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December 5-18, 2024

## Cuts for Confidence makes a difference, ONE HAIRCUT AT A TIME

BY KIM VON KELLER

Chronic homelessness is like a knot, and the reasons behind it are as complex as the people living through it. Improving the lives of people living in homelessness can also be complex. How can I make a difference if I'm not a doctor or a psychologist or an addiction specialist?

Sometimes, making a difference can start with giving someone a haircut.

That's the idea behind Cuts for Confidence, a nonprofit organization led by David Kimbrell, a former cosmetology professional. Kimbrell began giving haircuts to people living in homelessness in 2023. Since then, his organization has grown to encompass 15 partner agencies and over 150 volunteers. This year, Cuts for Confidence has provided almost 1,300 free haircuts at homeless shelters, rehab

centers, and soup kitchens.

"So much confidence can be restored when people look and feel their best," Kimbrell says.



"So often, we pass people in a doorway or on a street corner or in a tent, and all we see is

a dirty, grungy person, but that's not how people living in homelessness see themselves.

When we're finished and the

SEE CUTS ON PAGE 2

**CUTS FOR CONFIDENCE**  
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# Cuts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

person looks in the mirror, the image they see matches the way they think about themselves.

Volunteer stylist Hunter Wham works for SuperCuts of Easley, and she has a unique perspective when it comes to people living in homelessness.

"I have never lived on the street, and I've never dealt with addiction, but my dad suffered from addiction," Wham says. "From the time I was a young teen until 2022, he was living on the street as an addict. Most days he didn't know how he was going to eat. I tried to help him when I could without becoming an enabler. In 2022, he was murdered along with four other men in Inman, South Carolina. Because of his situation and the sudden, unexpected nature of his death, I felt like reality and time and life came into perspective for me. When I came across Cuts for Confidence, I thought, This is a skill I have. This is something I need to do."

Matching a need with a skill is what Cuts for Confidence is all about. When a person is sitting in the stylist's chair, they become just another client.

"A lot of folks don't see people living in homelessness as every-day people," Wham says. "They see them as people with problems. If I'm at a homeless shelter or rehab center, I try to talk to my clients like they're my next-door neighbors. I ask, 'How are you? What's going on in your life?' Just regular salon con-

versation. I don't put them on the spot, but I will listen to what they want to talk about. After a haircut, there's a different look on their faces. Living on the street or in a shelter, they lose who they are. When they see that they look like themselves again, it may be enough for them to realize that they want to be like that all the time."

In addition to providing haircuts in homeless shelters and rehab centers, Cuts for Confidence also offers haircuts in children's homes.

"Children need stability and consistency, and we show them that people in the community care about them," Kimbrell says. "We build relationships there, and we want to be positive role models. Kids want to look their best when they go to school, and being able to help with

that is something we're grateful to do."

You can help Cuts for Confidence fulfill their mission of helping people in need feel their best. When you visit the website, you'll find a volunteer tab. Cuts for Confidence partners with barber shops, hair salons, and cosmetology schools to provide as many haircuts as possible. If you aren't skilled at cutting hair, you'll also find a donation tab, and your contributions help provide sanitation products for stylist volunteers.

"It just fills us with joy to give people the images they have of themselves," Kimbrell says. "It's important to offer compassion. We can't solve the causes of homelessness, but we know how to cut hair, and we know how to show love to people. And there's never anything wrong with loving on people."



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Sunday: 2pm-6pm





# LETTERS TO SANTA

Back in the day, local publishers encouraged children to mail their letters to Santa directly to the newspaper offices. They would recognize those kids with the best written letters.

Santa letters originated as missives children received, rather than sent, with parents using them as tools to counsel kids on their behavior. For example, Fanny Longfellow (wife of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow) wrote letters to her children every season, weighing in on their actions over the previous year (“I am sorry I sometimes hear you are not so kind to your little brother as I wish you were,” she wrote to her son Charley on Christmas Eve 1851). This practice shifted as gifts took on a more central role in the holiday, and the letters morphed into Christmas wish lists. But some parents continued to write their kids letters in Santa’s voice. The most impressive of these may be J.R.R. Tolkien, who every Christmas, for almost 25 years, left his children elaborately illustrated updates on Father Christmas and his life in the North Pole—filled with red gnomes, snow elves, and his chief assistant, the North Polar bear.

Before the Post Office Department (as the USPS was known until 1971) presented a solution for getting Santa letters to their destination, children came up with some creative ways to get their messages where they needed to go. Kids in the U.S. would leave them by the fireplace, where they were believed to have turned into smoke that rose up the chimney and eventually reached Santa. Scottish children would speed up the process by sticking their heads up the chimney and crying out their Christmas wishes. In Latin America, kids attached their list to balloons, watching as their letters drifted into the sky.

