

# Senior News

## Georgia

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this March!*

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March 2023  
Vol. 37, No. 3



# Let Us Entertain You

by **CLAIR HOUSER-DODD**

**S**ometimes it is weeks before I find out what messages my Great Grand has left behind. Down low on my refrigerator is a stick-on of a precious little snow boy and snow girl happily skipping along hand-in-hand. They didn't come that way. He has them joined together! Guess that was left at Christmas time. Don't know when the sticker under the refrigerator faucet was left, but it is a very shiny green fish. So!!!

Matthew is always bringing gifts and leaving surprises! I have probably mentioned my yellow happy face heavy sponge. He was so impressed about it being so

strong and stiff, cold, and so soft when dipped in hot water. The newly found fact about the sponge is that it got approval and financing on SHARK TANK, a favorite show where inventors show their wares to get financial backing for a certain percent of their business. A very interesting concept and a great show! We are reminded of Matthew and his funny surprises every time we go to the sink. There is a big yellow happy face!

While we're on Matthew; he called one night so excited; "Gammy, I raced a go-cart for the first time today and I won, and I got a trophy." After much excitement and congratulations, and in a much quieter voice, he said, "Gammy, there was only one other racer, and she was a girl." Now, it took

courage to add that last sentence, and we love it!

During this season of flu, colds, covid, etc., we are all shopping healthily. Like juices for V-C! We selected (minus seeing-eye glasses) one large bottle of Pomegranate plus lemon. First the lemonade tasted awful. We decided to read the label to see if they added rusty radiator drippings for taste. They had not. However, during our investigation, we failed to notice the percent of V-C. No mention. We decided to research the Tomato Juice bottle. Still no mention of Vitamin C; and, in all fairness, not much of anything nutritional. We just threw both bottles out... labeled as WORTHLESS!

However, we happened to have a bottle of V8 original juice in the fridge and investigated it... Yeah! V-C listed right there big as life! Now we ask; How much money do these No Name companies spend in order to extract the V-C? We all know that Tomatoes come with V-C just as Lemons and Pomegranates do. Why the extraction? Think they squeeze it out and sell it to companies like V-8? It pays to READ! And, don't forget your Seeing-Eye glasses!

February was my Birthday Month. “Course, we started celebrating on January 28th with the Malibu birthday party of 1,000 people. Darlin Daughter, Emily, decided most of our friends would be there, so she’d decorate her table, put a sculpture with some odd beautifully decorated cupcakes, fresh flowers, and a large 90th Birthday Book with napkins to match. Never had so much fun! Even students and a house builder from the 50’s were there! Mike made my favorite pimento cheese and James, favorite fruits. Sandee and William brought the Caramel Cake and Lebanese snacks. What a party!

That's not all! Beth and Kathy took me to Natalia's on the 9th (the actual date) for a surprise dinner and presents and a caramel cake with candles. Beautiful! And, we all dressed up to fit the occasion. Even the kitchen staff came out to see what 90 looks like. More fun than a barrel of monkeys!

We think it's all over when Beth says, "Oh, No! You have to have lunch on Saturday and Eighty for Brady." We went and had a blast! We are pooped but are going with Annette and Chelle on Monday to a New Orleans type bistreau in Warner Robins. I said, "I know you are tired from your trip. We can go later." "Oh no, not tired." Then found out Sunday was Chelle's birthday, 62. Happy Belated!

Lo and behold, we walked in and there at a huge table are a dozen or so friends to celebrate MY BIRTHDAY AGAIN. I nearly passed out! Praise the Lord for so many good friends, presents and cards. My 90th Birthday Book is now running over and splitting out. Great times to remember. Thanks to all of you wonderful, wonderful people. We've decided to be 90 again next year since this one was so much fun!

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# EXERCISE AND BRAIN HEALTH

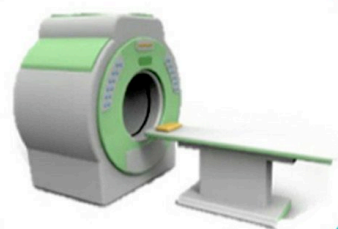
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**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
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## Taking Care

### Uncertainty In Caregiving Can Be Handled... Planning And Self-Care Are Key!

by LISA M. PETSCH  
lmpetsche@gmail.com

**C**aring for an aging relative, however personally rewarding it can be, is not without its share of challenges.



Lisa Petsche

If the relative has been diagnosed with a chronic illness – for example, Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease – a significant source of stress may be uncertainty about the future. For instance, how are your relative's needs likely to change and over what period of time? Will you be physically, mentally and emotionally able to handle the caregiving role on an ongoing basis? Will your relative eventually require residential care?

