

Senior News Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!



*It's
December
in Georgia!*

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December 2025
Volume 39, No. 12

Open Streets Macon Rescheduled!

Submitted by

Evans, GA – October 23, 2025.

Open Streets Macon on Houston Avenue, originally planned for December 7, has been rescheduled to Sunday, May 3, 2026 from 2–5 PM.

With so many exciting holiday events happening across Macon-Bibb County – we’re postponing to ensure Open Streets gets the full energy, attention, and participation it deserves.

We can’t wait to come together this spring to walk, bike, roll, play, and celebrate

Houston Avenue in a big way. Stay tuned for updates, and mark your calendars for May 3, 2026!








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JOIN US FOR THE LAST EVENTS OF 2025!

December 16: Walk 'n' Talk: Santa Paws Stroll - 6:00 p.m. Festive, pet-friendly walk through Macon Christmas Light Extravaganza! Bring your pup and a bag of pet food to donate to Meals on Wheels' Pet Food Pantry, helping local seniors and those in need care for their furry companions. Thank you to Piedmont Macon for sponsoring our 2025 Walk 'n' Talk series!

First Saturday: Walk with a Doc with Atrium Navicent Health. April to September starts at 8:00 AM | October to March starts at 9:00 AM.

All ages group walk around the Great Lawn at Amerson River Park.

Every Saturday: Bike Tech's Crank to Coffee - 8:00 a.m. Explore Downtown Macon with a 10-mile chill ride ending at Macon Bagels.

Every Tuesday: MVP Hiking Club - 6:00 p.m. 2-mile urban hike through Downtown Macon - meet at 562 Second Street.

Interested in being a ride or walk host?
 Email kaylee@bikewalkmacon.com to get involved!

Opinion

THE DANGERS OF ANGER

Part 2

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

Several months ago, I penned a column on the "Danger of Anger." The original copy had relevance to a person's physical endurance. We are simply not equipped, physically or mentally, to handle the fury which arises from within. Heart trouble, ulcers, and/or cancer will result from harboring hate and malice.

A larger threat is now fermenting from the liberal issue of immigration. A corporate "tug of war" now goes on within the political arena – a skirmish which, at some interval, will explode into violence and chaos!

America's largest loss of life resulted from The Battle Within... The Civil War! We cannot weather another of similar profile!

At a point of unreasonable activity, the scenes now occurring in Chicago and Portland will be incrementally enlarged, creeping into forbidden circles. We might not collapse; but, the damage incurred will be astronomical. Acquiescence toward "law and order" will eventually become a remedial necessity. The "Danger of Anger" will display its ugly face... with violence taking over. A war with neighbors is not a "sought after event!"

It is tantamount to survival that we recognize the creative base of such debacle; and, that we adhere to precautions in the prevention of disaster. In a world of eight billion people, and a Nation of over three hundred million, we simply cannot cater to the preference of individual choice.

There must be an "order to the border which lends to the end of the trend!" It may not gather steam in "your hot house," **BUT KNOW THIS...** the present pace will not win the race!

A Democratic rule will avoid the curse of anarchy; and, an ounce of prevention will stamp out dissension!

You can take it to "The Office!!!"



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Website
www.seniornewsga.com

Publisher
Billy R. Tucker
seniornewsga@cox.net

Advertising
Billy R. Tucker
seniornewsga@cox.net

Columnists
Carolyn Brenneman
Lisa Petsche
Fyllis Hickman
Victor Block

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President/Publisher
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Taking Care!

Look for clues about parent's coping during holiday visits!

By Lisa M. Petsche – lmpetsche@gmail.com

Addressing the needs of aging parents is a big concern for many boomers and younger seniors. Determining whether mom or dad needs assistance managing day to day can be especially difficult when they don't live close by. A holiday visit with a parent presents the perfect opportunity to assess firsthand how well they are coping on their own.

Plan to stay with them long enough so you aren't rushed. That way you'll have ample time not only to enjoy each other's company and special holiday activities, but also to get a good sense of how they are doing.