In the spirit of Christmas past, your kids can send their letters to Santa through The Electric City News. Let him know a couple of things you really want for Christmas. Also, let him know one kind thing you did this year for someone else, it is his favorite part of reading about you. Drop off your letters in The Electric City News mailbox outside at 309 N Main Street by Wednesday, December 11th. You just might see your kindness show up for others to read!

GAMAC

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GAMAC is funded in part by the South Carolina Arts Commission which is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.



# Holiday magic starts at home!

## Nov. 28-Dec. 25, 5:30-10 p.m. | 31st Annual Anderson Christmas Lights

The Lights of Hope are going up again this year at 150 Rose Valley Blvd. in Anderson.

With more than 2.5 miles of drive-through light displays and Santa's Village, it's a family friendly activity that brings out the holiday spirit in everyone. The attraction will have treats available for purchase, and it will host a variety of musicians and bands to add to its ambiance. But beware!



Ainsley McCarthy

Santa's Village will be closed on Dec. 24-25. It costs \$15 per car and \$30 per bus. The proceeds will benefit more than 10 local charities.

## Dec. 2-Jan. 5 | Ice in the Park

Ice in the Park is an ice skating experience in Carolina Wren Park on 111 E. Whitner St.

in Anderson. It will be open from 5-9 p.m. on weekdays, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and from 2-6 p.m. from Dec. 2-22. Starting Dec. 23, it will be open from 1-9 p.m. on weekdays, but weekend hours won't change. It will be closed Dec. 24-25. The rink's ribbon cutting will be on Dec. 6 at 7:15 p.m. following the tree lighting in the square, and will feature music, vendors and a performance from Olivia Pellerin, a professional figure skater. Admission costs \$5 per person, but children under 6 years old get in for free.

## Dec. 6-7 & Dec. 13-14, 4:30-8:30 p.m. | Pendleton Christkindlmarkt

The Pendleton Christkindlmarkt will take place on the Village Green at 105 Exchange St. It is a European-inspired market with gifts and desserts from more than 20 vendors each night. Admission is free and outside food is allowed. A lit and decorated Christmas tree is a shining centerpiece in the shopping area.

## Dec. 6, 6 p.m. | Anderson Tree Lighting and Holiday Walk

Santa will be waiting on the square by the Anderson County Courthouse for this year's Tree Lighting and Holiday Walk on 100 S. Main St. in Anderson! The TL Hanna Jazz Band will kick off the festivities, followed by The Combo Kings at 7 p.m.

## Dec. 6-8, Dec. 13-15 | A Christmas Story at Clemson Little Theatre

The Clemson Little Theatre is debuting their own rendition of "A Christmas Story" by Philip Grecian. This classic tells the story of Ralphie Parker's mission to get a real Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas despite objections from his parents and teacher. Adult tickets are \$15 and youth tickets are \$7. It will be the last show of their 2024 season, and it is sure to end the year on a high note.

## Dec. 6-8, Dec. 12-15 | A Honky Tonk Christmas at Mill Town Players

Mill Town Players' "A Honky Tonk Christmas" is a "boot scootin' holiday concert" meant to bring a little country twang to the

Christmas season. If you've ever wanted to line dance with Santa, now you can! He's traded his snow boots for cowboy boots, and he's ready to boogie to some country Christmas tunes. Adult tickets are \$16 a person.

## Dec. 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. | Crafting with Claus with Anderson Art Center

You can start the fun early before the Anderson Christmas Parade with Anderson Art Center's Crafting with Claus. Visitors can expect crafts, cookies, hot chocolate and pictures with Santa. A \$30 family ticket will cover adults and two children, with a \$10 fee for additional children. The Art Center says all proceeds will fund its youth art programming.

## Dec. 8, 3 p.m. | Anderson Christmas Parade

This year's Christmas Parade will be on 101 S. Main St. in Anderson. It will spotlight creative floats, performers and bands from the area. Of course, Santa will be the guest of honor. The event will be free, but attendees are encouraged to arrive early to find parking and the perfect viewing spot along the route, which will begin near Greenville St. and end near Highland Ave.



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## Ways to Give

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# The history of makeup

I'm somewhat of a history buff. I'm really enthralled with early American days of old and recently was watching Luisa May Alcott's, Little Women. In one scene the character Jo, burns her sister Meg's hair completely off while curling it



Kristine March

with a tool that they used to give ringlets throughout the hair. Back then, it would often times burn their hair because they would warm this intense looking tool in the fireplace and the heat was

totally uneven. So, they were really lucky if the curls turned out correctly. Mostly it left them with fried hair. They would also add pieces of fake hair for parties and places that required them to look fancy.

