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tri-countyelectric.net

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.
 Friday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SANTEE OFFICE

9348 Old Number Six Hwy.
 Santee, SC 29142
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CO-OP NEWS EDITOR

Sheila D. Rivers



Working together to lower demand

WHEN OUTDOOR TEMPERATURES drop, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us

indoors, where we rely more on our home heating systems, water heaters and household appliances.

Heating systems, by far our homes' biggest power users, run longer and more frequently in the winter to keep us comfortable and warm. Combine that with the fact that we all tend to use electricity the most at the same times—in the mornings and late evenings during cold weather months—and the result is significant pressure on our electric grid.

Tri-County Electric works closely with Central Electric Power Cooperative, our provider of wholesale generation and transmission solutions, to plan for these seasonal weather patterns and changes. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have reliable power whenever you need it. However, it's important to remember that our co-op is part of a much larger regional and national electric grid.

During the winter months, when homes and businesses across the country are using more electricity simultaneously, overall demand can approach—or even exceed—available supply. This is especially true during severe weather events, such as ice storms, sudden temperature drops or equipment malfunctions that reduce generation capacity.

In rare cases when demand threatens to outpace supply, grid operators may call for temporary, controlled outages—often referred to as rolling blackouts—to prevent broader system failures. If such an emergency arises this winter, Tri-County Electric will provide timely updates to keep you informed and safe.

To prepare for these scenarios and reduce their likelihood, Tri-County Electric and Central take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round.

These include routine system maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning.

These steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. Still, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort—and every member can play an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress.

Should we face an energy emergency this winter, we might ask you to help by taking these simple actions:

- ▶ Lower your thermostat. Even reducing the temperature by a few degrees can help reduce the strain your heating system puts on the grid.
- ▶ Delay running large appliances such as dryers, washing machines and dishwashers.
- ▶ Adjust your water heater. Setting it to 120 degrees and spacing out showers helps conserve both energy and hot water.
- ▶ Unplug unnecessary devices. Power used for lighting and electronics isn't a major portion of your home energy use, but every little bit helps.

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill, but you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community.

Together, through small actions and shared awareness, we can ensure that our homes remain warm, our lights stay on and our local grid continues to serve us reliably throughout the season.

Chad T. Lowder

CHAD T. LOWDER
 Chief Executive Officer

Reminder!

District offices closures, new call center

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC is preparing for an important service update designed to better align with how our members connect with the co-op. Beginning March 2, the district offices located in Santee and Lower Richland will permanently close.

This change is part of our effort to enhance accessibility for our members. In recent years, member preferences have shifted significantly. Fewer than 5% now visit district offices in person, while most choose to manage their accounts and receive assistance through phone and online services.

To support this shift, TCEC has a new, Member Service Call Center. Staffed by our member service representatives, the center will allow us to provide faster, more consistent assistance by phone and online.

We recognize that adjustments like these can take time, but this approach positions Tri-County Electric to serve members more effectively.

Member service options

By Phone: (803) 874-1215 or toll-free (877) 874-1215.

Online: tri-countyelectric.net

Mobile App—TEC Mobile: Easily manage your account details, view your bill and balance, make payments, find payment locations, set up alerts and reminders and receive push notifications.

- ▶ **To download for Apple devices:** Go to the Apple app store. Search for TCE Mobile. Download the app to your device.
- ▶ **For Android and Google Users:** Go to the Google Play store. Search for TCE Mobile. Download the app to your device

Payment options

Payment kiosks are located at our St. Matthews headquarters (6473 Old State Road, St. Matthews) and our Lower Richland office (11335 Garners Ferry Road, Eastover).

Payments centers (cash only) are available at participating retail locations, including Dollar General, Family Dollar, CVS and Walgreens.

Additional payment options include **Bank Draft** and **Levelized Billing**. Go to tri-countyelectric.net and look under the My Account tab for these options.

Members who prefer face-to-face assistance are always welcome at our St. Matthews headquarters, which will continue to operate with extended hours:

Monday–Thursday: 7:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m.–1 p.m.

If you have questions about these changes, our Member Service team is ready to help at (877) 874-1215. We appreciate your understanding and continued trust as we work to serve you better.

Ready for an experience you won't forget?

Your co-op has two amazing trips planned this summer. Juniors: Apply for the Washington Youth Tour. Sophomores: Apply for the Cooperative Youth Summit.

Juniors: Experience Washington, D.C., with hundreds of students from across South Carolina and the country, meeting lawmakers and touring all the sights. Your electric co-op will cover your round-trip plane ticket, tours and meals. In other words, it's all free!

Sophomores: Experience South Carolina's capital like never before. Tour the Statehouse, meet lawmakers and see how co-ops are preparing for our state's energy future. Plus, there's plenty of fun with visits to popular Columbia attractions like the South Carolina State Museum. Your electric co-op will cover all your expenses.

We've made it easy to apply for either FREE trip. Apply today!



Washington Youth Tour: June 14-19, 2026



Cooperative Youth Summit: July 13-16, 2026



Applications available: tri-countyelectric.net/youth
Application deadline: February 27, 2026



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14 For the love of the 'little brown dog'

South Carolina's beloved state dog, the Boykin Spaniel, is a special breed of history and heart.

4 CO-OP NEWS

Updates from your local co-op.

6 AGENDA

Wouldn't it be great to say, "Good morning, house!" and watch all the right lights and appliances come to life? Smart devices make it possible.

8 SC STORIES

Sweet in every season

An Upstate candy shop, named the best in the state, is known for its succulent decor as much as its decadent treats.

10 RECIPE

Steak out!

A steak-forward dinner doesn't have to break the bank. Delicious, affordable steak meals are a few easy steps away.

18 CALENDAR + FISH & GAME CHART

19 MARKETPLACE

20 SC GARDENER

Fringe gardening

These native trees are hardy enough to survive in river bottoms and lowlands and whimsical enough to be a bright spot in your yard.

