

# Senior News

## Georgia

*Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!*

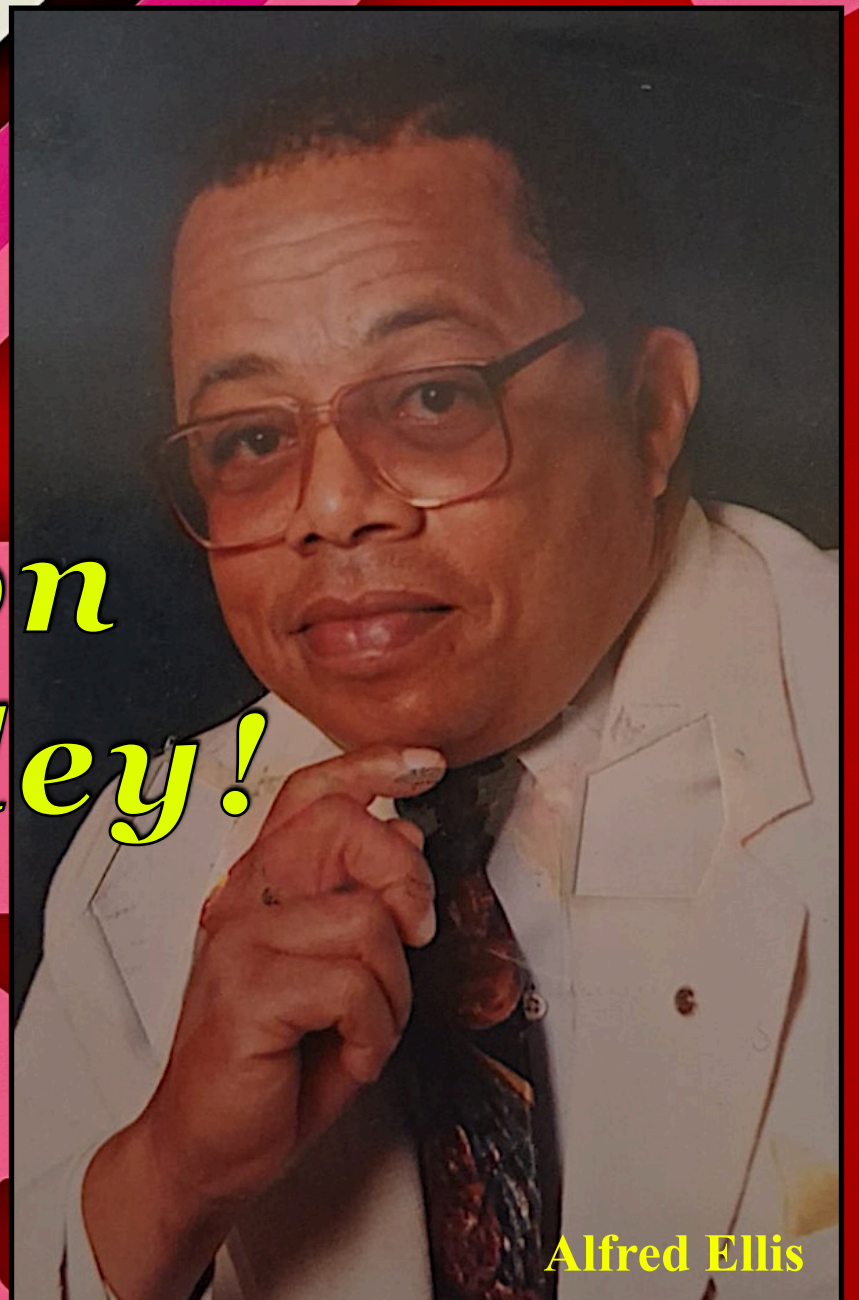
## *Valentine's Day is Coming!*

*page 8*

## *A Native Son of Fort Valley!*

*page 2*

February 2024  
Volume 38, No. 2



Alfred Ellis

# A Native Son of Fort Valley... Alfred Ellis!

by **CLAIR HOUSER-DODD, COLUMNIST**

**A**lfred Ellis was one of the first people I met when I moved back to the Valley. Alfred had also just recently moved back home again. Alfred was born to Alfred and Martha Ellis, both teachers. He went to grade school here then on to Morehouse College in Atlanta. Alfred also did a stint in the Armed Forces and spent a good deal of time in Germany where he visited friends of ours who were from here.

