Senior News Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!



November 2026
Volume 40, No. 11

Opinion

THE ELECTION TRANSITION

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

In a few hours, the 2026 MID-term Elections will become history! And, the "counter-positional crowd" will either enjoy… or regret… what "dollars have bought! That accusation may seem unfair to many who have been blinded within an unfair practice

But, truth be known, over the past two hundred-fifty years the ballot box has incrementally become the victim of a "paid palaver and post!"

A record amount of funds have been shuffled about this year in an effort to position prized candidates for the winners circle! No one will confess to such willful misbehavior however and the uncouth journey continues!

That is diametrically opposed to what the Constitutional Framers had in mind for the Republic; with a shameful tally being wrought by the Electorate! Many are filling positions that were never meant to be; and, the entire population suffers. It is a cycle that will never see daylight in honesty; for such "untoward process" emanates within the soul of men! One might expect such flaws from "third world entities" but we Americans pray for a better report. The entire process becomes a "grin and bear it" debacle, with wholesale uncertainties depicting the venue!

One great reason for the repetition of such a wayward trek is the fact that most deny any wrongdoing! The REPORT comes rushing by that "all is well in Peoria;" and, Time marches on! Shame on the Leaders who perpetually allow the despicable waves of vicious violations in a repeat performance!

We should, and we can, do better in the years ahead!



Flint Energies Names Bigler as CEO!

Submitted by Marian McLemore, VP, Cooperative Communications, mmclemore@flintemc.com
Elizabeth Almena, Cooperative Communications Specialist, ealmena@flintemc.com

Flint Energies' Board of Directors announced today that Todd Bigler has been hired to serve as the Cooperative's new CEO beginning December 1, 2026. Bigler will succeed Jeremy Nelms who has been leading Flint since October 1, 2020. Flint Energies Chairman of the Board, Neal L. Talton comments, "Flint is fortunate to have Jeremy Nelms as CEO. He has led Flint during some significant challenges over recent years, including a pandemic, a fiber network build, and our new Service Center build. We will certainly miss his leadership at the helm of this growing system and his enthusiasm for the cooperative difference. We are grateful for his tenure here and wish him and his family much happiness."

Currently, Bigler is the Vice President of Technology for Flint Energies and has been since January 2021. Bigler worked his way up through Flint's technology department, starting as an entry-level Helpdesk Technician in 2008. As VP of Technology, he provides technical guidance over all facets of Flint's enterprise applications systems, operations technology, and the $97.5 M fiber infrastructure deployment.

Bigler is enthusiastic about strategic planning and employee growth, and development. He is a graduate of Touchstone Energy's Master Class on Strategy Execution and has led the cooperative's strategy planning process since 2018. He serves as lead facilitator for Flint's internal mentoring program, which focuses on the personal and professional growth of cooperative employees.

Academically, Bigler graduated from Northside High School in Warner Robins, Ga. He possesses both a B.S. in Psychology from Valdosta State University and a B.S. in Information Technology from Macon State College. Bigler is also a graduate of the Robert I. Kabat Management Internship Program through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and University of Wisconsin's School of Business. He currently resides in Perry, Georgia, with his wife, Kesha, and their five children, Peyton, Addison, Ansley, Karsyn, and Ryan.

Talton continues, "We are eager to have Todd serve Flint in this new capacity. His institutional knowledge of Flint and the electric industry, especially in the realm of information technology, will lead us into the future. The Board looks forward to continuing working with Todd to provide our members with the best service possible."

Bigler concludes, "I am deeply honored by the trust placed in me to serve as President and CEO. Having spent the past 18 years working alongside our employees, board, and members, I understand both the responsibility and opportunity this role represents. While our mission remains rooted in serving our membership, our future is focused on innovation, operational excellence, and strategic growth. Together, we will ensure our cooperative remains a trusted partner, a community leader, and a source of value for our members for generations to come."



Todd Bigler



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Taking Care!

Family Holiday Survival Tips… Ways To Limit Stress And Keep The Peace During Gatherings!

By Lisa M. Petsche – lmepetsche@gmail.com

The fast approaching holiday season is a hectic time for many people, due to the preparations and festivities that typically take place. Staying sane, not to mention enjoying this time of the year, is even more of a challenge for those who don't get along well with their extended family.