22 HUMOR ME

Live and lettuce live

Old Aunt Gladys—not a blood relative, but crazy enough to be—took home gardening to a new level, Jan A. Igoe writes in a classic column.



Button, one of breeder Johnny Holden's Boykin Spaniels, retrieves a dummy in a training exercise. Above, Holden walks with (from left) Snuff, Button and Jones. Photos by Mic Smith.

Your guide to smarter electronics

WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT to wake up, say “Good morning, house!” and stand back as the lights flash on, the coffeemaker starts, the outdoor security lighting switches off and the toaster oven begins preheating for your frozen toaster pastry? Today’s smart home electronics make it all possible.

Smart devices use digital technology and Wi-Fi to take your home to a new level of convenience and comfort—and can help reduce electricity waste and lower your energy bills. You might be surprised by some of the newer devices that could change your daily life.

SMART THERMOSTATS Heating and cooling use more energy than anything else in your home. Replacing your home’s standard thermostat with a smart model can lower your monthly electric bills while keeping you more comfortable. Smart thermostats learn your habits and take over for you. You won’t have to raise or lower your thermostat every evening because it will happen automatically. Because smart thermostats know exactly when you need electricity and when you don’t, they use a lot less energy.

SMART APPLIANCES The second-biggest share of your home’s electricity powers appliances, from your refrigerator to your water heater. Smart appliances use Wi-Fi and sensors to operate more efficiently. A smart washer can sense the size of a load and adjust the water and cycle times accordingly. Smart refrigerators can warn you when the kids leave the door open. And smart water heaters don’t waste energy by heating water while you’re asleep.



DAVID CLARK

SMART PLUGS AND POWER STRIPS An easy and affordable way to explore smart technology is with smart plugs for your wall outlets. You can plug lighting, appliances and other devices directly into smart plugs and control the devices through a single app. Smart power strips are particularly helpful for eliminating waste caused by “phantom load,” such as leaving your phone charger plugged in when it’s not charging.

SMART SHADES Perhaps you wish your family room didn’t face south because it’s always warm there during the day. Smart shades and blinds can help. You can set them to automatically open or close depending on the time of day (and year) or based on your home’s indoor temperature. They can help your air conditioner keep you cooler for less.

SMART ASSISTANTS When you combine the capabilities of individual smart home electronics with voice assistants such as Amazon Alexa or whole-home smart energy management systems, they become even more powerful. You can

teach voice assistants to carry out multiple tasks that make up your daily routine, like the “Good morning, house!” message. Energy management systems simplify control of all aspects of your home’s energy use, and some offer specific tips to help you save even more.

Be smart (with your smart devices)

While all those smart devices may make your home more energy efficient and your life more comfortable, they’re not perfect. Most require an internet connection, so if your service

is down, your smart devices can’t be controlled through the app.

Smart devices typically don’t receive frequent system updates like your smartphone or laptop, so be aware of potential security issues. Before you choose any smart home device, make sure it’s completely secure and compatible with what you have. Then prepare to be amazed by what smart home electronics will do for you.

—SCOTT FLOOD, NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

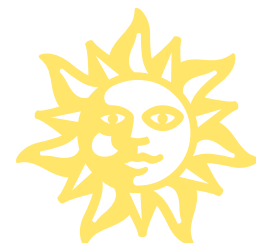
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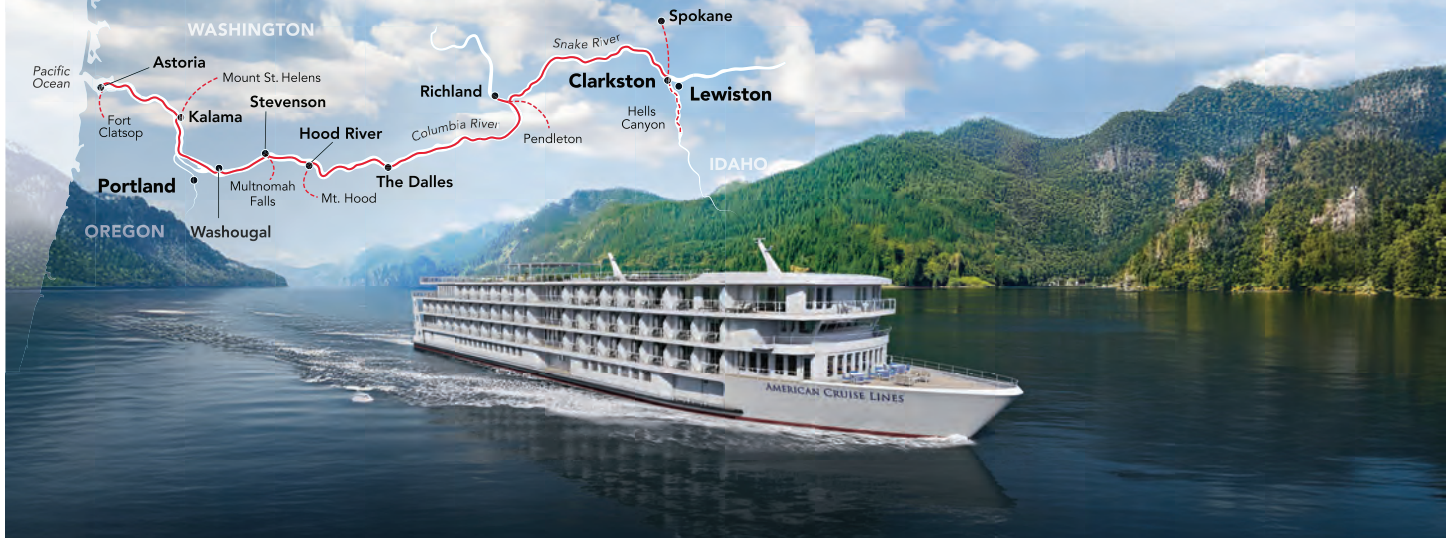
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**Kimberly Blackwell,
Claire Blackwell and
Camille Cunningham**

CLAIM TO FAME: The three women are the team behind Pendleton Candy Company, named the best candy shop in South Carolina by *Southern Living*.

