

APRIL 2013 VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2

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OF IDENTITY THEFT**

**EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY
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FEATURE ARTICLES

ON THE COVER:

- 16 CHARLES F. BOLDEN JR. - EVERY ROUND DOES GO HIGHER
- 29 SUZANNE F. GRANT - AWARENESS OF IDENTITY THEFT
- 5 LINWARD EDWARDS - EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY REINVESTS
- 3 TIM NORWOOD - RAISING THE BAR IN FINE DINING
- 16 SONJA TAYLOR - BUILDING BRIDGES



Appreciation of Our Military

CSM Gail M. Williams



More Than Just a Name

Tony McNeil



National Autism Awareness Month

Kim Thomas



Student, Scholar Shares His Values

Dean Page



Team Concept Includes ALL Members

Sherrie Carlisle



Bishopville Has a New Sheriff in Town

Chief Socrates 'Sonny' Ledda

Editor's Message

As sobering as Selisa Scott's first person article on autism was, creating the cover feature on NASA Administrator and fellow South Carolinian Charles Bolden Jr. gave us exhilarating liftoff from the doldrums forward into dreams.

And every article between those two extremes are compelling. If you didn't have to flip the pages, you would want to absorb them all at one time. And that is just how we want you to feel – eagerly hungry for every byte.

From every categorical feature, advertisement and news report, we delight in presenting Bishopville's new sheriff, Victor's Bistro's leading edge, Fair Housing Choices in the City of Florence, young professionals in Dillon and Florence reinvesting in their communities, crash courses in losing weight at a local gym, selecting the best realtor right here at home, understanding and obtaining maximum wellness from Gittens' chiropractic viewpoint, Wal-Mart's (the world's biggest customer) top secret revealed, quick-ending job searches at AccuStaff, the pursuit of true economic development in Dillon County, selfless women in the Eastern Carolina Community Foundation, medical providers such as Hope Health and Carolinas Hospital Systems making life better overall, bridge builders from the Governor's School to underserved communities, smarter standards/smarter testing solutions from Marion County schools to the world, a multi-cultural dean at Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School, Limestone's new outreach, FMU's Diversity Award-winning staffer, Florence-Darlington Tech's dual enrollment program, a statewide dropout prevention program available now, ID Theft awareness tips from ABB's Susan F. Grant, arts ushering in spring from FMU, FLT, Lake City and beyond, and proudly saluting our military with small town Gail Williams who has ascended to Command Sergeant Major.

Independent yet interrelated, none of these featured entities would exist without the other. Just read on and you'll see why.

Enjoy and share!



*Rennie Lunn-McAllister
Editor-in-Chief*

CONTENTS

BUSINESS

- 3 RAISING THE BAR IN FINE DINING
- 4 FAIR HOUSING EMPHASIZED FOR ALL
- 5 EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY REINVESTS
- 5 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION WORK WELL TOGETHER
- 7 CRASH COURSE IN CHOOSING THE RIGHT REALTOR
- 9 TEAM CONCEPT INCLUDES ALL MEMBERS
- 10 BISHOPVILLE HAS A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN
- 11 JOB SEARCH STARTS AND ENDS HERE
- 13 MORE THAN JUST A NAME
- 14 PARTNERS PROVE PURSE POWER
- 15 SMALL BUSINESSES IDENTIFY STRESS AS TOP CONCERN

SPECIAL FEATURE

- 16 EVERY ROUND REALLY DOES GO HIGHER
- 17 HATS OFF TO BARRIER BREAKERS
- 17 EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE ARTS
- 18 NATIONAL AUTISM MONTH IS HERE
- 18 FROM STARTLING DISCOVERY TO HAPPY ENDING
- 19 UNIQUE CAREER PREP AVAILABLE
- 20 PROTECTING OF THE PLANET

EDUCATION

- 21 BUILDING BRIDGES TO DIVERSE COMMUNITIES
- 22 SMARTER STANDARDS, SMARTER TESTING
- 23 STUDENT, SCHOLAR SHARES HIS VALUES
- 24 HIS COMMAND OF SIX LANGUAGES SPEAKS VOLUMES
- 25 FORMER WOMEN'S COLLEGE NOW EMBRACES ALL
- 26 BEDSIDE MANNER & ROLEMODELING
- 27 DUAL ENROLLMENT PUTS STUDENTS AHEAD OF CLASS

ENTERTAINMENT

- 28 FMU GEARS UP FOR ARTS INTERNATIONAL
- 29 STEDMAN GRAHAM SPEAKS IN GREATER PEE DEE REGION

FINANCE

- 30 AWARENESS OF IDENTITY THEFT IS YOUR BEST PROTECTION

HEALTH

- 31 CAROLINAS HOSPITAL SYSTEM LAUNCHES HEALTHY WOMEN
- 33 DEFINING HEALTH REQUIRES BALANCE
- 33 CANCER SOCIETY
- 34 GYM SERVES ANYONE ANYTIME
- 35 RE-INTRODUCING CAROLINAS CENTER FOR SIGHT
- 36 MOVING THE NEEDLE UP ON HEALTH RANKING

Crowd Pleaser: Victor's Bistro Raises the Bar in Fine Dining

By Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Tim & Anne Norwood

Expressions like flavor and spice certainly apply to the haute cuisine at Victor's Bistro but they also describes the restaurant's vibrant people as well. From owners Tim and Anne Norwood to the knowledgeable bar attendants to the trained culinary artists to the wait staff – all of which bring something special and different to the table – diverse ideas, talent and offerings abound.

“At Victor's, we strive to provide our customers with a unique dining experience every time they come in. From diverse menu items and associates, we have seen our customers benefit from the different ideas and personalities our employees bring to work. We aren't interested in offering a ‘cookie cutter’ dining experience. We want guests to feel special and to receive one-of-a-kind service and the best way to deliver that is by making sure we embrace diversity at all levels,” Norwood said in a recent interview.

Victor's even works to recruit different types of people because that practice allows the company to deliver the unique dining experiences guests expect. “We value diversity because we have seen that it takes a ‘whole village’ of ideas, personalities and backgrounds to make our business a successful part of our community,” he continued.

To ensure proper management of diversity observances and practices, Victor's personnel does not merely adhere to the law because company leadership believes that is not true diversity. “We want to include a range of team members regardless of age, race, sex, orientation, marital status or ethnic background because those differences are the crucial ingredient in

the Victor's dining experience,” Norwood said, noting that he encourages and expects everyone on his team to recruit and respect people who are similar to as well as different from themselves.

Confident that American business has made some major strides in the area of workplace diversity, Victor's owners acknowledge that there is certainly more progress to be made. “When you come to Victor's, notice the crowd and you will see a variety of diners at any time and that helps to make everyone feel welcome – a key benefit of valuing diversity,” Norwood said.

An example of how diversity in the workplace ensures workplace equality at the award-winning restaurant is its focus on similarities. “We are looking for team members who love people, are passionate about good food and great service and who want to work and excel in the high-end restaurant business. These are the qualities and attributes that unite us. Our differences add even more value to our team, but we all are always pulling in the same direction and that makes the workday fun for us and our guests,” he explained.

In its pure competition, Victor's outdistances other venues by offering high-end dining experiences in an intimate setting. “There are several wonderful formal sites in town where you can get a great meal, but Victor's is an intimate setting that is perfect for family, business meetings or a romantic evening. We serve lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch and have a unique menu with items you absolutely will not find anywhere else in Florence. We have also brought Benton Dargan in (remember Benton's Restaurant?) to make his coveted broccoli cornbread and his popular soups – you cannot get Benton anywhere else in Florence! In addition to the food, we have a staff that is committed to making Victor's the place you want to go to for a fantastic meal. From our bar manager to our chefs to our servers, we are all excited about what we can do to make our customers feel special.

Two of Victor's top immediate goals are to remain Florence's premier dining destination and soon to welcome guests to its new location downtown where they will serve three meals

per day and provide room service to the adjacent new Florence Hotel. Expanded banquet facilities will be available for special occasions.

Along with this exhilarating change comes one rather large challenge – to continue providing first class service while preparing for its move to the new location on Dargan Street. But management feels fortunate that General Manager Steve Gibson is a career restaurateur and he is guiding every move as the relocation date nears, making sure that customers do not experience any delays in service or offerings.

A people person, Norwood finds it natural to apply his everyday corporate training and interaction skills to Victor's. “I think I bring my love for people and enthusiasm for providing top-notch service to the restaurant also. What gives us a competitive advantage is that we listen to our customers and then we exceed their expectations. For example, our customers enjoy fine wines, so we now offer an electronic captain's book – we bring an iPad to the table that details each wine. The program is fun and interactive, so guests can select a wine based on their meal, or select an entrée that complements their wine choice! No other restaurant in Florence features an electronic captain's book!” Norwood told.

His favorite part of owning Victor's is enjoying the staff and the customers. “It's great that many of Anne's and my friends come see us at Victor's, but we also love meeting new people. When you're at Victor's, you really feel like you're among friends – even when you don't know everybody. The staff is a big part of that feeling – they have a fantastic blend of professionalism and personality that makes being at Victor's a memorable and enjoyable experience,” he shared.

Active in the community, Norwood has served as past Chair of the Florence Chamber of Commerce and Florence County Progress. He is actively involved with Boy Scouts of the Pee Dee and serves as Trustee for Francis Marion University. He and his wife, Anne, reside in Florence.

In This City... Fair Housing Emphasized for All

By Rennie Lunn-McAllister



On Thursday, March 14th, the City of Florence provided Fair Housing training to over 60 members of the Florence Board of Realtors.

There are many federal and state laws that instruct municipalities on how to enforce fair housing, but in Florence, creativity within those boundaries comes from the heart of the city. E v e n

long before his

rise to General Services Director, Scotty Davis – in collaboration with council and his trusted team – has been advocating for fair housing choice and home ownership citywide. However, there are a few oppressed areas in this entitlement city that need more attention than others – chiefly in the north, east, northwest and downtown, which contain a concentration of low-income and minority households. “The 2010 Census statistics on the racial and ethnic composition of the City indicates that the City is 52.5% white, 47.4% black and 0.1% other minorities. The City defines areas with a racial/ethnicity minority concentration as those census tracts --7, 8, and 9 -- that have 30% or higher minority concentration. These tracts contain 85% of the total number of blacks in the entire city, making up the most of the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) target area.” Davis said that by far, very low income families have a higher incidence of housing problems than do families

in other income groups. The city’s Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, done in compliance with the city’s Consolidation Plan, shows that there does not appear to be any identifiable inequities in the provision of municipal services that could subsequently impede Fair Housing choice. It is helpful, however, to know what the term “Fair Housing choice” means. Davis explains it as “the ability of persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin of similar income levels to have available to them the same housing choice.”

It is sometimes difficult to detect institutional or other unlawful housing discriminatory practices. They could present themselves in the form of falsely denying that a house is available, discriminatory advertising, using different screening processes, refusing to accept an application for housing, refusing to sell or rent to certain applicants, using different terms for select applicants on a purchase contract, lease, rent/security deposit, enforcing tenant rules differently, not allowing the use of facilities, neglect or unequal delivery of maintenance services, segregation within a complex or building, harassment, coercion, or unjustified eviction/foreclosure, or otherwise making housing unavailable. Some of the most troublesome impediments to fair housing include (1) redlining - lenders refusal to loan money to purchase a house because the house is in a minority neighborhood, (2) steering – attempting to influence where someone lives based on the protected status of the person, or (3) blockbusting – panic selling because of changes in neighborhood

demographics. Housing discrimination is not limited to landlords, realtors, or financial institutions. Neighbors can be guilty of harassment, coercion, intimidation, retaliation and membership refusal. Insurance companies also play a vital role in fair housing choice in that they oftentimes rely on credit scores which indicate potential risk for loss based on an applicant’s geographical location, driving history, age and gender.

