

South Carolina LIVING

SPRING
& SUMMER
TRAVEL
ISSUE

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bombed

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Sheila D. Rivers



Ready when it matters most

I HAVE THE UNIQUE PRIVILEGE of seeing first-hand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our

members. It's something I think about often, especially when severe weather tests our system.

When you see forecasts of storms across our part of South Carolina, our lineworkers see a call to action. They are always ready to respond when outages occur. They are ready to leave family dinners and miss Little League games so they can work in challenging conditions through the night to get your power restored as safely and quickly as possible.

That readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, deep experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is that they work to restore power to their own communities. They raise their families here. Their kids go to our schools. They shop at our grocery stores. They understand that the service they provide is essential to our daily lives—to our local businesses, farms and our neighbors, who depend on power for medical equipment or to simply keep food from spoiling.

Powering the place they call home is deeply personal to them.

Electric cooperatives like Tri-County Electric were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last to leave, often working long hours to get the job done.

At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events across South Carolina and beyond, Tri-County Electric crews are ready to assist neighboring co-ops. Sometimes just down the road, as they did after Winter Storm Fern, and sometimes across state lines.

When extreme weather happens here, crews from across our state and nation come to our aid. Mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

At the very least, losing your power can be frustrating, at worst, life-threatening. We are grateful for your patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical and dangerous. Our crews approach each job with a focus on safety and teamwork. They take pride in their craft and in the trust you place in them. A wave of thanks or even a kind word on social media means more to our crews than you might realize.

On April 13, we will celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but every day we are thankful for their service and dedication.

Their hard work, readiness and unwavering commitment to the communities they serve are the backbone of our cooperative.

Chad T. Lowder

CHAD T. LOWDER
 Chief Executive Officer



MATT WILES

Tri-County Electric lineworkers restore power after a major storm.

Share your feedback today

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE values your feedback and wants to hear from you. We invite you to take a few minutes to complete our Member Satisfaction Survey. Your input helps us better understand our members' priorities, evaluate how we're performing and identify meaningful opportunities to improve our services.

Your responses directly influence the decisions we make, from reliability and communication to programs and member support. By sharing your perspective, you play an



SCAN HERE TO COMPLETE SURVEY

important role in shaping the future of your cooperative and enhancing the overall member experience.

We encourage you to complete the survey online for the fastest and most convenient experience. Simply scan the QR code or visit tri-countyelectric.net to get started.

If you prefer, you may also return the completed survey by mail to:

Post Office Box 217
St. Matthews, SC 29135

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and for being a valued member of Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

Q: Consider all your experiences to date with Tri-County Electric Cooperative. How satisfied are you with Tri-County Electric Cooperative?

VERY DISSATISFIED										VERY SATISFIED									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
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Q: Considering all of your expectations, to what extent has Tri-County Electric Cooperative fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?

FALLEN SHORT										EXCEEDED YOUR EXPECTATIONS									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
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Q: Forget Tri-County Electric Cooperative for a moment. Imagine an ideal utility company. How well do you think Tri-County Electric Cooperative compares to an ideal utility company?

NOT VERY CLOSE TO THE IDEAL										VERY CLOSE TO THE IDEAL									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
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Q: Imagine that you could choose from among more than one utility company. How likely are you to choose Tri-County Electric Cooperative?

NOT VERY LIKELY										VERY LIKELY										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10											N/A
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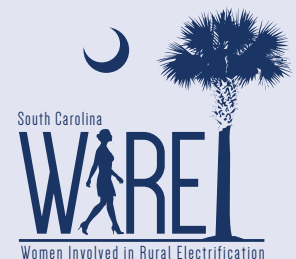
Apply now for scholarships

ADULT FEMALE members of Tri-County Electric returning to school to earn college degrees may now apply for financial assistance from the 2026 Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship program.

Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE), a service organization associated with South Carolina's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, the \$2,500 scholarship is a one-time award

based on financial need and personal goals. Applicants for the program must have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago and be accepted into an accredited college or university.

For full details and to apply online, visit ecsc.org/wire.



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SOUTH CAROLINA LIVING is brought to you by your member-owned, taxpaying, not-for-profit electric cooperative to inform you about your cooperative, wise energy use and the faces and places that identify the Palmetto State. Electric cooperatives are South Carolina's—and America's—largest utility network.

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On the cover, writer Susan Hill Smith takes in the wonder of Riley Moore Falls. Above, Dewitt Anderson and Shakira Morgan of Greenville, N.C., document their visit to Yellow Branch Falls. Photos by Mic Smith.

POWER SURGE

ACROSS THE U.S. AND HERE in South Carolina, the demand for power is climbing at one of the fastest rates in decades. As the economy becomes more reliant on electricity, electric cooperatives are preparing to meet the challenges that skyrocketing demand brings.

Extreme weather—remember those back-to-back ice and snow storms our state saw this past winter?—combines with other factors to drive increased demand, creating challenges for electric utilities, including cooperatives, in their mission to provide reliable power around the clock.

One of the biggest drivers of rising demand is what we call “electrification.” That’s a way of saying that we increasingly rely on electricity to power every part of our lives, from our homes and appliances to entertainment and transportation.

All these transitions mean more energy use and pressure placed on our electric grid.

Economic and manufacturing growth, plus new data centers to support ever-growing internet use and artificial intelligence, also contribute to higher electricity use. As businesses expand and new industries take root, especially in rural and suburban areas, the demand for reliable, high-capacity power is increasing. The resurgence of domestic manufacturing has led to major facility construction across the Palmetto State and the nation. These facilities often require substantial energy loads, and many operate continuously to keep production lines running. This growth brings jobs and investment, but it also puts new pressures on the electric grid.

Population growth and housing development also contribute to rising demand. South Carolina, in fact, is the fastest-growing state by population percentage in the country, according to recent census data. Our state has added more than 80,000 new people per year

Factors driving the rising demand for electricity

Demand for electricity in the U.S. is booming. Recent data shows that by 2028, power consumption nationwide is set to increase by an amount that could power more than 30 million homes. Meeting this new demand will require a combination of new power plants, grid upgrades and energy storage technology advancements. Here are the key factors that are driving increased demand:

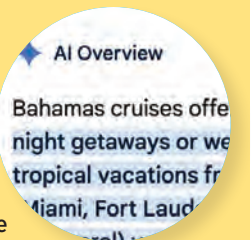


INCREASED ELECTRIFICATION:

Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating and industrial electrification are increasing overall U.S. energy consumption.

DATA CENTERS:

Driven by the explosive growth of AI, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase 65% by 2050.



ECONOMIC GROWTH:

Residential power consumption is expected to increase by 14% to 22% through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.



MANUFACTURING GROWTH:

New, expanding and “onshored/reshored” manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to increase industrial demand by 13,000 GWh per year.



South Carolina has gained more than 80,000 new residents a year over the past five years, adding the equivalent of a major power plant’s worth of new residential demand alone.

over the past five years, mostly folks moving to the state from other places. That’s tens of thousands of new people making important contributions to our communities—and needing electricity to power their lives, too. In five years, we’ve added the equivalent of an entire major power plant’s worth of new residential demand alone.

While increased demand presents new challenges for electric utilities, it also

offers co-ops and the communities they serve opportunities, such as job growth, steady revenue and improved infrastructure. South Carolina’s electric co-ops are responding by planning carefully for the future—investing in grid modernization and offering programs and services to help co-op members conserve energy.

Strategic planning and collaboration are critical to ensuring our state’s grid can support everything from EV charging to large-scale manufacturing plants. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of today’s economy, and its role will only grow stronger. As electrification accelerates, long-term planning becomes more important than ever.

South Carolina’s electric co-ops are ready to meet rising demand in our local communities. Through innovation, investment and collaboration, we are preparing for a more reliable and resilient energy future. —NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



Save Your Power. Power Your Savings.

These simple
steps around your home
can help you save energy and money.



Replace your cooling system's filter regularly to maintain strong airflow and boost energy efficiency. A clean filter means your system doesn't have to work as hard, saving energy and lowering your utility bills.

Lint and dirt cause your refrigerator to work harder than it's designed to. Clean the refrigerator coils every six months to a year, and more often if there are pets in the home.



Wash clothes with cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes.

SOURCES: NRECA and energy.gov

South Carolina
Living





Electrify your lawn care

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

AH, SPRING. THE SUN IS SHINING, the temperature is warming, and the grass—it sure is growing. It's lawn mower season, baby.