While no one knows what the future holds, there are strategies that caregivers can use to minimize surprises and cope with challenges and changes. Read on for some of them.

#### Accept

Accept the reality of your relative's illness. Let go of any bitterness resulting from unrealized plans and dreams so you can channel your energy in constructive ways.

Recognize that you are only human and allow yourself to experience all emotions that surface.

Accept that what your relative can do may fluctuate. Be flexible about plans and expectations.

#### Learn

Educate yourself about your relative's medical diagnosis.

Be open to learning practical skills, such as bathing techniques, to make caregiving safer and less stressful.

Research community services that can assist you and your relative. The local office on aging is a good resource.

#### Communicate

Allow yourself plenty of time to adjust to your relative's illness and the changes it necessitates. Your relative will also need time to adapt. Be patient and keep communication lines open.

Keep the rest of the family informed of changes in your relative's functioning.

Involve your relative and other family members in decision-making as much as possible.

Share information with healthcare professionals about your relative's needs, abilities and preferences. Ask questions, express concerns and offer opinions as you feel the need.

#### Prepare

Find a medical specialist whom you and your relative respect and trust.

Find out what to expect during the course of the illness in terms of symptom progression as well as caregiving skills, medical equipment and

community supports that are likely to be needed.

Talk openly with your relative about their wishes. Discuss living arrangements, outside help, surrogate decision-making, medical intervention and end-of-life care and funeral arrangements. Be careful not to make promises you may not be able to keep.

Help your relative get their affairs in order, including completing legal paperwork such as advance directives, powers of attorney and a will.

If you're concerned about your relative being on their own, provide them with medical alert jewelry and a personal emergency response system for summoning help. This can give you peace of mind while giving them autonomy.

#### Simplify

Eliminate as many sources of stress in your life as possible. Set priorities, streamline tasks and learn to settle for less than perfection.

Take things one day at a time so you don't become overwhelmed.

Learn to live in the moment and focus on life's simpler pleasures.

#### Practice self-care

Cultivate a healthy sense of humor.

Set aside quiet time each day, to nurture your spirituality and help keep you grounded.

Do something that provides you with meaning and purpose outside of the caregiving role, such as scrapbooking or researching your family tree.

Look after your health in terms of nutrition, rest, exercise and regular medical checkups.

Find something relaxing you can do to give yourself a daily mini-break – perhaps reading or listening to music.

Schedule regular breaks from caregiving duties. Take a couple of hours, a day or an overnight. You'll be more effective when you resume caregiving tasks.

#### Connect

Stay connected to your friends.

Find at least one person you can talk to openly, who will listen and empathize.

Join a caregiver support group in your community or on the Internet.

#### Get help

Accept offers of help. Ask family members to share the load and be specific about what you need.

Research and take advantage of respite services in your community.

Join a caregivers' organization – for example, the Caregiver Action Network (caregiveraction.org/) that offers information and support and advocates for caregivers' needs.

See your primary physician or a counselor if you continually feel sad, angry or overwhelmed. Such feelings, when they persist, may be symptomatic of depression, which is treatable.

\*\*\*\*\*

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



**OPINION**

**THE STRATEGY**

by Daniel W. Gatlyn USN Ret,  
Minister/Journalist

Look! Look! In the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Superman! On second glance, it's just a balloon!

Well... not just any balloon. It came from far away! Oh, what can it ever be? The puzzle of Twenty-Three!

We are fascinated! We are obsessed! We are hypnotized! Not since Blondie and Dagwood has America been so "carried away." We have been invaded... first from the south... then from the north... the big house... the White House... the Outhouse... the storehouse... the Legislative House... and, as a finale, the adversaries have resorted to a Balloon!

The SPY, like a fly from the sky, has violently torn away the splendor of our nation! We are incensed! What shall we ever do? Atmospheric terminology – global and political ideology! A strategy to be reckoned with! Diversion from the border? Mercy! Mercy!

If I sound somewhat discombobulated, it's because I am! Amused, confused, agitated, and even concerned! To be sure, it is a serious matter; but, the sky has not fallen. Do be reminded that the difference between "War and Warfare" is similar to the difference between "lightning and a lightning bug!" Think it over – wake up – use your head – the game is on... with bases loaded. And it did not start yesterday. The possibilities are many, but do be apprised that diversionary tactics are alive and well. The tricks of the mix are very much out of the sticks! The psychological thrust has been initiated. Time to import the "lotion for the motion!"

