

Senior News

Serving **MACON** & CENTRAL GEORGIA
Information For Ages **50 PLUS!**



***Helen Van Ostran
celebrates 100th!***

story on page 5

July 2017
Vol. 31, No. 7

Let us entertain you

by CLAIRE HOUSER DODD

I never could tell a lie that anybody would doubt, nor a truth that anybody would believe.

Mark Twain

June was hot and rainy, but Fort Valley managed to pull off the only Sanctioned Georgia Peach Festival on the best day of the month. Extra warm, but with a breeze! But, no rain! And with the peach crop being so scarce, a real miracle... Lane's and Pearson's Farms joined forces and gave that huge basket of peaches for the festival people to sell. A real God send. Thanks again, folks!

The Historical Society's Annual Chicken Salad Luncheon went perfectly. Thanks, Perdue, Harvey's, Food Depot, Kroger in Perry, Sam's in Macon, and the usual peaches ice cream from Pearson's and the pickled peaches from Lane's, we got 100% of our food donated. If we don't, there is really no money to be made to keep the McArthur Saxon House afloat. These old wonderful homes need a lot of TLC.

Music by Mary Anne and David Thames fit in perfectly with the era

and a fine dining experience. The tables were gorgeously decorated by Sue Humphreys and Leigh Giles Wasson. Candles, lace and flowers can't be beat, especially in the lovely setting of an historical home.

And the music on the Peach Beach was a knock-out with Dennis "Rock" Herbert as guest artist on guitar doing his moves. The band was "Good Vibrations" with Eddie Byrd, John Laughter, Ben Caldwell, and Jim Blanton.

The quilt, made by Kathie Lambert, was made from many past years of Peach Festival shirts. So

beautiful and colorful! And what a gift! Thanks, Kathie! We know the winner, Lynda Clark, will cherish it forever.

Barbara Davidson, son Bill Nelson, and his wife Amy, attended the Peaches and Politics in Musella at the Dickey's Packing Shed. We hear they were the luckiest peach growers in the area, as it at least had the most peaches. This event is always looked forward to by many. Barbara said it was great to see Mr. Bob and give him a Birthday Hug.

The First United Methodist Church held their annual Bible

School in the Fellowship Hall, starting this year at 6 p.m. for supper and continuing 'til 8:30 p.m. The Theme was *Makin' Fun Factory*; and, close to 50 children loved the camaraderie and learning more about the Bible. Approximately 30 volunteers helped Amber Alston pull this off!

Our grand cried when it was over and he had to go home. His weren't the only wet eyes.

I believe that our Heavenly Father invented man because he was disappointed in the monkey.

Mark Twain

Jury Duty Scam continues to rise

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

Being picked for jury duty can be stressful. Receiving a call from someone claiming to be with the local police department or district attorney's office who says you missed jury duty and are facing arrest is downright terrifying. Reports from consumers suggest that this type of fraud is

again on the rise.

The scam works like this: a consumer receives a phone call or voice mail from someone claiming to be with their local police or sheriff's department, district attorney's office or the county courts. The caller states that the consumer has missed a jury duty summons and could be arrested if they don't pay a fine. The caller may even claim that a warrant has already been issued for the consumer's arrest.

If the consumer responds to the caller; they are instructed to send money to the scammer to pay a fine in order to avoid arrest. The consumer is asked to provide a bank account number, wire money, or put cash on a pre-paid debit card or a gift card and send it to the scammer. In some cases, the scam may be used to trick a consumer into providing sensitive personal information such as a Social Security number, date of birth, or credit card or debit card number.

This scam preys on consumers' fear of law enforcement and unfamiliarity with how the jury duty summons process works. The caller may appear to be very legitimate -- with Caller ID showing a local number with police department information and an official-sounding voice on the phone. To help consumers see through these tricks, here are some red flags to spot these scams:

- Courts almost exclusively contact consumers about jury duty or missed jury duty by postal mail, not by phone or email;
- Court officials or police departments will never shake you down for payment or personal information over the phone;
- If the call comes in the evening or at night, it's a red flag. Real court-related calls should

only come during normal business hours;

- If the caller claims to be part of a "warranty amnesty program," it's likely a scam. Such programs typically require consumers with outstanding warrants (such as for failure to appear for a court date) to reach out to the courts on their own;

- Asks to pay via wire transfer or prepaid debit card (such as MoneyPak, Reloadit iTunes or similar cards) are almost always a sure sign of fraud.

