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October 8- October 21, 2026



Mother and daughter Nancy Johnson and Hunter Johnson Sims lead Pickens Railway together, combining family legacy, business experience, and a shared commitment to the company's future.

Two generations, one railroad

Some women plan their whole lives to become business leaders. Others, like Nancy Johnson and her daughter, Hunter Johnson Sims, find themselves thrust into leadership roles unexpectedly. But in the years that they have been running Pickens



Kim von Keller

Railway, the business has continued to strengthen and grow, supporting industries throughout the Southeast.

Pickens Railway is a short-line railway, connecting Upstate industries with CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. Nancy's father-in-law, Hugh Johnson, began fixing locomotives out of the back of his truck, and when Nancy's husband, Chip, joined the business after college, he built on that, integrating modern technology and design. Nancy remembers the early days of the family business.

"Chip came home one day and said, 'I think I want to buy a railroad,' so I said, 'Okay.' We bought and later sold 8.5 miles of railroad from Pickens to Easley, but at the same time, we bought two sections of railroad in Anderson County, creating Pickens Railway. From the beginning, women were an important part of the business, which was uncommon in the railroad industry. I would attend conferences when only four or five women would be present. Barbara Johnson, Chip's mother, worked in the front office, trying valiantly to get the men to turn in paperwork on time.



Chip's sister, Becki Bisher, was once told by a banker that she would need a father, brother, or husband with her to apply for a short-term business loan; her response was to find another bank, which gave her the loan."

Hunter joined Pickens Railway in

SEE RAILROAD ON PAGE 2



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Railroad

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

2013. After receiving her degree in business management from Southern Polytechnic State University, she had worked in wholesale insurance, but when her mother offered her a job in the family business that would involve long-term planning, Hunter jumped at the opportunity.

"It was never expected that my siblings or I would join Pickens Railway. Our parents wanted us to pursue whatever interested us. But I was pregnant with my first child, and I was excited at the opportunity. At that point in time, working for the railway wasn't my dream, but it has become my favorite job ever."

Their business acumen was tested when Chip passed away in 2017. Hunter became company president, while Nancy continued in the role of chief financial officer. While their academic backgrounds are very different, both women bring important knowledge to Pickens Railway.

"I graduated from Georgia State University with a degree in geography," Nancy says, "which may not seem applicable to the railroad industry, but I learned about natural resources, transportation, logistics, city planning. My education definitely gave me a better perspective about why certain products are made where they're made, how those products are made, and how those products are moved from one place to another."

Hunter's degree has more obvious business applications.

"I received my business management degree from Southern Polytechnic University, but I didn't know what I wanted to do. As president of the railway, it has been helpful to have studied accounting, marketing, business techniques, and global business relationships."

Under the leadership of Hunter and Nancy, Pickens Railway now moves more than 7,000 railcars annually, helping to replace over 28,000 trucks on Upstate roads each year. Commodities shipped and received through Pickens Railway include plastics, paper products, limestone, silica, rubber-related materials, farm supplies, electrical equipment, wood pulp, and other raw materials related

to production and manufacturing throughout the Southeast. This mother-daughter team also run two related companies: Johnson Railway Service, which repairs, rebuilds, and leases locomotives; and PTX Track WorX, a business Hunter started to provide industrial track maintenance and repair for manufacturing facilities and rail-served properties across Upstate South Carolina, Northeast Georgia, and Western North Carolina.

Neither Nancy nor Hunter foresaw their leadership roles in Pickens Railway, and they describe Chip's passing as difficult, both personally and professionally. But, along with the businesses, they became stronger by relying on their faith, their business knowledge, their family legacy, and each other.

"My mom is very easy to work with," Hunter says. "There's no ego. I can be a little difficult, and she's always very patient and levelheaded and logical. I often think about how Reese Witherspoon complains that in movie scripts, women in crisis often turn to men and ask, 'What do we do now?' But working in a small business, you learn every aspect of that business. We know each other, and we know what to do."

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The T.L. Hanna High School Class of 1966 celebrated its 60th Reunion on August 22, 2026, at The Bleckley Inn in downtown Anderson. It was a wonderful evening filled with reminiscing, renewing old friendships, and making new memories.

Thank you to everyone who attended and made the night so special:

Linda Norris McAlister, Beth Addis, Sandra Johnson Calhoun, Jane Rankin Jones, Mary Alyce Spinharney Visioli, Sandra Whitworth Whitfield, Gay Lyons Haley, Linda Lackey Hardy, Mary Ann Osteen Mills, Anne Honea Rabone, Sheila Moon Taylor, Dianne Jackson Coker, Marcel Connally Jarrett, Gail Callaway Shumer, Donna Johnson Poore, Margaret Fleishman Erickson, Mary Cooper McAbee, Wendy Geer Pedrick, Stephanie Polkinhorn Belcher, Gretchen Ungericht Murdock, Shirley Hiott Martin, Nancy Hall Hancock, Carolyn Drake Reynolds, June Williamson Hopkins, Michael Bowen, Frank Alexander, Michael Manly, Jan Hanks Clary, Laura Hayes Hunt, Gary Lewis, Bonnie McGee Lewis, Cherrie Beard Sneed, Danny Buchanan, Tony Hawkins, Jimmy Long, Donna Boyer Aronson, Judy Johnson, Reta Mackey Farrington, Marcia Warnock, Nick Hopkins, Steven Jordan, Janis Gerrard Hunter, Marcha Champion Heaton, Ellen Allen Bechard, James Owens, Ken Harbert, Henry Fleishman, Dick Fowler, Charlene Morgan, Johnny Taylor, Joe Crowder, Jimmy Geddings, Barry Visioli, Don Bryant, Bill Betsill, Clay Cox, Ron Cann, Sam Drake, Glenn Smith, Delores Bannister Stewart, Connie Burton Herring, Bill Chamblee, Kent Edmonds, Richard Hanks, Linda Lee Senn, and Tommy Templeton.