It seems that every group possess-

es an "aspirational narrative" on what was, what is; and, what will follow; often containing an over-reach, or fictional tag, or maybe just an attempt to convince the periphery of personal knowledge. The ability to inspect, to connect, to direct, to dissect is substantially in the hopper! The high tech set from the factory, the academy, test sight, and "unsightly might" has captured much more than needed.

Open your tablet, and scan the globe. That which is not in view merely awaits the Evening News. Not much is sacred or secret. While we fear the destruction of our planet, we have yet to perceive how to greet our neighbor! That which has been deemed necessary for survival within civility and discretion has suddenly been swallowed up with indisputable vanities.

\*\*\*\*\*

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On the Cover

# The Miller Theatre is “Alive with Will Downing” this March!

By Carolyn Brenneman

Cover: Miller Theatre in 2018!

There is some great history and entertainment here in Augusta. Today we will explore one of the magical venues that Augusta prides itself on. Yes, it’s the newly renovated Miller Theater in downtown. This entertainment center has some great history and today we will explore some of it.

This historic theater first opened in February 1940 with the performance of “Night at the Moulin Rouge” and continued to show movies, musical acts and other types of events for the next 40 years! The Miller Theatre was the second largest theatre, holding 1600 patrons, in Georgia. The original style and design of the Miller included Italian marble terrazzo, black walnut millwork, and a center stage framed by fluted columns and hand painted panels. Such beauty and great architecture.

But the theatre fell into disrepair with water damaged carpets, walls, ceilings and fixtures, as well as a failing roof; so, it closed in 1984... thus ending 40 years of performances and entertainment. In 2005 a philanthropist

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Will Downing at the Miller



The old Miller Theatre



Today the Miller is updated



## MILLER THEATRE

from page 6

and businessman named Peter Knox IV purchased the Miller and wanted to restore it to its former condition. Many different sources of funding were secured; and, following seven years of renovations, the Miller Theatre opened its doors again in 2018.

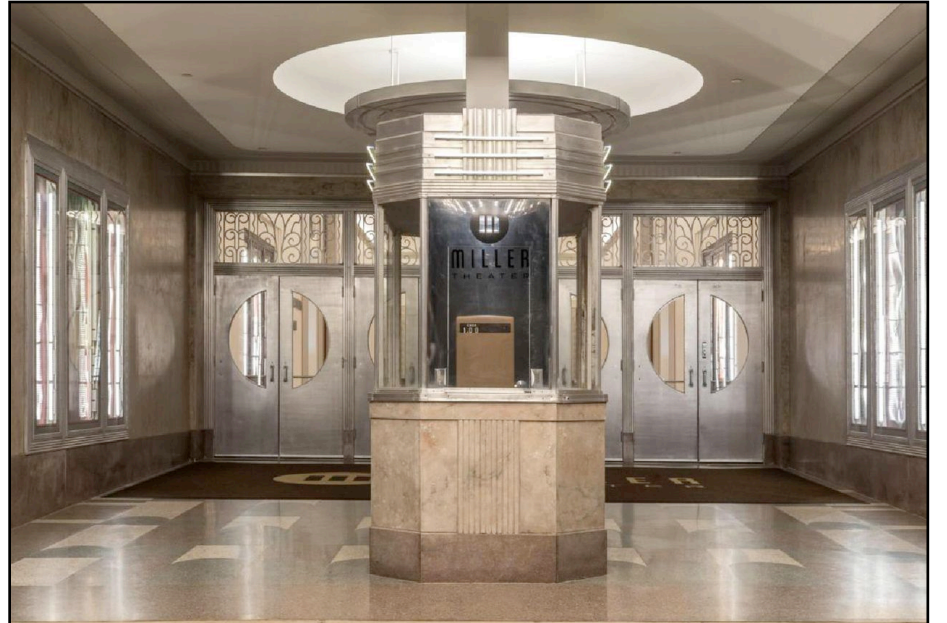
Today, it is the home to our Symphony Orchestra Augusta (SOA) and is a popular venue for many well-known performers and touring artists in the U. S.

Now, this March, just one of the many performances at the Miller will include a night with a nationally recognized vocalist, Will Downing, and special guest, Terence Young. Mr. Downing is touring the U. S. and will be with us on March 18th at the Miller Theatre, located at 708 Broad Street in downtown Augusta. With a career that spans over 32 years and 25 albums, Mr. Downing is definitely one of the most versatile baritones today. He is known as “The Prince of Sophisticated Soul” as his repertoire consists of his interpretation of many R&B classics, like “Wishing On A Star,” “Kind of Guy,” “I Try,” “Nothing Have Ever Felt Like This,” “Sorry I,” and many others.

