

Senior News

Georgia

Serving those age 50 PLUS in GEORGIA!

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Senior News & Views of Georgia

Taking Care from page 3

involves difficulty pronouncing words; however, language abilities may otherwise be intact. Follow these tips to help with communication:

- Choose subjects of special interest, to motivate the person in case they are self-conscious about engaging in conversation.
- Encourage them to slow down if necessary, in order to pronounce each syllable.
- Be patient and remain calm, allowing extra time for the person to get their words out. Don't interrupt or try to finish sentences unless they become frustrated.
- Be attuned to non-verbal language that can give clues to the factual or emotional content of the message.
- Summarize the message to check if you heard it right.
- Ask them to repeat the message if you could not make it out. Don't pretend that you understood.
- Ask questions that require a Yes or No answer so they can simply nod or shake their head.
- Don't correct every error.
- If the person is able to write, have a notepad and pen handy as a backup.

Cognitive impairment (dementia)

- Approach slowly, establish eye contact, and then address the person by

name.

- Identify yourself by name and indicate your relationship--for example, "Hi, Joe, it's your sister-in-law, Anne."
- Keep your voice low-pitched, to convey calmness and reassurance.
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Keep questions to a minimum and avoid open-ended ones. Offer limited choices – for instance, "Would you like coffee or juice?" rather than "What would you like to drink?"
- Allow plenty of time for response to a question.
- Avoid debating facts. Focus instead on feelings or use distraction if the person becomes argumentative.
- Respond to the person's mood when their words don't make sense – for example, "It sounds like you're feeling sad."
- Stick to familiar topics.
- Be direct. Avoid clichés and limit the use of pronouns.
- Try using different words when your message is not getting across.
- When giving instructions, break down a task into simple steps and communicate them one at a time. Demonstration may help.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and a freelance writer specializing in boomer and senior health matters. She has personal experience with elder care.

Georgia Golden Olympics Registration Form

Special to *Senior News Georgia*
by VICKI PILGRIM
vcpilgrim@gmail.com

Hi All: Yes... the past year has been a bit crazy and difficult for everyone but we are looking to the future and planning to have the Georgia Golden Olympics in September in Warner Robins and surrounding areas. The 2021 Registration form is available on our website and elsewhere on *Senior News Georgia's* website (www.seniornewsga.com) for your

information... and convenience.

If you have competed in the games in Georgia in previous years, you may go to the website and register online. If you have not competed in Georgia before, please print a copy of our Registration form, complete all information requested and mail it to the address shown... along with age verification and fees.

Thank you! See you in September!

Georgia Golden Games, Inc
770-867-3603
vcpilgrim@gmail.com

Opinion

A Voice From The Past

by Daniel W Gatlyn, USN Ret.
Minister/Journalist

All history bloggers will recognize the words of General Douglas MacArthur as he was forced to exit the Philippines from Corregidor on March 11, 1942. His prophetic words, "I Shall Return," were issued to the press on his way out! His intentions were "spot on;" but, the implications of these words were far more relevant than the oration, for it conveyed both promise to millions; and explained a vibrant philosophy that lives within every successful endeavor. To explain further, the Missions were incomplete; and, more importantly, "the Mission is perpetual." As long as men breathe, there will be an explicit reason to return. That is the reason why the 7th Fleet (and far more contingents) have been "underway in the Pacific for more than seventy five years... The task is incomplete! The unpleasant cycle is written in stone, and goes something like this: Involvement... Error... Retribution... Assessment... and, Rehabilitation! It never ends!

On this date of August 27, 2021, we are reliving this scenario in Afghanistan. As sure as day follows night, we will return – of our own volition – or when we are forced. Who is it that has not heard the timely explanation that "there is never enough time to do a job right, but always enough to do it over!" One does not require a record IQ to surmise that "all's not well in Denmark" or Kabul. In the finale, we are there for a reason – in spite of National explanations. UBL and Terrorism were merely stops (and exceptionally important ones) along the way. Read the Constitution again! We do not go to "nation build, alter the Religion, or culture," but rather to instill civility, practicality, and compassion. We have not gained perfection in these areas;

but, we are head and shoulders above others!