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AnMed Windsor Place nears opening

The first service lines to provide care in AnMed Windsor Place, the transformative new medical office complex at the site of the former Windsor Place shopping center, have scheduled their anticipated openings.

Orthopedics & Sports Medicine, including Hand to Shoulder Therapy, plans to begin providing care there at 1520 East Greenville Street in Anderson in November.

Occupational Medicine and ENT, including ENT's voice and allergy clinics, plan to begin care there in December.

Integrated Therapy and a state-of-the-art outpatient imaging center featuring 3 Tesla MRI technology — the latest in commercial imaging — plan to open there in February.

The completely refurbished property is revitalizing a key corridor near downtown Anderson on South Carolina Highway 81.



The shopping center had become dilapidated and mostly vacant.

"This project is exciting and especially gratifying because it will accommodate the growth of our health system while delivering benefits to the community on multiple levels," said William Kenley, CEO of AnMed. "We're securing more space and developing clean, modern accommodations. Not only are we increasing capacity and access to care, but we're also reinvigorating what had

become a blighted area in a prominent corridor of Anderson."

The redevelopment spans 82,267 square feet across 9½ acres on Highway 81 near a Publix and Chick-fil-A.

As part of this expansion, AnMed's Heart & Vascular services will relocate to fully occupy 100 Healthy Way, which previously included Orthopedics & Sports Medicine.

Two separate AnMed Integrated Therapy

locations will be consolidated into the new Windsor Place facility, streamlining efficiency and improving patient experience.

"To inject new life of energy and service rather than demolish and build anew — without sacrificing capabilities or amenities — it's heartening, and perhaps it's symbolic of the care our teammates provide every day," Kenley said. "Soon we'll enjoy more access, more service, better alignment of resources and better care for our community."

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Jessica Partain: From human resources to dressing rooms to the courtroom

As The Electric City News celebrates Women in Business this month, Vogue magazine did as well. The editor of Vogue sought out and featured Influential Women of South Carolina. In the October issue of Vogue, they chose Anderson native Jessica Partain as a woman of influence.

Jessica grew up in Anderson and graduated from Westside High School in 1999. She attended Clemson University and graduated with a major in Psychology. She returned to Clemson and earned her master's degree in human resources. She worked in that field for several years gathering experience in matters of business. She soon put her knowledge and experience to the test and started a business of her own. Having a flare for fashion, the confidence needed to take risks and the vision for a high-end women's boutique,

she chose a shop location in the center of downtown Anderson. It was here that her vision came to life.

The store in the corner lot on Main Street was soon buzzing with renovations. Vibrant purple colors, crystal chandeliers and a dazzling store window that caught the eye of all the women in town. The clothes, shoes and accessories were all the rage and were flying off the shelves. Jessica followed that dream making Bella's Boutique an iconic young women's store. She became an overnight success.

Mary Haley Thompson, Director of Strategic Projects for the City of Anderson recalls, "I worked at Bella as a high school student, and it was such a valuable experience for me. Jessica was incredibly smart and business-savvy, with a great understanding of what women wanted. She was also the best ambassador for Bella because

she looked great in everything she wore and had a natural ability to put an outfit together. I feel lucky to have worked for and learned from her at such a young age. She's the kind of person who is an inspiration in whatever she does."

At the height of her success, she decided she wanted to go back to school and become a lawyer. She sold her business, packed up her life and made her way to Charleston School of Law. She graduated from law school but stayed involved as an adjunct professor at the school in Legal Research and Writing.

In 2019, she joined Shannon Jones Law in Charleston. She worked there for several years and then joined Saxton & Stump Lawyers and Consultants downtown. Now a shareholder in the firm, she

practices mostly in family law. She works with clients in cases of divorce, child custody, adoptions, parental rights, equitable property and assets division and valuation of business interest. She is certified in family and civil court mediation and provides those services all over the state. She regularly returns to the upstate to act as a mediator in family court actions.

Jessica is accomplished in 3 careers and all before her 45th year.

She and her husband and their children lead a busy and well-appointed life in the Holy City. She is an avid Clemson fan and an enthusiastic traveler. So, if you are a woman with big dreams and have the courage to take on the challenge, Jessica would most likely say to that woman - "What are you waiting for?"





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LOOKING AT THE NIGHT SKY DURING FALL

Autumn, with all those cold fronts coming from the north and clearing out the atmosphere with fresh brisk air, is a great



Ann K. Bailes

season for looking at the night sky. My favorite part of teaching eighth grade earth science was helping students learn the constellations and stars.

We started with the Big Dipper. Every day we took a few minutes to work on learning the names of the stars, just because it was something different and unusual. Dubhe, Merak, Phecda, . . . all eight of them. Sometimes I'll see former students around town and they'll immediately let me know that they can still say the stars of the Big Dipper!

