



South Carolina LIVING

Purple martin majesty

Lake Murray's summertime
feathered phenomenon

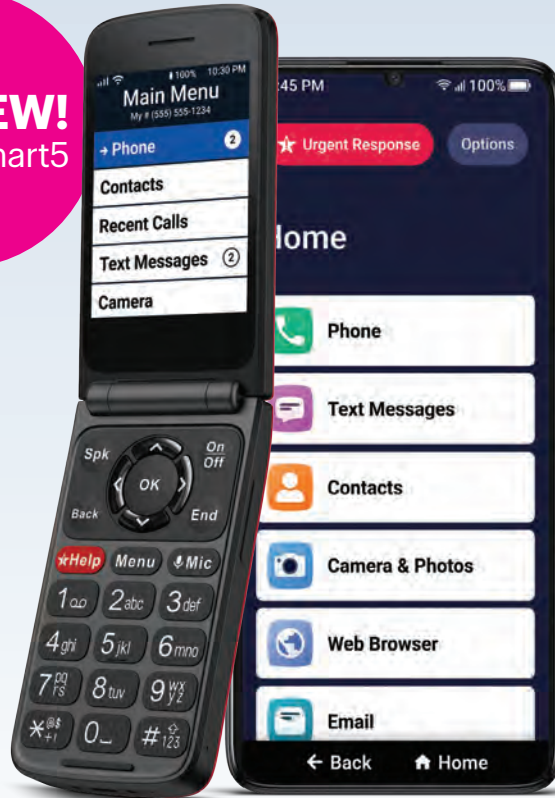
SC RECIPE

**Ultimate
backyard picnic**

SC SCENE

Quilted tales

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Finally, someone found a way to make baseball interesting to Jan A. Igoe, she writes in a classic column.



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Hundreds of thousands of these swift swallows summer at Lake Murray en route to their winter home in South America. Photo by Thomas Hammond.



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Managing payment costs responsibly

WITH MORE MEMBERS choosing the convenience of credit and debit card payments when paying their electric

bills, Tri-County Electric Cooperative continues to look for ways to provide flexible payment options while managing rising costs responsibly.

We understand the importance of offering payment options that are simple, convenient and easy to use. Whether a member prefers to pay through the mobile app, over the phone, at a kiosk, in person or through the online portal, our goal is to make the payment process as accessible as possible.

Beginning Aug. 1, Tri-County Electric Cooperative will begin charging a convenience fee for certain credit and debit card payments. The fee will be \$3.95 for every \$300 paid. For example, a payment up to \$300 will include a \$3.95 fee. A payment from \$301 to \$600 will include a \$7.90 fee. The total fee will depend on the payment amount.

This convenience fee will apply when members use a credit or debit card to make payments through the mobile app, automated phone system, payment kiosk, over the phone with a member service representative or through the online portal, except for members who use our Online Auto Pay monthly recurring payment option.

There also will be no \$3.95 convenience fee for face-to-face credit or debit card transactions made in person at our office. Members who prefer to come into the office and pay in person with a credit or debit card may continue to do so without this convenience fee.

It is important to understand that this fee is not a charge Tri-County Electric keeps as profit. The fee is used to cover the cost charged by credit and debit card processing companies. Each time a card is used, there is a cost associated with processing that payment.

“We have a responsibility to manage costs in a way that is fair to the entire membership.”

For many years, Tri-County Electric Cooperative absorbed these card processing costs on behalf of our members. However, as merchant banking fees and power costs continue to increase, it has become necessary to pass these fees on for certain credit and debit card payment methods. In 2025 alone, Tri-County Electric Cooperative paid more than \$330,000 in credit and debit card processing fees.

As a member-owned cooperative, we have a responsibility to manage costs in a way that is fair to the entire membership. By applying this fee only to certain credit and debit card payment options, the cost is assigned to the payment methods that create the added processing expense.

Members can avoid the convenience fee by using one of our no-fee payment options. Please see the chart on page 5 for a full list of payment methods and whether a convenience fee applies.

We know that changes to billing and payment practices can bring questions, and our team is here to help. Please contact our office if you need assistance understanding your payment options.

At Tri-County Electric Cooperative, we remain committed to providing reliable service, clear communication and responsible management of cooperative resources. Thank you for your understanding, your trust and your continued support of your cooperative.

Chad T. Lowder

CHAD T. LOWDER
 Chief Executive Officer

METHODS THAT WILL REQUIRE THE \$3.95 CREDIT/DEBIT CARD CONVENIENCE FEE

Payment Method	Fee Applies?
Online portal payment with credit or debit card	Yes
Mobile app payment with credit or debit card	Yes
Automated phone system payment with credit or debit card	Yes
Phone payment with a member service representative using credit or debit card	Yes
Kiosk payment with credit or debit card	Yes

METHODS THAT WILL NOT REQUIRE THE \$3.95 CREDIT/DEBIT CARD CONVENIENCE FEE

Payment Method	Fee Applies?
Auto Pay (online Automatic/Recurring Monthly)	No
Face-to-face payment at the office with credit or debit card	No
Bank Draft	No
e-Check/Draft	No
In-person payment at the office with cash, check or money order	No
Online portal payment with e-check/draft	No
Mobile app payment with e-check/draft	No
Automated phone system using check by phone	No
Phone payment with a member service representative using check by phone	No
Mail payment with check or money order	No
Drop box payment with check or money order	No
Kiosk payment with cash or check	No
CheckOut (Pay Where You Shop Locations)*	No



***SPECIAL NOTE:** CheckOut retail locations do not have the \$3.95 credit/debit card convenience fee. However, CheckOut payments have a separate \$1.50 retail transaction fee.

At this time, many participating CheckOut retail locations only accept cash payments for Tri-County Electric Cooperative Bills. Members should be prepared to pay with cash when using this option.

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Payment Options



tri-countyelectric.net/payment-options

CheckOut



(Pay where you shop)
tce.meridiancheckout.com/

Low- to no-cost ways to save energy

SAVING ENERGY DOESN'T HAVE TO BE EXPENSIVE OR TIME CONSUMING. You don't need to spend thousands of dollars or get the newest technology. Try these easy, low- and no-cost improvements to reduce energy waste, improve comfort in your home and help you rack up savings on your power bill month by month.

