

# East Cooper

Awendaw • Daniel Island  
• Isle of Palms • McClellanville  
• Mount Pleasant • Sullivan's Island

Your Lowcountry Thursday January 1, 2009

CHARLESTON.NET/EAST COOPER The Post and Courier

## SWEETGRASS LEGACY



## HISTORIC SULLIVAN'S ISLAND



## STUDENTS HELP OUT IN KENYA



TAD YANCHESKI

# 2008

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## GOING SMOKE-FREE



FILE PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA JOHNSON/STAFF

## USS LAFFEY REPAIRS



## ALSO ON THE INSIDE

**ON THE JOB:** Students participate in Christ Our King-Stella Maris Catholic School's We Give Wednesdays to distribute weekly tithes to charitable organizations.

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**POLICE BLOTTER:** Shop employee and passer-by reportedly exchange unpleasantries; change is stolen from vending machine; and report says diner asks for police escort to protect him from "low-life rednecks."

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# 2008

## A Look Back



FILE PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA JOHNSON/STAFF

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### 1. Laffey repairs

Former seamen of the Sumner-class destroyer Laffey (at left) which is part of the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum, come to the old steel structure twice a year to help the Patriots Point Development Authority refurbish the ship.

A recent USS Laffey Association work session included World War II veteran Ari Phoutrides, who served as a quartermaster on the bridge on April 16, 1945, the day the Laffey got its nickname: "The Ship That Wouldn't Die."

At the recent session, Phoutrides and 11 other men chipped and sanded away old paint and added a new coat of battleship gray, but it wasn't enough. In early December, staff discovered 5 feet of water in the ship. A breach in the hull had leaked thousands of gallons of water per hour. Crews were working to seal that and other holes. Patriots Point is soliciting donations to fund the repairs. Checks may be made payable to: Patriots Point Development Authority and write Save the Laffey on the check and envelope. The address is Patriots Point Development Authority, Attn: C.F.O., 40 Patriots Point Road, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464.

### 2. Sullivan's story

A group called Sullivan's Islanders formed to preserve the island's beaches, maritime forest, historic homes and public structures. It sponsored a tour of Sullivan's historic sites for the island's newer residents, hoping to pass on the island's story. Tour guide Roy Williams, who collaborated with Make McMurphy to write "Sullivan's Island/Gadsden Cultural Center," guided two tours teaching residents that the island has a special history.

"This is a very special place we live in and, unlike the other beach resorts, it's got a history that has many facets, because when you talk about Sullivan's Island, you are talking about influence of the military, you are talking about this being a summer resort, a permanent village, a quarantine station," Williams said.

No matter where people go on the island, they find signs of the former military presence. A series of batteries once lined the front beach. Some, including Battery Gadsden, now home to the Poe Library, still remain. Most of the island's 965 homes were built after the 1940s. The Wedding Cake house (left) was built in 1982. The eastern end of the island wasn't open to development until 1947 when Fort Moultrie was closed. Before 1968, the government allowed people to build only two-room houses on the island but didn't give deeds to property until 1968. Until then, state and federal government had the right to seize land for military purposes.

"You were always living here at the pleasure of the governor and the president," Williams said.

### 3. 'Grass Roots'

The sweetgrass basket has endured for hundreds of years, and its artistry was celebrated recently through an exhibit at the Gibbes Museum of Art. "Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art," African artwork and a collection of more than 200 baskets from South Carolina, Georgia and Africa called the second floor of the Gibbes home until Nov. 30. Sweetgrass baskets started as a tool made by slaves on Lowcountry rice plantations in the late 1600s, said Dale Rosengarten, a curator and historian of special collections at the College of Charleston Library, and became objects of admiration more than 100 years ago. They were a visible symbol of African-American culture in the Charleston area, Rosengarten said. Work baskets faded along with rice plantations, but aesthetic sweetgrass baskets endured.

The basket exhibit, which opened at the Gibbes, was created by New York's



Museum for African Art in cooperation with the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture at the College of Charleston and McKisick Museum at the University of South Carolina. While the New York museum waits for a new building, "Grass Roots" will travel for two years, ultimately starting at the museum's opening in Harlem.

### 4. Students aid Kenya

A group of mostly College of Charleston students spent its 2008 spring break assisting orphaned children in a Kenyan slum. Brian VanderSchauw of Mount Pleasant, Capers Rumph of Sullivan's Island, and Stephen Eggers, Leighton Gelders and Fritz Stine, all of Charleston, Mount Pleasant videographer Laura Shelton and photographer Tad Yancheski set out to raise funds to buy land and build a permanent school for the kids. They found support from Ongata Rongai Christian Women Works of Charity. Students raised \$13,000 by hosting college parties. However, post-election violence in the African country in the first few months of 2008 put a damper on plans. Six others dropped out of the trip, unsure of what to expect. When Shelton and the rest of the party arrived in Africa they discovered that a plot of land they hoped to buy was no longer available. Still wanting to do something, the students built a better kitchen for the school. In another slum about an hour away, the group built a wall of rocks and concrete around a school in Ongata Rongai, where the Christian charity is based. But the students still hope to raise funds for the school. Visit [www.orcwwc.com](http://www.orcwwc.com).

### 5. Going smoke-free

The Isle of Palms' workplace smoking ban goes in effect today. City Council approved a ban in September.

Council members who favored a ban said they wanted to protect the health of employees, falling in line with other communities east of the Cooper, such as Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island, where similar bans are already in place.

According to the law, smoking would be illegal in any workspace and any fully enclosed porch.

And smokers would be able to light up outside business entrances as long as their smoke didn't enter the building. People who violate the ordinance could be fined \$50, and business owners or managers who fail to comply could be fined \$100.

The ordinance affects a handful of businesses on the island because some of the barrier island's restaurants and bars already have gone the smoke-free route. Establishments including the Windjammer and the Acme Cantina would be able to allow smokers on their deck spaces.



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