It is not an exciting venture when forced to return... but the message is clear! Precious few ventures have exited with excellence the first time around. Rehearsals are expensive – in lives, in pride, and in dollars. Look back if you will! Without extensive review – the countless journeys into yesterday's family, homes, business, production, enterprise, methods (even in social and spiritual dimensions) – the errors

and deficits are numerous. I am not oblivious to Military strategy, professional ethics, and necessary logistics, but do understand that human ego, pride, vanities, and blemished methodology often demands a return to the "workhouse of yesterday." The virtuous outcome of our every action is predicated upon a motive of decency. Let not tomorrow take you by surprise! Afghanistan has multiple wrinkles; but, so does the country in which we reside.

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On the Cover

Fall is here... and it's time for a visit to the Falls!

By Carolyn Brenneman

Cover: Fabulous view of the Falls!

Yes, it's still time to take a trip to Helen, Georgia and visit the Anna Ruby Falls! The Anna Ruby Falls are gorgeous! We simply must take a trip up toward Helen to share in the joy of viewing these magnificent falls with our grandkids. Once we arrive at the entrance to the falls off Highway 356, it is only a short hike on a paved trail to see the breathtaking views and hear the thundering waterfalls in its natural and exquisite beauty. Anna Ruby Falls is the most outstanding recreational site in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Anna Ruby Falls come from Tray Mountain, Curtis and York Creeks which flow over the granite to form two sets of waterfalls. Both of them drop over 100 feet and together they form Smith Creek right at the base of the falls. The story behind the falls tells us that a local confederate soldier, Colonel John H. Captain Nichols, founded the waterfalls while horseback riding in this area. Upon his discovery he gave the falls the name Anna Ruby, after his only living daughter.

Colonel Nichols once owned Hardman Farms, very near Helen. He was a prominent businessman who served in the Governor's House Guard in the Civil War. He was also at the Confederate surrender at Appomattox. Later in 1869 he retired from his work in Gainesville because of his health. He loved to explore and travel to many places in the surrounding areas. He built a house on the Hardman Farm and also bought up miles and miles of land. After 1871, he purchased land in the Nacoochee Valley and built more houses, greenhouses and a spring house.

Now, to arrive at the falls, for easiest access... travel toward Helen, Georgia and then go through the town to Robertstown intersection of Highways 17 and 356. Turn left on Highway 356 and travel one mile to the entrance, which is on

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Anna Ruby Falls Visitor Center



Visitors viewing the falls



Visitors by the trout pond at Smith Creek

Anna Ruby Falls

from page 6

the left, and drive to the entrance booth. Admission is \$5 per person for anyone over 16, or if you have a National Parks and Recreation Pass – Senior Pass, there is no charge.

In addition to the falls, there is a fabulous visitor center and a short walking trail, called the Lion's Eye Trail, for visually impaired... or anyone who would like to walk the trail. There are designated areas for viewing the Smith Creek and for enjoying the views. Also, we can enjoy a picnic lunch right there!

