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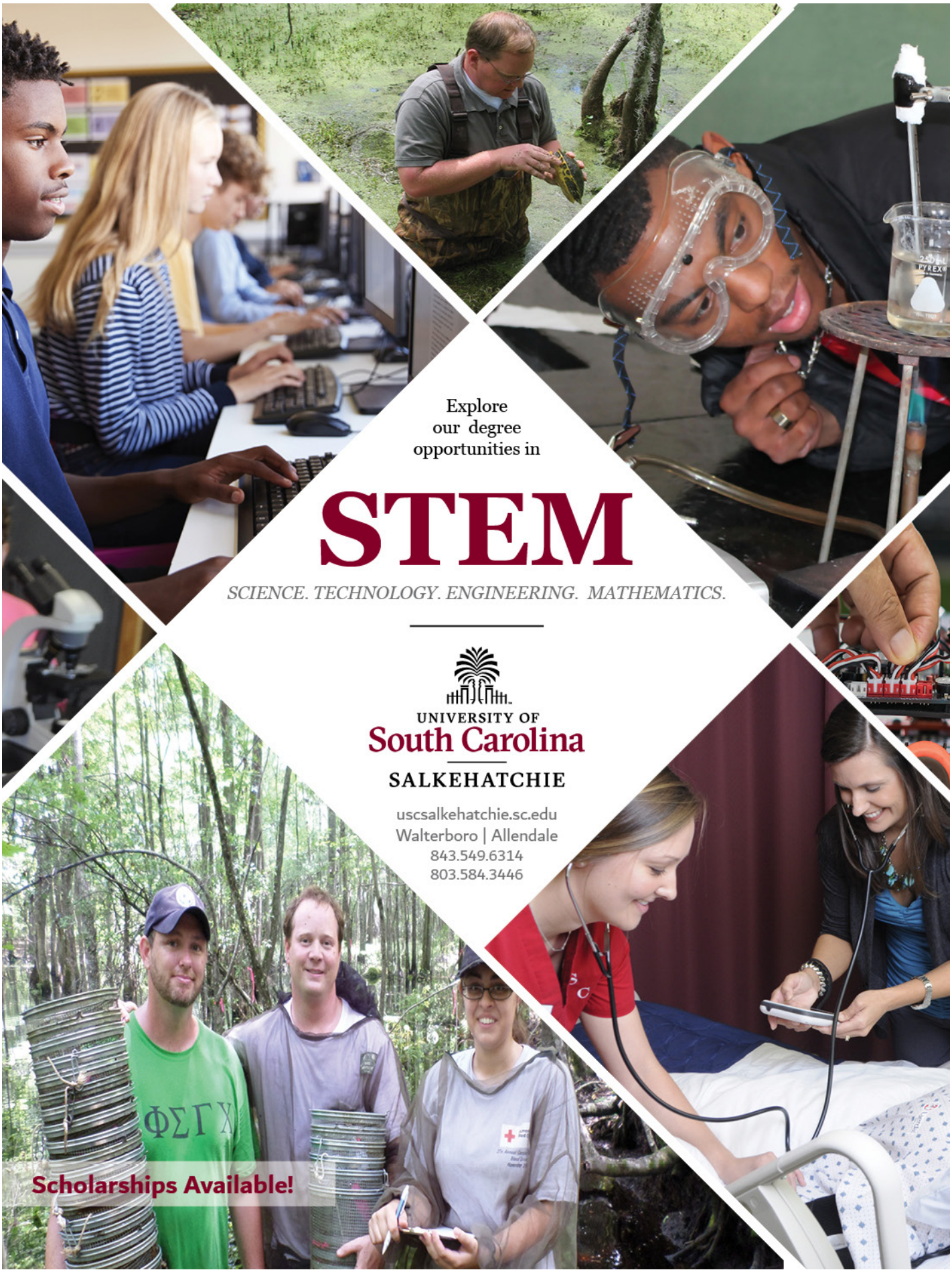
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Classifieds & Legals
Amanda Mosley

The Press and Standard
1025 Bells Highway
Walterboro, S.C. 29488
843-549-2586 - Fax 843-549-2446
walterborolive.com

Cover & Table of Contents Photos provided by

Brandon Mole
Photographer
bmole62587@gmail.com

What's Inside:

Photo by VICKI BROWN

PREPARING TO DANCE. Chief Francis Marion Terrapin is dressed in his warrior regalia for a powwow happening in nearby Ladson, S.C. His face is painted red for being a Native American, and white for his white/Italian blood. As a warrior dancer, his dancing mimics warriors in history searching for tracks. He wears a breast plate to protect the chest, wrist bands to protect his wrists that hold weapons, and a choker necklace to protect his throat, all historically correct.

LOCAL INDIAN CHIEF KEEPS THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

By VICKI BROWN

The old ways have been forgotten by many, but not Chief Terrapin.

At 79 years old, Francis Marion Terrapin is a rural Colleton County resident who still dances in powwows (Native American homecomings or gatherings), teaches Cherokee history on YouTube, and travels to different locations to explain Native American regalia.

He says he is retired, but no one would believe it.

Terrapin, which means "one who crawls" or "turtle," was born in northeast Oklahoma, as a part of the western band of Cherokee Indians who live on an Indian Reservation in Tahlequah.

