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To: Kester, Tonykester@aging.sc.gov

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Subject: Spotighting: Jackson County, Eastern NC, Columbia, Gaffney

May 12, 2015

Below: **In the Woods, hear muskets roar, grab a Little Ruby tm, Zoom the Zoo, Perfect your Backhand, Slow and Steady, Flying High, Catfish Cuisine.**

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Take a Road Trip to Jackson County, NC

Nature lovers can't get enough of Jackson County, perfectly positioned in the North Carolina Mountains. Here is where you'll find the Great Smoky Mountains, forever views, hiking trails, rivers and waterfalls, rafting, fishing, golf and, in the winter, a bit of Southern skiing.

You'll also discover small towns with charm to spare, as well as world-class restaurants that give you everything from upscale cuisine to regional specialties (best trout in the world).

There's so much to love about Jackson County and you don't have to be an extreme athlete to find your perfect niche here. We've done the research and now, before you plan your next outing, come along as we share tips for a vacation the

whole family will love and remember.

[Read More](#)

Where in the Carolina World is This?

When it's time for a change, consider this precious small town in Upstate South Carolina. Revolutionary War history can be found in the battlegrounds preserved for visitors, and re-enactments are frequently seen. When you're ready to move back into the here and now, the shopping attracts folks from everywhere who are seeking top quality at bargain prices.

[Where are you?](#)

Carolina Home Grown

We want a Little Ruby™.

*by Robert F. Polomski, Ph.D.
Horticulturist/Lecturer • Clemson University*

Similar to its distant cousin, flowering dogwood, the Chinese or Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) creates an uproarious floral display in late spring.

Despite flowering fashionably late after its leaves have completely unfolded, it's still a spectacular sight to see the long-lasting, white, four-pointed bracts of Kousa dogwood nestled comfortably above the leaves.

The flowers give rise to unique rosy-red fruits that look like raspberries on a stick; they are edible but insipid. Unlike the alligator-like bark of *C. florida*, the aging trunk of *C. kousa* exhibits beautiful flaking mottled bark patterns on a smooth trunk.

Kousa dogwood has better drought tolerance than flowering dogwood, and can be sited in full sun or partial shade. Dogwood borers and foliar diseases rarely attack this species.

To capture the beauty and durability of both species, plant breeders have crossed Kousa with flowering dogwood to create an exciting collection of hybrids touted for their insect and disease resistance. Recently, NC State Professor, Tom Ranney, created a hybrid between the pink-bracted Miss Satomi Kousa dogwood and the evergreen Summer Passion Hong Kong dogwood (*Cornus hongkongensis*).

The resulting offspring is called NCCH1 (Little Ruby™), a compact shrub or tree that bears four or more rose-pink bracts in late spring to early summer and burgundy-red fall color. NCCH1 has the added bonus of heat tolerance and disease resistance.

Learn more about Carolina gardening from Dr. Polomski's new book, [Carolinas Month by Month Gardening](#). Available wherever books are sold.

We Love Tennis

Wimbledon, Here We Come.

Help your youngster reach the next level in his/her game at the [Nike Tennis Camp](#) at Duke University in Durham. Read the reviews (including a child from France who traveled across the pond for this experience), and discover that it's not only the game they'll perfect, but also etiquette and social skills that will benefit them long after the game.

Taught by topnotch coaches, campers will work and play hard, as they make new friends and enjoy Duke's magnificent campus. (Tons of balls will be hit!)

The Carolinas are perfect for tennis and Duke is one of the best, but

only if your child is willing to put in 5-6 hours of tennis training every day.

Learn more about [Durham](#).

Don't You Need Some Family Fun?

Riverbanks Zoo Awarded Again.

FamilyFun magazine announced the winners of its annual Travel Awards. In the Animal Attractions category (voted by real families from across the U.S.), [Riverbanks Zoo and Garden](#), in Columbia, SC, made the list. They're in great company, with attractions like Disney's Animal Kingdom and Busch Gardens.

No wonder. Riverbanks is home to more than 2,000 animals who reside in natural habitat exhibits featuring psychological barriers such as moats, water and light, rather than bars and cages. Also on site: 70-acre Botanical Garden, wood trails, historic ruins and Zip the Zoo or Zoom the River zip line tours. Happening soon: a new sea lion exhibit.

Learn more about [Columbia](#).

