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May 7-20, 2026

Breaking bread

Building Beloved Community Around the Table

BY BOBBY RETTEW

There's been a lot of work done over the past several years through the Anderson Area Remembrance and Reconciliation Initiative.

Work that hasn't always been easy.

Through the Community Remembrance Project, we have committed ourselves to telling the truth about our past...honoring the lives of five men who were victims of racial terror and lynching here in Anderson County: Reuben Elrod, John Laddison, Willis Jackson, Elbert Harris, and Edward Sullivan.

We've remembered their names.

Through the historical marker placed in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative.



From Left: Bobby Rettew, Courtland Wright, John Wright and Juana Slade

Through the sculpture created by Herman Keith.

Through documentaries produced by students at Anderson University.

Through gatherings, conversations, and moments where we've asked our community to stop...to listen...and to remember.

But at some point, we began to ask a different question.

What comes next?

Because remembrance, while necessary, is not the end of the work.

It's the beginning of it.

And if remembrance calls us to look back with honesty... then reconciliation calls us to move forward with intention.

To sit together.

To listen.

To learn how to be a community that reflects something better.

What Martin Luther King Jr. called the Beloved Community.

Breaking Bread was born out of that question.

There are nights you plan for.

And then there are nights that stay with you.

Monday night felt like the second kind.

SEE BREAD ON PAGE 2

Edward Jones
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Bread

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We gathered at the Anderson Arts Center for the first Breaking Bread conversation... Story of Love. Tables filled. Plates passed. People settled in.

And before anything else happened, we tried to name what the space actually was.

Not an event.

An invitation.

An invitation to sit down.

To listen.

To learn.

To be present with one another in a way that takes intention.

And then Courtland and John Wright began to share.

One of the first questions we asked was simple:

What does family mean to you?

There was no hesitation.

"For me, I think about love and sacrifice," John said.

Courtland nodded along with him, and you could feel it wasn't a rehearsed answer. It was lived.

As they talked about their three boys, they said something that quietly shifted the room:

"They're all three brothers."

Not two and one.

Not adopted and biological.

Just brothers.

And something about that settled into the room.

As the conversation unfolded, it became clear that this night wasn't going to be about definitions.

We had come across words in preparation... biracial, multiracial, transracial adoption... but those terms only took us so far.

Because what mattered wasn't how their family was defined.

It was how it was lived.

At one point, Courtland said something that has stayed with me:

"We don't even feel like we look different... those are just my three sons."

That doesn't ignore reality.

It reframes it.

It makes us dig deeper.

It makes us move from hearing to truly, deeply listening

Later in the conversation, they were just as honest:

"We do see color... we have to."

That tension—between love that feels seamless and a world that is not—is where their story lives.

What struck me most wasn't just their story.

It was how they carried it.

There was humility in it.

A willingness to admit, over and over again,



that they are learning.

Every day.

They talked about the everyday moments... barbershops, sunscreen, conversations with friends... things most of us don't think twice about.

But for them, those moments carry a different weight.

Because they are raising two young Black boys.

And one day, those boys will be men.

At one point, John shared something that shifted the room.

He talked about coming to terms with conversations he never imagined having as a parent.

"I remember thinking... that can't be a real thing," he said.

"And then I realized... it is."

He was reflecting on the moment he understood that one day, he would need to prepare his sons for interactions with law enforcement—something he had never experienced himself.

"I've never had that conversation," he admitted. "And then I realized... you have to."

There was no performance in that moment. Just honesty.

The kind of honesty that comes when love forces you to see the world differently.

But this wasn't a heavy night.

Not in the way people might expect.

There was laughter.

There was joy.

Courtland shared a story about being at a playground when another child asked her son, "How is that your mom?"

And his answer?

"I'm adopted."

Just matter of fact.

No hesitation.

No shame.

Just truth.

And in that moment, it reminded all of us that sometimes kids understand things more clearly than we do.

They don't carry the same assumptions.

They ask.

They learn.

They move forward.

Another moment that stayed with me was how protective they were of their sons' stories.

They were intentional about what they shared—and what they didn't.

Not out of avoidance, but out of respect.

At one point, Courtland said:

"That's their story to tell... when they're ready."

In a world where we often feel entitled to other people's stories, that felt important.

A reminder that listening also means knowing when not to ask.

As the night moved on, the conversation began to shift.

It moved from their story...

to ours.

From understanding...

to responsibility.

Someone asked how we, as a community, could support families like theirs.

John didn't hesitate.

"The fact that you showed up tonight... that matters."

And then he said something I haven't stopped thinking about:

"The majority of people we want in the room... aren't in the room right now."

That could feel discouraging.

But I didn't hear it that way.

I heard it as a call.

Because this work doesn't begin with filling rooms.

It begins with deepening them.

And Monday night... that room got deeper.

As we wrapped up, each table shared a word. A phrase. Something they were carrying forward.

And as those words were spoken out loud, one by one, you could feel it.

Something had shifted.

Not dramatically.

Not all at once.

But meaningfully.

Because when people take the time to sit down, share a meal, and listen to someone else's story... something changes.

Not everything.

But something.

And sometimes...

that's where it begins.

This was the first Breaking Bread conversation.

It won't be the last.

Because remembrance calls us to look back.

But reconciliation calls us to move forward.

And sometimes...

that movement starts with something simple. A table.

A meal.

A conversation.

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YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

Another step in our 'self-care' journey to better health

I love positive people. Their energy is infectious. I find that invariably they are also focused on self-care – and making the best choices when it comes to their health so they can take full advantage of the joys and opportunities life holds.

Then there are those who are at the starting gate -- ready to make a positive change in their lives. Still others are motivated by realities imposed by health issues. Although I've always been about self-care, my focus sharpened when I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease that threatened my dental career.

Fortunately, we live in a time when advancements in medical science offer unprecedented guidance on how we can take better care of ourselves. To keep it simple, it boils down to what we eat, regular exercise, and quality sleep.

In our last feature we touched on how our bodies respond to something as simple as a 30-minute walk. I believe this is such an important motivator for all of us that I want to amplify what happens to your body when you

walk. It truly is medicine for your body -- but most people don't realize how far it goes. Here's more detail on the combination of factors that taken as a whole begin to reveal the true benefits of walking:



Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick

• Cardiovascular health. Walking improves the health of the inner linings of your blood vessels, reducing arterial stiffness and improving blood pressure.

• Blood sugar regulation. As you walk your leg muscles contract taking up glucose from the bloodstream. Walking after meals specifically is highly beneficial.

• Kidney health. Walking can improve the pressure on the kidney's filtering units guarding against kidney disease.

• Liver health. Walking attacks liver fat

which reduces the potential for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), a common disease with few or no symptoms affecting about 25% of adults.

• Joint health improvement. If you believe walking is bad for your joints, specifically the knees, think again. The nourishing fluid inside the cushioning cartilage gets circulated, thus reducing stiffness and breakdown over time.

• Preserves muscle. The number one issue in aging is mobility. Stay coordinated and slow decline by keeping your brain to muscle connection sharp.

• Mental health. Walking fights depression by lowering cortisol, the main stress hormone. Better memory. Sharper thinking.

The overall impact of walking on our health is powerful and well-documented. If you're already on this path of positive living, you know how it feels to get up each morning knowing you're equipped physically and emotionally to embrace the day and get the most from it. Let's

keep the Journey going! Reach out if you have questions or would like to share. Think of us as your hometown resource for guidance and support.

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

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



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A MAN IN A HURRY

BY JOHN DU PRE

There are some introductions that don't make sense until it's too late to ask why they happened at all.

Years ago, I was passing through Anderson, South Carolina, on my way to see family and old friends. Ginny Bailes, newspaper publisher and career English Teacher, force of nature and one of the truest friends a writer can have—was the first friend I decided to visit. When I arrived at her office, I discovered that she'd arranged for me to meet a man named Chris Pracht.

Her explanation was brief. Almost suspiciously so.

"I'm sure you two have plenty to talk about!"

We didn't.

Not really.

We sat across from each other, two men connected only by a place and a past that overlapped just enough to be confusing. I remembered him vaguely from when I was a boy, standing in his father's house while the adults talked in the next room. My father and his father, John Pracht, men bound together by something serious and dangerous. My father was one of the few attorneys in that part of the country willing to take on cases defending Black men who had been railroaded by a justice system that offered them none. John was one of the few men willing to stand beside him.

I didn't understand it then.

But I felt it.

And I remembered Chris.

Not for anything he said to me, but for the way others listened to him. His friends leaned in. Laughed loudly. Watched him closely. Even then, he carried something—momentum, maybe. Urgency.

He seemed to be a young man in a hurry.

I didn't know how true that was.