His father was full-blooded Cherokee, descended from the Georgia Trail of Tears survivors. His mother was full-blooded Italian. Until he was 10, Terrapin spoke no English. Even if he had known any, his grandfather, the dominant head of the family, would not have allowed it, he said. His given English name is Francis Marion Terrapin, named after the famous South Carolina Swamp Fox who was hidden by the Cherokee. His grandfather was also the one who gave Terrapin the Indian name "Chief," because he was always telling the other children what to do. "But grandfather only had to say one word or point and we immediately did what he said," said Terrapin. "Our elders were respected, and as children, we did what they said. There was no discipline because none was needed. We were raised to do as they said because they had wisdom."

Eventually, Terrapin did learn English when he attended the Sacred Heart Catholic school in the nearby town of Muscogee.

"I was 10 years old and in the first grade, had long black hair, was separated from my female cousins for the first time ever, hit over the knuckles by nuns, and I hated it," said Terrapin. "I couldn't conform. I couldn't make sense out of school. I was always in trouble."

As a child, he and his family followed the Cherokee ways.

Terrapins said when he was 8-years-old, his father took him across the Illinois River and dropped him off with nothing by a knife. As a rite of passage for all Cherokee boys, he was supposed to survive on his own for seven days. But his Italian mother refused to allow him to be left alone for seven days and agreed to two. For completing this feat, he earned an eagle feather, which he still has and proudly displays on his head cover.

"Living on the reservation, I had a great childhood," said Terrapin. More than 17-percent of Cherokee live in poverty on reservations, higher than the national average, but Chief Terrapin said he had no idea he was poor.

"We ran and played, often taking a "possible sack" with us (a deer skin bag or satchel containing jerky and snacks) when staying outside all day, eating some foods from the land and drinking in the Illinois River," he said.

"As kids, we played in Terrapin Creek, named for my family. Our clan is one of the seven Cherokee clans. We had milk straight from the cows, enjoyed sugar cane, apples, berries, squirrel, rabbit and honey. We lived off the land and in lodges or cabins, not teepees. About 15-20 family members lived together in two rooms. As kids, our jobs were to gather and cut firewood for the women to cook three meals a day. We took dug-out canoes and fished. We ate well, laughed and had fun. It was a great life," he said.

When Terrapin was 10, his father, who worked making gun powder for a company in Tahlequah, was transferred to South Carolina to the Savannah River plant. This transfer was because of World War II. It was then that Terrapin left the reservation. He recalls tasting bubble gum and Coca-Cola for the first time. But, even as he became a resident in the more modern community, he never forgot his heritage. While he no longer lives on a reservation, his children and other relatives do.

Today, Terrapin still wears his "medicine" around his neck, a small pouch containing a type of tobacco considered holy by his nation, as well as other elements that are sacred to only him. He also wears a turtle necklace that his grandfather wore and passed on to his father who wore it then passed it on to him. At his death, Terrapin's son will wear the turtle necklace.

Terrapin has homemade moccasins that he keeps oiled, a war club,

Photo by Vicki Brown

WEARING PIECES OF THE PAST. Chief Francis Marion Terrapin often wears a breast plate to protect the chest, wrist bands to protect his wrists that hold weapons, and a choker necklace to protect his throat, all historically correct. He wears these items when he participates in tribal dances.

a fan and headdress, leggings, a breech cloud, bone breastplate for armor, and his father's tomahawk, all part of his Native American regalia that he wears at religious powwows or gatherings along with his war paint. These powwows, formerly used as trading opportunities, are now used as homecomings with the different dances representing the chiefs, chiefs of all nations, warriors who served in the military, and competitive dancers consisting of grass dancers, gourd dancers, fancy dancers, traditional dancers, jingle dancers and shawl dancers. Holy tobacco is sprinkled on the dance

area and drum, and sage is smudged and burned to purify the people. A sacred fire is lit and stays lit night and day throughout the three days. Dancers enter the dance area from the east, move to their left and leave by the same eastern gate.

These traditions are similar among all Native American tribes; therefore, Chief Terrapin enjoys mingling and dancing with other tribes at their powwows, such as the nearby Edisto Natchez-Kusso. But, he said he loves to visit his family and attend other cultural events and powwows, often located on the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina.

CHEROKEE HISTORY

The Cherokee Nation reservation boundaries include 7,000 square miles in northeastern Oklahoma, home to the western band of Cherokee, and The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation is one of the only three federally recognized Cherokee tribes. There are about 15,300 members, most of whom live on the reservation. Called the Qualla Boundary, the reservation is slightly more than 56,000 acres held in trust by the federal government.

In the early 1800s the tribe had a written constitution, courts and schools. In 1821, a Cherokee scholar named Sequoyah invented a written Cherokee language. The language is based on phonics, or a combination of sounds, not letters. They even had their own newspaper.

Unfortunately, in spite of the Cherokee's efforts to adapt to European ways, the United States government, needing more land, broke treaties with the Cherokee nation. In 1838 the government removed the 16,000 Cherokees in the Southeast by force. More than 16,000 native people were marched on what would historically become known as the Trail of Tears and relocated to Oklahoma. Between 25-50 percent of the Cherokee tribe died on the Trail of Tears. Other displaced Indians besides the Cherokee were the Creek,

Photo by VICKI BROWN

CHIEF TERRAPIN. Shows off his handmade breech cloth with his clan's emblem... a turtle.

Photo by VICKI BROWN

TEACHING THE PAST. Chief Francis Marion Terrapin, who was named by his family after the Revolutionary War Hero Francis Marion, proudly holds a pair of handmade moccasins. Terrapin is now a Colleton County resident who holds YouTube tutorials about the history of his people.

