



The Georgetown County Chronicle



A monthly e-newsletter produced by Georgetown County, S.C., for its residents and visitors.

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Calendar

Jan. 30 – Coffee with a Cop, 8-9 a.m., at the Sheriff's Office, 430 N. Fraser St.

Jan. 31 – French Film Festival begins at the Waccamaw Library, 6 p.m. See page 2.

Feb. 1 – Sheriff's Office Polar Plunge fundraiser, Litchfield Inn. Registration starts at 10 a.m. See page 7.

Feb. 3 – County Council workshop to see presentations on the Port form Clemson design students, 9:30 a.m. at the Georgetown Library Auditorium.

Feb. 3 – Composting 101 workshop at the Waccamaw Library, 10 a.m. See page 8.

Feb. 11 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., at the historic county courthouse.

Feb. 14 – 10-year anniversary celebration at the Waccamaw Library. See page 6.

Feb. 17 – County offices and facilities are closed for Presidents Day.

Feb. 20 – Planning Commission meeting, 5:30 p.m., at the historic county courthouse, 129 Screven St.

Feb. 25 – County Council meeting, 5:30 p.m., at the historic county courthouse.

Volume 13, Issue 5

January 2025

New and re-elected Council Members take oath



The Rev. Ernie Cooper, left, and Ron J. Charlton take their oaths of office. Cooper was joined by his wife, Robin Shackleford-Cooper, while Charlton was joined by his father, former Council Member Ron Charlton.

An Oath of Office Ceremony took place this month for two new and two re-elected County Council members, along with the recently re-elected County Coroner. All will serve four-year terms.

New Council Members taking the oath for the first time were Ron J. Charlton of District 4 and the Rev. Ernie Cooper of District 3. Re-elected Council Members Bob Anderson of District 2 and Raymond Newton of

District 5 were also sworn in, along with Coroner Chase Ridgeway.

The first County Council meeting of the year followed the oath ceremony on Jan. 14. Council members elected a new Chairman and Vice Chair, with Clint Elliott of District 1 being selected to fill the Chairman's seat and Stella Mercado of District 6 as Vice Chair.

See "County Council," Page 8

County hosts one-stop veterans benefit claims clinic

The Georgetown County Veterans Services Office will team up with state and national Veterans Affairs partners to host a one-stop claims clinic at the Howard Center on Jan. 29. The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is part of a statewide effort to make it easier for veterans to apply for and receive the benefits to which they are entitled. The Howard Center is located at 1610 Hawkins St. in Georgetown.

This is the second such event the county has hosted. The first took place last summer and attracted

"We have to go out there and reach the veteran were they are."

— **Sheila Jackson**
Regional Director, S.C. Veterans Affairs

more than 100 local veterans eager to save themselves a trip to the regional office in Columbia. Sheila Jackson, director of the Regional Office, said then that more events would follow. Georgetown County Veterans Services Officer David Murphy said he's glad to see the

promise being kept and looks forward to hosting another great event.

The one-stop clinics are part of an effort to bridge the communication gap between the VA and the veterans the agency serves. It starts with community clinics, like the ones in Georgetown, and builds from there as the department regains trust and develops better relationships with veterans. The ultimate goal is to make sure veterans are aware of and can access the benefits they have rightfully earned, Jackson said.

See "Veterans," Page 9

Join the Fit GOAT Challenge

With the holiday season behind us and a fresh new year ahead, lots of people are aiming to make healthier choices, be more active and get in shape. If you're one of them, Georgetown County Parks and Recreation has a great, free opportunity for you.



The department's Georgetown Outdoor Adventure Trails (G.O.A.T.) program is hosting the Fit GOAT and Iron GOAT Challenge again this year. It encourages participants to get outside, get moving meet goals either individually or in groups to claim the title of either Fit GOAT or Iron GOAT, along with a host of prizes. Best of all, anyone can do it! The challenge allows individuals to work at their own pace and on their own schedule.

To rack up miles, participants can walk, hike, run, bike or paddle. The challenge officially kicked off on Jan. 10, but it's not too late to join. Participants will have until Nov. 10 to log their miles. By logging 100 miles, participants can earn the Fit GOAT title at the Bronze level. Silver is achieved at 225 miles and Gold at 250 miles.