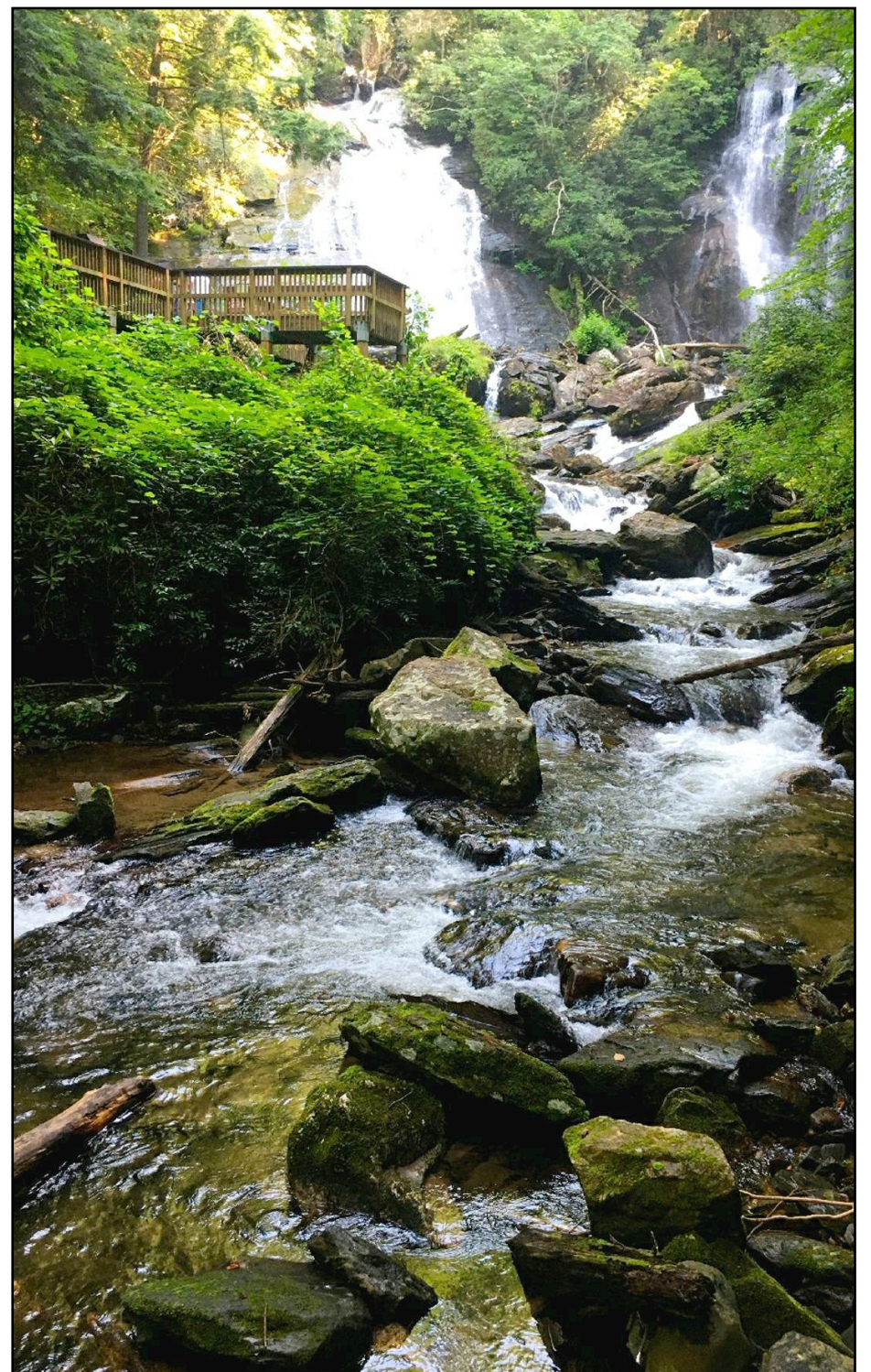
So let's mark our calendars and set up a date with the grandkids to venture out to the Anna Ruby Falls. For more information we can call the visitor center at Anna Ruby Falls at 706-878-1448.



My friends capturing a view



Another view of the Falls



A view of the Falls on the walking path

On the Cover

“Miss Dot” of Creekside Restaurant

By CLAIRE HOUSER-DODD

COVER

Mrs. Dot Matthews of “Creekside Restaurant Fame!”

We enjoy stories about home grown folks from Fort Valley, Georgia. Naturally we would, ‘cause that’s where we grew up. Almost, anyway!

This time we want to honor a long-time friend, Dot Poole... married and all grown up... now Dorothy Andrews... alive and well and living in Peach County.

Going back to the forties, we remember Dot as a very attractive and friendly young girl helping out at her parents’ (Mr. and Mrs. Dud Poole) at their downtown Fort Valley restaurant, Poole’s Café with impressive neon lights above the door. We loved to go to that particular restaurant at night. The town was dark, but Poole’s was all lit up and welcoming.

Besides being a bright and happy place to be, it was the only restaurant we’d ever been in that would fix you whatever you wanted – on the menu or not! As we remember it, Tomato Soup and Peanut Butter Sandwiches were not on the menu.

No matter, they took your order and pretty promptly your exact order was served. Sometimes you could eat Oysterettes while your parents started their meal: salad, entre, drink and dessert, but your “Specialty” was soon served.

