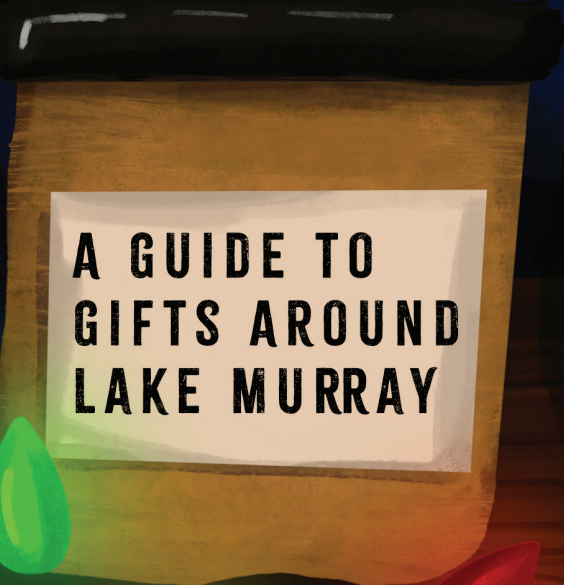


LAKE MURRAY

Winter 2023

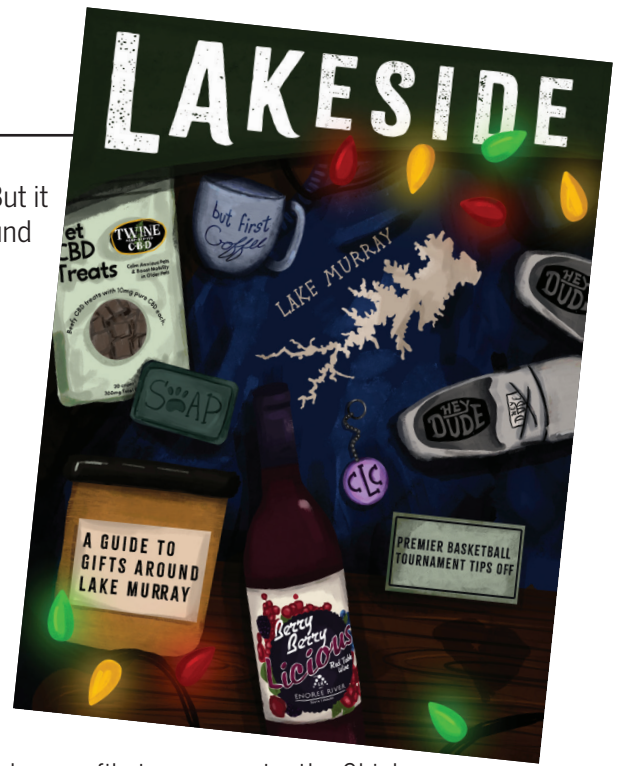


PREMIER BASKETBALL
TOURNAMENT TIPS OFF

on the cover

Shopping for Christmas and the holidays can be grueling or even awkward. But it doesn't have to be, especially with the wide availability of local shops all around the Lake Murray area.

Illustration by Kailee Kokes



from the lake

It's another wonderful time of the year.

The holiday season is upon us, which means it's another great time to enjoy yourself around Lake Murray.

The weather might be cooling down, but there's still plenty to do around the Jewel of South Carolina.

The various destinations around the reservoir offer plentiful shopping options for those looking for holiday gifts — or who just want to go out for some retail therapy during the dark, cold days of winter.

To help get you started exploring the shopping options around the lake, the latest edition of Lakeside includes a guide to some compelling options.

Speaking of helping you explore various options around the lake, we profiled some of the international restaurants in the area, and assembled a list of the many diverse dining options in the Lake Murray area. Consider them as you plan to spend quality time with friends and family through the holidays and moving forward.

The holidays also bring with them some great basketball action, with some of the top high school hoops talent in the nation arriving in Lexington county to take part in one of the

nation's higher-profile tournaments, the Chick-fil-A Classic. We have a look at how the tournament grew into the influential showcase it's become.

We also have a look at how Chapin, which proclaims itself as the Capital of Lake Murray, is leaning on public art with the unveiling of a new mural and unified art trail, to beautify the town and attract visitors.

Of course, the lake doesn't just belong to people, and in this issue, we have a look at the various wildlife you can appreciate around its shores and in its waters. We also caught up with a deer tracker to discuss an interesting aspect of hunting culture in the area.

We hope this month's issue helps you to continue to take advantage of the Lake Murray area through the holidays and winter. Turns out there just isn't a bad time of year around here.

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LEXINGTON COUNTY
Chronicle
You Live in Lexington County — Your News Should, Too

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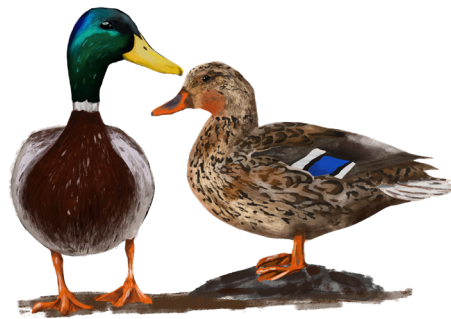
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Stay here, play here

Lexington County events for Nov. - Feb.

