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September 11-24, 2025

## Anderson's best-kept secret

There is a secret park in Anderson. It's only a few minutes from the bustle and hum of Anderson University, yet it is a place of quiet and tranquility. On any given day, you can hear songs of birds, see turtles slide into the water's edge, and smell wild herbs that dot the landscape. Fortunately for local citizens, the group that manages the park is doing everything it can to welcome everyone to the city's best-kept secret, Rocky River Nature Park.

Rocky River Nature Park is managed by the Rock River Conservancy, a nonprofit group of local citizens which collaborates with the City, the County, and Anderson University. The Conservancy is chaired by Dr. Annette Guiseppi-Elie, an environmental civil engineer who moved to Anderson in 2006.

"As soon as my husband and I met Dr. Juan A. Brown, one of our new neighbors, he shared with us his vision for a nature preserve in Anderson. Dr. Brown had been to similar parks and

had a presentation he put together, a photo presentation. Much of the initial land acquisition for the Rocky River Nature Park was accomplished under Dr.



Kim von Keller

Brown. By 2010, an advisory group was formed, with Dr. Brown as founding chair, and I became a member of that original board. We received

our nonprofit status as the Rocky River Conservancy in 2011."

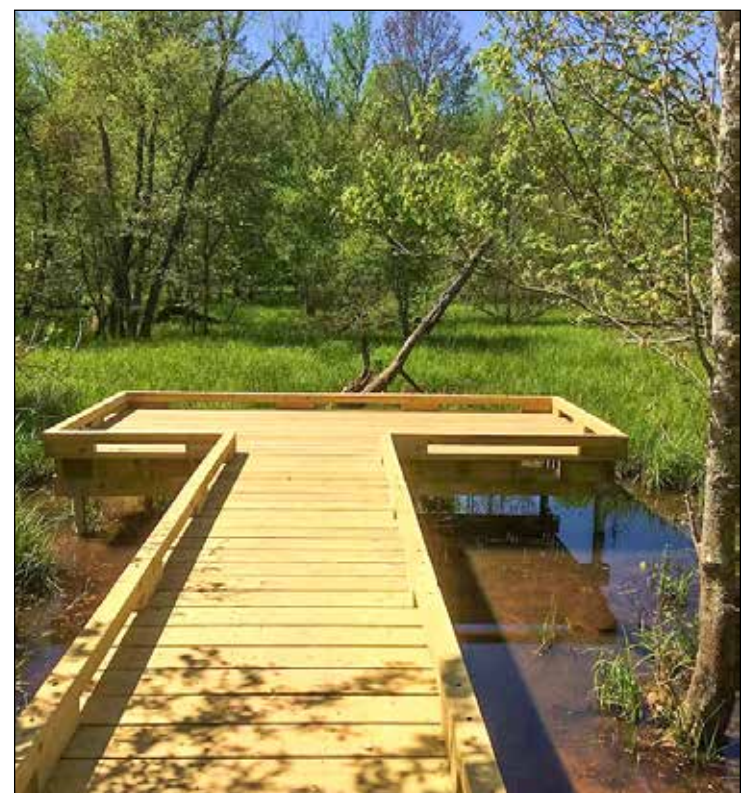
Rocky River Nature Park has now been open for over a decade, and what was once an underused city swamp now features parking, restrooms, picnic tables, and 2 miles of walking trails. There is a boardwalk over the wetlands, with benches and viewing platforms built by local Eagle Scouts. Because of its location, the park is a

perfect spot to walk your dog, enjoy a work-day lunch break, or bring your children to search for the birds, turtles, frogs, deer, rabbits, and other animals that call the park home.

"What I enjoy most about the park is the opportunity for solitude," says Dr. Guiseppi-Elie. "Even though the park is within the city limits, you are totally in tranquility. You can hike, watch the beekeepers at work, or just relax on a bench, but there is a sense of tranquility there, especially early in the morning and late in the afternoon."

Baylis Maxwell is past chair of the Rocky River Conservancy, and recent accomplishments were a result of his leadership in conjunction with Anderson University, the City of Anderson, and Anderson County. The development of the park has also included assistance from Anderson School District 5, the Abney Foundation, the United Way, Master

SEE SECRET ON PAGE 2



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# REVOLUTIONARY TREATMENT SYSTEM CHANGING CARE FOR AFIB

You or someone you know likely has atrial fibrillation, or AFib. It's estimated to affect 1 in 22 Americans, according to the National Institutes of Health, and its prevalence is growing.

Now a revolutionary treatment system is changing the conversation about care for this serious cardiac condition.

"It is the most common heart rhythm disturbance we encounter," said Dr. Ricky Henderson, an electrophysiologist with AnMed Arrhythmia. "Up to 30% of us in our lifetime will experience it. If we ever have any other heart condition like heart failure, then that number jumps to up to 50%."

## WHAT IS AFIB?

AFib is a progressive disease that occurs when the heart's upper chambers beat out of rhythm. As a result, blood is not pumped efficiently to the rest of the body. It affects nearly 60 million people worldwide and is associated with serious complications, including heart failure, stroke and increased risk of death.

About half of those with AFib will have heart palpitations or rapid heartbeat. Some will have shortness of breath or fatigue with exertion.

"If they don't have palpitations and they don't have any of the other

symptoms, most often those people first present with their first stroke," Dr. Henderson said.

## TREATING AFIB WITH ABLATION

Treatment for AFib has shifted dramatically – and for the better – in recent years. Dr. Henderson said that 15 years ago, doctors would try multiple medications to suppress AFib to protect patients from stroke. Important progress in treatment happened when ablation, which started in 1998, came to the forefront of patient care.

