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To: Kester, Tonykester@aging.sc.gov
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Subject: Showcasing: Charleston, Boone, Penland, Columbia, Wilkesboro

March 30, 2016

Below: Tea Time, our favorite comic actor, flameworker extraordinaire, for love of the game, brewskies for all, play ball, music Americana, newsworthy, comfort food.

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Carolina Adventure

Laura's Tea Room | Ridgeway, SC Let's Have a Tea Party

Lesson learned. You are never too old to play dress-up with your friends. Ladies, this adventure is definitely on the girlie side, but we saw gentlemen on the day we visited, and those guys were having a fine time, too.

That said, here's the scenario. Make reservations. Gather a few of your best girlfriends, or the book club, and head for Ridgeway, a tiny town about 20 miles north of Columbia that fairly oozes with Southern charm.

You'll walk into a charming gift shop and deli, but save that for after the tea. You'll be sent upstairs, via the landing and cutout of Queen Elizabeth, suitable for photo fun. Pick out a hat if you didn't wear your own. I wore my lovely little black straw, but must confess I looked longingly at the hats with veils. So sexy! You'll find cloches, wide-brims, garden

chapeaus, and a few, frankly strange concoctions. One will speak to you and, with the queen's most realistic look of approval, you'll head up from the landing to choose your cup and saucer from a dazzling variety. Properly equipped, you'll be shown your table.

The tea will arrive first and it changes daily. Our adorable tea pot contained a blueberry hibiscus brew – delish! Our group ordered a black tea as well, which was well-liked by some. The first course was a salad, with strawberries. Next, we received a small, chilled cup of strawberry soup, plus a tiny lemon scone. After a rather lengthy pause, our tea sandwiches arrived, enough for six tidbits each. My favorite was turkey with pesto, but others preferred the tomato and pimiento cheese, or chicken salad. Another tiered tray arrived last, holding six sweets for each of us. The portions are tiny, but the volume ample for a full lunch. And if you don't like something, simply pass.

The presentation was lovely, and the service measured. "We want you to slow down and relax," our server said. A bit more than two hours after it started, we walked downstairs and shopped for tea, cookbooks, linens, serving platters and assorted delights – many locally made. I headed back to work, but my friends wandered Main Street and the antique shops. It was a very good day, indeed.

WOW Factor: the building, the presentation, and the tea. It really is perfectly brewed. You'll step back in time and become one of those original ladies who lunch, at least for a bit.

Hint: Do not, we repeat, do not plan a visit to Laura's Tea Room on a day when you're short on time. They plan a long leisurely event and don't turn the tables. You are told to allow two hours, and it takes every bit of that and more. Wear (or borrow) a hat. It just adds to the fun.

laurastearoom.com

Carolina Famous Face

Bill Murray
Born September 21, 1950

He was so funny on *Saturday Night Live* – creating characters that made you laugh and watching him play off others in the ensemble cast. *Caddyshack* was wildly popular, but it was *Ghostbusters* that propelled him into superstardom. I, however, fell in love with him in *Groundhog Day*, where we watched him morph from burned-out boredom to a compassionate, fully alive altruist. His repertoire expanded with roles in *Ed Wood* and *Rushmore*, and he earned an Academy Award nomination, a Golden Globe Award and a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for his remarkable role in *Lost in Translation*. I loved that one, too. There were other award nominations and accolades, including a Primetime Emmy for his role in HBO's *Olive Kitteredge*.

More recently, he's received acclaim for his roles in *Moonrise Kingdom*, *Grand Budapest Hotel*, and *St. Vincent*.

The Carolinas can't claim Bill Murray as a native son, but he has adopted Charleston SC – at least for part of the time. He sported a locally created Charleston-born Brackish Bow Tie at the 2014 academy awards. He's been spotted dropping in on special events, and encouraging young people he meets on the street. From a variety of news reports – and clearly, a bit of good-natured stalking by fans seeking to catch a glimpse and take a selfie – Bill Murray and Charleston are well-suited for one another.