Concerned that you may have missed a jury duty summons or court date?

Contact your local courts directly by looking up the phone number online or in the phone book and calling them yourself.

Consumers should be aware that the jury duty scam is not exclusive to phone calls, either. Scammers have been known to send threatening emails or texts, purportedly from the local court, in an effort to get a consumer to send money, provide sensitive personal information (which can lead to identity theft) or install malware.

Kelvin Collins is president/CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc. serving 41 counties in Central Georgia and the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the Council of Better Business Bureaus. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: www.bbb.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org or info@csra.bbb.org. For more consumer tips that you can trust, visit bbb.org.

GEORGIA
DERMATOLOGY &
SKIN CANCER CENTER



MACON
1157 Forsyth St.
750-SKIN
478.750.7546

MILLEDGEVILLE
230 N. Jefferson St.
453-8484

WARNER ROBINS
212 Hospital Dr.
922-9281

MOHS SURGERY
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PSORIASIS

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MOLE REMOVAL
RASHES
WARTS - ACNE

GaDerm.com

BBB Warning: IRS may call you after all!

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

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has changed the way it deals with overdue taxes, and that means third party collection agencies may now call you on the phone.

Like the IRS, Better Business Bureau (BBB) is concerned this change might lead to scammers trying new ways to trick people. Here is what you need to know about this program that started in April 2017.

A federal law signed in 2015 lets four contractors collect unpaid tax debts for the government. According to the IRS, these are unpaid tax debts that were assessed several years ago and which the agency is no longer trying to collect directly.

All four of the companies contracted by the IRS are BBB Accredited Businesses:

- CBE Group, Cedar Falls, IA
- Conserve, Fairport, NY

- Performant, Livermore, CA
- Pioneer, Horseheads, NY

There are many ways to tell whether a call you receive about tax debts is legitimate. According to the IRS, people with overdue taxes will always receive multiple contacts, including letters and phone calls, from the IRS first. The IRS will also always notify taxpayers before sending their accounts to a private collection agency.

Here's how it will work, and how you can tell the difference between a legitimate debt collector and a scammer:

- The IRS and the private debt collection company will both send a letter to the taxpayer first. If you get a call first and had no idea you owed taxes, be cautious. NOTE: Taxpayers who have recently moved may have missed those letters. This could lead to confusion if their first contact is from the collection agency. Taxpayers can use Form 8822 to update the IRS with a new address: irs.gov/uac/form-8822-change-of-address.

- Private debt collectors will be able to identify themselves as contractors of the IRS collecting taxes. These employees must comply with the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and, like IRS

employees, must be courteous and respect taxpayers' rights. If the caller yells, curses, or threatens to have you arrested, it is not a legitimate collector. Just hang up.

- Private debt collectors will not ask for, and cannot accept, credit card information over the phone. Consumers will pay the IRS directly and will not need to send any money to the private debt collection company. You can check this page for payment options: irs.gov/payments. You can also see your balance and payment history. If the caller asks you to pay them directly, and especially if they ask for an unusual form of payment such as wire transfer or gift cards, it's a scam. Just hang up!

- Taxpayers can ask for their account to be transferred from the private debt collection back to the IRS.

The IRS adds that private collection firms will only be calling about tax debts that people have had for years and that they have been contacted about previously. Taxpayers can confirm they have an unpaid tax debt from a previous year by visiting irs.gov/balancedue.

BBB reminds all consumers, particularly those who have outstanding tax

debts, that the IRS will explain this new process clearly and will make every attempt to work with them to set up payment plans. They will also give taxpayers the chance to question or appeal the amount owed.

For more information and updates, you can visit the IRS website at irs.gov. You can learn more about how to tell if you're dealing with an IRS scam at bbb.org/taxscams and report a scam at BBB Scam Tracker – www.bbb.org/scam-tracker/central-georgia.

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How to safeguard yourself against medical identity theft

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

Identify theft affects millions of Americans every year, causing financial ruin and damaging credit histories that can take months or years to repair. Unfortunately, a specific type of identity theft is on the rise: medical identity theft. But, what is medical identity theft, and how does it differ from a classic case of identity theft?

