

Senior News

Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!



Let's Meet Our Augusta Beekeeper!

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April 2026
Volume 40, No. 4

Applications Now Open for Columbia County Chamber Leadership Programs

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

Evans, GA – March 5, 2026

The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce that applications are now open for its flagship leadership development initiatives: Youth Leadership Columbia County and Leadership Columbia County, both designed to cultivate informed, engaged, and forward-thinking leaders for the region’s future.

“These programs continue to play a vital role in shaping the next generation of community leaders,” said Heath Taylor, President & CEO of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. “We are excited

to welcome applicants who are ready to deepen their understanding of our community and make a meaningful impact.”

Leadership Columbia County (LCC) is a ten-month program for local professionals seeking a deeper understanding of key issues and opportunities within the region. Through monthly full-day sessions covering law enforcement, health-care, education and workforce

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Alex Griffin, Chair
 LCC Class of 2027

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development, economic growth, and local history, participants gain valuable insights, build strong professional networks, and develop the tools needed to lead with purpose. The LCC application deadline is April 24.

LCC's Class of 2027 will be led by program Chair Alex Griffin (LCC '23), Assistant Vice President of Innovation at the Medical College of Georgia Foundation, and program Vice Chair Carey Pifer (LCC '15), Vice President of Relocation & Business Development and Associate Broker at Southeastern Residential.

The Chamber's Youth Leadership Columbia County (YLCC) program spans nine months and is designed for rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors who live in or attend school in Columbia County. Selected for their leadership potential and commitment to personal growth, students engage in hands-on experiences that broaden their understanding of local issues, strengthen their confidence, and equip them to become thoughtful, community-minded leaders. Applications for the YLCC program are due April 3.

Applications can be downloaded from the Columbia County Chamber website at www.ColumbiaCountyChamber.com. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. For more information on these programs, contact Beth Frits, Leadership Programs Manager, at 706-373-9009 or beth@columbiacounty-chamber.com.



Carey Pifer, Vice Chair
LCC Class of 2027

A promotional advertisement for Georgia Dermatology & Skin Cancer Center. The top section features the center's logo, a 50th anniversary seal (1969-2019), and the text "New patients, patient referrals & most insurance plans accepted." Below this is a group photo of five medical professionals in white lab coats. The names and titles of the staff are listed below the photo: Jason Arnold, MD; John Cook, MD; Lauren Ploch, MD; Christopher Thompson, PA-C; and Caroline Wells, PA-C. Two phone numbers are provided: (803) 644-8900 for the Aiken location (2110 Woodside Exec.Ct) and (706) 733-3373 for the Augusta location (2283 Wrightsboro Rd). The bottom section lists services: Skin Cancer Removal - Mohs Surgery, Routine Skin Exams - Mole Removal, and Botox, Fillers, PRP & SkinCeuticals now available! The website GaDerm.com is listed at the bottom.

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Taking Care!

Retirement Residences Have Many Advantages!

By Lisa M. Petsche – Imepetsche@gmail.com

As people age, there's a good chance that at some point their longtime home will no longer suit their lifestyle or their needs. Moving to a different house, a condo or an apartment is not always the solution, though. In some situations, a retirement home turns out to be the best choice.

Retirement residences are private pay, wellness-oriented facilities that enable active seniors to maintain or improve their independence, health and overall quality of life.

~ Reasons for Moving ~



Lisa Petsche

The following are common reasons that seniors choose a retirement home.

Freedom: To reduce responsibilities associated with home ownership, allowing allow more time for preferred activities.

Independence: To offload responsibilities of daily living, in order to continue to live independently in spite of decreased physical abilities. People in this situation may wish to eliminate not only property maintenance tasks but also housecleaning, laundering, grocery shopping and meal preparation.

Accessibility: To increase the physical accessibility of their living space.

Finances: To reduce expenses associated with home ownership. Another reason for moving is that the cost of home adaptations to improve safety and accessibility is beyond their means or is not a wise investment from a real estate market perspective.

Peace of mind: To ensure help is available if they run into difficulty. This can provide them, as well as concerned loved ones, with reassurance.

Socialization: To increase social contact, which is known to significantly affect health and wellness.

Recreation: To engage in new and previously enjoyed activities that are stimulating and provide meaning or entertainment value, while maintaining mental and physical abilities.

Security: To reduce the risk of being victimized, increasing peace of mind e.g. for those who are anxious about mail theft ("porch pirates"), answering the door, leaving their home unattended or coming home to an empty house.

