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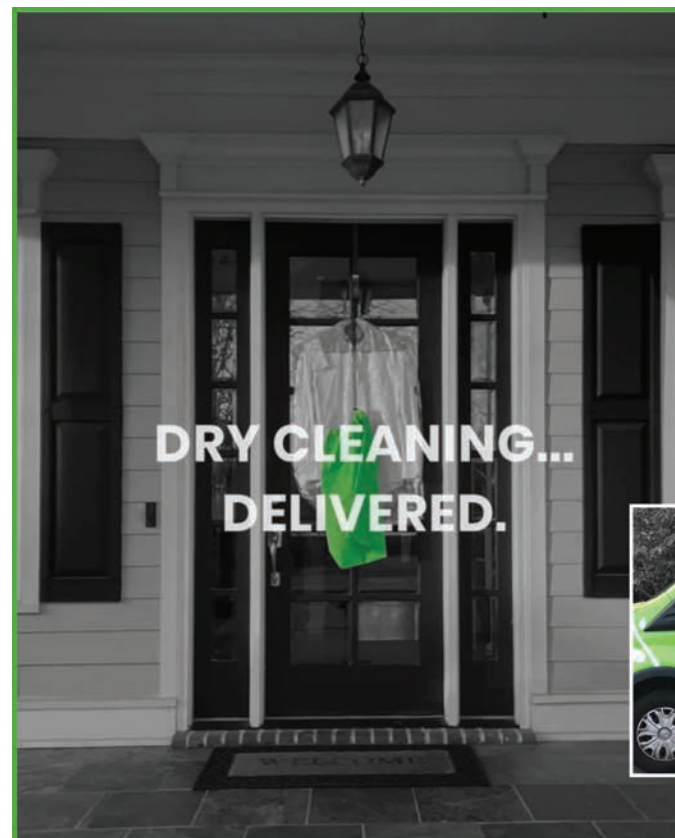
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# Upfront

I don't have a green thumb, but I love watching plants grow. Some nights, I don't feel like making the rounds to water things at the front door, on the street-side balcony, on the third-floor terrace, and in the courtyard out back. Fortunately, we have frequent midsummer storms, as useful as they are brash.

This year, planting was intentional and thorough. A project – in early May - that spanned much of a week. Alone, I would never have done it. Not the way it has been done. It's hard work – the physical part that includes hauling bag after bag of soil, digging and trying to hold back the walls of the void you've created while you awkwardly position roots, and – just when you think you can enjoy the product of your labor – the cleanup. And the decision part, which began at least 10 shopping trips.

I don't have the eye to imagine the end-product, the way the disparate elements of a scape come together to make a whole that far exceeds the sum of its parts. I don't know the differences between Podocarpus varieties (Podocarpus?). Before this summer, I had never heard of neem oil.

By myself, I planted flowers. One type to fill an entire space. They were pretty, unfussy, and limited. I believed these clusters of simplicity suited my minimalistic style (which, if you know me, isn't really my style, at all). In truth, it was just easier than composing something more elaborate, something beyond the limits of my own mind's eye.

Jenna is the change. She has a knack for mixing things up in ways that aren't obvious. She is tenacious when inspired. And she understands that foundational evergreens are as important as audacious blooms.

I look around me. I am happy and satisfied with what I see. When something unpleasant arises – a conflict or confrontation or failure to reach a goal I set for myself – I visit the portulacas. They are thriving, yet they were tiny and fragile just a few months ago. They are lovely. They make me smile.

*Scott A. Lawrence*



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on the cover:

Peter Schreck snapped a pair of bluebirds at their craftsman cottage in Moon River Landing.

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## AND MEN AND WOMEN IN BLUE

By Roger Smith

Like most cities, Savannah had to grow into itself. The 1733 plan of wards and public spaces – barely six neighborhoods when Oglethorpe left Georgia – took until 1856 to reach its maximum of 24 squares. Savannah's sparse founding settlement eventually gave way to a great array of 19th century buildings as the 1700s' skeleton gained 1800s' muscle. The same is true with the Savannah Police Headquarters, Barracks, and Jail, a handsome three-story brick structure completed in 1870, fronting Oglethorpe Avenue. Of course, Savannah – already more than a century old at the time – had secured police protection long before then.

Prior to the American Revolution, the city itself was a policeman of sorts, ostensibly safeguarding the valuable city of Charleston

against Spanish threats from Florida. South Carolinians scoffed at the notion of "protection" from the early ranks of poor, sickly Georgians. During the Revolution, the British occupied Savannah for a longer period than the Americans. So, the Georgian colony wasn't the mightiest deterrent.

Yet Savannahians took their internal security seriously. By the 1790s, a host of patrols, night-watch forces, and "watchmen" with exclusively nighttime hours must have provided some peace of mind. The opening decades of the 19th century witnessed growing numbers of safety officers and an increasingly formal approach to law enforcement. By 1812, Savannah's policemen wore uniforms with brass buttons. By 1850, a force of 86 officers reported to a police captain, and a city ordi-

nance in 1854 finally created an official police department. These proto-police officers were housed at the City Exchange (forerunner of Savannah City Hall), at the Oglethorpe barracks (until Confederate soldiers took over that lodging), and even within the aging Savannah jail.

The Oglethorpe barracks ouster at the advent of the Civil War in 1861 prompted the city to designate a plot of land measuring 107 by 400 feet as the site of new barracks for the Savannah police, in addition to a new, separate headquarters, and a new jail. The shorter dimension would face Oglethorpe Avenue while the longer wing would run south along Habersham Street (roughly analogous to the reach of Colonial Cemetery just to the west). The result was an Italianate structure that

still stands on that site today and still serves as headquarters of the Savannah Police Department (though neither officers nor prisoners live there anymore).

The Civil War delayed construction, of course, as Savannah joined the Confederate cause. But once the war was over, the Savannah Police Department came into its own – a flowering exemplified, certainly, by that 1870 building, but also matched in professional staff and formalized procedures, all shepherded by Robert M. Anderson. A West Point graduate and Army officer stationed in the Washington Territory, Anderson resigned his U.S. military commission to join the Confederate Army, where he rose to the rank of general. When the war was over (Anderson was in Savannah by November of 1865), the city tapped him as its first chief of police, a post he held until his death in 1888.