Years later, I learned the outline of his life. He dropped out of high school. Talked his way into Wofford College without a diploma. Finished in three years. Ran for the South Carolina House of Representatives—and won.

At 22 years of age, Chris Pracht became the youngest member in the history of the state legislature.

A record that still stands.

That had been nearly half a century before Ginny sat us down together.

And still, I didn't understand why.

Until a couple of years later, when the phone rang.

The voice on the other end carried a Southern drawl thick enough to slow time itself—raspier now, a little slower, but carrying the same jocular energy I remembered.

"Well, it's been a helluva long time since we've talked. How ya doin', ol' boy?"

Before I could answer, Chris kept going.

"You know, the world keeps turnin' and

life keeps sending us blessings and challenges and teaching us lessons—and if we're not too damned stubborn, we might learn the lessons we're meant to learn, ya know what I mean?"

He didn't wait for a response to that, either.

"My Lord, I have a few stories to tell from all those years of carryin' on, tryin' to do what I could to help out here and there—to atone for my sins and to make it all better than when I found it, ya know what I mean?"

I didn't bother to respond at that point. I remember thinking the old guy sounded like he'd had one too many and just wanted to bend somebody's ear, like good ol' boys are wont to do.

"What can I do for you, Chris?" I shot back, more abruptly than I intended.

That's when he said it.

"I don't know if Ginny told ya or not, but I'm interested in writin' my life's story. And she said you'd be somebody I should talk to. Hell, she said you'd be the *only* person I should talk to."

There it was.

Clear. Direct. No pretense.

"Somethin' I can leave for posterity."

This was not a casual idea. This was a man, looking back, wanting to make sure his life didn't disappear when he did.

I rallied.

I did what I do. I built the framework. Drafted the overview. Wrote the explainer. Prepared the agreement. I began mapping out a process that would take me from Las Vegas to Camden, South Carolina where we would sit down and begin the work of remembering.

Of shaping a life's story into something that could last.

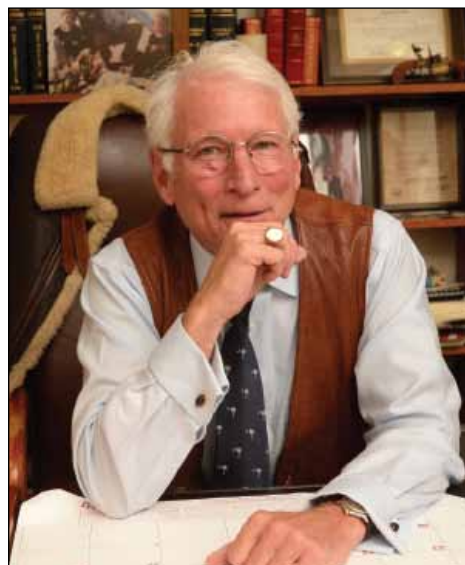
The following month, I had a few days to jot down questions for Chris. I thought I'd rather send them to him via email, but I knew I had to sit with him and conduct the interview as though we were having a conversation. It wasn't what I wanted to do. I knew I'd have to sift through hours of meanderings and reminiscences that would be irrelevant or repetitious, but I needed to hear his voice, sense his energy, and try as best I could to capture it with the written word.

I wasn't eager to spend all those hours in all those sessions, and I sensed Chris would not be able to sit through hours-long interviews. But the man said he wanted to write his life's story, and I felt obliged to help.

More than a month had passed when I called him back.

No answer.

I left a message asking for an email address so I could send an overview of my process—my expectations, what his expectations should be, a possible timeline, along with a work agreement outlining responsibilities, ownership, and publication terms.



CHRIS PRACTH

The following week, I realized I hadn't heard back, so I called again. Left another message. Careful not to sound irritated.

Weeks passed.

Then a voicemail.

It rambled almost incoherently. The voice-to-text transcription made no sense. But when I listened closely, I caught the message underneath it.

"I'm so very sorry, Jon."

He repeated that apology at least five times.

Something about Bloomington. A reunion.

An auctioneering convention. Something about wanting to fly out to Vegas and get started.

"Bullshit, man," I said into the empty room after it ended. "I thought you wanted to write a memoir. I'm wasting my time with this."

At the end of the message, he said again, "I'm truly sorry, Jon. Let's get together on a call when you can."

I decided I'd let Chris call me, just to make sure he was ready to get to work and wouldn't waste more of my time.

Time did what it always does.

It ticked.

Another month went by.

Then, a call came in.

5:54 a.m.

This one—from Ginny.

"Chris Pracht died"

Three words. No punctuation point from the English teacher and newspaper publisher. No explanation.

For a moment, time didn't move at all.

It stopped.

And my mind ran back—over every word, every call, every missed moment, every impatient thought.

Ol' Chris Pracht really was sorry.

More than I could have imagined.

And now, so am I.

Because I misjudged the man. I thought I was the one who was in a hurry—and that he was the one wasting time.

But every day that passed while I sat on my high horse thinking Chris was drifting... was another day he was fighting a cancer in his

blood.

The fevers. The fatigue. The swelling. The pain in the marrow of his bones.

Chris wasn't wasting time.

He was running out of it.

Now there is no manuscript. No recorded voice. No long afternoons spent pulling stories from memory and shaping them into something that could outlive him.

There is only this:

A man who lived fast. Who pushed forward. Who refused to wait for permission. Who made things happen—improbably, relentlessly, fiercely. A man who made a few mistakes along the way and wanted nothing more than to apologize for them.

And another man—me—who slowed down at exactly the wrong time.

I keep thinking about that first meeting. About Ginny's words.

"I'm sure you two have plenty to talk about!" Maybe she saw it before either of us did.

Maybe she understood something I didn't—that time had already started narrowing, that the window was already smaller than it looked.

Maybe she was giving us a chance.

The lesson here is not subtle.

When someone tells you they want to tell their story—listen as if time is already running out.

Because it is.

When someone reaches out—act.

Not when it's convenient. Not when the schedule clears. Not when the plan is perfect.

Now.

Because the space between intention and action is where things disappear.

Lives. Stories. Voices.

People.

Ol' Chris Pracht was a man in a hurry.

I should have been, too.

~~~~~  
Jon Du Pre is a former Andersonian, author of *The Prodigal Father* and a 40 year career journalist. He is a 7 time Emmy Award Winner and 21 time Associated Press Award Winner, an Amazon.com Bestselling Author currently completing *The Evolution of Eva: A Holocaust Survivor's New War*. Jon is Dad to Kasey, Jessie and Jonny and Grandpa to eight.

~~~~~  
Chris Pracht (November 4, 1954 – April 20, 2026) served in South Carolina House of Representatives and had a lifelong profession as an auctioneer. He served as president of the SC Auctioneers Association and was inducted into SC Auctioneers Hall of Fame. Chris served as treasurer of the National Auctioneers Association and was the first chairman of the NAA Education Institute Trustees.

He was named the South Carolina bid calling champion. Collaborating among close friends and colleagues in creating MarkNet Alliance, an international Auction Franchise.

Chris was Father to his son Christopher and Grandfather to three.

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How to choose the right pediatrician for your family

Choosing a pediatrician is one of the first important health care decisions parents make. Your child's pediatrician will help guide their care from infancy through adolescence — from routine checkups and vaccinations to illnesses, injuries and developmental milestones.

The experts at AnMed Pediatrics - Piedmont have advice.

Start your search early

Dr. Anna Neal suggests expectant parents begin looking for a pediatrician during the third trimester of pregnancy so they'll have time to explore options and feel confident in their choice before their baby arrives.

Newborns are typically seen within a few days after leaving the hospital, making it important to have a doctor selected ahead of time.

Look for someone who inspires trust

Dr. Kyle Torni recommends parents find a pediatrician who listens, communicates

clearly and inspires trust.

"A pediatrician should feel like a teammate — someone who helps guide your child and your family through the ups and downs of childhood," he said.

Consider location and convenience

Convenience can

play a key role in choosing a pediatrician, especially when children need to be seen quickly. Dr. Neal recommends starting with practical considerations like location, insurance and availability.

Meet the doctor if possible

Some pediatric practices offer prenatal visits, giving parents an opportunity to meet providers before their baby arrives. Dr. Torni said these visits can help families feel more prepared.

"Ask anything that helps you understand your pediatrician's approach and how it aligns with your family's values," he said.

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MRS. ERSKINE

In life, people talk a lot about family. And every now and then, someone comes along who quietly redefines what that word really means.

For me, that person was my mother-in-law, Margaret Erskine. My children called her Nanny, her grandsons called her Peggy or PegPeg but I always called her Mrs. Erskine. I think I just always felt she deserved that respect from me. She never asked me to call her anything else but most likely because she didn't want to change what made me comfortable.