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Community Access: To improve access to shopping and other businesses, medical resources, places of worship and other amenities such as parks and community centers, especially without the need for a vehicle. In addition to a walkable neighborhood, some retirement homes offer shuttle service to medical appointments, errands, shopping and community events.

Health: To ensure ongoing health care needs are met, beginning with the basics: nutritiously balanced meals and opportunities to stay physically active and mentally stimulated. Other needs may include medication management, a special diet and assistance with bathing. Many retirement homes offer assisted living packages for residents who need some degree of help with daily personal care.

Lifestyle: To enjoy an all-inclusive lifestyle. Seniors who have the financial means and wish to enjoy life to the fullest may seek a luxury setting that simulates a country club atmosphere. Amenities may include elegant spaces, concierge service, fine dining, a cocktail lounge or pub, café, fitness center, swimming pool, spa, well-stocked library, Internet lounge, games room, movie viewing room, convenience store, greenhouse, putting green and more.

Retirement homes vary considerably in terms of price, size, amenities and services, which can make it difficult to choose from among them. If you – or a loved one – are in the market for one, carefully consider your financial situation and preferred lifestyle to determine which places to focus on.

When making a choice, it's important to go beyond location, curb appeal and advertisements and take personal tours. Plan to visit several places and bring a notebook and pen so you can take notes. Also bring along a friend for a second opinion.

Many residences offer a complimentary lunch: take them up on it. Before making a final decision, you may wish to consider a trial stay at the place that appeals the most to you.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and freelance writer specializing in boomer and senior health and wellness.

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Let's Meet Our Augusta Beekeeper!

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: Beauty of the classical pianist!

For nearly two decades, Deborah Sasser has dedicated her life to beekeeping as the owner of Sasser-frass Hill Bee Farms in Augusta. What began as a charming hobby quickly grew into a deep passion and a mission. Today, Deborah not only harvests honey, makes unique products such as beeswax lotions and lip balms; but, also serves as a devoted advocate for what she lovingly calls “nature’s tiny unsung heroes,” the honeybees.

Deborah now has 20 active hives under her care, and she spends much of her time tending to her colonies, observing their behavior, and ensuring their health. Honey production typically peaks in May or June, though the timing depends on weather conditions. Good weather means abundant blooms, which means strong nectar flow and ultimately, jars of golden honey.

Working closely with thousands of bees requires proper protective gear. Deborah wears a beekeeper’s jacket and veil to shield her face and neck. She also relies on surgical-style gloves, which bees cannot sting through. Contrary to popular myths, honey will not cause harm if it touches your skin or even gets near your eyes but a bee sting can be painful, which is why protection matters.

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Caricature of Deborah, *The Joyful Beekeeper!*
Created by ChatGpt!



A Close Up View of the Honeybee!

