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February 12-25, 2026



Joe Nichols to headline The Soirée 2026 in downtown Anderson

Anderson's signature arts festival returns April 24-25



ANDERSON, SC — The City of Anderson is excited to announce Joe Nichols as the headlining performer for The Soirée, the City of Anderson's signature arts festival, returning to downtown Anderson on April 24–25, 2026.

One of country music's most-lauded 21st-century traditionalists, Joe Nichols is a multi-platinum recording artist whose style bridges country music's

past and present. Known for his warm, unmistakable baritone and honest storytelling, Nichols has earned more than two billion cumulative audio streams, six No. 1 singles, and ten Top 10 hits. With chart-topping songs like "Brokenheartsville," "Sunny and 75," and "Yeah," he delivers a live performance that is both timely and timeless—rooted in tradition while resonating across generations.

Now in its fifth year, The Soirée transforms downtown Anderson into a vibrant hub of creativity and celebration. This free, two-day, community-led festival showcases the best in visual, culinary, and performing arts, drawing visitors from across the region and beyond. Organizers also announced this

SEE SOIREE ON PAGE 2

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YMCA names Kevin Osborne as new CEO

Osborne brings 28 years of experience to organization

Anderson, SC — Anderson Area YMCA has named Kevin Osborne as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective March 1. Selected by the Y's Board of Directors, following a 5-month search, Osborne will succeed Joe Drennon who announced his retirement in July 2025. In his new role Osborne will be responsible for: revenue diversification, strategic partnerships, debt reduction strategies, and potential branch expansion.

"During our search for a new CEO, we looked at candidates from throughout the southeast, but Kevin Osborne stood out among the rest. His energy and vision for Anderson Area YMCA is exactly what we were looking for in a leader. With Osborne's experience in board development, public-private partnership management and enterprise-level initiatives and passion towards Christian mission, we are convinced that Anderson Area YMCA will have fantastic leadership for years to come," stated Ross

Brown, Anderson Area YMCA Board Chair.

"I am honored to join the Anderson Area YMCA family and become part of the Anderson community," said Kevin Osborne. "I believe deeply in the Y's Christian mission and the powerful impact it has on individuals, families, and communities. The Anderson Area YMCA is already a strong organization with an outstanding team, and I am excited to work alongside them as we continue building on that success. I am especially honored to follow a true Y legend, Mr. Joe Drennon, and I look forward to serving and growing the Y's impact throughout the entire Anderson County community."

Osborne comes to Anderson Area YMCA with 28 years of experience in the YMCA currently serving at Cleveland County Family YMCA where he has served as the Vice President/Senior Executive Director for the past 16 years. While there, Osborne has achieved budget surplus for nine years, led a successful \$8 million ~ 20-year contract with



Kevin Osborne

City of Kings Mountain and YMCA, and generated 25% growth in revenue in six years. Prior to Cleveland County Family YMCA, Osborne worked for YMCA of Catawba Valley ~ Hickory, North Carolina. Osborne holds a bachelor's degree from Appalachian State University. Kevin and his wife Jennifer have two children (Eli 21 and Ruby 18).

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TO SEND INFORMATION

Please make sure photos include the date taken, location and names of people in the photos. If photos are submitted via email, make sure they are a minimum of 300 dpi and saved as a JPEG file. If photos are mailed, we cannot guarantee the photo will be returned. The editor of The Electric City News will make your article/story grammatically correct without altering its content. The publishers of The Electric City News reserve the right to withhold inappropriate content or photos.

Soiree

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

week that the presenting sponsor for The Soirée 2026 is Pracht Injury Lawyers, with WYFF-4 serving as the festival's media sponsor. Nichols will be taking on the Papa Bear Car Wash Stage on South Main, sponsored by long-time Soirée supporter Papa Bear Car Wash.

"As we celebrate the fifth year of The Soirée, welcoming Joe Nichols as our headlining performer feels like a meaningful milestone for the festival," said Riley Tucker, Community Events Manager for the City of Anderson. "It reflects how far the event has grown and the level of talent we're excited to offer our community."

The City of Anderson's Soirée is made possible through a strong network of community partnerships and support. The festival is produced by the City of



Anderson in collaboration with the Anderson Arts Center, whose artistic guidance helps shape the visual arts experience each year. In addition to the presenting, media, and stage sponsors, The Soirée is supported by numerous local sponsors whose investment helps bring the event to life.

The festival's continued success is further driven by a dedicated Soirée Committee and a team of community volunteers who contribute significant time and effort to planning, coordination, and on-site support.

The magic comes together April 24-25 as downtown

Anderson sets the stage for a weekend of creativity, community, and a headliner who knows how to keep things "Sunny and 75."

For more information on The Soirée, including volunteer opportunities and festival updates, visit www.cityofandersonsc.com/soiree/.



IN CELEBRATION OF 'FIRSTS' — A FUNDAMENTAL FEATURE OF THE FOLLIES

BY TIMMI JERNIGAN

As I reflect upon my five years in the Anderson Senior Follies, I find myself as much in awe of the celebratory 'firsts' I've witnessed in relative newcomers to the stage, as I am of the jaw-dropping seasoned talent that surrounds me. Each year there are first-time actors whose comedic delivery, or dramatic sense, stand solidly alongside those of our more experienced actors. First-time soloists, who never aspired to sing on a stage, reveal voices that were meant to be heard. First time tap dancers, whose sum total of experience is a single Follies summer tap class, hop-shuffle-step like they were born to. The list goes on, and it is a beautiful thing to behold! In every instance, what these performers lack in experience, they more than make up for with unshakable motivation, enthusiasm, and a sheer will to succeed.

Yet, while it's expected for novices to experience such "firsts," I would venture to say that every Follies cast member can claim at least one "first" — even the most seasoned performers. The variety of acts included in



Timmi Jernigan in *Blast from the Past*

our shows and the creative spin our director applies to them naturally create a storehouse of opportunity for "firsts" regardless of past experience. Just ask the three people who

dressed up like Asparagus shoots during that bit about 'misheard lyrics' one year, or the group that performed the YMCA number last year!

I've had my own share of "firsts,"

often related to artwork. The 7-foot portrait of Dr. Larson for 2024's "Bucket List" is by far the largest portrait I have ever attempted. Painting flats to look like the interior of an antique train for 2023's "Blast From the Past" was a challenging first. This year's speed painting is a definite first! (I'll say no more lest I spoil the scene. Suffice it to say the concepts of 'speed' and 'painting' had previously never occupied the same neural pathway in my brain!)

So why do we do it? Why do we put ourselves out there, often outside of our traditional comfort zones? It's simple. We do it for our beloved audience! Every year thousands come and grace us with their smiles, their laughter, their tears, their applause. Each year you, the audience, tell us with your hearts that it is well worth whatever trepidation or inkling of doubt we may be struggling with, to forge ahead and perform in new and often challenging ways. You are that crucial ingredient that inspires Anderson Senior Follies to cook up fresh, new ways to perform on stage, and we are eternally grateful.

