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'DOING IT OLD SCHOOL'

Local resident keeping the past alive working mules

Steven Fisher is a driver, both professionally and as a hobbyist. He makes his living as a truck driver, often hauling heavy equipment and machinery. In his free time, though,



Kim von Keller

he keeps it old school, driving a vehicle from an earlier century: a people hauler wagon pulled by his three mules. It's an interest he's had since

he was a child, one he shares as a volunteer with his hometown of Iva and with the Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries in Greenwood.

Steven's interest in mules goes back more than 25 years.

"I was a little boy in Iva, maybe six or seven, and I used to watch an old man across the road plow with a



Steven Fisher with a team of mules

mule. Finally, he asked me if I would like to learn how to plow like that, but there was a catch: If he taught me, I had to promise to keep on working mules."

Eventually, Steven would buy his

own mules, three stocking-legged mules bred from jack donkeys and Tennessee Walking Horse mares. (Mules are born with an odd number of chromosomes, making them incapable of breeding.)

"I had gone through a bunch of horses, and I ended up with a mule I didn't even want. A friend called and said he had a mule he thought would be a great fit for me. The mule's name is John Henry, and I

started riding him. Eventually, I wanted a second mule so I could have a team, and I bought Jesse James. I recently added a third mule, General Lee, and I drive them three abreast. The funny thing is that now, I'd pick a mule over a horse any day. Mules seem to love going out and being seen and petted. A mule is more surefooted and willing to please. If they like you, they'll do anything for you... although if they don't, somebody's going to the hospital."

Steven started donating his time and skill as a mule driver at the annual Iva Depot Day Heritage Celebration.

"Steven started working with us more than five years ago," says Tim Taylor, Iva's city clerk and event coordinator. "During the Depot Day festival, he and his mules take people on wagon rides all over town. He decorates his wagon for Halloween on Main, and he sometimes carries Santa during our Christmas parade. Steven is local, and everyone in Iva knows and respects him and his family. We appreciate him sharing his time and hope to work with him for years to come."

Steven is especially well known in Greenwood in connection with

SEE MULES ON PAGE 2

WESTSIDE GIRLS HOOPS ON FIRE

Hear that noise? Boom. It's the sound of the Westside High School girls basketball team crushing it. They are winning a lot. Their record as of Jan. 22 is 17-1, 4-0 in the region.



Brian Hodges

They are the No. 1-ranked team in AAAA.

On Jan. 20, the Rams demolished

Laurens 64-22 at home as part of a stretch of four games in five days. All wins.

They had traveled to Atlanta for the Martin Luther King tournament and got some work done. They defeated Oak Cliff Faith Family Academy, of Dallas, Texas, 59-42. Boom.

On Jan. 17, they defeated

Dorman 84-52. On Jan. 16, the Rams stopped Fountain Inn 67-38.

"We aren't worried about our ranking right now," Westside coach Jackie Roberts said. "Some like to talk about it on social media. But we are just trying to play our style of basketball."

The win over Laurens was classic Westside domination.

Khalia Hartwell, a 6-foot-5 junior, scored 10 points. Harmoni Earl, a 5-8 junior, had 10 from inside and outside and MaKyhia Paul, a 5-10 forward, added 10.

Laurens repeatedly turned the ball over, as Hartwell and 6-1

freshman Brooke Bryant clogged the middle. The Westside guards, led by Asia Clinkscapes, Tiana

Marshall, Earl, and Paul are good with pressure on the ball.

The formula -- repeatedly forcing turnovers and throwing a long outlet pass to a guard for a fast layup -- worked pretty well.

"We use a lot of players so depth isn't a problem," said Roberts, who briefly retired after winning two state championships in 2021 and 2022.

"I was concerned tonight (against Laurens) because we began to look tired, but at half-time I made a point of telling them to up their energy."



Roberts is satisfied with her team's progress so far.

"I like our group. The girls have mostly played together for a number of years.

"But we've got to keep our minds on the goal of getting back to the state tournament," Roberts said. "I feel like our players are pretty focused."

Many of the Rams players were on the team that lost in the AAAA final to North Augusta last year.

Westside would love to get another shot at them, but Roberts said there are plenty of obstacles ahead.

"We've got some good AAAA teams in our area," Roberts said. "Daniel, South Pointe and Camden all have very good teams."

The challenge -- right now -- is to take care of business, Roberts said, using the old cliché: "We take it one game at a time."

Mules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Connie Maxwell Christmas.

"Over the three days of the Christmas lights, I give wagon rides to kids and adults. It's cold, super cold every year, and I probably take 2,500 people through the light display. It's volunteer work, but I try to give something back to the community, just slowing down the world a little bit. Besides, if the kids enjoy riding in the wagon, that's payment enough for me."