Anderson likely watched with pride as the new police edifice rose on Oglethorpe Avenue. Local architect John Hogg drew the plans and oversaw the \$28,000 project, which took some four years to finish. But even before the building's completion, two Savannah police officers became the first to lose their lives in the line of duty.

In 1868, Reconstruction politics in the city made for a contentious climate. This boiled to a head in a political skirmish between white Savannah Democrats and Republican "scalawags," apparently too enthusiastic in their support of the presidency of U.S. Grant. Officers Samuel Bryson and Robert Read died in the fray, their names later becoming the first inscribed on the police memorial that stands in the grassy median on Oglethorpe Avenue, the heading, "Lest We Forget."



Alexander Dole's bust of Gen. Robert Anderson, Savannah's first police chief, in Bonaventure Cemetery

ecture was Italianate, the most prevalent building style in Savannah in the post-War decades. Strong and boxlike, the three-story structure sported deep eaves at the roofline supported by decorative brackets, imposing eyebrow-like lintels arching over generous windows, and an ample "sally port," a wide, central opening on the Oglethorpe Avenue façade allowing horses and wagons into an inner yard. The 1870 Mayor's report echoed the journalist's pride in the new headquarters: "This building is an ornament to the city, affording wholesome and commodious quarter to its occupants, and is well adapted to the purposes for which it was constructed."

It served those purposes well until the Great Depression, by which time the police department was chafing under crowded conditions in its august old home. A Works Progress Administration (WPA) project came to the rescue, more than doubling the space of the building. The obsolete "sally port" was bricked in, affording more interior space for police functions.

The biggest change was the incorporation of the city jail into the structure as it reached

At the 1870 opening – the war still a recent memory – a Savannah journalist wrote, "The design of the building is eminently Southern, being planned by Southern architects and built by Southern mechanics."

Southern chauvinism oozes, reflecting the sentiments of a city saved from the ashy fate of Atlanta, grumpily adjusting to new emancipation-era social and economic realities, and eager to get back to business. The new police building may have been "Southern," yet its archi-

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In 1965, a memorial was placed in the median along Oglethorpe Avenue, in honor of police officers fallen in the line of duty.

south along Habersham Street. A new cell block – state of the art in 1937 – contained 20 cells housing up to 80 prisoners, with the uppermost floor reserved for female detainees. This new, enclosed city jail facility should not be confused with the Chatham County jail, south of the police headquarters on Habersham Street. A flamboyant Moorish-revival structure whose ghostly shell – no floors, no roof – reveals shelf-like jail cells on its back wall, is now a SCAD property known as Habersham Hall.

The city jail is gone now, too, from its former location at Oglethorpe and Habersham. It closed in 1977, the city moving its prisoners to the county jail on Montgomery Street. Indeed, there's no one – not even police – at the historic headquarters now. The 150-year-old building stands empty, undergoing yet another renovation, this one costing upwards of \$7 million. A great portion of that budget is devoted to updating computer wiring and climate control, but significant dollars are also aimed at the historic structure itself, mainly the repointing of mortar on the brick façade. From a distance, the building looks as sound as ever; yet a closer look reveals intrusive vines snaking their way across the brick sur-

faces, a few of those generous windows covered in temporary plywood, and the vintage patrol cars on exhibit on the Oglethorpe Avenue sidewalk temporarily removed.

This construction project, due for completion in April of 2024, exemplifies Savannah's commitment to preserving its historic places, chief among them its pride-inspiring 1870 police headquarters, the longest continuously operational police headquarters in the nation.

Roger Smith is the director of The Learning Center at Senior Citizens, Inc. TLC is Savannah and coastal Georgia's premiere lifelong learning program, featuring courses and lectures in the humanities at both its Bull Street headquarters and Skidaway Island. For information, visit [www.seniorcitizensinc.org/the-learning-center](http://www.seniorcitizensinc.org/the-learning-center).



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## To the Power of '24'

Under the guidance of its music staff, St. Peter's Creative Arts Academy looks forward to launching its new auditioned children's choir this fall. "This is for kids who are truly songbirds and cannot get enough music in their life," explains Kathleen Turner, St. Peter's organist and choirmaster.

The choir is called "24," which Turner says is a significant number in many different ways. "I don't know why the number 24 came into my head, but it did, and I thought I better look up what this number means to make sure it wasn't something bad. It was just the opposite; chill bumps."

She says the number represents hard work and determination. "24 has a doctrine of who we are that the children will memorize and be reminded that dedication and 'stick-to-it-iveness' will get you places," Turner explains. "They're achieving; they're performing; and they're accepting of and accepted by their peers. I like to call that 'unconditional love.' 24 will encompass all of that."

Turner says there will be a soft launch in September to get 24 up and running. "Our



formal launch will be in March of 2024, and it will be a 'Paint the Town Clover' gala," to coincide with St. Patrick's Day.

Parents are invited to contact Turner at 912.598.7242 to schedule their child's audition, which she assures is very child-friendly. "They can get to know Miss Kathleen, and we sing, 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,'" Turner explains. Despite its simplicity, Turner says the song features key elements that can demonstrate a child's musical ability.

"We also play some rhythm games back

and forth," Turner says. "It's so they get to know my nature, that this is a playful thing, a good thing for your child."

Turner served as artistic director of the Austin Children's Choir when she lived in Texas. "When I started my tenure, the choir was almost defunct," she says. "I revitalized with a training choir for younger children. All the fun music-making got into their DNA. As they got older, they stuck with it."

Many of the kids stayed with the choir through high school, and some pursued music professionally. One alumna became a middle school choral teacher and is now on the board of the Austin Children's Choir.

In 2022, shortly after Turner arrived at St. Peter's, she and Rev. Kelly Steele raised the possibility of starting a similar program to Austin. The discussion continued until a few months ago, when Steele suggested sharing the idea with the church's vestry. "I got a day's notice," Turner says with a laugh, "which is probably a good thing, because I wasn't able to overthink it."