ADJUSTING THE THERMOSTAT IS AN EASY WAY TO

SAVE. I often hear people say, "I didn't change anything, and my bill is higher." Well, on the hottest and coldest days, your heating and cooling equipment must work much harder than usual, and use more energy, to maintain the same temperature. **Nudge the thermostat a few degrees closer to the outside temperature,** especially on extreme weather days.



DON'T GET SOAKED BY YOUR HOT WATER USE.

Fix any hot water leaks or dripping faucets. Those tiny drips can add up to a big waste of energy, not to mention water waste. If you need to hire a pro to fix it, turn the shutoff valve under the sink to stop the leak until you can get it fixed.

Remember to **wash clothes in cold water to avoid using energy to heat it.** Washing on hot or warm settings can add up, especially if you have a top-load or older washing machine that uses more water.

And while we're on the topic of hot water, **adjusting the temperature of your water heater can save energy and money,** too. The optimal setting for most households is 120 degrees, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.



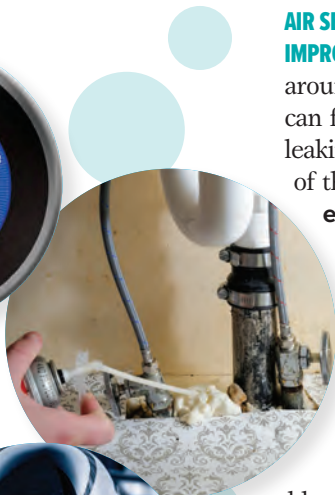
AIR SEALING IS A BEGINNER-FRIENDLY DIY PROJECT THAT IMPROVES COMFORT AND REDUCES ENERGY WASTE.

For around \$20 and a couple of hours of time, you can fill gaps, cracks and holes to prevent air from leaking in and out of the home. From the inside of the home, **seal trim around windows and exterior doors with caulk,** about \$4 per tube.

A can of spray foam is about \$5 and seals gaps around plumbing lines. It's great for pipes under sinks and in the crawlspace or basement. Air sealing these areas earns you bonus points for stopping insects and rodents from using the gaps to enter your home.

Spray foam is messy and nearly impossible to remove from whatever it touches, so wear disposable gloves and clothes you don't mind getting dirty, and use drop cloths to protect finished floors. Be careful if you're working with spray foam overhead. If you get it in your hair, it's not coming out with anything other than a haircut. Move any items and clean surfaces of dust and debris in areas you intend to seal before cracking open a can. Put the can in a cardboard box to carry throughout the house so you don't leave a trail of spray foam.

For just \$10 to \$15, you can buy weather stripping to improve the seal on exterior doors. If you can see light around doors or feel a draft between the door and the door jamb when the door is closed, weather stripping will help. —MIRANDA BOUTELLE



MORE AT SCLiving.coop

Optimize your energy use

We know power bills are hot on everyone's mind as summer heat cranks up. Head to SCLiving.coop and click on "Save Energy" for more information and tips on ways to optimize your energy use while not compromising your home's comfort, or call your local co-op to find out more about energy-saving programs.





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GINA MOORE

Ultimate Southern backyard picnic

BY BELINDA SMITH-SULLIVAN

The lazy days of summer are perfect for picnics. And these recipes are perfect for outdoor grazing. They travel well and do not require refrigeration. No need to worry about spoilage—no mayo here!



JULIA NEDRYGALLOVA

HEIRLOOM TOMATO AND AVOCADO SANDWICHES

MAKES 4

- 8 slices pumpernickel bread
- Garlic and herb cheese spread
- Sprouts
- 2-3 heirloom tomatoes (depending on size), thinly sliced
- 2 Haas avocados, halved, pitted, peeled and sliced
- ½ English cucumber, thinly sliced
- ½ red onion, peeled and thinly sliced (optional)
- 4 slices baby Swiss cheese
- Crisp lettuce leaves

On a clean kitchen surface or cutting board, place four slices of bread. Smear the bread slices with cheese spread. Next, splitting the ingredients among the four slices, layer on sprouts, tomatoes, avocados, cucumber, onion, baby Swiss and lettuce. Smear the remaining four slices with cheese spread (if desired), and cover each sandwich. Optionally, wrap each sandwich in parchment paper and cut in half diagonally. This prevents the bread from becoming hard and keeps the sandwich ingredients from escaping.



CHEF'S TIP Types of onions and when to use them. How you intend to use onions should guide the type you choose at the market.

TYPE	FLAVOR PROFILE	USES
Yellow	Bold & complex	Roasting, braising, sauces, soups, stews
Red	Mild & sweet	Salsas, chutneys, stir-fries, salads
White	Bright & crisp	Guacamole, pickled onions, salads, sandwiches
Sweet yellow	Exceptionally sweet	Onion rings, roasted vegetables, gratins
Shallot	Delicate	Vinaigrettes, egg casseroles, garnishes, sauces
Scallions (aka green)	Bright & grassy	Toppings, garnishes, biscuits, salads, dips

CHICKEN SALAD PITAS

MAKES 4

- 2 cups cooked or rotisserie chicken, shredded
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish
- 1 celery rib, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ shallot, minced
- Kosher salt
- Fresh-ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 small pitas with tops cut off (or 2 large, cut in half)
- Lettuce leaves
- Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced, for garnish

In a large bowl, combine chicken, relish, celery, thyme, parsley and pine nuts. Toss to combine. In a small lidded jar, combine lemon juice, mustard, shallot, salt, pepper and olive oil. Shake well. Pour the dressing over the chicken mixture and toss lightly just to cover completely. Refrigerate salad until chilled. When ready to serve, scoop salad into pita pockets lined with lettuce leaves. Garnish with tomato slices.



IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE.

