

INSIDE
this issue



Charleston Symphony
brings "Messiah" to
Saint Clare
4



South African author's
journey to DI
10



BE football coach
recognized in Ridell's
35 Under 35
15

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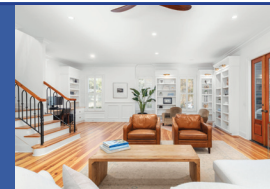
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Philip Simmons art students turn boxes into ‘magical playhouses’ for area children

EMMA SLAVEN
emma@thedanielislandnews.com

High school students from Philip Simmons are painting and turning ordinary wooden boxes into magical children’s playhouses, a project that allows them to apply their artistic skills in a real-world setting while making a difference in their community.

The project, coordinated by Habitat for Humanity and the Notre Dame Club, began when the groups reached out to Philip Simmons High School, looking for budding artists who could bring “creativity and artistic vision to decorating the playhouses for children in need,” explained Paige Duvall, the school’s visual arts teacher.

The project quickly proved to be a perfect fit for her National Art Honor Society students. “It allows students to apply their artistic skills in a meaningful, real-world context while making a direct impact on a child’s life,” Duvall said. “The project requires collaboration, creative problem-solving, and empathy – all essential skills for both artists and future professionals.” This December marked their third collaboration with the Notre Dame Club and Habitat for Humanity, and the students have spent the weeks leading up to the build immersed in

preparation. Each student receives a child’s name, favorite colors, and interests. From there, they sketch ideas and create decorative elements – window boxes, streamers, and wood cutouts – that can be attached to the playhouse on build day. “This year, we even collaborated with a Berkeley County School District technology representative, who laser-cut characters from ‘The Backyardigans’ along with the child’s name to add an extra level of personalization,” Duvall said.

The process blends organization with creativity: Habitat for Humanity identifies families in need and manages construction logistics, while Duvall’s students focus on design. On build day at Clements Ferry Road’s Lowe’s Distribution Center, the students transformed a simple wooden structure into a customized space reflecting the child’s personality.

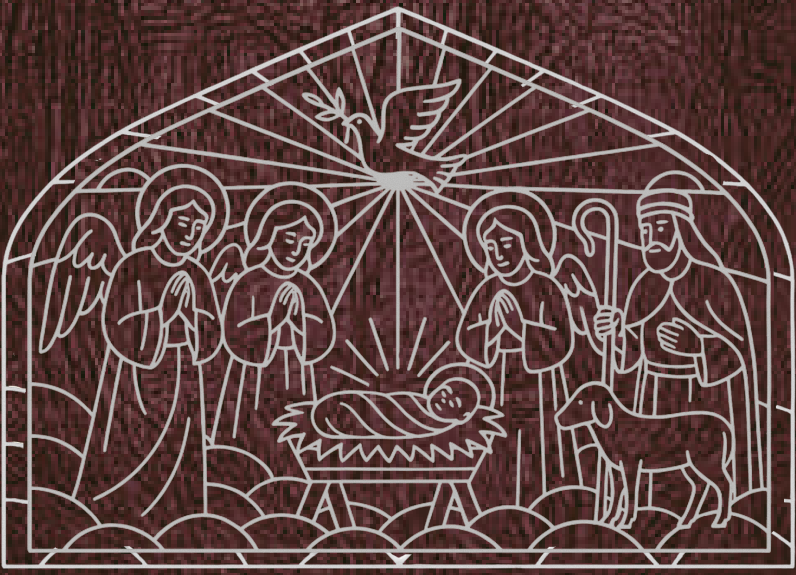
Students approach each playhouse with thoughtful research and brainstorming. They consider themes, colors, and decorative elements that will excite the child. “They work collaboratively to ensure every detail, from window boxes to painted accents, creates a cohesive design that feels personal and special,” Duvall said. “The students have responded with great pride and a strong sense of accomplishment. Beyond developing technical artistic skills, they learn the power of empathy-driven design,



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PAIGE DUVAL

Philip Simmons art students spent the day painting and personalizing playhouses for area children.

creating art with a specific person’s joy in mind rather than just personal expression,” Duvall said. They also gain practical skills in collaboration, project management, and creative problem-solving. The most rewarding part comes at the end of the day – seeing a child’s reaction to a playhouse designed just for them is an emotional, full-circle moment, Duvall said. “It transforms the abstract concept of ‘community service’ into a concrete, emotional moment where they witness the direct impact of their creativity and hard work.”



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Charleston Symphony performs "Messiah" at St. Clare

EMMA SLAVEN

emma@thedanielislandnews.com

If you want to understand why a 90-minute, centuries-old oratorio still packs a sanctuary on Daniel Island every December, you only have to watch the way people leaned forward as Assistant Conductor Ryo Hasegawa raised his baton.

Inside Saint Clare of Assisi Catholic Church, the Charleston Symphony's beloved "Messiah" returned Saturday evening on Dec. 5, with the kind of anticipation reserved for hometown traditions, because at this point, that's exactly what it is. The annual "Holy City Messiah" draws residents who know the music by heart and newcomers who quickly learn why it sells out each year.

For Hasegawa, stepping into this role for the first time was an honor. "It was absolutely special for me, especially knowing a lot of people in the audience personally," he said. "It allowed me to open up even more to tell

this powerful story of Handel's 'Messiah.'"

Though "Messiah" is standard holiday repertoire worldwide, Hasegawa approached the score with curiosity and respect.

"Since it was my first time conducting this work, I looked into some performance traditions, but in the end, I also felt there is beauty in bringing some freshness to this tradition," he said, adding that he shaped dramatic contrasts and encouraged sounds that made the piece feel vivid and immediate.

"Some of the texts are so powerful, so I took some liberties to make it more dramatic."

The result was a performance that felt alive and collaborative. The CSO Chamber Chorus, prepared by director Nicholas Quaradokus, filled the church's pristine acoustics, while soloists Catherine Psarakis, Christina Pezzarossi Ramsey, Brian Giebler, and Andrew Potter stood out for their vocal talent and spontaneity.

"In every number they sang, they would



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CHARLESTON SYMPHONY

sing slightly differently," Hasegawa said. "There are so many magical moments where the orchestra listened to them and reacted to their singing."

The high point, even for Hasegawa, came in the final Amen chorus. "You can feel this uplifting spirit in this moment, which is absolutely beautiful."

For Hasegawa, conducting means "using every part of my body visible to the musicians to show intimacy and grandeur of the drama of the work. I love communicating with players and singers in front of me live and being in the moment of making music.

"Even if you didn't know the text, the music and energy that musicians bring is uplifting, dramatic, and full of positivity."

Despite the demands of a nonstop 90-minute performance, the musicians delivered with stamina and heart. "Everyone on the stage did a superb job," Hasegawa said.

For a conductor preparing youth ensembles for venues like Carnegie Hall in New York City and Jordan Hall in Boston, this community-centered tradition remains grounding.