SWEETEST PARTS OF THE JOB: Owner Kimberly makes the sweet treats; her daughter, Claire, is the balloon animal queen; and Claire's best friend, Camille, keeps the crew organized and on task.

BY THE NUMBERS: Kimberly makes about 40 pounds of fudge every week. On an average day, Claire and Camille whip up around 260 balloon animals for customers.

Sweet in every season

A cardboard cutout of Willy Wonka keeps watch in one corner of Pendleton Candy Company's 400-square-foot store, a smirk on his lips and mischief in his bright blue eyes. From his perch near the Jelly Belly dispenser, he studies Claire Blackwell and Camille Cunningham as they prepare for the day, stacking clamshell containers filled with thick slices of caramel praline cake and refilling trays of fudge until the display case's shelves bow under the weight of 14 homemade flavors.

Shortly before she unlocks the door at noon, Claire Blackwell cranks up a playlist of peppy '70s hits while she and Cunningham, her best friend, twist up a stockpile of balloon creations. They'll tuck these pink and blue flowers and red and orange dogs into the bag with every purchase, along with color-coordinated tissue paper and a miniature rubber duck, just for fun.

Step inside the sweets shop in downtown Pendleton, and it doesn't take long to see: Just like the quirky candymaker in the corner, the three-woman team behind Pendleton Candy Company believes in imagination.

Each season, that creativity shows up in new ways. At Halloween, 92 jack-o'-lanterns shine from the windows and perches near the ceiling.

At Christmas, an 8-foot Santa and reindeer greet customers at the door. These seasonal transformations often require a U-Haul and nearly three days of work.

"It's rewarding to transform the store every season. You get to see your work pay off and see everybody walk in and be like, 'Oh my gosh, it looks so different,'" Claire Blackwell says.

Her mother, Kimberly Blackwell, scours Facebook Marketplace and travels across the Southeast to acquire memorabilia for the shop, like the life-size M&M's men she discovered while on vacation in Florida, or the giant gumball machine she tracked down in Charlotte.

Four hundred square feet can only contain so much creativity, though. That's why Kimberly Blackwell recently purchased a 2,900-square-foot building in Liberty, South Carolina, to house Pendleton Candy Company's second location.

That means more room for jellybeans and chocolate truffles. More room for taffy and pecan pralines.

A space big enough to hold all the pure imagination this team has to offer. —LINDSEY BECKWORTH | PHOTO BY MATTHEW FRANKLIN CARTER



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STEAK OUT!

BY BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN

A steak-forward dinner doesn't have to break the bank. Make these delicious, affordable meals using less-popular cuts of beef such as sirloin, chuck, flank and skirt.

GARLIC BEEF TIPS OVER PAPPARDELLE NOODLES

SERVES 4

- 1 pound sirloin, cut into 1-inch cubes
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 8-ounce package pappardelle noodles (or fettuccine), cooked according to directions
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley

Pat steak cubes dry with paper towel and season generously with salt and pepper to taste. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add meat in a single layer (work in batches if needed). Sear 2-3 minutes per side until golden brown. Remove to a plate and set aside.

Reduce heat to medium and melt butter in skillet. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30-60 seconds, stirring constantly to prevent browning. Return meat to skillet and toss to coat in garlic sauce. Cook 1-2 minutes to warm through. Place noodles in a large serving bowl and top with meat and garlic butter sauce. Garnish with parsley and serve immediately.



GWENÉL LE VOT

STEAK TACOS

SERVES 4-6

- ¼ cup unsalted soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- Juice of 3 limes
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ pounds skirt steak
- Small corn tortillas
- Pico de gallo or salsa
- Queso fresco cheese, crumbled
- Avocado slices
- Lime wedges, for garnish

In a large bowl, whisk together soy sauce, Worcestershire, lime juice, garlic, cilantro, chili powder, cumin, salt, pepper and olive oil. Place steak in a zip-top bag or baking dish and pour the marinade over it. Seal and refrigerate for 1-4 hours. Preheat grill or large skillet over medium-high heat. Remove steak from marinade, drain and cook 4-5 minutes per side until it reaches desired doneness, 130-140 F for medium rare, measured on an instant-read thermometer. Do not overcook. Remove steak and let it rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing. Slice thinly across the grain into bite-size pieces.

Warm tortillas in a dry skillet or on the grill for a few seconds per side. Keep warm in a towel. Place the sliced steak onto warm tortillas and top generously with pico de gallo, cheese and avocado slices. Garnish with lime slices.

GINA MOORE



JULIA NEDRYGALOVA

BEEF MUSHROOM POT PIE

SERVES 4

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound stewing beef, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 8 ounces mushrooms, quartered or thick sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 cup beef stock
- ½ cup red wine (optional, or use more beef stock)
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 package frozen puff pastry
- 1 large egg, beaten

In a large saucepan over medium heat, heat oil. Cook beef in a single layer (work in batches if needed) until browned on all sides. Remove from pan onto a plate. Reduce heat to medium. Add onions and cook until softened, about 3–5 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook until they release their moisture and start to brown. Add garlic and cook an additional 30–60 seconds. Stir in flour and tomato paste, cooking 1–2 minutes until combined and paste darkens slightly.

Gradually pour in beef stock and wine, stirring to prevent lumps. Add Worcestershire sauce, thyme, salt and pepper. Return beef to pan. Bring mixture to a boil and reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for at least 1 hour or until beef is tender and sauce has thickened. Remove from heat and allow mixture to cool for at least 10 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut thawed puff pastry into circles to fit over four 5-inch ovenproof ramekins, allowing a ½-inch overhang around the rims. Using a scoop or ladle, spoon cooled beef mixture into individual ramekins. Brush top edge of each ramekin with water. Place pastry cutoffs over the top of each dish and press edges down to help pastry seal to top of ramekin during baking.

Whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon water, and brush over tops of pastry. Using a paring knife, cut four small slits in each pastry top to allow steam to escape. Bake for 20–30 minutes or until pastry is puffed and golden brown. Serve individual pies with mashed potatoes and/or steamed vegetables.



KAREN HERMANN

PEPPER STEAK AND RICE

SERVES 4

- 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
- 1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded and cut into strips
- 1 green bell pepper, cored, seeded and cut into strips
- 1 medium onion, peeled and sliced
- 1¼ pound flank steak (or sirloin), thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger
- ¼ cup unsalted soy sauce (also referred to as tamarri)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ cup sherry, optional
- 1½ tablespoons arrowroot (or cornstarch)
- 2 cups uncooked rice, cooked according to instructions
- Chopped scallions, for garnish
- Sesame seeds, for garnish

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add 1 teaspoon oil. Add peppers and onions and cook for 3–4 minutes or until just tender. Remove to a plate. Season steak with salt and pepper to taste. Add remaining oil to skillet and increase heat to high. Add steak to skillet and cook 5–6 minutes or until lightly browned. Add garlic and ginger and cook for 30 seconds. Add pepper mixture back to skillet. Adjust heat to medium.

In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, sugar, sherry and arrowroot. Pour the sauce over the steak mixture and bring to a simmer. Cook for 2–3 minutes or until sauce thickens. Serve over rice and garnish with scallions and sesame seeds.



CHEF'S TIPS **How to core peppers.** Whether bell peppers or small chili peppers, cut off the tops and bottoms of peppers. Stand pepper on a flat surface and slice down the four sides around the core. Discard the core and seeds, and chop or slice the four cutaway sides.

Adding garlic to sautéed vegetables. Recipe instructions call for sautéing vegetables together until softened, then adding the garlic at the end for 30 seconds or so. This is to prevent the garlic from browning, which could cause it to burn and give the mixture an off taste.



SHARRI WOLFGANG



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SEND TO RRTS, 808 Knox Abbott Drive, Cayce, SC 29033. Entries must be received by March 31, 2026.

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Alpine Helen / White County Convention & Visitors Bureau



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Button takes a well-earned break after an exuberant workout.

GOOD DOG

JONES, BUTTON AND SNUFF sit quietly in their kennels as the trailer carrying the three Boykin Spaniels bounces along behind the pickup truck. It is a fine day—cool and cloudless, with only an unmistakable anticipation hanging in the air—and Johnny Holden parks in a field on his Galivants Ferry farm and gets out, dog whistles and remote controls dangling around his neck.

Holden walks into the field and sets up two electronic launchers, then goes back to the trailer and lets Jones out first. The little dog, with his floppy ears and big yellow eyes and curly brown hair, sniffs around excitedly, big tongue panting, and rolls around in the grass on his back. But as soon as Holden yells—“Heel! Sit!”—the dog heels, and sits, and perks up, ready for action.

With the punch of a button on his necklace, Holden fires one of the launchers, propelling a rubber duck dummy in the air with a loud bang, simulating a hunt. But the dog doesn't move. Only when Holden gives a voice command does Jones take off, bounding and leaping through the field at LockHaven Farm to find the dummy wherever it has landed in the tall grass.

The Boykin Spaniel, aka “the little brown dog,” is a special breed of SC history and heart

BY HASTINGS HENSEL
PHOTOS BY MIC SMITH

“Atta boy!” Holden yells as Jones zig-zags with his nose to the ground and comes up with the dummy in his mouth.

“Good boy!” Holden yells again, and Jones wags his little nub of a tail as he delivers the rubber duck to Holden's outstretched hand. “Now heel!”

And Jones heels, and sits, and perks up, ready to do it again—a rhythm of action that, as everyone who knows the South Carolina state dog will tell you,

is inherent to this special breed of history and heart.

A well-bred past

By now, the Boykin Spaniel's origin story has become something of a legend. It goes like this: In the early 1900s, a banker named Alexander White was walking home from church in Spartanburg when a little stray dog began following him. He fell in love with the dog and especially liked the way the dog retrieved. White wasn't a dog trainer, but he knew one—his friend and hunting partner, L.W. “Whit” Boykin.

Boykin trained the little dog, named “Dumpy,” who turned out to be a gem. So, Boykin bred Dumpy and thus founded

a line of compact hunting dogs that were especially good for hunting in the Wateree swamps, where hunters used small boats. (The Boykin has been referred to as “the dog that doesn’t rock the boat.”)

“Boykins think they can do anything a Lab can do, and they pretty much can; it’s just that their legs are a little lower, so it takes them a little longer,” says Holden, a longtime breeder. “I tell people, ‘If you’re going to hunt big water, get you a Lab or a Chesapeake. If you’re going to hunt swamps or duck impoundments, Boykins are the perfect dog.’”

Because of their reputation as loyal and outstanding hunters, their popularity soared—so much so that, in the 1970s, a Camden veterinarian named Dr. Peter McKoy noticed how many of the dogs coming through his vet clinic were being called “Boykins” just because they had brown curly hair. He was worried that, without an official registry, the true breed would die out. And because the American Kennel Club wouldn’t officially recognize the breed, a group of Camden citizens founded the Boykin Spaniel Society in 1977.

The society solicited members, compiled data, collected dues, held meetings, wrote bylaws and established breed standards—all the things needed to become an official registry.

“In that first year, they got 677 dogs to start the foundation stock (essentially, the first dogs to define the bloodline) of the Boykin Spaniel Society. And here we are, 58 years later, and we’ve got over 50,000 dogs recorded and almost 170,000 litters recorded,” says Dawn Crites, the administrative director of the society.