Born in Illinois and raised in a northern suburb of Chicago, he was one of nine children in a Catholic Irish American family. Divorced, he is the father of six boys. As part owner of the team, he can often be seen at a Charleston River Dogs baseball game.

Image: © Jerry Coli / Dreamstime.com

Let the Blooms Begin!

Hello Tony,

Welcome Spring. Bicycles out. Azaleas turning every yard into a botanical garden. It's good, here.

Thoughts just can't help but turn fast to the outdoors when spring arrives. Hint: incentivize your outdoor living by seeing what the experts are designing in the upcoming gardens cover feature in the *CarolinaLiving.com Guide*. Promise: you'll be inspired.

Time to make plans for vacation – early bird reservations get the best view units!

Check out below – NewsWorthy, where we'll pass along Carolina tips and deals in every issue.

Happy times abound! All across the Carolinas you'll find jobs, low taxes and great home prices. Click to: [Retirement Living & Real Estate Tips](#).

Click to 390+ pages at CarolinaLiving.com your resource for Carolina facts 'n fun ... stories 'n memories!

Carolina Creative

"The soul as a bird."

Shane Fero, Flameworker

Leyla & Patrick Mason

Co-Founders
Center For Carolina
Living *Showcasing Carolina Life
& Adventures*

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PS: Tony, your perfect Carolina vacation destination had what? (A spa, outdoor track, yoga coach, kayak, or shuttle to shopping?) Do share with our editor, Kathy Pettit. We'll pass along your experiences and questions.

South Carolina: Fairest Fairways of Them All

Four special awards and the announcement of this year's top 50 golf courses in South Carolina show why the state is a favorite permanent stopping point for baby boomers relocating to the Southern region of the country.

Most of the 125 members of the South Carolina Golf Rating Panel met at the Wild Dunes Resort on Isle of Palms over the first weekend in March to test the resort's recently renovated Links Course, to play its other 18-hole layout, the Harbor Course, and to hear the results of the group's voting for the best golf courses in the state for 2016.

The Panel, which comprises golf professionals, passionate amateur golfers, and South Carolinians who work in golf-related industries, named the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island the top layout in the state among both private and publicly accessible golf

That's how the Ancient Egyptians described the human soul, and discovering the magnificent bird work of artist Shane Fero, you instantly understand why.

Born in Chicago, and spending part of his youth in Winter Haven, Florida, Shane and Sallie Fero first traveled to the mountains of North Carolina for their honeymoon in 1983. They returned almost every year and beginning in 1987 he took classes at Penland. They decided to move to the area in 1990, in light of the "welcoming and encouraging nature of Penland School." The couple's daughter, Devon, was born during summer session in 1992, and grew up within the Penland community.

Mr. Fero has been a flameworker for more than 40 years, and maintains a studio next to the school. He participates in international symposia and conferences, and has taught in prestigious institutions worldwide.

His work can be found internationally, in public and private collections, as well as in more than 20 museum collections, including those in Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Asheville Art Museum and more. He's past president of the Board of Directors of the Glass Art Society and received their Lifetime Membership Award in Chicago, in 2014.

Enjoy his gallery of work at www.shanefero.com/bio.html

Image: Royal Purple, Pine Jays; photography by Mary Vogel

Celebrate "Traditional Plus" Music

MerleFest
April 28-May 1, 2016
Wilkes Community College, Wilkesboro, NC

It's one of the premier music festivals in the United States, attracting 80,000 attendees each year and celebrating traditional plus music – the traditional music of the Appalachian region, plus whatever other styles the musicians want to play. Think blue-grass, old-time music, Americana, country, blues, rock and so much more – all on 13 stages. Family-friendly with lots to enjoy over four days.

www.merleFest.org

Raise a Glass

courses. Harbour Town Golf Links on Hilton Head Island finished second.