"This type of concert reminds me of why I do what I do – connections with people, seeing the relevance and impact of music-making in real life, and sharing such a special season with people I love," Hasegawa said. "Without an audience who supports the music and arts, we simply cannot do what we do. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to share the joy with the community members of Daniel Island I adore so very much."



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The Daniel Island News

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Office 843.856.1999
291 Seven Farms Drive, 2nd Floor
Daniel Island, SC 29492

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The Daniel Island News is published weekly and distributed free throughout Daniel Island and down Clements Ferry Rd. to residences, business establishments and at various distribution points on Daniel Island, Mt. Pleasant, and Cainhoy. The entire content of The Daniel Island News is copyrighted 2025 by DI Media Group, LLC. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission from the publisher.

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E-bike close calls, injuries demand stronger laws

SCOTT NOONAN

E-bikes have become a fixture on Daniel Island and the surrounding areas – speeding down streets, zipping across intersections, and carrying kids to and from school faster than ever.

But behind the convenience and novelty lies a growing safety crisis that many residents see daily.

I've watched children, some as young as 11 or 12, flying down our streets at 35 miles per hour, riding while FaceTiming friends, doing wheelies, ignoring stop signs, or darting into traffic without looking. We have been extraordinarily lucky that these close calls haven't yet turned into tragedies.

This issue isn't about being anti-e-bike. It's about being pro-safety. E-bikes are, in every meaningful sense, motor vehicles. Many models accelerate like mopeds and reach speeds comparable to low-speed motorcycles, yet they are often operated by children far too young to appreciate risk or read traffic conditions.

Research backs this up: decision-making, hazard awareness, and impulse control simply aren't fully developed in kids and early teens. Roads are not meant to be training grounds for 12-year-olds traveling at 30-plus mph.

National data tells the same story. E-bike injuries have risen 293% in recent years, and head trauma cases have increased nearly 49-fold, according to studies published by the American Academy of Pediatrics and JAMA Surgery.

NIH research shows the age group most



Scott Noonan

commonly injured is 10 to 13 years old, many with internal injuries and hospitalization rates far higher than traditional bicycles. These aren't scraped knees. They're severe, preventable trauma.

That's why we are advocating for a common-sense community standard: a minimum age of 16 to operate an e-bike on public roads, sidewalks, or pathways, aligning e-bike use with the same safety logic applied to every other powered vehicle, including low-speed vehicles. If you're not old enough to drive a car, you're not old enough to ride a 35-mph electric motor vehicle through traffic, period.

To reinforce the rule, we propose a simple enforcement mechanism: any minor caught violating it would receive a six-month delay in obtaining their driver's license, as well as a \$500 fine. For a teenager eager to drive, that's a meaningful deterrent and a far more effective

one than a nominal fine.

Alongside that, parents should share liability. When a child repeatedly rides illegally or dangerously, parents must be accountable. Stiff fines will ensure involvement, oversight, and education at home.

But regulations alone won't solve the problem. Parents themselves need better tools and judgment, and fortunately, those exist. Apps like Life360, GeoZilla, and manufacturer-linked platforms such as Bosch eBike Flow allow adults to monitor speed, set geofenced boundaries, and receive alerts if a child rides too fast or too far.

Some systems even allow speed limiting controls, preventing bikes from exceeding safe thresholds. These technologies give parents insight and control they've never had before.

What should the city and state do? Adopt these clear and enforceable policies. No more ambiguous policies that are hard to understand and enforce. Speed limits based on different classifications of e-bikes simply don't work.

This isn't an attempt to ban e-bikes. It's an effort to protect kids, pedestrians, drivers, and the character of our community. E-bikes are here to stay; the question is whether we manage them proactively or wait for the first fatality to force reactive change.

For our children, the answer should be obvious.

Scott Noonan is a Daniel Island resident leading community efforts for stricter e-bike regulations.

Cub Scouts sing holiday cheer for senior residents

Daniel Island Cub Scout Pack 519 kept its annual tradition alive on Monday, Dec. 8, bringing holiday cheer to the residents of Revela at Daniel Island (formerly The Oaks at Daniel Island) with an evening of caroling.

Led by Cubmaster Matt Levin and coordinated by adult leader Ryan Roberts, the young scouts were joined by members of Troop 519, whose older Scouts helped guide the younger Cubs through the service project.

Levin said the experience offered the Cubs an early lesson in



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MATT LEVIN

kindness and community spirit.

"It was personally rewarding. I knew the pack played a part in bringing a little bit of joy and brightening their day."

One week left!

Final voting for The Best of Daniel Island 2026 enters final days

You still have time to make history! Go to thedanielislandnews.com/bestof and pick the winners of the inaugural BEST OF DANIEL ISLAND 2026.

Give the gift of your support and select your favorite finalists from categories ranging from best hairstylist, restaurant, happy hour, doctor, dental office, accountant, real estate company, foods, and schools... and much, much more.

You can still vote daily through Tuesday, Dec. 23, and then the polls close!

So make your vote count!

- Final Round voting continues through Tuesday, Dec. 23.

- You can vote once per day in each category.

- Just visit thedanielislandnews.com/bestof and

- There is absolutely no cost required to vote or win.

Winners will be celebrated at an exclusive Best of Daniel Island winners' event next spring, showcased in the inaugural Best of Daniel Island glossy magazine, and will receive a free framed certificate and window cling.

Promotional advertising packages are available to support finalists during their final week by contacting Ronda Schilling at ronda@thedanielislandnews.com or Patrick Villegas at patrick@thedanielislandnews.com.

Good luck, happy holidays, and happy voting!



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KIDS SAY

What is your favorite cozy thing to do at home in the winter?

Compiled by Rose Monahan
6th grade, University School



I like to put on my PJs and watch Christmas movies.

Manny, age 14
Charleston



Listen to Christmas music!

Marilyn, age 7
Charleston



Play with my cats and my dogs!

Addison, age 6
Charleston



Watch Christmas movies while wearing a blanket!

Harper, age 11
Charleston



My favorite cozy thing is drinking hot cocoa.

Quinn, age 8
Charleston



I like wrapping up in a blanket on my couch with my dog!

Kathryn, age 10
Charleston

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Money-saving tips to winterproof your wallet during the freeze

PATRICK VILLEGAS

patrick@thedanielislandnews.com

Staying comfortably warm from winter cold snaps in the South may not require winning the Powerball to pay a power bill. But it won't be cheap either.

"My power bill last winter was painful."

Those words come from Avery Wilks, who, in front of his bosses at the state's group of nonprofit electric companies, spoke bluntly to invited members of the media at the Moncks Corner headquarters of Berkeley Electric Cooperative.

Wilks said that, yes, you will pay more during the winter to heat your home.

But he defended the utilities, saying it's not because electric companies are intentionally jacking up rates.

