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Aug 13-Aug. 26, 2026

A look inside the Champions Center

Their goal is simple: "The Champions Center works to provide a future where children with disabilities and special needs can thrive."

But like a duck gliding effortlessly atop the water, there's a lot going on under the surface at the Champions Center for Special Children. This nonprofit, year-round school, which serves children ages one to five, depends on grants as well as public and private partnerships to serve not only its students but their parents as well.



Kim von Keller

NaToya Cartledge is Champions Center's executive director. A native of Plum Branch, South Carolina, she has extensive experience in early childhood education, including her

time as executive director of First Steps in McCormick County.

"When I learned that the position was open, I did my research. I learned that the Champions Center is one of only four of its kind in the state that serves young children with special needs. When I visited, I fell in love with the school, the board, and the staff. I really felt like this was a calling."

The Champions Center provides year-round specialized care, onsite therapies, early education, a full-time pediatric nurse, and other critical services for children with special needs and different abilities. While the school day may seem similar to that of a traditional preschool - instruction, snack time, play time, and rest - the Champions Center's young students are pulled out for onsite speech, occupational, and/or physical therapy provided by Tri County Therapy. Many children find



NaToya Cartledge, executive director at the Champions Center for Special Children, works with a child at the non-profit, year-round school on South Fant Street.

their way to the Champions Center by word of mouth. Some are referred by pediatricians. Others are referred by preschools or day care centers that are not equipped to meet such needs.

"Many families arrive at our door feeling

hopeless," Cartledge says, "and we are blessed with a board that believes if the parents aren't okay, their children aren't okay. We have just entered into partnership with Epworth

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Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Therapy Group to provide a counselor onsite that will be available to parents, staff, and children. Our vision is a holistic family approach. Most parents work, and their time is limited. Visiting multiple agencies for different types of assistance is difficult; many of our children lack formal diagnoses because the parents are stressed and the process is difficult. We are blessed with this beautiful facility in the South Fant Education Center, formerly South Fant Elementary School. We are working towards a time where families could apply for services such as SNAP benefits or disability assistance here at the Champions Center."

Bobby Rettew serves as the board of directors for the Champions Center, and he is confident that the board selected the right candidate for the job of executive director.

"NaToya is amazing, and she has brought new leadership. She's calm and methodical, a great listener, and she doesn't make quick decisions. We not only deal with children and their families but with The Department of Social Services, First Steps, all kinds of certification and licensing, and NaToy's good with process. She has come in and really taken us to the next level."

But even a committed board and a dynamic director need assistance. There are many ways to volunteer at the Champions Center. Individuals, churches, businesses, and

other organizations can take on projects, serve on the fundraising and events committee, or read to students. No act of service is too big or small. Donations of money or wish-list items, such as school supplies or cleaning supplies, stretch this non-profit's budget. Rettew, an assistant professor of communications at Anderson University, knows that a visit from a community member will open eyes and hearts.

"You just have to go to the Center and see it and feel it. Once someone takes a tour, it changes their perspective."

At a recent strategic planning session with the board, the Champions Center updated its mission statement to include the word community.

"We want our parents, staff, stakeholders, and people outside of the school to know that we're all in this together. We are driving this into everything we do. At the Champions Center, we stand upon the values of trust and belonging, collaboration and hope, and that includes everyone."

The Champions Center for Special Children is located at 1700 South Fant Street. To schedule a visit, call 864.375.5085. To volunteer, make a monetary donation, or make a wish-list donation, visit thechampionscenter.com.



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MEMORIES FROM THE CLASS OF 1976

BY EMILY HOLMAN SANDS

As I eagerly anticipate my T. L. Hanna High School Class of 1976 reunion, I look back with gratitude and appreciation for the privilege of being a member of this remarkable class. Our teachers showed great patience in molding our youthful minds and preparing us for the exciting future ahead. Friends that I made during my school years continue to be precious to me, standing the test of decades. One of my fond memories as a senior involved a class project.

As a gift to the school and a lasting legacy to our class, it was decided that we would raise money to build a sign fronting on Greenville Street to identify the name of our school. At the time, no signage showed the T. L. Hanna High School name to passersby.

Mr. Reese Fant of Fant and Fant Architects in Anderson, generously agreed to help us with our design. He provided us

with a handsome sketch and plans at no cost to our class.

Next came the fundraising part to make our sign a reality. Many fundraising projects followed, but our most successful effort came from selling ice cream bars outside the lunchroom during the lunch hour. Our principal, Mr. Joe Hazle, agreed to endorse our business endeavor, much to everyone's relief.

During a particularly hot fall day, a large crowd had gathered outside the lunchroom to purchase ice cream. Our fellow classmate and faithful customer, Jeff Hazle, who happened to be the son of Mr. Hazle, came to the door to make his purchase. Upon discovering that he had no money with him, he made a bet with me and other students gathered there to eat an entire nutty buddy bar in one bite. The terms of the bet were that we would pay for the cost of his ice cream if he were successful. Naturally, we were skeptical

that he could accomplish this feat, so we willingly accepted his challenge.

