

# South Carolina LIVING

## Main Street revival

SC downtowns  
are experiencing  
a reawakening



**SC RECIPE**  
Southern-style  
meatless favorites

**SC BACKSTORY**  
Bull Street transformed

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# 2026 | May



Once hushed, downtown Florence now invites foot traffic among its roughly 100 businesses, and counting.

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A revitalized downtown Laurens prides itself on small-town charm and historic roots. Photo by Thomas Hammond.



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## Reducing the risk of wildfires

**GONE ARE THE DAYS** when wildfires were primarily confined to the western United States. Today, more than 30 states, including South Carolina, face elevated wildfire risk. Wildfire risk is a reality for most of us, and it demands action from all of us.

At Tri-County Electric, protecting our members and the communities we serve is our highest priority. We recognize National Wildfire Awareness Month in May, but wildfire mitigation is a year-round commitment, embedded in how we operate and invest in our local system.

One of the most important ways we reduce wildfire threats is through our vegetation management program. Overgrown trees and power lines are a dangerous combination, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Throughout the year, Tri-County Electric crews—along with our trusted local contractors—proactively trim and remove vegetation that could come into contact with power lines and other critical infrastructure. This work requires careful planning, coordination with property owners and ongoing inspection. While it may not always be visible, it is one of the most effective tools we have to prevent fire ignition and maintain reliable electricity.

In addition, Tri-County Electric is leveraging advanced technology to strengthen our system. We are deploying specialized power line sensors that continuously monitor equipment performance and alert us to potential issues before they escalate. Advanced imaging tools and system analytics allow us to detect abnormal conditions and respond quickly. By investing in these technologies, we are shifting from reactive repairs to proactive prevention—identifying risks early and addressing them before they become emergencies.

Wildfire mitigation also requires thoughtful public policy. Managing electric infrastructure in and around public lands can present unique challenges. That is why

we support practical, commonsense solutions such as the federal Fix Our Forests Act, which would streamline the ability of electric cooperatives and other utilities to maintain power lines on federal lands and reduce hazardous “fuel” buildup. Policies that promote responsible land management are an essential part of a comprehensive wildfire prevention strategy.

While we are committed to doing our part, wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility. Each of us can take important steps to protect our homes and neighborhoods.

South Carolina law requires citizens to notify the Forestry Commission (visit [scfc.gov/notify](http://scfc.gov/notify)) before burning outdoors in unincorporated areas. When you do burn:

- ▶ Properly extinguish fires by dousing them with water, stirring the ashes and ensuring they are cool to the touch before leaving the area.
- ▶ Avoid outdoor burning on windy or excessively dry days.
- ▶ Always check local regulations for burn bans or restrictions.

Other fire protection steps you can take include:

- ▶ Maintaining a defensible space around your home by clearing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable debris.
- ▶ Using lawn equipment carefully, particularly during hot conditions.

Wildfires are becoming more complex and more widespread. Through proactive system management, smart investments, sound policy and community partnership, we can reduce risks and strengthen resilience.

At Tri-County Electric, our members depend on us not only for reliable power, but for leadership in safeguarding the communities we call home.

*Chad T. Lowder*

**CHAD T. LOWDER**  
 Chief Executive Officer

# Rodeo puts safety, family in the spotlight

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

WHEN RYAN JONES threatens to retire from the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo, his wife, Jodi, has learned not to believe him.

"Every year he says it's his last one, and every year we're back out here," says Jodi, whose husband is a construction crew foreman at Tri-County Electric Cooperative and participated in his seventh rodeo in March. "He loves the competition and loves seeing guys from other co-ops. For him, it's kind of a reunion."

This year's event, sponsored by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina and hosted by Black River Electric and Santee Electric at the Clarendon County Industrial Park in Manning, drew more than 40 apprentices and 14 journeyman teams competing in events such as the hurtman rescue, overhead bell changeout and obstacle course.

"It's not just about how quickly you can climb a pole or change out a fuse," says Travis Renwick, loss control and training director for The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina. "It's about safety, because the most important thing is that these guys go home to their families every night."

That emphasis is especially important to the families watching from the sidelines.

"It's a great profession, but it's a dangerous profession," Jodi says. "When storms come, you never know how long he's going to be gone. Seeing how Tri-County Electric equips these guys to work safely, that gives me comfort. They call it being your brother's keeper. They truly look out for one another."

Ryan Jones, an 18-year veteran of Tri-County Electric, says the rodeo reinforces habits that matter most when conditions are worst. For the first time this year, event details were withheld until the morning of the competition.

"They handed us our papers, and we had 45 minutes to figure it out," he says. "That's a lot more like storm work. You show up, you don't know what you've got, and you've got to use your head. An event like this gets the young guys ready for that pressure."

Jones competed on Tri-County Electric's journeyman team with Dillon Sheetz and Evan Williams.

For Jones' kids, the day is a chance to see up close what their dad does for a living.



TCE linemen Ryan Jones, Dillon Sheetz and Evan Williams (in blue shirts) meet before competing in the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo.

PHOTOS BY CHASE TOLER



Lineman Evan Williams competes in the hurtman rescue.



Linemen Dillon Sheetz (left) and Ryan Jones didn't know the details of the competition events until the morning of the rodeo.

CHAD LOWDER

"They think it's the coolest thing ever," Jodi says. "Our oldest understands the risk now, but the little one just watches him climb and says he's like a squirrel.

"He's a hero in our house. He's a hero in our community. When everyone else is hunkered down in a storm, my husband is out in it."

## Cool smarter, not harder

### LET'S SAY YOU'RE TAKING A WALK.

You're strolling on a flat path, going at an easy pace. You don't even break a sweat.

Now, let's say that path reaches an incline, and that walk becomes more of a hike. It takes more effort to keep moving—you're huffing and puffing, and your legs are burning. You need more oxygen and more calories to fuel you.

You're not so different from your air conditioning unit.

Whether it's a comfy spring evening or a sweltering summer afternoon—a flat path or a grueling hill—your air conditioner will work as hard and as often as necessary to cool your home to the temperature you set on your thermostat. The greater the difference between the outdoor temperature and the indoor temperature you set, the harder your AC must work. That means more energy is needed to fuel your unit's effort, and more dollars are due on your power bill.

Many factors affect the cost of your electricity each month, including the age of your home, the efficiency of your appliances and the increasingly expensive cost of fuel and supplies your co-op uses to bring electricity to your home. But one thing is firmly in your



DAVID CLARK

control: how you use your thermostat. And it makes a big difference, especially as summertime heats up.

The more you minimize the difference between the outdoor temperature and the setting on your thermostat, the more you'll save on energy costs. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat between 75–78 degrees during the daytime in the summer. If that feels too toasty to you,

that's OK. Even raising your normal thermostat setting by a couple of degrees can make a noticeable difference in how much energy it takes to cool your home.

Besides raising your thermostat, here are other energy-efficient ways to help your home feel cooler and minimize the hill your air conditioner has to climb this summer:

- ▶ Use ceiling fans to create a cooling breeze while you're in a room. A high-speed fan can keep you comfortable even as you turn up your thermostat a few degrees. Make sure your fans are set to turn counterclockwise in the summer, and turn them off when you leave a room.

- ▶ Keep window coverings such as blinds and curtains closed during the day to block out the sun's heat.