"In reality, when it gets to high bill season, it's related to the weather," he said.

Wilks said it's simple supply-and-demand economics: when temperatures drop overnight, more people collectively inch up their thermostats, putting a strain and drain on utility power during peak hours.

As everyone's heater fires up at the same

time, so do energy bills.

During the media event, electric officials flashed slides indicating what dominates the bulk of a customer's bill:

- Heating and cooling costs: about 50%
- Water heaters: about 22%
- Lights: about 5%

Officials noted that increasing a thermostat during a cold winter night or decreasing it on a hot summer afternoon can add \$10 per degree, per month, to a bill. Conversely, moving the thermostat in the opposite direction can save 3% to 4% monthly.

Their solutions to save money?

- Keep the thermostat steady: 68 degrees in winter, 78 degrees in summer
- Drop the temperature on your water heater
- Take shorter showers
- Turn off the lights
- Take advantage of off-peak hours and avoid high-demand times

Tony Vincent, who is Berkeley Electric Cooperative's vice president of public relations for the nonprofit company, said there are also other ways to save, one of which is requesting an energy audit.

"We have teams that want you to use less of the product we sell," Vincent said, "We want to do that for you. It doesn't help us to sell you more (energy.)"

Most utility companies offer audit teams to pick apart what may be hogging a home's energy.

Utility officials said mobile apps are also available to give customers data insights into their daily electric usage, help pinpoint the best off-peak hours, and identify appliances and lights in the home that may be auto-

mated to save money.

As for Wilks and his soaring electric bill last year, he said he finally called in an energy audit team.

"The culprit was bad insulation," he said.

"There were three inches of insulation left. We put in 13 inches of insulation, and the problem was solved immediately."



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South African native Elsa Dixon finds 'peace in my soul' on Daniel Island

MISTY JO NEILSON
news@thedanielislandnews.com

Nearly a quarter century ago, Elsa Dixon left her South African homeland and arrived on Daniel Island with only two suitcases and \$1,000.

Looking for a new life as crime and political unrest escalated in South Africa following the end of apartheid, Dixon came to America as part of an international educator program in 2002. She was one of 40 international teachers in Charleston that year and landed on Daniel Island by chance during a rainstorm.

"I was driving over the bridge and saw a sign that said Daniel Island, so I turned off the exit and my car took the road straight to River Landing Drive," said Dixon, who parked at Daniel's Landing condominiums. "The sign said, 'Future resident, we've been expecting you,' and that is where I stayed."

Dixon immersed herself in Lowcountry life and focused on socializing and learning about American culture: "I just dove into it completely and did all I could."

Dixon joined Daniel Island's first book club, enjoyed ballroom dancing, playing Scrabble, attending oyster roasts, celebrating American holidays, and visiting other states.

"I made quite a lot of friends here," she said. "The (Daniel's Landing) clubhouse was where everybody gathered, and I had a lot of parties where I would cook my South African curry dishes. I was a great one for organizing a party."

A music lover and author of three instructional music books, Dixon offered piano lessons in her home while working as a music teacher in the public schools of McClellanville, South Carolina. In 2005 she was hired by Ashley Hall in Charleston to develop the private school's preprimary music program.

In 2006, she began a travel company called Travels with Elsa, taking families on tour to South Africa and other countries during school holidays. She became a travel writer and published two books under her maiden name, Elsa van der Byl.

"Hippos, Hotspots, and Homelands" chronicles her life in South Africa, and "Immigration: From Lowveld to Lowcountry" tells the tale of her adventures in Charleston. Both books are available on her website, travelswithelsa.com, and Amazon.com.

Dixon said she has travel and entertainment in her genes. Her father, Piet Pompies, who she wrote a book about in 2018, was a famous South African comedian and songwriter who traveled the country with his family in tow.

Born in 1946, Dixon grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, during apartheid, a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination. "We had a very protected life as white South Africans, and I did not really understand how apartheid worked when I lived in Cape Town," she said.

It was only after she and her husband moved into the countryside as part of a government-sponsored rural educa-



PROVIDED BY ELSA DIXON

A Travels with Elsa tour group pushes a broken-down safari vehicle in the Serengeti in 2023. Dixon is pictured in the back.

tion initiative that Dixon immersed into Black culture. She was appointed lecturer in music and preprimary education and ran a student choir that promoted Black music and arts.

But the job she loved did not come without risks.

"I was held hostage by students on more than one occasion when they wanted to protest," said Dixon, who explained that she had a relationship of mutual respect with her pupils.

For nearly 10 years, Dixon lived and taught school in the Sabi Sand Game Reserve, where she said it was an ordinary day to be greeted by an elephant walking past the kitchen window or hear the rumble of leopards on the roof.

"One time the lions started climbing on my car, and I remembered I spilled milk in my trunk, so I made a quick getaway," she said with a chuckle.

After her husband died in 2001, Dixon's four daughters, who now live abroad in England, Switzerland, and Canada, began worrying about her safety. Dixon was living alone in the countryside and remembers sleeping with a gun under her pillow after being burglarized three times. Although she loved her country, she couldn't resist the opportunity to reinvent herself in America.

Dixon became a dual citizen of the United States and South Africa in 2014 and led travel tours to her homeland until 2024. She lived in Daniel's Landing for 23 years before moving last February to Daniel Pointe Retirement Community, where she still teaches piano lessons.

"I love Daniel Island; it's been wonderful," said Dixon, who appreciates the natural setting, family environment, and proximity to the ocean.

"It's just beautiful, and it's so nice to see all the trees and the moss out my window. That gives me peace in my soul."



MISTY JO NEILSON

Elsa Dixon moved to Daniel Island from South Africa in 2002. An author, educator, and music lover, she has taught piano lessons from her home for 23 years.



PROVIDED BY ELSA DIXON

Elsa Dixon on a hunting safari with members of the Hadzabe tribe in Tanzania in 2023.



PROVIDED BY ELSA DIXON

Elsa Dixon dances in Zimbabwe in 2018.

Baked cookies, beard-tugging, and brandy: A Lowcountry Claus slips into Santa's shoes

EMMA SLAVEN
emma@thedanielislandnews.com

If you think Santa's biggest challenge is squeezing down chimneys, think again.

According to the jolly man who's been spotted all over the Lowcountry this season, the real magic (and mayhem) of being Santa Claus happens long before Christmas Eve.

From beard-tugging toddlers to gluten-free cookie mandates, Santa's life is equal parts enchantment and chaos.

This particular Santa, known the rest of the year as local resident Jon Tirpak, speaks in character with the ease of someone who's spent a lifetime in the red suit – literally.

"I've worn this red suit for centuries! It's been patched, tailored, and enchanted more times than I can count," Santa said, noting that Mrs. Claus "manages the trendy updates," like the North Pole's own fashion director.