Davis said that according to the S.C. Human Affairs Commission, over the past 11 years, there were 21 Fair Housing complaints filed from Florence County, which equates to approximately 2 complaints per year. The commission says this low number suggests that perhaps the actual number of citizens in Florence experience housing discrimination is (1) minimal indeed, (2) those that actually victims of housing discrimination are not aware of the state agency’s role or (3) victims are unaware that they have been victimized. Because the City is concerned about all resident’s access to mortgage financing, it has taken aggressive steps to develop and promote credit and homebuyer assistance programs, comprehensive housing counseling, and raising the visibility of fair housing and the compliant process.

Davis concludes that the city is seeking to ensure that it remains inclusive and considerate of all its residents when it comes to fair housing choice. Not only is it the law, it is paramount to Florence’s continued growth and stability as a thriving, bustling, regional economic engine.

To report fair housing violations, contact the City of Florence at 843-665-3158



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Experienced Attorney Reinvests in Home Town

By: Alicia C. Phillip Gibson, Esq., Contributing Writer



Meet Attorney Linward C. Edwards, II, Owner of the Law Offices of Linward C. Edwards, II, LLC. If you've ever received an e-mail from Attorney Linward C. Edwards, II, you've probably read this Benjamin Franklin quote that appears in his e-mail signature: "The U.S. Constitution doesn't guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself." And indeed, Edwards enjoys using his legal expertise to help his clients catch up with their own version of happiness, whatever that may be.

The proud dad of Tahjae, Amir, and Cordae Edwards is a true son of Florence soil. He graduated from Wilson

High School in 1995 and then served his country in the United States Air Force for four years. Upon his return from service, he attended Francis Marion University, where he earned a Bachelor's of Business degree in 2004. Edwards then earned his Juris Doctorate degree from the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law in Washington, D.C., a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) law school, where he was very active in the Black Law Students Association.

Further, while in law school, Edwards clerked for the Public Defender's Office of the District of Columbia and he also served as a summer Judicial Clerk for the Honorable Margaret Seymour, Fourth Circuit Federal Judge. While at the court, he learned the inner workings of the criminal justice system. From initial arrest to sentencing, he worked first-hand with criminal defendants, prosecutors, and judges throughout the entire process. Upon graduation from law school, Edwards accepted a position at The Sellers Law Firm located in Dillon, South Carolina. He learned the dynamics of how to run a law practice first-hand under the tutelage of supervising attorney Rosalind Sellers.

Subsequently, Edwards fulfilled his lifelong dream of opening his own law practice in his hometown of Florence. Whenever he is asked why he decided to open his law practice in Florence, his response is always the same: "I always knew that I wanted to return home to open my practice; there was never any doubt in my mind." He enjoys working among his family, friends, and long-time neighbors, helping them to navigate the sometimes confusing world of legal issues. In addition, Edwards readily takes time from his busy schedule to mentor and speak to Florence students, encouraging them to aspire to achieve great things. In the future, he hopes to work with community leaders on initiatives that would bring more opportunities to Florence residents. He sees it as his responsibility to give back to the community that has given so much to him.

And he is definitely the right man for the task. He uses his experience working first-hand with criminal defendants, prosecutors, judges, and insurance companies, along with his excellent communication and negotiation skills, to obtain the best possible outcome in the most efficient manner for his clients. He practices in the areas of criminal and civil law, including bankruptcy, business law, criminal defense, DWI/DUI, personal injury, immigration law, estate planning, and family law. For more information on the Law Offices of Linward C. Edwards, II, LLC, which is located at 2301 S. Irby Street in Florence, visit them on the web at www.LEdwardsLaw.com, or contact Attorney Edwards by phone at 843.410.9605 or via email at Linward@LEdwardsLaw.com.

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Crash Course in Choosing the Right Realtor

In the Real Estate World, be prepared to “RUN LIKE THE WIND WHEN YOU HAVE TO”. Now allow me to tell you the story.

There is a house for everyone.....however; many Buyers and Sellers of real estate do not have the slightest idea about what the real estate market is about. I do know this; if you are sick, you want a doctor who is experienced in your field of illness; not a carpenter to cure your pain. If you need an attorney to defend you in a legal case, you want the best legal mind possible that specializes in your area of need. You do not go to a truck driver for legal services or you may end up in Alaska eating moose burgers. My point is that you want not just the best but, the very best expert you can get to help resolve your real estate challenges.

Now when it comes to selecting a real estate broker to handle your real estate business, why would you not hire the best real estate broker who cares about you and does not mind reaching out to you to help handle your real estate business? All too often, friends and relatives in the real estate business are not the answer. Some brokers are commission driven only, and not about handling your real estate business like we should.

A great real estate broker is not commission driven. He/she is about finding the right property (home or commercial) for your family and you. Take the time to interview at least three real estate brokerage firms before you make a decision to hire one. Your gut feeling will guide you most times to the right firm regardless of the size or the number of agents pictured there. But also use this time to ask a number of questions of and about the broker to ensure that he/she knows the real estate business and can help you and your family with your real estate needs. During your discussion with the broker and commission is the driving focus; again... “RUN LIKE THE WIND” fast. Ask for references from brokers. Ask about training/certifications. Ask about their firm’s commitment to educating their brokers. If the broker does not have any references, “RUN LIKE THE WIND” because you want that broker to be your eyes and ears in this crazy and complex world of real estate.

Too many times, potential real estate buyers and sellers select the wrong broker and when you have questions or problems later and you cannot find that commission driven broker; And now what!!!

You should take the selection of a Real Estate Broker very seriously. You are talking about a 15, 20, 30 year mortgage commitment. Keep in mind; a real estate broker’s reputations precede him/her.

As a real estate broker for more than 17 years and corporate trained, my clients (buyers & sellers) are important to me. When they are buying real estate, it is almost a lifetime decision and a very important one. Real estate brokers ask questions of you; then, you should ask questions of them.

I ask a number of questions so that I will get to know you and you

get to know me. It’s about establishing a relationship and we both want it to be the best real estate relationship possible. The relationship is so good that you will tell other potential buyers and sellers about your experience and the same goes for the bad relationships.

Knowledge of the real estate market and its components are good reasons why you want an experienced real estate broker working for you and your family. I will have you and your family best interest at heart. Buyers or Sellers need to ask questions about your real estate broker’s successes and failures stories. That will tell you a lot about the relationships forged between building contractors, mortgage lenders, attorneys, inspectors, and other service providers that will make your transaction go much smoother and be more enjoyable.

Now, let’s talk about the commercial real estate train...When it comes to buying or Selling Commercial Real Estate, it is not about the transaction that is important; it is about the bottom line that makes or breaks the deal at closing.

When you have or know someone who has a Commercial Real Estate need; look for a Real Estate Broker who knows the market and also knows the different methods of how to get the deals closed.

When a Commercial Real Estate Broker has a client who wants a something for nothing or wants to pay very little for a great deal, just remember this...”RUN LIKE THE WIND”.

Experience in the commercial real estate Field is vital to a successful real estate transaction. We should always know how to negotiate the sale along with how to take the transaction to closing. That is why you would hire me as your Commercial Real Estate Broker.

Placing a commercial real estate sign on the property is not an indication that I know what I am doing in that arena. It is important to take note of the real estate broker’s background. He/she must bring knowledge and real estate skills to the table for you as a client. They need to know how to make a stalled commercial real estate transaction move toward closing without hesitation. If he/she cannot bring real estate skills to the table, it is time to do what? “RUN LIKE THE WIND” because you hired the wrong broker. There should be no surprises doing the commercial real estate transaction and definitely no surprises at the commercial real estate closing.



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Team Concept Includes ALL Members

By Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Sherrie Carlisle

MARION -- To make workplace diversity truly work, managers and directors can no longer have an attitude of "I'm the boss; do as I say", but it is essential to learn to and FULLY embrace the team concept with the attitude of "Let's do this together!", says Sherrie Carlisle, Wal-Mart 1829 Manager, who believes it is also necessary to develop a strong team and include all members with

what they have to offer.

As a facility manager, Carlisle says she must ensure that all associates feel included by letting them know that their opinions count. "We hold daily meetings with all shifts to ensure the communications get out as it is key to our success. We execute on a series on diversity where assistant managers hold mini sessions with associates on diversity topics that range from dealing with conflicts to teamwork. When it comes to saturating every consciousness about the practice of inclusion, Carlisle refers to a report from her organization's chief marketing officer who says that "100% of the company's growth will come from the multicultural consumer. We have a huge obligation to our consumers to have the merchandise and the low price they want".

"We also have an inventory process called IMS.

Once all associates are trained in the process, we monitor our progress with a scorecard. That scorecard is just a measurement to see how we are executing the processes; however, it brings all associates together to work toward the goal to improve. We also get a measurement comparing our scores to other stores in the market. Letting our team know where we fall in the market brings out the friendly competition that has them all striving to be the best.

Internal competition is fine but in order to remain at the top, Wal-Mart is keenly aware that it has to take care of every customer by saving them money so that they can live better and giving back to the community. Yearly totals for 2012 US Wal-Mart Foundation showed more than \$872 million in cash and in-kind gifts, reflecting \$33,242,525 over the same period to the state of South Carolina. Going forward, the most immediate goals, Carlisle said, is meeting objectives in its three-pronged strategy: workforce, workplace and marketplace. She explains: "Workforce (diversity) – building a diverse global workforce to meet the rising expectations of Wal-Mart's next generation customer; Workplace (Inclusion) – nurturing an inclusive and collaborative culture to retain our talent and maximize their potential; and Marketplace (Empowerment) –Enabling associates to make a difference in the lives of our customers and communities served."

At the store level, challenges present in the form of the slow moving economy -- caused by the highest unemployment rate and lack of local available

jobs -- that Marion has been plagued with for a number of years.

As expected, though, there is a counterattack from the largest company in the world. "Wal-Mart was named the #1 company for providing opportunities to diverse businesses owners throughout the US. We help people around the world save money and live better in stores, online and through their mobile devices. Each week, more than 200 million customers and members visit our 10,700 stores under 69 banners in 27 countries and e-commerce websites in 10 countries. Within fiscal year 2013, sales of approximately \$466 billion are expected. Wal-Mart employs 2.2 million associates worldwide," Carlisle said.

With a teaching background, the mother of two sons and wife to Paul Carlisle is grateful to the company and her support group across the 20 years of this corporate association. I have an Associate's degree in general education but I love my Wal-Mart family and I love teaching and training and seeing people grow. We are a company also that gives back to the community. Since I have been in Marion, I have had the opportunity to help on several community projects including Habitat for Humanity and I am so proud of my team at store 1829 for overcoming the obstacles the past couple of years as I have been able to observe them from my various positions in the company, most especially the mentors that have helped develop me into the leader that I am today. It all makes me look towards growing a new generation of Wal-Mart leaders,"

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Bishopville Has a New Sheriff in Town

By Chinel Boateng, Contributing Writer



Chief Socrates "Sonny" Ledda

Born in Manila Philippines to a U.S. Navy father and Filipino mother, Chief Socrates "Sonny" Ledda began his U.S. journey in 1968, at the age of four. Both he and his mother were faced with the challenges of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture. As a result, Spiderman comic books and Sesame Street episodes became his best friends. It's through these resources that he learned to read, write, speak, and understand English. Ledda's first home as a child was in Charleston SC, and being the son of a Navy man, he travelled and lived in many parts of the county. During his high school years Ledda's father retired from the Navy and the family came full circle, settling down in Charleston, SC.