Mothers-in-law don't always get the best rap, but she never fit that mold. Not even close. She was kindness in its purest form. The kind of person you don't just appreciate, you study, hoping that maybe, over time, you might learn to be a little more like her.

She was the only grandparent my three daughters ever knew. And somehow, she made that feel like more than enough. She was there the day each of them entered this world, and from that moment on, she made it her mission to ensure they never doubted how deeply they were loved. To them, she wasn't just a grandmother; she was a constant, a comfort, and a source of joy that never ran dry. And honestly, she was that for me, too.

During those busy, often overwhelming

years of raising young children, she was always there. Not occasionally. Not when it was convenient. Always. Whether it was helping in the kitchen, folding laundry, or stepping in to care for the girls, she showed up without hesitation and without expectation. Looking back, I realize just how rare that kind of steady presence really is.

But what I carry with me most aren't just the things she did. It's what she taught me.

Not through lectures or criticism, but through quiet, gentle wisdom.

I remember rushing around the house when the girls were young, scrubbing floors, washing windows, cleaning bathrooms, etc, determined to keep everything spotless, convinced that somehow a perfectly clean home meant I was doing things "right." She reached for my hand one day, and said something I've never forgotten:

"Your children aren't going to remember how clean the house was. They're going to remember the time you spent with them."

It stopped me in my tracks. And she was right, and she was so very often.

When I worried about whether the girls were dressed just right for school, she would smile and remind me, "What difference does it make? As long as they're happy." If they wanted to wear mismatched outfits and



scuffed-up tennis shoes or didn't brush their hair, she didn't see a problem, she saw children being themselves. She was right.

In her kitchen, rules were even looser. Flour-covered counters, spilled ingredients, sticky hands were all part of the experience. She used to say a messy kitchen was a sign of happiness and creativity. And she meant it. She welcomed the chaos if it meant the girls were learning, laughing, and trying something new. No matter how those handmade biscuits turned out, too hard, too soft, or completely uneven, she praised them like they were perfect.

Because to her, the joy mattered more than the outcome.

She was also happy to assist in helping the girls have fun and create chaos in a room. Many times when my girls were at her house after spending the night, I would show up to get them and walk into what looked like her linen closet had exploded in the den. When staying overnight she would drag mattresses from a bedroom and put them on the floor in the den. She would add lots of pillows and blankets to ensure that each of the girls were as comfortable as possible. And in her fashion, she would join them on the floor and sleep on their makeshift camp, creating even more happiness for them...and for herself. In those mornings, she took breakfast orders

from each child and served their breakfast to them on the makeshift beds, with all the love she could muster. They have never forgotten that. They can still feel that love from her. So can I.

One of my girls once scribbled on a full-length mirror in her home, leaving little fingerprints, smudges, and marker streaks behind. Weeks went by, and the mirror stayed just as it was. When I offered to clean it, she simply smiled and said she didn't want it wiped away.

"I'd rather look at their little hand prints than a clean mirror," she told me.

To her, those marks weren't mess, they were parts of her grandchildren.

I have fallen very short of the kind of mother and grandmother she was. She set a standard that's hard to reach. But I've come to realize that maybe that's not the point.

Because she didn't just leave behind just memories, she left life lessons. The kind that settles into your being and stays there, quietly shaping the way you see things.

And in those small, everyday moments when I choose time over perfection, laughter over order, and love over everything else, I see a little bit of her living on.

There will never be another Margaret Erskine.

And how lucky we all were to have her.

She was also happy to assist in helping the girls have fun and create chaos in a room. Many times when my girls were at her house after spending the night, I would show up to get them and walk into what looked like her linen closet had exploded in the den. When staying overnight she would drag mattresses from a bedroom and put them on the floor in the den. She would add lots of pillows and blankets to ensure that each of the girls were as comfortable as possible.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to SC Statutory Law, personal property from the following units will be sold on May 25, 2026, at 11 am at Speedy Storage, 4350 Highway 24, Anderson, SC 29626.

M. Powell
Units: #23, #74, #83

Units appear to have the following items:
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Calling all grandmas!

It's not like I didn't know there would eventually be a baby. Eight months ago, we were so excited when our daughter and son-in-law called to tell us they were expecting our first grandchild. I saw Elizabeth



Kim von Keller

through nausea, a car accident, sciatica, a blood-clot scare, and a curious craving for Fruity Pebbles. Her due date is still a month away, but a doctor's appointment this week suggests it might only be two weeks. I thought I was

ready, but I still have some grandparenting questions. I'd love for you to share your thoughts, and I'll even use them in a future column to help other anxious grandparents like me.

Number one: Our daughter would like us to be at the hospital when she delivers the baby. When Elizabeth was born, her grandparents drove from Anderson as soon as we told them my contractions had started, and they arrived without even a toothbrush. What did you take to the hospital when your grandchildren were born?

Number two: How did you support the new family when they came home from the hospital? Ted and I are prepared to stay with Elizabeth and Zach in their home until they tell us to leave. We can cook, clean, and keep the house in order, but what did your children find most helpful?

Number three: My parents stayed with us for a week after Elizabeth was born, and I remember the panic I experienced when they drove back to Anderson and Ted went back to work and I was home alone with a new baby and a mild case of postpartum

depression. What are the signs that new parents might be struggling? Once Ted and I go back to our own house, how can we be supportive without being intrusive?

Number four: I have a chest freezer with a lot of storage space, and I'm not afraid to use it. What kinds of freezer meals did your children enjoy?

Number five: How do you give advice? I'm not usually one to offer unsolicited opinions, but new parents don't know what they don't know. If it becomes necessary, how do you gently and tactfully suggest that new parents do things differently? And if gentleness and tactfulness don't work, what next?

Number five: What will we need to have in our own home to make it easier when Elizabeth, Zach, and their baby come to visit? What did you do in your homes to make visits as comfortable as possible for a

new family? Crib or Pack 'n' Play? Changing table or changing pad? Diaper Genie or a whole lot of grocery-store plastic bags?

Number 6: Are there any books that have helped you as a grandparent? What would you recommend?

At this point, it's needless to say that I am a chronic overthinker. Ted and I had decent parental instincts, so I'm hopeful that there's such a thing as grandparent instincts. What I know for sure, though, is that the knowledge of a village always makes things easier.

So if you have answers to any of my questions, you can reach me at editkim50@gmail.com. Using the subject line "Grandma to the Rescue," please respond by May 14 with your name as you'd like it to appear in a future column in the Electric City News. Whether you're a Grammy or a Glammy, a Mimi or a Mee-Maw, I'm counting on you, Grandmas!



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TANGLED UP IN BLUE

Let's go back to say, 1975. You're an Anderson mother trying to get yourself and everyone ready for church when you see that you have just pulled a long run in the only pair of pantyhose



Neal Parnell

you have. This would not be a problem now, but in 1975, South Carolina had "BLUE LAWS" and many things could not be purchased until after 1 pm on Sunday, and some things could not be purchased at all until Monday.

Pantyhose was one of those things, and many a mother had a hard time keeping the Sabbath as holy as the blue laws were designed to keep it. You could go to church on Sunday, but you couldn't buy an outfit or any clothing to wear on that day.

It was pretty wild to say the least. You could buy a newspaper on Sunday, but not a magazine. You could buy milk, but not a glass to drink it from. You could buy canned food, but not a can opener. You could not buy toys, games, sporting goods, radios, televisions, or electronics at any time on Sunday. If it was Fun, it was forbidden.

If you wanted to have a beer or a cocktail on Sunday, you had two choices. You could stock up before midnight on Saturday, or you could take your chances by getting it from a bootlegger on Sunday. The bootleggers were people who would buy cases of beer and liquor at regular prices and sell them at three times the price on Sunday. Of course, this was illegal, and buyer and seller were subject to heavy fines and jail if discovered. I'm fairly certain there was a dark backroom somewhere



in the bowels of Anderson where a secret knock and password would allow you access to pantyhose on Sundays.

There are stories of arguments with cashiers and store owners over what could be bought on Sunday and what could not. One is of a Sunday shopper who came into K-Mart for some pancake mix, which was allowed; he also grabbed a spatula. A short conversation followed...

"You can't buy that spatula on Sunday, sir".

"You mean we can eat pancakes on

Sunday, we just can't flip 'em?"

"Not legally, sir."

Then there was the guy whose truck stopped running on the way to church. He lifted the hood and grabbed his toolbox as a policeman pulled beside him and said, "You can't work on Sunday". "What'll I do, officer?" "You can have it towed, or I'll have it towed". The perplexed man says, "So I can't fix it, but I can pay to move the problem somewhere else?" "That's the Law, Sir."