Alfred was lead teacher for LEAP when I had the Student Literacy Program, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Tutors at FVSU. So you see, we were closely connected. Both of us were interested in furthering the education of those young, and old, alike!

Now it seems that many times when I open the Legal Organ of Peach County, I see a picture or a mention of Mr. Ellis. He is a busy young man of 79, still giving... and still helping... his fellow man.

Alfred has been retired from the car business of many years. He and co-workers have stayed close and Alfred is still involved with the automobile industry. Quite often on Saturdays he caters a BBQ luncheon for the salesmen. That is a win-win deal as workers get a delicious meal and never leave the premises, much less a client. And... Alfred loves to cook. I've had lots of his good food at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church.



Alfred Ellis with Governor Zell Miller!



Alfred Ellis at Work!



Alfred Ellis' Children!

**continued from page 2**

Alfred is working with the United Way Reading Program also connected with St. Luke's. He hires college students to help tutor math and writing skills. They call themselves, "The Canterbury Club".

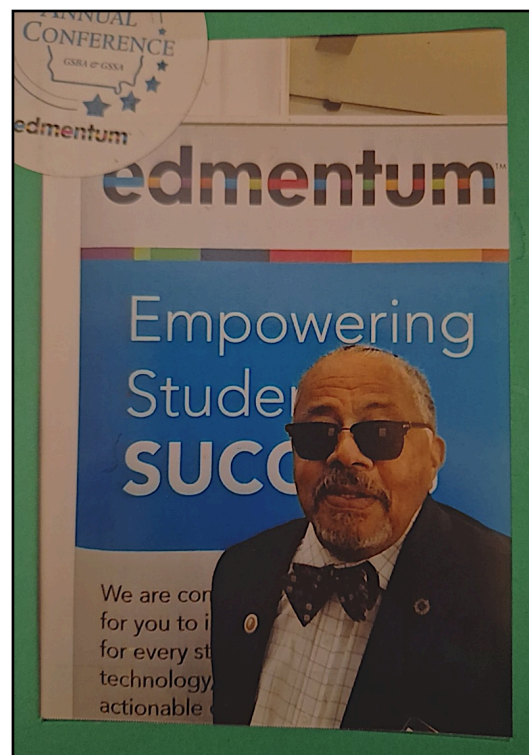
Mr. Ellis is a wonderfully happy man who loves everything he does. This makes it enjoyable to everyone around him. He has had a long association with Habitat for Humanity. The National Habitat for Humanity decided we were too small to run the program so consequently our group started working with another association in which Alfred is a director.

Alfred now enjoys being a member of the Board of Education here in Peach County. He was a member of Omega PSI PHI Fraternity, a national organization that addresses social means. He is President Elect of the Retired Educators Association and is a lay reader at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Alfred Ellis a happy camper and is proud of his good works and says the one thing that makes him the most proud and the happiest is that he got back home in time to take care of his parents in their later years. He was away for 20 years and back for 40. He has lived with a pace-maker for the last 7 but yet nothing has slowed him down or keeps him from his Church or doing good deeds for others. We are proud to have known him for all these years and to be considered as friends.



## Alfred Ellis on the Golf Course!



## Alfred Ellis at an Annual Conference!

# Georgia Dermatology & Skin Cancer Center

SKIN CANCER CENTER





**Darryl Hodson, MD - Mark Bonner, MD - Russell Harris, MD**  
**Misty Banknell, PA-C - Tamika Chester, NP - Jim Lekas, PA-C**  
**Kelly Miller, NP - M. Huntley Sanders, PA-C**

(478) **750-7546**

1157 Forsyth St  
MACON

(478) **453-8484**

230 N Jefferson St  
MILLEDGEVILLE

(478) **922-9281**

212 Hospital Dr  
WARNER ROBINS

## Skin Cancer Removal - Mohs Surgery

## Routine Skin Exams - Mole Removal

New patients, patient referrals & most insurance plans are welcomed.

