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April 10-23, 2025

A career of community service

BY KIM VON KELLER

George Ducworth has spent his career serving his community. Between 1980 and 2000, he was the 10th Circuit Solicitor, serving as the chief prosecuting attorney for Anderson and Oconee Counties. He followed that position with more than 18 years of teaching and leadership roles at Anderson University. And while retirement finds him writing and working on his farm, Ducworth remains active in the criminal justice field, offering his support to a new court system benefitting offenders, law enforcement officers and prosecutors, and everyone in Anderson.

"I think I've just always been interested in criminal justice, and I always understood the importance of law enforcement and the solicitor's office working together," Ducworth says. "I also saw the importance of good leadership in the criminal justice field. It just seemed like a natural transition when I learned that Anderson University was starting a Criminal



Justice program. When I was at AU, I also helped develop the Command College, a leadership program for law enforcement officials. Since its inception, the Command College has helped develop criminal justice leaders

in South Carolina, such as Anderson County Sheriff Chad McBride, Anderson Police Chief Jim Stewart, and Greenville Police Chief Howie Thompson." They are all graduates of the Command College."

Currently, Ducworth acts as a chairman of the Anderson County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The CJCC seeks to improve the criminal justice system in Anderson County, and it is through his involvement with the organization that he has played a part in the Anderson County Mental Health Court.

"As a solicitor, I put a lot of emphasis in prosecuting offenders who needed to be prosecuted and using it as a deterrent, but I realized it was also important to prevent people from becoming career criminals. For example, I helped develop the alternative school now known as the Renaissance Academy that seeks to keep at-risk students from dropping out of school and committing crimes. It's why I have wanted to see the development of the Mental Health Court, a program that diverts individuals suffering from mental illness from the criminal justice

SEE SERVICE ON PAGE 2

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Anderson Arts Center set to draw a crowd for its 50th Annual Juried Show



This year marks half a century that the Anderson Arts Center (AAC) has held its annual juried show, drawing artists from across



Ainsley McCarthy

the state and beyond for one of South Carolina's oldest juried shows. What began as an intimate exhibit in the Carnegie Building has

flourished into a renowned showcase that attracts artists and enthusiasts alike from all over the region.

"The 50th Annual Juried Art Exhibit is especially exciting because it highlights the incredible local talent in our area. Every year, I'm amazed by the submissions,

and I'm hopeful the community will come out to the opening, showing their support for these artists," Erin Spainhour, the executive director of the AAC said.

"The fact that this juried art exhibit has been thriving for 50 years is a powerful testament to the ongoing support and appreciation our community has for the arts."

The show's intake process yielded 407 unique pieces from 165 artists. Finalists discovered their acceptance status when it was posted online yesterday, the results of which were evaluated by juror Brenna Reilley, who serves as the Associate Curator at The Gibbes Museum in Charleston, S.C.

With a master's in public history from the College of Charleston and a bachelor's in history and nonprofit studies

from George Mason University, she has an extensive education and background in the arts and culture scene, which she intends to expand upon with new projects that promote interaction with art and history from the public.

As the show prospectus on the ACC website said, "Brenna is excited to combine her knowledge in the public history field with the arts as she grows into her career in the museum field."

The show will include original, never-before-seen work from adult contributors using any medium they wish, with the exception of artificial intelligence. The pieces will be for sale unless otherwise noted, and participating artists may choose to vie for either a \$500 or \$1,000 purchase award in addition to merit awards

funded by community donors.

"Over the years, the show has significantly evolved in terms of participation, diversity of art and public interest," Spainhour said. "Each year, we aim to expand the juried exhibition, welcoming a greater number of artists and offering more awards to recognize talent. The diversity of art has also grown, with an increasing number of mediums and styles, ensuring that there's something for everyone to enjoy. One notable year, the total amount of awards reached \$25,000, which was likely the highest it's ever been, reflecting the show's commitment to rewarding excellence."

Service

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

system and helps them become productive members of society."

The Anderson County Mental Health Court was developed through a grant. Defense attorneys, public defenders, mental health professionals, even family members can recommend an individual to the Mental Health Court program. To participate, an individual must be nonviolent and facing only misdemeanor charges.

Marlene McClain is the court coordinator with the 10th Circuit Solicitor's Office.