Don't miss being part of the audience for this year's show, *The Last Resort*. When a well-meaning child places her aging parents in a retirement community, the couple soon discovers that "The Last Resort" lives up to its name — and then some. Far from a quiet retirement environment, this colorful community is bursting with quirky characters, daily hijinks, and a never-ending stream of gossip. From offbeat activities to unexpected friendships, chaos and charm go hand in hand in this delightfully dysfunctional setting. True to Anderson Senior Follies tradition, *The Last Resort* is a crowd-pleasing mix of sharp comedy, toe-tapping music, and spirited dancing, brought to life by a remarkably talented cast. Get ready for laughs, surprises, and a heartwarming reminder that growing older doesn't mean slowing down.

The *Last Resort* will take the stage on March 12th-15th, 2026, at Anderson University's Henderson Auditorium. For tickets, go to andersonseniorfollies.org or call 864-231-2080.

Westside seniors sign to play college football

Westside High School football coach Brian Lane was like a proud father watching some of his kids sign with colleges on Feb. 4.

Rams standout running back Keylan Powell and defensive back Terrance Estrich signed with North Greenville University and wide receiver Jacob Lewis is headed to Fairmont State in West Virginia.



Brian Hodges

“There are several more players on my team who will get college scholarships, but they haven’t made up their mind yet,” Lane said. “I don’t know

what they are waiting on.”

Among those still deciding are left tackle A.J. Calhoun, a standout at protecting the quarterback.

Feb. 4 was National Signing Day, although the meaning has changed due to the changing nature of college sports. There is no longer a national letter of intent.

Receiver Lewis transferred from Wren High School for his senior year and adjusted quickly. He caught 46 passes for 846 yards and 13 touchdowns, and as a defensive back, he totaled 18 tackles with 2 interceptions.

Powell was a workhorse back for Westside during the Rams’ 9-5 season. He’s only 5-foot-8, 165 pounds but could handle the demands of the position.

He broke the school record for rushing with 2,045 yards and had 27 touchdowns.

“He’s a scat-back kind of runner,” Lane said. “Very quick. And on the field, he wants the ball. He’s tough.

“Plus, he’s a great kid,” Lane said. The coach added that Powell had a grade point average of around 4.0.

Powell never wanted to come out of a game for a break.

“I never got tired,” he said. “I loved it. Coach Lane even wanted me to go back in when we were (near the goal line and) ready to score a touchdown.”

Powell said he felt like he belonged last season when he rushed for 250 yards against a very good Prince Avenue Christian (Ga.) team. The Rams lost that one, 56-34.

Against Fountain Inn, he rushed for 200-plus yards, and quarterback Bear Woods threw for over 300 yards in a 48-21 victory. “That’s a game that I’ll remember,” Powell said.

Westside usually features a pass-heavy offense, but with freshman QB Woods getting his first taste of varsity competition, Lane said his offense was more balanced.

“It was something like 52 percent pass



Pictured, from left, are Westside High School principal Kory Roberts, along with former Ram football players Keylan Powell, Jacob Lewis and Terrance Estrich.

plays and 48 percent running plays,” Lane said. “We are usually 65 percent passing and 35 percent running.”

Lewis said he’ll play defensive back and get a chance to return punts and kickoffs at Fairmont State.

“Their program is on the rise. I felt like they wanted me up there,” said Lewis, who added he runs a 4.5 40-yard dash.

Estrich was a standout defensive back and he said he’ll love having Powell as a teammate at North Greenville.

“He (Powell) and I kind of grew up together,” Estrich said.

Woods, who will be a sophomore this fall, has already received 5 offers from colleges, Lane said.

“Wake Forest, Samford, Appalachian State, East Tennessee State and Miami, Ohio, have made offers,” Lane said of his 6-4, 185-pound quarterback.



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'Every day is Valentine's Day' – a true love story

"Valentine's Day is for amateurs."

Or so says Mark Roberts. He knows a little about the celebration of love as he and his wife, Lisa Moon Roberts, will celebrate their 39th wedding anniversary this year. To hear them tell their story is to

understand that true love is made stronger by a sense of humor.

Lisa was born in Anderson, but Mark, the son of an Army surgeon, was



Kim von Keller

born in Germany. He moved to Anderson as a child.

"I like to tell Lisa that I got here as soon as I could," he laughs.

Their story is one of love at first sight... unreciprocated love.

"The first time I remember even knowing who Lisa Moon was I was watching a Sub Deb thing when she was in high school. She had on a Wild Turkey T-shirt, and she was the prettiest girl I had ever seen."

As they got to know each other, Lisa thought he was funny, but she didn't like him at all.

"My family owned CMS garage, and Mark worked for Anderson Auto Parts. He'd come into the shop and pick on me," she says.

Mark admits that her scorn was probably deserved.

"I'd go into the shop and constantly tease her about drinking Diet Cokes. One time I told her that I had some Clemson buddies coming into town and that I wanted to introduce them to some cute girls... and then I asked her if she knew any."

Lisa was not amused. But she started to soften towards Mark after an incident at a bar downtown. It was Thanksgiving weekend, and lots of T. L. Hanna friends were home from college and getting together at Bud's on Bleckley. A biker, dressed in leather and wearing a helmet, took off his helmet and handed it to Lisa before saying things that can't be repeated in a family newspaper.

"I walked up to this big guy and said, 'Hey, man, she's with ME!'" Mark says.



"He's been my hero ever since," Lisa says.

"If she only knew how much I had to pay the guy to do that," Mark laughs.

They were tested as a couple when Mark began his career at Ashland Chemical. The company sent him to California for a year while Lisa was still in college, and when he returned to the East Coast, he moved to Newnan, Georgia. He and Lisa were married in 1987 and lived in Newnan for two years before returning to Anderson.

The Roberts have two children, Clay and Elizabeth, and two grandchildren. Mark retired from Ashland Chemical, and Lisa from her contract work with the Department of Social Services as a teacher of parent education. Sometimes, couples who become empty nesters realize that they no longer have anything in common, but not this couple.

"It took us about 20 minutes to get used to it," they say. "We like to travel. We went to Germany a few years ago, but we felt kind of like fish out of water. We decided we want-

ed to see more of America, so we bought our camper van. We've driven to California and back twice, just the two of us in a camper. Twice!"

Their favorite spots are in the mountains. They've been to many national parks, their favorites being Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Rocky Mountains National Park.

"We enjoy hiking," Lisa says, "and we always find a trail for a day hike. Mark's goal is to complete the Appalachian Trail, and he's already hiked 860 miles of it. I've hiked 50 of it, but I also enjoy relaxing by the campsite. Every year, we go to West Jefferson, North Carolina, a neat little town right on the parkway. We usually stay about a month, but with our families getting older, we feel bad about staying so long."

Another reason for staying closer to home is that their son and his family will soon be moving back to Anderson from Charlotte.

"Clay called us and said that they want to move into our house and for us to move out," Mark says. According

to Lisa, that's not exactly accurate.

"We've been wanting to downsize, and Clay and his wife are going to buy our house, the home he grew up in."

The Roberts have been together for almost 40 years. After working and raising children and traveling across America, what have they learned about each other?

