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August 14-27, 2025



Reggie and Emma Gibson of Reggie Gibson Architects

## Anderson native Reggie Gibson welcomes daughter Emma to firm

Anderson native Reggie Gibson, renowned architect well known for his sustainable and innovative designs and visually stunning spaces, has welcomed daughter Emma Gibson into his firm, Reggie Gibson Architects.

In the world of architecture, inspiration often comes from the spaces we inhabit, the communities we serve, and sometimes the people we call family. For Reggie and Emma, architecture is not just a profession but a shared creative love that bridges generations.

Reggie's journey into architecture began while studying at Clemson University. While taking a furniture design class, his professor encouraged him to pursue the field. That advice sparked a career defined by creativity, vision, and a deep respect for spaces.

**'I wanted to be an architect when I was young because of my dad.'**

— Emma Gibson

For Emma, the seed of inspiration was planted early. "I wanted to be an architect when I was young because of my dad," she recalls. Emma earned a degree from Furman University followed by a Masters from the University

of Alabama. She followed with a Masters in Architecture from Clemson University which led her to join her father's firm.

Both father and daughter have projects close to their hearts. For Reggie, the Salem Baptist Fellowship Hall on Wadmalaw Island stands out. A modest structure that housed a small congregation with a huge soul. Reggie states the small structure was led by Pastor Martha Brown, the most powerful person he has ever met.

Emma's early career highlight came working with her father on the Black River Cypress Preserve, where

SEE GIBSON ON PAGE 2



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Gibson

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

she created renderings for a pavilion designed to promote environmental stewardship and education. For her, it represented the very essence of what she hoped to achieve as an architect.

Their design philosophies share a deep respect for context. Reggie often begins by simply standing in a space, absorbing its character before putting pen to paper. Emma approaches projects by studying the site, the client, and the surrounding environment to create a design that harmonizes with its setting.

While their creative approaches align, their roles in the business complement each other. “I am forgetting, and Emma is remembering,” Reggie jokes. He serves as the creative visionary, while Emma ensures those visions come to life.

Both agree on the importance of design elements that connect people with the outdoors. Reggie recommends adding more glass to capture views of nature, while Emma values outdoor living spaces—be it a porch, garden, or inviting entry steps—as hallmarks of a successful home. They also share a commitment to preserving what’s essential, from protecting old, healthy trees to maintaining spaces where one can truly breathe.

Their architectural wish lists remain aspirational: a fire station for Reggie, a library for Emma. And while Emma admires her father’s ability to visualize designs, recalling his habit of sketching on napkins and scraps, Reggie values the fact that she chose to work alongside him, seeing it as a meaningful affirmation of their bond. “I am very proud of both of my daughters, Margaret and Emma. They are smart, compassionate and funny (thanks to their mother, Maryellen).”

“I am incredibly grateful to share a career with my father,” Emma says. “I do not take it for granted. He is an extremely talented man and being able to watch my dad work has been such a gift. As a kid I remember seeing him sketching on napkins and loose pieces of mail. Through this he taught me that architecture (or any kind of design in general) is a continuous engagement with the world around you. You learn so much from thinking about small details.”

With Reggie’s Bachelor’s in Industrial Education and Master’s in Architecture from Clemson, and Emma’s academic journey spanning philosophy, religious studies, and architecture, the two bring a unique blend of artistry, intellect, and heart to their projects. Together, they are building not only structures, but a legacy—one rooted in creativity, community, and family.

Goldsmith named Anderson District 5 Teacher of the Year

Courtney Goldsmith, a dedicated educator and proud product of Anderson School District Five, has been selected as the Anderson Five 2025-2026 District Teacher of the Year.

Now entering her 14th year in education, Courtney began her teaching career as a 5th Grade teacher at New Prospect Elementary. She is currently in her fifth year at Robert Anderson Middle School, where her passion for education, school spirit, and student leadership shines as a 6th Grade Math teacher.

A 2008 graduate of Westside High School, Courtney earned her B.A. in Elementary Education from Clemson University in 2012. In addition to her classroom role at Robert Anderson Middle, she serves as the Westside High School

Assistant Varsity Cheerleading Coach, advisor to the R.A.M.S Student Ambassadors, and a dance fitness instructor at Phenom Training Facility. She is also the owner of

Love it Events by Coco Re’Anne, a wedding and event planning business.

Whether she’s leading in the classroom, coaching on the sidelines, or inspiring students through extracurricular activities, Courtney brings energy and commitment to all she does. When she’s not teaching, coaching, dancing, or planning events, she enjoys tailgating at

Clemson and spending quality time with her family.

Courtney is looking forward to another exciting season of football, competitive cheer, and basketball—and to representing Anderson Five as its District Teacher of the Year.



Courtney Goldsmith

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# The Naturalist

Mike is a keen naturalist. He see things and hears things that the average person overlooks.