**Lisa
Petsche**

Read on for indicators that your parent needs assistance with activities of daily living or adaptations to their physical environment - or both.

- **Grooming:** Changes in appearance, such as unkempt hair; inappropriate dress or soiled clothing; body odor.
- **Nutrition:** Noticeable weight loss; insufficiently or inappropriately stocked refrigerator and pantry.
- **Housekeeping:** Accumulation of dirty dishes, laundry or garbage; excessive dirt or clutter.
- **Finances:** Unopened bills; major credit card debt or large, inexplicable bank account withdrawals; inability to count money or perform basic banking transactions.
- **Medication:** Non-compliance with medication regimes - look for prescriptions that haven't been filled and for unused medication; lack of an organized system for managing medications.
- **Mobility:** Difficulty going from sitting to standing; poor balance or walking endurance; difficulty negotiating stairs.
- **Safety:** Recent falls - look for bruises, limping or guarding of certain body parts; cluttered walkways or stairwells; accidents with household appliances.
- **Energy Level:** Lethargy or social withdrawal.
- **Mental Status:** Poor short-term memory; inability to carry out familiar routines or follow instructions; lack of insight into needs and limitations; suspiciousness.

Getting Help

- Here are some ways to help, depending on your parent's situation. Some may necessitate extending your stay or planning a follow-up visit.
- Arrange for a medical check-up and accompany your parent. Lethargy, forgetfulness or confusion might be caused by a reversible condition such as infection or depression. Request a medication review: side effects, drug interactions or overmedication might be the root of difficulties. Also ask their pharmacist about aids for organizing and remembering to take medications.
- If vision is a problem, ask your parent's doctor for a referral to an ophthalmologist. If nothing can be done to improve their vision, get them a magnifier for reading and other visually adaptive items, such as a large-keypad telephone.
- If falls are a concern, perform a home safety assessment to identify potential hazards and do what you can to rectify them. Visit a medical supply store for products that can make daily activities easier and safer.
- If financial management is an issue, arrange for direct deposit of pension checks and automatic bill payments. If necessary, have mail redirected to your home. Connect your parent with a lawyer about assigning durable power of attorney for property to one or two trusted individuals.
- Investigate available resources in the community. These might include: grocery delivery services; meals on wheels; volunteer driver programs; accessible transportation; therapeutic day programs; recreation programs; and home health care services. The local office on aging is a good resource.
- If the needs you identify aren't urgent, defer addressing them until after the holidays, so you don't spoil the festive mood. This also gives you an opportunity to consult with siblings and arrange a family meeting if necessary.
- If your parent is reluctant to consider assistance, start by trying to interest them in one of the least intrusive options, such as making minor home adaptations or using a grocery delivery service.
- Stress that your aim is to help them age in place and preserve the independence they so highly value.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and freelance writer specializing in elder care.



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Robyn Odzark, DO

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It's December in Georgia!

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: Atlanta tree lighting!

In our lovely Georgia, Christmas trees and decorations are a big deal. As soon as Halloween is over people start putting up trees, lights, wreaths, and all kinds of festive stuff. And yes, I get out my holiday decorations the very next day.

And then the festivities begin! This December many towns in Georgia will again transform into a twinkling wonderland filled with lights, laughter, and the buzz of holiday spirit. Families will head to places like Callaway Gardens for the magical Fantasy in Lights, while in Woodstock, cars snake through the Magic of Lights at Dixie Speedway, all with our windows down. Down south, Savannah's Botanical Gardens shimmer with festive pathways, and along the coast, Jekyll Island glows with millions of lights reflected off the ocean waves. And of course, in Atlanta, streets come alive with tree lightings, skating rinks, and pop-up markets. These are only a few of the places we will want to visit this December.

Georgia in December feels like a storybook – where every light, song, and snowflake reminds us that the holidays are about gathering all the family together, slowing down our pace in life, and taking in and loving the sparkle and lights. So let's take a peek at four of these wonderful events we all will want to attend.