November



HOLIDAY LIGHTS ON THE RIVER

Nov. 22-Dec. 31. One of the area's preeminent drive-through light displays. Features millions of sparkling lights and animated displays in the riverside park near Lake Murray. Various other activities are part of the festivities, including a laser light show and winter wonder tube slide. Saluda Shoals Park. 5605 Bush River Rd., Columbia. icrc.net.

CHRISTMAS IN CAYCE

Nov. 30-Dec. 2. Cayce's annual Christmas festivities return with a tree lighting ceremony, Carols Along the Riverwalk, a program at the city's history museum and its shared Holiday Parade of Lights, which rolls into West Columbia as well. Caycsc.gov.



SNOWBALL FESTIVAL

Nov. 30-Dec. 3. The Town of Lexington's annual Christmas celebration includes a craft fair, Carolighting Ceremony, multiple movie nights, a carnival and a parade. All events center around the Icehouse

Amphitheater (107 W Main St.).
icehouseamphitheater.com.

December

A VERY BERRY CHRISTMAS

Continues through Dec. 22 in downtown Newberry, with North Pole Lights at Community Hall & Memorial Park and Santa's Tours of the city Dec. 1, 8 and 15. newberrychristmas.com.



WILD LIGHTS AT RIVERBANKS ZOO

Continues through Jan. 14. Riverbanks Zoo hosts its annual Christmas light event (known previously as Lights Before Christmas). The zoo will be illuminated by myriad lights, including larger-than-life handcrafted lanterns inspired by nature. There will also be interactive activities, fun photo ops, and seasonal favorites including nightly snowfall and visits with Santa. Riverbanks Zoo, 500 Wildlife Pkwy. riverbanks.org.

CHRISTMAS IN LEESVILLE

Dec. 1. The Leesville Merchant's Association annually hosts Christmas in Leesville on Main Street in the Leesville Historic District. Downtown stores stay open late while shoppers enjoy the holiday lights and music, a marshmallow roast and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. batesburg-leesville.org.

"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY"

Dec. 1-17. Chapin Theatre Company stages the holiday classic as a live radio broadcast, including live foley sound effects. Chapin Theatre. 830 Columbia Ave., Chapin. Chapintheatre.org.

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" (PLAY)

Dec. 2. Columbia Children's Theatre presents the time-honored holiday tale. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

LAKE MURRAY'S CHRISTMAS LIGHT BOAT PARADE

Dec. 2. Boats decked with holiday lights cruise across Lake Murray, competing for awards and lighting up the December night. Lake Murray Dam Park Site (Lexington Side) 1797 North Lake Dr. lakemurraycountry.com

"A VERY MERRY BERRY CHRISTMAS"

Dec. 8-9. The Newberry Community Players holiday production. Ritz Theatre. 1511 Main St., Newberry. newberry-community-players.square.site.

"ELF THE MUSICAL JR."

Dec. 8-10. The ICRC Children's Theatre presents a stage musical version of the favorite holiday film. Spring Hill High School. 11629 Broad River Rd., Columbia icrc.net.

"THE TWO CLARAS" (BALLET)

Dec. 8-10. CCJ has been delighting audiences for over 15 years with our modern rewrite of the "Nutcracker" ballet. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.



OLD TIMEY CHRISTMAS

Dec. 9. Chapin's Christmas celebration returns for a third year with visits from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, readings from Chapin locals, carol sing-alongs and live music, along with plenty of shopping with hand-picked holiday vendors. Beaufort/Clark Street, Chapin. facebook.com/townofchapinsc.

NAT KING COLE CHRISTMAS

Dec. 10. Jazz singer and guitarist Allan Harris presents a holiday concert centered on the songs of one of Christmas' iconic musical hallmarks. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.

GEMINIDS METEOR SHOWER

Dec. 13. Watch as the asteroid 3200 Phaethon will bathe our planet with over 120 visible multicolored meteors an hour. Meech House at Mungo Park. 2121, Lake Murray Blvd., Irmo. icrc.net.

CANDY CANE HUNT

Dec. 15. Santa and his elves will be hiding candy canes at Crooked Creek Park for kids to find along with some prize candy canes. Crooked Creek Park. 1098 Old Lexington Hwy., Chapin. icrc.net.

EDWIN MCCAIN

Dec. 15. The ever-popular South Carolina favorite returns once again to Newberry's signature venue. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.

"THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL" (BALLET)

Dec. 15-16. Nova Ballet presents an original holiday ballet. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

SC JAZZ MASTERWORKS ENSEMBLE: SWINGIN' HOLIDAYS

Dec. 17. Resident Midlands big band presents holiday jazz concert. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

"THE POLAR EXPRESS"

Dec. 20 The beloved 2004 animated film "Polar Express" comes to life on the big screen at a historic opera house. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.



A VERY ELECTRIC CHRISTMAS

Dec. 21. Lightwire Theatre's "A Very Electric Christmas" is a captivating holiday show that uses glowing wire art to tell the heartwarming tale of Max, a lost bird. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE CELTS

Dec. 22 Acclaimed Celtic ensemble presents a joyous fusion of traditional Irish and Scottish melodies, infectious rhythms, and heartwarming Christmas classics. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.

