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To: Kester, Tonykester@aging.sc.gov
Date: 5/21/2015 9:55:45 AM
Subject: Spotlighting: Grand Strand, Raleigh, Bluffton, Blowing Rock, Abbeville

May 21, 2015

Below: All Aboard, deliciously local, golf where it's grand, searching for sunshine, where history happened. Really, really fresh.

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Carolina Adventure – Tweetsie Railroad

All Aboard
Tweetsie Railroad | Blowing Rock, NC

If you're old enough to remember Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and even The Lone Ranger (my personal childhood hero), you've probably got grandchildren or other little ones in your life who'd be thrilled to experience the wild west from a vintage train. For you, it'll be a step back in time, when the good guys saved the day; for little ones, the action will be real and the fun, contagious.

Tweetsie Railroad has been entertaining families with young children since 1957. The three-mile ride aboard an authentic steam locomotive is the star attraction, but there are amusement rides, a park and gift shop, plus other ways to have fun.

It's one of the nation's first theme parks, and the little locomotive that got things started was originally optioned by Gene Autry to travel to California for a movie career.

Blowing Rock entrepreneur, Grover Robbins, purchased the train and brought it to Blowing Rock. The track was built, and the adventure began. The original depot is surrounded by a wild west town (including saloon), adding to the wild west feel.

Today, there are three trains and multiple special events, including very popular Ghost Train excursions in the fall. Open from spring to fall, each season offers special events which may include a ride on a full-sized Thomas the Tank engine, or a chance to see the K-9s in Flight Frisbee Dogs in action during a ten-day appearance in July.

WOW Factor: The setting is drop-dead gorgeous, and while the little ones are mesmerized by the action, older folks will take a trip down memory lane with the soothing clickety-clack of the wheels. In short, there's something for everyone – except, perhaps, very bored older teens, who may prefer their smart phones.

Hint: Check the website for special events that interest your family.

Prepare to spend \$130+ for a family of four (children under two admitted free). The gift shop has affordable mementos and it's a very pleasurable way to spend a day in the mountains. www.tweetsie.com

Seasons –

- Open Fri-Sun May;
- Every day from Memorial Day-Mid August
- Fri-Sun Mid-Aug thru Oct
- Hours - 9am - 6pm.

More Carolina Adventures

Carolina Famous Face

Amy Sedaris | 1961-

She's an author, actress and comedian, perhaps most well known for playing Jerri Blank in the Comedy Central television series, "Strangers with Candy." The program, which debuted in 1999, was a collaborative project for Sedaris, Stephen Colbert and Paul Dinello. Amy Sedaris is sharp, funny and very prolific.

The Carolinas can claim the Sedaris family because, although Amy was born in New York, she grew up in Raleigh, NC, with five siblings (including older brother David, a star in his own right). Her father is of Greek heritage and she was raised in the Greek Orthodox Church.

Ms. Sedaris is a former member of Second City and Annoyance Theatre, both comedy troupes located in Chicago. In 1999 she first portrayed Jerri Blank, a character which gained a huge following.

Eventually, "Strangers with Candy" morphed from television and was made into a film.

A frequent talk show visitor, she never fails to use her quick wit and humor, and there is very little she is unwilling to discuss. (Example: a monologue on feminine hygiene during an appearance on the "Chelsea Lately" television show.)

In 2009, Ms. Sedaris narrated the PBS Special, "Make 'Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America," a six-hour documentary on comedy (and comedians).

She's played an accomplished lifestyle guru, sex-crazed sister, the Mormon wife of a Utah Senator, and so many more characters. In a more G-rated role, she voiced Cinderella in "Shrek the Third." She's co-authored several plays and written several books, among them *I Like Your Hospitality Under the Influence* (which stayed on the *New York Times*' bestseller list for more than 12 weeks), and the more recent *Crafts for Poor People*.

She resides in New York City and her private life is ... very private.

Learn more about her home town of [Raleigh](#).

Carolina Creative

Reaching for Sunshine

Stephen Kishel, Abstract Sculptor

Born in Muncie, Indiana, and the son of teachers with a penchant for spending summers on a remote island in Western Ontario, young Stephen grew up with the distinct juxtaposition of living life between a mid-western university city and a log cabin without electricity.

In his words, he "learned to love nature and solitude in Ontario, and appreciate the

knowledge and learning in Indiana."

Taught about a variety of art by his art teacher father, he fell in love with welded metal sculptures.

