

Question
of the week

Energy is in the news this week. Utilities are studying the feasibility of wind power off the coast of South Carolina, and Santee Cooper announced Monday it is shelving plans for its coal-fired Pee Dee power plant.

How do you think South Carolina should meet its current and future needs for electricity?

Tell us by 10 a.m. Tuesday and you could win an "I've got Moxie" mug. Please include your name and residence.

Congratulations to last week's winner, Nancy Worley of Mount Pleasant. Turn the page to learn about the teacher who most influenced her.

MOXIE

Created by a group of women on a mission to inform, entertain and inspire. Reach us by e-mail (moxie@postandcourier.com), snail mail (Moxie, c/o The Post and Courier, 134 Columbus St., Charleston, SC 29403) or phone (937-5548).

We're also at postandcourier.com/moxie.

Your breast cancer
stories are wanted

Has your life been touched by breast cancer? If so, Moxie would like to hear from you.

Tell us about your experience with breast cancer, whether it was you, a friend or a family member who received the diagnosis. What is the worst part of the disease? What lesson did you learn that could help someone else?

Stories must be less than 350 words. Photos of you or your loved one are welcome and appreciated. Send your story by Sept. 21 to moxie@postandcourier.com or you can send it by mail to Moxie, c/o The Post and Courier, 134 Columbus St., Charleston, SC 29403. Send either with a subject line of breast cancer.

Your story may appear in a special edition of Moxie.



FILE/RON EDMONDS/AP

Beauty + style

The world's most famous diamond, the Hope Diamond, will undergo a redesign to honor the 50th anniversary of its donation to the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History.

The Smithsonian Institution and Smithsonian Channel will celebrate the diamond's legacy by inviting the American public to vote on a new design for the stunning 45.52-carat blue diamond.

The House of Harry Winston, the company that donated the diamond to the museum, has designed three possible settings, each symbolizing modern hope in America.

The Hope Diamond will be put on display in its new setting at the National Museum of Natural History, and televised nationally as part of the world premiere of the Smithsonian Channel's "Mystery of the Hope Diamond" in March.

The Hope is the largest deep blue diamond in the world and has many special properties that have puzzled experts since its discovery. Its extraordinary history gave birth to the alleged curse: that all who owned or touched it met great tragedy.

The voting will take place online until Sept. 7 at www.smithsonianchannel.com/site/smithsonian/hope.html.

— Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History



Allyson Bird
with her father,
Ted, in 2007.

Reporter and
her mother help create
father's final album

a life in songs



PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED BY THE BIRD FAMILY

After college, Ted Bird won a station wagon in a poker tournament and set off to see the country, making music at every stop. He and his family moved to Charleston in 1993.

BY ALLYSON BIRD
The Post and Courier

The hardest part is the quiet.

When I moved back to Charleston, I found his body so thin, so pained, but never too weary to play the guitar or to sing.

When every joint ached from the poison of chemotherapy, his fingers never hurt to press those cold metal strings for a few hours between naps. And you'd never know from his voice that a giant tumor had taken up residence in his esophagus and had grown so large he could eat only certain

foods in small portions.

Up until the very week he was hospitalized, he sat on that same worn wooden bar stool and played for three hours straight out in the summer heat. Even if he couldn't mow the grass or swim in the ocean anymore, he could make music.

When he couldn't do that — I should have known — it meant my dad was dying.

Perhaps the most haunting part of cancer is the way it grows stronger while draining everything recognizable

Please see **SONGS**, Page 2D

For more info

To purchase Ted Bird's album, "To Absent Friends," visit www.tedbird.com



ON THE WEB: To hear a sample of his songs, go to postandcourier.com/audio.



KRISTEN HANKLA/STAFF

WE ASKED ...

Dot Glover

About why people should be interested in genealogy and attracting birds to her yard

Q: You became a librarian in the South Carolina Room of the Charleston County Public Library after 30 years in the insurance business. What attracted you to your current job?

A: I've been doing genealogical research for more than 10 years and had used the resources at the South Carolina Room many times. Early last year, I had given up my job at the insurance agency — far too

much stress.

Nothing else was available in that field and I didn't want to go back to retail, which I had worked for a number of years after Hurricane Hugo put several insurance companies out of business.