SC RECIPE IS SPONSORED BY SC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



KAREN HERMANN
GWENAELE VOT

SHRIMP AND VEGGIE SPRING ROLLS WITH PEANUT SAUCE

MAKES 10

- | | |
|--|--|
| 10 8-inch rice paper wrappers | ½ cup red cabbage, chopped |
| ½ pound large, cooked shrimp, peeled and tails removed | 1 avocado, sliced |
| 1 carrot, julienned | Small bunch cilantro, chopped |
| 1 cucumber, julienned | Fresh-squeezed lime juice |
| 1 red bell pepper, julienned | Peanut sauce, store-bought or homemade (recipe at right) |

Pour warm water into a shallow 9-inch pan. One at a time, dip rice paper wrapper into water for 45–60 seconds until wrapper is soft and flexible. Remove from water and place on a clean, flat surface. Pat dry. Place 3 shrimp in the middle of wrapper and stack some of the vegetables on top of the shrimp. Fold the bottom of wrapper up and over the shrimp mixture; fold the sides inward and tightly finish rolling the wrapper. Brush the tip of the wrapper with water to seal. Repeat until all wrappers and vegetables are used. Cut in half diagonally and place on a serving platter with a small dish of peanut sauce.

HOMEMADE CREAMY PEANUT SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- ¼ cup filtered water (up to ½ cup if needed)
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons tamari (or soy sauce)
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

Mix all ingredients in the bowl of a blender or food processor. Transfer to a small jar or bowl. Use as a dip for spring rolls. Refrigerate leftover sauce for up to a week.



CHEF'S TIP Spring rolls are best eaten the day they are made. If you must refrigerate leftovers, wrap them individually in plastic wrap and store in an airtight container. They will last 2–3 days in the refrigerator.



EASY, REFRESHING PASTA SALAD

SERVES 8–10

SALAD

- 1 pound short pasta, such as ditalini, orecchiette or farfalle
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup pitted Kalamata olives, halved
- ½ English cucumber, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil
- 6 ounces feta or goat cheese, crumbled

VINAIGRETTE

- 2 garlic cloves, minced or grated
- ¼ cup fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon fresh-ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano or Italian seasoning
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Cook pasta according to package directions and drain well; allow to cool. Into a large glass salad bowl, add pasta, tomatoes, olives, cucumber, bell pepper, parsley and basil. Into a medium lidded jar, add garlic, lemon juice, vinegar, onion, salt, pepper, oregano and oil. Shake until well blended.

If serving immediately, toss salad with vinaigrette and cheese.

If making hours ahead or the day before serving, toss pasta with half of dressing, cover and refrigerate. When ready to serve, add remaining dressing and cheese and toss thoroughly.

BROWNIES AND BERRIES PLATTER

MAKES 16 2-INCH BROWNIES

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted | ¼ teaspoon kosher salt |
| 1 cup sugar | ½ cup chocolate chips |
| 2 large eggs | ¼ teaspoon espresso powder |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla extract | 1 pint raspberries |
| ½ cup all-purpose flour | 1 pint blueberries |
| ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder | 1 pint blackberries |

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line an 8-by-8-inch pan with foil or parchment paper. In a medium bowl, combine butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla until smooth. Gently stir in flour, cocoa powder and salt until just combined. Do not overmix! Fold in chocolate chips and espresso powder. Pour into prepared pan and bake 22–25 minutes until a cake tester or toothpick comes out clean. Cool thoroughly and refrigerate overnight. Cut into 2-inch squares. Center on a serving platter and surround with assorted berries.



JULIA NEHRIGALOVA

stitching in time

BY LINDSEY BECKWORTH

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW FRANKLIN CARTER

SUE SWAN GRABS A QUILT from the stack in her bedroom and unfurls it. As the fabric rises and falls, the colors shift like a kaleidoscope. There's a block with waving flowers set against a polka-dotted sky. Strips with pink and turquoise stripes. Purple-toned florals. Swirls and whirls that spiral from red to blue-green.

Study this twin-bed-sized work of art closely, and you'll notice the tiny stitches holding the layers of this quilt—front, back and batting—together. With her long-arm Bernina sewing machine, Swan stitched free-motion circles within circles. Straight lines and swirls. Loops and fans and curlicues.

Since Swan retired over 10 years ago, she's adopted quilting as her full-time job. If she isn't attending a meeting of the Prickly Fingers Quilters Guild in Anderson or the Lake and Mountain Quilters Guild in Seneca, she might be in her basement quilting studio, piecing



SEW CLOSE TO THE SEA A quilt has three layers: the front, back and batting in between. The term “quilting,” whether done by hand or machine, refers to the stitching that holds the three layers together. Look carefully at the quilting on this ocean quilt, made by Sue Swan—shown below at her long-arm Bernina in her home quilting studio—and you'll spot all sorts of sea creatures in the border, like the seahorse center left.



KEEP 'EM IN STITCHES “Appliqué” is the term for fabric shapes that are sewn onto the quilt top (shown above and on much of the ocean quilt). “Piecing” is the process of sewing fabric pieces together to form blocks and ultimately the entire quilt (as shown on the wall behind Sue Swan).

together a new project on the design wall. Or you'll find her in the living room, hand-stitching the latest block-of-the-month from folk-art quilt designer Sue Spargo.

Quilts are tucked away in closets and spread over every bed in Swan's house. On the walls hang art quilts with a zoo's worth of animals drawn with thread: toucans, squirrels, goats, a kangaroo. Even an ocean with a whale and 77 tiny pink shrimp.

Swan has gifted her work to children and grandchildren. She's made quilts to celebrate new life and commemorate those who are gone. Her tuxedo cat, Riley, often curls up for a nap in the bedroom, princess-and-the-pea style, on a mattress 10 quilts thick.

Swan has mastered free-motion quilting, ruler quilting and English paper piecing, but there will always be one conundrum she can't overcome.

"I have everything I need except time," Swan says. The advanced techniques she's fond of take a lot of it, and there's always something new to learn.

Plus, this year, the pressure's really on: The biennial Anderson Area Quilt Show is in July. Swan hopes to complete several of her current works in progress by the deadline—if she can ignore the distraction of the next project that always seems to be calling her name.

Wrapped in a story

Quilting is centuries old, an art form born from the necessity for warmth. The craft found its way to Europe during the Crusades, and early American settlers brought the skill with them to the New World. The wealthy bought colorful pieces imported from faraway places, but everyone else saved cast-off fabric scraps—a bit of an outgrown flour sack dress, the torn fragment of a cotton work shirt—and stitched them together by hand. These bits and pieces formed a story, a collection of memories families could wrap themselves in.

