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WEST ASHLEY REACHES FOR THE STARS

The Charleston
Planetarium is set
to open at the
Citadel Mall

See story page 18 ...

Also inside ...



Mike Jefferson at the Elvis Showcase in the Westgate Las Vegas Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada



Maia and Addison Ingle at the mercado in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico



Amy and Joe Felder at Meow Wolf in Denver, Colorado

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Monkey Meow Meow

Hello, my name is Monkey Meow Meow. I am looking for a place to call my own. I would prefer the quiet solitude of the great outdoors and a job to keep me busy. For this reason, I believe I would thrive as a barn cat by keeping pests at bay.

PETS OF THE MONTH



Charleston Animal Society
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www.charlestonanimalsociety.org

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WEST OF FREE PRESS

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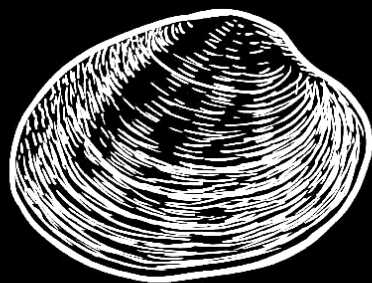
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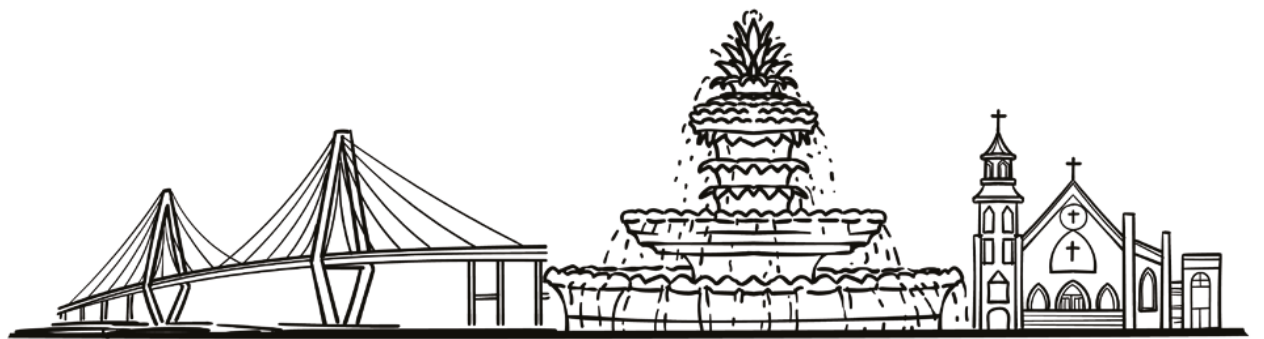
THIS MONTH CATCH US IN WEST ASHLEY:

- Feb 6th** @ The Garden by Charles Towne Fermentory 5-8pm
- Feb 8th** @ House of Brews 5-8pm
- Feb 13th** @ The Garden by Charles Towne Fermentory 5-8pm
- Feb 20th** @ The Garden by Charles Towne Fermentory 5-8pm

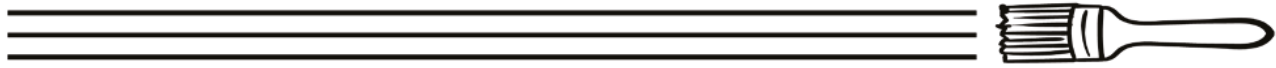
ALSO ROLLIN' INTO:

- Feb 1st** Taste of New England @ Firefly Distillery 12-5pm
- Feb 15th** @ Odyssey Bottle Shop 5-8pm
- Feb 16th** @ Graft Wine Shop 3-6pm
- Feb 21st** @ Sea Island Farmers Market 9:30am-1:30pm
- Feb 23rd** @ Graft Wine Shop 3-6pm

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NEWS

“As a kid, I always enjoyed going on field trips to planetariums and I felt like it was something Charleston needed.”

— Paul Gangarosa, Charleston Planetarium founder

West Ashley Reaches for the Stars

The Charleston Planetarium is set to open at the Citadel Mall

by Jenny Peterson | News Editor

The sky's the limit for Charleston's first planetarium, slated to open in late February/early March in a tenant space at the Citadel Mall.

Programming will span the farthest reaches of the galaxy projected onto a 23-foot-wide state-of-the-art inflatable dome with room for 50 seats underneath its orbit.