"First, Mark says, "she's a great mama. Part of her job with DSS was to teach good parenting, and we never had any problems with our children. Also, she keeps me grounded. I used to be a handful, but she just talks me off the ledge. I don't know what would have become of me if we hadn't met. I also just like being with her. Lots of couples have TVs all over the house and watch different shows in different rooms. We spend our evenings together. Every day is Valentine's Day with Lisa."

As for Lisa, she says that Mark is very loyal, a great father and family man who raised his children in the church.

"He's just solid," she says. "And

he's still funny."

And to illustrate that, Mark tells this story:

"For a while, we were ordering those Blue Apron meal kits," Mark says. "I came home one day and found the meal box on the porch and a Jehovah's Witness pamphlet in the mailbox. I took the food out of the box, put the pamphlet inside, and sealed up the box. I had to run back out for a while, and when I got home, I found Lisa on the phone with Blue Apron."

"I was fussing with this guy in customer service," Lisa says, "telling him that we didn't get anything but a pamphlet, and he's saying, 'Ma'am, I'm so sorry! Ma'am, we'll make this right!'" Then Mark comes in and I have to tell the guy on the phone that it was all a joke."

Mark still regrets coming home when he did.

"We were so close to getting a lot of free meals."

"I was mad," Lisa says, "but I have to admit that it was pretty funny."



When to be concerned about a racing heart

By identifying what triggers a racing heart, how frequently one's heart rate rises and what conditions occur along with a racing heart, you can learn when to respond with calming techniques and when to contact a doctor.

Heart Month, which comes each February to raise awareness, is wonderful time to prepare.

What is a normal heart rate?

For most adults, a normal, resting heart rate is between 60 and 100 beats per minute. A lower heart rate usually shows that a heart beats very efficiently; elite athletes can have healthy heart rates below 60. If your heart rate is beyond this range, talk to your doctor about what may cause your abnormal heart rate.

To check your heart rate, put your index and third fingers on the side of your neck, or place these two fingers on your wrist. Count the number of heartbeats you have within 15 seconds, then multiply that number by four. The number is your heart rate per minute.

How common are fast heart rates?

A fast heart rate can be quite common and — in many situations — completely normal. After a tough workout or amid a stressful situation, it's natural for a heart to race. Some illnesses may cause your heart rate to rise temporarily as well.

In other instances, however, a racing heart can be a symptom of something more serious. When a heart begins to race without a clear trigger, pay close attention and take it seriously. Following are different conditions that may cause a racing heart, as well as signs that you should see a doctor.

What causes a heart to race?

The causes of a racing heart range from dietary to lifestyle to genetic. Dietary causes include caffeine, alcohol and insufficient water. Smoking and lack of sleep can also make a heart race. Some diseases and conditions, including an abnormal heart structure and heart or lung disease, may also make people more susceptible to a racing heart.

How can a fast heart rate harm the body?

When your heart beats too quickly, it may not be able to pump enough oxygen

throughout your body. All of your organs and tissues rely on that oxygen. If you experience a racing heart frequently, it's crucial to go to a doctor to learn what's causing it and to make sure your body is getting the oxygen it needs.

What are different kinds of abnormal heart rates?

An irregular heartbeat — called an arrhythmia — occurs when your heart beats abnormally. This may mean your heart skips a beat (heart palpitations), your heart rate races (tachycardia) or your heart rate becomes too slow (bradycardia). Sometimes, you won't even feel an arrhythmia at all. An arrhythmia can be harmless, and it can be dangerous. If you're unsure, please contact a doctor to discuss your symptoms and to learn the cause of your irregular heartbeat.

What are heart palpitations?

A heart palpitation happens when your heart skips a beat. Most often, this doesn't become serious, and heart palpitations won't feel like more than a flutter. They can become more serious, however. Heart palpitations could cause your heart to pound or throb, and they may even be confused for a heart attack. If you experience shortness of breath, chest

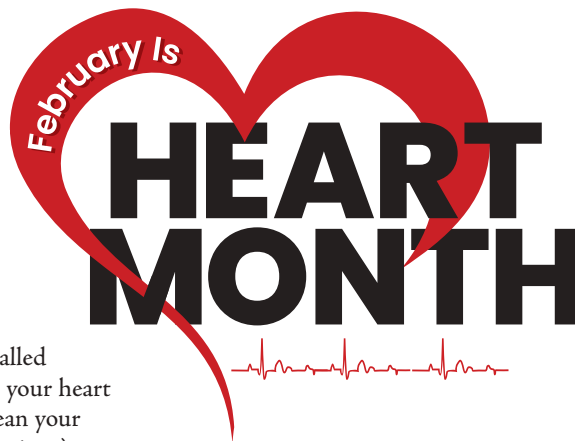
pain or fainting along with heart palpitations, you should consult a doctor right away.

Heart palpitations can be caused by excessive caffeine intake, dietary supplements, recreational drugs or smoking. They are also associated with stress, panic attacks and anxiety. Lifestyle changes, including dietary changes and stress management, may offer relief from heart palpitations.

What is atrial fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation is another cause of rapid heart rate, although one that is more concerning. It occurs when the heart's upper chambers beat erratically and lose sync with the lower chambers. This can cause heart palpitations and shortness of breath. While atrial fibrillation isn't always dangerous, it can increase your risk of stroke or heart failure.

Sometimes, atrial fibrillation resolves



on its own. Other times, however, it is persistent — which means it requires treatment or medication to return the heart to its normal rate. In some instances, however, atrial fibrillation becomes permanent, and it will require medications to manage it.

What should I do if my heart begins to race?

If your heart rate begins to race, the first thing you should do is to try to remain calm. Try deep breathing techniques: Take full, slow breaths into your nose, hold your breath for a moment, then slowly breathe out through your nose. You may want to put a hand on your belly to feel the sensation of air entering and leaving your body. Also, it can be calming to splash your face with cold water. See if your heart rate lowers after these techniques.

When should I see a doctor for a fast heart rate?

If your heart races amid a stressful situation or after a tough workout, it may not be serious. In that case, try some calming techniques and breathe deeply to see if the rate returns to its normal rate on its own. But if your heart rate races in ordinary situations and without these triggers — or if it occurs with chest pain, fainting or shortness of breath — it's time to visit a doctor. It's not easy to tell the difference between atrial fibrillation and heart palpitations, so don't guess: Trust a doctor to diagnose your condition.

AnMed offers premiere heart and vascular care, from diagnosis to intervention to management, with locations in Anderson and Clemson. AnMed has earned the recognition of a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care by BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina.

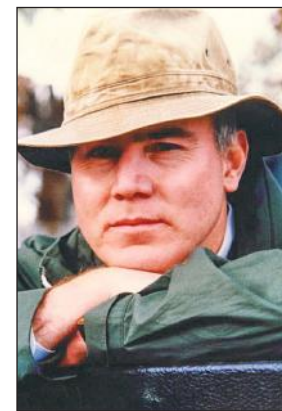
If you have concerns about your heart health, call 864-512-4530 to learn how AnMed providers can help.

OBITUARY

GARY ANTHONY KERLEY

Gary Anthony Kerley, 65, died peacefully on January 29, 2026, surrounded by his beloved family. Gary was born in Meridian, Mississippi on February 20, 1960, the son of Yvonne and Andrew Kerley. The proud oldest child of six siblings, he was a brother to all he called friend.