After a few days, we moved on to the Little Dipper, which contains Polaris, the north star. Polaris is not at all the brightest star in the night sky, which many people think. It's only memorable because it's the star directly above our North Pole. In fact, only three stars of the Little Dipper are visible in most places. Three of its stars can faintly be viewed, but the others can only be seen in dark rural locations without light pollution.

Then we went on to Cassiopeia, a very bright constellation toward the east in the evening autumn sky, that looks like a "3". The Northern Cross and the Great Square of Pegasus are also good finds. We learned others along the way, later shifting to the winter constellations of Taurus, Orion, Canis Major, and others. We learned to observe how star positions in the night sky shift, both as the night goes on, and as the season progresses.

Learning the constellations was a great confidence builder. Eighth graders don't usually get a lot of "kudos" from adults for their knowledge base, because most of their education is still fairly basic. But they loved going out nightly, finding what they could find, and coming back the next morning with their newly acquired observations.

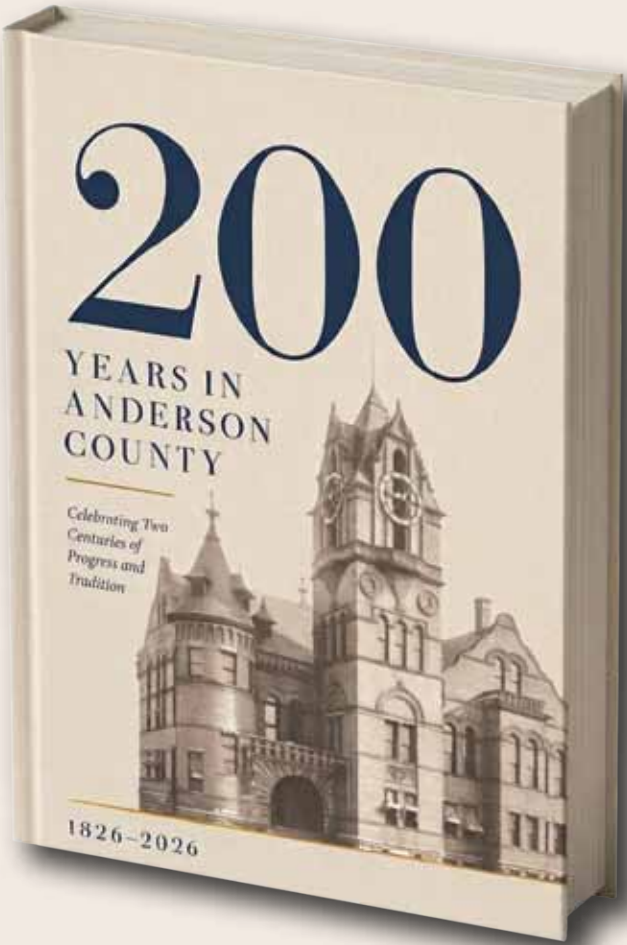


And after a big holiday like Thanksgiving, they'd tell me how they had shown the cousins and uncles and others their expertise about the stars. Always, these students would say, "My family couldn't believe I knew that!"

I also told them that this was practical knowledge that they would someday share with their children. They would get wide-eyed at that, thinking that having children of their own was way beyond their thinking. But I sometimes hear from former students, "We're still looking up at the sky!" "I showed my children Cassiopeia tonight!" One time, on a trip to Arizona, I even got to have a nighttime star class with the children of a former student and dear friend—passing on knowledge from generation to generation.

Learning the constellations not only gives young people information and a sense of success, but it also opens up their minds to see the beautiful order and design in the night sky—something all of us can see and enjoy with a little investment of time and effort. Apps can help. Go outside and enjoy the night sky!

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T.L. Hanna holds off Fountain Inn comeback

Last Friday night, the T.L. Hanna High School football team appeared to have the game buttoned-up tight.



Brian Hodges

The Yellow Jackets led Fountain Inn 15-7 at half-time and were driving for a score early in the third quarter.

It was homecoming for Hanna and all was right with the world. Until it wasn't.

The Jackets fumbled inside the Fountain Inn 10.

The two teams then exchanged touchdowns later in the third quarter and the score was 22-14 and Hanna and the Jackets were on the move.

However, another lost fumble kept the Hanna coaching staff uneasy until it wrapped up the 8-point win with an interception in their own end zone with 40

seconds left. Whew.

"That's who we are. We don't make it easy on ourselves," Hanna coach Jason Tone said. "We turn the ball over in every game. It's frustrating. I wish I could be more happy with the victory."

Hanna improved to 5-1 and faced Laurens on Oct. 9. They travel to Greenwood on Oct. 16.

Fountain Inn, now 3-3, featured a terrific quarterback in Sam Holliday. He completed 11 of 26 passes for 192 yards and also ran for 97 yards and a touchdown.

Holliday, by the way, is a verbal commitment to Anderson University.

The Jackets rushed for 253 yards, despite missing their top rusher Brock Cole.

Cole suffered a concussion in the Mauldin victory and didn't pass the concussion protocols.

"We hope to have him next week, but he has to pass the tests to be available to us," Tone said.

Meanwhile, Demarcus Duck led Hanna with 112 rushing yards and a touchdown. Five other players contributed to the ground game.

Duck caught a touchdown pass late in the first quarter on what appeared to be a busted play.