But even a timeless icon evolves. "Over the years, being Santa has changed from handwritten letters and chimney visits to emails, apps, and GPS-guided sleigh rides," he said. Though the modern world may influence logistics, tradition still tugs at his heart. "Bringing the joy of our Savior's birth has never changed."

Of course, some things never change, especially curious

children. He's heard requests for everything from dinosaurs to trips to Mars to a brand-new baby brother. And when little ones test whether he's the "real" Santa, he welcomes the challenge. "I let them tug! My beard is as real as the snow at the North Pole."

If that's not proof enough, he flashed his newest credential. "The State of South Carolina DMV just issued my Sleigh Driver's License – it's even laminated!"

Modern Santa life brings another complication: phones everywhere. But Santa takes it in stride. "With the help of my social media elf, F.B. Real, anyone is free to take a picture of yours truly!"

His real problem isn't the technology, though; it's all that gluten and dairy.

"My Chief Financial Elf advises a contract for my corporate clients to pay me residuals when I have to eat gluten-free cookies on the table. Which reminds me, my Physician Elf, Doc Humorous, informed me recently that not only should I avoid gluten, but also skip milk," Santa huffed. "Moms, instead of milk, how about a couple of fingers of brandy? Don't worry, I have a driver named Rudolph!"

By December, his schedule becomes a blizzard of activity. "Mornings are for toy inspections, afternoons for sleigh test flights, evenings for gluten-free cookie taste tests, and



ANN WARE

Santa fuels up for the season with a slice of gluten-free bundt cake – doctor's orders!

nights for checking the Naughty and Nice List twice." And if you're wondering – yes, Daniel Island is looking good this year.

Despite impossible wish lists, tough questions, and the pressure of delivering magic to a fast-paced world, Santa keeps coming back each year. His biggest Christmas wish? That people slow down. "Truth be told, the Christmas season starts on the 25th. Take advantage of this season, and start your new year on the right foot!"



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Clements Ferry artist turns oysters into holiday keepsakes



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ANISSA BREMER

Clements Ferry resident Anissa Bremer turns local oysters into hand-painted holiday art.



Bremer's hand-painted oyster ornaments show case a mix of holiday and coastal Charleston designs.



A hand-painted oyster ornament adds coastal charm to Christmas trees.

EMMA SLAVEN

emma@thedanielislandnews.com

Santa Claus, cardinals, and Charleston flowers – none of these normally come with shells attached. But for Clements Ferry resident Anissa Bremer, oyster art has become the perfect canvas for holiday magic, turning kitchen tables into workshops and simple shells into gifts that twinkle with charm.

"I have always been drawn to handmade crafts and specifically oyster art," Bremer said. "I'm a coastal girl at heart despite growing up in Michigan. I had a beautiful beach wedding and included oysters as place cards that were actually completed by my crafty little sister at the time.

"It wasn't until I had to undergo a shoulder surgery and was left with a lot of extra time on my hands that I found my love for making oysters into beautiful handmade gifts for friends and family."

Bremer works full-time as a physical therapist, but her oyster creations are more than a hobby; they're a way to stay creative while recovering.

"The surgery was done on my dominant arm, requiring me to be in a sling and be out of work for quite some time," she said. "In order to keep my body moving in a safe way and keep my mind at ease, I began creating oyster art. Each piece has continued to get better with time, as I am doing the art with my non-dominant hand."

Her home kitchen and screened-in porch serve as her studio, where shells of all sizes are transformed into ornaments, jewelry dishes, and wreaths.

"I think my husband would appreciate eventually having our main dining room table back as a place to eat versus create," she laughed, "but for now, he has been very supportive of my side venture."

Bremer's designs range from festive holiday themes – Santa faces, wrapped presents, and Christmas trees – to Charleston-inspired coastal pieces.

"Charleston motifs are by far my favorites," she said.

"With so many friends and family members living further away, I like to bring a piece of my home away from home to them during the holiday season. My husband and I have fully embraced the Charlestonian lifestyle since arriving here in 2019. We've always been drawn to the architectural style and artwork, including blues, whites, and symbols of what makes Charleston such a special place."

The process of ornament making can get pretty meticulous. Each piece begins with carefully mapping the oyster arrangement, followed by painting, gold edging, and finishing touches like bows for wreaths.

"My favorite part is seeing the final piece in its entirety," Bremer said. "You'd be surprised how different my pieces look until the gold edging or bows are added to the wreaths specifically." Depending on size and complexity, a wreath can take about two days to complete, while ornaments and jewelry dishes are quicker.

Her pieces are available directly through Bremer, with prices ranging from \$8 to \$35 depending on size. While she hasn't opened an Etsy shop yet, she's open to expanding if demand grows.

"Personally, these pieces have given me a sense of purpose during this time. You don't know how much you truly value movement and function until it's taken from you. That's when you can either become fearful and resentful or choose to make the most out of a tough situation.

"These oysters have brought hope and opened new doors of creativity for me. My real goal is to bring this same type of purpose and hope to others during the holiday season by creating a beautiful piece to be hung in areas where friends and family gather."

For more information, contact Anissa Bremer at Anissa.stanitzek1014@gmail.com.

Warm up your winter with beautiful blooms

Tips from The Joyful Florist for a cheerful, long-lasting holiday home

EMMA SLAVEN

emma@thedanielislandnews.com

Even in the chill of winter, your home doesn't have to go gray and dormant.

With the right blooms and a little know-how, flowers can bring color, texture, and life to the season, inside and out, according to Tiffany Ferez, owner and lead floral designer at The Joyful Florist on Daniel Island.

"We have a lot of options even in the winter months," Ferez says. "We have access to many varieties of roses, hydrangeas, stock, delphinium, to name a few. They come from various regions all over the country, even all over the world."

While you might expect traditional poinsettias and holly, Ferez loves to surprise her clients with unexpected winter-friendly blooms. "We use a lot of palms and tropicals like safari sunsets and hanging amaranthus in our holiday arrangements," she said, adding a whimsical, festive flair to traditional decor.

KEEPING FLOWERS FRESH

For arrangements that last, hearty flowers are key. Ferez recommends garden roses, amaryllis, tulips, anemones, ranunculus, calla lilies, and hydrangeas. "These hold up beautifully in the colder, drier months."

She emphasized the importance of placement to keep flowers looking fresh. "The biggest mistakes people make with floral arrangements in the winter are improper placement near extreme temperature sources such as drafty windows, exterior doors, or heating vents. These temperature fluctuations and dry air can quickly dehydrate the flowers and cause serious damage."

Indoor heating can be a silent culprit as well. "Central heating zaps the humidity, making flowers extra thirsty," Ferez said.

"Be sure to trim the stems at a 45-degree angle every few days to maximize hydration, and do not expose flowers to direct sunlight. A cool, bright spot in indirect sunlight is ideal. Pay attention to water levels and replenish it frequently with room temperature water."