One day in prayer, I told the Lord that the ideal job would be part-time in the South Carolina

Please see **GLOVER**, Page 6D



Moxie: Last week's question

Last Friday, we invited you to describe the teacher who influenced you the most. Here are a couple of the responses we received.

I was raised in mostly rural settings all over the West until I was 11 years old, when my family moved to my mother's hometown, Kansas City, Mo.

This was a large, strange and scary place for a shy kid like me. ... I had never been around or spoken to any African-Americans in my entire life, and there I was plopped in the middle of a class of 40 kids. Only two other kids were white, and within two months they had moved out of the area. ... We went through three or four teachers in the first three months of seventh grade.

The morning I came back from the Thanksgiving holidays, there was a new teacher, a black man. Mr. George Smith greeted us all by name, calling us Miss and Mr., and taught us to treat each other as adults from the beginning. He was able to keep us all excited about learning even though he was teaching at different levels.

... I remember him asking my opinion in class, and I learned not to be afraid to speak up. He even let me teach a class on Native Americans when he learned that was part of my heritage.

... He is the teacher I remember with love and gratitude because he taught me to be colorblind, and that's the best lesson — ever.

**Laura Perkins
West Ashley**

"Everything I needed to know, I learned in kindergarten" — the import of this was made clear to me this past year when I volunteered in Carol Killingsworth's 5K class at Harbor View Elementary. Her influence was not on me directly but on the 20-plus students in her class.

Because Carol is my sister, I have long been aware of her enthusiasm for and dedication to her career. These qualities are there each time she talks about her classes and about the children who come every year, in the response of parents who request her as their children's teacher, in affirmation from her peers and principal.

As she began this year, she said, "What an important job I have." This sums up her approach to each child who is in her classroom. Early in the year, she recognized each child's abilities, needs, strengths and weaknesses and planned accordingly. When I came on Thursdays, the plan was there — this group needs to work on learning to share, this group needs to learn to cooperate, these children need to work on numbers, on letters, on comparing, etc., and the area was set up with the appropriate tools to help achieve the goals.

Her firm but gentle manner taught discipline — being quiet, waiting to talk, taking turns, being kind to others. Even in disruptions, she was calm and positive. I observed as each child matured throughout the year and was prepared for the next step in his/her education always with encouragement from "Mrs. Killingsworth." At the end of the year, each child was recognized for his/her unique achievement.

So to Carol I say thank you for being a positive influence in the lives of so many children. She is one who recognizes and responds to the knowledge that children are our hope for the future.

**Nancy Worley
Mount Pleasant**

GUEST COLUMNIST

Making a difference with ADD

BY JENIFER CLAYBORN

I am sure you are thinking, "Here goes another mom praising the importance of Ritalin or sacred diets for her ADHD child," but I am not. In fact, I haven't even taken in my son to be tested for ADD or ADHD. It has taken until this year for me to finally face the facts that my perfect little precious 8-year-old may be struggling with more than just a boy's energy.

But here is what I see about my precious son, the same one who drives me so batty. My little prince has a huge heart, and I think that because he is so distracted by everything around him, he sees so much more than most people. I remember when he was in preschool and they were doing the big program for the parents, the little girl next to him was crying. She wanted her mom, and he was just so distraught over the whole thing. It was as if he wanted to help but didn't know how. Some of that has changed now. He is learning to put his concerns into action.



PROVIDED

Jenifer Clayborn's family includes her sons Eli (left), 8, Chase, 6, and husband Eric.

This bouncy boy with a heart of gold always has something that he cares about, some special "cause" that most people wouldn't even notice. He has begged me on multiple occasions to let him and his brother take the construction workers across the street Popsicles or cold drinks. "It's so hot and they must be thirsty." We have even taken the garbage men cookies. "Don't you think they could use a treat, too?"

He so often sees the good in people and the little things others miss. It used to fill

my heart when he would tell me how nice the kitchen floor looked when I had just mopped, a chore not done often enough. He was so struck by hurricanes Ike and Rita he wanted to take up a collection, asking to stand out on the road "like the firemen do" or go door to door.

He has given his allowance for good causes and really wants to make a difference. He has chosen to go with me and my Sunday school class to help at a soup kitchen. He was so happy to pass around the parmesan cheese and throw out

people's trash. Thrilled to help and unaware of any differences between the helpers and the people we came to help.