Medical identity theft occurs when someone steals your personal information in order to obtain medical care, buy drugs or submit fake billings to Medicare in your name, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Unlike financial identity theft – which occurs when someone illegally uses your personal financial information to empty your bank account or rack up charges on credit cards taken out in your name – medical identity theft can have other serious consequences and is more difficult to clear up. Any type of treatment, diagnosis or surgery that occurs with a stolen identity could become a part of your medical record. This could affect your access to medical care, insurance benefits and the acquired debts could end up on your credit report.

For someone to commit medical identity theft, your Social Security number isn't necessarily needed as your name, birthday and address could be enough. According to the private cybersecurity research firm, Ponemon Institute, an estimated 2.3 million cases of medical identity theft were identified in 2014, a 22 percent increase from 2013.

Better Business Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission offer the following advice to help prevent your medical information from falling into the wrong hands:

Watch out for red flags. Signs of medical identity theft may include receiving a bill for medical services you never received, medical collection notices on your credit report you don't recognize or a call from a debt collector

about a medical debt you don't owe. If you see a mistake, contact your health insurance provider and report it.

Keep copies of your medical records. Keep copies of your medical history, receipts and/or bills from treatments or doctor visits. Also, keep a record of your prescription history including the doctor who prescribed and the pharmacy that filled a prescription. Federal law allows you to have copies of your medical or billing records, and if your request is ever denied, you have the right to appeal.

Read the statements from your health insurance plan. Make sure to read your medical and insurance statements regularly and completely, as these documents can show warning signs of identity theft. Read the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement that your health plan sends after treatment. Also, check the name of the provider, the date of service and the service provided. Check that the claims paid match the care you received. If you see a mistake, contact your health insurance company and report the problem.

Protect your personal information. Read your credit card and bank statements carefully and often. Shred all personal and financial documents, including outdated medical documents and old prescription labels. Also, don't share medical or insurance information by phone or email unless you initiated the contact and know who you're dealing with.

Check your credit report. BBB recommends checking your credit report with the three credit bureaus at least once a year. This will help you detect any fraud, and it's easy and free. Visit AnnualCreditReport.com for your copy.

Some of these steps may seem excessive now but just ask someone who has had their identity stolen, especially their medical identity, and they will agree that these steps would have been much easier than fighting to regain your good name.

For more tips you can trust, please visit bbb.org.

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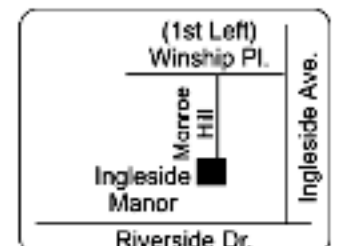
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You must be 62 years of age or older. Gross income must not exceed HUD guidelines for income.



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Senior News & Views of Georgia

Poets' Corner

Editor's Note: If you have written a "well-worked" poem which you would like considered for publication, please email it to seniornewsga@cox.net or mail it to Senior News, 214 Wilsons Creek Bend, Bonaire, GA 31005. Please include your name and address on your poem. We will publish selected poems (or excerpts) as space permits.

MY MAN STAN by Rochelle Siegel Day

*His huge, prickly nose
Those small, beady eyes
He's Not as "Sexy" lookin'
As most other guys*

*Large, freckled face
Not a strand of hair
My love for Stan?
Much more than I can bear*

*He treats me like a "Queen"
We seldom quarrel or fight
His sweet, tender kisses
Send my heart into flight*

*Holding the Holy Bible
He reads it aloud
Stumbling and stuttering
Yet, his efforts make me proud*

*I wouldn't Trade MY MAN STAN
For all the "studs" around
'Cause he has them all beat
He's the best "all around!"*

PAIN by Gerry Noel

*The doctor said I should exercise,
But doctor, how can I with this pain
in my back?
Every day when I get up,
It feels like I'm being hack.*

*I am seventy-eight years old,
Every day there is a new pain.
First the knee, then the hip,
My body parts are driving me
insane.*

*I think the pains in my hands are
the worst,
Because it has a crippling effect.
I can remember the good old days,
When I could stand erect.*

*My four doctors ask me if i am
depressed,
No, cause I've got my Pastor Levy.
He tells me I'm bigger than the pain,
And he wouldn't lie.*

Everyday I thank the Lord,

*It's good to be alive.
With pain in the back, hips, hand
and knees,
I can surely say "I will survive!"*

