

South Carolina LIVING

SPRING
& SUMMER
TRAVEL
ISSUE

ARTFIELDS
LAKE CITY, SC

SC RECIPE
Easter dinner
switch-up

HUMOR ME
Keeping
it crisp

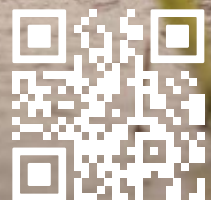
Lake City blooms

Embracing art brings new
life to this old farming town

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The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Inc.
808 Knox Abbott Drive
Cayce, SC 29033

(803) 926-3175
FAX: (803) 796-6064
letters@scliving.coop

EDITOR
Sarah Ellis Owen
(803) 739-3040
sarah.owen@ecsc.org

FIELD EDITOR
Josh P. Crotzer

PUBLICATION COORDINATOR
Sierra Hayes

ART DIRECTOR
Sharri Harris Wolfgang

DESIGNER
Rachael Arblaster

PRODUCTION
Andrew Chapman

WEB EDITOR
Chase Toler

COPY EDITORS
Jennifer Jas, Jim Poindexter

CONTRIBUTORS
Miranda Boutelle, Mike Couick,
Hastings Hensel, Jan A. Igoue, L.A. Jackson,
Belinda Smith-Sullivan, Jeff Wilkinson

PUBLISHER
Avery Wilks

ADVERTISING
Hyatt Drake
(803) 260-3393
ads@scliving.coop

NATIONAL REPRESENTATION
American MainStreet Publications
(512) 441-5200

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TRANSACTION WITH TRUST

2025 | April

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Give me crispy, or give me death

When it comes to the drive-thru lane, it's go crispy or go home, Jan A. Igoue writes in this classic column from October 2012.

"From This Moment Forward," by artists Herman Keith and Glover Richberg, one of many murals in Lake City.



Lake City's ArtFields mural by artists Jessica Diaz, Morgan Funkhouser, Olivia Cramer and Sam Ogden celebrates the town's regrowth and transformation. Photo by Milton Morris.



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MAIN OFFICE

6473 Old State Road
St. Matthews, SC 29135-0217
Fax: (803) 874-3888
Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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SANTEE OFFICE

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EASTOVER OFFICE

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Lineworkers are wired for service

IN THE QUIET HOURS before dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin

their day. They are often clad in flame-resistant clothing, hard hats, safety glasses, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots—gear they might still be wearing hours after the rest of us have returned home from our jobs.

They are the individuals who epitomize dedication to service in its purest form. It's no wonder that South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster recognized and thanked our state's electric cooperative linemen during his State of the State address earlier this year. This month also is an opportunity to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable and

our communities connected.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative crews travel across our six-county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational and emergency services remain accessible—a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

There is no better example of their dedication than how Tri-County Electric linemen responded in the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastation in our area. They worked long, exhausting days with little rest until the last outage was restored across our service territory.

Tri-County Electric lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of home. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur, and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible—lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life.

Chad T. Lowder

CHAD T. LOWDER
Chief Executive Officer



TRAVIS BELL

Linemen from electric cooperatives across South Carolina joined Gov. Henry McMaster on the staircase in the State House.

CheckOut a new convenience

Pay your bill while you shop at local retailers

WHEN LIFE GETS BUSY, being able to accomplish a few tasks at once feels like a win.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative provides its members with such a life hack. You can now pay your bill while shopping, grabbing a coffee or picking up prescriptions at more than 30 authorized retail locations across our service territory.

CheckOut offers the convenience of applying funds to your Tri-County Electric and TriCoLink balance when you purchase your other items at the store. Participating retailers in our area include Dollar General, CVS Pharmacy, 7-Eleven, Family Dollar, Walgreens, Pilot Travel Center and Circle K. You can even pay at your local Walmart by going to the Service Desk or using the Money Center.

“Our territory covers a large area, so we know our district offices aren’t as accessible to some of our members,” says

Wilford Thompson, Tri-County Electric’s vice president of Member Services. “This new service provides pay locations near almost everyone.”

Here’s how it works:

- ▶ Visit tce.meridiancheckout.com/Lookup and enter your TCEC account number.
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- ▶ A \$1.50 convenience fee is added to each CheckOut transaction.

More ways to pay

CheckOut is just one of the many convenient ways Tri-County Electric members can pay their bills. Payment options include:

- ▶ Full service lobbies at the St. Matthews headquarters, Santee District Office (closed Monday and Wednesday) and Richland District office (closed Tuesday and Thursday).
- ▶ Express payment kiosks accessible 24/7 at St. Matthews and Richland District offices.
- ▶ Online at billing.tce.coop/onlineportal.



For more information, call (803) 874-1215.

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That’s it! Within a few minutes, the payment will be applied to your balance. Visit tce.meridiancheckout.com/Lookup to learn more and find the locations near you.

Returning to college? Scholarships for women available

IT TAKES COURAGE and vision to pursue a college degree as a working adult. Tri-County Electric Cooperative offers an opportunity to female members who are taking that step.

The Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship is for women who are resuming academic journeys that have been interrupted or delayed.

Applications for one-time awards are now open for female members of Tri-County Electric. Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE)—a service organization associated with South Carolina’s electric cooperatives—and named after one of its founding members, the \$2,500 scholarships are awarded based on need and personal goals.

The deadline to apply is June 1.

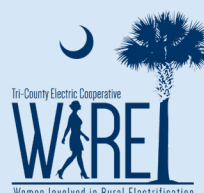
An online application for the 2025 WIRE scholarship can be found ecsc.org/wire.

Applications are also available at Tri-County Electric offices. The scholarship will be awarded based on the information provided in the application.

Applicants for the program must:

- ▶ Be a member of Tri-County Electric or another South Carolina electric cooperative;
- ▶ Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago;
- ▶ Obtain acceptance into an accredited college or university;
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need.

Recipients will receive scholarships for the fall 2025 or spring 2026 semester, with funds paid directly to the college or university.



Tanesha Simmons, winner of the 2024 Jenny Ballard Scholarship, is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in special education from Columbia College. She hopes to eventually obtain a master’s degree in school psychology and help students in her community.

Prep now for summer savings

SPRING IS THE TIME to get a jump-start on summertime energy savings to prevent high power bills.



Start with a professional HVAC tune-up to maximize your cooling system's efficiency and lifespan. This should include a refrigerant charge, airflow adjustment and condenser and evaporator fan coil cleaning. Some HVAC companies offer discounts for cleaning equipment during their less-busy months before high temperatures arrive.



A dirty furnace filter can waste energy, so have a stack of replacement filters ready to use. Filters tend to be less expensive if you buy them in bulk. Ductless heat pumps, or mini-splits, have a filter in the indoor unit, or head, which should be cleaned. If you clean the indoor filter yourself, turn the unit off before removing the filter and let it dry completely before putting it back.



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

When preparing for a day out for play or work, raise your thermostat by 7 to 10 degrees to reduce energy use and save on your power bill.

your kitchen, which requires more energy for cooling. Get the grill cleaned now so you are ready to enjoy outdoor cooking.



Something else to consider before summer is your home's impact on peak load—that is, when the demand for electricity is highest.

This typically occurs in the morning when people are getting ready for work and school and in the evening when they return home. Your electric cooperative must manage the energy use of all its consumers, and this balancing act can be a challenge. Consider starting the dishwasher before you go to sleep or starting a load of laundry outside of your co-op's peak times.

—MIRANDA BOUTELLE

78° Mind your thermostat as outdoor temps warm. The U.S.

Department of Energy recommends setting cooling temperatures to 78 degrees when you are home and higher when you are away. You can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day.



One way to feel cooler without touching the thermostat is to use fans in the room you're in during the day or when you're sleeping.

Remember: Fans cool people (and pets), not rooms. Turn fans off in unoccupied rooms. If your ceiling fan has a reverse function, flip the switch so it blows air down into the living space.



Cooking outdoors in summer is another way to save energy.

Using the stove or oven heats

MEMBERS SPEAK ON THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE



I ♥ MY CO-OP

Rick Farmer

NEWBERRY ELECTRIC MEMBER

MEMBER SINCE: 2015

HOMETOWN: Newberry

OCCUPATION: Economic development director for Newberry County

Finding an ally

Rick Farmer loves Newberry Electric Cooperative's online outage reporting system—even though he rarely uses it.

"When the power goes out, and that doesn't happen often, I don't even pick up the phone and report it because I know you guys are going to handle it pretty quickly," Farmer says.

Newberry Electric's great service comes with added benefits to Farmer in his day job as Newberry County's economic development director. Businesses looking to locate or expand in the area want to know they will have access to reliable electricity.

Beyond providing excellent service, Newberry Electric is deeply involved in recruiting new industries and jobs, helping Farmer by answering questions and even contributing to the upfront investments needed to attract economic development.

Farmer estimates the co-op has helped recruit hundreds of millions of dollars in capital investment and thousands of jobs since he began working for the county.

He knows he can count on Newberry Electric, whether the co-op is addressing an outage or sending experts to talk to the next business prospect.

"I have a lot of allies as an economic developer, but my electric cooperative is my absolute No. 1 ally," Farmer says. "I'm tremendously thankful for my electric cooperative, and quite honestly, we couldn't do it without them."

"My electric cooperative is my absolute No. 1 ally." —RICK FARMER



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Scan this QR code or visit SCLiving.coop/stories to share what you love about your co-op. Entries may be published in future issues of *South Carolina Living*, online and on social media.



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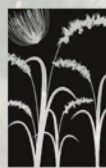


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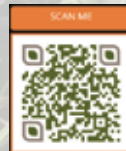
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MIKE COUICK
President and CEO,
The Electric
Cooperatives of
South Carolina

Darla Moore's intentional investment

WHEN WE INVEST in the places we call home, we not only preserve the special qualities and memories that give life to those places, but we also create hope for the future of those places, that they might mean as much to our children and grandchildren as they do to us.