Turner conveyed to the vestry what she

By Philip Schweier

[www.theskinnie.com](http://www.theskinnie.com)

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Julia Tucker (left) and Kathleen Turner (right) are the guiding maestros at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, collaborating on its musical programs.

had accomplished in Austin, adding two concerns: "One, I couldn't do this by myself; I needed an associate to help me. And the second thing: If it's not the right time, that's completely fine with me."

Clearly it was the right time, as the idea earned the vestry's approval. The church has been overwhelmingly supportive, according to Turner, with 24 falling under the Creative Arts Academy, as a cultural enhancement for children and youth in our community.

Julia Tucker, who has filled in for Turner on a couple occasions since her arrival last year, was recruited as St. Peter's associate director of music. She supports Turner in all aspects of the church's music program, with special attention to the children's choir.

"With these types of programs, it's been my experience that having two people really helps because you can catch each other," Tucker says. "You have a second set of eyes on stuff to make sure you've considered everything and nothing is falling through the cracks. And you have a partner, someone to talk things over with and brainstorm. I'm already thinking about stuff for the kids to sing. It's fun."

Tucker's interest in music began when singing in her church choir, where she learned the collaborative nature of performing. "It really forms such character in kids because you have to learn when to follow, when to lead, and it teaches and molds all these skills that you can carry well into your career and the workplace," she says.

Tucker played softball in her youth. She believes there's a similar

dynamic between team sports and ensemble performance. "There are moments when you have to step up and it's your time to lead, and moments when you have to let the person next to you cover that," she says. "It's important character development for kids."

Character development is a primary objective for 24. Tucker says, "The sense of doing something that is important, that is excellent, helps build character. When you give kids the sense that they're doing something important, that requires focus – something to achieve excellence – it really helps them buckle down."

According to choir director Turner, the treble ensemble will consist of a training choir of first and second graders and a treble choir of third through fifth grade. "Once a child has been in the choir for three years, they can enter the choral scholar program, which is part of our choral program at St. Peter's," she explains. "Those who choose to sing as a choral scholar receive a small stipend when they rehearse and sing with St. Peter's semi-professional chancel choir. Middle and high school members can receive compensation as a musician."

Tuition for 24 averages \$100 a month, with a sibling discount if more than one child joins. The season lasts from September through May. In addition, the choir will plan an annual silent auction gala to raise additional funds for performance needs. The choir will be available for hire. "In Austin, we would be hired for events such as weddings and Christmas parties," says Turner. "We performed at naturalization ceremonies, with a rock band for the SXSW Festival, and on stage with the late Robin Williams."

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~  
Kathleen Turner, St. Peter’s organist and choirmaster

**COLLABORATION**

St. Peter’s continues its musical collaboration throughout the community, partnering with organizations like the Savannah Philharmonic. The choir has been invited to participate in Christmas on Chippewa Square this December. To embrace the holiday spirit, Turner hopes to brand the choir for the event as the “Dickens Treble Ensemble,” complete with Victorian-era costumes.

Turner plans to incorporate musical theatre elements into the program. “Children’s musical theatre is huge in the Coastal Empire, so you’ve got to embrace what the community loves.”

“Children in 24 will learn more than singing songs and playing instruments,” Turner concludes. “They will experience opportunities to perform in different contexts throughout Savannah, learn what their strengths are, and build self-esteem and confidence, all in a safe environment. ‘Serious fun with music,’ which is my motto for 24, is a powerful asset for children who love music.”

*To schedule an audition for 24 Children’s Choir, or for information regarding St. Peter’s Episcopal Church’s music programs, please contact Kathleen Turner at [ktturner@saintpetersav.org](mailto:ktturner@saintpetersav.org), or Julia Tucker at [jtucker@saintpetersav.org](mailto:jtucker@saintpetersav.org), or call the church at 912.598.7242.*



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## Seeking Immunity

# Simple Ways to Boost Your Immune System

When we're in the sun, we use sun block. When we're in the car, we use a seat belt. But have you ever considered ways to protect your immune system? Most likely, we could all use a boost.

With school back in session and the flu season soon upon us, it's important to have a healthy immune system. "We need to be aware of our immune system and live a healthy lifestyle," says Dr. Leslie Pittman, primary care physician at St. Joseph's/Candler Physician Network.

### WHAT IS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM?

Our immune system is the body's defense and repair system, Pittman explains. It fights against infection and helps repair damage from injuries.

The immune system includes a network of white blood cells and organs, such as the spleen, lymph nodes, and other glands. They work together to identify and fight off infections from different kinds of germs, bacteria, and viruses. They also help remove injured cells and regulate the repair of injuries. The immune system also helps moderate allergic reactions.

"The immune system does a lot in the body," Pittman explains, which is why it's important to take steps to protect it. "You want to do everything you can to make sure you are protecting yourself from being exposed to infections to begin with, but you also want to ensure your immune system is as healthy as you can make it because you don't know how you're going to respond to an illness until you have one."

Germs impact different people differently. "If one person responds okay, they might

pass a contaminant on to a friend or loved one who might not be able to handle it and become extremely ill or even die," Pittman cautions. "Maintaining a healthy immune system is not just about protecting yourself, but other people, too."

Pittman recommends these tips to keep your immune system happy and healthy:

- **Wash your hands.** Washing your hands limits the chances of introducing infection to places like the nose and mouth where it might enter the body. Be sure to use hot water and soap, and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is okay.

- **Properly prepare foods.** Be sure to wash fruits and vegetables before eating. When working with meat or eggs, cook them to the recommended temperature and always be aware of any surfaces your raw meat touches. Be especially careful with raw chicken.

- **Get appropriate vaccines.** Get vaccines recommended for your age group and medical conditions. If you haven't gotten your flu shot, now is the time to do so. Talk to your doctor about other vaccines for conditions such as pneumonia or whooping cough.

- **Eat a balanced, healthy diet.** Your diet should include lots of fresh vegetables and fruits, which are high in vitamins. Looking

for foods high in vitamin C and antioxidants, which help fight off infection. Include whole grains and lean proteins, such as chicken, turkey, or fish, for a well-rounded diet.

- **Limit sugar.** Avoid overdoing unhealthy foods, especially sugar. Too much sugar makes it harder for the immune system to do its job of fighting off infection and repairing the body, Pittman explains. That's one reason people with diabetes have problems with infection and are at higher risk of complications from viruses like the flu.