It is now the frontline treatment for AFib, with medications used only if necessary.

As technology has advanced, the success rate of suppressing AFib with ablation has increased, along with safety and patient recovery time. Dr. Henderson was one of the first in South Carolina, and the first in the Upstate, to use the new Medtronic Affera 3D Mapping system to treat AFib.

"Ablation modifies the heart's electrical conduction system to keep the electrical impulses of our heart in the areas of normal heart muscle and not leak into the areas where

we know that the AFib lives," Dr. Henderson said. "Ablation simply channels all of these impulses away from those particular areas."

Ablation treatment has advanced from heating or freezing tissue – the only options for years – to pulse field.

"Pulse field allows us to effectively kill those conduction cells in a manner that doesn't introduce any risk to any surrounding tissue," Dr. Henderson said. "It delivers a radio frequency energy in an ultra short burst, only 150 milliseconds or .15 seconds."

That causes electrolyte shifts in the tissue, without injuring the surrounding area, providing a much more efficient way to treat the condition.

## A TRAILBLAZING ADVANCEMENT IN AFIB TREATMENT

The Medtronic Affera 3D Mapping system provides another leap forward in patient care.

"It's a combination of a mapping system – a way that we can actually see these electrical impulses on the internal lining of the heart – and it's combined with a Sphere-9

Catheter," Dr. Henderson said. "The catheter is a mesh of electrodes. We can put it somewhere, do our pulse field ablation, and then move it a little bit and do more ablation."

The Sphere-9™ Catheter is an all-in-one high-density (HD) mapping and dual energy ablation catheter, with both pulsed field (PF) and radiofrequency (RF). Dr. Henderson said the system pairs the mapping and ablation in one single catheter for increased precision and patient safety, since it does not require switching between mapping and ablation catheters, which can increase risk.

"It has been nothing short of fantastic," he said. "Patients are going to like it because it's much less time under anesthesia, and it's all done with much less discomfort, because we don't cause inflammation with this technology. It's just a win-win-win all the way around. It is absolutely remarkable."

Dr. Henderson said having access to this treatment in Anderson is a "feather in AnMed's cap."

"AnMed has led the way in many, many ways, and this is just one more way that not just in our region, but in the country, we're keeping it on the leading edge," he said.



picnic tables, and restrooms make it so much easier to enjoy time in the park. I'm so proud that we have this park in the city. The city has beautiful manmade things, but this forested wetland was put here by Mother Nature, and it's here to be enjoyed by everyone."

Rocky River Nature Park is open daily, including holidays, from sunrise until sundown. You'll find parking at 1311 Old Williamston Road, Anderson, SC 29621. Dogs on leashes are welcome, and volunteer opportunities are available on the first Saturday of the month. To learn more about the park, or to make a donation, visit rockyriverconservancy.org.

"This is a resource within our community that people should be aware of and take advantage of," says Dr. Guiseppe-Elie. "It's free public space, and you can experience it as an individual or a group. We also want to make sure that the park is there to be enjoyed long after we're gone. Preserving our environment has been the passion of my life and career, and there's a quote, often attributed to Native Americans, which sums up my commitment to the Rocky River Nature Park: 'We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.'"

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## Secret

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Gardeners, Master Beekeepers, and individual contributors.

"I was also brought on to the Rocky River Conservancy board by Dr. Brown," Maxwell says. "When he stepped down as chair, I assumed that role. The park has almost been like a secret in town, but we're making major efforts to make sure people know about it. In addition to car parking, we also have bus parking, and we're looking forward to having school groups visit. The Biology Department at Anderson University has been making lesson plans and will give tours. We have a small Learning Center, and a Discovery Center is planned. The boardwalk,

## YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

# Understanding Type 2 diabetes and oral health

It goes without saying the first order of business in our dental practice is to protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of our valued patients. When we say your dentist can save your life, we mean just that. Dentists are uniquely positioned because many health issues appear first in the mouth tissue.

In recent features we've been discussing Type 2 diabetes. Today more and more health-care providers are seeing a significant increase in this chronic health condition. What was once an older person's disorder is now afflicting people of all ages, including our youth.

Our practice remains vigilant. That is because the implications for oral health can be profound.

As more and more research is conducted it is shedding new light on the role our gums and mouth play in our overall health. This includes the striking correlation between diabetes (including Type 2) and Periodontal Disease.

What Is Periodontal Disease? Basically, it is a serious gum infection that damages the

soft tissue and destroys the bone that supports teeth. More than that, it is actually a set of different diseases that affect gum tissue. Periodontal Disease is typically the result



**Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick**

of poor oral hygiene, which allows plaque to build up and harden into tartar, causing gingivitis, the mildest form of Periodontal Disease. At this stage symptoms include swollen gums that bleed easily or recede from teeth, bad breath, and loose teeth.

If untreated, it can result not only in lost teeth -- which is bad enough -- but respiratory disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and coronary artery disease. Even in this age of dramatic advancements in oral healthcare, gum disease still affects half of all Americans over age 30. For those older than

65, approximately 70 percent will have some form of Periodontal Disease. Risk factors include tobacco use, medications that cause dry mouth, substance abuse, and poor nutrition. You can see now why we emphasize self-care and lifestyle changes in this feature!

Now comes new research suggesting diabetes may affect microbes found naturally in our mouths, potentially leading to bone loss and increased inflammation. If you are diabetic, you should take extra care with your dental hygiene. Maintaining a daily brushing routine is even more important. But also, regular dental checkups and professional in office cleaning.

Because this is so important, our practice offers a free consultation and checkups for new patients. If you have not been to a dentist in a while, now is a good time. We may be able to help you get on the road to better health. We love our patient family. We want our community to be healthier. If you have concerns, please don't put this off. With a simple phone

call, we can schedule your visit. Please feel free to reach out. Consider us your hometown resource for guidance and support.

*Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.*

*For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to [grandoaksdental.com](http://grandoaksdental.com) or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.*

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# Making fall fashionable

Fall is quickly approaching and I'm beyond excited for it. I'm an Autumn, as they say. Most people are Summer obsessed, but not me.

I adore the Fall season so much. The colors, the temperature, the activities, the parties, even the food



Kristine March

and libations are just beautiful. Just everything about it. I especially love the clothes. I've always loved the color palette, even as a child. I remember I would love to look out the car window and look at the leaves as we drove along the road. It makes me want to listen to seventies music like the band Bread, and sip hot apple cider. It's just a vibe. The wardrobe trends this year are really a mood, and easy to achieve.

One thing that you can incorporate into your closet is brown tights. Instead of the usual black ones, brown is the color this year. If you don't feel like wearing denim all season, you can always pair them with a cute skirt or just a leather pair of shorts with over the knee boots. They'll keep you warm and you'll still look super pretty. I think tights instantly elevate an outfit and make you look chic and expensive. Next on the list is, black lace. It was all over the Dolce & Gabbana Fall runway show. You can wear the lace as a bralette under a blazer, or as a kimono duster, and let it pop out of your jacket. It really just adds some femininity to the outfit. Army green is back and gives you that rockstar edge. Add some gems with it to break it down. Also, purple velvet was all over the Ralph Lauren runway. If you wore that with just a simple blouse, you really don't have to worry about anything else. It's an instant showstopper.

Slouchy boots are making a comeback, plus cowboy and moto boots are huge and in the color burgundy. Also pull out those Frye boots because they're also back in. Chocolate and deep browns are pretty for a manicure and a



pedicure. The biggest rain that I've seen this year is believe it or not, barn jackets. Think early '90s Martha Stewart. If you modernize it, it can look really cute. You can balance it out by wearing it over a feminine skirt with heels to give you that rustic approach. You could also add a turtleneck and a silk scarf, if you want to go for more of a preppy, classic look. It's timeless and really sophisticated. Add your own personal flair and you may just really like it. Lastly, quiet luxury is really big. The Olsen Twins have a fashion line called The Row and it screams quiet luxe. Their bags are a pretty penny, but you can get dupes on Amazon that look so similar, it's almost scary and for only \$35. The Margaux bag is all the rage and it's just a simple oversized suede tote bag that will run you \$4,500 and I'm sorry Mary Kate and Ashley, but no. I'll just carry the Amazon dupe. It's a really beautiful design though, I must say and will go with all of your dark hues this season. So definitely try to get it before it sells out, if you want to be an IT girl.

To finish all this off, pair your outfit with a good fall smelling fragrance. I personally love Viktor & Rolf's Flowerbomb perfume. It smells like candy, but with very warm notes like oriental patchouli with vanilla. Pure sophistication. Perfect for this season.

What are you going to comprise into your Autumnal outfits this year? I hope it's the best season yet. Remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters.

# JACKETS WIN RIVALRY SHOWDOWN

BY BRIAN HODGES

There was a palpable sense of joy on Hanna's sideline after its 49-20 victory over city rival Westside last Friday night.

The Rams had won three in a row over the Jackets, outscoring them 143-57.

But this one was a different story. "When you win these games, it's such a sense of relief," said Hanna coach Jason Tone. "I'm really happy for our kids. I know it's big for our community. The kids executed really well.

"This is a rivalry so it's good to get a win. But it's not the end of our journey," Tone said. "The kids had belief (in winning)."

The statistics show that Hanna was overpowering up front, rushing for 348 yards, and averaging 8.1 yards per carry. Emari Nance had 68 yards on 9 carries. Brock Cole gained 25 yards and scored 2 touchdowns.

Quarterback Gavin Magin passed for 41 yards and ran for 43.

Hanna was coming off a loss to Byrnes in the season opener and fell behind, 13-0, Friday night. Westside hit a 51-yard scoring pass to Jae White to open the scoring.

It was time to make a move and Hanna found some momentum. The Jackets put together a 7-play, 63-yard drive to score and it was 13-7 Rams.

Westside, quarterbacked by freshman Bear Woods, couldn't respond and punted, and Jaylon Watson produced maybe the play of the game.

He caught a short punt and ran 48 yards for a touchdown. The team and the Hanna crowd were energized as Hanna took a 14-13 lead with eight minutes left in the first half.

"You know momentum is funny," Tone said. "It's a real thing. Once you get it, you can build on it."

The Rams responded with a brief drive but fumbled the ball away at the Hanna 29.

The Jackets, feeling more and more confident, took over, shook off a penalty, and marched 71 yards for a touchdown.

Magin mixed in a 10-yard completion to Keegan Strickland with power inside running plays. Nance scored from the 1 and it was 21-13 Hanna.

Westside never gave up on its passing game, but Woods was intercepted by Watson with 2 minutes left in the half.

"Watson is a [good] player," Tone said. "He's going to make a lot of plays for us."

The Jackets were on the go again. Elijah Grimes had a 12-yard burst up the middle. Nance scooted 22 yards inside the 10 and Watson scored from the 5.

It was 28-13, Hanna, at the half and Westside couldn't recover.

Rams coach Brian Lane gave credit to Hanna's team, but knew what he was up against.

"We've got four ninth-graders starting on offense," said Lane, whose team fell to 0-2. "We've got some players who are young, who are learning. We've just got to keep our head up and keep playing."

Westside has a pass-first mentality, and Hanna knew what was coming. The defense, led by standout linebacker Walker Kelley, constantly pressured Woods and had several sacks.