Electric lawn equipment has seen drastic improvements in cost, motor efficiency and battery power in recent years. From hedge and string trimmers to leaf blowers, chainsaws and push and riding mowers, there are lots of options for electric lawn equipment.

Electric equipment is quieter than its gas-powered counterparts and typically needs less maintenance. There's no more mixing fuel, changing spark plugs or worrying about gas going bad over the winter. And advances in rechargeable battery technology eliminate having to lug around a heavy extension cord to get your work done. Just pop in a battery and go.

Most popular lawn equipment brands offer battery-powered options,

along with newer brands that specialize in electric tools. If you need multiple tools, buying the same brand with the same battery type allows you to swap batteries between different pieces of equipment. That also means fewer battery chargers to store or keep on your workbench.

Remove a battery from its charger once fully charged. Overcharging and heat buildup can shorten a battery's life and be a fire hazard.

Opt for equipment with brushless motors. They are more efficient, more powerful and have a longer lifespan than traditional brushed motors. A brushless motor typically costs more but is worth the improved efficiency. A brushed motor transfers electricity using physical brushes, which can wear down over time. The friction from the brushes makes the equipment run hotter and noisier. A brushless motor uses electronic commutation, which reduces friction, making it more powerful, extending the lifespan and allowing you to get more done on a single charge.

Just as gas-powered lawnmowers require safe storage and handling of gas and oil, battery-powered equipment requires proper care for maintenance,



MARK GILLILAND

Improved battery technology makes it easy to get more done on a single charge and avoid hauling around a cord.

charging and disposal. Always use the manufacturer's original charging equipment, charge batteries on hard surfaces away from anything flammable, and store chargers in a cool, dry place.

Most manufacturers recommend charging batteries only until they reach full capacity, rather than leaving them on the charger until you are ready to use them. This helps prevent damage to the battery from overcharging and heat buildup and reduces potential fire hazards. Unplug chargers when not in use to avoid energy waste.

Similar to gas and oil, old or damaged batteries should not end up in household garbage or landfills, where they can ignite fires and leak toxic chemicals into soil and groundwater. Instead, recycle them at a big-box store or at a county or city waste management site.

If you're looking for a quieter, more efficient, lower-maintenance lawn care routine, rethink your equipment options and consider electric models. ♻️

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



MIRANDA BOUTELLE

When you buy the same equipment brand with the same battery type, you can easily swap batteries between different pieces of equipment.

The accidental atom bomb

BY SARAH ELLIS OWEN

Starting this month, *South Carolina Living* is bringing you a new regular feature exploring the stories behind South Carolina moments, icons, places and more, from the momentous to the overlooked. If you'd like to know or share the backstory of some part of our state, send me a note at sarah.owen@ecsc.org.

WHATEVER UNEASE OR UNCERTAINTY we might experience in our world today (unprecedented times and all that), at the very least, we can say the U.S. military hasn't accidentally dropped an atomic bomb on any of us in a good six decades.

One afternoon in March 1958, Effie Gregg was inside her Mars Bluff family home, a few miles outside the small city of Florence, while her husband, Walter, worked in the woodshop and their children and a cousin played outside.

Fifteen thousand feet above them, a U.S. Air Force bomber was bound for England to perform mock bomb drops in a Cold War mission called Operation Snow Flurry, according to the Florence County Museum. The plane carried a Mark VI atomic bomb capable of bearing a nuclear payload far greater than the devastating bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

"It's the middle of the Cold War, and if you're an adult, you remember World War II wasn't that long ago," says Stephen Motte, head curator at the Florence County Museum. "You weren't supposed to be afraid of your own government. You're supposed to be afraid of your enemies."

What happened on the Gregg family farm that afternoon was a shocking moment in South Carolina and American history—and surprisingly relatively unknown today.



Pure human error caused the plane to release its Mark VI, which luckily was not equipped with its nuclear core when it fell, blasting a crater at least 50 feet wide and 25 feet deep near where the Gregg children played.

Even without the bomb's nuclear components, the impact was detrimental: Numerous people were injured. The Greggs' house was heavily damaged and had to be torn down. The home's contents were ruined, and the family's vehicles were totaled. Nearby pine trees were leveled, and nearby homes and a church were damaged, too. The blast was heard miles away in Florence.

"People don't realize how bad that impact was," Helen Gregg Holladay, who was 6 years old at the time, told *The Post & Courier* newspaper in 2024. "It was a miracle that we lived through it."

Imagine the fallout had the bomb been equipped with its nuclear core.

"You're talking loss of life, radioactive contamination, everything," Motte says. "What would your enemies have thought? What would your population have thought? You would've had a much bigger problem if your people lost trust in you."

For such a shocking event, public memory of it has faded considerably, despite occasional news stories recounting the explosion over the years. Today, a crater remains, though greatly diminished from its once-notable size and now often filled with litter or water. Residential development creeps nearly right up to the crater. And without preservation, the site is at risk of disappearing.

"It's a little bit surreal when you think about the enormity of it when it happened and how ordinary it is today. There's somebody's swimming pool and kids playing ... not unlike the Greggs when it happened," Motte says. "It's an odd juxtaposition, because life goes on for the people in this house (beside the crater), and it's immediately adjacent to this historic event."

It's a site and a story, though—fragments of our collective memory—that deserve to be remembered and preserved. ☺

TO LEARN MORE about the Mars Bluff incident and view artifacts from the bomb's impact, visit the Florence County Museum's Pee Dee History Gallery.

GINA MOORE



BY BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN

Starting the day off with a healthy breakfast can boost energy and reduce the likelihood of unhealthy snacking later in the day. These recipes are adaptable to use any meats, cheeses, vegetables or fruits you have available.

Easy, healthy breakfasts



GINA MOORE

HOMEMADE GRANOLA, YOGURT AND FRUIT BOWL

MAKES APPROXIMATELY 3 CUPS GRANOLA

- 3 cups rolled oats
- ½ cup whole almonds, coarsely chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup avocado or canola oil
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup dried cranberries or cherries, optional
- Plain Greek yogurt
- Assortment of fresh fruits
- Chia seeds or shredded coconut, for garnish

Preheat oven to 300 F. Line a half-sheet baking pan with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine oats, almonds, cinnamon and salt. In a small saucepan on low heat, warm honey and oil until honey becomes more fluid. Stir in vanilla. Pour the warm liquid mixture over the dry ingredients, and stir to coat evenly. Spread the granola into a single layer on the prepared sheet pan.

Bake for 15–20 minutes, then remove and toss the granola with a spatula. Spread it back into an even layer, and bake for an additional 15–20 minutes until golden brown. The mixture will still be soft but will crisp as it cools. Allow the granola to cool completely on the baking pan for 20–30 minutes. Once cool, mix in the dried cranberries or cherries. Serve ¼ cup granola over yogurt and fruit, garnished with chia seeds and/or coconut.

Granola can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to several weeks.

MINI FRITTATA EGG MUFFINS

MAKES 12

- 12 large eggs
- ½ cup milk
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup chopped or sliced fennel (or onions or shallots)
- 3 cups fresh spinach, chopped
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare a 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray or paper liners.

In a large bowl or measuring cup, whisk together eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Set aside. In a skillet over medium heat, add butter and fennel. Sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add spinach and stir until wilted, about 2–3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Divide cooked vegetables evenly among muffin cups. Sprinkle cheese over vegetables. Pour in egg mixture, filling each cup about three-quarters full. Bake 20–25 minutes or until eggs are firm and tops are slightly puffed and set in the center. Allow frittatas to cool slightly in pan, and transfer to a wire rack. Serve cool or warm.

Store leftover frittatas in refrigerator for up to 4 days or several months in freezer. Reheat in microwave or oven.



EGG AND MUSHROOM BURRITOS

SERVES 4

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 4 large eggs | 4 ounces mushrooms, sliced |
| Kosher salt | ½ cup black beans |
| Fresh ground black pepper | 4 10-inch whole grain flour tortillas |
| 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided | 1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese |
| ½ pound turkey sausage, crumbled | 1 avocado, sliced |
| ½ small red bell pepper, sliced | |
| ½ small onion, sliced | |

In a medium bowl, whisk eggs with salt and pepper. Set aside. In a large skillet over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons of oil. When oil is heated, add sausage and cook until browned. Remove with a slotted spoon to a platter and keep warm.

In the same skillet, add bell pepper and onion, and sauté until soft. Add mushrooms, and cook until moisture from mushrooms has evaporated. Add sausage and beans to mushroom mixture, and season with salt and pepper. Stir well to combine, then set aside.

