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July 18-31, 2024

Electric City history — Fant's Camera Shop

BY RICH OTTER

It was a large building at the corner of North Main Street and East Whitner with letters at the top just below the roof on the Whitner side announcing Drug Store. In addition to the usual commodities, the store hosted a soda fountain and there was also a camera supply section. The property was owned by Theodore Fant, the son of George Fant who founded Fant's Book Store that was reputedly the longest family owned and operated business in Anderson, having been established in 1851.

Tom Compton, as a ten-year-old youngster, had bought his photo supplies from the shop and, following a stint in the Navy during World War II and then the Korean War, returned home anxious to pursue his photographic interests. Compton discovered that while

he was away, his favorite haunt, the camera shop, had drifted two doors down Whitner Street and was then operated by Theodore's son Robert S. Fant who incorporated the business in 1955.

Compton took over the operation as manager just two years later in 1958 and the location became a meeting place, not to unlike the old soda fountain would have been in the drug store days. There were gatherings by folks interesting in photography, sharing stories about how they did their own developing, and the equipment they used. Handily, anyone wanting to upgrade their equipment or acquire supplies was at the right place at the right time.

In addition to the shop's regular staff of three, there was also assistance in the operation

SEE SHOP ON PAGE 2



Tom Compton in camera shop.

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Shop

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

received by Tom Compton's wife, Joyce Dye Compton, who was secretary/treasurer, and his three youngsters. Eldest daughter Anne Compton (Whitney) kept the company books for her dad during her high school years while daughter Caroline began her working career at age eight dusting and sweeping while ease dropping on the technical chatter. Caroline graduated into answering the telephone, making change and generally operating counter duties.

In addition to handling general photographic merchandising, the staff assisted customers with their equipment and fundamentals as to how to service and use their materials. They were the pre-digital days and even loading and unloading film could be a problem for some customers. Once they had their hands on a customer's camera, the shop employees would dust it, clean the lenses, and provide assistance generally—foreign in today's marketplace.

Much of the photography was black and white film and some could be processed in house, but color film was shipped off to Kodak. They would often receive old photographs for which customers wanted to have prints made and they were done in the store. Frequently the old home-movie strips broke and they were spliced to the great relief of a customer. Passport pictures were a common request.

Tom Compton's son, Carl, was also active in the business and, in addition to doing pho-



Horse drinking at public well on Main Street.

tographing himself, was an avid collector of old photographs. Many in his collection were of old structures and locations in Anderson, unique pictures that would have otherwise been lost. A book entitled Trade Street was assembled with the Anderson County Museum including a number of his unique images. His full collection was also contributed to the museum and includes many Anderson related postcards.

In November of 1973, Tom Compton moved Fant's Camera shop to 107 Cater Street, an octagonal building with outstanding display areas. The Whitner Street property had been a good location, but had the costs of an old building and problems of customer parking. The new home was a major improvement.

Tom Compton passed away in 1985. His son ran the business until either late 1987 or 1988. Carl basically had other interests he wanted to pursue and the business was closed.

A frequent visitor to the shop had been a serious young fellow by the name of Van Sullivan, a Sullivan-Hardware-Sullivan descendent. He pretended not to have noticed the young Caroline Compton who was working there. That changed by the time she became a Winthrop graduate. It so happened he had developed a photographic studio. With common interests, it didn't take a darkroom for something to develop for one Compton (Sullivan) to remain active in photography.



Public square taxi

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'A joyful spirit' — Spotlight on Michelle Denmark

BY ROSIE THOMPSON

We're back for our second issue of the caryatid article. For review, a definition of a Caryatid is "a sculpted female figure serving as an architectural support, taking the place of a column/pillar, particularly in Greek architecture." These women were literally the foundation for these illustrious structures.

Well, we don't know about you, but we know quite a few caryatids. Women that, through their skills, generosity, and passions, aid in the very foundation of the Anderson community. And what better way to highlight these women than a newspaper column – the structure that these women replace as well as regular stories in a newspaper. (We're all about plays on words around here.)

Each issue, we will highlight a different female that is integral to the foundation of the 'architecture' that is the Anderson community. Know a caryatid of your own? Send your nominations to rosethompson917@gmail.com.

This week's caryatid: Michelle Denmark.