In the 20's however, things got better because of good old-fashioned electricity. Finger waves and short bobs were literally the cutting edge and to achieve that certain look a French hairdresser by the name of Marcel Grateau came up with a very clever hair tool. The name Marcel wave or "marcelling" pretty much stuck and to this very day women still try to create that look. Especially on the red carpet and for that 1920's style.

Makeup fascinates me and especially historically. It dates back to Egypt of course and women lined their eyes with coal to ward off evil spirits. I'm definitely thankful that they did because I really love my eyeliner. In the Victorian era makeup was worn, but it couldn't be flashy or gaudy whatsoever. It was supposed to look pure. In fact, Queen Victoria banned lipstick and claimed it immoral and impolite. Rebellious women secretly started making their own homemade lipstick and it became sort of an underground society. I don't know about you, but I would've certainly been in their club.

Vintage powder boxes are so captivating to me and they go for a pretty penny on eBay. They had beautiful artwork on the packaging and those particular companies back then really took their work seriously. The makeup ingredients however were nothing like today and sometimes even carried traces of lead in them which in turn caused quite a few casualties because it actually got into people's bloodstream. That part of makeup history is quite baffling and pretty terrifying, but women used toxic formulas to look good. Anything for beauty. In today's standards, plastic surgery is what we do to look our best and really that's just as bad, but "Whatever makes you feel



your best" is my motto. I don't judge.

Another favorite cosmetic on my list is perfume. It dates back all the way to ancient Greece. It was more of an incense type formula and later made into liquid by Romans. Whenever I go to New Orleans I like to go to this certain perfumery and make my own. Bourbon French Parfum has been blending fragrances since 1843. Over 180 years and it's like a sensory time capsule. It takes you back. Some of their perfums are extremely strong, but I brought back little vials for my mother and sister so that they too, could smell like a French lady from that exact era. It is a neat experience to see how they batch them up and use the same methods from that time period.

Lastly, if you really want to delve into makeup history follow Erin Parsons makeup account on Instagram and Tik Tok. She's a beauty historian and a make-up artist. She takes you down a rabbit hole of incredibly interesting information. She's really knowledgeable and shares so many mesmerizing facts. I'm obsessed with all of her tutorials and accounts, so definitely add her to your social media if you're into beauty aesthetic and its history. What are some of your favorite beauty rituals? Remember to make the sidewalk your runway and kindness matters. Go put on some makeup y'all!

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## FROM THE SHELF

# On the gift of reading, Part 1

I'm approaching December's issues as a shopping guide for y'all. I'll also encourage buying from independent bookstores (if you can) as they need our business more, since this time of year can make or break them.

This year has been about reading for the joy of it, so there's been a lot of romance and thriller(ish) reads. Fortunately, those are popular genres, so there should be plenty to pick from if you're looking for book buying suggestions!

A favorite of mine this year is the Rebel Blue Ranch series by Lyla Sage. Set in Wyoming, this cowboy romance is contemporary while maintaining the traditional aspects of a western romance. I've never been one for westerns, but I loved Sage's fresh take. While it starts with Done & Dusted, the series can

be read out of order, each focusing on a different member of the Ryder family. They're short and sweet, but also take on some meatier topics.



Sara Leady

Plus, the covers are amazing!

The Townsend Harbor series by Kerrigan Byrne and Cynthia St. Aubin is another delight

I discovered this year. It's more humorous than Sage's, but it's also got some of the best puns I've ever read (which is a high bar). It also doesn't have to be read in order. In fact, I read Brewbies (book two) first, then I moved through the series. They're seriously hysterical and are a fun take on the small-

town trope, just very spiced up.

For the military romance readers, I really enjoyed Rebecca Yarros's Flight & Glory series. We already know I'm a Yarros fan, and these reflect the military foundation of Fourth Wing. Flight & Glory focuses on five different helicopter pilots. Book one, Full Measures, also has a hockey romance element, so two tropes for the price of one. These books have their funny moments, but they're more serious and tackle military living accurately (Yarros's husband actually just hung up his wings after twenty years flying a Blackhawk). This one is also a completed series!

Running with sports romances, I've read several but have been mostly lukewarm toward most of them. The Campus Diaries by Elle Kennedy were good in that they're

page turners, spicy, and have characters you're willing to root for, but they're a bit on the nose. For a sports romance fan looking for something a bit different than your standard fare, I'd recommend The Art of Catching Feelings by Alicia Thompson. It's extra fun since it's baseball, not hockey (hockey romances are SO popular now) and it handles grief and mental health in fantastic ways.