At the Fountain Inn 5, QB Will Mayfield and the running back went in different directions on an attempted handoff. Mayfield then turned and flipped the scoring pass to Duck.

Defensively, Hanna got interceptions



from Darius Hanna and Marcus Brownlee. "Our defense keeps bailing us out," Tone said.



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One of the more alarming developments in healthcare today is the rise in Type 2 diabetes. In fact, it is viewed by the healthcare profession as an “epidemic”, impacting both



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

young and old alike. Roughly 35 million Americans have Type 2 diabetes. But what is perhaps most significant is the rapidly growing number of children and teen sufferers.

A disease that was once an adult disease is now becoming a disease of childhood! Some education and awareness are certainly in order.

Type 2 diabetes is when over time your body loses the ability to use insulin -- the hormone your body uses to move sugar from your bloodstream into your cells. If your insulin resistance is out of balance, as with Type 2 diabetes sufferers, it can result in feeling tired, a lack of concentration, food cravings, weight gain, sleep issues and elevated triglycerides which can impact cardiovascular health. Type 2 diabetes is often linked to a sedentary lifestyle and obesity.

The good news is Type 2 diabetes can

be prevented or delayed through lifestyle changes. If you or a member of your family is concerned about high blood sugar here are just a few simple daily diet and lifestyle habits that can impact how your body manages blood sugar:

Staying hydrated helps regulate blood sugar. Plus, drinking water before eating can boost weight loss, reduce the waistline, and lower levels of triglycerides and “bad” cholesterol.

It may be tricky to do but try eating your vegetables first, then protein foods, and carbohydrates last.

Eating more fiber slows digestion resulting in a lower spike in blood sugar after a meal. Examples: apples, avocados, beans, nuts.

Intermittent fasting. Eat most of your calories at breakfast and lunch; eat a small dinner before 6:00 p.m.

Choose whole grains and avoid refined carbohydrates. Examples: oats, whole wheat, barley, corn, brown rice, buckwheat, Wild rice.

Walking after meals can lower blood sugar levels.

Strength training before a meal significantly reduces blood sugar levels particularly in people with obesity and prediabetes.

Eating a protein-rich breakfast can help reduce blood sugar levels throughout the day.

There is also supplementation. Studies show not getting enough vitamin D can negatively impact blood sugar regulation. Consult your doctor. Getting your vitamin D level tested gives you the clearest picture of whether supplementation is likely to help.

And of course, reduce consumption of sugar added to food to sweeten it. And a final tip. It may not be high on your list of favorite foods, but including avocados in meals can help regulate blood sugar levels. In fact, research indicates that those who eat avocados are less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who don't. If you would like to discuss this important health issue, please reach out. We are your hometown resource for guidance and support!

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

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A LOVE LETTER TO FASHION WEEK

Fashion Week in New York and Paris has been absolutely lovely this year. The Spring/Summer 2027 collections are amazing—it feels strange to even write that year! While some of the designs are completely over-the-top and unwearable, that's part of the fun. The ready-to-wear pieces, however, are stunning. Every major designer was there, including Diane von Furstenberg, Ralph Lauren, Dior, and my personal favorite, Chloé. In no particular order, the Chloé show was truly heavenly. Creative Director Chemena Kamali took it to another level with designs that are beautifully angelic and airy. She just knows how to dress a woman. Her pieces reflected that beautiful bohemian heritage as always, but this time, she made it uber feminine. Everything from long organza, delicate dresses to vinyl 1970s fisherman jackets,



Kristine March

lace harnesses, scalloped edges, and enlarged sleeves were all over her runway. Truly magnificent. A brief history on Chloe dates back to 1952. It was founded by Gaby Aghion. She wanted her clothes readily available to buy off the rack and to make things free spirit, flowing and not so stiff like most of the French haute couture designs back then. She was ahead of her time for the fifties and a real trailblazer. Her famous quote was—fashion should be as fresh as a salad. I concur. Ralph Lauren always takes my breath away. This year he showcased a mix of masculinity and then he threw in that gorgeous rugged and weathered feminine style he's so famous for. His collection highlighted crisp tailored jackets, heavy velvet, wide ties, shredded low-slung denim paired with ballet flats, and lightweight feather detailing. So enchanting. Diane von Furstenberg was all about color and supple leather. She used bright shades like peacock blue, tomato red, and lots of leopard, and yes, leopard is a color. She will always be known for her

iconic wrap dresses that debuted in 1974 and by the time 1976 rolled around she had sold over a million wrap dresses, which was a really big deal for the '70s. She will always be a legend. Her runway shows are riveting and luxurious. Lastly, for the Dior show, creative director Jonathan Anderson featured lots of botanical and floral prints and asymmetrical cocktail dresses on the runway. Jane Austen was the inspiration. Think metallic trousers, bar jackets and plush double-breasted coats gave the wardrobe a very distinctive neo-classical vibe. All of these runway shows were absolutely impeccable and fascinating to watch. If you haven't seen any of them, you should check them out on YouTube. So much culture and talent under one roof. These shows can also give you great ideas if you realistically don't want to spend a fortune. They can offer you some great creative direction for your wardrobe that you already have. Remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters. Happy fashion week y'all!