Michelle was born and raised in Greenville, South Carolina. (Before it was 'cool,' she says). Michelle majored in Public Relations, Advertising, and Business at Anderson University. It was there she met her husband, Jordan Denmark. They will be celebrating twelve years of marriage in October and have three children: two boys and one girl. Michelle just restarted her virtual assistant business this past April. Michelle also states that she is an avid reader - stating she "never goes anywhere without her Kindle."

We peppered Michelle with questions that she was gracious enough to answer:

What parts of our community give you the most hope?

Parts of the community that give me the most hope are the youth. I love watching their gears turn. They tend to have a fresh and simple view of life. I want to be like them when I grow up. A physical place would be Linley Park. Not only is it our front yard, but it's historic. I'm a lover of old things (antiques, history, etc). So to see something "old" becoming new again is such a wonderful thing!

What are some examples of good, wholesome you find to be unique to Anderson?

I think Anderson has something fun for every age group. As a mom with young children, we love the splash pads, indoor playhouses (Let's Play Pretend), the movies, outdoor theater, Creamland Ice Cream! Don't even get me started on the library! As an adult, we've had date nights at the Escape Room, played Scrabble at Commonhouse and you haven't lived if you've never had Texas Rice from Blue Tolok.

What women do you look up to most?



Dr. Beverly McAdams - who does so much for our community as well. I love Sheinelle Jones from the Today Show, and the matriarchs of our family are pretty amazing. I wish everyone could meet them! Any woman who can admit they don't have it altogether, no matter what it looks like-- those women are my people.

If you had to sum up your "philosophy on life" in one sentence: what would it be?

One sentence... whew. I have two: Veni, vidi, vici: I came, I saw, I conquered. Ester 4:14: for perhaps this is the moment in which you have been created to do so.

We also caught up with some members of the community to give their thoughts on this dynamic caryatid. Here is what they had to say:

"Michelle is a force of nature. She loves big and hard, and is 10,000% committed to the organizations and programs she cares about. She's an incredible friend, and the kind of mother I look up to. If Michelle is in your corner then you are bound to succeed. Michelle loves her community, and we as Andersonians are blessed to have her leadership, vision, hard work, and dedication." - Carlie Taylor

"Michelle is a joyful spirit. She sees the world through the lens of humor, love and fierce loyalty to her family and friends. I always enjoy sitting with Michelle and dreaming up ways to improve ourselves and our community." - Ruth Harbin

We are so grateful to Michelle for taking the time to chat with us. But more than that, we are grateful to have such a loving, dynamic caryatid as an integral part of the Anderson community. We hope you take Michelle's outlook on life with you into this next week: Veni, vidi, vici!



Michelle Denmark and family

ANDERSON SENIOR FOLLIES



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LAST DAY OF VACATION

It's the last day of vacation. You can tell a little girl has been here. All you have to do is look around, the little lake cabin is covered in kid stuff.

There are tiny wet swimsuits, draped over chairs. Wet beach towels, over each bannister, each sofa, and hanging from the chandelier.

Enough floaty pool noodles to span the equator.

Dead Gatorade bottles. An army of crushed water bottles, half empty—or half full, as it were.

Popsicle sticks, stained blue and orange, fallen in the line of duty, adhered to the countertop.

An empty pimento cheese container, with houseflies socializing on the rim. A jar of pickles with no pickles in it.

An abandoned smartphone, in a girlie purple case, sitting in the middle of the den. Random toys, scattered.

Board games, stored beneath the coffee table, apparently put away in haste, with Monopoly money poking from the box lids. A lonesome pair of dice on the floor, just waiting

to break someone's C4 and C5.

And oh, the shoes. We've got shoes. Tiny girl-sandals beside the doorway, with slightly elevated heels. Water shoes, with bits of lake moss clinging to the soles. Tennis shoes with sweaty socks stuffed inside.

And a host of other specialty shoes for females. There is probably a pair of shoes specifically designed for checking the mail.



Sean Dietrich

A sunhat, soaking wet, hanging by its chinstrap over a barstool. Six different kinds of sunscreen on the kitchen counter. Count them. Six.

The labels say the sunscreens are "100% vegan." I shudder to think of how many innocent vegans had to die to make this sunscreen.