Early in the summer, his senses were especially acute as we walked the Kerrigan Trail, the short nature hike that starts behind the gift shop at Huntington Beach State Park in Murrells Inlet. It leads through the woods out to the observation deck overlooking Mullet Pond. Mike glanced to his right and whispered, "Look!" A small deer



Ann K. Bailes

was watching us from deep in the trees. I would have never noticed it.

Then, as we continued down the easy walking trail, he said "Do you see that rub?" I looked through the break in the foliage he was pointing to, and didn't see much at all. Only after studying for awhile did I see the rubbed-off place on the small tree – evidence that a deer was rubbing velvet off of its antlers, or marking its territory.

He's constantly observing and noticing things. Next, while I was looking down at the ground just to keep from tripping, his eyes were on the trail also, and he said "Look at the differences there." To me, I'm seeing pine cones. But there's more to it. "See how some of those are stripped? It's because squirrels climb up into trees and get cones. They pull them apart to get the pine seeds out, then they drop



the remains of the emptied cones down to the trail." After his explanation, I could see the entire sequence. I would never have thought that. All I saw were pine cones on the ground.

We finished the short hike and ended up at the covered observation deck overlooking Mullet Pond. It's a lovely spot, perfect for getting good views of the large variety of waterfowl that fly up and down the waterway.

Mike knows the secretive sights as well as the more obvious wildlife. He caught sight of a least bittern, a very shy bird, flying in to the cover of the marsh edge. Once a bittern is deep in the reeds, it's not easy to locate. After he dis-

covered it, the two of us watched carefully as it slowly made its way between the cattails.

We watched great blue and little blue herons gliding by, and great and little egrets, ibises, and many kinds of birds large and small. We tracked an alligator lazily making his way to cross the straight road way off to our left. The quiet remoteness of the surroundings was relaxing and calming.

It was time to go back to civilization. We had arrived in the coolness of early morning, but were leaving after the heat and humidity had struck. We walked off the deck and back into the Kerrigan Trail woods – and were immediately met with buzzing sounds. I started feeling pinpricks on my skin, and seeing black things flying around, very thick in the sticky heat.

Mike's a great naturalist, but I don't need him to tell me what mosquitoes are. Let's get out of here and go home.



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# Andrew Carnegie and the Anderson Library

BY RICH OTTER

He was known as one of the Robber Barons who flourished in the 1800s into the 1900s. They were accused of using procedures considered unethical to run competitors out of business and to have used harsh labor practices. They amassed great fortunes.

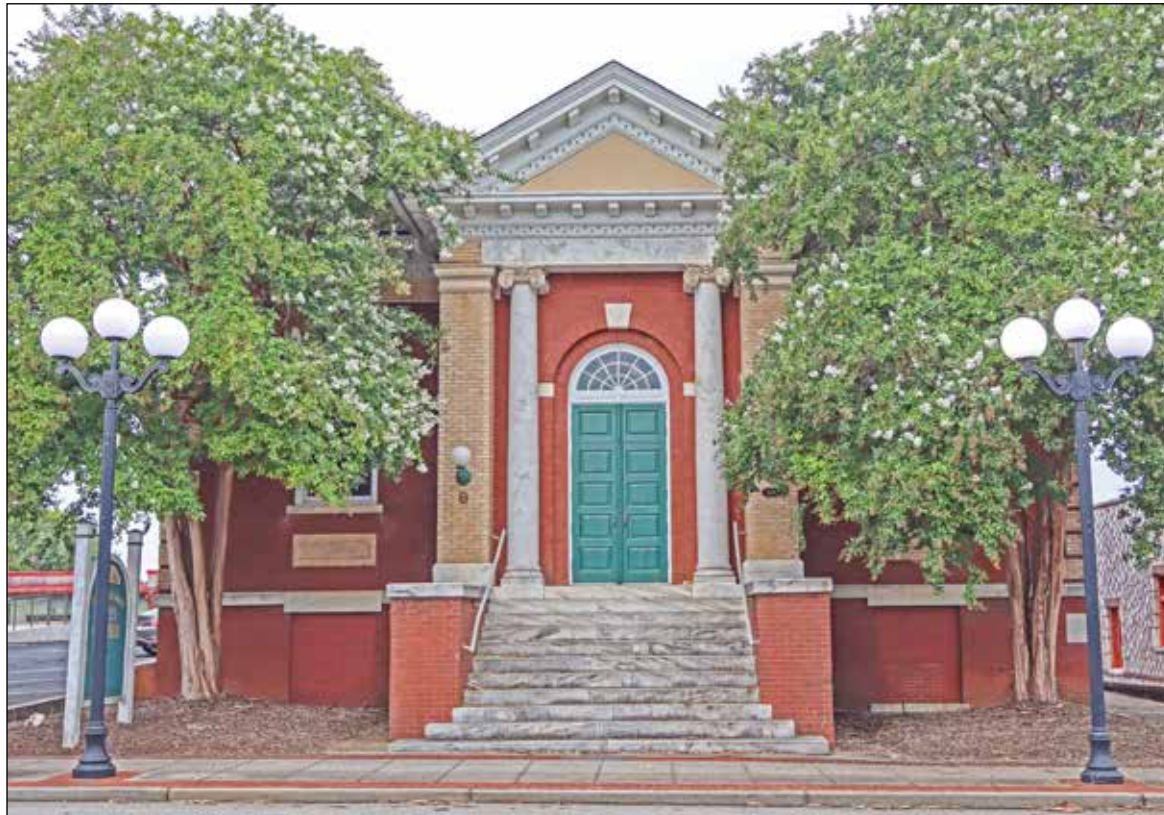
Many of the Robber Barons had been born into wealth, but Andrew Carnegie was born in Scotland to parents who had to sell all of their belongings to have funds for a ship voyage with their two sons to America. Born in 1835, thirteen-year-old Carnegie went to work as a bobbin boy in a cotton factory in Pennsylvania. He then became a messenger boy for a telegraph company, followed by becoming a telegraph operator with the Pennsylvania Railroad and rising up through the ranks, gathering an interest in iron and steel.