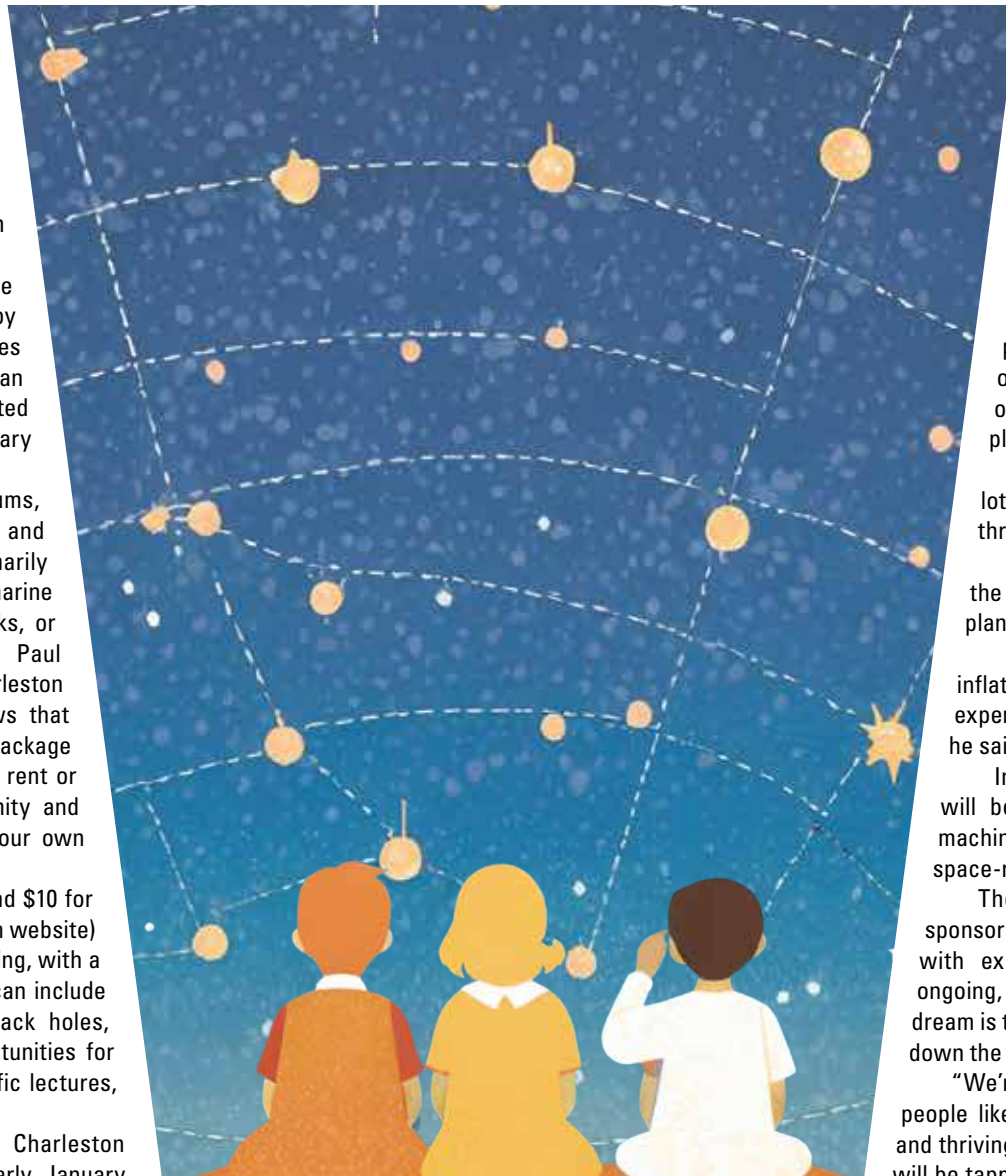
The vast library of shows for the Charleston Planetarium will be provided by Digitalis Education Solutions, which provides planetarium programming and for more than 700 portable domes worldwide. The updated timeline is for a soft opening in mid-February with a grand opening in March.

“When people think of planetariums, obviously they think of space shows and astronomy—and we will be doing primarily those—but we can also do shows on marine biology, like a show on great white sharks, or history shows and other genres,” said Paul Gangarosa, founder and president of the Charleston Planetarium. “There are around 80 shows that are included with the Digitalis Education package and there are a lot of shows available for rent or purchase within the planetarium community and we'll even have the capability to create our own shows.”

Each ticketed show (\$15 for adults, and \$10 for kids ages 6-13, according to the planetarium website) will include an hour of projected programming, with a scripted introduction about the topic that can include a focus on the moon, stars, planets, black holes, galaxies and beyond. There will be opportunities for private rentals for birthday parties, scientific lectures, corporate retreats and school field trips.

While the announcement for the Charleston Planetarium came out with a bang in early January, Gangarosa said it's been in the works for more than two years. His career has focused on public health, yet he said it was always his dream to open a planetarium to increase the public's interest in astronomy.

“I've lived in Charleston for about 20 years. As a kid, I always enjoyed going on field trips to planetariums and I



felt like it was something Charleston needed. The city really doesn't have a lot to offer in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) so I thought this would make a nice complement,” Gangarosa said. “Plus, NASA is planning the Artemis program to go back to the moon, so the timing is

good to help get people more interested in space.”

The Charleston Planetarium is overseen by the newly-formed nonprofit Charleston Planetarium Society, with expert board members in the business and science fields, including R. Scott Harris, a Planetary Geologist, and Dr. Chris Fragile, a professor at The College of Charleston in the Department of Physics & Astronomy.

An added value will be that the nonprofit plans to set up a telescope in the parking lot of the Citadel Mall when space-related events occur to further deepen the public's interest in planets and the wonders of the cosmos.

“We can rope off some of the mall parking lot and have people come by for free and look through the telescopes,” Gangarosa said.

The ability to bring in an inflatable dome to the mall space was the impetus in making the planetarium a possibility, Gangarosa said

“It really was the breakthrough because an inflatable dome is still very large, but so much less expensive. That's what really pushed this forward,” he said.

In addition to selling tickets for shows, visitors will be able to purchase snacks from a vending machine and there will be a gift shop with unique space-related items.

The non-profit is partnering with corporate sponsors, exploring grant opportunities and consulting with experts in planetarium operations to create ongoing, top-notch programming. Gangarosa said the dream is to have a standalone planetarium several years down the line with a fixed hemispheric steel dome.

“We're going to see how well it takes off and how people like it,” Gangarosa said. “There is a very large and thriving international planetarium community that we will be tapping into. The sky's the limit and the stars have aligned to bring it to Charleston.”

Sign up for the Charleston Planetarium newsletter to learn about opening dates, programming and other opportunities to support the effort at www.charlestonplanetarium.org.

Living Legacies

Magnolia Plantation & Gardens hosts program celebrating the lasting contributions of African Americans on Feb. 8

from Staff Reports

As part of Black History Month, Magnolia Plantation & Gardens is hosting Living Legacies, a powerful and immersive event celebrating the resilience, ingenuity, and lasting contributions of African Americans whose stories are deeply interwoven with our shared history. This inspiring event will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8, and is included with adult Garden Admission, and children 17 and under can attend for free.

Guided by living historians and artists from the renowned Slave Dwelling Project, you'll step back in

time to explore and honor the lives and legacies that shaped our community. Experience the rich aromas of live cooking demonstrations that showcase traditional recipes, witness compelling historical reenactments that bring untold stories to life, and try your hand at bricklaying as a tribute to the craftsmanship that built this land.

Through these engaging activities and storytelling, you'll reflect on the courage and creativity of generations past and consider the lessons we might gain from those generations as we strive towards a more just future.



This special event is made possible through a partnership with Drayton Hall, offering a day rich with history and learning. As part of this collaboration, your ticket includes your admission to Magnolia and reciprocal admission to Drayton Hall on the same day, allowing you to continue your journey through time.

Living Legacies will be held Saturday, Feb. 8. Tickets are \$32. Magnolia Plantation & Gardens is located at 3550 Ashley River Road. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (843) 571-1266 or visit www.magnoliaplantation.com.