Hair brushes galore. Heaven only knows why anyone would need more than one.

Tiny bottles of smell-good

stuff, littering the bathroom vanity. Lotions, moisturizers, sunburn creams, ointments, and at least four products featuring aloe.

A conditioner bottle in the shower, which claims to smell like strawberry milkshake. Special lotions, scented vanilla and lavender.

Hair ties. Hair ribbons. Hair clamps. Barrettes, spring clips, snap clips, hair claws, bobby pins, rubber bands, scrunchies, side combs, bows, and ponytail holders.

A random pair of little-girl pajamas, hanging from a doorknob. A pink sundress, on a hanger. A child-sized T-shirt which says: THE WORST THING TO READ IN BRAILLE IS: "DO NOT TOUCH."

A white cane with a red tip, leaning against the wall. A tiny purple hearing aid, charging in its case. A toothbrush for dental braces.

I spent the first half of my existence without children. And now there is a little girl in my life.

I am not qualified to be in a child's life. I am not a good influence. Namely, because I haven't



figured out what the heck I'm doing with my own life. My most notable talent is making poot noises with my hands.

I have spent the last forty-odd years as a musician and a nameless professional writer. I spent decades waking up at noon, eating four-

day-old pizzas for breakfast. I was a night owl and a full-time road warrior. I am immature. I am irresponsible. A child was not in my plans. But then, I suppose it's true what they say. Man plans; God laughs.

I hope He's having a good one today.

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Summer swimwear

The first swim suit ever created was in the 18th century and it was called a bathing costume. They were often made of wool and worn with hot socks and showed no skin whatsoever. It was considered immoral if you swam in the first place. Men, however, got to wear whatever they pleased while women had to conform to what I think is almost a torture device.



Kristine March

After all of that absurdity, by the 1920's, things started to get a little lighter. Swimsuits changed significantly getting shorter hemlines and being more comfortable. The materials were much more breathable with silks and rayons. Women wore swim belts so that the bathing suit wouldn't rise or float up in the water. Swimwear accessories were becoming popular during that era. Women would often wear swim caps and even little swim boots to protect their feet. Basically, like the sandals and flip-flops of today. By the 1940's, the evolution of the bikini had started to take off. It eventually became more acceptable for women to show their arms. During this time period

two French designers turned their lingerie business into designing a small two-piece swimsuit which they named the "Atome". They compared its impact on fashion to the atomic bomb.

By the 1970's, women were beginning to be more free and swimwear became even more revealing. From string bikinis to cut out swimsuits, the evolution of swimwear grew completely wild. Even sheer swimsuits were worn especially on Brazilian beaches, and hence the bikini term the Brazilian cut style. From all these different generational styles, bikini modeling became a thing. Magazines such as Sports Illustrated became super popular. In January 1964 the magazine was published and Babette March was featured in a two-piece white bikini. After this sensationalized, women then began to do bikini competitions, calendars, Hawaiian tropic beauty pageants and the swimsuit evolved into a whole new ball game. Function was no longer the focus. It was about being confident in your own skin. Now women never have to conform to uncomfortable bathing costumes as they were called, ever again. Now it's about stretchy Lycra today in 2024.

We have some of the most plush bathing suits ever created from Spanx to high-waisted



body types. The brand was founded by Leilah Shams, a woman of color and a mother. She was even on the show Shark Tank and the design was picked up instantly. Women praised the midsection cinching effect. Not only is it enjoyable to wear, but it gives you an instant boost of confidence. I highly suggest investing in one, ladies! So, through all of the pain and strife of wearing the most uncomfortable bathing suits known to man, there is finally a light at the end of the tunnel. Women have boundless options to choose from today.

We can look back to our ancestors and feel sorry for them for what they had to endure. What swimsuit is your favorite this summer? Remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters. Be confident in your swimwear y'all.

that you can swim in all day at the beach or lake effortlessly without even noticing. One of my personal favorites is the TA3 that is a swimmer line that sells compression suits with a lace-up back designed to enhance all

ART FOR KIDS HUB

We are on our third box of markers this summer. Why? Because my four-year-old loves to color. Normally I would not give a toddler a marker, but he colors with so much aggression that he breaks his crayons in half. Plus, we all know that markers are more fun to color with than crayons anyway. His favorite activity is for me to draw a picture then he colors it. Although I am an early childhood teacher, drawing is not among my many gifts. After I drew fields of flowers and houses, we both got bored. I showed him the "Art for Kids Hub" app. I asked him what he wanted to



Katie Laughridge

color first and he chose a fish. I showed him the many different options for drawing a fish. He loved watching me work through the tutorial video and draw the "zombie fish" he chose. Once I was done with the drawing, he partici-

pated in the guided coloring part of the video. He was absolutely engrossed in this activity for the next 30 minutes. As soon as he finished, he hung his art on the refrigerator then wanted to make another one!