In his young years he had an opportunity to become acquainted with a library available for young boys and was absorbed with reading and learning. That experience stayed with him the rest of his life.

In Anderson County, South Carolina, reading opportunities were also becoming important. In 1811, a Pendleton circulating library was formed and then in 1830 a library association. In 1860 there was a librarian with the Pendleton Agricultural Society. In 1896 a lend-a-learn library was developed by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and a room was set aside at the new Anderson City Hall that was completed in 1898.

The library in city hall was staffed by volunteers, but was only open on Saturdays. The Anderson Library Association was formed in 1900 by the WCTU. There was an annual membership fee of one dollar, life membership was \$25. The library was open four afternoons a week and the city paid the librarian \$10 a month. When the library opened, a number of books were donated and \$400 was spent for new books.

Meanwhile, Andrew Carnegie had been busy compiling a fortune in railroads, steel and other developments, but he had never forgotten the opportunity he had to read



Former Carnegie Library

when an underprivileged youngster.

Carnegie began using his fortune to build libraries and make grants for their construction. He became responsible for building over 3,000 libraries, fourteen in South Carolina, including Anderson. He made 1,419 grants and actually built 1,689 libraries. He invested \$45,865,440 in the program.

The Anderson Library Association was incorporated in 1905. Carnegie's Foundation approved a \$10,000 grant for a library building in Anderson if a suitable lot was furnished by the city. Such a location was furnished by Joseph Newton Brown on North Main Street, valued at \$4,000. He also gave \$1,000 for equipment and \$5,000 in 5% bonds as an endowment. Carnegie gave an additional \$1,000 appropriation for support of the library, and historian Frank Dickson reported that Carnegie ended up having given a total grant of \$17,000.

The original building is the red brick building on North Main Street now occupied by the Arts Center. When the building was outgrown as the Anderson County main library, it moved in 1972 to new quarters designed by Fant &

Fant Architects on Greenville Street, now occupied by the Anderson County Museum.

The library moved again in the year 2,000, needing more space, to its present facility on McDuffie Street on property where there previously had been the operation of the Protective Order of Elks lodge and Welborn Tire Service.

Many of the so-called Robber Barons were also philanthropists. Whether that was to soothe their conscious is an unanswered question. In the situation of Andrew Carnegie, however, there is a history of a poor kid with an education started from books he was given the opportunity to read. His interest in libraries was very personal. He provided an enormous amount of his personal wealth to help others have the same opportunity he so highly valued.

In today's dollars, his gifts for libraries in the United States would have exceeded \$1,500,000,000. He surely wasn't doing that just to soothe his conscience.

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# UPSET WIFE

I've done something to upset my wife. I do it quite often, but this time I have no idea what I've done or when. I do know I'm in hot water over something. A few days ago, I gathered the nerve to look her in the eyes and caught a glimpse of disgust before I lowered my head and turned away like a dog that has just been told "Bad Boy". Did I leave underwear hanging on a doorknob again? Did I leave stray ice cubes on the kitchen floor to melt? I know she doesn't like it when I breathe, maybe that's it.

I've just entered my seventh decade here on earth, and over half of that time, I've been married. You'd think I'd made all the mistakes possible by now, but "Not so fast, my friend." Marriage is like being a doctor, a weatherman, or playing golf; you're just practicing, and no matter how much you practice, you'll never get it right.