A SOULFUL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Dec. 31. The sixth annual New Year's celebration at West Columbia's resident jazz club features music from ChaVonne Campbell & Tre'Sounds. Chayz Lounge. 607 Meeting St., West Columbia. facebook.com/chayzlounge.

NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE GIN ON 391

Dec. 31. Prosperity event venue rings in the new year with help from The Big Time Band. The Gin on 391. 111 Boyd St., Prosperity. facebook.com/theginon391.



RUMOURS: THE ULTIMATE FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE

Jan. 6. Touring tribute act performs. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

HALEY REINHART

Jan. 13. "American Idol" alum swings through Newberry for a concert. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com. Ritz Theatre. 1511 Main St., Newberry. newberry-community-players.square.site.

CHAMBER CRAWL

Jan. 24. Irmo's one-stop-shop for craft beer and pints once again hosts a chamber ensemble from the SC Philharmonic, as part of the orchestra's ongoing bar-focused concert series. Craft and Draft Irmo. 7583 St. Andrews Rd., Irmo. scphilharmonic.com.



RUBEN STUDDARD & CLAY AIKEN

Jan. 25. Legendary former "American Idol" rivals perform together. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

"MURDER BOX"

Jan. 26-28. Murder mystery play is the Newberry Community Players' January production. Ritz Theatre. 1511 Main St., Newberry. newberry-community-players.square.site.

"BELL, BOOK, AND CANDLE" (PLAY)

Jan. 26-Feb. 4. Lexington's community theater presents a production of the 1950s Broadway play full of (literal) magic and intrigue. Village Square Theatre. 105 Caughman Rd., Lexington. Villagesquaretheatre.com.

SOFIA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Jan. 28. Lose yourself in the rich musical traditions of Bulgaria with the esteemed Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.



RTZFEST 2024

Feb. 1 Join headliner Chris Reed and the Bad Kids at this first annual fundraising concert for the Jason Foudnation, which offers training in suicide awareness to public school teachers in South Carolina. Ritz Theatre. 1511 Main St., Newberry. newberry-community-players.square.site.

JOHN LAKIN & FRIENDS

Feb. 10. Stalwart musician John Lakin presents another night of gospel in Irmo. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

SC JAZZ MASTERWORKS ENSEMBLE: JAZZ IS FOR LOVERS

Feb. 14. Resident Midlands big band presents a jazz concert for Valentine's Day. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

STEP AFRIKA!

Feb. 15. Witness the exhilarating art form of stepping come to life with Step Afrika! Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.

LAKE MURRAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: IN THE STEPPES

Feb. 18. Local community orchestra performs. Harbison Theatre. 7300 College St., Irmo. harbisontheatre.org.

VIENNA BOYS CHOIR

Feb. 23. For over 500 years, the Vienna Boys Choir has been enchanting audiences around the world. Newberry Opera House. 1201 McKibben St., Newberry. newberryoperahouse.com.

"FINAL APPERANCE" (PLAY)

Feb. 23-March 24. Chapin Theatre Company presents a play that follows the haunted world premiere of a fictional play. Chapin Theatre. 830 Columbia Ave., Chapin. chapintheatre.org.

Gifts Galore

Local holiday shopping ideas around Lake Murray

Words by Natalie Szrajc

We've all been there. Time is running out. Traffic is a nightmare. Stores and websites are out of stock of the items you actually think might work.

Yes, shopping for Christmas and the holidays can be grueling or even awkward. But it doesn't have to be, especially with the wide availability of local shops all around the Lake Murray area. Being surrounded by four counties – Lexington, Richland, Newberry and Saluda – gives the gift-giver prime picking for the holiday season.

Don't worry if you've got a finicky or hard-to-shop-for person on your gift list. There's quite literally something for anybody – and, yes, gift cards are available at most places. So whether you've got an in-law, boyfriend, father, stepmother or favorite coworker to shop for, you can lean on this list to blow away the bah humbugs.

Lexington County

LAKE MURRAY T-SHIRT/HAT

If you're looking for a novelty Lake Murray item, you can't go wrong with a Lake Murray hat or sweatshirt. This gift is unisex, making it ideal for anybody who has an affinity for Lake Murray, lives on or near the lake or someone who has moved away and misses the Lake Murray area.

The hat and sweatshirt are both available at Capital City Lake Murray Country Visitor's Center located at 2184 North Lake Dr. The hat is \$24 and the super soft sweatshirt is \$36. The hat even features the outline of the lake allowing anyone who wears it to represent the area and start a conversation about the jewel of the state.

SPA DAY

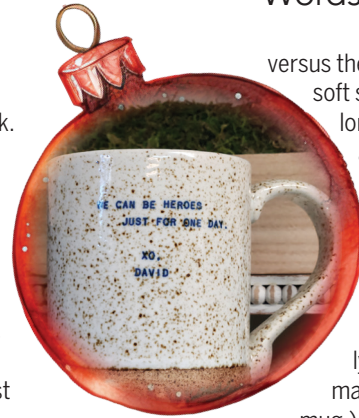
For the person who wants an aesthetic and cosmetic boost, the people at Lexington Aesthetics Medical Spa can provide the right fill, peel or massage necessary to help someone feel or look his or her best. They utilize state of the art technology according to their website, and judging by the more than 200 five star reviews on Google, you're bound to give a relaxing experience. Or maybe it can be a self-gift if you also need a little relaxation.