His upbringing in Louisiana instilled a strong sense of faith, and love of animals and the great outdoors. This only grew in his nearly forty years in South Carolina. From the bayou to the Blue Ridge Mountains, Gary was most content admiring God's creation.



Following his graduations from Nicholls State University and

Louisiana Tech University, Gary began his career in project management as an engineer. After earning his MBA from Clemson University, Gary spent a career in executive positions at commercial private equity firms before retiring in 2025.

Above all, Gary was devoted to his family. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Helen Edwards Kerley, children Grace Calhoun, John Andrew and Caroline Heidt Calhoun Kerley, sisters Julie Steib (Moe) and Belinda Sternfels, sisters-in-law Susan Willis (Jeff) and Mary Harris Edwards, and those lucky enough to have an "Uncle Gary."

Holding his memory dear are countless friends, including extended family, those he made cheering on his beloved Clemson Tigers and enjoying Lake Hartwell, the "Shepherds of the Marsh" fishing crew, and brothers of Phi Kappa Theta.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, Ronnie, Randy and David Kerley, and his mother and father-in-law Gloria and John Edwards.

A service was held at Grace Episcopal Church, 711 South McDuffie Street, Anderson, SC, on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 11:00 A.M. with Father Jack Hardaway officiating. A reception followed the service. Memorial gifts may be made to Grace Episcopal Church, where he was a dedicated parishioner for over 30 years.

Condolences may be left for the family by visiting www.mcdougaldfuneralhome.com.



YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Starting a journey to better health in the new year!

"Self-care is the quiet courage to choose yourself, even when the world is loud."

There appears to be an increasing level of interest in self-care all across our society -- among old and young alike. And as we learn more, many are putting this knowledge into practical action to achieve a healthier lifestyle that will lead to a better quality of life and even enable us to live longer than our ancestors!

I see this in our patient family at Grand Oaks Dental and in the feedback from loyal readers of this feature. That is why Grand Oaks Dental is evolving. We remain committed to ensuring our patients receive the most advanced care modern dentistry provides. But we are expanding our vision to support the "whole person". We are a member of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine enabling us to help patients identify and manage obstructive sleep apnea with oral appliances.

In addition, I am certified as a lifestyle, wellness, and nutrition coach through Harvard Medical School's Executive Education Program.

This journey began when I was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition affecting my hands and wrists, which motivated me to learn more about how nutrition, movement and lifestyle choices



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

can influence well-being. That experience now allows me to help others discover the powerful role these factors can play in their own health.

Take for example the new food pyramid recently released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services placing greater emphasis on whole foods, including proteins and healthy fats. There's also the Healthy Eating Plate published by Harvard's TH Chan School of Public Health. Here is a link to the website. I recommend you check it out.

<https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/>

healthy-eating-plate/

Consider what we've been told -- "our genes are our destiny". Research is changing this view. Our genes may only influence about 25 percent of how we age. The other 75% is influenced by factors within our control -- what we eat, how we move, how we handle stress, how we interact with others, and how we treat ourselves.

And the first and most important step is... what we eat.

Food is the foundation of everything. Research has found that certain foods do more than provide energy—they contain nutrients that can help "turn on" genes that make us healthy and "turn off" those that make us sick. These include:

- ♦ **Folate:** From green leafy vegetables, liver, legumes
- ♦ **Vitamin B12:** Mainly in meat, fish, shellfish, liver
- ♦ **Choline:** Mostly egg yolks, liver, and some in cruciferous vegetables
- ♦ **Betaine:** From beets, quinoa, shrimp, wheat bran

I hope you'll agree that we are on this journey together -- learning, growing, and making healthier choices one step at a time. If you have questions and would like to discuss this, please 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, click to grandoaksdental.com or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.

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TIPS FOR BEATING THE WINTER BLUES

We have approximately 42 days until Spring arrives. Okay, I admit it. My spirit is a little low. We had a beautiful snow and it was fun to play in, but now I'm feeling like I have cabin fever and I miss the green grass and the sunshine.



Kristine March

We can fight this seasonal depression by doing things for our mind, body and soul. I love to shop for clothes and the latest fashions, but that can become addictive and make you

spend too much.

Like I always tell you, instead of buying more you can declutter and come up with creative outfits that you already have, which I love to do for a stimulating activity. Something good for your cognitive function would be to buy a really beautiful journal that makes you happy to look at, and write down your thoughts every morning before even picking up your phone. You can even write down that dreaded to-do list, but make it pretty in your new fancy journal book. Then there is always an easy yoga session you can do. You don't even have to leave your living room. You can just hit YouTube and find your favorite one. I love Yoga with Adrian and it's not necessarily just to tone your body, there are ones she does that are really good for your nervous system. It focuses on breathing and relaxation. It's also perfect for all ages because she uses a blanket for sensitive knees and so on. So, anyone can do it. Sometimes when people hear the word yoga, they get intimidated, but you don't need to be. Definitely check her out.

Next up is nature. Especially if you're feeling anxious. You can always bundle up and go take a walk outside and look at all of the nature. Even though everything is dead and

brown, you can still find beauty everywhere.

A good facial or a massage is especially nice during the winter months. It will make you glow and feel relaxed. And if you have what I call the "winter uglies", you can always go get a spray tan. Try it before you deny it. If you've never had one, it will make you feel like a goddess afterwards. And there are all levels of color. You don't have to necessarily come out looking like a clementine either. It just gives you a natural luminosity.

Another great idea to fight the blues is literally go hear some live music always puts me in great mood. Try to find your favorite concert around town. Get some tickets and go dance! Dancing reduces stress and is really good for our serotonin levels. It also lowers our cortisol levels and is just the best mood enhancer there is. So, if you have the chance to dance, always get up and do it. It also boosts our confidence and makes us feel free and alive.

Another good thing to wake up the brain is to do a cold plunge. You don't have to go to a fancy sauna house either. You can literally do it in your own shower. Turn your faucet to as cold as a level you can handle at the very end of your hot shower. Even if it's for 5 seconds. It makes you very alert and it's great for your skin. It also does wonders for inflammation and puffiness. It's really good for your hair structure and makes it less tangled and shiny. You can eventually work your way up to 30 seconds or even a minute. You can train the body. Try the cold plunge and see if you like it.

Lastly, make your favorite recipe. Food is comfort and it's very healing. Try something out of the ordinary that you think you couldn't possibly do. If you mess up that's okay too. Start over. The ultimate therapy is to bake something for a loved one that's feeling sick or down in the dumps. Getting our minds off of ourselves is always the best medicine.

Not only does it make the person feel better, but it makes you feel better too. It gives you a quick release of dopamine.

Don't forget a warm hug. Did you know that hugging a person can reduce blood pressure and your heart rate? Not only does it give you an emotional connection, it instantly releases oxytocin. A ten second hug has so many wonderful benefits. Oh, and not to mention it's free. It doesn't cost a penny. So go on and hug someone.

How are you going to beat the Winter Blues this season? Just try to keep in mind that it's going to be brighter and warmer in just a few weeks, and you've got this. Remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters. Don't worry, be happy y'all!



