

Senior News Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!

February is Black History Month!

by Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

Cover: Poster showing the celebration for this February

Yes, February is Black History Month; and, it also coincides with the birthdays of two very important figures in the abolitionist movement... President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. You may ask, how did Black History Month all start? Well, in 1915, in response to the lack of information on the accomplishments of black people available to the public, historian Carter G. Woodson co-founded the "Association for the Study of Negro Life and History." Then in 1926, the group declared the second week of February as "Negro History Week." **continued on page 4**



Taking Care!

One Size Doesn't Fit All Caregivers!

By Lisa M. Petsche – lmepetsche@gmail.com

Much is written about caring for aging relatives, offering general advice and specific tips to family caregivers. Some information and ideas may resonate and be more helpful than others. That's because, although caregivers face many similar challenges, no two caregiving situations are alike. Read on for numerous factors that account for differences among caregivers' experiences.



Lisa Petsche

Interpersonal Issues: The nature and history of the caregiver's relationship with their relative plays a key role in how caregiving unfolds. If personalities, habits or values clash, the caregiver is likely to experience more stress than average.

Caregiver's Health: If they have physical or mental health challenges, caregiving is likely to be more difficult. Even if their health is initially good, this may change over time.

Timing: Caring for an older relative can be especially challenging when the caregiver is looking after multiple adults, raising a family or employed. If more than one of these applies, caregiver stress is further multiplied.

Care Receiver's Needs: The more physical or mental limitations a care receiver has, the more time, energy and skills are required to meet their needs. Caring for someone with dementia, for instance, may be mentally exhausting, because of the affected person's poor short-term memory and impaired judgment, resulting not only in repetitive questioning and other behaviors, but also the need for continuous supervision.

Caregiver stress tends to be higher when the care receiver has a degenerative disease involving changes and losses that necessitate ongoing adjustments, including increased – and perhaps more skilled – assistance. Stress can also be higher when the relative has multiple major medical conditions – for example, Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

Available Supports: Caregiving isn't meant to be a one-person job, but in some cases, the primary caregiver may be doing it all. This puts them at higher risk for burnout.

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Ideally, other family members pitch in and regularly give the caregiver a break; however, this doesn't always happen, depending on whether other family members live locally and are able and willing to share the care. Community resources can also go a long way to supplement a caregiver's efforts, but their availability varies from one community to the next.

Finances: Personal financial resources of the caregiver and care receiver affect the quality of life not only of the care receiver but also the caregiver. If, separately or together, they can afford the cost of home renovations, medical equipment and private healthcare services as needed, this is likely to make caregiving safer and less stressful.

Expectations: Care receivers vary in their expectations regarding caregiver availability, outside help (whether or not they'll accept it) and financial arrangements (who pays for what), among other things. Cultural factors may also play a role. For example, in some cultures it's expected that elders will be cared for in the home of one of their children until their death. Such an expectation can place undue pressure on a caregiver who feels stretched beyond their limits.

Sometimes, too, a caregiver can be their own worst enemy, expecting too much of themselves – due to perfectionism, for example.

Parting Thoughts

If you're a caregiver, try not to compare yourself with others in this role. Their circumstances are likely to be different, although perhaps not apparent from where you sit.

When you come across caregiving advice, know that it won't always be applicable because, in some ways, your situation is unique. Take what you can use and leave the rest, without any guilt.

In the end, you need to do what feels right and works for you. Because the best caregiver is a healthy caregiver – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

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

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Senior News & Views of Georgia

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Well the week-long event officially became Black History Month in 1976 when U.S. president Gerald Ford extended the recognition to "honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Black History Month has been celebrated in the United States every February since.

First, let's take a look at Carter Woodson. Born in 1875 to formerly enslaved parents, Carter grew up working in coal mines, where he listened to the stories of the elders of courage, pain, and triumph. He realized that the history of black people, their struggles and contributions, was rarely written down and never taught in schools. His family had been born into slavery, and though they were now free, life was still difficult and schools and education was not easily available.