Embrace self-care and look after yourself and your people this holiday season. Find the spa at 561 Whiteford Way behind Mellow Mushroom in Lexington.

MORE PAMPERING

Another pampering gift can be found in Lexington at Nifty Gifty at the end of Andrew Corley Road where it meets up with North Lake Drive. This gift shop has a little bit of everything but let's focus in on a couple of items worth wrapping up for the holidays.

Thymes has a line of bath and body products with scents for the romantic



versus the chill. Lavender Honey has a warm and soft scent and Kimono Rose will have someone longing for the flower fields of spring. There are body lotions, hand washes, room sprays and candles ranging from \$16 to \$36.

If you have a coffee drinker on your list, steer away from the mass marketed mugs and go for one that gives cozy vibes and is perfect to feature in someone's coffee nook. Get one with a catchy saying or song lyric for \$22. (Read on for some coffee beans made with purpose to pair with the coffee mug.).

DON'T FORGET THE PETS

We can't leave our furry friends off the list. Head over to Wingard's Market at 1403 North Lake Dr. and check out the gift shop for items for dogs and feisty felines.

Dogs need baths to keep away the dreaded dog smell. Soapy Tails has a line of dog shampoo bars for dogs with curly coats, wrinkled coats, sensitive skin and long and silky coats. At only \$10.99 a bar, you can pick up more than one to share with a friend's furry pet.

Another treat for dogs will help calm any anxious pet, whether it's during a bad thunderstorm or some other stressful experience. Twine CBD has Pet CBD Treats as well as Large Pet CBD Oil. The treats go for \$34.99 a bag and the oil goes for \$59.99 a bottle. As always consult with your pet's veterinarian regarding your pet's specific health needs.



SILK ART

Know someone looking to spruce up their home? Trotter Fine Arts is a Lexington-based husband and wife duo who make original and custom-printed artwork on satin fabric. Many pieces are from around the Lowcountry, and they also do triptychs, which take a scene and split it into three canvases.

Lynne creates the satin fabric artwork with much aid from her husband while Howard paints a lot on canvas. Together they have a wide range of artwork for the home. These pieces are investment pieces but the process of putting the art on satin fabric is more durable and longer lasting than other mediums, the couple says. More information is available at trotterarts.com.



Newberry County

CUSTOMIZE IT

Many people in the South have a sister, aunt, mom or girlfriend who enjoys a personalized gift. Whether it's a monogrammed shirt, personalized bag or piece of jewelry, Making it Personal in downtown Newberry has got you covered.

Their items change or sell out pretty fast, and with the holidays fast approaching, last-minute shopping is the last thing you'll want to do here. There's a lot to choose from this small business, but here a couple of unique, personalized items.

Make a mom's eyes well up with joy with a silver-plated bracelet with the kids' names engraved underneath. This can be for a mom or grandmother and can be customized with the nickname they prefer — "mom," "mama," "grandma," "nana," etc. At only \$24.99 a bracelet, it's a gift that will be worn for years to come.

For the person who loves to cook or bake, make it purposeful and sentimental with a recipe cutting board. At only \$35 a board, all you'll need to do is have a copy of the recipe you wish to imprint on the wooden board. A handwritten copy of a grandparent's favorite recipe emblazoned on the board will have people asking where you got the customized gift.

DRINK UP

For the wine drinker on the list, consider a locally made wine from Enoree River Vineyards and Winery at 1650 Dusty Rd. just off Interstate 26. All the wines are handcrafted from seasonal fruits, including muscadines and other blends.

There are discounts available, including a first purchase discount and a military discount. There are also \$25 and \$50 gift certificates available if you'd like to gift a night out together for you and a special someone.

Saluda County

SMALLTOWN STAPLE

Gifts for the whole family are available at C.B. Forrest & Sons in downtown Saluda. Located at 101 North Main St., this store has stayed in the family for two generations in the same location it started. They carry men's, women's and children's clothing and shoes with brands ranging from Carhartt, Ariat, HeyDude, Coastal Carolina and more.

If you're looking for boots to weather the rains and colder temperatures, owner Brad Forrest recommends Xtra Tuf boots. These boots are especially popular as kids wear them to school or play, he says. Prices range from \$69-100 depending on size, color and style.

Leather wallets are another popular choice and with wallets made from real leather, it's hard to resist these sturdy



money holders. Some of the wallets also have the RFID blocking aspect and range from \$20 to \$50. There are also wallets with different emblems such as USC and Clemson logos.

Hats are another option from Southern Point and Low Country brands. The Southern Point have classic styles but the Low Country have a variety of styles that often change depending on what may be trending. These hats go from \$26 to \$32.

