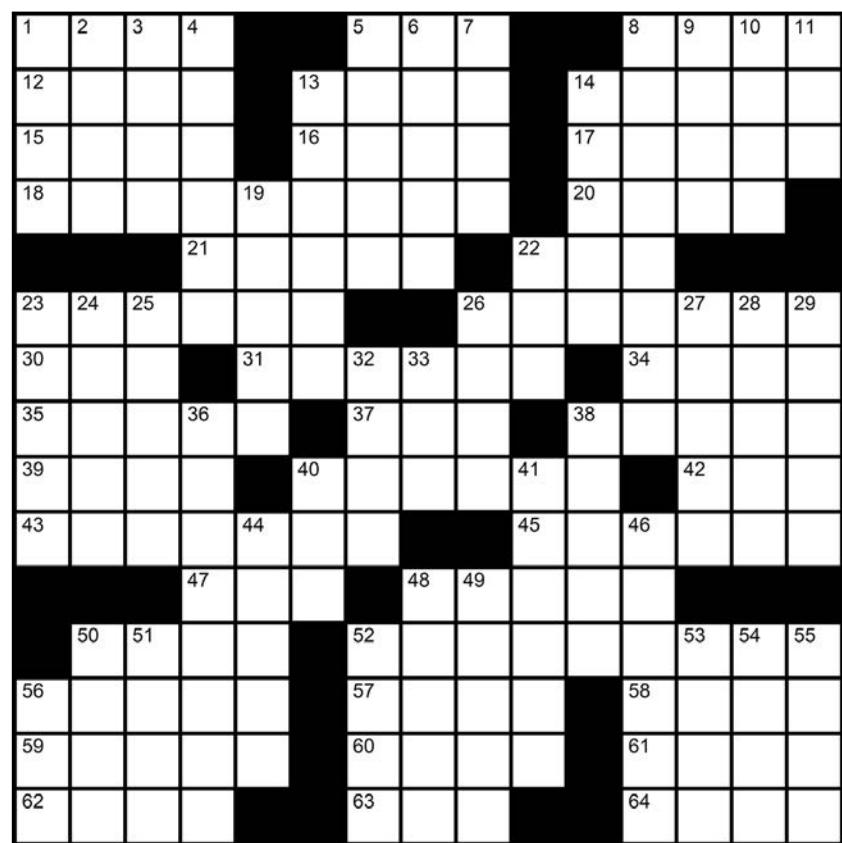
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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6. Armrest is different.  
3. Necklace is missing. 4. Tie is different. 5. Nose is smaller.  
Differences: 1. Man is looking the other way. 2. Mouth is open.

## CROSSWORD 1-24-26



## CLUES ACROSS

- Biology lab supply
- Aldous Huxley's drug of choice
- \*Certain Courtney
- Tear violently
- Color of a bruise
- Al Roker's show
- Pupil control
- Any minute, to Shakespeare
- Sheep-like
- \*H. P. of science fiction fame
- Hibernation stations
- Boat station
- Tennis shot
- Packed in container
- User-friendly interface, acr.
- Genetic info carrier, acr.
- \*Love unquestioningly
- Equal to 1.3 ounces in Asia
- Not a minor
- Poem addressed to certain subject
- Hundred, in Italian
- Nothing
- Relating to clone
- Division, abbr.
- Sloughed off skin
- Fluffy dessert
- All good things come to this?
- Between Octs and Novs
- Verde National Park

52. \*B-52s' "little old place" (2 words)