Quilting styles and technology have changed, but for modern-day quilters like Swan and other members of the

"What the quilt was designed for was to put around you and feel the hug." —QUILTER RENÉE SMITH

Prickly Fingers Quilters Guild, the sentiment remains.

There's the excitement of planning a new project or discovering a new fabric store. The satisfaction of uninterrupted time at the sewing machine. But nothing compares to the joy of sharing the finished product with a grandchild who lives overseas, a friend who recently lost her husband, or a daughter who just had a daughter of her own.

Better than a blue ribbon

"What the quilt was designed for was to put around you and feel the hug," says Renée Smith, another Prickly Fingers member.

Smith isn't a fan of precise measurements, so she leans toward art quilts that allow her to stick with whole and half inches. While traditional quilts rely on geometric designs pieced in blocks, art quilts use colors and patterns to portray an image. Art quilts with hand embroidery or raw fabric edges are often reserved for wall hangings, where they don't have to endure the rough and tumble of everyday life.

Many of Smith's designs are inspired by her family, such as the



SOFT PORTRAITS Prickly Fingers guild member Renée Smith makes art quilts that hold special meaning to her and those she gives them to.

Frida-Kahlo-in-Converse-shoes design she made for her art-loving daughter, or the quilted wall hanging of another daughter's Facebook profile picture.

For this year's quilt show, Smith plans to enter a replica of her favorite photo of her granddaughter. After converting the photo to a pattern, Smith paper-pieced two identical quilts. One she gifted to her granddaughter on the child's seventh birthday. The other will be on display at the Anderson Civic Center this month, where quilt show attendees' votes will determine how this piece stacks up against other entries.

After the show, though, Smith plans to take the quilt back home and hang it in the living room, where, every time she sees it, she'll go back in her mind to the day her granddaughter was born: Rushing to her daughter's house. The paramedics on one phone and the midwife on another. Her granddaughter born so fast that the pot of coffee Smith started when she arrived hadn't even finished brewing.

The gift of a healthy baby girl. The joy of holding her for the first time.

A blue ribbon might be nice, but it can't beat that. ☺

GET THERE

Anderson Area Quilt Show

More than 200 quilts created by members of the Electric City and Prickly Fingers quilters guilds will be on display, along with craft vendors, raffles and a silent auction.

WHEN: July 17, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., and July 18, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

WHERE: Anderson Civic Center, 3027 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd., Anderson

ADMISSION: \$7 per day to attend

MORE INFO: andersonscquilters.org

BIRDS *of* BOMB ISLAND

Purple martins flock to Lake Murray in
'one of the greatest mysteries of nature'

BY JEFF WILKINSON | PHOTOS BY THOMAS HAMMOND

DARK CLOUDS DRIFT SLOWLY OVER BOMB ISLAND in Lake Murray, threatening rain near sunset. Then one cloud—smaller, moving quickly, made up of swirling specks—dips and curls, circles the island, then settles in its treetops.

The cloud is made up of purple martins, swift birds, the largest of the swallows. They are considered the jet fighters of the avian skies, as they live on fast-flying insects.

Other flocks emerge from the four compass points as the sun begins to set in the west. Soon, Bomb Island is alive with thousands of chattering birds.



ALL EYES SKYWARD Locals and visitors alike take to the water to watch purple martins return each evening to Bomb Island. Here, (l-r) David Radick, Bill Rice, Deb Rice and Laina Radick cruise with Zach Steinhauser.



A small flotilla of pontoon boats circles the island as well—lake residents and sightseers on guided tours. They, too, flock daily to the island during the summer to see the mass gathering of the birds, one of the Southeast's most striking natural phenomena.

"It never gets old," says Tillman "Bubba" Meetze, who is cruising the lake with his wife, Pam, and friends Stephen and Pam Kirkland. It's his fifth trip to watch the birds.

"It's amazing to see them gather in such large numbers," he says, as the boaters nosh on snacks and drinks while marveling at the spectacle. "I'm a big fan."



Long flight home

Hundreds of thousands of the sleek birds migrate to this isolated, 12-acre island each year to bulk up before their long flight to the Amazon basin, where they will winter. They use the island as a nighttime base before foraging for insects around the lake during the day.

The annual Bomb Island gathering, or “roost,” is billed as the largest in North America. The birds’ mass liftoff in the morning has been known to show up on weather radar.

The roost attracts more than half a million birds and scores of human visitors to Bomb Island. The island in Lake Murray,

outside Columbia and Lexington, was given its name because World War II B-25 bomber crews from the Columbia Army Air Base used it for target practice.

The island is a mile from the nearest shore and is devoid of land-based predators such as raccoons, making it a perfect spot for the charismatic martins.

“Purple martins choose it because it sits in the middle of the lake,” says boat captain Zach Steinhauser, who is piloting Meetze and his friends. “Isolation means safety for them.”

There are purple martin roosts throughout the country. But why the birds show up in such large numbers at Lake Murray



“is one of the great mysteries of nature,” Steinhauser says. “They just feel like it’s a good spot, so they invite all their friends and have a big party.”

Jet fighters of the skies

Purple martins aren’t really purple, but a deep black that shimmers an iridescent purple in the sunlight. Males look more purple; females less so. They are the largest of the swallow species, about 8 inches long with a 16-inch wingspan. They live exclusively in the skies and treetops.

A flock is called a “haze,” like a pride of lions or a murder of crows.

And the birds’ distinctive call has been compared to R2-D2, the lovable robot from “Star Wars.”

They have sleek, pointed wings and a forked tail that make them acrobats of the skies, chasing down elusive flying insects such as dragonflies. (They rarely eat mosquitoes, contrary to what many believe, because the bugs stay too close to the ground.)

“They are built like a jet,” says Joe Siegrist, president and CEO of the Purple Martin Conservation Association. “They turn quickly—the fighter planes of the sky.”

Purple martins love people

Purple martin populations have dropped 24% over the past 55 years, according to the association, as habitats shrink and invasive species bogart the few natural nesting sites, such as woodpecker holes. As a result, the birds have become dependent on humans for their survival.

All the purple martins east of the Rocky Mountains were born in human-made houses and are wholly dependent on people for their survival. Two other subspecies of the birds live in the Pacific Northwest and the desert Southwest, where the habitat is more conducive to natural nesting.

