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December 1, 2015

*Below: The Confederacy calls it quits, A voice like a southern angel, For your barking buddy, Santa in summer, it's a secret, winter wonderland, tomato gelatin, succulent sweet potatoes.*

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## Carolina Adventures

### **Burt-Stark Mansion | Abbeville, SC**

#### ***Grave of the Confederacy***

The **Burt-Stark Mansion** is worth a visit for every history enthusiast, and any lover of Greek Revival architecture. It's major claim to fame? The site of the last council of the war of the Confederacy, where President Jefferson Davis admitted to the assembled group that, "All is indeed lost." His plan was to rally the troops to continue fighting until he became convinced that continuing the war would "inflict more misery on the South." And so our nation's most divisive conflict ended, and reconstruction began.

Today, a guided tour through the 1830s mansion will reveal Southern antiques, including silver, crystal, rugs and furniture. Paintings still adorn the walls. The guides are knowledgeable and some have personal memories of visiting the mansion when it was still the private residence of Mary Stark Davis, the last person to actually reside there. A rare, stained glass crescent transom connects the front and rear hallways.

The outdoor kitchen is still intact, which can be a bit of a rarity due to the fires which often destroyed those wooden buildings. The last

owners added an indoor kitchen, as well – for those modern conveniences. Guests will enjoy learning about the cuisine of the era.

The tall windows let in the breeze, and the four square columns support the two-story portico. The gardens were designed in the 1830s by an English landscaper, and the narrow drive, originally quite ample for carriages and horseback, still has a dismount stone at the front steps.

**WOW Factor:** It was listed in the National Register in 1970 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1982. The buildings and property are well worth a visit, especially with one of the very knowledgeable and interesting tour guides.

**Hint:** Check out the website for special events. While visiting Abbeville – why not plan a weekend stay at the beautiful historic Belmont Inn and take in a play at The Abbeville Opera House, listed on the National Register of Historic places.

[Discover 76 more Carolina Adventures.](#)

## Carolina Famous Face

### James Taylor Chapel Hill, NC

#### In My Mind I'm Goin' to Carolina

The lights dimmed and the crowd grew quiet. And then, the band began to play and James Taylor stepped out on the stage and began to sing. There was that voice – undiminished by time –

taking me back to a Carolina sunshine day and a very young JT singing to a bunch of college girls, who were sitting on a grassy hill behind campus. Nothing had changed.

Tonight, however, in Columbia, the crowd was quite a bit older, (although a few appreciative youngsters could be spotted here and there) and almost everyone was singing along. It wasn't all nostalgia however, and his new album, *Before This World* offers a new, intimate glimpse into what's currently happening in the world of Sweet Baby James. The music is complex, yet oh-so-approachable. Frankly, it sounds great.

When you have the chance, listen to those new songs. I loved "Angels of Fenway," although baseball's not my game. But listening to his homage to the Boston Red Sox, coupled with memories of his grandmother (a huge fan), reminded me again that beyond the voice, the singable lyrics, the genial personality, there is a true storyteller.

Singer-Songwriter James Taylor may be living in Massachusetts, but he still has his roots firmly planted in the Carolinas, where he moved at the tender age of three when his father accepted a position at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. His family made their home in Carrboro, North Carolina, near Chapel Hill, where he learned to play the cello as a child before later switching to the guitar. Today, his memorable "Carolina In My Mind" is an anthem here. "Can't you see the sunshine?" Why yes, we do.

**Hit those Lights!**

Drive through [Shadrack's Christmas Wonderland](#) at the Western North Carolina Agricultural Center in Fletcher (near the Asheville Airport).

This award-winning Christmas light and music extravaganza is a two-mile maze filled with hundreds of thousands of LED lights performing in perfect synchronization with the Christmas tunes playing on the car radio. You'll learn how Santa and friends spent their summer vacation. High-tech animation, loads of fun.

[More.](#)

## Don't Tell a Soul

### **Secret Season Passes to a Mountain Treasure**

*Note: There isn't much in the way of winter weather in the Carolinas, but on top of Grandfather Mountain, outdoor enthusiasts can get a hint of the beauty of a chilled world.*

The turn of the calendar signals a new season on Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina — and the return of a bargain allowing unlimited access to the park for six months.

The Secret Season Pass allows passholders unlimited access to the mountain November 1 through April 30, 2016, for less than the price of two regular tickets. A group pass, good for up to six people traveling in the same vehicle, sells for \$90 plus tax and pays for itself on the first visit.

**Season of Lights and Bright  
Spirits**

Hello Tony,

Most every Carolina town offers up splendid arrays that warm the heart with lights, feasts, cuisine and entertainment. Often amid weather that allows *alfresco* dining overlooking the Blue Ridge, Atlantic or town square.

Here, you'll find a Carolina Adventure that celebrates the history that flows over us. We remember where we were. We remember who we are.