56. Singing femme fatale

57. Deed hearing

58. Reverberated sound

59. Blue-Green scum, pl.

60. Misery cause

61. Actress Perlman

62. Scheme

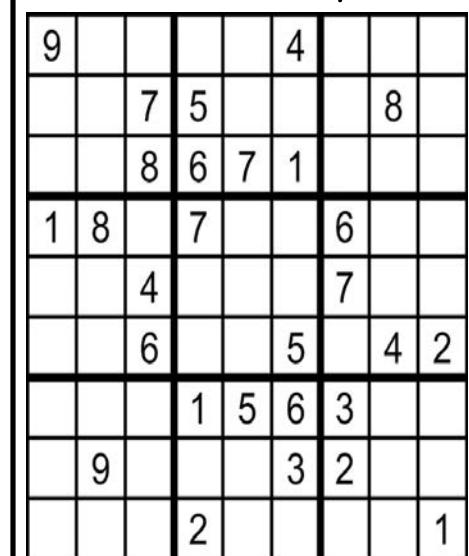
63. Right coast time

64. Made by tailor

## CLUES DOWN

- Seed cover
- Biking helmet manufacturer
- Tel \_\_\_, Israel
- #64 Across, redone
- Like 1969 landing
- Laugh with contempt
- Fender-bender damage
- \*a.k.a. hickey (2 words)
- Norse deity
- "Off The Wall" shoe
- Needle hole
- Macy's Thanksgiving offering
- Commotions
- Silica variety
- NaOH
- Solder together
- Dewey Decimal Classification, a.k.a. Relative \_\_
- Pleasant Island
- Small songbird
- Harry's and Hermione's magic tools
- Bigfoot's cousins
- \*Hand cover, with love
- \*Lemming relative, or anagram of love
- Tokyo, formerly
- \*Couch for two
- Lumps in liquid
- Knave
- Unit of electric current flow
- Absurd
- Theater guides
- Nutritious beans
- Black tie one
- Grain grinder
- "Cogito, \_\_\_ sum"
- Stud site
- Occasional heart condition
- Prepare to swallow
- Riddle without solution
- Tree juice

## SUDOKU



Here's How It Works:

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

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

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1181

## Blessing to you all, we are the Seniors Pastors of IN HIS GLORY

### Special to The Journal

HOUSTON COUNTY — Praise & Worship Center here in Perry, Ga. We are Pastors Alma and

James Parker Jr. We have orders from the LORD, to cover the Nation, our Brothers and Sisters, all surrounding cities and the city of Perry, Ga with prayer. The Beginning of the Year City Wide Prayer, starts January 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st, 2026 at 6 a.m.

January 3rd, Saturday morning at 6 a.m. We will be praying around the flag at the City Hall, here in Perry Ga. January 10th, Saturday morning at 6 a.m. at the City Hall in Fort Valley Ga., and Byron Ga. at 6:45 a.m. January 17th, Saturday morning at 6 a.m. we will be praying around the flag at the City Hall in Centerville Ga. and

6:45 a.m. at the City Hall in Warner Robins Ga. January 24th Saturday morning at 6 a.m. we would be praying around the flag at the City Hall in Macon Ga. and on January 31st, Saturday morning at 6 a.m. we will be ending the City Wide prayer around the flag at the City Hall in Forsyth Ga.

Matthew 18:20

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

People of God there is power in prayer, Now this is not about us, It's All about The KINGDOM Of GOD! So Friends, Familys. Leaders, Pastor, Ministres, and the Public you are welcome to participate as we cover our Nation, our Brothers and Sisters, all Surrounding City and the City of Perry with PRAYER.

For further information please contact: Pastor James Parker Jr. or

Pastor Alma J. Parker at (478) 714-2203

May God continue to richly bless you, In The Name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Senior Pastor James Parker Jr.

Co-Senior Pastor Alma J. Parker



## Houston County School District to Hold Pre-K Registration February 2-27

### Special to The Journal

HOUSTON COUNTY — The Houston County School District will accept applications for the 2026-2027 Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program between February 2-27. Approximately 1,300 children are expected to register for Pre-K in Houston County.

Pre-K students must be four years of age on September 1, 2026, and reside within the Houston County School District. Children who will be five years old on September 1, 2026, and are not currently enrolled in one of the District's Pre-K classrooms should register as kindergarten students for the 2026-2027 school year.

The application for Pre-K can be found on the District's Central Registration webpage. Parents should follow the directions listed in the "Steps for Student Registration" section to fill out the application, schedule an appointment, and begin gathering the required documentation needed.

The Pre-K application must be completed by the parent or legal guardian prior to your appointment and requires the following items:

- Parent/guardian photo

ID:  

- Child's certified birth certificate, passport, or other proof of age;

- Guardianship/custody orders if the child does not live with their natural parents;

- Social Security Card or waiver; and

- Two Proofs of Residency.

- 1. Lease or mortgage and

- 2. One of the following:

- Utility bill (electric, water or cable bill)

- Property tax statement or income tax statement

- Automobile registration or insurance

- Mail from any government agency

The following documents will be required once a child becomes enrolled. If you already have a copy at the time of your appointment, bring them with you.

- Ear, Eye, Dental and Nutrition Screening, Georgia Form 3300 completed after August 4, 2025

- (available from a doctor or the Health Department); and

- Immunization Certificate, Georgia Form 3231 (available from a doctor or the Health Department).