Johnny Holden, for his part, is one of the society’s 15 recognized “Gold Level” breeders, a designation for breeders who are vetted by the BSS Board of Trustees and who volunteer to have their dogs genetically tested for hereditary diseases before breeding and selling them.

It’s a job Holden takes seriously. “A lot of people, you know, just think you can take two little brown dogs and cross them, and get you a bunch of good puppies,” he says. “But it don’t work that way. You’ve got to have your pedigree there. The No. 1 thing I breed for is health, and the No. 2 is pedigree.”

Among the issues he screens for, the main ones are exercise-induced collapse, collie eye anomaly, hip dysplasia and degenerative myelopathy.

“You get excellent by breeding to excellent,” Holden says. “But what happens, my theory is: People want to get into breeding. They buy them a female. They don’t do any research, and they don’t buy it from a reputable breeder. And if you don’t test, you don’t know.”

What Holden does know is that his love of dogs runs deep—all the way back to when he would go visit his granddaddy, a Baptist preacher and retired

“They’re very loyal and affectionate. They just worm their way into your soul to where you just can’t breathe without them.” —DAWN CRITES, BOYKIN SPANIEL SOCIETY

farmer, after church on Sundays. His granddaddy often had a litter of puppies, and when Holden was 12, he received a little black-and-white feist squirrel dog named Bandit.

“I tell you ... we had the most fun. Bandit was perfect,” Holden recalls. “He had a black patch on one of his eyes, and man, we cleaned the squirrels out. I don’t believe there were more than four squirrels left in Horry County.”

Then Holden got into coon hunting. But his wife, Terri, who runs LockHaven Farm with him, didn’t like him going out hunting at night. So, one Christmas she gave him a black Lab named J.D., who, in Holden’s words, “trained me more than I trained him.”

Almost a decade later, one Sunday at church, the preacher asked the congregation if anyone wanted to help donate to ►►



Boykin Spaniel devotee Johnny Holden, shown here with (from left) Button, Jones and Snuff, breeds and trains the small hunting dogs on his Galivants Ferry farm in Horry County.



▲ With dog whistles and remote controls for dummy launchers dangling around his neck, Johnny Holden prepares an enthusiastic Snuff for another training session.

▼ Boykin Spaniels are happiest when they're working and are particularly well suited for hunting in swampland, but they also need to be an active member of their human family.



new stained glass windows. Holden's arm shot up, despite not having the money. He came up with it, though, by selling a litter of puppies. They were beagles, which he was raising to hunt rabbits.

For years he bred beagles and Labs. But when a friend of his—a private detective who kept a Boykin Spaniel in the patrol car for companionship—decided he couldn't keep a pet any longer, Holden took the dog. That's when his career as a Boykin breeder began.

And boy does Holden love him a Boykin.

"They get very attached to you, and they're very personal dogs, and they're so smart," he says. "They just love you to death. And maybe some of them are stubborn, but that's the cool thing about dogs. They're just like people. No two of them are exactly alike. They have personalities."

It's a sentiment you'll hear from just about every Boykin owner. "They're very loyal and affectionate," Crites says. "They just worm their way into your soul to where you just can't breathe without them."

But they are also working dogs, as Crites and Holden both note. This doesn't mean they can't be family dogs; it just means that a Boykin needs to be an active member of the family.

"A Boykin is what we call 'a companionable gun dog,'" Crites says. "They do not do well as a kennel dog. They need to be with their family, and they're a part of your family. They don't have to be hunting dogs, but they will find a job. You have to stimulate their nose and give them something to do in order to get that hunting drive focused somewhere, or they will focus it where you don't want it to go."

For this reason, some breeders will only sell to hunters. But Holden isn't one of them.

"We sell a lot of dogs for family dogs," he says. "And it excites me more knowing my dogs are going to a loving home."

On command

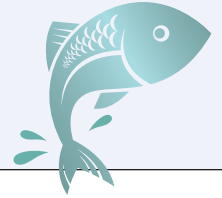
Back in the field, the 6-year-old Jones gets crated, and the 2-year-old Button gets released. And as eager as Button is to expend some of that hunt-drive energy, Button sits, and heels, and perks up on command.

It's only after the dummy flies into the air and lands, only after Holden gives the voice command, only after Button bounds out into the field and finds the dummy—it's only then that Button hears those two words every Boykin wants to hear:

"Good dog!" 🐾

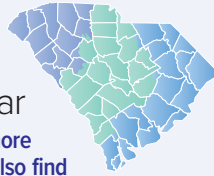
GET THERE

The Boykin Spaniel Society will host its annual Spring National Field Trial April 9–12 in Camden. For more information, as well as to find a list of reputable Boykin Spaniel breeders, visit boykinspaniel.org.



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.



Upstate

MARCH

19–April 4 *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, Centre Stage, Greenville. (864) 233-6733 or centrestage.org.

21 *Forging a Life: The African American historical experience at Rose Hill Plantation*, Rose Hill Plantation Historic Site, Union. (864) 427-5966.

21 *Kidsfest*, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visithagoodmill.com.

21 *South Carolina Waffle Fest*, 119 W. Front St., Liberty. (864) 843-3177 or libertysc.com.

27–29 *Reedy Reels Film Festival*, SC Children's Theatre, Greenville. reedyreels.com.

APRIL

4 *IMAGINE Upstate STEAM Festival*, downtown, Greenville. imaginessteamsc.org/upstate.

4–5 *Historic Pendleton Spring Jubilee*, Pendleton Village Green, Pendleton. pendletonspringjubilee.com.

11 *Southern Roots—A BBQ Reunion*, Trailblazer Park, Travelers Rest. southernrootsreunion.com.

16–19 *Dare to Dream Jr., A Disney Musical Revue*, Greenwood Community Theatre, Greenwood. (864) 229-5704 or greenwoodcommunitytheatre.com.

17–18 *Old Time Weekend Jam Festival*, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visithagoodmill.com.

