



The Skinnie

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CONSTRUCTION

Upfront

I'm a girl-dad. Which – I'm generalizing – is more expensive than being a boy-dad. This truth is most evident when the girl(s) get married. Throwing a wedding is like building a house. There's a budget. And there's the amount you spend. And the two figures are, at best, distant relations. The "budget" is the baby that organically and without fail grows into its much larger self. The same way your kids grow relentlessly, as much as you'd prefer otherwise, before your anguished eyes. These are fundamental elements of the implicit bargain you make with the universe in exchange for the privilege of parenthood.

My little girl got married. My dread was the inverse of her euphoria. Aside from the economics, weddings are not comfortable for me. I'm apprehensive in social settings. I don't drink. I'm not great at small talk. Once I start eating, it's hard from me to stop. I'm not much of a dancer. I rarely tuck my shirts inside my pants. I shave, at most, once a week. My hair was at an awkward in-between length.

When your girl is the bride, the stakes are rich. You're giving a speech...perhaps the most important one of your life. I've observed fathers-of-the-bride (FOBs). Many prep for THE moment for months. Writing and rewriting and rehearsing, time and again. Not me. I'm a deadline-junkie. Take this column: I sit myself in front of my laptop about 90-minutes before our printer's drop-dead time and type. The process works when the outcome is an inconsequential essay. When it's the ultimate love letter to your precious progeny, procrastination is a fool's device.

So, there I was, Saturday, May 4, in my pajamas, at my desk. Hairstylists and makeup artists and young women in custom, matching sleepwear flitted about my house. I sought refuge in my carriage-house office. I was holding a cup of coffee and holding a panic attack at bay.

Fast forward. The wedding reception ended as abruptly as an untimely death. I was relieved. But I was also sad that it was forever finished and elated that it was more magical than my most ambitious dreams. Surprisingly, being an FOB is among the handful of life's most indescribably amazing experiences... When someone opened a door and I saw my

baby in her white dress for the first time... When she handed me a card that I will save forever... When we hugged and I cried... When we stood in shared silence and awe behind the grand doors of the Cathedral Basilica, waiting to walk the pathway to her future self... When we danced with everyone watching, yet it felt like she was the only other person there... When her stepmom and I walked home quietly, arm-in-arm, after the afterparty... And... when I delivered the speech.

I speak publicly often. Always off-the-cuff. This time, I brought paper, with letters in giant font to accommodate old, misty eyes. A stack...probably 15 sheets. I expected a mic stand; I got a handheld. Pro tip: you can't flip through unstapled pages and hold a microphone without something going wrong.

I was coming into rhythm, finishing page one, when the other 14 flew from my hands like a scrambling flock of birds from a tree. Like we had choreographed a slapstick routine, my new son-in-law took to the floor to save me. He gathered and fed me each page as I finished its predecessor. A metaphor for the way I pray he always carefully picks up the pieces of my daughter's psyche when they scuttle unexpectedly to life's floor.

I said many things to my daughter that day. These are among my favorite words:

Gabby – you were who are you right from your first moment on earth. You have two undeniable, innate qualities...both on display here today... You have always been easy to love AND you make a dramatic entrance...or a dramatic anything, actually...

At times, you've doubted yourself. I'm here to stridently dispel that doubt. You are smart. Very smart. And you are incredibly strong. You are wise beyond your years. You are diligent and driven... and you are kind.

Although you're a dreamer, you have common sense. When we – later in life – learned that you had – on occasion – snuck out of our house at night, I wondered how you had navigated out the window, across the roof, and down to the ground...

You answered simply: "I never did that...I just walked out the front door."

I can think of two occasions – many years apart – when you literally saved my life.

When you were an infant, I came home way



too late on an unremarkable Tuesday night...a thing I had done too often.

I went into your room, got down on my knees next to your bed, stared at your innocent, perfect face, and asked God to help me be the man our family deserved.

After your mom passed away and it was just you and me in our house your senior year of high school...Reversing roles, you calmed me. You gave me the peace to sleep and heal.

You are strong...so strong...like an angel, you turned tragedy into triumph. We were...we are...in awe of you.

You carry that strength with you and honor our family every day, as a businessperson, fitness instructor, graduate student...and now...wife.

Gabby and Andrew, I wish you this:

When you face challenges, you return to the reasons you chose one another. That you always treat each other with respect. And that you remember you are co-creators, building this life together. You collaborate as you write this script. Do so with open hearts and strong hands to steady one another when you're shaky.

And know your families love you, just as God loves you, and we can't wait to see what your future brings.

My Father's Day present came early as I got to say – out loud – these and other life-affirming things to my not-so-little-anymore girl.

Scott A. Lauretti

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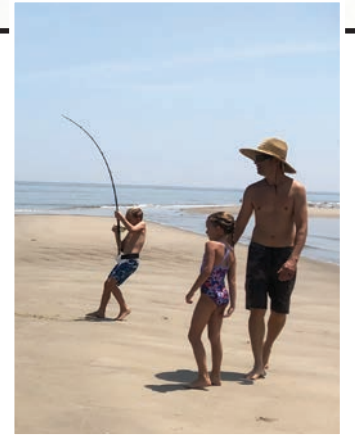
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WILLIAM
HENRY

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A Square Deal

By Roger Smith

Photos Courtesy of City of Savannah Municipal Archives

On February 10th of this year, an event took place in the Historic District that had never occurred in any living person's memory: The ceremonial renaming of one of Savannah's 24 squares. Taylor Square was awash with people delighted to witness the renaming of a Savannah square in honor of a woman of color.

The official renaming had taken place earlier, in two phases. November of 2022 found Savannah's City Council voting unanimously to remove John C. Calhoun as the namesake of the southernmost square on Abercorn Street. In a separate action in August of 2023, the temporarily nameless space was re-christened Susie King Taylor Square.

Bureaucratically, the Savannah City Council acted under the advisement of two appointed citizens' commissions: Park and Tree, and Historic Sites and Monuments. Although Council is not obliged to follow the recommendations of either commission, the advisory groups frequently hold sway. The commissions typically take up their work through grassroots organizing – pavement-pounding, awareness-building, and petition-signing. In this case, the Susie King Taylor Center for Jubilee, spearheaded by "Sistah" Patt Gunn, used a multi-year effort to replace the name Calhoun with that of Taylor.

These processes were neither direct vectors nor simple achievements. Residents of the square had to weigh in at least 50 percent in favor before any action could move forward. Achieving that goal was not easy. Confusion over the locations of two long unmarked cemeteries – one for "strangers" and the other for African Americans – which lie under Calhoun and Whitefield Squares, respectively, led to concerns over which square demanded the more immediate renaming. The public-awareness phase sometimes generated more heat than light, but eventually Gunn and her growing cadre of supporters won over Park and Tree, Historic Sites and Monuments, and City Council.

Racially, the crowd in Taylor Square was evenly divided. One city official speaking from the rostrum encouraged people to "look around: this is what Savannah looks like." Indeed, 54 percent of Savannah's population is Black, and the city's nine-member council includes five Black women. Mayor Van Johnson, an African American man, made one of very few references to John C. Calhoun, the outgoing namesake: "What he stood for is not what Savannah stands for."



