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Accomplishing the American dream

BY KIM VON KELLER

Some inheritance is intangible. There are traits we derive from those who came before us and a responsibility to live in a way that honors the hardships they suffered. The Mowlajko family is one who continues to honor the memory of a man who risked, suffered, and worked to accomplish the American dream for his family.

"Growing up, I was the girl with the last name no one could pronounce or spell," says Anderson native Molly Mowlajko Antinori. "I don't think I truly understood how special my name was until I became an adult and realized the sacrifice my grandparents made to get here."

Molly's grandfather, Andrie Mowlajko was born in Ukraine, in 1914. Like so many of his generation, he was caught up in the turmoil of World War II. University educated, with a master's degree in mathematics and a command of seven languages, he had fled the Soviet Union for Poland, only to be imprisoned with other refugees in a Nazi work camp. During that time, he dug trenches and survived on starvation rations before being sent to Austria to work as a gardener. As the war ended, he managed to flee to a sector of American occupation, where he found work as a mechanic and an interpreter.



He met Klementine Lazuruk, a Polish refugee, whom he later married. After the birth of their first child, they made their way to Barnwell, South Carolina through an American program for the resettlement of war refugees. There, the Mowlajkos had two more children. Their son, Peter Mowlajko, graduated from Clemson University and the MUSC College of Dental Medicine and established Mowlajko Family Dentistry here in Anderson in 1978. Sadly, Dr. Mowlajko passed away in 2007, leaving his wife, Patti Phillips Mowlajko; daughter Molly Mowlajko Antinori; and son, Dr. Andrew Mowlajko,

owner of Mowlajko Family and Cosmetic Dentistry.

In 1950, the town of Barnwell, South Carolina had a population of fewer than 2,000 people. But in a curious twist, another family, the Tongours, arrived in Barnwell under similar circumstances. Michael Tongour reminisces about his family's relationship to the Mowlajkos, his connection to Anderson, and an immigrant family's life in America.

"I was born and raised in Barnwell, South Carolina," Tongour says. "Even though I have lived in Washington, DC for nearly 40 years, I still call Barnwell home. My wife, Lalie, who graduated from Furman and whose ancestors are from South Carolina (Boykin family) and I raised our three children in Washington, but often visited South Carolina. Our son Alec especially loves the South Carolina upcountry. On his college tours, he immediately felt a special connection to Anderson University. He has now been a student at AU since 2022 and loves it. Since then, Lalie and I have visited him regularly. We have thoroughly enjoyed the warmth of the people of Anderson! We have made new friends and reconnected with old ones. Some are from college days, and others

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Dream

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also have Barnwell ties. We also have a special Anderson connection which falls into the heartwarming, "circle of life" category. It has made our family feel that Anderson must have been an inspired choice for our son, and for our family.

"My parents were born in Russia (mother) and Ukraine (father) around the time of the Communist revolution. Their families were refugees who were fortunate to have escaped the Communist regime in its early years (1918 to the early 20's) with their very young children (my parents). Both my mother's and my father's families settled in Istanbul, Turkey. My parents met there and were married in 1945. My sister was born in Istanbul two years later. My parents always dreamed of living in America. After nearly thirty years in Turkey and through family connections, the owner of a US company, National Fasteners Corporation, which manufactured zippers, offered my father a position in his company, and sponsored my family's immigration to America. They were to live in the rural town of Barnwell, South Carolina, which is where the company's main factory had recently located.

"They arrived in Barnwell in 1950. They did not speak much English, and except for one other family, were the only people there who had very heavy accents. They definitely stood out! The other family, who had an even more recent and painful refugee experience (from Hitler's Germany and from Stalin's Russia) were the Mowlajkos. My parents and their families had been uprooted from their native land a generation before the Mowlajkos. Accordingly, the Tongours' path to America was significantly easier than the Mowlajkos who, as a Barnwell paper article indicated, had been suffering in Poland as "displaced persons" only months before their arrival in Barnwell, also in 1950.

"My dad and his company



offered Andrie Mowlajko a job at the zipper factory. Our families became fast friends. They were able to speak fluently with each other in their native language. Their common experiences and language were a special bond which helped both families in their early years in America. Like our family, the Mowlajkos were warmly welcomed to Barnwell. Our family encouraged the Mowlajkos to join the local Episcopal Church, the closest Barnwell church to the Mowlajkos' Ukrainian Orthodox background. Growing up, my sister and I were friends with Lucia (my sister's age), Pete, and Mary (my age). Our families were in church every Sunday, and Mary and I sang in the youth choir.

"No one worked harder than Andrie. Dad would say he was the first to come to work and the last to leave. Although Andrie was an intelligent, educated man, he never shied away from strenuous manual labor. As a Barnwell newspaper article recounted on his passing, he would gladly and with gratitude take on any tough task if it helped to support his family.

"My family and the Mowlajko family are prime examples of the American dream. I was the first person in my family to be born in this country. Dr. Pete was his family's first American-born child. Because of the hard work of our parents, my sister and I and the Mowlajko children finished college and professional schools.

"The Mowlajkos were devoted Christians and always contributed to the betterment of their communities. Pete went on to marry the wonderful Patti. This paper's readers certainly remember him as an excellent, beloved dentist and community leader in Anderson.

"When Alec needed a dentist in Anderson, it was an easy choice. My son, whose grandparents immigrated to Barnwell in 1950, got superb dental care from Andy Mowlajko, whose grandparents also immigrated to Barnwell that same year. Although both families suffered a great deal before they came to America, they exemplified the values of hard work and did everything they could to make sure their children were well educated, had strong morals, and were good citizens.

Andrie was certainly an example of the greatness of America. Pete, Lucia, and Mary had excellent role models in their parents. Today, my parents and my sister are buried a few feet away from their friends, Andrie and Klementine, at our church cemetery in Barnwell. I am sure they would enjoy knowing that after they came to America 75 years ago, their grandchildren are connected, are doing well, and are living in the wonderful city of Anderson. Andrie and Klementine certainly personified the great American dream!"