It's possible that it wasn't something I did, but something I didn't do. Did I forget to check the locks on the doors before bedtime? Did I forget to push the can out on trash day? I know that others my age are losing their ability to recall birthdays and anniversaries, but I'm not letting that happen to me. Now, where was I? Oh yeah, my wife is upset about something I did or didn't do, and you're wondering why not just ask her what it is. Oh no, rookie, I was born at night, but it wasn't last night. I can't just walk up to the Queen and spew random questions unless I want my head on a platter. I'm going to have



Neal Parnell

to rack my feeble peasant brain and come up with some answers without knowing the questions before even thinking about requesting an audience with Her Majesty.

I'm outside now, hoping that Mother Nature will send me a sign and reveal my transgression. I can't think with that stupid mockingbird incessantly singing every sound it's



ever heard. Oh! That's it, I've annoyed her by saying something. Nah, that can't be it, she loves the sound of my melodic voice rambling on and on about everything I've read or heard.

Could it be that I've lost my Southern charm? When we first dated, I'd put on a freshly ironed wide-collared shirt, my best faded bell-bottomed jeans, and suede

platform shoes. I'd top it off with a splash of Chaps or British Sterling, knowing that when she saw me, she would think I could actually dance. Now my daily attire consists of my favorite thirty-year-old clean but mustard-stained Jimmy Buffett "Cheeseburger in Paradise" t-shirt, a pair of soft, torn, worn shorts, with a splash of cat hair on the lap. So that can't be it. Yesterday at the breakfast table, I had a surprise sneeze that contorted my body and was so loud and violent it sent my Fruit Loops and milk into the toaster and places I'm still finding today. I didn't look up at her, but I'm sure she feels blessed to have a seventy-year-old toddler to cuddle with.

It's been a week, and I still have no hint as to why my little Num-num smoochie face found fault in such a perfect specimen of southern manhood. I poked my head into her home office and announced I was headed to Ingles. Her words revealed all..." Last week, I put a bag of Little Debbie powdered donuts on the list, and you didn't get them."



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# Back-to-school health tips for your family

With school starting back, it's time to support children's success with necessary medical visits for children and reinforcement of healthy habits.

Dr. Zoza Grace Spears of AnMed Pediatrics - Beltline Boulevard would assign a little homework for parents:

## PLAN PHYSICALS AND MAKE NECESSARY DOCTORS' APPOINTMENTS

Schedule annual physicals for school and sports.

Check with your school to learn which physicals your child needs, depending upon their grade and any sports they plan to play. Some schools may offer physicals at special events at their facilities while others require you to see your pediatrician or family doctor.

## SCHEDULE VACCINES

Parents are encouraged to talk to their pediatricians or family doctors to keep children up to date on the proper vaccines for their age group.

More information on which vaccines your kids need and when is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at CDC.gov.

## SCHEDULE DENTIST'S APPOINTMENT

Most children should visit a dentist every six months. If your child requires more frequent or less frequent visits, your dentist will let you know. Prepare your child for the appointment by telling them what to expect.

## INSTALL PROPER SLEEP HABITS

Lead the creation of beneficial sleep habits. Children who get enough sleep tend to be healthier, perform better in school and have better mental health than children who don't sleep enough.

How much sleep is enough sleep? Pediatricians' sleep recommendations depend upon the child's age:

Infants: 12 to 16 hours of sleep (including naps)

Toddlers: 11 to 14 hours (including naps)

Preschoolers: 10 to 13 hours (including naps)

Grade-schoolers: 9 to 12 hours

Teenagers: 8 to 10 hours



## INSTALL HEALTHY FOOD HABITS

Healthy food habit tips:

- DO find ways to include fruits and veggies into delicious snacks. Healthy foods should be seen as fun, not punishment.

- DON'T force children to finish all the food on their plate. They should learn to listen to their bodies and finish eating when they're full.

- DO make a steady schedule for meals and snacks. This can prevent over- or under-eating when everyone knows when the next meal will be.

- DON'T turn food into a reward or bribe. To praise your kids, use kind words or hugs instead.

- DO let children help decide menus, help shop for food and help prepare meals. This can be a great time to show kids how to read nutrition labels and teach them how to make good decisions.

## INSTALL POSITIVE HYGIENE

When helping children create positive hygiene habits, put the focus on how these habits make them healthier. It's about more than how we look; it's about how we feel. And, just like healthy food habits, one of the most important ways to teach children these skills is to model them yourself:

- Hand washing: before and after meals, after going to the bathroom, after playing with pets and after being with someone who is sick

- Hair washing: typically two or three times each week

- Teeth brushing and flossing: at least two times per day. Encourage

children not to share their hair brush to prevent getting head lice.

## PREPARE FOR SCREENINGS

Your child could receive additional screenings at school. Here are some resources for additional information about each of them:

### Vision screening

The National Association of School Nurses offers a wide variety of resources about vision screening and eye health in children. Because vision problems can be common in children – and they can create problems in development and school performance – it's crucial to regularly screen children's vision.