Mr. Downing is on tour throughout the U. S. and this is the only day he will be performing at the newly renovated Miller Theatre. So, let’s not miss this one!

Make plans now to attend this event, or another event, at Augusta’s beautiful entertainment center... the Miller Theatre. Arrive early to enjoy viewing the astonishing renovation of the Miller Theatre and to listen to the sounds of Mr. Downing.

See you there!



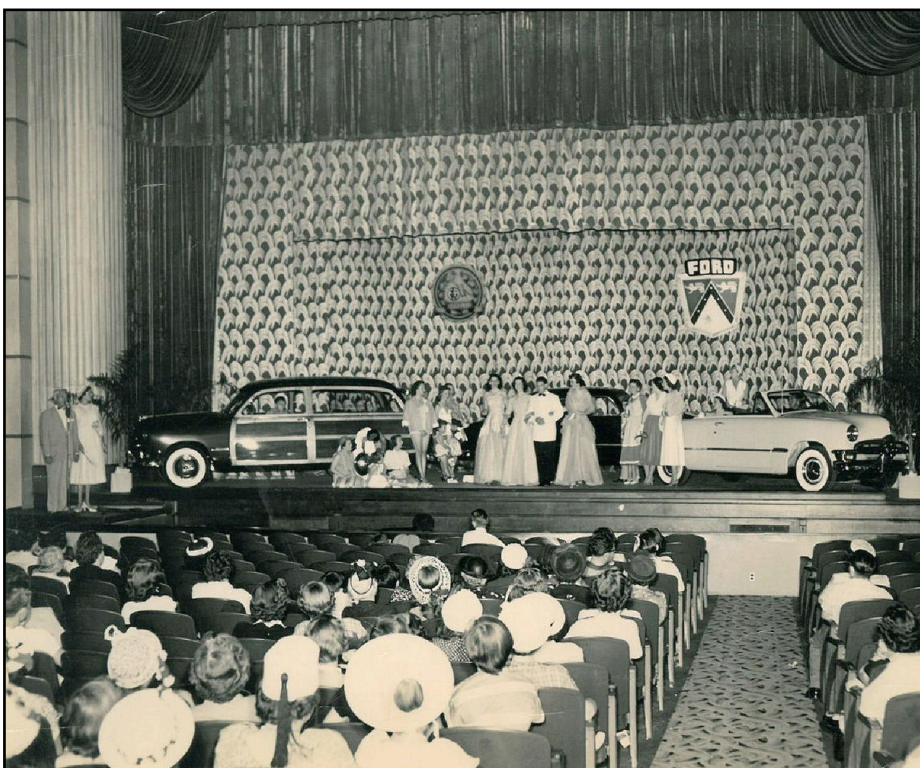
**Newly updated entrance**



**The members of Symphony of Augusta**



**Former front entrance of the Miller**



**Inside the Miller in the 1940's**



**How the Miller was in disrepair**



On the Cover

Isaac Wasson and the Bridge!

by CLAIR HOUSER-DODD

COVER: Ed Wasson (Isaac's father), Isaac Wasson (Engineering Student), Charles Kim (Architecture Student) and Angel Cabrera (President of Georgia Tech University).

You've read about my neighbor, ED, before; so now, if you will, you can read about one of his eight boys, Isaac, who is in the Graduate School of Civil Environmental Engineering at our most prestigious Georgia Technical College in Atlanta, Georgia, whom we can see following in his very proud father's footsteps. Ed was an engineering graduate of Texas A&M and is as engineering and architectural as my father, and his father, were engineers from Tech.