"That's what we wanted to do," said Kelley. "We knew we had to rattle him."

Kelley, a senior, was enjoying the moment afterward.

"You know it feels good to finally beat those guys," he said.

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# Ancestry

BY RICH OTTER

If you are not afraid of an answer you may find, one of the most interesting, and often exciting adventures you may ever undertake, is to examine your personal history. As amazing as you may be, you didn't just pop into a world waiting for your appearance. If you have the courage to seek where you actually came from, there are those who can help get you started on, or continue, a fascinating journey.

You have an opportunity to go to a jamboree, a Genealogical Jamboree where there will be exhibits and tables with folks ready and willing to show you what can be found and how you can get started or continue your quest. The two major players will be the Anderson Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Society and the Church of the Latter-Day Saints which has a non-denominational, long history, of seeking ancestors through their well-known FamilySearch division. They have the largest collection of genealogical records in the world.

There are a number of other organizations helping in such research but, particularly for a new-comer, these two organizations offer their help as a community service and can be of great assistance. Others may be used along the way as you may determine appropriate for your search and you can be given advice and help, as to how to use them.

You may think a study of genealogy a dull activity of just making a list of ancestors for your records, but there are many surprises that always occur. It is not just a listing of names. They represent people, real people, who have come from many different places and situations from throughout the world. They have done different things you will discover, some may be bad, some good, but always interesting. They have had courage to



Anderson Latter-Day Saints Research Room

even get to where you are today. You will be surprised.

It will not be just your parents or grand-parents. It may well go back hundreds of years. Hopefully, you will have some personal memories of stories that have passed down and they will be valuable to be preserved for those who come after you, to know what they did and why. You don't have to be a historical genius or a great writer. It can be a simple procedure, following formats that have stood the test of time.

FamilySearch maintains a free library in Salt Lake City, Utah, accessible through the Jesus Christ Church of Latter-Day Saints in Anderson. Their workshop is open to the public, free of charge, Wednesday evenings each week. The Anderson County Genealogical Society is open for research with free assistance on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week and as otherwise available with special appointments. It provides help and free access to most commercial genealogical sites.

With common interests and goals, the two organizations have come together with what may be the start of an annual program to acquaint residents with available genealogical research. Representatives Alan MacDonald, as the local Temple & Family History representative and Shirley Phillips, the Anderson Genealogical Society President, with a host of helpers working with their individual organizations have joined forces to offer help and assistance to Anderson residents in starting, or peer-

ing in greater depth, into their family histories.

Alan MacDaniel said the church is equipped with computer access for drawing materials directly from FamilySearch archives. Some of the information in the files cannot be obtained through normal internet research because of copywrite restrictions, but can be reached with the computer access available at the church facility.

MacDonald indicated his strongest interest is with regard to having children exposed to their family history. It has helped children understand and be comfortable with themselves, knowing who they are by learning about their ancestors. They can relate their personal



Anderson Genealogical Society

experiences to those who came before them.

Shirley Phillips explained that the first Genealogical Jamboree will be held at The Church of the Latter-Day Saints at 412 Harden Road in Anderson, on Saturday, September 27, 2025, from 10:00 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. The Genealogical Chapter space is so filled with materials it would not have room for such a program and the church has convenient and attractive facilities and parking, in an easy to reach setting with a room capable of accommodating a number of visitors.

Phillips said it is a rare opportunity to unite two organizations seeking to help you unlock secrets of your personal history.



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# IF YOU FEED THEM ...

"I've had this feeder out for awhile," said my friend somewhat dejectedly, "and I can't seem to attract any birds." I looked out at her setup and saw two major difficulties that would probably prevent birds from being attracted to it--and thought of a couple of other items she could add that might also increase her chances.

First of all, she was feeding a generic wild bird seed mix. Yes, wild bird seed mix is the cheapest blend out there, but it's mostly filler. Most birds are not attracted to red or golden millet, flax, or other fillers and often scratch the millet out onto the ground to get to what they love. I highly recommend using black oil sunflower seed as the primary offering in a feeder. It's easy to find in stores, and birds feast on it.

Sometimes specialized seeds will attract specific species. Painted buntings, the brilliant birds seen in the Lowcountry as far inland as Columbia, come to white millet. Safflower seed is attractive to cardinals and other desirable birds (and it deters squirrels as another benefit). So alternatives are out

there – but go for sunflower seed as the main food offered.

The other major drawback I saw in my friend's set-up was that her feeder was completely out in the open. That's actually good; however, no cover was available nearby. Instinct tells the birds that they need a place to go quickly when Mr.

Hawk comes looking for his own meal! They are aware of their surroundings, and this yard had no bushes, trees, or shrubs anywhere close by. No cover in the area probably means few birds.

Along with sunflower seed and putting our feeders in an area with some cover, we like to put out a couple of suet feeders, sold as little wire containers in many stores. Suet is available for purchase as pre-made cakes; recipes are also out there for making the stuff at home. I take the easier route and buy

the cakes. Woodpeckers adore suet, so putting it out there can really help bring them in, as well as attract other good birds.

One more attractant: If possible, put out a bird bath or other source of water. A fountain set-up with continuously dripping water is even better. (We've never had a fountain, but maybe one day!) Some birds will come just to get water, that may not come for food. A couple of years ago, I happened to glance out my window and saw a yellow-throated warbler at our bird bath. It didn't stay long, but it was a life-list bird for me and a big treat to see. And it didn't come for the food source – it came for the water.