### Hearing screening

Like vision screening, hearing impairments that go undetected can create developmental, social and academic problems for children. Learn about the importance of hearing screening in children from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

### Head lice screening

Head lice are common in children: about six to 12 million infestations occur in kids between 3 and 11 every year. Not all schools offer lice screenings anymore, however. Instead of screenings, some schools place their focus on prevention and treatment. In South Carolina, individual schools determine their own lice policies. Learn how to treat head lice, in case your child comes in contact with an infestation at school.

## FIND MEDICAL CARE

If your family needs a pediatrician, AnMed Pediatrics - Beltline Boulevard is welcoming new patients. Call 864-512-8161 for an appointment. <https://anmed.org/locations/anmed-pediatrics-beltline-boulevard>

# HOME DECOR PET PEEVES

I was scrolling through my phone the other day and I came across a post that said "Let's stir the pot", what's a home decorating trend that you don't like? The comment section was



Kristine March

quite frankly hilarious. For me personally, I think it's your house and you live in it, so decorate it however you want to. I must admit I was in agreement with practically everything everyone said though. I was even a bit guilty and felt attacked a few times for having some of the decoration decisions that were "so called" bad taste. Whoops. Especially, in years past when I was younger and didn't have it all quite together and was

finding my way or my own personal style. These are just some comical examples and see if you concur. A sign that simply reads or says "Blessed" or "Live, Laugh Love". That's all fine and dandy as long as the household is actually acting accordingly and not fighting and complaining and remains that way, I guess. Maybe they just need the daily reminder.

Another one was all grey everything. That's a new millennial trend that definitely caught on quickly and it's still seriously going strong. Grey sofa, grey walls, grey bed. Just grey. Another one was all beach and nautical decorations and you live hours from the shore. Hey, maybe people just really love the ocean. Plastic trees was a big one and I personally see those everywhere and anything with artificial flowers which I'm guilty of. Someone else said the same old Tom Ford or destination coffee table book. Like, we get it you've been to Spain and Italy and you like Chanel. Or even worse, they're not even real books just glued together. They're plastic from the Hobby Lobby. Whatever floats your boat, I guess.

Another one which I really like is, from the artist named Mackenzie Child's. Her tea pots have these courtly checks all over them. She would do these whimsical, beautiful pieces and social media influencers always have one on their range or stove. The sad thing is, I really don't even know if these young content creators know who she is. She's an extremely eccentric, almost sort of a witchy type of potter artist from the eighties and I'm almost certain most of these content creators haven't done their research or their homework. They just buy it simply because of some type of observational learning.

Really, from what I gathered from all of this is, there's honestly no such thing as bad taste because it's yours and everybody is creative in their own way. Like the song says "If it makes you happy it can't be that bad". What's truly upsetting in all of this is the mass production and not supporting our local artists or buying antiques or up cycling. Our culture's motto is "We need more" when our landfills are already at capacity and releasing greenhouse gases as we speak. But that's a whole other subject that would bore you to tears. The point of this whole article is whatever you do, try to branch out and explore. Try not to be a copycat. Be your own kind of weird. I love the quote, "I tried being normal once and it was the worst two minutes of my life". So, the next time you want to decorate try to take a walk on the wild side and be funky. Be an individual. What are some of your pet peeve, home decor mistakes that make you cringe? Make the living room your runway y'all! And remember kindness always matters.



## YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

# Understanding the risk of Type 2 Diabetes

As we've been discussing, obesity is considered a chronic disease affecting over 40 percent of our population. At the same time, we're seeing a significant increase in Type 2 diabetes. It's believed obesity may be linked to this condition. In our dental practice we maintain vigilance when it comes to treating patients who have periodontal disease (bleeding gums) and systemic inflammation, both of these conditions are also associated with Type 2 diabetes.

More than 38 million Americans have diabetes, with over 90% having Type 2 – historically referred to as “adult onset” diabetes because it was rare in young people. Today with one in every five school-age children considered obese, the rate of Type 2 diabetes in young people is rising at an alarming rate. Studies point to a significant jump in recent years for those ages 10-19!

Type 2 diabetes affects how our bodies metabolize sugar (glucose), causing high blood sugar levels. Many people have high blood sugar, but when it reaches a certain level consistently it becomes a

chronic and potentially life-threatening disorder that if not properly treated can lead to heart disease, sight loss, kidney disease, and neuropathy.

Now here's the good news. Type 2 diabetes can be delayed and prevented from developing! What is required is what we have been discussing in this column. Lifestyle changes.



**Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick**

Certainly, consult a doctor if you have high blood sugar. But also ask yourself, “What can I do?” And if you have children who may be at risk,

understand preventive measures are basically the same for adults and children. Complications from diabetes are happening earlier in life. With the biggest risk factor being obesity, it underscores the importance of educating and guiding our children about the dangers of contracting Type 2. We have

to be honest. Are our children getting the recommended daily 60 minutes of exercise? How many are sitting in front of screens for hours eating foods high in sugar and fat that is associated with obesity and the development of Type 2 diabetes?