- ▶ Change your air filters regularly (roughly every one to three months, depending on the type of filters you use and the conditions in your home), and schedule regular maintenance for your cooling equipment to keep it operating as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Your co-op is here to help. Call if you ever have questions. —SARAH ELLIS OWEN

### energy efficiency tip



**Don't forget about the small gaps around windows and doors in your home. Tiny cracks and worn weatherstripping allow cool, conditioned air to escape and hot, humid air to seep indoors. This forces your air conditioner to work harder than necessary and increases energy costs. Check for drafts, replace weatherstripping and seal leaks.**

SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV



# Revolutionary SOUTH CAROLINA

## *It Happened Here.*

South Carolina's Revolutionary history embodies the American story of ingenuity, resilience, and the relentless and ongoing pursuit of independence told through the diverse voices of those who shaped it. Whether it's a visit to one of our historic battlegrounds or discovering your ancestral roots, we invite you to discover your South Carolina story as we commemorate the 250th anniversary of America's Independence from Britain.

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**DISCOVER**  
*South Carolina*

# Home lighting 101

BY ABBY BERRY

**MOST OF US DON'T THINK MUCH** about the lighting in our homes—until it's wrong. Maybe the living room feels too dim for reading, or the kitchen lights cast an odd bluish glow. Sometimes we grab whatever bulb or fixture we think looks good without considering how it will perform in a certain space. But with a little planning, you can make your home brighter, comfier and more energy-efficient.

Good lighting doesn't just make your home look better. It makes it feel better, too. Whether you stick to traditional bulbs and fixtures or explore the flexibility of smart lighting, thoughtful choices today will brighten your home for years to come. ☺

**WATTS VS. LUMENS** When shopping for light bulbs, it's easy to focus on watts, which measure how much energy a bulb uses. When it comes to brightness, the lumen count matters most. Lumens measure the actual



**REMEMBER THIS**  
Incandescent: watts = energy consumed.  
LED: lumens = light output.

light output. For example, an 800-lumen bulb gives off about the same amount of light as an old-fashioned 60-watt incandescent bulb. (You've likely replaced all incandescent bulbs with long-lasting, energy-efficient LEDs, but if not, it's time to make the switch!)

**A couple of helpful rules of thumb:**

- ▶ Higher lumens mean brighter light.
- ▶ Lower watts mean less energy consumed.

Remember to check wattage ratings for fixtures and only install bulbs that meet the fixture's wattage safety requirements.



**DIMMERS AND SWITCHES** Installing dimmers instead of standard on/off switches can be a game changer. Dimmers give you more control over brightness, help save energy and create a more comfortable atmosphere. Not all bulbs are dimmable, though, so double-check labels before buying.

While you're thinking about switches, consider whether you have enough of them—and in the right places. A light that only turns off from one end of a hallway quickly becomes annoying. For new installations or upgrades, it's best to hire a licensed electrician to ensure everything is wired safely and efficiently.

**GET MORE** Want a brighter, whiter light in your bathroom but warmer, less intense lighting in your living room? Our home lighting guide provides recommendations for lumens per square foot in various rooms around the house. Find it at [SCLiving.coop/energy](http://SCLiving.coop/energy).



**CONSISTENCY COUNTS!** Please, for your neighbors' sake if not your own, keep the same color temperature on matching outdoor lamps.

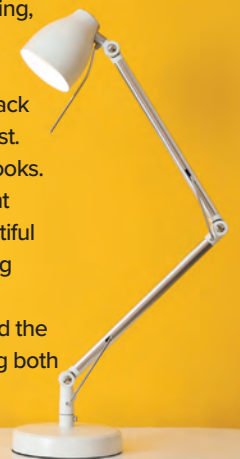
**COLOR TEMPERATURE AND CONSISTENCY** Light bulbs also vary in color temperature, from warm yellow to cool white or even bluish tones. This detail often gets overlooked—until you replace one bulb and notice the new light doesn't quite match the others. If mismatched tones drive you crazy, consider buying and installing bulbs of the same brand and wattage throughout a room at the same time. That way, the look stays consistent, and you won't be stuck hunting for a perfect match later.

**SMART LIGHTING** Smart lighting adds another layer of control and convenience. With smart bulbs, you can adjust brightness, set schedules or even change colors—all from your phone or a voice assistant like Alexa or Google Assistant. Want the lights to dim automatically for movie night, or to turn on before you get home? Smart bulbs make it easy.

Smart lighting also lets you personalize your space. You can go classic with warm white tones or experiment with colors to set the mood—anything from a soft glow for winding down to vibrant hues for a party. Consider pairing smart bulbs with smart light switches, many of which also come with motion detectors that add another level of efficiency and convenience.

**FORM MEETS FUNCTION** Bulbs are only part of the equation. Fixtures matter, too. Ambient lighting, such as sconces or glass-covered ceiling fixtures, provides general illumination. Task lighting, such as pendants, desk lamps or track lighting, focuses light where you need it most.

When choosing a fixture, think beyond looks. Ask yourself: Does this light provide the right amount of brightness for the space? A beautiful chandelier might look perfect over the dining table but leave the rest of the room too dim. Alternatively, an oversized fixture could flood the room with more light than you need, wasting both energy and money (and hurting your eyes).



# A painful history, a brighter future

BY BENJAMIN CULBRETH

**“WE’LL SEND YOU TO BULL STREET.”**

Any South Carolinian in the 20th century probably knew what that statement meant. A friend makes an unbelievable claim? *Tell her where she belongs.* A 10-year-old throws a tantrum? *Warn him about Bull Street.*

It was a colloquialism for years, a threat that acting out of line might result in a stay at the South Carolina State Hospital on Columbia’s Bull Street, one of the capital city’s main thoroughfares. But the joking statement belied the seriousness—even cruelty, in many cases—of the true experiences at Bull Street, where, for decades, people with mental illnesses and disabilities were housed and treated.

Today, going to Bull Street holds a vastly different meaning. The former mental hospital campus has transformed into a bustling downtown city district where residents live in high-end apartments and townhomes, a minor league baseball team draws crowds and revelry,



ROBB MCCARTER, COURTESY OF BULL STREET DISTRICT

**REVITALIZATION** Restored and new buildings for apartments, retail and offices have brought a brighter future to Bull Street.

and locals enjoy strolling, shopping, eating and drinking.

How does a place take such a drastic turn? It’s a long story—about 200 years long, in fact.

The campus first opened in 1828 as the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, one of the first state-run mental hospitals in the United States. Throughout the 19th century, people who were considered mentally unwell for a wide range of reasons were sent there for care, often unwillingly. The campus even briefly served as a Civil War prisoner-of-war camp. At its peak, the hospital was nearly a city within itself, with doctors and staff living on campus with their families. Over time, many of the staples of any town, including a chapel and a library, were added.

As mental health care shifted away from the archaic practices of the 19th and early 20th centuries, with many of those practices now recognized as abusive and inhumane, the hospital began to decline, expedited by the deinstitutionalization movement of the 1960s and ’70s. By the 1990s, few patients were being treated at the campus. And in 2003, the state officially closed the hospital.

## A new kind of Bull Street

The old hospital village sat largely dormant until 2013, when Columbia officials inked an agreement with Hughes Development Corp.—respected as the architect of Greenville’s bustling Main Street area—to revitalize the 181-acre campus into a vibrant downtown neighborhood. More than a decade later, the BullStreet District, as it’s now known, is unrecognizable compared to when the project began.