Have you ever heard of "Art for Kids Hub?" "Art for Kids Hub" is a free website that provides tutorials on how to draw, paint, make origami, and so much more! Your child can log on at any time and learn how to draw pictures of animals, Santa, vehicles, food, people, and even landscapes. Not only are the videos easy to access, but they require very minimal materials. For a drawing lesson, students only need a piece of white paper, crayons/colored pencils, a pencil, and a sharpie (optional). The lessons can be started and stopped at any point, which makes it less frustrating and easier to complete.

I thought that maybe this would be something neat for your child to do while they are taking a break from the sun one afternoon.

"The important thing is to create." -Pablo Picasso

Happy creating! -Katie

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THE ANDERSON SUMMER GAMES

The Olympics began in the 8th century in Athens, Greece with competitions such as chariot racing, sword fighting, and wrestling. The little-known Anderson Summer Games



Neal Parnell

started around that same century but no residents were aware of it as they had yet to construct an alphabet.

This did not prevent them from spreading news of the event by grunting, growling, and groaning; much as they do today. Unlike the modern International Olympics that has the running of the torch and the Olympic flame lighting ceremony, the Anderson Summer Games opens with a shirtless redneck running through town hoisting a flaming Skins hotdog and ends with the lighting of an elevated large pot of Boiled Peanuts in the Anderson Mall parking lot. The Anderson Summer Games set the standard for athletic fashion and comfort long before the Greeks. They introduced

tank tops, shorts, and going barefoot while the Greeks were still in togas, tunics, and sandals. For the first time, Break Dancing will be a sport included in the 2024 Olympics. Most don't know that I actually invented Break Dancing in 1959, but I was ordered to get off the floor and stop wrinkling my clothes before church; so no one knew until a New Yorker claimed he developed it in the late '60s.

Water sports are popular at the Olympics, and the Anderson Summer Games are no exception. Immense crowds clog the Anderson Jockey Lot to watch the heart-stopping "Bobbing for Pork Rinds" event, and throngs of spectators gather on and below the Double Bridges to view hefty athletes cause mini-tsunamis with the daring "Belly Flop Plop". Feats of strength and agility have a long history at the Olympics. Sports such as weightlifting, gymnastics, and the discus throw can test an athlete's concentration and endurance to the limit. The Anderson Summer Games has taken these brutal tests to the next level with highly trained professionals competing in grueling timed events such as, "Pickle Jar

Opening", "Horse Fly Swatting", and the team "Find that Tick" competition. Driving cars has never been a part of any Olympic venue but the Anderson Summer Games is dropping the green flag and starting a new tradition. For its inaugural start, organizers have chosen ten of Anderson's newly licensed teenage drivers. First, drivers will be judged in the "Pothole Dodging Competition" on a course specially designed to have potholes remotely controlled to pop up at any time. Next a "Keep Your Eyes on the Road" contest, where drivers must text their BFF, drink a cup of coffee, put on lipstick, and eat an Egg McMuffin while speeding at 70 mph on I-85. Minutes of meticulous planning have gone into delivering this spectacle of sporting grandeur. For two whole weeks, all eyes will be on the Anderson Summer Games which will bring you spectacular events like, The Shopping Buggy Hundred Yard Dash, Possum Shearing, The Litterbox Long Jump, Dishwasher Loading, and a Weed Whacking tournament.

There will also be a Rocking Chair Marathon and a Waving from a Porch Swing



challenge. The Anderson Summer Games trials are underway, so if you know someone that Mops, Sweeps, or Vacuums, have them enter today. They could be on the Anderson Summer Games podium wearing a Gold, Silver, or Bronze Flip-Flop medal, and be a part of Electric City history.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN !!