"Once we determine that an individual is legally eligible," McClain says, "we do a clinical assessment to see if there is a severe and persistent mental illness. After that, we write an individualized treatment plan. That's followed up with intensive counseling, medication assessment and monitoring, and referrals with vocational rehabilitation, substance abuse treatment, housing, and transportation partners in the community. This is voluntary on the part of the offender, and they agree to abide by the rules of the court. For a lot of people, it's a chance to get treatment and a support system and to be connected with the right people or agencies. If they successfully complete the program, the charge

they're facing is dismissed."

Since the creation of the Mental Health Court, four individuals have successfully completed the program. McClain shared the story of a man who finished in March. He entered the program last July, having been in jail for three months.

"He was in a revolving door with the criminal justice system, and he told me, 'I am 51 years old. I have no place to live. My family has written me off, and if I don't make a change, I will die in prison. If you give me a chance, I will not let you down.' We put him in the emergency shelter at Salvation Army, and in just a few months, he got on the right meds, passed all his tests, and completed all his requirements. He found work as an upholsterer, bought a truck, moved into his own home, and stays current with all his bills. He has also reunited with his family. He now volunteers at Hope Missions to give something back to the community. He still calls me just to check in, and I'm just so proud of him."

Ducworth echoes that sentiment.

"At his graduation, his mother was there, and I believe his sister was as well, and they were so proud of him. It's been so rewarding to see someone turn their life around like that. People with mental health issues can be a drain on the resources of the criminal justice system and the community, and because of our Mental Health Court, this individual is now a productive member of society."

Now that he's retired, Ducworth is looking forward to spending time on his other interests. He does some farming, and he's currently working on a book for his grandchildren that details the lives of his parents and grandparents. But he'll always be interested in making the criminal justice system in Anderson the best it can be.

"As an Anderson native, I can say that the stresses on our community are greater than at any time in my life. Programs like the Mental Health Court are helping to relieve some of that stress."

CORRECTION

In the March 27 issue of The Electric City News, the article titled "Anderson's community-based approach to helping the unhoused," the following sentence has been acknowledged as incorrect: "On the same night as the meeting, Anderson City Council approved the donation of 24 unused plots to Habitat for Humanity, Anderson Housing and Homeless Alliance and Hope Missions." It was actually Anderson County Council that approved the donation of 24 unused plots to Habitat for Humanity, Anderson Housing and Homeless Alliance and Hope Missions. We apologize for this mistake.

RED ROCKET PUBLISHING OF ANDERSON, LLC PUBLISHERS

Julie Bailes Johnson
864-221-9269
julie@theelectriccitynews.com

Ginny Bailes Fretwell
864-934-1477
ginny@theelectriccitynews.com

ADVERTISING SALES

Becky Pruitt
864-367-2102
beckypu@aol.com

LAYOUT/DESIGN

ART DIRECTOR
Zack Mauldin
zack@upstatetoday.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Nate Thomason
signal43@live.com

WRITERS

Neal Parnell
dnparn@gmail.com

Rich Otter
richotter29621@yahoo.com

GARDEN & FLORAL
Susan Temple
gardningirl@yahoo.com

MENTAL HEALTH
Mary-Catherine McClain Riner
drmarycatherine@riner counseling.com

FASHION
Kristine March

SPORTS
Brian Hodges

COLUMNISTS
Kim Acker Von Keller
Katie Laughridge
Ann K. Bailes
Sara Leady
Ainsley McCarthy

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



Performing Arts Schedule

FRIDAY, APRIL 25TH

DUKE ENERGY STAGE AT CAROLINA WREN PARK

- 5:30pm TAILGATE HOMEBOYS
- 7pm STEPPIN' OUT DANCE STUDIO

NORTH MAIN COMMONS STAGE

- 6pm LUKE DEUCE

PAPA BEAR MAIN STAGE AT SOUTH MAIN

- 7pm BENTON BLOUNT
- 8pm CLAY WALKER

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AT COURTHOUSE SQUARE

- 5pm AUDREY ADAMS
- 6pm SYDNEY WELLS

SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH

DUKE ENERGY STAGE AT CAROLINA WREN PARK

- 10am CENTERVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 10:30am SOUTHWOOD ACADEMY OF THE ARTS
- 11am CALHOUN ACADEMY OF THE ARTS
- 11:30am NEW PROSPECT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 12pm NEVITT FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 12:30pm STARR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 1pm NEVITT FOREST KINDNESS CREW
- 1:30pm RENZO GRACIE SOUTH CAROLINA JIUJITSU
- 2pm FLOURISH CREATIVE ARTS STUDIO
- 2:30pm LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN THEATRE
- 6:30pm THOSE GUYS
- 8pm THE SWINGIIN' MEDALLIONS

