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The Brunswick News

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, May 28

• **Coastal Georgia Audubon Society** will hold a bluebird box building workshop, beginning at 9 a.m., at 279 North Street, Dover Bluff, Camden County. The kits are made available for young people who attend the DNR Coast Fest in October. Bring a drill and/or an electric screwdriver if possible. Drinks will be provided. Details: 265-0515.

• **Memorial Weekend Arts and Crafts Show** will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Sunday in Mallery Park, Mallery St., in the Pier Village, St. Simons Island. Please note location change. Details: 262-0628.

• **St. Mark's Episcopal Church's** new thrift store, Good Buy, 1523 Glynn Ave., Brunswick, will hold a clean-up day for the warehouse area from 1-5 p.m. All help would be appreciated. Details: 265-8320.

• **"The Battle that Changed Sgt. Stewart Forever"** event will begin at 2 p.m. at the Battle of Bloody Marsh site, St. Simons Island. It will feature a British soldier retelling his role in the Battle of Bloody Marsh and the effect the battle had upon the soldiers and settlers of Frederica. It will also include a musket firing demonstration. Free. Details: 638-3639.

• **"Greekfest,"** a day of fun, food and fellowship sponsored by the Coastal Georgia Panhellenic Council, will be from noon to 4 p.m. at the Howard Coffin Park Pavilion, Brunswick. The event will feature fish dinners, entertainment and vendors.

Sunday, May 29

• **Jazz in the Park**, featuring the Phil Morrison Trio and Michael Hulett and sponsored by the Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association, will be from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lighthouse Gazebo, St. Simons Island. Bring picnics, beverages and chairs. Cost is \$10 for adults; children 6-12, \$5 and children under six are admitted free. Details: 262-6934.

Monday, May 30

• **American Red Cross blood drive** will be from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. St. Simons Health and Fitness, 2929 Demere Road, St. Simons Island. All presenting donors at any May drive may enter our drawing to win two free round-trip tickets from Delta.

• **Memorial Day Commemoration** will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Fort King George State Historic Site, 302 McIntosh Road SE, Darien. Join the Fort King George Garrison and staff members for a day of musket and canon firing drills, in commemoration of those who have fought for our freedom. Admission is \$3.50-\$6.00, plus tax. Details: 912-437-4770.

• **More Community Calendar, 2B.**

A lasting sisterly bond

Family friendships survive the ups and downs of life

By **LINDSEY ADKISON**
The Brunswick News

It's been said, "having a sister is having a best friend that you can't get rid of."

Even with the ups and downs that siblings endure, it can't be denied: Sisters share an unshakable bond.

Katie Orrel and Ellen Murphy can attest to this.

"I call her 'monk,' she calls me 'ditsy' and says 'bless her heart' quite often," Murphy said. "Close friends and family say we are very opposite. We have very different personalities. I am a risk-taker, Katie is more cautious. She is very methodical, I am whimsical."

The two do have one special thing in common.

"We love each other unconditionally," she said.

Orrel and Murphy weren't the only children in their family. In fact, there were five. But the two were close in age, which made them perfect playmates when they were young.

"Katie and I were sandwiched in between two boys," Murphy said. "We lived in a world of make believe, playing with dolls, paper dolls and glass figurines who were actors in our plays."

Their childhood made the sisters extremely close.

Orrel and Murphy relied on each other for just about everything: Friendship, comfort and understanding. They always have.

"We moved into a room of our own at age 5 and 7. Even though there was no TV or computer, we thoroughly entertained and fiercely defended each other," she said.



Nick Nichols/The Brunswick News

Sisters Katie Orrel, left, and Ellen Murphy have developed a close relationship that has built on both their similarities and differences.

"I remember sometimes forgetting the Lord's Prayer when our Mom or Dad would come in at night, so Katie would say it louder in hopes they wouldn't notice my stumbling. Even though there were twin beds in our bedroom, we always slept in one."