The Eastern subspecies, the most populous of the three, “are permanently intertwined with humans,” says Siegrist

Meet the martins

WORLD TRAVELERS: Purple martins migrate thousands of miles from their nesting grounds in the United States to winter in the Amazon basin in South America.

JET FIGHTERS OF THE SKY: The birds are speedy acrobats, built to chase down flying insects.

DEPENDENT ON PEOPLE: Almost all purple martins nest in human-made houses.

NUMBERS IN DECLINE: The purple martin population has dropped 24% in the last half-century.



CHECKING IN
Zach Steinhauser looks in on a clutch of purple martin eggs in one of the gourd-like “apartments” at his parents’ lakeside home.

from his office in Erie, Pennsylvania. “We’re not going to regrow the forests or eliminate invasive species. The only thing that stands between them and extinction is us.”

Native Americans hollowed out and strung gourds for the martins for thousands of years. The birds ate insects that harmed their crops. Through the years, strings of gourds and purple martin “hotels” on long poles have dotted the American landscape.

The birds like to return to the same, familiar nesting spot each year. They and their human hosts can develop relationships, including when humans feed them by sling-shooting crickets high in the air.

But purple martins are tricky. Houses need to be placed in open spaces or large yards, at least 40 feet from trees or houses. Nesting boxes should be designed to keep out invasive species and predators and cleaned out annually to remove pests.

“It takes a lot of tinkering and vigilance,” says Steinhauser, whose parents keep a house at their lakeside home. “But without folks building houses, they would quickly disappear.”

Beautiful boat ride

Steinhauser runs Carolina Safari Co. and has been conducting boat tours on Lake Murray for the past 10 years. He is one of several captains who run tours on the lake. His tours leave from Jakes Landing Marina in Lexington and last about two hours.

The birds begin showing up at the lake around Memorial Day. The numbers peak in late July and early August, “and by Labor Day, they are pretty much gone,” Steinhauser says.

Steinhauser began offering tours at his family’s Wingard’s Market, a garden center founded by his grandparents Margie and Judson Wingard more than 50 years ago.

After graduating from the University of Florida, Steinhauser became a naturalist and still works at the market, educating customers on local wildlife, especially in customers’ backyards.

But purple martins have become his calling. He produced a documentary on the birds, “Purple Haze: A Conservation Film,” which is available on YouTube. He spent five years working on the film, including traveling to South America.

The lake tours offer a leisurely boat ride replete with beautiful sunsets, wide vistas and bird-watching, from great blue herons and waterfowl to eagles and hawks.

From her experiences on Steinhauser’s tours, Pam Meetze advises passengers to bring a jacket, hat and sunglasses—and something good to eat and drink.

Like the annual synchronized firefly display at Congaree National Park, the purple martin roost at Lake Murray is an opportunity to see one of the world’s most unique natural wonders, right here in South Carolina.

“It’s something that everyone should see at least once,” Bubba Meetze says. “And the trip on the lake is a bonus.” ☺



EVENING DELIGHT Boat captain and wildlife naturalist Zach Steinhauser runs tours on the lake, noting that purple martin numbers peak in July and early August.

“It never gets old. It’s amazing to see them gather in such large numbers.”

—TILLMAN “BUBBA” MEETZE, ON HIS FIFTH TRIP TO WATCH THE BIRDS

GET THERE

Purple martin tours

There are plenty of options for viewing the purple martin roost at Lake Murray, with the peak viewing season in late July and early August. Here are a few suggested guides from the Capital City/Lake Murray Country Regional Tourism Board.

Captain Zach Steinhauser, Carolina Safari Co.

Sails from Jakes Landing Marina, 220 Jakes Landing Road, Lexington
(803) 359-9091
zach@wingardsmarket.com
carolinasafarico.com/
lake-murray-purple-martin-tours

Captain Kenny Hardee

Sails from Pontoon Rentals & Tours, 220 Jakes Landing Road, Lexington
(803) 530-3713
lake-murray-boat-rentals.com

Captain Ben Stickney

(803) 969-0105
pilotcoveventures@gmail.com
pilotcoveventures.com

Spirit of Lake Murray

Sails from 216 Shadowood Drive, Irmo
(803) 250-5497
spiritoflakemurray@gmail.com
spiritoflakemurray.com

Captain Rick Crout, Captain Hook’s Lake Murray Tours

(803) 603-1142
rickcrout@icloud.com
captainhookstours.com

Captain Dale Gossett, Lake Murray Island Tours

(803) 318-3911
capt.dg@icloud.com
lakemurrayislandtours.com

Dale Watson

AGE: 67.

RESIDES IN: Mount Pleasant.

MEDIUM: Both digital and traditional, painting with oil, watercolor and acrylic and creating illustrations with a stylus on an iPad.

HORSES AND HANDS: He loves painting horses, which serves him well for historical scenes. Hands, he says, are the most challenging.

HIT THE TRAIL: Find Watson's work at a battlefield near or far via thelibertytrail.org, american-revolution-experience.battlefields.org and dalewatsonart.com.

A 'Revolutionary' artist

As a child, Dale Watson fidgeted in the church pew while his father preached. To settle him, his mother gave him a pencil and paper and encouraged him to draw. He would sketch Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, cowboys and Indians and soldiers—staples of a little boy's imagination in the early 1960s.

He parlayed that talent into a career in architectural drawing. But today, Watson stays busy with his side hustle, creating portraits and battle scenes to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary. One of his artworks was even included in Ken Burns' recent docuseries, *The American Revolution*.

Watson's illustrations are on interpretive signs at Revolutionary War battlefields such as Camden, Eutaw Springs and Hanging Rock along South Carolina's Liberty Trail. The national American Battlefield Trust also pegged Watson to create illustrations for Kentucky, New Jersey, New York and Virginia.

"They said, 'We're going to keep you doing it until you don't want to do it anymore,'" Watson says. He's been commissioned to create portraits of little-known Revolutionary War figures, including enslaved people, Native Americans and women, for a traveling exhibit, "The American Revolutionary Experience."