Lauren Jones is the equine director at Connie Maxwell.

"Steven is one of the many wonderful volunteers we pull from for Connie Maxwell Christmas, when we have three nights of our light show, petting zoo, living nativity, and hot chocolate. Everyone looks forward to the wagon rides, and his upbeat personality adds so much excitement. He's just a fun person to be around!"

In addition to his volunteer work, which sometimes includes driving his wagon as a funeral hearse, Steven participates in wagon trains across the country. He's driven the Alabama Wagon Train, which starts in Centre, Alabama, and takes 11 days to complete. He's taken part in wagon trains in Round Oak, Georgia, and at the Whetstone Horse Camp



in Oconee County South Carolina.

"We have 10-15 wagons everywhere we go. Wagon trains started for fellowship and friendship, almost like a motorcycle club but not as gritty. We get together and have dinner every night. I'm 33, probably the youngest in our group who work mules, and most of the other wagon-trainers are over 60. It's just a great way to disconnect from the world."

It's clear that over the last 25 years, Steven has lived up to the pledge he made as a child to keep working with mules.

"I enjoy saddle-riding with my mules, taking people for rides in my wagon, and driving in wagon trains. Just like my neighbor taught me, I hook my mules to a plow to plow my garden. I have tractors, but I like doing it old school."

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*ADORABLE PIECES
FROM NORA FLEMING*

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH SERIES, PART 3



MARY-CATHERINE
McCLAIN
RINER

Recently, I completed my Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) certification and wanted to share some key information I learned during this experience and overall process. As individuals prepare for parenthood, there are some key facts to share versus myths that need to be debunked around maternal mental health. It is important to remember that pregnancy-related mental health disorders are known as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs)—and are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth.

PERIMENOPAUSE: WHAT IS ACTUALLY TRUE

1) Hormones just “drop” suddenly. The reality is that hormones fluctuate widely during perimenopause. Estrogen can spike higher than in puberty and then crash, while progesterone often declines first—therefore creating an imbalance. Sleep disruption is also extremely common and leads to additional mood swings.

2) Hormone therapy is dangerous for everyone. The reality is that modern hormone therapy is much safer and effective compared to older formulations used in studies back in the 1990’s. Hormone treatment can improve symptoms while also protecting heart, brain, and bone health. Non-hormonal options exist too. Similarly, estrogen changes impact tissue and this can be resolved with the right treatment.

3) Weight gain is inevitable. The reality is that metabolism shifts with aging and hormones, yet weight gain is not guaranteed. More commonly, distribution changes (e.g., abdomen) yet protein, resistance training, and mus-

cle preservation make a significant difference.

4) Perimenopause has always been common knowledge. The reality is that 50 years ago, women weren’t given language for this transition. Medical research rarely studied it, physicians did not name or talk much about this process, and society often treated it as a private decline rather than a developmental phase. Mental health symptoms were chalked up to nerves, hysteria, or mid-life crisis. Women often took pills or other substances, or filed for divorce. While medical research discussed hot flashes, little research explored cognition, mood, sleep, and libido. Symptoms were not milder, yet talking about women’s bodies was taboo.

5) Perimenopause is the end of fertility. The reality is that while fertility declines, ovulation is unpredictable and it is surprisingly common for women to have unexpected pregnancies as cycle irregularities does not mean ovulation stopped.

6) Women just need to “push” through it. The reality of sleep loss, mood shifts, physical pain, and cognitive changes have real impacts

on quality of life and work performance. Addressing symptoms is not a weakness, yet it is preventative.

7) The mental health intersection. During this time of physical and physiological change, women will experience significant identity shifts (e.g., body image, fertility, sexuality), structural shifts (e.g., caregiving load, career demands, financial pressure), and medical changes (e.g., joint pain, mobility restrictions).

8) Perimenopause is the beginning of the end. The reality is that many women describe post-menopause as one of the best times in their lives—when they discover agency, more clarity, less self-censoring, and more alignment of values.

Mary-Catherine McClain Riner, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.S., is a Licensed Psychologist with Riner Counseling, LLC. Visit www.rinercounseling.com or call 864-608-0446.