It's one reason electric co-ops are so committed to their communities and why they invest in the people they serve with economic development initiatives, youth programs and contributions to local charities.

Investment doesn't just happen—it takes intention and real work.

My friend Don Coker remembers the life that buzzed through the Lake City of his youth. His hometown, like many small towns at the time, boasted a bustling downtown surrounded by thriving, family-owned tobacco, cotton and produce farms that fueled the local economy and culture.

"You had numerous locally owned grocery stores, hardware stores, restaurants and a movie theater," the Santee Electric Cooperative trustee recounts. "You'd get up in the morning, get the newspaper then meet downtown to discuss the day's events."

It was the kind of place that even people in Florence would hop on a train to visit.

Then all that life seemed to fade from Lake City, and Coker's hometown—again, like so many other small, rural towns—withered.

Coker also remembers a young girl he grew up with. Darla Moore lived across the street and was athletic and smart. Her mom worked at the Methodist church, and her dad, a celebrated baseball and football player, was a coach and principal at the high school.

Moore's now well-known story—a self-made billionaire whose philanthropy has had a tremendous impact on her hometown and state—is part of this month's cover feature, "Tiny Lake City blooms with ArtFields."

Moore's successes and contributions have achieved almost mythical status in South Carolina. But to Coker, she's still a neighbor and a friend.

ArtFields was one of Moore's earliest and best-known initiatives that propelled the rebirth of the town. But Moore's investments in education have had an equally consequential impact.

And to the people of their shared hometown, Moore is the force behind the new life that's washed over Lake City.

ArtFields, a nine-day visual arts festival held each spring, was one of Moore's earliest and best-known initiatives that propelled the rebirth of the town. But Coker contends that Moore's investments in education have had an equally consequential impact. One of those investments is The Continuum, a collaboration between The Darla Moore Foundation, Florence-Darlington Technical College and Francis Marion University. Located in downtown Lake City, it provides college courses, training and certifications, and programs for students in the area.

"It creates a place where kids can get a head start," says Coker. "You give them an opportunity for a job, and she loves that. That is her goal, to always put others first."

Coker, who has owned and operated Coker Oil Company in downtown Lake City for 54 years, is seeing Moore's myriad investments in her hometown improve the lives of all its residents. (The vast majority of her investments, Coker notes, are made in Santee Electric territory.)

"Every month it's like opening a new present," says Coker. "She does it all from her heart, and when you've got the knowledge to go along with it, you're going to be successful."

Landscaping to save energy

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q How can landscaping help lower my energy bill?

A The space around our homes has a lot going on. Competing factors of aesthetics, safety, energy efficiency and water conservation are a lot to consider. Thoughtful planning and good design can address these factors and result in year-round energy savings.

Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a typical household's energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To select the right trees and other foliage, research what is best for your local climate. Select native species naturally adapted to your location for lower maintenance.

Strategically placed deciduous trees allow for summer shade and passive solar heat gain in the winter when leaves have fallen, leading to energy savings in both seasons. Slower-growing trees might take longer to provide maximum shading benefit, but their roots are typically deeper and their branches stronger. These factors can make them less likely to be damaged by wind, snow or ice and more likely to be drought resistant.

Be sure to plant large trees far enough away from your home to prevent damage from falling branches or root damage to your home's foundation.

If you have a rooftop photovoltaic solar system, keep in mind that even a small amount of shade can significantly reduce energy production. Consider smaller plantings closer to the home to shade walls, windows or hardscaped surfaces, such as driveways and sidewalks.

Windbreaks—trees and



TIME-WORTHY INVESTMENT Although it may take a few years to pay off, strategically placing trees to shade your home during the summertime can help lower air-conditioning costs.

Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a typical home's energy use.

shrubs that grow relatively low to the ground—are another landscaping strategy that can help save energy in windy areas. They can reduce wind speed by as much as 30 times the windbreak's height, according to the Energy Department. That, in turn, reduces wind chill near your home and can lower heating costs. The Department of Energy recommends planting two to five times the mature tree's height away from your home. Plant evergreen trees and shrubs for windbreaks, and consider adding fences or

earthen mounds to help lift wind up and over your home.

Keep landscaping clear of dryer vents, heat pumps and air-conditioning units to ensure access for maintenance and airflow around those locations.

Always consider safety first when landscaping or making other home improvements. Call before you dig to ensure you know where any underground power, gas, water or sewer lines are located. The national 811 Underground Service Alert program routes you directly to your local resources. Call 811 or go online to call811.com before you dig.

Be mindful of overhead power lines, too. Look up and check your surroundings before setting up ladders. Be thoughtful when planting new landscaping that could encroach on power lines. Utility equipment should have at least 10 feet of clearance, when possible.

As you prepare to refresh your yard for the coming spring and summer, consider these ways you can boost your energy efficiency for more comfort and savings year-round. ☺

MIRANDA BOUTELLE writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.



LANDSCAPE-FREE ZONE Keep shrubs and flowers clear of HVAC and air-conditioning units to ensure maintenance access and airflow around equipment.

Easter dinner alternatives

BY BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN

BRAISED LAMB SHANKS WITH HORSERADISH AND FENNEL MASHED POTATOES

SERVES 6

- 6 lamb shanks, preferably bone-in
- 2 tablespoons Greek seasoning
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 celery stalks, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 3 carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 3 cups beef stock
- 1 28-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 6 sprigs fresh rosemary

MASHED POTATOES

- 4 large Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and diced into 1-inch cubes
- 2 fennel bulbs, stalks removed and outer layer discarded (reserve stalks)
- 1 cup olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons horseradish

Preheat oven to 350 F. Pat shanks dry with a paper towel and sprinkle generously with Greek seasoning. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Brown the shanks on all sides, working in batches if needed. Remove shanks to a large platter and set aside.

Skim off excess fat in pot, leaving just enough to sauté vegetables, and return to heat. Sauté onions, celery, carrots and garlic until vegetables brighten in color, 5–7 minutes. Add wine and scrape the brown bits on the bottom of pot. Cook until wine reduces by about half. Add stock, tomatoes, cinnamon stick, thyme and rosemary. Taste and add additional seasoning if desired. Return shanks to pot and submerge in the liquid. Bring to a boil. Cover pot and transfer to preheated oven. Cook 2½ hours or until fork-tender, adding a little more stock if needed.

While shanks are cooking, prepare potatoes by bringing salted water to boil in a heavy-bottom saucepan over medium-high heat.

Family holidays are often steeped in traditions we look forward to year after year. But this could be your year to forge a new tradition by trying these fresh takes on Easter-inspired recipes.



JULIA NEDRYGALOVA

Add potatoes and lower heat, cooking until potatoes are soft, about 15 minutes. Remove potatoes and set aside, reserving 2 cups of cooking liquid. Slice fennel bulbs in half, removing the cores, then cut each half into ½-inch slices. In a saucepan containing ½ cup oil, add the fennel and ½ teaspoon salt. On very low heat, poach fennel in oil, uncovered, for 12–15 minutes until soft. Add fennel to a food processor with 2 tablespoons of the poaching oil, and puree. Using a potato ricer or food mill, puree the potatoes. Fold the fennel puree and horseradish into the potatoes and return to saucepan. Fold in salt, pepper and 2 teaspoons chopped fennel fronds—only the tiny delicate fronds, not the woody stems. Add the remaining oil along with ½ cup of the salty potato cooking liquid. Add more liquid, if needed, until you get the desired consistency.



KAREN HERMANN

What's cooking at
SCLiving.coop/food/chefbelinda

ATTENTION PORK LOVERS Chef Belinda didn't forget you! Find her alternative Easter dinner recipe for **Herb Roasted Pork Loin with Rice Pilaf** only online.



GINA MOORE

WHOLE ROASTED CHILI HONEY SALMON WITH SKEWERED VEGETABLES

SERVES 4–6

- 1 half-salmon fillet, unsliced
- Olive oil
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 2–3 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice (one lemon)
- Chili honey (see recipe below)
- Lemon slices, for garnish
- Capers, for garnish
- Dill, for garnish

Preheat oven to 425 F. Pat dry salmon fillet and place on a foil-lined sheet pan. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Smear top with garlic and squeeze of lemon juice. Brush on chili honey. Place sheet pan in oven and bake salmon 10–12 minutes or until starting to flake. (Cook vegetable skewers with salmon.) Remove salmon from oven, brush on another coat of chili honey and place lemon slices and capers on top. Cook for another 5 minutes. Remove from oven, cover with foil and let rest.

CHILI HONEY

MAKES 1 CUP

- 2 red chilies, Thai or serrano (depending on your preference for heat)
- 1 cup honey

Rinse and dry chilies. Simmer chilies and honey in a saucepan over medium-low heat for 10–15 minutes, then remove from heat. Cool slightly and pour into a canning jar with airtight lid. Let cool completely in jar. Tighten lid and store in a cool, dry place.

VEGETABLE SKEWERS

- 12-inch wooden skewers
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 zucchini, halved and cut into ¾-inch slices
- 1 yellow squash, halved and cut into ¾-inch slices
- 1 red onion, cut into roughly 1-inch pieces in three-layer segments
- 2 bell peppers (one red, one yellow), seeded and cut into 1-inch segments
- 1 pint grape or cherry tomatoes

Soak skewers for 20 minutes in water. In a large bowl, combine vinegar, oil, lemon juice, garlic, Dijon, seasoning, salt and pepper. Toss vegetables in the seasoning mixture and marinate for 30 minutes. Thread vegetables alternately onto skewers and set aside. Reserve liquid leftover in the bowl. Place skewers on a foil-lined grill pan and cook in oven alongside salmon for 8 minutes. Rotate skewers, brush with additional marinade, and cook an additional 5 minutes. Serve on a platter with salmon.