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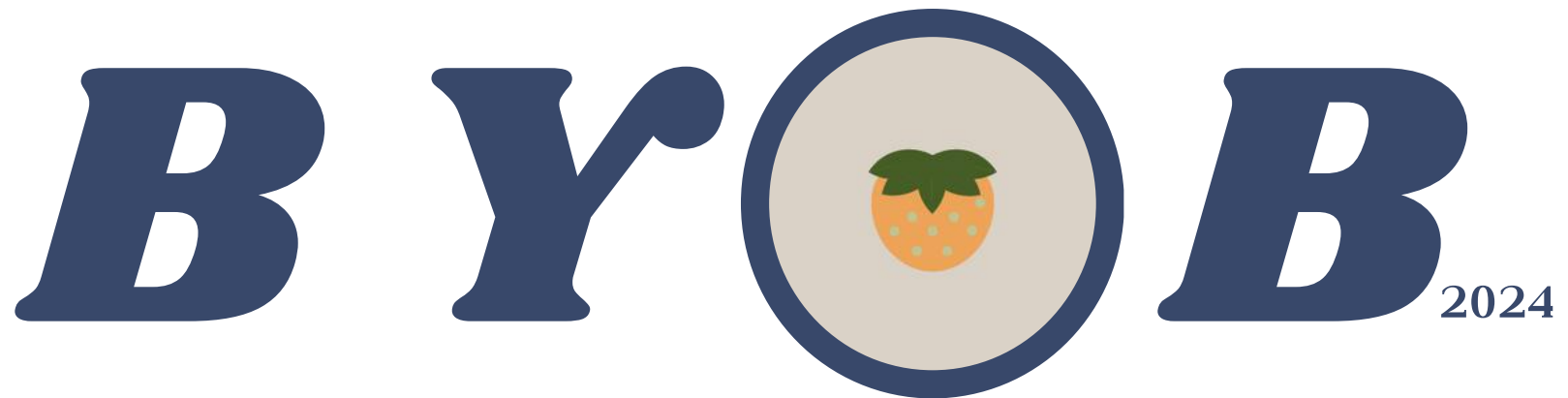
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- Philly S., Anderson, S.C.



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THE GARDEN SHOP

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SUSAN
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Thankfully my part of the county finally had about an inch of good, slow soaking rain. But that was almost two weeks ago. Newly planted native azaleas are getting watered. Containers have to be watered. A big container that has color guard yucca, gray santolina, and a low growing native aster in it, is in full sun all day. When yucca struggles, we know times are tough. But gray santolina is doing fine. It has a peculiar smell and deer to not like it. The little aster is hanging on. Plants in pots at the garden shop area must be watered. I have large containers that hold water and rotate putting potted plants in them to soak. That way, I know they are watered through and through. Be mindful when watering containers. Water will run through, and the plant may not thoroughly soak up the water, particularly if it has gotten dry. For plants in the ground, slow deep watering, for longer times, is better than frequent, shallow watering. Slow and deep makes roots grow deeper, therefore plants need less watering. Shallow, short watering causes roots to stay on the surface, then dry out quicker.

Hophornbeam copperleaf weed (*Acalypha ostryifolia*) does not seem to be fazed by this heat and drought and there seems to be more this year. Thank goodness chamberbitter is few and far between in the garden. Pre-emergent was put down in March and fortunately has been the only application needed this year. The stuff is expensive. I checked the label of Snapshot, used for chamberbitter, and hophornbeam copperleaf was not listed as a weed it controls. I don't want to use another chemical, and when reading about what controls this copperleaf, pre-emergents are primarily for crops such as soybeans. Hophornbeam is in the spurge family and there are a few spurge listed on the Snapshot label. Maybe it was the timing for control of hophornbeam. For now, it's getting chopped, or sprayed. According to UGA's extension site, one plant can produce more than 12,500 seeds, and grow up to almost four feet tall. It is usually only about two feet in my garden, if it gets passed me. It is a native, but no benefits to pollinators, etc. were mentioned.