For those who want a bigger challenge, they can aim for Iron GOAT status. Iron GOAT Bronze status requires a minimum of 500 miles, 1,000 miles for silver or 1,500 for Gold.

Last year, more than over 80% of participants completed the challenge.

For more information or to sign up, send an email to goat-herd@gtcounty.org. Look for Fit GOAT Team Challenges coming in March and September.

French film festival returns Jan. 31

Bonnes nouvelles! Beginning Friday, Jan. 31 at 6:00 p.m., the Waccamaw Library will resume its popular screenings of foreign films with the return of the French Film Festival. As in past years, the six screenings will take place on the final weekend of January and the first weekend of February in the library's auditorium.

On Fridays, screenings will begin at 6 p.m., while on Saturdays and Sundays, screenings will start at 2:30 p.m. The French Film Festival is sponsored by the Friends of the Waccamaw Library in partnership with the Institut Français. All screenings are free and open to the public, and will be shown with English subtitles.

This year's lineup of movies showcases an excellent mix that offers something for everyone—comedy, adventure, thriller, romance, drama—and all these extraordinary foreign films are well worth seeing on the Library's large screen. For the Friends groups "First Thursday" series presentation on Feb. 6 at 10:00 a.m., Philip Whalen, Ph. D., will provide context for the French

films on the schedule by delivering a lively presentation on French food and wine festivals, and how these have helped to create a modern cultural identity for France — especially its wine-rich Burgundy region. Whalen is Professor of History at Coastal Carolina University and has an expertise in modern and contemporary European history.

The full schedule for the 2025 French Film Festival is as follows:

- Jan. 26: "Number One Fan" (2014)
- Feb. 1: "The Three Musketeers: D'Artagnan" (2023)
- Feb. 2: "Someone Somewhere" (2019)
- Feb. 6: First Thursday Speaker Series: Dr. Philip Whalen, "Making and Marketing Modern Burgundy: French Food and Wine Festivals"
- Feb. 7: "Farwell, Mr. Haffmann" (2021)
- Feb. 8: "Between Two Worlds" (2021)
- Feb. 9: "Beautiful Minds" (2021)

Find more information, including film descriptions at gtcounty.org/newsroom.

2025 Youth Baseball & Softball



Interested in playing Youth Baseball or Softball?
Scan the QR code to register today!

Registration: 1/1/25 - 1/31/25
 For more information call 843-325-6473



<http://secure.rec1.com/SC/georgetown-county-scf/catalog>

Get the Chronicle

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and property owners kept abreast of what's going on inside their local government. That's why we created the Georgetown County Chronicle.

It's a vehicle for information about county services and events, important messages from county officials and behind-the-scenes glimpses at how government works.

You can find the Chronicle on our website at www.gtcounty.org or through our social media accounts. If you'd rather have it delivered to your inbox, sign up at gtcounty.org by clicking the "News & Alerts" icon on the home page.

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, please contact Jackie Broach at (843) 545-3164 or jbroach@gtcounty.org. We welcome your feedback.

www.gtcounty.org

Series celebrates Lowcountry African-American heritage

The Georgetown County Library is excited to host new series of programs beginning next month that will explore and celebrate the profound enrichment of American life through African American cultural experiences. Called "Shared Traditions," the series will have a particular emphasis on South Carolina and Lowcountry contributions. The series will run through May 21.

Shared Traditions will feature an array of presenters and performers sharing Gullah heritage, Black Southern musical traditions and stories about significant figures and episodes from African-American history. Programs will take place in the Georgetown Library's Moody Auditorium. Presentations and performances are scheduled for Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m., beginning Feb. 12. The lone exception is a performance by Bright Star Touring Theatre, which will take place Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.

All programs are free and open to the public. This series is made possible by a \$30,000 Library Services and Technology Act grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the S.C. State Library.