As Carter grew older, he dedicated his life to education, eventually becoming one of the first African Americans to earn a doctorate from Harvard. But despite his achievements, he saw that black history was still ignored, as if black people had never shaped the world. So he took action, and in 1915, Carter founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, a group devoted to researching and sharing the history of Black Americans.

Ten years later, he had an idea – Negro History Week, a time each February when schools, churches, and communities could learn about the lives and legacies of black people who had changed the world. Few people studied black history and it wasn't included in textbooks prior to the creation of Negro-History Week.

Carter chose February because it held two special birthdays: Abraham Lincoln, who had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, and Frederick Douglass, the formerly enslaved man who had become a great leader for justice.



Accomplished Carter Woodson

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Artifact at Martin Luther King, Jr. Center

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For decades, Negro History Week grew. Schools decorated their halls with posters of Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Families gathered to hear stories of inventors, activists, and leaders who had paved the way for freedom.

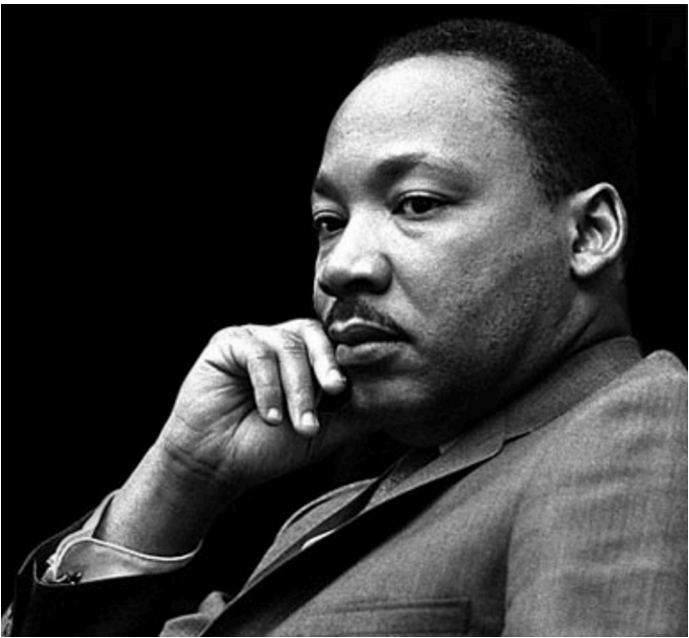
Then came the 1960s, a time of protest and change. Young men and women marched, sat at segregated counters, and demanded equal rights. As the Civil Rights Movement grew, so did the realization that one week was not enough to honor black history.

Finally, in 1976, President Gerald Ford made it official: Black History Month, a time to recognize the brilliance, strength, and contributions of Black Americans. Other countries, including Canada and the UK, soon followed.

Today, Black History Month is more than just a series of tributes – it is a reminder of the strength of a people who have shaped history despite oppression.

Among the notable figures often spotlighted during Black History Month are Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who fought for equal rights for Blacks during the 1950s and 1960s. In Atlanta, we can take a walking tour of the MLK historic district. We'll get an up-close look at the places that inspired MLK's life and legacy. We can see King's memorials, his birth home, and many historic sites including the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