Before taking the position of Bishopville's Chief of Police, Ledda served as Supervisor at Clinton Department of Public Safety in Clinton, SC for thirteen years. "The challenge of being Police Chief is, I'm the one, the buck stops with me", said Ledda in this interview. Being responsible for a group of men and women can have its challenges. Employee's concerns about family, health, job security, training, professional development, proper equipment, and balancing their wants and needs within a budget are just a few of the challenges leaders face. But, Ledda is taking a different approach. He's asking his department to do something that doesn't cost the department anything; he's asking them to get out their cars, shake hands, and develop a rapport with the citizens of Bishopville. Chief Ledda leads by example as he tries to attend most engagements he's invited.

Chief Ledda's goal is for the citizens of Bishopville to be comfortable

enough with the police department to engage in conversations about their concerns, to participate in police led Crime Watches in their neighborhoods, to take part in a Citizen's Academy where they can learn about police procedures, the do's and don'ts of what police officers can and can't do, and gain worthwhile knowledge they can use. "My hope for this department is that we are a community involved Police Department, and I would like the citizens to feel comfortable enough to approach any one of us... anyone that they would feel comfortable enough just talking to "their Police Department". Cause this Police Department isn't mine; it's not Chief Ledda's, this Police Department belongs to the City of Bishopville."

Diversity in the Bishopville Police Department starts at the top. In addition to Ledda being the first Asian American serving as Chief of Police, Captain Calvin Collins is the first African American serving in his capacity. Additionally, the department consists of a Victim's Advocate, an Investigator, and eleven officers; young and seasoned. Chief Ledda truly has an "open door" policy and, the atmosphere reveals there are no barriers when it comes to freedom of religion. "I don't mean to offend anyone, but I'm not going to hide who I am, because I don't think they would wanna offend me either." Although the job is not his first priority, Ledda feels it is a "calling". "It's not even a career for me; it's something I was led to do; everything has led me to this point, said Ledda." "Beyond my family, my first priority in life is my creator he's eternal and so is my soul."

"Diversity is absolutely important. In my life's experience I haven't dealt with just one group of people; it's not gonna happen. It may have happened 100 years ago when you lived in a village or lived in an area, you didn't move from there. I think if your organization is not diverse, you're drawing from a very limited pool of life experience and knowledge", said Ledda in closing.

Job Search Starts and Ends Here

By Doris Lockhart, Owner - Accustaff

AccuStaff of Florence is a full spectrum staffing service providing quality service for 29 years to the Pee Dee Area. AccuStaff of Florence is locally owned and is a division of Randstad, the second largest staffing service in the world. Our Staffing Consultants are diverse and have over 40 years of combined experience. We assist companies with their staffing needs and provide employment to individuals on a permanent, short- and long-term bases in the areas of clerical support and light industrial.

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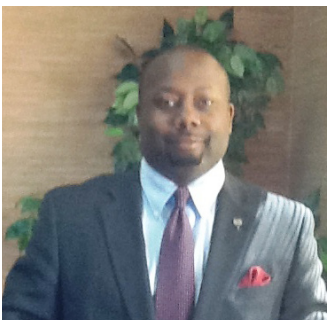
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Dillon County Economic Development: More Than Just a Name

By Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Tonny McNeil

DILLON-- With a sense of purpose, Economic Development Partnership Director Tonny McNeil highly values and views workplace diversity as a tool that creates well rounded teams who represent the various ethnicities, genders and ways of life that the surrounding communities are comprised of. "I intentionally seek to place team members with different backgrounds within the same group. I truly believe that our differences complement each other -- especially, but not only -- in the workplace," he said recently, pointing out that he, his associates and colleagues

contribute to various organizations that represent the diversity in the (South Carolina/North Carolina) border communities and participate in many events.

To advance the cause of diversity and practice inclusion, McNeil thinks that everyone should do all they can to encourage both. "I can remember working out in industry as a mechanical engineer and asking my fellow engineers -- Latino, Italian, Chinese -- what they brought for lunch that day. They all replied 'chicken' (in English) but when we went to lunch and looked at each others' meals they were all prepared differently. This represents to me how folks with various backgrounds approach and solve problems differently. I believe it is a very positive thing. I personally think there is a lot of room for growth in the area of diversity. We are often afraid of what's different but really what we should be doing is learning from the individual who is different from us.

Ever conscious that workplace diversity can only ensure workplace equality if when the right approach is taken, McNeil said that "everyone must receive the same information and have common goals that align with the team or organization of which they are a part. It is also vital that the individual must also be recognized for their contributions and accomplishments."

In distinguishing itself as an organization, the director said "We

understand the product we are selling and we are the direct beneficiaries of our success or failure due to the fact that most of us were born and raised in Dillon County. It's about more than economic development for us. Dillon County's success is our success...it's our mothers', fathers', children's success. It also ensures that we will be a thriving and vibrant community for many years to come.

Two of the organization's top immediate goals are to create at least 200 jobs in 2013 and to obtain at \$8,000,000 in new investment this year. Also on the near future radar is to build a 50,000 square foot spec building in one of the county's industrial sites this year to make available more products.

But McNeil says these goals do not come without challenges. "The biggest challenge we face right now is our low inventory of available buildings. About 50% of our prospective companies want an available building. However, the size of the building varies from prospective companies so this is why we want to build a speculative building in order to attract more industry. It is a top priority as we speak," he said.

Because Dillon sits on the border of two tourist- and commerce-driven states, McNeil says it is a double given that it can boast of 4 exits off I-95, 15 miles north of I-20; can provide a workforce of 800,000 in a 60 mile radius of the city, is located 2.5 hours from deep water ports of Charleston, Savannah (GA), Georgetown and Wilmington (NC) and the same distance from 4 international airports, has access to two class I railways and 7 SC Certified Industrial Sites and a SC Certified industrial Mega Site and offers the low cost-of-living and of doing business.

As he continue to seek change and growth in economic opportunities for businesses large and small, he says he hopes the quality of life will be the most constant in that it will be most consistently progressive because improving the quality of life for one person will transform an entire community" which translates into true economic development.

Partners Prove Purse Power

By Sarah Shelley

Eastern Carolina Community Foundation works with an effective group of women who really understand the meaning of “power of the purse.”

The group is Women in Philanthropy, a giving circle based on the theory that women informed about philanthropy and about needs in their community can collectively make a difference.

These women are dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Pee Dee by combining their financial and intellectual resources to award annual grants to nonprofit organizations. Members connect to each other, and to the community and bring about change through the power of small grants.

Women in Philanthropy, has been in existence for five years. The organization was established in 2009. Each member is a link in an ever-growing chain that enables Women in Philanthropy to do collectively what no one member might achieve individually. Membership gifts are pooled to create a larger fund that awards grants. Every member has a voice and a vote in where the funds go. To date, \$150,000 has been awarded to 23 organizations.

Any woman who resides in the Pee Dee and commits to contributing \$500 annually— women 40 and younger may contribute \$250 -- is encouraged to join. Members represent a broad variety of incomes, religions, backgrounds, and educational and/or career achievements. In addition to the financial contribution, the only other requirement is to have a significant interest in Pee Dee charities.

Grants from Women in Philanthropy have helped abused women and children, cancer patients needing medications, senior citizens needing in home nurse visits, handicapped children eager for a week at camp, and indigent individuals needing dentures. In turn, staff from

organizations receiving funds are frequent speakers at Women in Philanthropy events. The professionals share information about the work they are doing in the community which provides education about needs in the community. Some women take their interest further by becoming volunteers at organizations although that is not a requirement.

Women in Philanthropy helps the Community Foundation carry out its mission of promoting philanthropy by making it easy and effective for people to support the issues they care about. Donors to the Foundation establish permanent charitable funds by contributing a wide variety of assets today or through a future bequest to support nonprofit groups and causes now and far into the future. The Foundation began operations in 2006 with a substantial gift from the Rotary Club of Florence to fill local needs in the seven counties of the Pee Dee. Until then, this part of the state was the only area without a community foundation.

More information on Eastern Carolina Community Foundation and how to join Women in Philanthropy can be found at www.easterncarolinacf.org or by calling 843-667-1131.



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Small Businesses Identify Stress as Top Concern

Today's tough economic environment would give anyone a headache. America's workforce faces increasing pressures to meet the bottom line and achieve financial results with less, particularly small businesses. So, it's no wonder that small-business owners' most pressing wellness concerns include stress and employees' sick days, as identified through a recent study of more than 1,000 small-business owners and decision-makers. High employee stress ranks No. 1.

The national study - by Humana Inc., one of the nation's leading health care companies, and the National Small Business Association (NSBA), America's leading small business advocate - offers some insights into today's current small business wellness environment. The study found that while an overwhelming 93% of small business owners consider employees' physical and mental health as contributors to business results, only one-third are confident in their ability to help employees manage their health and wellness.

If you work for a small business, there is a good chance that your employer doesn't have a health and wellness program in place. Only 22% of small businesses offer their employees access to such options. But among those that do, 85% think these types of offerings are worth the investment. Three in four say such programs enhance their profits.

"As the economy continues to improve, wellness solutions likely will continue to be of interest and an increasingly important part of the employee value proposition," predicts Jerry Gannon, president of Humana's small group employer segment. Gannon believes it's crucial for the health insurance industry to focus on providing small-business owners with the information they need to make wellness decisions that will help to recruit and retain employees while enhancing their bottom lines.

So why aren't more small business owners embracing wellness initiatives as bottom-line boosters? (Wellness initiatives are considered

those that encourage employees to make healthier choices such as getting preventive care, eating right and exercising.)

More than half say enough information isn't available about starting and using health and wellness programs. Another key challenge they list: employee interest in such programs. Forty-eight percent of respondents who used to have or never had wellness options believe lack of interest among employees ranks as the top barrier to introducing one. However, despite these obstacles, interest among small business owners in considering and providing health and wellness initiatives actually is on the rise. Younger businesses were reportedly more likely to have health and wellness programs in place than businesses older than 10 years, the Humana-NSBA study reveals.

In fact, 31% of startups - those companies less than a decade old - offer them. Startup business owners view these benefits as a tool for employee recruitment and retention; one in four report being most motivated by employee demand versus 3% for more established companies.

Workplace wellness programs can play a big role in keeping health care accessible and affordable for employers and employees.

There seems to be little question that health and wellness programs pay off for employees. For every \$1 spent on worksite health-promotion programs, a company sees an average of \$3.50 in savings related to fewer sick days, more productive work time, and reduced health care costs, according to research from the Partnership for Prevention.



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Every Round Really Does Go Higher

By: Rennie Lunn-McAllister

WASHINGTON, DC – Much like an eyewitness account viewing earth from ground level starkly contrasts to an outer space perspective of the same, NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden, Jr.'s ascent from a native son of the segregated south to universal prominence allows him to appreciate life from both sides now. Subjectively, he is aware of unrest in many areas of our planet, but objectively floating in the windows of the Space Shuttle which he has described as speeding across great deserts at 4 to 5 miles per second, he perceives that all is serene and well despite earthly reality.

“You don’t need to go very far from earth – at some points you can see from an airplane – a blue line which is our atmosphere and how fragile it is. That thin film is our protective covering and we must do all we can to preserve and protect it as well,” he said recently.

Recalling his first space flight in 1986 and his final one in 1994, he noted that the earth changed dramatically during that short span. “In just those eight years, climate change altered much of everything. Whereas we could in the early flights observe storms, deserts and big bodies of water, the latter flights revealed the water being (or having been) cooked off, deforestation of the Amazon and so much more,” he said.

A self-described product of Affirmative Action, he said diversity in his workplace today plays a crucial role. “Here at NASA, we have the most diverse workforce in the US government” and one of his top objectives is to keep it that way, modeling to inspire other agencies to follow suit.