Every family has "dysfunction" to some degree, because no member is perfect. But some families are prone to more interpersonal tension than others, due to diverse personalities, circumstances, values and lifestyles among members.

Read on for some tips on how to cope with the almost inevitable stress inherent when relatives get together for the holidays.


Lisa Petsche

Preparation!

Make it a point to practice self-care at this time of the year. Eat healthy foods, make time for exercise and get adequate sleep.

Allow plenty of time to get ready for a family event, so you're relaxed and feel your best.

Conjure up compassion for relatives who emanate negativity, bearing in mind that they're unhappy individuals.

Set realistic expectations about family members' behavior. The narcissist, non-stop talker or chronic complainer is not going to change. Plan to steer clear of them if possible, otherwise limit the amount of time you spend with them.

Give yourself a pep talk. Reassure yourself that you're up to the challenge of gracefully handling a few hours with anyone. If necessary, pretend you have a role in a play and, of course, must stay in character.

If you're particularly anxious about a gathering, invite a friend along for support.

Aim to cut your visit short as a last resort. Plan something to look forward to afterwards – for example, visiting your favorite café or watching a holiday movie.

During A Gathering: Dos And Don'ts!

Avoid consuming alcohol; otherwise, limit yourself to one or two drinks. Disinhibition can cause you to say things you may regret.

Practice good listening skills: pay attention, don't interrupt and ask open-ended questions. Be conscious of your non-verbal language, keeping your posture open (avoid crossing your arms), making eye contact and nodding periodically. This will help you to come across positively.

Show courtesy towards everyone. When you can't manage any more politeness towards a particular individual, find a reason to excuse yourself and move on.

Give people the benefit of the doubt when you wonder if they are being sarcastic or condescending. Use humor to defuse tension.

Count to ten and refuse to take the bait when someone tries to one-up you or goad you into an argument. Instead, adopt a "stupid and cheerful" demeanor – signature advice from syndicated radio host and licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Joy Browne.

Stay away from contentious topics and change the subject if others raise them.

Don't participate in gossip or put-downs of others or bring up unpleasant events.

Engage relatives positively by reminiscing about pleasant times or inquiring about something meaningful to them, such as their children or grandchildren, work, a hobby or a recent vacation.

Breathe deeply if you find yourself getting stressed. If that doesn't help, head to the washroom or step outside, to compose yourself.

Parting Thoughts!

If you keep in mind that you can't change anyone's behavior except your own, and that it's always within your power to be civil and, yes, even kind to a certain degree, you will make it through family events, perhaps even better than you anticipated.

If things don't go well in spite of your best efforts to be congenial, plan a vacation over the holidays next year, so you can have a guilt-free break from family functions - and other sources of seasonal stress - and thoroughly enjoy yourself.

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Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and freelance writer specializing in health and relationship matters.

Andersonville “Step Into History” Event Honors World War I and World War II Prisoners of War!

Special to SeniorNewsGeorgia

Submitted by the National Park Service – ANDE_information@nps.gov

Andersonville National Historic Site will host the final installment of the “Step Into History” series to honor World War I and II prisoners of war. The event is part of the park’s year-long Freedom 250 commemoration.

This living history weekend will feature immersive, hands-on activities for people of all ages, including:

- Signature “Step Into History” activity in which participants can step into the role of an archaeologist who discovers a time-traveling watch to explore the stories of POWs from World War I and II
- Special talk by staff from Jimmy Carter National Historic Site on Jimmy Carter’s uncle, Tom Gordy, who was a POW during World War II
- Weapons displays presented by trained volunteers and staff

This free event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 7 and 8 at the National POW Museum, 760 POW Road, Andersonville, Ga.

An aircraft display and programming will also be available at Jimmy Carter Regional Airport during this event. Formerly known as Souther Field, it was one of 32 Air Service training camps established after the United States entry into World War I in April 1917. Members of the Georgia World War II Heritage Trail will support the programming.

Andersonville National Historic Site is located 10 miles south of Oglethorpe, Ga., and 10 miles northeast of Americus, Ga., on Georgia Highway 49. The national park features the National POW Museum, Andersonville National Cemetery and the historic Camp Sumter Civil War prison site. Andersonville National Historic Site is the only unit of the National Park System to serve as a memorial to all American prisoners of war. Admission to the park is free.

For more information call 229 924-0343 or email ANDE_information@nps.gov. nps.gov.