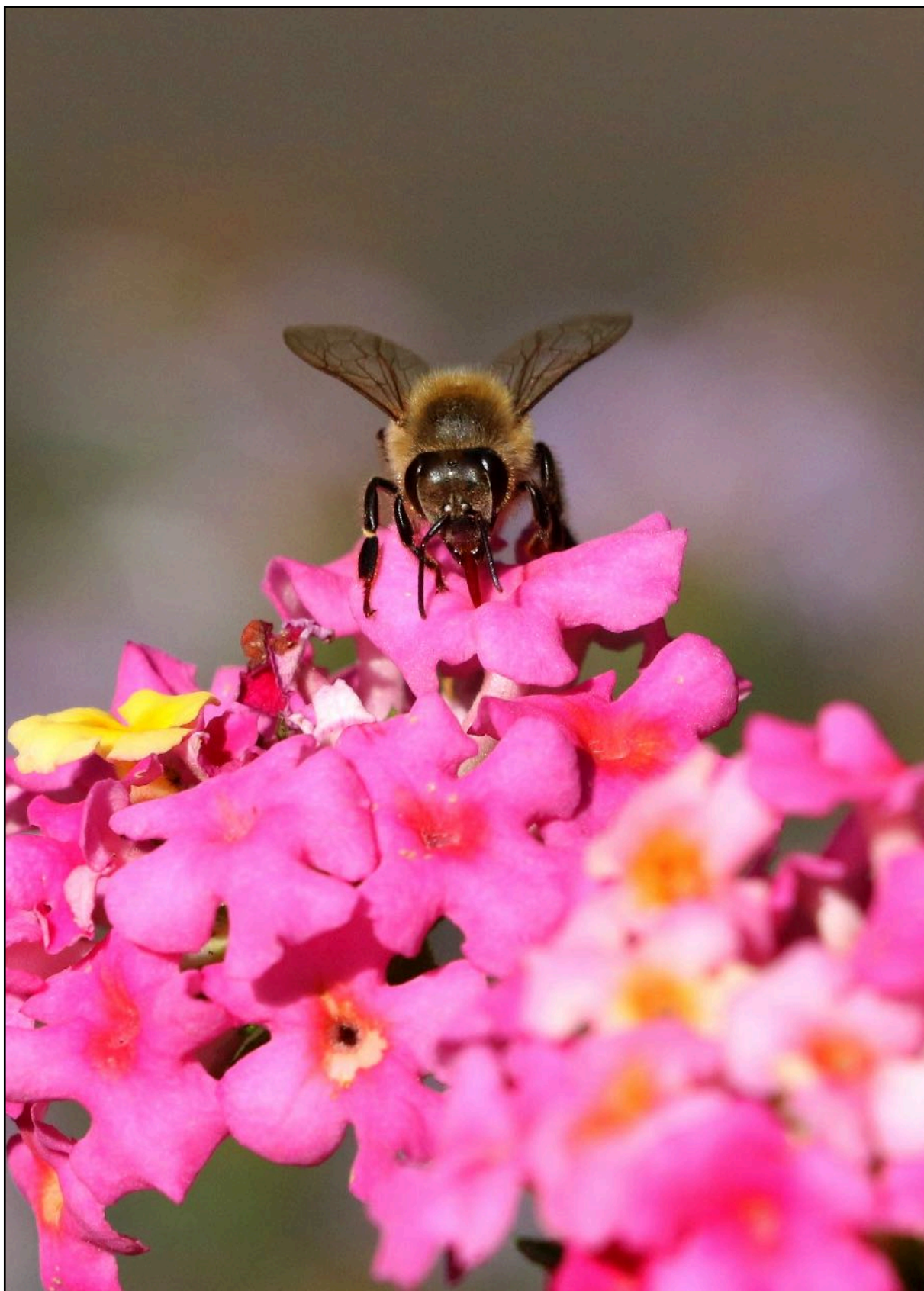


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However, Deborah emphasizes that honeybees are rarely aggressive. A honeybee will only sting if she feels threatened and when she does, she dies shortly afterward. Wasps and yellow jackets, not honeybees, are more commonly responsible for repeated stings.

It's a beautiful sight to see these hives on her property. There are 20 colorful hives on the Sasserfrass Farm and inside each hive is a highly organized society of bees. Let's take a look.

Each hive has only one queen honeybee and she is the heart of the colony. Deborah can often spot her and mark her with a small dot to make identification easier. The queen's primary role is reproduction. After mating, usually during several flights where she mates midair with up to 20 different drones, the queen can lay thousands of eggs per day. She mates only once in her lifetime but continues laying eggs daily. It takes about 21 days for a worker bee to develop and approximately 24 days for a drone. The greater the genetic diversity from multiple drones, the stronger and more resilient the hive.



Honeybee foraging on pink Lantana flowers!

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A view of the hives!

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The majority of bees in a hive are the female worker bees, affectionately called “the girls” by Deborah. They perform every job in the hive including cleaning cells, feeding larvae, producing wax, building comb, and foraging for nectar and pollen. These tireless workers live about six weeks during the season, literally working themselves to death.



Handcrafted beeswax luminary made by Deborah!

Drones, on the other hand, live about three months and have only one purpose: to mate with a virgin queen.

What happens to the queen bee? Well, an old queen bee typically leaves the hive during spring when the colony becomes overcrowded, a process known as swarming. She takes with her thousands of “the girls” to establish a new colony. They cluster in a nearby tree while scout bees search for a new home. Deborah says sometimes this swarm will land on neighboring properties.

The original hive is not without a queen though. A new queen is raised by the worker bees who continually feed selected larva royal jelly to the proposed new queen. This special diet changes her hormonal and endocrine development, transforming her from a worker bee into a queen. She develops in a uniquely shaped “queen cell,” distinct from regular brood cells. This daughter queen is now the newly emerged queen of the hive.

While the sight of thousands of bees may look alarming, swarming bees are typically calm and focused on relocation. They are not defending a hive and are far less likely to sting. If you encounter a swarm, Deborah urges us to not spray them! Instead, we need to contact our local county extension office or a beekeeper who can safely remove and relocate the colony.