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BLOOMS

During the holidays, certain blooms and greens naturally shine. "Classic choices like poinsettias, amaryllis, and holly bring traditional cheer, while elegant options like red roses, hypericum berries, and juniper offer a timeless beauty," she said. At The Joyful Florist, Ferez loves to add her own creative twist. "We use burgundy peonies and Belles of Ireland, green hydrangeas, red and burgundy ranunculus, and tulips for a festive yet whimsical look."

Even the most beautiful flowers come with caveats. Ferez warns, "Peonies, hydrangeas, tulips, poppies, and dahlias, while all beautiful, are delicate and prone to petal dropping and wilting when exposed to warm temperatures or lack of consistent water." Choosing the right flowers and understanding their needs ensures your home stays vibrant all season long.

For her own home, Ferez leans on texture and variety. "I love to use lots of different types of greenery for richness, and hydrangeas, garden roses, and ranunculus to add a delicate and whimsical touch," she said. The mix of textures and colors, she says, is what makes a winter arrangement truly special.

BUYING ADVICE

Beyond the aesthetics, Ferez believes in the value of buying local, especially during the holidays. "Local flowers can be customized to your holiday decor, color, and style and are extremely fresh. Flowers are often delivered to a floral shop within 24 hours of being cut," she said.

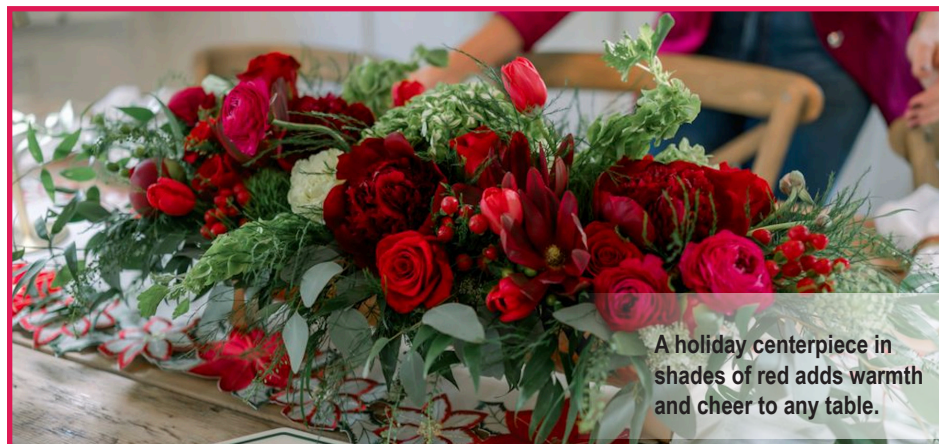
"Local floral designers have a fresher product than a national online company, but also the creative freedom to use their skills and artistry to design a custom arrangement versus having to copy a photo from a national chain."

Whether you're decking the halls with classic reds and greens or experimenting with tropical touches and textured greenery, Ferez's tips might just make it easier to keep your home blooming bright, no matter how frosty it gets outside.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TIFFANY FERAZ

A classic poinsettia adds a pop of festive red to any winter arrangement.



A holiday centerpiece in shades of red adds warmth and cheer to any table.



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BE's Logan Hall named among the nation's top football coaches under 35

PHILIP M. BOWMAN
sports@thedanielislandnews.com

The American Football Coaches Association announced its 2026 Leadership Institute's 35 Under 35, which includes 34 coaches under 35 years old from schools such as Stanford University, North Carolina, SMU, Georgia Tech, Texas Tech, Houston, Ole Miss, and many, many more.

The other coach?

That's Bishop England High School's Logan Hall.

The Institute, presented by Riddell InSite Analytics, is a program designed to identify and develop premier future leaders in the football coaching profession under the age of 35.

Selected participants attend a one-day institute that features a curriculum of interactive lectures focused on topics specifically tailored to emphasize leadership in the coaching profession, ethics, influential responsibilities, career progression, and family balance.

"This award is a terrific opportunity to continue learning and networking in this profession with coaches that are doing it at the highest level," said the 34-year-old Hall, who just completed his second year as the head coach of the Battling Bishops.

"It is also a great honor to represent Bishop England High School. I have a couple of friends who have attended this event and talk about how good a job they do during the event."

Being named one of the top 35 was impressive enough. Being the only high school coach selected made it much more of an honor.

"So, there is a requirement that you must be under the age of 35 and a high school head coach or working in the college ranks to apply for this leadership institute," Hall explained. "I was a candidate due to my resume, but it is an honor to be the only high school head coach selected this year across the United States. It is an honor to be a part of such an exceptional group of coaches and the organization of the AFCA."

Candidates for the institute must provide a resume and professional references, along with writing about a subject in football candidates teach at their program.

"My paper was about creating base of-fensive plays and applying tempo to them in packages to not only rep more plays in practice but to also take advantage of teams during games to control the tempo of the game. I realized just saying my resume was not everything."

The BE job is his first stint as a head



Logan Hall

coach. He took over a struggling Bishop England squad that had trouble scoring – and winning. But he stressed accountability, unity, and hard work, and the team responded by posting a combined 17-7 record the past two seasons.

The Bishops were 9-3 and Region 6-AAAA champs in 2024, which earned Hall the Lower State coach of the year. The team finished the 2025 campaign with an 8-4 record.

Hall said every destination of his coach-

ing journey has been a building block and a natural progression to landing his first head coaching assignment.

Hall graduated from South Carolina's Laurens High School in 2009. He played quarterback at Laurens and originally signed to play football at Coastal Carolina. He was a quarterback at Coastal and played for head coach David Bennet, helping his team win a Big South Championship.

He played three seasons at Coastal until a knee injury put him on a coaching journey with his first stop in Columbia – where he graduated from the University of South Carolina and served in various coaching roles under USC legend Steve Spurrier and Will Muschamp.

Hall also served as offensive coordinator at Battery Creek High School and was an assistant at Limestone College, where he coached tight ends and was a recruiting coordinator before taking the offensive coordinator job at Pinewood Prep in Summerville.

Hall and his wife, Molly, have a son, Stanton, and daughter, Mary James.

Hall said Molly is the glue of the family. "This is a hard profession," the coach said. "You spend a ton of time away from your family. I could not do it without her and her support during the ups and the downs."

Area football stars Mahoney, Falotico shine in SC all-star game

PHILIP M. BOWMAN
sports@thedanielislandnews.com

Bishop England quarterback Quinn Mahoney, Philip Simmons kicker CJ Falotico, and the rest of the South squad didn't get to celebrate a victory in the 78th edition of the annual battle of South Carolina's best upper and lower state football players in the Touchstone Energy Bowl, which was contested Dec. 13 at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium in Myrtle Beach.

The North prevailed for a thrilling 35-27 victory, but that didn't stop the Daniel Island student-athletes from savoring success.