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Middleton Lights Up The Night

Historic gardens take on a new glow from Feb. 6-22

from Staff Reports

This month only, you can explore the Middleton Place Gardens at night in a rare opportunity to experience America's Oldest landscaped gardens in a whole new light. Visitors can embark on a breathtaking walking journey through glowing pathways and garden rooms, each designed to honor the site's preservation from Feb. 6-22.

Guided by the rich history and culture of the South Carolina Lowcountry, the gardens come alive with vibrant hues and thoughtful designs. From the brilliance of Camellia Allée under the night sky to the tranquil reflections in the Sundial Garden overlooking the Ashley River, this immersive art experience is both a celebration of culture and nature and a connection with the past.

Garden Lights is self-guided and can be enjoyed at your own pace. Allow around 45 minutes for the full experience.

The Middleton Place Restaurant will be open from 5-8:30 p.m. with a



special prix fixe three-course dinner. Reservations are required through RESY, and free admission to Garden Lights is included with your dinner reservation. Beer, wine, cold and hot beverages, and grab-and-go food will also be available for purchase at the Garden Market.

Garden Lights will be held 6-8:30 p.m. from Feb. 6-22 at Middleton Place, located at 4300 Ashley River Road. \$25 for adults, \$20 for members, \$10 for children ages 5-12, and free for kids under the age of 5. For more information or to reserve your spot, call (843) 556-6030 or visit www.middletonplace.org.



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The following were taken from actual incident reports filed last month by the City of Charleston Police Department. These are not convictions and the names of businesses, complainants, and suspects have been left out to protect the innocent. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty ... of course.

the lane of travel. The man was considered a "habitual traffic offender" and had that status until the year 2028. The man said he drives for a living and didn't know his license was suspended. After a search of his vehicle, officers found an open bottle of lemon-flavored vodka in the center console, which was 2/3 full, with no cap or seal on the bottle. He was arrested for driving under suspension and officers added an open container charge.

into the store with the item and sold it. Video footage was available.

**DECEMBER 26
BREAKING & ENTERING**

A couple reported that they were gone for one day between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and during that time, someone had ripped a window screen from the bedroom window, gained access to their residence, and stole an entire safe that contained \$100,000 in cash as well as over \$2,000 worth of designer watches and \$20,000 worth of rings that were in the bedroom. Other valuables and firearms in the home were not taken. Officers noticed a handprint on the bedroom window and a muddy shoe print. Officers canvassed the area for any surveillance video. The investigation is ongoing.

**DECEMBER 21
WEAPONS LAW VIOLATION**

Officers on patrol observed a vehicle drive through a red light and while initiating a traffic stop, officers observed a black in color object "fly" out of the passenger side window, which turned out to be a firearm. Officers arrested the 21-year-old man, whose driver's license was suspended for a previous failure to stop for blue lights. The man also had outstanding warrants. He was not permitted to carry a firearm due to being a convicted felon, and officers found an additional firearm in the vehicle.

**DECEMBER 26
VANDALISM**

A local car dealership reported that ten of their vehicles had been vandalized, with rocks thrown, breaking windows, and scratching exteriors. The estimated repair cost is \$12,300. The manager said similar vandalism occurred during the previous Thanksgiving holiday, and he believes youths were behind the crimes, as several have been seen hanging around the back of the business.

**DECEMBER 23
SHOPLIFTING**

The manager of a big box retailer reported that two women stole eight "Bogg bags," which are large colorful tote bags dotted with holes, with a total value of \$535.92. The manager stated he followed the suspects to a waiting vehicle, where a male driver was heard saying, "Get in, he won't touch you," before driving off. Photos and video footage will be provided; however, the women were wearing N95 masks that covered their faces.

**DECEMBER 28
SWINDLE**

A woman reported that she had sent money via electronic communications to a dog breeder for a Shih Tzu puppy after connecting with the business on Facebook. After sending \$200, the breeder asked for an additional \$100 for a veterinarian visit, and when the woman refused, the breeder stopped answering and responding to messages. Officers noted that the spelling of "Shih Tzu" was incorrect in the business name on Facebook. The woman provided screenshots of the conversations, which were entered into evidence.

**DECEMBER 23
LARCENY BY FALSE PRETENSES**

Officers were called to a West Ashley jewelry store to assist in an investigation by the Mount Pleasant Police Department. Officers in Mount Pleasant stated they recently arrested a man for grand larceny for stealing a \$28,000 Rolex watch from a UPS package intended for a Mount Pleasant store and subsequently pawned it for \$4,000 at the West Ashley jewelry business. The owner of the West Ashley business stated the suspect indeed came

forged an \$11,000 check she had mailed to the IRS. The woman stated that the IRS had cashed the check but that someone had written over the words IRS with another name, signed the back of the check, and re-deposited it successfully. A total of \$30,000 was pulled from her account.

**JANUARY 18
GENERAL INFORMATION**

Officers met with a woman who said that an unknown neighbor was walking his dog in front of her apartment, and when the dog went to the bathroom, the man "refused to pick up the dog's feces." The dog's owner began cursing and yelling at the woman when she pointed out the inconsideration, calling her a "dumb ass" and "crazy." The woman said she wanted to file a police report for the apartment's property management records.

**JANUARY 19
VANDALISM**

A West Ashley woman reported that when she returned home from eating dinner, someone had thrown eggs, hotdogs, and vanilla snack pack puddings at her residence. The various items struck her front door and window. Officers observed multiple eggs and hot dogs littering her front door. The woman said she couldn't think of anyone who would have done it.

**JANUARY 19
GUNSHOT**

Officers responded to a residence after a woman stated a bullet had entered her daughter's bedroom through the wall and struck a dresser. The daughter had not been at the residence at the time. Officers went to the neighbor with whom she shared a wall, and he admitted that he accidentally fired his gun while cleaning it and had already patched the hole on his side of the wall. The man said he didn't think the round went all the way through. The man was apologetic and said he would pay for the damages.

**JANUARY 17
FORGERY/COUNTERFEIT**

A woman stated that someone had

**DECEMBER 17
ALL OTHER LARCENY**

A woman said she called a ride share from a big box retailer back home and had nearly \$160 worth of merchandise she had placed in the trunk. When she exited the vehicle and attempted to get her items from the trunk, she said the driver took off with her newly-purchased items. She showed officers a call log where she called the driver approximately 50 times and sent approximately 20 text messages with no luck. The investigation is ongoing.