About the National Park Service.

Established in 1916, the National Park Service preserves America’s most treasured natural and cultural places for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of current and future generations. Learn more at nps.gov.

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A Place Where the Arts Come to Life!

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: A backstage view of the area!

Have you ever attended a performance at the Columbia County Performing Arts Center in Evans, Georgia, and wondered what happens behind the curtain? Where do performers pre-pare, how is the stage transformed for each show, and what goes into creating an unforgettable evening?

Recently, we had the opportunity to tour the center with our guide, Joe, and discover the fascinating world that audiences rarely see.

Located on Market Street in Evans Towne Center, the performing arts center has become a welcome addition to the cultural life of Columbia County, Richmond County and the greater Augusta area. Since opening in 2021, it has brought a wide variety of entertainment to the region, from Broadway touring productions and musical performances to comedy and holiday shows.



View of the auditorium with Joe!

Inside, the main auditorium seats 2,062 guests. Orchestra, mezzanine and balcony seating give the theater an impressive appearance, while its comfortable seats and carefully designed acoustics create a welcoming atmosphere. Whether the stage features a musical, an orchestral concert or a rock band, the setting gives audiences an excitement they will always remember.

Joe explained how the center's sophisticated sound systems, theatrical lighting and technical facilities accommodate such a diverse schedule. What looks effortless from the audience requires careful coordination behind the scenes. Lighting cues, sound adjustments and stage changes must work together seamlessly so that every performance

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Drawing of the Arts Center!

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unfolds as intended. It is more preparation than we originally thought.

Then came the part of the tour we had been especially curious about – backstage.

Beyond the curtain is a working world of dressing rooms, rehearsal spaces and areas where performers prepare for their time in the spotlight. Individual dressing rooms provide private spaces for artists, while larger rooms accommodate touring casts. Rehearsal and warm-up areas allow singers, musicians and dancers to practice and make final adjustments before the show begins.

Standing there, we could almost picture the activity before a performance, musicians tuning their instruments, singers warming up their voices and dancers reviewing their steps. While audiences settle into their seats, an entirely different kind of excitement is building just beyond the stage.

It gave us a new appreciation for the people and preparation behind an evening of entertainment. The audience sees the finished performance, but the hours of work that precede it are an important part of the experience.

And there is certainly no shortage of reasons to visit. My nephew, Charles, enjoys hearing the familiar songs of his favorite singers, while I look forward to the storytelling and spectacle of a Broadway musical. My sister Janet is already anticipating an evening of holiday entertainment in December. Although we have different tastes, the center offers us a wonderful opportunity to plan an outing with family and friends.

The 2026–2027 season includes an appealing mix of performances. November brings Christian music artist Zach Williams, the holiday sounds of Mannheim Steamroller and Georgia's own Southern rock favorites Blackberry Smoke. Broadway fans can look forward to *Jersey Boys* on November 24, featuring the memorable music associated with Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. In December,

***c*ontinued on page 8**



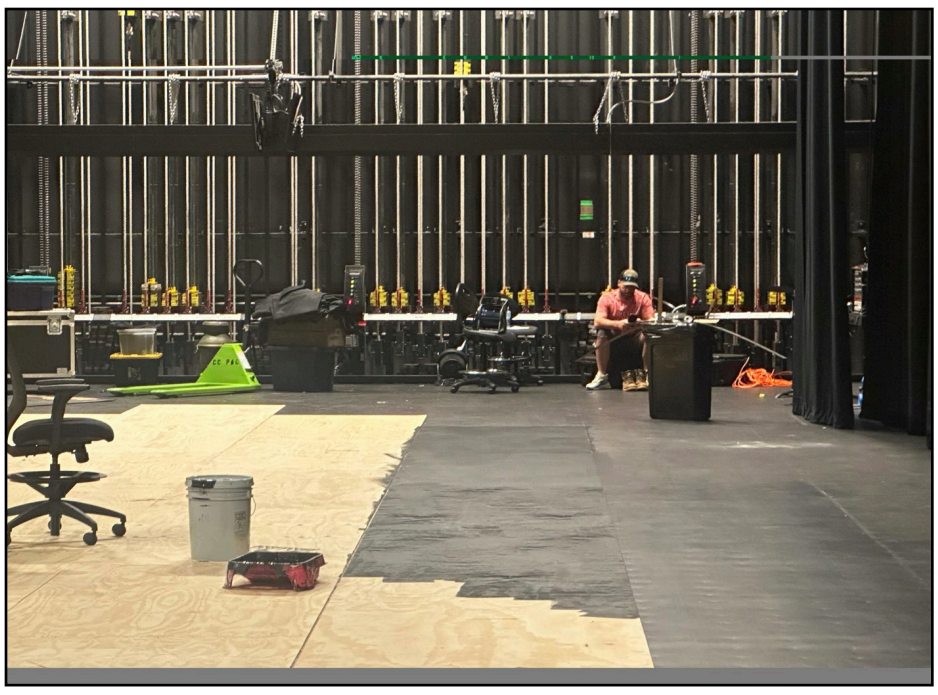
Inside one of the green rooms for the performers!