In 1856, on the eve of the American Civil War, Savannahians named one of the city's final two squares for Calhoun, who had died six years prior. A native of South Carolina, he served in three different presidential cabinets, and was vice president for eight years. In 1845, he was elected to the senate, a seat he held until his death. Calhoun embodied the prevailing sentiment the 1850s, but his beliefs don't stand up to current standards of humanity. A Democrat, he championed the prerogative of the states to determine their own stance on the issue of slavery and the right of American citizens to transport their "property" anywhere in the nation, including into the western territories. Calhoun also represented a new racism that characterized 19th Century America. In the 1700s, even slavery apologists frequently called it a "necessary evil." But there was no apology in Calhoun's vernacular; slavery, he declared, was a "positive good," elevating both the enslaved, who had no other hope for "civilization," and the enslaver, whose elite class in the American South was unprecedented.



John C. Calhoun (left) and Susie King Taylor (right)
Images courtesy of Wikipedia.



complete account of life in camp during the Civil War.

Savannah has frequently named squares for people of national (even international) importance: Washington, Franklin, Lafayette, Madison, and Pulaski. Several speakers at the February dedication noted that 140 years had passed since the previous renaming of a Savannah square. Since Colonial times, St. James's Place paid homage to the royal residence in London. In the 1880s, with Georgia's fealty to Great Britain in the distant past, everyone seemed to agree that the Telfair family – especially the philanthropic and longest-lived matriarch, Mary Telfair – merited the renaming of the square on which their majestic residence stood. The home was about to be transformed into the first art museum in the Southeast. There's no evidence of any dissent regarding the soon-to-be-dismissed name of a London landmark.

Conversely, the selfless heroism of Susie King Taylor better reflects the values of current generations. Born into slavery in 1848, she learned to read and write, a crime in antebellum Georgia. Near the start of the Civil War, she made her way from Savannah to South Carolina, where she offered her services – daytime laundress and nighttime literacy tutor – to the First South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment, one of the era's "colored" troop configurations. Most importantly to history, Taylor penned a memoir about her time with the military, providing the most

Nor were there Loyalists around to object when Savannah's city leaders changed the names of three streets after the American Revolution. Royal appellations were discarded in favor of more democratic words: King Street became President; Queen Street, Congress; and Prince Street, State. York Street, named for the Duke of York, retained its aristocratic name. Savannah also decided to keep all three of His Majesty's royal governors as the names of squares: Reynolds, Ellis, and Wright – which had been known first as Percival Square, named for the first president of the Georgia Trustees. Name changes came early, public protest or not.

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Savannah Mayor Van Johnson (left) and Patt Gunn (right) are joined by dignitaries for the renaming ceremony of Taylor Square.

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Criticism for name-changes seems to be a modern phenomenon. Indignant voices decry “erasing history” as Confederate monuments come down, public schools and military bases shed their Confederate badges, and cities and towns re-examine the names previous generations placed on public places. A gentleman at a recent Savannah gathering claimed (during the question-and-answer period) that Yale University had “erased history” by expunging Calhoun’s name from a campus building. “Now there’s no record that Calhoun ever had anything to do with Yale,” pled the man. However, to effectively erase the history of Calhoun’s studies at Yale College (as it was called in 1802), a miscreant would have to physically blot out Calhoun’s name from the university’s historical records. Even then, those documents are no doubt replicated in online archives, Calhoun family papers, and numerous biographies.

Monuments, buildings, and the names of squares are not where or how people study history. History – that rich reservoir of facts, attitudes, arguments, and theories of the past – is found in scholarship. That is, in well-maintained records rooms, deeply researched documentary films, and lectures by professional historians and educators. The only history to be gleaned from a monument or a square name is not about the named person but, rather, what a particular community at a particular time had on its collective mind and held up for esteem. Naming a place for someone does less to educate than to elevate.

In an August 25, 2023, NBC News interview, Mayor Johnson said, “It’s one thing to make history. It’s something else to make sense. And in this case, we’re making both.”

Savannah plans to erect a small plaque in Taylor Square, identifying Calhoun as the erstwhile name of the square and explaining when, how, and why the change took place. As if on cue in response to detractors,

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Attendees at the dedication of Taylor Square represented a healthy racial blend of Savannah citizens.

Johnson observed, “It’s important that we don’t erase history; it’s important that people who come long after us understand the time that we are in today.”

Roger Smith is director of The Learning Center, Savannah’s premier life-long learning program for people over the age of 50. He is a Savannah native who served as a classroom teacher and director of education at the Georgia Historical Society. The Learning Center is a program of Senior Citizens, Inc., which has been helping people age successfully for more than 65 years. For more information, visit seniorcitizensinc.org/the-learning-center or call 912.236.0363.




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Advice for what matters most, when you need it most

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THE FERAL GOLFER

Nearly 30 years ago, psychologist Bob Rotella warned us that "Golf is not a game of perfect," but we didn't listen. We continue to flog the fairways in frustration, searching for the Holy Grail, which is forever out of reach.

In bowling, a perfect game of 300 is achieved dozens of times each year on the professional level, and the bowler leaves the alleys having conquered that sport that day. There is no equivalent in golf, which leaves us striving in vain for something amorphous. A perfect score in golf requires holing every approach shot, and never taking the putter out of the bag. Since this is not remotely possible, let's all agree that the "perfect game" in golf shall henceforth be defined as 18 under par for 18 holes, no matter how it's achieved. Okay, go get it!

Curiously, the odds of an average bowler scoring 300 are about the same as those of an average golfer making a hole in one; about 12,000 to 1. Since the newly defined perfect game of golf is probably unattainable, all that golfers can realistically strive for is their personal best. Even that is a frustrating achievement, because a 70 could easily have been a 69 if only that cursed putt hadn't curled out. Never being satisfied is what brings us back, reaching for something that will always be beyond our grasp. Our plight is not quite that of Tantalus, as we can grab a hotdog and soda at the turn, but our frustration is real.

I smile when I see a fellow golfer assessing a long, double-breaking

putt using the plumb-bob technique. When it first came into vogue many decades ago, it was used when a golfer couldn't decide if a putt was straight or had a slight, otherwise imperceptible bias. It was usually restricted in its use to shorter putts. As any student of Euclid and Newton will tell you, it's useful only if the section of the green between the ball and the cup is one uniform plane surface, tilted or not. This is rarely the case; but, as the abundance of golf gadgets demonstrates, golfers are ready and willing to plumb the depths for help.

Now we have AimPoint, which is subject to the same limitations as plumb-bobbing. Somehow, you determine with your feet the cant of the surface and express it as a percentage, say from 1 to 5 percent. Then you fiddle with your fingers at an exact distance in front of your face. How do you train your feet to sense precise gradients, especially in barely perceptible 1 percent increments? I suppose you could set the slope of your treadmill accordingly, and then stand on it sideways for hours until your feet get the message. Feet: Don't fail me now.