To our amazement, Jeff stuffed the nutty buddy horizontally into his mouth and was able to swallow it with very little chewing. For a moment, both cheeks were bulging, with one side having a pronounced point from the end of the cone. Needless to say, we paid for Jeff's ice cream. He was decidedly pleased with his accomplishment.

Then the bell rang ending the lunch hour and we were off to class. But I smile even today thinking about this funny episode while looking forward to reminiscing with all of my friends at the upcoming reunion. Our good friend Jeff, will be sorely missed.

By the way, our sign still stands proudly on Greenville Street and in all of its glory. But now it displays the name of McCants Middle School, which occupies the former T. L. Hanna High School location.

Stuart Fish Co. brings fresh, premium seafood to Anderson

Seafood lovers in Anderson have a new destination for fresh, high-quality fish and shellfish with the opening of Stuart Fish Company, a family-owned business launched by Johnny and Ellen Stuart on July 31.

Located in the side yard of Vine & Barrel on Highway 81, Stuart Fish Company is open each weekend, Friday through Sunday, or until sold out, bringing fresh seafood from the North Carolina coast directly to Upstate customers. Every Thursday, fresh catches arrive from the waters around Surf City, ensuring customers have access to seafood that was caught just days before it reaches Anderson.

"We wanted to bring truly fresh seafood to the Upstate while supporting the hardworking commercial fishermen who make it possible," said Johnny Stuart.

The market features an impressive selection of fresh seafood that changes with seasonal availability. Customers can expect favor-



ites such as North Carolina jumbo shrimp, grouper, American red snapper, vermilion snapper, wahoo, flounder, swordfish, Spanish mackerel, wild-caught catfish, and both yellowfin and bluefin tuna.

In addition to locally sourced North Carolina seafood, Stuart Fish Company also offers premium fresh imports that are never frozen. Selections may include Faroe Islands salmon, Hokkaido sea scallops from Japan,

Icelandic cod loin, Alaskan sockeye salmon, Atlantic halibut from Nova Scotia, Hawaiian opah, mahi mahi, and Greenland turbot. These specialty products are imported into the northeastern United States and delivered fresh to Anderson within the same week.

Beyond fresh seafood, the Stuarts stocks a variety of specialty products including Louisiana alligator sausage, seafood boil ingredients, Cajun seasonings, fish fry mixes, gourmet spices, and unique items like Blue Spirulina Sea Salt from California. During holidays and special occasions, customers can also look forward to premium offerings such as jumbo crab legs, oysters, littleneck clams, and rock lobster tails.

For Johnny Stuart, the business is the culmination of a lifelong passion. A North Carolina native, he grew up fishing the Outer Banks and developed an appreciation not only for great seafood but also for the commercial fishing families who make their living on the water. Combined with more than nine years of experience in corporate retail supply chain management, that passion inspired the creation of Stuart Fish Company.

His wife, Ellen, a lifelong Anderson resident and speech-language pathologist, shares the family's vision of creating a business that serves the community while building something lasting for future generations.

Together, the Stuarts hope Stuart Fish Company becomes more than a seafood market.

"Our goal is to become a positive part of the Upstate community," the family said. "We're excited to provide seafood people can trust and build a business that our son may one day continue."

Stuart Fish Company is currently open at Vine & Barrel on Highway 81 every Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., though the market frequently sells out before Sunday. Because seafood availability depends on the weekly catch, hours and product selections may vary, with updates posted through the company's social media channels.

For Anderson residents looking for seafood that's fresh from the coast, not the freezer, Stuart Fish Company is offering a new way to bring the taste of the ocean to the Upstate.

Going back to school in style

I can't believe summer is almost over and it's already time for the school year to start. We are dropping our son off at Western



Kristine March

Carolina University this Sunday. I am definitely going to miss the days of going to the mall to pick out kids' clothes and sneakers, but those days are behind us now.

This year, our shopping list consisted of dorm essentials like comforters, sheets, pillows, a mini fridge, snacks, a first aid kit, and his first-ever Pendleton blanket. If you have little ones, especially in elementary school, please give them a hug and truly embrace the time you have with them. Those sweet days go by so swiftly. Those precious memories are some of the best times I've ever had. Now, let's start with some fashion tips for getting your children ready for the big day, if they haven't started it already. There's no point in breaking your bank for our little ones because let's face it, when they come home from the first day of school, they're tired. Their little ponytail has fallen down, and their clothes and shoes are filthy.

You can dress them affordably and fashion-forward at the same time. Some of my favorite places to shop are Gap Kids, Zara, and H & M. They have modern, on-trend looks and durable denim. And you can make

it really fun and make it like a game, especially if you are actually going in person shopping with your little one. That way they don't get antsy and irritable. For example, if they're starting 5th grade, let them buy five of their favorite things and so on. It gives them some confidence and Independence.