Fast-forward to 1973 and his marriage to Gloria Ann. He studied electronics at Ohio Institute of Technology and worked in the family plastics business. But, sculpting was still a primary passion. In 2002, the family moved to Bluffton, seven miles from Hilton Head Island – rural, but not remote. They live and work on an acre of wooded land and love the salt marsh and the nearby May River.

He's created several hundred pieces, ranging from table-top to outdoor, larger-than-life works.

He does commissions and favorite pieces are in galleries as well.

His advice is sound. "Doing what you love for a living is possible; it is not only possible, it is the right thing to do. Everyone is, by nature, gifted with a unique ability. Find your gift, and then pursue it."

[Visit his site](#), enjoy, and picture one of these beauties adorning your home or yard.

Carolina Golf

In praise of Yoga and so much more

Hello Tony,

Summer is upon us, and with it, the promise of outdoor living, from early morning coffee or tea, to late afternoon cocktails on the deck.

As a yoga devotee of 35+ years, permit me to provide a personal plug for this most wonderful of mind-body strengthening practices. Makes you feel better, look and feel younger, and ultimately last longer. The Carolinas agree. So many yoga studios, great teachers, classmates who become friends.

Check out our directory.

We've called the Carolinas charming, quirky, lovely and diverse for good

Happy Trails to You: Golfing South of Myrtle Beach

reason. Here:

Carolina Adventure – Tweetsie Railroad – definitely for the children, surprisingly entertaining for grown-ups, too;

Amy Sedaris, quirky humor, but we confess, we love Jerri Blank;

Our very own golf trails are great for playing and having fun after the game;

A very special mansion with an indelible position in Civil War history;

Searching for Sunshine? We've got it here.

When you visit (and the time is now for vacation planning), note our appealing lifestyle incentives for a permanent move. Jobs and entrepreneurial options, the strong economy, low taxes and real estate bonanzas, and folks are out there looking. Click to: [Retirement Living](#) & [Real Estate Tips](#).

Use the 370+ pages at CarolinaLiving.com as your resource for Carolina facts 'n fun that lead to stories 'n memories!

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.](#)

The New Guide is here.

Updated town information, six fun new Carolina Adventures, and info about living "[Beyond the Porch.](#)"

Alabama is not exactly a state typically associated with innovation.

Good football teams, yes, but not innovation. In one area, however, Alabama has led the nation, and that was in its legendary development of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, which opened its first course in 1992. Since then, golf operators throughout the land have imitated (but never quite duplicated) the Jones Trail in terms of its size and its dedication to one golf architect.

Most of Jones' courses from Muscle Shoals in the north to Point Clear 376 miles away on the Gulf of Mexico are not easy to get to from the northern reaches of the country, and modest golf trails have sprung up in more accessible locations that are also known for excellent golf.

One of the best is the Waccamaw Golf Trail south of Myrtle Beach, a collection that comprises some of the best and most popular layouts among the Grand Strand's 100-plus courses.

Learn more about the [Waccamaw Golf Trail](#).

Top photo: True Blue Golf Club
Bottom photo: Pawleys Plantation

Where History Happened

Burt-Stark Mansion

Abbeville, SC: It was in this stately home, on May 2, 1865, that Confederate President Jefferson Davis held the last council of the War of the Confederacy.

It was in this house that President Davis finally admitted, "All is indeed lost."

Today, the Greek Revival style home, built in the 1830s, is a remarkable preservation that invites visitors to learn about its history and the way life was in the 1800s. It was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1992.

Plan your visit to downtown Abbeville and take time to visit the Abbeville Opera House during your time there.

[Burt-Stark Mansion](#)

Carolina Cuisine

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.

Sunshine in a Bowl

I must confess that ceviche is one of my favorite foods, but it can seem a bit ... dangerous.

Growing up in a family where everything was well done and then some, consuming raw meat is really edgy. And yet, there is no better way to find the essence of the food. It is divine. But, the ceviche should be fresh, created by folks who know their catch (and its age).

Thanks to Surf House for sharing this [Local Snapper Ceviche with Avocado Spread](#) and for their commitment to all that's good about bringing the best food to your plate.

Heading your way twice a month

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

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How does your garden grow?

In keeping with our Welcome-to-the-Carolina-Garden season, We're finding some heirloom recipes you might like. So share some longed-for favorite requests with us and we'll supply the where-to-find, how-to-make answers. Artichoke Relish? Grandmother's Bread and Butter Pickles? Just as good – and Southern – as ever. [See](#) you on Facebook.

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