Golfers of a certain age may share the common experience of getting to the top of the backswing in a position to apply a good hammering to the ball, when our ancient body parts collectively protest and decide, "No, we aren't doing that now," and go their separate ways. The result is an uncoordinated, lunging swipe that invites ridicule and sends the ball askew. A related outcome may be an unwelcome visit from our old nemesis, José Hosél. It doesn't seem to matter how well you've been swinging up to that point, this phenomenon seemingly comes out of nowhere. As Pliny the Elder observed, "With man, most of his misfortunes are occasioned by man." But that's hardly any aid and com-

Notes From the Deep Rough
by Peter Sizer

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fort to the suddenly lost.

Tom Kite observed, "Discipline and concentration are a matter of being interested." At the recreational level, interest is the first thing to go during a round. The optimistic expectation that suffuses the first tee quickly turns to disappointment as weeds are whacked, sand is shoveled, turf is turned over, and putts come in pods of three. Our attention soon turns to anything but golf. "Aren't those cloud formations something today? I think I see the face of the nun who used to whack my knuckles with a wooden yardstick. Is that why I play so poorly?"

On the first tee, my playing companion hit a pathetic drive into the undergrowth. Being the sympathetic and generous person that I am, I offered him a "breakfast ball."

He declined, saying, "Never mind, I already lost my breakfast on the first one."

Later, he hit a rather poor drive on a short par 4. With a soupçon of sarcasm, I pointed out that he had left himself a mere 210 yards to the hole. He replied, "Well, that's a problem, since I have but mere skills."

*The game of golf will drive you nuts,
A series of unkindest cuts.
Safer to take up bocce,
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My brother and I were reminiscing about our adventures on the 36-hole public course where we honed our nascent skills as teenagers in the 1960s. I asked if he remembered the golfer who had an entire set of clubs composed of custom-made woods. We suspected that he was an inveterate shanker who needed implements without hosels to get through a round unscathed. You might say that he had turned golf into a shankless job. Clearly, he was decades ahead of his time, as hosel-free hybrids are now essential parts of most golfers' equipment.

Me: "I wonder what became of him?"
Bro: "He died from the constant mockery."
Me: "Well then, how have you survived? I've been on your back for 60 years."
Bro: "You never brought your A-game."



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Laila Ali to Headline the 22nd Annual SmartWomen Luncheon and Expo

Hosted by St. Joseph's/Candler, the event brings inspirational speakers to Savannah.

Boxer, role-model, chef, and TV host Laila Ali will bring her energy and stories to Savannah as the keynote speaker at the 22nd annual St. Joseph's/Candler SmartWomen Luncheon and Expo in October.

Daughter of boxing great Muhammad Ali, she has blazed her own path beyond her undefeated boxing career. She is a media personality, chef, entrepreneur, advocate, and role model.

Presented by Chatham Parkway Lexus and Hilton Head Lexus, the SmartWomen Luncheon and Expo is an annual fundraiser for St. Joseph's/Candler's Telfair Mammography Fund. Its goal is to ensure that all women have access to mammography and other breast health services, even if they are underinsured or have no insurance. In this region, approximately 25 percent of the population fits into these categories. With five fixed locations and a mobile mammography unit, St. Joseph's/Candler offers screening services where women live and work.

"We are honored to do our part in making this event not just a fundraising success but also an unforgettable experience for those who attend," says Robert Myers, MD, of Savannah Chatham Imaging. "Laila Ali will be a wonderful speaker and representative for this great cause. We are excited to once again partner with St. Joseph's/Candler and look forward to another incredible year."

Price Minglehoff, 2024 chair of SmartWomen, anticipates another record-breaking

year for the event. "SmartWomen is always such a special day for us and the 1,400 people who come," Minglehoff says. "Not only is Laila Ali an exceptional keynote speaker, but we anticipate that what we will offer in the expo will be some of the best we've ever had. But the most special part is knowing the profound effect the money raised will have on uninsured and underinsured women in this region."

Over the last several years, the Telfair Mammography Fund has been increasingly utilized to fund screening for women. Funds raised through the SmartWomen Luncheon and Expo help replenish the fund to ensure its impact going forward. To this end, SmartWomen has raised more than \$2 million to meet this goal since its inception. Last year alone, SmartWomen raised more than \$220,000, a record-breaking total.

Chatham Parkway Lexus and Hilton Head Lexus, longtime contributors to the Telfair Mammography Fund are SmartWomen presenting sponsors again in 2024. "Laila Ali is the perfect continuation of inspiring SmartWomen speakers at the preeminent event in this region," says Winston Pittman, Sr., president and owner of Chatham Parkway Lexus and Hilton Head Lexus. "The impact that the Telfair Mammography Fund has had on our community is immeasurable, and we continue to see an amazing level of support for this event as last year's record-breaking results shows. It is our privilege to be the presenting sponsor for this incredible event."

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WHAT ELSE: There are a limited number of tickets available. Please contact sjcsmartwomen@sjchs.org or 912.819.8683 for more information. Visit sjcsmartwomen.org.

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Laila Ali

Laila Ali — pro athlete, wellness advocate, TV host and chef — is the force behind the Laila Ali lifestyle brand. Alongside her husband, former NFL star Curtis Conway, Ali cherishes family life in Georgia with the couple's two children, Curtis, Jr. and Sydney. Daughter of boxing icon and global superstar Muhammad Ali, Laila herself excelled in the ring, winning four world championships during her undefeated career. Ali has provided color commentary for NBC Sports during the network's Olympics coverage. Because of her impact on the sport, she was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2022.

Opening new pathways for women, Ali became a regular panelist and contributor for the CBS Sports Network's all-female sports commentary program, "We Need to Talk," the first of its kind in sports broadcasting. She is a past-president of the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF), a non-profit organization supported by some of the biggest athletes in the world. Through the WSF, she promotes equality for women in sports, advocating for programs that encourage confidence, health, and strength, and bolster Title IX initiatives. Her dedication to female empowerment is an ongoing mission. She inspires others as a sought-after speaker and author of her book for young women, *Reach: Finding Strength, Spirit, and Personal Power*.

Ali is as fierce in the kitchen as she is in the ring. She has triumphed as a two-time champion on Food Network's celebrity edition of *Chopped*. Always up for a challenge, she made it to the final round of the fourth season of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* in 2007, capturing the hearts of millions in the process. She has appeared with Rachael Ray, Dr. Oz, and *The Chew*, and she cooked her "famous oven-baked fried chicken" on Steve Harvey's hit daytime talk show. She has hosted multiple seasons of *Everyday Health*, and was co-host of *American Gladiators*. She hosted *All-In with Laila Ali*, which aired in weekend syndication on CBS.

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She has hosted the Emmy-Award-winning show *Home Made Simple*, which aired every Saturday on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) for three seasons.

As a revered leader in the health community, Ali was the 2012 "Mombassador" for the Aquaphor New York City Triathlon. From wellness guru to role model, her fierce social activism has led to endorsement deals with major brands like Subway, Kohls, T.J. Maxx, Activa, and Purina. She is recognized for her fiery entrepreneurial spirit.

Ali's cookbook, *Food for Life*, is available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. She has created her own line of organic seasonings — Laila Ali Spice Blends. She produces YouPlenish nutrition supplements, skincare, and apparel. Recently, she launched Laila Ali Home Decor with At Home.