Painting isn't the only skill required for period pieces, Watson says. It also takes detective work, especially for details like a soldier's uniform. "Oh my gosh," he says. "You get one button wrong..."

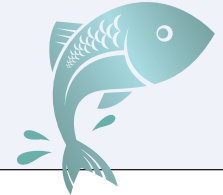
And likenesses are challenging, as photography didn't exist in the 1700s, and the portraits that do exist were often painted late in the subject's life. "I have to 'young' them up," Watson says.

For Francis Marion, known as the "Swamp Fox," Watson relied on brief written descriptions and his imagination. The South Carolina Revolutionary hero was only 5-foot-2, bowlegged and homely, according to descriptions from the day. A historian joked that Marion might have resembled Klinger from the TV show *M*A*S*H*, Watson says, "so that's who I based him on."

Although technically retired, Watson still works on projects for architectural firms, but the historical paintings bring him the most joy.

"I get to do what I love to do," he says. "I also get to team up with all these brilliant historians. I'm just so excited about what I do, and I'm not sure that every 67-year-old can say that."

—JEFF WILKINSON | PHOTO BY MIC SMITH



Upstate

JULY

- 17–18 Anderson Area Quilt Show**, Anderson Civic Center. andersonscquilters.org.
 - 17–18 Banjo Extravaganza**, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visitthagoodmill.com.
 - 17–26 Heathers: The Musical**, Spartanburg Little Theatre, Spartanburg. (864) 542-2787 or spartanburglittletheatre.com.
 - 18 Tunes in the Park**, Greer City Park, Greer. (864) 848-2150 or cityofgreersc.gov.
 - 25 Liberation Day at Fort Thicketty**, Fort Thicketty Historic Site, Gaffney. (864) 489-3988 or ccmuseumsc.org/events.
 - 25 Spartanburg Comic Con**, Piedmont Interstate Fairgrounds, Spartanburg. (864) 238-8630 or facebook.com/spartanburgcon.
 - 29–Aug. 9 South Carolina New Play Festival**, multiple venues, Greenville. (828) 440-0175 or southcarolinanewplayfestival.org.
- AUGUST
- 1–2 Anderson Home & Garden Show**, Anderson Civic Center, Anderson. (855) 321-2110 or facebook.com/andersonschomeandgardenshow.
 - 1–8 Senior League Baseball World Series**, J.B. Red Owens Sports Complex, Easley. littleleague.org/world-series/2026/slbws.
 - 4 Battleground Carolina Lecture Series: The Battle of Kings Mountain**, Upcountry History Museum, Greenville. (864) 467-3100 or upcountryhistory.org.
 - 6–23 Dear Evan Hansen**, Centre Stage, Greenville. (864) 233-6733 or centrestage.org.
 - 8 Music on the Mountain**, Table Rock State Park, Pickens. (864) 878-9813.
 - 14 Camp Croft WWII Historical Hike**, Croft State Park, Spartanburg. (864) 585-1283.
 - 14 Member Appreciation Night**, Greenville Zoo, Greenville. (864) 467-4300 or greenvillezoo.com.
 - 15 Landrum Quilters “Airing of the Quilts” Show and Sale**, North Trade Avenue, Landrum. landrumquilters.com.
 - 15 Songs of the South: An Alabama Tribute**, Abbeville Opera House, Abbeville. (864) 366-9673 or abbevillecitysc.com.
 - 15 The Rolling Waterwheel Gospel Revue**, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens. (864) 898-2936 or visitthagoodmill.com.
 - 15 Tunes in the Park**, Greer City Park, Greer. (864) 848-2150 or cityofgreersc.gov.

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.



- 16–18, 23–25 Laser Days of Summer in the Planetarium**, Roper Mountain Science Center, Greenville. ropermountain.org.
- 22 A1A: The Official and Original Jimmy Buffet Tribute Show**, Abbeville Opera House, Abbeville. (864) 366-9673 or abbevillecitysc.com.
- 22 Battle of Musgrove Mill Commemoration**, Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, Clinton. (864) 938-0100.
- 22 Japanese Bon Dance Cultural Festival**, McAlister Square, Greenville. jaasc.org.

Midlands

JULY

- 16–18 Pageland Watermelon Festival**, 128 N. Pearl St., Pageland. pagelandwatermelonfest.com.
- 16–26 Chapin Community Theatre presents Disney’s Mary Poppins**, Harbison Theatre, Columbia. (803) 404-0015 or chapintheatre.org.
- 17 Aiken Master Gardener Lunchbox Lecture Series: All About Citrus**, Millbrook Baptist Church, Aiken. aikenmastergardeners.org.
- 18 Floatchella Lake Murray**, Fat Frogs Marina, Chapin. floatchellalake Murray.com.
- 19 Columbia VegFest**, Segra Park, Columbia. vegfestexpos.com/columbia-vegfest.

AUGUST

- 3 803 Day Festival**, The Mansion on Blanding, Columbia. (803) 922-5310 or 803day.org/festival.
- 6–9 South Carolina Women’s Open**, Cobblestone Golf Club, Blythewood. wscga.org/womensopen.
- 7 Brew at the Zoo**, Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Columbia. (803) 779-8717 or riverbanks.org.
- 8 Aiken Music Fest Summer Concert Series: Peach Ice Cream Bluegrass**, Highlands Event Center, Aiken. (803) 649-3505 or aikenmusicfest.com.
- 8 Gaston Market Days**, Gaston Livery Stable, Aiken. (803) 643-3701 or visitaikensc.com.
- 8 JailBreak Escape Urban Challenge Run**, 541 Gibson Road, Lexington. (803) 359-6113 or adventuresignup.com.
- 14–30 Lemonade**, Trustus Theatre, Columbia. (803) 254-9732 or trustus.org.

- 20–30 The Odd Couple Female Version**, Sumter Little Theatre, Sumter. (803) 775-2150 or sumterlittletheatre.org.
- 21 Aiken Master Gardener Lunchbox Lecture Series: Deer Resistant Gardening**, Millbrook Baptist Church, Aiken. aikenmastergardeners.org.
- 21–22 Sandy Oaks Pro Rodeo**, Lazy J Arena, Edgefield. sandyoaksprorodeo.com/sandy-oaks-pro-rodeo.

