

publisher's note

CHILD'S Play

As August is traditionally our eagerly anticipated “kids and pets” issue, it was only fitting that we feature our former graphic designer Staci Sarkowski’s adorable triplets on our cover. While snapping a few shots of cute babies may seem like “child’s play,” add four puppies, ten adults, beach sand, ants, diaper bags and a setting sun, and you’ve got the makings for one pretty exciting endeavor!

Staci, who freelances now, and husband Chris, a director of youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church, cherish their bundles of joy, but say they couldn’t manage easily without the outpouring of support from friends, family and community. See more about our “cover girls” on page 52.

It’s hard to believe that my own “babies,” daughters Ashley and Brittany, are completing college and high school, respectively. But no matter what age anybody’s children become, we never stop worrying about their health and well-being, particularly when the obesity epidemic among children and adults continues to spiral out of control. See what area educators and youth are doing to keep active in the Lowcountry, beginning on page 22.

My other “babies,” dogs Addi and Brock, are growing up too and are an equally important part of my family. In this issue, we celebrate our wonderful pets. From taking them to work, page 34, finding a caregiver for them, page 43, or even “marrying” them off, page 123, our cuddly companions add so much value to our lives and even our treasured memories. Although we can’t publish them all (we receive hundreds of submissions), check out *Monthly’s* “Furry Foto Album,” page 53, where we showcase our readers’ favorite snapshots in the most highly anticipated feature of the year!

Keeping all our family members safe, particularly at home, is always an important issue. This month, our special “Safe & Secure Home” section features tips on everything from childproofing to beefing up security. For great ways to make your home safer and more convenient for children,



PHOTO BY BILL LITTLE

pets and adults, turn to page 74.

August is also back-to-school time and this month we highlight some great educational toys for little ones and hot fashions from local vendors for kids of all ages. See page 45.

This month’s Home Discovery takes a look at downsizing without compromising style and comfort. Turn to page 96 for a peek at a “Vibrant Seabrook Villa.”

For those looking for one last summer vacation getaway, why not try out a dude ranch? See page 58 for details about some fun family-oriented destinations.

And while I’m not yet an empty nester, local resident Karen Cerrati shares some interesting insight regarding her experience. Check out her “Last Word” on page 144 for a glimpse at life as a new empty nester.

Here’s to making the most of the “dog days of summer”!

Jan Doodridge

“Cartoonist” Profile



In addition to displaying his creative talent among the pages of *Monthly*, Matthew Anderson’s cartoons have appeared in numerous southeastern publications since 1991. He’s also worked on an upcoming series of “Garbage Pail Kids” (collectible cards), makes figurines for the “Art-O-Mat Project,” plays in a band called “Tailohepup,” and creates icky Web animations. Anderson also loves toy robots and we love his illustrations. See page 20 for this month’s clever creation.