*I've written five kiddie's books,
You can download them on Amazon.
Look for my name in the future,
Today, tomorrow, and beyond.*

JUDGE NOT by Shirley Glisson

*STOP and think before you speak,
For words may prick the heart.
Silence oftentimes is best,
In judgement you should have
no part.*

*The situation your brother is in,
Have you been there before?
If not, be very slow to speak,
For prayer can do much more.*

*Whatever you may think is best,
May not be just right.
Be careful if you do not know,
For much is not in sight.*

*Are you familiar with the grief,
The trouble and despair?
Don't be so quick to judge someone,
Unless you have been there.*

Opinion Your Freedoms

by DANIEL W. GATLYN, USN Ret.
Minister/Journalist

The fact of extended "Rights and Freedoms" to U.S. Citizens is beyond debate! Another Anniversary of our gifts is here! The price that was paid for such is almost beyond comprehension. But do keep in mind that such options are always monitored (and limited) by designated entities; according to statutes and behavior. Like it, or not, we are continuously being held accountable to legal, moral, ethical, or practical rules or guidelines. Only the illiterate will perpetually disregard the Creator, the law, protocol; or the weather. Make no mistake, your rights come with conditions! This prerogative does not indiscriminantly extend an invitation to be, do, or say anything that "fits your fancy!" Such is a fact of life. You will adhere to the boundaries of sensibility; or, pay the piper! Thousands died that you may benefit! Don't blow it!

Humanity is prone to push the envelope of phrase, deed, or desire past the breaking point – then blame the elements or circumstances for violation. Multitudes will ignore such boundaries until they are called out; but, such disregard will not change the "charge or penalty!"

Whether it is "mischievous Mike, romantic Rosa, or political Pete,"

each are eventually measured for quantity and quality! There will be a "payday" – in the margins of red, or black!

Granted, there are millions marching through life as if there is no tomorrow – totally adrift from reality – espousing profit over compatibility (or intellectual recognition) – essentially divorced from pertinent points or values – but not past screaming when "their party falls apart!" They may even appear to be successful for a season. Every patron of the planet is somewhere made aware; however, that reckoning, or balance, has made the agenda, and it is only a question of time before the table is properly

set! Make your personal inquiry; your elaborate appraisal; your in depth exam; if you will. And do be sufficiently honest in sharing your find, especially to self.

Rights and Freedoms are a blessing of unfathomed substance; but, should never be taken for granted! They are always predicated upon terms and process! Life and breath are postured for profit to the individual, the inclusion of which shall cease for the ingrate. You will be aligned! You will behave! You will be held accountable! Or you will forfeit the gem and gift designed! So... Buckle Up... both in your car; and, in your conduct!

2017 Georgia Golden Olympics Registration

Special to Senior News

The 2017 Georgia Golden Olympics is scheduled for September 27 - 30, 2017 in Warner Robins, Georgia. You'll want to join in for the 35th year of the games!!! Plan now to participate... and, bring your friends! As an athlete you'll

have over 50 events to choose from. Not an athlete... then volunteer to help with the games. Join the fun!!!

Registration for the 2017 Georgia Golden Olympics opened on May 1st. Registration without late fees must be completed by August 1st. For complete details concerning the games, registration, and volunteer opportunities visit www.georgiagoldenolympics.org.

On the Cover

Helen Van Ostran Celebrates 100th Birthday!

by CLAIRE HOUSER-DODD

COVER: Fran Washko, Frances McDaniel and Helen. Frances and Helen were City Clerks together.

Born in Fort Myers, Florida, Helen's parents were Valerian Estes and Alberta Weatherly Williams of Fort Myers, Florida. Granddaughter, Lynda Childs of Locust Grove, Georgia, laughed and said, "Daddy was the fourth of four boys. The rest were named real easy names like Joe and Tom, but Daddy being the last, really got hit! But that's OK, everybody called him Bud!"

Helen didn't have to worry about her name... one as easy to remember as she was impossible to forget. Everyone who knew her remembered her... and her jellies and jams which she gave so freely to friends. Not only did she make them, but she also grew the fruits. It appears gardening was her passion, but when forced to stay indoors by bad weather or the like, she was busy knitting. A busy little bee, you might say!

Helen and Bud moved to Marshallville, GA in 1960 and bought the farm next to the Haslam's. Though Bud was a dairy farmer in Florida, he switched to crop farming in Georgia.