A retired Marine Corps Major General, Bolden became the twelfth administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 2009 when nominated by President Barack Obama, assuming responsibility for leading the vastly diverse NASA team and managing the agency’s resources to advance its missions and goals. Now a very long, progressive distance from his Columbia, SC roots as eldest son of Charles Sr. and Ethel Bolden – schoolteachers who despite long hours and lower wages than their white counterparts – he salutes them for making the tough decision to remain in public education and propel countless Black students to find their rightful places in national, state and local leadership. He said that with his parents as the

consummate role models, he “overcame the refusal of my Senators and Congressman to appoint a Black to the Naval Academy by appealing to President Lyndon B. Johnson for assistance. Having learned of Johnson’s initiative to send a retired federal judge around the country to visit with Black and Hispanic high schools to recruit young, qualified minorities for entry into the three major service academies, During one such visit at C.A. Johnson High, Bolden expressed interest in the Naval Academy and as a result received an appointment to Annapolis from Cong. William Dawson of Chicago. Impressed with what he encountered there, he chose to become a Marine upon graduation and served 34 years with distinction.

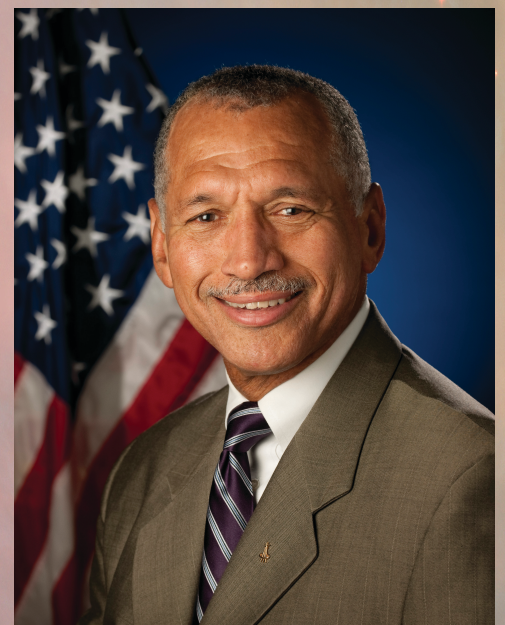
After a premium and decorated career – he has been awarded the Defense Superior Science Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross and was inducted into the US Astronaut Hall of Fame – Bolden has written and spoken retrospectively about many milestones of his tenure, to include his four orbit travels, commanding two; more than 100 combat missions in North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and on to numerous other assignments and duties. From his service as CEO of JACK and PANTHER LLC -- a small business enterprise providing leadership, military and aerospace consulting, and motivational speaking -- Bolden knows the endless possibilities for small business in the flourishing space program. And among his team contributions from decades back, he has written reflections of “the violent days of the 1960’s civil rights movement, war in Viet Nam and the anti-war demonstrations in our streets -- turmoil and division in our nation not seen since the Civil War – I am inspired by the power of a shared national vision articulated by President John F. Kennedy to put men on the Moon; united the world in celebrating this achievement and assuming uncontested technological leadership. NASA and its contractors produced what is a marvel of the modern age – the Space Shuttle, followed by the International Space Station (ISS). With the common goal of making life better for humans here on Earth and improving understanding of our universe,

Unlike the appearance of space travel viewed by earthlings via satellite feed, Bolden did not float through the doors that were opened

before him. He credits faith with hard work, perseverance, and the elements of social change, political will and direct connection with people like his parents, former teachers Jeffcoat and J.P. Neal and the late Dr. Ronald McNair. “McNair challenged and embarrassed me to the point that I had to step out of my comfort zone into that unfamiliar to me,” he said.

Books and movies may not be on Bolden’s horizon but his top goal is to make sure he can rollout the President’s 2014 budget, make sure that NASA is still the best place to work and strive toward the attainable end that success is possible through international cooperation with faithful stewardship of the planet and human achievement as the drivers. “Together we can find innovative ways to advance space exploration reduce the costs of access to space and further push the boundaries of what we can achieve as a nation,” he said.

Bolden holds a BS degree in Electrical Science from the US Naval Academy and an MS in systems Management from the University of South California. He is married to the former Alexis “Jackie” Walker and they have two children: Anthoney Che, a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps who is married to the former Penelope McDougal of Sydney, Australia; and Kelly Michelle, a medical doctor now serving a fellowship in plastic surgery.



*NASA Administrator
Charles F. Bolden, Jr.*

Military Leader

By: Rennie Lunn-McAllister



CSM Gail M. Williams

Command Sergeant Major Gail M. Williams, a native of Timmonsville, SC, has led a distinguished military career of 34 years with the South Carolina Army National Guard. CSM Williams entered the Guard in 1978. She was the first female to be promoted to the rank of first sergeant and the first African American sergeant major.

In 2003, CSM Williams reached another historical milestone when she became the first female in the South Carolina Army National Guard promoted

to the highest enlisted rank — Command Sergeant Major. At the time, she was one of a half dozen Guard Soldiers to attain the rank.

At the time of her promotion, CSM Williams told the press of her experiences as a woman in the Guard. “As females sometimes we have to really show what we can do, and I don’t mind doing that.

There’s a lot of other females that are capable of doing their jobs, and all that they entail, and that females are capable of being the soldiers that we need to be.”

CSM Williams has studied business administration and human resource management and training and development at Limestone College. A registered radiological technologist at Moncrief Army Community Hospital at Fort Jackson, she is a dedicated member of Macedonia Holiness Church in Cartersville, South Carolina. She is a member of the committee for Providence Heart and Soul Race for Women and Red Dress Ambassador.

CSM Williams is the first female to hold the rank in the 228 Signal Brigade, Spartanburg, South Carolina. She was mobilized to Fort Jackson as the command sergeant major for Task Force Northern Regional Medical Command, Operation Enduring Freedom.

Among her numerous awards and decorations, CSM Williams has received the Meritorious Service Medal with Five Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal and the Kuwait Liberation Medal.

(Information provided is from the 2013 AT&T South Carolina African American History calendar)

SPECIAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMENT THROUGH THE ARTS

World Class Art Will Bloom in Lake City, SC

By: Colleen Troy, Touchpoint Communications, LLC



The fields that once produced enough beans, tobacco and cotton to fuel an entire community have given way to fast food restaurants and storefront churches. Once a thriving farm town and transportation crossroads, Lake City, SC has struggled – like so many small towns - in recent decades. Its nearly 7,000 residents earn just over half that of their South Carolina neighbors; sporadic industrial development has helped, but demand exceeds opportunity.

When the trains stopped pausing, and the bean trucks no longer brimmed over, the young people started to leave. Along with them went investment dollars, tax

revenues, diversity and energy. But that’s not the end of the story; it’s the beginning. That’s because Darla Moore, famed for her financial acumen and the new emerald jacket she’ll wear at Augusta National, has a plan.

Moore is the catalyst behind the Lake City Partnership Council, an economic development group that has invested generously in the rehabilitation of Lake City. Their energy has converted crumbling public places into iconic spaces, and fostered a sense of hope in revitalization. Through her leadership, the local booster groups have rescued and rehabbed storefronts. They’ve bolstered the Boys and Girls Club, and inspired a new Young Professionals organization. Their most public investment will be realized April 19 – 28, when hundreds of works of art will bloom in Lake City, vying for \$100,000 in total prize money that makes ArtFields (www.artfieldssc.org) the Southeast’s largest art contest. The art – destined for display in dozens of downtown businesses like barbershops, stores and restaurants – will come from professional artists residing in 12 Southeastern states.

The 10-day festival will include art lectures featuring the likes of Jonathan Green and Mary Whyte. Workshops will give participants hands-on opportunities. Live music from Southeastern artists – including the renowned Rebirth Brass Band – will keep the fun going into many evenings. Add in food trucks on the weekends, a farmers’ and artisans’ market, and more, and it’s clear Lake City is the place to be this April. (Most events are free; a full calendar is available on the festival website).

But success will rely on other things coming to Lake City, too: tourists viewing the art and falling for the town’s quiet charms; young families attracted to affordable land and housing; and locals, who might just see Lake City in a new way. Sound like a gamble? The National Governor’s Association estimates that the non-profit arts industry spins off \$36.8 billion annually, and has already changed the course of cities as varied as Austin, TX and Newark, NJ.

Organizers promise that no matter the immediate impact on the economy, the immediate impact on guests will be positive. For 10 days, Lake City will be THE place to be in SC. And the city’s future looks brighter than ever.



Photos by Justin Nathanson

Unique Career Prep Available

By: Rennie Lunn-McAllister

Many students in South Carolina are graduating with the advantage of being ready for the next level whether it's post-secondary education, military, or employment through their involvement in a unique career preparation program.

Launched by the State Workforce Investment Board in 2005, Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) is a dropout prevention program focused on academic success and career readiness skills. A dedicated career specialist in each of the affiliated schools functions as a teacher, coach, counselor, and advocate for students with documented barriers to success. Over the course of their enrollment, students master 81 competencies identified by business as essential to successful employment.

Students earn one credit hour for this course to gain valuable learning experiences aimed at ensuring success for seniors after graduation. The main objectives of this program are: 1) to help seniors graduate, 2) to seek post-secondary education, 3) to obtain a job, and 4) to get started on a solid career path.

JAG facts:

1. JAG-SC is in the eighth year of service delivery to high school youth across South Carolina. The program currently serves over 1,100 active high school participants. Students, on average, are enrolled with six documented barriers to success (e.g., teen parenting, excessive absenteeism, low income household, or substance abuse).
2. JAG-SC helped transition 1060 seniors since the spring of 2009 with an average 95% graduation rate.
3. JAG-SC Return-to-School rate, with classes across all seven years, has consistently been greater than 95%.
4. JAG-SC experienced a 78% growth since its inception through public/private investments in new high school sites with plans to pursue further growth as funding opportunities become available.

JAG-SC currently operates in the following schools:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| CA Johnson High School | Manning High School |
| Calhoun High School | McCormick High School |
| Carolina High School and Academy | Mullins High School |
| Chesnee High School | North District Middle School |
| Chester High School | Rock Hill High School |
| Clinton High School | South Florence High School |
| Colleton County High School | Swansea High School |
| Creek Bridge High School | Wade Hampton High School |
| Darlington High School | West Florence High School |
| Estill High School | Wilson High School |
| Lake Marion High School | Woodmont High School |
| Lancaster High School | |

Specialists work closely with local employers to provide valuable learning experiences for their students. After graduation, the Specialists assist them to attain employment. These work experiences give the students an edge as they apply what they have learned on the job. Business partnerships are critical to the JAG-SC program. Their service on local business councils, financial assistance, participation in the

classrooms, and efforts in expanding the JAG-SC program to reach as many students as possible is a major part of the success of those individuals who participate in JAG-SC.

Another essential component to success is the one year of follow-up that students receive after graduating from high school. Students receive monthly contact with their Career Specialist. This ensures that they receive assistance during the transition beyond high school and are continuing on a positive track. After one year of follow-up last year's participants attained a 95% graduation rate, a 96% full-time placement rate (school, work, and military combined) and a 62% further education rate. Of those students placed in employment, 81% were employed full-time.

Testimonials:

- "JAG is why I'm where I am today."
-A. Brown-Class of 2012 (junior graduate)
- "JAG prepared me for life."
-J. Daniels-Class of 2009
- "JAG kept me from being a drop out."
-D. Toney-Class of 2009

If you are interested in learning more about Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina, please contact Elaine Midkiff at emidkiff@dew.sc.gov or 803-737-0214 or visit the national website at www.jag.org.

JAG Specialist Who Represent the Pee Dee Area



Dorothy Fore
Creek Bridge High School



Noreen Wingate
Darlington High School



Terry Davis
Mullins High School



Linda Williams
W. Florence High School



Carolyn Reed
Manning High School



Anjennette Moses
Wilson High School

National Autism Awareness Month is Here

By: Kim Thomas, Interim President & CEO South Carolina Autism Society



Kim Thomas

Did you know that in South Carolina there are over 52,000 people with an autism spectrum disorder? The number of cases is steadily increasing as just two years ago the Centers for Disease Control estimated that 1 in 110 people have an Autism Spectrum Disorder. With the increase in numbers of cases there comes an increased need in raising awareness in our communities of autism spectrum disorders.