Shoes are also really important. They want to make a statement, but students do a lot of walking and running around, so you definitely want those to be roomy and soft. We were always big on Converse and Vans at my house. They lasted throughout the year, stayed clean, and they never rubbed blisters. For Fall and Winter, I suggest a good Sorel lace-up boot. Those were especially good for rain and snow and looked really cute on. For a backpack, The North Face was the best. In fact, my son is bringing his to college. He's had it since his junior year in High school, and it looks brand new still. You get what you pay for, and those brands are worth every penny.

For a good lunch box, State Bags makes the most adorable little lunch sacks with awesome little themes. They're mostly metallic with all sorts of cool patterns like celestial, sprinkles, Hot Wheels, and Barbie galore. Their backpacks are really fun too. All of these ideas will help your kiddo get ready for school. I hope they have the most amazing year yet. Remember to make the sidewalk your runway, and kindness always matters. Happy back to school, y'all.



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See social media posts for updates.

Disney's Frozen: The Broadway Musical brings six magical shows to Anderson's Carolina Wren Park

ANDERSON — The City of Anderson and Market Theatre are bringing the magic of Disney's Frozen: The Broadway Musical to Carolina Wren Park for six unforgettable nights, Aug. 26–31. Performances begin nightly at 7 p.m., and general admission is completely free.

Audiences will experience the beloved story of Anna, Elsa, Olaf and Kristoff live under the stars in the heart of downtown Anderson. The full Broadway musical features favorite songs from the hit Disney film—including “Let It Go,” “Do You Want to Build a Snowman?” and “Love Is an Open Door”—along with new songs written especially for the stage.

Filled with breathtaking music, memorable characters, humor, adventure and plenty of Disney magic, Frozen tells the heartwarming story of two sisters and the extraordinary power of love.

Rated G, the production promises an enchanting evening for audiences of all ages—from the youngest Elsa and Olaf fans to parents and grandparents experiencing the story alongside them.

“Outdoor theatre in Carolina Wren Park creates the kind of shared experience that makes downtown Anderson so special,” said Riley Tucker, Community Events Manager for the City of Anderson. “Residents and visitors will come together in the heart of our community to enjoy an incredible production, explore downtown and support our local restaurants and businesses. Offering an experience of this caliber at no cost makes the arts accessible to everyone, and we cannot wait to see Carolina Wren Park filled with families,



music and excitement.” Presented in partnership with Market Theatre, the production will transform Carolina Wren Park into the magical kingdom of Arendelle, combining the spectacle of a Broadway favorite with the energy and intimacy of live outdoor theatre.

“Our vision is to create an experience that feels both spectacular and deeply personal,” said Noah Taylor, Executive Artistic Director of Market Theatre and director of the production. “Audiences will see the wonder, humor and visual magic they expect from Frozen, but at its heart, this is a moving story about sisterhood, courage and the kind of love that can thaw even the coldest heart. Carolina Wren Park gives us an extraordinary stage, and we are thrilled to bring Arendelle to life for this community.”

Guests are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair and arrive early, as seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Face painting and concessions will be available

each night, along with cool treats from Sunset Slush. Before the show, make an evening of it by enjoying downtown Anderson's restaurants, shops and local attractions.

Premium reserved seating is also available for guests who would like a guaranteed seat.

Tickets may be purchased at tickets.markettheatre.org.

EVENT DETAILS

What: Disney's Frozen: The Broadway Musical
When: Aug. 26–31, 2026, nightly at 7 p.m.
Where: Carolina Wren Park in downtown Anderson
Admission: Free; seating is first come, first served
Reserved Seating: Available at tickets.markettheatre.org
Rating: G; appropriate for all ages

Additional information is available on the City of Anderson event page. Come ready to laugh, sing and discover why some people are worth melting for. This August, the magic of Broadway—and a touch of winter—are coming to downtown Anderson.



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REMEMBERING THE PRINCE NEWSSTAND

BY RICH OTTER

The time had come, but removing the old Anderson Hotel Building across Main Street from City Hall in 2025 certainly ended an era. It had housed the Charleston & Western Carolina Railroad depot and multiple businesses at its street level, including eating establishments, repair and barber shops, and a very popular newsstand.

Ernest Anderson Prince had been working in a textile mill but also operated a small general store in the 1920s. He had an opportunity to acquire magazines for display that in time blossomed into a distributing company supplying newspapers, magazine and softcover books throughout northwestern South Carolina and northeast Georgia. He purchased the Anderson Hotel Building.

The businesses erupted into family enterprises. Ernest's sons, William and Francis, became involved as did his grandchildren. William's son Robert (Bob), remembers, as a five-year old, selling newspapers from the back of a truck on Sundays behind the old post office (now the G. Ross Anderson Building) to people getting out of church.

As time went on, the wholesale operation of the Prince Distributing Company was taken over by son William, and the Prince Newsstand on South Main by son Francis. Bob Prince, explained, that with competition from large wholesale companies, the distributing business transformed into selling books to schools.