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FROM THE SHELF

ON LIFE WITH A REACTIVE DOG

It's been three years since we brought home our Spicy Marshmallow. I've written about Hutch (said Marshmallow)



Sara Leady

and his reactivity before, but it's been awhile. "Reactive" as a descriptor for a dog is a bit of a misnomer because it generally carries a negative connotation. Ultimately, it just means the dog is predisposed to have a

bigger reaction to something. A dog that pees every time it gets excited is technically a "reactive dog," but that's not what people think of when you say "reactive." Even hardcore dog people tend to picture lunging, insane barking, and what appears to be a completely out of control dog.

Much like with people, big reactions stem from a trigger. Triggers can be all sorts of things — people, sounds, the environment, maybe just a sketchy looking leaf invading the yard. Reactions could be barking, jumping, lunging, peeing, or wagging their tail so hard they're actually wagging their entire body. Obviously, some of these are more desirable than others, but we don't get to decide someone's triggers or their responses. What we can do is choose how we react to them.

Ol' Hutcherson is that stereotypical vision of a "reactive dog." He's a "Stranger Danger" dog, so his biggest trigger is people he doesn't know. Depending on the day, person, alignment of the stars, his reaction will vary, but there's definitely one. Minimally he's hackled up and huffing— worst case he's also maniacally lunging. Fortunately, he's not a barker, so his big reaction doesn't feel as overwhelming as it might with a more vocal dog. His reaction can be scary, and even potentially dangerous, if the warning about maintaining his safe space bubble is not heeded.

Hutch is a rescue. He was found wandering the countryside and spent over 300 days in a shelter, so his wariness of strangers (or anything unfamiliar in general) is partially learned. He's also a mix of working dog breeds, who if not properly socialized when young, can lead to things like "stranger danger" fairly often. It's easy to assume that being a "rescue" is why he's got behavior challenges but, and I can't emphasize this enough, "rescue"

does not automatically mean behavior issues. Any dog is capable of behavior issues — especially if the right training and lifestyle aren't provided for them. But also, the perfect training, breeding, socializing, etc. isn't a guarantee of a dog not being reactive.

Pre Hutch I'd owned a reactive dog, and I'd been around plenty of dogs with behavior challenges, so I was very aware of what I was getting into when adopting him. I knew it would take a ton of intentional work to do everything I could to address and adapt to his reactivity. It's easy to look at him and assume that his spice level is due to a lack of training or poor ownership. I think most people think that whenever they see a dog having a big reaction. While that's true in some cases, it's just as likely that the dog and owner have done a ton of work to address the reactivity, and the dog just is who it is (again, kind of like people).

I'd be the first to say I can do more work with Hutch, but I've also already done an insane amount. Life with a reactive dog is a master class in boundaries and emotional regulation. For him to succeed around triggers, I have to manage my feelings about his big reactions. This can look odd to the stranger causing the worst of his reactions because I'm not yelling, nor am I visibly frustrated; I keep a calm, even tone as I drag him away. Yelling at a toddler who can't make sense of his own emotions, let alone regulate them, is Sisyphean at best.

I wouldn't recommend a "reactive dog" to most people, but it's also one of the best experiences of my life because of how much I've grown and learned. While we (and other reactive dog owners) might look a mess when you pass us on a walk, just know we're doing our best whether it looks like it or not.



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ELECTRIC CITY UPCOMING EVENTS

ELECTRIC CITY FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL & HALLOWEEN FUN RUN

Date: Saturday October 24th 11:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Location: 1815 Park Drive, Anderson

Start the day with a one-mile Halloween Fun Run from Anderson Recreation Center to Linley Park, complete with a ribbon cutting to officially open the City's new community trail. No timing. No pressure. Just costumes, community and a little friendly motivation to get to the food trucks first.

Then stick around at Linley Park for an afternoon of food trucks, live music and kids' activities. Every food truck participating in the festival is a kitchen user at the City of Anderson's 110 North Kitchen + Commissary, giving you a chance to support some of the local food entrepreneurs growing their businesses right here in Anderson.

The food truck festival and all post-race activities are free and open to everyone—no Fun Run registration required. You can skip the race and come straight to Linley Park for the food, fun and Halloween festivities!

Fun Run registration: \$5 + \$1.30 registration fee

Every registered participant gets an event T-shirt. Costumes are strongly encouraged.

200 YEARS IN ANDERSON COUNTY

Date: Thursday October 29th - 5:30 to 7:30 PM

Location: Anderson County Museum
202 E Greenville Street, Anderson
(864) 260-4737

Join us for the book launch and celebration of Anderson County's 200-year anniversary! We'll have live music, signature cocktails, delicious food, and plenty of reasons to celebrate as we officially launch 200 Years in Anderson County. A once in a generation milestone and a wonderful way to celebrate the people, places, stories and history that make Anderson County so special.

CRAFT FAIR

Date: Saturday, October 17th, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Location: Anderson Elks Lodge



225 McGee Road, Anderson, SC
Fundraiser to support technical school scholarships.

There will be more than 20 vendors inside and out.

ANDERSON FREE CLINIC FESTIVAL OF TREES - SIP & SPRUCE

Date: Wednesday November 18th - 6:30 to 9:00 PM

Location: The Bleckley Station
Door hanger painting * Food *
Specialty Cocktails * Local Vendors

ANDERSON COUNTY PAWS TRICK OR TREAT

Date: Friday October 30th
4:00 to 8:00 PM

Location: 1320 Hwy 29 South, Anderson
Food & drink vendors, trick or treating and lots of fun!
(864) 260-4151

CELEBRATE THE VENETIAN RENNAISANCE COLORITO!