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Deborah’s multiple colorful beehives!

SIX



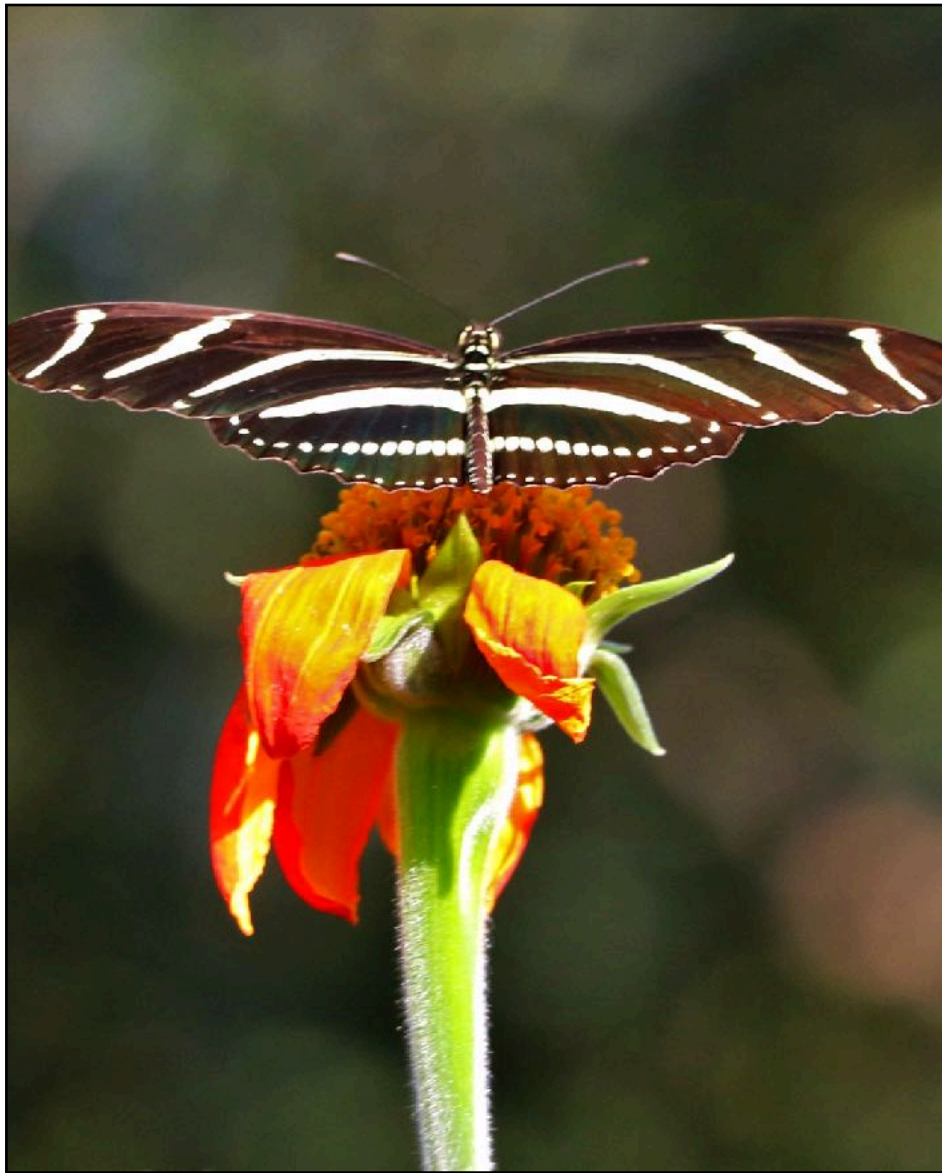
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Zebra Longwing butterfly!