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On I, Medusa and retellings

The older I get and the more I read, the more I see myself revisiting and rethinking how classic stories have been told. Given my education background I've been trained to think through the perspective of the author, time period, intended audience, etc. but all that training has also been through a classical education lens—a lens that's incredibly narrow, despite its encouragement to dig deeper.

I, Medusa is Ayana Gray's adult debut. While she's written previously, it's not an extensive catalog; she's only published a single YA trilogy (a fantastic diverse trilogy, don't get me wrong). I bring this up to emphasize the importance of new and different voices telling stories because they provide new perspectives and insight we wouldn't get otherwise. Case in point, Gray's version of the legend of Medusa, an infamous villain.

The story I remember from Greek mythology is about how Medusa, a priestess of Athena, insulted the goddess and defiled



Sara Leady

her temple by sleeping with Poseidon in it. This insult and betrayal is met with Medusa being cursed and turned into a monster. We don't question or villainize Athena or Poseidon, even if we think the punishment was harsh, because ultimately Medusa obviously got what she deserved.

Did she truly deserve her fate? We never really stop to think about it from Medusa's viewpoint. We don't see the human woman behind

the "monster" before we go ahead and agree with condemning her.

Gray gives us Medusa, barely seventeen, naive, and curious for life beyond the island she and her family are trapped on (did you know she's the daughter of primordial sea deities dating back to before the Olympic gods? I sure didn't). At a party to show off her and her sisters (for marriage, of course), we see the first time she and Poseidon take notice of each other. This is important because even after she goes to Athens to become a priestess of Athena, we watch how Poseidon intentionally grooms her and uses her naiveté to take advantage of her. Medusa has never had "the talk" with an adult and doesn't understand the specific threat of violence against women or the concept of "purity." She's been conditioned to think her purpose is marriage, but there's no real context given to her for what that or a relationship between men and women might actually entail.

While training as an acolyte in Athena's temple, Medusa's best friend is violently assaulted. However, Medusa has no framework for what this assault actually means beyond her anger at the wrongness of Apollonia being punished when she was attacked and didn't do anything wrong; she didn't "want" the soldiers to hurt her, regardless of her being out alone late at night. Between this and Poseidon's perceived friendship and fondness for Medusa, when he pushes things physically between them, Medusa says she doesn't want to break her vows to Athena (chastity) but she also doesn't understand the physical act happening between them, nor does she know how to tell a notoriously vengeful god 'no.'

In this context Medusa's story is tragic, it's just never been framed that way. Even without the story of Poseidon grooming Medusa, taking advantage of her naiveté, and all the rest of the backstory, we have

a god (man with incredible power) against a human woman. Even with that egregious imbalance of power, the story has always been framed as Medusa's fault.

I could go further into Gary's examination of the legend and her beautifully dissected and recrafted version of Medusa, but to my original point Gray's diverse voice gives us a new context to view the human experience of Medusa, and very specifically the continued experience of women. We need diverse voices, and I think it's imperative for us to continue to seek new frameworks and perspectives of old stories and examine who is telling the original story (with most classics, men), and how their viewpoint and intentions provide a specific narrative that's often partial to the teller, and rarely the subject. When you read the story of Medusa written from the perspective of a woman, it's hard to fault her for turning men to stone, given the violence and betrayal she's always experienced at their hands.

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Drew Whitley on DonorsChoose

After graduating from Clemson University, you taught English and Drama at Daniel High School. From there you went to work for DonorsChoose, based in New York City, whose mission is to make public school education equitable by funding projects for classroom teachers.

ECN – In a nut shell, what are the highlights of this national organization?

DonorsChoose was founded by a New York City public school teacher back in 2000 who thought that if people knew what teachers and students needed, they would want to help – it turns out that he was very right! Over the past 26 years, we’ve raised nearly \$2 billion for classrooms in every state across the country, rallying nearly 7 million donors to support over a million teachers.

The premise of DonorsChoose is pretty simple: Teachers create projects for materials they need, we share those projects with our network of generous donors and partners and we ask that teachers do the same, and, once funded, teachers receive those materials straight to their classroom. It’s all right there in the title: DonorsChoose and kids succeed.

ECN – What is your job at DonorsChoose?

I’m a Marketing Manager at DonorsChoose, which involves a few different things. The first is that I oversee marketing strategy and project management for a

number of our promotions, which are big moments on our site that connect donors with teachers, often with the help of matching funds from one of our partners, like Google, SONIC, or Allstate, just to name a few.

I also keep a watch on our daily donations, making sure that we’re hitting goals for funds raised for teachers and helping to overcome challenges we have along the way. Finally, I get to stay connected to my teacher roots as I help out with our Teacher Ambassador Program and our Facebook Teacher Community.

ECN – What are things teachers need to know about applying for classroom funding?

They should know that it’s so easy! A teacher wanting to post their first project on DonorsChoose can head to donorschoose.org/teachers, sign up for an account in less than five minutes, and then get straight to shopping for their first project.

They should also know that they can get nearly anything they need on DonorsChoose, including, but definitely not limited to, books, basics like paper and markers, technology like iPads and projectors, essentials like snacks and hygiene products, and just about anything in between. We’ve had projects funded for greenhouses, cheerleading uniforms, book vending machines – you name it and we can help fund it.

Finally, they should know that we’re here to help. On average, DonorsChoose brings more

than half of the funding for a project to the table. Along the way, we often have partners that will double donations from their friends and family.

ECN – Who can donate to DonorsChoose and how do they go about it?

Anyone! Truly, anyone that wants to make a difference right here in our community or in any community around the country can easily give my heading to donorschoose.org. Once on the site, you can search for projects in a number of ways, including by map to see projects around Anderson. It’s also fun to search for projects that are of interest to you – I love looking for high school theatre projects.

Right now, there’s more than 60,000 projects live on the site – that’s a lot of students waiting for the material they need! Donors can easily give via credit card or Apple Pay or can even mail in a check or give from their DAF, or donor-advised-fund.

ECN – What are specific things you want the public to know about DC?

There are three quick things that come to mind that I think set DonorsChoose apart.

The first is transparency – with DonorsChoose you can see where every single dollar of your donation goes down to the pencil or book. There’s an itemized list of materials with every project and so you really know your dollars are making a difference. On

top of that, every single project is screened by a human screener to be sure that it’s up to our standards.

The second is teacher choice – in a time when topics in public education are hotly debated and many teachers feel that their expertise is overlooked, DonorsChoose is an organization that deeply trusts teachers to know what’s best for their students. They select every item in the project because they know it’s exactly what they need in their classroom.

The final is gratitude – after a project is funded, every donor receives a thank you letter from the teacher and, if you give at least \$50 to a project, you also have the opportunity to receive thank you notes in the mail from students. I’ve got student thank yous hanging on my fridge and they’re the best reminder that the donations we make have a very real impact.

ECN – As a graduate of the public school system, a former public school teacher and an advocate of public education, what is your goal for the future of all students?

My goal for the future of all students is very closely aligned to the mission of DonorsChoose: That every student in every classroom around the country has the tools and experiences they need to succeed. That’s regardless of their background or zip code – every student deserves an incredible education.