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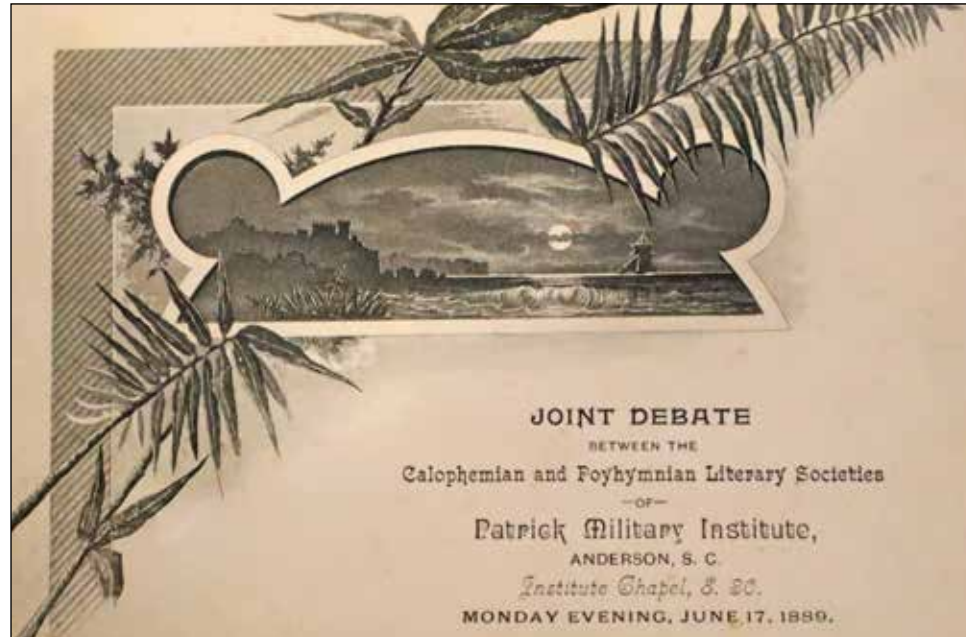
Debating

BY RICH OTTER

Communities had no radio, television, and often not even a newspaper in the late 1700s and on through the 1800s. Entertainment was generally not available except for a traveling circus or show of some sort in larger communities. Probably the most news, discussion and knowledge received was at the livery stable. Depending upon the source, that could be very questionable.

What sprouted around the country, were debating clubs or societies. It is not known specifically if that occurred in Anderson on a local level, but, in one form or another, it is certainly possible, if not likely. Such organizations took various forms. In some cases, a club or society might break into teams with positions being presented pro and con on an issue while other team members acted as judges.

It might simply be that two members would be presenting opposing sides with other club members making their own issue determinations, or be open to include any interested members of the community. Sometimes, one member may have acted as the devil's advocate such as regarding a subject such as slavery. Of course, political presentations were common and churches certainly presented their beliefs with vigor. Political and church



Patrick Military Institute Debate

offerings were usually one-sided, but were, none-the-less, advocating positions.

Debating came over from England in the mid-to-late 1700s and one of the first societies in a university was at Princeton, in New Jersey. Another early group was at the University of North Carolina.

The debaters in a community were generally considered as addressing pressing issues affecting those directly involved. The more philosophical problems common in academic settings would not have been as important as

the practical issues facing local inhabitants.

Grasshoppers, boll weevils, soil depletion, weather conditions and how they should be attacked would have been of primary importance to the farmer. Farmers would also have been challenged by trains crashing through their property, endangering their livestock and children and keeping them awake at night.

City folk had other concerns. They had to house drunks, control growth of the community, provide passable streets and sanitation along with other amenities. Law and order had to be

preserved. Their problems could conflict with those of the agriculture community but resolution was needed to maintain harmony.

They faced practical matters to be debated and resolved. It was necessary to understand the complexities and seek solutions. It was far better to reach understandings through debate rather than wait until situations became overwhelming and subject to aggravated confrontation.

Anderson's Patrick Military Institute held debates to prepare students for life in 1889 and educate and entertain the public. It encouraged community attendance.

The preparation for a debate in itself could open opportunity for resolution. For the participants, interaction assisted problem solving, developing creativity, critical thinking and the ability to negotiate. It was credited with increasing leadership, social and thinking skills. What was perhaps most important was that the procedure benefitted both the presenter and the individuals to whom it was presented.

Such discussions were not like current television where motivation for presentations would impact maintenance of a participant's position or personal advancement. Debating was presenting issues that needed to be resolved by those participating and likely those attending. Interest would be greater for resolution than personal aggrandizement.

Community debating generally served a different purpose than debating on an academic level. It was entertainment, but also a realistic approach to solve problems encountered in the community.

FROM THE SHELF

ON MATT HAIG

Matt Haig is probably most famous for his novel *The Midnight Library*, but he has written several other novels along with some non-fiction collections. Haig's nonfiction mostly falls within the memoir and 'self-help' arena, but I might argue that they're first and foremost philosophy. A major theme in Haig's writing is the intentional act of living. Haig has struggled with depression and anxiety for most of his life and at one point was close to committing suicide. Close to the point of his being one step shy of going off a cliff while in Ibiza. This time of his life serves as an anchor and a driving force for his writing.