The North led 28-10, but the South scored 10 unanswered points, including a field goal by Iron Horse standout Falotico, to make it 28-20 with just under nine minutes left in the game.

After the North returned a kickoff 95 yards for a score to push the lead to 15 points, Mahoney, the Bishop's star quarterback, led a 10-play, 52-yard drive that produced a touchdown when he scored on an 8-yard run with just over five minutes left in the game to make it 35-27.

But the South couldn't convert its last drive into points as the North won for the second straight year and for the sixth time in the last seven games. The North leads the series 44-32-2.

The 6-3, 210-pound Mahoney missed the last three games of the season battling mononucleosis, and that probably cost him all-state honors. But the signal caller, who will matriculate to Campbell University, proved he belonged in the all-star game. He completed 4 of 9 passes for 23 yards and ran four times for 14 yards and a score.

Mahoney played in only nine games this fall and completed 102 of 183 passes for 1,446 yards and 14 touchdowns. In two years at Bishop England, he was 272 of 488 passing, for 3,907 yards and 37 scores.

"It felt great to be back on the field," Mahoney said. "I had a blast all week, and scoring that touchdown felt great. It was the perfect way to end my high school career."

Falotico, who is still open for recruitment, finished the day with two field goals, 25 and 22 yards, and was 3-for-3 on PAT attempts. He also had two kicks that went for touchdowns.

He was all-state and was also named to the South Carolina Football Coaches Association 2025 Palmetto Champions Class AA Lower State special teams player of the year.

Falotico connected on 13 of 18 field goals and converted 54 of 59 PAT attempts his

senior season to account for 93 points.

Iron Horse head coach Eric Bendig was a member of the South coaching staff. He was named the Palmetto Champions Class AA Lower State coach of the year.

The all-star week also included the naming of South Carolina's Mr. Football award at halftime of the game, which went to Tamarion Watkins of Northwestern High School.

Last weekend, Watkins, a 6-4 safety, helped the Trojans win the Class 5A Division II state championship for the second year in a row. He collected 80 tackles and three interceptions his senior season. Watkins has signed with Texas A&M and is expected to enroll later this month.

Iron Horse wrestling team enthusiastic as new coach takes helm

PHILIP M. BOWMAN
sports@thedanielislandnews.com

The wrestling career of Philip Simmons' Tyler Hendricks -- and his love of the sport -- began early in his life, when he was a 4-year-old fascinated by a sport that stressed dedication, hard work, and physical and mental discipline.

It didn't hurt that his father, George, served as wrestling coach at General McLane High School, located in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, a borough near the shores of Lake Erie. (One of the most notable Edinboro residents is Bruce Baumgartner, who won an Olympic gold medal in 1984.)

Hendricks, who wrestled at Penn Hills High School in the Pittsburgh area, arrived in the Lowcountry in 2021 and shared his passion for the sport by coaching youth wrestling.

Hendricks, who also coached youth soccer, was hired as an assistant at Philip Simmons to help head coach Anthony Sardelli build a winning wrestling program.

Hendricks was then named head coach in late summer when Sardelli stepped down to focus on his family.

There was an aura of great expectation for the 2025-26 season, as many observers felt the Iron Horses had the potential to be a top 10 team in Class AA because six players who qualified for the individual state championships were expected to return.

But the six grapplers either transferred to other schools or moved.



PROVIDED BY PSHS

The 2025-26 Philip Simmons High School wrestling team.

That pretty much meant a restart for a program that currently has six boys and two girls on the roster: Rell Cass, Alison Souvoravong, Connor Roberts, Samuel Haas, Daniel Wright, Mason Langworthy, Alexander Feaster, and Jacob

Henderson.

Most of the student-athletes on this year's squad have plenty of enthusiasm but limited practical experience, which could mean a challenging winter for the Iron Horses.

Coupled with the fact there are 14 weight classes in the Palmetto State, forfeits in the weight classes in which the Iron Horses don't have competitors may be too much to overcome.

"We will judge success by more than wins," Hendricks said. "We will look at individual accomplishments against opponents and apply what we will learn as a team. We will build on that."

Hendricks' move to the Lowcountry in 2021 started when he took a job with Pattison's Academy, "an education and rehabilitation hub for discovering new abilities in the lives of children with disabilities," according to its website.

He began as the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator when he started with Pattison's Academy, supporting youth literacy development, engaging volunteers in their local communities, and establishing healthier eating and physical activity practices in schools.

A year later, Hendricks was named director of operations and compliance at the academy.

Hendricks graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2017, where he was connected to the Big Brother/Big Sister Program in the Steel City.

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

Elayne & Mark Smith

I hope you have a safe and joyous Holiday Season and that the New Year brings you nothing but happiness. Thank you for the privilege of representing you in the S.C. House of Representatives. If I can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. God bless you and your family.

Rep. Mark Smith

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Daniel Island tree lighting *shines bright* at Credit One Stadium

With the twinkling of lights and a sprinkle of some instant snow, Daniel Island's holiday season officially began Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the Credit One Stadium Tree Lighting, complete with Santa, Mrs. Claus, cookie decorating, and cheer for the whole family. Check out more photos at thedanielislandnews.com.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY BEEMOK

Families enjoy the winter wonder of falling snow at Credit One Stadium.



Daniel Island's Christmas tree sparkles at Credit One Stadium.



Holiday elves keep the crowd smiling with juggling tricks.

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Markham nabs second win in 3 weeks, defeats Jimmy Foti of Foti Law



Bruce Markham

Not too shabby for Bruce Markham of Daniel Island!

Markham picked up his second \$50 gift card in three weeks after winning Week 17 of The Daniel Island News Pigskin Pick 'Em.

"Winning the Pick 'Em a (second) time is beyond belief," Markham said via email. "Possibly my next adventure will be taking on the lottery or going to Las Vegas."

Markham selected 10 of the 12 games correctly

to beat the online field and VIP sponsor Jimmy Foti of Foti Law, who went 7-5 and donated the \$50 gift card to Vinea Courtyard.

"Seriously, I have become a casual observer of the football scene over time," Markham said. "Whether that helps or not in picking teams with all the upsets remains to be seen. I do know the gift cards for winning the Pigskin Pick 'em are keeping me full and happy."

Would you like to be full and happy this week? If

you win Week 18, you will enjoy a \$50 gift card to Vespa Pizzeria.

Scan the QR code on the next page, or visit bit.ly/dinews18 to fill out your picks, or email patrick@thedanielislandnews.com to receive a weekly ballot.

Submit your picks by 5 p.m. Friday, then root for your favorite teams to see if you might be the big winner. The VIP sponsor with the best record at the end of the season will receive a donation from The DI News to their favorite charity.