- Proof of eligibility for Medicaid, SSI, TANF or food stamps, if applicable.

Applicants will be entered into a computer system for a lottery drawing. All Pre-K applications

submitted by February 27 will have an equal chance of computer selection, regardless of the

application date. Parents will be notified of acceptance or waiting list status by mail by mid-April.

Parents who do not have access to a computer may arrive at Central Registration 30 minutes early to complete the online pre-registration paperwork prior to your appointment.

Central Registration hours are Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

They are located at 410 Bear Country Boulevard off Highway 96, next to Houston County High School.

For more information about the application and registration process, please contact Central

Registration at (478) 741-3610. For information about the Pre-K program, visit [www.hcbe.net/pre-k](http://www.hcbe.net/pre-k) or contact the Coordinator for Special Programs at (478) 988-6330 or [sharon.eddy@hcbe.net](mailto:sharon.eddy@hcbe.net).



## THE CLASSIFIEDS THAT CLICK

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### Announcements

#### NOTICE

I'm looking for Pete Reveles Jr, this is his wife. If anyone knows where he is please send an email to [mreveles916@gmail.com](mailto:mreveles916@gmail.com)

  
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### STATEWIDE CLASSIFIEDS FOR THE WEEK 1/25/26

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## Kemp declares state of emergency for Georgia, readying state crews, National Guard for snow and ice

By TYTAGAMI  
Bureau Chief  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Gov. Brian Kemp announced a state of emergency for all Georgia counties Thursday ahead of a winter storm expected to dump snow and sleet onto the northern third of the state starting Saturday, potentially encasing the land in a layer of ice.

In an online briefing from Belgium Thursday, where he was traveling to promote trade, Kemp outlined state preparations for a wintry mix that could slicken roads and pull down power lines, darkening homes for days if temperatures remain as cold as predicted.

The governor said he had called up 500 National Guardsmen for deployment, if necessary. State agriculture and forestry crews are prepared with chainsaws to clear the way for power crews.

His main message: hunker down for the weekend.

"If you can just stay off the roads, that would be a big favor to us," he said, noting that state police, utility crews and salt trucks need open roads to do their work.

The latter will begin bringing roadways late Friday night or early Saturday morning. The governor placed the danger zone north of Interstate 20.

The National Weather Service has a winter storm watch in place in an east-west line just north of the Atlanta suburbs, dipping south as it moves to the east side of Georgia to take in Athens. The forecast calls for "heavy" mixed precipitation of up to two inches of snow and sleet, with ice accumulations of a quarter to three quarters of an inch.

Major potential impacts include travel disruptions and power outages as ice weighs down power lines and tree limbs that can

break and fall on them.

Kemp said a drop in expected temperature of just a degree or two could push the danger line southward.

Josh Lamb, director of the state emergency management agency, advised filling cars with gas and emergency supplies, including snacks and blankets, and to drive cautiously on bridges and overpasses, which tend to ice up faster. But he also encouraged people to stay off the roads.

Lamb said Georgians should prepare their homes by covering pipes, cleaning gutters and stocking a three-day supply of food and water.

Prepare a way to keep cellphones charged while devising a communications backup plan for family members, he said. "Take precautions, don't panic, and please stay informed and stay off the roads."

## Georgia lawmakers wrestle with removing

### ballot QR codes as required by law

By MARK NIESSE  
Staff Writer  
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — Georgia legislators and the state's elections chief lacked a plan Wednesday to stop using computer QR codes for counting ballots before a July 1 deadline.

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger told a budget committee that the General Assembly hasn't provided any money to upgrade Georgia's voting system, which displays candidates on touchscreens and then prints paper ballots with QR codes containing voters' choices.

But a state law passed two years ago mandates that QR codes can't be used to count ballots in elections after July 1, 2026.

Critics of Georgia's election system say voters can't verify their votes from unreadable QR codes, which are used for the official vote count.

Lawmakers haven't yet introduced a bill that would spend money or outline an alternative to the state's current election technology.

Sen. Blake Tillery, R-Vidalia, suggested that every vote could be counted by hand this November — usually over 4 million ballots in midterm elections.

"If we were able to count all of them, would you not just be able to certify the

hand count there and that suffice to meet the Senate bill's request of not counting the QR code?" Tillery asked Raffensperger.

Raffensperger responded that each ballot can include 16 or 20 races, making it expensive and time-consuming to count each of them by hand. He said he would look into the taxpayer cost of that kind of hand count.