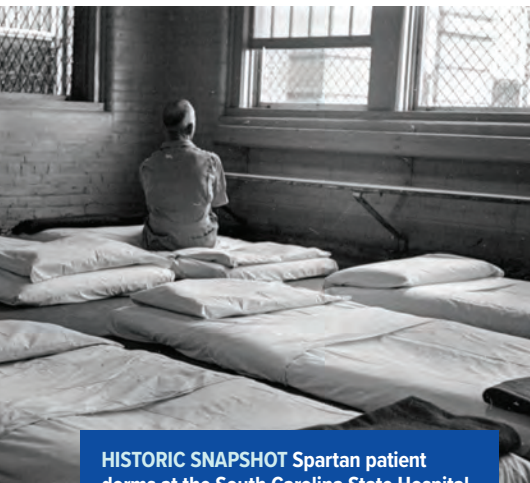
Today, crowds swarm a new outdoor

food hall, residents walk their dogs, shoppers peruse outdoor gear at a massive REI store, a drive-thru line snakes around a Starbucks, and beers are flowing at a brewery next door.

At the center of it all, BullStreet is anchored by a notable juxtaposition of new and old: The award-winning Segra Park baseball stadium, home of the Columbia Fireflies, sits beside the historic Babcock Building, once home to patients and now boasting more than 200 luxury apartments that rent for up to \$1,900 a month.

Several historic buildings have been preserved and repurposed. For instance, the old bakery now houses a coworking space; the former power plant is an event venue; and the striking facade of the Williams Building, a former dorm for drug and alcohol patients, stands between a new office building and an apartment building (pictured above). But many historic structures and trees were sacrificed in the name of redevelopment. Even the Babcock Building’s historic cupola was lost to a fire in 2020, but a replica was constructed and now towers above the district’s tree line.

Nearly 200 years after it first opened, Bull Street still holds memories of its complicated past while focusing on its bright future. On the horizon, perhaps the most fitting addition to the campus is under construction today: A new medical school for the University of South Carolina, expected to open in 2027. ☺



THE STATE MEDIA CO. ARCHIVES, COURTESY OF RICHLAND LIBRARY

**HISTORIC SNAPSHOT** Spartan patient dorms at the South Carolina State Hospital, pictured in 1957, have since given way to luxury apartments on the historic campus.

**SC Backstory explores the moments, icons, places and more that shaped the Palmetto State. If you’d like to know or share the backstory of some part of our state, submit your idea online at [SCLiving.coop/sc-backstory](https://SCLiving.coop/sc-backstory).**



# MEATLESS

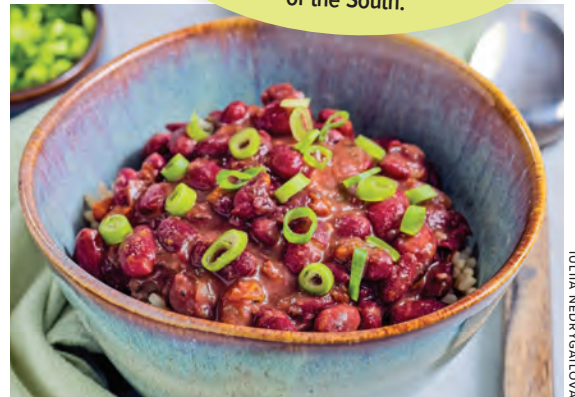
## Southern-style meals

BY BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN

Traditional Southern meals extend a welcoming plate to everyone, from longtime vegetarians to those simply seeking a healthier, more sustainable way to enjoy the rich, delicious flavors of the South.



KAREN HERMANN



JULIA NEDEYGALOVA

### COLLARD GREENS AND CORNBREAD

SERVES 4-6

#### COLLARD GREENS

- 2 bunches collard greens, stems removed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (or less, depending on taste)
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke, optional
- 1 tablespoon sugar or maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

#### CORNBREAD

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons stevia or monk fruit sweetener
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup almond or other milk (more if needed)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Wash collard leaves with cold water and a splash of vinegar. Rinse and pat dry. Roll up leaves, cigar-style—a few leaves at a time—and cut into 1-inch strips. In a large Dutch oven over medium heat, heat oil and sauté onions until soft, 5–7 minutes. Add garlic, pepper flakes and paprika and cook an additional minute. Add chopped greens a few handfuls at a time; allow them to cook down, and continue adding until all greens fit into pot. Pour in chicken stock, vinegar, liquid smoke, sugar and salt. Bring to a boil, then lower heat. Cover and simmer 60–90 minutes. Adjust salt, pepper and/or vinegar to taste.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 425 F. Spray a 9-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray. In a large mixing bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, sweetener, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, milk and butter. Add wet ingredients to dry and stir until just moistened; do not overmix. Pour into the prepared skillet and bake 20–25 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and spread additional butter on top of cornbread. Allow to cool slightly and serve with collards.

**CHEF'S TIP:** Using chicken stock takes this meal from totally meatless to mostly meatless. You can certainly use vegetable stock, but chicken stock will give you a richer flavor.

### RED BEANS AND RICE

SERVES 6-8

- 1 pound dry, small red kidney beans, soaked overnight
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced
- 1 bell pepper (any color), cored, seeded and diced
- 3 stalks celery, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1–2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 cups vegetable stock
- 1–2 teaspoons hot sauce
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 6 cups cooked rice
- Sliced scallions, for garnish

Soak kidney beans overnight before preparing this recipe. In a Dutch oven over medium heat, heat oil and sauté onion, bell pepper and celery until tender, 8–10 minutes. Add garlic, thyme, oregano, paprika and cayenne and cook an additional minute. Add beans, bay leaves and stock. Stir and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 2 hours until beans are very tender. Remove bay leaves and stir in hot sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste. To serve, ladle beans over a scoop of rice and garnish with sliced scallions.



IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE.

SC RECIPE IS SPONSORED BY SC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



GWENEL LE VOT

## MACARONI AND CHEESE

SERVES 6

- 8 ounces cavatappi, elbow or mini penne pasta, cooked al dente in salted water according to package directions
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 2 cups whole milk (or oat or almond milk)
- ½ medium onion, peeled and studded with 1 whole clove
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig thyme
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Pinch nutmeg
- Kosher salt
- White pepper
- 1 cup grated Gruyere cheese, divided
- 1 cup grated sharp cheddar, divided
- 1 cup grated fontina cheese, divided
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- ¼ cup breadcrumbs
- Chopped chives, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 F. Drain cooked pasta and toss with 1 tablespoon butter to keep from sticking. To a medium saucepan, add milk, onion, garlic cloves, bay leaf, thyme and mustard. Warm over medium-low heat until milk starts to steam, about 10 minutes—do not allow it to boil. Remove from heat and let the flavors infuse while you make the roux.

In a large pot over medium heat, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Add flour and cook, whisking, 3–4 minutes. Do not allow to brown. Strain the milk and whisk into the roux to avoid lumps. Continue to cook until thickened, whisking constantly, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and season with cayenne, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Add half of the Gruyere, cheddar, fontina, and Parmesan. Stir until cheese is melted. Taste and adjust seasoning. Stir in pasta and mix well to coat.