For your 'romantasy' readers, I really enjoyed the Kingdom of Lies series by Stacia Stark. It's a completed series (though I suspect we'll get a spinoff), slow burn, no love triangle nonsense, enemies to lovers, and has super fun world building. It's another BookTok darling, so there's spice that increases throughout the series. If you have Sarah J Mass or Fourth Wing fans in your life, this would be a great one for them, and it's a bit lesser known so you might even surprise them. I would also recommend Faebound, a start to a new trilogy. Saara El-Afrifi builds a really fascinating world with really

interesting characters and includes parallel love stories. It's a slow starter but I'm anxiously awaiting February 18th for when book two releases; that cliffhanger was ruthless.

I'll end this on a thriller romance crossover since part two will be thrillers/mysteries. The Ruinous Love Trilogy by Brynne Weaver is uh, something. This one is not for the faint of heart in either genre and maybe even only for the hardcore. It starts with Butcher & Blackbird, which is a romance between two serial killers... Hear me out! If you're a fan of both genres, you'll actually really like this one. It's surprisingly funny, and while obviously an oddball combo, both our killers kill for a good reason and only kill people who deserve it? Whatever. Don't judge me. I can't wait for book three – it has clowns and a shady carnival. Fair warning, Weaver is about to ruin various foods for you... honestly just take her list of warnings seriously and proceed with caution.



## Improving the Landscape of Our Community

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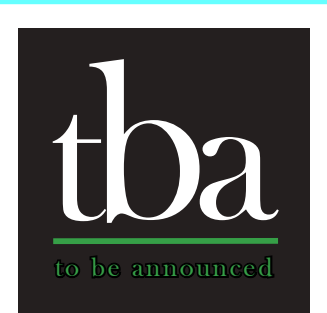


**Pegasus:**  
Did you know... That Pegasus is an enduring symbolic figure representing freedom, power and the eternal spirit of imagination and creativity. The bronze sculpture is 12 feet tall with a wingspan of 14.5 feet.

It was created by sculptor Sandy Scott of Lander, WY.

*"The seventh tba project brings beauty and imagination to Courthouse Square.*

*Whenever I'm downtown, I notice people admiring the sculpture and even taking photos with Pegasus in the background!"*  
Robert Rainey



**tba: Project Eight is in the works and will be announced in the Spring of 2025. Another gift to the Anderson Community from your friends at tba!**



# THE BIRDS COMES TO ANDERSON

Has a Hitchcock protégé come to Anderson? Because a remake of *The Birds* appears to be underway.

As anyone knows who has seen it, *The Birds* is a creepy movie. It succeeds despite having seemingly very little plot or theme – just those birds that keep arriving, and . . . well, if you’ve seen it, you don’t need any more description. And I don’t want to spoil it for anyone who never has. Just know that it is eerie.

Frightening. And just plain weird. But it is also arresting and difficult to turn away from!



Ann K. Bailes

And what does that movie have to do with Anderson? Twice in recent mornings Mike and I have been driving down the East-West Connector, and all the towers holding up high-power electrical lines have been covered with vultures – many of whom have probably been there at roost all night. The longer we looked, the more birds appeared, landing one at a time, just like the movie. It was a spooky – and getting spookier by the moment – sight.

Vultures are creepy and weird birds in their own right. They certainly don’t make for a pleasant little article in a community newspaper. Two types live in our area – both are large birds, with featherless heads, that ride the thermal air currents in wobbly circles, looking for dead things to eat. The turkey

vulture is larger and has a red head. The black vulture has a black head, is not quite as common, and has a slightly smaller wingspan. Those naked heads mean that they don’t mess up their feathers when they eat.

However, those not-very-nice huge birds do play an important role in ecology. Their unusual choice for a buffet means that they help get rid of dead carcasses – and that also helps prevent diseases that could spread from rotting flesh. They are commonly seen by the side of country roads, and despite their size and awkward gait, they can move quickly to get out of the way of passing cars. When a large group of vultures is seen circling in the distant sky, a carcass is there for the taking.

So, apparently local vultures have found

good roosting sites in those high-powered electrical towers that dot the landscape on the

East-West Connector. Hundreds of them can be seen. They’re lined up like black-cloaked undertakers, suspicious characters, awaiting their next customers. And thus those large black birds, coming in one by one, bear an eerie resemblance to the Hitchcock movie. I hope it’s just a resemblance. Knowing what the birds eventually inflicted in the movie, I might have to keep my windows up.

Just kidding. I know that nothing is going to happen, and the connector is safe to travel. But I might not watch *The Birds* for awhile. It’s too close for comfort to our own current apparition right here in town.

**Has a Hitchcock protégé come to Anderson? Because a remake of *The Birds* appears to be underway.**



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## YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

# Living a fulfilling life with purpose

As we come to the close of another year, I hope each of you – my faithful readers – can look back over the past 12 months and say that on balance it has been productive and fulfilling. I also want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your readership and your excellent feedback. Clearly, ours is a wonderful community of caring people. And it's a privilege to have a thriving dental practice that is in service to our patients and conducted for all in the spirit of "giving back".