From his standing on that cliff ledge, Haig writes with a raw and humanizing veracity. I think it's this experience that gives his work such a

raw and veracious look at life and the different ways we can choose to live it, both good and bad. The *Midnight Library* examines regret



Sara Leady

by letting a person replay each regret or moment in their life, letting them see where a different choice might have taken them. His latest, *The Life Impossible* focuses on guilt and grief and the ways we can cage ourselves through drowning in either.

The Life Impossible focuses on Grace, a retired math teacher, widow, and mother whose son died as a child. Her life is stagnant and she

is trapped with guilt over the death of her son and how it was her fault. Grace thinks she's a bad person and thus does not deserve good things. Grace's life is turned inside out when an acquaintance from years before leaves her a beach house in Ibiza. Having only had one meaningful interaction with the woman years ago, Grace buys a one-way ticket to Ibiza hoping to unravel the mystery of her long-lost friend, including the mystery of how she died.

When Grace arrives in Ibiza, it's nothing like she expected, including her being left a note with specific instructions of who she should seek out on the island. As Grace both follows and blatantly ignores the different instructions, she unravels the life of her friend which also forces Grace to face her own life choices and the path she's chosen to take with her life. At 72, Grace explores coral reefs, cheats at poker, and has an interac-

tion with a potential alien entity.

I know it sounds a bit bonkers but that's also part of the magic of Haig's writing. The whimsy, outlandish experiences, and eccentric characters are both the balance and foil to the darker themes of depression. Accepting the reality of "aliens" and the beauty of their existence is Grace's precursor to accepting herself—her grief and guilt and how they've shaped her but don't have to continue to entrap her. Her experience honestly reminds me a bit of the movie *The Abyss* (it's "ancient"—literally as old me) and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio's character's encounter with a similar (ish) version of a deep-sea alien entity. It's a life changing experience just like a full acceptance of self, both our good and bad, is a life changing experience.

I'm not a big believer in the "100 Books You Have to Read Before You Die" lists, but if I made one of my

own, Haig's writing would definitely be included. I loved *The Midnight Library*, but *The Life Impossible* focusing on Grace, a woman in her 70s finding forgiveness for herself and having a new understanding and approach to the life she has left is a pretty powerful message itself. There's a lot more to the book (obviously) and Haig touches on a lot of other topics, like the importance of reading and how a book can change your life, but Grace's journey of a different self-discovery is what really sat with me.

Between my personal place in life and everything going on in the world at large, Haig's writing serves as both a balm and a reminder about the vastness of life even when it feels bleak and unrelenting. I'll leave you with a quote from the book that stuck with me, "You are not here to be perfect. None of us are. You are here to live."



Pictured, from left, are Sid Collins, President & CEO YMCA of Easley, Pickens & Powdersville; Rusty Burns, Anderson County Administrator; Dan T Cooper, Executive Director of External Affairs, Tri-County Technical College; Mike Gambrell, South Carolina State Senator Dist. #4; Jimmy Wilson, Honoree; Don Chapman, SC House of Representatives Dist. #8; Jimmy Davis, Anderson County Council Dist. 6.

Jimmy Wilson honored with the Order of the Palmetto

As a businessman and entrepreneur, Jimmy Wilson has worked to provide leadership in the economic development of Anderson County for over 70 years. His efforts to enrich and enhance the lives of area residents embody the concepts of development and growth in his hometown of Piedmont.

As president of Wilson Inc., he owned, developed and managed Upstate Industrial Park in Piedmont. Upstate Industrial Park was developed in 1992 by Mr. Wilson and was the first industrial park in Anderson County. It encompasses 130 acres and currently houses 21 buildings with 1.2 million square feet of space. The companies located in the park employ over 750 people. The current owners are now expanding the park with three (3) new 20,000 sq. ft. spec. buildings for Anderson County.

Recognizing the benefits of a location in South Carolina and particularly Anderson County, both US and International Companies have chosen to open locations or move their headquarters to the Upstate. Current operating plant headquarters are in Michigan, New Jersey, Georgia, Ohio, California South Carolina, Germany and the Netherlands.

Over the years Mr. Wilson has also worked to bring business to the town of Piedmont. Those include Capital Bank and Trust, Sun Trust Bank, Hardees, Eckerd's, Riverside Nursing Home, Freds,



Jimmy Wilson, daughter Angela Wilson Boggs and her family.

Dollar General Market, Domino's, Twice the Ice and others. The Piedmont Center currently houses the Piedmont Post Office and the Dollar General Market.