Ali is a major supporter of charitable organizations such as Feeding America, Peace 4 Kids, the American Dental Association, and more.

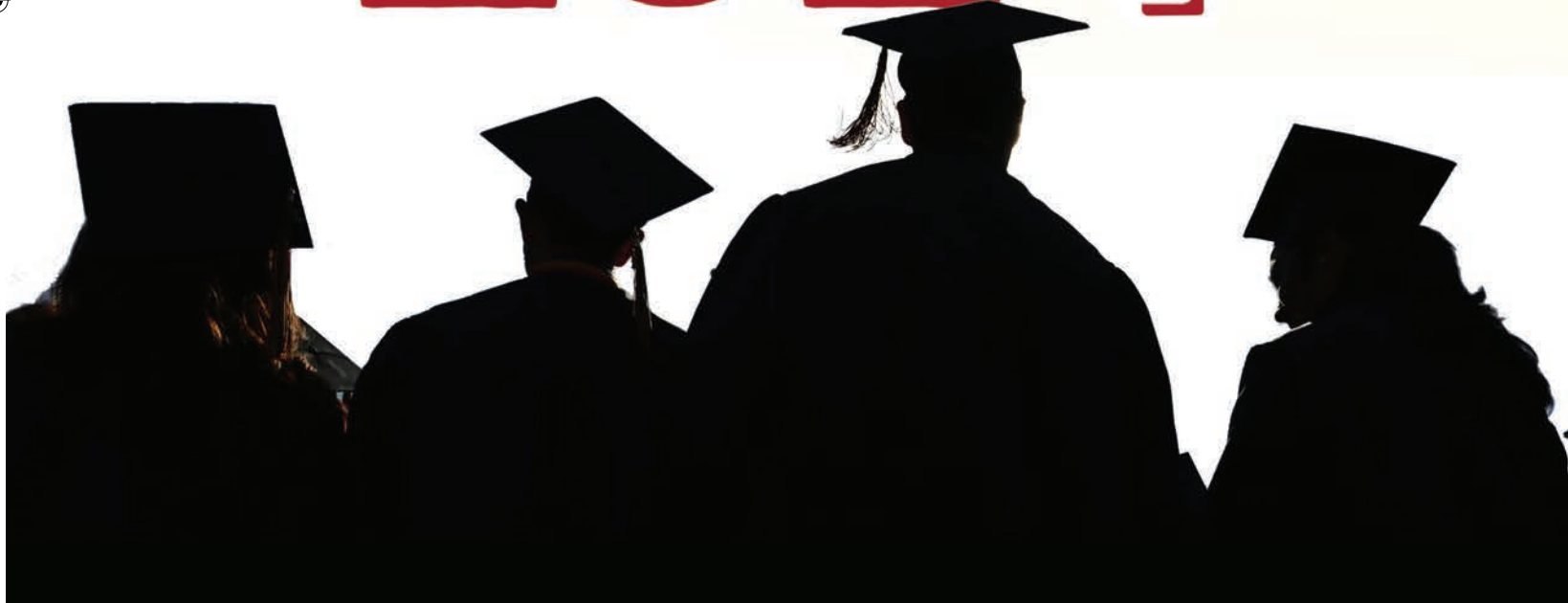
Sharing her wisdom and experience, Ali continues to engage her followers with her lifestyle blog, *Laila Ali Lifestyle*.



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COL. PAUL WHITAKER

For more than 30 years, Paul Whitaker served as a pilot for the U.S. Army. He logged many hours as a flight commander of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, his favorite assignment.

Born and raised in Johnson City, Tennessee, Whitaker graduated high school in 1966. He enrolled at East Tennessee State University, where he was an Army R.O.T.C. student. After earning his bachelor's degree in 1970, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army and began his four-year active-duty obligation (which he later extended into a full career). Because he was a distinguished graduate, Whitaker had his choice of duty stations, selecting Kitzingen, Germany, where elements of the 3rd Infantry Division were stationed.

After orientation to artillery duty and promotion to first lieutenant, he enrolled in the infantry officer basic course at Fort Benning, Georgia. Anxious to fly helicopters, Whitaker was soon accepted to flight school, and trained at Fort Rucker, Alabama. He then joined the 159th Aviation Battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, doubling as the battalion operations officer and a team pilot pulling double shifts. "Loved the flight time," he recalls with a smile.

Whitaker eventually returned to Fort Benning to complete the Advanced Course for Infantry Officers. He made the Commandant's List (class honors) and earned assignment to the 19th Aviation Battalion near the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea. Armed violations of the truce were frequent by both sides, and Whitaker flew cautiously. Following his 18-month Korean tour, he returned to Fort Benning where he was promoted to captain. He flew with the 121st Aviation Company, a combat-ready unit specializing in infantry support.

Whitaker's next assignment required both judgement and diplomacy. For three years, he was posted to the Pentagon, where he conducted interviews with hundreds of aviation branch officers. Whitaker assigned each one to their next duty station, often a challenging job. Not only did he consider the soldiers' personal preferences, but he also had to try to match them to the Army's needs.

For the remainder of his career, Whitaker flew helicopters on-and-off between duty assignments, executing missions that included supporting major infantry operations. On the ground, he worked as a garrison commander and inspector general, among other administrative tasks.

Rising through the ranks, Whitaker aced the Officer Advance Course at Fort Benning, finishing in the uppermost 20 percent of his class, again earning a spot on the Commandant's List.



Then-Capt. Whitaker prepares for a flight mission with the 271st Assault Support Helicopter Company in Korea, 1976.

Following another tour at Fort Campbell as staff operations officer for a combat aviation battalion, Whitaker completed the U.S. primary and advanced flight training courses for fixed-wing aviation pilots at Fort Wolters, Texas, and Fort Rucker, Alabama. He ranked in the top 10 percent of his class and was recommended to return as a flight instructor. He also was selected to transition to the Chinook heavy-lift birds.

The two years beginning in April of 1991 were busy for Whitaker. As the commander of the Rapid Deployment Combat Aviation Force based at Hunter Army Airfield, he directed all aspects of operations for security issues of the 500 personnel and 58 aircraft under his command. The unit deployed worldwide during the time, including peacekeeping missions in Somalia, drug interdiction in Honduras, and hurricane disaster relief in the Caribbean. They exceeded all performance objectives and operated within budget, without a major accident, injury, or fatality.

Promoted to "full bird" colonel, Whitaker served as deputy inspector general for the U.S. Pacific Command from 1993 to 1996. He



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During Whitaker promotion ceremony to colonel in 1993, his wife Judy (left) and Maj.Gen. Michael Spiglemire, commanding general of the 24th Infantry Division (right) pin the rank insignia on his epaulets.

helped plan and execute evaluations of the major exercises in the Pacific, involving more than 100,000 military personnel and numerous ships and aircraft.

Winding down an outstanding career, it was back to the R.O.T.C. ranks, supervising and supporting 28,000 cadets at 283 colleges and universities for the next four years, while returning an overrun of \$5 million dollars to the U.S. Treasury.