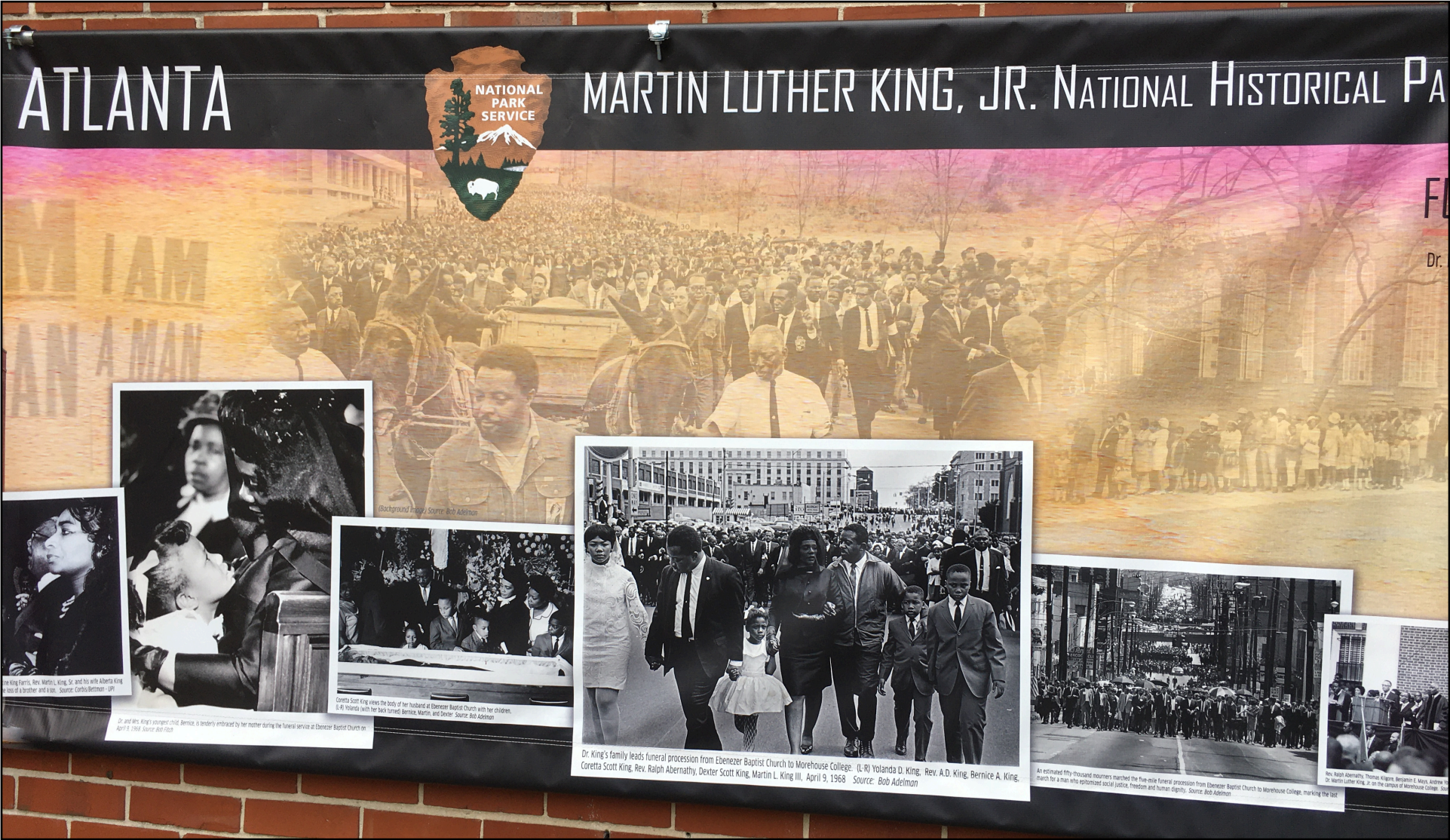
Let's check with our local library to get a selection of events for February and let's find an event to explore about Black History Month. It's all month long.



Martin L. King, Jr.



Display of many prominent black persons!



Beautiful display at the MLK Center!

Augusta Museum of History 2025 Brown Bag History Lecture Series!