Gov. Brian Kemp's proposed budget includes \$5 million for a statewide hand recount of two races in November, but his spending plan didn't include money to remove QR codes.

"The General Assembly has not funded a single dollar to upgrade the system. If you do fund that system, we could talk about alternatives," Raffensperger said.

Raffensperger supported verifying ballots by using text-recognition software to check the results read from QR codes, a method first used after the 2024 election.

Lawmakers have until the end of this year's legislative session in early April to pass a bill to stop using QR codes. Without a new law, voters can't use Georgia's current touchscreen voting system for elections later this year.

Several election security organizations are asking legislators to switch to paper ballots filled out by hand. But Raffensperger and election officials say Georgia's current voting system is safe and accurate.

they are another method of verifying results without depending on technology that could be manipulated or misprogrammed.

State representatives studied options for removing QR codes during meetings across the state last year, but they haven't issued any recommendations.

They're still evaluating how to move forward, said House Governmental Affairs Chair Victor Anderson, R-Cornelia.

The study committee and the House Governmental Affairs Committee are diligently evaluating legislative options to ensure compliance with the Legislature's will and to guarantee that Georgia has the most accurate, trustworthy and secure elections possible," Anderson said.

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## AAA Warns Drivers to Prep Vehicles and Plan Ahead for Safety

### Special to The Journal

ATLANTA — With snow, ice, and sleet creating hazardous conditions, AAA — The Auto Club Group urges drivers to take proactive steps to stay safe on winter roads. Winter weather can be deadly: the U.S. Department of Transportation reports that each year 1,300 people are killed and 116,000 are injured in crashes on snowy or icy pavement.

"Winter driving hazards such as slick ice, snow-packed roads, and reduced traction make braking and steering treacherous," said Montrae Waiters, spokeswoman for AAA - The Auto Club Group. "Speeding, tailgating, and poorly maintained vehicles amplify the danger, so preparing your car with winter tires, a strong battery, and proper fluid levels is essential for safety."

### AAA's Winter Vehicle Maintenance Checklist

• Tires: Check pressure weekly; consider winter tires.

• Battery: Test regularly; cold weather reduces power.

• Fluids: Use winter-grade washer fluid; check antifreeze; change oil for winter viscosity.

• Wipers & Defroster: Replace blades; ensure heater works.

• Brakes & Lights: Inspect brakes; clean and check all lights.

Drivers can ensure their vehicles are winter-ready by visiting a AAA Car Care location or AAA.com/AutoRepair to view a network of trusted AAA Approved Auto Repair facilities nearby.

### Primary Reasons for Roadside Assistance in Winter Weather

• Dead Batteries: Cold weather significantly reduces a car battery's power output and efficiency. A battery that works fine in warm weather may fail completely when temperatures drop, making a jump-start or a replacement

battery more common.

• Tire Issues: Icy and snowy roads demand good tire traction. The tread needs to be able to effectively push snow and grip wet/icy surfaces to steer and propel your vehicle. Drivers should check their tires' tread depth to see if replacement tires are needed.

• Vehicle Crashes/Sliding off the Road: Reduced traction from ice and black ice increases the risk of skidding, sliding off the road, or getting involved in crashes.

• Running Out of Fuel: Being stranded without fuel in freezing temperatures can become an emergency very quickly. Drivers should not let their gas tanks drop below a quarter of a tank in inclement weather.

• Car Lockouts and Frozen Locks: Freezing moisture can cause car locks to freeze, preventing access to the vehicle.

### What to Do If You Become Stranded

If your vehicle becomes disabled in winter weather, staying calm and taking the right steps can save your life.

• Stay inside your vehicle for shelter unless it is unsafe to do so.

• Turn on hazard lights to increase visibility.

• Call for help and share your GPS location.

• Run the engine sparingly (about 10 minutes per hour) and crack a window for ventilation.

• Layer clothing, stay hydrated, and conserve your phone battery.

"If your car stalls in traffic, act quickly: turn on your hazard lights, set the emergency brake, stay inside with the doors locked, and call for roadside assistance," added Waiters. "However, if staying in the vehicle puts you in danger, for example, on a blind curve or in heavy traffic exit carefully, move to a safe spot away from the roadway, and then call for help."