This perspective is what has worked for us here in upstate South Carolina—We live on the west side of Anderson, and often have 30+ species a year. Other locales may have different attractants. But using sunflower seeds, putting out suet, making sure there is cover nearby, and including a water source should greatly help anyone's chances of attracting quality birds to their home. I hope my friend is reading this!



Ann K. Bailes





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# PRIZE INSIDE

The first cereal to come with a prize inside was Kellogg's PEP Wheat Flakes. The prize was a metal button with a steel pin and pictured a comic character such as Superman, Moon Mullins, or Little Orphan Annie.

This button could be poured right into your cereal bowl, and there could be someone out there today who was mad that they didn't get their Superman button but had swallowed it without seeing it. Some of you may remember when cereal just came in a box with no inner bag to protect the contents.

In the early 1970s, the government enacted the Child Proof Packaging law. They tested their

new packaging on 5 to 8-year-olds in their own homes and found that if a kid wants to get what's inside, they will get it. The law was rewritten and said that if 85% of kids could not open the package in five minutes, it could be called Child-Resistant, but never Child-Proof.

In the 1960s, laundry detergents came in boxes; Tide, Oxydol, Cheer, and ALL were just a few of the popular powdered soaps. DUZ would not get your clothes as clean as the others, but they offered a Free Golden Wheat patterned dish, glass, saucer, or cup in every box. Sure, you would lose half the detergent trying to get the cup out of the box, and your clothes looked a little dingy, but after you bought 20 or so boxes of DUZ, you had a complete dinner set.

As a kid, I was a bit confused about why the cereal box I saw on TV was black and white, but in the



grocery store, it was in bright, vivid colors. I'm convinced that before I could read, I recognized the words, "PRIZE INSIDE". It didn't matter that the name of the cereal was Sugar Frosted Oak Bark; if those words were on the box, I had to have it. Yes, my mom was mad that

I wouldn't eat it, but I had a brand new one-inch-tall dinosaur to play with for the next five minutes.

Back then, there were no warning labels on the cereal box stating that it contained small parts and should be kept away from children six and under. Cap'n Crunch once had a

prize of a tiny treasure chest that, when opened, revealed five small gold plastic coins. To a five-year-old, these coins looked like candy, but the real problem was that they were coated with a shiny lead paint. It's of little wonder that kids of my generation had skin that even Superman couldn't see through.

Molasses, peanuts, popcorn, and a prize. These are the ingredients that launched the first and most iconic box with a prize inside, Cracker Jacks. The prizes were small trinkets, rings, plastic animals, temporary tattoos, and just about any choking hazard you can think of. You can still get a prize with a box of Cracker Jacks, but it's not inside. What you get now is a QR code that you scan with your phone and then taken to a website where you can play vintage games. It's nothing like digging through sticky popcorn and peanuts searching for treasure. To me, Cracker Jacks were more of a choking hazard than the prize I found inside, but that's coming from a Fiddle-Faddle fan.

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# Charleston resident Hairfield talks hurricanes

*You've lived in Charleston your whole life. What would you say were the most memorable hurricanes you've been through?*

The first hurricane I have memory of is Hurricane Gracie which blew in on September 29, 1959. I was 7 years old. My parents and our family of 5 boys lived on McCants Drive in the Old Village of Mt. Pleasant, which was not far from the Charleston Harbor. My grandparents lived on King Street in downtown Charleston, but would not even consider crossing the old 2 lane Grace Memorial Bridge (better known to us as the "Cuppa Rivah" Bridge) to come and stay with us during the storm after the warnings were broadcast about the hurricane.



**Kim Hairfield**

When Hurricane Gracie made landfall, it came in around St. Helena Island near Beaufort at low tide. Although the northern side of a hurricane sustains the most damage, having it hit at low tide was literally a lifesaver. Damage between Beaufort and Charleston was substantial. We were without power for many days, stores were quickly emptied of food, and schools were closed so you can imagine the chaos and fun in a house with five boys - not my mother's favorite memory. My father worked for Southern Bell as the supervisor for all phone service in Mt. Pleasant, Sullivan's Island, and the Isle of Palms so he reported to work as soon as the storm passed and worked almost non-stop for weeks afterward, while we were left to wreak havoc in the house and the neighborhood.

I have no recollection of ever being afraid or anxious about that hurricane, but can pull up a few dusty memories of cooking on charcoal grills outside, playing with my brothers and neighborhood friends in the flooded streets, having candles in the house at night, and getting to be out of Catholic school without the nuns hovering over us like watchdogs - we were free!

Of course, the most impactful hurricane in my memory is Hurricane Hugo, which made a direct hit straight into Charleston harbor on September 22 in 1989. Although it had been categorized as a Category 5 storm with wind speeds of 140 mph as it was approaching Charleston, being a "native" I had no intention of evacuating as everyone from the governor to local officials were calling for - that was only for people who had not grown up here and were not accustomed to weathering the conditions of storms characteristic of our area. Boy, had I miscalculated!

As the storm approached in the hours before it reached Charleston, I remember being energized in getting my supplies together, preparing our house (even moving ALL of our furniture from the first floor upstairs with a friend from Charlotte), securing everything outside, packing up my wife Barbara and our 2 young children, ages 6 and 3, and sending them off to safety at the Bailes family home in Anderson. Then, with my family safe, my utility belt strapped on, in possession of a new weather radio, and my flashlight charged, I thought I was ready for another hurricane.

Our house was built on what was at one time a small island set in the middle of marshland along the Ashley River, which had been connected to a mainland neighborhood by a man-made causeway in the 1960s - a little piece of paradise with only room for 7 houses and scenic Charleston water views. Later that day, the police rode across our causeway with bullhorns blaring a "mandated evacuation" by the Charleston County Police Department instructing everyone to vacate their homes for safety reasons due to the approaching storm and the extreme probability of wind and storm surge damage. Again, a message not meant for seasoned natives. So, everyone evacuated. But, standing in our street, wearing my utility belt and armed with my charged flashlight, I assured our neighbors as they were driving away that I was staying and would keep an eye on everyone's property.