CHEF'S TIP **How long does honey keep?** Honey does not spoil. But the USDA recommends keeping honey for up to a year.



GWENAELE VOT

EASIEST PESTO ROAST BEEF WITH THICK-ROASTED RUSSET POTATOES

SERVES 4

- 1 2-pound tri-tip beef roast (or top sirloin roast)
- ½ cup basil pesto, divided
- 1½ teaspoons coarse-ground black pepper
- 1 14.5-ounce can Italian-style diced tomatoes
- Grated and shaved Parmesan cheese, for garnish

POTATOES

- 2 large russet potatoes, washed and cut into ¼–½-inch slices
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme (or your favorite herb blend)

Preheat oven to 425 F. Cover a shallow-rimmed baking sheet with foil and set aside. Using a spatula, evenly spread ¼ cup pesto all over roast and sprinkle with pepper. Place meat on baking sheet and roast in preheated oven for 30–40 minutes for medium rare or 40–50 minutes for medium. Test roast for doneness with an instant-read thermometer, 135 F for medium rare and 145 F for medium. Remove to a carving board and tent loosely with foil to keep warm. Let stand for 20–25 minutes. The meat's temperature will continue to rise, to about 145 F for medium rare and 160 F for medium.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine tomatoes and onion. Cook 15–20 minutes or until onion is tender and most of the liquid has evaporated, but not all. Stir in remaining ¼ cup of pesto and keep warm.

While roast is cooking, prepare potatoes. In a large bowl, combine potato slices, oil, salt and thyme. Mix thoroughly and place potatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet in a single layer. As soon as roast is removed from oven, insert potatoes and bake 20 minutes until light brown and tender; flip and bake an additional 15–20 minutes. Test for doneness with a cake tester or toothpick. Thicker slices will require a longer baking time.

When ready to serve, carve roast across the grain into thin slices. Sprinkle with additional salt and pepper, to taste. Serve with tomato sauce and potatoes. Garnish with grated Parmesan, and using a potato peeler, shave additional Parmesan over roast and potatoes.

Spring into festival season

South Carolina is in bloom with a bushelful of seasonal festivals from corner to corner of the state, celebrating everything from azaleas and peach blossoms to fine art and South Carolina traditions. Here are some of the fun and family-friendly festivals you'll find throughout our state this spring. For more upcoming festivals and events, check out our calendar listings on page 34 and our online events page at SCLiving.coop.

—SARAH ELLIS OWEN



COURTESY OF ARTISPHERE

Arts

Artisphere

MAY 9–11

Immerse yourself in visual, performing and culinary arts all along Greenville's charming Main Street. The weekend-long festival, which last year drew more than 92,000 visitors, is dedicated to celebrating fine arts, with 135 visual artists displaying their work and with musical performances across seven downtown stages. The festival is free to attend.

Located along Main Street, Greenville

artisphere.org

Spoletto Festival USA and Piccolo Spoleto

MAY 23–JUNE 8

Spoletto is a renowned destination for internationally accomplished and emerging artists in

◀ **Blake Gore**, who inks very tiny artworks like this "micro-stacean," will be at Artisphere.

▼ Chamber music sponsored by Bank of America will be performed at Dock Street Theatre during Spoletto Festival USA.

Attendees at Greenville's Artisphere are treated to a feast for the eyes with works by 135 artisans.



COURTESY OF ARTISPHERE

opera, theater and dance along with chamber, orchestral, choral, jazz and contemporary music, with performances spread throughout historic Charleston's theaters, churches and outdoor venues. The concurrent Piccolo Spoleto festival turns the spotlight on local and regional artists, including visual arts exhibits, children's activities, and music, dance and theater performances. Ticket prices vary per event.

Various locations in Charleston

spoletousa.org and piccolospoleto.com

food

Columbia Food & Wine Festival

APRIL 22–27

Local chefs and mixologists anchor this weeklong festival, which features 15 events spread across the capital city, including an educational session on breadmaking, a dinner dedicated to Gullah culinary traditions, storytelling and discussion with local authors, and a series of collaborative dinners featuring menus curated by multiple chefs. Ticket prices vary per event.

Various locations in Columbia and surrounding areas

columbiafoodandwinefestival.com

A Taste of Beaufort

MAY 2–3

Lowcountry cuisine is the star of the festival, with Beaufort restaurants showing off their best concoctions in this two-day event at Waterfront Park. Fill up on food and drinks and enjoy live music, a crafts market and kids' activities. Admission is free, and food and drink tickets cost \$1 apiece.

Located at Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, 1010 Bay St., Beaufort

atasteofbeaufort.com



COURTESY OF SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA



FORREST CLONTS

▲ Diners are ready to dig in at a brunch prepared by area chefs at the Columbia Food & Wine Festival.

▼ This little fella at the World Famous Blue Crab Festival will be bright orange before long.



COURTESY OF
WORLD FAMOUS BLUE CRAB FESTIVAL

World Famous Blue Crab Festival

MAY 17–18

For more than 40 years, the town of Little River has celebrated its bounty of local seafood along the town's historic waterfront, with live music and more than 250 vendors. Admission is \$10 for ages 13 and up; food and drinks are purchased separately.

*Located at Historic Little River Waterfront,
4468 Mineola Ave., Little River*
bluecrabfestival.org

agriculture

Pickens Azalea Festival

APRIL 25–26

Celebrating the annual emergence of colorful blossoms across the small town of Pickens, this two-day festival features food, concerts, art and craft vendors, a cruise-in, amusement rides, a pie-baking contest, a pet pageant and a husband-calling competition (with points for originality, volume and clarity!). The festival is free to attend.

Located along Main Street, Pickens
pickensazaleafestival.com

Johnston Peach Blossom Festival

MAY 3

Little ol' South Carolina is the second-biggest peach-producing state in the country (harvesting three to four times as much fruit each year as our "Peach State" neighbor Georgia). Downtown Johnston celebrates this signature crop with a festival featuring a parade, rides, games, and arts and food vendors.

Located in downtown Johnston
johnstondevelopmentcorp.org

South Carolina Strawberry Festival

MAY 2–3

A strawberry baby contest and strawberry eating contest are just two of the sweet ways to celebrate, you guessed it, strawberries at this juicy two-day festival. You'll also find live music, cornhole, rides, vendors and more—and don't miss the strawberry sales stands on your way to or from the festival.

*Located at Walter Y. Elisha Park,
345 N. White St., Fort Mill*
scstrawberryfestival.com



NATHAN BINGLE PHOTOGRAPHY

▲ It's all strawberries all the time at the South Carolina Strawberry Festival in Fort Mill.



ANDREW HAWORTH

▲ A rider corners too tightly during at the Black Cowboy Festival and Rodeo.

cultural

The Black Cowboy Festival and Rodeo

MAY 22–25

More than just a rodeo, this festival celebrates the legacy of African American cowboys and pioneers. In addition to rodeo and horse-showing events, there'll be agricultural workshops, documentary viewings, line dancing, gospel and other musical performances, a fish fry and more. Saturday rodeo tickets cost \$35 for ages 13 and up and \$15 for ages 12 and under. Ticket prices vary for other festival events.

*Located at Greenfield Farm,
4585 Spencer Road, Rembert*
blackcowboyfestival.net

The Original Gullah Festival of South Carolina

MAY 23–25

Gullah culture shines at this weekend of storytelling, dancing, music, education and a plethora of Gullah cuisine. Dig into a dish of delicious soul food while listening to the sounds of African drums and perusing the array of vendors, and catch the Decoration Day play at the USC Beaufort Center for the Arts. The festival is free to attend, and tickets for Gullah tours and the play cost \$45 each.

*Located at Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park,
1010 Bay St., Beaufort*
originalgullahfestival.org 📍