GaDerm.com

# Senior NEWS

Serving the Macon Metro Area

## Website

www.seniornewsga.com

## Publisher

Billy R. Tucker  
478-929-3636  
seniornewsga@cox.net

## Advertising

Billy R. Tucker  
478-929-3636  
seniornewsga@cox.net

## Columnists

Claire Houser-Dodd  
Carolyn Brenneman  
Lisa Petsche

\*\*\*\*\*

Published monthly on our online website at www.seniornewsga.com. Business Office is located at 214 Wilsons Creek Bend, Bonaire, GA 31005. Editorial and advertising copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to desired month of publication. Preference is given to editorial copy submitted earliest. Publishers do not accept any liability whatsoever for any material supplied by advertisers and/or editorial organizations including the use of trademarks, logotypes, slogans, or any other service marks, or any claims made by such organizations; and, such organizations indemnify and save harmless the publishers in the event of any lawsuit or litigation. In the event of any publishers' error in the content of any advertisement and/or in the content of any editorial presentations, maximum liability shall be limited to the cost of the advertising space in which the error occurred. Publishers reserve the rights to edit and/or reject any materials submitted for publication. Editorial information you would like considered for publication should be emailed in "text" format to: seniornewsga@cox.net.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CORPORATE OFFICE

Billy R. Tucker,  
President/Publisher  
Phone/Fax: 478-929-3636  
www.seniornewsga.com  
E-mail: Seniornewsga@cox.net  
Copyright 1987  
Senior News & Views of Georgia

## Taking Care!

# A grieving friend is a friend in need! Here's how to help!

By Lisa M. Petsche – [lmepetsche@gmail.com](mailto:lmepetsche@gmail.com)

**W**hen someone you know loses a loved one to death, you want to reach out but may feel unsure of what to say or do. Here is some advice.

Don't agonize over what to say. Keep it simple and heartfelt – for example, "My heart goes out to you," "I'm here for you" or perhaps "I'm at a loss for words." Avoid platitudes such as "It's for the best" or "You still have a lot to be thankful for."



**Lisa  
Petsche**

Let your friend do the talking and listen attentively and non-judgmentally. Resist the urge to give advice or recount your own experiences. Be prepared for repetition – this is part of working through grief.

Keep in mind that grief affects people emotionally, spiritually, mentally and physically, and that, although there may be similarities, no two people grieve alike.

Don't underestimate the pain your friend is experiencing and don't discourage tears or urge them to "be strong."

Share memories of your friend's loved one – kind or funny things they did or words of wisdom they shared with you.

Find a favorite photo of the deceased person, frame it and give it to your friend.

Encourage your friend to practice self-care, getting adequate nutrition, exercise and sleep and scheduling regular medical checkups, as well as avoiding unnecessary stress. Discourage the use of alcohol or medication as a coping mechanism.

Offer to help in practical ways, such as fielding phone calls, preparing meals, shopping for groceries or running errands. Make concrete offers (for example, "I'm going to the grocery store – what can I get you?") or simply go ahead and do things like deliver a casserole or mow a lawn.

Many newly bereaved people experience a spiritual crisis, so don't be alarmed if this happens with your friend. Listen patiently and empathetically to doubts and fears. If they persist, encourage your friend to speak with a religious leader, if applicable.

## After the funeral

Continue to stay in touch after the funeral is over. That's when the reality of the loss – with all its implications – sets in, and bereaved people need support more than ever.

Don't act as if everything is OK. This makes it hard for your friend to open up if they feel the need.

Don't avoid the subject of the deceased person or mention of their name. It's comforting to the bereaved to know that others still remember their loved one as time goes by.

Be patient. Since grief saps energy, take the initiative in the relationship for now, calling and arranging visits.

Recognize that timelines for healing vary from one person to the next. Don't pressure your friend into doing things they don't feel ready for, such as sorting through and disposing of the loved one's belongings.

Discourage friends from making major life changes – such as relocating – for a while, unless absolutely necessary.

Encourage your friend to seek professional help if they're unable to function in day-to-day life (suggestive of clinical depression), or if they appear to be stuck in one of the phases of grieving (for example, denial or anger).

Remember special occasions throughout the year that are likely to be difficult: birthdays, wedding anniversaries and holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, as well as the anniversary of death. Call or send a card to let your friend know you're thinking about them.

Above all, keep in mind that bereaved people don't expect friends to provide answers to difficult, often philosophical questions – such as "Why did this happen?" – or to take away their pain.

What they do want and need is the comfort of knowing they are not alone.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

Opinion!

A CLOSING COMPOSITION!

By Daniel W Gatlyn, USN Ret. – Minister/Journalist

I am hearing the sounding drum... the voice of the wind... an admonition of attrition... to shut down the vibrations of declaration! After thirty eight years of Journalistic “Blabber” to the local area, and Outer Banks; and, upon my "Ninety Fourth Birthday,” you may consider this a "FINAL EDITION.”