Spray a 9-inch cast-iron skillet with cooking spray. Pour the pasta mixture into the prepared skillet and top with remaining Gruyere, cheddar and fontina cheeses. In a small bowl, combine the reserved ½ cup of Parmesan with breadcrumbs, and sprinkle over the top of pasta mixture. Bake in preheated oven for 15–20 minutes until bubbles form around the edges and the topping starts to brown. Remove from oven and garnish with chives.



## JAMBALAYA

SERVES 6

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 12 ounces plant-based sausage, sliced
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced
- 3 stalks celery, peeled and diced
- 1 bell pepper (any color), cored, seeded and diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1½ cups long-grain white rice, uncooked
- 1 14.5-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained
- 1 cup sliced okra
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- Sliced scallions, for garnish
- Chopped parsley, for garnish

In a Dutch oven over medium heat, heat oil and sauté sausage until browned, about 5 minutes. Remove and set aside. To the same pot, add onions, celery and bell pepper and sauté until softened, 5–7 minutes. Add garlic, Cajun seasoning, thyme and paprika and cook for an additional minute. Stir in rice to coat with spices. Add tomatoes, stock and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 20–25 minutes until liquid is absorbed. Fold in sausage, kidney beans, okra and Worcestershire sauce. Let sit covered for 5–10 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Garnish with scallions and parsley before serving.

GINA MOORE



## The barber full of heart

Everyone has a story. And when a person sits in Keon Washington's barber chair, the storyteller begins his work.

One client's story may be expressed in the wail of a wolf that stretches from ear to forehead. Another person may be hurting with cancer and treatments that leave their hair falling away in clumps, but they smile through grateful tears as a bald spot is transformed into a beautiful style. For another, satisfaction comes from a simple cut, the soothing sounds of a trimmer bringing comfort.

"I love people," says Washington, who has been cutting hair for close to 25 years. "I don't sell haircuts. I sell confidence and community."

Freestyle barbering requires fine-tuned skills and earned trust, similar to a mechanic. But it also invites a certain creative flair that originates from the barber's inner artist. Washington calls his craft "hair art."

"I believe everything is art. It's a weapon of mass creation."

Washington was featured earlier this year in a local TV news segment highlighting his barbering relationship with a nonverbal man named Caleb. Washington spoke to Caleb with his eyes, and the two moved together in an easy flow. Caleb left with a tapered cut, a smile on his face and a new friend.

Washington remembers, as a boy, moving from Virginia to Greenville with his mother and four siblings. Some people solely judged him by the color of his skin, and that hurt.

"I never want anybody to feel that way," Washington says.

While some of his creativity comes from his father, Washington says his mother taught him to be a man. He owes her much, as she mostly raised her children on her own. Of her four boys, two have passed and another is serving a 38-year prison sentence.

Those experiences have shown Washington that life is a gift, and he's embraced a posture of voluntary servitude.

"If I can be a good thing in other people's lives, that's what I feel like I should do," he says. "... At some point in time, we're all going to need somebody else. And I believe a reflection of how you treat others is how you'll be treated."

—MICHAEL BANKS | PHOTO BY MATTHEW FRANKLIN CARTER

### Keon Washington

AGE: 38.

RESIDES IN: Greenville.

CLAIM TO FAME: A self-described master hair care specialist, Washington owns Wavelengths Hair Studio and is known for his creative freestyle hair designs and welcoming demeanor, especially for customers who are nonverbal and have other special needs.

STORYTELLER: He's also a hip-hop artist, performing as Story the Word Smith, who's released close to 50 songs. His current favorite is "House Party," which he calls a South Carolina anthem.



THOMAS HAMMOND

# MAIN STREET

**NEW LIFE** From top: Laurens, Florence and Hartsville are three cities that have reinvented and revitalized their downtowns during recent decades with the assistance of Main Street South Carolina.



**How three South Carolina downtowns changed their fate**

BY LIBBY WIERSEMA

# AWAKENINGS



LEFT & ABOVE: JOHN RUSSELL

Civic club luncheons, court sessions, council meetings, coffee klatches, book buying, clothes shopping—by day, downtown Florence is a hive of business and commerce. But come night, all that task-driven energy gives way to a chill vibe. Diners fill restaurants, friends meet for art galas and live music, kids sit on benches juggling ice cream cones, and couples cozy up at a rooftop bar for cocktails and romantic sunsets.

Florence's town center is a near-perfect portrait of many of the hallmarks of South Carolina's most vibrant downtowns—walkable, attractive, diverse, historic. Today's Florence is a far cry from the town scene only a couple decades ago.

Starting in the 1960s, suburbanization and the advent

of big-box stores and shopping malls rendered many downtown districts obsolete. But a reversal is happening: Many Main Streets across the state are pulsing back to life, as people seek to do business, have fun and make their homes in the heart of their hometowns.

Reanimating dormant downtowns is no easy feat. It is a lengthy undertaking that requires resourceful collaboration and strategic planning.

Florence, along with Hartsville and Laurens, are three of five cities accredited by Main Street South Carolina, an organization that supports downtowns as they grow through these life-saving transformations. Though their stories are unique, all share a common mission to build and sustain a thriving, healthy downtown. ▶▶



PHOTOS BY JOHN RUSSELL

“The support of downtown Hartsville and this community is a big reason I am still here.”

—ROXIE GARDNER, OWNER OF SEERSUCKERGYPSEY

resources to best use” by offering research training, professional development, technical assistance, advocacy and more, says Jenny Boulware, the coordinator of the organization.

Hartsville first earned Main Street SC accreditation in 2020, which ushered in a steady wave of downtown renovations and upgrades. Tax incentives for historic preservation, grants for beautification projects and support for new businesses have meant positive changes for both the community and individuals. Roxie Gardner, owner of the retro shop Seersuckergypsy, won a startup business grant in 2015.

“I could not have opened my business without it,” she says. “The support of downtown Hartsville and this community is a big reason I am still here.”

David Zanoni, a certified canine and feline nutritionist, opened Purrs McBarkin’ in



**SUCCESS STORIES** Small business owners Roxie Gardner of Seersuckergypsy and David Zanoni of Purrs McBarkin’ thrive on Hartsville support.

2021. Though he competes with online and big-box pet supply giants, he is a Hartsville small business success story.

“I believe my customers appreciate that I am local and don’t push products they don’t need just to make a sale,” he said. “The community has really responded to my approach.”

Beyond business, Hartsville boasts more than 50 events annually, including block parties, an outdoor farmers market, craft shows, concerts, holiday events, a St. Paddy’s Day pub crawl and the Wild Hartsville Brew Festival.

“You can come to downtown Hartsville and find just about everything you want or need,” Brown says.

## HARTSVILLE

### Taking care of business

**OCCUPANCY:** 97% of business spaces claimed.

**NEW BUSINESSES:** 11 added in 2025.

**ON THE HORIZON:** Completing renovations to the historic Center Theater, which will serve as a performing arts venue.

A quaint historic district. Flowers spilling from sidewalk planters. Tree-lined avenues that hum with foot traffic. Downtown Hartsville has earned its tagline, “Small town with a big heart.”

A boutique hotel, bakery, fashion stores, coffee houses, gift shops, salons, specialty food markets, a bookstore, thrift and antique shops, a guitar repair shop, restaurants and a brewery are some of the businesses you’ll find downtown.