MOLDED

When I was first married, I didn't think much of it. I thought that I would continue as the same wild, untamed, carefree, numbskull I'd always been, only with a girl. I remember the first time that I thought I was free while



Neal Parnell

married. Young New Wife: "Where are you headed, babe?" Me: "I'm just going out with my friends for a while". Young New Wife: "Aren't you going to kiss me Goodbye?" I knew then that I wasn't going anywhere, and from that moment on, any thought of having friends was locked away on a high shelf in the very back of my mind. Now that I can look back over 37 years of marriage, I see that my transformation was so subtle that I never realized it. She was like the opposite of Tom Sawyer whitewashing the fence. Instead of making the job look so fun that I'd want to do it. She'd muck it up so bad that I'd have to do it. "Honey, I think there's something wrong with this mop". The next thing I know, I'm bent

over a wet kitchen floor looking back at her on the couch, eating my cheese-puffs, and changing the channel from football to Doogie Howser, M.D. I believe it was all part of a long-term master plan that I never saw happening. Was it really a mistake when her rice came out of the pot solid as a hockey puck? Or that her grits had more salt than the Dead Sea? I took over the cooking duties for good when I was served a glass of iced tea with the ice cubes sitting on the bottom. We had a bulky 40-pound Eureka vacuum that would send the cats to the rafters, put down more dirt than it picked up, and only a man could push it around the house. "Look, honey, I got us a rechargeable Dyson Animal. It's lightweight, powerful, has a ton of attachments, and the cats stay on the floor." "That's nice, Dear, be sure to get under my bed". They say that the one who cares the least about the relationship has all the power. I think this was made up by a person who was only dating and is still not married. It's my experience that women have the power, know they have the power, and only on occasion allow the other to think



they have the reins. I'm not complaining, I'm just trying to comprehend how I went from watching NASCAR racing at noon on Sundays to watching four hours of "In the Kitchen with David" on QVC. Or, how I know that Kathy Hilton is a half-sister of Kyle Richards on The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills. In my seventy years, I have never been served breakfast in bed unless you count the time years ago when I had a bad cold and was brought some saltines, a glass of orange juice, and a Tylenol. Even that came with the question, "When do you think

you'll be able to get the laundry?" Excluding that one day, I have served my wife breakfast in bed every morning. Now granted, most mornings it's just a muffin and coffee, but over 37 years, that comes to 13,505 times.

My sisters had one of those Play-Doh fun factories as kids. They'd put the Play-Doh into a press a lever, and different shapes would ooze out of it to be sliced off, making stars, squares, tubes, and all sorts of shapes that could be used to build whatever was on their minds.

"Let's build a Man". "Make him strong, good-looking, and willing to do anything we say."

I used to be the Fun Factory. Now, I'm just the PLAY-DOH. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

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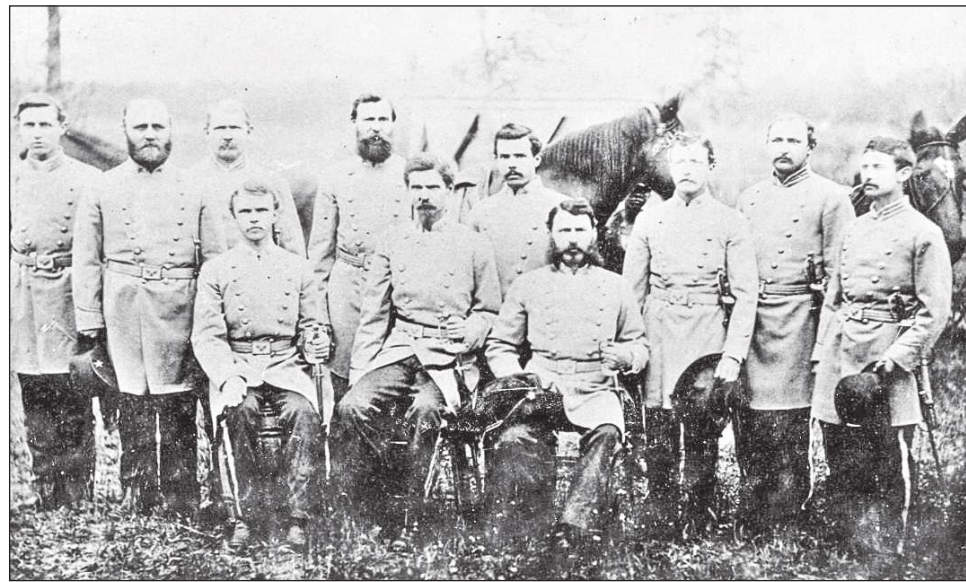
PALMETTO RIFLES AND BEYOND

BY RICH OTTER

With division brewing between the Northern and Southern States, in August of 1860 a meeting was held in Anderson to form a volunteer militia company. They named themselves the Palmetto Riflemen. James A. Hoyt personally, and in his subsequent writings, followed the Riflemen's involvements during the war. He contended few thought a war would actually ensue, but that changed when Fort Sumter fell.

The Palmetto Riflemen were merged into the Fourth Regiment South Carolina Volunteers. The regiment consisted of ten companies from the Anderson, Pickens and Greenville Districts. Hoyt said they were sent to Columbia for two months of training and then to Virginia where they became involved in the first battle of Manassas. The horror of war was quickly realized.

It was a one-year enlistment. They left their homes, farms and businesses, and many never returned. The Palmetto Riflemen consisted of a total of 145 men. Of that group, 10 were discharged through disability from wounds or sickness, 30 were transferred to other commands, 34 were killed in battle, 14 died of disease, 34 were seriously wounded and 39 were surrendered at Appomattox.



Some of the wounded had returned to fight.

At First Manassas, Hoyt described the Confederates as being out-manned and out-gunned, but they "persevered with glory" as the Union retreated. He lamented the fighting was followed with its members struck down by camp diseases. "Nine-tenths of its remaining members were languishing on beds of sickness," and "few remained to discharge the weary round

of camp duties." Their one-year terms were expiring.

The Palmetto Sharpshooters was the only South Carolina regiment composed entirely from companies of men re-enlisting after their previous service. They signed in for an additional two-year term. The new regiment was composed of twelve companies of troops from the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Ninth Regiments. It included many of the former Palmetto Riflemen.

Hoyt explained that the Palmetto Sharpshooters were "most conspicuous in its conduct at Seven Pines, and received the warmest praises from general officers for its gallant bearing." He contended, however, that the battle at Frazier's Farm was "one of the severest ordeals of fire through which our regiment ever passed. The battle raged with great violence from the outset, and with artillery and musketry belching forth missiles of death in our front and on each flank, the regiment led most gallantly by the fearless and intrepid Maj. Anderson who was disabled by wounds that proved fatal." Four-fifths of those entering the fight were reported killed or wounded.

In addition to the fighting, Hoyt spoke of the endurance against weather. At one point: "It rained almost incessantly. The trenches were filled with water. No fires could be allowed...The army had neither coffee, sugar nor hard bread, but subsisted on flour and salt meats, and these in reduced quantities, and yet no murmurs were heard." He said men "died in the mud and water, before they could be taken out to the hospitals."