As an active field officer during his career, Whitaker was always supportive of general good health for those under his command. Prior to his retirement, he served as deputy commander of the Craven Army Health Clinic at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

August 31, 2011, was a proud but melancholy day for Whitaker. He retired from Army with more than 30 years of distinguished service to his credit and 19 awards and decorations attached to his dress uniform.

In 2012, Whitaker became team leader and special investigator for the former U.S. Investigations Services. For seven years, he was the direct supervisor for 25 full-time and eight contract investigators conducting federal background investigations. He supervised investigations for the military, the FBI, the Secret Service, and the Customs and Border Patrol.

Whitaker now lives a busy retired life in the Savannah area, contributing to a variety of organizations and causes. Since 2009, he has been a board member of the Tybrisa Beach Resort Condominium Association on Tybee Island, fighting for a fair insurance settlement related to damage caused by the 2016 Hurricane Mathew. He is currently the president and CEO of the association. He is an active Mason, Shriner, and member of the American Legion.

Whitaker credits his wife, Jilly, for being an outstanding military spouse and a great and supportive partner. The couple has a son and a daughter and three grandsons.



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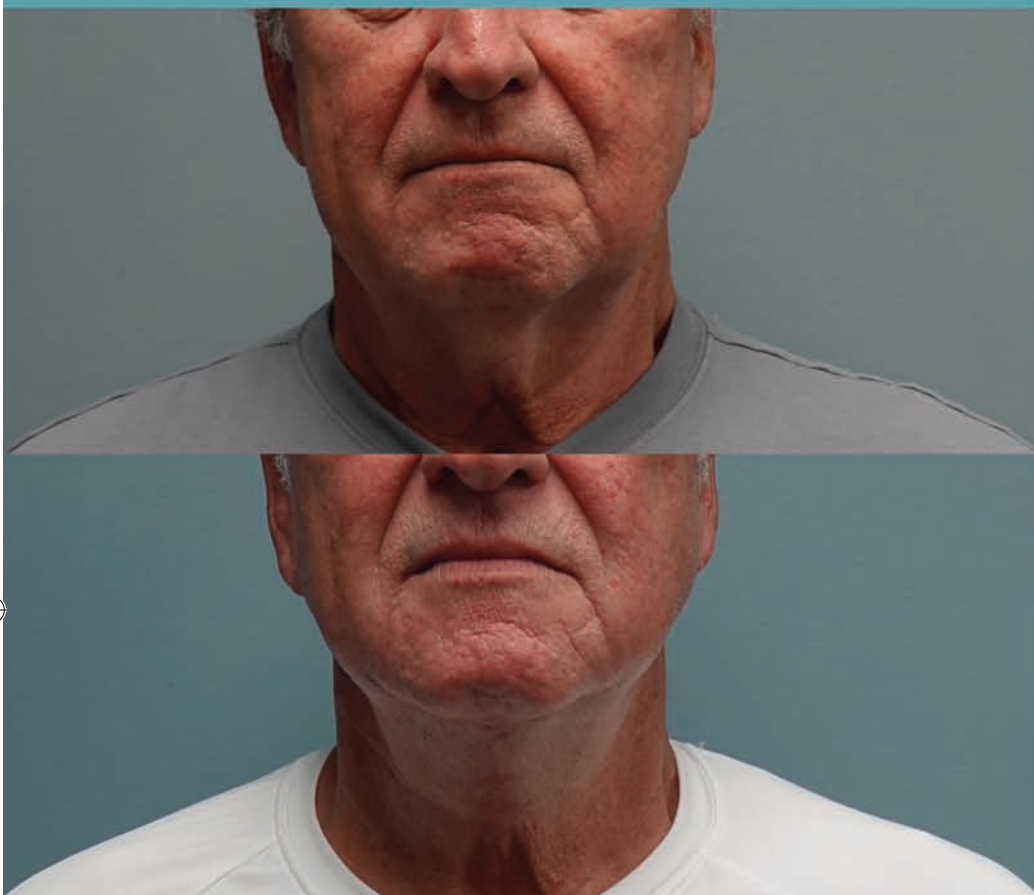
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Deadline is the Friday prior to publication.

HEAR GREAT SPEAKERS

WHAT: Kiwanis Club of Skidaway
WHEN: Thursday mornings at 8 a.m.
WHERE: Palmetto Club
HOW MUCH: Free to attend, including any refreshments, which includes coffee/tea (compliments of Morgan Stanley) and occasional pastries from Auspicious Bakery.
CONTACT: Michael Klavon, 912.306.0474 for gate pass
WHAT ELSE: Membership is open to Savannah/Chatham area residents. Visit www.kiwanisofskidaway.com for more information.

WHO NEW?

WHAT: New Neighbors
WHEN: Visit www.landingsnewneighbors.com to see our calendar
CONTACT: Visit our website or contact Jody at nnnewmember@gmail.com
WHAT ELSE: The club offers more than 250 different activities from biking, golf, pickleball, walking groups or fishing to Mahjong, Bridge, Needle-arts and Canasta. We have exciting military tours and special events for you to enjoy right here on Skidaway Island.

THE EYES HAVE IT

WHAT: Landings Eyes Are Smiling
WHEN: June 2024
WHERE: The Landings
HOW MUCH: No charge, just a bit of courtesy
CONTACT: webmaster@landings.com
WHAT ELSE: The days are over when a gentleman would tip his hat to others along the street. But the hat wasn't the point; the connection was eye contact. Brief eye contact and a smile sends a friendly greeting to a stranger, and it might open the door to a future friendship. Courtesy doesn't cost anything, and it can be fun.

ABSTRACT THINKING

WHAT: a new exhibit by artist Dell Belew
WHEN: June 2 - 30
WHERE: Jewish Educational Alliance, 5111 Abercorn Street
HOW MUCH: Free and open to the public
CONTACT: Katie Griffith, JEA Arts and Ideas Coordinator, 912.355.8111
WHAT ELSE: A self-proclaimed chameleon artist, Dell Belew's "intuitive" paintings venture into trying new things and changing the focus, concentrating on texture. The exhibit will include some of her representational paintings with texture and a variety of fluid art works and textured abstracts.

BE A DECENT DOCENT

WHAT: Tour Guide Training – Volunteer Docents Needed
WHEN: Beginning June 3
WHERE: Green-Meldrim House, 14 W. Macon St., Savannah Historic District
HOW MUCH: Free of charge!
CONTACT: Jamie Credle, 912.233.3845; jcredle@greenmeldrimhouse.org
WHAT ELSE: Docents lead tours and assist with programs for people from around the world who visit the historic Green-Meldrim House. Trainees will meet on Mondays in June for a two-and-a-half hour session each week. Once trained, volunteer docents are asked to give at least six hours (two shifts) to the museum each month.

GATHERING GROCERIES

WHAT: Packing groceries for Second Harvest
WHEN: 9 – 11 a.m., June 7
WHERE: Second Harvest, 2501 E. President St.
CONTACT: Terry Lewis, terrylewis324@gmail.com.