NORTH MAIN COMMONS STAGE

- 12pm STONE GROOVE
- 2:30pm MARVIN KING REVUE
- 5pm FL!PSIDE
- 7:30pm HOTO MOZAMBIQUE

PAPA BEAR MAIN STAGE ON SOUTH MAIN

- 10am TALBERT BLACK
- 11:30am SECOND TIME AROUND BAND
- 1pm CECIL TOMPKINS
- 2:30pm CAROLINA MOON BAND
- 4pm BLUE SKY
- 6:15pm DOUG MCCORMICK
- 7:30pm OUTSHYNE

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AT COURTHOUSE SQUARE

- 12pm ANDERSON UNIVERSITY JAZZ COMBO
- 1pm AU GREG ALEWINE ENSEMBLE
- 2pm AU TIM BLACKWELL ENSEMBLE I
- 3pm AU TIM BLACKWELL ENSEMBLE II
- 4pm BLACKTOP RUN
- 5pm AU FACULTY ENSEMBLE
- 6pm AUTHENTICITY

HANNA GIRLS' LACROSSE TEAM SHINING BRIGHT

Lacrosse is one of those under-the-radar sports. It doesn't get the media hype like high school football or basketball.

But the T.L. Hanna girls' lacrosse team is making it hard to ignore them.

They are 11-0.

Jason Stiles, the Hanna girls coach, has been in charge since 2017 and he thinks this is a good team.



Brian Hodges

"We are looking pretty good," Stiles said. "But I don't want to get too far ahead of ourselves because we've got more games to play."

Hanna defeated visiting Mauldin 12-3 on March 28 to extend their streak to 11. Olivia Wallach led the team with six goals in the win.

Stiles has reason to believe he's got a good thing going. The Yellow Jackets defeated a tough Christ Church Episcopal team 6-5 on March 25.

Stiles considers that one and a 6-5 win over J.L. Mann in early March as their biggest moments so far this season.

"Christ Church has a good program, and we scored with something like 20 seconds left to win," he said. "J.L. Mann is a bigger school (they are in the Big 5A classification) with good athletes and we won with a shot in the last three seconds."

Stiles said three seniors are leading the way. Olivia Wallach is an aggressive scorer. She is 6th nationally (and No. 1 in S.C.) with 70 goals. Evelyn Wallach is No. 1 nationally in

ground balls and Caelyn Little is ranked No. 1 nationally in assists.

"They are leaders and all three have a future in college lacrosse," Stiles said. "They have great chemistry playing together."

Olivia is bound for Emmanuel College in Georgia, Evelyn is headed for Stony Brook and Caelyn is going to Southern Wesleyan, Stiles said.

Stiles said there are 30 girls playing junior varsity lacrosse and 17 girls on the varsity.

"It's been a learning experience for everyone," he said. "The game is like ice hockey on grass, or even basketball on grass."

Teams run man and zone defenses and players pass the ball using a stick with a small net at the end.

"It takes some getting used to, catching a ball like that," Stiles said.

Stiles grew up in New Jersey before attending Clemson. He played on a lacrosse club team at Clemson.

He was an assistant coach on the Hanna boys team starting in 2014 before taking over the girls program in '17.

Stiles is especially proud of his defense.

"If you can hold a team to 5 goals or less in a game, that's a good defensive effort. Layla Fallous is our best defender. She can lock down her opponent."

"And our goalie, Susannah White, is a freshman and she's outstanding," Stiles said.

"White leads the state in goals allowed and save percentage. She really has a knack for the position. You have to be mentally tough," since the shots keep coming at you.



From left – Olivia Wallach, Evelyn Wallach, and Caelyn Little

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YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Are we taking obesity seriously?

There are few subjects in the area of public health that receive more attention and discussion than obesity. One could argue there may be no more complicated – and stressful -- physical challenge than weight gain and weight loss. After all we are all different physically – from small to large and everything in between.

How then does medical science assess obesity? They apply a Body Mass Index as a gauge. BMI is simply a medical screening measurement based on the ratio of your height to your weight that estimates your amount of body fat. Obesity as currently defined is a person having a BMI of 30% or higher. Now, are we going to get sick and be miserable for the rest of our lives if we exceed this level of body fat? Probably not. However, there is plenty of room for caution. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimates 40% of US adults have obesity. Twenty percent of children and adolescents! Obesity is linked to

serious physical health issues including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, fatty liver disease -- not even counting the on-going emotional stress.



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

And still obesity rates continue to climb. Why?