Francis Prince fell heir to the newsstand. He had been a city alderman and chairman of the police committee, but was appointed an Anderson County magistrate in 1963, operating from the historic Anderson Courthouse. As Francis was busy with his judicial obligations, the newsstand business was actually dropped in the lap of his wife, Elsie Moore Prince, and their children. Working with their mother, the children split time after school and on weekends. Francis took over on Sundays so the children and their mother could attend church services.

Elsie Prince expanded the business by moving next door, from 410 South Main to 412, in the Anderson Hotel building, acquiring more floor space. It was sold about

two years after Francis Prince passed away.

Elsie and Francis' daughter, Lina Prince Harris, remembered the store was about 45 feet long and 20 feet wide with a wooden floor. She said it was pretty chilly in the winter in spite of a hanging electric heater toward the back of the building and a small space heater up front. It was hot in the summer with only a single window air conditioner and an electric fan for the counter attendant up front.

The newsstand maintained a large supply of newspapers, magazines and paperback books. Plentiful comic books were a major attraction for children. The comics led to a discomfiting situation at one point when a woman came in with children who were observed secreting comic books under their mother's skirt.

Lina, as a young school girl, alone at the time in the store, quickly called over to the fire department across the street to seek help. She then confronted the culprits and during a rapid departure the mother left a trail of comic books flowing from under her skirt, likely escaping with a few. The nearby firemen and other city employees were regular customers and good friends. Many lifelong friends were made during the newsstand days.

Lina recalled that one of the great benefits derived when she was coming to the store after school was learning to rapidly add and subtract sale amounts in her head. There were no calculators and she couldn't call anybody for help. She had to quickly determine the total and change. It was only if it became too complicated that she would revert to pencil and paper. Lina had a wonderful opportunity to develop knowledge and experience in the business world. Bob Prince, likewise, said he had learned to give change when selling from the back of the truck at five years of age.

A newsstand was a vitally important operation in those days, but as television expanded and newspapers became available over the internet, local daily publications faded, as did reporting of local news events. Lina Harris graciously commented: "Thankfully, Anderson has the Electric City News to keep us with the smell and feel of a treasured part of our past and current community."



FRANCIS PRINCE



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FROM THE SHELF

On ‘Love Is an Algorithm’ by Laura Brooke Robson

I’ve had a weirdly hard time writing this review. I’ve read *Love Is an Algorithm* maybe three times now. It’s just in my head making me think hard on all the things. It’s literary, it’s a romance, it’s an incredible look at the current state of humanity and its relationship with technology, more specifically AI.



Sara Leady

The book starts out with Eve, our leading lady, getting attacked by a cougar, followed promptly with a bad car accident leaving the hospital. These near death experiences prompt her to break up with her boyfriend (kind of a jerk) and move back to New York and really get back to her music career. I know it sounds bonkers, but it honestly works, and you sort of forget the chaotic start once you get in.

On the other side, we have Danny, who happens to be Eve’s brother’s best friend, and business partner. Danny and Julian have developed a dating app that operates off AI by measuring compatibility percentages and creating matches based on them. Danny is incredibly anxious and is always seeking to better understand the relationships around him. For Danny, the more data the better, so a dating app that collects and builds off tangible facts should theoretically remove some of the anxiety from the equation (theoretically).

Danny and Eve have a more organic meeting (i.e. not through the dating app), but this is where the story starts to get interesting in terms of examining the human condition. With his anxiety, Danny develops an offshoot for the app that measures the “healthiness” of a relationship.

Yes, I know, communication can, and should solve a lot of those anxieties, but trauma does a good job of overriding logic—especially when it comes to love. For an anxious brain, the ability to measure and validate the human experience and relationships through numbers and facts can mean safety and security.

As Danny continues to develop the app, he adds in a chatbot, Bug, who you can then ask questions of for how to better your relationship. ‘Bug’ has all your texts and history right there at his coded finger tips so who could give you better advice than this omnipresent entity? On the flipside of this is Eve, a musician, who is impacted by AI in completely different ways. Including a deepfake video showing her “death,” and no one believes she’s alive despite all the proof she gives because obviously those videos are the actual AI.

Love Is an Algorithm does this incredible job of examining the ways that technology has evolved and infiltrated every aspect of our lives. While I have my own personal feelings about AI (creative theft), there are positive aspects and a lot of potential for good – it’s just been pointed in the worst directions (also assuming we sort out all the environmental factors). As the app develops, we see more of what makes Danny and Eve who they are, and how much of it is in reaction to their parents, previous relationships, and general expectations for what is “good,” and how we’ve come to define love and happiness.

Robson also looks at how far we’ll go in order to outsource conversations and decisions and how technology so excellently enables us to do this. This isn’t just in terms of romantic relationships, but literally all aspects of our lives. Unsure of something? Just Google it. Or worse, ask ChatGPT. ‘Bug,’ much like ChatGPT and other AI bots, almost becomes a sort of therapist or coach. Danny finds himself looking to ‘Bug’ for answers not just with his anxieties around Eve, but with his dad, and his anxiety with basically everything.

Fortunately, while literary, *Love is an Algorithm* is also a romance, so we don’t have Bug going off the rails with nefarious intent. ‘Bug’ actually gives good advice and insight, but he also gives a lot of non-answers.