So amidst all the frantic holiday "to-do's," as you embark on a Carolina vacation plan or need to dazzle visiting friends & family, become *the* destination planner!

You'll find most memorable times in out-of-the-way burghs, villes, boros and dales.

**Leyla & Patrick Mason**

Co-Founders

Center For Carolina

Living *Showcasing Carolina Life & Adventures*

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PS: We join friends and family in being thankful for all the good times and good hearts we've found in the Carolinas. It's truly a remarkable area to call home.

**The New Guide is here!**

[Click here](#) for the official hold-in-your-hand Guide to Carolina lifestyle fun and adventure trips, plus real estate tips, tax & cost-of-living advantages,

The pass allows guests to experience the wonders of Grandfather Mountain without the bustle of spring, summer and fall. Whether your interest is snapping shots of snow-dusted evergreens, sipping soup from Mildred's Grill or just savoring the solitude, the Secret Season Pass is the most affordable way to do it.

"Grandfather Mountain becomes a veritable winter wonderland during the colder months," said Frank Ruggiero, director of marketing and communications. "Rime ice coats the Mile High Swinging Bridge, the otters frolic in their frozen pond, and the mountain itself seems exceptionally peaceful."

The Secret Season Passes are now available at the Grandfather Mountain Entrance Gate and are valid through April 30, 2016.

Grandfather Mountain is open from 9am to 5pm every day in winter except Thanksgiving and Christmas, weather permitting.

[www.grandfather.com](http://www.grandfather.com)

*Above Photo: The crisp, clear air of winter makes for stunning views from Grandfather Mountain, which is now offering a Secret Season Pass to help guests enjoy the mountain's wonders during the quieter months.*

*Photo by Skip Sickler | Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation*

## Carolina Creatives

### If It Barks

If It Barks was founded by Nicole Robbins in 2002, thanks to her retired racing greyhounds, Nutmeg and Oswald. After she adopted them, she realized their dog collar needs were unique.

Because their heads are smaller than their necks, they required a martingale type collar. But why should greyhounds be the only breeds to enjoy the benefits of martingales?

Instead of making the collars for two dogs, If It Barks was created to provide martingale (and eventually side-release) dog collars for all types of dogs.

Brian and Polly Godwin took over the business in 2015. They are continuing the mission of If It Barks - providing quality products made in the USA that show off the style and fun of owners and their dogs.

If It Barks collars are hand-sewn in North Carolina, with all U.S.

retirement opportunities and town profiles.

Just share your dream goals and we'll help lead you to smart Carolina life and times.

### ***We hear it over and over.***

Folks visit (and move) to the Carolinas for the four-season climate and the ability to be outdoors most of the year.

How do you get your thrills? Biking? Birdwatching? Hang gliding or Parasailing? What about zip lines? No thanks – no problem. Get your jollies from a slow day fishing beside a mountain stream, or waiting for the perfect outdoor nature image to come into view.

See how we do it, at [carolinalive.com/outdoor-thrills](http://carolinalive.com/outdoor-thrills)

## Facebook

### **What's your favorite Thanksgiving tradition?**

One friend heads to the Carolina beaches and abandons turkey and all the trimmings for fresh shrimp and beach music.

Another gathers friends together for one gi-normous potluck. As for me, it's the one time each year I make a big batch of tomato aspic, with green olives of course.

And although my spouse says he can't imagine why anyone wants to eat congealed tomato juice, I ignore it all.

It's a low-calorie trip down childhood lane, fueling lots of great memories with every bite.

**Share** your favorite traditions.

## Heading your way

- Let's Take a Road Trip!
- Carolina Famous Faces
- Insider Attractions
- [eNewsletter Archives](#).

materials. Custom-dog collars or leashes are available – choosing from more than one million color combinations and styles.

Now this might be a perfect gift from Santa Paws to your very own furry companion.

[www.lfftBarks.com](http://www.lfftBarks.com)

## Carolina Cuisine

### **Savor these Sweets**

'Tis the season when our thoughts turn to ... sweet potatoes. What a wonderful fall vegetable! We recently stopped at a roadside stand and purchased a bag of very fresh sweet potatoes, clearly pulled from the black earth earlier that day. Don't ever think a grocery store spud is as good as it gets. These jewels are worth the two-hour drive back to load up on yum.

Versatile (sweet or savory), great in salads, casseroles, desserts, cookies, smoothies, and so on. Lucky for us, the NC Sweet Potato Commission has a website filled with great recipes that fit all those categories. (No wonder. NC is the largest sweet potato producer in the U.S.)

We were tempted by the [Sweet Potato Vegetable Medley](#) as a refreshing and colorful side dish to the Thanksgiving bird (and a great alternative to the old melted marshmallow gooey sugar rush).

Got your veggies covered? Then visit their [website](#) and consider the sweet potato crème brulee. Tasty-licious!

[www.carolinalive.com](http://www.carolinalive.com) phone 803.782.7466  
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