The late Dr. Peter Mowlajko honored his parents' sacrifice as a dentist. His family describes him as a man who worked hard to establish his dental practice but who never forgot those who struggled. As busy as he was, he always had time to give to the Anderson Free Dental Clinic.

"My grandparents' struggle and my dad's example taught me to always be inclusive and treat those less fortunate with kindness and respect," Antinori says.

Dr. Andrew Mowlajko was named for his grandfather. And like his father, Dr. Mowlajko and his sister received an intangible inheritance from Andrie and Klementine Mowlajko.

"My grandfather brought his family to America to start a new life with nothing but the clothes on his back. His story is one of individual hard work, determination, and bravery. It is also a story on the power of community and helping others. My father and his family were embraced by the Barnwell community and could not have made it without that support. My father instilled those traits in his children."

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Breast cancer screening recommendations updated for women beginning at age 40

If you're turning 40 this year, it's time to get your first mammogram.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, an independent panel of national experts in disease prevention and evidence-based medicine, recently changed mammogram recommendations so that all women are to get a mammogram every other year starting at age 40. Past recommendations were for women of average risk between the ages of 40 and 50 to make individual decisions about when to start mammography screening.

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer and the second most common cause of cancer death for women in the U.S.

WOMEN ARE GETTING BREAST CANCER AT YOUNGER AGES

Early detection is critical to treatment and survival, and women are getting breast cancer at younger ages. Starting mammograms for all



women at age 40 is expected to save nearly 20% more lives from breast cancer overall, with an even greater potential to help Black women, who are 40% more likely to die of breast cancer than white women, according to the USPSTF.

Dr. Michael Seemuller, chief quality officer at AnMed and medical director of AnMed Primary Care - Wren, said that although many women are already screening every year beginning at age 40, this change stresses the importance of applying that recommendation to all women.

Before age 40, women should talk with their doctor if they have concerns about their breast health.

IT'S EASY TO BOOK YOUR NEXT MAMMOGRAM

Women can feel confident in scheduling with AnMed's mammography team, which recently fulfilled the American College of Radiology's guidelines and achieved reaccreditations for all AnMed mammography units. This lets patients know that they are getting the highest level of image quality and safety they can get, AnMed Radiology Manager Kimberley Stevens said.

And because AnMed is accredited in mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy, breast ultrasound and MRI, the health system is an ACR Designated Comprehensive Breast Imaging Center of Excellence.

Book an appointment online at AnMed.org or through MyChart for locations in Anderson or Pickens or on the mobile mammography unit.





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Recognizing the humanity of our ancestors

BY RICH OTTER

The Anderson County Chapter of the South Carolina Genealogical Society works with people in tracing their roots, but they are also interested in looking beyond the mere statistics. They stress the importance of the ancestor as a human being, not just a place on a chart.

Featured at the association's annual Christmas program, Mildred Kay Froman was able to review personal experiences passed down through three generations, experiencing segments of two world wars and financial depression years in Germany.

Millie's grandfather, Adolph Forman, was a cobbler. His occupation was interrupted during World War I when he had to serve in the German military. That service was interrupted when captured by the Russians. He was incarcerated in a small town where somehow the residents heard a cobbler was being held. Their cobbler had been taken into the military. They had no one who could repair their shoes and boots. In those days the foot-ware could not be replaced. The townspeople were able to get him released to their care. He had a room in the back of the absent cobbler's shop and was able to pursue his trade.

As a child in those bleak years, including following the war, her father told of their dire food shortage. In the cold weather, they survived on turnips—turnips for breakfast, turnips for lunch and turnips for dinner.

The children had no food to take for school lunch. The American Red Cross provided the food and made soup every day for the students. Because he was tall and skinny, her father was selected to serve the food. Any left-over soup, he was allowed to take home to his family in a bucket. Some days, it was all



Mildred Kay Froman

they had to eat. Fortunately, they had school six days a week with six likely buckets. Her father was eternally grateful to the American Red Cross.

Her father's older brother had come to America. Her brother had extolled the conditions in America—how if you worked hard, you could thrive. In Germany, it was said at that time, no matter how hard you worked, you could not thrive.

In 1929, at the age of 21, her father bought a ticket for passage on a freighter to the United States. He left his father, mother and his other brother, and shipped out. He had one major problem. He could not speak a word of English. No one on the ship understood German. When a ticket on a freighter

was bought, it only provided a bunk, not meals.

He went below decks to where they had food and a menu was posted. It was all in English. He could see nothing he recognized. Then he saw it—Hamburg—his hometown. They were delicious and he lived on them at all meals during the weeks or month at sea.

He came to America in 1929. For about six months, he worked for his uncle who had a grocery store, maintaining his old delivery trucks while going to school and learning English. He then obtained a job that placed him in charge of a shop of eight or ten other men. Even though he was only in his early 20s.

His parents were still in Hamburg when the World War II began. In 1943, the Americans and British began an extensive bombing campaign that included Berlin and Hamburg. Millie Froman said her grandparents were then living in a large apartment complex, attached by an underground tunnel to a related complex. Her grandfather was an air raid warden and when a raid was expected, he would go down to the tunnel and to the basement of the other building to turn off a gas main to avoid an explosion if a bomb were to hit.

One evening during a heavy raid, he was directed by radio to shut off the main. He was in bed, jumped up, pulled his wife out of bed and was leading her out and down to the tunnel in their bed clothes. His wife happened to grab a salt shaker off their kitchen table as they passed. They got to the basement of the other apartment building and there was a tremendous explosion. The other building had been hit during the British raid.

Their apartment building collapsed, completely devastated. Some 1,500 people were killed. Nothing remained. It was just bull-dozed over and eventually a park was made in its place. Their only salvaged belongings were the night clothes they were wearing and the salt shaker. The shaker is now in the possession of Millie Froman.



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THE GARDEN SHOP

A RE-DO FOR A NEW DAWN

For a gardener who

enjoys tending roses,

New Dawn would

be a real stunner.