**DECEMBER 19
IMPERSONATION**

A citizen flagged down officers to report that he had received an alert on his phone from his bank about two charges on his account that he did not authorize, one for \$1,167 and another for \$1,800. The man said the charges were for Apple laptops from sketchy sellers. The man contacted the sellers and was told the \$1,167 would be able to be reversed but the \$1,800 could not be reversed. The investigation is ongoing.

**DECEMBER 19
LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION**

Officers arrested a 49-year-old man for driving under suspension after a traffic stop where the man's vehicle traveled over

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- SATURDAY:** Buy One Signature Sushi Roll,
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WEEKLY EVENTS

- MONDAYS:** Matt Jordan 5:30-8:30pm
- TUESDAYS:** Live Trivia 7-9pm & Comedy Show
9-11pm
- WEDNESDAYS:** Music Bingo with Aaron 8-11pm
- THURSDAYS:** Team Trivia 7-9pm
- FRIDAY:** Live Music 9:30-12:30pm
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SCHOOLS

“Our Star Principals demonstrate exceptional leadership, dedication, and creativity, making a lasting impact on students, staff, and the community.”

— Anita Huggins, CCSD Superintendent

Charleston County School District (CCSD) recently recognized seven Star Principals of the Year for 2024-2025. Several of them have ties to West Ashley, including Andy Brandt of West Ashley High School, Megan Williams of Springfield Elementary School, and LaCarma McMillan of St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle School, who had previously served as principal of West Ashley Advanced Studies Magnet for six years and an assistant principal at West Ashley Middle before that.

All seven principals who were honored were nominated by their peers and selected through a competitive application process based on their leadership and work to improve student outcomes and implement strategic change.

“Our Star Principals demonstrate exceptional leadership, dedication, and creativity, making a lasting impact on students, staff, and the community,” said CCSD superintendent Anita Huggins. “We are blessed to have them as leaders in CCSD and are extremely proud to celebrate their outstanding achievements!”

In his first year at West Ashley High School, Dr. Andrew Brandt received the honor of “Star Rookie Principal of the Year.” Brandt has been a dedicated educational leader in CCSD for 12 years, previously serving as associate principal, lead assistant principal, and assistant principal at WAHS, as well as assistant principal at Morningside Middle School. He holds a Doctorate in Education Systems Improvement Science from Clemson University, along with advanced degrees in Educational Leadership and Secondary Administration from The Citadel, and a

Star Principals of the Year

Two West Ashley Principals honored by CCSD for their dedication to their respective schools

from Staff Reports

bachelor’s degree in English Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Brandt’s achievements include The Citadel’s Charles E. Hirshey Award, being named Morningside Middle School Teacher of the Year, and receiving CCSD’s Teacher of the Month recognition.

Springfield Elementary School’s principal Megan Williams was named as the “Elementary School Star Principal of the Year.” Williams was appointed principal of Springfield in 2018 after serving as interim principal during the 2017-18 school year. She began her career as a fifth-grade teacher at Charles Pinckney Elementary for eight years before moving to Stono Park Elementary, where she taught and served as lead teacher. Williams then transitioned to Springfield Elementary, serving as assistant principal for five years. Known for fostering collective efficacy and championing student success, she works closely with teachers to ensure their needs are met.

Williams holds a degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Clemson University and a master’s degree



West Ashley High School’s principal Andrew Brandt was named “Star Rookie Principal of the Year”



Springfield Elementary School’s principal Megan Williams was named “Elementary School Star Principal of the Year”

in educational leadership from The Citadel.

Other Charleston County principals receiving “Star” honors included Chas Coker of Wando High School, James Dallas of E.B. Ellington Elementary School, LaCarma McMillan of St. James-Santee

Elementary-Middle School, Barrett Reese of CCSD Early College High School, and Monica Smalls of Chicora Elementary School. All Principals will be honored alongside Teachers of the Year at this year’s black-tie gala event on March 1.



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A&E

“Our goal is to foster enthusiasm for books and learning and provide opportunities for people to support local literacy.”
— Leah Donaldson, Executive Director of Charleston Friends of the Library.

Charleston Friends of the Library is bringing its mission to empower literacy and learning to a new, temporary branch in West Ashley. The organization will relocate to Citadel Mall this spring as the Charleston County Public Library undergoes renovations. The move ensures that the nonprofit can continue its operations and expand its reach in the community.

“The mission of Charleston Friends of the Library is to empower literacy and learning in Charleston County,” said Leah Donaldson, Executive Director of Charleston Friends of the Library. “We do this by fundraising to support programs across the 18 branches of the Charleston County Library, distributing thousands of free books to underserved communities and supporting local authors.”

Known for its community-driven initiatives, Charleston Friends of the Library raises funds through multiple avenues, including its popular book sales. The organization hosts four annual book sales at regional library branches, pop-up sales at local establishments, and its signature event, “That BIG Book Sale.” The four-day event, which attracts more than 4,000 attendees, is a highly anticipated tradition among local book lovers, and this year’s BIG Book Sale will take place June 5-8 in Mount Pleasant. Proceeds from these events help fund essential library programs integral to our community, including children’s story times, literacy workshops, author talks, and more.

“Our goal is to foster enthusiasm for books and learning and provide

opportunities for people to support local literacy,” Donaldson said.

The temporary location at Citadel Mall is expected to open its retail space by the end of March, with full operations moving there by mid-June. Once operational, the space will serve as a hub for book donations, sorting, and sales. It will also include a retail space where the public can purchase gently used books at affordable prices. According to Donaldson, the move to West Ashley will also provide a convenient space for volunteers, donors and customers to engage with the organization.

“We are thrilled to have a temporary home that is centrally located,” Donaldson said.

Beyond its fundraising and retail operations, Charleston Friends of the Library has made a lasting impact on literacy efforts across Charleston County. The organization distributes thousands of

by Elise Lusk | Contributing Writer

free books to underserved communities, ensuring access to reading materials for individuals and families who may not otherwise have them. It also provides a platform for local authors, helping them connect with readers and share their work.

Charleston Friends of the Library encourages residents to get involved with its work by donating books, attending events or volunteering their time. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks, including sorting donations, assisting with book sales and helping to organize fundraising events. The organization also welcomes monetary donations to support its mission of promoting literacy and learning throughout Charleston County.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, donating books, Friends events and ways to support local literacy, please visit their website at charlestonlibraryfriends.org.