### How To Request AAA Roadside Assistance

- App: AAA.com/mobile
- Online: AAA.com/roadsideservice
- Text: Text "help" to 800.222.1134
- Have your membership card and ID ready

**Electric Vehicle Winter Tips**  
For those with electric vehicles, cold weather can slash EV range by up to 40% and slow charging. To conserve the battery:

• Precondition Your Battery: Warm up the battery before driving by using the preconditioning feature while the car is still plugged in. This helps maintain range and efficiency.

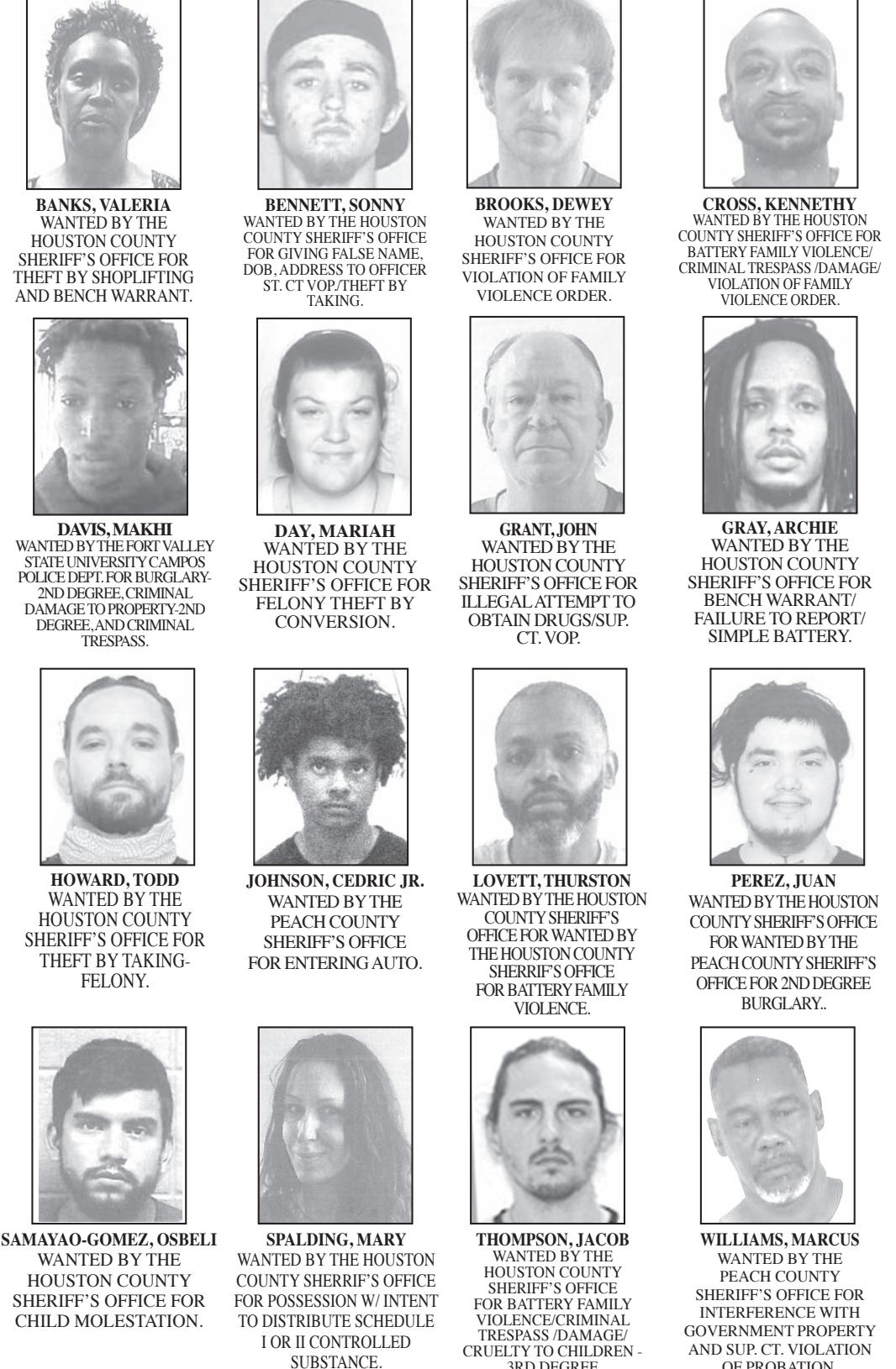
• Keep It Plugged In: Whenever possible, leave your EV plugged in overnight. This keeps the battery warm and prevents deep discharge in freezing temperatures.