Think about prevention and keep it simple:

- Practice healthy weight management without restrictive dieting. Establish habits that encourage a healthier diet, fresh whole food and lean meat.
- Emphasize family meals. Eating together allows parents to model healthy eating habits.
- Practice “portion awareness” to avoid over-eating.
- Make exercise a natural part of every day.
- Stay positive. Focus on progress in adopting healthy habits rather than numbers on a scale.

When it comes to children, remember they tend to imitate their parents' actions. By demonstrating healthy habits, you inspire them to make better choices. These are actions that can positively impact their health – and yours -- now and for years to come! Please feel free to reach out if you

would like to discuss this important subject. We are 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.*

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FROM THE SHELF

# On ‘The Dogist’ and This Dog Will Change Your Life

When I first grabbed *This Dog Will Change Your Life* off Libby it was purely off of the title. We all know I am peak “dog mom” and pretty dog obsessed. I honestly had no idea it was by Elias Weiss Friedman, someone y’all probably also know as ‘The Dogist.’ If you’re unfamiliar with ‘The Dogist,’ he’s a photographer on Instagram (along with several social media platforms) who documents his famous photography of dogs, then shares it with the world. It’s easily one of my favorite Instagram accounts, and it is just wholesome and nothing but a pure delight.

For ‘The Dogist,’ Elias essentially walks around wherever he’s at (most often NYC where he lives) and asks people to take pictures of their dogs. In *This Dog Will Change Your Life*, he explains that his thought was to capture dogs in a similar fashion to the street-photography of Humans of New York and other similar accounts on Instagram. His approach is to focus on the dog and capture candid shots of the dog, then get some anecdotes from the owner. Said

anecdotes are what made him so famous.

As social media has changed, Elias has obviously had to evolve, and what started as just a series of candid happy dog photos has morphed into what ‘The Dogist’ is today, which includes a quick on screen interview showing the personality of the dog in action while also bringing the human/dog relationship into the spotlight, too. His stuff is seriously delightful, and I would definitely encourage you to check it out, especially if you need a pick me up.

‘The Dogist’ started in 2013, so he’s been at it over a decade now and *This Dog Will Change Your Life* captures not just the story of how he became one of the most beloved social media accounts, but also his general love of dogs. It also covers how over the course of his life, especially as the ‘The Dogist,’ he’s



Sara Leady

come to appreciate and understand the true impact that dogs have on humans in general.

Throughout the book Elias highlights some particular dogs and experiences he’s had as ‘The Dogist.’ Through these highlighted snapshots, Elias also shows the different ways he’s seen firsthand how dogs truly can change a life, in some cases even save it. The name for the book even comes from his friend struggling with depression and other mental health challenges, and how getting a service dog basically saved his life. Elias remembers telling his friend quite literally, “this dog will change your life.”

Elias also speaks of his time working with “Puppies Behind Bars,” which is a nonprofit that pairs people who are incarcerated with puppies, who then train the puppies in order for them to become service dogs. This is double the power of dogs because of the insane impact the training of puppies has on the prisoners, who are often trapped in environments where they’re quickly losing their humanity, and the dogs bring that part of their heart and

mind back. Then there’s the puppies they’re training to become service dogs, which will go on to change another person’s life.

This was a really fun read for me, not just because I’m dog obsessed, but because it was also a great experience thinking through all the different dogs I’ve had in my life and the incredible ways they’ve changed me for the better. While I have a penchant for project dogs (i.e. dogs with behavior issues) and they can be a lot of work, each breakthrough we have with training is that more special for me. Dogs have also been structure-builders in my life. I can honestly say there’ve been seasons of my life where had there not been a dog needing me to get up and out of bed to feed and walk them, I might not have managed to make it out of bed.

Dogs can be a lot of work, and they come with their baggage and shenanigans, but ultimately, I think even a negative experience with a dog can change your life, and change it in a positive way if you’re open to the experience.

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# RAMS LOOKING TO RETURN TO STATE TITLE GAME WITH SIZEABLE SENIOR CLASS

Coach Brian Lane has had a pretty good run at Westside.

In 2023, his Rams were 14-1 and won the state AAAA title. He followed that up with a 13-1 mark last season before losing in the state championship game. There was a 27-game winning streak in the middle of all that. Remarkable stuff.



Brian Hodges

But Lane lost 34 seniors off that team, including quarterback Cutter Woods, who threw for a gazillion yards in two seasons before leaving for South Carolina.

"People need to step up this year," Lane said in an understatement. "When you develop a program, you've got to have some replacements ready to go."

"We'll have 32 seniors on this year's team," he said. "Willie Jeffries (a longtime successful coach at South Carolina State) said if you can get at least 25 seniors every year, you will have a pretty good program."

The first question is at quarterback, and Bear Woods, the younger brother of Cutter, has a good chance to start.