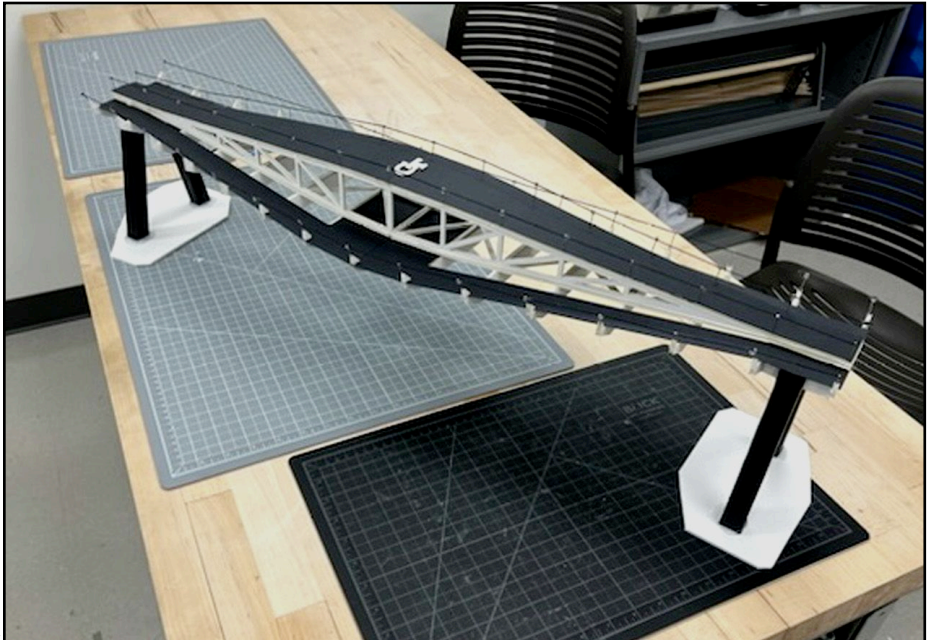
Last Fall, Isaac was enrolled in the Westside Community Connector Bridge Class which combines one Architecture Studio and a Civil Engineering class to solve a collaborative design problem. Twelve pairs (one architecture student and one engineering student) were in competition for the best design of a real-world problem; a landmark piece of infrastructure connecting two parts of the campus that have been impossible to cross because of roads and railroad tracks.

To interest the students even more in this project, they were flown to London to see those "iconic" pedestrian bridges spanning the Thames which runs through the center of the city. One bridge impressed Isaac and his partner, Kim. It was the Millennium Bridge; more open than the others, so that St. Paul's Cathedral Museum was clearly visible. These two guys side stepped the exact problem a bit, simplified the bridge with a lower level for bikes and the higher level for walking tourists, open and letting the skyline of Atlanta be the focus more than the bridge. It is called "the eye" because it is eye shaped from the side with the span featuring a split-like path surrounding an elevated pedestrian pathway; oval shaped into points at each end with trusses below to support the structure.

Wasson and Kim

won the \$4,000 award because the judges loved the concept from engineering and

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"The Bridge"



20230217  
Science Square Site Visit  
@isaacwasson



Isaac Wasson and Richard Kim!



Isaac Wasson Fishing!



BRIDGE  
from page 8

architectural standpoints. In addition, it was also the most economical to build. Hopefully in the near future!

For this stunning bridge, they chose reinforced polymer dickey because it is light weight and would require less steel for support, reduce cost of construction and the project’s carbon footprint.

One of the goals for the class was to leave architecture to think like engineers,

and vice versa. It worked. They were forced to develop the left and right sides of the brain!

Isaac Wasson and Charles Kim are proud to think more holistically. Wasson said, “In our education, it is often framed that there’s one right way to do things. Through Charles, I saw that there are a lot of different ways to approach things. Making a successful project is making something people like.” Kim said, “Working with Isaac made me more practical and professional. What’s the point of making beautiful things if they can’t be built?”

To Top the Cap! After all the congratulations and ceremonial happenings, Ed was taking Isaac out to dinner in a nice restaurant in downtown Atlanta when, what should they hear; “Hey, there goes the winner of the Bridge Building Contest at Georgia Park!” Wow! That’s nothing, especially in Atlanta!

“This is a legitimate chance to leave our mark on campus. This was a really special, unique opportunity. It’s such a cool thing that we got to be a part of it,” Isaac Wasson shared.

Congrats, Isaac and Charles!  
\*\*\*\*\*

Dublin VAMC held Black History Month Cultural Festival

Submitted by James W. Huckfeldt  
Deputy Public Affairs Officer  
Carl Vinson VA Medical Center  
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Black History Month is observed every February and the Dublin VA Medical Center held a festival celebrating the wide variety of Black history on Feb. 24, from noon to 4 p.m. in their Main Auditorium. The four-hour celebration showcased African head wrappings, drums, dancing, apparel, food tasting, and a keynote speaker, Chaplain Donald Retemiah, who shared his stories from his life in Guyana.

“We have to remember that Black history is American history, and this is an opportunity to share the wide spectrum of diversity observed with Veterans, staff, and our community,” said Dublin VAMC Equal

Employment Opportunity (EEO) Specialist and U.S. Air Force Veteran Marcia Morris. “Veterans are a significantly diverse demographic, and our goal is to educate people so they can take something meaningful away from our festival.”