• Manage Charging: Charge more frequently in winter since range can drop by 20-40% in cold weather. Use Level 2 charging for faster replenishment and better battery health.

• Optimize Cabin Heating: Use heated seats and steering wheel instead of blasting cabin heat—they consume less energy. Preheat the cabin while plugged in to avoid draining the battery on the road.

### Rescuing Stranded Motorists

AAA's service providers play a critical role in winter, rescuing stranded motorists from icy roads and ensuring safe transport during wintry conditions. Drivers can do their part to help keep all first responders safe by adhering to the Slow Down, Move Over law, which requires drivers to slow down and move over a lane when approaching tow trucks, law enforcement, or emergency vehicles.



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## BUSINESS & FINANCE

### Chamber welcomes Olive and Ivy Wellness



**Olive and Ivy Wellness**, located at 1818 Houston Lake Road #1200b offers everything you need if you're in the mood for a little self-care. Stop by their establishment in Perry if you're in the mood for some IV Therapy, hydration options, red light therapy and much more.

### Robins Regional Chamber celebrates Colossal Fitness



**Colossal Fitness**, located at 6011 Watson Blvd Set 350, is a personal training studio with something for everyone. They offer one-on-one sessions, small group training and high-intensity cardio. Contact Jai at Colossal Fitness to help you get your New Year physique.

### Atrium Health Navicent improves access to care in Houston County with new Perry primary care clinic

#### *Special to The Journal*

PERRY — Members of the community joined Atrium Health Navicent in celebrating a ribbon cutting Tuesday for a new clinic, Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Family Medicine Perry.

"We're excited to expand our primary care and family medicine services to help residents of Perry and the surrounding community to have easier access to high-quality care close to home," said Atrium Health Georgia Market President Delvecchio Finley. "Regular check-ups with a primary care provider and receiving prompt care for other medical needs are key to helping individuals and families live healthier, fuller lives."

Conveniently located at 2370 Houston Lake Road in Perry, the clinic offers care for patients aged 6 months and older, including preventative care and annual physicals; immunizations; same-day sick appointments; disease management for conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure and hypertension; minor surgical procedures, laboratory services and more.

As part of Atrium Health Navicent, patients at Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Family Medicine Perry

will have direct access to referrals to a broad range of medical specialists. Additionally, patients are invited to register for the MyAtriumHealth patient portal for access to their electronic medical record, appointments and additional services.

Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Perry offers appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. To make an appointment, call 478-654-2199.

Atrium Health Navicent also offers primary care services at Atrium Health Navicent Primary Care Warner Robins. Care is available with extended hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To make an appointment, call 478-333-6688. Walk-in services are also available.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of Advocate Health, which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina,

and is the third-largest non-profit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region.

As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home — including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 130-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit [www.NavicentHealth.org](http://www.NavicentHealth.org).

The US News Best Nursing Homes ratings recognize skilled nursing facilities that demonstrate strong clinical outcomes, consistent staffing, and effective rehabilitation programs. Church Home's High Performing designation places it among an elite group of facilities nationwide for excellence in short-term rehabilitation. Church Home is among one of only five such high-ranking facilities within 100 miles and the only in the immediate Perry and Houston County communities. Data from over 15,000 nursing homes nationwide were included in the evaluation. Results for Georgia

### Decluttering? BBB offers tips to safely and successfully sell your used items online

#### BBB TIPS

**KELVIN COLLINS**



how much insurance you need to cover the sale.

Make a quality listing. A quality listing can be very helpful towards selling your item. You'll want to make sure images are clear and accurately show the item's color, form, and other key details. You'll also want to include specific measurements and detailed written descriptions that inform buyers of any flaws the item may have, no matter how small. If you've set a price based on the flaws, share that as well. It can be helpful to use keywords that accurately describe the item, its aesthetic, and its use to help match with online searches from buyers who are actively looking for the items you're selling.

Check the platform's refund and dispute policies. Understand how the platform handles refunds, disputes, and chargebacks. Be aware of timeframes for reporting issues and gather any required documentation or evidence that may be needed if a buyer files a dispute.

Use secure payment methods. Stick to payment methods offered by the platform, as they often have security measures in place. Avoid accepting checks or wire transfers, as these are common methods scammers use to manipulate sellers.

Understand the fees. Each online marketplace has its own set of fees. Before signing up, take a moment to review the fine print and understand whether you'll pay a percentage of your sale, a flat rate, or both, and how the fees are collected. In addition, find out how many sales each platform allows you to make each month.