THE RIGHT STUFF

WHAT: Luncheon meeting of Ladies On The Right (LOTR).
WHEN: Thursday, June 20. Social/sit down lunch 12-12:45 p.m.; program 1-2:15 p.m.)
WHERE: Landings Palmetto Club ballroom
HOW MUCH: LOTR members and military – \$35; Nonmembers – \$40
CONTACT: To register (June 17 deadline) or to join LOTR, visit www.ladiesontheright.org
WHAT ELSE: Guest speaker will be Andre Pretorius. LOTR is a greater-Savannah Conservative leadership organization whose mission is to inform, educate and inspire members to take action roles on issues that impact our country, community and lives. LOTR hosts luncheon meetings on the third Thursday of each month. Members bring a paying guest and be entered into a raffle.

DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

WHAT: Skidaway Democratic Club meeting
WHEN: Thursday, June 20, at 7 p.m.
WHERE: The Landing Association Meeting Room, 600 Landings Way South
CONTACT: For those who don't live in the Landings, e-mail Rosemary Mackey at rwmackey1@gmail.com for a gate pass
WHAT ELSE: Kevin Olasanoye, executive director of the Democratic Party of Georgia, will discuss the Democratic Party's core values, accomplishments, and key issues. If you need a

KEY PERFORMANCE

WHAT: The Arts at Messiah with pianist Anthony Ratinov
WHEN: Friday, June 14, at 7 p.m.
WHERE: Messiah Lutheran Church, 1 W. Ridge Rd.
HOW MUCH: Free, but donations for the concert series are appreciated
CONTACT: MLC at 912.598.1188, Monday through Friday mornings
WHAT ELSE: Anthony Ratinov has won top prizes at many international competitions – including the 1st Prize at the 2023 Ricard Viñes International Piano Competition; 2nd Prize and Audience Favorite at the 2023 València Iturbi International Piano Competition; and 2nd Prize at the 2022 Olga Kern International Piano Competition. He recently took 2nd place at the prestigious 64th Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano, Italy.



RED, WHITE, AND BLEW

WHAT: Savannah Wind Symphony Patriotic concert
WHEN: Sunday, June 30, at 3 p.m.
WHERE: The Fine Arts Auditorium on the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern University
HOW MUCH: Due to past years' popularity, we suggest that you get your tickets early. Prices are \$35, general admission; \$25 military/college students; \$10 ages under 18. Tickets are available at eventbrite.com or at savannahwindsymphony.com, or at the door by check or credit card.
CONTACT: Please visit savannahwindsymphony.com for more information.
WHAT ELSE: Celebrate Independence Day with stimulating music and pageantry! Wear your red, white and blue and bring flags to wave! Master of ceremony Sonny Dixon will be joined by conductors David Elliott, John Madden, and Larry Hyatt, with soloists Rebecca Flaherty and Scott Rogers. Also participating are Brass and Color Guard from the 3rd ID at Fort Stewart. The Chatham County Veteran of the Year will be recognized and honored.

ride from The Marshes or Thrive, please contact Mitzi Toth at mlancetoth38@gmail.com.

POSTAL PEOPLE

WHAT: Landings Stamp Club
WHEN: Friday, June 21, 10 a.m.
WHERE: Messiah Lutheran Church conference room
COST: Free
CONTACT: Carl Luecke, cluecke@comcast.net or 631.766.5002 for meeting details.
WHAT ELSE: Beginner, advanced, or anyone in between is welcome to join our monthly meeting. Learn about buying, selling, or preserving your collections, and discover different types of stamps from all over the world.

HELLO, SAILOR

WHAT: Basic sailing class, sponsored by The Landings Sailing Club
WHEN: Saturday, Aug. 24, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., plus 4 hours on the water
WHERE: TLA Meeting Room, 600 Landings Way South
HOW MUCH: \$100, of which \$25 of which will be refunded if you join TLSC within 30 days
CONTACT: Angela Margolit, amargolit@hotmail.com, 973.296.8011
WHAT ELSE: Open to all Landings residents 21 or older who are either new to sailing or want a refresher course.

HELP AROUND THE HOUSE

WHAT: Habitat for Humanity volunteers wanted
WHEN: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays, possibly Thursdays
WHERE: locations vary
CONTACT: Mark Piven, 912.598.0323
WHAT ELSE: Prior experience is not necessary. Many volunteers learn on the job and only do whatever they feel comfortable with. Tools are provided.

FINANCIAL AID

WHAT: AARP Tax-Aide Program needs volunteers
WHEN: Training in Dec. and Jan.; Tax preparation starts Feb. 1 for 10 weeks; hours and days are flexible
WHERE: Chatham SW and Bull Street Libraries
CONTACT: Volunteer coordinator John Gerardi, 912.661.8705 or johngerardi@hotmail.com
WHAT ELSE: This program provides free tax preparation for low- to moderate-income families, as well as the elderly and people with disabilities. AARP Tax-Aide saves underserved individuals/

families millions in preparation fees and helps taxpayers claim millions in refunds, which can be used to reduce poverty. Tax preparers will be trained to become IRS-certified. Volunteers are also needed to help with intake/front desk.

TAXATION REPRESENTATION

WHAT: Opportunities for volunteer income tax assistance with Neighborhood Improvement Association
WHEN: starting in January, flexible hours from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
WHERE: Several sites in Savannah, Pembroke, Rincon, Richmond Hill and Hinesville
CONTACT: Tiffany Carter, tcarter@niacdc.org or 912.447.5577
WHAT ELSE: This program helps underserved communities by offering free tax preparation. No experience necessary. Volunteers include greeters/screeners and tax preparers

BODY AND SOUL

WHAT: Mat Pilates and Sit-Fit exercise classes at Skidaway Island Methodist Church (SIMC)
WHEN: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Mat Pilates, 9:15-10:10 a.m.; Sit Fit: 10:15-11:10 a.m.
WHERE: Bailey Hall at SIMC, 54 Diamond Causeway
HOW MUCH: \$5 per class for 8 or more classes per month. \$6.25 per class for 7 or fewer classes per month.
CONTACT: For more info or to register, call Elena Bennett, ACSM-certified fitness instructor at 404.510.6042
WHAT ELSE: Mat Pilates participants must bring an exercise mat and be able to get up/down from the floor. Sit-Fit participants should wear athletic shoes. Everyone should bring water.

HORSE SENSE

WHAT: Pegasus Riding Academy volunteers needed
WHERE: Old Roberds Dairy, 2500 Tennessee Ave., Savannah
CONTACT: For information and directions, visit www.prasav.org or call 912.547.6482
WHAT ELSE: Pegasus Riding Academy is a therapeutic riding program providing safe, professional and ethical equine-assisted activities for individuals with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. Volunteers are needed to assist these special children. Horse experience not necessary. bottle.

MAGPIE LADIES

WHAT: Landlovers Ladies Discussion Group
WHEN: First Thursday every month, year round, 1-3 p.m.
WHERE: Members homes
HOW MUCH: Free
CONTACT: Bernadette Maffei, bmaffei@comcast.net
WHAT ELSE: New members are always welcome, but participants must be members of Landlovers.

DUEL PURPOSE

WHAT: Skidaway Hamiltons meetings
WHEN: Every third Tuesday of the month, 3:30 p.m.
WHERE: Messiah Lutheran Church, Skidaway Island
HOW MUCH: Free for members of the Skidaway Hamiltons and Skidaway Abigails
CONTACT: HamiltonsMembers@gmail.com
WHAT ELSE: To learn more about Skidaway Hamiltons, a non-partisan civic-minded men's organization, visit skidawayhamiltons.org. See the calendar for past and future speakers.