One of the studios backstage for the performers!



The wall displays previous shows at the Center!



Stage area being prepped for the next show!



Beautiful lobby area inside the theatre!

continued from page 7

A Charlie Brown Christmas offers a charming way to welcome the holidays.

The new year brings *A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical* in January, followed by *The Wiz* in February, *Waitress* in March and *Legally Blonde: The Musical* in May. And there are many more.

The variety makes it easy to find a performance suited to different interests and occasions. Show dates and ticket availability can be confirmed through the website, www.thecenterofcc.com.

On performance night, the auditorium gradually fills with conversation and anticipation. Volunteers help guests find their seats, the lights begin to dim, and attention turns toward the stage. Then the music starts, the story unfolds, and for a while, everyday concerns fade into the background.

That is part of the charm of the Columbia County Performing Arts Center. It brings the excitement of professional entertainment to us while giving the community a place to share new experiences and lasting memories.

Our tour with Joe gave us a glimpse of the remarkable work behind the curtain and a deeper appreciation for what happens onstage. The next time we visit, we will see more than the lights, costumes and performances. We will remember the people preparing backstage and the many details that make each show possible.

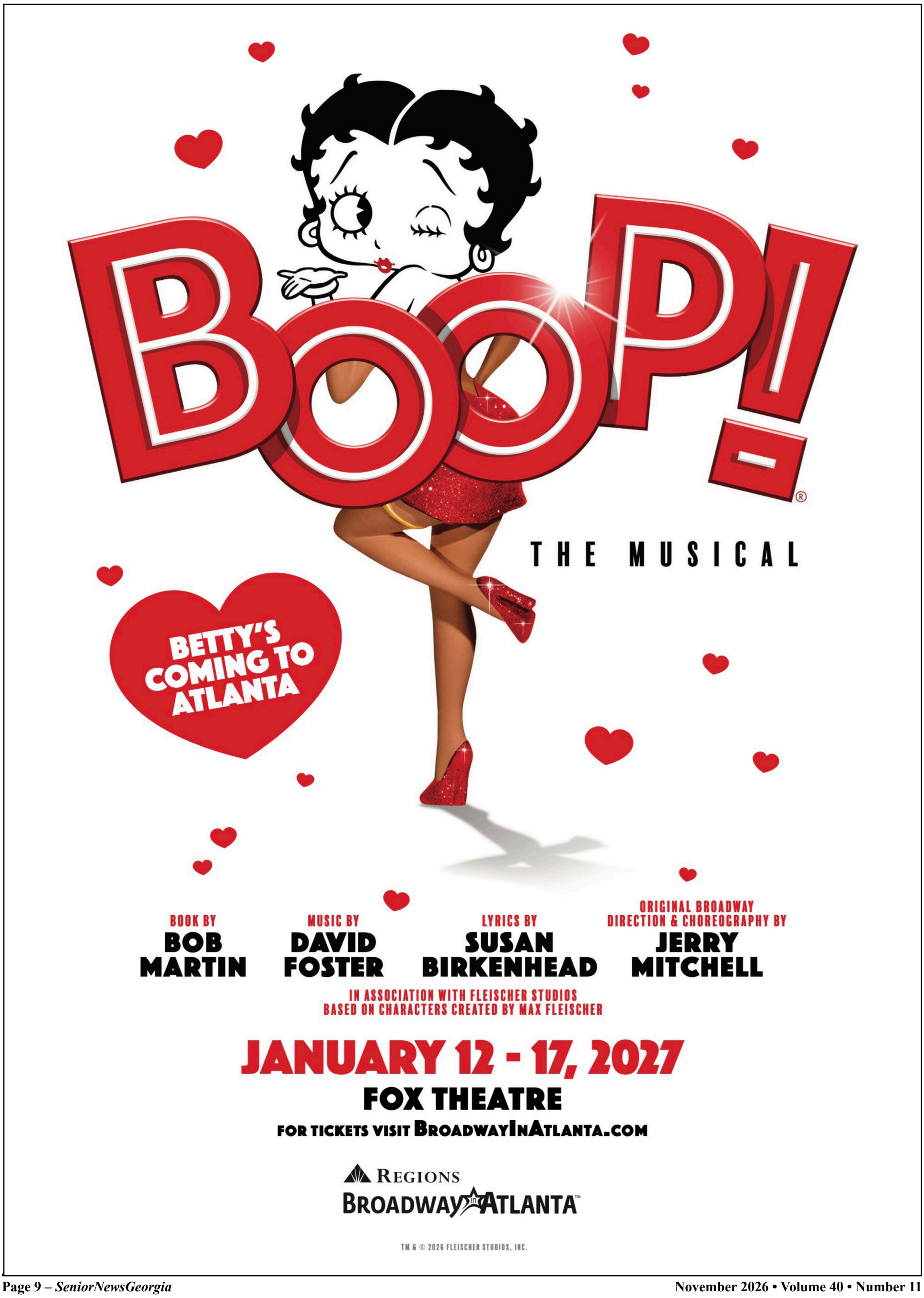
For residents of Evans and the greater Augusta area, a memorable evening may be waiting just down Market Street. All that remains is to choose a show, invite your family and grandchildren along and enjoy the magic of live performance.