Ultimately, he tends to tell users to talk to the other person, but that scary leap tends to be what leads a person to ask an AI what to do in the first place.



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LAWN MAINTENANCE

You can blame the very rich for your lawn. Way back when, in England, wealthy land-owners liked to display their wealth by not



Neal Parnell

growing food on thousands of prime acres, but just showing it off. We still see this today in the form of millions of pristine plots of land that are being used for nothing but viewing, admiring, and hopefully impressing the neigh-

bors. Most of us still carry on this display on a smaller scale and strive to keep up with the aristocracy.

I have a yard. And yes, I weed-whack it and use a push mower and a riding mower, but that's it. I do not spend forty-five minutes trimming around my mailbox so the neighbors think I have my life together. By the time I'm done, I'm soaking wet, my legs are green, my ears are ringing, and somehow there is a june-bug in my pocket. My grass-cutting luck goes like this: The lawn is lush, long, and green... I spend two hours

being nuked by the sun while in a dehydrated stupor getting it cut and trimmed... then there's a four-to-six-week drought that turns it bare, brown, and crispy, and I realize I didn't need to mow at all. My dream is to have one of those Arizona rock and cactus yards.

I've noticed there are a few people on my street and the adjoining neighborhoods that treat their lawns like they're preparing Augusta National for the Masters. I've witnessed them having truckloads of sand and mulch dumped in their driveways and working all weekend to spread it so they can get their cars out for work on Monday. You know the ones I'm speaking of. They have a leaf blower for the leaves and one for the patio and walkway. You won't believe this, but there is a neighbor a few plots behind me that has his dormant bermuda grass spray painted green in the winter, I kid you not. His yard is so perfect that I'm sure the birds wipe their feet before landing. I don't know him, but if he were to see my yard's mix of fescue, clover, crabgrass, fire ants, and dandelions, he'd move.

The "Weed Whacking Fashion Show" is my favorite part of any lawn maintenance week, and I'll describe one of the runway models. The shoes are a pair of 10-year-old New Balance with the laces tied in four knots to keep them from ever untying. The leather and soles are rock hard and permanently stained green to match the 5-year-old tube socks that stand on their own. The cargo shorts are missing a vital button, now cinched with a zip-tie, and the front zipper is frozen halfway, but the wearer is sure no one will notice. The one pocket without a hole is filled with weed-eater string that will jump out unseen in the front yard and cause memory issues when needed in the back. The Ozzy t-shirt from 1988 has no sleeves and is never allowed in the house. The hat was purchased at the Jockey Lot in '79 and had a white front with the words "Keep On Truckin'" but after a low-limb incident now reads "Keep On uckin'".

Don't tell anyone this, but I actually enjoy working in the blazing sun and exhausting myself all because every blade of grass needs cutting in half. I've seen young, healthy par-



ents with healthy teenagers pay a firm to mow their quarter-acre. I'm guessing that they don't handle frustration well and will never know the satisfaction of completing a tough task and miss out on those words we long to hear: "The Yard Looks Great, Honey".

A friend and a mentor

Harold Jones is part of one of the most famous stories in Anderson.



Brian Hodges

The Hanna football coach became a surrogate father to James "Radio" Kennedy starting in the 1960s.

In 1996, Sports Illustrated's Gary Smith wrote an in-depth piece on Radio, who was intellectually challenged.

The Radio nickname came about because when he was hanging around football practice, he always had a transistor radio with him.

Jones, who was also a very successful track coach at Hanna, mentored Radio and welcomed him on the Hanna football sidelines.

The story was noticed by Hollywood, and in 2003, the movie "Radio," starring Cuba Gooding Jr. and Ed Harris, became a big deal.

Who is more famous in Anderson? Only actor Chadwick Boseman or ballplayer Jim Ed Rice rank that high.

The story has been repeated many times. But Jones, now 92, never tires of talking about it.

"I was surprised at how popular the movie became," Jones said.

In April 2004, Coach Jones and Radio decided to attend the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Ga.

Because of the movie, Radio was a popular figure. Fans lined up to get autographs.

"Radio was swarmed by people," Jones said. "Finally, Radio looked at me and said, 'my hands are getting tired!'"

"I told Radio, 'You've got to keep signing for these people,'" Jones said.

"We didn't get to see much golf," Jones said.

One story said Radio wasn't in the mood to eat the pimento cheese sandwiches at Augusta National.

So the concessions staff managed to find a chicken sandwich for him.

The patrons on the course were amazed. "They wanted to know where he got that chicken sandwich," Jones said.

One of the best-known stories about

Radio was him eating 30 roast beef sandwiches packed in a cooler that were meant for the track athletes after competing at a meet in Rock Hill.

"He always had an enormous appetite. Boy, we were mad at him at the time," Jones said. "But he had a pretty big stomachache afterward."

Radio was a fixture on the sidelines, even after Jones had retired from coaching in 1999.