18 *South Carolina Chili Cook-off Championship*, 101 N. Main St., Belton. scchilicookoff.com.

24–25 *Pickens Azalea Festival*, downtown, Pickens. (864) 301-1798 or pickensazaleafestival.com.

24–25 *Stone Soup Storytelling Festival*, 134 S. Main St., Woodruff. (864) 670-9980 or stonessoup.org.

25 *Greer Goes Global International Festival*, Greer City Park, Greer. (864) 968-7008 or greergoesglobal.com.

25–26 *Annual Revolutionary War Encampment*, Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, Clinton. (864) 938-0100.

26 *Shalom Fest*, Temple of Israel Campus, Greenville. (864) 292-1782 or templeofisrael.org/shalomfest.

30–May 10 *The Great Anderson County Fair*, Anderson Sports & Entertainment Center, Anderson. (864) 309-6618 or thegreatandersoncountyfair.com.

Midlands

MARCH

21 *Aiken Spring Steeplechase*, Aiken Steeplechase Race Course, Aiken. (803) 648-9641 or aikensteeplechase.com.

21 *Crafted in Carolina Festival: A Celebration of South Carolina's Brewers & Artisans*, Segra Park, Columbia. scbeer.org.

21 *Irmo Cherry Blossom Festival*, Irmo Town Park, Irmo. (803) 781-7050 or townofirmosc.com.

21 *Soiree on State*, State Street, Cayce. soireeonstate.com.

21 *Sumter Springfest*, downtown, Sumter. sumterspringfest.com.

21–22 *Colonial Times Under the Crown*, Living History Park, North Augusta. colonialtimes.us.

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

26–29 *Tartan Day South Highland Games & Celtic Festival*, Historic Columbia Speedway, Cayce. tartandaysouth.com.

27 *Southern Shuckdown Oyster Roast*, Senate's End, Columbia. (803) 716-9097 or thebigredbarnretreat.org.

27–29 *Palmetto Sportsmen's Classic*, South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. psclassic.com.

28 *Carolina Cup*, Springdale Race Course, Camden. (803) 432-6513 or carolinacup.org.

28 *Curing Kids Cancer Fire Truck Pull*, Soda City Market, Columbia. curingkidscancer.org.

28 *Spring Festival & Garden Open*, Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City. moorefarmsbg.org.

28 *Xtreme Xperience Car/Truck/Bike Show*, Generations Park, Aiken. (803) 571-3630.

28–29 *Cheraw Spring Festival*, Centennial Park, Cheraw. cheraw.com.

28–29 *Shaw Air & Space Expo*, Shaw Air Force Base, Sumter. shawairexpo.com.

APRIL

10–11 *Governor's Cup Road Race*, downtown, Columbia. runsignup.com.

16–25 *Come-See-Me Festival*, multiple locations, Rock Hill. (803) 329-7625 or comeseeme.org.

17–18 *Meeting Street Music Fest*, West Columbia Riverwalk Amphitheater and Meeting Street, West Columbia. meetingstreetmusicfest.com.

17–18 *Purple Martin Festival of St. Matthews*, downtown, St. Matthews. facebook.com/purplemartinfestival.

17–19 *Artista Vista*, Vista district, Columbia. vistacolumbia.com. (803) 269-5946 or vistacolumbia.com.

18–19 *Columbia International Festival*, South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. (803) 799-3452 or cifonline.org.

22–26 *Columbia Food & Wine Festival*, multiple locations, Columbia. colafoodandwine.com.

24–25 *Clarendon County Striped Bass Festival*, downtown, Manning. (803) 435-4405 or clarendoncounty.com/sbf.

24–25 *South Carolina Square & Round Dance State Convention*, The Gateway Conference Center, Richburg. scsquaredance.com.

25 *Aiken Electric Cooperative Run United Half Marathon, 5K, 10K and Kids' Fun Run*, downtown, Aiken. runsignup.com/aiken.

Pee Dee & Lowcountry

MARCH

20–22 *Charleston Antiques Show*, Charleston Festival Hall, Charleston. thecharlestonshow.com.

20–22 *Cobblestone Quilters Guild Celebration of Quilts, Textiles & Fiber Arts Show*, Trident Technical College, North Charleston. cobblestonequilters.com.

20–22 *Palmetto Quilt Guild Welcome to Paradise Quilt Festival*, Hilton Head Beach & Tennis Resort, Hilton Head Island. palmettoquiltguild.org.

21 *Birds of a Feather Festival*, Caw Caw Interpretive Center, Ravenel. (843) 795-4386 or ccprc.com.

21 *Hilton Head Wingfest*, Lowcountry Celebration Park, Hilton Head Island. hiltonheadwingfest.com.

21 *Mount Pleasant ArtFest*, Mount Pleasant Town Centre, Mount Pleasant. (843) 884-8517 or experiencemountpleasant.com.

22 *Chamber Music Charleston presents The Chamber Music Legacy*, Dock Street Theatre, Charleston. (843) 763-4941 or chambermusiccharleston.org.

22–28 *Hilton Head Island Wine and Food Festival*, various locations, Hilton Head Island. hiltonheadwineandfood.com.

27–29 *Summerville Family YMCA Flowertown Festival*, downtown, Summerville. summervilleymca.org.

28 *Cooper River Bridge Run*, downtown, Charleston. (843) 856-1949 or bridgerun.com.

APRIL

10–May 2 *ArtFields*, multiple venues, Lake City. (843) 374-0180 or artfieldssc.org.

11 *Founders' Day Festival*, Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site, Charleston. (843) 852-4200.

11 *Shadow Bay Celtic Festival*, 3833 Socastee Blvd., Myrtle Beach. (843) 360-9052 or mythicalmedievalfest.com.

11–12 *World Grits Festival*, 110 South Parler Ave., St. George. worldgritsfestival.com.

13–19 *Charleston Jazz Festival*, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 641-0011 or charlestonjazz.com.