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Chris Buchholz
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136-62

THIS
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BALLOT:

COLLEGE GAMES

Alabama at Oklahoma
Miami, FL at Texas A&M

Tulane at Ole Miss
James Madison at Oregon

NFL

Packers at Bears
Chargers at Cowboys
Vikings at Giants
Bengals at Dolphins
Buccaneers at Panthers
Jets at Saints
Bills at Browns
Chiefs at Titans



Garret McNally
Mac's Daniel Island



134-64

THIS
WEEK'S
BALLOT:

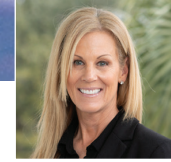
COLLEGE GAMES

Alabama at Oklahoma
Miami, FL at Texas A&M

Tulane at Ole Miss
James Madison at Oregon

NFL

Packers at Bears
Chargers at Cowboys
Vikings at Giants
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Jets at Saints
Bills at Browns
Chiefs at Titans



Edie Coupe
Carolina One



134-64

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Bills at Browns
Chiefs at Titans



Michael Patterson
Patterson Law Firm



133-65

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Miami, FL at Texas A&M
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Jimmy Foti
Foti Law Firm



133-65
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Gabe Jolly
Carolina One



133-65
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Buccaneers at Panthers
Jets at Saints
Bills at Browns
Chiefs at Titans



Tyler Letson
Mount Pleasant Chrysler Dodge
Jeep Ram



122-76
**THIS
WEEK'S
BALLOT:**

COLLEGE GAMES

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Tulane at Ole Miss
James Madison at Oregon

NFL

Packers at Bears
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Roundabout at River Landing, Seven Farms still undergoing approval process

Here are the developments before the various City of Charleston boards and committees this week, as well as results, if any, from the prior week's items specific to Daniel Island and the Cainhoj area. More detailed agendas and results can be found at charleston-sc.gov/agendacenter.

Owner: Clouter Creek Reserve LLC. Applicant: Seamon, Whiteside & Associates, Inc. Contact: Zak Wortman, zwortman@seamonwhiteside.com. Results: No Return/Paperwork Comments.

RESULTS: TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Dec. 11: Thomas Island Subdivision – Proposed concept plan for 42-lot conservation development on 17.99 acres at 100 Sands Preserve Drive, Cainhoj. TMS: B2750000004.

Dec. 11: River Landing at Seven Farms Drive Roundabout – Proposed conversions of existing intersection to a roundabout on 2.1 acres. Daniel Island. Owner: City of Charleston. Applicant: Berkeley County. Contacts: Reeves Connelly, reeves.connelly@kimley-horn.com and James Wallace, wallacej@charleston-sc.gov. Results: No Return/Paperwork Comments.

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

For free community events, send info to emma@thedanielislandnews.com.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

12TH ANNUAL DI CHANUKAH CELEBRATION & MENORAH LIGHTING
Wed, Dec. 17, 4:30-6 pm, DI Rec Center. Join the community for traditional food, music, and games. Candle lighting at 5:15 pm. Free and open to all faiths. Volunteers welcome; contact Matt Levin at levinml@gmail.com or Fred Danziger at fred.danziger13@gmail.com.

BERK. CO. HAZARD MITIGATION TOWN HALL
Thurs, Dec. 18, 7-8 pm, Daniel Island Library. Berkeley County Emergency Management will host a public meeting to share details and gather input on the 2025 All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan outlines potential hazards, assesses local risks and vulnerabilities, and proposes strategies to strengthen community resilience. Residents and businesses are encouraged to attend and provide feedback.

CHRISTMAS MARKET
Sat, Dec. 20, 12-5 pm, New Realm Brewery. Browse local arti-

sans, enjoy sweet treats, seasonal brews, and live music from DJ Earl and 40 Mile Detour. A festive stop for holiday shopping and last-minute gifts. Free admission.

10TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GOLF CART PARADE
Sat, Dec. 20, 3 pm, The Peninsula. Decorate your golf cart, wear your Christmas pajamas, and join this festive community parade. All are welcome!

HOLIDAY MARKET AT THE DIME
Sun, Dec. 21, 4-9 pm, The DIME Courtyard. Shop local vendors, enjoy a cozy courtyard atmosphere, and find perfect last-minute gifts. Free admission.

DANIEL ISLAND TOASTMASTERS
Toastmasters meetings are free, open to the public. Contact Bud 843-284-6291 or clare@eduave.com.

ECCO FOOD DRIVE
Drop off canned goods, pasta, rice, and other non-perishables at Edward Jones (8:30-4), 895 Island Park Dr Suite A2.

LOWCOUNTRY STREET GROCERY
Fri. at Guggenheim Terrace, 10:30 am-3 pm.

ECCO FOOD DROP AT DI LIBRARY
Starting Oct. 1, the Daniel Island Library will serve as an ECCO Food Drop location. Hours: Mon-Thurs 10 am-6 pm; Fri-Sat 9 am-5 pm

REGULAR MEETINGS

AA MEETINGS - CLEMENTS FERRY
King's Cross Church: Mon. and Fri. - 7:30 pm. Women's only meeting: Tues. - 8 pm. 2011 Clements Ferry Rd. 843-723-9633.

AA MEETINGS - DANIEL ISLAND
Providence Church: Mon. - Fri., 7:30 am. Church of the Holy Spirit: Speaker Mtg. Sat., 7 pm; 12 Step Mtg. Wed. 7:30 pm.

AL-ANON
Al-Anon, a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics, meets every Thurs., 7 pm at Providence Church on Daniel Island.

STRENGTH AND BALANCE
Tuesdays, 10-11 am. All ages and levels. The class is \$10 and is being held at the DI Rec Center. Contact: 843-216- 6366...

CORE STRENGTH & STABILITY
Mon., 9-10 am, DI Rec Center. Improve balance, posture, and injury prevention with this all-levels class designed to support healthy movement. \$10. Contact 843-216-6366.

CRAFTERNOONS Craft-emoons with Edie every 1st Fri. of the month from 1-3 pm at the Daniel Island Library. Tim Boyle at 843-471-2952 or timothy.boyle@berkeleycountysc.gov.

DANIEL ISLAND GOP CLUB 3rd Mon., 8am, Daniel Pointe Retirement Community. Free. Contact Mark Smith at 843-442-8371 or Susan Chapman at 203-512-3929 for info.

DANIEL ISLAND LIBRARY EVENTS
Capt. Daniell's Pipers Recorder Grp: Tues. 1:30-2:30 pm; Needleworkers: 2nd & 4th Tues., 11:15 am; Deepthinkers Discussion Grp: Wed., 10:30 am - noon; Social Bridge Club: every Monday 1-4 pm.; Writers Group: 1st Wed., 4:30-6 pm.

DANIEL POINTE CHAPEL
Non-denominational Christian worship services in the Theater of the Daniel Pointe Retirement Community at 1:15 pm on the 1st and

3rd Sun. each month. 514 Robert Daniel Drive. Deacon Ed Dyckman at dyckman.edward@gmail.com and 843-367-5647.