When asked about bringing business to the Upstate his answer has always been, "Good jobs are what it's all about and we are blessed to be able to bring jobs to our area." In 2008, Mr. Wilson was recognized for his aggressiveness to bring new business and jobs by being awarded

the SC Ambassador for Economic Development for Anderson County by Governor Mark Sanford for outstanding commitment to economic development.

On September 16, 2025 Mr. Wilson was recognized by Anderson County Council with a resolution on the occasion of his 90th Birthday and his lifetime of service to Piedmont, Anderson County, and the State of South Carolina.

Prior to opening Upstate

Industrial Park, Mr. Wilson was a subcontractor for Duke Power, South Carolina Electric and Gas, Broad River Co-Op, and Laurens Co-Op for twenty-three years. Wilson Inc. employed one hundred people who cleared right-of-ways and installed transmission lines.

Along with his father, James C Wilson, Sr., he opened his first business in Piedmont at the age of 22. Together they grew Wilson's Purina Feed and Seed into a major supplier

to area farmers and businesses in the Upstate. They received numerous regional and national awards from Purina during operation. The business grew to five locations, which included three fertilizer plants prior to being sold to Gold Kist in 1975.

Known in the community as a humble and giving man who is always looking for ways to help, in 2021 he decided to share a gift with the local YMCA of Powdersville. For many years Mr. Wilson worked assembling what would evolve into the largest collection of John Deere tractors in the southeast. Many hours of heart and effort went into assembling this incredible collection of over 100 tractors. With the same spirit and passion, he made the decision to auction this collection to provide the seed money for building a Child Development Center for the community. Under the direction of the YMCA of Powdersville, the Wilson Child Development Center will become a reality for families soon.

Jimmy Wilson was born on September 6, 1935 to James Coleman and Ruby Mae Gaillard Wilson in the Slabtown Community of Anderson County. He is the oldest of three children. Mr. Wilson currently resides in Piedmont on Wilson Farm. He has four children, seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. He is a member Mountain Springs Baptist Church Piedmont and turned 90 years old in 2025.

DESIGN ON A DIME

Do you have a room or space in your home that needs a refresh? It's that time of year that we all want to reconfigure our living spaces. We are bringing back the ever popular "Design on a Dime." One lucky person will win a free room make-over. We will bring in an interior design expert to redesign and revamp a room using only the things you have in your home, without spending a dime.



Anne Gallant

Anne Gallant of Elizabeth O'Herron Interiors in Beaufort, has agreed to donate her time and talents to get you started on a fresh look for the new year. So, take a look around your house and see if there is a room that could use a lift. Don't waste another minute. To enter, just email your photos to ElectricCityNews@gmail.com. And may the most deserving room win!




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THE GARDEN SHOP

Professor Sargent and the second kick of a mule



SUSAN
TEMPLE
master
gardener

During the last single digit cold spell, I did not do anything with plants in the garden shop area. These are plants rooted, divided from the yard for the Anderson Master Gardener plant sale, seeds started in pots, and plants I've bought waiting to figure out where they will live. Because I was a doofus and did nothing to help some of these plants then, I was later kicking myself as I lost a camellia cutting from Sally Abney Rose's yard. I had been nursing several cuttings for several years, and it was the only one to survive. It even set a bloom one year, but the plant being so small, the bloom was cut off to save its energy. A Professor Sargent camellia cutting that came from Grandmother Cooley's yard was also killed. Several cuttings had also been nursed for years. Thankfully, I was able to get more cuttings of Grandmother's Professor Sargent, and they are steadily growing. The garden shop is on the edge of the woods; leaves fall on and around the plants, and I thought they would be okay. I was quite peeved with myself.

Well, that mule ain't gonna kick me this time. Last Friday, lots of special babies were brought into the garage. Two loquats, grown from seed, that are now almost three feet tall. The big loquat in the yard has never produced fruit, but it's wonderfully fragrant blooms are a fall favorite.

Back in early fall, I ordered two different types of *cimicifuga*, common name bugbane. I fell in love with this plant garden touring in the pacific northwest. Blooms have a sweet smell. Black Negligee, hardy to zone 9, has very dark, frilly foliage with tall practically white flower spikes above. Another variety, Pink Spike, hardy to zone 8, has more bronze colored foliage but nearly white blooms too. They should both be able to take our summer heat. When they arrived, it had been very dry. They were potted up, awaiting the perfect spot (where they won't be in afternoon sun, and the soil never really dries out). Research also has them as deer and rabbit resistant. I don't know about that, as something ate the foliage off most of them within no time. Fence will go around them just to be safe. An area that is right for them doesn't have many polli-

nator plants. They'll be great new additions.

Another special one, that came back in my suitcase from Heronswood Garden in Kingston Washington, is platinum blue globe thistle (*Echinops ritro* ssp.). I've wanted to grow globe thistle for years and never could find it. It likes hot and dry. It will go in the front garden. Hope research is right on it being deer resistant.