REEL MEN

WHAT: Landlovers Men's Action Movies and Dinner
WHEN: We usually see an action movie once a month.
HOW MUCH: Movie admission
CONTACT: Dave Robinson, dave.robinson16@gmail.com
WHAT ELSE: Men's Action Movies is a friendly gathering of men who want to see movies your wife probably wouldn't want to see. Must be a Landlovers member. Membership is open to all residents of Skidaway Island.

SPEAK EASY

WHAT: Savannah Speech and Hearing Center's "Speak Easy"
WHEN: Every Friday morning, 10-11:30 a.m.
WHERE: Savannah Speech and Hearing Center - 5414 Skidaway Rd.
HOW MUCH: Free and open to the public
CONTACT: Jenna Harcher, 912.355.4601 or jharcher@speechandhearingsav.org
WHAT ELSE: A support group for survivors of stroke or traumatic brain injury and their family or caregivers. Participants work on improving and maintaining skills associated with speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Attendance via video conference is also available upon request.



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While the Savannah Philharmonic is renowned for its inspiring performances by the orchestra and chorus, the organization's impact reaches far beyond the concert hall. At the core of its mission is a deep commitment to providing accessible, enriching music education opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds across the region.

"Each and every day, we strive to inspire a lifelong appreciation for music and foster the talents of aspiring musicians throughout our community," says Amy Williams, Executive Director of the Savannah Philharmonic. "Our education programs open doors that empower young people's creativity, confidence and overall growth."

Leading this effort is the flourishing **SavPhil Strings** initiative. Thanks to the supporting Ben Tucker Instrument Library, students can access quality instruments at no cost. This season, the innovative violin program expanded to four new partner sites - Windsor Forest Elementary, Horizons Savannah, Bethesda Academy, and Charles Ellis Montessori Academy - reaching over 70 students with enriching group and private instruction.

For high schoolers, the **SavPhil All-Star Ensemble** provides a unique opportunity. This annual two-day

musicians across Savannah's high schools. They rehearse together, receive mentorship from SavPhil musicians, and then perform a final concert side-by-side with the professional orchestra members. It is truly inspirational chance to collaborate and grow their skills among their peers.

The SavPhil is also focused on setting students up for success through its **Small Group Instruction** program, which emphasizes fundamental skills of their instrument, helps them practice difficult sections of their band music, and guides participants through the audition process for the District Honor Band.

As they become better players, they become better people," explains Williams. Overcoming the intimidation of auditioning builds confidence that extends far beyond music.

From eliminating financial barriers to providing mentorship from world-class musicians, the Savannah Philharmonic's education programs are life-changing opportunities. They represent the organization's steadfast belief that the joys and benefits of music should be available to everyone in the community.

"Music has the power to unite people, spark creativity, and unlock human potential," says Williams. "Our education initiatives ensure these transformative experiences can inspire the next generation of music lovers and artists throughout Savannah."

To learn more, please visit: SavannahPhilharmonic.org



Complete Island Hopping listings are available online at www.theskinnie.com

ACROSS

- 1. Sidewinder sound
- 5. Smart-mouthed
- 10. Lends a hand
- 14. Social starter
- 15. "The Republic" writer
- 16. Flat-bottomed boat
- 17. Kind of mark
- 18. Bold poker bet
- 19. Stick up for
- 20. Funeral pile
- 21. Figure skater Johnny
- 22. Cuban dance
- 23. Periphery
- 25. ____-than-life
- 26. Element no. 5
- 28. Demand
- 30. Jennifer Garner series
- 31. Trip planner's aid
- 32. Dandy dresser
- 35. Secure with straps
- 37. Pizzeria herb
- 39. Lawn starter
- 40. Colorful parrot
- 42. Done to death
- 43. The Louvre, e.g.
- 44. Gypsy's deck
- 45. Secure
- 48. Temporary teacher
- 50. Full of chutzpah
- 51. Novelist ____ Mae Brown
- 52. Bit of rain
- 55. Cheat
- 56. Biblical length
- 57. Like some beds
- 58. Slender instrument
- 59. Assign
- 60. States further
- 61. Take care of
- 62. "Bopper" lead-in
- 63. For fear that

DOWN

- 1. Door securer
- 2. Pitch-black
- 3. Cooked in a wok
- 4. Detour route, often
- 5. Breed, as salmon
- 6. Loyalty
- 7. Most noticeable
- 8. Awaken
- 9. "Silent Night" adjective
- 10. Separate into groups
- 11. Cake topper
- 12. Dakota maker
- 13. Take an oath
- 22. Boombox insert, once
- 24. To such an extent
- 25. ____, ____, Pants on fire
- 26. Off one's trolley
- 27. Spicy stew
- 29. Replay feature
- 32. Win-win transaction
- 33. Cognizant of
- 34. Longfellow, eg.
- 36. Diluted art medium
- 38. Type of seizure
- 41. Within earshot
- 43. Who was that ____ man?
- 45. Brothers' keeper?
- 46. "Survivor" team
- 47. Prey grabber
- 49. Like some remarks
- 51. "One ring to ____ them all"
- 53. Racetrack figures
- 54. Dennis, to Mr. Wilson
- 56. Alley prowler

Puzzle answers, page 31

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DIXIE MOTORS, INC. • Serving Savannah since 1980. From minor to major repairs on all makes and models. We offer 30-minute oil change service. Towing available. Fleet service available. A/C experts. Nationwide warranty. Conveniently located at 2013 E. Victory Drive (across the parking lot from Home Depot). 912.355.3568

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DIAMOND CARPET AND TEXTILE SERVICES • Founded in 2001, Diamond provides Award Winning* Service in Carpeting, Tile & Grout, Upholstery and Oriental Cleaning. Featuring Experienced, Polite, Professional, Uniformed personnel our goal is to accomplish your complete satisfaction. Our reviews are on Google and Facebook or ask your neighbor for a personal referral! For Better Results, CALL Diamond today! 912.349.7115 SMS accepted 912.658.2899 www.diamondcarpetandtextileservices.com

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CLEAN N GO • Currently accepting new clients all over the Savannah area. Residential or commercial cleaning as well as lawn maintenance. Contact us for all your cleaning needs. No job too big or small. New client discount with recurring contract as well as military discount. INSURED Sheila 912.657.7765 or Rhonda 912.663.2754 or email information@cleannngo.pro

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ONSITE NETWORK SERVICES, LLC • On-site Network / Aaron Wechsler providing prompt and professional onsite computer and IT services for Landings residents for over 15 years. Special-

izing in Windows and Apple computers, laptops, iPad and smart devices, new computer sales and upgrades, computer cleaning and tune ups. Transfer programs and files from old to new computers. Wireless network and printer installation. Install streaming TV services and help customers "cut the cord." Provide training and tutoring. Smart Home device installation, lightning/power surge repairs and data recovery. Recycling or donation of old equipment. Free phone consultations. Call 912.598.2990 or 912.507.2693, 7 days a week.