I like to think of this column as a shared learning experience -- as we strive together to achieve a healthier and more productive life!

Over the past year we have focused on subjects like the importance of getting restorative sleep. Having a positive attitude. Being resilient in the face of stressful situations. Getting "unstuck" when the going gets rough. Having maximum energy for every day. Enjoying quality connections. And more.

Let me conclude our feature series for this year with this thought...

The secret to better health is more than eating better, sleeping better and exercising. It's also about living a fulfilling life with purpose.



**Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick**

Consider. We wake up, go to work, come home, have dinner, watch television, go to bed. Repeat. Making a living is a necessity, to be sure. But perhaps we should ask ourselves:

Am I incorporating into my days things that bring me excitement and joy? Here are four simple steps that provide a guide for living a more purposeful and fulfilling life:

- ♦ Look inside yourself to try and understand

what your life should feel like. What aligns with your beliefs and values. Do what feels right to you.

♦ Ask yourself what you care about and apply your unique skills in ways that can be used for a cause and/or contribute to the greater good.

♦ Trust yourself. Don't worry about what others think. Trust your gut and make decisions (life choices) that are best for you. In this way you live your life with a clear conscience.

♦ Practice gratitude. Reflect on the blessings in your life and share them with others. Touching others in a positive way is a wonderful feeling! You will gain a sense of pride while being of service to others. A true win win!

There's much more to consider. Learn to let go of failure. Be content with the purpose you have chosen for yourself. Try to live in the moment. Marvel in it...not waiting for a time when everything will simply fall into place. Again, I thank you for joining me in this journey to

better living. If you would like to discuss any of our subjects, please reach out. Consider us your hometown resource for guidance and support.

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

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

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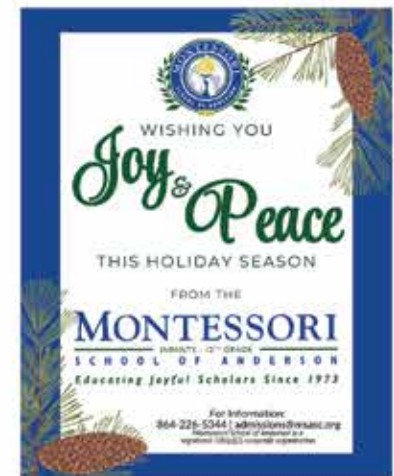
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# GALLANT'S DEFINING MOMENTS

BY RICH OTTER

In 2004, Robert Gallant described a number of what he considered to have been his defining moments in life. The first one, he acknowledged, was being born October 19, 1929. Robert was best known for his involvement with the Gallant-Belk store founded by his father with the Belk organization in 1919, but he enjoyed an exciting life that greatly enriched the city and county of Anderson.

He said his first experience in retail selling, that would define much of his life, came with an adventure with his brother and sister. As youngsters they were exploring the Gallant-Belk store on the Square in Anderson. In a sub-basement they found some old packing crates with long forgotten clothing dating back to the 1920s—"including pointy-toed women's shoes with spike heels. The clothes were just magnificent." They took them to the old milking shed behind their home and sold them for 15 and 20 cents each.

But there was a long rocky road ahead of him. For instance, at North Fant Street School on one occasion he was required to stay after school. He was incarcerated in the office of the principal, Miss Ettie Davis, to serve his time. She had a little plant that was leafless but had thorns she had decorated with gumdrops. During her absence from the room,

it seems a little gumdrop looked very inviting—and then another, and another, and another. By the time she returned the gumdrop tree bore naked thorns. She noticed. He spent a week in her office after classes (but without gumdrops).

Not wanting to dive into a big university too quickly, he went to Davidson for two years and then transferred to the University of North Carolina. To fit in with his fraternity brothers

at Beta Theta Phi, he acquired a pair of white buck shoes. The problem was, they had to be ordered specially to fit his quite large feet. They finally arrived and were glorious. He put them on and paraded into a group of brothers,



Robert Gallant

all of whom had on their dirty white bucks. They looked down at those huge white shoes and broke into laughter. One said: "Robert, why don't you knock the snow off your skis."

Humiliated, he scuffed them up.

The Korean War was heating up and he enlisted in the Air Force. No military boot would fit him. He went through basic drilling running obstacle courses in a pair of old dress shoes. Finally, some special order boots came through.

A supposed hearing impediment had kept him while in college from pilot cadet status. He later passed the same test and was told he probably had a cold at the

time of the first test. He went to Officer's Candidate School and became an officer in Alaska at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

In 1953, he retired and returned to Anderson, going to work at the Gallant-Belk

store. Although he anticipated being an old bachelor, he took a shine to Mary Calhoun. Her father, Andrew B. Calhoun, "wouldn't let me date her." She was eight years younger. Three years later, after a warning that she had a mind of her own, her father relented. Obviously, a defining moment.