Special to *SeniorNewsGeorgia*

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

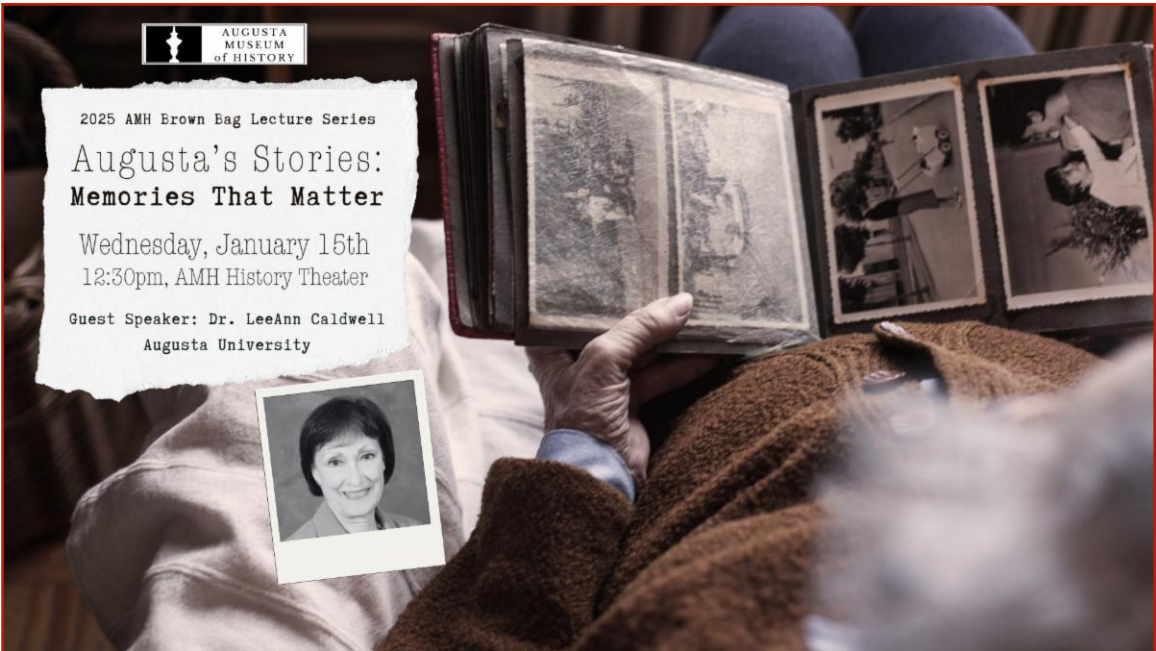
In 2025 the Augusta Museum of History will focus the Brown Bag History Lecture Series on beginning to collect oral histories from area families. This is the first major initiative of the Museum to preserve individual and family legacies and stories. Through these lectures and interviews, the audience will gain a unique understanding of Augusta’s past, and be inspired to gather and share their own stories with their family and friends. Recording family stories will guarantee that your family’s stories are not lost.

The Brown Bag Lectures started on January 15th with an Introduction to the series from Dr. Lee Ann Caldwell, Professor Emerita from Augusta University.

During this lecture Dr. Caldwell presented an overview of the stories you will hear throughout the year, and shared some of benefits of collecting oral histories and family stories. See the other lectures for 2025 below.

The Brown Bag History Lecture Series is provided monthly by the Augusta Museum of History and is an ideal lunchtime break for students, downtown professionals, and retirees.

The lectures are free to Museum members and \$5 for non-members, no registration required. Participants may bring a lunch to enjoy in the Museum Rotunda and the AMH will provide water, hot coffee and a dessert. Lunch can begin as early as 11:30 a.m.; the lecture takes place in the History Theater at 12:30 p.m. with a short Q&A following. The recorded sessions will be available on the AMH YouTube channel and shared on social media.



In January Guest Speaker, Dr. Lee Ann Caldwell, presented “Augusta’s Stories: Memories That Matters” Overview. Dr. Caldwell is Professor Emerita of History, Augusta University.

2025 Brown Bag History Lecture Series Schedule

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• February 12, 2025 – Brad Usry, Fat Man’s Hospitality Group
The Son of a Fat Man, the Usry Family in Augusta• March 12, 2025 – Doug Herman, Augusta Brewery Company
The Belle of Georgia, An Irish American’s Story in Augusta• April 16, 2025 – Phil Wahl, Security Federal Bank
Phillip Wahl Sr. and the Augusta National Golf Course• May 14, 2025 – Helen Bissell, Chick-fil-A Evans
Abe’s Story, A Holocaust Survivor• June 18, 2025 – Flo Carter | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Carter Family Musical History• July 16, 2025 – Surprise Guest• September 17, 2025 – Virginia “Jean” Bowe Strickland
The Four Master Builders Who Changed Augusta’s Skyline• October 15, 2025 – Dr. Ben Casella, Casella Eye Center
An Italian American’s Story in Augusta• November 12, 2025 – Alena Rensch, Augusta Museum of History Registrar
Augusta Stories Through the AMH Collection |
|---|---|