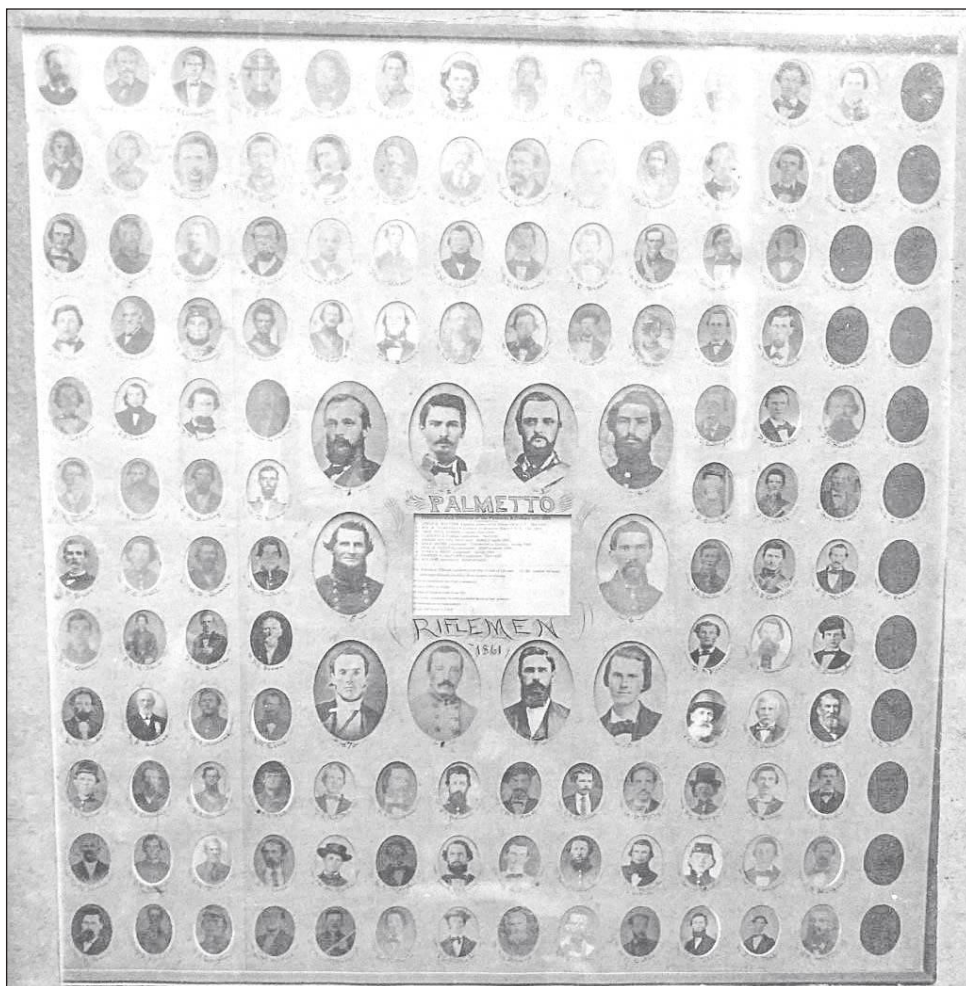
In spite of all, Hoyt related the sharpshooter's company was "intimately connected with the glories of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania." But, after the fall of Richmond, it was all over.

Shortly after the war, in 1865, a reunion

in Anderson of survivors of the Palmetto Riflemen and Sharpshooters with their families was held at Keys Springs, near the home of J. Crawford Keys. A second reunion was held twenty years later at the same location attended by thirty-three survivors and their families. An address was given by A. J. Hoyt along with a detailed written description of the involvement of the Palmetto Riflemen and the re-enlisted Palmetto Sharpshooters.

Amazingly, by 1903 it had been possible to find pictures of 133 of the original members who had joined the Palmetto Riflemen.

Dan Snipes has held a particular interest in the Palmetto Riflemen and those who survived their one-year term and joined the Palmetto Sharpshooters. Some of the information he collected is now available in the Anderson County Museum, including the names and brief historical information of Riflemen members as well as published personal background information concerning some of its participants.



NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice to Creditors as required by South Carolina statute is hereby given that on March 18th, 2025, Letters of Administration in respect to the Estate of Derrick Little, who died on February 14th, 2025, and was domiciled in Anderson, South Carolina, were issued to the undersigned by the Probate Court of Anderson County.

All persons, resident and non-resident, having claims, matured or unmatured, against said estate are required to file the same with the Clerk of Court on or before February 14th, 2026, otherwise their claims will be forever barred.

This the 6th day of February, 2026.
Jessica Little Personal Representative of the estate of Derrick Little.

THE GARDEN SHOP



Sniffing the damage

A little this and that



**SUSAN
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The past couple of weeks have not involved anything much in the yard. First ice, then snow, but Yogi and I did wander in the woods, and enjoyed evening strolls when the full moon was reflecting on the snow. One camellia was sprawled open from the ice. Fortunately, as soon as the ice melted, it went back to normal. No other evergreens were damaged either. When snow and ice damage plants, it's usually best to wait a month or so, or longer if you can, to see if they recover on their own. They often will.

All the special baby plants are still in the garage. I'm telling myself those cimicifuga from last Garden Shop issue are going in the ground. I'm not going to put them back in the garden shop area to babysit them any longer. Fence will definitely go around them though, to at least give a headstart, since something ate their foliage when they were first put in the garden shop area. The company I ordered them from uses sustainable coconut fiber pots, which makes planting easy. My thinking is since cimicifuga like soil a bit on the moist side, hopefully that liner will hold some moisture this summer. If my intentions to take care of them fail, or they are finicky, it's going to be a bit of a costly mistake. Shipping cost about as much as the plants did. However, the company does offer a 100% guarantee. The ground never really dries out where they're going, so I think they'll be happy.

Towards the end of the year, a new red-

wood tree, Inman's Select (*Sequoia sempervirens* 'Inman's Select') was planted on the edge of the conifer corner in the yard. This tree had been growing in a pot for almost a year, waiting for me to decide the right place, and to plant it when rain was coming to water it in. Another redwood tree was planted many years ago and it is growing great. It is not providing a thick screen to the other side of the creek but so be it. The bark is very pretty. Hopefully, Inman's Select will grow as nicely. I'm telling myself I'm going to water it this summer to push it along a bit. Time will tell. It is not planted as much to screen as the other one was, and it will be seen better from the back porch.

A peculiar thing happened with Inman's

**Perplexed,
I looked
around for
tracks, closely
inspected the
tree again, and
was left baffled
by the mystery.**

though. I did not put fence around it when it was planted as I thought deer were finished rubbing. While in the backyard, I noticed the tree looked different. "Oh No! Deer have torn it up" was my first thought. Yogi and I hurried back there to check on it. Two limbs looked as if they had been pruned off and were laying on the ground beside it. There were no typical deer rubs on it, thank goodness. One tiny little spot on the trunk was damaged.