As the afternoon wore on and the winds were picking up, I kept checking outside and monitoring the weather coverage on TV to track the storm as it moved to hit Charleston. As night fell and the power was now out, I sat on my back porch overlooking the Ashley River and watched transformers light up the sky as they were blowing up all over the city. Charleston had fallen into a blackness like one would only see when deep in the woods or far away from city lights. Unfamiliar sounds were all around me. Tall pine trees that once stood on our island began snapping off like toothpicks and became flying projectiles in the air crashing into other trees, houses, and hitting the ground so hard it began shaking like an earthquake. I felt my way upstairs and lay in the darkness, now praying that I might actually make it through the night. The relentless pounding pressure from the winds made our house feel like it was compressing and expanding - almost breathing. I heard our screened back porch being ripped off and felt the pull

on the roof being tugged by the winds, expecting it to lift off at any minute. At that time, I felt my way back downstairs to the only room in our house with no windows - a small guest bathroom - closed the door and sat on the floor to wait out whatever was coming...

*What is the eye of the hurricane actually like?*

After what seemed an eternity, an eerie silence fell all around - it was almost deafening. I realized that it was the eye of the storm so I pushed open the door to the darkness and found my way to an exit. What I saw outside was something I will never forget. Looking up into the silence, there was an opening in the clouds, and I saw brilliant stars like one would see on the clearest of nights. But, the waters had risen so high that the elevated deck to our house was almost covered and threatened that we were about to lose everything. As the knot of helplessness rose in my throat, the winds began to pick up again, the eye of the storm was passing over, shifting the winds in the other direction. Just as quickly as the waters had risen over the banks, they began to subside from the winds blowing in the other direction.

*You've always stayed in your home to face the wrath of these storms. What are signs that you pay attention to the most?*

The things that I keep an eye on the most are the tides and the travel speed and direction of the storm. It is vital to calculate the time and location of projected landfall, along with the tidal chart for what the surge will be at the time of landfall.

There are countless stories about Hugo. What remains as vivid to me is waking up the next morning (after falling asleep finally about 4:30 a.m.) to the sound of helicopters and chainsaws and generators. When I stumbled outside, the sky was crystal blue, but the land was totally wrecked - no leaves on the trees,



those that were still standing. Hundreds of trees were down everywhere, and the causeway that connected us to the mainland was completely blocked by piles of trees - no way out. I remember a Coast Guard helicopter flying low overhead. He saw me, and I gave a "thumbs up" signal. He nodded and waved; then turned to fly in the other direction. After a couple of days of being isolated and unable to leave, a group of guys with a backhoe - total strangers from Beaufort - showed up and began moving the trees off the causeway and opening up other streets in the neighborhood. Although we were without power and had few opportunities to take showers after working hard clearing debris, it was probably one of the greatest times of camaraderie I have ever experienced. Neighbors got together in the streets in the evenings, contributing food from freezers and cooking on community grills for anyone who wanted to eat, sharing coolers and drinks, and listening to music on battery operated devices. Since cell phones were not around, people gathered, talked and laughed, and the stories grew as the evenings wore on. This city is kind of known for that - when tragedy strikes, people can come together in peace and love.



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## THE GARDEN SHOP

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While talking gardening with a friend, she referred to her weed garden. She did not know what the prolific undesirable is but decided she had no choice but to live with it. During an early spring visit, she asked me to look at her weed garden. It was full of Florida betony (*Stachy floridana*). It is a fall/winter perennial that goes dormant once weather turns warm. There are weeds, and then there are weeds. A moment of panic set in because we have shared plants over the years. Florida betony is one weed that is not at my place. I remember when Roland Austin was on Making It Grow and was asked how to get rid of Florida betony, he always said "Move". Tiny nodule root things make pulling it practically ineffective because it is so easy to leave a piece behind. Chemicals are about the only choice. And then it's difficult.

A couple of years ago, I was allowed to dig plants from a friend's yard. I mainly wanted some azaleas. Parts of the yard were filled with something unknown. Seeing how prolifically it spread, it was clear I did not want it. The plant seemed vaguely familiar and identifying it piqued my interest. It reminded me of a plant I passed on lunch time walks. Except that one was purple. While bushhogging a short path in the woods, a plant stood out from everything else. It reminded me a bit of stinging nettle, which is in the woods here and there. Then, when reading Jason Reeves', University of Tennessee Extension Agent, garden designer, and more, Facebook post, not only bells, but alarms, started ringing. The plant vaguely familiar is perilla mint (*Perilla frutescens*) and it's highly invasive. Jason is fighting it on his farm. The azaleas from my friend's yard were grown in pots for two growing seasons to keep them quarantined, just in case. Knock on wood, nothing has sprouted in the ground around them. Perilla mint spreads by seeds. It does not run like most mints. It's not growing horribly in the woods, yet, and hopefully when the creek floods, it will keep it somewhat under control.

Perilla mint blooms with spikes of white to pale purple flowers late July, possibly into October. I did not see any blooming, but some were setting buds. Leaves can have a purple tint to the tops and bottoms. This is

where the common name, beefsteak, comes from. Some think it sort of resembles meat. Mississippi State's Extension site says 60 percent of seeds, stored at room temperature, can germinate after more than four years. It is unknown how long seeds stay viable in nature. I will absolutely keep a very close eye on those azaleas. Perilla mint grows in most any type of soil or light. Birds also scatter the seeds, therefore maybe it provides some benefit. Foliage has a bit of typical mint smell but slightly different. From Asia, perilla mint, sometimes called Shiso, has culinary uses. But it is toxic to cattle and other ruminant (grazing) animals. There is nothing I can do to control it in the woods. Hopefully it never makes it into the yard.