In order to focus attention on awareness and the growing population of children being diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, the South Carolina Autism Society and organizations such as the Autism Society of America and Autism Speaks recognize April as National Autism Awareness Month. The month of April will be dedicated to educating the public about autism spectrum disorders and the effects on families and the community. So, join the South Carolina Autism Society by getting involved with the autism community this April.

There are many ways to get involved and show your support. One easy way is by wearing the autism ribbon pin on your shirt or purchasing

an autism awareness magnet and placing in on your vehicle. Several organizations and businesses in the community will be participating by being part of the Light It up Blue campaign that Autism Speaks organizes on April 2nd. So if you are a business and would like to show your support for autism you can light up your business blue too!

Another way to get involved and make a difference is by contacting your legislators on the state and federal level to let them know how important it is for them to support autism related bills along with continuing to fund services for the autism community because they do make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by autism. Please be sure to thank your legislators for their continued support as well! We have been very fortunate in South Carolina to have legislators that have taken the time to learn about autism spectrum disorders and support important services and enact legislation such as Ryan's Law and the Pervasive Development Disorder Waiver.

South Carolina Autism Society has several events going on during the month of April, so come join in the fun! For a complete listing of events and to learn more about the South Carolina Autism Society and autism spectrum disorders go to www.scautism.org. The South Carolina Autism Society offers several services which are free to the public such as Information and Referral, Service Coordination and Case Management, Parent to School Partnership, as well as classes like Autism 101, Visual Communications, and Autism Informed Response.

From Startling Discovery to Happy Ending

By: Selisa Scott



Behind Archie Scott (Husband) & Aaron Scott the oldest son. Front Mother Selisa Scott & youngest son Ephraim

"YOU ARE NOT ALONE." Those were the words of comfort that sustained and kept me encouraged after my son was diagnosed with Autism. My son, Ephraim, was born on June 11, 2001. There were no complications during my pregnancy or at his birth. Ephraim and my oldest son, Aaron, both were healthy six pounds and three ounces at birth. Indeed, I felt blessed to have two healthy children. However, by age of two things started to seem a little different with Ephraim. I began to notice that he was not meeting certain milestones. When we called his name, he appeared not to hear us or seemed to be ignoring us. I then thought that maybe I should get his hearing tested. After the test, we received the results that his hearing was fine. A few months later at church, my pastor's wife greeted us and inquired about him. After our brief conversation, she immediately told me to get him tested for Autism (because she noticed that he had characteristics of Autism). Of course, I did not know what to think or say. Holding back tears, I told her that I would. After getting home, I was devastated just to hear that something called "Autism" may be wrong with my baby. To my recollection I did not even know what "Autism" was about. I began to do research over the internet. After a few bouts of trial and error, I finally came across a website about Autism. I was feeling sick to my stomach, anxious, and nervous about the things I read. Yes, I too must say that my son displayed some of the characteristics listed. I thought to myself, "What do I do now and where do I go from here?" I made an appointment with his pediatrician. The day of the appointment, I held my breath and prayed that what I researched would not be my child's fate. When the nurse called us in to the room for the assessment, one of the questions she asked me was, "Does he have at least twenty words in his vocabulary?" I looked at her and said, "No." At that time he only did a lot of babbling. Needless to say, different people were telling

me that he was just a late talker. So therefore, I did not give it much attention. Sitting there waiting on the pediatrician to enter the room, I whispered, "Please God, don't let there be anything wrong with my baby." When the pediatrician entered the room, I told her my concerns about him having Autism. She replied by saying, "I don't think so and if he does it's just a mild form of it." She requested a consultation with a Developmental Specialist to get him tested. Upon our visit with the specialist, Ephraim was given several tests. The specialist confirmed my fear by saying, "Your son has Infantile Autism". While he was talking, my mind was whirling. How could this be? I was a praying, saved, and married woman when my children were conceived and birthed. What did I do wrong? I know the Bible says, He will never leave me nor forsake me, but at that moment I felt so alone.

In my research, I discovered when facing a crisis such as this, it is beneficial to find a support group. I searched in my hometown for one, but to no avail. I later learned about an Autism support group in Florence, SC. With much anticipation, I traveled alone from Dillon, SC, to my first meeting. It was a blessing and a sense of relief to be in the company of people who could relate to my story. After a few sessions, I wondered about other families in my hometown that had children with special needs. Surely, they could benefit from a support group. Therefore, Y.A.N.A. (You Are Not Alone) Special Needs Support Ministry was birthed. In August 2006, Y.A.N.A. held its first meeting. We had families from diverse races and populations. They were grateful to have a support group in our area. Y.A.N.A. is a Christian community ministry for families of children with special needs regardless of age, race, diagnosis or religion. We meet monthly at Outreach Family Fellowship 136 Pee Dee Church Road, Dillon SC 29536. Our goal is to strengthen and encourage parents, grandparents, caregivers, and supporters. We provide workshops, information booths, help with IEP's, a yearly Autism Awareness and Other Disabilities Event, an appreciation banquet, movie nights, and family fun day.

I believe that God has a plan and destiny for our children. My desire is for all parents of children who have special needs to know that they are not alone.

Why Greener Schools Can Make a Difference in Kids

As awareness about the environment continues to grow, it's becoming more apparent that "going green" not only benefits the planet - it benefits the entire population, especially its youngest segment. When children learn in safe, comfortable, toxin-free school environments, their futures are that much brighter.

"Green schools improve student test scores, lower energy bills, and promote a more ecologically sound atmosphere," explains Matt Petersen, president and CEO of Global Green USA. "We call it the three R's of green schools: Rise in student performance levels and teacher retention; Reduction in carbon emissions and toxins; and Renewed hope in education and the future."

Unfortunately, right now, many schools across the national earn poor marks for "greenness." This is not from a lack of initiative; many schools simply don't have the funds necessary for making renovations and repairs. To help schools get on track toward becoming better, greener learning environments, Pureology Serious Colour Care is teaming up with Global Green USA to present the 2nd Global Green USA Green School Makeover Competition. From Jan. 1 through March 31, 2013, any parent, student, teacher or individual can nominate a K -12 public, private or charter school for a well-deserved green school makeover. Students and parents can work with school administrators to complete an application that details the green improvements their school needs. The winning school will receive a green makeover valued at \$140,000, and finalist schools will receive awards for sustainable upgrades. For more information, visit Pureology.com/GreenSchools or www.globalgreen.org/greenschoolmakeover.

Here are a just a few ways schools can be greener, with benefits for both the earth and students:

Start a recycling program

- * Green benefit: A recycling program can greatly reduce the amount of recyclable waste that is created in schools every day which would otherwise end up in landfills. Schools could also take it one step further and launch a composting program, which provides fertilizer for gardens.
- * Learning benefit: Children can learn about what items can be recycled and take

those lessons home to their families. Composting provides a great platform for biology lessons.

Conducting energy audits

- * Green benefit: Many older schools aren't equipped to be energy efficient, which can lead to lots of wasted dollars. When cold air leaks in and warm air seeps out, it's not only uncomfortable but costly as well.
- * Learning benefit: Have teachers show students how and where energy leaks happen and explain what the effects are. It's also a great source for a science lesson. Increasing energy efficiency also saves schools money on utility bills, which can instead be used for books or other school supplies.

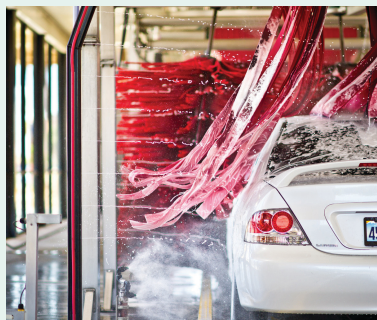
Use green design elements

- * Green benefit: Plain and simple, schools that use green materials and design elements, from window awnings and solar panels to non-toxic flooring and low-VOC paint, don't use nearly as much energy and provide a healthier learning environment.
- * Learning benefits: Green buildings use non-toxic compounds that decrease the chances that students will be exposed to something that will make them sick and keep them out of school. Natural lighting and proper ventilation also help students stay healthy and maintain the proper mindset for learning.

When schools go green, there are short- and long-term benefits to enjoy. A better school environment today can teach kids how to lead the way toward a more sustainable tomorrow.



Simple Tips to Save Water



There are a number of ways to save water and they all start with you.- According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the average American uses about 50 gallons of water per day at home. That means a family of four uses approximately 6,000 gallons a month. The following tips can help you save water, money and the environment.-

1. How to be green and clean your driving machine

Keeping your car clean with regular washing is an important part of responsible maintenance, but washing at home with a garden hose can use more than 60 gallons in as little as five minutes.- Furthermore, you're putting harmful chemicals and detergents down drains and directly into your city's water supply. You may be surprised to learn there is a greener way to keep your car sparkling: a professional car wash. A common misconception is that professional car washes waste water, when in fact the opposite is true. WaterSavers professional car washes, for example, use an average of no more than 40 gallons of fresh water per vehicle - less than the average home washing machine, which uses 41 gallons per load, according to the EPA. According to the International Carwash Association(R), professional car washes also responsibly dispose of - and in many cases recycle and re-use - the water runoff. -For more information, visit WashWithWaterSavers.com.

2. Go green and keep your whites white

It's easy to take steps to conserve H2O and keep your wardrobe fresh. First, only run the clothes washer when you have a full load. Make this habit for

both your clothes washer and dishwasher, and you could save up to 1,000 gallons of water a month, according to Wateruseitwisely.com. You get extra green points if you use cold water when washing your clothes. Approximately 86 percent of the energy used by washing machines is for heating the water. Washing with cold water eliminates 1,600 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions each year from just one household, according to the Sierra Club.

3. Break bad bathroom habits-

Bathrooms are water hogs, accounting for about 75 percent of a home's water usage. Adopting a green mindset in the bathroom can save major water and money. Start by switching to a low-flow showerhead, which National Geographic says saves 15 gallons of water during a 10-minute shower. Keep the occasional bath for a special treat because the average tub takes about 70 gallons to fill, so showers are much more efficient. Toilets are another major water-waster. The current federal standard is 1.6 gallons of water per flush, so if you have an older toilet, it's time to upgrade. By replacing old toilets with WaterSense-labeled models, the average family reduces water used for toilets by 20 to 60 percent, or about 13,000 gallons of water and \$110 in water costs per year.

4. Water down the drain

When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing. Fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water. And for cold drinks, keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain. When watering your lawn or garden, it's best to do so in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation. Also be sure to adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street. Be sure to monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks.

These simple tips can help you green your household in just minutes. Not only are you helping Mother Earth, you'll be saving money too.

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Building Bridges to Diverse Communities Through STEM Education

By Alison Mann, GSSM Marketing Director



Sonja Taylor

Sonja Taylor joined the staff of the South Carolina Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics (GSSM) Foundation as Diversity Recruitment Manager in January 2013. GSSM, located in Hartsville, is a public, residential high school for juniors and seniors who excel in science and math. The diversity recruitment manager is a newly created position within the recruiting arm of the GSSM Foundation. Taylor is uniquely qualified for this position. After growing up in Louisiana, she earned her B.S. in Chemistry from Stephen F. Austin State University, TX and her Master

of Education in Divergent Learning from Columbia College, SC. Her professional experience includes working as a laboratory scientist and chemist, teaching science in urban and suburban schools in Massachusetts and Florida, and writing textbooks for secondary science courses. What’s more, Taylor attended the Louisiana School for Math, Science and Arts, a sister school to GSSM.