Nowadays, people stock up for hurricanes and snowstorms; in the 70's, we stocked up for Sunday. Don't worry, they made sure you could have your pipe, cigar, and cigarettes; you just couldn't buy a lighter. The inside of some store aisles were blocked with yellow tape, the shelves were covered in plastic, and you'd have thought a horrific crime had taken place except for the fact that it was just Sunday and you weren't allowed to buy a doll or a baseball for your kids.

It doesn't take much thought to see that Blue Laws were designed to make money for the churches and the governments, while squeezing the moral law-abiding citizen to the brink of existence.

The Blue Laws have been relaxed over the years, but keep your eyes open and always have a backup spatula.

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Lost landmarks: Remembering Anderson County's covered bridges

BY RICH OTTER

It was not possible in the early days to travel very far in South Carolina without encountering an impediment—a stream or river. If the water was low enough, it could be forded, but that would be difficult with belongings if not on a horse. They could possibly be carried, dragged or floated in some way, but there were certainly limitations. Travelers couldn't carry a boat around wherever they were going.

At commonly used crossings not easily forded, entrepreneurs eventually provided crude ferries for a fee, but bridges were needed. The primary material available in the early days for such a structure was wood. Building a bridge took time and labor. A problem with a wooden bridge was that, in most weather situations, the bridge would only last about ten or possibly twenty years.

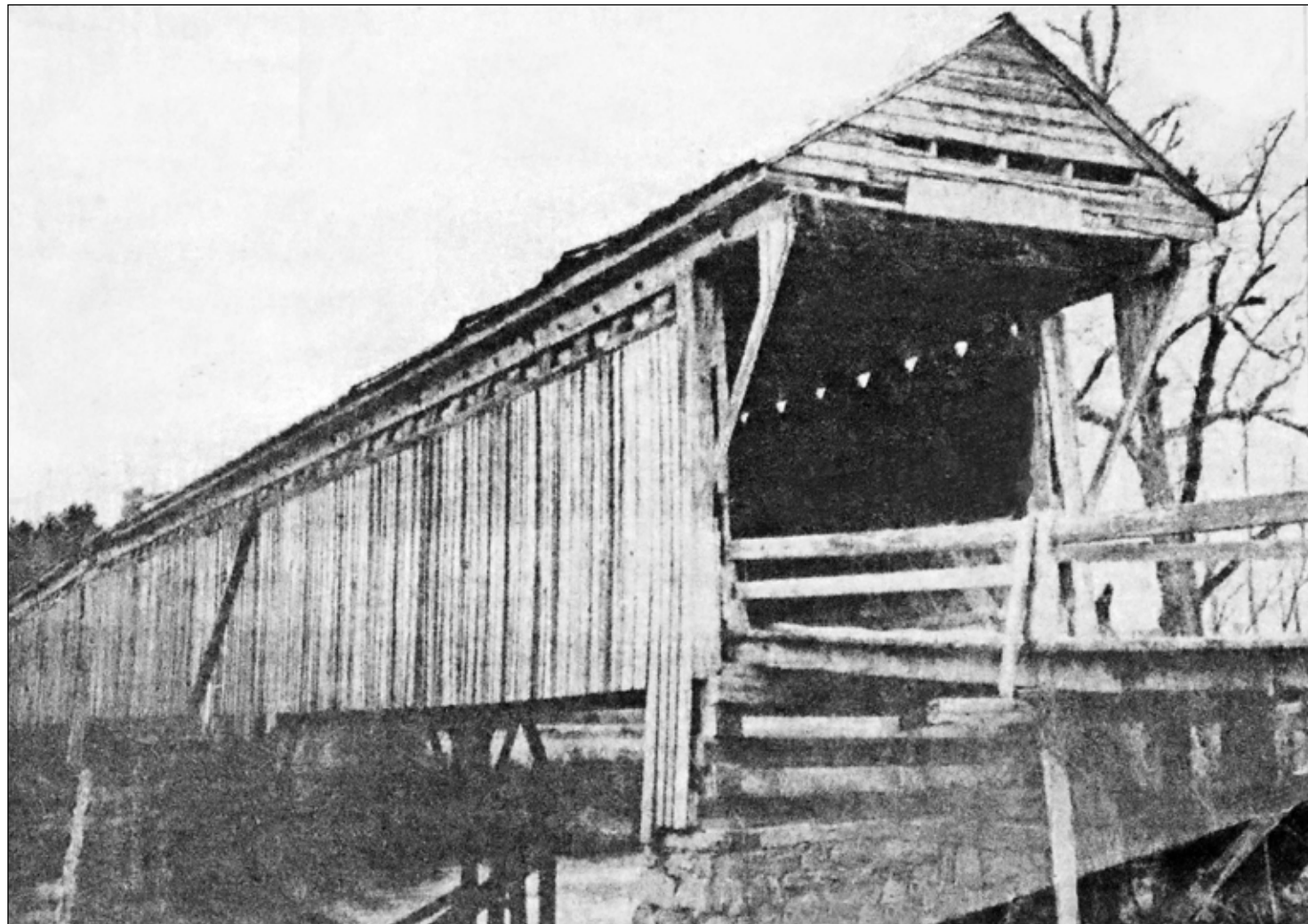
Considering the work involved, that was just not economical. Interestingly, however, the solution to the problem was to add more wood. If the problem was that wood deteriorated, why would adding more wood solve the problem? That appeared counterintuitive.

The solution was a covered bridge. A roof would shed rain and snow. It helped prevent decay of the platform underneath, and considerably extended the lifespan of the bridge. In fact, it could double the life of the structure. There was still danger from wind and flooding, but the entire bridge became more stable by adding the sides and roof. When damage occurred to the roof, sides, or internal structure, repairs could be made to extend the lifespan even further.

If necessary, the bridge could offer shelter for a traveler when weather suddenly turned. Livestock and horses going through the shelter would not be subject to the danger of fording a waterway and would not be easily spooked by being on an open bridge with water thundering past below.

The covered bridge was not just safer for children, it offered a mysterious tunnel to pass through. It became an exciting adventure.

The first covered bridge is attributed to having been constructed across the Schuylkill River in 1805 near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It has been replaced now by the Schuylkill Expressway (generally known to locals as the Surekill Expressway for reasons other than its history as a covered bridge).



Unfortunately, there are no known remaining covered bridges in Anderson County although there were several here with possibly one or two remaining in memory of some Anderson County residents, such as over Wilson Creek in the Iva area.

The Knox Covered Bridge, constructed in 1854, was a connection between Georgia and South Carolina in Oconee County over the Tugaloo River. It was claimed to have been the longest covered bridge in South Carolina at the time. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire in the 1950s. One tale was that kids would hide in the upper rafters at night making ghostly noises to startle those passing through.

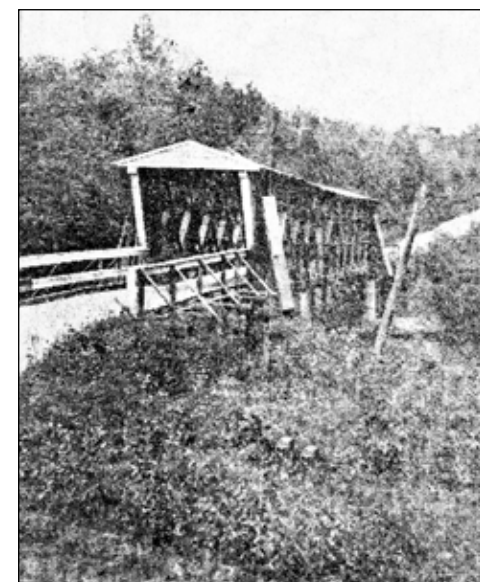
The only known surviving covered bridge in South Carolina is in Greenville County—Cambell's Covered Bridge. It is maintained

by the county's recreation department. The bridge was said to have been constructed between 1909 and 1911 and underwent major restorations in 1964 and 1990. It is 35 feet long and 12 feet wide, spanning Beaverdam Creek. It is painted a bright red. It is not known if it was originally painted.

Bridges over small creeks were often built by local residents, not engineers. No problem, locals had acquired requisite experience building outhouses.

Some covered bridges, although closed to modern traffic, are still found throughout the United States. Many are prevalent in the New England area.

Covered bridges were revered for their beauty and nostalgia. People would travel from miles around just to visit them. They often provided a peaceful location for a picnic.



RIGHT ON QUEUE

We hadn't seen any rose-breasted grosbeaks for three years. They come through our area annually during the last two weeks of April, but they just weren't choosing our yard.



Ann K. Bailes

Last year, many people both online and here in town were reporting these strikingly-colored birds at their feeders. . . but not us. I felt a little left out of the party.