The famous Wall displays the previous shows!



Our group walking down the side entrance hall!


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Fulton County to Host Inaugural Youth Homelessness System Innovation Conference!

Youth-led conference will bring together young leaders and advocates to explore innovative approaches to addressing youth homelessness.

Submitted by Erica Miller, Department of External Affairs
Fulton County Government – erica.miller@fultoncountyga.gov



Atlanta

The Fulton County Department of Community Development, in collaboration with the Fulton County and Atlanta Youth Action Boards, will host the inaugural Youth Homelessness System Innovation Conference (YHSI-CON) on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Loudermilk Conference Center, 40 Courtland Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30303.

The free, youth-led conference will bring together young people ages 18–26, service providers, advocates, and community partners to explore innovative approaches to addressing youth homelessness. Developed with input from the Fulton County and Atlanta Youth Action Boards, the event will emphasize the importance of youth perspectives in improving access to resources and support services.

Conference discussions will focus on three key themes: resource sharing, system navigation, and reimagining and innovating a better youth system. Attendees will hear from youth leaders and service providers, share ideas, and explore ways to better support young people experiencing housing insecurity.

In addition to conference discussions and activities, attendees will have opportunities to participate in giveaways and win prizes throughout the event.

Registration, breakfast, lunch, and parking are free. Advance registration is required through Eventbrite.

For more information about YHSI-CON, please contact YHSI@SLCY.org.

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For more Fulton County news, sign up for the weekly e-newsletter #OneFulton at https://goo.gl/Nb1L84. You can also visit Fulton County's website at www.fultoncountyga.gov or connect with Fulton County government on Twitter at @FultonInfo or Facebook at @fultoninfo.

Fulton County Continuum of Care Announces Virtual Board Meeting on November 19, 2026

The Fulton County Continuum of Care Board will meet virtually to receive updates and discuss business items on Thursday, November 19, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Citizens who wish to participate in the CoC Board Meeting must register in advance **at: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/6YfpVcPRSG6jbOl6P2Z3GA.**

After you register, a confirmation email will be sent with instructions for joining the meeting.

For more Fulton County news, sign up for the weekly e-newsletter #OneFulton at https://goo.gl/NblL84. You can also visit Fulton County's website at www.fultoncountyga.gov or connect with Fulton County government on Twitter at @FultonInfo or Facebook at @fultoninfo.

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It sounds like your grandson. That isn't proof.