At last year's Greenville Master Gardener symposium, SC Botanical Gardens had Alabama crotons for sale at their booth. I must admit, this plant was chosen simply because it is rare and I would like to watch it grow. It's still waiting for its perfect spot, and to grow bigger before the little baby goes in the ground. The foliage supposedly smells like apples or bananas. I don't think the blooms are going to be anything spectacular. Fall color is supposed to be beautiful. Fence will definitely go around it just in case.

Other miscellaneous plants were put in the garage. Hopefully I didn't miss something that won't survive this arctic blast. There is no education in the second, or third, kick of a mule.



Black Negligee camicifuga

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ANDERSON GOSSIP

I don't get out much and I'm not into watching the news. I usually call my social-ly active 90-year-old mama for the latest Anderson Gossip.

She tells me that in Anderson, "We don't gossip, we Catch Up." I said, "Well then, catch me up on what's been happening. She starts by telling me, with a laugh, that nothing hap-pened in Anderson today and folks are pretty proud of it.

"C'mon, Mama, gimme the skinny on what's been going down; I know something must have gone on at church." She says, "Well, we had a potluck supper last week and one woman's sweet tea was said to be a little weak. Nobody told her, but we're all praying for her." She goes on to tell me that nothing brings Anderson together like free food and folding chairs. That's it, mama, that's the kind of juicy stuff I'm looking for. "What else?"

"Well, one woman brought a container of cookies she was bragging on until an Ingles

price sticker was found at the bottom. She tried to talk her way out of it, but I'm guess-ing she'll be moving out of town soon. There is one nice lady who brought a huge healthy salad, but I never saw anyone make eye contact with it."