This past Sunday morning, Mike glanced out the picture window in our kitchen and

said "Come! Rose-breasted grosbeak!" Sure enough, though the lighting was bad, and rain was falling – we could faintly see that a male grosbeak was tanking up on our sunflower seeds.

And since then, we've had a veritable caravan of them in our yard. A procession. A convoy. A queue. We saw a total of ten throughout that Sunday, April 26. After returning from church, we saw three males at one time! They kept coming all day long, and

have continued all week. I am turning this article into the paper a week before the May 7 publication, and as of now we have seen at least 36 males and 10 females. And that's with us being away from home the greater part of several days. Who knows how many we might have seen had we been able to do nothing but watch for them.

(Speaking of the word "queue," have you ever thought about the fact that that word consists of the letter Q followed by four silent vowels? Let that mess with your mind a little. But I digress.)

Rose-breasted grosbeaks winter in Central America and the northern part of South America. They breed in the northeastern states of the USA and across both eastern and western Canada. Males and females look very different in breeding season – the females are brown, but the males almost look like they're wearing tuxedos, stark black and white, with those bright pink triangles below their heads substituting for ascots. In the autumn, the males lose the tuxedo coloration and look more like the females.

The males migrate first, arriving in the



northern forests to set up breeding territories. The females travel a little later, into mid-May, which explains why we've seen so many more males than females right now.

If one of these birds flies up into the trees right by our house, we know that it will probably return for more seeds. However, when they fly across our yard and into the neighbor's tall oak trees, they are pointed in the right direction, and I know they're probably headed onward to the northeast and their

destination.

Grosbeak migration is a little like azalea-blooming season – a brief and colorful event that is spectacular but then finished for another year. And this time we finally got to take part in it once again. In the future, keep sunflower seeds loaded into your feeders and watch carefully. Maybe next year in the last two weeks of April we can all enjoy the rose-breasted grosbeaks on their way through – right on "queue"!

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Saturday, May 9th
2211 North Main St. • Anderson

Walk Start: 9am

Please arrive at 8:30am to prepare a special dedication bib in honor of your loved one.

We are honored to host our second annual **Walk of Remembrance!** This meaningful event offers a supportive environment where individuals and families can come together, share stories, and find comfort in knowing they are not alone in their grief. Open to all, this is a space for reflection, support, and shared healing.

Take part in a peaceful, one-mile walk at your own pace, enjoy fun activities, and gather over complimentary coffee and light refreshments.

This event is not a fundraiser but a gentle opportunity to walk alongside others who understand the journey of grief – reminding us that while loss is deeply personal, we never have to face it alone.

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Participants may register the day of the event by signing up at the assembly station.



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OBITUARY

SARAH ELIZABETH BOWEN GIBSON

Sara Elizabeth Bowen Gibson, 96, passed away Saturday, May 2, 2026, at her home in Anderson.

Born in Greenville, she was the daughter of the late J.L. and Hassie Hubbard Bowen.



Sara was a graduate of Anderson College. She was a retired decorator at Maynards with 20 years of service. Sara was a master gardener and enjoyed her Bridge Clubs. She was a member of the Anderson Country Club

and Trinity United Methodist Church, where she served on various committees.

Survivors include her son, Reggie Gibson

(Maryellen); daughter, Julie Gibson Orr (fiancé, Joey Lee); grandchildren, Emma Abigail Gibson (Ian Kordonis), Sara Margaret Gibson, and Savannah Powell; and a brother, Jack Bowen.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a son, Mark Gibson; former husband, Emmett Lee Gibson, Jr.; brother, Ray Bowen; and a sister, Sue Reardon.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, May 11, at Trinity United Methodist Church, conducted by Rev. Roy Mitchell and Jack Bowen. The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. Monday at the church prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to The Salvation Army, 112 Tolly Street, Anderson, SC 29624.

AU wins National Cyber League tournament

ANDERSON – Against more than 1,000 teams nationwide, Anderson University won the national championship following a remarkable performance at the National Cyber League (NCL) Team Competition last weekend.

Anderson University was among more than 500 colleges and universities competing in the 56-hour event. During the final team challenge, AU's Cyber League team achieved a perfect score and accuracy to claim the national title.

The NCL Team Competition is a biannual cybersecurity event for college students across the United States and is among the most recognized competitions in cybersecurity education. Often compared to the Olympics for cybersecurity students, teams solve digital puzzles and defend against simulated virtual threats.

Dr. Brandon P. Grech, director of the Anderson University Center for Cybersecurity and team coach, emphasized

the collaborative effort behind the win.

"We are extremely proud of our cybersecurity students," Grech said. "They have been persistent and intentional in their personal, professional and spiritual growth at Anderson. This achievement reflects the collective effort of students, faculty and staff across AU."

The Anderson University Center for Cybersecurity became one of the first private higher education cybersecurity programs in South Carolina in 2020, offering degrees in multiple related fields.

Since then, AU's Cyber League team has made its mark nationally and is currently ranked No. 5 in the country, according to NCL Power Rankings. The team has appeared in national rankings since the program began in 2020.

The national championship team includes Aaron McCurry, Camden Sloan, Joshua Cordeiro, Kyle Beaugard, Charlie Paddock, Zachary Lee and Noah Perricelli



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August 8, 10:00 am
Pete the Cat is
Too Cool for School
by James and Kim Dean

September 12, 10:00 am
Sneeze, Big Bear, Sneeze
by Maureen Wright

Championship culture drives Hanna golf success

Let's state the obvious: Winning a high school state championship is a big deal.

Now consider this: the T.L. Hanna boys golf team has won three consecutive state titles, and the girls' golf team has won two in a row.

It's unique and impressive.

The boys' team, coached by Eric Bona, could win its fourth consecutive state title in May.



Brian Hodges

Sports cliches are out of control, but these golf teams are setting a pretty high standard.

"I've got hard-working kids and coaches putting this thing together," said Bona, now in his fourth year as head coach. "(Assistants) Matt Harbin and Michael Ross Collins are excellent."

Hanna girls coach Gabby Kitts appreciates her golfers. The girls compete in the fall, and the team got their state title rings in April.

"We are very fortunate," Kitts said. "We have good families in the area. For a public high school, we've got talented players who are good students, too."

The Hanna girls won the title in the fall by 12 shots after trailing by 5 shots going into the second round.

"Conditions were cold and wet and we toughed it out," Kitts said.

The Hanna boys' team has been a powerhouse this year. On May 4, the Hanna boys won the Upper State championship with a 10-shot victory. They had a 7-under-par 281 total at Star Fort Golf Course in Ninety-Six, S.C. The state tournament is set for May 11-12 at Coastal Carolina.

Coach Bona is pretty hopeful.

"I like our chances," he said.

He should. Hanna has a deep and talented squad. Erik Erlenkeuser is a senior and was the individual champion in the S.C. state tournament last spring.