Even though he will only be 15 when the season starts.

"He's taking a lot of snaps at No. 1," said Lane of fall practice. "He's a ninth-grader and is 6-foot-3, 175 pounds."

Lane said Bear was good at watching film with Cutter in previous seasons, so he knows what is expected of him.

"In the off season, we'd watch film on



Sundays after church," Lane said.

Almost the entire offense will reload with only left tackle A.J. Calhoun returning. Rams receivers such as Chamarryus Bomar and Armoni Weaver have moved on to college programs.

But Lane, who has a career record of 155-65, knows what he's doing. He loves the forward pass.

"We call a pass play on every down," Lane said with a laugh. "It's up to the QB to make the right call."

"But we prepare to get to the championship game every year."

The Rams will have three preseason scrimmages, the final on Aug. 15 at Hillcrest. Westside opens the season Aug. 22 in Alabama vs. Vestavia Hills, before hosting T.L. Hanna on Sept. 5.

**'We'll have 32 seniors on this year's team. Willie Jeffries said if you can get at least 25 seniors every year, you will have a pretty good program.'**

## SCHSL votes to keep 5 classes in realignment

BY BRIAN HODGES

The South Carolina High School League voted to stay at five classifications in its next realignment for 2026-28.

However, the league won't split its top class, 5A, for the next realignment, the State newspaper in Columbia, S.C., reported.

T.L. Hanna is currently in Class 5A, Division II. Westside High School is currently Class 4A. School classification is based on student enrollment.

The league's executive committee voted 13-4 on July 31 to keep five classifications.

Class 5A had split into two divisions for championships in all sports for 2024-2026.

The SCHSL can now begin putting teams into classifications (again, this is for the 2026-'28 seasons). Those discussions will begin in September, the State newspaper reported.

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# A conversation with the Unsinkable Shea Abramo

How long have you lived in Anderson?

"I moved here in 2003, graduated high school in 2004 and in 2010, I decided to travel all of America. I lived in Alaska and Hawaii and then came back here in 2014. I met Josh in 2016, got married and have been here ever since."



Lisa Wilson

*You've made quite an impact with your art. The exhibit you and Nat Morris have up at the Anderson Arts Council is*

*incredibly moving and thought provoking and there's an artists' talk on August 14th at 5:30. I hope everyone takes time to go see this exhibit.*

*You've also painted many beautiful murals around Anderson. How many are there?*

"That's a good question! I did several for businesses that are no longer there and there are several around Market street, not including what's in the buildings. Also Hope Missions and Electric City Pizza where I did a kind of collage mural of Anderson. At least seven I can think of."

*I'm going to shift focus and circle back to art. You've really been through a lot in the past couple of years.*

"I call it the series of unfortunate events. It started at the beginning of 2024 with some health issues. Then the storms came. In May's microburst, we got our first tree on the roof. The roof didn't get fixed until July, and then Helene came through and the trees literally crushed the house. That led to us living in a tent for about 55 days. We made a makeshift bathroom shower outside. Luckily, we thrive in that type of environment thanks to my experience in Alaska and traveling and his experience of growing up in the outdoors. I felt like we were strong candidates for a not so great situation and being able to handle it."

"We lost everything. We counted our lucky stars to keep everything in our freezer, which is everything we hunt, catch, and harvest. And we had an amazing community that showed up. It was awesome as far as what can come from tragedy. After the tent, we upgraded to my grandpa's 86 RV."



"I was able to have a moment of mourning for the things that I lost in that house and say goodbye to what was. And I decided that the best way to move forward is to welcome what's to come. I really had to embrace positivity in the times that I did not want to. With that and my faith, and a lot of inner thought and reflection, it got me through."

"But then I lost my dog, Jasper. That came about a month and a half after losing our home, and it wrecked me, and so I had to go through the process of not just losing my home, but also losing my best friend."

*And just recently, you injured yourself here in your studio, right?*

"Yeah. These pieces that I did for this show are so large. I was working on eight foot panels, and I'm four-eleven. You get to this point of painting where you're on the ladder and so close for an hour or two. And

I needed to step back and look, then I tripped, tearing a muscle in my leg."

*I'm reminded of that quote, "Nevertheless, she persisted."*

"What has happened is tragic and dramatic, but I could sit down with Josh, and say, 'But you know what? It's still not the worst situation I've ever been in.' Instead of being weaker from what's happened, I've become stronger. And it is a painful process. There is really nothing easy about dying and growing. But that's another spot where I see the beauty. Like the darkest of situations I've ever been in, something beautiful and light came out of it. So, I know, in the act of moving forward, I'll get to that light. And I think that's what has always kept me from dwelling in my situation because I know the answer to getting through it, too."

*And meanwhile, you were also*

*involved with the Lot Project.*

"Yeah, Market Street has a huge place in my heart and in the Lot Project, we were all connected. There was the dream of the Maker Space, and I remember when it was just ideas and fresh."