The series schedule is as follows:

- Feb. 12: Author, performing artist and cultural interpreter **Ron Daise** will engage participants in a scripted exchange about his new historical novel, "Raptors in the Ricelands." The story is set in a 21st century fictional community in Georgetown. Through readings of book excerpts, songs, poetry and information about his creative process, Daise will inform about Gullah-Geechee history, culture and legacy.
- Feb. 19: **The Plantation Singers** of Charleston will deliver a live concert of Lowcountry spirituals. Formed in 1996, they are a professional a cappella singing group renowned locally, nationally and internationally for their performing of the music of the Lowcountry.
- Feb. 26: **Bright Star Touring Theatre** will offer a theatrical performance that is equally educational and entertaining. "Freedom Songs: The Music of Black History" follows the compelling story of the role that music played in the history of Black Americans, from the work songs of the fields of people who were enslaved, to ragtime, jazz, R&B, and the spirituals of the Civil Rights movement. Meet incredible Americans like Scott



A collage of some of the featured presenters for the Shared Traditions Series. Clockwise from top left: Charlton Singleton of the Charlton Singleton Trio, Glenis Redmond, the Plantation Singers, Ron and Natalie Daise, and J. Drew Lanham.

Joplin, Billie Holiday, Little Richard and more in a tale that is sure to intrigue audiences of all ages (note this is the one show that deviates from the 4 p.m. timeframe).

- March 12: **The Charlton Singleton Trio** will play a spirited jazz concert. An Awendaw native, Singleton began his musical studies at age 3 on the piano and would then study organ, violin, cello and trumpet. As the leader of his own ensembles, he has performed across the world and is a founding member of Ranky Tanky, a Grammy Award-winning quintet that interprets the sounds of Gullah. Singleton has performed with some of the most talented entertainers in the world, including Lisa Fischer, Bobby McFerrin, Ruby Dee, Darius Rucker and Cyrus Chestnut, and was the recipient of the 2021 South Carolina Governor's Award, the highest honor for the arts in the state.
- March 19: **Natalie Daise** will put on her inspired and inspiring one-person show, "Becoming Harriet Tubman." The performance tells the incredible story of Tubman's life, from her time as an enslaved child, to her role as a leader in the abolitionist movement. Daise plays five characters, including Harriet herself, her first mistress and a field hand who injured Tubman.
- April 16: **Glenis Redmond**, the First Poet Laureate of Greenville, will celebrate the

life and work of David Drake, known as Dave the Potter. Born into enslavement in South Carolina, Drake produced hundreds of works of pottery, often inscribing these with his original poems. An award-winning poet who has written works in Drake's honor, Redmond will present the artistic legacy of one of the most well-known Black potters, and one of the most innovative and underappreciated enslaved poets, of the nineteenth century.

- April 23: **J. Drew Lanham**, Ph.D., will talk about African-Americans' role in natural resources conservation. Raised in Edgefield, Lanham is an author, poet and wildlife biologist who was honored in 2022 with a MacArthur Fellowship (i.e., the "genius grant") for his work "combining conservation science with personal, historical and cultural narratives of nature." Alumni Distinguished Professor at Clemson University, he researches songbird ecology. Among his books is the award-winning memoir, "The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature."

- April 30: **Kelvin A. Waites Jr.** will share formative experiences that he recorded in his recent memoir, "Favored: From Last to First." Waites retired as the first African-American Police Chief at the Georgetown Police Department and currently serves as the Community Engagement Director for the City of Myrtle Beach.

"Shared Traditions" concludes with three intriguing programs in May led by significant scholars and authors with expertise in African diasporic anthropology, Civil Rights history and African-American genealogy.

- May 7: **Gillian Richards-Greaves**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology at Coastal Carolina University, will discuss her research into shared traditions between Africa and South Carolina's Gullah people.
- May 14: **Millicent E. Brown**, Ph. D., will talk about her personal role at the center of the struggle to end racial segregation in South Carolina's public school system, drawn from her memoir, "Another Sojourner Looking for Truth."
- May 21: Closing out the series. **Kameelah L. Martin**, Ph. D., Professor of African American Studies at the College of Charleston, will discuss the process of tracing African-American genealogies and recording family histories.

Retiree achieves dream with launch of new nonprofit

When Janet Fricke retired from Georgetown County Public Services in early 2023, she knew exactly what she wanted to do with her newfound free time.