Dublin VAMC Chaplain Donald Retemiah, a native of Guyana, a country in South America, shared some interesting facts about his native country. Did you know that Guyana is the least populated country in South America and is the only South American country that English is the primary language?

“Much of Guyana’s culture and traditions are adopted from the Caribbean and gained its independence in 1966,” said Chaplain Retemiah. “Approximately 80 percent of Guyana is covered by tropical rain forests, but also showcases fertile agricultural lands along with mineral resources to include bauxite and

gold.”

After Chaplain Retemiah’s presentation, a cultural food tasting was offered including ox tails, Jamaican cooked cabbage, jerk chicken, collard greens, fried chicken, corn bread, and other soul food.

Performances included dances to such as the Charleston, Reggae, Maranga, Salsa, Modern, Jazz. A story telling Rhythm in Motion illustrated the story of dance in African American culture from West Africa to the United States from the transatlantic slave trade through the Harlem renaissance eras. An impressive show of African drumming had audience members’ feet tapping and head bopping along with the percussion rhythm. The festival concluded with a stilt walker and how that is a lost art in Black history.

Black history is American history and, what the festival showed, it’s a fun and engaging history, too.





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

## Tips for responsible sports betting

- recommends establishing what constitutes an acceptable loss before you start gambling. Knowing when to stop and only gamble with money you can afford to lose is critical. You may also want to set time limits for yourself regarding sports betting.

- Problem Gambling.** You can call their hotline or find other resources available in your state.

Get expert advice on how to spot a scam by visiting [BBB.org/SpotaScam](https://www.bbb.org/SpotaScam). If you spot suspicious activity or dishonest business practices when placing sports bets, report your experience to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTracker). Your report can help others avoid falling victim to a scam.

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# Hop to it!



The Gala 2023 raffle item is this dashing bunny painting by Hunt Slonem.

Valued at \$6,500, *Atlanta* is an oil on wood painting, 8 x 10 inches.

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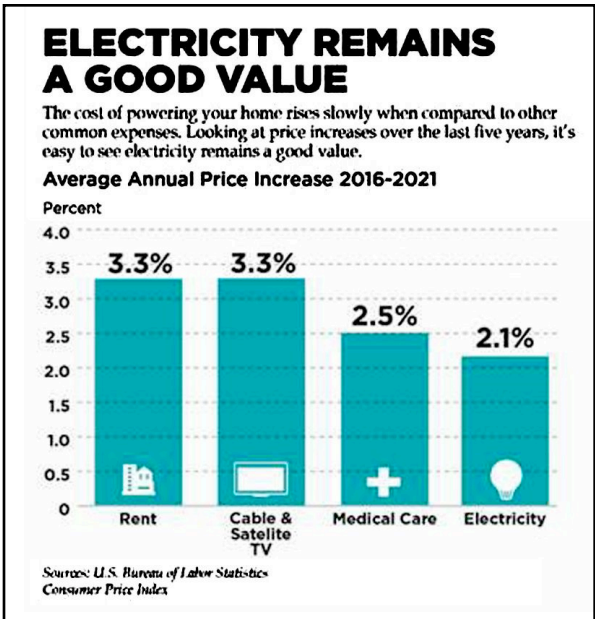


# Flint Energies plans April 1 Rate Changes

Submitted by **Marian McLemore**  
VP of Cooperative Communications  
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**Jennie Lacey, Manager of Cooperative Communications**, [jlacey@flintemc.com](mailto:jlacey@flintemc.com)

Effective with Consumer-member billings that begin on April 1, Flint Energies’ residential base charge will move from \$32 per month to \$34 per month, continuing a long-term initiative to gradually align this monthly access charge with the fixed costs of operating the electric system. This increase equals \$24 for one year of service, approximately less than 7 cents a day.

Flint Energies’ residential rate will remain steady at the current 10.55 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), where it has been since 2017.



“As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, all Flint Members share in not only the costs but also the benefits of electric service,” says Flint Energies Chief Executive Officer Jeremy Nelms. “The Co-op has experienced cost increases from materials to operations and maintenance, including credit card fees, postage and right-of-way expenses. Flint’s Board and employees work hard to reduce expenses and operate more efficiently to help control costs for all Members, because they too are Members. The price of electricity has risen less than many other common Member expenses even with this base rate change.”