“Many talented and deserving students from diverse communities throughout the state are unaware of the outstanding educational opportunities offered by GSSM,” says Taylor. “My primary goal is to raise awareness about the school and to speak specifically to the benefits of obtaining a solid STEM education in preparation for college, career, earning a livable wage, and ultimately moving families forward. As an African American scientist and educator, I am able to go into communities and share how educational preparation in a STEM field afforded me many opportunities that may have been otherwise unattainable.” While GSSM is a tuition-free public high school, open to applicants across the state, it is an ongoing challenge to convince students from diverse backgrounds of the benefit of leaving their communities, families and friends to live in

Hartsville for two years. “Research has shown a direct correlation between educational attainment and economic advancement,” says Taylor. “This is especially true in minority communities. In order for minority students to be academically competitive, they must get a solid foundation in courses such as mathematics and science.”

GSSM has developed a variety of summer programs for students as they build interest and aptitude in math and science in advance of applying to the GSSM Residential program. One such program is GoSciTech, a week-long residential summer program. Students can select from a wide variety of courses and stay for one, two or three weeks on GSSM’s Hartsville campus.

“By participating in programs such as GoSciTech, students are able to spend a week on the Hartsville campus taking all sorts of cool courses including Astrophysics, Forensic Science, Game Theory, and Genetics,” says Taylor. “While these courses are fun, they also encourage development of critical reasoning and analytical skills, which are transferable to high school, college, and the workplace.”

Taylor goes on to say, “I want to see the achievement gap closed and I know that GSSM is a conduit for accomplishing this goal. My message to minority students and their families is one of encouragement accompanied by action. GSSM is a public school, so all students throughout the state are welcome to apply and partake in the learning experience. I know that the students who make the commitment to invest in themselves will realize the fruits of their labor, and they will have the skills to move their families, communities, and the state of South Carolina forward.”

Keep an eye out for Taylor as she travels across the state, visiting middle and high schools, meeting with guidance counselors and students, and building partnerships with community stakeholders. Contact Sonja Taylor at 803.252.9152 or Sonja@scgssm.org. Learn more about the Governor’s School for Science & Mathematics and its outreach programs at www.scgssm.org.

Smarter Standards, Smarter Testing

As of this school year, the Marion County School District began an implementation plan to begin working with the new Common Core State Standards adopted by the state of South Carolina. These standards were developed in English Language Arts and Mathematics in a cooperative fashion by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. These standards were created with input from teachers, and are supported by the major teacher unions as well as by the National Parent Teacher Association.

As of today, 45 states, as well as the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense's Educational Activity and Guam have adopted these standards. The goal of the CCSS is twofold: provide a consistent and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, and to allow states across the nation to be on the same page when it comes to testing and accountability reporting. This is very important to schools across the country- when educational rankings are released, it is crucial that we are comparing ourselves to other states in the same things. We need to compare apples to apples, not apples to oranges.

Only then can these ranking systems be actually fair and just. If teachers in Kansas are

teaching the same thing as teachers in South Carolina, then it is fair to compare them, but not until then. The CCSS is also going to give us a very clear expectation of what students should be learning, as well as guidelines on how they should be assessed. These new standards were created to reflect the real world, and are designed to give our students the knowledge and skills necessary for success; whether that student goes on to college or enters the workforce.

Naturally, if we are adopting new standards, then it follows that we will have new assessments. Most of us are familiar with the PASS exams, given for students in grades 3-8. PASS will continue to be given for Science and Social Studies, but ELA and Math will be assessed using the Smarter Balanced Assessment starting next year. Britton's Neck Elementary and McCormick Elementary have been chosen to pilot the Smarter Balanced assessments this year. Smarter Balanced is designed to assess students in the spirit of the new standards.

The test is administered online, so students go to the computer lab to take them. This is more in keeping with career and college assessments, especially for careers, where most training takes place through computer and video tutorials. These tests are different from the paper and

pencil assessments like PASS. Students are asked to do performance tasks; and therefore measure students' creativity and critical thinking skills. In other words, this series of tests show the mastery of skills necessary for working in the 21st century.

What does that mean for our students? This translates into providing curriculum and instruction geared towards gaining skills in necessary areas such as presentation, writing, oral literacy, problem solving, and creative thinking. These are skills that have been identified by major corporations as necessary for successful employment. They are, not so coincidentally, skills that provide college success as well. This means that, as we implement these new standards and assess them more efficiently, we are better preparing our students for the future. And isn't that the goal of all educators?



*Dr. Dan Strickland
Marion Schools Superintendent*



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Student, Scholar Shares His Values

By: Laura Hoxworth, Content Manager & Writer



Dean Page, owner of Successful After-School Sites and student at Coker College

When you talk to Dean Page about his after-school program in Dillon you don't need long to see how much it means to him. It only takes a moment to hear the passion in his voice and see the depth of his commitment in his eyes. A native of Dillon, Dean grew up in a neighborhood he describes as "rough." While he didn't let it affect his own ambitions, the culture of violence and addiction—which started young, and led to a nearly 50% high school dropout rate—always troubled him. Even when he graduated high school

in 1986 and joined the U.S. Navy, Dean always knew he would be back to help his community. It took 10 years and a woman named Tanya, but in 1997 he did return to Dillon to settle down. The dropout rates, poverty and violence hadn't changed. With Tanya's background in early childhood development, it didn't take the pair long to realize their calling. In 2004, Successful After-School Sites was born.

The program had a modest start, advertising with a few brochures and a lot of word-of-mouth. "We had no business plan," Dean says with a smile. "We didn't know what we were getting into." But it didn't take them long to gain a foothold in the community. Dean found that they were filling a need in Dillon, and the community responded. "They invited us in," he says. They quickly formed ties with schools, churches, and other organizations, and the program grew.

Ten years later, the program has grown from serving 85 kids to 410 every day. Open to children ages 3-18, it runs from 2:30 to 6 p.m.

every school day. A mix of paid and volunteer staff members, all screened and background-checked, lead the children in a number of educational activities, from computer labs to reading games. The activities build on what the kids are learning in school—but a wide variety ensures that every student will find something to educate and engage them. But despite the program's success, Dean isn't content to sit back and rest. Inspired partly by the children he helps educate every day, Dean decided to go back to school himself. He's now a sophomore in the Marion branch of Coker College's ALPHA (Adult Learners Program for Higher Achievement) program, studying Business Administration with a minor in graphic design. Dean says the program, which offers courses two nights a week, allows him to take classes while running his business full-time. He hopes his new business knowledge will help him better communicate and market his business's message, so he can reach as many children as possible. But one of the biggest benefits of going back to school, he says, is the self-esteem he's gained. From the support network of fellow students to the numerous educational resources, the experience he found at Coker empowered him to keep achieving his dreams. "I feel like I can climb a mountain," he says.

Dean has big plans for the future. He wants to change the pervasive mindset in disadvantaged communities that keeps children in a cycle of poverty, by doing whatever he can to advocate for the importance of after-school programs—especially in smaller or disadvantaged communities. As for Successful After-School Sites, Dean hopes to expand soon to neighboring counties and, eventually, to other states. "I'd like to see us develop a model that we can duplicate throughout the world," he says. "And I feel like when I get done here at Coker, I will be able to do that."

But when it comes down to it, Dean's grand aspirations have a simple motivation: to help break a cycle of poverty and delinquency, one kid at a time. "I don't want to see our kids lose faith in what one or two people can do," he says. "When you're accustomed to disappointment, it's hard to believe that someone could care enough about you to want to change your life."

Between the program, the church where he serves as a pastor, his business classes, and his wife and three children, Dean admits that he has to make some sacrifices to keep everything running. But even when the sacrifices feel like a lot, he says the benefits are always worth so much more.


"When those kids realize that after three weeks, Mr. Dean is still here...they begin to share everything," he says. "They know they have someone who's going to be there; someone who's not going to leave."


"That's why I get up every day."

[re]define your career

Iris Lynch
business major; psychology minor

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His Command of Six Languages Speaks Volumes

By: Alicia C. Phillip Gibson, Esq., Contributing Writer



Rob Curran

It is impossible to speak about diversity issues in South Carolina educational institutions without mentioning the name Rob Curran. Currently serving as the Assistant Head of School and Dean of Academics at Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School, a college preparatory 6th to 12th grade school in northeast South Carolina, Rob Curran is one of a select group of professionals who have dedicated their careers to diversity matters.

And he has indeed blazed quite a trail. He is a qualified and experienced educator and diversity practitioner with proven success in classroom and school leadership positions. An advocate of global education, socially engaged practice, inclusive curriculum, sustainability, and service learning, he also speaks five languages (Spanish, French, Russian, Italian, and Portuguese). Curran's main focus is on fostering diversity in schools and organizations, ensuring that the structure of an organization reflects an ethos of equity and inclusion, and that it teaches intercultural issues and inclusion.

His past experience demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity. For four years he served as the equality, diversity & social responsibility manager at University College Falmouth, a small creative arts college in Cornwall, United Kingdom (UK). While there, he helped raise the profile of civic engagement, community partnership, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and socially engaged learning. Some of his contributions included: developing a campus-wide program to promote a diverse, inclusive learning and teaching community; advocating and strategizing for retention and success of diverse student and staff cohort; advising and advocating for multicultural, LGBT, disabled and international students/groups; coordinating an employee diversity network; commissioning and delivering

diversity training for staff and student groups; providing guidance around accessibility, assistive technology, and dyslexia/visual learning; and creating a concept for and organizing an annual campus Diversity Festival. Prior to that, Curran coordinated a diversity education program for a multicultural youth project, working in and with schools across Cornwall to advocate for race equality and diversity. At that project he developed and delivered a diversity education program for the project, in partnership with local education authority and relevant voluntary/community organizations; designed and delivered curriculum content, presentations, workshops, and training on cultural diversity, human rights and global citizenship; advised school administrative teams on race equality and inclusion issues; and mentored and supported young people from a range of minority backgrounds.

In addition, Curran's passion for improving diversity is evident in his service as a part-time tutor for TRIO/Upward Bound, a federally funded college readiness and access program for high school students from low-income, rural families, where he worked with rural South Carolina high school students aiming at college admission. He has also consulted and assisted with curriculum development for local school districts, concentrating on education for sustainability.

Curran completed his Master's degree in Education from the University College Falmouth, his undergraduate degree in Spanish and Russian from the University of Bristol, UK, as well as a year abroad program at the Universidad Católica de Chile, and the State Pedagogical Institute, in Pyatigorsk, Russia. Further, he obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education from University College Falmouth.

For further information, please contact Rob Curran by e-mail at rcurran@tcstitans.org or by phone at 404.213.9335.



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Former Women's College Now Embraces All

By: Sheri M. Goff, Area Coordinator & Alicia C. Phillip Gibson, Esq., Contributing Writer



Sheri M. Goff, Area Coordinator

Limestone College is an independent, coeducational four-year liberal arts institution located in Gaffney, SC that offers programs that lead to the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Social Work, Associate of Arts, and Associate of Science degrees.

It has a rich history of diversity stemming from its establishment in 1845 as the first women's college in South Carolina and one of the very

first in the United States. In fact, it wasn't until the late 1960s that Limestone became fully coed. Today, the college has a total enrollment of over 3,500 students, with more than 700 day students on its main campus and 2,800 Extended Campus students at eight sites in South Carolina and online. The Florence and Kingstree sites serve students in the Pee Dee region. These extended campus classroom sites offer a non-traditional format by offering classes in the evenings to accommodate working students. Majors in Business and Liberal Studies are offered for a two year Associates or a four-year baccalaureate degree. A four-year baccalaureate degree is offered in the social work discipline. Limestone College is a military-friendly college, serving veterans and active military personnel.

Diversity is at the core of the college's mission, which is to educate students from diverse backgrounds. It accomplishes this by providing

degree programs on extended campuses throughout South Carolina and by way of the Internet, thereby giving access to higher education to less traditional students.