Date: Saturday November 7th - Anderson Arts Center

Location: 110 Federal Street, Anderson
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Date: October and November

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HOPE MISSIONS CEO TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN ANDERSON

Date: October 8th and 9th

Location: HOPE Missions on S. Towers St. and the Anderson Task Force & Miracle Hill at the Anderson County Library.

Behind every statistic on homelessness



is a person with a story. On October 8th and 9th, HOPE Missions of the Upstate is bringing those stories to the forefront through Conversations on a Bench, a 24-hour national event created by Citygate Network to break down stigma surrounding homelessness, addiction, and mental health.

CEO Dave Phillips emphasizes that "the goal is to restore dignity to the unseen in the community and open hearts to those facing hardship."

Beginning 3 pm on Oct 8th, in downtown Anderson, you are invited to join the conversations at two locations: HOPE Missions on S. Towers St. and the Anderson Task Force & Miracle Hill at the Anderson County Library.

Watch the live broadcast or learn how to take a seat on the bench at hopeupstate.org/conversations

ANDERSON SENIOR EXPO

Date: Thursday October 8th, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Location: 3027 Martin Luther King Blvd, Anderson

Community expo geared towards local seniors with vendor booths and giveaways.
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Your plate will tell

Having lived in Anderson for seventy years, I have developed a unique trait that allows me to distinguish whether a person is an Anderson native by observing what is on their breakfast, lunch, or dinner plate. In some cases, I have actually been able to pinpoint where they are from by using what I call my inner GPS (Global Plate Scanner). I'm excluding those twenty-five and under, as their palettes haven't yet evolved past mac and cheese and chicken nuggets to go with their pink lemonade that Mommy and Daddy are paying for.

I'll let you try one to get us started. Let's see how many breakfast items it takes you to tell if this person is from Anderson or not. Item #1. Egg-white omelette. Wow! You got it on the first item. No one from Anderson would ever pay extra to have egg yolks removed from an omelette. That was too easy. Let's have you try another breakfast plate: black coffee, two scrambled eggs, and toast. If you said "Not from Anderson," you are correct. While this measly breakfast offers a good base of protein and a jolt, a finely-tuned Anderson body needs added lubrication in the form of buttered grits, hickory-smoked bacon, and fig preserves to keep the machine running smoothly until Lunch.

Things can get a bit complicated at lunch; remember, I'm judging by what's on the plate and not what came in a bag. It's a cold February afternoon in Anderson when two working men enter the diner. They are not together and sit apart on separate stools at

the counter. Funny, they both ordered grilled-cheese sandwiches and tomato soup. One got sweet tea, and the other Dr Pepper. This was gonna be a tough one. Both orders arrived at the same time. Not ten minutes later, one of the men paid his bill and left. I figured this one out by observing the men, not the plate. The out-of-towner ate lunch as if it were a task, while the man from Anderson, well, "Lunch ate the Afternoon."

I've found that some menu items are always a good indicator that a person is definitely from Anderson. Tea so sweet it'll make their teeth itch. No fork is used; a biscuit is both bread and a utensil. Beans cooked with meat that no longer resembles meat. A thick slice of tomato that was never refrigerated and never will be. Chow-Chow, if you know, you know. Green beans cooked until they've seen some things. Mac and Cheese that is aggressively yellow. A plate where nothing matches: beige, yellow, brown, green, and orange come together in perfect Anderson harmony. A roll that is 100% unnecessary but emotionally required. A salad that is actually desert: Cool Whip involved, fruit optional, marshmallows probable. Mashed potatoes that have been scooped and molded, not spooned, and covered in brown gravy, whether you wanted it or not.

If you happen to come across a plate that you cannot see the bottom of, that's mine, and usually contains country-fried steak and gravy, fried okra, speckled butter beans, squash casserole, a slice of garden tomato, a homemade biscuit, and a thick wedge of cantaloupe. And don't worry; I'll be staying in Anderson until someone admits that the traffic light timing patterns are personal.



Neal Parnell



LOCAL ARTIST PRESENTS PAINTING

This original painting was created by Joey Withinarts as a tribute to the history and leadership of the city of Anderson, S.C. The artwork brings together three generations of Anderson mayors, representing different periods of the city's leadership and the continuing legacy of public service. The painting was created to honor the individuals who have served as mayor and contributed to Anderson's history. Joey Withinarts' sister also helped with the creation of the painting, making it a meaningful family creative project. Joey Withinarts presented the original artwork as a gift to the Mayor and the City of Anderson at City Hall. The piece is intended to preserve a visual part of Anderson's history while honoring its past, present, and future leadership.



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Downs celebrates distinguished nursing career, deserved retirement

After more than three decades of dedicated service in nursing and healthcare quality, Mary Downs is looking forward to a new chapter. A 1979 graduate of T.L. Hanna High School, Mary began her career in the healthcare field in 1983. She began her nursing journey after receiving a full scholarship to nursing school from Doctors Memorial Hospital. She graduated from the nursing program at USC-Spartanburg with her Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and became a registered nurse in 1993. She later returned to USC Upstate, earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), followed by a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Gardner-Webb University.