Dixie Speedway!



Historic District Jekyll Island!

Fantasy in Lights at Callaway Gardens is one of those classic Georgia Christmas experiences that feels like it is straight out of a holiday movie.

The main event is this 7-mile drive-through light display, and it's massive – there are millions and millions of lights. We will tune our car radio to a special station that plays Christmas music, and as we drive through, the lights are perfectly synced to the songs. There are themed sections, like Snowflake Valley, Magical Christmas Garden, and Santa's Workshop, each one brighter and more detailed than the last!

The most amazing part of this display is that one minute it's sparkling snowflakes hanging above us, the next it's giant toy soldiers and candy canes towering on either side of the road. Everyone in our family will love this.

About halfway through, there's a place called the Christmas Village, which is super cozy. You can get out, stretch your legs, shop for ornaments or local gifts, grab a snack, and snap a photo with Santa and the grandkids. There's live music, festive treats, and kids running around with blinking light necklaces. Everyone will enjoy this outing and encounter the feel of Christmas magic. We are so excited to experience this magical time. So let's not miss it.

Next, let's venture to Woodstock and take in the Magic of Lights at Dixie Speedway. It is such a fun, cozy holiday outing – it's got that "pile all the kids and grandkids in the car, and listen to Christmas music" vibe.

So once we are cruising up to the Dixie Speedway, we soon up. The entire racetrack is transformed into this massive, winding light trail. What an experience. We stay in our car the whole time,

continued on page 7



Savannah Magical Gardens!

continued from page 6

as we start driving through. It's just lights everywhere. Over 2 million of them, all synchronized with festive music as we tune in through our radio. We pass through these glowing tunnels where the lights swirl overhead, and wind around curves and straightaways. There are giant candy canes, animated displays of elves at work, and snowflakes sparkling like crazy. There are themed sections things like Toyland, The 12 Days of Christmas, and Santa's Safari. In the back seat, our grandkids, the smaller ones dressed in pajamas, will love pointing out every reindeer or snowman they spot. It's very magical.

It's one of those experiences where we will all end up smiling, humming along with the music, and enjoying each lighted design. This year, it will be my family's first time, so let's all plan to attend.

Of course, we don't want to miss the beauty tucked near Savannah. The Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens shimmer in December due to the annual [December Nights and Holiday Lights](#) event in this historic city.

As soon as we walk the path at the gardens, we are greeted by a shimmering tunnel of lights, hundreds of glowing arches, and crystals of LED forming a luminous corridor. At that moment, we step into a winter-wonderland of light.

Across more than five acres of garden space, nearly a mile of lit trails wind through the formal garden glowing with white and gold lights. There is a colorful one through the Crapemyrtle Alley where the trees are wrapped in multicolored sparkle. We wander past a grove of bamboo and see reindeer shapes shimmering, angels perched on the patio. Everywhere we look, the view is enchanting.

We hear soft music coming from the performance space, Santa's sleigh bells in the distance, and laughter from the guests who are mesmerized by the experience.

Walking further down the path, we now see the colorful lighted gardens of camellias, bamboo, and roses. The White Garden is especially magical with cherry-blossom trees, big oaks draped in twinkling lights, dozens of twinkling stars, and snowflakes all lit up under the night sky. Yes, this is Savannah's holiday lights – where over a million twinkling lights transform the botanical gardens into a spectacular and festive wonderland.

And yes, we also want to take our grandkids to the festivities in Jekyll Island. Jekyll Island turns into a coastal Christmas dream with its Holly Jolly Jekyll celebration – where we see palm trees wrapped in twinkling lights, and over two million lights sparkling across the island like stars that decided to visit earth. Our family can hop aboard the Jekyll Trolley Light Tour, and ride past glowing dolphins, sandcastle Santas, and giant holiday ornaments dotting the beachside paths. On our ride, we ride down by the Historic District, where there's music drifting through the air, and finally we are in awe at the massive Christmas tree near the Great Lawn. If we stay for the weekend, we will experience a festive parade, carnival rides, and even a "lighted golf cart parade" that feels so delightful. Last year when my family attended, I went on the walking tour several times just to experience the spellbinding beauty of the 2 million lights.