In a medium skillet, over medium heat, scramble eggs until just cooked. Remove from pan and keep warm. Clean pan for reuse.

To assemble burritos, place tortillas on a clean work surface or large cutting board. Divide the mushroom and sausage mixture onto the middle of each tortilla, followed by the eggs and then the cheese. Fold in the sides of each tortilla over the filling, then roll up the tortillas from the bottom, keeping edges tucked in as you roll.

Add remaining 1 tablespoon of oil to pan over medium heat. When oil is hot, place burritos seam-side down, and cover pan. Cook until bottoms of burritos are golden brown, about 3 minutes. Flip the burritos, then cover again and cook until golden brown on the other side.

Remove to a serving platter or individual plates, and serve warm. Garnish with avocado slices.



ALMOND FLOUR PANCAKES

SERVES 2

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1½ cups almond flour | 2 large eggs |
| 1 teaspoon baking powder | 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup |
| ¼ teaspoon kosher salt | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| ⅓ cup almond milk | Olive oil, for frying |

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together almond milk, eggs, syrup and vanilla. Pour wet ingredients into dry and stir. If batter is too thick, stir in more milk, 1 tablespoon at a time, until it reaches desired pouring consistency. If it's too thin, sprinkle in more flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency.

Brush a nonstick skillet with oil over medium heat. Using a ¼-cup ladle, scoop or measuring cup, pour batter into heated skillet. Cook 1–2 minutes per side until brown. (Almond flour pancakes will darken quicker than pancakes made with regular flour.) Serve warm with honey butter, if desired, and maple syrup.

HONEY BUTTER

MAKES ABOUT ¾ CUP

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ cup honey

Mix all ingredients in a medium bowl until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl, and cover with plastic wrap until ready to use. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. Add honey butter to pancakes, waffles, toast, biscuits, vegetables and sandwiches.



IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE.

SC RECIPE IS SPONSORED BY SC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SPRING
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ISSUE

Upstate South Carolina has an unusually rich concentration of waterfalls, with the highest count in Oconee County. From easy trailside views to rugged hikes, you can visit the falls that match your sense of adventure.

BY SUSAN HILL SMITH | PHOTOS BY MIC SMITH

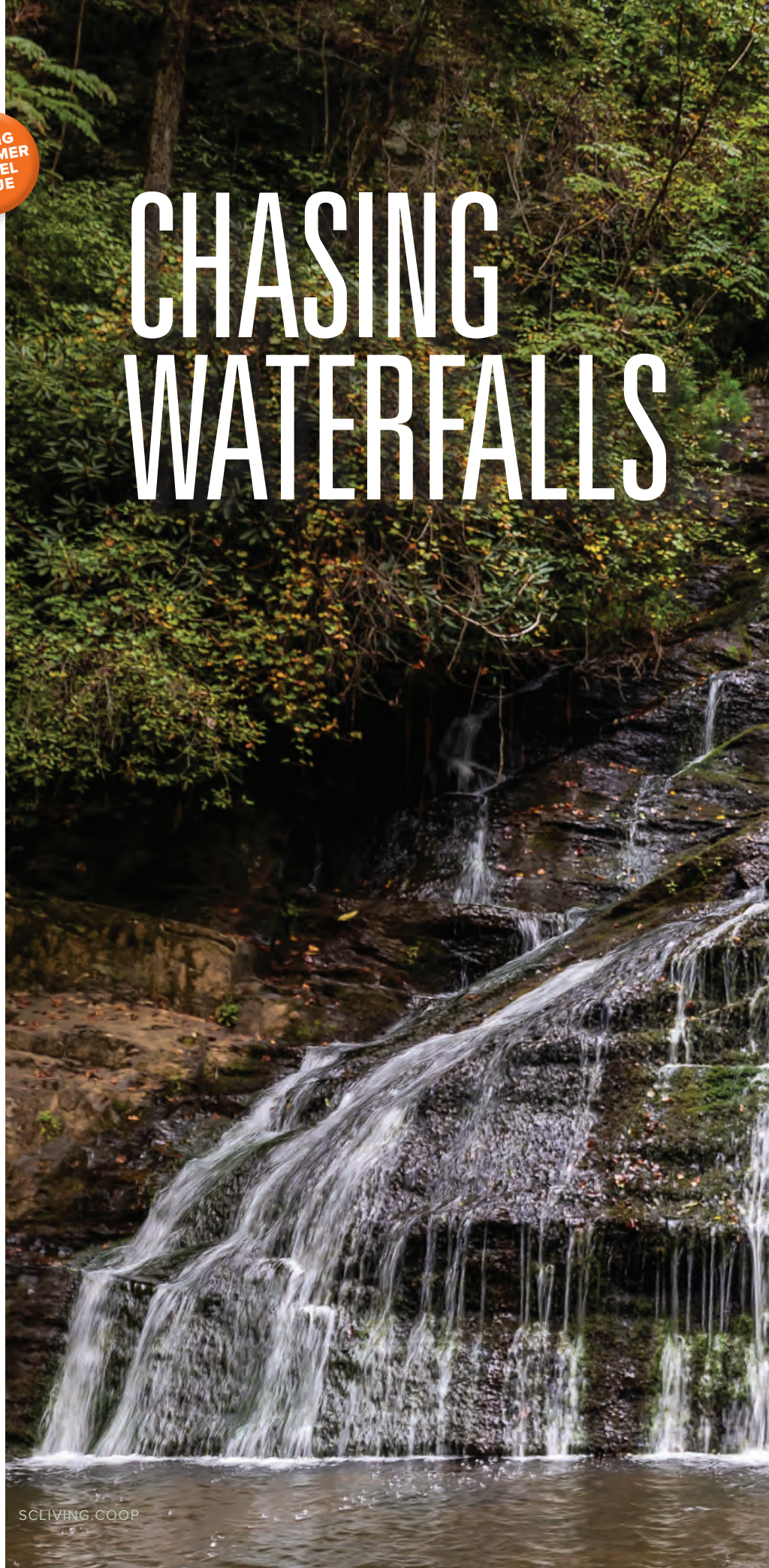
A sensory treat

awaits near the base of the 40-foot-high falls that end Little Brasstown Creek. As my husband takes photographs, I watch the water race over the granite ledges with a splashing roar and feel the coolness of the spray in the air. If not for the snake sunning itself on the rocks by the water, we might have waded into the calm pool at the bottom, where families play on warm days.

We had set out that morning from the Brasstown Valley trailhead in Sumter National Forest, expecting to visit four impressive waterfalls with less than a mile of hiking. At the outset, it seemed too easy. But now, we find ourselves looping over to another trail that runs beside the bigger Brasstown Creek and features a quick succession of three more falls, each shaped by gravity and water in a unique way. We follow the path to a tiered cascade, move on to a veiled falls and finish with a sluice, where water squeezes downward through a narrow passageway as it drops 35 feet into a swimmable pool.

We take a short climb down a wooden ladder that drops us by the rushing waters of the sluice. Otherwise, the hike isn't demanding or time consuming. Even as we stop to chat with

CHASING WATERFALLS





GO WITH THE FLOW Little Brasstown Falls is one of at least 144 waterfalls hikers can explore in Greenville, Oconee and Pickens counties.



WATERFALLS CHRONICLER Thomas King, outdoors advocate and author of *Waterfall Hikes of Upstate South Carolina*, says his favorite waterfall is whatever one he's visiting. Here, he enjoys this day's favorite, Ramsey Creek Falls.

visitors from Texas, Florida and Indiana, we're back at the trailhead within about two hours on this sunny Friday afternoon in September.

Our weekend of chasing waterfalls in Oconee County is off to a fast start.

Sharing an abundant resource

South Carolina's Upstate and neighboring sections of Georgia and North Carolina boast an intense concentration of waterfalls. The two main reasons are the region's average annual

Waterfall safety tips

Adapted from Visit Oconee South Carolina

- Stay on developed trails. Don't stray from observation decks and platforms.
- Watch your footing. Dry rocks can be just as slippery as wet ones, especially those covered with algae.
- The top of any waterfall is the most dangerous. Do not lean over a ledge at the top of a falls.
- Do not swim or wade upstream of a waterfall.
- Hike with others when you trek to waterfalls so someone "has your back" in the event you run into trouble.
- Bring your cellphone in case you need to call for assistance, but be aware you might not have cell service.

rainfall of 80 inches and the dramatic rise in the Blue Ridge Mountains known as the Blue Ridge Escarpment—or the "Blue Wall," as the Cherokee called it.