Maybe another highly invasive, Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*) will choke out perilla mint. Stilt grass thrives in shady, moist areas and is slowly encroaching into parts of the yard along the edge of the woods. It was intro-

duced from China as packing for porcelain. Seeds are tiny and are good hitchhikers on most anything. I'm sure deer are helping bring it out of the woods. As I track it around also. I think this one can be kept out of the yard though by cutting it before it goes to seed. Both perilla mint and stiltgrass are easy to identify in winter, as stiltgrass foliage stays after it has dried. Perilla mint bloom stalks do too. Both are annuals.

Be they come with plants from friends' gardens, plants bought in nurseries, from a lawn service that may cut your grass, or who knows where, weeds are part of life. It's just that some, as in this issue, are really, really bad.



Perilla mint foliage

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## WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PROTECT MY FAMILY?

ESD IS A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM ON UPSTATE LAKES. IF YOU HAVE A POWERED DOCK THAT IS OVER 5 YEARS OLD IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR DOCK TESTED FOR ESD. MOST OLDER DOCKS WERE WIRED USING CODES THAT ARE NOW OUTDATED, AND WILL NOT PROTECT YOU FROM ESD. IN MOST CASES THE OUTDATED WIRING IS THE CAUSE OF ESD. ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT CHILDREN AND WOMEN ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ESD BECAUSE THEIR BODIES ARE LESS TOLERANT OF CURRENT FLOWING THROUGH THEM WHILE IN THE WATER AND REACH TO TOUCH YOUR DOCK OR LADDER. REMEMBER, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE YOUR DOCK SAFE.

**WE WILL BE ON LAKE HARTWELL AND LAKE KEOWEE ALL SUMMER CONDUCTING ESD TESTING ON PRIVATE DOCKS. CALL: 864-238-5413 LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR DARRELL DEAN AND I WILL GET BACK TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS SCHEDULING AND PRICING.**





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## FROM THE SHELF

# On Blood Over Bright Haven by M.L. Wang



Sara Leady

Literature merit based on genre or target age group is something in the book world that endlessly annoys me. The idea that only books like Pulitzer winners are the highest (or only) form of literature is both ridiculous and pretentious. While the Pulitzer is what it is for a reason, sometimes it also takes itself too seriously, and the book is so “literary” that no one can actually make sense of it. This begs the question of what makes a book qualify as “literature,” and by literature, I mean more “worthy” or “smarter” than other books.

A lot of readers think a book written for children or teens can't have the same literary merit as books for adults. This relies on merit being tied to story complexity or big words, and that the experiences of a child are somehow less impactful or important than those of an adult. This ignores the bones of the story, and the conversation that's being had between the reader and the text. Shakespeare is widely accepted as a literary great, but is it his “big words” (see archaic jargon) or complexity (iambic migraine) that makes it great, or is it the actual story?

I see this a lot with genres too. I've waxed loquacious (see more archaic jargon) on the merits of romance novels, but it's not the only genre under a continuous smear campaign. I saw *Blood Over Bright Haven* by M.L. Wang on some list of great new “romantasies,” so

I grabbed it. The list lied. They put far too much emphasis on the “romance” (it's more of a footnote) and sort of ignored the true bones and beauty of the story. It was a good reminder of how some really incredible literature comes in unexpected packages.

*Blood Over Bright Haven* is a bit of everything rolled into one. If I had to pick bookish buzzwords I'd go with “dystopian” and “dark academia.” It has a society that's power and social structure is based around a group of ‘highmages’ who power the city, run industry, and hold the magical barrier around the city protecting the people of Tiran from ‘blight.’ The structure of the mages and the rules of their magic use are based in religion and their forebears' teachings. The base being that Tiranish are the chosen people and will continue to be, by maintaining these strict social and power structures.

Sciona has dedicated everything to being so magically adept that she will be the first woman ever admitted to the High Magistracy. Women have been deemed too emotional, fragile, or feeble-minded to be highmages. Thomil is a ‘blighter,’ having come from the other side of the barrier (barely escaping with his life), and is the lowest amongst society, barely even human. Sciona, being hazed by other highmages, is given Thomil, the janitor, as her assistant as she competes with other mages to create a spell to expand the magical barrier.

While both are social outsiders, they've lived vastly different lives and have vastly different understandings about what is wrong or right, and how having power, magical or social,

dictates the definition and rules for what, or who, is right. The conversation Wang creates around power dynamics by having Thomil and Sciona debate social structure, power, knowledge, and morality is a masterclass in philosophical debate. Through these debates they uncover hard truths, and it's how they respond to these challenges to their core of their beliefs that the true literary magic happens.

Wang deftly tackles sexism, classicism, fear

of the other (immigration), morality, and how we value power and knowledge as Thomil and Sciona grow as characters. She also poses the larger question of who decides the value of a person and who ultimately writes history—those in power. The amount of quotes I wished I could write down while listening and walking the dog was infuriating. One that stuck with me was, “Truth over delusion. Growth over comfort,” and how that can lead to broader thinking, or trap an entire society under a tyrannical rule without their even knowing it. *Blood Over Bright Haven* is a book that will continue to sit with me, and I'll read again, maybe even frequently.

## GAMAC TO HOST FOURTH ANNUAL JAZZ CLUB FUNDRAISER

Anderson, South Carolina — Sept. 2, 2025 — The Greater Anderson Musical Arts Consortium is hosting Ray McGee's Jazz Club on Sept. 25, 2025, at the Bleckley Station in downtown Anderson.