Unbeknown to us at the beginning there were grocery stores across the little park in front of the café, and someone, maybe Dot, ran across to get the Peanut Butter or whatever that wasn’t on the menu.

Dot... now and for 35 years... runs Creekside Restaurant, a fantastic Catfish Restaurant that is full to the brim (pun intended) on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights for three weekends each month. Why, you ask, when so many

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Dot’s children... (front) Kim Andrews Lones; (back l-r) Debbie Landreth Douglas, Terry Landreth and Susan Landreth Robertson



Dot enjoys a moment with her daughters and daughter-in-law!



“Miss Dot” with her family including children, children-in-laws, greandchildren and great-grandchildren!

“Miss” Dot

from page 8

restaurants are closed? Me thinks it is because it’s run the same way Poole’s Café was run for 50 some odd years.

As of now, Dot has two of her three daughters, Debbie Douglas and Susan Robertson, who seem to have caught the “Restaurant Bug from Mama.” These two girls are in charge at this time; not only of the restaurant, but also of a thriving catering service along with weddings, corporate functions, fund-raisers, and even a Food Trailer to fry fish or chicken on site, plus anything else that comes along.

Miss Dot, as she is so well known, has two other children, Kim Lones, who runs a decorating business, and Terry Landreth, retired from the Navy. He and his wife Darlene, operate a bicycle shop in St. Mary’s.

Don’t know how many times this restaurant out on Highway 96 at Houser’s Mill Road has been leased! But, as the parking lots are full when Dot is running things, is not the case when somebody else takes over. She usually walks around and talks to the people as friends... actually she knows most of them and calls them by name.

As for our family, she speaks to daughter Emily and asks about me. On the other hand, when grandson Eli goes with his son Matthew, she speaks to them, and if I’m not there, asks about me and Emily. Amazing friendship. Amazing energy. Amazing memories. Amazing lady!



“Miss” Dot’s high school portrait.



“Miss” Dot reviews the restaurant’s menus!



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Mandy Lanier
PROGRAM COORDINATOR
CANDLER COUNTY UNIT



Aaliyah Taylor
PROGRAM COORDINATOR
KING DANFORTH UNIT

What's HAPPENing at Carl Vinson VA Medical Center?

Special to *Senior News Georgia*

Submitted by **James W. Huckfeldt**
Public Affairs Specialist
Carl Vinson VA Medical Center
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Carl Vinson VA Medical Center staff kicked off a new Hospital Acquired Pneumonia Prevention by Engaging Nurses (HAPPEN) initiative pilot program Thurs., Aug. 26. HAPPEN educates and equips Nurse Managers, who are responsible for residential Community Living Centers (CLC), to train their staff and appoint Nurse Champions to oversee oral care practices for residing Veterans.

The HAPPEN initiative improves the oral care among Veterans residing at Carl Vinson VAMC and those staying temporarily in the Medical Surgical unit while also reducing hospital-acquired pneumonia. Poor oral hygiene habits, food particles, and bacteria are leading causes of hospital-acquired pneumonia a preventable respiratory illness that significantly affects older Veterans who reside in CLCs. Prior to the official kickoff, HAPPEN was implemented for practical application to refine the program and work out unforeseen challenges.

Our dental team saw a need for improvement with oral hygiene among our Veteran residents and we created a plan that achieves several outcomes, Dental Hygienist Michelle Lord said. By working collaboratively with Nurse Managers, Veterans will be monitored, or assisted, with oral hygiene practices daily reducing the number of hospital-acquired pneumonia cases we report annually.

Lord is part of an internal VA-led training program called Emerging VA Leaders, or EVAL. EVAL is an eight-month program that focuses on building leadership skills in a multitude of areas for staff in middle management positions looking to advance their careers. Prior to graduation, students must complete a capstone project resulting in a real-time process improvement with measurable goals.

The HAPPEN initiative has the potential to not only be a

best practice at Dublin VAMC. We are extremely proud of our Dental and CLC staff for making the services we offer to our Veterans even better, Interim Medical Center Director Ronnie Smith said. Significant reduction in hospital-acquired pneumonia is a great goal but improving our Veterans quality of life while providing their loved ones with peace of mind is priceless.