Base rate changes will also be in effect for the other rate schedules which were previously billed at \$32 per month. Those rate schedules will bill at \$34 per month and will affect approximately 1,000 non-residential accounts. Members may compare current residen-

tial rates online at the Georgia Public Service Commission website: [www.psc.ga.gov/utilities/electric/residential-rate-survey/](http://www.psc.ga.gov/utilities/electric/residential-rate-survey/)

Every two years, Flint updates its cost-of-service calculation; it offers a direct and accurate reflection of current expenses. The base charge, or access fee, covers the costs of operating the Cooperative and delivering power. It also includes covering the Co-op’s cost to maintain more than 7,000 miles of electric lines and 52 substations, while providing 24/7 service and an outage reporting system. The wholesale power cost adjustment rider, which can change monthly, fluctuates based on the costs to generate power. The computed cost of providing service to a residential location is more than \$35 per month.

### New Electric Vehicle (EV) Rate for Commercial Members

The new electric vehicle rate for Flint’s commercial Members will have a monthly service charge of \$100 for single and three phase service. Energy used will be charged at a flat rate of \$0.19 per kWh, instead of the time-of-use rate used by residential Members. Commercial members on this new EV rate will realize facilities charges based on the cost of the Co-op’s investment in dedicating local facilities to support the commercial member’s EV charging equipment.

“With major car manufacturers offering more electric vehicles options at affordable prices, we anticipate that an increasing number of our commercial Members will seize opportunities to offer EV charging for their cus-

tomers,” says McLemore.

### Option for Low Income

Members who are approved for the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can be placed on Flint’s low-income rate. After April 1, Consumer-members that confirm their LIHEAP standing with a check payment will be eligible for a reduced monthly base service charge of \$17 per month. Local Community Action Agencies administer the LIHEAP program.

### About Flint Energies

Flint Energies is a not-for-profit electric cooperative owned by its Members in parts of 17 central Georgia counties. Flint employs nearly 215 employees and serves nearly 95,000 electric meters. We are 100% locally controlled and democratically governed by nine Directors elected from among the membership. In 1937, Flint Energies was created to bring people together to meet common needs like reliable electric energy, and our mission remains focused on improving the quality of life in Middle Georgia. Flint Energies is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Follow Flint on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

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# BBB Tip: Data Privacy!

Special to *SeniorNewsGeorgia*

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

The possibility of a cyberattack by a foreign country has gone from being the stuff of science fiction to a common threat that is often reported in the news. While it may seem like there is nothing an individual can do to stop a cyberattack, there are some best practices that consumers and businesses can do to help guard against losing important personal information to cyber thieves.

Quite a bit of personal information is already shared on the internet by cell phones, tablets, laptops or any other device that connects through wifi or an internet provider. These access points make it easier to shop, bank, make travel arrangements, and keep in touch with friends or family. When online, safeguard your information to help avoid scams, fraud, and identity theft. Periodically, it is a good idea to review who has your information. The Better Business Bureau and the National Cyber Security Alliance offer the following tips to help secure the privacy of critical information:

- Share with care. Posts on social media last a long time. Consider who will see the post, how readers might perceive it, and what information it might reveal about the individual posting it.
- Manage privacy settings. Check the privacy and security settings on web services and apps and set them to your comfort level for information sharing. Each device, application, or browser used will have different features to limit how and with whom you share information.
- Personal info is like money: Value it. Protect it. Personal information, such as purchase history, IP address, or location, has tremendous value to businesses – just like money. Make informed decisions about whether or not to share data with certain businesses by considering the amount of personal information they are asking for and weighing it against the benefits you may receive in return.

- Make your passwords long and strong. Use long passwords with a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols – eight characters for most accounts and twelve characters for email and financial accounts. Don't use the same password for multiple accounts, especially email and financial. Keep a paper list of your passwords in a

safe place, not on or near your computer. Consider using a password vault application. See BBB's tips for creating a strong password at BBB.org.

- Keep tabs on apps. Many apps ask for access to personal information, such as geographic location, contacts list, and photo album, before using their services. Be thoughtful about who gets that information and be wary of apps that require access to information that is not required or relevant to the services they offer. Delete unused apps on your internet-connect devices and keep others secure by performing updates.

- Lock down your login. For your online accounts, use the strongest authentication tools available. Your usernames and passwords are not enough; consider two-factor authentication for key accounts like email, banking, and social media, especially for access on mobile devices.

- Don't click on unfamiliar links. Whether at home or at work, don't click on links from unfamiliar sources or unexpected correspondence. One false click can infect a whole computer... or a whole business.

- Pay attention to internet-connected devices. Smart thermostats, voice control systems, cars, and even refrigerators are just the beginning of the growing list of devices that watch our homes and track our locations. Read the privacy policy and understand what data is being collected and how it will be used. Read BBB's tips on smart devices and cyber security risks.