Richland County

JEWELRY A DIFFERENT WAY

Permanent jewelry is a relatively new trend and one that is taken off across the country. But there's no reason to travel when you can get custom-fit 14 karat gold filled or sterling silver chains permanently attached to your wrist or ankle. Whether you and your significant other want a special bond less painful than a tattoo or you and your bestie want friendship bracelets, Refined Jewelry based out of Columbia does pop-up shops in Columbia, West Columbia and Lexington. In addition to pop-up shops they also do private parties.

While the permanent jewelry chains are welded together they can easily be unattached or even reattached should the chain break. Check out efined-jewelry.com for pop-ups or a private party. Prices vary but average in the \$50 range.



HOLIDAY JOLT

For the coffee lover on your list, check out the Oliver Gospel Roastery at 1120 Taylor St. Coffee beans are roasted in house with a mission of supporting the Oliver Gospel and supporting those caught in the cycle of homelessness by providing counseling, career services and homeless assistance.

Buy a bag of beans for \$18.50 and partner them with the distinctive coffee mug from Nifty Gifty for a gift that will make mornings a bit more delightful.

In addition to signature blends there are also seasonal or limited bags, so check out the shop in downtown Columbia.







HOLIDAY HOOPS

Prestigious high school basketball tournament tips off in Lexington County

Words by Elijah Campbell

Since 2002, the Chick-fil-A Classic has been one of the premier in-season high school basketball tournaments in the country. And for the second straight season, the tournament will be played in Lexington County.

The competition is set to return to River Bluff High School Dec. 27-30, bringing with it some of the top ascending basketball talent in the country.

Over the last 20 years, the tournament has grown to attract some of the more prestigious high school hoops programs in the nation.

Many of the top players who have played in the Chick-fil-A Classic went on to become NBA stars — Steph Curry, Anthony Edwards, Brandon Ingram, Zion Williamson, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Jaren Jackson Jr. and many more have showcased their skills during the tournament.

This season, the tournament will

once again be jam packed with some of the best high school basketball players in the country. Prolific Prep, featuring AJ Dybantsa who is the No. 1 player in the country in the 2026 class, headlines this year's field.

Defending champion John Marshall High School from Richmond, Va. is also in the field along with nationally recognized programs like Hillcrest Prep from Phoenix, DME Academy from Daytona Beach, Fla., Dynamic Prep from Irving, T.X. and St. John's

College High School from Washington, D.C.

There will be some local teams participating as well, including

two teams from Lexington County. The host school, River Bluff, will be participating, as well as Gray Collegiate Academy from West Columbia. Other South Carolina schools that are in this year's field are Lancaster, Keenan and Ridge View.

Gary Fulmer, the tournament director, has been in basketball



WHERE TOMORROWS STARS PLAY TODAY

coaching and administration for decades. He's been the tournament's director since their first year in 2002 and used elements of what he liked about other tournaments from his coaching days to help mold his now highly coveted event. He had a vision, he just then needed a sponsor.

Fulmer re-connected with a coach he hired to replace him at his last coaching stop before going into administration and used a connection he had with Scott Richardson, who owned a Chick-fil-A location, and was able to set up a meeting to pitch his idea to a potential sponsor.

"I sort of pitched the idea to them about doing a national level basketball tournament here in Columbia," Fulmer said. "Myrtle Beach had one down there for years down there, the Beach Ball Classic, and I had the privilege to attend and participate in and it was a super event. With us being the capital city of Columbia and being around Lexington and Lugoff and all of the metro area here, I said it would be a great location for a basketball tournament. So I pitched the idea and from there, and obviously the Chick-fil-A operators thought this was a good idea because they decided to be the title sponsor for it at the time."

The tournament began taking place at Richland Northeast High School, where Fulmer was working as athletic director at the time, and did so for the first 19 years of its existence. The tournament grew and national high school basketball powerhouses like Montverde, Oak Hill and Huntingdon Prep began to participate. The key to bringing in schools with that level prominence stems from the tournament's early success and the coaching community spreading positive reviews of the tournament and encouraging other coaches from across the country to travel to Columbia to participate.

"We understand that word of mouth between coaches is the best way to get those teams to come here," Fulmer said. You can call and advertise all you want to but if I call a school from New Jersey and they had not heard of the Chick-fil-A Classic but I tell them someone who's played in it and contact them and if they do, they word of mouth is really what got that started," Fulmer said. "Of course, as we've gone, with the number of players we've been able to bring here, then obviously the reputation of the

tournament sort of sells itself now. We usually have 30 or 40 people from all across the country and Canada that reach out to us every year wanting to know if they can come back and play."

After 2021, issues with crowding in the gym and a lack of capacity forced the tournament to consider a new location. With the tournament's reputation growing, it not only brought high profile teams and players, but larger crowds to see those high profile teams and players. Parking became a significant issue and with Richland Northeast being a neighborhood school, spectators were parking in yards and looking wherever they could in the surrounding areas for a place to leave their vehicles.

The venue situation reached its peak in 2016 when Williamson, who eventually went on to star at Duke and the New Orleans Pelicans, was playing in the tournament and the capacity of 2,000 spectators filled the gym early, leaving what Fulmer estimated to be between 500-600 hopeful fans left outside the gym unable to watch Williamson's highlight reel performance. After 2021, the issues never got resolved so the tournament moved to River Bluff High School in Lexington.