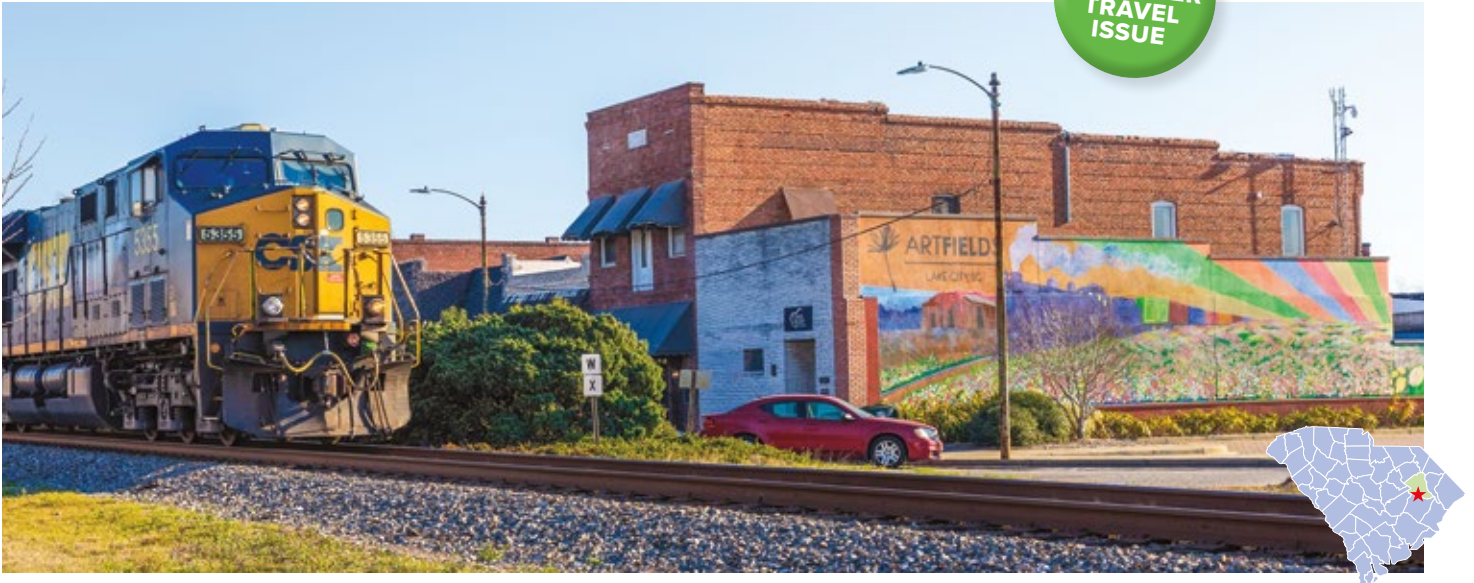


T·I·N·Y LAKE CITY



BLOOMS W·I·T·H ArtFields





How art became a springboard for a small town's brighter future

BY JEFF WILKINSON | PHOTOS BY MILTON MORRIS

April Matthews has been working at her family's produce store in tiny Lake City since she was a toddler. Her grandfather Ross began operating Matthews Fruit Stand at the corner of North Acline and Sauls streets in 1963, selling snap beans, peanuts, watermelons and much more directly to people on the sidewalk. April has been a fixture there since she was old enough to walk.

"I was helping unload trucks when I was 4," she says.

Ross Matthews passed away in 2016, and April now runs the business. Her 4-year-old daughter, Daisy, works alongside her, babbling to customers as she plays on her tablet. On the wall outside the stand is a mural of Ross cradling April when she was a small child. It's called "Papa," what April called her grandfather, who raised her. "I love it," she says. "It makes me think about him every day."

A lot has changed in Lake City since the stand first opened. Once a prosperous farming center southwest of



Florence, the town fell on hard times when the tobacco market petered out and the interstate highways passed it by.

But today, the little hamlet of about 6,000 people is undergoing a renaissance. "Papa" is part of a kaleidoscope of murals, sculptures and art galleries that have transformed Lake City into one of the South's premier arts destinations. There's a palpable sense of optimism in the tiny town, like a fallow field, newly plowed and blooming in the spring.

Each April since 2013, ArtFields, a nine-day visual arts festival, has drawn tens of thousands of visitors. Artworks are displayed in every venue imaginable, from newly minted galleries to the corner barber shop. Curated greenspaces line the streets.

Landscaped pocket parks have replaced tumble-down buildings. Shuttered storefronts now host boutiques and restaurants. Old warehouses have been renovated into artists' studios and event venues.

It all springs from the vision of one woman: hometown girl and billionaire financier Darla Moore. Moore earned her fortune financing distressed companies and developed a reputation as one of the toughest women on Wall Street. CNN once described her as "a cross between Terminator and Kim Basinger, with a wicked Southern drawl." She was the first woman to grace the cover of *Fortune* magazine. And when the prestigious Augusta National Golf Club—home of The Masters golf tournament—finally allowed female members to join, Moore and former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice were the first to be invited. ►►

ALL AROUND TOWN This page: The ArtFields mural (top) welcomes visitors to Lake City. Proud Lake City native April Matthews (center) owns Matthews Fruit Stand, a business begun by her grandfather.

Opposite, clockwise from bottom left: A rooster sculpture stands guard at Piggybacks BBQ & Catfish; Main Street Mercantile; Jones-Carter Gallery in a repurposed warehouse; the Bean Market, once a green bean auction house and now an events venue; the local barber shop displays art during ArtFields; and Daisy's Snax ice cream and hot dog shop. At center is a visitor admiring an installation during the 2022 ArtFields (photo courtesy of ArtFields).



MOORE ART When Wall Street financier Darla Moore was ready for a new project, she returned to her grandfather's farm in Lake City. Along with spearheading ArtFields, she established a botanical garden and peppered its 65 acres with acquired and commissioned artworks. The garden is open to the public during the festival.

“The idea of an art competition came up. I thought, ‘Well, we could try it. What’s the worst that can happen?’ We threw spaghetti on the wall, and it stuck.” —DARLA MOORE

Moore in 2012 scaled back her efforts on Wall Street and, with the world to choose from, decided to move back home, settling in at her grandfather Eugene’s farm just outside of town.

“It was the most special place on earth when I was a child—sheer joy and happiness,” she says while tending the gardens surrounding the ancestral home. She has lovingly cultivated the gardens into Moore Farms, a botanical garden open to the public that focuses on native South Carolina plants. “It was the happiest place in my life. It’s where I feel safest and the most connected.”

Moore also embarked on a program of philanthropy. She donated about \$100 million to her alma mater, the University of South Carolina, paying for a business school that bears her name. She also founded and helps fund the Charleston Parks Conservancy, which has donated \$25 million for the Holy City’s many parks. And she built the Continuum, a \$24 million combination trade school and junior college in Lake City. And those are just a few of her gifts.

But Moore’s love for her hometown is most remarkable. Her foundation has transformed the town using ArtFields as a springboard to a brighter future.

“I thought, ‘What can we do to reinvent ourselves? How could we engage with the public?’ The idea of an art competition came up. I thought, ‘Well, we could try it. What’s the worst

that can happen?’ We threw spaghetti on the wall, and it stuck.”

It’s not unusual to see Moore popping into offices or shops to enjoy her town and keep an eye on its progress. On a recent visit, she was spotted hopping out of her Mini Cooper to photograph a tree newly planted near the town’s main intersection.

“All of Lake City is her passion project,” says Phillip “Shady” Rodgers, executive director of Lake City Creative Alliance and an unofficial chief salesman for the town.

Died on the vine

Oddly enough, Lake City doesn’t have a lake.

First known as Graham’s Crossroads, the town was named for a series of ponds that bubbled up along flood-prone Lynch Creek. It was Lake City’s boggy nature that made it an agricultural marvel. About anything you planted grew. “It was produce in the spring, tobacco in the summer and cotton in the fall,” says Kent Daniels, a former high school teacher who now runs the Lynch Lake Historical Society.

Lake City boasted the nation’s largest auction house for green beans. Strawberries grew in abundance. Cotton fields blanketed the countryside. Tobacco warehouses lined the railroad tracks that led to markets up and down the East Coast. But time passed. Things changed for the worst. Businesses closed. Young people fled. And the once-thriving farm town wilted on the vine.

Rodgers (“Shady” is an old family name, not a reflection of his character) graduated from Lake City’s Carolina Academy in 2007 and vowed never to return. “Lake City was dangerous then. Lots of crime,” he says. “Everything was boarded up. I grew up here and never walked down Main Street.”

Rodgers attended the College of Charleston and graduated from Francis Marion University. But he was drawn back to his hometown in 2014 as it began to blossom with ArtFields, and

he now serves as president of the chamber of commerce. "This place is a hidden gem," he says.

Rebirth

A walk around town reveals a creative colony worthy of a big-city arts district. The Moore Foundation operates three galleries with rotating exhibits. The renovated green bean auction house and other nearby warehouses now host upscale corporate meetings and weddings and serve as centers for the festival. Shops fill colorful, renovated storefronts on Main and Sauls streets. A new high-end hotel graces downtown, and a village green ties the town together. There's even a tricked-out RV park a short walk away.

New restaurants offer fare from brunch and barbecue to late-night cocktails. The Green Frog Social Club is a fully stocked tavern with generously portioned bar food. Piggybacks is a barbecue and catfish joint with a bluesy feel. Baker's Sweets on Main Street serves brunch and bakes pies and cakes to take home later. And Lake City Bistro offers steaks, chops and seafood in an elegant dining room with an adjoining courtyard. Be aware, however, that alcohol is not served in Lake City on Sunday, and many establishments are closed on Monday.

For the history buff, the Ronald E. McNair Life History Center on Main Street honors the astronaut who grew up in Lake City and was killed in the tragic Challenger accident. It's housed in a former library that wouldn't allow McNair,

who was Black, to check out books as a child. The center features a large plaza around McNair's raised tomb.

Across the street, the Lynches Lake Historical Society and Museum is packed with displays and artifacts from Lake City's rich Native American, Revolutionary War and agricultural history. ►►



NO PLACE LIKE HOME "Papa," outside Matthews Fruit Stand, shows owner April Matthews as a tyke in her grandfather's arms. Phillip "Shady" Rodgers (inset), president of the chamber of commerce, left Lake City after high school, vowing never to return, but the success of ArtFields lured him back a decade ago.



LAKE CITY ATTRACTIONS

The fabric of Lake City is woven from a blend of old and new, history and progress—threads that together tell the story of the town and of the art and artists who've become the nucleus of its revitalization. Anchors of the town include:

The ROB

245 S. Church St.

The "Ragsdale Old Building," a former charcoal briquette warehouse, has been renovated into the city's largest event venue. The 22,000-square-foot space hosts events from weddings to trade shows and is the ArtFields festival's main venue.

The Bean Market

111 Henry St.

Once the world's largest green bean auction house, built by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression, it is now a 10,000-square-foot event venue that adjoins the town's Village Green.

▼ The Ronald E. McNair Life History Center

235 E. Main St.

The center honors the life of Lake City native McNair, an astronaut who died in the 1986 Challenger space shuttle explosion. It features tributes to McNair's life and career, as well as a 40-desk classroom

for educational events and an outdoor memorial dedicated to the astronaut.

▲ Jones-Carter Gallery

105 Henry St.

The former feed-and-seed store was renovated into an art gallery and year-round exhibition space, free to the public. It features regional and global artists and hosts such works as "The Devil's Work" sculptures by Dustin Farnsworth and "Los Caprichos" etchings by Francisco de Goya.