During this time, their business continued expanding. The store having grown from its original 5,000 square feet to 75,000. They needed more parking space. They planned to build a parking deck over the railroad cut behind the store and obtained a 99 year lease of the air rights that many years before the city council had reserved when the railroad was first built. After considerable haggling with the railroad, the deck was constructed.

During seasons such as Christmas time, traffic was backed up to get into the new lot and the store. Robert would go out, stop traffic, and wave the cars into the lot or let them

out. It could then accommodate about 1,500 cars a day. He also was proficient at opening doors for customers.

One day he happened to open the door for a Black gentleman and bid him "Good morning". After he passed through, his customer suddenly stopped, turned around and said: "That's why I moved back down South. I left Anderson years and years ago and went up North and have done well, but they are not friendly up there. I have come back down here where my roots are and where people are friendly." That was certainly a defining moment for Robert.

He was very active in downtown development, but following urging of the Belk chain they moved the store to the Mall. He retired in 1989 and had the opportunity to pursue an interest in architecture he had harbored since college. Robert passed away in 2019. He was one good guy.

**In 2004, Robert Gallant described a number of what he considered to have been his defining moments in life. ... He enjoyed an exciting life that greatly enriched the city and county of Anderson.**

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# SNOW

If you're a meteorologist in the South, using the 'S' word can make or break your career. You know that we don't flinch if the stock market dives or spikes and that we don't blink when gasoline goes up another dollar,

but if we are walking through our den and hear the word SNOW our ears perk up, and a frosty panic is set in motion.

Before cell phones and the Internet, a weather announcement of snow was spread slowly through our car radios or the news at noon on our televisions. Everyone had time to prepare in a calm and cool manner. Nowadays, with instant Live 24-hour weather updates, everyone already in the grocery store is hoarding milk and bread and by the time

you get there you'll be lucky to fight your way to a quart of goat milk and a smushed loaf of Pumpernickel.

Our Northern neighbors are never surprised by a nor'easter with 12 feet of snow and ice. They stock up months in advance and hunker down for weeks on end. In the South, we are never prepared and must wait until the roads are solid blocks of ice before thinking our jacked-up 4-wheelers are immune to gravity and ditches. When a

Northern mother dresses her kid to play in the snow they are wearing a Gortex coat, insulated waterproof boots and gloves, and a thermal wind-protecting head cover.

My mom had to be inventive for me to go out into the winter wonderland of Anderson. A safety pin was used to have my dad's old baseball cap fit my head. His high school sweater with the sleeves rolled up was my coat and a pair of socks were my gloves. I did have waterproof shoes. Well actually, I had on two pair of socks which were then covered with bread bags held up with rubber bands

and stuffed into my sneakers. A little Vaseline smeared on anything else exposed and I was ready for hours of frosty fun. So, what if I came in later with frostbite; Dad said I probably wouldn't need all those fingers and toes anyway.

We Southern folk are pretty stubborn regarding coloring books and driving; we just can't stay inside the lines. When snow covers the lines in the road it's a free-for-all and even calling all 9's won't help. Thanks to my dad's snow-driving advice, I've never had a snow accident. He said, "Son, just pretend you're taking your grandmother to a church social. There's a chocolate cake and three gallons of sweet tea in glass jars in the back seat, and she's in the front wearing a new dress and holding a crock-pot full of hot gravy in her lap".

There are many signs that predict snow in the South; here's one - "If leaves fall early, winter will be mild. If leaves fall late, winter will be wild". I've come up with a couple for Anderson. "If the line at Besto is out the door, we'll get 2 inches, maybe more." "If you make every light while driving through town, a ton of snow is sure to come down"

And one more thing. Please don't grab the dash and scream every time I run off the road, it makes me nervous.



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# RUMINATING AND PLANNING AHEAD



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November 25th marked 22 years of living in my house. Before this, 16 years was the longest I had lived in one house. My daddy was a truck driver and had going in his blood. We moved A LOT. The land was bought in late fall of 1997 with a five-year plan to build. Once Henry Busby hired me in February 1998, my plant habit really grew...pardon the pun.

While wandering around trying to figure out where to plant more, it gives pause to think about how some things have grown. Last fall, I bought two banana shrubs because they smell wonderful with no plan of where I would put them, just somewhere I could enjoy their blooms. There were two in the yard already. But as time goes by, and decisions are re-thought, one was cut down because it was planted too close to Grandmother Cooley's magnolia tree. As I learned how big the banana shrub would grow, eventually it would block too much of grandmother's magnolia. I consider how big things will grow, but often times think "In another 20 or 25 years, will it matter". Banana shrubs make a good evergreen screen. One finally got planted to block a neighbor's house. I want to plant the other one behind the house even though it will eventually get too big for that area too. But I'm probably going for where I can smell it and never mind how big it will grow. I love the view from the screen porch though and must



Leaning possumhaw with new junipers

take that into consideration.