Her professional credentials continued to grow throughout her career. Mary is a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ) and a Six Sigma Green Belt, reflecting her longstanding commitment to improving the quality and experience of healthcare for patients and families.

Mary began her professional career at

Doctors Memorial Hospital, where she worked from 1990 until the hospital closed in 1994. From 1994 to 1998, she served as Director of Nursing at White Oak.

In 1998, Mary was recruited by Spartanburg Regional Medical Center, beginning what would become an exceptional and rewarding career with the health system.

Over the next 29 years, Mary served in a variety of roles, including the past 21 years under the Quality Services umbrella. For seven years, she served as Patient Experience Officer for the

health system, focusing on the experiences of patients and families receiving care.

An opportunity eventually arose for Mary to return to the area of work she loved most. For the past seven years, she has served as Quality Manager for Pelham Medical Center in Greer, where she has continued her commitment to healthcare quality and patient care.

Throughout her career with Spartanburg

Regional, Mary received numerous honors recognizing her dedication and contributions. She was named Associate of the Year, became the inaugural recipient of the Heart Center Compassion Award, was selected as a Palmetto Gold recipient, and was recognized as one of the top 100 nurses in South Carolina.

Beyond the titles, certifications, and awards, Mary's career has been defined by a genuine commitment to the people she served and the healthcare profession she loved.

Mary is the daughter of the late Arthur and Patsy Guida of Anderson. She is married to Jeff Downs, and they have a son, Grayson Downs.

As she enters retirement, Mary is looking forward to spending more time doing some of the things she enjoys. She plans to participate in exercise classes at the YMCA, grow "big flowers" and replenish her art supplies. She is also excited about adding an easel to her back porch, creating a space where she can enjoy her creativity in the years ahead.

Congratulations to Mary Downs on an impressive career and a well-deserved retirement!



MARY GUIDA DOWNS

Bryant retires after 46 years as dental assistant

After 46 years of dedicated service in the dental field, Robin Smith Bryant has retired, marking the end of a long and meaningful career serving patients throughout the Anderson community.

Bryant, a 1979 graduate of T.L. Hanna High School, began her journey toward a career in dentistry shortly after graduation. She attended the Dental Assistant Program at McDuffie High School, where she completed her certification in 1980.

Following her certification, Bryant began working with Dr. Eddie Thomas, who had been one of her instructors during the dental assistant program. She remained with Dr. Thomas throughout his practice until his passing in 2016, continuing a profes-

sional relationship that spanned more than three decades.

Following Dr. Thomas's passing, Bryant joined Anderson Family Dental Care, where she worked alongside Dr. John Hollingsworth. She continued serving patients and supporting the practice until her retirement on September 3, 2026.

Over the course of nearly five decades, Bryant built a career defined by dedication to her profession and the people she served. Her retirement marks the close of a remarkable chapter in Anderson's dental community.

Outside of her career, Bryant is married to Robby Bryant of Anderson. Together, they are the proud grandparents of Eddie,



ROBIN SMITH BRYANT

Charlie and Wyatt Cothran, as well as Jett and Hadlee Rogers.

In retirement, Bryant plans to spend more time with her family and friends while continuing to give back to her commu-

nity. She will remain active in volunteering at Hope Missions and serving through her church, continuing her commitment to helping others.

As she begins this new chapter, friends, family, and colleagues celebrate Robin's 46 years of service and wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

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Unit D49- Smith- household items

Unit 69- Gilreath- furniture, household items

Unit 59- Kurtz- household items

Unit 22- Finklea- toys, household

Unit 103- Sanders- household items, mattress, clothes

Unit 137- Hollingsworth- clothing, car seat

Unit 151- Buckner- Furniture, Appliances

Unit 158- Grossman- household goods

Unit D4- Joost- furniture, household goods

THE MENTAL LOAD: WHEN YOUR BRAIN NEVER GETS TO CLOCK OUT



**MARY-CATHERINE
McCLAIN
RINER**

You finally sit down. The kids are in bed. The dishes are mostly done. The house is quiet. For the first time all day, no one is asking you for anything. And yet, your brain keeps going:

Did I respond to that email? We need milk. When is the dentist appointment? I need to sign that school form. Did I put the laundry in the dryer? What are we doing for dinner tomorrow? I haven't scheduled that appointment. I need to remember to bring snacks. Did I ever call my mom/dad today?

You may not be physically doing anything in that moment, yet mentally, you are still working. This is part of what psychologists often refer to as the mental load.

Mental load is the cognitive and emotional work involved in anticipating needs, remembering details, planning ahead, making decisions, and keeping track of what needs to happen next. It is different from simply having a long to-do list. A to-do list contains tasks. Mental load includes the responsibility of remembering that the tasks exist in the first place. For many people, the invisible responsibility can become exhausting.

When "busy" becomes constant

Modern life gives us an almost endless number of things to monitor. For example, work, children, and school to household responsibilities, finances, meals, aging parents, friendships, and health.

Even when we aren't actively completing those tasks, our brains may continue scanning for what we've forgotten. That constant mental monitoring can make it difficult to truly rest. You may notice yourself becoming more irritable over small things. You may feel overwhelmed by a relatively minor request. You may have difficulty concentrating because your brain is already holding twenty other pieces of information. You may lie in bed exhausted but find yourself mentally reviewing tomorrow. Often, the problem isn't that you don't care. It may be that you have been carrying



too much for too long.