On a pleasantly surprising note, for May's meeting of Fountain Inn Garden Club, I took



Crybaby bush rooting

a stem of blooming crybaby bush (*Erythrina crista-galli*) for show and tell. Our president kept it for the 75th anniversary celebration of the club. The blooms started falling off before the drop-in the following week, so she set it aside. After all the festivities were over, she went to pour out the last little tad of water and dump the stem. It had started growing roots and even had two little stems growing from the very bottom of the cutting. Well who knew!

Crybaby bush is near the top of special plants in the garden. It came from my great great aunt's yard on one of the last digs there. The gangly little thing would have been looked over that time too if it had not been blooming. And this was in fall of the year. Its primary bloom time is early summer. Plus, if my brother had not been with mama and me, I'm not too sure I would have been able to get to it. It was growing down between concrete blocks marking the old well. He is tall enough to be able to stand on the blocks and dig it out. With Mama saying at least a dozen times "Now don't fall in the well". I've been able to divide this crybaby bush a few times, but not easily so. Now I know it roots in water. This shows if someone wants to try and root a cutting, it may be as easy as putting it in some water. I would have never guessed the stem would have rooted that way, and with blooms on it.



Hophornbeam copperleaf weed

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THE POWER OF THE PRINCESS

Has there ever been a better time to be a girl? I think not! Girls can do anything, dream anything. And if you're a young girl, there's a Barbie to capture all of those dreams. For girls who want a life in nature, what could be more inspiring than a Dr. Jane Goodall doll? A girl who wants to be a writer could choose the Maya Angelou doll. A musical girl might choose the Gloria Estefan doll. There are doctor dolls, athlete dolls, veterinarian dolls, and chicken farmer dolls. As Barbie likes to tell children, "You can be anything!"



Kim von Keller

Except a princess. In today's Barbie world,

princesses have become passé. Ordinarily, I would say that's a good thing. First, the United States has no royalty, so you can't be born to the title; you'd have to marry into it. The only American princes I know are Tom Hanks and Al Roker, and they're already taken. And besides, if we look across the pond at the British royals, Princes haven't always turned out to be princes where marriage is concerned. (Yeah, I'm talking about you, King Charles and Prince Andrew.) So I think it's good that in 2024, most young women aspire to more in life than owning a tiara. Mattel has honored that by creating inspirational dolls that help a girl to see her future. Princess Barbies are a thing of the past. My problem, though, is a delightful little girl named Georgia Grace. She is turning

three and would very much like for her Great Aunt Kimmy to give her her first Barbie. A Princess Barbie. This is because G.G. as we often call her, eats, sleeps, and breathes princesses. She would wear a princess dress to preschool every day if my niece would let her – she won't – and has been known to cry just a little bit if she can't wear her princess heels to preschool as well – she can't. G.G. is allowed to wear princess dresses at home, at her grandparents' homes, and at the Alpharetta City Center Fountain, where she wears them instead of a swimsuit.

I can't exactly relate. The princesses I remember were gullible (Snow White), abused (Cinderella), and helpless (Sleeping Beauty). Today's ani-

mated role models are bold (Moana), independent (Elsa), and Fiona (spunky). Even the Barbie from last year's hit movie broke away from stereotypes to control her own destiny. These aren't just characteristics that children are drawn to. They're characteristics we should want for our children as well. At the end of the day, I bought two Barbies for my darling G.G., a Doctor Barbie and a Horsewoman Barbie. I hope that she'll find them fun and somehow inspirational. But if I can find two tiny tiaras to transform them into Princess Doctor Barbie and Princess Horsewoman Barbie, in G.G.'s eyes, I'll be magically transformed from Great Aunt Kimmy into Queen Kimmy.

I think it's good that in 2024, most young women aspire to more in life than owning a tiara.

Good to know

BY MELISSA BROWN
WESTMORE beauty Body Coverage Perfector (\$49) (instant camouflage & illuminator)
WESTMORE Blend & Blur Body Brush (\$49) (Extra large perfecting brush)
Are you in search of the elusive perfect spray tan? Are you frustrated with tans that turn out too dark, too orange or bleed onto your clothes and bedsheets? Are you frustrated with the cost, inconvenience and not-to mention that hideous smell? I have tried them all, from drug store brand lotions to very expensive professionally applied sprays and I have yet to come close to even a decent-looking tan. That is until a video for WESTMORE beauty popped up on my Instagram feed and I thought, "Why not? I'll try ONE more product." And I'm so glad I did.