Photo by VICKI BROWN

A PROUD DISPLAY. Colleton County Indian Chief Francis Marion Terrapin displays his homemade "regalia," items that he wears during native rituals and dances.

Chickasaw, Choctaw and Seminole from South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. A total of 46,000 native people passed through nine states and walked 5,043 miles to Oklahoma.

Today, some members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who are descendants of Trail of Tears survivors are living in modern day western North Carolina. Some of those descendants made it to Oklahoma and then walked back home. Others hid in the mountains and refused to be relocated. In 1850 the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians numbered approximately 1,000.

Presently, the Cherokee tribe is its own sovereign nation.

The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians is also a sovereign nation and is governed in a similar way. The Cherokee government consists of an executive branch with a principal chief and a vice-chief; a legislative branch made up of a 12-member tribal council: two representatives each from communities; and a judicial branch. More informally, there are seven clans with each clan having a leading warrior chief and grandmother. Clan members take their issues to the warrior and grandmother who make minor decisions or take complaints to their elected officials.

The tribe financially pays for schools, water, sewer, fire and emergency services without assistance from the federal government. Cherokee schools teach the Cherokee language.

The Cherokee Nation is the largest tribe in the United States with more than 380,000 tribal citizens worldwide. More than 141,000 Cherokee Nation citizens of the western band reside within the tribe's reservation boundaries in northeastern Oklahoma.

Membership in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is only open to people over 18. Prospective members must prove they have an ancestor on the Baker Roll of 1924. They must also have proof that they are at least 1/16th Cherokee by blood.

"I feel sorry for the lives of children today. Life is so different now; not carefree. I am proud of my heritage," said Terrapin showing his Cherokee membership card. "I am not upset about being called a red man," he said. "Most Cherokee are not overly sensitive about their culture. I have been called many things … Geronimo, Tonto, etc., but I do not get offended. Most Native Americans just want to be left alone. But I have never forgotten what my father taught me. He told me to be like all Cherokee — honest. He also said, 'Stand tall like a redwood tree and walk straight like an arrow.'"

**This information was compiled from information taking during an interview with Chief Francis Marion Terrapin.*

PATRICIA GRANT STEPS INTO NEW RETIREMENT ROLE

By CINDY CROSBY

Patricia Grant is starting a new, and long-awaited for, phase of life called retirement.

After a 46-year career in the judicial system in South Carolina, including 20 years as Colleton County Clerk of Court, Grant has left the building. A native of Round O, she began her career in July 1974, and was the first African American apart from law enforcement officers, to work at the Colleton County Courthouse. She would go on to be elected as the first black Clerk of Court in Colleton County, running unopposed for five terms.

Grant, often described as professional, respectful, fair, graceful, and poised, had a plateful of responsibilities running the Colleton County Courthouse. One of her most important tasks was the proper filing of court documents such as dockets and rosters, jury lists, case files, transcripts, judgments, liens, fines, indictments, preliminary hearings, motions, orders, trial records, evidence, settlements, sentences, verdicts, and pleas and appeals.

What is next for Patricia Grant?

"I am so excited about what lies ahead," said Grant. "I plan to continue to work within my community, helping serve those in need. I want to do my part to enhance the lives of others. I am also looking forward to spending time with my family and traveling."

Proudest accomplishment while serving Colleton County?

"It is hard to narrow down just one of my proudest accomplishments while in office," said Grant. "But as I reflect, being chosen as the first black Clerk of Court in Colleton County, running unopposed for five terms, stands as a major achievement for myself and the community I served."

Favorite memory from days spent in the courthouse?

"One of my special memories was working collaboratively in a committee with Judge Buckner and several other county officials for the renovation, celebration and dedication of our historical courthouse," said Grant. "Another memory goes back to the seventies of recording documents by hand to now the modern day of technology – such as electronic filing, which has become more user friendly for legal professionals and the community. I will always cherish these memories, along with all the wonderful people I had the pleasure to serve."

Married to her husband Glenn Grant for 51 years, she is the mother of two sons and four grandchildren. She is a member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church. She is an active participant in the Colleton Training School Alumni Association and the Colleton Long Term Recovery Group.

Photo by CINDY CROSBY

GRANT RETIRES AFTER A 46-YEAR CAREER IN COLLETON COUNTY. "Using an analogy, I once heard, I will say that once the train arrives at the station – it is time to get off. My mind, soul, and body felt a satisfaction that I had arrived to my destination and my mission as Clerk of Court was accomplished. So, it felt like it was time to step off the train and onto the platform of retirement." – Patricia Grant.

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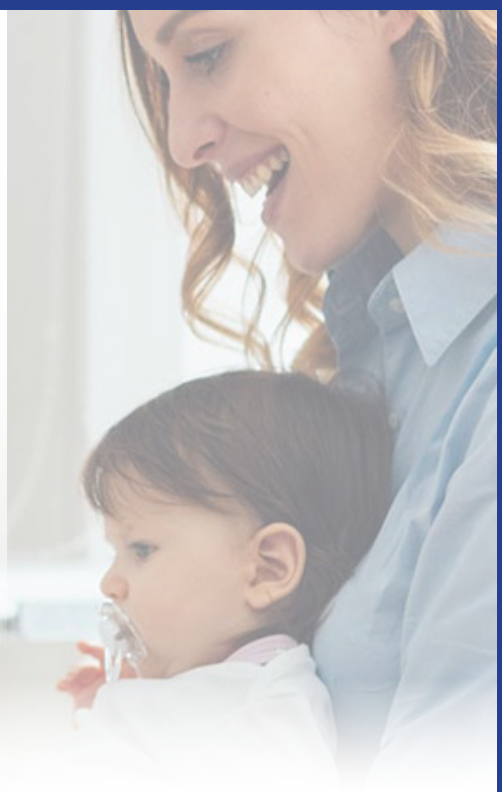

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AFRICAN ARTIST WANTS TO TEACH TRADITIONS

By VICKI BROWN

An artistry that began thousands of years ago in Africa is continuing in the Lowcountry, thanks to Kisha Kinard's love of crafting sweetgrass. She has been making sweetgrass baskets and art work for years and now hopes to pass on the talent to others.