While Helen grew up in Miami and went to business school there, she took to farming like a real trooper. Daughter, Charlene Schouwenaars of Fayetteville, Georgia, has a good story about her mother. It seems they were going to pick up a new group of chickens in Fort Valley somewhere close to the Country Club. They were driving Helen's old Mercedes, so they put the little chicks in the trunk (as opposed to letting them flip and flap around in the interior of the Mercedes). The problem arose when the trunk was opened and it revealed that the little darlings were more or less exfiliated by the diesel fumes off the motor. As she remembers it, Helen was squatting on the ground, picking up each little chick, fanning their wings up and down and begging, "Breathe, little chick, breathe, please

breathe." And some did. For the life of her Charlene can't remember how many lived. The important part of the story has already been told! See the pictures in your mind's eye.

On Saturday before Helen's birthday on June 1, Charlene and Linda held a beautiful party to honor their mother and grandmother, her life and her longevity.

A nice group of DAR members of the Fort Valley, Byron, Marshallville and Macon clubs

drove up to Golden Crest Assisted Living on Country Club Drive in Stockbridge, where Fran Washko took many pictures. She and Betty Rackly, Lynn Southerland and others celebrated with Helen Van Ostran on her 100th birthday. They laughed and enjoyed telling everybody they finally got her to join the DAR at 90!

Congratulations, Helen, on a fun and healthy day. Nobody believes you're really 100. A very young one at that!



Helen's Daughter, Charlene Schouwenaars.



DAR members attending: Fran Washko, Martha Culpepper, Betty Rackley, Sara Smelt and Helen.



Helen's Granddaughter, Linda Child.

Additional Senior Services & Events Information Available at www.seniornewsga.com

**MACON METRO AREA
Senior Services & Events Directory**
For additional *Services & Events*
listings, please visit our website at:
seniornewsga.com.

Coliseum Health System "Medicare Made Easy and Advanced Directives"

Coliseum Northside Hospital,
400 Charter Blvd. For complete
information call 478-746-4646.

**Medical Center Navicent Health –
Partners In Health Classes**
Golden Opportunities
The Wellness Center
3797 Northside Drive, Macon 478-
757-7817

Heartworks
389 First St. (Inside the MHC)
478-633-9090

Central Georgia Rehabilitation Hospital

3351 Northside Drive
478-201-6500
Cancer Life Center
Information and Reservations: 478-
633-8537; www.cancerlifecenter.org

Alzheimer's Association, Central Georgia Regional Area Caregivers' Support Groups

Call 478-746-7050 or 800-272-3900
for details.

Bibb County

• 2nd Tues., 3:30 p.m., Alzheimer's
Association, 886 Mulberry St.,
Macon, 478-746-7050

• 1st Wed., 10 a.m., Martha Bowman
UMC, 500 Bass Rd., Macon, 478-
743-7050

Houston County

• 4th Thurs., 7 p.m., Peachbelt Rehab
Center, 801 Elberta Rd., Warner
Robins, 478-397-4669

• 4th Tues., 7 p.m., Houston Health
Care, Classroom #1, 1601 Watson
Blvd., Warner Robins, 478-923-2532

Dodge County

• 3rd Thurs., 5:30 p.m., Dodge
County Hospital, Educational Annex,
901 Griffin Ave., Eastman, 478-374-
0600

Lamar County

• 4th Tues., 6:30 p.m., First United

Methodist Church, 375 Thomaston
St., Barnesville, 770-358-4516

Laurens County

• 1st Thurs., 2 p.m., Carl Vinson VA
Medical Center, 12-A Family Room,
1826 Veterans Blvd., Dublin, 478-
272-1210, x2328

Monroe County

• 1st Thurs., 6 p.m., Monroe County
Hospital Dining Hall Downstairs, 88
Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr., Forsyth,
478-747-8754

Peach County

• 3rd Thurs., 7 p.m., The Medical
Center of Peach County Cafeteria,
1960 Highway 247 Connector,
Byron, 478-951-3613

Putnam County

• 3rd Wed., 10 a.m., First Baptist
Church, 115 N. Madison Ave.,
Eatonton, 706-485-3331

Upson County

• Last Thurs., 7 p.m., Thomaston
Reflections, 302 S. Bethel St.,
Thomaston, 706-647-1607
Telephone Support Group
• 1st & 3rd Tues., 7-8 p.m., "Care
Connection" facilitated by an
Alzheimer's Assoc. staff member, 1-
866-453-5550. To learn more about
"Caring Connection" call 800-272-
3900.