At my place, it

blooms heavily in

spring, then on and

off throughout the

summer and fall.



As the winter tidy up continues, this jag was getting a trellis put back together and the rose climbing on it pruned and in check. February is the ideal time to prune roses. But the "round to it" showed up and there was really no reason to wait another month. The rose, I'm practically positive, is New Dawn. Mama rooted it from hers. Roses usually are quite easy to root from cuttings. As with any plant you're trying to root, be sure it does not have a bloom, or buds.

New Dawn is an old variety of David Austin roses. The website dates it to 1930, and says it is the forerunner of modern perpetual flowering climbers. For a gardener who enjoys tending roses, New Dawn would be a real stunner. At my place, it blooms heavily in spring, then on and off throughout the summer and fall. It does get some black spots but not horribly so. And it gets no care. Deer don't seem to like it much either. I have

a little orange rose in the front garden that was rooted from my mother-in-law's. Deer about ate it to death last year and now it has fence around it, in hopes it will recover.

A kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) was planted several years ago at the edge of the yard. These are different from our native dogwood and need full sun, or least half a day. Blooms are slightly different, and they bloom in early summer. These are the trees beside Medicus on Greenville Street if you've noticed those beauties. It seemed like a good idea to plant New Dawn to run up in the tree. Having never planted a rose on a tree, this could be a good test. After a

few years, New Dawn needed more than the tree to climb. Surely there was something in the crap collection I could make a trellis from. Plus, on an antique trip, Husband found some metal finial things that he liked and bought them for me. They were waiting for the perfect thing.

Taking square, leftover wooden fence posts, I put two t-posts in the ground and tied the wooden fence posts to them. The wooden posts were not tall enough to put in the ground so tying them to the t-posts gave the height needed. Then wire fence was hooked to the fence posts. The finials fit on the wooden posts perfectly. They were painted pink to match the rose, and ta-da, a perfect trellis.

As years passed, and New Dawn grew, the metal fence came loose from the posts. I let it take its course but eventually, the rose had

practically no support. Other than the tree, there is nothing around it, and it could have been left to its own devices to grow however. But it looks so good in between the finials, plus, one big cane had started pushing the finial up a bit. Time had come to work on this homemade trellis, and the rose needed dead pruned out, some canes pruned, etc.

It wasn't too bad of a job. Finials came off first. Dead canes were cut off as close to the

ground as possible. The posts were re-attached, the fence was tightened up, and finials put back on. Then New Dawn was pruned to shape it some. Branches were wound around the trellis, and some more on the tree. Grass was pulled out from around the whole thing. Leaves were put around for good mulch, and she looks good as new, for the New Dawn beauty.

The idea did come together nicely. It does draw the eye out to the edge of the yard. Kousa dogwood looks good in late spring and early summer. New Dawn looks good several months of the year. And the finials make a statement anytime.



New Dawn rose and Kousa dogwood in bloom



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Bright ideas for your windows

Budget Blinds of Anderson offers style and service for every budget

BY AINSLEY MCCARTHY

Though the city's temperatures have dipped significantly in recent months, those who haven't forgotten the sizzling heat of the summer can attest that shutters, blinds and shades are a necessity to keep their homes from turning into ovens in the early afternoon sun. Such accessories have a reputation for costing a pretty penny, but Darren and Lily Smiley, the new owners of Budget Blinds of Anderson, said this is a common misconception among customers that is remedied by their specialized array of custom products and services with quality options for all budgets.

"Whether it's light control, insulation, privacy concerns or finding the exact custom style for your home, our job is to ensure we provide our customers with the perfect window covering solution. From the initial phone call through installation, our team is dedicated to providing the best customer experience possible," said Darren Smiley.

Shutters are the Anderson location's best seller, followed closely by blinds and shades. If a customer is unsure which options would best suit their needs, they can book a free con-

sultation with a Budget Blinds professional, who will bring showroom samples to their home, so that they can make informed decisions from the comfort of their kitchen table.

Customers may choose to makeover their entire home, or transform one room at a time. Either way, the Smiley's encouraged those who want to upgrade their living space to pursue a free consultation, while keeping in mind that doing so is "an investment in your most important asset."

The process, from product selection to installation, generally takes 3-4 weeks. It includes a free in-home consultation, where customers can review and select from Budget Blinds of Anderson's industry leading product assortment from the top name brand manufacturers in the business, including Norman, Springs Window Fashions and Pro Design. Next, Budget Blinds trained professional team will take precise measurements and carefully review all details so that they can provide an accurate quote and ensure each customer is receiving their best price and service. Budget Blinds specialists will then deliver and install the custom-built order after receiving



Budget Blinds of Anderson owners Lily and Darren Smiley

it from their network of preferred manufacturers.

"Ensuring each customer project is expertly measured and installed to the best fit and finish possible is a critical step in our process," Lily Smiley said. "Our team is professionally trained and has years of experience. They understand each customer's home is unique and equally important. We're extremely proud and grateful for the numerous five star reviews our team has received. It lets us know that we've provided a first-in-class customer experience and exceeded their expectations."

Community involvement is also a regularity at Budget Blinds. The

corporation supports a number of great causes. Locally, the Anderson territory offers free shipping and free professional installation to veterans and active military personnel year-round. Teachers and First Responders will also get the chance to enjoy periodic specials throughout this year.

"Budget Blinds of Anderson is our family business, we're locally owned and live in the Anderson community, and although we recently purchased the franchise, the Budget Blinds of Anderson Team has proudly served the Anderson, Belton, Honea Path, Pelzer, Starr, Townville and Williamston communities for over 20 years," the Smiley's said."We're also blessed to have the strength of the Budget Blinds brand behind us, as it's the largest retailer of custom window coverings in North America, and as a franchisee it provides us with unmatched buying power, an expansive product assortment at a great value and hands down the best warranties in the business, which includes our exclusive 5 year No Questions Asked Guaranty."