“There is so much diversity in this town,” says Erin Kent, who co-owns Vintage, an eclectic craft beer and wine boutique tucked in an attractive alleyway called Mantissa Row. “We put a lot of thought into creating a relaxing place where people can socialize over a beer or glass of wine, play board games and get a bite to eat.”

Coker University students can cross the street and enjoy live music on the Vintage patio, play pinball at Firefly Toy and Games, or grab a Big Dipper sandwich from Groucho’s Deli. The school’s proximity, with its theatrical events and art exhibits, boosts downtown’s image as a cultural destination.

“Unlike some towns, Hartsville never aimed to spread out and managed to avoid a devastating decline,” says Michelle Byers Brown, the local Main Street director. “But in the 1970s, a group of businesspeople recognized things were heading that way as big-box culture arrived in the area. The risk of losing downtown motivated them to develop a plan. They were definitely before their time.”

Towns in need of a jolt turn to Main Street South Carolina, a nonprofit program of the Municipal Association of South Carolina and coordinating program of Main Street America. Currently serving 33 local programs, Main Street South Carolina helps smaller cities and towns “put their limited

## LAURENS

### Blending past and present

**CHARM FACTOR:** Activity pivots around a stunning and historic Greek Revival courthouse.

**ANNUAL EVENTS:** Freedom Fest, Halloween Spooktacular, Juneteenth Weekend, Laurens Film Festival, Steam on the Square.

**ON THE HORIZON:** Expanding upper-story housing, office space, cultural and community programming.

Laurens is one town where being called “square” is not an insult.

The community takes great pride in its public square—one of only five such designs in the state. The square links a host



THOMAS HAMMOND

**SMALL TOWN CHARM** The Capitol Theatre in Laurens first opened in 1926 and still hosts events such as concerts and family movie nights. Renovation plans are in the works for the historic building.

of businesses and frames the town's most iconic feature: a 14,000 square-foot classic Greek Revival courthouse. To maintain its stately appeal, the circa-1840 building has been undergoing renovation to enhance its functionality and restore historically accurate characteristics.

Efforts to meld past and present have created "a district that feels both rooted in history and full of momentum, with a small-town charm but modern amenities," says Brad Abercrombie, the town's Main Street director.

Like other rural South Carolina towns, Laurens was marked by vacant and aging buildings with sparse foot traffic. But community leaders understood that preserving landmarks and restoring downtown's original purpose would pull it out of the clutches of decline.

"Early efforts focused on stabilizing the district, improving façades and reestablishing downtown as a community gathering place," Abercrombie says of the revitalization movement that began around 1996.

The result is that downtown Laurens still boasts historic buildings such as the Capitol Theatre, which first opened in 1926. Now, renovation plans are in the works for the venue that hosts family movie nights and events like "Homegrown: Live" featuring Upstate musicians. Adding to the nostalgia are a 1950s-inspired grocery and healthy food store, Sanitary Market, and the family-owned Thomason Jewelers, which has been serving Laurens since 1970.

Laurens' dining scene has surprising range for a small town. You can kick back at Tap & Table with a cold brew and brick oven pizza or experience fine Southern cuisine at Moultrie. Abercrombie suggests a visit to Roma Italian restaurant, a local institution operating for more than two decades. And—*surprise!*—there's even a crepe shop.

"Looking ahead, downtown will see continued redevelopment of historic buildings, more residential opportunities and expanded cultural and community programming," Abercrombie says, adding a nod to previous leaders and their accomplishments. "Their collective work laid the foundation for the progress the community continues to build on today."

## FLORENCE

# Growing full speed ahead

**RENOVATION BOOM:** Since 2002, 79 buildings and structures have been rehabilitated.

**INCLUSIVITY:** Nearly half of downtown businesses are owned or operated by minorities.

**ON THE HORIZON:** Opening the renovated Carolina Theatre this year and adding 1,000 new housing units by 2030.

Once a popular stopping point for tourists driving to Myrtle Beach, downtown Florence fell victim to a familiar tale of woe in the 1960s, with the emergence of shiny new shopping malls and urban sprawl. Some downtown businesses relocated, while others called it quits.

By the 1990s, blight had taken up residence, and foot traffic faded to a hush. Racial divides, neglect and the demolition of culturally significant buildings cast a pall over the area. A decade later, rumors of resuscitation circulated, but few believed, as attempts fell short.

Then Florence Downtown Development Corporation signed on with the Main Street program, and by 2011, public and private alliances were forged, volunteers recruited, plans drawn up, business incubators established and investments made in preservation. The result: Today's downtown is alive and thriving, with exceptional dining, two hotels, boutiques, art galleries, an independent bookstore, a wine bar, an ice cream shop, entertainment venues, public art, an artisan chocolate shop and more. There are now around 100 businesses, and counting.

"In about 20 years' time, the historic district vacancy rate dropped from 42% to just 4%," says Hannah Davis, Florence's Main Street director. "That is what can happen with a robust master plan and committed community effort."

She points to a major private investment project as the catalyst for all that progress. When local developer and entrepreneur Tim Norwood first talked about moving his restaurant downtown and opening a boutique hotel in a historic ►►



JOHN RUSSELL

**LIVELY SCENE** Cru Wine & Tap is one of approximately 100 businesses that give patrons a reason to return to downtown Florence over and over again.



JOHN RUSSELL

**SOCIAL SATURDAY** The weekly City Center Farmers Market in Florence features artisans as well as plenty of food and flower vendors.

**“Something happened that seemed impossible: People started showing up downtown.”** —HANNAH DAVIS, FLORENCE’S MAIN STREET DIRECTOR

building, a lot of people called the idea crazy. But he and his partners went ahead.

“To me, it just made sense for the restaurant, the hotel and for downtown,” Norwood says.

When the posh Hotel Florence and its acclaimed restaurant, Victors, welcomed the first overnight guests in 2013, Norwood’s “crazy” plan became widely viewed as “brilliant.”

“It was a definite trigger point,” says Davis. “Something happened that seemed impossible: People started showing up downtown.”

Partnerships were crucial in establishing a robust cultural district, which includes the stately Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center, Florence County Museum, Florence Little Theatre and and Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation Library. Art galleries and public art installations across town add to the vibe.

Now that its sleepy days are behind it, downtown Florence hosts tons of events, the biggest being the fall South Carolina Pecan Festival with 50,000 attendees. And buzz is building around the Florence Wine & Food Festival. Since its inception in 2018, it has grown into a major happening, with cookbook authors and television personalities Ted and Matt Lee (aka the Lee Bros.) as organizers, and celebrity chefs such as Sean Brock and Vivian Howard as headline talent.

Small-town revitalization stories don’t get much better than that—or do they?

“The question is always what needs to happen next to keep moving the ball forward,” Davis says. “Downtown Florence has a truly remarkable history, and it is still in the making.”

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The 2026 South Carolina Ag + Art Tour is a free, self-guided tour of farms and markets featuring local artisans. For details, visit [agandarttour.com](http://agandarttour.com).