Read more.

The New Guide is coming!

Updated town information, six fun new Carolina Adventures, and one heck of a good-looking feature showcasing gardens. 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

The Great Outdoors.

We're exploring ways to take advantage of several of the Carolinas' most appealing resources – our climate and our geography. Where's your go-to-commune-with-nature retreat?

Please share with us on [Facebook](#).

Heading your way

- **Let's Take a Road Trip!**
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NC Beer Month 4th Annual Celebration

Did you know? North Carolina has the largest number of craft breweries in the south? They're showcasing the brew culture for the month of April. The event promises enough "Beer Moments" to fill a memory bank as the good times tap into local and regional scenes, and award-winning brewers create collaboration beers, brewery events, and beer tastings. There will also be food pairings and beer dinners, as well as classes in making beer.

Plus:

- A happy 30th birthday party for Weeping Radish Farm Brewery – the state's oldest brewpub, located in Grandy NC on the Outer Banks (where their beer is distributed);
- A really fun, get-you-in-the-mood "Celebeertory" sweepstakes from New Belgium offering a weekend getaway;
- New breweries showcasing their best;
- NC Beer Month Olympics;
- [Hickory Hops](#) statewide beer festival and so much more.

Details at www.ncbeermmonth.com Have fun, Be Safe. Bring a designated driver to events where alcohol is consumed.

Image: [VisitNC.com](#)

Take Me out to the Ball Game

The Carolinas Love Baseball.

The Columbia Fireflies Inaugural Season at Spirit Communications Park will begin in the new downtown stadium on April 14.

Tickets for the 2016 Fireflies Inaugural Season will be available at ColumbiaFireflies.com or via phone

at 803.726.4487.

Carolina Cuisine

It's not just for breakfast any more.

If you're looking for a warm and bubbly dish to finish off a special Southern brunch, Easter gathering, or even a cozy evening meal, we found it. The **Baird House Hashbrown Casserole** does what all great casseroles do – it mixes starch, cheese, and adds crunch on the top to make heaven in a dish. My spouse declared it a new favorite comfort food, and a serving or two disappeared from the fridge, overnight.

If you want to go to the source, consider a visit to the Baird House – oldest house in Watauga County and the only mountain B&B near Boone, on the Watauga River. (In fact, the river flows past the front yard of the Inn.) Their breakfasts are called legendary, and they've won *Trip Advisor's* Certificate of Excellence. Try this recipe soon. Delish!

Take a fresh look:

Woodside Plantation's new website is so much fun. A great introduction to the Aiken community, including Rick and Carol Steele, owners of this beautiful -- and beautifully done -- community. www.woodsideadventures.com

We've Got Your Health ...

Carnes Crossroads, near Charleston, SC, will be a center for medical services for Summerville, Goose Creek and Berkeley County. Design work begins soon for Roper St. Francis Berkeley Hospital, the centerpiece of the 90-acre healthcare campus at Carnes Crossroads. www.carnescharleston.com

Stay and Play:

Enjoy a breath of Spring on the coast, at **St. James Plantation** with exceptional stay and play rates while taking advantage of event-only special pricing. Stroll through 25 designer model homes, and select from 50+ newly released homesites. Plan now for April 12th - 17th. www.stjamesplantation.com

Ride on:

Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) and Tryon Resort will welcome equestrian competitors back to the rolling hills of western North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains in early April, with eight weeks of world-class equestrian events and competitions. www.tryon.com

April 14-17

Blowing Rock, NC. Savor Blowing Rock features classes, tastings, food and wine pairings and good times to spare in this more charming of small mountain villages. savorblowingrock.com

A good time in a small town.

Artfields: in Lake City, SC showcases more than 400 masterpieces by artists from the 12 Southeastern states, exhibited in one of the historic downtown venues. April 22-30, 2016. www.artfieldssc.org

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