Someone has counted my columns (I think there is exaggeration); but, there have been several hundred on everything from "soup to hay.” I will be brief with my closing remarks, in your dreams, as I am not sure that all bases have been covered. "Fourscore and seven years ago... (Never mind). These words (and more) by Abe, and echoed by millions, labelled by experts as the Greatest Speech in History, could not be improved upon... though many have tried. My efforts have been a mere dribble!

I would like to thank the “Dar-ing Readers” who have formed a huddle to ponder my puddle of philosophical briefs. To be sure, if various particles were marked with merit, and lodged within the mental frame of patrons surrounding interest and concerns, please know that such content was derived from a "Higher Source!” It has been an extreme Privilege... a Joy... and sterling Experience... to have been given the opportunity to knock on your door. I am indebted to a vast throng of scholars, from those who spurred a vital interest in early years, to the intermediate Leadership along the way; and, on to the Editors and Publishers of a wide and welcomed press who unselfishly opened the doors for a "novice" to sound off. You have been very kind!

As a Military Warrior who has viewed the Patriotism and Loyalties of thousands and have witnessed the heroic and sacrificial efforts expended, even unto death, let me extol the character once more of those who have paid the price for our National Liberties. May we all recognize these vessels of compassion and render a heart-felt gratitude.

While a firm scheduled space with my pen will be terminated, I will continue to be involved with multiple projects and interests. I pray the best for each citizen, as you endeavor to reciprocate in kind. **Vaya Con Dios!**

## Vintage Gardens

### At Sweetwater



Senior Living at its best! Enjoy the quiet gazebo with flowers, individual gardening areas, and a community center with planned activities for everyone.

Independent living for residents 55 years of age and older.

#### Apartment Features

- Washer/Dryer Connections
- Spacious Sunrooms
- Fully Equipped Kitchens
- Oversized Bathrooms
- Large Walk-in Closets
- Water and Sanitation Included
- Garbage Disposal
- Mini Blinds
- Single Story, No Stairs
- Handicap Accessible

#### Community Features

- Community Center w/Planned Activities
- Individual Gardening Areas
- Gazebo with Flower Gardens

### COME ON HOME!

Section 8 vouchers accepted and transferable from Georgia to South Carolina!

Equal Housing Opportunity

### Vintage Gardens

#### At Sweetwater

3 Murrah Road Extension  
N. Augusta, SC 29860  
**(803) 819-3139**

Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Saturday by appointment

# Let Us Entertain You!

By Claire Houser-Dodd, Columnist

When asked, “How did I fall?” I can’t tell! All I know is I fell. This is a familiar statement and as we get older accidents happen... falls, bumps, hits, etc; and, if we knew how and why they happened, we would know enough to avoid them. All my friends tell me to get rid of my rugs; and, I say, “ I’ve just ordered ten more!” Not true of course, but I do plan to keep the ones I have. I am planning on a SOFT LANDING. That is unless I miss an outside brick step; and, I still won’t know how.

I don’t know about you but AFIB has become the popular game around here. My Wesleyan Conservatory roommate, Varese Chambless, started it. We thought she was well and she went home; but, had another problem and had to go back to the hospital. She didn’t make it, much to our sorrow. I had AFIB at the same time and we joked about having the same disease at the same time. I just heard that a couple of more friends have been diagnosed with the same heart issues. I have never heard of so many heart problems since my husband, Dr. Billy Dodd, was practicing and seeing so many patients with heart issues. So many times we were shopping and he would get an emergency call to rush to the hospital and I would have to catch a taxi home. One time we were at Barnes Furs. That was fun!

Speaking of fun and games, my friend, Kathy, and I went to see E. G. Kight and her band at Mercer Music at Capricorn in Macon. The band consisted of Gary Porter on drums, Ken Wynn on guitar, and of course, E. G. Oh what a night! E. G. was better than ever singing, telling her stories, and playing her guitar. We really liked the story about pot liquor in New Jersey. They thought she had been smoking the funny stuff and drinking. Just maybe I should explain pot liquor. It is real southern and is nothing more than the broth in the pan after greens have been taken out. It is delicious and healthy and you can dip your corn bread in it and eat it like soup. Any kind of greens will do. We prefer collards but they used to be hard to find. The last time we were at Jekyll Island all the up-scale restaurants had them. I guess collard greens now have class.

E. G. writes some of her songs but can sing most anything and make it her own. One of my favorites is, *You Can Have My Husband But Don’t Take My Man*. She would sing this song every time Dr. Dodd and I would be in the audience. We were just dating then and he was the MAN!