She first learned how to make the Lowcountry staple about 40 years ago, while growing up in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. After a few summers of practice, she said she was able to start making baskets "from scratch" and making something that looked worthy of the marketplace for people to buy retail.

Kinard was taught the skill by her mother, her grandmother and her great-aunt, who all taught Kinard and her siblings the passed-down skill. She said she was taught by the women in her family during rhe summers and on the weekends.

"As the tradition goes, I will teach my descendants how to make sweetgrass baskets," she said.

Kinard said it was important for her to learn to make the sweetgrass baskets because of her own personal design preferences in the arts of pottery and geometry.

"I think in terms of design, my designs are influenced by my interest in pottery, geometry, nature and traditional sweetgrass baskets shapes and designs," she said.

On average, Kinard said it takes her from several days to several months to complete one sweetgrass basket, depending on the size and detail of the project. She obtains the sweetgrass used to make the baskets by collecting it certain locations in the Lowcountry, alongside her family. These locations are allotted to sweetgrass basket-makers throughout the Charleston area and Lowcountry, she said.

"Or, we can purchase them from gatherers in the community who collect the grasses for sale. With it becoming more difficult to get native sweetgrass, I have begun to develop a space on the farm where I will be able to propagate and plant sweetgrass."

Additionally, Kinard recently received the ACRE grant. ACRE stands for Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship. "I was awarded the ACRE grant after completing a six-week virtual class program, a business plan and presenting a recorded pitch before several judges."

Several new and seasoned farmers applied for the grant. The pool of applicants was condensed to 17 competitors. A total of seven individuals were awarded funding to be used as needed.

"The funds will be used toward the purchase of a multi-purpose shed for plant propagation and storage. I am super-excited about this funding because it will allow us to continue our tradition of sweetgrass basketry in light of the difficulty in finding sweetgrass in public spaces," she said. "Further, I will be able to develop a program to teach and demonstrate this

and other folk art on the farm, in schools, corporate settings and more.

The History Behind the Art

According to Kinard, the technique of sweetgrass basketry originated in West Africa. When enslaved West Africans were brought to American plantations, they utilized their skill in basketry to create agricultural pieces used in the winnowing of rice and storage of dry goods.

"I come from a line of sweetgrass basketmakers and Gullah Geechees in the Snowden and Hamlin communities of Mount Pleasant," she said. "My 94-year-old grandmother often carried us to downtown Charleston with her during the summer, where she sold the family's sweetgrass baskets, flowers and wreaths. Her mother and many women in our family made sweetgrass baskets. My mother opened the first sweetgrass basket retail store, which she operated from 1999 to 2004 on Washington Street in Walterboro. Now I'm doing my part in carrying on this craft tradition in the framework of our farm Sweetgrass Roots where I will propagate and grow native sweetgrass."

Kinard is currently selling her baskets from her Web site, www.sweetgreet.etsy.com. She is also looking for an actual retail location to exhibit ad sell her work.

Photo by VICKI BROWN

PLANTING SWEETGRASS TO KEEP THE TRADITION GOING. Kisha Kinard's love of crafting sweetgrass has turned into a retail business. She has been making sweetgrass baskets and art work for years and now hopes to pass on the talent to others. She is now planting the grass to help her keep the tradition alive.

Photo by VICKI BROWN

WOODWORKING IS A PASSION. Tom Whitacre puts together broken and torn cain chairs and also builds and repairs new furniture, as part of a hobby that has turned him into a local businessman.

THE ART OF WOODWORKING

By VICKI BROWN

Gifted with his hands, Walterboro resident Tom Whitacre is bringing the art of repairing furniture back to life.

From his garage, he repairs and restores furniture, and he methodically refurbishes unstrung cane seats for chairs. Interestingly enough, Tom says his hobby started out as an accident.

"My wife, Pam, wanted the kitchen cabinets refinished in our house," he said. "I looked them over and thought that maybe I could do that for her. I stripped them down and refinished them in my small shop in the backyard. I had never worked in wood before, but it didn't look too hard. So, I found myself renovating the cabinets," said Tom. "Then I did some work for family, which made me think that maybe I could do this sort of work and get paid! Before I knew it, I had started a side business," laughed Whitacre.

Fifteen years later, he has now doubled the size of his shop so that he can accommodate all of the business that has come his way. "You know, in high school, I had no interest in woodshop at all. But it is amazing how things changed in my life," he said.

Whitacre says that the Lord has thoroughly blessed him by sending him business on a routine basis. "One client tells a friend which leads to another, and so on. I also get a lot of repeat business," he added. "If nothing else, I love the way that my woodworking and caning business has allowed me to meet some many wonderful people from around the area. That is my favorite part—meeting the people. I enjoy talking with them and developing a relationship," said Whitacre.