Not surprisingly, Oconee County's Cherokee-derived name has been translated as "watery eyes of the hills." In the third edition of his guide, *Waterfall Hikes of Upstate South Carolina*, local author and outdoors advocate Thomas King lists a whopping 65 waterfalls in Oconee County, along with 33 waterfalls in Pickens County and 46 in Greenville County. At least 36 more falls in those Upstate counties didn't make it in the guide because of accessibility issues.

For each waterfall in his guide, King provides two pages of details, helping set expectations with a five-tiered rating system from "nice" to "spectacular," difficulty levels from "easy" to "strenuous," and the length and estimated time for the hikes.

On Friday evening at Chau Ram County Park, we meet up with King and his wife, Fay, who took notes for the guide as she accompanied him on many of the hikes. In addition to a notable suspension bridge, the county park features Ramsey Creek Falls, which has adjacent parking and picnic tables. You can drive up to the 40-foot-high tiered waterfall and, if you land the right parking spot, walk a few steps to a small stone table with a nice view of the falls.

Accessibility and amenities are key to this waterfall's popularity; otherwise, it gets a "good" rating in King's book. While he lives an hour's drive away in Williamston, he visits this spot with members of his church for picnics. For him, sharing waterfalls with others is as meaningful as experiencing them himself, and he gets choked up as he recalls sharing a meal under a nearby shed with friends who have since passed away.

"Excuse me," says the 80-year-old King. "These are just memories."

The beauty and the danger

The Kings started exploring waterfalls together when they dated in their 20s. "We hiked down the side of Whitewater Falls when there was no trail," Fay says, and I know enough to understand this took determination and courage.

Located along the North Carolina-South Carolina border, Whitewater Falls is the highest series of falls in eastern North America, with a total drop of more than 800 feet from Upper Whitewater Falls in North Carolina to the end of Lower Whitewater Falls in South Carolina as it spills into Oconee County.

King tells me about a harrowing moment he had exploring Upper Whitewater Falls as a teenager with three hiking buddies: "One of my friends walked out on the waterfall, slipped and fell over a certain area of the falls, landed in the pool and crashed up against some rocks that kept him from going over the final plunge."

King and the others retrieved him from the water and helped him limp back with a broken heel, and they kept the

“When I’ve got a lot going on in my head, the best thing for me to do is get by water. ... Life gets chaotic, and sometimes just being in nature gives you perspective.”

—LAVONDA MULLET, SENECA RESIDENT AND KING CREEK FALLS VISITOR

episode quiet. “We didn’t call the rescue squad,” he says. “No newspaper picked up that story.”

Today, Whitewater Falls is one of the most visited and photographed waterfalls in the Blue Ridge Mountains. And while most see the series from viewing platforms, at least 13 people who got too close have died at Upper Whitewater Falls since 1995, according to news reports published in 2022 when a toddler slipped into the water and went over the falls.

Other waterfalls in the region, including Little Brasstown Falls, have memorial markers for hikers who lost their lives there. In his book, which he compiled after retiring, King advises hikers to “always exercise extra caution and common sense around all waterfalls.” The rocks, roots and fallen trees around them are typically wet and slippery, and even a twist of the ankle can ruin a hike, he reminds. Plus, emergency help may take time to arrive in remote areas.

Dialing up the adventure

Within a half day, my husband and I managed to see six waterfalls, including a quick stop at Issaqueena Falls, a relatively easy quest known for its dramatic backstory as much as its beauty.

Legend tells us the waterfall is named for a Choctaw maiden from the mid-1700s. Issaqueena fell in love with an English trader, warned his colony of an impending attack by the Cherokees and escaped the tribe’s wrath by either faking her death or surviving a jump from the 100-foot-high falls. Interpretive signs with more details are at the site, which includes paid parking and a well-maintained short trail that takes visitors to a viewing platform. From there, it’s a rougher but relatively short descent to get close to the bottom of the falls.

On Saturday, we choose waterfall hikes that require more effort and a splash of adventure. Our morning visit to Yellow Branch Falls involves a 2.6-mile round trip on a well-maintained trail through groves of native trees and ferns. For me, it’s a Goldilocks trek, with just enough up-and-down to get my blood pumping, plus the payoff of seeing and hearing



NATURE FIX The 70-foot-high King Creek Falls provides an immersive experience well worth the relatively short but muddy hike.

thousands of trickles spilling over thin rock ledges at the secluded, 60-foot-high convex falls.

Next, we set off to find the Chauga Narrows using a less-traveled path geared more toward trout anglers. Without King’s guide, we never would have known about this hidden waterfall or how to find it. While the round-trip hike along the Chauga River is only 1.2 miles, it requires ducking through tangles of rhododendron and downed trees. When we reach the 200-foot run of rapids, we have the place to ourselves and enjoy a magical nature moment, sitting on the rocks, gazing at the fine particles suspended in the air above the frothy whoosh of whitewater.

After that, we drive 10 miles to a trail that takes us to Bull Sluice, a complex Class V rapid on the Chattooga River, which forms part of the Georgia-South Carolina border. King’s book tells us that eight people, including kayakers, have lost their

lives at Bull Sluice. So I'm surprised to see whitewater rafters taking a break to jump from a boulder into the churning water at the end of the rapids; though, thankfully, they are wearing life vests and supervised by their rafting guides.

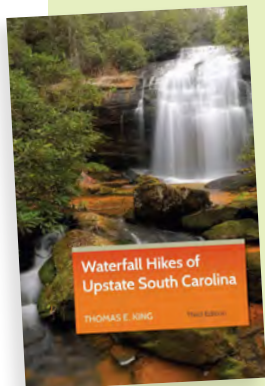
'Air vitamins'

Fast-forward to Sunday afternoon, as we take in our 15th waterfall of the weekend, the 70-foot-high King Creek Falls, an immersive experience well worth the relatively short but muddy hike. I sit on a ridge of stepping stones by the shallow pool below the falls and talk over the water's hum with Lavonda Mullet, who lives by Lake Keowee in Seneca. She and her spouse used to bring their four kids on waterfall hikes, but now that the kids are older and busier, she's visiting on her own.

"When I've got a lot going on in my head, the best thing for me to do is get by water," she says. "It's a place where I can let go of everything and just think through some things. I'll often take a notebook and do journaling, or a book and just read. I don't know, life gets chaotic, and sometimes just being in nature gives you perspective."

While she connects with the water in other ways, including kayaking on Lake Keowee, she prefers waterfalls for her nature fix. "There's something about a waterfall that's just extra soothing. I think it's probably the noise, the negative ions. ... I love it."

The ultimate SC waterfalls guide



The third edition of *Waterfall Hikes of Upstate South Carolina* by Thomas E. King, released by the University of Georgia Press in 2023, provides a thorough listing of 144 waterfalls in Greenville, Oconee and Pickens counties that can be reached with a day hike. King also includes a few noteworthy nearby falls in Georgia and North Carolina.

King's Waterfalls of South Carolina website, waterfallwalker.com, incorporates some of the same information, along with color photos,

videos and additional resources. However, it does not provide the full descriptions, ratings or directions to trailheads that are available in King's printed guide, which proved to be an invaluable resource for this report.



WILD RIDE
A kayaker negotiates the Class V rapids at Bull Sluice.

She's not the only one to speculate that negative ions, a byproduct of misting water, can benefit well-being and help explain our attraction to waterfalls, which produce an abundance of these "air vitamins." That conversation started in the early 1900s with Nobel Prize-winning research and continues to this day. Some reports suggest negative ions can have a calming impact on the brain's serotonin levels, similar to Prozac. In a 2021 study in China, patients showed a significant decrease in fatigue, anxiety, depression and hopelessness and an increase in antioxidants after spending three hours a day for a week in a waterfall forest environment.

Inspired to return

Personally, I find the closer I can safely get to a waterfall, the more satisfied I am. That's reinforced during a follow-up visit to Oconee County in late October, which we start by hiking 2 miles to a viewing platform for Lower Whitewater Falls.

We enjoy the vibrant autumn leaves along the way, and once we arrive at the platform, we can see most of the falls' 200-foot drop—an excellent photographic opportunity for my husband, with optimal fall foliage. But we are miles away from the falls, and for me, it's not as invigorating as other magical waterfall moments we've already enjoyed in Oconee County. From the platform, I'm missing the splashes, the mist and the megadose of air vitamins—not to mention the sound, which I imagine would be thunderous if we were hiking by Whitewater Falls, as the Kings did decades ago.