Think of it as foundation for your body. You can apply it anywhere to give a warm, beautiful, healthy glow to your arms, legs, torso, décolletage. Choose from 7 different color variants. It smooths skin tone and covers a multitude of veins, bruises, stretch marks, and scars. If you have some inopportune bikini lines, this product can make them almost magically disappear.

One of the things I love most about the Perfector is that it is waterproof, sweatproof proof and smudge-proof. It sets in TEN minutes! (No more sitting around for 4 hours after a spray tan waiting to dress or shower!)



Follow directions and wipe off residue after 10 minutes
No ODOR! Yes! Thank you!!!!
IMPORTANT: You need to purchase the body brush to go along with the Perfector. It makes the application so so easy! (Even with the purchase of both products, it is still much more cost effective than that of commercial spray tans.)
For helpful tutorials and product reviews, visit www.westmorebeauty.com.

Be sure to check out Melissa's next review in the August 1st edition of The Electric City News.

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FROM THE SHELF

On some nonfiction

At the start of the year, I stated my intention to read this year with no intentions. A loose potential I was contemplating was to try to keep my fiction to nonfiction ratio at 90/10, in favor of fiction. It's probably against 'librarian code,' but I generally find nonfiction boring, even when it's topics I'm into. Still, I regularly "force" myself to read nonfiction, though never as loftily as a 90 to 10 ratio. I am currently at 83% fiction, 17% nonfiction which feels both surreal and good. Of my 17%, sixteen books, below are my standouts from the year so far.

The Cure for Burnout: How to Find Balance and Reclaim Your Life by Emily Ballesteros

Ballesteros has risen to TikTok/social media fame addressing 'burnout' and hustle culture. She pulls not just from her personal experience, but also experiences of those she's coached through it. It's a great handbook for

examining problematic work culture and personal habits along with tools to address/fix the problem(s). I've even bought a physical copy to refer to.



Sara Leady

ADHD for Smart A Women: How to Fall in Love with your Neurodivergent Brain** by Tracy Otsuka

Otsuka can be a big presence to swallow but she's a great example of success with ADHD. She does a great job of showing how a neurodivergent brain can actually make someone better suited for various jobs/industries and how the different way the brain works can be a superpower rather than a detriment or mental or moral failing. If you or someone you know has ADHD, especially if they're a woman, I highly recommend you read it.

Starry Messenger: Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization by Neil deGrasse Tyson

Tyson is great at not over-sciencing things for layman readers (me). *Starry Messenger* is a scientific and philosophical take on how we as a species have gotten to where we are. If you don't want to repeat history, it's always good to take a look back and examine the full "origin story" so to speak.

Dare to Lead and Daring Greatly by Brené Brown

I feel like Brown is a household name, but I've never read her until now. I started with *Dare to Lead* and as a manager, especially at the middle management level, there's a ton to delve into and ruminate on. I don't necessarily agree with all her takes, but the concept of the 'courage to be uncomfortable' and do the hard stuff is something I think probably everyone could use a little bit of in all aspects of life. *Daring Greatly* personally was a letdown. She's both too obvious with her takes on 'shame,' and too blind to major factors when she claims to be diving deep into the nitty gritty. She presents a good springboard, but the key is to only springboard off her and then go do the real work (just my opinion).

Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal by Mary Roach

I've already established I'm a huge Roach fan. *Gulp* is the only one of hers I might put a "warning label" on. That label would read: only read if you aren't squeamish and find the science behind how a body functions fascinating. Also, only read if you think farts are funny and not a four-letter word.

Hip-Hop is History by Questlove

Questlove is one of the joint-frontmen of the hip-hop group 'The Roots.' If you aren't a hip-hop nut like me, you probably would be more familiar with the group through their work as the house band for Jimmy Fallon's various late night shows. *Hip-Hop is History* goes from the origins of the genre and its early influences up through 2023. What's unique with this history of the genre is that you're seeing the literal growth of the genre from the eyes of a kid who was there when it started, who then grew up to be a Grammy Award winning artist and producer within the genre. It was a nostalgic and behind the scenes look at a favorite genre of mine. I also now have a huge list of artists I missed or didn't give enough of a look at when they hit the scene originally.