DUPLICATE BRIDGE Duplicate Bridge, ACBL sanctioned. DI Rec Center, 160 Fairbanks Dr. Weds, noon-3 pm. Space limited, reservations required, 843-224-6778/843-209-1471.

EXCHANGE CLUB OF DANIEL ISLAND 4th Tues., 5:30 pm, Daniel Pointe Retirement Community theater, 514 Robert Daniel Dr., dixchange-club.org.

MASTER GARDENER Q&A Certified Clemson MGs. DI Library, first Mon. of month, 4-6 pm. Soil samples, at least two cups in a sealed plastic bag, are tested at Clemson University for \$6 per sample, payable by check or credit card only.

RECORDER GROUP Join Captain Daniell's Pipers at the DI Library every Tue. 1:30-2:30 pm. All welcome regardless of your level of playing. Richard Foreman, eflat3@gmail.com.

REPUBLICAN LADIES OF DI meets 1st Fri. of mo., 8:30-10 am. Call or text for venue info and RSVP, 714-337-6944.

ROTARY CLUBS The Daniel Island Rotary Club meets most Weds. mornings at 7:15 am and on the second Tues. of each month at noon. The Cainhoj Rotary Club meets the 1st and 3rd Tues. of the month at 6 pm. Contact: Ben Laaper, ben.laaper@gmail.com.

SENIOR MEN'S GROUP Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Daniel Island Rec Center. A free, relaxed weekly meetup for senior men to socialize and connect. Coffee and refreshments provided.

SOUTH BERKELEY DEMOCRATS Meets at 4 pm on 3rd Sun., Daniel Pointe Retirement Community. berkeleydems.com.

STRONG & MOBILE FUNCTIONAL FITNESS Sat., 9-10 am, DI Rec Center. A class for active lifestyles, especially pickleball players, focused on strength and mobility for sport and real life. \$10. Contact 843-216-6366.

TAI CHI CLASSES DI Library Tues., 10 am & Fri., 9 am.

THE INFINITE JUKEBOX A bi-monthly multimedia discussion group for music lovers. All music genres including: Country/western, baroque and electronia. 2nd & 4th Thurs. at the DI Library from 11 am - noon.



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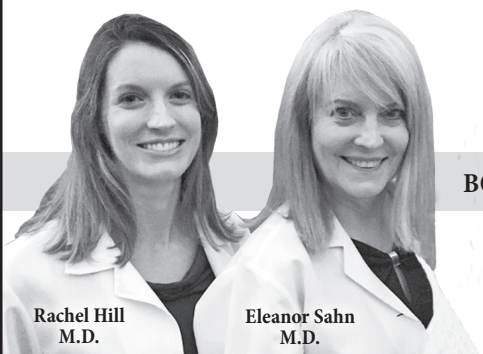
2025 Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Advisors: Awarded April 2025; Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on the time period from 6/30/23 - 6/30/24 (Source: Forbes.com). See full list of winners: <https://www.forbes.com/lists/best-in-state-wealth-advisors/>. Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, Member SIPC, a registered broker-dealer and non-bank affiliate of Wells Fargo & Company. *2025 Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC. PM-10022026-7814657.1.1



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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Neil R. Manausa

ACROSS

- 1 Eight dry quarts
5 Theda Bara, for one
9 Zeal
14 Yodeler's answer
15 "On the Waterfront" director Kazan
16 Man with a code
17 Lea
19 Larger than Lincoln
20 Big ____, CA
21 Garfield's pal
22 Lower back region
23 Irving Berlin hit
"____ This a Lovely Day . . . ?"
25 Dubonnet or claret
26 Prices
28 Memorable sportswriter Rice
33 Citrus fruit
34 Puts up
35 Attorney's rate
36 Hawkeye portrayer Alda
37 Bridal path
38 Ollie's sidekick
39 Court divider
40 Lustrous fabric
41 Not his
42 Final resting place of Elvis
44 Secretariat, e.g.
45 Hit Broadway musical of the 1960s
46 Reasons for braces
47 Care of the entire patient
50 Teenage sleuth Nancy
52 Garden tool
55 Site of an 1836 battle
56 Its capital is Godthab
58 Phileas Fogg's portrayer
59 Hostels
60 Bakery fixture
61 Urges on
62 Brief letter
63 Western Colorado feature
- ### DOWN
- 1 Backgammon needs
2 Light beige
3 Personal charms
4 Evander Holyfield stats
5 African plain
6 Jai ____
7 Open-pit, for one
8 Hippie home
9 Totals
10 The Desert Fox
11 Dreary
12 Government watchdog: acron.

- 13 1954 Hitchcock thriller "____ Window"
18 Junior and others
22 Tilia Americana tree
24 British carbine
25 Like Avila
26 Louder than a ping
27 Tennessee pro, pre-Titan
28 Johnny Winter's instrument
29 Out of bed
30 Men's cologne
31 Approaches
32 Thickheaded
34 Pagan idols
38 "Little ____ of Horrors"
40 Vivaldi's "The Four ____"
43 Rang a bell
44 Actress Goldie
46 Gaggles members
47 "____ 'Em High"
48 Gallimaufry
49 Etna emission
50 Ian Fleming adventure
51 Hit Broadway musical of the 1990s
53 Change for a fin
54 "Showboat" author Ferber
56 Part of a Tom Collins
57 Sellers co-star Herbert

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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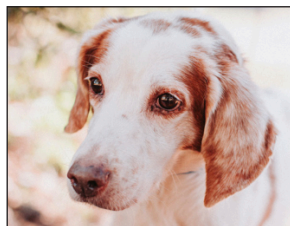
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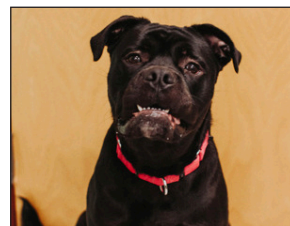


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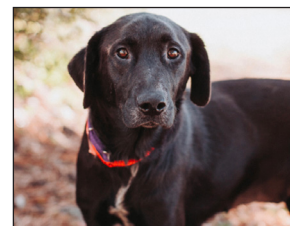
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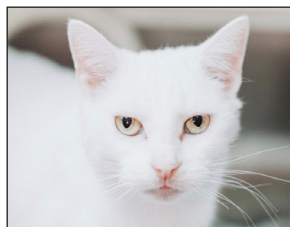
I'm Mudd, an 8-year-old medium male hound mix



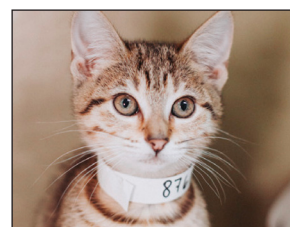
I'm Goliath, a 2-year-old large male Mastiff mix.



I'm Winnie, a 3-year-old medium female terrier mix.



I'm Dee, an 8-year-old small female domestic shorthair mix.



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