Prospective clients can reach Budget Blinds of Anderson at (864) 332-0612 or request a free, no obligation, in-home consultation at budgetblinds.com/Anderson. You can also check out before and after photos from recent jobs on their Instagram and Facebook page.

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Pendleton foundation announces new Keese Barn Legacy Project fundraiser

PENDLETON, S.C., December 19, 2024 — The Pendleton Foundation for Black History & Culture is pleased to share the news of a new fundraising campaign to rebuild the "Old Keese Barn" façade. Benjamin Horace Keese's barn played a significant role in Pendleton's history as the first public gathering place for the town's African American population in the early and mid-1900s. The new Keese Barn Legacy Project will strive to replace a missing piece of Pendleton's heritage and build a new gathering place for the 21st century through the creation of a state-of-the-art façade.

"Mr. Keese's business played a major role in the growth of and sense of communion within Pendleton's Black community," said Terence Hassan, chair of the Pendleton Foundation for Black History & Culture. "The site is just a stone's throw from Farmers Hall, yet no one can see it, and few know of its historic prominence. It is truly the invisible mecca of Pendleton's history. That's why it is so important for us to restore a structure on the Keese Barn site that will be a fitting tribute to Mr. Keese's vision and legacy."

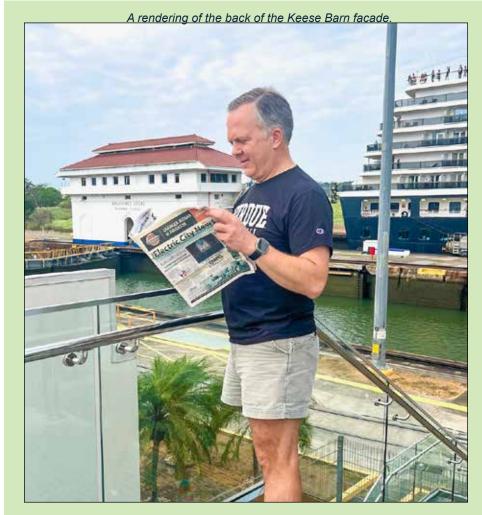
Built between 1900-1910, the original Keese Barn building began as a general store in the heart of downtown Pendleton. Benjamin Horace Keese had returned to his hometown here in Upstate South Carolina after several years working in Philadelphia, and he brought cosmopolitan business ideas back with him. He transformed the barn into a one-stop shop for Pendleton's Black residents, adding a public restaurant, antique

store, auction house, and even a residence onto the general store. The building eventually became known as "The Hundreds" after the scores of people who would socialize and eat together there. After Keese died in 1975, the structure fell into disrepair; in 2003, Clemson University architecture students dismantled the ruins and created a memorial on the site.

The Keese Barn Legacy Project seeks to restore the Keese Barn's place in Pendleton's history while simultaneously providing a new gathering place for the town's residents. This project will see a façade built on the site, mirroring the front of the Keese Barn and containing concessions, storage, and restrooms. The back of the façade provides a stage and gathering area for people to meet, spend time together, and enjoy public or private events. Just as the original Keese Barn was a place for fellowship and friendship, the new façade will provide all Pendleton's residents with a home for gathering, community, and growth.

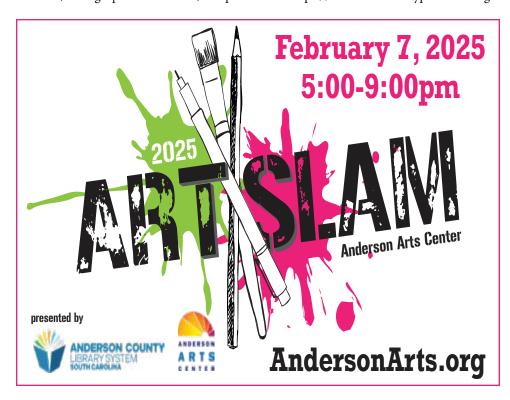
The Pendleton Foundation for Black History & Culture encourages individuals and businesses to contribute to the Keese Barn Legacy Project. From monetary donations for upkeep and construction costs to naming rights for components of the barn, every contribution is warmly accepted and appreciated.

For more information and to donate to the Keese Barn Legacy Project, please email PFBHC chair Terence Hassan at terencehassan@gmail.com, PFBHC vice chair Deveraux Williams at Deveraux.williams@gmail.com, or visit https://www.blackhistorypendleton.org.



Where's the E?

Mike McClain enjoyed reading The ECN while visiting the 8th wonder of the world — the Panama Canal.





My childhood, mapped out

Hi there! My name is Ainsley. I'm a recent graduate of Winthrop University with a BA in Mass Communication, and I joined the Electric City News back in October. My time back home in Anderson post-grad has had me reflecting on my childhood and the places here that shaped me into the woman I am today. My twenty-third birthday is fast approaching, so it's safe to say those days are officially gone, but

they hold some cherished memories that I'd like to share.



Ainsley McCarthy

ANDERSON MAIN LIBRARY

I didn't learn to read until the first grade, and for a while I was ashamed that I couldn't seem to pick it up as

quickly as my classmates. But, the adults in my life, especially Dad, kept taking my brother and me to the library after school in hopes that I would find a story that stuck with me. Eventually, I did. In second grade I latched onto "The Magic Treehouse" series by Mary Pope Osborne, and it was then that I began to imagine what it would be like to write a book one day, with my name printed on its cover in shiny letters. I remember feeling so proud and grown up the day I got my first library card. I walked out of the building a little taller. By the third grade I paid attention to other authors' writing styles and the phrases they liked to use. I took pride in incorporating new vocabulary words into my assignments, and the compliments it received from my teachers. By the fifth grade, I knew I wanted to be a writer when I got older. Lesson learned: words can be just as powerful as actions.