She had previously participated in the acclaimed Stoop Storytelling program in Baltimore and had found a new passion there. She wanted to create something similar in her new hometown and share that passion with others.

"I used to talk about it. I'd say, 'I'm going to start this,'" recalled Fricke, who was the executive administrative assistant for Public Services Director Ray Funnys for five years.

Nearly two years to the day after her retirement, she achieved her dream with the first show of Georgetown Tidal Tales, a nonprofit, taking place before a full house at Winyah Auditorium Jan. 25. The event showcased eight local storytellers from diverse backgrounds.

"We had a wonderful mix of voices," said Fricke. "There was a high school student, a filmmaker, a longtime resident of Andrews, and more. It's a representation of the unique and varied community we have here in Georgetown."

The storytellers took the stage for a few minutes each to share personal tales based on the theme of "For the First Time." None were professional story tellers.

"They're just regular people," Fricke said. "When you see regular people doing this who are not celebrities, who sometimes stumble or say 'ummm,' you feel empowered. It maybe removes some of that terrible fear of public speaking that happens."

The storytellers kept the audience engaged from start to finish, with stories ranging from a "coming to America" tale to one about being (accidentally) intoxicated for the first time.

Often after attending a performance, audience members will decide they have a story to tell too, Fricke said. Luckily, there will be plenty of opportunities. Georgetown Tidal Tales will have quarterly shows and, as with this first one, members of the public can apply to be a storyteller by pitching their topic through the organization's website. Upcoming themes are "Do-overs," "First on the Scene" and "Taking Chances."

"We don't try to change their voice or anything," Fricke said of the storytellers. "We just help them workshop it."

The shows will all follow the same format,

modeled off of the Stoop Storytelling program. The show begins at 7:30 p.m. and will feature music – The Zack Patton Trio performed at the January show. The band will play for the first 30 minutes or so, and then the storytelling begins, emceed by Fricke and Kayla Funnys.

All proceeds from each show will benefit a local nonprofit. The beneficiary for first show was Habitat for Humanity Georgetown County. It seemed appropriate, said Fricke, as the theme is "for the first time" and Habitat makes local residents homeowners for the first time.

Fricke said she was delighted with how the first show went and the audience engagement. And she hopes people will be talking about the stories they heard for some time to come. "Storytelling is such a powerful way to bring people together," she said. "It allows us to see the humanity in each other and understand perspectives we might not have considered."

Despite the challenges of starting a nonprofit, Fricke has embraced the journey with the help of a dedicated nine-member board, including family members and local supporters. "The learning curve has been steep, but I've been incredibly fortunate to have so many people rally around this idea," she said.

Tickets for Tidal Tales shows are just \$10, keeping the event accessible to all. Fricke hopes this affordability will encourage a wide range of residents to attend and experience the magic of live storytelling.

As Fricke reflects on her journey from retirement to launching a nonprofit, she's grateful for the support she has received and excited for what lies ahead.

"This is about more than just stories," she said. "It's about fostering connection, building understanding, and giving back."

Learn more at georgetowntidalstories.com.



Janet Fricke, left, with Tidal Tales co-emcee Kayla Funnys.

FREE COMPUTER CLASSES

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- BASIC INTERNET SKILLS
- CREATING AND MANAGING AN EMAIL



Every Wednesdays from 12pm-4pm

Carvers Bay Branch Library
13048 Choppee Road
Hemingway, SC 29554

Telephone: 843-545-3515

County Council recognizes outstanding employees, volunteers

Georgetown County Council recognized four outstanding individuals, including three employees, at its first meeting of the year on Jan. 14. They were:

T.L. Staub, Trails Coordinator for Georgetown County Parks and Recreation, was selected as Georgetown County's Employee of the Quarter for the last quarter of 2024. Since joining the Parks and Recreation Department as a part-time staff member in the spring of 2023, Staub has done a tremendous amount to grow its trails initiative and has been a key player in helping the new GOAT (Georgetown Outdoor Adventure Trails) program. As with many of the department's staff, his work is labor-intensive and he has to deal with heat, bugs and other pests as most of his work hours are spent out in the woods. He does all this with a smile and tremendous enthusiasm.