Doing the task isn't the same as carrying the responsibility

One of the most important distinctions when talking about mental load is the difference between doing a task and owning the responsibility for the task. For example, someone might say, "Just tell me what needs to be done and I'll help."

The intention may be supportive. Yet, the person who has to notice that the refrigerator is empty, decide what meals are needed, make the grocery list, remember when the children have activities, notice that the laundry detergent is running low—and then ask someone else to complete one of those tasks is still carrying much of the cognitive responsibility.

Sharing the workload isn't always about dividing the number of chores equally. Sometimes it means sharing the responsibility for noticing, planning and remembering. This distinction can be particularly important in relationships. Couples may find themselves arguing about dishes, laundry, school forms or appointments when the deeper issue is actually feeling alone in the responsibility of managing everyday life.

What can we do about it?

The goal isn't to eliminate every responsibility from our lives. That's not realistic. Instead, we can look for ways to get some of the responsibility out of our heads and into systems and shared ownership. For example, write things down rather than relying on memory. Use shared calendars. Create routines for recurring tasks.

responsibilities with a partner, consider whether you are sharing the task or sharing the ownership of that task.

It can also help to notice the difference between something that is truly urgent and something that simply feels urgent because you are accustomed to responding immediately. Perhaps most importantly, give yourself permission to have moments when nothing is being accomplished. Remember, the truth is that the list will probably never be completely finished. There will always be another load of laundry, another email, another. The goal is to create a life in which you don't have to be the person mentally holding everything, all the time.

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

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Martha Hanze, E.A.

Elliott Craighton McCants: the man who embodied the spirit of South Carolina

BY RICH OTTER

Born just a few months after the conclusion of the Civil War in the community of Ninety-Six, Elliott Crayton McCants came into the world during the difficult period of Reconstruction. His father had been a Confederate surgeon during the war who died in 1875. His family was poor.

McCant's early education came from his mother, then from neighborhood schools with high school in the back of a store building. College was deemed out of the question until the Citadel reopened during Reconstruction and he became qualified for a scholarship on the condition he would teach at a local school for two years after graduation. He majored in engineering.

His two years were spent at an Abbeville school, followed by a year of attempted farming. His farming adventure was described as having been a "miserable failure" by Eric R. Carlson in the South Carolina Encyclopedia

McCants returned to teaching, and during the next eleven years served at various schools around the South. In the meantime, he eloped, marrying Tressa Lipscomb, and thereafter producing eight children.

He transferred to Anderson in 1900 and became the Anderson high school principal. In 1907 he assumed the position of superintendent of Anderson schools. He was the third superintendent and held that position until he retired in 1945 at eighty years of age.

In his early years he published two books, *In the Red Hills*, *A Story of the South Carolina Country* (1904), followed by a volume of short pieces called *One of the Gray Jackets* (1907). Over his career, he produced some 200 short stories. He wrote a daily column in the *Anderson Independent* from 1932 to 1936. McCants later returned to books with three more: *Histories, Legends and Stories of South Carolina* (1927), a novel *White Oak Farm* in 1928, and a Reconstruction novel, *Ninety-Six* in 1930.

Biographer Carlson wrote: "The most dominant aspect of McCants' work...is celebration of the independent spirit of



ELLIOTT CRAYTON MCCANTS

South Carolina and its people. It is not difficult to see McCants prided himself in his identity as a South Carolinian, and his fiction represents a continuing celebration of his native state."

In 1935, the Anderson Junior High opened on Fant Street. Its name was later changed, in his honor, to McCants Junior High, evolving to be McCants Middle School. In 1992 the McCants Middle School moved to new facilities on Marchbanks Avenue.

In 1928, The University of South Carolina conferred upon him a doctorate of literature degree and he also was awarded an honorary doctorate of laws degree by the Citadel. Posthumously, he was inducted into the South Carolina Academy of Authors in 1996. He was also inducted into the Anderson County Museum Hall of Fame in 2004.

In the Anderson County Museum, there is an apparently unpublished document (including his editing) entitled *Remembrances and Remarks* in which he recalls incidents from throughout his lifetime. He mentions being in a railroad station in Charleston as a young man when he heard General Ulysses S. Grant had died. McCants happened into a conversa-

tion there with an old gentleman and, in making conversation, said: "Well, General Grant is dead." He observed the gentleman turned his quid of tobacco in his cheek, spat, and said, "There'll be a big time in Hell tonight."

Speaking of his father, Nathaniel Stephen McCants, E. C. McCants wrote: "He would never wear any footwear other than a custom-made boot." His father claimed he had a "Confederate toe" irritated by a Yankee-made shoe.

McCants was known as a kind and gentle individual, but, apparently, the right circumstances could stimulate a change of demeanor. He recalled the owner of two newspapers in Anderson who was a "cantankerous and turbulent fellow" and "given

to assertions and unpredictable breaches of the peace." One of the editor's children had been guilty of "a breach of discipline" and was punished by a young woman in charge of his grade. The editor wrote about it in the paper and announced an intention of chastising physically the woman teacher involved. On a previous occasion, McCants said the editor had, in fact, beaten a feeble old man.

"So, I went to the newspaper office and I said mildly: should you carry out your threat to thrash the lady who is under my protection, I will surely kill you." That ended any problem with the editor.

Elliott Craighton McCants not only wrote about the spirit of South Carolinians; he also embodied the spirit.

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