- **Exercise.** Exercise improves circulation



Leslie Pittman, MD

## Live Smart When Heading Back to School

The start of a new school year is exciting for many. They are returning to their friends and playgrounds, while parents return to some sort of schedule normalcy. As summer fades to fall and kids settle into a new school year, frequent colds, strep throat, and trips to the doctor's office can upset routines.

"Kids absolutely get sick more often during the school year because they are frequently around sick people," says Dr. John Rowlett, St. Joseph's/Candler director of pediatric emergency medicine.

It starts with germs. Germs are the vehicles through which illnesses spread. One of the most effective prevention tactics is to ensure that kids follow proper handwashing techniques.

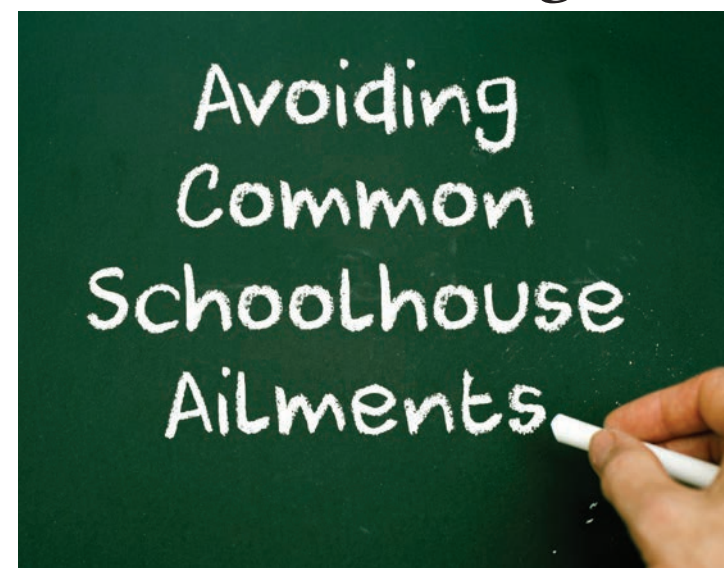
"Younger kids are not good about washing their hands," Rowlett observes. "They put things in their mouths. They touch gross things, and the younger they are, the weaker their immune systems."

Cold and other viruses can be transmitted by coughing, sneezing, or contact with someone who is sick. The mouth and nose are main points of entry for germs into the body. If your hands contact germs and you subsequently touch your nose or mouth, you expose yourself to the possibility of getting sick. Germs can be anywhere, from door-knobs to library books to bus seats. And while it may not be possible to avoid touching these germ spots, especially in a schoolhouse setting, washing your hands frequently can reduce risk of illness. It's also

and blood flow to keep things working properly. The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Exercise also helps reduce stress because it releases endorphins that generally make you happier and more relaxed.

- **Decrease stress.** Speaking of stress, it can have an impact on your immune system. While it's hard to avoid all stress, it's important to have some activities that help you relax. Consider listening to music, doing a favorite hobby, exercising, prayer, or meditation.

- **Get plenty of sleep.** Sleep is important to the immune system because it gives your



- clean, running water.
- Dry your hands with a clean towel or air dry them.
- If you are in a situation where soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer – something to add to the back-to-school shopping list.

### TIPS TO AVOID A BACK-TO-SCHOOL COLD

Rowlett suggests:

- Getting adequate amounts of sleep.
- Eating a healthy, balanced diet.
- Keeping a routine, as well as possible.
- Getting a flu shot.

"Influenza is pretty easy to get if you are exposed to it," Rowlett says. "The best thing to do is to get the vaccine so you are protected from it. You can make it a family project – everybody goes together and gets one."

body a chance to recover and repair itself. If you don't get enough sleep, your body can't catch up. Adults should aim for seven or eight hours of good sleep a night, while teenagers need closer to 10 and toddlers and young children need around 12 hours. Good sleep means taking care of conditions like sleep apnea that might keep you awake, and turning off the TV and putting down the phone.

- **Quit smoking.** Nicotine of any kind, but particularly cigarette smoking, causes a lot of damage to the body. This forces the immune system to expend a lot of energy trying to repair that damage. Consequently, smoking also makes you more prone to infection,

specifically lung and sinus infections.

- **Limit alcohol intake.** Alcohol can strain the immune system. The daily recommended limit for women is one drink or less per day and two drinks or less per day for men.

- **Be aware of your current medications.** There are certain medications that can suppress the immune system. That doesn't mean you should avoid them altogether. Never stop taking a medication without consulting with your doctor. But be aware of medications impacts to your immune system. If so, take steps to limit exposure to infections and viruses.





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# ROBERT ROMANELLI

During the Vietnam War, the Seawolves, a Navy combat helicopter squadron, flew missions in support of the riverine patrol boats of the U.S. “brown-water Navy.” In small-world fashion, five decades later, one of the crewmen from a brown-water Navy boat (Dale Monroe Hardie, profiled in the previous issue of *The Skinnie*) now lives a few miles from a Navy pilot whom he may very well have called for support, Robert Romanelli. Both men reside in the Savannah area.

Robert Romanelli was born in the Bronx, New York, on June 14, 1943. He jokes that growing up with his colorful accent he became known as “Bob from da Bronx” to anyone west of the Hudson River.

His father, Patrick, a first generation Italian-American, was a talented inventor and entrepreneur. When he passed away at age 93, he had more than 100 patents to his credit, spanning the automotive, natural gas, and medical industries. While working at the Sperry Corporation during World War II, Patrick helped perfect the Norden bomb sight, developed anti-jamming devices for the .40-mm anti-aircraft guns on our warships, and conceived critical sensing devices installed on weather balloons. His ingenuity helped save Allied lives.

Patrick was an auto-racing enthusiast who became an industry engineer and fabricator while working with Tony Bonadies, a world-famous “midget” car racer. Consequently, “Bob from da Bronx” was ex-



After a distinguished career as a Navy pilot in Vietnam, Robert Romanelli soared to greater heights in the corporate world.



posed to auto racing as a young boy and became hooked for life on cars, leading to a successful career in the high performance automotive industry.