## Upstate

### MAY

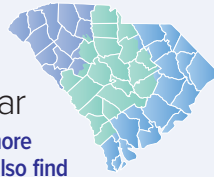
- 16 Bygone Days Antique Tractor and Engine Show**, The F.A.R.M. Center, Seneca. [farmoconee.org](http://farmoconee.org).
- 22 Great Scot! Parade**, downtown, Greenville. [gallabrae.com](http://gallabrae.com).
- 22–June 15 Upstate Shakespeare Festival**, Falls Park, Greenville. (864) 235-6948 or [warehousetheatre.com](http://warehousetheatre.com).
- 23 Greenville Scottish Games**, Furman University, Greenville. [gallabrae.com](http://gallabrae.com).
- 23 SpringFest '26**, The Market at the Mill, Pickens. (864) 506-2982 or [themarketatthemill.com](http://themarketatthemill.com).

### JUNE

- 4–7 South Carolina Festival of Flowers**, various locations, Greenwood. (864) 223-8431 or [scfestivalofflowers.org](http://scfestivalofflowers.org).
- 5–21 Football Football (or I Love Love Dash)**, The Warehouse Theatre, Greenville. (864) 235-6948 or [warehousetheatre.com](http://warehousetheatre.com).
- 6 Sparkle City Rhythm & Ribs Festival**, Barnet Park, Spartanburg. [rhythmndribs.org](http://rhythmndribs.org).
- 12–13 Greenville Jazz Fest**, downtown, Greenville. (864) 232-2273 or [greenvillejazzfest.com](http://greenvillejazzfest.com).
- 12–21 Annie**, Greenwood Community Theatre, Greenwood. (864) 229-5704 or [greenwoodcommunitytheatre.com](http://greenwoodcommunitytheatre.com).
- 12–23 Chautauqua History Comes Alive Festival**, various venues, Greenville, Spartanburg, Abbeville and Liberty. (864) 244-1499 or [historycomesalive.org](http://historycomesalive.org).
- 13 Music on the Mountain**, Table Rock State Park, Pickens. (864) 878-9813.
- 18–20 Mighty Moo Festival**, Veterans Memorial Park, Cowpens. [thecowpensmightymoo.com](http://thecowpensmightymoo.com).
- 19 Juneteenth at Unity Park**, Unity Park, Greenville. (803) 232-2273 or [greenillesc.gov](http://greenillesc.gov).
- 19 Juneteenth Soul Food Festival**, Main Street, Fountain Inn. (864) 531-0644 or [mainstreetfountaininn.com](http://mainstreetfountaininn.com).
- 20 Americana Folk Festival**, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or [visithagoodmill.com](http://visithagoodmill.com).
- 20 Browse and Stroll Art Market**, Swamp Rabbit Trail, Travelers Rest. (864) 834-8740 or [travelersrestsc.com](http://travelersrestsc.com).
- 20 Greenville Reggae Block Party**, 25 Goldsmith St., Greenville. [greenilleregaea.com](http://greenilleregaea.com).
- 20 Mamma Mania!**, Abbeville Opera House, Abbeville. (864) 366-9673 or [abbevillecitysc.com](http://abbevillecitysc.com).

## SCLiving.coop/calendar

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



PARADIGM VIDEOGRAPHY

Mark Lippard is scheduled to bring laughter and circus magic to Kidfest on June 6 during Greenwood's S.C. Festival of Flowers.

**27 Greer Freedom Blast**, Greer City Park, Greer. (864) 968-7008 or [freedomblast.org](http://freedomblast.org).

## Midlands

### MAY

- 15–16 ColaJazz & Roots Fest**, Finlay Park, Columbia. [colajazzfest.com](http://colajazzfest.com).
- 15–17 Iris Festival**, Swan Lake Iris Gardens, Sumter. (803) 436-2640 or [sumtersc.gov](http://sumtersc.gov).
- 21–24 Black Cowboy Festival**, Greenfield Farm, Rembert. [blackcowboyfestival.net](http://blackcowboyfestival.net).
- 22 Aiken Master Gardener Association Lunchbox Series: Riverbanks Gardens**, Millbrook Baptist Church, Aiken. [aikenmastergardeners.org](http://aikenmastergardeners.org).
- 23 Flopeye Fish Festival**, Great Falls First Baptist Church, Great Falls. (803) 482-6029 or [flopeyefishfestival.com](http://flopeyefishfestival.com).
- 23 Native American Heritage Tour**, 1120 Fort Congaree Trail, Cayce. (803) 739-5385 or [cayce12000years.com](http://cayce12000years.com).
- 24 Aiken Bluegrass Series**, Stable View, 151 Stable Drive, Aiken. (484) 356-3173 or [visitaiakensc.com](http://visitaiakensc.com).
- 24 Civil War Battle of Congaree Creek Tour**, 1120 Fort Congaree Trail, Cayce. (803) 739-5385 or [cayce12000years.com](http://cayce12000years.com).

### JUNE

- 5 Summer Beach Bash**, Fort Mill Amphitheater, Fort Mill. (803) 547-2034 or [fortmillsc.gov](http://fortmillsc.gov).

**5–6 Peach Tree 23 Yard Sale**, Highway 23, Batesburg-Leesville to Modoc. (803) 685-5511 or [ridgespringsc.com](http://ridgespringsc.com).

**7–13 Southeastern Piano Festival**, University of South Carolina School of Music, Columbia. [southeasternpianofestival.com](http://southeasternpianofestival.com).

**11 Taste on the River**, 121 Alexander Road, West Columbia. [beautifywestcolumbia.org](http://beautifywestcolumbia.org).

**11–13 Party in the Pines Festival**, downtown, Whitmire. (803) 694-2356 or [whitmirejayecees.wikisite.com](http://whitmirejayecees.wikisite.com).

**11–14 South Carolina Caribbean Carnival**, South Carolina State Fairgrounds, Columbia. (803) 319-3225 or [southcarolinacarnival.com](http://southcarolinacarnival.com).

**13 SC Jazz Masterworks Ensemble presents Joshua Redman**, Harbison Theatre at Midlands Technical College, Columbia. (803) 407-5011 or [harbisontheatre.org](http://harbisontheatre.org).

**19 Aiken Master Gardener Association Lunchbox Series: Wanderlust Chronicles**, Millbrook Baptist Church, Aiken. [aikenmastergardeners.org](http://aikenmastergardeners.org).

**19–July 19 Urinetown**, Trustus Theatre, Columbia. (803) 254-9732 or [trustus.org](http://trustus.org).

**20 Columbia Shrimp & Grits Fest**, Seawell's, Columbia. [columbiashrimpandgrits.com](http://columbiashrimpandgrits.com).

**20 Juneteenth Freedom Fest**, Finlay Park, Columbia. [juneteenthfreedomfest.com](http://juneteenthfreedomfest.com).

**20 Ridge Peach Festival**, downtown, Trenton. [ridgepeachfestival.org](http://ridgepeachfestival.org).

**22–28 Black Eats Week 803**, various restaurants, Columbia. [blackeatsweek803.com](http://blackeatsweek803.com).

**26–July 4 Oliver! The Musical**, Rock Hill Theatre, Rock Hill. (803) 326-7428 or [rockhilltheatre.org](http://rockhilltheatre.org).

**27–28 American Radio Relay League Field Day**, Andrew Jackson State Park, Lancaster. (803) 285-3344.

## Pee Dee & Lowcountry

### MAY

- 16 Bulls Bay Nature Festival**, Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center, Awendaw. [bullsbaynaturefestival.com](http://bullsbaynaturefestival.com).
- 16–17 World Famous Blue Crab Festival**, Historic Little River Waterfront, Little River. (843) 249-6604 or [bluecrabfestival.org](http://bluecrabfestival.org).
- 22–24 Gullah Festival**, Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. (843) 525-0628 or [originalgullahfestival.org](http://originalgullahfestival.org).