Augusta Museum of History, the only Museum in the CSRA accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, was established in 1937 for the purpose of preserving and sharing the material history of Augusta and the region. From a 10,000 year-old projectile point to a 1914 locomotive, to James Brown memorabilia the collections chronicle a rich and fascinating past. The museum is located at 560 Reynolds Street in downtown Augusta. Please call (706) 722-8454 for more information or visit www.augusta-museum.org.

Hours: Thursday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Closed Monday-Wednesday
Admission: Adult: \$5 * Senior: \$4 * Child (6-18): \$3 * Child (6 & under): Free
Group tours: (10 and up) available all week; must book in advance. Register here: https://bit.ly/AMH_FieldTripReg

The 1797 Ezekiel Harris House, said to be "the finest eighteenth-century house surviving in Georgia," is located at 1822 Broad Street and is an excellent example of early Federal architecture. Fully restored in 1964 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Ezekiel Harris House is a reminder of the days when tobacco was the primary cash crop of Georgia. For more information, call (706) 722-8454 or visit www.augustamuseum.org.

Columbia County Chamber of Commerce to Celebrate 20th Anniversary with Annual Banquet & Awards Ceremony!

Submitted by Jamie Miller, Communications Manager, Columbia County Chamber of Commerce
jamie@columbiacountychamber.com

Evans, GA – January 17, 2025


The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce its 20th Anniversary Celebration Banquet & Awards Ceremony, which will take place on Thursday, February 6, 2025, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Columbia County Exhibition Center in Grovetown, Georgia. This special event is dedicated to celebrating the Chamber's 20 years of impact, growth, and success in fostering business and community development in Columbia County and the Greater Augusta Region. The evening will begin with a silent auction, followed by a catered dinner, live music, and a special presentation. During the ceremony, the Chamber will recognize outstanding local businesses and individuals through the presentation of its prestigious Annual Awards. Categories include the Leadership Columbia County Award, Ambassador of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Small and Large Businesses of the Year, Non-Profit of the Year, and the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award.

“We are thrilled to celebrate 20 years of supporting our local businesses and community,” said Russell Lahodny, President & CEO of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. “This event will not only honor our past, but also highlight the incredible achievements of those who make our region such a vibrant and thriving community. We’re proud of the groundwork we’ve laid in our first two decades and we’re excited to see what the future holds as we work towards our next milestone.”

Guests at the celebration will enjoy a gourmet dinner, live music, and a chance to network with business owners, local leaders, and supporters.

Tickets and sponsorships for the event are available now and can be purchased through the Columbia County Chamber website. Early reservations are recommended as seating is limited. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit columbiacountychamber.com/annual-banquet or contact the Chamber office at (706) 651-0018.

The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce is a five-star accredited chamber representing over 1,000 businesses in the Greater Augusta Region. As a member-driven, business-focused organization, the vision of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce is to ensure and promote the beneficial growth of our community. For more information on the Columbia County Chamber, visit columbiacountychamber.com.



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BBB Tip: How to recognize phony debt collection calls and texts!

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

Serving the Fall Line Corridor, Inc. • 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 12th Street, Ste 911-B, Columbus, GA 31901

Debt collection scams can be one of the most frightening and persistent scam types. Victims often report that scammers harass them or their family members for weeks or even months, both at home and at work, trying to get them to pay a debt they don't even owe. BBB receives numerous reports of con artists changing tactics just to get the information necessary to collect information or cash.

How the scam works:

The scammer calls or texts and says that they work for a loan company, law firm or government agency, and claims to be collecting an overdue payment for you or a family member. After replying that you or your family member don't owe money, the "debt collector" starts threatening to file a lawsuit, have wages garnished, request an arrest warrant, or arrange for a court appearance thousands of miles from home. All of these claims are nerve-wracking, leaving the person answering the phone not even sure they owe money in the first place.