Staub's main focus is on cutting and maintaining trails, and creating and growing trails programming through GOAT. This includes leading programs on our waterways and finding all sorts of ways to get people outdoors and enjoying nature. The GOAT program has gotten off to a great start, largely due to his dedication and hard work. A GOAT Facebook group now has more than 1,000 members who share information and photos from their outdoor adventures. GOAT "herd members" range in age from 7-74.

TL is working hard to make Georgetown healthier and get more residents active, while growing an appreciation for our county's natural resources.

Pete Copeland, Battalion Chief at Midway Fire-Rescue was selected as Georgetown County Manager of the Year for 2024. An employee at Midway for nearly 25 years, Copeland is a longtime member of the department's Safety Committee. He has served as its chairman for the last five years and was instrumental in leading the charge for safety in 2024. The normal accident/illness investigations were performed promptly with a major goal of reducing injuries as priority. Copeland always provides feedback and solutions following the investigations.

Additionally, Copeland was responsible for leading the effort to develop and implement a new firefighter ability test to better evaluate whether a firefighter is able to perform essential job functions recommended by the NFPA. This was a long process and ultimately the county received recognition from the SCAC for the effort and its results. Copeland also assisted with development of a new policy pertaining to injured firefighters returning to full duty after being assigned to light duty. He recognized the need of a transition program to better ready these staff members for full duty in an attempt to reduce further injury. He developed and implemented a new committee, the Health and Wellness Committee, to focus more on firefighter fitness and mental wellness.

Copeland volunteered to take on all of this in addition to his regular duties. He brainstorms ideas and recruits the support needed to make them happen without being prompted and without seeking credit or recognition. The ideas he has implemented will benefit the department and its firefighters for many years to come.

Jason Stukes, a Firefighter/EMT with Midway Fire-Rescue, was selected as Georgetown County's 2024 Employee Volunteer of the Year. The Employee Volunteer of the Year award is presented at the end of each year to recognize one county employee who also volunteers their time and service outside the course of their regular job.



Pictured from left are Jason Stukes, Employee Volunteer of the Year; Pete Copeland, Manager of the Year; Father Wil Keith, Volunteer of the Year; and .T.L. Staub, Employee of the Quarter.

Stukes volunteers with a program called the Emergency Volunteer Project (EVP). The purpose of this program is to provide firefighting assistance to the country of Israel wherever needed. Stukes has been deployed to Israel four times in the last 1.5 years and each time he serves for 2 weeks. He serves to help with staffing fire and EMS needs wherever the organization has a need in Israel. He does this voluntarily and uses shift trades or leave time when deployed. He receives no compensation from the project and it only covers the airfare and living expenses while he is there.

Father Wil Keith of Midway Fire-Rescue was selected as the county's Volunteer of the Year for 2024. At the end of each year, Georgetown County recognizes a non-employee who volunteers for one of its departments and who has stood out above the rest in their commitment and service. Keith, known as "Father Wil," has served the department for 12 years as Fire Department Chaplain. He is always available to offer opening prayers for any event the department hosts or is involved in. He makes himself available to department members for any emotional or mental needs and ministers by presence. He is in the Firehouse several times each week just interacting with the staff. He intentionally arrives at difficult incidents to offer support. He is well versed in the needs of those hurting and understands the balance needed to involve fire department administration when necessary.

At a recent tragic drowning, a tourist lost her life. The tourist was a young adult. Without request, Father Wil arrived on the scene and immediately began emotional support to team members. Once he had spoken with the team, he then began focusing on the family members of the drowning victim. He went back to the place where they were staying and ensured their needs were met and that they had contact with their Pastor at home. He spent the remainder of the evening traveling back and forth between the Firehouses, spending more time with our team.

Father Wil never seeks accolades – he just wants to help others. He has a full-time job with his church – family, but still gives and gives to the community through Midway.

Lippert retires after 25 years in courts



Donna Lippert, who worked in the Georgetown County Clerk of Court's Office for 25 years, retired this month. Her colleagues threw her a retirement party Jan. 8 and she was presented with a plaque by Clerk of Court Alma White. We thank Donna for her many years of service to the residents of Georgetown County and wish her well in her retirement.