Tom recalls that his favorite experience was when he met a customer "out in the country" who needed some repair work. She told him that she was excited to finally meet another Christian.

"That meant a lot to him because my belief in Jesus is a big part of my life," he said. Tom also plays in his church's praise and worship band. "That also happened by accident," laughed Whitacre.

As a teen in 1966, everyone had to learn to play the violin. The next year, all students had to learn to play the cello. But since his last name started with a "W", by the time they got to him, all of the cellos were taken, so he was told to learn the string bass. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

While working the night shift at a bubblegum factory, he ended up cutting off the tip of his finger in a machine accident. But since the string bass is played with the flat of the finger and not the tip, he could continue playing. He played string bass and trombone throughout college and afterward, for different groups. He nows plays for his church.

Since college, Tom has worked several different jobs, the most recent was with Sprint. While working for Sprint as a fiber-optic technician, he said he discovered he had a knack for repairing just about anything. "I learned as I went along how to fix things. Since I maintained and repaired fiber-optic cable, I began to understand and was never afraid to figure out how things worked. Buying my first house taught me a lot about home repair, too. And that's what I do with woodworking. People bring me things that are broken, and I will work out how to fix it," he said. He went on to say that in most cases, wooden furniture cannot be put back exactly the way it was originally. But he works hard to figure out how to put the wooden pieces back into place as closely aligned as the original. "Sometimes I can't sleep. I will lie in bed and reason out how to fix the wood. It may take days or even a week until I can come up with the perfect way to fix the project so that it looks like the original," said Whitacre.

Whitacre's father, Carl, was a schoolteacher who worked during the summer repairing cane chairs with damaged seats. "I often looked at him tediously repairing the cane chairs and thought, I will never do that! But I purchased some antique chairs that had no seats. The cane had been destroyed. So, I went online, purchased some cane materials, found some instructions, and before I knew it, I had caned the chairs. The thing about caning is that if you don't catch your mistakes early, it is easy to tell. You can't go back and fix the one mistake because the caning is so tight. But soon after I caned my chairs, someone asked me if I caned, and for the first time I said yes...slowly, but carefully," chuckled Whitacre. He recently completed flat reed caning which is wider and extremely difficult. He caned the seat as well as the back of the chair. "It was painful; the reeds cut up my fingers many times," he said.

Beside the cuts, caning is back-breaking work. He has to constantly bend over to maneuver the caning into the correct pattern, and the close-up work is hard on the eyes. It took him several days to complete the project, but it turned out well. "I guess

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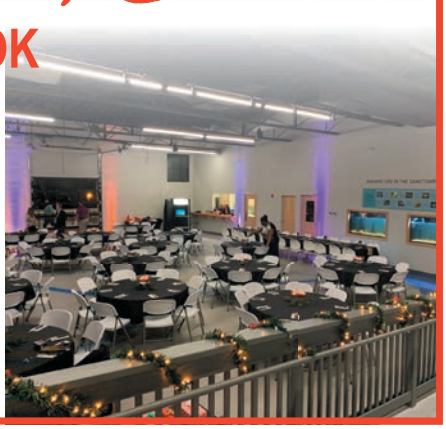

Photo by VICKI BROWN

CAIN CHAIRS AND SUCH. Local resident Tom Whitacre mends cain chairs in what he calls "back-breaking work," using hand techniques and tools.

Photo by VICKI BROWN

WOODWORKING. Using techniques he has mostly taught himself, Tom Whitacre is building new furniture, mending old furniture for Colleton residents and also repairing cain chairs, a Lowcountry furniture tradition.

I can now add flat reed caning to my list of things I can fix," he added. Whitacre uses special tools for his caning and has to order caning materials and reeds. Sometimes he uses woven-pressed cane that comes in sheets. He doesn't have to weave it, but he does have to use and attach spline. Before replacing cane, he has to drill tiny holes around the edges of the seat. A steamer is inserted in the holes and is used to remove old glue around the old spline (outer edge)of the caned area. Once that is removed and the area cleaned, itis ready to be re-caned. He measures, cuts, stretches, glues and attaches the new cane. It's not only restored on top, but underneath the chair ,as well. "I have worked on several chairs that I hope to sell," said Whitacre.

I really love restoring wood and furniture and bringing it back to what it once was," said Whitacre. "I enjoy woodworking, caning, and meeting new people. The more I do, the more I want to do."

SHERIFF BUDDY HILL LOOKS BACK ON CAREER

By KATRINA MCCALL

November 2020 was the charm for Buddy Hill. "There's a time for everything," said Hill who became Colleton County Sheriff in 2020 after running for office in 2008 and 2012. He officially took office in January 2021. A native of Colleton County, the 60-year-old Hill grew up doing his favorite things: hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family and friends. And those favorite things haven't changed over the years, except for adding law enforcement. He and his wife of 36 years, Becky S. Hill, have two daughters and six grandchildren (four girls and two boys). "We have a lively time at the house when we get all the kids together," Hill said. His love of enforcing the law started with his family. His father, Guerry Hill, was a career law enforcement officer, retiring from S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources after 24 years. "When he got out of the Marines, he started with the Walterboro Police Department and worked there for three years. Then he worked for the sheriff's office for nine years; and he went to DNR for 24 years before he retired. My mother (Janice) was a legal secretary for almost 50 years," Hill said. "So growing up around law enforcement, I just grew to have a love for it." Early in his career, Hill considered following in his father's footsteps in SCDNR. "But then when I got in the sheriff's office, I fell in love with it. There's just something about it—I didn't want to leave it." He started his career at age 25 as a deputy under Sheriff Cutter