Live your Dreams and touch the Sky

Carolina Gems

Hello Tony,

Are coastal towns at the top of your vacation list? [Waterside](#), by a bit of a margin, maintains first choice amongst Carolina Visitors. Others prefer mountain peak experiences, or riverside paddles. See how 5,000 people like you [ranked Carolina town](#)

Check this one off your bucket list.

favs for lifestyle and adventure.

The rankings are understandable, but not our only jewels. Medium-sized burbs as well as tiny villages are worth exploration. We say, spread out a bit when you visit.

Today, we've got lowbrow to high-class adventures for your consideration, including:

A road trip to high country and world-class recreation.

Family fun favorite in our own backyard.

Little Ruby™, another dogwood to grow and love.

Creatures worth saving (and watching).

Up, up and away – check this one off your bucket list.

We've got answers to your vacation questions – ideas born from 30 years of traveling the Carolinas.

Thinking relocation? Great plan. We live the Carolina difference and notice its “beautiful places” at every turn. Travelers witness the “smiling faces” DNA woven into the more relaxed Carolina culture. Visitors and newcomers insist – living-it-up here is easy. Traffic jams and tolls are hard to find. Stacked living? Rare. Good values aplenty. Be assured, exploring and living in the Carolinas is a four-season joy.

Lots to see and do. Years to enjoy. Thanks to you, our readers, for ideas that drive us to provide the best that's out there. Enjoy!

All the Best,

Leyla & Patrick Mason
Co-Founders

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P.S. The spring/summer edition is flying off the shelves. The Beyond the Porch outdoor living article is inspiring. New Carolina Adventures, pure fun. [Get yours today.](#)

Carolina High Hot Air Balloon Company, LLC, caters to couples, friends, and families. Owner Randy Lee holds a Commercial/Instructor Rating for hot air balloons. His wife, Jean, handles everything else. They are located in Eastern North Carolina, near I-95 and I-40.

Here's what one rider said:

“Beautiful journey in a beautiful balloon. There is no grander thing than being gifted with an opportunity to dance in the clouds with gracious new friends. Looking forward to dancing again.”

Aren't we all! [Learn more!](#)

Carolina Animals at Risk

Loggerhead Sea Turtle

The Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) was designated as the official State Reptile of South Carolina in 1988. They are the most abundant species of sea turtle in US coastal waters with major nesting concentrations from North Carolina to South West Florida.

Loggerhead turtles, like all sea turtle species, are threatened by a variety of human activities. The primary threat is incidental capture in commercial fishing gear. Other threats include marine debris, environmental contamination, loss of nesting habitat, and artificial lighting. The SCDNR is working on many projects to help better understand and manage sea turtles along our coast. They've also partnered with the SC Aquarium Sea Turtle Rescue Program, which acts as a sea turtle hospital for sick and injured animals.

To help sea turtles to thrive in our South Carolina waters and beaches, visit the [SCDNR website](#) for more information on how to Adopt-A-Nest or purchase an Endangered Species Sea Turtle license plate.

Written by Stacy Hitt, SC Master Naturalist

Carolina Cuisine

The New Guide is here.

Updated town information, six fun new Carolina Adventures, and info about living "Beyond the Porch." Order yours today.

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, retirement opportunities and town profiles.

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

Facebook

We're taking it outside.

Take a look at the new CarolinaLiving.com Guide and you'll be inspired to create your own outdoor paradise. What's at the top of your List? Kitchen, spa, pool or firepit? Please [share](#) on Facebook.

Catfish has gotten a bad rap and we're here to polish its image.

Farm-raised catfish is a very mild, delicate fish that cooks up white and flaky, but holds up on an open grill without falling apart.

We heard about Carolina Classics Catfish and decided to investigate. After all, if Chef Vivian Howard of "A Chef's Life" buys from them, we should go and do likewise. Simply sprinkle your favorite seasoning and grill away. [Check it out.](#)

About the Company

Rob Mayo started [Carolina Classics Catfish](#) in 1985, having grown up around commercial fishing on the Chesapeake Bay. Knowing that wild-caught seafood supplies were reaching their limits globally, he believed that aquaculture would fill the growing global demand for seafood. Today, aquaculture accounts for 50% of seafood eaten around the world, and this growth must continue in order to keep from over-fishing wild fisheries.

Their Naturally Raised catfish are fed a grain-based diet and are raised antibiotic-free on family farms in Eastern North Carolina.

Today they are proud to supply fine regional restaurants like Chef and the Farmer, as well as great grocery chains like Whole Foods Market. (They also sell their catfish, along with other regional seafood in season, at their office and plant on Highway 11 in Ayden.)

Heading your way twice a month

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