Acline Studios

132 N. Acline St.

The arts space features working artist studios and art exhibitions. It serves as a hub for creativity, offering a platform for artists to share their work while fostering public engagement and dialogue.

TRAX Visual Art Center

122 Sauls St.

The former warehouse is one of South Carolina's arts centers. It includes two exhibition spaces, a sculpture garden and artists' studios.

Moore Farms Botanical Garden

100 New Zion Road

Lake City benefactor and native Darla Moore has turned her grandfather's farm into a botanical garden, outdoor art venue and horticultural research center. It's open from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. during ArtFields.





BIG DREAMS College of Charleston grad Daniela Salgado first rented studio space at the Moore Foundation's Acline Studios before opening her own gallery, Daniela De Art3, down the street.

Despite the artistic flair and upscale vibe, Lake City is still a very small town, and the arts district is even smaller, compressed in a few city blocks. You can walk anywhere.

"We want to keep that small-town feel," says the city's mayor, Yamekia Robinson.

'Building a dream'

The celebration of Southern art is Lake City's new identity, and its ArtFields festival draws the crowds. This year, the festival has selected 370 works from artists across 11 states. The art will be displayed in more than 50 venues that range

"They're building a dream here, and I want to be a part of it." —DANIELA SALGADO

from the 22,000-square-foot Ragsdale Old Building (the ROB) to the local hardware store and medical clinic.

"They are literally everywhere," ArtFields Director Caitlin Bright says.

Judges award a grand prize of \$50,000 to the first-place winner and \$25,000 to the runner-up. Two people's choice awards will receive \$12,500, and five merit winners get \$2,000. This year's judges include representatives of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Academy of Design.

The festival is expected to draw 12,000 visitors, and it will likely grow in the future. The town doesn't have the hotel rooms to handle bigger crowds right now.

"When we get more hotel rooms, we'll be able to expand our programming," Bright says.

The town and foundation are also exploring ways to attract new residents and build affordable housing to keep locals at home. "It's the next step for us," Rodgers says.

Although there is plenty to see and do on any given weekend, the festival drives the local economy. "We're like a beach town with a nine-day summer," says Jamison Kerr, the foundation's director of art town development.

So Moore's foundation and town leaders are working to build Lake City's year-round appeal. The botanical garden hosts a full calendar of events, from outdoor movie nights and "wine walks" to the popular Beer Fest, held in September. Most events are free. And the three foundation-owned galleries—TRAX, the Jones-Carter Gallery and Acline Studios Gallery—mount exhibits that change nine times a year, drawing crowds on opening weekends.

Acline also offers studio spaces that host up-and-coming and established artists alike, open to the public. Private galleries dot the streets, such as the new Daniela De Art3, owned by Colombian artist Daniela Salgado. She emigrated from Bogotá, Columbia, to Charleston in 2015 when she was 17 years old, attended the College of Charleston and began painting in her home, selling her works online.

"I've been artistic since I was 2 years old," she says. She moved into Acline studios this past June and in December opened her own gallery in a brightly painted storefront just down the street.

"They're building a dream here," Salgado says, "and I want to be a part of it."

Even April Matthews, who grew up in the fruit stand and was leery of the town's makeover at first, is expanding. She's opened an ice cream parlor across the street. It's named "Daisy's Snax," after her daughter.

"I didn't like all the changes at first, with all the cranes and construction going on," she says. "I didn't see the bigger picture. But look at the town now." ☺

GET THERE



The ArtFields 2025 Competition and Festival runs April 25 to May 3. Artworks will be displayed at more than 50 venues around Lake City.

HOURS: 10 a.m.–7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1–6 p.m. Sunday.

DON'T MISS: Special events throughout the festival include Lake City Live, Makers Market, Sundown Rundown Artist Talks and the Wet Paint Competition.

DETAILS: artfieldssc.org

◀ Visitors attend a class during the 2022 ArtFields festival.

HONORING HEROES

The Medal of Honor Museum provides immersive experiences to connect with soldiers' stories

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SARAH ELLIS OWEN

▲ The USS Yorktown, a World War II aircraft carrier, houses the Medal of Honor Museum at Patriots Point. ▼ The entryway to the museum features an etching wall with the names of every Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, dating to the Civil War.

Darling I love you with all my heart and I know you do me. Just be true until we can be together again and maybe we won't have so much to worry about then. I must close. Kiss Sharon for me and let her know I love her and you too.
Love,
Vernon McGarity

WORDS FROM A 23-YEAR-OLD ARMY soldier, held captive in Germany in 1945, capture a small sense of the personal sacrifice that underlies every war. The words are memorialized inside what museum designer Mark Catton describes as one of the best-kept secrets in South Carolina, the Medal of Honor Museum aboard the USS Yorktown battleship at Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant.

"We tell the story of the commitment that these gentlemen make and the fact that they have integrity and they have courage," says Catton, who first experienced the Medal of Honor Museum some 13 years ago and then was called on to revitalize it a decade later. "These guys run to the sound of gunfire. ... They're not doing it because they want a medal. They're doing it because it's what they're trained to do and they don't want to let the guy standing next to them down."

If you visited the museum in the past, it likely would be unrecognizable to you now since its substantial renovation and reopening in May 2024. Visitors to the renovated museum are welcomed by a mural depicting the "everyman" soldier and representing each American war and branch of the military, along with an "etching wall" containing the names of thousands of Medal of Honor recipients. Inside, the interactive and environment-driven exhibits—from a Civil War-era log cabin to a bamboo hut in Vietnam—aim to engage visitors far more ►►

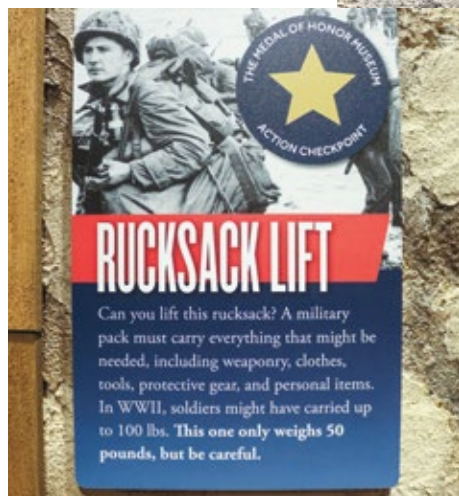


deeply than reading plaques on a wall.

Army Technical Sgt. Vernon McGarity was stationed near Krinkelt, Belgium, during World War II when the Germans attacked on Dec. 16, 1944. McGarity was wounded but refused evacuation, instead leading his men in fighting for more than a day as they held their position. The wounded McGarity repeatedly charged into fire to help his fellow soldiers, but he was taken as a prisoner of war in the aftermath of the battle. McGarity was held for the rest of the war as a prisoner in a German camp, and upon his release, he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Alongside McGarity's story are artifacts belonging to and honoring the more than 3,500 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, spanning every branch of the military and every major American war and conflict since the Civil War.

You'll see dog tags worn by Army Capt. Ronald E. Ray in Vietnam. A pocket-sized New Testament Bible carried by Army Technician 5th Grade Robert D. Maxwell in World War II. Body armor worn by Army Sgt. Ryan M. Pitts in Afghanistan. You can peer through a night vision goggle simulator, step inside a partial replica of a helicopter air ambulance, try lifting the weight of a soldier's 50-pound rucksack on your shoulders, or get a taste of boot camp on pull-up bars. "Easter



▲ **ON DISPLAY** A complete renovation of the museum was finished about a year ago, making the stories and artifacts of more than 3,500 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, from the Civil War to present, accessible and inviting.

▼ **INTERACTIVE ATTRACTIONS** Visitors have the opportunity to perform tasks soldiers face, such as the rucksack lift, and to discover "Easter eggs," including Kilroy, tucked here and there.



eggs," as Catton calls them, sprinkled throughout the museum include "Kilroy was here" graffiti that was popular during World War II and wacky string that was carried by soldiers in the War on Terror to help detect trip wires.

The Medal of Honor itself gets the spotlight with educational displays on its history and design through each military branch and examples of the medals encased alongside stories of the men who received them—"Many of them so young, just in their 20s when they acted as heroes," Catton says.

Catton says he hopes that by entering an immersive environment, visitors will

GET THERE

The Medal of Honor Museum is aboard the USS Yorktown at Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

WHERE: 40 Patriots Point Road, Mount Pleasant.

TICKETS: Entrance to the Medal of Honor Museum is included with the price of admission at Patriots Point. Tickets are \$23 for children aged 6–12 and \$28 for adults and teens aged 13 and up, with discounts available for seniors, military members, first responders and teachers.

DETAILS: Get more information at patriotspoint.org or by calling (843) 884-2727.

slow down and take time to engage with the experiences and stories of the medal recipients.

"I think if they think for a minute about these core values, (they'll) realize, 'Thank goodness that there are others in this country who put others before themselves,'" Catton says. "It's just that simple. These guys did not want to let their buddies down." ☺

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SPRING & SUMMER TRAVEL GUIDE



BROOKGREEN
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Brookgreen.org/summer for information and tickets

Gardens of Glass:

The Art of Craig Mitchell Smith

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Gardens of Glass: The Art of Craig Mitchell Smith showcases vibrant glass sculptures that capture nature's beauty.

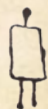
The exhibit is included with daytime admission, while evening visits require a separate ticket to *Summer Light: Art by Night*, Wednesdays and Saturdays, June 4 – August 30.