CHRIS TAYLOR MEMORIAL PARK

Before I wanted to be a writer, I dreamed of being a princess. My "castle" was at Chris Taylor Memorial Park. Many times I sheltered inside it during games of Hide and Seek, though I rarely won because I always giggled too much. I would go down the slide with Bubby and pretend I was escaping evil villains. I also loved the swings. Dad would offer to push me, then pull back as far as he could, leaving my legs dangling in the air and me gripping the chains for dear life. One time I fell off, and I guilted him into letting me eat a popsicle before dinner. Lesson learned: your perception can become your reality.

PALMETTO CHEER AND TUMBLE

Though its doors have long since closed,



this was where, at 8 years old, I learned to do a cartwheel. I was a cheerleader for Pink Panthers, a cheer and tumbling program tailored to children with disabilities. While I'll admit I initially expressed interest in it because I liked the sparkly competition uniforms and the trampoline, my mom urged me to strengthen my core and dive-literally head first-into new experiences. I was one of the flyers on the team, and the other girls and I trained every Sunday in pursuit of a first place trophy. When competition season arrived, I relished the adrenaline hit that came as I stood atop the pyramid at the end of our routine, with my lipsticked smile wide and my arms outstretched. But, more than that, I found solace in knowing that within those gymnasium walls, I wasn't fearful that others would judge me for how I walked, or ran, or jumped, because they were like me, and they understood that it wasn't our bodies or brains that needed fixing, but the narrow worldview that tried to tell us who and what we can be. Lesson learned: I can do anything I set my mind to.

DENVER DOWNS FARM

Who knew that playing in a box of corn kernels could be so fun? It entertained me for what felt like hours—I'm sure my parents felt

that way too. I didn't want to go on the rope swing until I saw Bubby do it, and then, of course, I had to try. I made my mom stand at the bottom just in case, and closed my eyes as I swung through the air. I remember Bubby yelling, "You have to let go!" That went against my survival instinct. Mom laughed and hugged me when I made it onto solid ground again. Lesson learned: sometimes, letting go is better than holding on.

THE YMCA

Water is known for its healing capacity, and it did heal me with the help of my physical therapist Mrs. Mandy in the summer of 2012. I had undergone major surgery on my legs and feet that November, and I had to learn how to walk again. We met at The YMCA's pool every Wednesday so that I could walk laps, balance on pool noodles and relay the week's grade school gossip to her. The smell of chlorine and the sound of booming laughter between us were a comfort when the other aspects of recovery were frustrating. What I enjoyed most about it was that we could dance and jump around without worrying about falling. She remains a good friend of mine to this day. Lesson learned: real friends help you back up when you're down, and they do it with a smile.

Do-it-yourself cat trapping

BY SHIRLEY MCALISTER

Hello! Christmas is over—I hope yours was merry and bright—and the new year lies ahead. May 2025 bring good things to us all. Now let's talk some more about cat-trapping.

It's hard to find people who trap. Not many people do it, and those who do are always swamped. The alternative is to do it yourself.

You've got to be committed because it's not an easy task, but the rewards are huge. The biggest colony I've ever trapped contained 25 cats. Knowing they wouldn't be adding massive numbers of kittens to the overpopulation gave me immense satisfaction. (Note: Don't use professional trapping services until we talk about those in a later column.)

So, first things first: What kind of trap do you need? There are many models, but I have one universal piece of advice: Make sure the trap opens at both ends. You'll need to get food and water into the trap, and, if you line it with pads or newspaper, they'll need to be changed. Both are much easier to do with two access points. (Some trappers simply put the pads or paper under the trap itself.)

I use the Tru-Catch 30LTD Light Duty Animal Trap, a model that Wanda Crane ordered for me when I told her I needed new traps. This trap is much more lightweight than the heavy, awkward traps I've used in the past. It's smaller, too, but it still has plenty of room for the animal. The brown powdercoating on the steel wire keeps it from rusting and also helps the trap blend into its surroundings. In addition, it has no springs or hinges to rust or loosen or otherwise malfunction. Measurements on this trap are 30Lx9Wx11H, but there are also kitten and "fat cat" versions. Cost: about \$100.00.

One caveat: The mechanism that closes the door is extremely sensitive. Usually, the door shuts behind the cat after it steps on a plate inside the trap itself, but particular care has to be taken with this trap to make sure the mechanism is correctly set and the trap is level. If not, the door may close prematurely. This is a an easily prevented problem, and the sensitivity is otherwise a good thing; I've had other traps that were carefully set but didn't close because the trigger mechanism was damaged or just plain inefficient.

Now we need to talk about (a) how to trap and (b) what to do with the cats after they're caught. "B" is the real problem, and that's a topic I hope to cover in the next column.

Have a great week, everyone, and remember what the great artist Leonardo da Vinci said: "The smallest feline is a masterpiece."



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FROM THE SHELF

ON RATING BOOKS WITH STARS

I've been ruminating about how we rate books and what exactly makes a "five star" read. I get anxiety over giving stars. To start, I want to give partial stars, and while StoryGraph allows this, a lot of other "official" platforms don't. I also get a lot of anxiety over how those stars affect the book, and consequently, the author. While my tiny review may be one in a sea of millions, those stars multiply and can determine whether someone else will read a book or not. I'm wary of the fate these books have written in their stars.

Recently I've had a few books where I really thought about how I might star' them. My rating was caught up in my actual enjoyment of the book versus its "literary merit" or craftsmanship. The Covenant of Water by Verghese was incredibly crafted and beautiful in its nuance and rich characters; it was also an absolute slog to drag myself through. I loved the writing but wouldn't say I enjoyed myself. How do you rate a book like this with stars? Five stars for execution, or two for my having to endure it? What about a book whose execution is mediocre at best, but I immensely enjoyed it and couldn't put it down? What about in comparison to the book's genre peers?

Am I overthinking this? Probably. But as a librarian and fiction specialist to boot, my review of a book can carry a lot of weight. I know everyone has their preference when it comes to reading, but I also know a trusted reviewer gets readers to brave new literary frontiers. I want to be that trusted reviewer, and as an overly logical librarian I want the stats to back me. I've begun to ask people how they decide their ratings, and why. While I've mostly been met with amused reactions for taking this so seriously, there's also been great discussion around balancing a star count with multiple factors.