"I hold a special place in my heart for the homeless community and I love what the Lot Project did. It was just connecting through art. I want better for all of us and I don't know what I can do on a large scale, but I have seen what happens on a very small scale, and it takes just the smallest steps to make an active difference in your community, to just give space. That thing that says, 'Okay, at this moment, you're not this person struggling on the streets; you are creating.' I think that's beautiful and great relationships came out of that."

"I love that we're becoming a community that's facing our times and are truly ready to tackle it in a way that's effective. It's not like everybody needs a course in being homeless, but we definitely need a course in empathy and the understanding that rock

bottoms look different for all walks of life."

*I'm struck by your positivity and empathy towards others in the midst of all you've been going through.*

"I should thank my parents. I was able to call them to pull me out of the studio and get me back to my feet, and I believe it's a beautiful symbolic message of who they've been in my life this last year because I needed some pillars."

"There's a part of me that likes to kind of disappear especially when I'm overwhelmed. It's okay to respond that way, but also to realize that people are extremely important to have in our lives. There's a ripple effect that happens when we are around each other, or lift each other up."

"When we figure out how to step in and empathize and feel for people that we love, even people we don't like; that is what makes this whole thing harmonize. When we come together, we just make this full life. I remind myself how absolutely important each and every relationship is, and that somehow it comes full circle."





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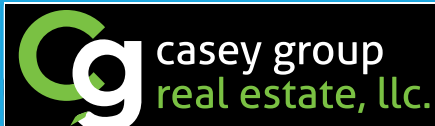
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## THE GARDEN SHOP

# The black and white of texture



**SUSAN  
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Finally, rain and cooler temperatures have allowed this gardener to work in the front garden. It is always remarkable how fast plants bounce back with some rain. Sometimes it can take a long time for drought damage to show in larger trees. I hope trees that seem stress free truly are.

While taking pictures for Anderson Master Gardeners' newsletter, I decided to try a few black and white ones. Experts say to take black and white pictures of your garden to better see textures of plants. It is surprising how different a garden can look. One time, alliums were in full bloom. I instantly understood what those experts mean about texture. Color guard yucca proves the point in the picture too. Admittedly, the front garden seemed to need some thinning, cleaning out, before the picture. After years of leaving plants to their own devices, some have spread a bit too much.

Generally, weeds are in check. However, the

weed for this summer is hophornbeam copper-leaf (*Acalypha ostryifolia*). When reading more about it, it is native and is wind pollinated. Mostly, wind pollinated plants do not produce nectar, therefore, they do not attract bees, butterflies, or other pollinators. One hophornbeam can produce up to 12,500 seeds. While pulling up small ones, one growing in a flowering almond (*Prunus glandulosa*) had grown almost as tall as the shrub. Thankfully, unless the weed is growing in something else, they usually get pulled before growing more than several inches.

Four o'clocks (*Mirabilis jalapa*) had gotten quite leggy during the heatwave, and they got cut back, or some pulled up. They've reseeded quite a bit over the years and have spread across the path to a section I prefer they not grow. There are lots of bulbs in that section so it's hard to dig up the four o'clocks. Last fall, while dividing crinum lilies, a huge four o'clock bulb came up with crinums. It looked like a big ol' sweet potato. It was quite surprising the bulbs would grow that big. As daylight was running out, the hummingbird moths were buzzing around my head. I hated to take their flowers away, so a few were left for them. This led to a thorough thinning of that section.

As the garden was expanded over the years,

it turned into a series of island beds, since paths wind through the whole garden. This really helps get my mind around tending it. Rather than look at it as a whole, section by section makes it much more doable. Coreopsis have really spread too. Their bright yellow flowers in early summer make quite a show. Deer pass them by and these plants have been left alone for years, except for scattering seeds to other areas to help them along, only to now pull some up. They have gotten quite thick. Time will tell what happens with the bare ground in this section. Leaves will be put down once fall arrives.

There are numerous big salvias throughout the garden. Deer don't eat them. Hummingbirds love the blooms, and they survive any kind of weather. But they are leggy and could maybe stand some dividing also. It seems that cutting one back hard one year killed it the following winter. Maybe fall is not the time to cut them back. I will experiment on one of the bigger ones and see what happens.

Speaking of deer, they love poke salad, particularly new growth. I've left two plants in a section of the garden for them. Like many other shrubs, they've eaten around the bottom of the plant, up to about three or feet high. The top of these poke salads were beginning to set



**Yucca in black and white**

seed. So the tops have been cut out. I'll do my best to keep those seeds out of the garden. That plant getting out of hand would be a mess.

Not that any fall planting is planned, but I'm going to keep in mind the black and white picture when looking for things to add and pay close attention to plant texture. And remind myself, the garden does not need another salvia, regardless of how tempting they are.

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