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- **August 16**
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- **September 19 - 20**
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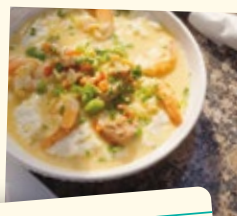


A SLICE OF CULTURE



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A woman and a young girl are tubing down a river. The woman is in the foreground, sitting in a blue inflatable tube, looking back and smiling. The girl is in a tube behind her, also smiling. They are surrounded by water and lush green trees in the background. The scene is bright and sunny.

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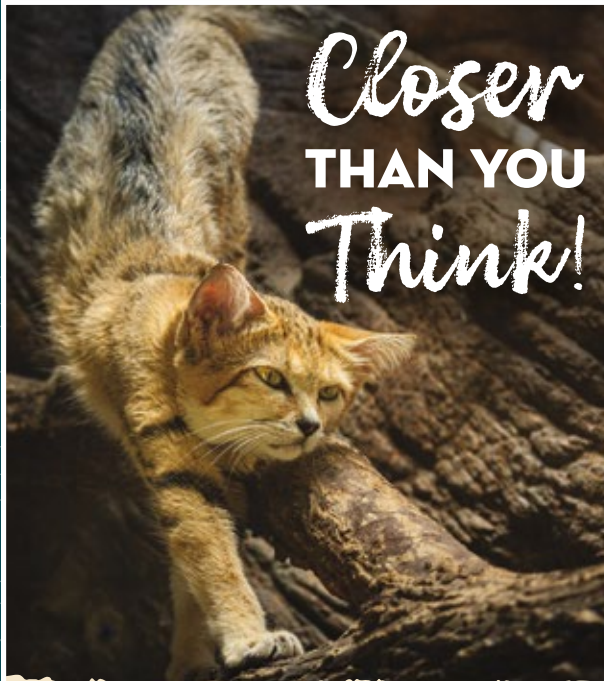
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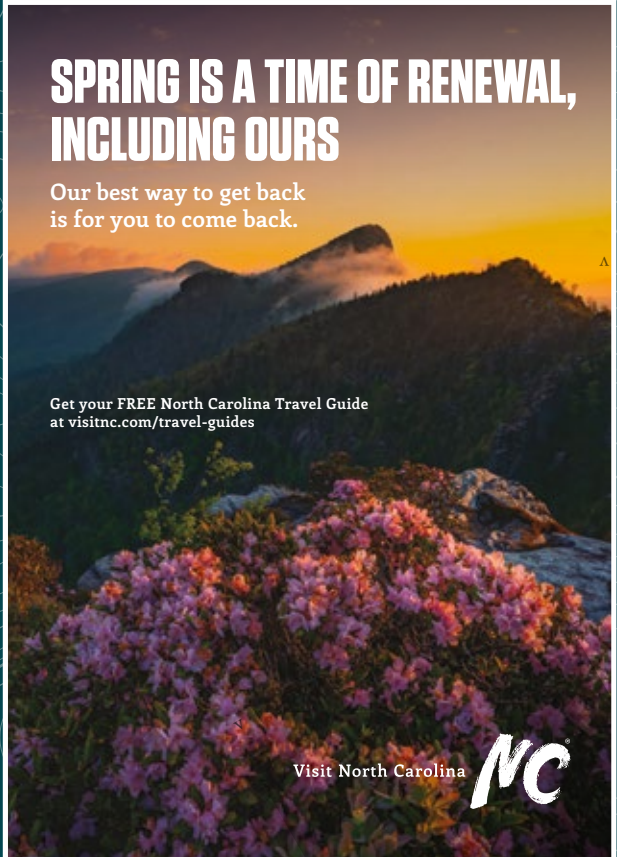


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OPENING RECEPTION
Wednesday, April 30, 6-8pm
Charleston Area Convention Center

ARTY BLOCK PARTY
(street market with live music)
Saturday, May 3, 5-8:30pm
Olde Village of North Charleston
East Montague Avenue

EXHIBITION ENCORE
Sunday, May 4, 2-5pm
Charleston Area Convention Center



Passwords to the past

Place names
unlock
South Carolina
histories and
mysteries

BY HASTINGS HENSEL

A FEW YEARS AGO, I TOOK AN 800-PLUS-MILE ROAD TRIP around South Carolina to learn about the origins of 10 of the state's most intriguingly named communities: Round O, North, Plum Branch, Ninety Six, Due West, Possum Kingdom, Cross Anchor, Prosperity, Coward and Ketchuptown.

Colorful town names, I knew, would lead me down colorful backroads to colorful places and colorful people. And I wasn't wrong. However, there remained so many other towns that I did not reach but that still tantalized me and beckoned me on the South Carolina map. Blue Brick, Trio, Eureka, Lone Star, Lucknow, Stringfellow, Bucklick, Climax, Goat Alley, Giant ... to name but a few.

So, in the fall of 2024, I set out again. I had one condition—I planned to wheel into each town only with wild imagination rather than actual knowledge (e.g., "Stringfellow must have been named after a skinny man." "They must have found something pretty good in Eureka."). That is, I would conduct real research only after my visit.

Along this second, 450-plus-mile journey, I was reminded that place names are the great passwords that unlock history and personal memory. As far as conversation starters go, to ask someone about the town's name is as fruitful as asking them about where to find the town's best cheeseburger. The next thing you know, you are talking about rabbit hunting or training horses or the last passenger train to come through town.

Although many of these places were long past their heyday, and some had even become ghost towns, I was reminded of an essential truth—that what lives on is the name and the voices of the people who speak that name and call it home.

BRICK-A-BRAC Top: Uneven heat distribution caused the blue hue that imbued bricks fired in beehive kilns decades ago at Marion Ceramics.

Blue Brick • MARION COUNTY

After poring over the map and discovering a locale called Blue Brick, I'm hoping for a little neighborhood of blue brick houses tucked away in the green expanse of Marion County farmland. But when the asphalt gives way to dirt, I find myself going through a set of open gates with the inscription Marion Ceramics: Founded 1885.

Bulldozers are pushing clay into big heaping mounds, and I know I've entered some kind of mine or quarry. With sheepish reluctance, I get out of the car and approach the trailer office. These folks are doing serious work, and here I am digging around for a few words.

The first man I meet is Wayne Kirby, the vice president of marketing and someone friendly enough to tell me to hold on a minute, that he'll be right back with something. Sure enough, Mr. Kirby returns holding—of all things—a blue brick. It has the word PEE DEE imprinted on it in big block letters.

"This brick," he says, "used to be fired here in beehive kilns, which are round kilns, kind of like a dome. And they'd load it up with brick, and they'd just heat it up. But it wouldn't be even distribution—some places would get hotter than others—so you'd get blue brick, along with regular red."

The owner of the company comes out, laughs, and says I look like a tourist lost on my way to Myrtle Beach. It's a fair



SILENT SENTRY A not-so-blue brick building served as the post office for the old Blue Brick community.

COURTESY OF MARION CERAMICS

point. When I try to explain what I'm doing—looking for why there's a Blue Brick on the map—he tells me that there once was a community here, with a post office right over there.

One hundred thirty-nine years later, Marion Ceramics is still making bricks at this site today—face bricks, thin bricks, pool coping bricks, brick tiles—but, alas, no more blue bricks. Those, as they say, are history.

Lucknow • LEE COUNTY

At the Lucknow Mini Mart, Andrew "Pop" Williams and Deborah Tisdale Gardner say the same thing: When the logging companies came here, they looked around at all the longleaf pines and said, "We're in the luck now!"

But, they say, that also might just be a legend. If anyone knows for sure, it will be Cecil Stevens, and they give me directions to his house.

No one is home, but the license plate on the Cadillac reads LUCKNOW, and I know I've absolutely got to locate Cecil Stevens. And as luck would have it in Lucknow, his wife pulls into the driveway and tells me he's down at the church.

I find Mr. Stevens, the Lee County historian, out back of the church, near the cemetery, sawing wood for a new door frame. He doesn't seem at all surprised to see me.

"That's a myth—and it's been written and written and written—but it's not true," he says, about the story I heard at the Mini Mart. "They were in luck now, but they didn't name it Lucknow."



YOU'RE IN LUCK NOW An April shower dampens activity at the Lucknow Mini Mart, but luckily it'll bring May flowers.

JOSH P. GROTZER

According to Stevens and an old map in his office, Lucknow Village was part of the Buffalo Township in the late 1700s, and many of the first villagers had emigrated from Scotland. ▶▶

[LUCKNOW, CONT.]

“Now, this is what I think; it’s not fact, but there’s a place in Scotland called L-O-C-K-N-A-W,” he says. “Some of them came from that little town called Locknaw. That makes more sense.”

He suggests the spelling of Lucknow is an Americanized phonetic change—like how Bardo, Kentucky, was named after Bordeaux, France.

It might be said that the town itself—which once had a

movie theater, jail, turpentine mill and sugar cane mill—ran out of luck when the last train came through. But for his part, Stevens remembers that story fondly.

“When my mother was about 20 or 21, she took me out to Lucknow as the train was making its last run,” he says. “The conductor took me up in his arms and rode me about a block down the track and brought me back up. Now, they always told me this. They said, ‘Cecil, you was the last one to ride the train.’”

Lone Star • CALHOUN COUNTY

I figure that someone from Texas, the Lone Star state, must have settled here in Lone Star, South Carolina. The place certainly has the



MILTON MORRIS

ONLY A MEMORY Lone Star Barbecue and Mercantile founder Pat Williams, right, and his son Chris, pictured together in 2013, ran the restaurant before selling it in 2018. Five years later, the building was lost in a Christmas Eve fire.

look of a Western ghost town. A two-story brick building is boarded up and locked. A white clapboard shack needs a fresh coat of paint and is locked. The Lone Star S.C. Store has a barred front door with a sign telling me this is “Private Property.”