I've created a "grading system" that will minimally serve my overthinking needs. My inspiration comes from, and you'll love this, a favorite dog social media account (very on brand for me). @Deputy_Dog_Rader, a K9 unit and his handler treat their followers

to videos of testing and reviewing various "snacks." Both try whatever "snack" has been selected, and then they 'rate' it in six different



Sara Leady

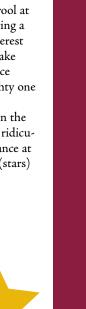
categories: 'cronchy,' excitement (dog and human scored separately), messiness, drool levels, and a "hidden" category (no one really knows what this means). People from all over the world send them stuff, and as you can imagine, sometimes Radar is at

a level 10 for excitement, while his handler (bless him) is sitting in negative digits. These categories are then averaged to create the overall snack rating.

This 2025, I'll be attempting to put that Master of Library and Information Science degree to extra good use and do my own "literary study." My current proposed categories are as follows: reading experience, craftsmanship, brain cells required (did it make me think), cover art/book design (I will die on this hill as a worthy judgement), and "how much of a bribe would I need to slap main characters" (my research thus far indicates that "character likeability" can be a major among readers). My 'hidden' category will be in flux, and based on whim or genre (romance and spice content, did the book live up to the hype, gore/graphic content levels, predictability, delightful banter, etc.).

Is this completely overzealous? Absolutely not. It's hard to argue with empirical data and science and this is serious business. I drool at the thought of selling one of you on trying a horror title, the ultimate ego Mount Everest I (foolishly) want to conquer. I'll even take getting a "serious" reader to try a romance novel; perhaps a smaller feat, but a mighty one nonetheless.

I salute you Literary Giants, as I even the reading ratings field by giving the most ridiculous amongst the shelves a fighting chance at greatness. As they say, may the odds (stars) be ever in your favor.





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'An encyclopedia of Hanna football'

"I spent over

6,000 hours

working on

this project."

— Frank Alexander

BY BRIAN HODGES

It's always a jolt when high school football season ends. The weekly adrenaline rush of games suddenly ends.

What now? How do you satisfy that hunger for prep football?

Frank Alexander has an answer. He just put together a book: "The History of Anderson Yellow Jacket Football, 1921-2023."

The book is comprehensive, a collection of pictures (black, white and color), charts, statistics and stories. The charts include a list of coaches through the years and their year-by-year records.

There are 701 pages of Yellow Jackets history.

"This book is an encyclopedia of Hanna football," Chuck Allen, a local attorney and former Hanna standout, told him.

Alexander says he spent six years researching old school yearbooks and two years writing. He is obviously a worker bee.

"I spent over 6,000 hours working on this project," he said.

The chapters are marked by each head coach and his era. Probably no one will remember coach Buck Barton in 1921, which is the first year of "Anderson Yellow Jackets" football. But there are yearbook photos and the season results are listed.

Each head coach/chapter won't be named here, but some may remember coach "Frog" Reames, who coached from 1928-1936. Reames later became principal of the high school from 1941-1962.

The table of contents includes the Bill Dillard (1939-1948) era, and the Ralph Jenkins (1949-1953) era. It depends on your age but some longtime residents might remember Stan Honeycutt (1963-65) and Joe Hazle (1966-1967). Each season includes game-action photos, and when available, pictures of cheerleaders and even homecoming queens.

Jim Fraser (1968-1984) has the most victories, with a 128-56 record during his tenure. The field at Hanna is named for Fraser. The 1974 team may have been Fraser's best, with

the Jackets advancing to the state title game against Spring Valley.

Hanna outscored its opponents 377-101 that season, but the Jackets lost to Spring Valley 21-19 in the final

In recent years, Alexander credited Bruce Ollis (2014-2016), Jeff Herron (2017-2018) and Jason Tone (2019-present) for Hanna's success.

"Bruce Ollis went 1-10 his first season but he took over a program that had a lot of problems," Alexander said. "He did a lot of work rebuilding the team.

"Jeff Herron was outstanding, with those five state titles in Georgia," Alexander said. "And Herron went 25-2 before briefly retiring and recommending Tone as his replacement."

Alexander became an unofficial Hanna football historian, and he sort of backed into the role. He was a corporate salesman

for 33 years. He took up photography as a part-time passion in 1976. He spent 32 years photographing football games at Clemson. He also took photos for the NFL Carolina Panthers and Atlanta Falcons.

In retirement he worked for WRIX-AM, and in 2013 worked for WAIM-AM, where he became part of the Hanna football broadcast crew.

When then-Hanna athletic director John Cann

asked Alexander to help build a website for Yellow Jackets football, Alexander agreed. It was a labor-intensive project but it gave Alexander an idea.

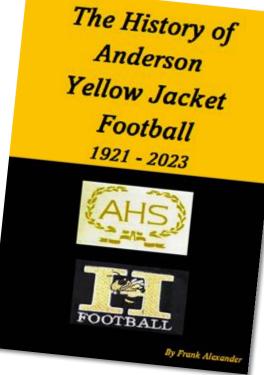
"It was God's plan." Alexander said in his biographical introduction of the book.

Was there a Hanna player that stood out for Alexander?

He devotes a chapter to Jake Nicolopulos, a sturdy, outstanding linebacker from 2006-2008. But his story isn't about wins and losses.

Nicolopulos committed to play for Dabo Swinney and Clemson after being pursued by Vanderbilt, Georgia Tech and Stanford among others.

But in December, 2009, Jake suffered a



major stroke

Alexander wrote that for 10 days students at Hanna held a prayer vigil at the area hospital.

Jake then spent three and a half months at the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. His life was saved but his football career was over.