SAVANNAH COMPUTER SERVICES, INC. • Professionally serving coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina for over 25 years. Specializing in both business and residential PCs, Macs, and most IT equipment with a full spectrum of services including but not limited to installation, networking, cabling, diagnostic and repair, upgrades, data recovery, virus removal and prevention, moving/relocation, and consulting. Specialty business offerings include VOIP phones, high speed internet circuits with failover, and hosted cloud backup services. Enjoy fast and convenient on-site service, FREE pickup and delivery, or remote service by appointment only. Quotes are always free and no travel charge within our local area of coverage. Call Mike and Cyndy Tabakian, 912.756.7860 or visit our website at savannahcomputer.com.

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CUSTOM EPOXY FLOORS

FLOORS & MORE Custom Garage Floors • Refinish your floors in durable and easy-to-clean epoxy today. Our flooring is poured directly over your existing surface and comes in various colors and finishes. Landings resident. Get a free estimate today. Call: 912.777.9431 | 843.540.3402 | info@floorsandmorelowcountry.com or visit: http://www.floorsandmorelowcountry.com/ Offices | Boutiques | Salons | Garages | Laundry Rooms.

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JOHN HODGES CONSTRUCTION INC. • We specialize in window and door replacement and repair. We're a Marvin certified contractor. We also specialize in exterior siding, decks, service fence and trim. Interior remodeling: Kitchen, bathrooms, and trim. No job too small. Serving the Landings since 1982. Call 912.313.2767.

MURRAY'S HOME IMPROVEMENTS • We offer all types of home repairs with professional services at reasonable prices. Custom remodeling, new construction, rotted wood replacement, along with interior and exterior woodwork. We're available for changing out light switches, installing ceiling fans...and general handyman jobs! We've been serving Savannah for over 30 years. Call Stacy

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KMB TECHNOLOGY • As a Savannah native, Kerry McBride has over 40 years of experience as a commercial and residential electrician. He specializes in electrical repairs, renovations, and service engineering. All work is done to code and done with expert craftsmanship and integrity. Please call or email for a quote or any questions. 912.508.5540.



Murray at 912.346.0046



CONCIERGE HOME WATCH HOME WATCH SERVICE • Skidaway Concierge Home Watch is owned and operated by Skidaway Island residents who understand the importance of providing exceptional service to neighbors. Our Concierge State of the Art Home Watch program is tailored to provide you with property protection and Peace of Mind. 912.598.6801 or www.skidawayconciergehomewatch.com

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SKIDAWAY IRRIGATION REPAIR • As Skidaway Island residents we understand your needs! We specialize in irrigation systems and sprinkler repairs. We also offer many other services. Low-voltage lighting repair and installation, Seasonal flower planting programs to suit your needs, and long leaf pine straw/mulch installation. Give us a call at 912.210.9773 and 912.656.9088

LANDSCAPING & LAWN CARE

GRASSMASTER LAWN CARE • We offer complete landscape management with year-round service. Our services also include fertilization, insect, weed, and fungus control, along with lawn and shrub programs. We are your total lawn care service. We also offer landscaping, i.e. lawn renovation and sodding. Licensed and Insured. Free estimates. Please call Mike Schuman at 912.354.8856.

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SPECIALTY MOVING AND DELIVERY LLC • Residential and Commercial Relocation Specialists. Local & Long Distance. Offering Household Moving & Rearranging, Business Relocation & Inter-office Moving, Pickup & Delivery Service,

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MARK ANTHONY'S SMALL MOVING & DELIVERY • Household and office small local moves. Pickup and delivery, loading and unloading, antiques, furniture, and fine art. References available. Call 912.398.7474

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PEACEFUL PETS • Planning a trip out of town? Or do you work long hours and need someone to take your pet out for a restroom break? Peaceful Pets is a Pet Sitting service that can do this. I offer affordable rates and overnight visits. Call 912.707.1707 for pricing, www.peacefulpetssavannah.com.

SKIDAWAY CAT ALLIANCE TEAM provides for the humane treatment, health, welfare and population control (spay/neuter) of free-roaming cats on and around Skidaway Island. If you are interested in learning more or need help with a feral cat, please contact us at skidawaycats@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/skidawaycatallianceteam>.

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SKIDAWAY ISLAND PRO WASH • Owned by Landings residents and members, we offer the most premium roof and house soft washing, concrete pressure washing and window washing available. We use only the highest quality cleaning processes and commercial equipment available, running the highest quality service available in our industry. Free estimates. Google and Facebook 5-star rated. 100% satisfaction guaranteed. Call or text Matt Shannon 912.600.7377; email matt@siprowash.com

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SUPER CLEAN POWER WASH • Doing high quality work for more than 20 years here on Skidaway Island. The most trusted name in house washing. No pressure roof cleaning. Soft wash house washing. Decks, patios, driveways, and outdoor furniture too. Super Clean Power Wash, Jon Kotowski, 912.631.3121

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• Removal and Hauling
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THE SKINNY VOL. 22 ISSUE 11 - 31



LIFESAVING CARE IS A BEAUTIFUL THING.



Minnie Wingster - Savannah, GA

One morning Minnie woke up with a pain in her chest. Not only was she having an active heart attack, an electrocardiogram (EKG) found severe blockages in multiple vessels. She was in a state of advanced heart failure and cardiogenic shock, causing organ failure.

Dr. Abisogun, a cardiologist practicing at The Heart Hospital at St. Joseph's Hospital, used the minimally-invasive Impella CP® to artificially pump her blood while he inserted stents and performed multiple artery-clearing procedures. Thanks to the availability of lifesaving technology and the expertise of Dr. Abisogun and the entire Heart Hospital team, Minnie is now back to planting flowers and enjoying life.

"I knew I would receive the absolute best care from the St. Joseph's/Candler heart team. I'm grateful to be here for my children, my grandchildren and myself." – Minnie Wingster



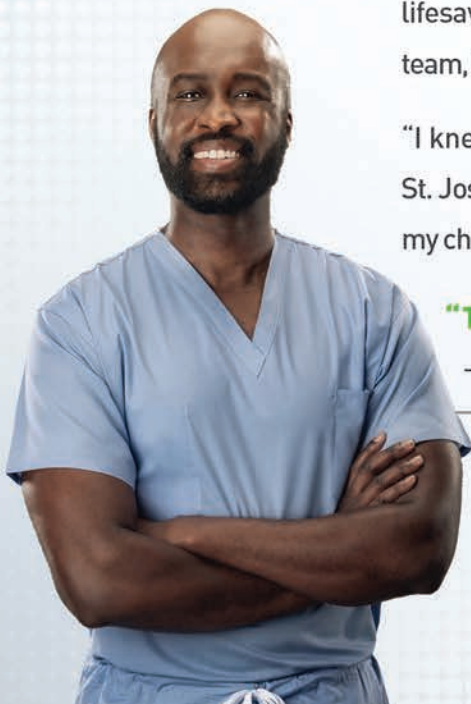
healthy artery



clogged artery

"THAT'S WHY I CHOOSE ST. JOSEPH'S/CANDLER"

– Akinniran Abisogun, M.D. – Cardiologist



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