Ackerman, then worked for Ackerman's successor Sheriff Eddie Chasteen. During those years, Hill did almost everything. He started in the patrol division, worked as a sergeant, lieutenant, an investigator, property and personal crimes and narcotics. He trained bloodhounds when the sheriff's office had its tracking dogs. He was SWAT commander for Sheriff Alan Beach, in charge of assembling and training the first CCSO SWAT team. He worked for the Walterboro Police Department for two years, before experiencing a personal tragedy with his dad. "I needed to step away for a while, but it wasn't long before I got back in," he said. "When I was out for a few years, the whole time all I could think about was getting back in. This is what I want to do. This is the place I want to serve. "After his selection as chief deputy under the previous sheriff, Hill assumed supervision of the entire sheriff's office in January 2013. "My father was very well known in the county. He was somebody I learned a lot of good lessons from. He'd be fair with everybody and treated everybone with respect. Be fair but firm, and as long as you do that, they may not like you, but they can't say you weren't fair with them. Generally, arresting somebody is not a pleasant experience. But, as long as you treat them with respect, treat them as a human being, you're going to be ok," he said. He also learned a lot from serving under seven sheriffs. "I've got that experience working with so many. I've seen the good, the bad, and the ugly," he said. Hill takes the sheriff's position very seriously. "There's more to being sheriff than just wanting to be sheriff. It's a huge responsibility," he said. "You're a manager of law enforcement officers and the agency. Being a sheriff isn't a one-person job. Many moving parts are working together to ensure we're getting the job done and done right. During the past eight years, I've been fortunate enough to work with a wonderful group of honest, hard-working, dedicated men and women who ensure the best decisions are made to keep Colleton's citizens and staff safe."

That agency includes some 140 employees, including deputies, 911 dispatch, the Colleton County Detention Center, and civilian employees. And he has a long wish list for the agency. Long term, he wants to expand the patrol division, covering over the 1,100 square miles of Colleton County. Implementing additional deputies within the agency will increase safety for both deputies and civilians. He'd like to increase pay so he can better retain officers. "I'd like to get our people to a point where they don't feel they have to go somewhere else to get better pay," he said. "And that's going to take some time, but a process I'm going to be working on." He's continuing to build good relationships with Colleton County Council, other law enforcement agencies, DSS, Fire-Rescue and "anybody else where we can help each other." He'd like to have another team of bloodhounds, which are an invaluable tool in finding lost children or dementia patients, as well as offenders. He plans on buying more narcotics and tracking canines, for a total of four. After COVID-19 subsides, he will continue building programs that get officers out in the community, talking with residents about what they need and building positive relationships. He will continue the open-door policy to his office, talking with anyone who needs him. "And if they don't want to come to me, I'll come to them," Hill said. The office of internal investigations will continue. "When we get complaints, we follow up and investigate. And if it's anything criminal, we'll immediately contact SLED. This is standard

Photo by KATRENA MCCALL.

TRANSITION OF POWER. Recently-elected Colleton County Sheriff Buddy Hill is shown with former Interim Sheriff Charles Ghent, who was sent to Colleton County by state leaders to act as the interim sheriff when former elected Sheriff Andy Strickland was removed from office. Hill is the new elected leader, and was formally sworn into the sheriff's seat in January of 2021.

Photo by KATRINA MCCALL.

SWEARING IN. Recently-elected Colleton County Sheriff Buddy Hill is sworn into office, alongside his wife, Becky Hill. Buddy has been a law enforcement officer in Colleton County for decades, and has served in various other leadership roles before winning the 2020 sheriff's election.

New deputy follows father's footsteps

Guerry L: "Buddy" Hill Jr. is sworn in as a Colleton County Sheriff's Deputy by Clerk of Court Emily Baggett while his wife Becky holds the Bible and his father Guerry Hill Sr. (left) and Sheriff C.E. Ackerman (center) look on. His mother Janie also was present.

Buddy Hill fills an additional position in the Sheriff's Dept. funded for the fiscal year beginning this week. The department now has 17 commissioned officers.

Ackerman said "I'm proud to have Buddy with me. I've worked side by side with his Daddy for 28 years."

Guerry Hill Sr. worked as a Walterboro policeman for three years and as a sheriff's deputy for nine years. He has been a S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Dept. conservation officer for the past 21 years. (Photo by Dan Johnson)

protocol to ensure an unbiased investigation. We don't criminally investigate our people. We've learned a lot," he said. He plans to hit drugs hard. "A major problem we have today in this county is methamphetamines. That's the root of a lot of our problem," he said. "We need a dedicated narcotics teams in place. We're going to be partnering with some neighboring agencies because their problem is our problem. If we hit it together, I think we'll make a significate impact on it," Hill said. But most of all, Hill just wants to do a good job. "Election night, when the returns came in, it was exciting, but it was also humbling." It was very humbling to know that so many people entrusted me with their sheriff's office. I'm honored to have this position, and I will do everything in my power to make everyone proud of the decision they made," he said. "As long as I feel like I'm productive in this office, I'll continue to try to stay in this office. I know that's something I'm going to have to work on every day. I am here to serve me office—the office is not here to serve you. And the office belongs to the people of this county. I've lived here all my life. I love this county. I love this community. I think it's the best anywhere. It's just a unique place. I can't think of any place else I'd like to be. We're looking forward, and we're not looking back. I look forward to what's coming."