Gary Porter tore up the drums. I have never heard such wonderful drumming in my life.

E. G. Kight has many talents. Raising goats as well as writing a book about them is just another talent of hers. I just bought her book, “Things I learned from a Goat.” It is adorable! It has pictures of her flock on one page and what she learned on the other page. They are the funniest, happiest, sweetest little animals you will ever see and they are all cuddling up to E. G. The goats as well as the book is a real gift! When ask, E. G. will say she loves God, Goats, and Guitars; and, we say that we love E. G.!

## CENTRAL CITY APARTMENTS ~ WAITING LIST OPENING ~

This is to notify the public that Central City Apartments, located at 122 Walnut Street, Macon, GA, will begin accepting pre-applications on February 5, 2024. Central City Apartments is a multifamily mixed income property funded by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program containing 82 units (36-1BR and 46-2BR). Twenty-five units have Section 8 Project Based Assistance, 16 of which are set aside for referrals from DePaul/Daybreak. The maximum income limit is the MTSP 80% AMI for Macon-Bibb County. Applicants must have an acceptable rental history and pass a criminal background check.

### Request an application as follows:

- (1) **Website:** Download an application from: [www.centralcityapts.com](http://www.centralcityapts.com);
- (2) **Email:** Request an application from: [centralcity@maconhousing.com](mailto:centralcity@maconhousing.com); or,
- (3) **Telephone:** 478-292-8081 (Mon. - Thurs: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. or Fri: 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

### Return the application with a check or money order for the \$25.00 application fee as follows:

- (1) **Mail:** Central City Apartments, PO Box 13387, Macon, GA 31208, Attn: Central City Apps.
- (2) **Drop Box:** Located at 990 Shurling Drive, Macon, GA.

**Pre-applications will not be available in person or at the property. Incomplete or unsigned pre-applications will not be accepted.** A \$300.00 Security Deposit is due at move-in. Persons with hearing or speech impairments or limited English proficiency requiring assistance with the application process may call the Georgia Relay Service at 7-1-1 or go to <http://georgiarelay.org> or call 478-292-8081 for assistance. There are units available designed for persons with mobility, hearing, and/or visual impairments. Central City Apartments is an Equal Housing Opportunity property and provides housing to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, age, or national origin.



# BBB Warns to Use Caution Before Clicking on Shopping Surveys!

Submitted by Kelvin H. Collins, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau

Serving the Fall Line Corridor, Inc. • [BBB.org/central-georgia](http://BBB.org/central-georgia) • Office: 478.742.9034 (Direct)

OFFICES: Macon: 277 M.L. King Jr. Blvd, Ste 201, Macon, GA 31201. • Augusta: 119 Davis Road, Ste 3-B, Augusta, GA 30907  
Columbus: 233 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste 911-B, Columbus, GA 31901

**W**e’re in the midst of the final and post-holiday shopping days, and you may see offers for the best deals yet. It can feel even more exciting if you see a claim that as part of a holiday deal, the “company” is offering a free product, discount, or gift card to anyone who completes a short questionnaire or survey. Unfortunately, some of these offers are fake and you will need to use caution.

Real businesses use surveys to understand their customers or get feedback on their products and service. However, phony surveys have become a very common way for scammers to phish for personal information. These schemes typically come via text messages and emails containing links that could even lead to the theft of valuable account information from unsuspecting victims.

Why do scammers use surveys? Most people like to give their opinions – especially if there’s a discount or other reward on offer. While someone might put up their guard during a sales pitch, surveys can seem harmless, meaning it’s easy to accidentally share information that a scammer can use.

## How it Works:

Typically, these messages will falsely claim to be from a well-known chain store to try to add authenticity. They also usually push for quick action.

If you click on the provided link, you won’t go to the store’s official website. Instead, it will take you to a third-party website where you’ll be asked to fill out a form that asks you for personal information, such as your full name, address, email, and more.

Even if you don’t provide your details, just by clicking the link you could be downloading malware - including spyware - onto your device. Spyware is software used by scammers to monitor the information you’re typing. This means they could capture your login information and passwords to gain access to your online accounts, including bank accounts.