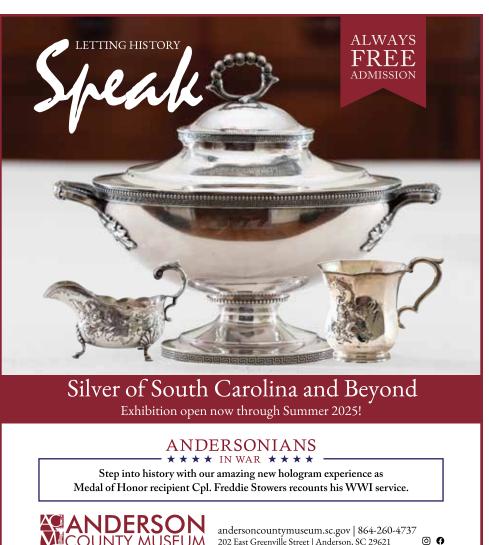
Alexander wrote, "High school coach (Kanya) Fouch wanted Nicolopulos to have his own signing day (despite being at the Shepherd Center). So with close to 70 coaches, family members and friends from his hometown of Anderson and Dabo Swinney by his bed, Jake signed his offer from Clemson. ... Clemson honored what they offered, a full scholarship."

Alexander writes that "Jake is almost 15 years past the stroke. It is a lifetime of recovery for him but Nicolopulos now walks independently and is able to drive.

"He serves Anderson County Meals on Wheels and continues physical therapy as he works and learns the family business, Venture Homes of Anderson."

Alexander said he's sold 85 copies of the book in two weeks. "That's just the tip of the iceberg, I think," Alexander said.

Those interested in buying the book can reach Alexander at (864) 367-8874. The cost is \$60.



Managing the 'After School Collapse'



It is that time of the year when children are transitioning back to school after a holiday break. It is also the time when darkness hits earlier, the cold air is here to stay, and families pray to avoid sickness and school germs. In combination, this can lead to behavior shifts in our children—manifesting as tears, meltdowns, and/or withdrawal behavior. Essentially, children feel safe enough to finally

release emotions that they have restrained from showing throughout the school day. It is important to remind yourself that children are abiding by rules, socially engaged, listening to instructions, and acting with significant self-control. In order to best manage this "emotional collapse," consider the following:

- 1) School settings can be incredibly overwhelming and overstimulating. The sounds, images, interactions, activity, and learning can be hard to manage. Each child will process, cope, and adapt in his/her own way. Signs of sensory overload may appear as irritability, frustration, yelling, throwing, or detachment. Having a safe space to decompress following the school day is essential.
 - 2) Establish a consistent routine that will

provide stability and predictability. This will help with transitions from school to home or the extracurricular activity. This also allows children to unwind before beginning homework. This may look like quiet time, rest time, a quality snack, or getting outside.

- 3) Provide snacks with quality nutrition (e.g., proteins, healthy fats, carbohydrates) in order to stabilize the overall mood and energy. Hydration is equally important.
- 4) Ensure your emotions are in check. This will facilitate the process of co-regulation. Specifically, guiding children to manage emotions with support and understanding. Speaking calmly and slow, modeling deep breathing, and practicing stretching can be useful. Get at the child's level and ask if they want

to hug or hold hands. Counting to 5 or 10 can also be helpful. Alternatively offer a walk, bike ride, or to listen to music. Simply remind your child that they are safe, you are here for them, and can be a container for their feelings.

- 5) Do not personalize your child's behaviors. It is also not the time for big conversations.
- 6) Close the loop. For example, saying "I love all the parts of you, even the meltdown part." Remind them that they are loved and move forward.

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



Getting ready for Galentines

We have about five few weeks before we celebrate Valentine's Day. I have to admit when I was in the grocery store recently and I saw the Valentine's Day candy and the multiple floral arrangements out already, I was a little astounded. Since it will be here before we know it, I thought about hosting a Galentines day party for my gal pals. For starters you don't have to spend a fortune to make it absolutely gorgeous. It will impress your friends and maybe it will give them the incentive to host next year. The first thing you need to do is come up with a menu. I saw this great charcuterie board idea. Instead of chopping all of your meats, cheeses and other time-consuming accoutrements go ahead and pre-make it in a glass jar. It can sit in your fridge for a few days and it's absolutely delicious. Your ingredients are salty salami, creamy Havarti, smoked gouda, chopped basil, the pickle of your choice, olives to add a briny flavor, sundried tomatoes and then toss them in a garlic vinaigrette. You can then put the lid on your jar and stick it in the fridge. I would prep it the day before or earlier and then it's a no fuss charcuterie board. Add toothpicks and pretty little serving dishes

or even coupe glasses to serve it in.

Preferably pink and red. It's a genius idea and so simple.

Next on my list is something



Kristine March

sweet, but simple. You can style this on a cutting board. Add all pink and red candies. Like red gummy bears, pink starburst and red, white and pink M&

Ms. Then add some strawberries dipped in chocolate. Pink sugar cookies and so on. Most of the time your local grocer will have most of the fresh items pre-made. So, it's easy as can be. You can get really creative, definitely stay in those color schemes. This party is supposed to be fun and silly and nothing really that fancy. The objective is to be able to spend time with your girlfriends so it doesn't need to be over the top.

Lastly, you need a fun beverage. Come up with a signature cocktail. My favorite is a French 75 and a mocktail of course for your non-drinkers. Since you didn't really splurge on the party you can definitely splurge on the champagne. Go with Moet Chandon or Veuve Clique. A lot of times the Veuve

bottles are already pink so it's the perfect color pallet. To make it super fun, fill your champagne flutes with pink cotton candy conversation hearts and sprinkles. For the mocktails, Poppi sodas come in colorful packaging and are healthy and taste great. For decorations order a pink bow banner. Also, add some pink and red helium balloons to your mantle or table area and don't forget to add little bows to your champagne flutes at the stem.

Instead of having a stuffy sitdown area, make it a buffet style and add a bunch of floor pillows around your living room. Make sure to have really fun games such as twister or prosecco pong readily available. You're bound to laugh and have fun with those.