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February 22 & 23, 2025

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Salty Saturday - Street Closure Event

Saturday, February 22 | 10am-4pm

Center Street

Sand Castle Building Competition

Sunday, February 23 | 10am

Beachfront at The Tides

For More Information
and to Purchase Tickets,
PLEASE SCAN HERE



Admission is **\$10 in advance** or **\$15 the day of**.
Folly residents and kids 12 and under are free.



NO GLASS ON CENTER STREET! No Animals, Coolers, Bikes, Skateboards, Scooters, or Backpacks (except diaper bags). Any bags brought may be searched at the discretion of security—no outside beverages. Reusable cups are permitted but must be empty upon entering and exiting the event. Service animals are allowed.



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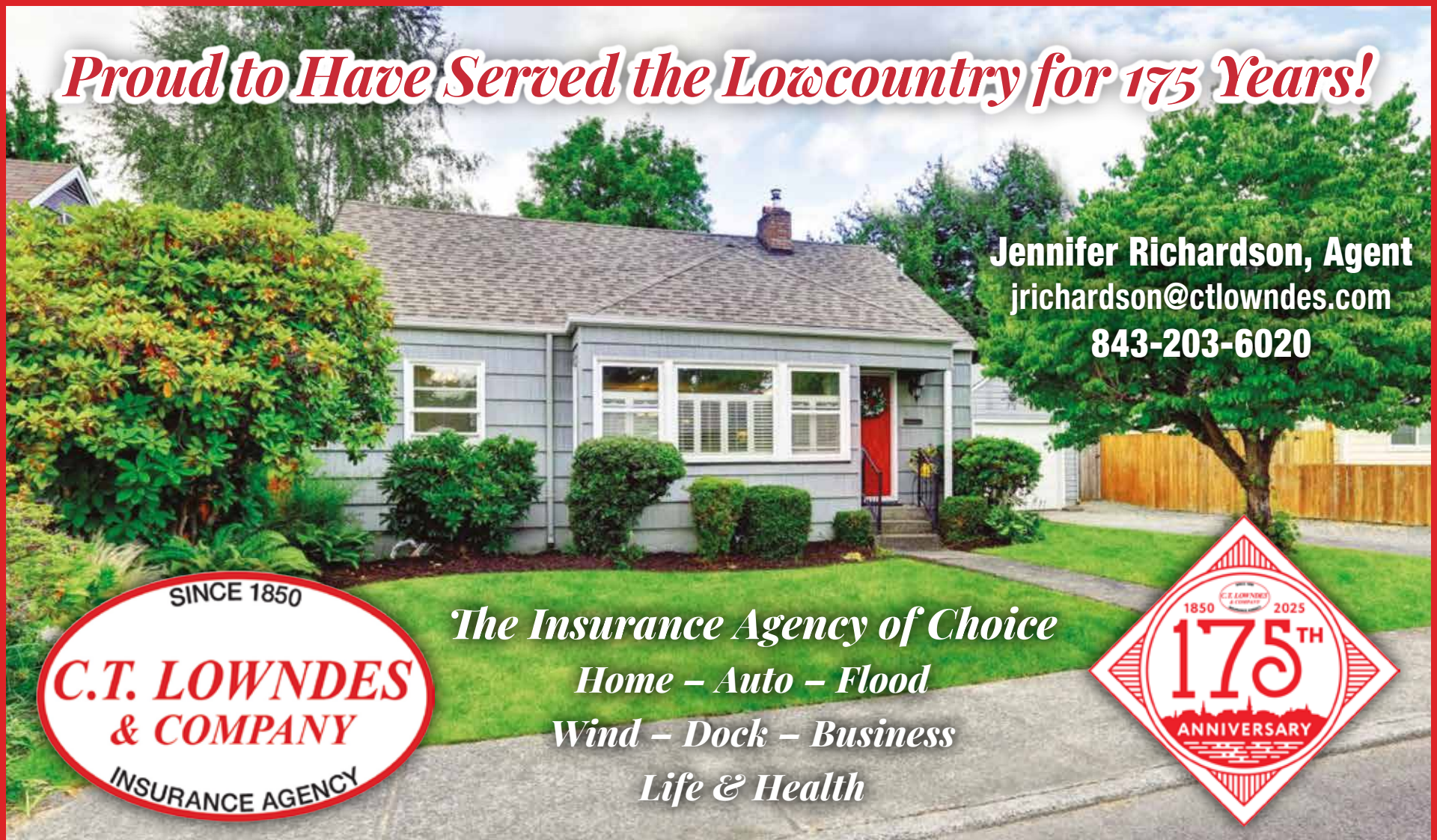
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DINING

“Our team is excited to welcome guests to our newest KC location, complete with a spacious indoor-outdoor bar and patio.”

— Bobby Perry, The Kickin' Chicken co-founder

Something to Cluck About

The Kickin' Chicken opens second West Ashley location on Bees Ferry Road

from Staff Reports

The Kickin' Chicken recently opened its sixth location in the Charleston area and its second in West Ashley with a new restaurant and bar on Bees Ferry Road.

“We are thrilled to expand our presence in Charleston with our new Bees Ferry Road location,” says Chip Roberts, who co-founded The Kickin' Chicken in 1997 with his friend Bobby Perry. The two Charlestonians were fresh out of college at the University of South Carolina when they opened their first, very humble location on Morrison Drive in the upper peninsula of Downtown Charleston in 1997.

Nearly three decades later, The Kickin' Chicken now has locations all over the Lowcountry. Known for its commitment to providing quality food in a fun and friendly atmosphere, The Kickin' Chicken has remained a favorite spot for families, sports enthusiasts, and guests of all ages.

“Our team is excited to welcome guests to our newest KC location, complete with a spacious indoor-outdoor bar and patio,” adds Perry.

The new Bees Ferry location, which has a large open-floor concept, a soaring ceiling, and a large bar, promises to deliver the same food, service, and vibrant

atmosphere that patrons have come to expect. Whether it's for happy hour, grabbing a quick bite, or settling in to catch a game with friends and family, the new Kickin' Chicken has plenty of room to spread out and relax.