After college, the two sisters lived apart physically but not emotionally. There was always a connection. Even though Orrel moved to different parts of

the country with her husband, Murphy made trips to visit. The sisters were reunited years later when both moved to the Golden Isles.

"We became virtually inseparable. We have worked together for the past 16 years, live next door to one another, travel an hour-and-a-half, round-trip to work each day and even vacation together with our husbands, who happen to be best friends," she said.

Now, the sisters' relationship is even deeper than a best-friend type of friendship.

"We know exactly what to say to one another depending on the circumstances: When to empathize, when to agree, when to voice an opinion and how to comfort," she said.

Like Murphy and Orrel, the Thomas sisters also have an innate ability to understand each other. There are three sisters, all four years apart.

"Cindy is the oldest, Lynn is the middle then me," Marla Thomas said. "I think we have all grown closer in different ways as we have grown older. We have kind of settled into our roles. Cindy is the dreamer and philosopher, Lynn is the bohemian who still doesn't care what anyone thinks and I am the responsible one that tries to take care of everyone."

As adults, the sisters look and even sound alike. They've been exceptionally close since their childhood.

"We have always been close. We are all a lot alike. We all have we can tell by a tone or a look if something is going on with the other one," she said.

Of course, there were times that they didn't get along so well. Like many sisters, they found themselves at odds.

But Thomas says that they are never upset with each other for very long.

"Me and the middle sister, Lynn, used to fight a lot when we were young because we shared a room and chores," she said. "But we have all remained extremely close, and we do not go more than a few days without talking to each other. We have a two day rule: Take two days to get over it and then everything is back to normal."

Regardless of who is upset with whom, the Thomas girls are protective and support each other.

"We can always fight with each other, but if an outsider ever messed with one of us — the other two are very quick to attack. So, in other words, I can mess with my sister but no one else can," Thomas said.

Preparation makes a perfect backyard barbecue

By **LINDSEY ADKISON**
The Brunswick News

It's time to warm-up that grill. And that's just what many a backyard pit masters are looking to do right now.

But creating sensational barbecue takes more than coal and meat. It takes some secret skills. Just ask local grilling expert Harrison Sapp. The co-owner of Southern Soul on St. Simons Island encourages cooks to take preparation seriously. It can make or break a meal.

"Grease grates before you light your fire. A water bottle, fire extinguisher and digital thermometer are always good ideas," he said.

Sapp also suggests doing the shopping for the weekend ahead of time to beat the crowds.

"Get your meat now. Do not wait until the weekend because all the good stuff will be gone. Get your marinades and sauces prepared. Try to share the cooking duties — maybe like a



potluck," he said.

This will help take some of the pressure off the cook. And there's plenty of pressure. Sapp concedes that even the most seasoned chefs suffer a defeat every now and then. He says this is why all grillers should stay positive.

"Bring a smile and bug spray because with barbecue sometimes it doesn't turn out as planned. If you don't believe

in your food, no one else will either," he said.

There are ways, however, to avoid the usual pitfalls of outdoor meal making. According to those in "the know" this usually centers around the temperature of the fire. Some eager chefs try to slap the meat on too early when the fire isn't hot enough. Others go the opposite direction and make the grill a bit too toasty.

Dub Waters, owner of Twin Oaks BBQ in Brunswick, says this is the most common mistake he sees, especially when cooking a Boston butt.

"Some people try to cook it with too much heat and they try to cook it too fast. The Boston butt is a good piece of meat, but it's a tough piece of meat. The best way to cook it is slow over lower heat," Waters said.

Another error he sees concerns flavoring. He feels that many go overboard in this area. Some cooks use too many sauces and artificial flavor that neutralize the natural taste of the meat.

Instead, Waters relies on wood chips to bring a boost of flavor.

"Some people try to alter the meat. We don't add any artificial flavorings. And we don't add any sauce while the meat is cooking. Some people do that, and it burns the sauce. It's just not as good," he said.