The initiative will be started in Cardinal Circle and Freedom Lane, two of the five total Community Living Centers at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center. After more data is analyzed and Nurse Managers measure effectiveness, HAPPEN will be implemented at CLCs facility wide.



Dental Hygienist Michelle Lord

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BBB Tip: Charitable Giving after a natural disaster or tragedy!

by **KELVIN COLLINS, President/CEO, BBB of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.**

After a disaster or very public tragedy, people want to help in any way possible, and that often means contributing to fundraisers to help the survivors and the families of the victims. Sadly, with the earthquake in Haiti and the flooding in Tennessee, scammers will certainly take advantage of these moments of vulnerability to deceive donors. In addition, many campaigns set up by well-meaning individuals who may not be able to deliver on promised relief activities.

BBB Wise Giving Alliance urges donors to give thoughtfully and avoid those seeking to take advantage of the generosity of others. Here are BBB WGA's tips for trusted giving:

- **Thoughtful Giving:** Visit Give.org to verify if a charity meets the BBB Standards for Charitable Accountability. Take the time to find out how the organization plans to address either immediate or long-term needs. The first request for a donation may not be the best choice. Be proactive and find trusted charities.

- **Crowdfunding:** Keep in mind that some crowdfunding sites do very little vetting of individuals who decide to post for assistance after a tragedy or a disaster. As a result, it can be difficult for donors to verify the trustworthiness of crowdfunding requests for support. It is always safest to contribute to individuals that you personally know. If the post claims it intends to pass along collected funds to a charity, consider cutting out the middleman and visit the charity's website directly.

- **How Will Donations Be Used?** Watch out for vague appeals that don't identify the intended use of funds. For example, how will the donations help victims' families? Also, unless told otherwise, donors will assume that funds collected quickly in the wake of a disaster

or tragedy will be spent just as quickly. See if the appeal identifies when the collected funds will be used.

- **Newly-Created v. Established Organizations:** This is a personal giving choice, but an established charity will more likely have the capacity and experience to address the situation quickly and also have a track record that can be evaluated. A newly formed organization may be well-meaning but will be difficult to check out and may not be well managed. News reports may help identify responding charities but are not a guarantee that the organ-

izations will use donations effectively.

- **Give Money Rather Than Goods.** Donating money is the quickest way to help and provides charities the flexibility to channel resources to impacted areas.
- **Be Wary of 100 Percent Claims.**

Watch out for claims that 100 percent of donations will assist victims and/or their families. The organization is probably still incurring administrative and fundraising expenses, even if it is using other funds to cover these costs.

continued on page 13

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- What if a Family Sets Up Its Own Assistance Fund? Some families may decide to set up their own assistance funds. Be mindful that such funds may not be set up as charities. Also, if collected monies are received and administered by a third party such as a bank, CPA, or lawyer this will help provide oversight

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Preserving Your Treasures!

A program that shares tips for caring for your treasures and gives the general public a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes world of museums.

Special to Senior News Georgia

Submitted by Nancy J. Glaser
Augusta Museum of History
amh@augustamuseum.org

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA (08/27/2021)

The Augusta Museum of History is offering the popular 'behind-the-scenes' special program to the general public – Preserving Your Treasures: Behind the Scenes at the Augusta Museum of History. Beginning Saturday, September 11 and continuing on Saturday, September 18 and 25, Natalie Smith, Registrar at the Augusta Museum of History, will escort visitors in the collection preparation area at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., giving the public the opportunity to see the Museum's Processing Laboratory. The Museum's Registrar will demonstrate how the Museum collects, catalogs, preserves, studies, cares for, and displays archival collections.

The Augusta Museum of History is responsible for a broad and diverse range of artifacts, representing many aspects of the rich history of the River Region. The goal of this hour-long presentation is to demonstrate to visitors how historically important objects reach the Museum and how they are evaluated, prepared for display or stored. All of the relevant considerations, such as pest infestation, temperature and relative humidity levels, light levels, and composition of storage materials will be explained. The visitor will understand how these processes are central to the Museum's mission of the preservation and interpretation of history and receive tips on taking care of their family treasures.

Space is limited to fifteen participants per session and participation is on a first come, first serve basis.