Photo Courtesy of S.C. DNR

SHELLING WITH A PLAN. Used oyster shells are critical to keeping waterways healthy, but one local non-profit says there is such a shortage of properly recycled oyster shells that South Carolina leaders are having to buy recycled oyster shells from other places.

RECYCLING OYSTER SHELLS IS CRITICAL

By HEATHER WALTERS

Oyster season is in high swing, with buckets of the small shells being dumped out, steamed and served up all over the Lowcountry. But, what happens after you suck down those salty and slimy bits of goodness? Apparently, not enough people are doing the right thing by recycling the shells.

Environmental officials with one of the Lowcountry's biggest recycling groups say that not enough people are properly recycling their used oyster shells.

This is causing South Carolina officials to have to actually buy used oyster shells from other states to recycle back into local waters.

According to Charleston Waterkeeper, a non-profit organization that focuses on keeping Charleston waterways clean, not enough people are actually recycling their eaten or used oyster shells by placing them at local, designated dump sites. This is creating a problem with the quality of water in local waterways.

It's also not helping to boost the health of future oyster beds.

"The highest and strictest water quality we have comes from areas where there are healthy oyster beds," said Andrew Wunderley, with Charleston Waterkeeper.

According to Wunderley, Charleston Waterkeeper frequently provides volunteers to S.C. DNR, and the two groups work

together to safely clean, sanitize, bag and then restore oyster shells into the water. This is all done to help rebuild oyster reefs for future oyster life cycles.

"Crabs, fish, birds, racoons … pretty much any living creature you can think of that lives in or near a waterway in our region needs oysters to survive and thrive. Oysters are an important part of those life cycles," he said.

Prime oyster season in South Carolina runs from September through April, or in any month that has an "R" in it. In these months, S.C. Department of Natural Resources officials say the commercial shellfish harvest oyster season has been "stable" over the past three decades, but there has been a decline in shucked oyster shells being recycled and turned into oyster beds. "The increasing popularity of backyard oyster roasts and by-the-bushel retail sales have contributed to this shortage in that, contrary to the shucking houses and canneries, shells remaining from individual oyster roasts are not usually returned to the estuary to provide a suitable surface to attract juvenile oysters. More often than not, the shell ends up in driveways and landfills," according to the S.C. DNR, which operates SCORE, a specialized oyster shell recycling program in South Carolina. The person in charge of that project is SC DNR Officer Michael Hodges.

"These factors have contributed to the critical shortage of oyster shell used for planting purposes and sustaining oyster habitat. The state has been forced to purchase the majority of its oyster shell from out-of-state processors to supplement our stocks of shell for planting," as stated by the S.C. DNR and Hodges.

State officials said oyster shell recycling is critical to maintain, restore and enhance the state's marine habitats – including the

future of oyster shell beds.

"During the summer months, oysters spawn and release free-swimming larvae, called spat, into the water column. The spat are carried by tide and current and after spending about two weeks moving in the water column, seek a suitable surface upon which to attach and begin building their shells of calcium carbonate," as stated by S.C. DNR in provided information. "Unless disturbed, they will spend the remainder of their life cycle where they have attached. Centuries of oyster cultivation experience have proven oyster shell to be one of most desirable materials (called cultch) for attachment and subsequent growth of young oysters. Other cultch materials, such as shucked whelk shell and wooden stakes have been very successful in attracting and supporting oyster spat."

The S.C. DNR has a project funded by revenue from the sale

of Saltwater Recreational Fishing License sales. The money from these sales helps to fund recycle oyster shells and then turn them into new oyster reefs.

For more information on oyster shell recycling, or to be told how to find the closest shell recycling site, call (843) 953-9841 or email the S.C. DNR Oyster Shell Recycling Program at oystershellrecycling@dnr.sc.gov.

Photo Courtesy of S.C. DNR

THERE IS A PROCESS. Used oyster shells must be quarantined for at least six months before being placed back into local waterways.

Oyster Facts

According to the S.C. DNR:

A Harvestable and Renewable Resource: Each year tens of thousands of bushels are harvested recreationally and commercially.

Estuarine Filters: Adult oysters filter up to 2.5 gallons of water per hour or up to 50 gallons per day.

Habitat: Oysters build reefs which provide habitat for fish, shrimp, crabs, and other animals. They are an integral part of the marine ecosystem. There are nearly 120 different species that frequent oyster reefs, including; Red Drum, Blue Crabs, Flounder, and Shrimp.

Erosion Control: Oyster reefs are natural breakwaters that absorb wave energy and protect marsh shorelines from erosion.

Oyster Shell Recycling Do's and Don'ts

DO separate the shell from your trash and put into a separate container.

DO dump shells from bags and leave only shells in the recycling bins.

DO bring your shell to the recycling center

DO NOT put live oysters into local waters.

DO NOT put freshly-shucked oyster shells into SC waterways. Shells have to be quarantined for 6 months before being recycled back into waterways.

Walterboro Oyster Shell Recycling Location

The Walterboro Bin is located at the Beltline Convenience and Recycling Center which is located on Robertson Blvd (Walterboro Bypass) just 0.3 miles north of the Colleton Middle School near the airport runway. The bin is located in the far, left corner of the facility right when you pull in.

Edisto Island Oyster Shell Recycling Location

Take Highway 174 toward Edisto Beach State Park. Approximately 12.1 miles from the Dawhoo Bridge there is a recycling center on left or 0.8 miles from the beach on right. Look for blue recycling signs.