First Thursday series returns to library

The popular Friends of the Waccamaw Library "First Thursday" speaker series returns for another anticipated run next month. Although subjects of presentations are eclectic, most highlight a facet of local or Lowcountry culture, such as our area's diverse histories; elements of our coastal ecology; or the unique language, customs, literature, and arts inspired by our region.

Presentations take place in the auditorium at the Waccamaw Library and begin at 10 a.m. on the first Thursday of the month. Presentations are free and open to the public. Arrive early to enjoy piano music performed by the talented Tom Santopietro.

The Spring 2025 lineup features an engaging range of speakers and topics, including:

- Feb. 6 — Coastal Carolina University historian Dr. Philip Whalen discusses French food and wine festivals in "Making and Marketing Modern Burgundy: French Food and Wine Festivals;"
- March 6 — Gullah cultural interpreter Glander Pressley talks about key Gullah traditions;
- April 3 — Conservationist and author Chip Smith presents "Keeping Our Coast Wild and Clean," a talk on sustaining the wildness of our area ecology;
- May 1 — Charleston County Public Library historian Nic Butler, Ph.D., discusses "10 Things Everyone Should Know About the South Carolina Lowcountry;" and
- June 5 — Julie Warren, head of the Georgetown County Digital Library will talk about the fascinating hidden histories from the library archives in "Hidden Histories Revealed."

It's Our Library's
10th Anniversary



Join us February 14th as we Celebrate
10 years
of Community and Knowledge

**Library
Open House!**



10am-3pm
OPEN HOUSE

- Join a Children's Program
- Visit our Big Backyard
- Watch Adult & Teen Tech Staff Demonstrations

3pm-4pm
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Enjoy a Valentine performance by the
**Pawleys Island
Flute Choir**



On February 14, 2015, our beloved library opened its doors for the first time. In honor of our ten-year anniversary, the children's department would like to offer a heartfelt program to the community~

**A Special Valentine's Day
Musical Storytime**
including a Ukulele Concert for our
littlest patrons!

Friday, February 14th, 2025
10:30am

@ the Waccamaw Neck
Branch Library

Everyone welcome!
(especially babies and
little ones!)

Sheriff recognizes top law enforcement employees for 2024

In a ceremony this month, Georgetown County Sheriff Carter Weaver recognized his top employees for the year 2024. Sgt. Charles Whitaker was named Deputy of the Year, Corporal Giorgio Gaudioso was recognized as Correctional Officer of the Year, and Allyson Carter was named Telecommunicator of the Year.

Whitaker, a four-year member of the Sheriff's Office, is a shift supervisor in the Patrol Division. His assignments, in addition to Patrol, include: SWAT Team, Blood Hound Tracking Team, Field Training Officer and Law Enforcement Corrections Officer.

Whitaker works alongside his deputies and leads by example. Peers find him cool, calm and collected under pressure and count on him to be in control. He teaches new deputies correct procedure and makes sure everyone goes home safely at the end of shift.

"Sgt. Whitaker displays a level of professionalism, dedication and integrity that sets a high standard for all," his nomination form said. "Recognizing Sgt. Whitaker not only honors his exceptional contributions but also inspires other to follow his example of excellence."

Gaudioso has consistently demonstrated leadership with a positive attitude, collaborative spirit and willingness to mentor colleagues. From covering shifts on short notice to stepping into situations that are above and beyond his normal workload, he has shown behavior that supports the mission of the Georgetown County Detention Center.

Carter started her career in 2022 and is always willing to assist.



Whitaker



Gaudioso



Carter



Branch



Pelham

She is an asset to her department and the county, stepping up to cover open shifts, train new dispatchers and assist dispatchers when they get busy. She has learned her job expertly and is willing to pass on her knowledge.

Weaver also presented Sheriff's Awards to Jonathan Branch and Heather Pelham. Branch, director of the Sheriff's Reentry Program, was recognized for his work in leading a successful program that allows former inmates to rejoin society as productive law-abiding citizens. Four inmates gained their release this year and found jobs with the skills they acquired in the program. Branch has guided the development of new woodworking and welding training and helped establish a program to provide college credits for inmates through Costal Carolina University.