Could it be many men and women have tuned out, deciding weight gain and the endless "solutions" appear so complicated and the results so unpredictable they are no longer "listening"? Don't be that person. If you find yourself in this position, please reconsider. Carrying a few extra pounds is one thing. But we can gauge when we've let ourselves go too far.

We all know diet and exercise are essential for optimum health and maintaining a

healthy weight. But ultimately, it's about how we choose to live – which in turn enables us to achieve a longer and more productive life. You might consider adopting the following simple steps as you begin each new day. They have led many to victory over not only weight issues but the challenges of modern life:

1. Drink a glass of water first thing. The body can be dehydrated after a night's sleep. This can jump-start your energy, mental focus, and aid in weight loss.

2. Arise with a sense of purpose prepared for a day of organization and accomplishment. With a reason to get out of bed, we are better equipped to manage the ups and downs of daily life.

These simple morning routines set the stage for the rest of your day, including the motivation for making important self-care choices like proper diet and exercise. Start today and never stop. Please reach out if you have comments or suggestions. Consider us

your hometown resource for guidance and support.

Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.

For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to grandoaksdental.com or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.



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FROM THE SHELF

On 'The Hunger Games' and rereading

I've talked before about rereading for comfort, but another form of rereading is doing it with a new lens. It happens often enough that I'll start a book, and I can just tell that the moment for reading that book isn't the present. At least not if I want to enjoy the book, or minimally not hate it.



Sara Leady

With the fifth book in The Hunger Game series, Sunrise on the Reaping, having just been released, I decided I wanted to reread the original trilogy since Reaping covers the story of Haymitch.

Reaping explains so much about his troubled character in the original trilogy that was released about fifteen years ago. There is also The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes, a prequel that released in 2020. When I first heard about The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes, I admit

to feeling like it was just a cash grab, and I went into reading it with that harsh opinion. A lot of my strong feelings came from what I thought was folly in Collins' attempting to "humanize" President Snow (the horrific fascist villain from the original trilogy), and I wasn't interested in feeling any sort of empathy toward him.

After I read Sunrise on the Reaping, I was talking to a friend and I made the comment that I was "really glad Collins went back to making an actual statement unlike the last one." My friend vehemently disagreed, so I decided I should reread The Ballad for Songbirds and Snakes before reading The Hunger Games. Y'all. I know it's been five years and who knows how many 100s of books since, but it's like I never read the book. I know that for most it would make sense to not remember a book's broad strokes or vibes, but my book memory is ridiculous. Suffice to say, I was a bit too quick to judge A Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes, and a reread in the present definitely gave me a new

and different appreciation for it.

Like most people, my take on a book tends to reflect my mood, or general state of being. My second reading of The Ballad for Songbirds and Snakes still had the humanizing aspect of President Snow as a young teenager, but it also feels like a cautionary tale. By giving us his childhood, Collins gives context for why Snow behaves the way he does. She also gives context to the decisions he makes, including the thought process behind them, so while you might want to empathize you also are seeing each moment he could have chosen differently.

The original Hunger Games trilogy casts a stark light on economic disparities between classes and regions in Panem, a futuristic North America. The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes shows the motivation behind the desperate cling to power from an elite. Fear, especially of change or discomfort, is a powerful motivator. Young Snow has always been told (because of his family name and their status),

that he is just innately better than everyone else, therefore deserving more than others. Even though the Snow family lost almost everything in the war, this entitlement creates a desperation to cling to and claw for power, rather than empathy to those who have nothing and have also suffered incredible losses. This contrast I think is where Collins' tale can be cautionary. To forget empathy and instead frame your life and choices around only your own needs, wants, and most importantly fears, is to become your typical Capital citizen, or worse, President Snow.

Sunrise on the Reaping is a bit of a bridge between 'cautionary tale' and a call to revolution. It's been interesting to read the books in chronological order of how they happen within the world of Panem versus their publication dates. Collins started with rebellion but shifts toward the cautionary in the most recent books. I'm glad I gave the prequels a shot without the attitude of assuming money was the motivation. Collins is, and I think likely always will be, one hell of a statement writer. Her books are just getting a bit more scathing, and a lot more overt as she continues to expand on Panem.

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AnMed forms partnership to create needed PTA program

Officials from Tri-County Technical College, AnMed and Elite Integrated Therapy Centers signed an agreement March 26 outlining a new Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) program that will launch at the College's Easley Campus in fall 2027.

The new two-year associate degree program aims to address a critical shortage of physical therapy assistants in the area and create a pathway into additional physical therapy education programs.