Guests can look forward to signature dishes like the classic Kickin' Chicken sandwich or Bobby Fries (French fries topped with ranch dressing, bacon, and mixed cheeses), along with an array of wings (20 sauces to choose from), tenders, nuggets, tacos, sandwiches, salads, and more. The menu also includes a selection of local craft beers and specialty cocktails.

According to Roberts and Perry, they look forward to hosting local events and continuing their tradition of community involvement and charitable support with their new Bees Ferry location.

From its humble beginnings on Morrison Drive to its bustling new location on Bees Ferry Road, The Kickin' Chicken is a beloved staple in the Lowcountry region, with a legacy spanning 28 years.

The new West Ashley Kickin' Chicken is located at 1184 Bees Ferry Road. For more information or to view the hours and menu, call (843) 990-5711 or visit www.kickinchicken.com



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COMMUNITY

“Everyone has a place, and something they can do. Mine is grassroots. I need to be with the community.”
— Teresa Mellis Tidestrom, West Ashley Connects administrator



The Power of Local

West Ashley Connect’s Teresa Tidestrom urges us to join efforts to create a more caring community

by Joan Perry | Contributing Writer

The West Ashley Wanderer can’t wander far without bumping into Teresa Mellis Tidestrom.

My photo storage albums are randomly full of pictures of Teresa at Litter Clean-Up events, Farmer’s Market opening day, the Longest Table Neighborhood Dining event, fundraising for the Ukraine, Community Day at the Citadel Mall, etc.

I knew there was more she was involved in. I walked up the West Ashley Bikeway to share a coffee at Wildflour Bakery and to learn how we might support her efforts to improve our neighborhood.

You wouldn’t know it by what she accomplishes, but our neighborhood do-gooder has had her wings clipped with a series of health issues. Since 2014, she has dealt with skin, vocal cord, and breast cancer, now neck and spinal issues related to the lifesaving treatment, and faces possible upcoming surgery.

My thinking is that if we knew of some of the projects ahead of time, we might do better at lending a hand in 2025.

Teresa’s efforts have not gone unnoticed. She has been awarded the Jefferson Award, Spotlight Award, Southeast Chamber Community Award, West Ashley Day recognition, and the prestigious Westie — *West Of’s* golden Cow Award. Her background working with MUSC Medicare & Emergency Management, followed by working in Long Term Care, left her with an appreciation of human needs and how we all depend on each other.

West Ashley neighbors have always been good about lending a hand to neighbors. “Everyone has a place, and something they can do. Mine is grassroots. I need to be with the community. I can rally people like no tomorrow.”

Two of the main charitable projects support HALOS (www.charlestonhalos.org) — an organization supporting families caring for children taken out of homes in emergency situations.



Towards the end of summer, July to early August, consider joining the School Supplies Drive hosted by Office Depot West Ashley. The supplies are given to Guidance Counselors in all of our elementary schools and distributed to needy children. Both supplies and fund donations are welcome.

During the holiday season, West Ashley neighbors have adopted entire fostering families. Working with a needs list from both the children and caregivers, Teresa reports we’ve been able to take good care of 4 - 6 family units with gifts as well as ingredients for a holiday meal. The families are selected by HALOS. Contributions are welcomed during the last two weeks in December and

delivered directly to the families.

Litter Clean-up is high on Teresa’s list. She keeps orange bags and grabbers in her car. Upcoming Clean-Up days are planned for the Northbridge/Orange Grove area, Sam Rittenberg around Ashley Hall, and the Bikeway. The Keep Charleston & Keep SC Beautiful organizations have been supportive with supplies and can be a resource for Neighborhood Associations planning clean-up days.

Upcoming Projects:

Teresa hopes to reactivate the West Ashley SC Art Rocks painted rock project. Decoratively painted rocks are tucked away in hiding places to be found, appreciated, documented on social media, and rehomed.

A neighborhood beautification sign

project is underway for Savannah Highway and Wateree Drive.

Teresa is an Administrator of the West Ashley Connects Facebook group, sharing helpful announcements about our infrastructure and emergency and supportive neighborly announcements. The site has 9,200 members, and this is a great way to keep up with current events and upcoming projects.

Hopefully, this information will encourage us all to play a part in improving our community.

Stay healthy my friends and wave at me as I wander. Send ideas for upcoming columns to: westashleywanderer@gmail.com.

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Sometimes Sugar is Good for You

Recalling traveling salesman's role in polio immunizations

Community is built by many and yet each individual adds an important element to history and its legacy. Some build houses. Some build schools. Some build churches. Some organize clubs. Some gather us for our health.

Between the late 1940s and mid-1950s, several polio epidemics prevented people from gathering for large public events. If one uses "polio" as a keyword in search of local papers digitalized in Newsbank, 8721 newspaper articles are listed during this time. People with children were concerned.

By 1955, Jonas Salk provided the world with a "killed virus" vaccine. This vaccine protected the individual but did not effectively prevent the spread of the virus. By 1961, Albert Sabin had developed an "attenuated live virus" oral vaccine. (Remember the sugar cubes?) Distribution of the vaccine was the next step.

For the purpose of this narrative, enter the individual who assisted with the coordination of this gathering for our health: Justin Amesbury Hopkins.

Hopkins lived in St. Andrew's Parish and was the territory manager for Wyeth Laboratories, the distributor of the Sabin vaccine. A notebook is in the care of the Hopkins family that details the events of the vaccine distribution in 1963.

Let's take a minute for the individual. Justin Amesbury Hopkins was born in 1916 on the peninsula of Charleston. Pictures and shared memories are indicative of a fun childhood. He was a member of the Bull Street Bulldogs, which mainly involved themselves in athletics.

He attended Murray Vocational School and dreamed of becoming an architect. This dream did not materialize, so he entered the world of employment. His first job was as a clerk at Geer Drugs. Personal events and world events influenced the picture during this time. He met and courted Selina Parker

Stoddard, of the Stoddard Dairy. Selina was living in Charleston with a relative while pursuing a career in teaching. They married in 1943. World War II found him enlisting with the US Coast Guard and serving until peace was declared.

Hopkins then returned home to a career with Geer Drugs. Territory Manager for Wyeth Laboratories was his next career move. As he moved around St Andrew's Parish with his family—they lived in Avondale, St. Andrew's Homes, Byrnes Downs, and Parkwood Estates—he also traveled the greater territory for Wyeth.