**22–June 7 Piccolo Spoleto Festival**, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 724-7305 or [piccolospoleto.com](http://piccolospoleto.com).

**22–June 7 Spoleto Festival USA**, multiple venues, Charleston. (843) 579-3100 or [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org).

**24 Hilton Head Choral Society presents "Celebrate America,"** First Presbyterian Church, Hilton Head Island. (843) 341-3818 or [hiltonheadchoralsociety.org](http://hiltonheadchoralsociety.org).

**29 Reggae Nights Summer Concert**, James Island County Park, Charleston. (843) 795-4386 or [ccprc.com](http://ccprc.com).

**30 Charleston Charity Duck Race**, Daniel Island Waterfront Park, Charleston. [charlestonduckrace.com](http://charlestonduckrace.com).

**30 Piccolo Spoleto Sand Sculpting Competition**, Front Beach, Isle of Palms. (854) 837-2330 or [iop.net](http://iop.net).

### JUNE

- 4–7 Carolina Country Music Fest**, Burroughs and Chapin Pavilion Place, Myrtle Beach. [carolinacountrymusicfest.com](http://carolinacountrymusicfest.com).
- 5–6 High Tide Festival**, Riverfront Park, Charleston. [hightidefestival.com](http://hightidefestival.com).
- 5–7 Black Moses Freedom Festival**, Penn Center, St. Helena Island. [blackmosesfreedomfestival.com](http://blackmosesfreedomfestival.com).

**6 Great Guns on the Ashley Artillery Demonstration**, Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site, Charleston. (843) 852-4200.

**6 Lavender Festival**, King George Lavender Farm, Barnwell. [kinggeorgelavender.com](http://kinggeorgelavender.com).

### MAY

- 2–3 Chester County**
- 9 Aiken County**
- Lancaster County**
- 16 Abbeville County**
- Calhoun County**
- Colleton County**
- Laurens County**
- 30 Hampton County**
- Lexington County**
- McCormick County**

### JUNE

- 6 York County**
- 6–7 Richland County**
- 13 Allendale County**
- Barnwell County**
- 26–27 Bamberg County**
- Georgetown County**

**6 Music Festival of the Lowcountry**, Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort. [musicfestivalofthelowcountry.com](http://musicfestivalofthelowcountry.com).

**18 Yoga Fest**, James Island County Park, Charleston. (843) 795-4386 or [ccprc.com](http://ccprc.com).

**18–21, 25–28 Bye Bye Birdie**, Main Stage Community Theatre, Hilton Head Island. (843) 689-6246 or [msctheatre.org](http://msctheatre.org).

**20 Hilton Head Margarita Festival**, 59 Pope Ave., Hilton Head Island. (843) 715-3942.

**20 Juneteenth Family Fest**, Riverfront Park, North Charleston. [jffcharleston.com](http://jffcharleston.com).

**20–27 Hampton County Watermelon Festival**, downtown, Hampton. [hcmelonfest.org](http://hcmelonfest.org).

**24–Aug. 8 Mean Girls: The Musical**, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. (843) 842-2787 or [artshhi.com](http://artshhi.com).

**26 Reggae Nights Summer Concert**, James Island County Park, Charleston. (843) 795-4386 or [ccprc.com](http://ccprc.com).

**27 Conway Riverfest**, downtown, Conway. (843) 248-2273 or [conwayriverfest.com](http://conwayriverfest.com).

**27 Lizard Man Stomp**, downtown, Bishopville. (803) 484-6359 or [facebook.com/lizardmanstomp](http://facebook.com/lizardmanstomp).

**28 Carolina Day—Commemoration of the Battle of Sullivan's Island**, Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island. (843) 883-3123 or [charlestoncvb.com](http://charlestoncvb.com).

### ONGOING

**May 30–Aug. 30 Original Declaration of Independence on view**, Charleston Museum, Charleston. (843) 722-2996 or [charlestonmuseum.org](http://charlestonmuseum.org).

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**The dishwasher uses  
less water than hand-  
washing your dirty dishes.**

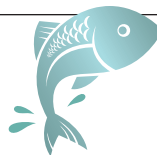
Maximize its efficiency:

- Run the dishwasher fully loaded.
- Ensure the water-spraying arms aren't blocked.
- Use the “air dry” setting instead of “heat dry.”
- Use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster.



SOURCES: NRECA and energy.gov

South Carolina  
Living



## 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.

DATA BY SOLUNAR SERVICES

	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
<b>MAY</b>				
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	—

	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
<b>JUNE</b>				
01	6:36	12:23	7:01	12:48
02	7:30	1:17	7:55	1:42
03	8:24	2:12	8:49	2:37
04	9:18	3:06	9:42	3:30
05	10:11	3:59	10:34	4:22
06	11:00	4:49	11:22	5:11
07	11:47	5:36	—	5:58
08	12:08	6:21	12:32	6:42
09	12:52	7:03	1:15	7:26
10	1:34	7:46	1:58	8:10
11	2:17	8:30	2:43	8:56
12	3:04	9:19	3:33	9:48
13	3:57	10:13	4:29	10:45
14	4:57	11:14	5:31	11:47
15	6:03	—	6:37	12:54
16	7:12	12:56	7:45	1:28
17	8:21	2:06	8:51	2:36
18	9:25	3:12	9:53	3:39
19	10:24	4:12	10:49	4:36
20	11:16	5:05	11:39	5:28
21	—	5:52	12:03	6:14
22	12:24	6:35	12:45	6:56
23	1:04	7:14	1:25	7:36
24	1:42	7:53	2:04	8:15
25	2:22	8:33	2:45	8:56
26	3:03	9:15	3:27	9:39
27	3:46	9:59	4:11	10:23
28	4:33	10:45	4:58	11:11
29	5:21	11:34	5:47	—
30	6:12	12:00	6:37	12:25

IN MEMORIAM



MILTON MORRIS

Pearl's leafy legacy

Last month, South Carolina said farewell to a horticultural icon. Famed topiary artist Pearl Fryar died April 3 at the age of 86. Fryar was internationally known as the self-taught architect of 3 acres of sculpted plants in the small town of Bishopville. But he humbly thought of himself as just a guy who cuts up bushes, *South Carolina Living* wrote in a 2017 feature. Thousands of tourists visit Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden each year. The garden, his legacy, is free to visit Tuesday–Saturday at 145 Broad Acres Road, Bishopville. —SARAH ELLIS OWEN

MAY IN THE GARDEN

Find L.A. Jackson's gardening tips for May, including how to dry "forever flowers" such as the Kobold variety of liatris (pictured), at [SCLiving.coop/home--garden](http://SCLiving.coop/home--garden).



L.A. JACKSON



The color range of the 'Cubanelle' sweet pepper.

Hot for sweet peppers

BY L.A. JACKSON

L.A. JACKSON

**HOT PEPPERS HAVE BEEN THE DARLINGS** of both vegetable and ornamental gardeners in recent years because many are so sizzling, so colorful and so sexy, especially when compared to sweet peppers, of which the ol' utilitarian, blocky green bell pepper readily comes to mind. Ho-hum.