Preserving Your Treasures is open to the general public and FREE with the cost of regular admission. Museum hours are 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Admission is \$5 for Adults, \$4 for Seniors, \$3 for Children, and Free for Children under Age 5 and Museum Members. For more information, please contact the Museum

at (706) 722-8454 or visit www.augustamuseum.org.

Program: Preserving Your Treasures: Behind-the-Scenes at the Augusta Museum of History

Where: Augusta Museum of History

When: Saturday's, September 11, 18 and 25 Sessions at 1 and 3 p.m. each of the Saturday's

Cost: FREE with admission

About Augusta Museum of History

Augusta Museum of History, the only Museum in the CSRA accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, was established in 1937 for the purpose of preserving and sharing the material history of Augusta and the region. From a 10,000 year-old projectile point to a 1914 locomotive, to James

Brown memorabilia the collections chronicle a rich and fascinating past. The museum is located at 560 Reynolds Street in downtown Augusta. Please call (706) 722-8454 for more information or visit www.augustamuseum.org.

Hours: Thursday - Saturday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm; Sunday 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm; Closed Monday-Wednesday


Admission: Adult: \$5 * Senior: \$4 * Child (6-18): \$3 * Child (6 & under): Free

Group tours: (10 and up) available all week; must book in advance.ule tours call (706) 722-8454.

Admission: Adult and Senior: \$2 * Child: \$1

Augusta Museum of History
560 Reynolds Street
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¹ "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2021. ² "How might my oral and dental health change as I age?", www.usnews.com, 11/30/2018. ³ American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, 2018 Survey of Dental Fees, Copyright 2018, American Dental Association.

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Chamber to host Annual State of the Community Address

Special to *Senior News Georgia*

Submitted by Olivia Reich,
Communications Manager
Columbia County Chamber of Commerce
Olivia@columbiacountychamber.com

Evans, Georgia

The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce will host the tenth annual State of the Community Address on Thursday, September 9 at the Columbia County Exhibition Center in Grovetown.

The event begins at 4:00 p.m., with a Business Expo and a cash bar. Dinner to begin at 5:45 p.m. with the program to begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. Community leaders will give an update on the future growth and goals of Columbia County and our region. Vendors will be on site with free giveaways and other prizes. Tickets will be sold to raffle off a Recteq RT-B380 Bullseye. Raffle tickets can be purchased at the Chamber office prior to the event or at the Exhibition Center day of the event. You do not have to be present to win.

This event is presented by South State Bank and the City of Grovetown. Premier sponsors include AT&T and Columbia County Board of

Commissioners and executive sponsor Allegra Marketing-Print-Mail/Image 360.

This year's panel of speakers will include: Scott Johnson, County Manager, Columbia County Board of Commissioners; Dr. Steven Flynt, Superintendent, Columbia County School District; Elaine Matthews, City Administrator, City of Grovetown; Debra Moore, City Manager, City

of Harlem; and Colonel Shaw Pick, Garrison Commander, Fort Gordon.

The event is open to the public. Registration, which is required in advance for this event, is \$35 for Chamber members and \$50 for non-members. For more information and reservations, contact the Columbia County Chamber at 706-651-0018 or columbiacounty-chamber.com.

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Chamber unveils Leadership Columbia County Class of 2022

35 Community leaders slated to participate in 10-month long program

Special to Senior News Georgia

Submitted by Olivia Reich
Olivia@columbiacountychamber.com

EVANS, GA

The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the Leadership Columbia County Class of 2022. This program is presented by TaxSlayer, along with premier sponsors Herbert Homes, Harlem Family Dental and Cranston Engineering Group.

The 10-month long leadership program is managed by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. A highly informative and engaging program, it is designed to expose businesses and area leaders to the opportunities and challenges facing our community, promote and foster the development of leadership, and educate and prepare community leaders who are committed to shaping Columbia County's future.

Each month, the participants experience topics concerning our community, including economic development, education, media, healthcare, government, diversification, military and law enforcement.