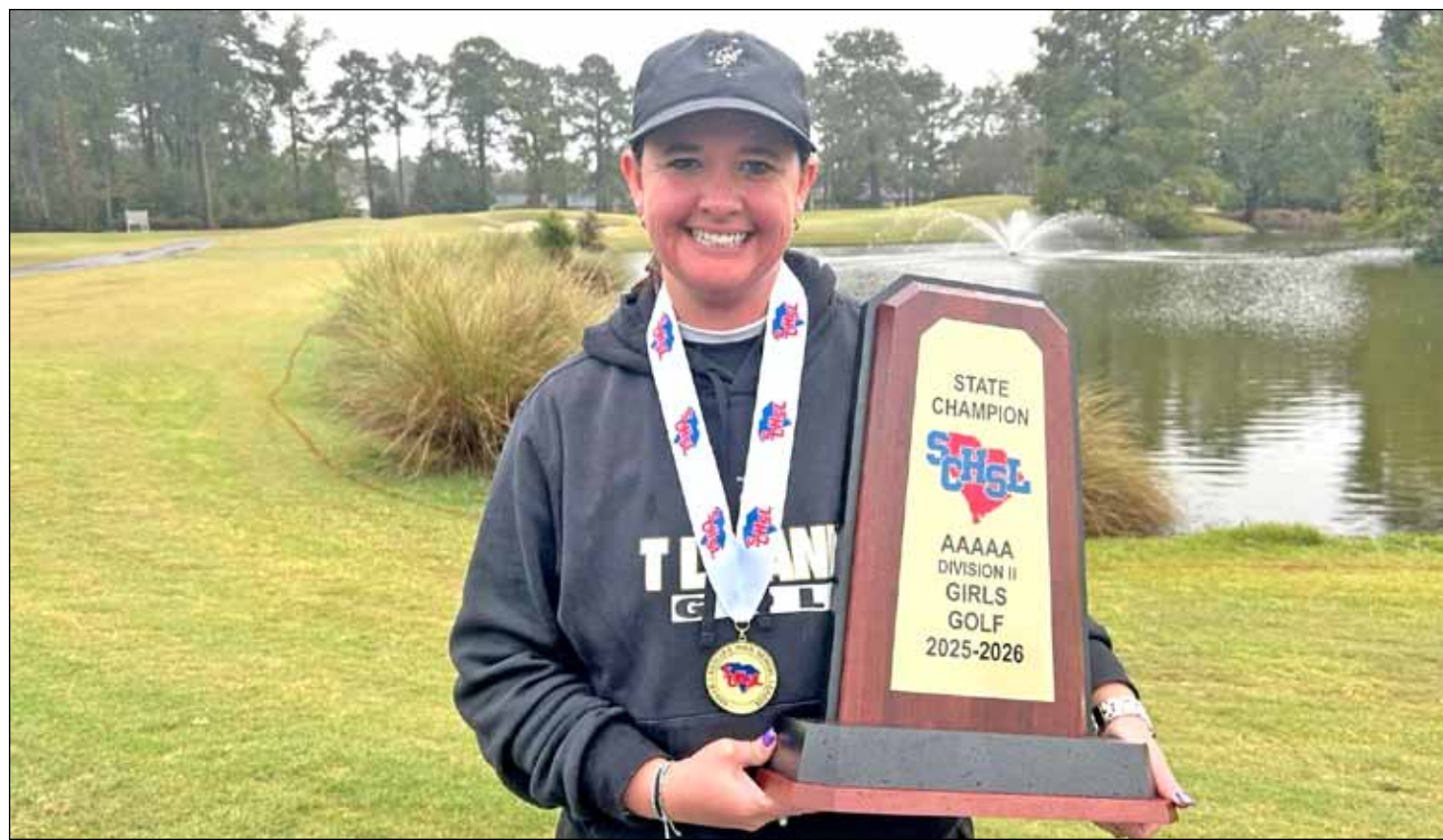
Bennett Scaletta is an outstanding junior, a Clemson commit and he plays either at No. 1 or No. 2. Cal Harbin is a senior and is just as good as the other two.

"My top three guys could all play at No. 1," Bona said. "Our roster is pretty strong."

Scaletta's sister, Marissa Scaletta, is graduating but was sensational for the Hanna girls. She was the 5A Division II individual state champion last fall.

She's also a commit to Western Carolina next season.

"She obviously comes from a talented family," girls coach Kitts said. "She was a late bloomer to the sport, but she's always been super competitive. As a youngster, she had been good in gymnastics and Crossfit."



Above: T.L. Hanna girls golf coach Gabby Kitts holds up the 2025-2026 Class 5A-D2 state championship trophy. Right: T.L. Hanna boys golf coach Eric Bona is looking to lead his team to a fourth consecutive state title this season.

Returning for the girls in the fall are senior Serra Erlenkeuser, junior Sierra Schulze, sophomore Hanna Erlenkeuser and Hayden Bell.

Bennett Scaletta was named the Jay Haas boys player of the year and Marissa was voted the Beth Daniel girls player of the year. Bennett and Marissa became just the third brother/sister combo to win a state championship individually in S.C. high school golf history.

If you dig a little deeper, the Scaletta family also includes Jackson, who was a leader on the Hanna boys' team before graduating two years ago. He now plays golf at the Air Force Academy.

"I really appreciated Jackson," Bona said. "He was the glue at the time. He made sure our golfers had high standards. He helped organize practices. I made sure to thank him before he graduated."

Bona is from Royston, Ga., and initially came to Hanna as a football assistant on Jeff Herron's staff.

"My wife got her dream job at Clemson University and that's a better reason why we moved here," Bona said with a laugh.



Swimsuit shopping without the spiral

I can't believe it's already warm weather season. I feel like it was just February last week, but I'll take it. Swimwear can be complicated, but today were going to make it fabulous. For starters try to go in with a good attitude. If you need a new swimsuit and you have to go try one on, this helpful tip makes me feel more secure about myself. Getting a spray tan, just to make me look glowy and alive. That bold overhead lighting in the dressing room needs to be outlawed and can make you feel depleted and depressed. Don't let it because it's not real. If you have a cute boutique option that sells your favorite swimwear, go with that one. Their lighting is worth the price tag. In all sincerity, I have found that having a bit of a color makes me feel less apprehensive and boosts my confidence. You can even do it at home. Get your favorite tanning foam and put it on with a brush or a glove in the comfort of your living room.



Kristine March

Another good lesson is to pick out swimsuits that you will feel comfortable, whether it be a miracle suit that has the ruched panel around the abdomen or it can even have a sleeve on it if you're not into showing your arms. I like to put cute little kimonos on top of my swimsuit. Let's face it, I'm 41 now and I don't feel as comfortable as I did at 21. Flowy and relaxed is key. Now for the fun part, there's so many different designs on swimwear that I really love this year. You know I always like to go for the splurge, and then for the bargain. Here are two of my faves. The splurge is a bathing suit by Alice and Olivia. She is a really cosmic fashion designer. She caters to the modern hippie. Her halter one piece with palms is really luxe for your next vacation. She has designed and made a collaboration with PQ and their pieces can take you from the poolside to the party or from the resort straight to the restaurant. Her pieces are feminine and make your silhouette look lovely. So, check her out. My bargain pick is by Free People and I'm obsessed with the Amber printed lorex one piece. It's just enough coverage and you could even wear

it as a body suit. I love a good two in one option. I also love their Judy swim skort. Perfect for the beach. For cover ups and kimonos I usually just get those from Amazon because I'm rough on my swim kimonos. I don't like expensive ones because they just get ruined with sand, chlorinated water and sunscreen. I also love their Kaftan options. They're so affordable and comfortable to wear after a long day out in the sun. Their selections are endless. You are bound to find something you like with all of their prints, patterns, colors and for every shape and size. Remember to wear a good sunscreen so you don't get burned because there's nothing more miserable than a terrible sunburn. My favorite sunscreen at the moment is The Super Goop Play Everyday Lotion. it doesn't leave that frustrating white cast on your skin. I also love Vacation Orange Gelée that pays homage to the 80's and 90's Ban de Soleil. I can still smell the original. This is actually almost identical. Highly recommend. All of these are actually making me want to go swimsuit shopping. What about you? Remember that all bodies are good bodies! Confidence is key,



and kindness always matters. So that being said, make the diving board your runway, and have a great pool day y'all!

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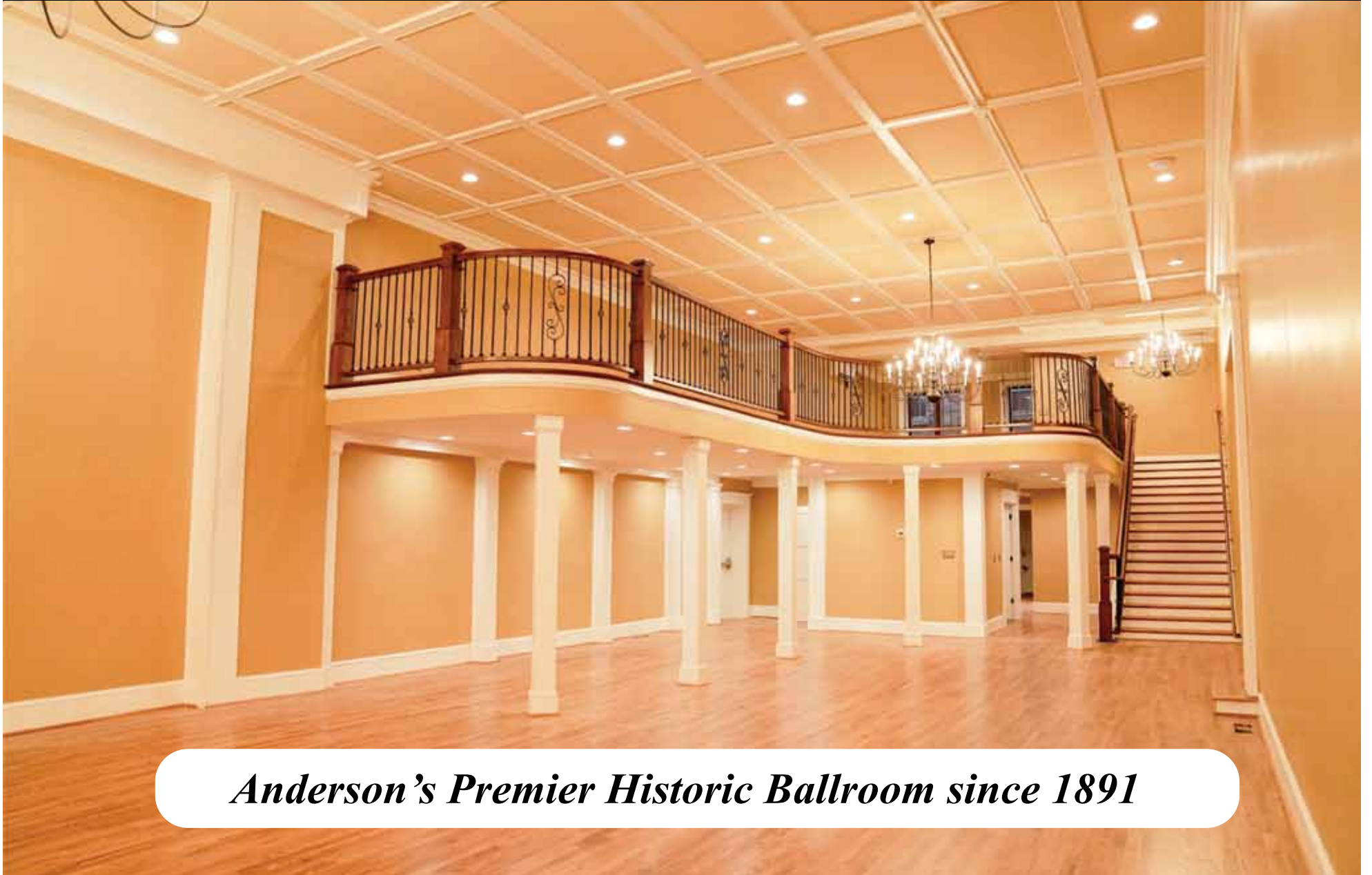
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NAVIGATING END OF THE YEAR STRESS