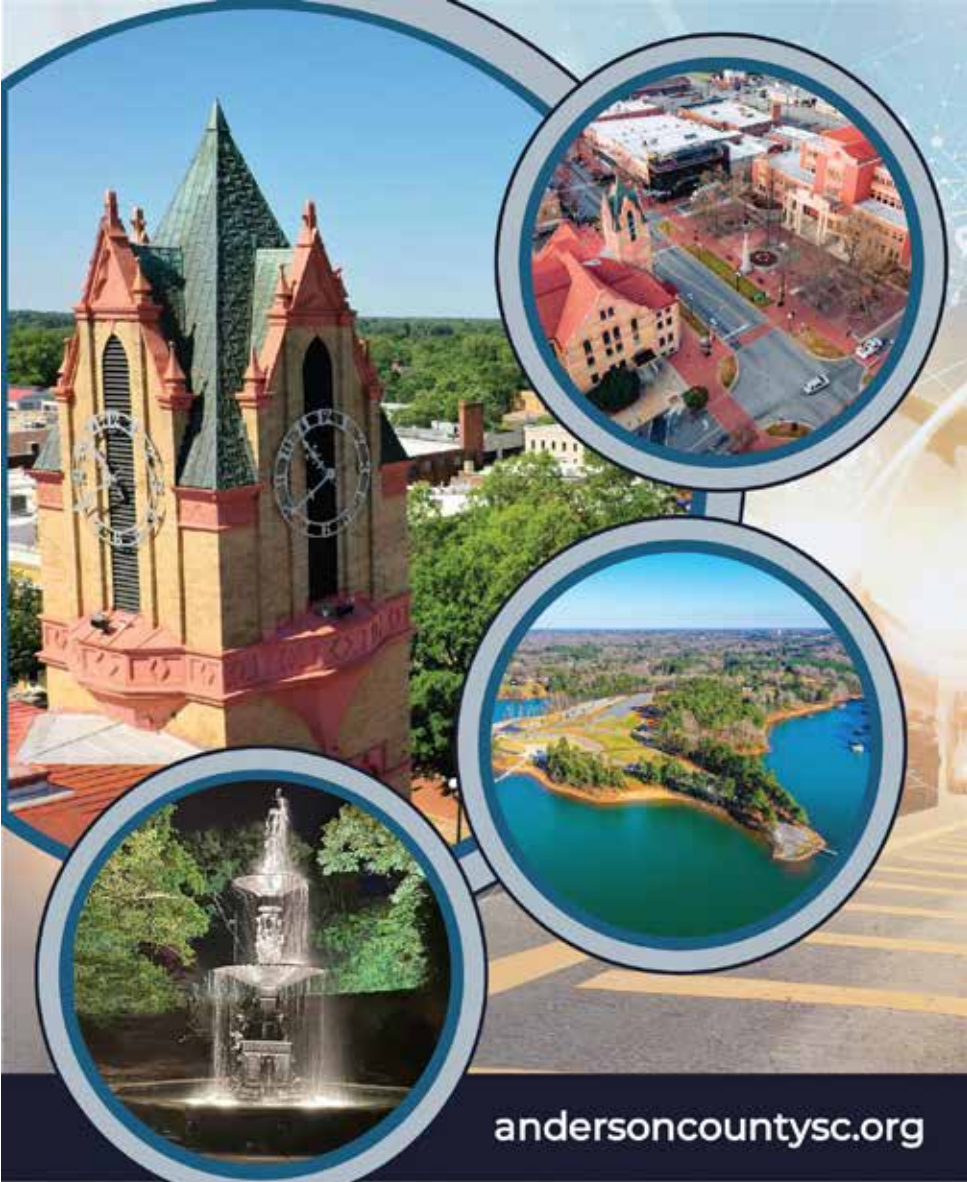
Neal Parnell

Oh, Mama, you should be on the six o'clock news. Tell me more. "Now, Neal, you've got to promise not to tell anyone these things".

"Mama, I swear, I won't open my mouth." Well, okay then. "A man brought in a very large sheet pan covered in aluminum foil and placed it on a folding table by itself. I noticed everyone trying to act casual as he removed the foil to reveal fifty deviled eggs. As some announcements were being made, I could hear shoes shuffling and people looking as if they were standing still

but actually inching toward those eggs. Before the Pot-luck Prayer was said, at least ten of those eggs had vanished. I guess Thou Shalt not Steal doesn't count with deviled eggs at a church potluck." Geez! Mama, if the deviled eggs caused that much of a stir, what went on with the mac and cheese? "Oh goodness, there must have been six mac and cheeses there. Somebody brought one in a crock-pot that looked older than the youth pastor and there was one I'm sure was made with Velveeta that no one would admit to. I don't know why

there's always one kid who only eats mac and cheese and Hawaiian rolls. You can always tell the one made by an older cook, it has crushed Ritz crackers on top. Then there's the mac and cheese that is kinda loose and never sets right. They say, "It's still hot." It will never set. And there is the person who didn't cook anything that says, "Needs more Pepper." I can tell you this from years of attending church socials, gatherings, and potlucks. The mac and cheese in the aluminum pan with the foil bent just right is going to be the best one." Well, Mama, thanks for catchin' me up. I knew I could count on you to know what was on the cutting edge in Anderson. I wish I had time to hear about the Baptist Banana Puddin' scandal, but I'll save that for another time. Thanks Again.



City of Anderson honors the life, legacy of Judge Goetz Eaton

Anderson, S.C. — The City of Anderson mourns the passing of Judge Goetz Benedict Eaton, Sr., a respected municipal judge, veteran, and longtime public servant whose years of service helped shape the City's justice system and community life. Judge Eaton passed away on January 25, 2026, at the age of 90.

Judge Eaton served the City of Anderson with distinction as a Municipal Judge, earning a reputation for fairness, integrity, and a deeply compassionate approach to justice. Throughout his tenure, he was known for

treating every individual with dignity and for his belief that the justice system should balance accountability with understanding—a philosophy that influenced both his decisions and those who served alongside him.

"Judge Eaton represented the very best of public service," said Mayor Terence Roberts. "He led with humility, wisdom, and a genuine respect for people. His steady leadership and commitment to fairness helped shape our municipal court and strengthened trust between the City and the community it serves."

In addition to his judicial service, Judge Eaton played a significant role in Anderson's civic life. He previously served eight years on Anderson City Council, contributed to the South Carolina Parole Board, and volunteered extensively within Family Court and Department of Social Services cases, advocating for children and vulnerable populations.

Judge Eaton's life story reflected resilience and service. Born in

Germany in 1935, he immigrated to the United States as a child after his parents fled Nazi persecution. He later earned a Bachelor of Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Juris Doctor from Emory University School of Law, before serving as a Captain in the

United States Air Force. After military service, he chose to make Anderson his home, where he spent the majority of his professional life in service to the community.

Chief Municipal Judge Josh Allen, who began his municipal court service alongside Judge

Eaton early in his judicial career, reflected on his lasting influence.

"Judge Eaton was not only a respected colleague, but a mentor to all of us," Judge Allen said. "He set a standard of fairness, professionalism, and humanity that shaped how I—and so many others—approach this work. His guidance and example will continue to influence the Anderson Municipal Court for many years to come."

Beyond his official roles, Judge Eaton supported economic development, mentorship, and community connection throughout Anderson. He was also a familiar presence in the community, known for his daily visits to Eggs Up Grill—sometimes even twice a day—reflecting the genuine connections he built across the city.

The City of Anderson extends its heartfelt condolences to the Eaton family and honors Judge Eaton's legacy of service, integrity, and dedication to the community.