Free Legal Services Available to Seniors

The Macon Office of Georgia
Legal Services provides free legal
services to seniors (60 and over) as
resources allow. We interview clients
in the following counties BY
APPOINTMENT ONLY: Bibb,
Baldwin, Crawford, Houston, Jones,
Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam,
Twiggs and Wilkinson.

Call the Macon Office at 478-
751-6261 for an appointment.

Meals on Wheels of Middle Georgia, Inc.

Meals on Wheels of Middle
Georgia, Inc. needs volunteers to
help deliver meals to home-bound
clients. Volunteers must have a valid
Georgia driver's license and a posi-
tive attitude. If you can spare two
hours a day one day a week, then
you may just be the person needed.
We're currently needing volunteers
Mondays and Fridays. Meals on
Wheels is a wonderful organization
which takes pride in everything it
does. This program would not exist
without volunteers.

If you are interested in volun-
teering, please contact our Volunteer
Department at 478-745-9140.

Macon-Bibb County Parks & Recreation Department Senior Center

1283 Adams Street Macon, Georgia
31201; Phone: 478-751-2790, 478-
751-9238; Daily activities 9:00-2:00

Warner Robins Senior Citizen Services (50+ Years Old)

**Warner Robins Recreation
Department - Felicia Wright,
Director**

Email: FWRIGHT@wrga.gov; 478-
293-1066

Senior Activity Center

152 Maple Street, Warner Robins
Office: 478-293-1066

Support Group for Caregivers of Frail Elderly Family Members

First & third Tuesdays of each
month, 3:30-5 p.m., 6060 Lakeside
Commons Place (off Bass Rd.),
Macon. Call Martha Duke at 478-
808-6957.

Houston County Council Of The Blind

The Houston County Council of
the Blind meets the first Saturday of
each month at the Centerville Lions
Club located on Houston Lake Road
voicing state and local concerns for
the blind or visually impaired.
Fellowship and membership are wel-
comed.

Georgia Leathercrafters Guild

The Guild meets every second
Sunday in the month at Geico on
Weaver Road. All who wish to learn
and/or expand their knowledge of
leather craft are invited. For addi-
tional information call 478-745-2320
or 770-688-2315, Tom Maldonado.

Central Georgia Genealogical Society

Meets 2nd Mon., 7 p.m., Flint
Energies Conference Room, 900
Hwy. 96, Warner Robins. For com-
plete details call 478-987-7260 or
visit www.cggs.org.

• July 15: Central Georgia
Genealogical Society will sponsor
their annual "Saturday at the
Genealogical and Historical Room of
the Washington Library" in Macon.
Muriel Jackson, Head Librarian, will
introduce attendees to the holdings
and CGGS members will be avail-
able to assist researchers throughout
the day. Presentation begins at 9:30
a.m. and coaching available to 4:30
p.m. Researchers may remain until

the library closes. For details visit
www.cggs.org or call 478-987-7260.

Health Education

The Office of Health Education
at the Macon-Bibb County Health
Department has brochures-pamphlets
on various topics available in
English and Spanish. These materials
are available to businesses, commu-
nity-based organizations, and faith-
based organizations upon request.

For additional information call
478-749-0113.

The Macon Arts Alliance

486 First St., Macon
478-743-6940

Massee Lane Gardens

For information call 478-967-2358
or www.camellias-acsc.com (The
American Camellia Society.)

Museum of Arts & Sciences

4182 Forsyth Road, Macon
478-477-3232 or visit website
www.masmacon.com.

Theatre Macon

438 Cherry Street, Macon
478-746-9485

Warner Robins Little Theatre

502 South Pleasant Hill Rd.
478-929-4579; www.wrlt.org

Tubman Museum

340 Walnut St., Macon
www.tubmanmuseum.com

Middle Georgia Art Association Gallery

2330 Ingleside Ave., Ingleside
Village, Macon. 478-744-9557; middlegeorgiaart.org. Tues.-Fri., Noon-5
p.m.; Sat., Noon-3 p.m.