Pelham, grants supervisor among her many duties, has enhanced the image of the department with her video, photography and social media skills. She serves on numerous committees and provides a joyous, positive outlook to her fellow employees.

The Magic Treehouse Adventure Club

@ the Waccamaw Neck Branch Library

Tuesdays in January
4:00-5:00 PM

for ages 5-11

Get ready for an exciting adventure! Step into the world of Jack and Annie as we explore fascinating places and moments in history through interactive activities.

Travel through time and discover the wonders of geography and storytelling in this engaging series.

2025
GEORGETOWN COUNTY

POLAR PLUNGE

AT LITCHFIELD INN

2.1.25

Registration 10 am | Costume contest 11 am
Plunge at 11:30 am

Help us support **Special Olympics South Carolina**

<https://give.classy.org/2025GeorgetownPlunge>

For more information contact:
MSgt. James Ketcham at Georgetown County Sheriff's Office
jketcham@gtcounty.org or 843-546-5102

County Council

Continued from Front Page

Meet the new Council Members

• **The Rev. Ernie L. Cooper Sr.** replaces Councilman Everett Carolina as the representative for District 3, which includes the Sampit and Santee areas, as well as a portion of Andrews.

Cooper grew up in Georgetown, graduating from Andrews High School and receiving an Associate's Degree in business from Horry Technical College. He received a Bachelor's in theory from United Bible College and his Master of Divinity from Amridge University.

Cooper said he received his calling and began his ministry in 1987 in Jersey City, N.J. During his time in there, he served as a Sunday School teacher, Young People's President, and President of the Ministry Team. He was also the youngest member of the Jersey City Ministry Alliance.

He moved back home to Andrews in 1991. He was licensed with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc. and was ordained in 2004. He served on the Carolina State Council Evangelistic Outreach as Vice President from 2005-2010. He also served six years as co-pastor of Greater St. Luke Holiness before becoming the church's pastor. He was elevated to District Elder in 2017 and installed as pastor of Coopers Faith Chapel the following year.

An Army Veteran, Cooper presently serves as a Volunteer Chaplain with Tideland Hospital System. He served on the Executive Board of Episcopal District Four Council and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa. He and Robin A. Shackelford-Cooper have been married for 38 years and have four children and four grandchildren.

• **Ron J. Charlton** replaces longtime Council Member Lillie Jean Johnson, who retired after more than 20 years of service.

A Georgetown native, Charlton and his family reside in Maryville. Though now retired, in his professional life he spent many years as an owner of Southern Coastal Cable, LLC. Through the company, he was proud to provide cable TV, Internet and telephone services to

the City of Georgetown and Georgetown County for two decades. In all, Charlton worked in telecommunications for 30 years.

A graduate of Georgetown High School, he served as a Reserve Deputy for the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office from 1995-2000 and was a Reserve Officer for the City of Georgetown Police Department from 2000-2004.

He is a proud father to three children: Taylor, Ron Jr. and Sara-Caroline. The family attends Maryville Pentecostal Holiness Church, where Mr. Charlton served as president of the Men's Fellowship.

Charlton's father, also named Ron, was a longtime County Council Member until two years ago. The elder Charlton held the Bible as his son was sworn in and the new Council Member Charlton wore his fathers old Council name badge as he participated in his first Council meeting.

Read full Council member bios at gtcounty.org/council.



Clint Elliott, right, is the new Chairman of County Council. Stella Mercado is the new Vice Chair.

Did you know you can watch Georgetown County Council meetings online?

Watch at [YouTube.com/GtCountySC](https://www.youtube.com/GtCountySC).

First Friday

with Georgetown County



New episodes on the first Friday of every month. Join us as we discuss topics important to residents of our county. Listen on YouTube or anywhere you normally stream and download podcasts.

RESCHEDULED
Compost 101
Waccamaw Library
February 3 @ 10AM

Limit 1 per Household

Free tumbler bin with attendance

Call to register 843-545-3452

Why Compost? How do I start?