Charitable organizations should be aware of data privacy. Donors and others communicate online with charities via their websites, emails, and other online means and need to be informed about what policies are in place to address privacy concerns.

BBB Wise Giving Alliance published a blog article containing advice for charities regarding data privacy concerns.

For more information, see BBB's Cybersecurity Resources page at

[www.bbb.org/all/cyber-security-resources](http://www.bbb.org/all/cyber-security-resources).

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*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 local BBBs 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](http://BBB.org) or E-mail: [info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org](mailto:info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org).*



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MKT-P0240



# Carl Vinson VA Medical Center provides 235 permanent housing placements to homeless Veterans!

Special to *SeniorNewsGeorgia*

Submitted by James W. Huckfeldt, Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, Dublin, GA  
James.Huckfeldt@va.gov

DUBLIN, GA

As part of VA’s nationwide goal to house 38,000 homeless Veterans in 2022, the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center’s far exceeded its goal to provide 143 permanent housing placements to homeless Veterans. Dublin VAMC Homeless Veteran Program and community partners provided permanent housing to 235 homeless Veterans exceeding VA’s goal by 164.34 percent.

Permanent housing placements provided by VA staff and community partners included apartments or houses that Veterans could rent or own, often with a subsidy to help make the housing affordable. VA staff also helped some Veterans end their homelessness by reuniting with family and friends.

These placements, along with placements provided by other VA health care systems across America, led to VA housing 40,401 Veterans nationwide, meeting and exceeding its national goal by more than 6.3%.

“This goal was achieved through the hard work and dedication of our Dublin VAMC homeless program staff, our grantees and contractors and our

valued community partners,” said Dublin VAMC Medical Center Director, Manuel M. Davila. “The progress we’re seeing with Veteran homelessness in Middle and South Georgia shows that we have the right solutions to end homelessness for all Veterans we care for.”

Nationally, the total number of Veterans who experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2022, was 33,129 – a decrease of 11% from January 2020, the last year a full PIT Count was conducted. In total, the estimated number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in America has declined by 55.3% since 2010.

All of these efforts are built on the evidence-based “Housing First” approach, which prioritizes getting a Veteran into housing, then provides the Veteran with the wrap-around support they need to stay housed – including health care, job training, legal and education assis-

tance and more.

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If you are a Veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838). Visit the VA

Homeless Programs website to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.

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# Avoiding Fraudulent Tax Preparers

Special to SeniorNewsGeorgia

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

**T**ax scams, including fraudulent tax return preparation, cost taxpayers billions of dollars every year and is continuing to grow. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reports that criminal investigations into fraudulent tax return preparers continue to rise.

Dishonest tax preparers can commit fraud in a number of ways. They can claim inflated personal or business expenses, false deductions, unallowable credits or excessive exemptions on returns prepared for their clients. Fraudulent preparers also may manipulate income figures to obtain fraudulent tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or some of the new provisions created during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Missing the signs that a preparer could be abusive could cause the taxpayer considerable financial problems. Some of the most common signs include:

- Claiming that they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.
- Basing their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund. Fees should be based on the complexity of the return, never on the size of the tax savings or refund.
- Claiming they can get you immediate payment of your return. Keep in mind that this is a loan. Fraudulent tax preparers often pad their pockets by giving cash up front at a high interest rate while presenting it as an instant refund from the federal government.
- Refusing to sign the tax return or provide the taxpayer a copy for his or her records. Always make sure that you have something in hand that shows proof of what transpired, and you should have a receipt for services rendered.

Taxpayers should be very careful when choosing tax preparers. While most preparers provide good service to their clients, a few unscrupulous tax preparers file false and fraudulent tax returns and ultimately defraud their clients. It is important for taxpayers to know that even if someone else prepares their return, they are ultimately responsible for all the information on the tax return. The Better Business Bureau, along with the IRS, recommends that taxpayers follow these tips when hiring a preparer:

- Get referrals from satisfied clients and check their BBB Business Review.
- Ask the preparer about their training, experience and current knowledge of tax law.
- Find out whether the preparer has ever represented taxpayers in an audit or has ever been denied eligibility to do so.
- Consider whether the individual or firm

will be around to answer questions about the preparation of the tax return months or even years after the return has been filed.

New tax laws can help create confusion that dishonest preparers will capitalize on, so taxpayers should always review their return before signing and ask questions on entries they do not understand. Also be sure to get a copy of the return for your records. Finally, do not ever sign a blank tax form or one filled out in pencil!

For more trustworthy consumer tips, visit [BBB.org](http://BBB.org).

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**Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77**

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