But, *pssst!* Ya wanna know a secret? There are sweet peppers that not only have great taste—with way, way less heat—but also the visual sass to compete with fancy hot peppers in the garden. Here are four such floosies to consider not only for your veggie patch but also for flower borders or container planters this year:

**Carmen.** An All-America Selections winner, this cultivar shows off 6-inch, elongated peppers that mature from green to a handsome red—creating, for those inclined to wish, a touch of summertime Christmas in the garden. Easy to enjoy raw, this selection is also delicious when roasted.

**Shishito.** Another contender to create a “Yuletide July” effect in the garden, this Japanese heirloom variety also sports slim, wrinkled green peppers that eventually color-shift to bright red. True to their East Asian roots, the 3- to 4-inch, thin-skinned fruits are a popular ingredient in stir-fries and tempura. Shishito peppers are generally mild, but take note

that an occasional rogue fruit could pack a slightly spicier punch, just to keep your taste buds guessing.

**Sweet Banana.** Its fruits start out banana-like in shape and hue—yellow—but then their color morphs to warm orange and then a striking crimson, making for a very pretty plant. In the kitchen, ‘Sweet Banana’ is a tasty addition to salads, sandwiches and stir-fries, and it is a favorite pick of pepper picklers.

**Cubanelle.** Green, chartreuse, orange, red—this is the delightful range of colors that ‘Cubanelle’ can bring to any garden scheme. Usually harvested when it is immature green for the mildest taste, the 4- to 6-inch-long, crinkly fruits have thin skins, making them good candidates for frying and roasting. But sandwiches and salads can also be perked up with the addition of raw slices of this pepper.

Although not as common as bell pepper plants, these four alt-sweet selections aren't hard to find. At various times, I have frequently found all of them in big-box garden centers, so spotting them at local independent nurseries shouldn't be tough. And, of course, many online companies can readily serve your needs, especially with seeds. ☺

L.A. JACKSON is the former editor of *Carolina Gardener* magazine. Contact him at [lajackson1@gmail.com](mailto:lajackson1@gmail.com).

## With braces for all

BY JAN A. IGOE

**IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE A DENTIST**, you may want to quit reading and go find some teeth to drill. While this column is not meant to offend any member of the dental profession—particularly those who stick sharp objects in my gums twice a year—I occasionally wonder if the entire tooth-growing population really needs braces as much as you guys need yachts.

I'm certainly not implying that every mammal's bite couldn't be improved, but when your grandmother's dentures need braces, I tend to worry. And at this point, if your kid isn't a metal mouth by kindergarten, the next knock on your door might be social services.

My daughter's orthodontic journey began in second grade, when our dentist gave me two options: Pay by credit card or check.

"Your child's teeth have outgrown her mouth," he said. "You can change her name to Beaver or give me \$4,000."

He had a point. My daughter was starting to look like the shark from *Jaws*, only she had more teeth.

Rather than remove some, the dentist decided to expand her palate with a Frankel device—a wire contraption that was several times the size of her head.

The device was the exact same one used to torture heretics in the Middle Ages, except heretics wore theirs outside their heads, which was probably much more comfortable.

I was wondering how they planned to cram this Frankel-stein thing into my daughter's tiny mouth when the dental team moved in with crowbars.

Panic flooded her eyes, but before she could scream, the thing disappeared behind her lips, contorting her cheeks into bowling balls. Her teeth were now behind bars, completely imprisoned by wire. My beautiful, intelligent child was grunting foreign syllables and drooling on herself.



**A zillion dollars later, my daughter has one of the most beautiful smiles around. But the dog's teeth are straighter.**

Then the dentist gave me the bad news: "She'll have to take it out to eat."

I politely asked if we could leave it in and just feed her intravenously, but he'd already left to count his money.

I wasn't being cruel. I'd gladly stand up in any PTO meeting and admit to being the biological mother of a snaggletoothed, slobbering heretic, but if any child ever needed braces permanently jackhammered into her head, it was my daughter.

That first night, the Frankel thing must have triggered her gag reflex, launching the oral invader airborne. Across her bedroom, our grateful dog was waiting to snap it up like a slimy, flying liver treat from heaven.

Daytime was worse. As predicted, she forgot the drool-coated contraption,

leaving it on her school lunch tray for Mom to rescue. Luckily, no one was willing to touch it, even to throw it out.

After a nice dinner at a Mexican restaurant, my daughter confessed that her Frankel device was on the lam again. We spent hours crawling around the restaurant floor and interrogating busboys in broken Spanish, but got nowhere. The Frankel device had escaped again.

For the second time that month, I handed over my credit card to an exuberant orthodontist to make another frightening Frankel thing. That's when he told me she'd still need \$8,000 in braces later on, even if this one managed to stay in her mouth. Of course, it didn't.

A zillion dollars later, my daughter does have one of the most beautiful smiles around. But the dog's teeth are straighter. ☺

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

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## Discover Buford's Battleground Park

*The park is the location of the 1780 massacre of more than 110 Continental soldiers by British-led Loyalist cavalry.*

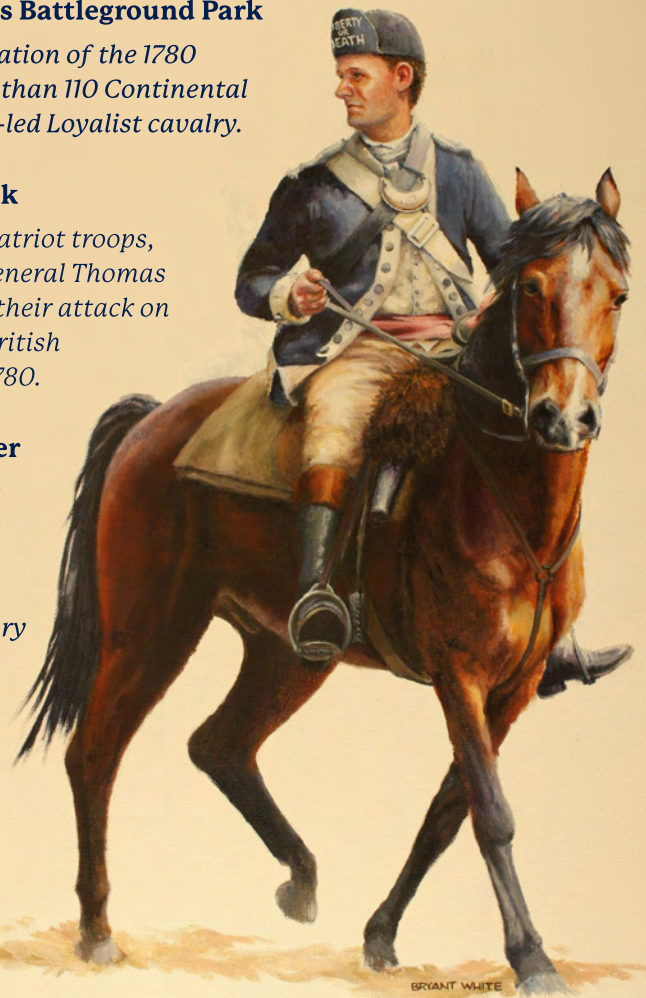
## See Hanging Rock

*The site is where Patriot troops, under Brigadier General Thomas Sumter, launched their attack on the first of three British camps August 6, 1780.*

## Explore Lancaster County Museum

*The museum showcases local history, including many Revolutionary War artifacts.*

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