Public Services employees recognized

Georgetown County Public Services recognized three of its most outstanding employees during a recent luncheon to honor staff. Sharon Moultrie was named Public Services Employee of the Year, Karan Cokley received the Professional Achievement Award, and Rodney Butler received the Customer Service Award.

The Public Services Employee of the Year award was created to recognize a team-oriented individual who embodies professionalism, customer focus and work quality. Moultrie, Operations Supervisor in the Public Works Division, has been with the county for more than 30 years and is consistently a standout employee. Moultrie supervises more than a dozen employees who are responsible for maintaining county-owned roads and rights-of-way all across Georgetown County.

Cokley, a motor grader operator, came up the ranks with several promotions over the years. He is now classified as an "HEO III," the highest level a heavy equipment operator can achieve in this agency. Cokley spends his days grading dirt and slag roads throughout the county. "He puts a lot of effort into grading his roads and they are always graded with quality," said his supervisor, Jacob Nesmith. "He is always willing to help out wherever needed, is a team player and is willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done." Beyond that, Cokley always shows up with a smile and good attitude.

The Customer Service Award is given annually to a Public Services Employee who goes above and beyond in the name of service and professionalism in dealing with county residents. Rodney Butler, an MS4/Watershed Specialist with Georgetown County Stormwater, was selected as this year's winner. Butler has been described by colleagues as a consummate professional and has become a "go-to person in his department for dealing with the public," Nesmith said. "His friendly attitude and demeanor have kept more than one resident from making a bad choice during a stormwater crisis." Butler is instrumental in the Stormwater Division's obligations to education and public outreach. "He is truly committed to improving the lives of everyone in Georgetown County," Nesmith said.



Moultrie



Cokley



Butler



Veterans

Continued from Front Page

A 20-year Army veteran herself, Jackson said the first thing she noticed when she came to S.C. is there were many veterans the agency wasn't reaching. She wanted to fix that.

"We started on this massive outreach campaign," Jackson said. "We have to go out there and reach the veteran where they are in their environment, at their leisure, and at their time. Our whole vision and mission is to bring service to them for benefits that they so richly earned."

The clinics bring the full resources of the regional office directly to veterans in their communities. These claims clinics function as mini regional offices, offering on-the-spot assistance and resolutions to veterans' queries.

No pre-registration is required to take advantage of the claims clinic. Walk-ins are welcome!

For more information on the claims clinic and other opportunities from Georgetown County Veterans Services, call 843-545-3330 or email dmurphy@gtcounty.org.

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Clerk of Court, 545-3004

County Council, 545-3058

Coroner, 546-3056

Elections, 545-3339

Finance, 545-3002

Parks & Rec., 545-3320

Planning/Zoning, 545-3116

Probate Judge, 545-3077

Register of Deeds, 545-3088

Sheriff, 546-5102

Treasurer, 545-3102

P.O. Box 421270
129 Screven Street

Phone: (843) 545-3063
Fax: (843) 545-3292



SNOW DAY

It didn't quite compare to the blizzard of 1973 or the Christmas snow storm of 1989. But it was close, said some residents. A storm system that traveled through our area Jan. 21 blanketed the county in about five inches of snow, closing schools, government offices and many businesses for several days. A full week later, some shady areas still had patches of snow. Georgetown County's Public Services Department cleared more than 1,000 lane miles of roadway in the days following the storm.

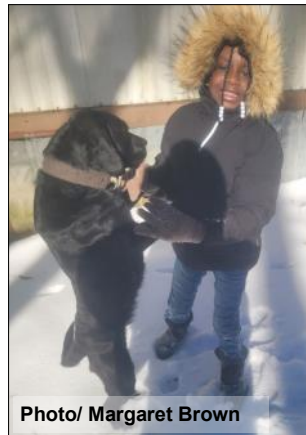
Here are some of our favorite photos from the event, taken by residents and submitted on our Facebook page.



Photo/ Cynthia Owens Hall



Photo/ Brandi Mathis



Photo/ Margaret Brown



Photo/ Kaley Nevin



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Photo/ Taylor Breanna



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