So save some dates in December and some of the fantastic events occurring all through December in Georgia. Check out the websites for more information.



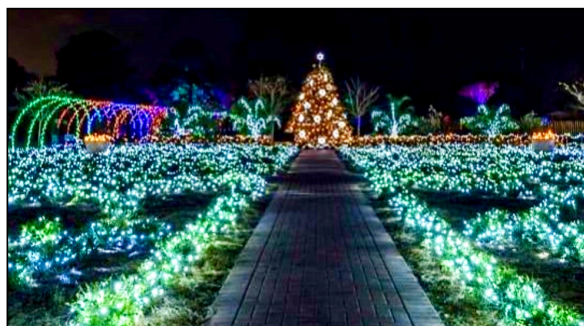
Cute decorations for Christmas trees!



Jekyll Island!



Callaway Gardens!



Savannah Botanical Gardens at Christmas!



Downtown Jekyll Island!

Greater Aiken-Augusta Region Builders and Associates Present Mr. Stanley with Keys to His Home!

Submitted by Taylor Williams, Communications Coordinator • taylor@homebuildersaikenaugusta.com
AUGUSTA, GA

The Home Builders Association of the Greater Aiken-Augusta Region and several members including: *Merit Flooring, Ivey Homes, Southern State Builders, House Plans, Inc., SouthPaw Roofing, UpStream Recycling, Flow Pro Plumbing, Filipe Silva, Howard Lumber, Mulherin Lumber, Southern Residential Installation, Pulley and Associates, R.L. Wiley, Georgia Drywall, W.A. Bragg, Sherwin Williams, Sherwin Williams Nacho Painting, Looper Cabinets, Star Granite, Carpenters in the Home, Cingo, Belair Building Supply, Augusta Trim Carpentry, Grayco Windows & Doors, and Andersen Windows and Doors* worked together to rebuild a member of our community, a veteran, a neighbor, Mr. Stanley's home.

In September of 2024 our region was hit with a devastating storm, Hurricane Helene. Many homes were destroyed in its path, including Mr. Stanley's. An 83 year old Army veteran who had called his place home for over 50 years lost it all in one night.

With assistance from HBI Disaster Rebuilding Grant, the Builders Community Fund, and heart from our membership, the rebuild began in May and we are finally ready to welcome Mr. Stanley back home. The Home Builders Association of the Greater Aiken-Augusta Region will be presenting Mr. Stanley with his keys at 11:30am Thursday, November 20. It would have not been possible without our home builder association members who have worked tirelessly and have been incredibly generous.

The Home Builders Association of the Greater Aiken-Augusta Region is a non-profit trade organization dedicated to creating and promoting an ongoing successful environment for housing on behalf of its members and the community.

For any questions or concerns, please reach out to Executive Officer, Tiffany Heitzman at tiffany@homebuildersaugusta.org or call 706-860-2371.



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A festive poster for the musical 'Elf'. The background is a night cityscape of New York City with snow on the ground. In the top left, Santa Claus and his reindeer fly across a full moon. The title 'elf' is written in large, green, sparkling letters with gold outlines. A large green elf boot with a red cuff and gold bells is positioned between the 'e' and 'f'. The words 'KID TESTED. SANTA APPROVED.' are at the top in white, and 'THE MUSICAL' is below the title in blue. At the bottom, the dates 'DECEMBER 16 - 21' and 'FOX THEATRE' are listed, followed by the 'REGIONS BROADWAY IN ATLANTA' logo and the website 'BroadwayInAtlanta.com'. A red tag in the top right corner says 'DIRECT FROM BROADWAY!'.

KID TESTED. SANTA APPROVED.

elf

THE MUSICAL

DECEMBER 16 - 21
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