Thankfully, we finish out our field research over the next two days with treks that allow us to get up close to popular Station Cove Falls, Reedy Branch Falls and the middle and upper sections of Fall Creek Falls—all rated by King as "excellent," one step below "spectacular."

In total, we visited 20 waterfalls over two trips to the Upstate, which seems like a lot but is less than a third of the Oconee County listings in King's guide. We will be back for more, including recommended falls in Greenville and Pickens counties. But instead of rushing, we will try to take more time on each waterfall so we can soak it all in.

Like the snowflake cliché, no two waterfall experiences are the same. The value of each is unique, subjective and can't fully be categorized. While King has offered a framework in his guide that helps connect others with the wonders of nature, I believe he would agree. When I asked which Upstate waterfalls he liked the most, it was clear he had already given that question some thought because he had an answer ready:

"The one I am at is my favorite." 🌀

Moving people

Only someone as improvisational as Martha Brim could turn a flat tire into a 43-year dance with South Carolina.

In the summer of 1983, Brim was a freelance choreographer traveling with her husband from Washington, D.C., to Florida when their tire blew outside of Charleston. During the necessary overnight stay, Brim flipped through a tourism brochure about the Spoleto Festival.

"I said it out loud," Brim recalls with amusement. "I want to come back here."

A few days later, Brim learned of an opportunity to teach choreography at Columbia College, and she made a pivot turn back to the Palmetto State.

Ever since, Brim has expanded what people think of as dance, and she has become a distinctive artistic voice in South Carolina.

"Creative movement allows you to express your humanity in a way that nothing else does," says Brim. "We speak with our bodies, with our postures, with the energy that we put out."

A native of Columbus, Georgia, Brim discovered modern dance and choreography while she was in college.

"I found that I could make things from scratch, but do it more physically," she says.

Since her first position teaching choreography at Columbia College, she continued teaching for 35 years, "graduating" in 2018 to distinguished professor emerita of dance.

"I resisted the word 'retired,'" she says. "I had learned so much there, and I was going to go on and continue my artistic practice."

In 2000, she founded The Power Company Collaborative, or PoCoCo, a Columbia-based dance and arts company. The group has staged performances in a variety of unexpected spaces across the state and internationally, showing that art and movement belong to everyone. They have commissioned works at ArtFields in Lake City, in old buildings in Sumter, at the opening of Liberty Bridge in Greenville and at the Prague Quadrennial in the Czech Republic.

"Dance is very community oriented," says Brim. "A lot of people declare that they're not dancers, and that's one thing we've tried to address with The Power Company. Everybody is a dancer. If you have a body, you're dancing."

Brim's next project is The Movement Lab, a community arts and wellness center located in a former mechanic shop in Columbia.

It's another improvised step in a life full of them. —JOSH CROTZER |

PHOTO BY CRUSH RUSH

Martha Brim

RESIDES IN: Columbia.

AGE: 71.

HONORED: Brim has received the S.C. Arts Commission Choreographic Fellowship and the S.C. Dance Association Advocacy Award.

FROM ONE ART TO ANOTHER: Brim first studied visual arts in college before pivoting to dance.

SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW: "My spine is my tool. My material is humanity. My process is a serious, disciplined play."



PEACEFUL RETREAT
Hopelands Gardens, in the center of Aiken, offers 14 acres of botanical bliss as well as the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum.

Aiken is SC's timeless resort town

Mix classic charm with modern amenities and plenty to do for a delightful getaway

BY JEFF WILKINSON

CRUSH RUSH

IT'S 5 P.M., AND THE WILLCOX HOTEL in Aiken is filling up. Guests mix with town folk and casual tourists alike. They enjoy cocktails at the intimate bar, queue up for reservations at its popular restaurant, and lounge on inviting couches and chairs in a wood-paneled lobby.

The gleaming white hotel on Colleton Street is a Southern classic, hosting guests since 1898. Winston Churchill stayed here. Franklin Delano Roosevelt is rumored to have slipped in the back door from a private train to visit his mistress. Celebs like Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire found it a secluded retreat, far from the lens of paparazzi.

But despite its patrician pedigree, the Willcox today is remarkably relaxed, with a cozy, country club vibe. It's known as Aiken's "living room," a place to linger, chat, catch up with old friends and make new ones.

"This is so completely different from our modern life in Atlanta," says Misty Rothermel, curled up with her husband, Geoff, on an overstuffed couch facing a large flagstone fireplace. "It's nostalgic and timeless."

Kind of like Aiken itself.

A railroad town

Aiken is an unlikely resort town nestled in the piney woods about 20 miles east of Augusta. It was built from scratch by officials of America's first steam-powered railroad, completed in 1833 from Charleston to what is now North Augusta to transport cotton. It was also one of the nation's first trains to offer passenger service.

Aiken soon became a summer retreat for wealthy Lowcountry planters to escape Charleston's malarial summers. And in the early 1900s, Gilded Age industrial barons formed a "winter colony" in Aiken to escape the New York cold. The area's sandy soil proved perfect for polo matches and fox hunts, with prize horses transported to town in specialized railroad cars.

The wealthy visitors built grand homes surrounded by expansive stables, polo fields and jumping rings. They also built golf courses to augment their leisure time, including the South's first, the Palmetto Golf Club, founded in the 1890s.



CITY OF AIKEN

NINETEENTH HOLE Visitors dine at the historic Palmetto Golf Club, one of the oldest continually operating courses in the country. Aiken has attracted tourists since passenger service began on the rail line between Charleston and North Augusta in 1833.

At weekly Sunday polo matches in the spring and fall, \$10 and a picnic basket can give you a taste of the good life.

It is said that Bobby Jones built his storied National Golf Course, home of The Masters, in Augusta because it was close to Aiken. In April, during The Masters, Aiken becomes a base for golf fans from around the world, their private jets packing the local airport.

But don't be put off by the town's gilded lineage. Aiken is about as laid-back as a posh little town can get. The Gilded Age tenet that wealth shouldn't be flaunted—at the risk of seeming gauche—is a legacy that lives in Aiken today.

"You might see a multimillionaire and a stablehand hanging out together, and you wouldn't know the difference," says Matthew Sayer, the New Zealand native who manages the Willcox for owners Geoff and Shannon Ellis.

The Horse District

The essence of Aiken is summed up in the Horse District, just southwest of downtown. It boasts polo fields, tracks and competitive horse parks interspersed with expansive homes



CITY OF AIKEN

and stables. Streets remain unpaved to protect the horse's hooves. The speed limit is 15 mph, and riders have the right of way.

Many of the mansions are clustered around the iconic corner of Whiskey Road and Easy Street—the largest, a private residence modestly named the Joye Cottage, boasts more than 60 rooms.

While most of the grand residences are private homes or host private clubs, Banksia, a Gilded Age mansion, now houses the Aiken County Historical Museum. Admission is free. Nearby, Hopelands Gardens is a botanical treat that hosts the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum.

And the Horse District's myriad events are remarkably accessible.

"We have every equestrian discipline from show jumping to fox hunting," says Albert "Pete" Peters, Aiken's tourism ambassador. February saw the annual Grand-Prix dressage and show jumping competition, featuring Olympic-class competitors from as far away as Australia. It's a mainstay of Aiken's equestrian calendar, which also includes:

- ▶ The Aiken Trials, a proving ground for young thoroughbreds heading toward stakes races like the Kentucky Derby;
- ▶ The Pacers and Polo weekend, one of the country's premier polo competitions;
- ▶ The Aiken Horse Show, held in the sprawling Hitchcock Woods, with its 70 miles of hiking and riding trails;
- ▶ And the Spring Steeplechase, which drew 34,000 spectators last March.

At the Grand-Prix event, the dress code was jeans and boots without the cowboy kitsch. Guests gathered in tented



CITY OF AIKEN

SWEET DREAMS The Willcox Hotel looks much the same as when it was built in 1898. Winston Churchill and Fred Astaire are counted among its many guests.

Aiken's small downtown is intimate and walkable, dotted with horse sculptures decorated by various artists.



CITY OF AIKEN



CRUSH RUSH

GO HUNGRY A stroll through downtown Aiken will tempt you with numerous restaurants ranging from cozy and informal to upscale. Above, a horse sculpture at The Feed Sack on Whiskey Road welcomes diners.