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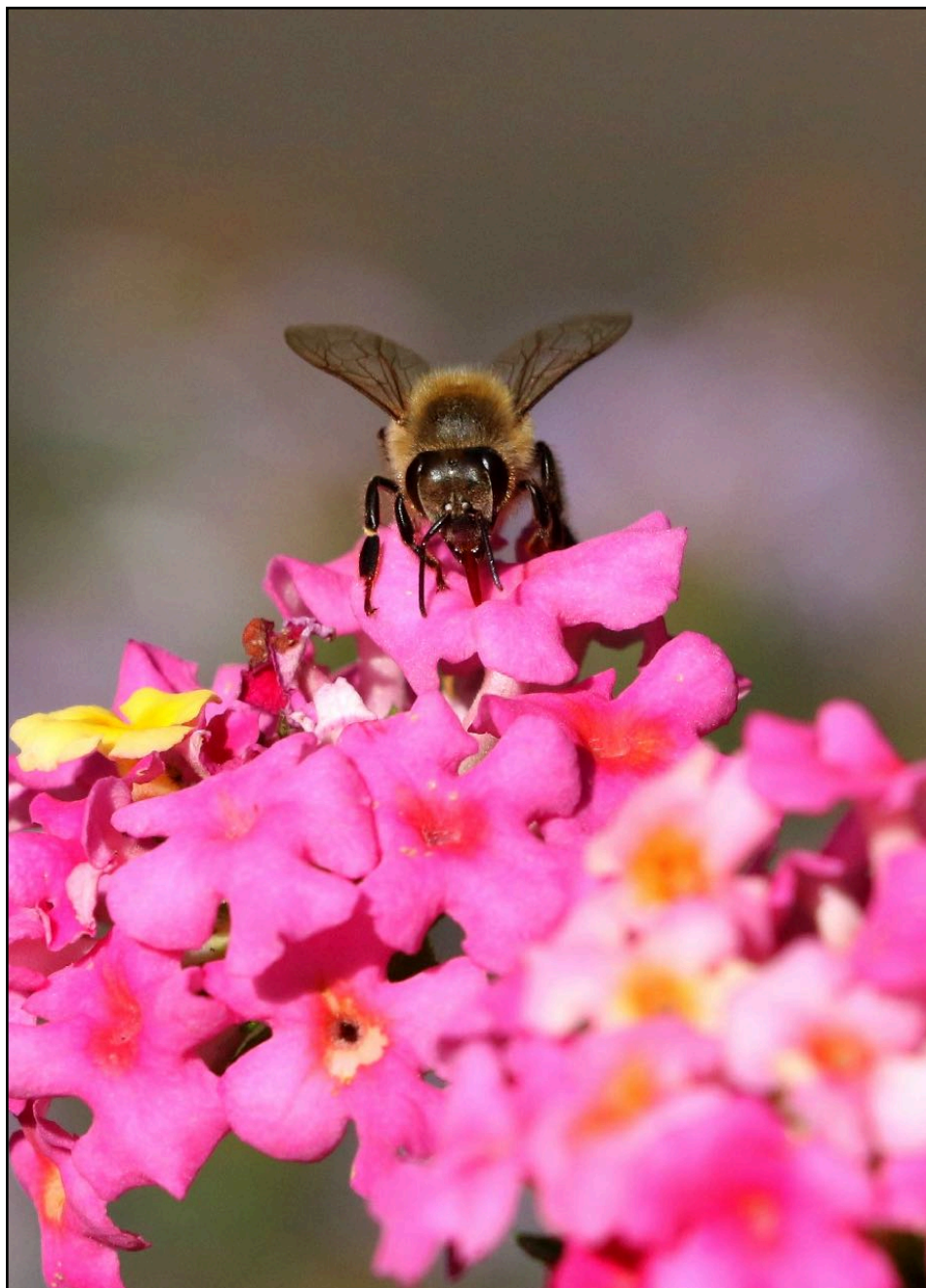
Deborah is unique. Beyond maintaining her hives, Deborah has become a respected ambassador for honeybees. She frequently speaks to clubs, community groups, and organizations about bee safety, pollination, and the challenges bees face today due to human behavior and environmental pressures. Education, she believes, is key to protecting pollinators for future generations.

Also visitors often come to her farm to learn firsthand about hive life and see the colorful hives. It is fascinating. For Deborah, beekeeping is far more than honey production. It is stewardship, science, and service rolled into one. From watching “her girls” gather different types of pollen to preparing hives for spring growth, she finds joy in every stage of the process.