What makes the program unique is that it is fully funded by AnMed and Elite Integrated Therapy Centers. In addition to covering the cost of equipment and program faculty, AnMed and Elite will provide internships, work placement and clinical rotations for students.

"Rigorous, quality education and training for health care professionals is critical both for our not-for-profit health system and the community at large, and we're grateful to be able to team up with wonderful partners like Tri-County Technical College and Elite Integrated

Therapy Centers to make a program like this happen," said William Kenley, CEO of AnMed. "Physical therapists and assistants are needed by neighbors, friends and family members throughout the Upstate, and that need is growing. With the help of this wonderful new program, we're going to educate and train people to make a difference and launch rewarding careers in health care in the process."

Students enrolled in the PTA program will gain foundational knowledge in anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and patient care with a focus on therapeutic exercises, modalities, and clinical skills for rehabilitation. They will also engage in clinical rotations to gain hands-on experience.

Upon graduation, students must pass a national exam to become certified. Once certified, they can work under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist in a variety of settings including hospitals, outpatient clinics,

skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, and schools.

Students may also choose to pursue further education, such as a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree to become a physical therapist. TCTC has transfer agreements with four-year colleges and universities to aid students in their preferred career pathway.

"Whatever the student decides, there is no shortage of career opportunities for them," said Dr. Ahmad Chaudhry, dean of TCTC's Health Education Division. "The demand for physical therapy assistants and physical therapists continues to grow as our population ages and the prevalence of chronic conditions increases."

According to a 2024 report produced by the American Physical Therapy Association, the national vacancy rate for outpatient physical therapy practices stands at 9.5%, nearly double the U.S. national average vacancy rate for all industries of 4.8% as reported by the

Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Additionally, roughly 13% of all physical therapist and physical therapy assistant positions at outpatient practices are open.

These shortages are projected to continue through 2037, further impacting patient access to timely care.

"By offering a local PTA educational program, we are not only addressing the critical shortage of skilled licensed therapists in our community, but we are also creating opportunities for local individuals to pursue rewarding careers close to home," said Paul Hecker, owner and CEO of Elite Integrated Therapy Centers. "Those who are educated and trained within their own communities are naturally more invested in its well-being, leading to a higher level of care and a deep sense of responsibility to give back to the neighborhoods they serve."

The PTA program will be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. Individuals interested in learning more about the program are invited to visit tctc.edu/pta.



BELTON'S ON FIRE APRIL 12

It's getting hot in Belton! What could be more exciting than a beautiful spring day spent sampling the world's best chili? You can enjoy this and more if you join us on Saturday, April 12, in Belton for the 15th Annual SC State Chili Cook-off Championship, brought to you by Dodge and Friends of the Chili Richard and Eleanor Dorn.

Whether you want to sample the

amazing culinary talents of champion chili cooks from around the nation or you try your hand at competing yourself, the SC State Chili Cook off Championship is waiting for you!

"We have 28 professional cooks signed up right now and are looking for more amateur competitors in the individual and organizational categories," said co-chairman Gene Jameson. "It's always fun to see this



side of the competition heat up."

Cooks in the professional arena can compete in four categories: traditional red, homestyle, chili verde, and veggie chili. Amateur cooks, both individual and organizations, can compete in People's Choice and Amateur Homestyle competitions. If interested in competing, go to www.schilicookoff.com for more information and instructions.

Amazing trophies and great cash

prizes are awarded to winners. And best of all, professional winners qualify for the International Chili Society World Championship!

Or, if you just love a good chili, no matter what kind, come buy a tasting ticket packet (5 tickets for \$5) or band (unlimited tastes for \$20) so you can sample the best chili around. With your tickets or band, you can expect the chance to sample from among at least 30



varied chili recipes. Come between the peak hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 pm and look for the signs to cast your vote for your favorite.

Proceeds from the band and ticket sales benefit six non-profits in our town who provide quality of life and emergency services for our community including the Belton Alliance, the Belton Area Museum Association, the Belton Center for the Arts, the Belton Interfaith Ministries Association, American Legion Post #51, and the Belton Masonic Lodge #130-Christmas for Kids program.

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ANDERSON RESTAURANTS OF YESTERYEAR

BY WALTER HUDSON

Recently I posted on Facebook about a restaurant on the west side of Anderson that's been around since the 80's but seems to struggle to stay in business. The comments from my friends began to quickly roll in - some defending the eatery and others agreeing it was a mystery how they kept their doors open. What happened next as we expanded on that subject was pretty cool. Comrades ranging in age from their thirties to their fifties began reminiscing about long forgotten restaurants around town that we loved and miss.