- 21–23 Freedom Festival International Film Festival**, Ambrosia Taverna (1734 Main St.), Columbia. (803) 361-1692 or filmfreeway.com/freedomfest-1.

- 22 Main Street Latin Festival**, 1300–1400 blocks of Main Street, Columbia. mainstreetlatinfestivalsc.com.

- 22 York Summerfest**, downtown, York. (803) 984-2645 or yorkscsummerfest.com.

- 22–23 Soda City Comic Con**, Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Columbia. sodacitycomiccon.com.

- 28–30 South Carolina Quarter Horse Association Sandler Classic**, South Carolina Equine Park, Camden. scquarterhorse.com.

Pee Dee & Lowcountry

JULY

- 15–18 Edisto Invitational Billfish Tournament**, Marina at Edisto Beach, Edisto Beach. govcpu.dnr.sc.gov.
- 15–Aug. 9 Mean Girls: The Musical**, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. (843) 842-2787 or artshhi.com.
- 17–26 Beaufort Water Festival**, Waterfront Park, Beaufort. bftwaterfestival.com.
- 18 Caw Caw: Walking on History**, Caw Caw Interpretive Center, Ravenel. (843) 795-4386 or ccprc.com.
- 18–19 Da’ Gullah American Revolutionary Experience**, May River Theatre, Bluffton. gullahkinfolktravelingtheater.org/revolution-show.

- 24 Dancing on the Cooper: Tommy & the Chucktown Players**, Mount Pleasant Pier, Mount Pleasant. (843) 762-9946 or experiencemountpleasant.com.

- 25 Isle of Palms Beach Run**, Windjammer—Front Beach, Isle of Palms. (843) 886-8294 or isleofpalms.gov.

- 25 Sweetgrass Festival**, Memorial Waterfront Park, Mount Pleasant. (843) 884-8517 or experiencemountpleasant.com.

- 25–26 Folly Beach Wahine Classic All-Female Surf Contest**, beachfront, Folly Beach. follywahine.com.

- 31–Aug. 2 Craftsmen’s Summer Classic**, Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach. gilmoreshows.com/myrtle-beach-summer-classic.

- 31–Aug. 2 Low Country Coin Club Summer Show**, Exchange Park Fairgrounds, Ladson. lowcountrycoinclub.com.

AUGUST

- 3 Divas Through Time: Tribute to the Queens of R&B, Pop, Rock and Soul**, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. (843) 842-2787 or artshhi.com.

- 7 The American Revolution Through the Eyes of Eliza Lucas Pinckney**, Baxter-Patrick James Island Library, Charleston. (843) 795-6679.

- 8 Half Rubber Tournament**, Isle of Palms Recreation Department, Isle of Palms. (843) 886-8294 or isleofpalms.gov.

- 19 The Art of Jazz: Quiana Parler**, Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston. (843) 722-2706 or gibbesmuseum.org.

- 21–23 Pee Dee Outdoor Classic**, Florence Convention Center, Florence. arena.florencecenter.com.

- 22–23 Ultimate National Reptile Show**, Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach. (843) 918-1225 or myrtlebeachconventioncenter.com.

- 24–25 Gullah/Geechee Famlee Weekend**, Penn Center, St. Helena Island. (843) 838-2432 or gullahgeecheeation.com.

- 26–Sept. 27 The Wizard of Oz**, Dock Street Theatre, Charleston. (843) 577-5967 or charlestonstage.com.

- 28–29 Black Jacket Symphony presents AC/DC’s Back in Black**, Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, Hilton Head Island. (843) 842-2787 or artshhi.com.

- 29 Pee Dee Doll Club Doll & Toy Show and Sale**, 1951 Pisgah Road, Florence. (842) 731-2107 or facebook.com/peedee.dollclub.

- 29–30 Lowcountry Rodeo**, 6505 Carolina Highway, Denmark. lowcountryrodeo.com.

ONGOING

- Through Aug. 30 Early Charleston-printed Declaration of Independence on display**, Charleston Museum, Charleston. (843) 722-2996 or charlestonmuseum.org.

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.

JULY	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
16	7:56	1:42	8:22	2:09
17	8:53	2:41	9:17	3:05
18	9:46	3:35	10:09	3:57
19	10:36	4:25	10:58	4:47
20	11:23	5:12	11:45	5:34
21	—	5:47	12:08	6:19
22	12:29	6:40	12:52	7:03
23	1:12	7:24	1:36	7:47
24	1:55	8:07	2:20	8:32
25	2:39	8:52	3:05	9:17
26	3:25	9:38	3:50	10:03
27	4:11	10:24	4:37	10:49
28	4:59	11:11	5:23	11:36
29	5:46	11:58	6:10	—
30	6:34	12:23	6:57	12:46
31	7:22	1:11	7:44	1:33

AUGUST	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
01	8:10	1:59	8:31	2:21
02	8:58	2:47	9:20	3:09
03	9:47	3:36	10:09	3:58
04	10:38	4:26	11:01	4:49
05	11:30	5:17	11:56	5:43
06	12:00	6:10	12:24	6:38
07	12:50	7:05	1:20	7:35
08	1:46	8:02	2:18	8:34
09	2:43	8:59	3:15	9:32
10	3:41	9:57	4:12	10:28
11	4:38	10:53	5:08	11:22
12	5:34	11:47	6:01	12:15
13	6:28	12:15	6:53	12:40
14	7:21	1:09	7:44	1:32
15	8:12	2:01	8:35	2:24
16	9:03	2:52	9:26	3:14
17	9:54	3:42	10:16	4:05
18	10:44	4:32	11:07	4:55
19	11:33	5:21	11:57	5:45
20	—	6:09	12:22	6:34
21	12:45	6:57	1:10	7:22
22	1:31	7:44	1:57	8:09
23	2:17	8:30	2:43	8:55
24	3:03	9:15	3:28	9:40
25	3:47	9:59	4:11	10:23
26	4:31	10:43	4:54	11:06
27	5:15	11:26	5:37	11:48
28	5:59	—	6:20	12:10
29	6:44	12:33	7:06	12:55
30	7:32	1:21	7:54	1:43
31	8:23	2:11	8:46	2:35

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**JULY
IN THE GARDEN**

■ Unless you like to harvest rose hips later in the growing season for adding zing to teas or jellies, keep snipping off spent rose blooms to prevent energy from going into hip production at the expense of future flowers.