## You can identify and avoid fake surveys, using these tips:

- **Watch out for rewards that sound too good to be true.** Remember that legitimate businesses run surveys to understand their customers. They may offer a modest discount to encourage participation, but the reward is not the focus. If someone offers you a valuable product or gift card in exchange for completing a two-minute survey, it’s probably a scam.
- **Limited time offers could be a red flag.** Scammers often use a sense of urgency to get their victims to hand over valuable information without thinking. Be careful if a text message says something like, “If you complete this survey in the next 10 minutes, you’ll win a prize!” Don’t let yourself be pushed into action without really examining the message first.
- **Remember that scammers conceal their identity.** Many scam surveys are very vague about their purpose and who is running them. If you can’t figure out who or where the survey is coming from, don’t take it.
- **Watch for typos, bad grammar, and incorrect company logos.** Scammers can easily copy a brand’s name, but awkward wording and poor grammar are typically a giveaway that the message is a scam. Other times, scammers might not use the right company logo.
- **Hover over URLs to reveal their true destination.** Typically, the hyperlinked text will say one thing, but the link will point somewhere else. Make sure the links actually lead to the business’s official website, not a variation of the domain name. But don’t click on it to find out. Simply hover over it to see what site it shows is associated with the link.
- **Do some research.** If you aren’t sure about a survey, do an internet search to find out more information. Look for links to the survey on a business’s official website. You can also do a search using the survey name and the word “scam” to see if there are any reports about it being a fake. Feel free to call your BBB at 800-763-4222 for assistance as well.

While the holidays can be a peak time for these messages, you should stay alert for similar survey scams all year round. For more information, check out BBB’s [signs of a fake survey](#), which includes real examples of fake surveys.

If you’ve spotted a survey scam, please report it to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](http://BBB.org/ScamTracker). Your report can help others avoid falling victim.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

On the Cover

Valentine’s Day is Coming!

by CAROLYN BRENNEMAN, COLUMNIST

Yes, it is almost Valentine’s Day this year and it’s time to celebrate our love for our husband or wife, or grandchildren, or our siblings, or even our friends!

Although Valentine’s Day, formerly called Saint Valentine’s Day, originated many centuries ago as a Christian day honoring a martyr named Valentine, in present day it is a day of celebrating love. The history of this February 14th tradition is extremely interesting, but today this special day has become a significant cultural, religious and mostly commercial celebration of romance and love throughout the world. So today we will focus on the fun and expressions of love of Valentine's Day and let’s indulge our favorite people by showing them just how much they mean to us.

Valentine’s Day is a special day to celebrate love and affection not just between romantic partners, but also between friends and family members. For me it’s the special day of the year to express my appreciation. It is a day to express our affection for the people in our lives who bring us joy and happiness.

Well, for me, I love writing special notes in greeting cards to each of my loved ones. Yesterday I picked up several very large sized and giant oversized Valentine’s Day cards to give to each of my sisters, my nieces and great grandnieces. Then heading down the store aisle, I saw the cutest stuffed animals including squishmallows, which can be a bear, a triceratop dinosaur or even a frog. They are now my favorite stuffed animal, and maybe yours also. My grandniece, Harlie, who is 13, requested I send her a Trinity Pink Tie-Dye Triceratops with the Fuzzy Belly. Jody, my 11-year old grandniece requested the Francine Purple Frog with

continued on page 9



continued from page 8

Heart Cheeks squishmallow.

And I am even tempted to get a few soft squishy stuffed bears for each of my sisters. With their outfits of red hearts, my love for my siblings is expressed by these bears!

Well, let’s not forget the sweet treats! The variety is endless, from picking up a box of chocolates at the local store to baking treats. My older sister loves making stuffed red velvet cookies to give out to everyone for Valentine’s Day. I prefer to whip up a batch of strawberry pinwheels most of the time as they are fairly easy to make, and super delicious.

Whatever you do to express your love and appreciation for your favorite people, don’t forget to express your love and appreciation for yourself also, It empowers us and reminds us to take good care of ourselves to live a happy and serene life. So, let’s all enjoy this heart filled beautiful day!



# Local Thomasville Child with Special Needs Receives Dream Trip to Florida!

Submitted by Mariah Almonte, Dream Village Assistant – [Mariah@sunshinefoundation.org](mailto:Mariah@sunshinefoundation.org)

Logan Griffin was recently granted a dream from the Sunshine Foundation for a family trip to Florida. Logan lives with the challenges of Trisomy 21, congenital heart disease, and hypothyroidism, a genetic disorder caused by the presence of all or part of a third copy of chromosome 21.