"River Bluff's seating capacity is 3,000 and gives us an opportunity to sell tickets in advance where we could not do that at Richland Northeast, where you had first come first serve," Fulmer added. "Now, you can purchase a ticket online starting in November for the tournament."

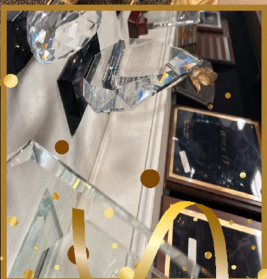
What makes this tournament so special is that with all of the nationally ranked talent and the large crowds it attracts, it creates memorable performances and memories. The one that sticks in Fulmer's mind the most came back in that same 2016 tournament featuring Williamson and a crowd that was at capacity to see him make Chick-fil-A Classic history.

"If I had to pick one game, just because of the sheer excitement, it was the night when Zion scored the tournament record with 53 points," Fulmer recalled. "He was like 19 for 21 from the floor. They couldn't stop him and he was scoring from everywhere and everyone from Roy Williams to Mike Krzyzewski and all the big name college coaches in the nation were sitting here in the gym."

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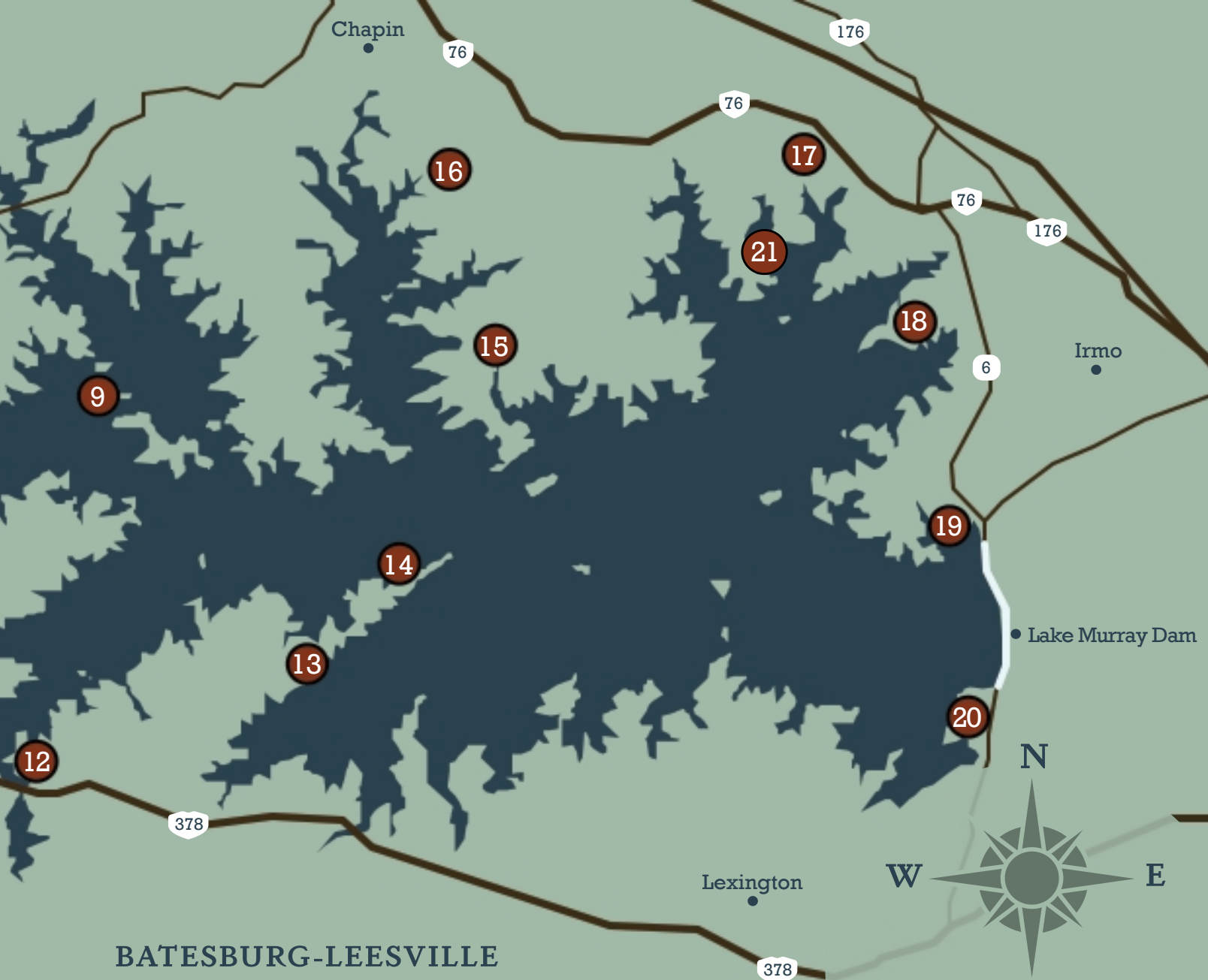
- 1** Kempson Boat Ramp
2822 SC-395

PROSPERITY

- 2** RiverWinds Landing
221 State Route 391
- 8** Buffalo Creek Marina
849 Marina Way
- 9** Billy Dreher Island Ramp
224 Sassafras Lane
- 10** Crayne's Landing
26 Crayne's Loop