**MARY-
CATHERINE
McCLAIN
RINER**

As the school year winds down, many families expect relief. Yet the final stretch often brings a different kind of stress for both students and parents. Exams, final projects, shifting routines, and the anticipation of change can create pressure that feels surprisingly intense. With a thoughtful approach, this transition can become more manageable.

Why the End of the Year Feels Stressful

For students, stress is often a combination of academic pressure and emotional weight. Final assessments feel high-stakes, and everything seems to be due at once. At the same time, students are processing endings. For example, saying goodbye to teachers, classmates, and routines. Even

positive changes, like moving up a grade or graduating, can trigger anxiety because they involve uncertainty.

Parents experience their own version of this pressure. There's often a push to help children "finish strong," while also managing fatigue from a long year. Planning for summer adds another layer, making this time feel especially full.

Practical Strategies for Students

- Focus on progress, not perfection. Encourage effort and completion rather than flawless performance.
 - Break tasks into smaller steps. Divide large assignments into manageable pieces with clear goals.
 - Create a simple routine. Maintain a loose structure for homework, studying, and downtime.
 - Use short, focused work periods. Try 25–45-minute study blocks with breaks.
 - Prioritize sleep. Rest improves memory, focus, and emotional regulation.
- Ways Parents Can Support

- Shift expectations. Aim for steady effort and emotional balance rather than perfection.
- Watch for stress signals. Irritability or avoidance may signal overwhelm.
- Keep communication open. Ask low-pressure questions and listen.
- Model calm and flexibility. Your response shapes your child's response.
- Help prioritize. Identify what tasks need the most attention.

Emotional Support Matters Too

- End-of-year stress is not just about academics. Students may experience relief, sadness, excitement, and anxiety all at once. Creating space to acknowledge these feelings helps them process the transition in a healthy way.
- Normalize stress: Acknowledge that it makes sense to feel overwhelmed.
 - Encourage reflection: Ask what they are most proud of this year.
 - Celebrate effort, not just results.
- Simple Reset Strategies for Tough Days
- Take a 10–15-minute walk or move-

ment break.

- Step away from screens to reset focus.
- Do one small task to build momentum.
- Write down everything that feels overwhelming (brain dump).

Ending the Year with Intention

Rather than treating the end of the school year as a race to the finish, families can reframe it as a transition. Taking time to reflect on growth, acknowledge challenges, and celebrate effort helps students close the year with a sense of accomplishment. With realistic expectations, steady routines, and attention to both emotional and academic needs, this season can feel less overwhelming—and more like a meaningful step forward rather than just a stressful finish line.

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.

FROM THE SHELF

On essay and 'thought' collections

If you've been following my own "essay and thought collections" (this column) you know I'm not the biggest nonfiction reader. If you're new here, you might be confused,



Sara Leady

since I've been reviewing more nonfiction recently. Currently I am vibing with essays, and what I'm defining as "thought" collections. I think in the past month I've read five, though two of those were the same book (it deserved a second read—maybe even a third).

Considering the only Ann Patchett I generally like is her essay collections, I shouldn't be surprised by this, but I am.

"Essay" and/or "thought" collections are basically what it sounds like, but are also slightly different and/or expansive. A lot of these books are combinations of what you'd think of as a traditional essay, but also like a blog post (hence the 'thought' element). We'll call them 'short-form memoirs' with a

sprinkling of philosophy. The entries can be anywhere from two-pages long to upwards of twenty. Some are stories, others are well-researched opinions, and some are just delightful and ridiculous bags of letters.

On the essay wave I'm riding I have discovered Samantha Irby and what a joy she's been. Irby got her start as a blogger, but now she also writes books, TV scripts, and various articles. I'd seen her books before and between the titles and covers, she's been on my list for forever. Quietly Hostile, which features a hissing ragey skunk on the cover, spoke to my snarky feral heart, thus selling me on reading all her books. Irby is hilarious, but she's also incredibly real. As a woman who has Crohn's, chronic pain, and mental health challenges, she lets the reader behind the curtain to her chaos through her vignettes on life and her opinions. Her blog legit got optioned for TV, so you know her books serve the good stuff (even if it never made it past pilot).

My double-read (maybe soon to be triple), was Jenny Lawson's latest, How to be Okay When Nothing is Okay: tips and tricks that

kept me alive, happy, and creative in spite of myself. Jenny Lawson is one of my favorites. Irby reminded me a lot of her actually—they're just unhinged in different ways (they're even both bloggers). Lawson's books are usually more a meander through her life with musings and lessons around living with depression and anxiety, chronic pain, and her collection of bad taxidermy. How to be Okay When Nothing is Okay has a wealth of knowledge in it for how to push through the tough days when you don't think you can even breathe.

I think my favorite thing about Lawson and Irby is how they share their weird so openly, which makes the rest of us weirdos feel better because we're not alone. I know not everyone battles chronic illness or pain, but it can be a hard road because it's hard to explain to people who haven't experienced it. They both give the raw reality of having chronic issues, but they also show how they've chosen to co-exist with them with humor as they roll with the punches. Lawson also has a very scattered brain with a ridiculous inner dialogue just like me, so reading about her

conversations (arguments) with herself while she's finding herself in the most awkward situations is refreshing. She writes how she talks (kinda like me - if you know, you know) so if too much word chaos is hard for you, I'd recommend the audiobooks so you can hear her cadence.

I already mentioned Irby's epic covers and titles, but they both really have strong cover and title game. Irby's got: Wow, No Thank You featuring a giant bunny with a single brain cell, We're Never Meeting in Real Life with a screaming wet kitten, and Meaty juxtaposed against a grumpy hedgehog. Literal perfection. Lawson's covers often feature some of her wackadoodle bad taxidermy. Furiously Happy with an overly enthusiastic stuffed raccoon reaching for a hug (named Rory) was my first and favorite. The covers are a great set up for the weird and hilarious ride their books will take you on. Only warnings I'll give is if body waste or foul language give you pause then... brave them anyway?

A small act that meant everything

Betsy hurried to pack up again and head back to Greenville Spartanburg Airport in time to turn in her rental car and catch the return flight back to Las Vegas. She started towards I 85 when she realized the car was low on gas. Locating the nearest gas station, she pulled into a Spinx and jumped out at the pumps. Grabbing her card, she loaded the car with gas and headed back to the highway.

Arriving at GSP, she gathered her belongings and went straight to the Hertz counter to turn in the car. It was then she noticed her wallet was missing. She went back to the car and began to search. The good folks from Hertz helped turn that car inside out looking in every nook and cranny for the missing wallet. Nothing. She explained that the last time she saw it was at the Spinx station. The kind people at Hertz handed her the keys and told her to use the car to go back and see if she could find it.

Focused, she pulled back into the parking lot. Looking around as she walked to the door, praying, "Please be here." She asked at the counter if anyone had turned in a wallet within the last



hour. No one had seen or heard of a lost wallet. "We're so sorry."

Defeated, she headed back to the car while keeping her eyes focused on the ground of the parking lot. Time was running out, she needed to get back in order to make her flight.