One consumer reported their experience with a debt collection scam to BBB Scam Tracker: "Family member was contacted being told that this company was looking for me to deliver papers to me. I contacted the company and was told that a loan from [company name redacted] had been taken out in my name back in Nov. 2012. I had no clue about this loan but was told that I was going to be served with papers and have a class three felony on my record if convicted of defrauding a bank institution if I didn't settle the matter today." This consumer reported losing \$1,489.

If you receive a phone call like this, the first thing to do is to stay calm. Despite these threats, these "debt collectors" don't have any legal power. In most cases, the alleged overdue loan doesn't even exist. Don't give in and pay the money you don't owe, otherwise, they'll call back for more.

The "good cop" version:

An unsolicited call comes through from a debt collection agency. The caller claims there is an unpaid debt from long ago that is about to go to court. The person speaking is polite at first and appears to have your best interests at heart. They seem like they sincerely want to help avoid the court date. To fix the situation, all you need to do is make a reasonable payment, perhaps even divided up into several installments.

No matter how kind the caller seems, don't fall for it. If you make the payment, the person you spoke to on the phone will take the money and disappear. Any future efforts to contact them will be in vain.

Tips to spot this scam:

Ask the debt collector to provide an official "validation notice" of the debt. In the U.S. and most of Canada, debt collectors are required by law to provide this information in writing. The notice must include the amount of the debt, the name of the creditor, and a statement of your rights. If the self-proclaimed collector won't provide the information, hang up.

Ask for proof of the debt and of the agency calling. If you do owe money and aren't sure if the caller is real, ask for their name, company, street address, and telephone number. Do not provide any bank account, credit card, or other personally identifiable information over the phone. If the collector is legitimate, they should have details on the accounts in question.

Stay calm. Debt collectors are not allowed to harass people even if they do owe money.

Protect yourself:

Just hang up. If you don't have any outstanding loans, hang up. Don't press any numbers or speak to an "agent."

Never provide payment to someone you don't know. If you're being urgently asked to provide payment over the phone to someone you don't know, hang up. Scammers often ask for payment through wire transfer, prepaid gift cards, or digital wallet apps. Take these as red flags for a scam.

Reach out to your loan providers to verify the information. If you currently have loans taken out and aren't sure if the caller is real, call the banks or loan companies on your own and verify if what the caller states is true. Be sure to look up their customer service phone numbers on your own and never use a phone number that a potential scammer is using or provides you with.

Check your credit report. In the US, check with one of the three national credit reporting companies (Equifax, TransUnion, Experian). This will help determine if there are outstanding debts or if there is suspicious activity.

Place a fraud alert on your credit report. If the scammer has personal information, place a fraud alert with the three national credit reporting companies.

Remember that while most debt collection agencies are legitimate, there may be times when a scammer is phishing for information. For more information on how to avoid this scheme, visit BBB.org/AvoidScams. If you've been targeted by a debt collection scam, be sure to report it to BBB.org/ScamTracker.

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

Macon-Bibb County named a Bronze-Level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists!

Submitted by Rachel Umana, Executive Director, Bike Walk Macon
rachel@bikewalkmacon.com

The League of American Bicyclists honored the efforts of Macon-Bibb County to build better places for people to bike with a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award. Macon-Bibb County joins 460 communities across the country in the movement for safer streets and better bicycling for everyone. The award recognizes Macon-Bibb County for its commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources that benefit its residents of all ages and abilities while encouraging healthier and more sustainable transportation choices.



“Bicycling is more than just a mode of transportation - it’s a powerful tool for building healthier communities, fostering sustainability, and connecting people,” said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. “The cities and towns recognized in this round of Bicycle Friendly Community awards are leading the way by investing in infrastructure and programs that make biking an easier, safer, and more accessible choice. Their leadership demonstrates that supporting bicycling is an investment in a healthier future for everyone.”

The League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly America program sets the standard for how communities build and benchmark progress toward making biking better. The League strives to provide continual updates to the application as part of our commitment to help communities raise their standards for safety, equity, and accessibility.