After graduating from St. Michaels Academy in The Bronx in 1961, Romanelli enrolled at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts. He characterized himself as an average student with a below-average tolerance for the strict environment at Assumption. He transferred to Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey, splitting his spare between time drag racing (winning more than 55 events) and learning the business world from the "bottom up." He worked at RAM, a growing company started by his father that manufactured home appliance controls for companies such as Magic Chef, Caloric, and Hotpoint.

Meanwhile, the U.S. was becoming increasingly involved in Vietnam. Expecting a military obligation, Romanelli joined the Navy's aviation officer candidate program. After graduating from FDU in 1966, he reported to the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida, for training, and received his commission as an ensign the following year.

Fifteen months later, Romanelli joined Helicopter Attack Light 3 (HAL-3), known as the Seawolves. Operating in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, they were a quick-reaction force created to support



and protect river patrol boats, Navy SEALs, and other "friendlies" requiring combat assistance. Missions included close-air support, tactical reconnaissance, medical evacuations, and Special Forces team insertions and extractions.

When Romanelli arrived in Vietnam in June of 1968, he quickly confirmed that it was going to be an action-packed year for him. After a week of briefings and orientation, he took off from Dong Tam Base Camp and made continuous combat missions for 14 straight hours. He eluded incoming fire for many of those 14 hours as an introduction to his new life in Vietnam.

The Seawolves stood 24-hour shifts, awaiting calls. Whenever a "scramble one" code came through, friendly forces were in serious trouble and needed immediate helicopter support. "We were expected to be airborne in just a couple of minutes – or less," explains Romanelli. "And we were!"

The all-volunteer group of pilots and airmen were equipped with updated Army Huey B model gunships. The helicopters were amply armed with pilot- and co-pilot-fired machine guns and rockets, as well as two door gunners firing machine guns loaded with 14,000 rounds. The choppers also carried 14 2.75-inch rockets. Later, some crews added Gatling guns capable of firing 3,000 rounds per minute and installed a door-mounted 50-caliber machine gun with 2,500 rounds

of armor-piercing incendiary tracers.

SEALs, Green Berets, Navy river patrol boat crews, and native villagers relied on the Seawolves to get them out of trouble. Flying in a fire team group of two (sometimes three), the choppers swept into a hot zone with guns blazing and quickly made a lot of new and grateful friends. Often, the Seawolves were the only air cover available for clandestine operations, such as insertion or extraction of covert teams.

Romanelli preferred night missions to daylight. At night, you could see where enemy fire was coming from, like the effect of a flash bulb. "If we involuntarily went down, we had to wait for daylight to get help," he recalls. "Nevertheless, while airborne, we sent many more enemy nighttime shooters to meet their makers than daytime shooters."

When enemy fire was too heavy for regular unarmed medical evacuation choppers to land, Romanelli and his Seawolves buddies went to work. Looking back, Romanelli realizes many soldiers survived because of the Seawolves. HAL-3 is recognized as the most-decorated aviation squadron in the history of the Navy.

In addition to the combat sorties, Romanelli was assigned to construct a 600-foot helicopter runway, a bunker, and a storage building for mechanical supplies. Sourcing construction materials was a challenge, creatively met by Romanelli's team. When he and his crew discovered a Seabees (Naval engineers) building storing wood, steel, masonry, and concrete, the necessary items were quickly "transferred" for emergency use under cover of darkness – just in time for Bob Hope and his entertainers to use the new runway a couple of days later.

Romanelli was 23 at the time. He flew more than 600 combat missions while logging 800-plus hours of flight time. Advancing from co-pilot to pilot to a fire-team leader, he had numerous close calls, but one stands out. On March 26, 1969, enemy mortar rounds struck an ammunition supply dump near the helipad at Dong Tam, burning out of control. Quickly realizing the danger to his two helicopters and the crewmen on-board, Romanelli ordered immediate takeoff. As they rose in close formation, the ammunition dump exploded, crushing the trail aircraft. The lead aircraft piloted by Romanelli flipped and crashed, upside-down when it impacted the hard ground. Injured



The remains of Romanelli's helicopter, following a crash in March, 1969.

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and disoriented, Romanelli crawled from beneath his chopper and raced through fire, hot cinders, and exploding ammunition to the other gunship to rescue the trapped pilots before they burned to death. He then returned to his own helicopter to free his co-pilot, trapped beneath the burning aircraft. Seconds after Romanelli pulled his flying mate away from the wreckage, the helicopter exploded. Romanelli was awarded the Silver Star – our nation's third highest award for conspicuous gallantry – for his heroic actions in the face of danger that day.

Courageous to the end, despite his injuries, Romanelli volunteered to remain in the field rather than take a desk job during his last six weeks in Vietnam. Eventually, he received three Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Bronze Star with V, 34 Air Medals, plus three Single Action Air Medals, and two Purple Hearts. From the Vietnamese government, he received its Medal of Honor and an Air Gallantry Cross.

In June of 1969, Romanelli left Vietnam as a lieutenant junior grade, and headed home to the U.S. thanks to a combination of airborne skill and good fortune. Like many who served in Vietnam, he was shunned and treated with disrespect by people who objected to the war, but he did his best to ignore the negative treatment.

He reported to HC-4, a combat support squadron at Lakehurst, New Jersey, where he spent 18 months as the squadron's public affairs officer. While at Lakehurst, he accompanied several detachments aboard the *USS Independence* aircraft carrier as a rescue pilot and flew several hurricane rescue missions. He was then transferred to the Naval Air Station Pensacola, where he taught advanced instrument flying for two and a half years. He started a small but successful business off-base.

Romanelli's service time was almost up and the military was downsizing. So, despite his love for the Navy, he made the difficult choice to muster out. His wife, Debbie, pregnant at the time, was a factor in that decision.

For the next year, he flew helicopters off the coast of Louisiana while living on an oil rig 140 miles from shore. After that, he became a partner in a fertilizer company in Alabama, selling out to a larger grain company for a healthy profit.



In January 1970, Lt. Romanelli received a Bronze Star and a Silver Star at Naval Air Station Lakehurst.