Lots to do all year

Aiken is a historic inland resort town that features an extensive calendar of events that stretches all year long. Find a complete events list at visitaikensc.com.

Here are some highlights:

BATTLE OF AIKEN

The three-day Civil War reenactment draws up to 12,000 spectators each February. It commemorates the historic battle between Union and Confederate cavalry during Sherman's march through the Carolinas.

AIKEN SPRING STEEPLECHASE

The horse race each March attracts upward of 20,000 spectators and is a place to see and be seen.

JOYE IN AIKEN PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL

The two-week Spoleto-type festival in March is held in conjunction with performances at The Juilliard School in New York.

AIKEN'S MAKIN' ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL

The September arts and crafts show stretches the entire length of Park Avenue and attracts about 200 exhibitors.

pavilions and lounged in folding chairs next to the fences, drinks in hand, their dogs as beautiful as the horses.

For events like the Steeplechase, guests can lay on elaborate tailgates that rival an SEC pregame and dress to the nines, a la the Kentucky Derby. At weekly polo matches—held on Sundays in the spring and fall at the civilized time of 2 p.m.—\$10 and a picnic basket can give you a taste of the good life.

“There are different levels,” says Lynne Iversen, a self-avowed “horse lady” who retired in Aiken. “Some people are all whoopy-do in their tents, and others are just hanging out in their folding chairs, very casual.”

No one-trick pony

The town boasts only about 30,000 residents. Its small downtown is intimate and walkable, dotted with horse sculptures decorated by various artists. The street grid features wide boulevards, all named for South Carolina counties and shaded by canopies of century-old live oaks. Boundary Street is a veritable green tunnel, dividing downtown from the Horse District.

But Aiken is not a one-trick pony. It has built on its resort reputation with year-round events: an antique convention, a Civil War reenactment, a seafood festival, a fall festival and dozens more.

The old train depot is now the Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum, which has copious information about events and maps for the Horse District, Downtown, the Cultural District and the greater Aiken area. But be aware, the center is only open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The influx of visitors supports a remarkable number of shops and boutiques. And a stroll through downtown presents many dining options, from the cozy, local flavor of Mack's sandwich shop for lunch, to the relaxed but refined Whiskey Alley for drinks and tapas, to the upscale Park Avenue Oyster Bar and Grill for seafood and steaks.

Then there's the Willcox, whose restaurant is a destination for family gatherings, romantic dinners and special occasions. The hotel can be both a beginning and an ending for a trip back in time.

“It's old, and it's cultured,” says Misty Rothermel, the Atlanta guest. “It's what Southern hospitality is supposed to be.” ☺

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Cannoli (and more) in Carolina

BUCATINI PASTA. SAN MARZANO tomatoes. Pecorino cheese. Soppressata sausage. Castelvetrano olives. Just a decade or so ago, the hunt for these and other products coveted by Italian Americans—or Americans who love Italian food—was largely a futile effort in South Carolina.

And those who'd moved to the Palmetto State from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and other far-flung places where Italian delis and markets are part of life's fabric could just *fuhged-daboudit*. Not even a newfound love for shrimp and grits could temper cravings for a good "chicken parm," garlic knots or freshly made mozzarella.

The options were clear: Live with the longing, or do something about it. Much to the benefit of everyone, several entrepreneurs have stepped up in the last few years to fill the niche. Today, South Carolinians don't need to head north for that authentic Italian American market and deli experience. It can be had in nearly every region of the state thanks to changing demographics.

Even in the heart of the Pee Dee, you can get your cannoli on. When Positano Deli and Market opened its doors in Florence last September, the community swarmed the small space.

Proprietor Mike Femminella moved from Long Island with his wife, Kathy, three years ago, bringing with him years of experience as an Italian deli/market owner. Though opening another business was not part of his plan, he couldn't help but notice there was no dedicated purveyor of Italian goods in the vicinity.

"I knew there were a lot of other people who had moved here from up north," says Mike, whose business was named for his birthplace, Positano, Italy.

BUON APPETITO! Satisfy your yearning for authentic Italian treats, including salads, olives and cannoli, at Positano Deli and Market in Florence.

The Italian American deli experience is on a roll across South Carolina

BY LIBBY WIERSEMA | PHOTOS BY JOHN RUSSELL

"The demand was there. I wasn't exactly ready for retirement, so it made sense to open an Italian market and deli here."

Mike estimates that about 75% of his customers are transplants to the area. His best sellers: Italian subs, focaccia pizzas, pepperoni rolls, house-filled cannoli and the freshly made salads featured in his deli case. Grocerywise, he sells pastas, canned tomatoes and sauces, pickled vegetables and olives, imported cheeses, Italian cookies and a whole lot more.

"I also make my own mozzarella, and our bread is made from New York dough," Mike says.

Visit any Italian deli and market in South Carolina, and you'll likely hear a similar story.

In nearby Conway, Leone's Italian Deli is doing brisk business. New Jersey natives Jim and Anne-Marie Leone identified a need to deliver an Italian deli experience to the rapidly growing community, and they did just that in 2024.

"The goal was to introduce traditional





WISE MOVE Mike Femminella and his wife, Kathy, came to Florence from Long Island three years ago and opened Positano Deli and Market last September. He estimates about 75% of his business is from newcomers to the area.

Italian recipes, freshly prepared foods and classic deli sandwiches made with high-quality ingredients,” Jim says. “Some of our most popular items include our chicken cutlet sandwiches and classic Italian subs like the Angelo, which was named for our first grandson.”

Leone’s is Conway’s headquarters for premium Italian deli meats, cheeses, freshly prepared salads, homemade sauces, cutlets and other traditional prepared foods. Just across the street, Italian food lovers can sit down to a meal at the recently opened Leone’s Italian Ristorante.

The booming trend to satisfy the “Southern Yankee” palate is strong in the capital city, too. Joe Cardinale’s Italian deli and market concept, Enzo’s, is a

rousing favorite among people born here, there and just about anywhere.

“I decided to open an Italian deli after I moved from my native New York,” says Joe. “I couldn’t find a New York-style Italian deli sandwich or typical Italian and Italian American grocery items anywhere.”

Open since August 2020, Enzo’s is renowned for hefty cold and hot sandwiches. The Chicken Vodka—chicken cutlets layered with fresh mozzarella, vodka sauce and pecorino Romano—is wildly popular.

Like Mike at Positano, Joe makes mozzarella and relies on weekly bread shipments from the Bronx for sandwich-making. Take-and-bake pasta casseroles, eggplant Parmesan, artichoke pie and the savory, dense Italian pie, torta rustica, fly out of the case. And in the drink department, Enzo’s distinguishes itself from other such establishments.

“We are proud to offer wines from all

Get your Italian deli/market fix

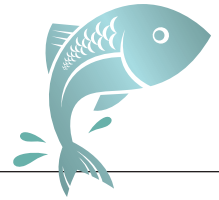
POSITANO DELI AND MARKET
1506 Second Loop Road, Florence
(843) 610-8777

LEONE’S ITALIAN DELI
337 Main St., Conway
(843) 488-2899

ENZO’S DELICATESSEN
612 Whaley St., Columbia
(803) 550-9220

20 regions of Italy,” Joe says.

If you’re a transplant in need of a sweet hug from back home, hear this: Many of these businesses offer slices of New York-style cheesecake and that quintessential deli treat, puffy “half-moon” black-and-white cookies—just the thing to bridge the miles between North and South. ☺



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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	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
MAY				
01	5:25	11:36	5:47	11:59
02	6:11	—	6:35	12:23
03	7:02	12:50	7:27	1:14
04	7:56	1:43	8:21	2:08
05	8:51	2:38	9:17	3:04
06	9:47	3:34	10:12	4:00
07	10:41	4:29	11:06	4:54
08	11:34	5:22	11:58	5:46
09	—	6:11	12:23	6:34
10	12:45	6:57	1:08	7:19
11	1:28	7:39	1:51	8:02
12	2:09	8:20	2:31	8:43
13	2:48	9:00	3:12	9:24
14	3:30	9:43	3:56	10:09
15	4:18	10:32	4:46	11:00
16	5:12	11:27	5:43	11:58
17	6:15	11:54	6:47	12:31
18	7:24	1:07	7:57	1:40
19	8:35	2:19	9:08	2:52
20	9:45	3:30	10:16	4:01
21	10:51	4:36	11:19	5:05
22	11:48	5:35	—	6:01
23	12:14	6:27	12:38	6:50
24	1:00	7:11	1:22	7:32
25	1:40	7:50	2:00	8:11
26	2:16	8:27	2:37	8:48
27	2:53	9:03	3:14	9:25
28	3:30	9:41	3:53	10:04
29	4:11	10:23	4:34	10:46
30	4:56	11:08	5:20	11:32
31	5:44	11:57	6:09	—

DATA BY SOLUNAR SERVICES

Upstate

APRIL

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

18 Mauldin Blues & Jazz Festival, Mauldin Cultural Center, Mauldin. (864) 335-4862 or mauldinculturalcenter.org.

18 Porchfest Abbeville, historic district, Abbeville. (864) 366-4600 or abbevillechamber.org.

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 Craft & Farmers Market, Kings Mountain State Park, Blacksburg. (803) 222-3209.