"We'd go to the games with Radio's

brother, George Allen "Coolrock" Kennedy," Jones said. "But Radio would let us know we belonged in the stands, not with him on the sidelines."

"Radio's brother, 'Coolrock', has had health issues recently," Jones said.

Radio passed away in December, 2019 at age 73.

Coach Jones and his wife, Linda, keep busy. Jones tends to the Salvation Army's Red Kettle buckets at several restaurants. The money goes to families in need.

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GONE FOR THE SEASON

They are gone. Those beautiful purple martins, that found our gourds last spring, and in the terminology of the martin community made us “landlords,” have left for the season.



Ann K. Bailes

Early on, we counted eight birds nesting in the gourds. We’ve watched them all summer performing their antics. A couple of weeks ago, we counted 17 plus a couple more babies still poking their heads out of the gourds, so it would appear that at least eleven birds were fledged this year at our location.

Upon getting out of the truck at the farm, we would immediately hear their calls as they perched on the gourds, then swirled up in

flight. They would make a continual loud melodic song, ending with a “clack, clack, clack” that is unique to martins. The sound was if they were saying “Yes, we’re here! Good to see you!”

During the nesting season, martins like to be in communal locations, not too close to trees, yet close to people. They are very social birds who rely almost completely on manmade cavities such as gourds. Martins are one of the rare species that actually prefer human involvement in their lives. They are in decline overall, but are important birds in our ecosystem because they help keep local insect populations controlled.

They seemed to work in unison. Five or six would perch on top, then at some unseen signal, they would swirl up, up, up toward the sky. Sometimes they’d come back immediately and sometimes they’d disappear for awhile. But they always came back. And as

the little ones fledged, they’d join the adult birds while learning to fly and hunt insects in a wide range around the area.

After purple martins are done nesting for the season, they gather in huge roosts, sometimes millions of birds, in preparation for leaving for their winter home in South America. According to the experts, the birds disperse in the morning and then gather again in the evening. These enormous flocks occur in locations all over the U.S. The closest to us is Bomb Island in Lake Murray, where martins have roosted in July and August for almost 40 years.

After all the work of purchasing, assembling, and hanging our twelve gourds several years ago, we have loved seeing purple martins coming in and out of the holes, perching above, swirling around, and then coming home once again.

When Mike first suggested putting up



martin gourds, I was only nominally interested. But after the first year of attracting martins (this is our fifth year), I was hooked. And there’s something good about knowing that the gourds on our farm are helping a very valuable species of bird to survive.

Understanding anxiety in today’s world



MARY-CATHERINE
McCLAIN
RINER

It’s normal to worry. We worry about our children, our health, our finances, our jobs, and the people we love. In many ways, worry is part of being human. It helps us prepare, solve problems, and recognize potential danger. On the other hand, what happens when worry doesn’t turn off?

For millions of people, anxiety becomes more than an occasional feeling. It begins to affect sleep, relationships, work performance, physical health, and the ability to enjoy everyday life. Many people assume anxiety simply means feeling nervous. In reality, anxiety can affect the mind, body, and behavior in ways that are sometimes surprising to others. Our brains are designed to keep us safe. The brain’s alarm system works remarkably well when facing genuine danger. It prepares us to fight, flee, or protect ourselves. The challenge is that today’s “threats” often aren’t life-threatening. Instead, our brains respond to deadlines, uncertainty, social media, financial stress, parenting demands, health concerns,

and an endless stream of information as though they require the same emergency response. When anxiety becomes chronic, the nervous system spends too much time in “survival mode,” making it harder to think clearly, concentrate, sleep well, or enjoy the present moment.

Emotionally, anxiety may look like: Constant worry that feels difficult to control, feeling overwhelmed by everyday responsibilities, irritability or feeling “on edge,” difficulty relaxing, even during downtime and fear that something bad is about to happen.

Physically, anxiety often shows up as: muscle tension, headaches, upset stomach or nausea, rapid heartbeat, chest tightness, sweating, shaking, trouble sleeping and fatigue.

Behaviorally, people may begin to: avoid situations that make them anxious, seek frequent reassurance from others, overthink decisions, procrastinate because of fear of making mistakes, constantly check emails, messages, or work and withdraw from social situations

The Cycle of Anxiety

One of the reasons anxieties persist is because avoidance provides temporary relief. For example, someone who feels anxious about giving presentations may

begin avoiding opportunities to speak. The relief feels immediate—but over time, the brain learns that avoidance equals safety, making future presentations feel even more threatening. Similarly, repeatedly seeking reassurance, checking symptoms online, or mentally replaying conversations may reduce anxiety for a short time, but these habits often reinforce the cycle rather than break it. Remember, anxiety is not weakness or failure, it is a survival response. Learning to gradually tolerate uncertainty is one of the most effective ways to reduce anxiety over time.

Practical Tools to Help Manage Anxiety

1. Notice Your Thoughts Without Automatically Believing Them

Our minds generate thousands of thoughts every day. Anxiety often convinces us that our worst-case scenario is the most likely outcome. Try asking yourself: What evidence supports this thought? What evidence suggests another possibility? If a friend were experiencing this, what would I tell them?