Judge Goetz Eaton

Northern Lights in the South

The northern lights have put on quite a show in the past two years, and in the last couple of years we've been treated to four such events in, of all places, here in upstate South Carolina. The



Ann K. Bailes

most recent event was just last week. That used to be unheard of, and scientists did not think the phenomenon to be a possibility this far south.

For years in my eighth grade science classes, we went over the basics of the northern lights (aurora). The shimmering lights are caused by the interaction of a solar flare with the earth's magnetic field, which is tighter further north at the magnetic north pole. I always let the students know that we wouldn't get to observe them here; aurora were only seen in the far north of our hemisphere, mostly Canada and Alaska and occasionally dipping down into the northern reaches of the continental U.S. That's what was thought back in the day.

The solar flares have something to do with sunspots, darker places on the sun's surface that move across it over about a month's time. For reasons unknown, sunspots intensify in eleven-year cycles called solar maximums. That's when the flares and the northern lights are greater. (In the southern hemisphere the same phenomenon, called the aurora australis, occurs.) We are currently at the maximum of an eleven-year-cycle, which increases our chances.

So — why have we begun to occasionally see northern lights in the south? One reason is because scientists are getting better at understanding sunspots and how far south a solar storm interaction will occur. Perhaps the northern lights did occur further south in past years, but we didn't know it because science wasn't advanced enough to predict and see this phenomenon.



Photo credit: Andrew Bailes, 5/10/24

Another big factor is that we have a much better capacity to find out about solar events — many people found out about the recent light shows from social media or from reading news reports online. Meteorologists are all over Facebook and Instagram with posts about events of all kinds. So we no longer have to wait for the six-o'clock news or the daily paper to find out what's going on.

And even more than increased access, improved photography is a major reason. iPhone cameras have gotten better and better—and almost everyone carries a phone right in their pocket. Better cameras mean superior photos of solar events like the

northern lights, which are much better seen when photographed than with the naked eye. As people share their photos online, that spreads the knowledge abroad even further.

So occasional auroral events in the southern U.S. are not necessarily getting more common—we're just getting better at understanding, knowing about, and photographing them. As we start a new eleven-year cycle, the possibility of seeing the northern lights will diminish for several years—but will then approach a maximum again in about a decade. And since science and photography will be even better by then, our views may be, literally, out of this world!

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PAMPER YOUR PETS

We love our pets as much as we love our other family members. They are our pride and joy. They love us unconditionally and they deserve to be treated as such. I've always said that animals were wingless angels sent from above.



Kristine March

I personally own a black cat named Luna. We adopted her almost eleven years ago and instantly fell in love with her. The wretched thing about the lore of black cats is because of superstition, they're usually the last to be adopted.

She has brought us nothing but pure love. So, if you can, always adopt a black cat. You won't regret it. She's also spoiled rotten of course. Winter is here, so I recently purchased a precious little sweater for her even though she's an indoor cat. She loves to stay warm and she looks fashionable while doing so.

There are so many cute pet clothes brands on the market that it would be impossible to even name them all, but I've discovered some really cute ones for your little fur baby.

MaxBone is a really darling luxury company. You can purchase everything from beds to portable bowls and even life jackets and harnesses. They have the most adorable little jumpers and sweaters too. They also do collaborations with fashion designers to make your pet look posh. Just too precious for words. Definitely check them out.

The Foggy Dog makes the most enchanting little collars. They have everything from gingham to dainty little flowers and seersucker prints. Even personalized little charms plus you can get their names engraved. Every order feeds a shelter dog. How cool is that?

Another necessity for your pet is their little shoes, especially in the harsh winter and hot summer months when the pavement can reach up to one hundred and sixty degrees. It's crucial that they wear shoes because it can burn their feet. You can always check the asphalt temperature by placing the back of your hand on it for seven seconds. If it's too hot or too cold for you, it's too hot and too cold for them.

For the best dog leashes there is a company called Dogistry and they make a no pull design. They have an adorable print called Rockstar with black and gold stars on it.

For pet care and hygiene, you can always purchase pet wipes that are safe for your cat or dog. Lick - Safe makes hypoallergenic ones that are great to keep your pets healthy and clean.

Jennifer Aniston makes a shampoo for your dog from her LolaVie company as well. It's called Puppy Love and it will make your

The list is endless if you want to overindulge and pamper your animals. They give back so much to us, and we need to reciprocate.

dog's hair shiny and beautiful. Only the best for our babes.

The list is endless if you want to overindulge and pamper your animals. They give back so much to us, and we need to reciprocate. If you can, always donate to your favorite charitable organization for animals and remember what a beautiful world it would be if people had hearts like animals.

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