17–19 *Puddin' Swamp Festival*, downtown, Turbeville. facebook.com/psfestival.

17–26 *Society of Stranders Spring Safari*, multiple venues, Myrtle Beach. shagdance.com.

18 *Lowcountry Cajun Festival*, James Island County Park, Charleston. (843) 795-4386.

20–26 *Colleton County Rice Festival*, downtown, Walterboro. (843) 549-1079 or ricefestival.org.

21–25 *Myrtle Beach International Film Festival*, multiple venues, Myrtle Beach. (843) 497-0220 or myrtlebeachfilmfestival.com.

22–26 *Art Charleston*, The Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston. (843) 722-2706 or gibbesmuseum.org.

24–26 *Black Food Truck Festival*, The Exchange Park Fairgrounds, Charleston. blackfoodtruckfestival.com.

25 *Berkeley Electric Cooperative Bright Ideas 5K*, Cypress Gardens, Moncks Corner. berkeleyelectric.coop/bright-ideas-5k.

25 *Carolina Forest Spring Fair*, Carolina Forest Recreation Center, Myrtle Beach. (843) 915-5332.

26 *Blessing of the Fleet & Seafood Festival*, Mount Pleasant Memorial Waterfront Park, Mount Pleasant. experiencemountpleasant.com.

29–May 3 *North Charleston Arts Fest*, multiple venues, North Charleston. (843) 740-5854 or northcharlestonartsfest.com.

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

MARCH				
16	3:58	10:10	4:21	10:33
17	4:40	10:52	5:04	11:15
18	5:24	11:36	5:47	11:59
19	6:10	11:55	6:34	12:22
20	7:01	12:48	7:26	1:13
21	7:57	1:44	8:24	2:10
22	8:58	2:44	9:27	3:13
23	10:03	3:48	10:33	4:18
24	11:09	4:54	11:41	5:25
25	—	5:59	12:14	6:29
26	12:45	6:59	1:14	7:29
27	1:41	7:55	2:09	8:23
28	2:32	8:45	2:58	9:11
29	3:17	9:29	3:41	9:53
30	3:59	10:10	4:21	10:32
31	4:39	10:49	5:00	11:11

APRIL				
1	5:19	11:30	5:40	11:51
2	6:01	—	6:23	12:12
3	6:46	12:35	7:09	12:58
4	7:35	1:24	7:58	1:47
5	8:27	2:15	8:51	2:39
6	9:21	3:08	9:46	3:33
7	10:16	4:03	10:41	4:28
8	11:10	4:57	11:36	5:23
9	—	5:50	12:03	6:16
10	12:29	6:41	12:54	7:06
11	1:17	7:29	1:41	7:53
12	2:02	8:13	2:25	8:37
13	2:44	8:55	3:07	9:18
14	3:24	9:36	3:47	9:59
15	4:05	10:16	4:28	10:40
16	4:48	11:00	5:13	11:25
17	5:37	11:50	6:04	12:17
18	6:33	12:18	7:02	12:47
19	7:36	1:21	8:07	1:52
20	8:45	2:29	9:17	3:01
21	9:55	3:39	10:27	4:11
22	11:04	4:49	11:35	5:19
23	—	5:53	12:07	6:22
24	12:36	6:50	1:03	7:16
25	1:27	7:39	1:51	8:03
26	2:11	8:22	2:33	8:44
27	2:50	9:01	3:11	9:22
28	3:27	9:37	3:47	9:58
29	4:03	10:14	4:24	10:35
30	4:42	10:53	5:04	11:15

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Teen, Miss, Ms. Strawberry Pageant	April 18
Strawberry Festival Golf Tournament.....	April 21
Strawberry Sprint & Stroll	April 25
Strawberry Soiree	April 25

For the full list of events, please visit
WWW.SGSTRAWBERRYFESTIVAL.COM

UNDER THE CROWN

& COLONIAL TRADES FAIR

MARCH 21 – 22, 2026

HISTORY COMES TO LIFE ...

THE LIVING HISTORY PARK is a recreated village representing the period between 1735–1785, run by the non-profit Olde Towne Preservation Association and volunteers. 100% of funding comes from donations and grants. Reclaimed from a water works dump site, the village has numerous permanent buildings, including the Colonial Barn, Willow Spring Meeting House, the Blacksmith Forge, the Spring House Tavern, the Grist Mill, Thompson Academy, and many others. Hours are Saturday - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

RENT THE PARK - This picturesque park, located in downtown North Augusta is the perfect location for weddings, parties and business meetings. There are several buildings & outdoor areas that are available to rent.

Upcoming Events:

- Under the Crown – 3rd Weekend in MARCH.
- Education Days are for students in grades 3rd - 6th. Students will watch our colonial past come to life through demonstrations & exhibits. Event is held the Friday before our two major events each year. This year's dates are Mar. 20 & Oct. 16. (Reservations required).
- 4th of July is held on July 4th each year.
- A Day to Remember - 3rd Weekend in OCTOBER.
- Christmas in the Backcountry - Last Weekend in NOVEMBER.

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**MARCH
IN THE GARDEN**

■ Even as the new spring brings rising temperatures, there is still time this month to start cool-season veggies such as turnips, kale, collards, Irish potatoes, spinach, leeks, garden peas, cauliflower, mustard greens, lettuce, asparagus, broccoli, carrots, beets and cabbage.

■ Fall-planted, spring-blooming bulbs such as crocuses, daffodils, species tulips, spring starflowers, glory-of-the-snow and Spanish bluebells can naturalize in South Carolina gardens. But they will become established sooner and spread faster if their energy-absorbing leaves are allowed to fade from green to brown before being pruned.



L.A. JACKSON

ON CLOUD 9 A fluffy fringe tree flower cluster.