The college's commitment to diversity is further evident in its concerted effort to recruit more women students. It recently implemented an inaugural scholarship program designed specifically for women, offering grants worth \$8,000 annually for a total of \$32,000 over four years.

Scholarship recipients of these McMillan Scholarships, so named after one of the college's professors, must be South Carolina women residents with high school grade point averages of 3.0 or better, who major in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Professional Communication, Music, Art, Theatre, English, or History.

Further diversity initiatives include the Women in Technology Conference (WITS) which is held every March and is open to young women who are sophomores and juniors in selected Upstate South Carolina high schools. During the WITS Conference, women faculty in biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, and athletic training introduce the students to college-level classes in those fields and also provide career advice. Attendees of the 2013 WITS Conference are eligible for the McMillan Scholarships.

For more information about Limestone College, please contact the Pee Dee Area Coordinator, Sheri Goff, at 843-662-3517, 843-662-3214, or their Admissions Office at 1-800-795-7151.

Bedside Manner & Rolemodeling Help Brogdon Exceed Expectations

By: Angela R. Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Rhonda M. Brogdon

Francis Marion University Assistant Professor of Nursing Rhonda M. Brogdon of Olanta is the fourth recipient of the FMU African-American Faculty and Staff Coalition (AAFSC) Diversity Award. The award seeks to recognize a faculty or staff member for their significant contributions to enhance the university's diversity and inclusiveness.

"Rhonda is most deserving of this award. She was chosen because of her work across campus, her work with professional organizations and in the community," said Teresa McDuffie, chairman of the selection committee. "Her interaction with faculty, staff and students exemplifies the values of diversity."

The award was presented to Brogdon at the 12th Annual Banquet of the AAFSC on Thursday, Feb. 21. The proceeds from the banquet go toward the group's scholarship funds and functions. The keynote speaker for the gala was Dr. John Keith III. He is a pediatrician at Eastern Carolina Pediatrics and a former chief of pediatrics at Carolinas Hospital Systems. Keith is a native of Florence County and a graduate of Hannah-Pamplico High School. He is also a graduate of Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. and Duke University in Durham, N.C.

Brogdon has been a medical-surgical nurse for 16 years. She received the Bachelor of Science in nursing from Clemson University in 1994, the Master of Science in nursing in 2004, the Master of Business Administration in 2001, and the Doctor of Nursing Practice from Duquesne University in 2010. Rhonda has served as mentor and preceptor for 12 years in bedside nursing and was consistently evaluated as a "role model" nurse for 10 years while working in acute care by her nurse manager.

Recipients of the FMU African-American Faculty and Staff Coalition Diversity Award are people who routinely and voluntarily make diversity and inclusion a priority in much of what they do or people whose major responsibilities are implementing gender diversity and inclusion initiatives, but consistently explore ways to go above and beyond expecta

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Dual enrollment allows high school students to simultaneously earn credit toward high school graduation while also earning college credits. Since its inception in 2004, students have participated in the Dual Enrollment program at Florence-Darlington Technical College. There are currently over 70 courses listed on the statewide articulation list of transferable courses to public senior institutions, which is available online at:

http://www.che.sc.gov/AcademicAffairs/transfer/transferable_courses.pdf
Students have an opportunity to earn a year's worth of college credit or more before they graduate from high school.

Dually Enrolled Students Are More Likely To:

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- Earn higher grades
- Complete a college degree
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Requirements for specific majors at senior institutions may vary; therefore, it is the responsibility of each student to plan a program of study to meet the requirements of the college to which the student expects to transfer. It is strongly recommended that students consult the college/university to which the student plans to transfer to ensure that courses taken at Florence-Darlington Technical College meet the senior institution's requirements. If you would like more information about Dual Enrollment options at Florence -Darlington Technical College, contact Nick Lyerly at (843) 661-8103 or email him at Nick.Lyerly@fdtc.edu



We are all different, but each one of us is as important as the other, because we need each other.



Like the different pieces of a Jig Saw puzzle, we all fit together to make the beautiful picture that is our wonderful world

Arts International April 20, 2013

FMU Gears Up for Arts International

Plans are underway for Francis Marion University's Arts International, the annual celebration of the arts, to be held Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

This celebration of the visual and performing arts is for the whole family, with simultaneous performances at several different venues on campus. The event, a union of FMU's Arts Alive and the Pee Dee International Festival, will take place on the FMU campus. Musical performances are scheduled at stages indoors and outdoors.

For the first time, this year's festivities will include Florence-Darlington Technical College's Welding Sculpture Competition. The sculpture competition will be located behind the Smith University Center. There, teams of experienced craftsmen will have eight hours to create a breathtaking piece of art, using only a pile of scrap material

Featured on the international stage are the Walhalla Oktoberfest Bavarian Dancers; the Jabali African Acrobats; Shrimp City Slim; Wanda Johnson; and Swamp Pop Shelley.



Robert Sims, a lyric baritone who specializes in African American folk songs and spirituals, is among those who will perform in Kassab Recital Hall in the Fine Arts Center

In addition, artists from all over the southeast region of the United States will be showing and selling their work at the festival. There will be oils, acrylics, pottery, woodwork, stained glass, jewelry, metalwork, photography, basketry and more. Food vendors representing countries all over the world will be on hand and cultural booths will have displays featuring global history, businesses and organizations. Also participate in a sidewalk chalk art competition and a recycled reading book sale.

The annual Art Show and Sale will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the festival as well. This one-day exhibition and sales event is designed to promote the quality of diverse artisans residing in the region. In addition to booths displaying items for sale, several sites will have artisans demonstrating their skills. The art show will be juried; with cash awards of \$600, \$300 and \$150 awarded to first, second and third place, respectively.

For more information about the art show or Arts International, go to www.fmarion.edu/news/artsinternational or contact Kathy Johnson at the FMU Office of Public and Community Affairs at (843) 661-1225, orkjohnson@fmarion.edu.



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Stedman Graham to Speak in Greater Pee Dee Region

By: Dr. Marnelle Alexis Stephens

The James Stephens Scholarship Foundation will host its 25th annual gala 7:30 pm May 4th at the Francis Marion Performing Arts Center. The gala will present a host of celebrity entertainers as well as local and national leaders. Last year's event was a remarkable success featuring Temptations' Louis Price and American Idol's Patrick Hall, with a surprise performance by Grammy award winning and living legend award recipient, Ms. Melba Moore. This year's entertainment will be sure to surpass last year's performances with living legend award recipient, Stedman Graham. Graham is widely known as author, international speaker, businessman, and long-time partner of Oprah Winfrey.

In support of the James Stephens Scholarship Foundation, Graham will be hosting a special seminar for the Pee Dee community of which the proceeds will support scholarship recipients. The seminar will be held on Monday, April 29th. The cost for the seminar is \$50. Space is limited. Information about time and event location will be made available via the Florence Morning News, Florence Chamber of Commerce, Dillon Herald and Dillon Chamber of Commerce. There will be a photo opportunity as well as a book signing. For further information, please call 843-627-3300.

For more information about the James Stephens Scholarship Foundation and to purchase tickets for the gala, please visit our website at www.thejamesstephensfoundation.org

Awareness of Identity Theft is Your Best Protection

By: Susan F. Grant
Marketing & Compliance Officer



Susan F. Grant

Most of us think if we resist the electronic devices or the fast-paced electronic world we are in today that we do not have to worry about this rapidly growing criminal attack. This is not true: Identity theft can happen to anyone. It is not restricted to any age, gender, income level, or location. The recent South Carolina Department of Revenue tax computer breach has alerted many people to Identity Theft, but this is only one of many ways thieves can get your information.

When someone steals your personal information and uses it without your permission, you have just become one of many victims. Identity thieves use many ways to get your information,

from rummaging through your garbage, public dumps or pretending to work for companies you deal with. They may try to trick you by email or phone, to convince you to reveal your personal information. If you suspect that your personal information has been stolen, acting quickly is the best way to limit the damage.

Once they get your information they may run up charges on credit cards, open new utility accounts, or even get medical treatment on your health insurance. They might even file a tax return in your name to get your tax refund or even give your name to the police during an arrest. The list just goes on and on.

The first signs that someone has stolen your information:


- Unexplained withdrawals or purchases made from your checking account
- You do not get your bills or other mail
- Businesses will refuse your checks
- Debt collectors calling on debts which aren't yours
- Unfamiliar charges on your credit cards or on your credit report
- Medical providers bill you for service you didn't use
- The IRS notifies you that you have more than one tax return filed

If there are any unusual account activities contact your bank immediately to protect your accounts, they will advise you of the best option for your situation. They may put an alert on the account or advise to close it.

If you suspect you might be a victim, place a fraud alert on your credit file through the three credit bureaus and exercise your right to a free copy of your credit report. The credit report is full of information such as where you live, how you pay your bills, whether you have been sued or filed bankruptcy. Review the credit report for any name, address, or employers reported inaccurately and debts which are not yours. Dispute any errors as soon as possible with the credit reporting companies.


Identity theft can happen to anyone. Children are even at risk of being a victim of identity theft. Protect your personal information and keep important papers secure. Be careful with your mail, take packages and payments to the post office, shred sensitive documents and remove mail that arrives in your mail box. Protect your Social Security Number and medical information.

Be alert to impersonators asking for account information or Social Security numbers because this is a big red flag. The companies you deal with will have this information so you would not need to supply it to them over the phone or thru email. If you do business with a company that is calling you for this information, ask for their information and call the company number which you have, not the one the caller maybe giving, to verify the identity of the caller and that this information is needed.



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Carolinas Hospital System Launches 'Healthy Woman'

For women, fulfilling the various roles and responsibilities required of them – mother, daughter, caregiver, friend, mentor, volunteer or career professional-is stressful. Finding time to care for themselves is a challenge. Carolinas Hospital System has launched a program to help: Healthy Woman, a free program just for women.

Healthy Woman is designed to support a healthy mind, body and spirit for women – and the families they care for.

Healthy Woman was created by women for women to provide up-to-date health care information for the entire family. The program's mission is to empower women of the Pee Dee Region with the knowledge and confidence to make informed healthcare and well-being decisions for themselves and their loved ones.

Healthy Woman presentations will cover physical and emotional health, as well as financial well-being and spiritual development. Healthcare topics will include important information on heart disease, diabetes, breast cancer, menopause, nutrition, osteoporosis, stress management and life balance issues and much more.

An advisory council composed of women throughout the Pee Dee Region has been named to support the hospital in identifying topics of interest and promoting the program throughout the area.

"Women, who make between 80 and 90 percent of all healthcare decisions, often balance careers, primary and secondary families, issues with parents, and civic work," said CEO Darcy Craven. "We want to help them with information to make those decisions."

Joining the free Healthy Woman program is easy; just visit CarolinasHospital.com/HealthyWoman to sign up. Members can access

timely health information, receive upcoming event information, and register for future health seminars. The site also includes an award-winning online health library with more than 12,000 adult and pediatric health topics.

Carolinas Hospital System is committed to being a leader in improving women's health and supporting their unique role as healthcare managers.



Carolinas Hospital System's Healthy Woman Kick-Off featuring Elizabeth Smart was spectacular and enjoyed by everyone that attended. Elizabeth Smart, abducted from her Utah bedroom in 2002 at the age of 14, delivered a message filled with hope and encouragement, and overcoming adversity.

Fun.

Get healthy. Stay healthy.

Are you looking for something fun to do? Join Healthy Woman today! Healthy Woman is a free community resource from Carolinas Hospital System designed to empower women with the knowledge and confidence they need to maintain a healthy body, mind, and spirit. Healthy Woman events cover a wide variety of women's issues designed to improve your life and the lives of those you love.

To join Healthy Woman, visit CarolinasHospital.com/HealthyWoman.

Membership is free and the benefits last a lifetime.