This round of awards includes 91 new and renewing awardees, joining a total of 460 current Bicycle Friendly Communities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Bronze BFC award recognizes Macon-Bibb County’s commitment to improving conditions for all people who bike through investments in bike education programs, regular bike events that promote and encourage people to choose biking, pro-bike policies, and bike infrastructure.

“As a community, we are all working to improve the quality of life of our families by supporting healthier lifestyles, connecting people, and making our entire infrastructure safer for cyclists, runners, walkers, and more!” says Mayor Lester Miller. “I want to thank Bike Walk Macon for their leadership in multiple initiatives that are all tied together, from the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail to Vision Zero and Complete Streets policies to education programs to, of course, expanding our bike lane network. And I know that, even with all their progress, they’re just getting started!”

Nearly 900 communities have applied for recognition by the Bicycle Friendly Community program, which provides a roadmap to making biking better for communities of all shapes and sizes. While the award process considers very visible elements such as bike infrastructure, other essential elements include efforts around adult and youth bike education, encouragement through events like Bike to Work Day, evaluation mechanisms, and enforcement all through the lens of equity. The rigorous application process is an educational tool in itself, and includes an opportunity for local bicyclists and active transportation advocates to provide input on their experiences and perceptions of bicycling in their community.

The five levels of the BFC award – diamond, platinum, gold, silver and bronze, plus an honorable mention category – provide a clear incentive for communities to continuously improve. Awarded communities must renew their status every four years to ensure that they not only maintain existing efforts, but also keep up with changing technology, national safety standards, and community-driven best practices.

To learn more about the BFC program, visit bikeleague.org/community.

ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS

The League of American Bicyclists leads the national movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. With a history dating to 1880, the League is committed to engaging diverse communities and building a powerful, unified voice for change around protecting and promoting bicyclists’ rights. Learn more at www.bikeleague.org.

ABOUT BIKE WALK MACON

Bike Walk Macon is a non-profit organization leading the movement to make bicycling and walking a safe, healthy, and convenient option for transportation and recreation for everyone in Macon-Bibb County. Bike Walk Macon’s office is located at 830 High St., Macon, GA. For more information, visit www.bikewalk-macon.com.



BBB Offers Tips on Choosing a Tax Preparer!

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

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The IRS recently announced that they will begin accepting 2024 tax returns on Monday, January 27th and the filing deadline will be Tuesday, April 15th. 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.

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.

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, 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 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: BBB.org or Email: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.

Opinion

DEI-AND AWAY WE FLY

by Daniel W. Gatlyn, USN Ret, Minister/Journalist, dangatlyn@gmail.com

Let me first clarify the following: Both Affirmative Action and DEI were brought into existence for reasons... albeit those items spelled out and judged as sound, did not fix the world! I would also assure "the flow" that I am thoroughly attuned to the Trump Order, that spells dismay for the likes of DEI. Having abridged the afore-mentioned sound bites, as we open another "can of worms" will neither fix the mix of where we have been; or, where we are going. On a National or corporate scale, the recent actions may "blaze a trail" for the wishful thinkers, but will minimally stretch the sketch of humanity... and his personal tendencies.

By now a good portion of America is aware that DEI stands for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and, while the intentions were essentially honorable, there rest a "fly in the ointment." Indeed, the Act, and Program, worked to invoke answers for a segment which had been overwhelmed with awkward decisions and legislation; but, at the same time, destroyed a valid motivation for the qualification and/or advancement of a majority.

Whatever it was, IT IS OVER... FOR THE PROGRAM IS NO MORE.

Face it, or not, the prejudicial moves orchestrated by male and female since day one has maliciously torn at the fabric of humanity; and, that beyond all comprehension! Be it legally and morally correct, or not, our favorite place, time, act, and verse will forever take precedence over matters of ethics and practicality. Our first choice for candidates are those who are solid with appearance, an eloquent speaker; or, those with an outgoing personality. Our choice for waiter, or waitress, will be a handsome male or attractive female. And our largest tip will rest with those who are prone to amplify our choice, or our biding, while they may be professionally bereft! Such is the nature of the beast!