Divorce Recovery Group

First Baptist Church of Christ,
Macon, located at 511 High Place, is
offering a Divorce Recovery Group
for those interested. The meetings
are held on Wednesday evenings.
Child care and children's activities
will be provided.

For additional information call
the church office at 478-742-6485.

DivorceCare Offered

By Central Baptist Church

Divorced? Separated? Find help
at DivorceCare.

DivorceCare is a special weekly

continued on page 7

General Business Directory For Seniors

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EVENTS

from page 6

seminar and support group for people who are separated or divorced. The group meets at Central Baptist Church located at 1120 Lake Joy Road, Warner Robins. Childcare is provided for babies through 5th grade.

For additional information call 478-953-9319.

New Dimension of Praise International Ministries, Inc.
Uletha Durham, Pastor, 207 S. Davis Dr., Warner Robins, Church: 478-329-8780, Cell: 478-283-9494

NAMI Central Georgia National Alliance on Mental Illness
Barabra Long, Executive Director 478-328-0508
(Call for details on events)

- Monthly support group for consumers and families: Last Mon. each month, 7 p.m., New Hope, 100 Story Road, Warner Robins. Free. Refreshments.
- SOS (Survivors of Suicide) Support Group: First Thurs. each month, 7-8 p.m., Houston County Medical Center, Board Room next to the coffee kiosk, Watson Blvd., Warner Robins. For loved ones of those who have experienced suicide. Free.

Substance Abuse Help Available

Did you know alcohol is the most-used drug in the country and it's the number one abused substance among teens? Although most parents don't realize it, they are the best prevention tool around when it comes to underage drinking. Children do listen to their parents. Not only can you be a good role model for drinking behavior, you can have a meaningful, honest

discussion with your children about alcohol, its pitfalls and risks. If you need more information or help, Hodac, Inc. is here to lend a hand. You can talk to trained professionals 24-hours a day, seven days a week by calling the Georgia Helpline at 800-338-6745. Making that call puts you on the road to answers so why not call today.

Volunteers Needed

GeorgiaCares, Georgia's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), needs volunteers to assist seniors and persons with disabilities with Medicare problems, fraud, and abuse. Must be computer savvy. Rewarding volunteer work. Call Carol Cannon, GeorgiaCares Coordinator for the Middle Georgia Regional Commission/Area Agency on Aging, at 478-751-6489 or email: ccannon@mg-rc.org for details.

MGRAACA Meeting

The MGRAACA (Antique Automobile Club of America - Middle Georgia Region) meets on the 3rd Thurs. each month, 7 p.m., at the Ole Times Country Buffet located at 1208 Russell Pkwy., Warner Robins. Come early to eat and greet! Anyone interested in antique cars and restoration is welcome. Call Rosemary Chaney at 478-987-9519 after 5 p.m. for information. Forsyth-Monroe County Convention & Visitor's Bureau.

Open Sketching Portraits

Presented by the Fine Art Society of Middle Georgia, every Tuesday that is not a holiday, 6-7 p.m. at the Gallery of Fine Art, 149 S. Commercial Circle, Warner Robins. For details contact Leslie Hoops-Wallace at 478-396-9198, or email unicornsquest@hotmail.com.

Fine Art Society of Middle Georgia

Meets 4th Mondays at the Flint Energies Building, Hwy 96 & Sutherland Dr, Warner Robins. For details call 478-396-9198, email fasmidga@gmail.com, or visit www.fasmidga.org. FAS Gallery of Fine Art is located at 149 S. Commercial Circle, Warner Robins.

Houston County Council on Aging/Meals on Wheels

Houston County Council on Aging/ Meals on Wheels is a non-profit that delivers meals to home bound seniors. We have openings for seniors in need of meals and for volunteers able to distribute meals. Please call Alesha Mathis, Meals on Wheels Coordinator, at 478-328-6070 for more information, to sign up for meals, or to volunteer.

Ocmulgee Audubon Society

Meets 2nd Monday monthly (except July), 7:30 p.m., Museum of Arts and Sciences, 4182 Forsyth Rd., Macon. Birders and visitors welcome. Additional information, call 478-477-7016; http://ocmulgeeaudubonsociety.blogspot.com.

Free Car Seat Checkup

2nd Wed. of the month, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Bibb County Health Dept., 171 Emery Hwy., Macon. SAFEKIDS Central Georgia. For details call 478-749-0144.