He is so excited to help in any way he can from cleaning up after a school carnival to helping with yard work at home or for someone with a need. He will help anyone and play with anyone, and though he doesn't have a best friend, he can make a friend anywhere.

I am sure he drives his teachers nuts, too. Still, they all seem to like him even though he's not the best student and can't be still or stay on task. I really think some of them see his heart, too. Of course, sometimes it's painful for me when he sees it all. He has come home from school on more than one occasion asking to get a classmate a bigger backpack because his is too small and he can't fit his books in it. Or "can you make an extra sandwich and apple for me, because my friend's mom doesn't ever pack him very much and I think he must be hungry," or, "I played with a boy today. He doesn't have many friends because

he's kind of mean. He's nice to me, though. I think if everyone were nice to him, maybe he'd be nice, too."

He has told me when it comes to schoolwork that he "just wants to know so much about everything, he can't focus on one thing!" That's a lot of wisdom from an 8-year-old.

But if my little prince focused only on how to find the best in people and on how to reach out when there's a need, he sure would be a blessing to all those who know him. Especially to me. I just might need reminding for those times when he's bouncing off the walls instead of copying his spelling words.

Jenifer Clayborn lives in North Charleston with her husband and two sons, Eli and Chase. She has enjoyed a busy but fun summer with no spelling homework.

We want you

We're looking for the next guest columnist. Send us your story in 700 words or less for consideration.

a life in songs

SONGS From Page 1D

from its host. It took the last of Ted Bird on Sept. 1, 2008.

He died during Tropical Storm Hanna, and that seemed apropos. Some out-of-town family and friends didn't make it to the memorial because of the weather, but quite an eclectic crew showed up anyway.

Out of the rain came long-haired musicians in Hawaiian shirts and sweetgrass basket weavers in their Sunday best, tour guides and teachers, washed-out old surfers and parking lot attendants.

Days later when that support system dismantled, and I hear it always does in these circumstances, I received a call from "Uncle Jim," the deep-voiced producer in New York whom I'd known of since childhood but never actually had met.

He couldn't say much about my dad's short battle with the disease and all-too-sudden death, but he did say he wanted to make one final CD.

Over the next few months, Jim Wisner, my mom, Jane, and I dug through dust-covered albums and home recordings to put together a song list with cuts spanning three decades. We named it after a toast my dad made in his long-gone but hard-lived drinking days: "To Absent Friends."

I play those 16 tracks and see his life: It starts in black and white ...

He's 22 with long, wavy, brown hair and a leather jacket with fringe. He's pondering his coal-mining hometown in northeastern Pennsylvania and a world along the coast that's just a poker tourna-

ment, just a won station wagon away.

*In that dirty little town where I was born
I can feel it even now and I'm still torn
'Tween what I learned back then, and what I know now*

A flood ravages his widowed mother's home, and he flies back to help with the cleanup. But before returning to Cape Cod and then the rest of the country awaiting him on his decadelong gypsy tour, he buys a plane ticket and shows up unannounced for the girl with black hair and green eyes.

They became friends in first grade, and she took him to McDonald's to talk that day during their senior year of high school when his father collapsed into his arms and died.

He asks her now: "You coming?"

*I got a red Cadillac and at this very moment, it's sitting outside
And it just crossed my mind maybe you'd be inclined to go for a ride
It's a beautiful night; the stars are just right
They're all lined up in a row
What can you say, but hey, let's go*

I see in color now, he's quitting things — whiskey on my first Christmas, corporate work when he realized that it, too, took him away from his family. After nearly 20 years in the same place, he quits that as well.

After playing a friend's medical school graduation



PROVIDED BY THE BIRD FAMILY

Jane, Ted and Allyson Bird at their home in Matunuck, R.I., with their Great Dane, Spot.

in Charleston, he returns to Rhode Island and sells our house within days. The three of us cram into a Ryder truck with tall cans of Arizona iced tea and a wad of cash from our home sale.

He finds his dream house on Folly Beach despite the warnings from friends that only bikers and homosexuals live out there. Perfect, he says, and at 43 returns to playing music full time.