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.

30–May 2 Abbeville Spring Festival, downtown, Abbeville. (864) 366-5017 or abbevillecitysc.com.

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

MAY

1–10 Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Spartanburg Little Theatre, Spartanburg. (864) 542-2787 or spartanburglittletheatre.com.

2 Cribbs Kitchen Burger Cook-Off, W. Main Street and Daniel Morgan Avenue, Spartanburg. (864) 582-0673 or childrepscancerpartners.org.

2 Reedy River Duck Derby, Reedy River Liberty Bridge, Greenville. duckrace.com/greenville.

6–9 Albino Skunk Music Festival, The SkunkFarm, Greer. albinoskunk.com.

7–24 A Few Good Men, Centre Stage, Greenville. (864) 233-6733 or centrestage.org.

8–10 Artisphere, downtown, Greenville. artisphere.org.

8–24 Memphis, Mauldin Cultural Center, Mauldin. (864) 335-4862 or mauldinculturalcenter.org.

15–17 Greenville Greek Festival, downtown, Greenville. greekforaday.com.

15–24 The Fair at Heritage Park, Heritage Park, Simpsonville. fairatheritagepark.com.

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

16 Mountain Roots Herb Festival, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visithagoodmill.com.

22 Great Scot Parade, downtown, Greenville. gallabrae.com.

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

23 Springfest '26, The Market at the Mill, Pickens. (864) 506-2982 or themarketatthemill.com.

Midlands

APRIL

17–26 Deathtrap, Rock Hill Theatre, Rock Hill. (803) 326-7428 or rockhilltheatre.org.

17–May 2 The Squirrels, Trustus Theatre, Columbia. (803) 254-9732 or trustus.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. scsquareanddance.com.

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

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

MAY

1–2 Birdfest, SCWA Wildlife Education Center, Pinewood. birdfestmusic.com.

1–2 Strawberry Festival, Walter Y. Elisha Park, Fort Mill. scstrawberryfestival.com.

1–3 FoodeesFest, Newberry Street, Aiken. (877) 909-3378 or foodeesfest.com.

2 Rosewood Crawfish Festival, South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. rosewoodcrawfishfest.com.

2–3 Orangeburg Festival of Roses, Edisto Memorial Gardens, Orangeburg. (803) 534-6821 or orangeburgchamber.com.

7–10 South Carolina Poultry Festival, downtown, Batesburg-Leesville. scpoultryfestival.com.

9 Best Dam Food Festival, Catawba Park, Tega Cay. (803) 548-3512 or tegacaysc.org.

9 Sumter Microbrew Festival, downtown, Sumter. palmettooptimistclub.com/microbrew.

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.



14–16 Saint Philip Neri Italian Festival, Saint Philip Neri Church, Fort Mill. (803) 548-7282 or spnitalianfestival.com.

14–17 Open Arts Jazz & Roots Fest, multiple venues, Columbia. colajazzfest.com.

14–31 Nana's Naughty Knickers, Chapin Theatre Company, Chapin. (803) 404-0015 or chapintheatre.org.

15–16 Aiken Garden Show, Aiken County Historical Museum, Aiken. (803) 646-5127 or aikengardenshow.org.

15–17 Iris Festival, Swan Lake Iris Gardens, Sumter. (803) 436-2640 or sumtersc.gov.

15–24 Fame: The Musical, Aiken Community Theatre, Aiken. (803) 648-1438 or aikencommunitytheatre.org.

15–30 Footloose, Workshop Theatre, Columbia. (803) 799-6551 or workshoptheatreofsc.com.

16 Columbia Black Expo, South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. blackexposouth.com/columbia.

16–17 Festival at the Friars Gate Renaissance Fair, Moore Park, Irmo. friarsgatefestival.com.

21–24 Black Cowboy Festival, Greenfield Farm, Rembert. blackcowboyleft.net.

23 Flopeye Fish Festival, Great Falls First Baptist Church, Great Falls. (803) 482-6029 or flopeyefishfestival.com.

Pee Dee & Lowcountry

APRIL

20–26 Charleston Cocktail Week, multiple venues, Charleston. charlestoncocktailweek.org.

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.

22–May 24 Hairspray, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. (843) 842-2787 or artshhi.com.

24–25 Striped Bass Festival, downtown, Manning. (803) 435-4405 or clarendoncounty.com.

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

24–May 3 Disney's Frozen, Florence Little Theatre, Florence. (843) 662-3731 or florencelittletheatre.org.

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

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

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

MAY

1–2 Hell Hole Swamp Festival, Jamestown Rec Park, Jamestown. hellholeswampfest.com.

1–2 Taste of Beaufort, Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. atasteofbeaufort.com.

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

2 Georgetown Food, Beer & Wine Festival, Front Street, Georgetown. discovergeorgetownsc.com.

2–3 Charleston Airshow, Joint Base Charleston, Charleston. airshowcharleston.com.

3 Pedal Hilton Head Island, multiple distance routes, Hilton Head Island and Bluffton. pedalhhi.org.

8–9 Barnwell Sundial Festival, downtown, Barnwell. (803) 259-7446 or barnwellsundial.com.

8–10 Charleston Greek Festival, Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity, Charleston. (843) 577-2063 or charlestongreekfestival.com.

9 Bluffton Mayfest, Calhoun Street, Bluffton. bluffton.com.

14 Lake City Concert Series: Project Trio, Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City. (843) 210-7582 or moorefarmsbg.org.

16–17 AtomaCon (All Types of Media Arts Convention), Trident Technical College Conference Center, North Charleston. atomacon.org.

16–17 Blue Crab Festival, Historic Waterfront, Little River. (843) 249-6604 or bluecrabfestival.org.

22–24 Gullah Festival, Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. (843) 525-0628 or originalgullahfestival.org.

22–June 7 Piccolo Spoleto Festival, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 724-7305 or piccolospoleto.com.

22–June 7 Spoleto Festival USA, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 579-3100 or spoletousa.org.



FLYING HIGH The Charleston Airshow, May 2–3 at Joint Base Charleston, will feature the U.S. Navy Blue Angels.



Spring full of fun

So many festivals and fairs, and so few gorgeous spring weeks to pack them all in! Check out a few highlights from a packed springtime calendar of fun across South Carolina. And stay up to date with more activities listed online at SCLiving.coop/calendar.



MYRTLE BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

APRIL 21-25

South Carolina's longest-running film festival returns for its 21st year, with more than 50 feature-length and short films slated to play. Besides the faces you'll see on the big screen, look out for industry pros and film up-and-comers from around the world.