LEESVILLE

- 4** Big Mans Marina
125 Big Mans Road
- 5** River Bend Boat Ramp
734 Riverbend Point
- 6** Lake Murray Shores
Boat Ramp
1 Robbins Street
- 7** Acapulco USA
960 Rock North Creek Road
- 11** Hollow Creek Marina
3340 Hwy 378
- 12** Southshore Marina
3072 Hwy 378



BATESBURG-LEESVILLE

- 3** Lake Murray Estates Boat Ramp
394 Ruby Riser Road

CHAPIN

- 15** Hilton Recreation Area
Cove Launch Court
- 16** Eptings Landing
433 Eptings Camp Road
- 21** Lighthouse Marina
1925 Johnson Marina Rd

IRMO

- 17** Shealy's Landing
320 Shadowood Drive

COLUMBIA

- 18** Rocky Point Boat Ramp
411 Rocky Point Drive
- 19** Lake Murray Dam Ramp
6 SC-6

GILBERT

- 14** Larry Koon Landing
1523 Shull Avenue
- 13** Public Boat Ramp
1523 Shull Avenue

LEXINGTON

- 20** Jake's Landing
220 Jakes Landing Road

EAT AROUND THE WORLD (AROUND LAKE MURRAY)

Words by Kailee Kokes

Turns out you can eat a lot around Lake Murray. And those culinary options don't just occupy Southern and American traditions, there's food from all over the world in our backyard. We profiled three beloved International restaurants in the area and compiled a list of other options to try.

CLARA & RAY'S RISTORANTE ITALIAN (5140 SUNSET BLVD. IN LEXINGTON)

This family-owned Italian restaurant has called Lexington home for 15 years, celebrating this milestone July 14, 2023.

Co-owner John Immerso, who owns the eatery with his wife Tracey, opened up the business in 2008, motivated by the family's love of cooking. Immerso told Lakeside that what really spurred the start of the business was the lack of "mom and pop" Italian restaurants in Lexington, with the family looking to bring something that stood out from the prominent chains.

"We wanted to open a family place," Immerso exclaimed, adding that it has always been a dream of theirs to own and operate their own restaurant.

That dream didn't come without overcoming some challenges, with Immerso explaining that food costs, finding good staff and supply chain shortages have impacted the business during its run.

Immerso said Clara & Ray's Neapolitan thin-crust pizza, which is homemade and hand-stretched, is one of its most popular items.

He said that one thing he thinks sets the restaurant's food apart is the flour it uses. The business opts for unbleached and unbromated flour, with Immerso adding that most pizzerias and Italian restaurants in the state don't use it. He called bromated and bleached flour unhealthy, emphasizing Clara & Ray's focus on using fresh ingredients in everything it makes.

Immerso recounted that his grandmother, Amelia, who hails from Italy, taught both him and his wife how to make homemade pizza.

"She was a great cook," he praised.

He added that his mother, Clara, whom the restaurant is named after along with his father, taught the husband-and-wife duo her recipe for marinara and pasta sauce.

"She was also a great cook," Immerso enthused.

He emphasized that the restaurant is important to him, having allowed the owners to bring some Italian history and good food with them to Lexington.

Immerso proudly shared that the restaurant has been recognized since 2020 as having the best pizza around and was voted "Best Pizza" in Lexington Life Magazine.

He said his family are the restaurant's biggest supporters, adding the restaurant welcomes guests with "friendly staff, warm personalities, great service, comfortable and inviting atmosphere," and many of that staff being family members, too.

3 MARIA'S AUTHENTIC MEXICAN FOOD (306 N JENNINGS ST. IN SALUDA)

This authentic Mexican eatery, which serves its food out of a trailer with outdoor seating, has operated in Saluda for nearly seven years.

Nelle Coates, co-owner of the restaurant, said the business was inspired by wanting to share the authentic taste of the Mexican dishes cooked by her and her husband, Greg.

She attended high school in Mexico, where she is originally from, and from middle school to high school, students had to pick an activity to pursue, and she chose cooking and baking. The experience in school spurred her to begin baking cakes for family members.

In Saluda, she would cook for her husband and their three daughters, for whom the restaurant is named. Coates said the name of the restaurant was originally set to be Los Portales, but ultimately, paying tribute to their children, who all have some variant of Maria or Marie baked into their names, won out.

Before the husband-and-wife duo started their venture, Nelle worked in a bank. During this time, she saw how some people would hit retirement and end up not having any money, adding that she didn't want to live like that.

"I told my husband, 'Let's open a business,' but I didn't think about what kind of business," Nelle said. "I said, 'Well first we need to think about what we want to sell. Shoes? Not everybody buys shoes all the time. We want to sell clothes? Maybe, but not everybody buys clothes all the time.'"

"We were like, 'What do people do all the time? People eat all the time,'" she added.

Nelle said they were nervous when they first opened, but Greg insisted that once people started learning that they made homemade tortillas, salsa, refried beans and rice, among other items, people would start coming.

Greg added that they started getting visitors from Sumter, Aiken, Newberry among others coming to eat their food.