There was something about an "after church" restaurant back in the day here in the south. Depending on the sermon you had just heard, you could hum hallelujah while undressing a chicken bone or maybe wash your sins away in the depths of some country style gravy. One of the first places mentioned was Morrison's Cafeteria near the mall, which seemed to be at the top of many of my friends' list. My personal favorite was Po' Folks on Concord Road. We must have frequented that

spot a hundred times on the sabbath when I was in elementary school. I remember thinking the red table cloths were the zenith of fine dining, because at home we never broke ours out until Christmas. Beverages were served in mason jars. Jewelers had nothing on that dessert display case, with their jello containing gravity defying fruit cocktail topped with whipped cream and obscene-sized pieces of chocolate cake.

Another place that I'd love to time travel back to would be Breeze's. Do you recall that 1950's style diner? It was "Jack Rabbit Slims" from "Pulp Fiction" without all the lookalikes. There was the larger location on North Main with the cool train set mounted around the walls and the drive in at Watson Village with classic cars built into the walls of the building. I recall them having a country fried steak sandwich that you'd be eager to clog your arteries with, and proper milkshakes that obliterated best laid plans of calorie counters.

To name a few more, there was The Dragon Den on Clemson Boulevard, where as my friend

Brian so eloquently put it, yokel met the Orient. Great places to grab vittles and biscuits included Katherine's Kitchen near exit 19 (with the stairs from "The Exorcist" leading up from the boat ramps) and Dolly's Chicken 'N' Biscuits. My grandmother worked at JC Penny's in the mall and when we dropped by to visit her I'd pull up a stool at the Orange Julius snack bar. On the wrong side of the train tracks sat a small chain fast food joint known as Hot 'N' Now, where imitation cheeseburgers literally cost 39 cents. Back then there was no internet to question the contents of that meat, nobody to steal the joy of a carload of people feasting for \$4.65.

As I've generally lived within a couple miles of the area, my fondest memories were of the restaurants & businesses long gone from Lakeside Shopping Center. Now practically a ghost town, it once was the Mecca of my childhood. The first Walmart in Anderson was there. Bi-Lo around the corner had majestic plastic cattle staring down from the roof. The McDonald's that nourished me with Happy Meals was at the center. Rainbow Records gave us our music. Pic-A-Flic christened our VCRs. Sly old TCBY tricked the ice cream

lovers with a wink and a smile. Putt-Putt proprietors retired to the Caribbean on the quarters of youngsters. Mazzio's Pizza reigned supreme, as long as you picked the mushrooms off (to quote Lewis Grizzard, "frogs go to the bathroom on them things"). Yes, the heyday of Lakeside Shopping Center. They even had a closed up restaurant of mystery, a place where Shaggy and Velma dare not tread, Arthur Treacher's Fish 'N' Chips, that stayed abandoned and undemolished for approximately 47 years. I never ate there once because it never appeared to be open in my lifetime, at least not to my earliest recollections. It somehow reminded me of Boo Radley's house. Either the Illuminati were meeting in the kitchen or it was utilized as Area 51 East.

Posting a random status on social media reminiscing on dining spots of yesteryear sure did bring back some fond memories. I'd like to give a shoutout to Brian, Bradley, Vaughn, Amy, Donna, Jeffrey, Chris, Linda, Greg, Phillip, and Andrew, among others, whose abilities to dust off dormant thoughts of the past far outweigh mine. Let's crank up the DeLorean and drive thru Pete's No. 5!

What to wear in warm weather

Warmer weather is slowly making its way to us all. I'm going to be positive about it and make the most out of the pollen and the humid southern season. I was just talking to my sister and we both agreed that now that we've approached 40, we are more into the cooler weather. Perhaps



Kristine March

that comes with age. I love the attire more in the colder months. Spring and Summer clothes can be appealing too.

Today I've gathered have a few do's and don'ts and these are just for fun. I feel like when it comes to fashion you can honestly do whatever you want, but these are just my opinion. So definitely keep that in mind. For starters, the do's and the don'ts. I think once you turn a certain age especially when you're at the beach, you need a cover up in your late thirties and so on. I love a good Kimono. I just ordered one with these beautiful tassels on the sleeve and on the bottom stitching. It's really chic and makes me feel more comfortable. I love a good high-rise bathing suit as well.