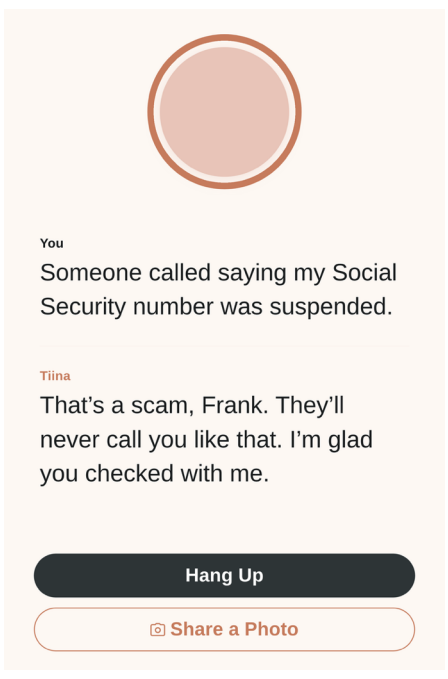
Submitted by Marcus Arcabascio – Guest Columnist

Imagine this. Your phone rings at 9 p.m. It sounds exactly like your grandson, Danny. He's been in a wreck, he's at the police station, and he needs $4,000 wired for bail tonight. He begs you not to tell his mom.

I made Danny up, but the grandparent scam is real. Earlier this year, Kelvin Collins of the Better Business Bureau warned Senior News readers that scammers can now clone a loved one's voice, sometimes from just a few seconds of audio. His column included a line worth taping next to the phone: "Even realistic audio or video should not be considered proof."

The stakes are high. The FBI's 2025 Internet Crime Report says Georgians 60 and older reported more than $218 million in losses that year.

So if AI can clone a voice, can AI help you catch a fake? It can help you spot warning signs. It can't prove who's calling.



Example screen from the Tiina app. Some scams follow a script an AI can recognize. A cloned voice still needs a call back.

I built Tiina (tiina.ai), an AI voice app for older adults, partly to help people talk through suspicious calls like Danny's. Here's what it, or any AI, can and can't do.

After a call like that, you can open Tiina, tap the screen and say what the caller told you. It talks it through with you calmly, points out which parts have the signs of a scam, and explains why. When your heart is pounding at 9 p.m., a patient voice saying "slow down" helps.

You don't need an app to ask the same questions. Is there an emergency? A rush? A request for secrecy? An unusual way to pay, like a wire, gift cards or a payment app? Those are on the BBB's list of warning signs, and any one of them is a reason to stop.

What AI can't do is tell you that voice was Danny's. Tiina never heard the call. It only knows what you told it. The FBI's report warns that AI-made content "is becoming increasingly difficult to detect and easier to make." I'd be wary of any app that promises to tell a real voice from a fake.

There's a second catch. A careful scammer leaves out the warning signs. No panic, no wire, just a friendly voice asking a small favor. When an AI finds nothing suspicious, it hasn't proven anything. It has run out of clues.

An AI can't tell you a call is safe. Only the real person can.

Three checks work whether or not you use any app.

Hang up and call back on a number you already have. Not the number the caller gives you. Call Danny, or call his parents.

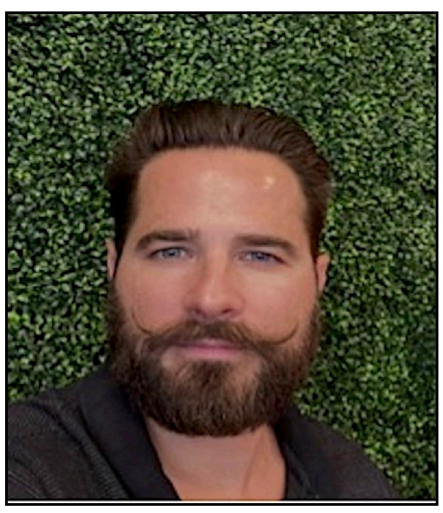
Pick a family code word. The BBB suggests one, and the FBI puts it simply: "Create a secret word or phrase with your family to verify their identity." The holidays, with everyone at one table, are a good time to choose it.

Tell someone before you pay. When a caller says "don't tell anyone," that's your cue to tell someone.

Report calls like this to BBB Scam Tracker at bbb.org/scamtracker or the Georgia Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-869-1123.

A familiar voice used to be proof. It isn't anymore. A call back is.

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Marcus Arcabascio is the founder of Tiina (tiina.ai), an AI voice app for older adults on iPhone and iPad, named after his mother. He has built internet companies for more than fifteen years.