The City Directories list Hopkins as a traveling salesman during this time. It was during his tenure with Wyeth that Hopkins played a leading role in coordinating the gathering of the local community for the purpose of Sabin vaccine immunization.

"Stop Polio Sundays" was the name given to the Charleston County campaign sponsored by the Charleston County Medical Society to ensure all residents received vaccines. Dr. Margaret Jenkins was the Chairman of the Steering Committee, of which Hopkins was a member. Sundays in March (Type I vaccine), May (Type III vaccine), and June (Type II) were chosen for the mass oral immunizations via sugar cubes.

Coordination of the use of schools for immunization locations; receiving the vaccines at the airport; transporting the allotted vaccines to the appropriate cold storage facility, which happened to be the Purity Ice Cream Plant; and communicating all the logistical details to the leaders in the community was the responsibility of the Steering Committee.

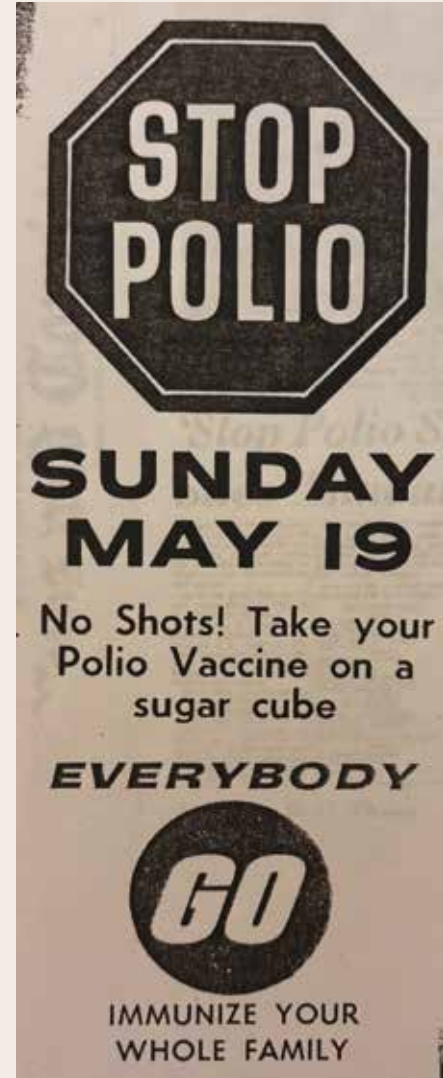


Justin Amesbury Hopkins
(Courtesy of Alan Hopkins)

In a personal letter dated July of 1963, Dr. Jenkins thanked Hopkins for his "extensive time and effort" serving as coordinator for the many details necessary for the success of the "Stop Polio Sundays" campaign despite the "many local problems which we had." In her letter, she detailed the metrics: in Charleston County, 86 percent were immunized against Type I, 77 percent against Type III, and 78 percent against Type II.

Thank you, Justin A. Hopkins, for being that individual in the community who helped make it happen.

Stories about people, places, or happenings in St. Andrew's Parish? Contact Donna Jacobs westashleybook@gmail.com.



"Stop Polio Sundays" flyer.
(Courtesy of Alan Hopkins)

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ACROSS

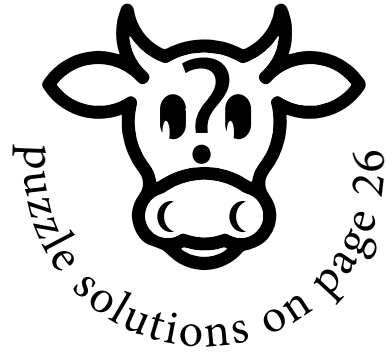
1. Neighbor of Vietnam
5. Fraud
9. Haughty response
14. A bushy hairdo
15. Several
16. Eagle's home
17. Violent vortex
19. Legend
20. Grill
21. Dunk
23. Postponements
25. Plans for meetings
28. Whichever
29. South southwest
32. Sell off
33. Picnic insect
34. Head
35. Nights before
36. Daisylike bloom
38. Away from the wind
39. Writing styluses
40. Falsehood
41. Overseas
43. Explosive
44. Not her
45. High ground
46. Dissipates

DOWN

1. Young sheep
2. At a distance
3. Black-and-white cookie
4. Substantiality
5. Supersonic transport
6. Stallions
7. Illicit sexual relationship
8. Pliable sheet of tissue
9. With caution
10. Approaches
11. Spheres
12. Anger
13. Golf ball support
18. Sleighs
22. Very attractive women

ACROSS

24. Convinced of their powerlessness
25. Highly skilled
26. Assumed as fact
27. Occurrence
29. Beauty parlor
30. Place
31. Noxious plants
33. Consumed
34. Leeches
37. Smirked
42. Confer happiness on
44. Batsman
45. Bearish
46. Terpsichore
47. Gladden
48. Extended family
49. Posterior
51. Military stronghold
52. Threesome
53. Type of duck
54. Influenza
56. Short sleep



SUDOKU

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TRIVIA

1. MOVIES

What movie leads all Oscar nominations this year with 13?

2. TELEVISION

What new Netflix series is a gritty Western created by Peter Berg, the man behind Friday Night Lights?

3. SPORTS

What 73-year-old college football National Championship and Super Bowl-winning coach is returning to the NFL as the new head coach of the Las Vegas Raiders?

4. ANIMALS

Where is the only place on their body dogs have sweat glands?

5. MUSIC

What washed-up Country Music star had a disastrous performance at the Liberty Ball, a post-inauguration event?

6. THE OSCARS

What comedian is hosting the Academy Awards next month?

7. NAME GAME

Natalie 'Nadya' Suleman is the focus of an upcoming docuseries based on her life. What is she better as?

8. CLASSIC MOVIE QUOTES

In which movie did Bette Davis utter the famous line, "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night"?



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 Weekly Mahjong game with a \$5 PIE. Tuesdays at 6:30pm. Meets at the Pavilion in Shadowmoss (meets in the Clubhouse if it's raining). Meet new people and have some fun! All skill levels welcome.

The Sampler Guild of Charleston
 All skill levels welcome. Meets on the 4th Monday of every month at 10am. Old St. Andrews Parish Church in Fellowship Hall, 2604 Ashley River Rd. For more information, contact nancythechief@gmail.com

Soap and Candle Making Workshops
 Call for details. Pluff Mud Mercantile, 2408 Ashley River Rd. (843) 872-6022.