I don't think you should honestly wear a super low-rise bikini, but that's just me. Whatever makes you feel confident though. High waisted skirts and shorts look really cute on top and I always add jewelry to my swimwear. It's just makes you look put together.

Next on my list is a tee-shirt. It's much more

attractive to have it shaped in a V or slouchy or even oversized. The other ones make me appear super boxy. I know they're comfortable, but you can actually make a t-shirt look really chic by cutting the neckline, pruning it a bit and even cropping it and styling it in many different forms. Tuck it half way into your jean shorts or even add boyfriend jeans and a cute pair of loafers or a platform pair of Birkenstocks and let it fall off the shoulder. Add a cute blazer to it and you're still roomy. It will elevate it tremendously. You don't have to wear athletic shoes with it. There are other really comfortable shoes options that are even more comfortable than your average tennis shoe.

Another tip is for wearing hats. Make sure that you don't just wear your average baseball cap. Try to buy an embellished trucker hat or a rancher hat instead. You will end up getting so many compliments and you're stepping out of the box.

Lastly get a spray tan. You will feel like a whole new person. There are so many options for all different skin tones and you will look glowy and beautiful at your next party, event or Spring Break vacation. I know most of us do these things already, but if you don't maybe try to get out of your comfort zone and see how you feel. These are just a few little ways to make you feel more self-assertive this season. What are some new things you're going to try to make you defy convention? Remember to make a sidewalk your runway and kindness always matters. Bring your sexy back, y'all.

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Flocks of flickers

BY ANN BAILES

There is always something new to learn, and last week I found out something completely unknown to me: Flocks of flickers are a thing.

Most woodpeckers are solitary birds, colored in black, white, and red. I thought flickers, common in the southeast, were solitary also. They're different from most woodpeckers in their striking appearance: beige, grey, and golden, with black touches on their wings, a black arch across the chest, and a red nape. They are also unusual in that they are more often seen on the ground than in trees, foraging for small insects which they dig out with their slightly curved beaks.

(One way to know that a bird which just flew up is a flicker is if it has a bright flash of white on its backside, or "rump" in bird terminology, that is immediately obvious. That's clearcut evidence that the bird is a flicker.)



Photo by Dawn White

In the southeast, if you see a flicker in the air, after you notice that bright white backside you'll then notice that the underwings are a delicate shade of gold. In the western subspecies of flickers, the underwings are shaded red rather than golden. We noticed that difference during our trip to Arizona. The two birds used to be considered separate species due to that wing variation; however, in recent years ornithologists have determined that they are more alike than different genetically, and they are now grouped together.

Last week Mike and I were riding in the golf

cart at the farm, when we came up over a little ridge – and we flushed up a dozen flickers! They were foraging as a large group, and they flew up into the trees together. I've never ever seen anything like that. A little research revealed that yes, flickers do sometimes flock in large groups. They are here year round, but also are migratory, so the group we saw very likely could be traveling

together back further north as spring approaches.

It was quite a sight! That behavior must be unusual, because the general information on the net about flickers doesn't say much about flocking behavior. I had to dig a little deeper to find it out. Flocks of flickers – not common, but out there. There is always something new to learn, about flickers, or just about anything else.

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When talking gardening, it is rare one will hear "I love weeds". Many years ago, I remember someone saying a gardener must figure out their level of tolerance of weeds and plant imperfections. My tolerance is pretty high. Some weeds have pretty flowers. Many serve a beneficial purpose we may not be aware of. And then there's the somewhat lazy way of just living with them rather than fight against them.

Wild violets are one of those plants for me. They are left alone to do whatever they do. Foliage is semi-evergreen, depending on how protected they are in the winter. *Viola sororia* and *Viola papilionacea*, both called common violets, are native. With effort, I might be able to tell which is which, but such details don't matter much. Wild violets are host plants for several butterflies, particularly fritillary. Since they bloom early, many native bees enjoy their nectar. Birds also enjoy them. A neat fact is there are two kinds of flowers on these violets. The purple one, and a small green flower, which is actually its fruit, that do not open and are self-fertile. How can a flower multiply that never opens, or gets pollinated, but yet make a seed? Plant nerd details. They also spread by rhizomes. If you've tried to pull them, you know the knotty root. Leave a piece behind and the labor was for naught. Ants

also spread the seeds as they enjoy the protein coating of the seeds. Shiny green leaves, growing up to about 10 inches tall, make a nice groundcover. They will grow just about anywhere, sun, shade, wet, dry. I've planted some in a home-made hayrack type of container to help cover the metal. It's a slow process but it's working. These pretty little violets have also planted themselves in other containers. Makes for a nice, free, filler. One source states deer tend to pass them by. Not at my place. But if deer are eating the violets, maybe they'll be full before they get to plants I've bought. Another site states farmers have long used wild violets to show high fertility levels in soil. Another benefit, free soil analyzing. Violets also stand up to Yogi's romping inside his fence. There are many health benefits of them for humans too.