Hopefully, my message has been profoundly dispatched; for while the "Merit System" is the most logical route – there is no administrative work, or magical formula, that can neutralize the vanities which has captured the heart and progress of humanity. The Sanitation and Immunization of distasteful elements will always characterize an otherwise virtuous trek toward conformance... beckoning our engagement of a prejudiced stance. It is only the internal transformation, and resolve, that can truly alter the path ahead.

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Step Into a World of Fantasy: Mirth & Mischief Premieres at Uhuburg Castle in May 2025!

Submitted by Elise Riley, My Global Presence For Mirth & Mischief

elise@myglobalpresence.com

HELEN, Ga., Jan. 21, 2025

Prepare for an unforgettable journey where reality and imagination intertwine. Mirth & Mischief, a groundbreaking immersive theatrical adventure, debuts May 2, 2025, at Uhuburg Castle. Running on select Friday and Saturday nights, this extraordinary experience invites adult guests into a fantastical realm filled with larger-than-life characters, interactive storytelling, and surprises around every corner.

A Pioneering Immersive Experience

Nestled within the breathtaking Uhuburg Castle in North Georgia, Mirth & Mischief redefines immersive entertainment. Guests are invited to roam freely across the castle's sprawling 2.5-acre grounds, where performances inspired by myth and legend unfold. From cirque-style acrobatics and contemporary dance to cutting-edge video projection mapping, every twist reveals another layer of magic.

“Our vision is to immerse guests in an experience where they are more than just spectators,” said Kelly Nelson, creator, director, and executive producer of Mirth & Mischief. “We want people to step into this world and become part of the story.”

Uhuburg Castle: The Perfect Stage

Located against the scenic backdrop of the Appalachian Mountains near Helen, Georgia, Uhuburg Castle provides a spectacular setting for this visionary production. Guests can expect hidden performances, unique activities like Mythic Portraits and Aura Readings, and the castle’s artisan village. Each evening concludes with the Mischief After-Party, an electrifying event featuring fire dancing, burlesque, and world-class DJs.

For families, Fairy Frolic Family Day on Sunday afternoons offers a magical experience complete with live storytelling, face painting, and family-friendly performances. Fantasy-themed parades in the Village of Helen will add extra whimsy on select Saturdays during the run.

A Visionary Project by Kelly Nelson

The creative mind behind Mirth & Mischief, Kelly Nelson, brings over 30 years of event design and production experience, including acclaimed events like Luminocity featuring Big Boi of Outkast and seasonal spectacles at Ponce City Market. An Atlanta native and pioneer in immersive design, Nelson said, “Creating in Georgia, my home state, makes this project all the more meaningful. We’re not just offering entertainment – we’re building a legacy.”

A Catalyst for Tourism and Culture

In addition to captivating audiences, Mirth & Mischief is poised to boost the local economy, attracting visitors from Atlanta, Greenville, Knoxville, Asheville, and beyond. “Uhuburg Castle already draws vibrant tourist interest, and with Mirth & Mischief, we aim to position North Georgia as a premier destination for immersive entertainment,” Nelson said. The event is projected to create over 100 jobs, support local artisans and businesses, and enrich the region’s cultural landscape.

Ticketing and Sponsorship Opportunities

Tickets for Mirth & Mischief are on sale now, with options ranging from general admission to VIP packages, including exclusive access to the Enchanted Forest Lounge. Sponsorship opportunities are available for brands looking to partner with this innovative production and leverage its expansive marketing reach.

For more details, visit mirthandmischief.live or contact Elise Riley at elise@myglobalpresence.com for sponsorship and VIP inquiries.

About Mirth & Mischief

Mirth & Mischief is an immersive theatrical experience blending fantasy-themed live performances with cutting-edge technology, staged at the majestic Uhuburg Castle in Helen, Georgia. The event opens May 2, 2025, featuring adult shows on Friday and Saturday evenings and family-friendly programming on Sunday afternoons, offering an unforgettable adventure for all ages.