■ Lawn areas turning brown? It might not be from a lack of water. Dig into the afflicted area and look for short, pale “worms,” which are actually root-chomping, grass-killing grubs. For a people- and pet-friendly solution, try a lawn treatment that contains neem oil.



TIME TO LEAVE The pretty—yet invasive—ditch lily.

TIP OF THE MONTH The ubiquitous orange-flowering daylilies lighting up roadsides this summer are more than likely *Hemerocallis fulva*, an Asian species introduced long ago for use in erosion control and as a garden ornamental. Commonly known as orange daylily, tawny daylily or, unflatteringly, ditch lily, this fast-spreading perennial has become naturalized in South Carolina to the point of being invasive. So, think twice before adding this daylily to your landscape, as its aggressive rhizomes can readily bully nearby plants. As an alternative, keep in mind there are many clump-forming, better-behaving daylily cultivars that show off more impressive, longer-lasting displays of orange blooms.



Spheres of influence BY L.A. JACKSON

THE ORIGIN

of gazing globes traces back to 13th century glass blowers in Venice, Italy. Their peak popularity in Europe is often associated with the grand English gardens of the 19th century Victorian Era, but on this side of the Atlantic, many gardeners continue to party with gazing globes like it’s 1899.

Gazing globes have been a steady ornamental staple in Southern landscapes because, quite frankly, the allure of such shiny “spheres of influence” can be hard to resist. However, these colorful orbs have often been found perched on top of concrete bases (most often the remains of a broken bird bath). Use—or more correctly, overuse—like this has caused gazing globes to be lumped into the less-than-flattering category of “yard art.”

There are other, more creative ways to help restore the fun and charm of this old garden favorite. For starters, find a tree. Not just any tree, but an old guardian of the garden that has three or more trunks. In the cavity at the base, simply nestle a few gazing globes of different sizes and colors to pleasantly surprise passersby.

Of course, not every garden is graced by such a large, stately tree, but there is another trick that can

provide a treat in almost any landscape. Buy a round

wire tomato cage, turn it upside down, and bend the prongs inward so they can support a gazing globe from its bottom. Next, slip the cage underneath the foliage of a flowing, flowering bush such as abelia, shrub rose, spirea, forsythia, clethra, weigela or kerria. Place the gazing globe on the bent prongs and position it so the sphere is slightly nuzzled into the flowers and foliage. This creates a “floater”—a magical bit of mischief that makes gardening fun.

Speaking of floating, also think beyond the flower border and consider placing a few gazing globes in the water garden, where their constant colors will add visual interest during times when aquatic plants are not in bloom.

And since gazing globes come in various sizes, make use of smaller spheres by adding them to potted plantings. Whether sitting on a short perch or nestled in the plants, one or two of these pretties in the round will complement the eye appeal of fancy flowers and colorful foliage. ☺



PHOTOS BY L.A. JACKSON

GARDEN WHIMSY Gazing globes nestle in the trunk of a guardian tree, above, and a gazing globe “floats” in a flowering kerria bush, top.

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

Real bananas don't bunt

BY JAN A. IGOE

NO MATTER HOW

hard I try to escape this time of year, baseball season finds me, and someone disguised as a friend will inevitably try to drag me to a game without my consent. Yes, I realize this is sacrilege to everyone who loves mom and apple pie.

When my kids were little, our family often went to see the Pelicans games in Myrtle Beach. Since my hub insisted I was part of the family, he would find me (wherever I was hiding) and lovingly place me in the trunk for safe transport to the game. The ride was always the most enjoyable part of the evening.

The Pelicans put on a great show, but baseball games can last forever. When you're a spectator at normal sports, you can only be trapped for a limited amount of time. But with baseball, you might have to cancel your Thanksgiving plans if the game decides to last 354 innings. The players should ask to get paid by the hour.

Then there's the action. Or not. *The Wall Street Journal* once reported that 90% of baseball is spent standing around, waiting for something to happen—like when the balls and/or players actually move—and spitting tobacco doesn't count. On average, that's only 17 minutes and 58 seconds of action per game, so bring your knitting. You'll have time for a sweater and matching socks.

Even when something good happens, like a home run, the guys don't get over-emotional unless it's a game-winner. A



The revitalized game combines one part serious baseball with one part dance party and one part circus (minus the elephants).

few high-fives, maybe. Then the players slink back to the dugout, hidden from fans, like they're some species of dangerous bat. (Not the ball bat—the flying, frightening, fanged kind.)

Turns out I'm not the only one who thinks baseball moves at the speed of sludge, so in 2016, Jesse Cole gave it a total makeover and introduced the Savannah Bananas and Banana Ball.

Debuting to a sold-out crowd, the revitalized game combines one part serious baseball with one part dance party and one part circus (minus the elephants). Everybody's moving all the time, from the Ultimate Dad-bod Cheerleading

Squad to Split, the macho banana mascot, and the Banana Nanas senior dance team. Yeah, they feature genuine, gyrating grannies. Tasteful, of course.

Here's the best part: It's fast. In two hours, you can go home. The fastest inning in the team's 2022 summer series was over in less than two minutes. That's my kind of inning. There's no bunting, no stepping out (whatever that means), no mound visits from coaches or catchers and no walks

allowed. Batters are welcome to steal first base, and if a fan catches a fly ball, it's an out.

No sedate pinstripes, either. Their uniforms are a solid yellow that's bright enough to light their stadium if the power ever quits. Unless they decide to play in yellow plaid kilts and form a chorus line. Or break out the stilts. The Savannah Bananas claim to have the world's only dancing umpire, who is known to "twerk it out on strikeout calls," according to the team website.

And these guys know how to celebrate. Some backflips? A few Michael Jackson moves? Strike up the team band? No problem. This is baseball at its finest. Thank you, Mr. Cole. 🍌

EDITOR'S NOTE: South Carolina Living is reprinting some of Jan A. Igoe's previous columns. This "Humor Me" originally appeared in the April 2023 issue. Visit [SCLiving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe](https://www.scliving.coop/news/in-memory-of-jan-igoe).

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