*“Logan had an absolute blast; we went to Magic kingdom and Hollywood studios. Without all the gracious donors Logan would not have been able to experience Disney World. We are forever grateful. His favorite part was meeting Minnie, Mickey, and Winnie the Pooh. You guys are awesome and thank you for everything you do to make our special child’s dream a reality. God bless you all.”- Logan’s family*

Sunshine Foundation answers dreams to **children with life-long severe chronic illnesses and conditions** such as: spina bifida, cerebral palsy, Level 3 severe autism, Down syndrome, hydrocephalus, severe epilepsy, Sickel Cell Disease, blindness, deafness, trauma from abuse, and others.

To make these dreams a reality for children that may be turned away from other wish-granting organizations that require a life-threatening or critical diagnosis, Sunshine Foundation relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations, and corporations. Logan’s “Dream Come True” was made possible through a generous donation from Micro Air and other generous donors. You can also help make a dream come true by donating at [www.sunshinefoundation.org](http://www.sunshinefoundation.org).

The most common request is a Magical Dream to visit Disney World, Legoland, SeaWorld, and Universal Studios while choosing to stay at the Sunshine Foundation Dream Village near Disney. Sunshine Foundation also answers Special Dreams: shopping sprees, computers and iPads, outdoor playsets, above ground swimming pools, family trips, cruises, adaptive tricycles and other special needs equipment, plus many more.

Since 1976, Sunshine Foundation has spread Sunshine into the lives of more than 42,000 children throughout the United States. For more information or to make a donation, please visit [www.sunshinefoundation.org](http://www.sunshinefoundation.org).

**Contact:** Rich Mergo, Director of Development  
[rich@sunshinefoundation.org](mailto:rich@sunshinefoundation.org)

Tickets ON SALE NOW!

YOUNG ENOPION PERFORMERS PRESENTS

Lilly White and the Seven

We would love for you to join us as our Young Enopion Performers present this whimsical show for children of all ages. Yes that includes kids at heart too!

Show Times and Tickets

Lilly White and the Seven

This is a familiar story that is commonly found in children’s story books. You will recognize the theme: Girl has a jealous Stepmother – Girl meets prince – Girl is hidden away – Prince finds Girl – They live happily ever after. But what if we could tell the story in a way that takes this familiar plot and causes you to think about the Gospel. Well... we have done it. “ Lilly White and the Seven” shows us how important it is to share God’s wonderful story so that we will all have a “happily ever after” ending.

Purchase online at [www.enopion.com](http://www.enopion.com) or call 706-771-7777



# BBB Offers Tips on Choosing a Tax Preparer!

Submitted by Kelvin H. Collins, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau  
Serving the Fall Line Corridor, Inc. • [BBB.org/central-georgia](http://BBB.org/central-georgia) • Office: 478.742.9034 (Direct)  
OFFICES: Macon: 277 M.L. King Jr. Blvd, Ste 201, Macon, GA 31201. • Augusta: 119 Davis Road, Ste 3-B, Augusta, GA 30907  
Columbus: 233 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste 911-B, Columbus, GA 31901

The IRS recently announced that they will begin accepting 2023 tax returns on Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup> and the filing deadline will be Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. If you need help with your tax preparation, now is an ideal time to ensure you’ve secured the services of a trustworthy tax professional.

For many people, major life changes, business ownership, or simply a lack of knowledge about the ever-changing tax laws make finding a reliable tax preparer a good idea. That said, not all tax preparers have the same level of experience and training. BBB offers tips for finding someone you can trust with your finances and sensitive personal information.

First, it’s important to understand the different types of tax preparers and their qualifications. Only enrolled agents, certified public accounts, and attorneys may represent their clients to the IRS on matters such as audits, collection issues, and appeals.

**Enrolled Agent (EA):** An EA is a tax preparer that has been approved by the IRS to represent taxpayers. An EA must either have prior qualifying employment with the IRS or pass an intensive two-day exam on federal taxation and complete a background check. To maintain EA status, they must complete a specified number of credit hours each year of continuing education in accounting methods and tax regulations. An EA may work independently or as part of a firm and specialize in specific areas of tax law.

An EA is a good option if you have a more complex tax situation. However, you’ll want to make sure their area of expertise applies to your personal situation. Fees and availability may vary, but you can expect an EA to charge less than a CPA. An EA is also qualified to help you with financial planning and give you tips that could help you reduce your taxes in the future.