*If you've got laughter and love and time to spend at home
If you're comfortable inside of your own skin when you're alone
And if you've got some real friends you can count on to this day
That's all success is; the rest just fades away*

A doctor shared with me that, in his final days, my dad had told her, "I wouldn't trade 10 minutes of my life for 10 years of somebody else's."

He taught me to choose a career not because it brings me money, but because it gives

me satisfaction. To support myself so that the people in my life are there not because I need them, but because I love them. To live richly, honestly, unapologetically, answering first to my own heartbeat.

... So suddenly, I'm giving his eulogy, knowing he would've wanted me to tough that one out, to cut the cliches and say something real about his life. We play a slideshow of photos — some black and white, some color — set to his songs.

*Life don't always play like in the movies
Heroes, villains, you just never know
Sometimes it seems like the leading man's down on his knees
And the real side of the fantasy hits home*

Friends ask how I can hear these songs without becoming sad. Listening to his music, I can see the way he would close his eyes and tilt his head back before belting out the high notes or take a deep

breath before leaning into the harmonica after the chorus. I can see his hands effortlessly plucking 12 strings as if with magnetized fingertips. I can see his eyes scan a bar crowd in the middle of a heartfelt blues number and land on me for a second.

Then I can see him grin. I moved back to Charleston when he was diagnosed, but by then, his cancer had reached Stage 4.

We had only another 10 weeks together.

I consider myself fortunate to hear his voice whenever I want, whenever I play his songs.

His life didn't stop at esophageal cancer. It didn't stop on Sept. 1. It's a melody that's bigger than both.

It's a promise that the quiet will never last too long.

Allyson Bird covers the port industry, tourism and general business issues for The Post and Courier. She is also a member of the Moxie team. Reach her at abird@postandcourier.com or 937-5594.

THE JOB COACHES

Plan for references, background checks

Q A company that interviewed me wants references and is going to do a background check. What do I do?

A: Most companies check references and do background verifications for security and legal reasons. They also want to assure that your resume and application contain the facts. References are a make-or-break part of getting a job offer. Successfully handling this part of your job search requires some prior planning.

Who should be on your list of references? Prospective employers want to talk to people who can vouch for your work accomplishments. Excellent choices include former supervisors (ideally your most recent), indirect supervisors (your boss' boss), customers, vendors, professors/advisers, clients, colleagues and direct reports. Employers will ques-



JANE PERDUE

tion your credibility if you include close friends and relatives as references.

How do I know what people will say? Always invite someone to be a reference. A first-rate initial question is: "Are you familiar enough with my job performance to give me a positive reference?" If someone hesitates or is lukewarm with their response, that's a good sign to pick someone else. You must know in advance that your references can confirm the content of your resume and speak confidently of your contributions, strengths and performance. If your references work for a company that

limits the information they can share to just dates of employment, job titles and salary history, you need to be aware of that; so ask.

Is there a way to prepare my references for calls? Provide your references with a copy of your current resume along with a list of companies or people to whom you have given their name. Secure current information from your reference: current job title, company, address, telephone numbers (home, work and cell) and e-mail address. Ask them if they prefer a phone or e-mail contact, and include that information in the list you give to potential employers.

Will I have to sign any releases or waivers? Don't be surprised if a possible employer asks you to sign a release so they can check your references. They are simply protecting themselves from

possible liability. If a company is using an outside company to conduct a background check, you must provide written authorization to them before the review happens.

What kind of information is included in a background check? While the list of items checked varies from company to company, any of the following (and even more!) could be researched: criminal history, previous employment, driving record, military experience, Social Security number, court records, credit history and education.

What do I do if something bad turns up? Upfront honesty works best. Employers typically check your background once they are interested in you. So disclose that DUI from your college days. Tell the truth on your resume — don't inflate job titles or college degrees. If you were fired

or involved in other difficult situations, work with a job coach to develop an interview response. More and more companies are also checking you out online — Facebook, Twitter, etc. — so clean up anything that could be embarrassing or compromising. With some thoughtful preparation, you can ace the reference and background check part of your job search.

Jane Perdue is the principal/CEO of The Braithwaite Group.

The Job Coaches are experienced volunteers from the Center for Women's Job Counseling Program. Ask them a question by calling 763-7333 or e-mailing info@c4women.org. If you would like further assistance, make an appointment. A donation of \$10 is requested for appointments.