Henbit is another weed that is generally allowed to grow as it wants. It is very easy to pull up from places I don't want it to grow. Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) is a wonderful pollinator plant for bees and early butterflies. The flowers are very rich in nectar and are blooming when many plants have not yet started. Even though it pulls up easily, the roots and foliage can form dense mats that help to smother other weeds out and help aerate the soil. Henbit has a long history of medicinal use and is associated with many stories of hope and strength. I have not tested it, but one site said it is nature's kazoo. If you blow on the flower, it will make a bugle like sound, hence a common name fairy horns.

Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*) is often confused with henbit. If one read such a love-

ly sounding botanical name in a nursery, it would surely tempt. In fact, *Lamium* varieties are often sold in nurseries. Spotted deadnettle is one often seen. There are varieties with yellow, pink, or white flowers. To talk out of both sides of my mouth, I would never buy any kind of *Lamium*. They can be quite aggressive and difficult to control. However, in most areas of the yard, deadnettle weed is left alone. It is also welcome inside Yogi's fence. An easy way to tell henbit and deadnettle apart is henbit has skinny stems and dainty flowers in the top. Deadnettle has thick leaves along stems, fuzzy foliage has a maroon tint, and flowers are sort of pink. It is also good for early pollinators.

I tried to strike a balance of waiting to cut



Deadnettle and henbit side by side

the "grass" in the fence. The yard was abuzz with visitors. But I didn't want henbit and deadnettle to spread too much to other areas. Violets are reblooming and have created a pretty purple carpet inside the fence. I love these weeds.



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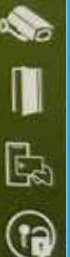


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I know, I know. You're thinking this is just another tall tale concocted by someone with a vivid imagination and too much time on their hands. But if you were ever young like me and remember the first time the big people started talking about the Easter Bunny coming, you had questions. There's a lot for a kid to process in that first year of realizing that even though your house is a safe and secure haven, there are other-worldly beings that have access to you during the night. Did they really think I was



Neal Parnell

going to sleep after telling me The Sandman was coming to close my eyes? How could I rest while my mind raced with thoughts of the Tooth Fairy flying into my room and snatching the bicuspid out from under my pillow? They told me some old man named Santa Claus would come down our chimney every year, and that almost every year since I was one year old a Stork has arrived to leave me a sister. By the time I heard that Jack Frost was coming, I'd stopped sleeping altogether.

There were many questions I had about the Easter Bunny, so I asked the wisest and most trusted person in my life who always told the truth; my Grandmother. She was the one who revealed to me that there wasn't a monster under my bed; it was a trick to keep me in bed till morning. From her, I learned that my teacher didn't have eyes in the back of

her head, that swallowing a watermelon seed wouldn't grow a watermelon in my stomach, and that Mr. Ed couldn't really talk. So when I asked her if the Easter Bunny laid eggs I knew I would get an honest answer. She said that most parents tell their kids that the Easter

Bunny just delivers the eggs but that her Grandmother told her this...

There was once a Greek Goddess of Spring called Eostre, that's where we got the name Easter from. Now her job was to warm the earth and bring it back to life after a long cold Winter. Her favorite animal was the rabbit and she would ride in a carriage pulled by them. She slept underground all Winter and one Spring when it was time to warm things up she just didn't feel like getting out of bed, so she snuggled up and went back to sleep. When she finally woke she was embarrassed that she was two months late with the ground still covered in snow. She climbed into her carriage and her rabbits quickly pulled her across the frozen land and as she passed the

snow melted, flowers started blooming, and the trees sprung green leaves. She spotted a bird with its wings broken and frozen to the ground. She cupped the bird into her hands, warmed it up, and turned it into a rabbit with thick white fur so that it would never be cold again. The rabbit kept just one of its bird traits; it was able to lay eggs and it was so grateful to the Goddess that every Spring it and now all white rabbits lay colorful eggs for the festival of Easter.

This Easter story must be true as it was told to me by my Grandmother whose Grandmother heard it from a deaf policeman, who heard it from a Baptist blind man who saw it all.

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