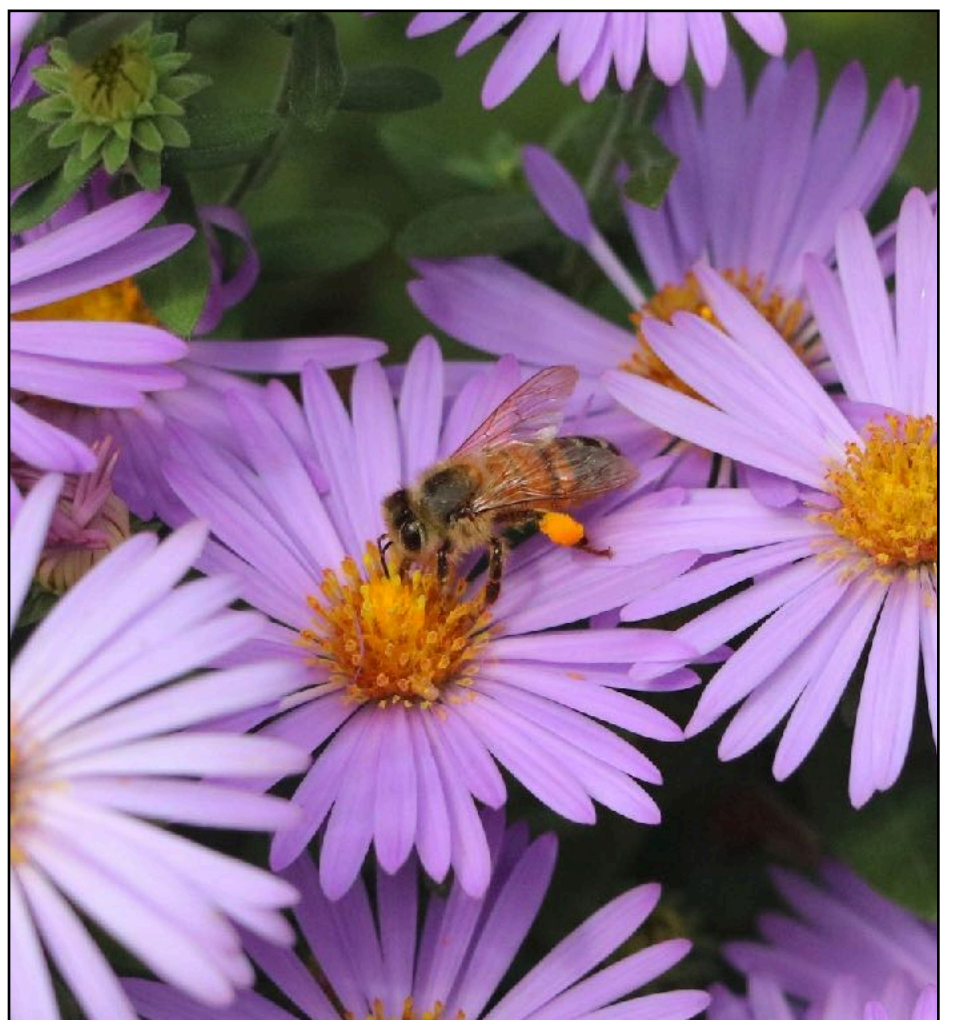
After 19 years, Deborah remains as excited as ever about “her girls” who tirelessly pollinate crops, sustain ecosystems, and produce one of nature’s sweetest gifts. Deborah hopes we all make a difference by planting wildflowers and native or heirloom plants and trees that provide nourishment for pollinators. She also urges us to eliminate the use of chemicals in our lawns and gardens as this would be a crucial step in protecting these tiny, indispensable creatures and ultimately, ourselves.

As a photographer, I have had many of my photos chosen for the cover of Bee Culture magazine. Please check it out.

Please contact Deborah at 706.855.5240 and schedule a visit. Check out her website at <https://sasserfrasshill.com>.



Honeybee foraging on pink Lantana flowers!



Honeybee foraging on Aster flower!

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Tibetan Bowls provide the source for an experiential spa treatment unlike any other!

by Fyllis Hickman, Photo by AliakSandra Salalaika/dreamstime!

Palm Beach, Florida: An Introduction to a very unusual spa treatment!

Palm Beach, Florida, is well known for Mar-a-Lago, beaches; Mar-a-Lago, golf courses; Mar-a-Lago, extraordinary wealth; Mar-a-Lago, John F. Kennedy's Winter White House; MAR-A-LAGO; and, oh yes, spas. So that's where I focused my energy. Also, I don't golf. Or have extraordinary wealth.

Spas are ubiquitous – and most offer similar services: massages, facials, reflexology, hot coal treatments. I sought out the unusual. I've had several different massages over the years. A couple of facials. But they all had one thing in common. Tactile manipulation of various body parts. That and soft New Age-y music in the background to induce



Fyllis Hickman
Travel Columnist

relaxation. Neither was true at SiSpa at the Palm Beach Marriott on Singer Island. My body remained untouched – at least by a masseuse – and the sounds more resemble bells – Tibetan bowls to be exact – which more reflect a spiritual journey – an affirmation of self – than the usual relaxation escape.