St. Andrew's High School 50th Reunion
 The class of 1975 on Saturday, April 5 from 4-8pm. Pay early for discounts! \$75 per person if paid by Feb. 15th, \$90 per person if paid by Mar. 25th, \$100 per person after March 25th or at the door. Cash bar, DJ, buffet dinner, casual cocktail. Still missing information for many of the classmates. Join the Facebook group: St. Andrews Parish High School- Class of '75 Reunion or visit the website at [sties.google.com/view/standrewsreunionclassof1975](https://www.google.com/view/standrewsreunionclassof1975). Email davidseithel@hotmail.com or text David at (843)

822-3540.
West Ashley Quilting and Sewing
 Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 460 Arlington Dr. from 10am-noon and the 4th Tuesday of the month at Five Eighth Seams, 1888 Raoul Wallenberg Blvd. from 10am-2pm for open sew. Find on Facebook or contact cgb7507@gmail.com.

West Ashley Writer's Group
 Established in 1999, this is the longest running writer's group in the Charleston area. Writers of all types and genres are welcome. Free. The group meets on Zoom on the 4th Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm. Message the group here to receive the Zoom link: <https://www.facebook.com/westashley-writersgroup>

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Bees Landing Recreation Center
 1580 Ashley Gardens Blvd. (843) 402-4571. www.charleston-sc.gov. Call ahead for more info. Bricks 4 Kids, StoryTree Theater, Little Nature Lovers, Busy Bees Ballet, Monthly Art Workshops.

- **Cards & Coffee.** Fridays, 1pm-4pm. Free.
- **MahJongg.** Tuesdays, 1pm-3pm. Free.
- **Bridge.** Wednesday, 10am-12pm. Free.
- **Acoustic Music Group.** Thursdays, 2pm-4pm. Free.

Bees Ferry Library
 3035 Sanders Rd., (843) 805-6892, www.ccpl.org. This library offers a variety of events and activities for children, teens, adults, and seniors including children's story-time, computer classes, crafting events and more.

Charleston County Parks
 The Charleston County Parks system offers a variety of activities, classes, and even summer camps. Check their website for more information: www.ccprc.com.

Hurd/ St. Andrews Library:
 1735 N. Woodmere Dr., (843) 766-2546, www.ccpl.org
 This library offers a variety of events and activities for children and teens, including crafts and month-long challenges.

SPORTS & RECREATION

St. Andrew's Family Fitness Plus:
 1642 Sam Rittenberg Blvd., (843) 763-3850, www.standrewspark.info. Offers a variety of activities for adults and children.

St. Andrew's Parks & Playground:
 1095 Playground Rd., (843) 763-4360, www.standrewspark.com.
 • Afterschool Program – Only \$85 per week. St. Andrews Playground, 1095 Playground Rd.
 • 2025 Spring Youth Sports Registration – T-Ball/ Baseball ages 4-14; Softball ages 9-12; Track ages 7-14; Volleyball ages 7-14. Early registration: Jan. 1-19, \$45 PSD residents, \$70 non-PSD residents. Regular regis-

tration: Jan. 20-Feb. 2, \$60 PSD residents, \$85 Non-PSD residents. Late registration: Feb. 3-7 (based on availability), \$80 PSD residents, \$105 Non-PSD residents.
 • Esports Program – co-ed ages 10-16. Space is extremely limited.
 • Pickleball – Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am-12pm, \$2 per person. Bring your own equipment or borrow. All skill levels welcome. St. Andrews Parks Gymnasium, 1095 Playground Rd.

West Aquatic Center
www.ccprc.com
 5156 Highway 165 Hollywood, SC 29449. (843) 762-6160.

SENIOR

Waring Senior Center:
 2001 Henry Tecklenberg Dr. (843) 606-7877, www.lowcountryseniorcenter.com for more info. The West Ashley Senior Center offers a variety of fitness classes including yoga, Tai Chi, synergy, dancing, and strength training, for all levels, and art classes. Available for both members and non-members.

OUTDOOR

Caw Caw Interpretive Center:
 5200 Savannah Hwy. (843) 795-4386. Register online at www.ccprc.com. Caw Caw offers a variety of children's walks through the forrest and along the waterways, where they learn about animals and their habitats.

Charleston Parks Conservancy
www.charlestonparksconservancy.org
 • **Charleston Trees' Native Tree Giveaway**
 In partnership with Charleston Trees, is thrilled to offer free native trees to City of Charleston residents. Saturday, Feb. 8th from 8am-12pm. Magnolia Park and Community Garden, 720 Magnolia Rd.
 • **Mushroom Bucket Inoculation Workshop:** Grow Your Own Mushrooms
 A hands-on educational workshop where you'll learn everything you need to grow your own mushrooms at home. Saturday, Feb. 22nd from 10am-3pm. Charleston Parks Conservancy Office, 720 Magnolia Rd.

Charles Towne Landing
www.southcarolinaparks.com
 1500 Old Towne Plantation Rd., Charleston, SC 29407. (843) 852-4200.

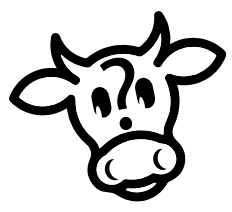
Stono River County Park
 3580 McLeod Mill Rd., www.ccprc.com.

West Aquatic Center
 West Aquatic Center/ Hollywood Town Hall is located at 5156 SC-165, in Hollywood. www.ccprc.com for more info.

The West Of Free Press Community Billboard is free listing for events taking place in West Ashley. Please submit all happenings to: publisher@westof.net.

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SUDOKU SOLUTION

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1	2	3	5	9	6	7	4	8
7	1	8	6	4	9	5	3	2
9	3	4	2	8	5	1	7	6
2	5	6	3	1	7	9	8	4

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Emilia Pérez
2. American Primeval
3. Pete Carroll
4. Paw pads
5. Billy Ray Cyrus
6. Conan O'Brien
7. Octomom
8. All About Eve

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February 15th ♥ 12-4pm (run starts at 2pm)

Pre-Game & After-Party at Loggerhead's Beach Grille, 123 W. Ashley Ave.



CUPID'S
UNDIE RUN



FOR MORE INFO: [CUPIDS.ORG](https://cupids.org)

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