Perplexed, I looked around for tracks, closely

inspected the tree again, and was left baffled by the mystery. Fence is around the tree now. I've read deer prefer to rub on aromatic trees, like cedars, pines, etc. There are several baby pine trees over on the hill that were killed this year after rubbing. Unfortunately, shortly after Inman's mystery, the little Purple Ghost Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Purple Ghost') tree was damaged quite a bit from a buck rubbing it. It will most likely need pruning this year to help it recover, and to reshape it. Chicken wire is around it until I get more fence. Apparently, some buck is still marking his territory.

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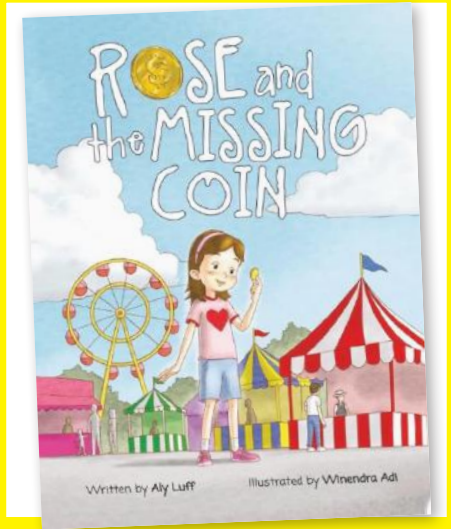
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SEVEN SISTERS IN THE SKY

It looks, curiously enough, like a tiny fuzzy dipper in the night sky. I first saw it years ago when studying constellations to teach to earth science classes, and still love seeing it. Every autumn and winter, interest-

ed students would ask me the same question: "What is that fuzzy thing up there?"



Ann K. Bailes

What we were seeing was the "Seven Sisters," the open star cluster called the Pleiades, which really does look like a fuzzy, jewel-like object with a tiny dip-

per of stars inside. To see the Pleiades at this time of year, first find the bright, easily seen constellation Orion. Follow the three stars of Orion's belt upward to the right, past the bright star in Taurus called Aldebaran, and up to the "fuzzy place."

The best way for the average observer to get a good look at the Pleiades is NOT to look straight at it. Look slightly to its side, and then the brightest of the stars that make it up will come more into focus very close together. It's beautiful! New observers are always amazed. It looks different than anything else in the sky.

Some people assume that what they are seeing is the Little Dipper constellation, because the Pleiades does have a slight dipper shape. However, the Pleiades is far smaller than the much bigger Little Dipper, which is northward, and not easily seen because most of its stars are dim.

The Pleiades is not the same as a constellation because its stars function together as a group. It also isn't a galaxy because it is a tiny part of our own Milky Way. Galileo, the first to view the Pleiades through his early telescope, discovered that it has far more stars than the seven that it is known by—he saw at least 36, and we now know that there are many more.

The Pleiades has a long and storied history. No one knows who discovered it, because it has been recorded since the earliest of historical times. It is known as the Seven Sisters in Greek mythology – the daughters of Atlas, who held up the earth. The Pleiades is also mentioned twice in Job, one of the most ancient books of the Old Testament, as an example of God's greatness in creating the universe (Job 9:9 and 38:3).

Many people are not aware of this jewel in the late autumn and winter sky, but the first time I viewed the Pleiades I knew it was something special. I loved seeing the excite-

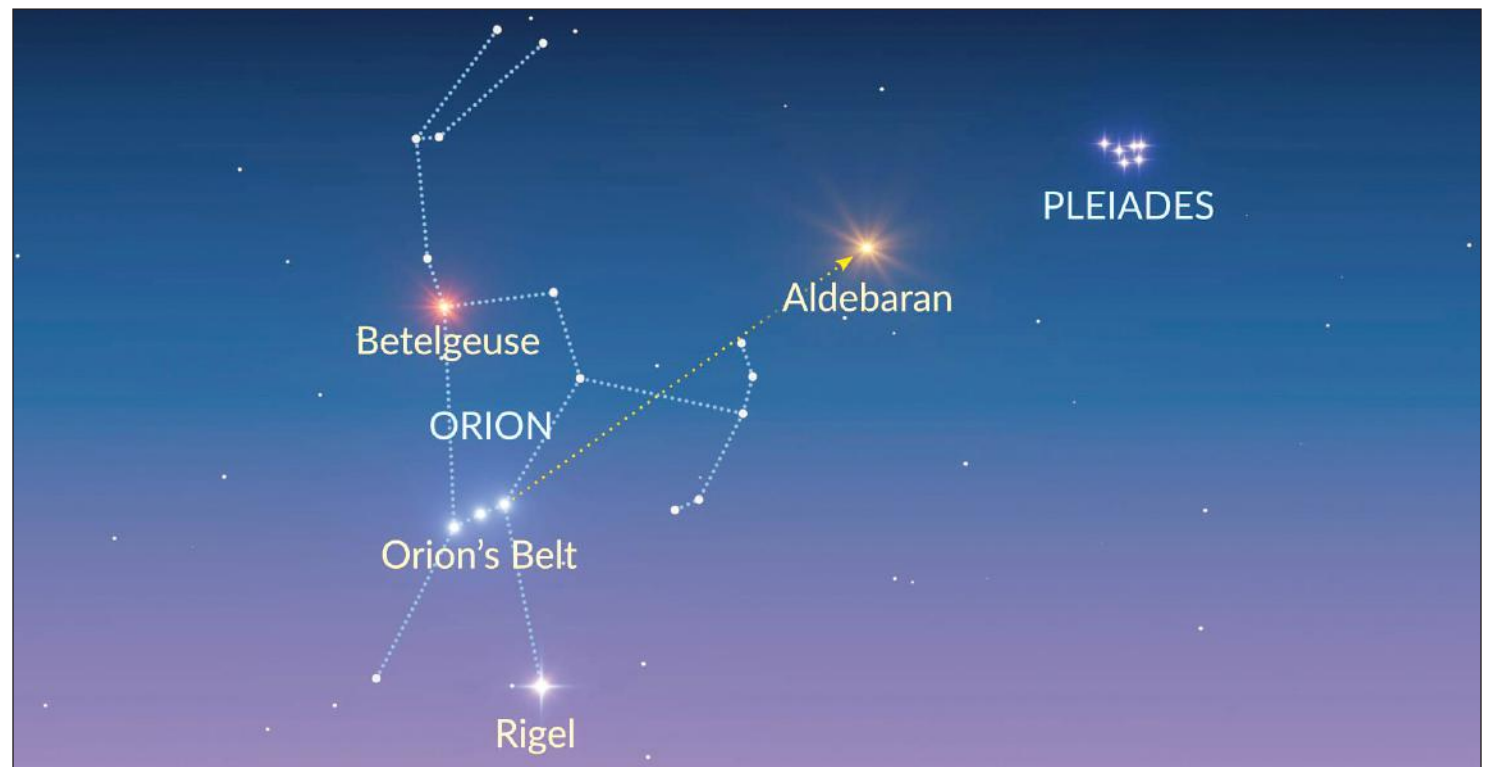


Diagram from starwalk.space

ment of my students as they found this beautiful starry object at night. On a clear, dark

winter evening, go outside and try out your skills to find the Pleiades. You'll be welcome

to join the club of those who have discovered the Seven Sisters.

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