The Leadership Columbia County Class of 2022 includes: Ben Barmore, Barmore Hammond, CPAs; Liz Bragg, Meybohm Real Estate; Ashley Campbell White, City of Grovetown; Robert Collins, III, US Army Signal School; Angelica Concepcion, Eagle Dynamic Solutions; Kayla Cooper, City of Augusta; Jonathan English, Jonathan English State Farm; Steve Exley, Columbia County Board of Commissioners; Jordan Gray, Serotta Maddocks Evans CPAs; Nick Guzman, University Health Care System; Faye Hargrove, The Better Choices Group, LLC; Grace Helms, SRP; Kim Hensley, TaxSlayer; Chris Huneycutt, JH

Cleveland Construction; Sara Kessie, OLH, Inc.; Crystal Kincade, Doctors Hospital of Augusta; Kelly Knitter, First Command Financial Services; Diana Krawiecki, Georgia Power; Andy Lawrence, Queensborough National Bank & Trust; Jennifer Leisey, Health Center Credit Union; Ann Malay, Golden Harvest Food Bank; Hillary Millar, M-Homebuilders, Inc.; Jace Morgan, The Cleveland Group, CPAs; Sarah Murray, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS); Zach Murray, Southpaw Roofing; Anita Patel, Development Authority of Columbia County; Leah Pontani, Goodwill Industries of Middle GA & the CSRA; Clayton Quamme, AP Wealth Management; Stacy Roberts, Augusta University Hull College of Business; Kelly Schlein, Columbia County Board of Education; Sandy Shirk, Brandon Wilde; Corey Simpson,

US Army Cyber School; Sean Smith, Cranston Engineering Group, P.C.; Jenny Viger, Market House Realty; and, Tiffany S. Watson, GIW Industries.

Each Leadership class collaborates on a project to address a specific concern in our community. Last year's class adopted four non-profits: The Mosaic Center, Columbia County Foundation for Children, Hope House and Child Enrichment.

The chair of the 2022 Leadership Class is Meredith Burkett, with Elliot Davis, and a Leadership Class of 2018 graduate; vice chair is Robert Kelly, with Augusta Staffing, and a member of the Leadership Class of 2017. For more information about Leadership Columbia County, contact Beth Frits, Leadership Programs Manager, at beth@columbiacountychamber.com or 706-373-9009.

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BBB Tip: How to make your next home improvement project a success!

by KELVIN COLLINS, President/CEO, BBB of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.

Whether you are remodeling your home, making needed repairs, or sprucing things up to put your house on the market, the following tips will help make your next home improvement project a success.

Come up with a budget and stick to it. Home improvement projects can get expensive, fast. If you don't want to break the bank, create a realistic budget to figure out how much you can spend ahead of time. Be upfront with contractors you hire about how much you can spend on a project as well.

Think about the pros and cons of DIY projects. If time and motivation is no problem for you, you may be able to tackle some basic home improvement projects on your own, but other projects may require further expertise. If you don't have a background in construction, it's usually best to hire a contractor to help with larger projects, such as plumbing, tiling, tree removal, exterior painting, and general remodels.

Give high priority to projects that keep your home clean and safe. If your home is in need of repairs, take care of those projects first. For example, fix that leaky roof before you give your home's walls a fresh coat of paint. In addition, don't forget to stay on top of regular home maintenance tasks to maximize the cleanliness and safety of your home.

Up the value of your

home with a bathroom or kitchen remodel. Remodeling your bathroom or kitchen can completely change the look and feel of your home, creating a space you enjoy being in - not to mention it can add quite a bit of value to your home. For large scale remodels, hire a contractor that specializes in construction and remodeling services.

Improve energy efficiency. Save money (and the environment) by

improving the energy efficiency of your home. Energy saving projects that are worth taking on include checking and replacing the seals on all windows and ducts in your home, or installing new windows.

Get multiple quotes from contractors. When you are ready to start your home improvement project, be sure to get multiple quotes from

continued on page 18



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Home Improvement from page 17

several different companies. Never be pressured into hiring the first person you speak with. Comparing pricing and services is a critical step in choosing a skilled contractor you can trust.

Properly vet contractors before you hire. Even if the price is right, don't hire a contractor before doing some research. Check them out or obtain a list of trustworthy contractors at BBB.org. Ask the contractor to provide references. Pay close attention to any reviews or complaints from previous customers. Remember, complaints are normal in the construction industry so pay attention to how the company handled the complaint. Verify that the

contractor is licensed and insured and get an estimate and contract in writing. Read contracts carefully before you sign them.