TIP OF THE MONTH Although native to South Carolina, fringe trees aren't particularly common offerings at garden centers, except possibly those that have impressive inventories of indigenous plants. But if you are interested in "fringe gardening," at least ask your local friendly nursery if they can find one for you. For regional online options, Wilson Brothers Gardens (wilsonbrosgardens.com) in McDonough, Georgia, offers several selections. Ty Ty Plant Nursery (tytyga.com) in Ty Ty, Georgia, offers our native version. And Woodlanders (woodlanders.net) in Aiken sells the Chinese fringe tree.



L.A. JACKSON

**Fringe
gardening**

BY L.A. JACKSON

Large fluffs of white, confetti-like blooms envelop the tree in a feathery, fragrant cloud.

FOR YEARS, I HAVE GARDENED on the fringe—well, to be more accurate, I have gardened with the fringe.

Let me explain. Many moons ago, on a whim, I bought a small fringe tree and, I'll readily admit, proceeded to hastily, haphazardly plant it in the first spot I found in my landscape. But despite this rude introduction to my garden, it has proved to not only be pretty tough, but in the spring, well, pretty dang pretty, too.

Fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) is a Southeastern native woody, so I shouldn't have been surprised by its toughness. More than just a survivor in the wild, it is also a survivor of the slop—fringe trees find river bottoms, lowlands and savannas much to their liking.

These indigenous, deciduous pretties have rounded shapes formed by semi-open branches that can eventually stretch 12 to 20 feet tall and about as wide. They are also dioecious—guy and gal trees—with pollinated females producing small, olive-shaped, bluish drupes that are eagerly devoured by birds in the early fall.

Fringe tree is also called "old man's beard," and the reason for both names becomes pleasingly apparent in the spring. Just as new, vibrant green leaves begin to appear, large fluffs of white, confetti-like blooms form, enveloping

the tree in a feathery, fragrant cloud. This show for the nose and eyes usually starts around mid-April and lasts about two weeks.

Another option is Chinese fringe tree (*Chionanthus retusus*). This slightly larger Asian import tends to display smaller bloom clusters—Wait! Smaller bloom clusters? Sorry, that swings my preference needle to the shaggier "Made in America" fringe tree. But in your garden, it's your decision.

In the woods, our native fringe tree is typically found in moist environments. But in cultivated landscapes, it will do well in just about any location if mulched and watered regularly. And while this ornamental can be planted in partially shaded spots, its flower power will have more oomph in constant sun.

When its blooms fade away, fringe tree becomes a green glob in the landscape. Come autumn, however, its foliage salutes the seasonal change by brightening to a pleasing yellow. Then, after a leafless winter rest, it will, once again, burst into its bodacious spring-time spectacle of blooms, which, for me, begins yet another year of fringe gardening. ☺

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

Live and lettuce live

BY JAN A. IGOE

I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY when our family officially adopted her, but Aunt Gladys has been around forever and is crazy enough to go toe-to-toe with any of my blood relatives, so she fits right in.

Decades ago, Mom discovered Gladys standing by a rusty, old Rambler parked at a two-headed meter (that took only quarters) with a penny in her hand. Even then, she seemed ancient.

Standing in the street, she looked to be about 4-foot-6 in her lace-up orthopedic shoes, which made those Minnie Mouse legs look even more toothpicky. Her eyes and hair were equally blue. Mistaking Gladys for confused and helpless, Mom started to put her own quarter in the slot for the Rambler.

“Oh, not that one, dear,” Gladys interrupted, turning toward the other car sharing the meter.

“That one!” Her bony, little finger was pointing to a bright metallic Porsche Roadster convertible.

Before Mom could take her quarter back, Gladys pushed the coin into the slot and quickly returned the penny to her change purse, which contained quite a few quarters.

Scammed by a prehistoric hustler who drives a stick! You had to love her. So we kept her.

Gladys still chauffeurs herself everywhere. Her coordination is extraordinary, probably from practicing the bongos every day. But she can get creative with technicalities, like where she’s going.

When she went to pick up her friend at the airport in Raleigh, we got a frantic call on a Monday night. “Irene has been kidnapped! She’s gone,” Aunt Gladys



Aunt Gladys had everything under control. She’d already lined up a buyer while she was out shagging.

moaned. “I called 9-1-1, and the cops are on their way.”

Well, the good news is that Irene was fine. She wasn’t at the airport because her flight didn’t leave until Wednesday. And its destination was Charlotte.

Since then, we’ve been trying to keep Aunt Gladys busy a little closer to home. She’s got a nice, big yard, so we gave her a book on gardening, which she seemed to enjoy.

A few days later, Mom returned with her first crop report. Aunt Gladys was running around in coveralls, planting lettuce. In her living room.

We’re not talking about some harm-

less little black thumb-proof AeroGarden here. Oh, no. Aunt Gladys went out and sprang for the most decadent professional hydroponic growing system she could find. Easily 7 feet tall, the monster was sitting where her sectional used to be. It had dozens of bright, migraine-inducing lights and enough tubes to raise Frankenstein from the mulch. If you wanted to watch TV, you’d have to straddle the filtration system, which had displaced both recliners.

“I’ll keep you girls up to your eyeballs in arugula,” Aunt Gladys promised merrily.

Mom was horrified. Gladys was thrilled—almost as thrilled as the hydroponic company where she must have dropped thousands.

Within six months, the system had yielded approximately three leaves of overpriced produce—not quite enough salad for a flea. The only thing that experienced substantial growth was her water bill.

“What are you going to do now?” we asked our unfazed aunt, who was playing a bongo solo to the lettuce.

Of course, Aunt Gladys had everything under control. She’d already lined up a buyer while she was out shagging.

“No worries. I met a guy who’ll take it for twice what I paid,” she said.

We were about to do the happy dance when Aunt Gladys shared her plan to deliver it personally. To Raleigh.

We just have to talk her out of taking the Porsche. ☹

EDITOR’S NOTE: South Carolina Living is reprinting some of Jan A. Igoe’s previous columns. This “Humor Me” originally appeared in the November 2013 issue. Visit SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe.



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