Photo Courtesy of MJM STUDIO

THE BEAUTY OF WOOD

By VICKI BROWN

Wood, painstakingly crafted, can be breathtaking. Using different varieties of wood and creating objects of beauty takes skill and patience. Mike Mallaney has the ability to design almost anything made from wood.

Inside the Artists' Hub of the Ace Basin, located on Washington Street, Malloney displays his creations of wood. There are various sized boxes, boards and a host of other things for sale.

Mike Mallaney is the owner and craftsman of MJM Studio and custom woodworking designs. A retired millwright of 43 years in the paper industry, he is now enjoying spending time with his wife, three daughters, and eight grandchildren, five boys and three girls. "I am proud of all of them," said Mallaney. But when he is not with his family, he is designing in wood.

"My dad was a woodworker, and that is how I got started. Plus, I have always liked making things," Mallaney said. "I like working with domestic hardwoods like cherry and walnut."

He says that he has no particular piece that he loves more than another; everything he makes is his favorite. "All my pieces are my favorites. I have made a lot of different things such as cabinets, cribs for grandchildren, a 17' canoe, a restored a 1957 Chris Craft Cavalier 15'utility, a wooden geared clock, a miniature table and chairs for grandchildren, and some furniture," he said.

But one piece stands out among the others. "About four years ago, a dear friend lost a child tragically," said Mallaney. "I was at a loss for what I could do for them. But then I came up with the idea of a "memory" box personalized for her. At the time I did not know how popular they were, I actually thought I had invented it," he laughed. "But anyway, it really helped them with their grief. "They had always saved photographs, and they even had a good habit of getting cell phone pictures printed, so now there is a place for the good memories. It was very gratifying for all of us," he added.

Mallaney's advice to someone wants to get started working with wood is to get the best tools you can afford. It's all about the right tools. "You don't need fancy new tools, just good sharp ones," he said. "And don't forget the most important thing…measuring; you just can't make it bigger after you cut it too small."

Explore the FRONT PORCH

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Fighting Rising Waters

By HEATHER WALTERS

Edisto is being impacted by rising sea levels and higher tides that are becoming more frequent. Combine that with repeated punches that it took by several recent hurricanes, and town officials are looking to find creative answers to their beach erosion problems.

Happening now, the town is currently undergoing a beach renourishment project that is putting sand back onto its beach. This time, however, the town is using trucks to haul in sand onto Edisto. This is different from last several times that the town has undergone more expansive - and expensive - renourishment projects, which entailed dredging sand from the ocean floor.

The spot-beach renourishment project began on Jan. 18th, and is meant to replenish parts of the beach that eroded from Hurricane Dorian.

A portion of the renourishment funds – approximately 75 percent– is being paid for through FEMA. This is because Hurricane Dorian was declared a federal disaster.

The Town of Edisto Beach is paying for the

Photos by Kami Merritt

FIGHTING BACK. The Town of Edisto Beach is now undergoing a beach renourishment project to fight back from sand lost during Hurricane Dorian. This is the first time in recent history, however, that the town has used trucks to haul in sand, instead of dredging it from the ocean floor.

remaining portion of the estimated $678,280 renourishment project.

According to the official FEMA report about Hurricane Dorian's impact on Edisto Beach, the Category 3 storm hit Edisto with 115 mph winds. The hurricane impacted the Edisto Beach shoreline between Sept. 5 and 6th of 2019, as it produced "high water levels (surge), increased wave energy, and tropical-storm-force winds as it passed inland," the report states.

"Offshore wave heights were measured at 7.5 meters (25 feet) during the storm. The storm passed just offshore of Edisto Beach, with the eye located about 70 miles offshore …" the report states.

FEMA officials estimate that Hurricane Dorian sucked away about 34,838 cubic yards of sand, causing the current erosion problem.

As of last week, the renourishment project was "moving along quickly," according to information provided by town leaders. Already, crews have placed about 1,312 cubic yards of sand between groins three and four along Edisto's shoreline. Earlier in February, crews placed an additional 1,520 cubic yards of sand in this same area.

In addition to fighting erosion caused from hurricanes, the Town of Edisto Beach is also facing another hurdle, thrown at it by Mother Nature: flooding.

Rising sea levels, higher tides, and more frequent "king tides" are creating more and more flooding problems for town residents. The flooding is also impacting the town's infrastructure, and negatively impacting natural resources, like the beach.

"The higher tides that we are having are creating a slew of issues, from road flooding to erosion to yards on the marsh front that are repeatedly flooded. The marsh-front will realize the impacts of flooding before the beach-front, in most cases," said Iris Hill, town supervisor for Edisto Beach. For more than a decade, Hill has led the charge in fighting erosion and in keeping the town's pledge to small-town businesses. She is currently working with town leaders to fight erosion: Edisto Beach officials have partnered with the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and the Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments Program to develop a "Sea Level Rise" Adaption Report. This report is meant to help the town develop ways to adapt to rising sea levels. Two local colleges – College of Charleston and the University of South Carolina – are also involved in the project.

According to Hill, town leaders are still waiting on the first report from the consortium's leaders. COVID-19 travel restrictions have created a backlog in the town receiving the data. But Hill said she believes the town is going to see positive benefits from being involved with this organization.

"The frequencies of higher tides and the higher sea levels are all related and are contributing to our overall problem," she said.

The actual location of Edisto Island is also a problem. "As a barrier island, we are surrounded by water. As sea levels rise, our barrier island becomes inundated with water," she said.

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