As his entrepreneurial spirit kicked into high gear, Romanelli became involved in developing test equipment for electronic fuel injectors used in new cars. This led to establishing Ram Fuel Injection, manufacturing high-tech components for the automotive industry. Within six years, the company was sold to the Echlin Corporation, where he became the director of operations for its worldwide fuel group. Echlin later bought Mr. Gasket, a premier performance company, and Romanelli was named its president.

In 1995, Romanelli retired (temporarily), but agreed to visit China to examine Echlin's holdings. He spent three years in Beijing, instead of the original three-weeks he had planned. He later became the director of operations for Asimco – a “small” company consisting of 18,000 employees and 16 large joint-ventures – owned by Dean Witter, Trust Company of the West, and Wall Street legend Jack Perkowski. After five productive years with Asimco, Romanelli returned to the U.S. in 2001 and retired again.

Romanelli and two investors bought Mr. Gasket, grew the company, and sold it Prestolite. Next, he joined Kinderhook Industries Investment Group as an operating partner, where he was involved with buying, selling, and managing more than 26 companies. “Traveled much of the time, but as an owner, you need to be aware of the major decisions,” he says of his time as a private equity operator.

During the period, he served as CEO or chairman of the board for three major automotive performance companies before retiring for good in 2021.

The Romanellis reside on a wooded multi-acre plot near the Landings. To “give back,” as he puts it, he has ordered a large specialty trailer to produce hydroponic crops. The produce will be donated to homeless military veterans and the needy. Such generosity is no surprise to anyone who knows him.

On November 5, 2022, Romanelli's distinguished service and benevolence earned him induction into the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame.



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## LOSS MITIGATION

**WHAT:** Pandemic support group  
**WHEN:** Meeting Wednesdays at 6 p.m.  
**WHERE:** St. Peter's Episcopal Church Library  
**HOW MUCH:** Free  
**CONTACT:** Suzanne at St. Peter's, 598.7242  
**WHAT ELSE:** Many of us have lost friends or family, and pandemic isolation has made dealing with these losses difficult. Dr. Stevens Peirsol will guide the group, offering those who would like to share and find help in processing loss.

## MEETING OF THE MINDS

**WHAT:** Stroke Survivors  
**WHEN:** Third Thursday of every month, 4 to 5 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Messiah Lutheran Church, 1 West Ridge Rd.  
**HOW MUCH:** Free  
**CONTACT:** Shirley Nack, 598.7047  
**WHAT ELSE:** Share your experiences with stroke survivors. At our meetings we listen and learn what other survivors have accomplished in order to return to an active lifestyle.

## 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 [skidaway-hamiltons.org](http://skidaway-hamiltons.org). See the calendar for past and future speakers.

## READ ALL OVER

**WHAT:** Landlovers Singles Co-ed Book Club  
**WHEN:** 4th Thursday each month, 5:30 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Palmetto Clubhouse  
**CONTACT:** Marianne Claysmith, [claysmith2@aol.com](mailto:claysmith2@aol.com)  
**WHAT ELSE:** Landlovers and Landings Club membership is required.



# island hopping

Please email content to [mail@theskinnie.com](mailto:mail@theskinnie.com).  
Deadline is the Friday prior to publication.

## HEAR GREAT SPEAKERS

**WHAT:** Kiwanis Club of Skidaway  
**WHEN:** Thursday mornings at 7:45 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Palmetto Club  
**HOW MUCH:** Free to attend; Coffee/Tea: \$2.50 (Occasionally free pastries)  
**CONTACT:** Michael Klavon, 912.306.0474 for gate pass  
**WHAT ELSE:** Membership is open to Savannah/Chatham area residents. Visit [www.kiwanisofskidaway.com](http://www.kiwanisofskidaway.com) for more information.

## WHO NEW?

**WHAT:** New Neighbors  
**WHEN:** Visit [www.landingsnewneighbors.com](http://www.landingsnewneighbors.com) to see our calendar  
**CONTACT:** Visit our website or contact Jody at [nnewmember@gmail.com](mailto:nnewmember@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.

## GOTTA LOVE IT

**WHAT:** Landlovers membership / open to all Skidaway Islanders  
**HOW MUCH:** Each \$30 membership fee covers one household of one or two adults.  
**CONTACT:** Vicki Knapp at [landloversmembership@gmail.com](mailto:landloversmembership@gmail.com) or visit [www.landingslandlovers.com](http://www.landingslandlovers.com) for more information.  
**WHAT ELSE:** The membership year runs from September 1 through August 31. Landlovers is a philanthropic and social organization dedicated to enriching the Landings community and Skidaway Island at large. Landlovers sponsors year-round social activities and fundraising events to support student scholarships and multiple non-profit service organizations.

## PAIR OF PAINTERS

**WHAT:** Gabriel Drabek and Tommy McMillan's art exhibit  
**WHEN:** The month of August  
**WHERE:** JEA Art Gallery, 5111 Abercorn St.  
**HOW MUCH:** Free and open to the public  
**CONTACT:** Vicky Lunick, 912.355.8111  
**WHAT ELSE:** Although he has worked in pencil, charcoal, watercolor, and acrylics, Savannah native Gabriel Drabek's favorite medium is oil. Oil allows him to pull out unique storytelling features in his portraits, and musically paint his landscapes. Tifton-born Tommy McMillan studied painting in Brunswick, and is continuing his art

studies at Georgia Southern University.

## HOW EGG-CITING!

**WHAT:** Release of turtle hatchlings  
**WHEN:** Aug. 8 and 22, Sept. 5 and 19 – 5 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Sunset Park, 707 Landings Way South  
**HOW MUCH:** Free; donations appreciated  
**CONTACT:** [friendsofskidawayaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofskidawayaudubon@gmail.com)  
**WHAT ELSE:** Attendees will learn how volunteers rescue Diamondback terrapin eggs and now they are incubated. Then, you will help release the hatchlings into the marsh. Registration opens July 16 at [skidawayaudubon.org](http://skidawayaudubon.org). Due to the popularity of this event, participation is limited to island residents with gate passes, 100 attendees per session, and to just one session only.