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BBB Tip: Your Bank Is Calling – Or Is It?

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

Your phone rings and the caller says there's suspicious activity on your bank account. They know your name, the name of your bank and perhaps even some information about your account. Caller ID may even display the name of your financial institution.

Then comes the alarming news: Someone is trying to steal your money. Fortunately, the person on the phone says they're from the bank's fraud department and can help you protect it. Unfortunately, the person trying to steal your money may be the one on the phone.

Bank impersonation scams have become increasingly sophisticated. Scammers use personal information, spoofed phone numbers, and a sense of urgency to convince consumers they're speaking with a legitimate financial institution.

Don't Trust Caller ID

Seeing your bank's name or telephone number on caller ID doesn't prove that's who's calling. Scammers can manipulate caller ID information to make a call appear to originate from a legitimate business or government agency. They may also have personal information about you obtained through data breaches, stolen information or other sources.

Knowing your name, address or even information about your accounts doesn't prove the caller is legitimate.

Hang Up and Call Your Bank Yourself

If someone unexpectedly calls claiming there's suspicious activity on your account, don't panic. Get the basic information about what they claim is happening and then end the call.

Contact your bank using a number you know is legitimate. The safest options are generally the telephone number on the back of your debit or credit card, your bank's official mobile app, a recent account statement or a website address you already know. Don't simply call back the number that contacted you.

The Federal Trade Commission also cautions consumers against relying on the first telephone number appearing in an online search. Scammers can use advertisements and other techniques to place fraudulent customer-service numbers prominently in search results.

Never Give Someone Your Verification Code

A verification code is intended to prove that you are the person trying to access your account. If someone calling you asks you to read back a verification code that was just sent to your phone, stop.

The scammer may already have your username and password and be attempting to access your account. The verification code may be the final piece of information needed to get in. Never provide an account verification code to someone who unexpectedly contacts you.

Never Move Money to "Protect" It

This is one of the most important warning signs consumers should recognize. A scammer may tell you your bank account has been compromised and that you need to transfer your money into a "safe account" or "secure account" while the bank investigates. while the bank investigates.

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continued from page 14

The FTC's advice is simple: Never move or transfer money because someone who unexpectedly contacted you says that's necessary to protect it. The new account may actually be controlled by the scammer.

The instructions can become increasingly unusual. Victims have been told to withdraw cash, purchase cryptocurrency, use a Bitcoin ATM or even buy gold to protect their savings. A legitimate bank or government agency isn't going to protect your money by having you hand it over to a stranger.

Watch for Pressure and Secrecy

Scammers don't want you to have time to think. They may tell you that money is leaving your account right now, that law enforcement is involved, or that you'll lose everything if you hang up.

Another major warning sign is being told not to discuss the situation with anyone. A scammer may claim bank employees can't be trusted or instruct you to lie if a teller asks why you're withdrawing or transferring a large amount of money. Don't do it.

If a bank employee, family member, or trusted friend questions what you're doing, listen. A second set of eyes may recognize a scam before money is lost.

What If You Already Sent Money?

Act immediately. Contact your bank or financial institution using a telephone number you know is legitimate. Explain what happened and ask whether the transaction can be stopped or reversed.

If you provided a password, change it immediately. If you provided a verification code or other account information, tell the bank. Recovery isn't guaranteed, particularly when a consumer was convinced to authorize a transfer, but acting quickly may improve your chances. Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission at ReportFraud.ftc.gov and to BBB Scam Tracker at BBB.org/ScamTracker.

Bottom Line

A call about fraud on your bank account is designed to get your attention – and scammers know it. Remember three simple rules:

- Don't trust caller ID. Don't give anyone your verification code. And never transfer money because someone who contacted you says you need to move it to keep it safe.
- If there's really a problem with your account, your bank will still be there after you hang up.
- End the call, find a telephone number you know belongs to your financial institution, and contact the bank yourself.

When something doesn't seem right, take the time to check it out. Visit BBB.org for information on businesses and BBB.org/ScamTracker to research and report scams.

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Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, which serves 77 counties across Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. BBB helps consumers make informed marketplace decisions, promotes trustworthy business practices and provides resources to help consumers avoid scams.

To research a business, file a complaint, submit a customer review or report a scam, visit BBB.org. For assistance from your local BBB, call 800-763-4222 or email info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.