I approach one of the lone houses in Lone Star, standing there among acres of cotton fields in white bloom.

A vivacious poodle comes leaping out, followed by Martha Shirer, who has lived in Lone Star for over 60 years. She gets straight to the point. Lone Star got its name, she says, “Because one day the train came by and saw a star up in the sky.”

We flip through a thick three-ring binder full of laminated *Times* and *Democrat* newspaper articles she’s cut out over the years. When I get back home, I read the articles she selects for me, and I learn that the town was supposed to be called Auburn. It was developed by the Pee Dee Land Company back when the Atlantic Coastline Railroad laid tracks through the territory in 1893. Some legends support Shirer’s lone-star-in-the-sky story, and some say it was indeed a homesick Texan who named the town.

In 2000, four of the town’s buildings were moved to Santee, South Carolina, to become the Lone Star Barbecue & Mercantile Tavern and Grill. Unfortunately, the facility caught fire on Christmas Eve in 2023.

“One of the stores that went to Santee was the post office,” Shirer tells me. “It took me a long time to accept it. It was like they tore up Lone Star.”

According to a recent article published on the *Times* and *Democrat* website, the barbecue joint plans to rebuild in Santee but admits that, like Lone Star itself, “What was lost can’t be replaced.” ☹️

READ MORE Join Hastings Hensel for more of his journey to small towns with big names. Visit [SCLiving.coop](https://www.scliving.coop) to read what he learned about the origins of three more South Carolina communities: Ruby, Birdtown and Privateer.



Upstate

APRIL

24 Blue Wall Birding Festival, Table Rock State Park, Pickens. (864) 878-9813.

25–26 Pickens Azalea Festival, downtown, Pickens. (864) 301-1798 or pickensazaleafestival.com.

25–26 Stone Soup Storytelling Festival, 134 S. Main St., Woodruff. (864) 670-9980 or stonesoupssc.org.

26 Fishing with Friends Trout Tournament, Devils Fork State Park, Salem. friendsofjocassee.org.

26 Greenville Greener Earth Day Festival, various locations, Greenville. (864) 331-9216 or makegvgreener.com.

26 Greater Greenville Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale, 17 Roper Mountain Road, Greenville. ggmgga.org.

26–27 Annual Revolutionary War Encampment, Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, Clinton. (864) 938-0100.

MAY

1–3 Abbeville Spring Festival, downtown, Abbeville. (864) 366-5017 or abbevillecitysc.com.

1–4 Piedmont Plant & Flower Festival, Greenville State Farmers Market, Greenville. agriculture.sc.gov.

1–11 The Great Anderson County Fair, Anderson Sports & Entertainment Center, Anderson. thegreatandersoncountyfair.com.

3 Cribbs Kitchen Burger Cook-Off, W. Main Street and Daniel Morgan Avenue, Mauldin. (864) 582-0673 or childrencancerpartners.org.

4 Tacos 'n Tequila Fiesta, Events at Judson Mill, Greenville. (864) 248-4868 or tacotequilafiesta.com.

7–10 Albino Skunk Music Festival, The Skunk Farm, Greer. albinoskunk.com.

9–11 Artisphere, downtown, Greenville. artisphere.org.

15–18 "The Wall That Heals" touring replica of Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Deer Wood Farms, Liberty. (864) 898-5926 or pickensveterans.org.

16–17 Erskine Flower & Garden Show, Erskine College, Due West. erskine.edu/flower-garden.

16–18 Greenville Greek Festival, St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Greenville. greekforaday.com.

23 Great Scot! Parade, Main Street, Greenville. gallabrae.com.

24 Flopeye Fish Festival, Great Falls Baptist Church, Great Falls. flopeyefishfestival.com.

SCLiving.coop/calendar

Our mobile-friendly site lists even more festivals, shows and events. You'll also find instructions on submitting your event. Please confirm information with the hosting event before attending.

24 Greenville Scottish Games, Furman University, Greenville. gallabrae.com.

Midlands

APRIL

22–27 Columbia Food & Wine Festival, various locations, Columbia. columbiafoodandwinefestival.com.

25 Wine Tasting at Riverbanks Botanical Garden, Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Columbia. (803) 779-8717 or riverbanks.org.

25–26 Newberry Pork in the Park, Memorial Park, Newberry. newberryporkinthepark.com.

25–26 Purple Martin Festival, downtown, St. Matthews. (803) 874-0101 or calhounconnects.com.

26 Aiken Electric Cooperative Touchstone Energy Run United, Newberry Street Festival Area, Aiken. facebook.com/rununitedaiken.

26 Sharpvue Irmo International Festival, Moore Park, Irmo. sharpvueirmointernationalfestival.com.

26 Kid's Day of Lexington, Lexington Municipal Complex and Icehouse Amphitheater, Lexington. (803) 356-8554 or lexingtonkidsday.com.

26 Kinetic Derby Day, Meeting and State streets, West Columbia. kineticderbyday.com.

26 Lower Richland Sweet Potato Festival, Hopkins Park, Hopkins. lowerrichlandsweetpotatofest.com.



RUNNING FOR GOOD Aiken Electric Co-op's Run United takes place this year on April 26 in downtown Aiken. Proceeds benefit United Way of Aiken County, Inc.

MAY

2–3 BirdFest Music Festival, Wildlife Education Center, Pinewood. birdfestmusic.com.

2–3 South Carolina Strawberry Festival, Walter Elisha Park, Fort Mill. scstrawberryfestival.com.

3 Johnston Peach Blossom Festival, downtown, Johnston. johnstondevelopmentcorp.org.

3–4 Festival of Roses, Edisto Memorial Gardens, Orangeburg. (803) 534-6821 or orangeburgchamber.com.

4 Spring Open House, Lexington County Museum, Lexington. (803) 359-8369 or lexingtoncountymuseum.org.

8–10 South Carolina Poultry Festival, downtown, Leesville. scpoultryfestival.com.

16–18 Iris Festival, Swan Lake Iris Gardens, Sumter. (803) 436-2500 or sumterisc.gov.

17 Car and Truck 3rd Annual All-Day Cruise-In and Parts Swap Meet, 1623 Columbia Highway N., Aiken. (803) 422-1266.

22–25 The Black Cowboy Festival & Rodeo, Greenfield Farm, Rembert. blackcowboyfestival.net.

Pee Dee & Lowcountry

APRIL

19 Striped Bass Festival Dam Run, 1022 Randolph's Landing Way, Manning. (803) 435-4405 or clarendoncounty.com.



The 2025 South Carolina Ag + Art Tour is a free, self-guided tour of farms and markets featuring local artisans. More dates follow in June. For details, visit agandarttour.com.

MAY

3 Hampton County

3 Lancaster County

3 McCormick County

3–4 Pickens County

10 Aiken County

10 Newberry County

10–11 Berkeley County

17 Abbeville County

17 Anderson County

17 Bamberg County

17 Calhoun County

17 Colleton County

17 Laurens County

31 Kershaw County

31 Lexington County

21–27 Charleston Cocktail Week, various locations, Charleston. charlestoncocktailweek.org.

21–29 Charleston Jazz Festival, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 641-0011 or charlestonjazz.com.

22–26 Myrtle Beach International Film Festival, The Grand 14—The Market Common, Myrtle Beach. myrtlebeachfilmfestival.com.

23–27 Art Charleston, The Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston. (843) 722-2706 or gibbesmuseum.org.

24–27 Pee Dee Plant & Flower Festival, Pee Dee State Farmers Market, Florence. agriculture.sc.gov.

24–30 Society of Stranders Spring Safari, various locations, North Myrtle Beach. shagdance.com/safari.

25–26 Colleton County Rice Festival, downtown, Walterboro. (843) 549-1079 or facebook.com/walterboro.ricefestival.

25–May 3 ArtFields, downtown, Lake City. artfieldssc.org.

25–May 4 Jersey Boys, Florence Little Theatre, Florence. (843) 662-3731 or florencelittletheatre.org.

26 Battle in a Box—Revolutionary War Reenactment, Old Santee Canal Park, Moncks Corner. (843) 899-5200 or oldsanteecanalpark.org.

26 Bright Ideas 5K, Cypress Gardens, Moncks Corner. berkeleyelectric.coop/bright-ideas-5k.

26 Shadow Bay Celtic Festival, 3833 Socastee Blvd., Myrtle Beach. mythicalmedievalfest.com.

26–27 Art Festival, Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet. brookgreen.org.

27 Blessing of the Fleet & Seafood Festival, Memorial Waterfront Park, Mount Pleasant. (803) 884-8517 or experiencemountpleasant.com.

30–May 4 North Charleston Arts Fest, various venues, North Charleston. northcharlestonartsfest.com.

MAY

2–3 A Taste of Beaufort Festival, Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. atatasteofbeaufort.com.

3 Charleston Dragon Boat Festival, Brittlebank Park, Charleston. dragonboatcharleston.org.

4 Pedal Hilton Head Island, Lowcountry Celebration Park, Hilton Head Island. pedalhhi.org.

9–10 Barnwell Sundial Festival, downtown, Barnwell. barnwellsundial.com.

9–11 Charleston Greek Festival, Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity, Charleston. charlestongreekfestival.com.

10 Bluffton Mayfest, historic downtown, Bluffton. (843) 540-7957 or blufftonrotary.org.

10–12 Myrtle Beach Sun Fun Festival, Plyler Beach, Myrtle Beach. sunfunmb.com.

16–17 All Saints Garden Tour, various locations, Hilton Head Island. (843) 681-8333.

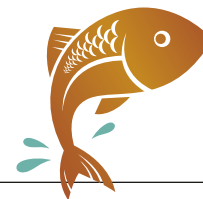
17–18 Blue Crab Festival, Little River Waterfront, Little River. bluecrabfestival.org.