## SEAS THE OPPORTUNITY

**WHAT:** Evening @ Skidaway  
**WHEN:** Aug. 8 - reception at 6:30 p.m., presentation at 7 p.m.  
**WHERE:** The in-person program will be presented in the McGowan Library on the UGA Skidaway Marine Science Campus, 10 Ocean Science Circle, Skidaway Island. To view the program online, visit the UGA Skidaway Institute YouTube channel.  
**HOW MUCH:** Free and open to the public  
**CONTACT:** Natalie Cohen, 912.598.2312, [cohen@uga.edu](mailto:cohen@uga.edu)  
**WHAT ELSE:** UGA Skidaway Institute of Oceanography scientist Natalie Cohen discusses harmful algal blooms (HABs) in a talk titled "Monitoring for Harmful Algal Blooms on Skidaway Island."

## SCOTT'S PLACE

**WHAT:** Celebration of Life and kiosk dedication  
**WHEN:** Wednesday, Aug. 9, 6:30 p.m.; Rain date is Aug. 10  
**WHERE:** Sparrow Field, Bartram Rd.  
**HOW MUCH:** Free  
**CONTACT:** [friendsofskidawayaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofskidawayaudubon@gmail.com)  
**WHAT ELSE:** A kiosk will be dedicated by David and Beckie Helmreich in memory of their late son, Scott. Everyone is invited to come walk alongside the gardens, have a beverage, and appreciate the nature that Scott enjoyed there.

## POWERFUL VOICES

**WHAT:** Fabulously fun a cappella quartet at the Arts at Messiah  
**WHEN:** Friday, Aug. 11, 7 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Messiah Lutheran Church, 1 West

Ridge Rd.  
**HOW MUCH:** No admission charge – donations are welcomed  
**CONTACT:** Messiah Lutheran Church, 912.598.1188, weekday mornings  
**WHAT ELSE:** The Charlestons, a unique a cappella quartet, have made a name for themselves with trademark flawless intonation, rock-steady camaraderie, and wide variety of vocal styles. The group has performed in a broad range of venues and events, presenting an exciting and seriously fun program – a smattering from Renaissance to Broadway, spirituals to country, and jazz to pop.

## COLOR COORDINATED

**WHAT:** Colores Calidos – a Hospice Savannah summer nights party  
**WHEN:** Thursday, Aug. 17, 6 to 9 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Soho South, 12 W. Liberty St.  
**HOW MUCH:** Tickets are \$45  
**CONTACT:** 912.629.1027 or [hsfoundation@hospicesavannah.org](http://hsfoundation@hospicesavannah.org)  
**WHAT ELSE:** Purchase tickets at [hospicesavannah.org/summernights](http://hospicesavannah.org/summernights). Featuring artwork by SOY X SOY curated by Location Gallery. Supporting Hospice Savannah's Healing Arts of Music and Massage programs.

## LET'S TALK TURTLE

**WHAT:** Terrapin show and tell  
**WHEN:** Aug. 17, 5 p.m.; Aug. 26 and Sep. 2, 10 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Aug. 17 - Landings Community Park; Aug. 26 and Sep. 2 - Skidaway Island State Park  
**HOW MUCH:** Aug. 17 - free; Aug. 26 and Sep. 2 - \$5 parking fee  
**CONTACT:** [friendsofskidawayaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofskidawayaudubon@gmail.com)  
**WHAT ELSE:** Learn about Skidaway Audubon's successful Diamondback terrapin rescue project which has a positive, measurable impact on the recovery of this species. Pre-register online for the Aug. 17 session at [skidawayaudubon.org](http://skidawayaudubon.org) beginning July 16. This event is open to island residents with gate passes. Register for the Aug. 26 and Sep. 2 events, which are open to all, by contacting Skidaway Island State Park.

## NATURALLY INCLINED

**WHAT:** The works of Janet Bailey  
**WHEN:** Sep. 1 - 30; reception Sep. 7, 6 - 8 p.m.  
**WHERE:** JEA Art Gallery, 5111 Abercorn St.  
**HOW MUCH:** Free and open to the public  
**CONTACT:** Vicky Lunick, 912.355.8111  
**WHAT ELSE:** Janet Bailey has painted tides, landscapes, sky, star, moon, and space-related paintings for several decades. In her abstracted paintings, anything related to our natural surroundings – what is both seen and unseen – has long been her interest and influences her work.

## SISTER, SISTER

Complete Island Hopping listings are available online at [www.theskinnie.com](http://www.theskinnie.com)

**WHAT:** Panhellenic Picnic in the Park  
**WHEN:** Monday, Sep. 18, 6 - 8 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Skidaway Island State Park covered pavilion  
**HOW MUCH:** Free  
**CONTACT:** RSVP to [panhellenicsavannah@gmail.com](mailto:panhellenicsavannah@gmail.com) by Sep. 11. Please include name, sorority, and college  
**WHAT ELSE:** This event is open to all sorority women. No need to be an active alum. If you were in a college sorority, you are welcome to come. Please bring your beverage of choice and an appetizer to share. Panhellenic Sororities of Savannah will be supplying the desserts, ice, and all paper and plastic products.

## POSTAL PEOPLE

**WHAT:** Landings Stamp Club  
**WHEN:** Friday, Sep. 22, 10:00 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Messiah Lutheran Church conference room  
**COST:** Free  
**CONTACT:** Carl Luecke, [cluecke@comcast.net](mailto:cluecke@comcast.net) or 912.349.0340 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.

## TAXATION REPRESENTATION

**WHAT:** Opportunities for volunteer income tax assistance with Neighborhood Improvement Association  
**WHEN:** starting in January, flexible hours from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**WHERE:** several sites in Savannah, Pembroke, Rincon, Richmond Hill and Hinesville  
**CONTACT:** Tiffany Carter, [tcarter@niacdc.org](mailto: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/screener and tax preparers

## 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](mailto: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.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

**WHAT:** New social bridge game  
**WHEN:** Thursdays at 1 p.m., starting Sep. 7  
**WHERE:** the Savannah Bridge Club  
**HOW MUCH:** \$6 for members, \$7 for non-members  
**CONTACT:** Veronica – 912.598.7217 or Savannah Bridge Club – 912.228.4838  
**WHAT ELSE:** All skill levels welcome. Come alone or with a partner or bridge group.