The GeorgiaCares Program

The GeorgiaCares Program helps people with Medicare understand their

benefits, make informed decisions about health care options and provide ways to protect themselves from Medicare fraud, error and abuse. Call 1-866-552-4464 (option 4) or (478) 751-6489 to schedule an appointment at a counseling station in Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Twiggs and Wilkinson Counties. Visit www.mygeorgiacares.org for counseling site locations and hours.

Mid Georgia Orchid Society

Meets 2nd Tues. each month from Jan. through Nov., 7 p.m., Houston Lake Baptist Church, 2300 Houston Lake Rd. (2300 GA Hwy 127 E), Perry. Meetings include social gathering and fellowship period, business discussion, "orchids" program, refreshments, show & tell and raffle (members only please). For additional information please email: rwfaber1@gmail.com.

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General Business Directory For Seniors

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Taking Care

Hemochromatosis: A common but under-diagnosed disease

by LISA M. PETSCHÉ

Chances are good that you have never heard of hemochromatosis, also known as iron overload disease, despite that it's the most common genetic disorder in the western world. Although it can affect males and females at any time in life, it typically manifests itself in middle age. The disease is potentially fatal, but the earlier it is diagnosed, the better one's chances are of being able to lead a long and healthy life.

The cause of iron overload can be genetic or non-genetic. The genetic type, which is by far the more common variety, is known as hereditary hemochromatosis or HH for short.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "in the United States more than one million people have the gene mutation that can cause HH. This mutation is most common among people whose ancestors came from Europe." Typically those who have it are unaware.

A metabolic disease, HH causes the body to absorb and retain too much dietary iron. Since there is no regular mechanism for eliminating iron from the body, the excess iron is stored in tissues and can cause damage in many areas, including joints, the heart, brain, liver, pancreas and endocrine glands.

"The speed at which iron builds up and the severity of the symptoms vary from person to person," says the CDC, and "many people do not have any early symptoms." Typically, by the time they are diagnosed – if they are ever properly diagnosed – they have sustained irreversible damage.

Take the case of Lorraine, for example. After several years of increasing health issues – including fatigue, weakness, abdominal and joint pain and Parkinson-like symptoms – and visits to numerous medical specialists who were puzzled by her seemingly unrelated symptoms, she was extremely frustrated and discouraged that no underlying cause could be found. Meanwhile, her physical functioning became more and more compromised. It was a naturopath she eventually turned to for help who suggested iron testing, querying hemochromatosis. In 2006, at age 69, Lorraine was diagnosed with the disease.

Her iron levels were life-threateningly high but gradually returned to normal as a result of weekly phlebotomies (blood removal treatments from the arm, similar to blood donation) over the course of a year. She was told she was lucky that her internal organs had not been damaged. However, her joints have been severely affected, leading to the need for multiple joint replacements. The management plan includes regular blood testing to check her iron levels, and periodic phlebotomies as indicated.

Diagnosis of HH is difficult because symptoms are vague, often masking themselves as other, more common conditions, such as hypothyroidism, liver disease, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes or even chronic fatigue. Some people may develop a bronze skin tone; Lorraine wasn't one of them.

In her journey through the healthcare system, Lorraine discovered that most healthcare professionals know little if anything about HH. (Up until recently, medical students were taught that the disorder is extremely rare.) And the vast majority of lay people have never heard of it. She had to do her own research, and eventually found valuable books, research articles and other materi-

als through the Hemochromatosis Society (for information, call their toll free line at 1-888-655-IRON (4766) or go to their website at www.americanhs.org/).

Talk to your doctor, because two simple and inexpensive blood tests – transferrin saturation (TS) test and serum ferritin (SF) test – can detect iron overload and may save your life or that of someone you love. These tests are not part of the standard blood testing ordered with regular medical checkups. If someone in your family is diagnosed with HH, DNA testing can be done to find out if other members may be at risk.

Author's note: Lorraine is my mother and we've made it our mission to spread awareness about

hemochromatosis. Lorraine recently died of complications from atypical Parkinson's disease, believed to have been caused by HH. If we can save even one person from the health problems, functional disability, medical testing, hospitalizations and surgeries she endured, and perhaps even save a life, our efforts will have been worthwhile. The month of July has been designated nationally as *Hereditary Hemochromatosis Genetic Screening and Awareness Month*.

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



Lisa Petsche

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