Tibetan Bowls DmitryMarchenka dreamstime!

THE TIBETAN BOWL TREATMENT AT THE SISPA AT THE MARRIOTT RESORT IN PALM BEACH, FL IS A ONE-OF-A KIND SPA EXPERIENCE!

Every kind of sound – different tones and pitches, highs and lows, soft and loud, close and far away. I felt the reverberations throughout my body, a magical, musical symphony coursing through every organ.

And there's a theory underlining the enchanting experience. Mostly it's based on aligning the chakras – apparently, there are seven of them, points along the spine said to represent energy sources in the body.

Each is associated with physical, emotional and spiritual functions. ranging from the root chakra between your legs up to the crown chakra atop your head. There's also heart, throat and solar plexus – and each chakra controls a different body part – and if the energy in any is blocked, it can have physical and emotional repercussions

THE TIBETAN BOWL EXPERIENCE AT THE SPA AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL IN PALM BEACH, FL ALSO OFFERS A LESSON IN HOW THE CHAKRAS IN OUR BODIES DETERMINE SO MUCH OF OUR EMOTIONAL MAKE-UP!

Enter the Tibetan Bowls – a sort of sound therapy to entice your brain to



Reiki Master playing Tibetan Bowls and Chanting! Photo by Victor Block.

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incorporate relaxation and health and peace; to release tension in the body; to bring clarity, improved self-esteem and the healing of negativity. One bowl was placed on each chakra and emitted its own sound when struck. I know one bowl was on my solar plexus, which is related to survival, heart, and communication and another on my head, connected to prayer and intuition. I lost count after that.

Elsa, a Reiki-trained master (a step-above my chakra-addled brain), encouraged me – in her soft voice in my dimly lit room – to be calm and listen to the sounds of the bowls, to close my eyes, breathe in and out and connect with the bowls, to focus on their message. Meditation was key.

I did the best I could, while trying not to think about all these notes (paper ones, not musical) I should be taking. There's a separate chant for each chakra which Elsa repeated while circling the table on which I was lying. Apparently, each chakra also has its own color but fortunately I didn't have to concern myself with that.

Different bowls were struck at different times, sometimes in conjunction with each other, other times in concert. The concert – I mean the treatment – ended with a grand finale (crescendo?) of all seven bowls playing in unison. It was mesmerizing.

I may not have understood it all; I may have been a tad preoccupied with trying to remember the experience for this article as opposed to just experiencing it. But it did feel somewhat mystical and magical – and I really didn't want the session to end.

THE TIBETAN BOWL MASTER CIRCULATED MY BODY CHANTING ALMOST AS IF IN A TRANCE – AND I THINK I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AS WELL!

But there's even more to the overall spa experience – to be explored at leisure either before your scheduled procedure or after. And yes, you can get all kinds of massages and facials you want. There's a nail salon, a fitness room, a room with stone beds to lie on with cold cucumbers on your eyes (don't ask – or at least don't ask me....), a steam room, a relaxation room with tea, infused water, fruit and a Chex Mix assortment – and of course a jacuzzi. The actual treatment may be the least of the relaxation options. The Mimosa at the end satiates the only sense not yet gratified!

For more information, visit: <https://www.thepalmbeaches.com/listing/sispa-at-palm-beach-marriott-singer-island-beach-resort-spa>.



Tibetan Bowls lined up AliakSandra Salalaika dreamstime!



The Tibetan bowl master circulated around me plying her magic! Photo by Victor Block.

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Jury Duty Scams Continue to Rise!

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

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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

Being selected for jury duty is a civic responsibility – but scammers are exploiting that obligation to frighten consumers into sending money.

Across the country, reports of jury duty scams are increasing again. These scams typically begin with a phone call, voicemail, text, or email from someone claiming to represent the local police department, sheriff's office, district attorney, or county court.

How the Scam Works

The caller claims you missed a jury summons and now face fines or even arrest. Some scammers say a warrant has already been issued. To “resolve” the issue, they demand immediate payment. Victims are often instructed to:

- Wire money
- Send funds through apps such as Cash App, Zelle, or Venmo
- Purchase prepaid debit cards or gift cards and provide the numbers
- Deposit cash into cryptocurrency ATMs
- Provide bank account or credit card information
- Share sensitive personal information like a Social Security number or date of birth

The scammer may sound official and convincing. Caller ID can even appear to show a legitimate local agency number – a tactic known as “spoofing.” Some scammers provide fake badge numbers or case numbers to sound more credible.