Get appraisals for high-value items. If you're selling jewelry that's made with precious metals or stones, it's best to get an official appraisal before you list or sell the items.

Keep in mind that jewelers may give you a lower price quote as they intend to make a profit on resale. If you have other valuable items, like antiques, artwork, etc., that you believe are worth over a thousand dollars, consider getting a written opinion on each item's worth from a professional appraiser. This will give you a better idea of the price you should set and

use to manipulate sellers.

Use tracking for shipments. Always use a trackable shipping method and require a signature on delivery for high-value items. Tracking ensures you know

the item's delivery status, and a signature confirms the buyer received it, helping to avoid disputes.

Be extra cautious when making local sales. Some platforms, such as Facebook Marketplace, allow you to meet up with people in your local area to exchange your item for cash in person. While this can be an effective way to sell big items and avoid marketplace fees, be sure you use caution when meeting up with strangers. Don't be quick to give them your home address, instead ask buyers to meet you in a safe place, such as a designated spot in your local police department's parking lot. Never meet up with a buyer you don't know alone. Always bring your partner or a friend to make the transaction.

If you're selling big items like furniture or exercise equipment, you will likely need to arrange for pickup from your home. Prepare those items ahead of time so they are ready to go to the buyer. Again, never meet up with a buyer you don't know alone. Have friends or family present, and also consider moving the item to an area that is easily accessible, like near your front door or in your garage, which doesn't require the buyer to enter your home.

Always protect your personal information. As you sell items online, keep your sensitive personal information under lock and key. Avoid communicating with buyers outside of the online platform you're using to make the sale and avoid giving out your home address, phone number, or email address as much as possible.

We encourage you to read more tips from BBB via our New Year's Guide at [www.BBB.org](http://www.BBB.org).

### Church Home Rehabilitation and Healthcare Earns US News Best Rehabilitation Award

#### *Special to The Journal*

FORT VALLEY — US News has named Church Home Rehabilitation and Healthcare a Best Short-Term Rehabilitation facility in recognition of its excellence in post-acute care services.

The US News Best Nursing Homes ratings recognize skilled nursing facilities that demonstrate strong clinical outcomes, consistent staffing, and effective rehabilitation programs. Church Home's High Performing designation places it among an elite group of facilities nationwide for excellence in short-term rehabilitation. Church Home is among one of only five such high-ranking facilities within 100 miles and the only in the immediate Perry and Houston County communities. Data from over 15,000 nursing homes nationwide were included in the evaluation. Results for Georgia

nursing homes can be found here [https://health.usnews.com/best-nursing-homes/area/ga?short\\_term=true](https://health.usnews.com/best-nursing-homes/area/ga?short_term=true)

In addition, Church Home's long-term care is also rated highly in the US News report. The US News report refers to Church Home, but this includes LifeSpring's Church Home long-term care, Jacob's House short-term rehabilitation, and Grace Garden memory care services.

"This recognition reflects our team's commitment to helping patients recover safely, regain independence, and return to their home and community," said Glenn Smith, Chief Operating Officer of the LifeSpring Community. "We are proud to serve Houston County and surrounding communities with high-quality, compassionate care."

The LifeSpring Community is a 75-bed, non-profit, church-related

skilled nursing facility located between Perry, Warner Robins, and Fort Valley in Houston County. The facility offers short-term rehabilitation, long-term care, and memory care, participates in Medicare and Medicaid, and maintains an overall 4-out-of-5-star (or higher) rating according to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

About LifeSpring Community The LifeSpring Community provides personalized rehabilitation and nursing care in a mission-driven environment. The facility is located at 2470 US Hwy 41 N, Fort Valley, Georgia, on the campus of Christ's Sanctified Holy Church.

## Warner Robins Basketball

### Demons claim first place in Region 1-4A with rematch victory over Wayne County

By CLAY BROWN  
HHJ Sports Editor  
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — It's been a long season for Jamaal Garman and the Warner Robins Demons (10-10, 5-1 Region 1-4A), but they've clawed their way back to .500 and are now first place in the region after a 63-58 win against Wayne County (13-6, 4-2 Region).

Tuesday's triumph over the Yellow Jackets was the first of the region rematches as the regular season enters its final weeks.

When the Demons made the trip to Jesup last time around, they lost 59-50 at the end of a six-game losing streak. At that point Warner Robins was 4-10 and the defense of their 2025 region title felt unlikely.