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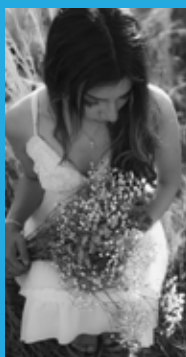
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MARTIN COLONY WRAP-UP

At first, this article was going to start out with "Our purple martin colony has limped in to the finish. Mike's words a month ago were 'It is damaged but not decimated.'" We really thought it was going to end badly--but not anymore!



Ann K. Bailes

In late May, the activity surrounding the twelve gourds was off the charts, as was the noise. Their characteristic "tootle-tootle-clack-clack" sounds could always be heard as soon as we pulled in to the farm. We loved the commotion.

Then the adversity started. First, we had a pesky starling pair intent on claiming gourds and building nests for themselves. Part of that is our fault. Our first colony two years ago hadn't done very well as the birds couldn't get into the gourds. We found out at the end of that season, after several phone calls and emails, that the openings really were too small. The company sent us twelve new ones.

However, when the birds still didn't appear to go in, we cut an additional 1/8" out of the opening. Mistake. Now the opening was big enough that starlings could go in also. They took full advantage of the situation, and starlings are not to be deterred. Every time we cleaned out a starling nest, they immediately started building another. And another. And another. We think they're finally gone now, but even so are monitoring closely. Invasive starlings can decimate a colony.

Then, someone who shall not be named accidentally removed some viable martin eggs, thinking that they were in a starling nest. That person was crushed to realize the error, and now remembers that "blue is bad, white is good" when describing eggs in a purple martin gourd.

Then a black snake, usually a good snake to have around a farm because it eats mice and rats, figured out how to get past the snake guard at the bottom. Fortunately we were there



that morning, and could minimize the damage. Our counting of up to a dozen martins was now way down. For about a month, we only saw four or five. The outlook was bleak.

But by the end of June, we began getting up to fifteen flying around! We don't know if they were fledglings from our gourds, or transients. One day Mike even counted 17! Success had returned.

And slowly, as expected by the calendar, the numbers went down again – but it's OK. Now, they are pretty well gone. They've probably joined the millions of martins that roost on Bomb Island in Lake Murray each summer, preparing for the long flight to South America for the winter.

We'll leave the gourds up for a little longer. Who knows but that travelers from further north might need "hotel accommodations" for the night along their path. We'll do whatever possible to help these useful birds along the way.

Then we'll take the gourds down in a month or so and clean them up for next year. Being martin landlords is a great experience. As my dad likes to say, "We don't make much money, but we sure have a lot of fun!"

WESTSIDE RAMS

Rams aiming for back-to-back state championship runs

BY NEAL PARNELL

Anderson- The Westside Rams are stepping high after hoofing their way to winning the AAAA State Championship last season.

Morale is also high this year as the Rams try to climb the steep slope to Back to Back titles. It's tough to stay on top of the mountain, but the surefooted Rams have a high-altitude passing game, and those defensive curly horns have

absorbed the impact of many grid-iron clashes.

In their first match-up of the season the Rams will host the Creekside Seminoles, on a hot August Saturday afternoon. Next, they'll travel fifteen minutes and be rared up and ready to charge the T.L. Hanna Yellow Jackets.

Winning these first two battles will lower the mountaintop and spur the Rams to higher peaks.

T.L. HANNA YELLOW JACKETS

Yellow Jackets hope to swarm in 2024

BY NEAL PARNELL

Anderson- The T.L. Hanna Yellow Jackets football team is buzzing over its chances for a great football season.

Although the hive focuses on one game at a time, mapping a flight plan to a State Championship is in the back of every player's mind. Speculating on flight plans, there is talk around the nest that the Yellow Jackets may let the old pigskin see a bit more airtime this coming season.

The Jackets have a stinging ground game, but the thinking is that

a less conservative aerial attack may have adversaries scrambling for cover.

Nearly a dozen players return to the colony as Seniors this year and aim to leave their marks in Yellow Jacket history.

The Yellow Jackets go on the attack in their first game against the Rebels of J.F. Byrnes High before welcoming their crosstown rival and AAAA State Champions, Westside Rams.

With winning stings against these challengers, the Swarm will be in a frenzied feeding and no hope will be needed for the Hive to Thrive.

Ralph Hayes
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