From a previous Garden Shop issue, wax myrtles Mother Nature planted under cedar trees on the property line have been dug up. Some have been planted further out from the edge of the yard. Part of the planting disorder is, years ago, I started letting some of the yard

return to pasture to decrease grass cutting. But now that I see how big the wax myrtle has grown, I'm putting some transplants where I will need to cut more grass, only until they get bigger though. Then they can fend for themselves amongst the broom sedge. Again, to hide me more from view. Mother Nature pro-

vides little cedar trees too and they are being transplanted into the pasture.

Another project going on is laying down cardboard, then covering it with leaves. It's free mulch, looks nice, and cancels out some grass cutting. I thought about starting a new bed in an open area of the front yard. I was going to put lantana and zinnias to make it a butterfly haven. Husband helped me bring vintage wrought iron from the "crap collection" behind the shed. I laid it out with the intention of making it a square parterre type garden. It seemed a good contrast to curvy lines around the yard. It did not come together as imagined. Plus, how many years would it be before Mother Nature planted sweet gums and oaks amongst the lantanas. So Husband got to help me put the wrought iron back where it came from. Another part of the disorder. He wondered how long it would be before he helps bring it out again.

Many years ago, a possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*) was planted in a standalone spot out front. Red berries contrast beautifully against golden yellow leaves in fall. Berries stay after foliage is gone for another show against its grey bark. Wind made the possumhaw lean and cutting grass under it was difficult. To fix that, three Tortuga junipers (*Juniperus communis*) have been planted under it. The tag says full sun but with the angle of the sun, and leaning of the shrub, they should be fine. Again, cardboard was covered in leaves that allowed the junipers to be planted near the edge of the shrub. Silvery blue foliage of the junipers should contrast nicely against the possumhaw and give winter interest once the possumhaw is bare.

The garden shop area is beginning to thin out as many things have been planted. If I can continue on this jag, it should be ready for restocking come spring...that disorder again.



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# The Soloist

I was eleven. I was invited to try out for the Christmas community choir. A lady visited our church to conduct the auditions.

I had been practicing for three weeks, learning the lyrics to "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

My father, the welder, took me to the audition after work. Before it was my turn to sing, he gave me a pep talk.

"Knock it outta the park," he said.

I sang for the lady in the wire-rimmed glasses who held the clipboard. She was less than impressed with me.

"Stop singing!" she

shouted, interrupting my song. "We're looking for something else, I'm sorry. Next please?"

My father stormed forward from the back of the church. He looked like he was on his way to pick a fight with an umpire.

"Now wait a minute, Lady," he said. "I demand you let my boy finish his song. He's been working on it for weeks. What kind of heartless woman doesn't let a kid finish his song?"

The woman's mouth dropped open. She looked at my father like he'd lost his mind.

She sat down and asked me to sing it again. I cleared my throat. I sang. I did much better than before. It wasn't a home run, per se, but more like an infield single.

I got the part.

I was fifteen feet tall. Until that day I'd never done anything special with my life—unless you counted the noises I could make with my underarms. I was a chubby kid with awkward features, I was neither handsome, nor athletic.

But now I was a soloist.

It took months of preparation to get it right. Each day after school, I would rehearse for my mother in the kitchen while she made supper.

On the night of the performance, my father arrived home an hour late. He wheeled into our driveway, kicking gravel behind his tires.

My mother flew off the porch, carrying my choir robe on a hanger. "You're late!" she shouted at him. My mother gasped when she saw my father.

"You're filthy!" she said. "You can't go like that!"

His denim clothes were stained, he smelled like diesel, his skin was painted with soot.

"The boss made me work late," he said. "Ain't got time to change."

My mother wished me luck with a kiss on the forehead and stayed behind. My father sped through the night.

We arrived at a Presbyterian church with lots of cars in the parking area. Families were walking into the chapel dressed in Christmas finery.

"I think I'm gonna be sick," I told Daddy.

"You're gonna be fine."

"But what if I mess up?"

"You won't."

"I gotta puke."

"Listen to me," he said. "Singing is just like baseball, you stand at the plate, you relax, you hit the ball. Now you're gonna go knock that ball outta the park, got it?"

I almost lost my lunch on his boots.

The chapel was ornate. I have never seen so many people crammed into one place, there must've been three counties in attendance. A small community orchestra played. The choir sang. Then came my solo.

And...

I choked.

I missed my cue. Maybe it was because of the large audience, or the three-story stained glass, or the beautiful choir. I opened my mouth, but nothing came out.