But now they've flipped the script. They're winners of six straight and in first place, and the on-court product looks completely different from a month ago. Garman says even from a couple of days ago.

"Everything's been different over the last couple of days," Garman said. "Just working hard, being determined to win. Just knowing your responsibilities and taking care of them for your teammates. Just turning into a team right now."

It was an ideal team effort as Warner Robins held a steady lead throughout the game.

Everyone had active hands and came up with blocks and steals, disrupting Wayne County's offense. The Demons are a team that want to push the pace to its maximum, and everyone was conscious looking ahead



Clay Brown/HHJ

**Kam Schmitz (3) sends M.J. Moore (5) to the line after fouling on a shot at the basket. The Demons ended up with the last laugh, a 63-58 region victory — their sixth straight.**

after a rebound or takeaway. But there were a lot of important individual efforts to make up the whole, too.

Gavyn Williams was aggressive getting his shots up and finished with a team-high 18 points. Tyler Harris was a tremendous help on the glass along with Rykeem Ashley, but what stood out for Harris was his aggressiveness getting his own shot.

Garman has been calling for him to contribute more as a scorer, and he put 14 in the book, 12 in the second half.

"I just put them stipulations on him, man. 10 shots. You got to run at practice if you don't have at least 10 attempts," Garman said.

"He's just finally finding out what kind of player he is, and he's turning himself into one of our leaders and better players on the team."

Warner Robins led by 11 after the second and third

quarters, but the Yellow Jackets made a late push as the offense ground to a halt. Wayne County trailed 55-51 with 1:33 left, but that was the closest they came. A quick 4-0 spurt in the next 42 seconds put the Demons ahead by eight and they held on to the final buzzer.

"We got real stagnant on offense, and we weren't doing what we were supposed to on the defensive end," Garman said of the fourth-quarter slowdown.

A lot of times they were flashing and catching the ball, just turning and shooting a jump hook. So we just got to knock that out."

#### UP NEXT

Warner Robins has a boys-only night coming up against Benedictine on Friday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Wayne County will head back to Jesup to play New Hampstead on Friday, Jan. 23 at 6:30 p.m.

### Demonettes put on defensive clinic in 54-21 win against Wayne County

By CLAY BROWN  
HHJ Sports Editor  
clay@hhjonline.com

WARNER ROBINS — The Warner Robins Demonettes (17-3, 4-0 Region 1-4A) have always been known for their defense, but they took it to another level in their 54-21 win against Wayne County (11-8, 1-3 Region) on Tuesday.

The Lady Yellow Jackets' Ametrius Everett got a shot to finally go through the basket with 55 seconds left in the first half — for their first score of the evening.

Demonettes head coach Rebecca Ivory let out an "Awwww" just after, mildly disappointed they couldn't keep the scoreless streak going to halftime.

"I wasn't totally disappointed," Ivory said with a laugh. "If they held [Wayne County] to zero at the half I was gonna walk up to my [Athletic Director] and tell him you owe them donuts like he does for the football team for a shutout. So that was more of my 'aw,' just to get them some donuts or some treats."

The treat of a 28-3 halftime advantage would have to be enough for Warner Robins, as well as remaining an undefeated 4-0 in the region.

Obviously, a stellar defensive effort was the catalyst behind another lopsided victory.

"I think we just had a lot of energy defensively. Closing out well, executing defensively," Ivory said, also noting the Demonettes' unusually good rebounding effort. "It was key, too, that we boxed out and rebounded, they didn't get second-chance

shots. That was one of our goals."

Rebounding on both ends has been an established weakness for Warner Robins, but against the Lady Yellow Jackets they boxed out and chased the ball down instead of waiting for someone else to get it.

"My girls were doing the little things first. The box out first, and then rebounding. Not just trying to out-jump somebody," Ivory said. "It's gonna be key going down the line, doing the little things."

An underrated aspect of the defensive show was how well the Demonettes avoided fouling on the interior.

In high school, and really at most levels of the sport, getting players to consistently stay vertical on contests is seemingly impossible.

The slightest angle in your arms can brush up against an arm, a wrist or a hand



Clay Brown/HHJ  
**Warner Robins' Madyson Jones (24) splits Wayne County's Jakeliah Fullmore (25) and Destiny Rooks (2) with a eurostep before finishing at the basket during the Demonettes fourth region victory. Jones contributed a team-high 12 points in the 54-21 final.**

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