## WALK AND TALK

**WHAT:** Landlovers "Let's Walk"  
**WHEN:** One hour every Wednesday and Saturday at 8 a.m.  
**WHERE:** June, Delejal; July, Oakridge  
**CONTACT:** Email Bev Dalrymple at [bevda100@gmail.com](mailto:bevda100@gmail.com) to sign up  
**WHAT ELSE:** Looking for walking buddies? Join our morning walking group. Walking pace is brisk but "talkable." This is a great way to get some exercise, see the island and chat with friends. You must be a Landlovers member to participate.

## BODY AND SOUL

**WHAT:** Mat Pilates and Sit-Fit exercise classes at Skidaway Island United Methodist Church (SIUMC)  
**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 SIUMC, 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 a water bottle.

## WELCOME MAT

**WHAT:** Learn to create sleeping mats for the homeless from discarded plastic bags  
**WHEN:** Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon  
**CONTACT:** For project information, DIY videos or to schedule group workshops call Carol Greenberg at 912.355.1238 or [MStarArts@gmail.com](mailto:MStarArts@gmail.com)  
**WHAT ELSE:** These mat and pillow sets help divert plastic bags from landfills and waterways while providing comfort to the homeless. All ages can learn to cut the bags into ribbons, tie these together to make plastic yarn. No tools are needed for braiding, crochet hooks cost less than \$5 and looms about \$10 to make.



ACROSS

- 1. Make an impression?
- 5. Diamond Head's home
- 9. Dog who played Eddie on "Frasier"
- 14. White as a ghost
- 15. Privy to
- 16. Garment worn by Flo and Alice
- 17. Like some tea
- 18. Talk like Daffy
- 19. Argue against
- 20. Pooch from Wales
- 22. Fix, at the vet's
- 24. Greet the day
- 25. Lady's man
- 27. Thirst quencher
- 29. \_\_\_ Day
- 31. Solidly built
- 33. Cold War competition
- 35. Full of back talk
- 39. \_\_\_ of limitations
- 40. Nutrition label unit
- 42. Church council
- 43. Wearing black, maybe
- 44. Trustworthy
- 47. Relax, slangily
- 48. Kind of wheel
- 51. Spreadsheet filler
- 53. Orchard fruit
- 54. Leaves home?
- 56. "Same here!"
- 59. Fort Knox bar
- 61. Edit menu option
- 63. Like Jack Sprat's diet
- 64. Do a salon job
- 65. Ruckus
- 66. Fender flaw
- 67. Public figure?
- 68. Can't stand
- 69. Conclusion starter

DOWN

- 1. Kind of proportions
- 2. Mexican fare
- 3. Religious leader
- 4. Beat around the bush
- 5. Painter's medium

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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59				60		61			62		63			
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

- 6. Spanish cordial
- 7. Home for the sick
- 8. Post-vacation task
- 9. Damage
- 10. Game with a character named "Cavity Sam"
- 11. Elliptical path
- 12. Lush
- 13. Stage direction
- 21. Unwelcome visitor
- 23. Welcome word at a proposal
- 26. "\_\_\_ does it!"
- 28. Educated
- 29. Physics calculation
- 30. Pretentious, perhaps
- 32. Cooler contents
- 34. Place for supplies
- 36. Armed ship of old
- 37. Lodgepole, for one
- 38. Burglar
- 40. Corn holder
- 41. New Year's word
- 43. Ink cartridge color
- 45. Beyond tipsy
- 46. Arrival en masse
- 48. Nutmeg, e.g.
- 49. Mortise's mate
- 50. Colonel's insignia
- 52. Diacritic mark
- 55. Cut and paste
- 57. Zingy taste
- 58. Not duped by
- 60. Take a stab at
- 62. Kind of deposit

Puzzle answers, page 33

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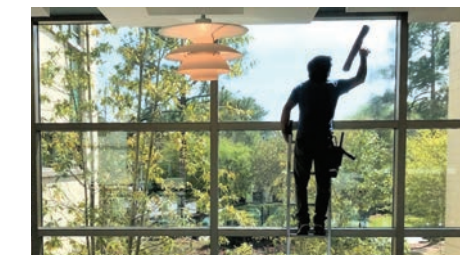
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23	G	E	N	T	I	C	E	W	A	T	E	R
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45	S	T	E	E	R	I	N	G	D	A	T	A
48	P	E	A	R	T	R	E	E	D	I	T	O
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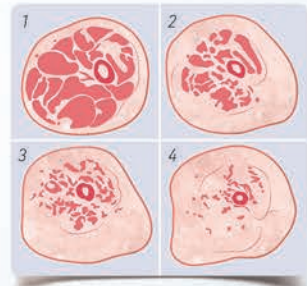
A sudden onset of weakness in her limbs and hands began interfering with two of Elaine's biggest joys: painting and bike riding. Additional symptoms, including slurred speech and severe trouble swallowing, led to electromyography (EMG) and muscle biopsy testing, which revealed necrotizing autoimmune myopathy - a rare autoimmune condition attacking the muscles.

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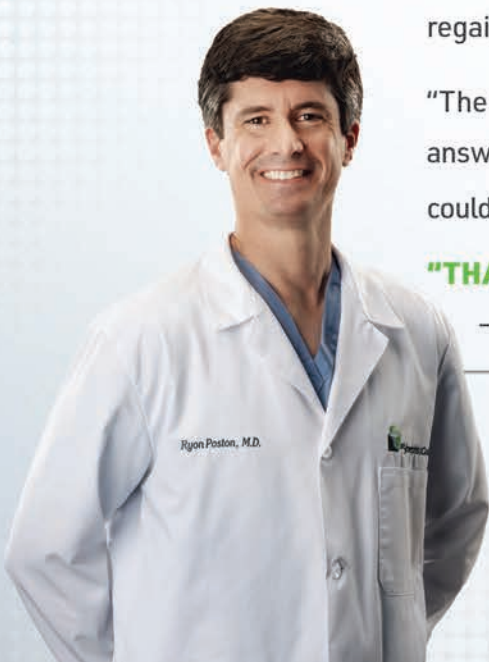
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stages of myopathy



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