Before I forget, make sure to tell all of your friends to wear sequins or sparkles because it's not every day we get to wear that so we might as well take advantage of it. Wear fancy faux fur and lots of bling. Make sure you have a good playlist. Love songs from the '70s '80s '90s and today would be perfect. Dance, laugh, take lots of photos and have the best Galentines Day ever. Remember to make the sidewalk your runway kindness matters and love is all you need! Happy Love Day y'all!

Those 23 1/2 degrees matter

So, are you cold enough yet? The polar vortex has us in its grip. Which means those who love winter



Ann K. Bailes

are in their element, and those who prefer summer are ... enduring.

Now quick, answer this question without doing any googling:

Why are winter temperatures colder than summer ones?

If you answered "Because the earth is farther away from the sun in the winter," you'd be in the company of most people. However, you would be wrong. On the 3rd of January each year, the earth is actually closer to the sun that at any other time of the year.

So then, why don't we have warm temperatures in January?

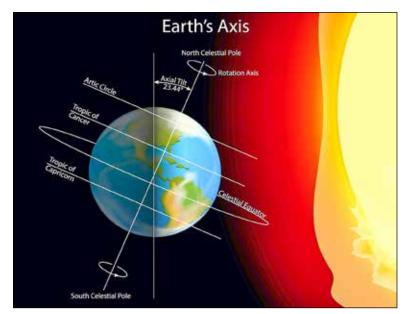
The answer is due, not to the distance that the earth is from the sun, but to its tilt, approximately 23½ degrees. That tilt determines why we have four seasons every year. When we in the northern hemisphere are tilted toward the sun, in summer, the sun is higher in the sky, causing more intense heating of the earth as well as longer periods of heating due to longer days. This causes crops to grow and mature.

In the winter, we're on the opposite side of our revolution around the sun. So the northern hemisphere is tilted away, and the sun is lower in our sky. The heating is then less effective than when the sun is higher. And spring and autumn are simply the transitions between these two ends.

We rarely stop to think about this

progression of seasons, but without that tilt, and the seasons, life would be much harder. Warm-weather crops would not grow properly. Insects would not be killed by the cold, and life would be plagued with swarms of bugs, as well as diseases carried by them. Regions far from the equator would be much less hospitable to life, and humans would migrate toward the middle latitudes. The equator would be unbearably hot. Weather patterns would stagnate, and ice would accumulate at the poles.

Too much tilt would be as serious as no tilt at all. If the degree of tilt was much greater, the temperature extremes between summer and winter would be far more pronounced. Most of North America and Europe would have mostly darkness in winter and mostly sunlight in summer. Again, life would be far more miserable.



(Sometimes I'll see former earth science students here in town, and they will smile and say to me "23½ degrees!" That was one of the first things we learned every year.)

As we venture through this cold winter, bear in mind that if we didn't have winter, then summer would not be nearly as enjoyable.

Someone once said about autumn, "I am glad it's fall, but I'm also glad it's not always fall." That goes for winter, spring, and summer as well. So though some dislike this cold weather, we must have all the seasons for life to function efficiently and can be grateful for that beautiful design. We need that 23½ degrees!

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I CAN'T WATCH

Way, way back when I was a youngster, my Dad would never allow us to watch television while we ate. TV was before or after a meal, not during. The only exception to that rule was on Saturday mornings when we kids

floo al a and and

Neal Parnell

could lie prone on the floor with a bowl of cereal and watch cartoons.

I'm much older now and can watch TV and eat anytime I like, although I choose not to unless I'm sure there will be no commercials during the program. In the past few years, I have

found that I can't watch some commercials until thirty minutes after I've eaten, or I'll risk losing my lunch. It used to be when a commercial was pitching a razor or deodorant, they would have a cartoon animation of the razor cutting through a hair, or a real person applying deodorant to their forearm to demonstrate the ease of shaving or applying the product and were careful not to offend anyone. Not today my friends. I just turned on my TV and witnessed a deodorant ad with a naked arm being raised, revealing the longest, gnarliest, strip of armpit hair I've ever seen. I'll skip a few meals until that image leaves my mind. With large TV screens and ultra-high-definition pictures, we're seeing things that most of us don't care to view.

I used to be able to watch golf or football while munching on a Skin's hotdog and chips, secure in the fact that the next commercial break would feature only Budweiser beer or a picnicking couple sitting by a stream smoking Salem cigarettes. If I try that today I'm reminded that I can now mail in my latest stool sample with ColonGard, followed by an extreme close-up of a bulging intestinal polyp the size of a school bus. To each their own I guess, but I'd rather watch Dexter quickly bludgeon, dismember, impale, and behead a victim than watch one more close-up of a bigmouthed dude bite into a dripping Hardee's Double Cheese Burger in slow motion. It seems to me that commercials should entice me to buy their product, but when I see cartoon bears shaking their booties and wiping up blue bear poop while encouraging me to Enjoy the Go!, I lose my appetite. There's just no way I'm making myself a delicious BLT sandwich and watching a zoomed-in view of a puffed-up belly being injected with the latest weight-loss drug or a microscopic view of someone's dry scaly skin.

Soap Operas got their name by advertising washing machine flakes and powders, dish-washing detergents, and bath soaps during

In the past few years,
I have found that I
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don't care to view.

commercial breaks in the 1960s. A housewife could relax and enjoy a mid-day snack while watching The Secret Storm or The Guiding Light. Not so in 2025. They are now bombarded with lawyers wanting to know if they were in a car wreck, or if they or someone they love is suffering from chronic moderate to severe

irritated bowel syndrome. Maybe I'm making too much of this, I realize that when I watch a horror movie, I expect to see atrocious scenes of gruesome gore. What I don't care for is having oozing pimples or cold sores shoved in my face when I'm trying to snack and watch 'Wheel of Fortune'. Or while watching 'Georgie and

Mandy's First Marriage' I have to sit through three minutes about why my sex life and hair could grow to new heights if I'd only try HIMS.

Please let me know I'm not the only one who feels this way by sending me an e-mail of your "Just Can't Watch Commercial" to dnparn@gmail.com.







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