Know the Red Flags – Keep these warning signs in mind:

- Courts almost always contact jurors by U.S. mail, not by phone, email, or text.
- Law enforcement will never demand immediate payment over the phone.
- Courts do not accept payment in gift cards, prepaid cards, cryptocurrency, or peer-to-peer payment apps.
- Threats of immediate arrest for failure to pay are a major red flag.
- Calls received outside normal business hours are suspicious.
- Pressure tactics that demand secrecy or urgency are common scam techniques.

What To Do If You Receive a Call

- Do not provide any personal or financial information.
- Do not click on links in suspicious emails or texts.
- Hang up immediately.

- Look up your local court's official phone number on its website and call directly to verify.
- Report the scam attempt to the BBB's Scam Tracker at www.BBB.org/scamtracker and to your local law enforcement agency.

Important Reminder

Jury duty scams are not limited to phone calls. Scammers also send threatening emails and text messages that may contain malicious links designed to steal personal information or install malware.

If you are concerned that you may have missed a jury summons or court date, contact your local court directly using contact information you independently verify.

Staying informed is the best defense against fraud.

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, Website: BBB.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.

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Atom X



Audien Hearing

Community Invited to Attend Cobb County Senior Services, Annual Expo on April 21 at Jim Miller Park

Submitted by Melissa Pinsky, Communications & Strategic Partnerships Manager
Cobb County Senior Services • melissa.pinsky@cobbcounty.gov • www.cobbcounty.gov/seniors

Marietta, GA (March 23, 2026)

Make plans to attend Cobb County Senior Services' Annual Expo on April 21 from 10 am to 2 pm at its new location at Jim R. Miller Park and Event Center (2245 Callaway Road, Marietta) and connect with valuable resources on healthy aging. As the largest gathering of its kind in Cobb County, this free event will feature more than 120 vendors showcasing resources on meals, transportation, life enrichment, health, wellness, financial planning, legal guidance, housing, safety, recreation, and more. Adults 55 and up, caregivers, and the community can also explore free health screenings, free fitness demonstrations, giveaways and more! For more information, visit cobbcounty.gov/seniors or call 770-528-5393.

Cobb County Senior Services is bringing back its Annual Expo, a showcase of resources on aging well, from 10 a.m. -2 p.m. on April 21, 2026, relocating to a new larger location at Jim Miller Park and Event Center.

As the largest gathering of its kind in the area, the free event will feature more than 120 local businesses, non-profit organizations, and community partners offering information on health, wellness, financial planning, housing, safety, recreation, and more. In addition to visiting exhibitor booths, older adults, caregivers, and family members can enjoy free fitness demonstrations, health screenings, activities, and giveaways.

"This event is designed to empower older adults and their families with knowledge and access," said Ioana Bovo-Nicolescu, Director, Cobb County Senior Services. "Whether you're planning for the future, supporting a loved one, or simply looking for ways to stay active and engaged, the Expo offers something for everyone."

Last year's event drew more than 1,800 attendees, making it one of the region's premier gatherings dedicated to healthy aging and community connection.

This year's event presenting sponsor is Wellstar Health System. Their team will be onsite offering a variety of healthy aging resources. Free screenings for vision, blood pressure, BMI, wellness and carotid artery will be provided by Cobb Douglas Public Health, East Cobb Lion's Club and Vascular Surgery Associates. Aloha to Aging will conduct a shortened version of its "A Day in the Life" aging simulation.

Supporting sponsors include Altuvo and Carebuilders at Home. Friend sponsors include Kaiser Permanente, Peachtree Arts Center and Janice Overbeck Real Estate Team.

Admission is free, and parking is available on-site. Older adults, adult children, caregivers, and anyone interested in learning more about resources for aging well are encouraged to attend.

About Cobb County Senior Services

For more than 50 years, Cobb County Senior Services (CCSS) has provided older adults (55+) and their families with programs and resources such as Meals on Wheels, transportation, Veteran outreach, care management, and volunteer opportunities. CCSS operates seven senior centers throughout Cobb County, offering engaging activities, educational classes, fitness programs, workout rooms, social events, day trips, and more. For more information, visit www.cobbcounty.gov/seniors or call 770-528-5355.

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