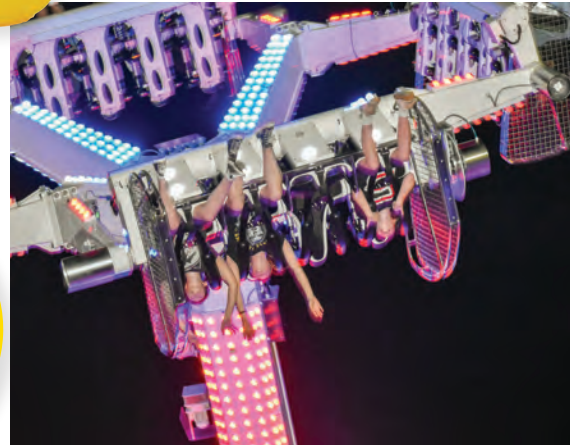
myrtlebeachfilmfestival.com

CHARLESTON DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

MAY 2

Teams of amateur paddlers raise funds to support programs for cancer survivors, including nutrition and exercise workshops, social events and travel expenses. A full boat (complete with a dragon head and tail) carries up to 20 paddlers and a drummer! Enjoy food trucks, a beer garden and a children's dragon parade.

dragonboatcharleston.org



THE GREAT ANDERSON COUNTY FAIR

APRIL 30-MAY 10

One of the Upstate's signature annual events, this fair offers far more than carnival rides and fried foods (although there are plenty of those, too). Admission also gets you access to the daily circus, magic shows, pig races, petting zoo and—new this year—the Amazing Bubble Factory.

thegreatandersoncountyfair.com



ROSEWOOD CRAWFISH FESTIVAL

MAY 2

It's a grand day to celebrate the humble mudbug. Tastier than they look, Louisiana farm-raised crawfish—10,000 pounds of them, to be precise—go down easy at this casual day of food and music at the State Fairgrounds in Columbia. And for the shellfish-shy, don't worry, burgers and beer and countless other fares abound.

rosewoodcrawfishfest.com



REEDY RIVER DUCK DERBY

MAY 2

Adopt a duck for a chance to win free groceries for a year or \$2,500 cash. Or just enjoy the day of live music, face painting, balloon twisting, yard games, food trucks and 14,000 rubber duckyies racing down the Reedy River falls in downtown Greenville. The event benefits local Rotary Club service initiatives.

duckrace.com/greenville



IRIS FESTIVAL

MAY 15-17

Sumter's Swan Lake Iris Gardens provide the stunning floral backdrop for this weekend of beauty and entertainment. Not only will you enjoy spring's bounty (check out the Japanese iris beds, or buy your own flowers from Sumter Master Gardeners), but also concerts, arts vendors, classic cars and plenty of food.

irisfestival.org



APRIL
IN THE GARDEN

■ Ready to start that summer veggie patch? Warm-season edibles, such as green beans, lima beans, honeydew melons, cucumbers, eggplant, cantaloupe, peppers (sweet and hot), southern peas, squash, watermelons and tomatoes can all be planted this month, but gardeners in western South Carolina might hold off until at least the end of April.

■ Your garden friends on the wing will be working overtime with spring activities, so give the birdbath a good cleaning and then begin refilling it with fresh water at least once a week.



L.A. JACKSON

ANNUAL CLIMBER A black-eyed Susan vine (not to be confused with the Rudibekia variety with yellow daisy-like flowers) dresses up bare fences without getting out of control.

TIP OF THE MONTH Vines are perfect plants for dressing up bare fences, grungy mailboxes, exposed gazebos and dull deck rails during the summer. However, perennial vines, by their very nature, could become sprawling, crawling problems. So, just plant fast-growing annual (or tender perennials treated as annuals) vines instead and let them romp during the growing season until winter weather stops their parade cold, figuratively and literally. Need examples? Consider moonvine, mandevilla, cardinal climber, firecracker vine, scarlet runner bean, black-eyed Susan vine, bougainvillea or purple hyacinth bean.



SWAMP MONSTER
Scarlet rose mallow sports blooms 8 inches wide on stems 6 to 8 feet tall.

Wet and wild
Native perennials for soggy places

BY L.A. JACKSON

L.A. JACKSON

WONDERING HOW TO MAKE A RAIN garden pop with color? Scratching your head over what to do with a low, soggy area in your yard? Several pretty native perennials can be part of the solution. These tough beauties thrive in the wettest parts of the wild in our region and can turn mire into mass displays of cheerful blooms.

Need examples? Here are five of my favorites:

Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*). A hummingbird favorite, it has 2- to 3-foot-tall blossom spikes that flaunt one of the prettiest reds on the planet. Although it can take full sun, cardinal flower puts on a better bloom show with at least some afternoon shade. In favorable moist soil, it will slowly spread by way of basal offshoots and seeds.

Ironweed (*Vernonia* sp.). This tall, open, gangly plant waits until late summer to display clusters of small, vivid purple, sprite-like blooms, which are held high on skinny, 6- to 9-foot-tall stems. As another plus for the flowers, also factor in kinetic color—these botanical bits of amethyst are bee and butterfly magnets.

Swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*). This is the showoff that turns roadside ditches golden late in the

growing season. It can grow to 8 feet tall and produces better flower displays in full sun. A happy swamp sunflower can be a bit of a bully in the garden, as it rapidly spreads by rhizomes, so give it plenty of room.

Scarlet rose mallow (*Hibiscus coccineus*). Also known as “swamp hibiscus,” it is a tall (6 to 8 feet) beauty sporting brilliant red blooms as large as 8 inches across in the summertime. Its long, narrow, palmate leaves also give this plant a tropical look. Full sun, plenty of water and occasional supplemental fertilizer feedings will keep this plant in flower through the growing season.

Canna (*Canna* sp.). Stretching from 3 to 8 feet tall, depending on the cultivar, cannas flash sassy flowers in hot hues of pink, red, orange or yellow. Their broad leaves can also be attention-getters, ranging from dusky, deep burgundy tones to screaming green, salmon and yellow stripes.

Although these natives shouldn't be too hard to spot at local nurseries, if your search comes up empty, they are all easy online finds. ☺

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

A bucket list to die for

BY JAN A. IGOE

EVERY TIME FRIENDS START sharing their “bucket lists,” I retreat to the nearest ladies’ room to spend time alone with the delusion that I’m not old enough to have one.

Bucket lists are the place to file all the insanely awesome stuff you meant to do before careers, rug rats and April 15 got in the way of the fun you meant to have as a grown-up. It’s tough to schedule Mount Everest expeditions between PTO meetings.

Since the days of secret plans and locked diaries are over, you’ll find several zillion bucket lists online, in case you run out of ideas. There are lots of regular people—maybe some of the folks singing right next to you in the church choir—who really want to milk a pit viper, wrestle a moose and rappel off the Eiffel Tower. You’ll also find a few mashed couch potatoes who hope to keep breathing long enough to grow a tomato and lose 3 pounds. (Forget Ambien; read their lists.)

“Stuff to do before you die” lists went mainstream after Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman spent their final days racking up adventures in a 2007 movie called *The Bucket List*. Now everybody has a bucket list, and you’d be amazed how many feature bungee jumping in the “must-do” section.

Besides riding an elephant to her Zumba class and serving fondue from a volcano, my friend Rachel—mild-mannered, cookie-baking, sock-knitting grandmother of seven—wants to bungee jump off the Bloukrans Bridge in South Africa. That’s a lovely structure arching 708 feet above a river flanked by solid



OK, I get the elephant thing, but bungee jumping? ... Rachel still has all her original parts. You’d think she’d want to keep them.

rock cliffs on which to bang your head.

OK, I get the elephant thing, but bungee jumping? Much to the envy of her bionic Mahjong buds, Rachel still has all her original parts. You’d think she’d want to keep them.

Let’s be clear: Bungee jumping involves tall buildings, cranes, hot-air balloons or helicopters that were minding their own business until someone strapped an elastic cord between them and some leaping lunatic’s ankles. To me, this has “bad plan” written all over it.

“You are about as adventurous as a

Brussels sprout,” Rachel laments.

“Yeah, a Brussels sprout who knows the difference between a bucket list entry and a death wish,” I retort. “Why don’t you hop off the Piggly Wiggly checkout counter a few times to be sure you like it?”

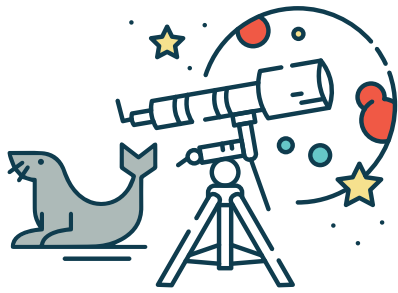
Bungee jumping isn’t for everyone. Humorist Jeanne Robertson was 62 when she was invited to bungee jump in Canada with her husband, who refused because his teeth might fall out. But the jumping facility did offer a safe place to leave hearing aids and dentures, which mature jumpers appreciate. Robertson thought the leap might knock a few saggy parts back into place, but in the

end, she declined the adventure.

At 96, Mohr Keet became the oldest bungee jumper on the planet when he leaped off the Bloukrans Bridge (Rachel’s bridge of choice) in 2010. The event was captured on YouTube, where the video shows him moving slowly to the launch point, balancing on a cane. Moments before Keet went bouncing off the bridge like an antique yo-yo, someone checked his blood pressure. Apparently, you can’t jump to your possible death if you’re having a heart attack. Go figure.

First entry on my bucket list: Find my first sane friend. Preferably one who likes Brussels sprouts. ☺

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



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