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Celebrity Spotlight

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Crystal Andrus, Bestselling Author, Founder of The S.W.A.T. Institute, Registered Holistic Nutritionist, and Fitness Expert Certified with the American College of Sports Medicine



“Bonecrusher” Smith Joins Xooma Family

We are proud to officially announce that world-famous Heavyweight Boxing Champion, James “Bonecrusher” Smith, has joined the Xooma family! Bonecrusher was the first Heavyweight Boxing Champion to hold a college degree and was one of the only boxers in history to go 12 rounds in the ring against Mike Tyson. In addition to his career as a boxer, James Smith is now an author and just completed his first book. March 1, 2013 marks the launch of Bonecrusher’s nationwide book signing tour for his just-released book, “M.A.D.” (Make a Decision). Included in his book is a chapter that talks about the power and value of having a successful home-based business. The first stop on his book tour is in Wilmington, NC near his hometown of Magnolia. While you certainly don’t want to meet Bonecrusher in the boxing ring, we can assure you that he is an incredible, down-to-earth and determined guy who is serious about helping people “Make a Decision” so that they can make a positive difference in their life. In fact, he is already building a fast-growing business with Xooma and we’re honored to have this former professional athlete as part of the Xooma family. Watch for upcoming opportunities to hear from and meet James “Bonecrusher” Smith in person!

A personal testimonial from “Bonecrusher” Smith

I was contacted by dear friend, Diane Chapman from Florence, SC in October last year. It’s been an amazing experience the last few months, to say the least. I feel like I have my life back. Although I had a few health challenges that prohibited me from doing some of the things I used to do earlier in life, I am very proud to say that my health has totally changed. My high blood pressure and diabetes have been regulated. The inflammation in my joints have improved tremendously. My LDL /HDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels are great. I have lost weight and I feel great. My family and friends are beginning to ask me, “What’s got you looking and feeling so good?” I attribute my success to my friend, Diane Chapman, National Director at Xooma Worldwide and their amazing products we now market. I’ve been using the Xtreme X2O™ mineral sachets that you simply drop in the water you drink, transforming your water into an alkaline water, and releases over 70 organic trace minerals. After about 5 minutes of letting your sachet sit in the water while making its transformation, you then begin drinking the water and literally watch your life change before your very own eyes. I am also enjoying the incredible income opportunity that Xooma provides. It is unlike any opportunity I have ever seen or been a part of. As I am beginning to travel all over the world again, I am sharing life-changing information about how I got my health back and what others can do to possibly experience and have success as well. I want all my family, friends, and fans to be HEALTHY, WEALTHY, and WISE. I am looking forward to being in your city soon for a personalized book signing. Until then, IT’S GONNA BE A KNOCK OUT!!!

James BoneCrusher Smith

Diane Chapman

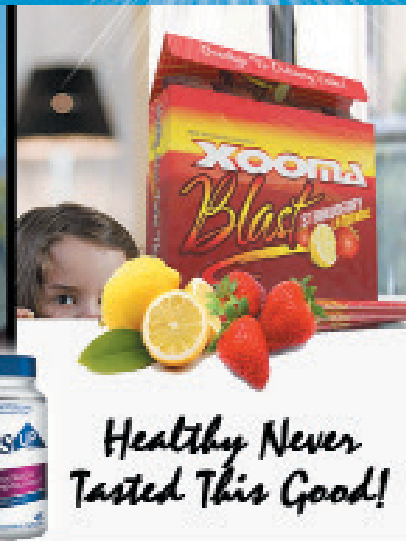
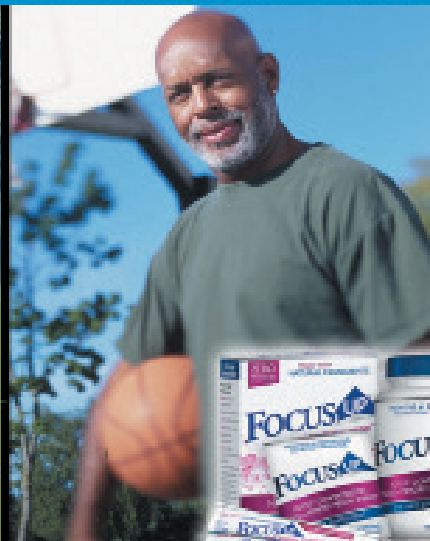
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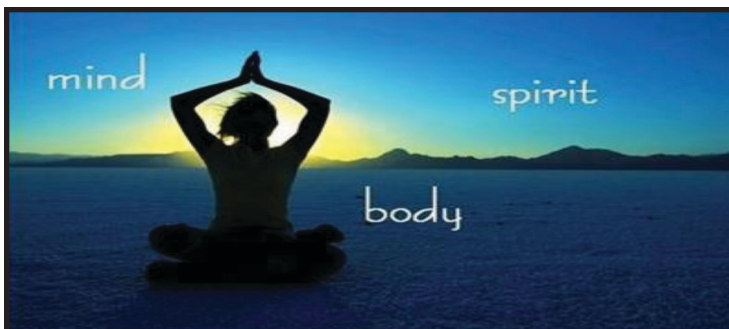
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Dr. David A. Gittens, D.C.

American Cancer Society 100th Birthday



Remember when you wanted to stay up all night just for the fun of it? Well now you can, and for a good cause, too. Form a team and join the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life event in your county, or make an online donation.

The American Cancer Society will celebrate its 100th birthday in May and more people than ever before are surviving cancer. But, we don't want cancer to see another century.

We invite you to take part in the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Lee County, Darlington, Florence, Chesterfield, Dillon, Marlboro, Loris, and/or Green Sea Floyd counties. This is your chance to celebrate the life of survivors, honor the memory of friends and loved ones, and fight for a world with less cancer and more birthdays.

Join us for this celebration of life ... and sign up for the American Cancer Society Relay For Life at www.relayforlife.org and find an event near you. For more information call 1-800-ACS-2345. And we promise that no one will come in and yell at you to go to sleep.

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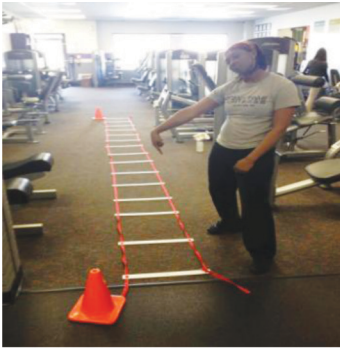
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Certified Personal Trainer

Certified Personal Trainer Glenda Hasty tells every client yes. That is because at Anytime Fitness, the bulk of them ask the same question: ‘Can you help me lose weight and keep it off?’

“Well, sure we can. Set a goal, a plan and a timeline and if they happen to complete it early, then we work on maintenance,” she said, pointing out that the plan needs to be diverse. “You need diversity because if you do the same thing (workout routine) all the time, you

don’t alter the results. You may even have to change trainers – and we have four – but here it’s a team effort so we all rejoice in the various successes anyway.

Hasty said clients also have to change their lifestyle and if they are serious about losing weight and staying in top shape, they must avoid the weight scale. “It is not about what you weigh; it’s how you look and feel. You will know when your clothes feel looser and others will tell you how you’ve changed,” she said.

Aside from appreciating the differences in age, stage and status of clients who walk through their door on Cashua Drive, Anytime Fitness personnel focus mainly on the spectrum of sizes and shapes and attitudes. “First we educate newcomers about the three aspects of fitness – weight, cardio and nutrition. You see, not eating enough is worse than eating

too much. If you starve your body one time, it is smart enough to know to store whatever it is that you give it on the next feeding -- whether it’s right or wrong, healthy or not -- and that is a very dangerous signal to send to your brain,” she told.

Relocating from Florida, which many regard as the ‘health capital of the world’, Hasty said there is much more to a gym than working out. “At Anytime Fitness, we also have to talk it out, engaging the body, mind and overall well being. We take the wholistic approach to each individual and that is just our first competitive advantage,”

She continued, “Another thing we do better than other clubs is that we have a clean and safe environment for adults only, a happy and upbeat atmosphere that keeps them coming back and then we (staff) get paid for what we love doing. Add to that we have a zero mandatory enrollment fee, are open 24 hours to accommodate anyone’s schedule and have no shortage of state-of-the-art equipment for every need.”

To catapult the one-of-a-kind club over the top is its claim to fame for being global. “We have a customer in our Sumter affiliate who is a native of London and as a member of Anytime Fitness when she visited her relatives back home; she used our facilities over there. A member anywhere is a member everywhere!” she quipped.

A personal trainer to clients, but a mom and life coach to her 22-year-old son, Hasty has served in the US Army for ten years, including Operation Desert Storm. She said her immediate goal is to get her son graduated from college but on the grand scale it is to get everyone aware of the essence of fitness and become involved in their own plan to achieve optimum shape and size.



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Diagnosis and management of medical and surgical retinal diseases including Age-Related Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, Retinal Detachments, Macular Holes and Puckers is offered by retina specialists Dr. Jack A. Wells, Dr. W. Lloyd Clark, D. David L. Johnson, and Dr. John F. Payne. On-going clinical research studies are performed onsite, offering the Pee Dee access to the newest treatment options. Carolinas Centers for Sight will soon be joined by Dr. John Gillespie, a leading glaucoma surgeon.

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Moving the Needle Up on Health Ranking



South Carolina is currently forty-eighth in state health rankings, only ahead of Mississippi and Louisiana. With alarmingly high rates of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and Type II Diabetes, the state also ranks first in lower limb amputations caused by Diabetes. One of the major risk factors for each of these serious health conditions is obesity.

Children in America currently face shorter life expectancies than their parents due to this ever-growing epidemic. In fact, two of every five (39.1%) children in South Carolina are either overweight or obese.

These life-threatening combinations are even more exaggerated in the areas of our community that have a lower socioeconomic status. Implementing health and wellness programs have the potential to make enormous impacts on the health of our community and would also positively impact our economy in South Carolina. According to the South Carolina DHEC, decreasing the prevalence of obesity at today's levels could save South Carolina taxpayers \$858 per adult by 2018, totaling \$3 billion.

Be Your Own Champion is a health and wellness program created by HopeHealth, a federally qualified health center that services the Pee Dee region and parts of eastern South Carolina, and hosted by Lake City Wellness Center. The goal of Be Your Own Champion is to empower patients suffering from chronic and acute illnesses to change their health behaviors. As a result, this program can help improve health outcomes related to obesity, cardiovascular disease, and Type II Diabetes through the fusing of wellness, exercise and conventional health Participants (Champions) of Be Your Own Champion will be enrolled into a twelve-month program that consists of regular visits with a HopeHealth physician and one of the fitness experts at Lake City Wellness Center. The physician and the wellness center will partner together to create a tailor-made program that will specifically meet the needs of each Champion.

"Physical fitness can have positive effects on individuals with many different kinds of chronic disease," explained Roosevelt Bryant, executive director of Lake City Wellness Center. "Decreasing the risks associated with obesity and diabetes are not the only benefits to this program, symptoms of arthritis and depression can also be improved with regular exercise and a healthy diet."

Unfortunately, statistics show a correlation between low socioeconomic status and chronic disease. People who would benefit from our program are unable to pay for memberships for this life-saving intervention. HopeHealth is working to raise funds in order to provide scholarships for individuals who otherwise would be unable to participate in wellness programs.

"We want to target individuals who suffer the most from chronic disease," said Stu Carroll, HopeHealth's director of business development. "In order to do this, we must find support within our community to help fund the cause."

HopeHealth invites you to join them in their mission to improve the health statuses of those who need it most. Members of the community surrounding Lake City wishing to participate in or donate to Be Your Own Champion can contact Stu Carroll at 843.664.9414 or scarroll@hope-health.org. And, always remember that with HOPE, ALL things are possible.

Submitted



welcomes...



Dr. Brinda Chokshi



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