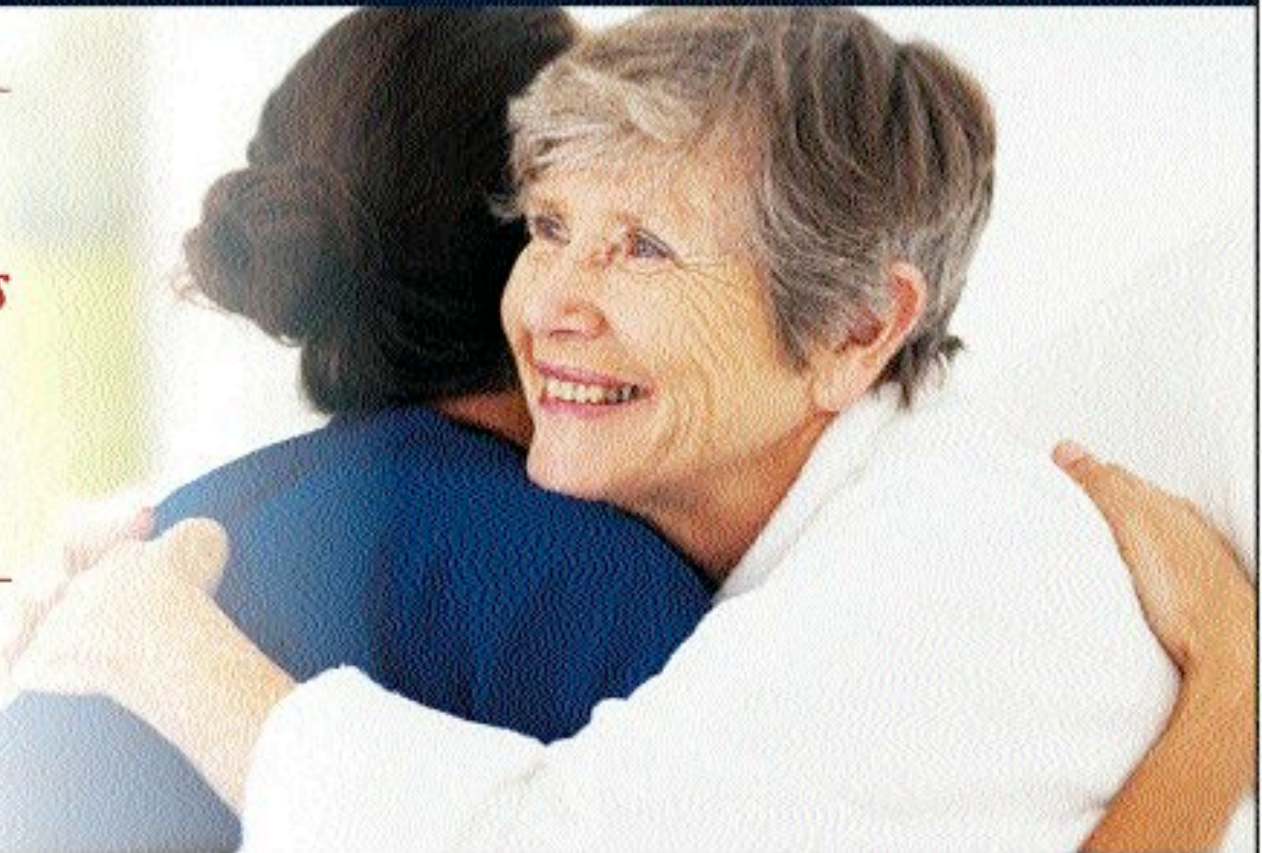
Don't get scammed. Stay alert to any suspicious behavior on the part of "home improvement specialists." Red flags include not putting things into writing, demanding upfront payment, unexpected price changes, high-pressure sales tactics, unsolicited free inspections (that usually reveal the need for an urgent repair), and cash-only deals.

You can always search BBB.org for more tips or to find reputable roofers, painters, plumbers, and lawn maintenance specialists in your area.

Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business

Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the International Association of Better Business Bureaus (IABBB). The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: BBB.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.

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