2. Practice Slow, Controlled Breathing

Anxiety often speeds up our breathing, which can increase physical symptoms. Slowing your breathing can help signal your nervous system that you are safe.

Try this simple exercise: Breathe in slowly through your nose for four seconds, exhale gently through your mouth for six seconds and Repeat for two to five minutes.

3. Stay Grounded in the Present

When anxiety pulls your attention into future “what if” scenarios, grounding techniques can help reconnect you with the present. One simple exercise is the 5-4-3-2-1 technique: Identify five things you can see. Notice four things you can touch. Listen for three things you can hear. Find two things you can smell. Notice one thing you can taste.

4. Reduce Avoidance One Step at a Time

Avoiding anxiety-provoking situations often strengthens anxiety over time. Instead try the following: Start with small, manageable challenges, repeat them until they become easier, build confidence gradually.

5. Create Daily Moments of Calm

You do not have to eliminate stress to improve your mental health. Even 10–15 minutes each day of intentional slowing down can make a difference. Consider: reading, prayer or meditation, journaling, spending time outdoors, listening to calming music and talking with someone you trust

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



TY AND BONNIE WILSON



JUDE RAY

HERE FISHY FISHY — THE WINNERS!

Thanks to all of our entrants to the Fishy Fishy Contest. It was a difficult decision to just pick two winners as they were all winners in our book.

Congratulations to our winners!

It didn't take long for Ty and Bonnie Wilson to hit the jackpot catching catfish at their great-grandfather's fishpond! (Jimmy Wilson, Wilson Farm, Piedmont) Needless to say, all the fish stories were true!

Ty (6) and Bonnie (4) are the children of Tyler and Sommer Wilson in Williamston.

Nine-year-old Jude Ray and his biggest catch! He caught this beauty right off of his papa's dock.

Jude loves fishing and one day would love to compete in the Bass Masters Tournament. Jude is the son of Kris Ray.



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10:00 AM - 2:00 PM: CHARLIE T'S & TINT PLUS PRESENT 35 YEARS OF TINT PLUS CRUISE IN
10 AM - 11:00 AM: COMBAT VETERANS MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION RIDE REGISTRATION
12:30 - 2:00 PM: ENTERTAINMENT ON STAGE - WILL YATES & CHRIS VITA
2:00 PM - 8:00 PM: THE OSCAR MAYER WEINERMOBILE
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM: ENTERTAINMENT ON STAGE - THE CAROLINA MOON BAND
5:40 PM: COMBAT VETERANS MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION RIDE AWARDS
5:50 PM: PRESENTATION OF COLORS
6:00 PM: FLYING TIGERS JUMP IN WITH NATIONAL ANTHEM
6:00 - 8:00 PM: BALLOONING WINDOW: FLIGHTS / GLOW / TETHERS
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM: ENTERTAINMENT ON STAGE - ADJACENT HAYS
6:30 PM: LIFT OFF COLOR RUN & WARRIOR WALK

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

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4:30 PM - 4:15 PM: ENTERTAINMENT ON STAGE - ADEN WEBB
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YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD NIGHT'S REST

Recently in this column we've been discussing sleep, which may be the most important part of our goal to take better care of ourselves. When night after night we fail to achieve a level of quality sleep it can not only affect our daily functioning – but impact our mental and physical health in dramatic ways.



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

Consider... After only a few nights of poor sleep, our brain, hormone levels, immune system, and metabolism start to break down -- as well as the body's ability to repair damaged cells. Put another way, first to be impacted by sleep deprivation is your brain's ability to function. Your mood changes. At the same time your memory and your ability to focus and concentrate begins to diminish – and, you

have trouble processing new information. If this is not enough, your reaction time slows. (Not a good time to be operating a motor vehicle or machinery!) On top of this you feel irritable and maybe anxious, which can affect your interactions with family and co-workers. As impactful as poor sleep is on one's daily life, it's by no means the whole story. Now new studies are emerging that underscore how our sleep habits also affect longevity. When we get the same healthy amount of consistent sleep each night it can actually slow our biological clock! The repeated rhythm of quality rest at night followed by day-to-day activity – including regular exercise – show up as "health indicators" of how we are physically aging. These include: How well are your heart and lungs functioning, How resilient are your muscles, How is your metabolism performing, How much chronic inflammation is in your body and How is your body aging at the cellular level In practical terms, when we fail to get

enough quality sleep it creates a heightened risk as we age of developing a number of serious age-related conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, arthritis – and dementia. To be sure, getting regular quality sleep can sometimes be an elusive part of selfcare. Many of us living and working in this complex and fast-paced time find it increasingly difficult to achieve optimum sleep levels. Recognizing this and observing it in our patient family, I have expanded our Grand Oaks dental practice to include help for those suffering with sleep issues. Check out our Sleep Well Anderson website at <https://sleepwellanderson.com/> We offer gentle and effective solutions that can help you reclaim that all important restful, restorative sleep you need for better health and an improved quality of life! In all it's hard to overstate the importance of a good night's sleep. Don't neglect it. If you or a member of your family is suffering with

sleep problems, reach out for a free consultation. We're your hometown resource for guidance and support! Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is a dentist, Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine, and certified Nutrition, Lifestyle, and Wellness Coach. Dr. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental and Sleep Well Anderson, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. Dr. Cannick is passionate about integrating oral health, sleep medicine, and lifestyle coaching to promote whole-person wellness. She is a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.