"We also use strictly oak

wood. The smoked oak on the grill gives the meat a certain flavor and allows it to cook for a long time at a lower temperature," he said.

Roger Hardman is also a fan of using wood chips. The co-owner of Beachcomber BBQ and Grill on St. Simons Island typically opts for hickory chips.

"Start by soaking some hickory chips in water. Stack charcoal on one side of grill. Bring Boston butt or ribs to room temperature," he said. "When charcoal is ashed over add wood chips to charcoal and put meat on opposite side. Cover grill and only open every hour or so to add charcoal or wood chips."

Like Sapp and Waters, Hardman urges grillers to have patience.

"A Boston butt will take longer than ribs. Pulled pork takes longer than sliced or chopped pork," he said. "Ribs are done when lifted with tongs they droop about 90 degrees."

We can learn lesson of what is today may not be tomorrow

Haughtiness and arrogance has always perplexed me for I've never understood those traits. "Pride goeth before destruction," declares a book known for pulling no punches.

I have always thought that too many people are not aware of how a twist of fate can snatch away fortune, beauty or health. In the twinkling of an eye, it can all be gone.

As a young, naïve sports writer, I was once writing a series of articles about hot shot high school athletes and what happened to them 20 or 30 years after their fame.

One football player had been outstanding in college and in the pros. He sounded like a fairy tale from the stories folks told. Hand-



Ronda Rich

Dixie Divas

some, talented and the scion of an extremely successful family who lived in an enormous house, he was the envy of all when he showcased his beauty in a brand new convertible Cadillac.

I tracked down his dad and arranged to meet him to get photos from the glory days twenty years earlier.

He gave me the address where he lived but when I arrived, I thought, "This can't possibly be

it." I knew how wealthy they had been. But it was. He lived on the poor side of town in a run-down, one level building that had once housed several little connecting stores.

He pushed open the glass door and invited me into the tiny one-room abode with a worn out sofa, an old TV and a shabby daybed covered by an ancient chenille spread. He reached under the bed and pulled out a shoe box that held a collection of black and white photos, his only reminder of a once grand life. His hands shook as he took off the lid.

Tears filled my eyes and I swallowed hard. I was 19 years old and that day I learned a lesson I have never forgotten: What is today may not be tomorrow.

Let me tell you another such story.

Beth was pretty, smart, talented and hard working. When she arrived on the NASCAR circuit as a reporter from a Detroit newspaper, we became fast, close friends. I loved her dearly and watched proudly as she rose through the ranks and grabbed the brass ring of motorsports reporting — USA Today. She became the most read motorsports writer in America.

She called me one night, this was somewhere toward the end of the 1990s, and we caught up on each other's lives. There she was at USA Today in a coveted position and was madly in love with an "incredible" guy.

"Oh Beth," I said with a happy

sigh as I listened to her bubbling bliss. "I'm so happy for you."

"I know," she said. "I'm so happy for me, too. Life's perfect."

At a celebrity/media golf tournament, she injured her back. It was the beginning of the end. She became addicted to painkillers and lost her job. Then the "incredible" guy did an incredible thing. He left her.

In constant pain, lonely and unable to find another job, she turned to the bottle. She called me one night, so drunk that I could not understand one thing she was saying.

We who loved her, watched her decline for years and helped as we could or as she would allow. As I watched her fall from the

pinnacle of success to a drunken crawl for survival, I said often to others who knew her, "There but for the grace of God go any of us."

On a recent autumn day, she was found dead, cause unknown, in a tiny apartment, her body decaying from several days without life. It took two days for the police to find someone to claim the body.

Her name appeared in the newspaper one last time. It was the obituary of a woman who died at least 30 years too soon.

— *Ronda Rich is the author of "What Southern Women Know (That Every Woman Should)." Visit www.rondarich.com to sign up for her weekly newsletter.*