Betsy returned the car and headed to the gate for Flight 711 to Las Vegas. Once in her seat, she realized the magnitude of the loss. A list of cards to be cancelled flooded her thoughts. Documents that needed to be replaced would take time, how would she manage in the mean-

time? She arrived home from a busy trip and instead of relaxing, she made urgent phone calls, checked on account protections and made notes.

Back home in Anderson, a relative received a FB notification from an unfamiliar name. There is a message. A girl named Ashleigh Kennemore Brooks wrote: "Hey, I am trying to get in touch with Betsy. My husband found her wallet and I'm trying to return it to her. I didn't know if you could give her my info. Thanks!"

Not knowing if this was legitimate, she contacted Betsy. It was true, she had lost her wallet. Surprised and relieved, Betsy found Ashleigh on FB and identified herself. Not only was everything safe and intact, the kind couple will be mailing it back to her in the morning. Ashleigh explained that she only wanted to do what she hoped someone would do for her in that situation. She didn't want any thanks in return.

So, here's to Ashleigh of Studio Bliss Salon in Greer and her husband Jonathan Brooks of Brooks Exteriors, a family-owned business in Greer. Thank you for your honesty, efforts and kindness.

THE Electric City News

Kids Corner

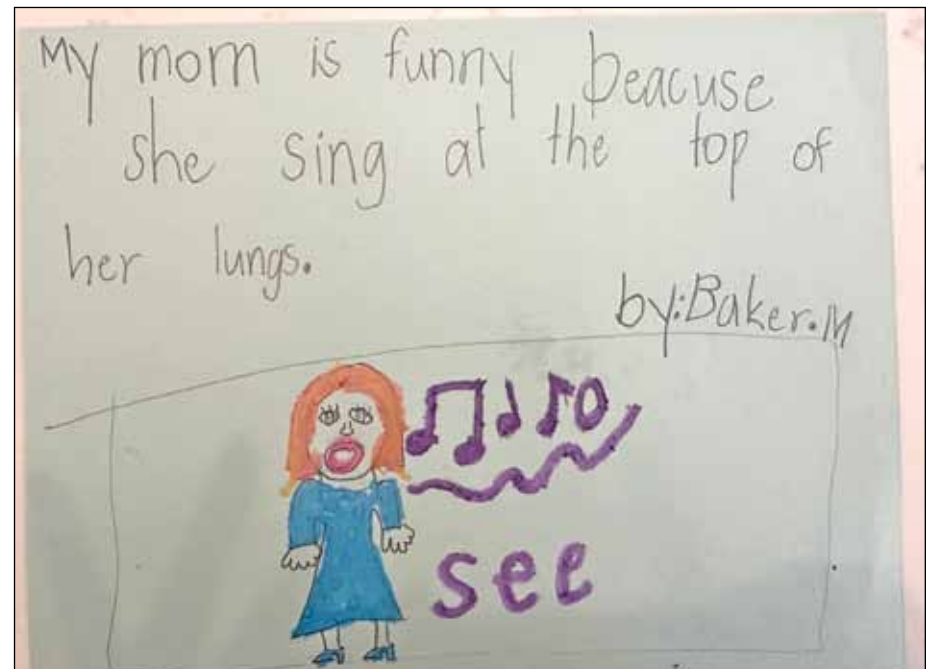
Park safety

BY: BAYLEE HILL
4TH GRADE

Have you ever gone to the park and seen trash all over the place and was questioning who made this mess? Well when I go to the park and see trash I go crazy and decide to clean it up. I also hate to look at dead or injured animals because of trash. When you eat food, please don't throw trash on the ground because if animals see the trash they

might try to eat it and it may get stuck on their beaks or on their head making it where you can't see. Also don't throw your food or trash in the water, the fish may eat the extra food and it might be poisonous or not good to eat. The last thing is that no litter makes your park look better and more neat. Next time you eat at the park, please throw away your trash in the trashcan. And remember the poor animals suffering from littering.

MY FAVORITE THING ABOUT MY MOM



PET OF THE MONTH



BY: ELLIONNA PATTERSON
4TH GRADE

I think that the Electric City News should have a specific part of their newspaper for kids to be able to write about their pet or their favorite animal. Kids should be able to express how they feel about their pet or even just talk about their favorite animal so that kids can get ideas. I'll go first!

My dog Benji, a Shih Tzu, is so cuddly and playful. Benji's favorite snacks slash treats are turkey and his bones. My grandma gives him treats every time she sees him. My

dog loves my grandma so much that when he sees her he goes CRAZY. I love Benji. We got him when I was four years old, my sister was at least seven or eight years old. Right now Benji is six years old and about to turn seven.

Benji knows how to sit and even walk on his back legs! It's crazy right? Also, when Benji sees me he gets so excited and starts crawling to me on his stomach. It looks so funny!

Now that I've shared my favorite pet, what's yours?

Anderson 5 students honored

Seven Anderson Five students were among 21 Anderson County middle and high school recipients of the 2026 Cory White Diversity Award. Presented by the Anderson County Human Relations Council, this award honors students making a positive impact through leadership in human rights, inclusion, and advocacy for others.

Please help us congratulate the following students: Krisna Patel (Glenview Middle School), Andre Rodrigues (McCants Middle

School), Timothy Davis (Robert Anderson Middle), Lillian Amare (Southwood Academy of the Arts), Sara Kate Smith (Anderson Five Charter School), Emry Smith (T.L. Hanna High School), Karoline Stewart (Westside High School)

We are so proud of these students for exemplifying the character, compassion, and values that reflect Cory White's legacy. Keep making a difference!

Learn more at andersoncountysc.org/news.



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DISORDER DURING DROUGHT



**SUSAN
TEMPLE**
master
gardener

Thankfully, there has been rain in the gauge, a little over an inch in the past week or so. Foolishly, in February, three new camellias and a few new perennials were planted. I'm attempting to grow bugbane (*Cimicifuga*) again, after falling in love with it while garden touring in Seattle last year. It seems on my first attempt, those bugbanes were put in a spot that was too dry. This round, a patch has been put in total shade, where when we have rain, they will be wet. Another patch is nearby but in more sun, probably up until late morning. This patch is beside one of the confederate azaleas, Admiral Semmes, with beautifully bright yellow flowers, so I can water both at the same time when needed. The third patch is also near a native azalea, Clowning Around, that has bright orange blooms. These bugbanes are in sun until about three o'clock. These new babies, along with the three new camellias, are getting watered this time. My normal behavior

is plant and let nature take its course. The confederate azaleas are special; therefore, they have fence around them until they get enough age to withstand deer browsing. Fence was put around two patches of the bugbane, just in case. And one patch was left exposed. Thus far, it seems deer don't like it.

Azaleas were exceptionally pretty this year, which kicked in my desire to add new ones... like I didn't know we are in a drought. To add varieties not offered locally, I shopped online from two nurseries used over the years. Wilson Brothers is not cheap, but shipping is free. Right - just built into the price of the plant. Either way, their plants are worth every penny. The order from the other company was disappointing. However, they refunded me for the azaleas that have lace bugs. Lace bugs can be a problem with azaleas. If leaves seem spotted, look on the underside of the leaves. If there are little brown spots, those are lace bugs. Lace bugs won't hurt the plant if the infestation does not get overwhelming, then leaves may look lacy, hence lace bugs. Good air circulation is key to helping decrease the chances. Systemic products listed specifically for lace bugs work well if treatment is needed. For the pitiful ones ordered, the branches were cut off, bagged, and trashed.

They are recovering. Since I hate dragging a hose pipe, the new azaleas were potted up into larger pots and will be planted in the fall. At least I know where they will go. Oftentimes, that is beside the point.

Three small native perennials, pussytoes (*Antennaria parlinii*), were also bought, during this drought, when Mama and I went to Hart County Master Gardener Expo last month. Mama used to grow pussytoes, but either they played out or were choked out by lenton roses. Pussytoes are fantastic pollinator plants, and parts are poisonous, so deer, rabbits, and other critters supposedly

won't eat them. They form a groundcover with silvery green fuzzy foliage. White flowers, about 10 inches tall, bloom in early spring. Supposedly the blooms look like cat paws, hence the common name. A bit more research should have been done on these. Where I thought would be perfect is totally wrong. First, they need gravelly, dry soil and sun, even full sun. But I find that hard to believe come July. Where they were going to be planted is shade, and damp to wet when we've had rain. These little guys, too, have been potted up awaiting fall. But I have no idea where they will live.



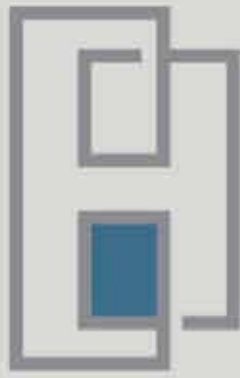
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