23 Caroline Aiken and Yes Ma'am Family Band at the Awendaw Green Barn Jam, Awendaw Green, Awendaw. (843) 452-1642 or awendawgreen.com.

23–25 Original Gullah Festival, Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. originalgullahfestival.org.

23–June 8 Spoleto and Piccolo Spoleto, multiple venues, Charleston. spoletousa.org and piccolospoleto.com.

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FISH & GAME CHART

The Solunar forecast provides feeding and migration times. Major periods can bracket the peak by more than an hour, minor periods by a half-hour before and after.

	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
APRIL				
16	8:27	2:15	8:52	2:40
17	9:22	3:10	9:48	3:35
18	10:19	4:06	10:46	4:32
19	11:16	5:03	11:43	5:30
20	—	5:59	12:12	6:25
21	12:39	6:52	1:05	7:18
22	1:29	7:42	1:54	8:07
23	2:16	8:28	2:40	8:53
24	2:59	9:12	3:24	9:36
25	3:42	9:55	4:07	10:20
26	4:28	10:41	4:54	11:07
27	5:18	11:32	5:46	12:00
28	6:16	12:01	6:46	12:31
29	7:21	1:05	7:52	1:36
30	8:30	2:14	9:02	2:46
MAY				
1	9:40	3:24	10:11	3:55
2	10:46	4:31	11:16	5:01
3	11:47	5:33	—	6:00
4	12:16	6:28	12:40	6:52
5	1:03	7:15	1:26	7:37
6	1:45	7:55	2:06	8:16
7	2:22	8:32	2:42	8:52
8	2:56	9:06	3:16	9:25
9	3:30	9:40	3:50	10:00
10	4:05	10:16	4:26	10:36
11	4:44	10:55	5:06	11:17
12	5:27	11:38	5:50	—
13	6:14	12:02	6:39	12:27
14	7:07	12:54	7:32	1:19
15	8:02	1:49	8:28	2:15
16	9:00	2:47	9:27	3:13
17	9:58	3:45	10:24	4:11
18	10:55	4:42	11:21	5:08
19	11:49	5:37	—	6:02
20	12:16	6:28	12:40	6:52
21	1:03	7:14	1:26	7:38
22	1:46	7:58	2:10	8:22
23	2:29	8:41	2:54	9:06
24	3:13	9:26	3:39	9:53
25	4:01	10:16	4:30	10:45
26	4:56	11:12	5:27	11:43
27	5:58	—	6:31	12:47
28	7:05	12:49	7:38	1:22
29	8:14	1:59	8:45	2:30
30	9:21	3:07	9:50	3:35
31	10:23	4:10	10:49	4:36

DATA BY SOLUNAR SERVICES



APRIL IN THE GARDEN

■ Take time to visit local arboreta, botanical gardens and nurseries with display gardens to enjoy their versions of early spring beauty. And who knows? You might find some interesting plants or landscape design ideas to try in your garden!

■ Welcome your feathered friends back by giving birdbaths a good cleaning and restocking bird feeders with fresh seed weekly. If adding birdhouses in the garden is on your to-do list, opt for wooden models because they will provide better insulation for nesting birds as the summer heat begins to rise.



L.A. JACKSON

WARM-WEATHER BEAUTIES It's time to plant pretties such as this "Sunny Keys" Oriental lily.

TIP OF THE MONTH The colorful parade of fall-planted, spring-blooming bulbs is becoming a memory now, but fret not, intrepid gardeners. Rising soil temperatures mean plantings of dazzling warm-season bulbs such as dahlias, gladioli, amaryllis and caladiums can begin. Want even more summertime visual sizzle? Consider planting "false" lilies, such as calla lilies (*Zantedeschia* sp.), glory lilies (*Gloriosa superba*), lilies-of-the-Nile (*Agapanthus* sp.), crinum lilies (*Crinum* sp.) and rain lilies (*Zephyranthes* sp.), as well as "true" lilies (*Lilium* sp.), with Easter lilies, Asiatic lilies, Oriental lilies and tiger lilies being common finds.

Avoid spring mistakes for a summer bounty

Common causes of poor fruit set can be cut off at the pass

BY L.A. JACKSON



GARDENER'S REWARD
Proper fruit set leads to bountiful harvests.

L.A. JACKSON

WHILE SPRING IS A SEASON OF GIDDY optimism for gardeners planting warm-season vegetables, summertime reality lurks in the form of meager harvests due to poor fruit set. This occurs for several reasons, but many can be cut off at the pass with proper gardening techniques. Below are four of the more common causes:

Shady situation. Sun-loving summer vegetables will not properly produce in areas that receive less than six hours of Ol' Sol a day. Why? Too much shade can cause veggie plants to back off making flowers. And then, it's simple botany: Fewer blooms equal fewer vegetables.

Feeding frenzy. A sin many gardeners commit: too much fertilizer. Fertilizer is, of course, necessary for healthy plants—that is, in moderation. Slinging loads of fertilizer willy-nilly—especially ones with high nitrogen content—can yield large plants with lush foliage. But the extra leaves are often produced at the expense of fewer flowers. Tilling in gobs of compost (either homemade or store-bought) at planting time is a good way to fertilize vegetables organically. Granular fertilizers can also do the job, starting with sprinkling a small handful of 10-10-10 or 8-8-8 around each veggie (not in the prepared hole) at planting time and

adding another round as they begin to set fruit.

Pesticides gone wild. Many flowering vegetables rely on bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects for crop production. But bad bugs also visit the veggie patch. If you have to resort to pesticides to dispatch problem-causing insects, try a contact killer to minimize harming beneficial six-leggers. I use such bug boppers only when absolutely necessary, but when I do, my usual preference is well-aimed squirts of pyrethrin spray because it breaks down (meaning becomes safe) quickly after drying. Also, I only go pest hunting early in the morning or late in the day when beneficial insect activity is at a minimum.

Water woes. Giving maturing vegetables a quick splash here or a fast splash there will encourage shallow root formation, which, during dry times, makes plants more susceptible to stress—and typically fewer flowers. Water thoroughly for deeper saturation into the ground, and the roots will follow. Also, maintaining about 3 inches of mulch will help stabilize soil moisture through the long growing season. ☺

L.A. JACKSON is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine. Contact him at lajackson1@gmail.com.

Give me crispy, or give me death

BY JAN A. IGOE

MOTHER TERESA AND ALBERT

Schweitzer may have been great humanitarians, but as good guys go, they have nothing on my friend Rick, who has two charitable missions in life: training service dogs for disabled veterans and saving mankind from soggy french fries.

In a world of fast-food drive-thrus, the middling masses allow limp spuds to pass as edible fare, but Rick recognizes the demise of Western civilization when he tastes it. Soggy fries mark his line in the sand.

"I refuse to be a human garbage disposal for anyone," Rick says, vowing to fight the "Vast Fresh Fry Conspiracy" with his last breath—which he may take at a drive-thru, where someone is most likely to kill him.

Potatoes have long played a pivotal role in culinary history, even before they started swimming in boiling oil. Back in 749 B.C., or so, the Incas were already cultivating future fries and mutilating close friends when the potato gods got grumpy. There's nothing like a fresh fried volcano virgin to cheer up a cranky supreme being.

Now, every time Rick ventures into a drive-thru, he summons those deities for a miracle: un-heat lamped, extra crispy, fresh-from-the-fryer fries.

"Welcome. May I take your order?" the squawky voice in the box inquires.

"I want a cheeseburger and large fries. But ..." Rick says, waving his finger at the speaker, "the fries must be fresh. They must exit the bubbling oil and come directly to my lips. If they are not pristine, I will know. I am a fry man."

Rick's finger is still wagging at the box, but the voice doesn't see it.

"OK, so you want fries with that. Pull up to the first window," the box says.



"Please give me the freshest, hottest, crispiest fries you have. ... I'll gladly snorkel into that fryer and fetch them myself if you'd like."

As the cashier takes his cash, Rick smiles brightly and continues his plea, lest a soggy fry inflict itself on his palate. "Please give me the freshest, hottest, crispiest fries you have. I can spot a dud spud a mile away. I'll gladly snorkel into that fryer and fetch them myself if you'd like."

The girl at the window with the freeze-dried smile had at least 10 minutes of training on appeasing peculiar customers but can't recall corporate policy on snorkeling.

"I'll tell them," she says, without moving her lips.

By the time we pull up to the delivery window, a dozen cars have lined up behind us. Rick's next victim hands him his burger, accompanied by a bag of mushy fries, doomed to flunk inspection.

He shifts the car into park and returns the bag to the clueless employee who has

not been privy to one syllable of the fry speech.

"Excuse me, Miss. These fries are soggy. Please give me some right out of the cooker," Rick says, cutting off the engine. "I'll wait right here."

No amount of pleading can budge him away from that window. Horns honk while famished, fist-waving families rush toward our car. They don't seem to realize he's fighting for their rights. Leaving without fresh fries would only bring the world closer to doom.

"Maybe you should have offered something to the potato gods," I quip to Rick, who is eyeballing me strangely when he pops an intensely personal question.

"Look, there's only so much I'll do for charity. Besides, we're nowhere near a volcano and I have two kids," I huff. "Sacrifice something else."

Next time, we'll stop for pizza. Let's hope the crust is hot and crispy. ☺

EDITOR'S NOTE: South Carolina Living is reprinting some of Jan A. Igoe's previous columns. This "Humor Me" originally appeared in the October 2012 issue. Visit SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe.

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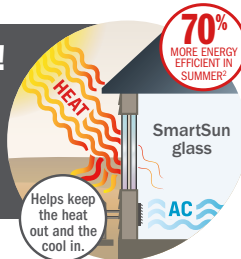
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