Now in its fourth year, the event has become known for its cool vibe and great jazz entertainers. This year's Jazz Club headliner is Will Matic & Friends, with special guests Ray McGee, Wanda Johnson and more.

Tickets and tables are on sale now. All proceeds from the event benefit GAMAC, whose mission is to provide the very best in community musical performing arts and education.

You can get more information about Ray

McGee's Jazz Club, as well as GAMAC's symphony and chorale concert seasons, at [gamac.org](http://gamac.org).

Individual tickets or a table of friends for the jazz event can be purchased at [www.gamac.org/buy-special-event-tickets](http://www.gamac.org/buy-special-event-tickets).

The Greater Anderson Musical Arts Consortium's concerts, events and programs are a favorite way for residents and visitors in the Anderson community and surrounding area to enjoy, explore, and create music that excites, inspires, heals and unites. GAMAC is funded in part by the South Carolina Arts Commission which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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# A conversation with SCDMV official Lauren Hinnant Phillips

*As Director of Driver Services at SCDMV, tell us in a nutshell what that entails.*

More than 4.2 million people in South Carolina have a driver's license or identification card issued by the SCDMV. I lead the division of the SCDMV that sets the policies and procedures around all aspects of our credentialing program, to include overseeing the operations of convictions, suspensions, compliances, commercial licenses, international customers, and drivers with medical needs. I have a few specialty teams such as one that ensures other states have knowledge of problem drivers who may be moving from South Carolina elsewhere and one that trains the license examiners and third-party testers across the state how to administer our driving tests. My day-to-day involves working with a great team of SCDMV staffers, but also courts, attorneys, law enforcement, and the Legislature; along with several other entities both government and associations that integrate into the SCDMV.

The SCDMV is the agency that nearly every other agency and entity relies on to get it right. I frequently tell people that your driver's license is far more than a license to drive. While it's that, yes, it's a license to register your children for school or sports activities, it's a license to board a domestic, commercial flight (assuming it's a REAL ID), it's a license to buy age-restricted products, it's a license to access government benefits and healthcare services, and so on.

*Trace your career steps from college to the present.*

I graduated from the University of South Carolina in 2011 with a BA in Journalism in Mass Communications. I went back to school in 2016 to earn my Masters in Strategic Communication. My career started at the CBS station - WBTW News 13 - in Myrtle Beach as an overnight producer. After six months I became the morning live reporter. Nine months later, I began anchoring and producing the morning and evening weekend shows. Myrtle Beach will always hold a special place in my heart. Not only did I earn such an understanding of local government - Horry County is a special place - but I met my husband.

I left TV in 2015 to move to Columbia, and have been working for the State since. My first job with the State was handling Public Relations for a small children's mental health agency called the Continuum of Care. At the time, COC was under the Governor's Office but then transitioned under the Department of Administration. I joined the SCDMV as the Chief of Strategic Communications and Community Affairs in September 2016, and I

served in that role for about three years before becoming the Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs. I represented the agency at the State Legislature, as well as led several strategic management units at the SCDMV.

In October 2023, I decided I needed a better understanding of federal relations, and was graciously onboarded at the South Carolina Department of Transportation as the Director of Federal Affairs. I worked with our congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to secure federal grant funding for transformational infrastructure projects, as well as ensure full understanding of federal impacts to South Carolina's transportation program. I am such a better citizen from my time at SCDOT.

In January 2025, I returned to the SCDMV in my current capacity. Our Executive Director appointed me to this role, and I've been welcomed back by him and the other members of our executive leadership team - people I have known and worked with for nearly a decade. We have an incredible team working for the people of South Carolina. We try to solve hard problems, and I think we do it well a lot of times.

*What is your strong suit that you rely on?*  
I want to know the 'why' and the 'how'



behind what we do - versus just one or the other. Knowing how to reinstate driving privileges following a suspension is a different skill set than knowing why someone is eligible to reinstate their driving privileges following a suspension. I like to think I have a good handle on both.

*What has been an unexpected turn of events in your life?*

Caring about, let alone being involved in, transportation policy is something I never had on my bingo card, but it is an exciting space and truly impacts every single person. I love it. I am a student of it. Identity verification, and all the security considerations that come with it, plus funding for roads, bridge, and other infrastructure - transportation is what connects people to people. The SCDMV gives people a very impactful privilege - driving - and with that comes a great responsibility, a compact if you will, between the state and

the driver that you will do this safely and to the best of your ability. That goods and commodities are safely transported to support our state's economy. That loved ones continue to get the chance to see their loved ones.

*Who are those who have been the greatest influence in life?*

As I've progressed in my career, I think about this question a lot. My parents, of course, instilled such a work ethic in me that I carry with a lot of pride - sometimes too much, frankly! I think about my grandparents, too; my dad's parents have both passed away, and my mom's dad died in 2015. I know they would be so proud. When my paternal grandmother was still living, she frequently asked if I still worked at "the Highway Department" (if you know, you know!).

*Your roots are in Anderson, tell us about your own family in Columbia.*

I have three sweet children - two boys and a girl - Henry, John, and Lydia. My husband, Andrew, and I are so undeserving of their sweet souls. When we aren't working, we're doing all we can to keep up with them between baseball, soccer, and a special network of friends in the Midlands that we get to share our lives with. This State is so special to us. Andrew is a converted South Carolinian who grew up in Georgia and attended UGA (we don't hold that against him), but I'm so thankful my family gets to enjoy South Carolina. I hope their affinity for South Carolina grows throughout their lives - as it has mine.

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