The music came to a screeching halt. The choir director almost passed a kidney stone. Everyone knew something was wrong. The silence of the hall was deafening.

This is how I would die, I thought. On a stage, wearing a starched robe.

Then, I saw him.

He was in the back of the room, a mile away. The sooty man, sitting in a pew surrounded by people in fancy clothes. People who had scooted away from him.

And that look he wore. It was pride. His boy was on the platform.

Suddenly, I was less worried. I forgot where I was. The audience disappeared. The next thing I knew, I was singing.

By the second verse, every voice in the audience had joined me. Hundreds of voices, following mine. And from the back of the chapel, candles were being lit, one by one, until the place was illuminated with a million lights.

When the concert finished, my father met me backstage. His eyes were raw and red. There were tear-trails on his dirty cheeks.

The choir director congratulated me. Then, she shook my father's filthy hand.

"Merry Christmas," she said.

But he couldn't seem to speak. All he could manage to say was, "That's my boy." Then he said it again.



Sean Dietrich



He took me into town to eat a chili dog. We ate on the tailgate. We stayed up late. We laughed.

That was our last Christmas together. If you get a chance this year, tell your kids how proud they make you.

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# Westside demolishes Camden in third round

## Yellow Jackets fall at Gaffney to bring season to an end

BY BRIAN HODGES

The Westside Rams continued their remarkable winning streak last Friday night, and they manhandled Camden with ease.

The host Rams won 49-7 over the Bulldogs in the state AAAA quarterfinals, giving them 26 victories in a row. And this one was over a 9-3 Camden team that had been highly successful in AAA before moving up in class this season.

But Westside's offense is different. They are like a 1,000-horsepower Formula-One race car competing against a 90-horsepower Ford Pinto.

Their talent is overwhelming.

Quarterback Cutter Woods, a South Carolina commitment, came into this game with 2,437 passing yards and 28 touchdowns this season.

So what does Camden do? They try a high-risk outside kick at the start of the game that Westside recovered at midfield.

The Rams hit several short passes before Woods dropped back and threw a beautiful 39-yard touchdown pass to Chamarryus Bomar.

It was 7-0 only three minutes into the game.

Camden ran three plays and lost the ball on a bad snap. The Rams ran two plays and Woods then threw a 43-yard scoring pass to Bomar.

Bomar then intercepted a Camden pass at the 32. Two plays later Woods threw a 38-yard touchdown pass to Armoni Weaver, and it was 21-0. For good measure, Woods threw

his fourth TD pass to Weaver with 2:25 left in the first quarter and it was 28-0.

Was the proud Westside team revved up after Camden's gamble to start the game?

"No, we were just revved up to play at the beginning of the game," Westside coach Brian Lane said. "It was a game on Thanksgiving weekend and we were ready to go."

The Rams didn't let up in the second quarter. Dreson Evans scored on a reverse and then added a brilliant cutback score from 19 yards out and it was 42-0 with eight minutes left in the half.

That meant the second half was played

with a running clock, which was welcomed by fans and players on a brisk 39-degree night.

"Every week we try to get a running clock," Lane said. "That's what we aim for."

The Rams will host South Pointe in the Upper State AAAA championship on Friday, Dec. 6. South Pointe (11-2) defeated Daniel 49-35 last Friday in a AAAA showdown. South Pointe's only losses were to

Spartanburg and Northwestern, two powerhouses in AAAAA.

### HANNA SEASON ENDS WITH LOSS AT GAFFNEY

T.L. Hanna's football season came to an end with a 21-7 loss at Gaffney last Friday night.

Gaffney overpowered the Yellow Jackets in the first half, building a 21-0 lead. Hanna fought back with a touchdown run by Daylan Williams in the third quarter but was shut down the rest of the game.

"Gaffney is a really good team and we had too many penalties in the first half," Hanna coach Jason Tone said. "Every drive we seemed

to stop ourselves. We haven't had that many self-inflicted mistakes recently. (Hanna had won seven games in a row.)"

Tone was able to take satisfaction in Hanna's turnaround after starting the year 2-2.

"It was a tale of two seasons," Tone said. "We were two plays from being 0-4. We survived against Byrnes and Wren and we seemed to regroup after the hurricane interrupted things."

"It stings right now, because we work so hard to reach this point and suddenly your season is over."

Next season, the Jackets will lose quarterback Brandon Cunningham to graduation but Gavin Magin will return.

Hanna had outscored their opponents 347 to 152 before Friday's loss. The Jackets ended their season at 9-3.



— Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 6 PM —

**Talk to Santa Claus and Tell him you've been good!**

He will be on the square in front of the Anderson County Courthouse.

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		Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> Electric City Christmas Market
		Dec. 14 <sup>th</sup> Free Photos with Santa



Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM  
Main Street | Downtown Anderson

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