For more information about Grand Oaks Dental, Sleep Well Anderson, and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to grandoaksdental.com or sleepwellanderson.com.



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What the World Cup taught me about headlines

BY DR. SHEILA FINLEY HILTON

Watching the recent international soccer matches reminded me of something we've forgotten.

For a few weeks, politics took a back seat. People from different nations embraced one another. Fans cheered incredible plays, applauded great sportsmanship, and celebrated the humanity that unites us far more than the issues that divide us.

It made me wonder...

How much of our division comes from our own experiences, and how much comes from the way those experiences are presented to us?

When I taught 10th-grade English at T. L. Hanna High School in the 1980s, one of my favorite lessons focused on media literacy. Even then, long before social media and 24-hour news channels, I wanted students to understand that headlines and news stories don't always tell the whole story.

I used the famous case of Kitty Genovese, the young woman murdered in New York City in 1964. She was a 28-year-old woman who lived in Kew Gardens, Queens. On March 13, 1964, she was attacked by Winston Moseley as she returned home from work. She screamed for help. Some neighbors heard her screams, while others saw only brief moments of the attack. One neighbor shouted at the attacker, causing him to flee temporarily. Minutes later, he returned, sexually assaulted her, and ended her life. A neighbor rushed to Kitty's side and stayed with her until help arrived, but Kitty died on the way to the hospital.

Two weeks later, The New York Times published what would become one of the most influential newspaper stories in American history.

"37 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police."

"Apathy at Stabbing of Queens Woman Shocks Inspector."

"For more than half an hour, 38 respectable, law-abiding citizens... watched a killer stalk and stab a woman..."

Those words spread across America. Newspapers around the country repeated the story. Television reports echoed it. Soon the story crossed oceans, appearing in newspapers around the world. It was cited in Europe, Asia, South America, and even by the Soviet newspaper Izvestia as

evidence of America's moral decline. A single narrative shaped how millions of people viewed not only one tragic event but, to some extent, the character of an entire nation.

Years later, investigators discovered the truth was far more complicated. Far fewer people actually witnessed the attack. Several neighbors tried to get help. One neighbor comforted Kitty until emergency responders arrived. The tragedy was real, but the story that shaped public opinion for decades was incomplete. The corrections never traveled nearly as far as the original headlines.

That lesson has stayed with me for more than forty years.

Not because it taught me to distrust the media, but because it taught me to think critically.

Headlines influence emotions. Complete facts build understanding.

That same lesson came to mind during this year's World Cup.

Before arriving in the United States, many international visitors expected to find an angry, deeply divided country. Many worried about violence, hostility toward foreigners, and a place where people kept to themselves. Those expectations had been shaped by years of news coverage, social media, entertainment, and online commentary.

Then they experienced something different.

They talked about friendly Uber drivers, welcoming hotel employees, restaurant servers who treated them like family, strangers who offered directions, recommendations, rides, and even invitations into their homes. They laughed about discovering Buc-ee's, Waffle House, free drink refills, Texas barbecue, Southern hospitality, and the warmth of everyday Americans.

Many said, in one way or another, "The America we experienced was not the America we expected."

Does that mean every news story was wrong? Of course not. Every nation has real challenges that deserve honest reporting.

But perhaps we've forgotten that headlines rarely tell the entire story.

We've all been influenced by narratives—some accurate, some incomplete. No matter how educated or discerning we think we are, every one of us has, at some point, formed opinions based on only part

of the picture.

Perhaps this is one of the greatest challenges facing our country today.

Our political differences are real, and they always will be. But they are often intensified because millions of Americans consume entirely different versions of the same events. We no longer simply disagree about solutions—we sometimes disagree about the facts that frame the discussion.

When each of us hears only one narrative, it becomes easier to fear those we have never met, question the motives of people who think differently, and assume the worst about one another. Yet when we sit together at a soccer match, cheer for remarkable athletes, help a traveler find their way, or simply have a conversation with someone from another background, we often discover something the headlines rarely capture: our common humanity.

The World Cup reminded us what

happens when people meet face to face instead of through headlines. They discover kindness before conflict, conversations before assumptions, and friendships before labels.

Wayne Dyer said,

"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

Maya Angelou reminded us,

"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."

Perhaps that's the equilibrium we've been searching for.

Let's be curious before we're critical.

Let's seek truth before outrage.

Let's remember that every story has more than one perspective, every headline is only the beginning of the story, and every person is far more than the label someone else gives them.

The world doesn't need more division.

It needs more conversations.

And maybe that's where healing begins.

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