**Certified Public Accountants (CPA):** CPAs have a college degree (or the equivalent in work experience). They are licensed after passing a state professional qualifying exam. They are highly skilled in accounting. This makes them good candidates for complex tax planning and preparation *if* they are experienced in handling tax matters and enrolled in continuing education programs that keep them abreast of the constant changes to tax laws. If your return is quite complex, a CPA may be your best choice for tax preparation, but keep in mind they will charge much more than basic tax preparers.


**Attorneys:** Tax attorneys often charge the highest fees as tax preparers. For taxpayers looking to shelter part of their income legally or for those who need specialized advice on municipal bonds, estate planning, and similar items, hiring a tax attorney is a good option.

**Non-Credentialed tax preparers:** There are about 700,000 people who work as non-credentialed tax preparers in the United States. They often work part-time or only during the tax season. These preparers must have an active [preparer tax identification number](#) (PTIN) through the IRS, but beyond that, regulating tax preparers is done at the state level.

In Georgia, tax preparation professionals are required to register with the Georgia Department of Revenue through a CRF Tax Preparer Registration Form.

Most tax preparers are legitimate and competent, but it’s important to conduct a thorough interview with a tax preparer before you hire them. When it comes to choosing the right kind of tax preparer for you personally, much will depend on the complexity of your tax situation.

continued on page 12



COLISEUM PARK

PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY

380 Hospital Drive

Macon, GA 31217

Across from the Emergency Room

BOB MOODY RPH.

Pharmacist, owner

Start Getting Better Now!!!

Phone: 478-745-5431      Fax: 478-765-4359

FREE PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY

St. Paul Apartments & Village

62 & Older and Disabled Persons Welcome

1330 Forsyth Street • Macon, GA 31201

Call 478-745-0829

Rent Includes All Utilities • Beauty Shop

Library • Optional Lunch 5 Days/Week

Bus for Groceries & Doctor Appointments

Range of Planned Activities

Washer/Dryer On Each Floor

Subsidized and market units.



FOR ADVERTISING

ASSISTANCE!

Please Call

Billy Tucker

at 478-929-3636

continued from page 11

After you’ve decided what qualifications your tax preparer needs, the following tips will help you choose someone who is trustworthy and competent:

**Review the tax preparer’s credentials.** EAs, CPAs, and tax attorneys are all qualified to represent their clients to the IRS on all matters. Other preparers can help you with forms and basic matters but cannot represent you in case of an audit. Don’t be afraid to ask about these or other qualifications before you hire someone.

**Be wary of spectacular promises.** If a tax preparer promises you larger refunds than the competition, this is a red flag. Many such tax preparers base their fees on the amount of your return and may be likely to use questionable tax preparation tactics. In addition, it’s wise to avoid tax preparers who offer “refund anticipation loans” as you’ll probably lose a large percentage of your return to commission fees.

**Get referrals from friends and family.** One of the best ways to find a trustworthy tax preparer is to ask your family and friends for recommendations. Once you have a few options, check [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org), paying careful attention to other consumers’ reviews or complaint details. This will give you a clear view of what you can expect.

You can also find a [BBB Accredited tax preparer near you](https://www.bbb.org) on bbb.org.

**Think about availability.** If the IRS finds errors in your tax forms or decides to perform an audit, will your tax preparer be available to help you with the details? Find out whether you can contact the tax preparer all year long or only during tax season.

**Ask about fees ahead of time.** Before you agree to any services, read the contracts carefully and understand how much the tax preparer charges for their services. Ask about extra fees for e-filing state, federal, and local returns, as well as fees for any unexpected complications.

For additional information, please check [BBB's Tax Tips and Resources](#).

\*\*\*\*\*

*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: [BB-B.org](https://www.BB-B.org) or E-mail: [info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org](mailto:info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org).*



Quality Patient Care  
50 years  
1969-2019

New patients,  
patient referrals &  
most insurance  
plans accepted.



Jason Arnold, MD - John Cook, MD - Lauren Ploch, MD  
Christopher Thompson, PA-C - Caroline Wells, PA-C

(803)  
644-8900  
2110 Woodside Exec.Ct  
AIKEN

(706)  
733-3373  
2283 Wrightsboro Rd  
AUGUSTA

Skin Cancer Removal - Mohs Surgery  
Routine Skin Exams - Mole Removal  
Botox, Fillers, PRP & SkinCeuticals now available!

GaDerm.com

SeniorNewsGeorgia

Volume 38 • No. 2

February 2024 • Page 12