The owners said the menu hasn't changed much through the years, though they have added items like milkshakes and boba tea. Greg adamantly proclaimed they won't make anything that falls under "Tex-Mex."

While they overall have a pretty fixed menu, Greg told Lakeside that sometimes they'll whip something up for their customers who want something different. Nelle shared that their two most popular dishes are their enchiladas and tortas.

The cuisine itself comes from generations of family members, with Nelle



Kailee Kokes | Chronicle
(all other photos provided)



being taught by her mother how to cook real and authentic Mexican cuisine and Greg having been cooking since he was a child.

During our interview, multiple community members stopped by or honked their horns to say hello.

"See, I told you everybody knows us. A lot of people love us," Nelle said. "We do help out a lot of people when we know they don't have food or they are sick or whatever. And that's how they look for us."

BODHI THAI (126 E MAIN ST. IN LEXINGTON)

This Thai restaurant just celebrated its six-year anniversary Oct. 28 and is run by Chef Nivit Tipvaree, a native from Nakhon Sawan, Thailand.

According to Caleb Salyer, a server who orchestrated answers to a questionnaire with help from Tipvaree, the business started after Tipvaree left his job as chef at Heirloom in Charlotte.

Salyer said the executive chef had plans to move to New York and work in a Michelin-star kitchen, but while visiting his parents in Lexington, he and his dad found the Bodhi location and proceeded to turn the former bank into a restaurant.

The Thai-inspired dishes are fully made to order by Tipvaree with some of the more popular dishes being the Toong Tong, their ribs and a variety of

special feature entrees.

The cuisine itself is labeled modern Thai with a French twist, as Tipvaree wears many culinary hats.

"The original history of Thai cuisine is the dishes were influenced by many cultures including India, China and Portugal anciently," Salyer said. "Now many recipes have been adapted and modified and Chef takes pride in that."

Owning and operating his own restaurant wasn't Tipvaree's dream initially, but now that he does own his own restaurant, he still dreams to become a Michelin-star chef.

As to challenges that the business has faced, the economy has been the largest, though opening a fine dining restaurant in downtown Lexington was no small feat either, as a majority of downtown puts an emphasis on casual dining and drinks.

According to the restaurant's website, Tipvaree studied hotel, restaurant and tourism management at the University of South Carolina and later changed his focus from the service side of the industry to the kitchen. He then graduated from the International Culinary School of the Art Institute of Charlotte.

"Chef considers each dish 'Art of a Plate' because he takes time to add finer details to each dish," Salyer said. "Uniquely, him being the Executive Chef, he touches each plate before it leaves the service line to ensure that the dishes are perfect."

NIGERIAN

BFKT Nigerian Cuisine and Catering (425 Riglaw Cir. in Lexington)

LATIN-AMERICAN

Lulu's Latin Cuisine (109 Old Chapin Rd. in Lexington)

JAMAICAN

The Reggae Grill (901 Holland Ave. in Cayce)

HONDURAN

Cabañas Restaurant (825 Sunset Blvd. in West Columbia)

JAPANESE

Miso Japanese Restaurant (1419 Chapin Rd. in Chapin)

HALAL

Teelo Kebab House (1599 Broad River Rd. in Columbia)

CHINESE

China Garden Restaurant (200 W Church St. in Saluda)

CARIBBEAN

Trini Lime Caribbean Cafe (2008 State St. in Cayce)

THAI

Thailand (6024 St. Andrews Rd. in Columbia)

INDIAN

Tasty Tikka (10401 Broad River Rd. in Irmo)

FRENCH

Black Rooster (201 Meeting St. in West Columbia)

IRISH

O'hara's Public House (131 E Main St. in Lexington)

GREEK

Ariana's Greek Restaurant (1720 Sunset Blvd. West Columbia)

SOUTHERN STYLE

Blue Collar Bistro (397 Lee St. in Johnston)

CAJUN

CRABBLER (1809 Wilson Rd. in Newberry)

ITALIAN

Angelo's Greek and Italian (333 Village Square Dr. in Batesburg-Leesville)

MEXICAN

Los 3 Amigos Norteños (117 N Main St. in Prosperity.)





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From Air to Earth: Lake Murray is

Words by Natalie Szrajc | Illustrations by Kailee Kokes

Lake Murray touches four counties, with more than 48,000 acres of surface water and 620 miles of shoreline. While it's not the biggest lake in the state it is certainly an attraction and recreational outlet for residents and visitors alike.

Many people swim, boat and fish the lake year-round, but there are also creatures of the air, land and water that call Lake Murray home. Here's the skinny on some of the prominent animals you can see around the lake.

PURPLE MARTINS

When it comes to Lake Murray, it's nearly impossible not to talk about the members of the swallow family who annually return to Bomb Island during the late-summer months.

There are tours to go see the rare phenomenon and learn more about helping the birds thrive. And there was even a film made about them by Lexington native Zach Steinhauser.

Purple martins are considered cavity nesting birds. This means they find rest in the nest in cavities created by other species, such as woodpeckers. They often gather in large groups to help fend off predators.

They are also dependent on special housing around the lake built by people. According to Steinhauser, because of their dependence on people to build homes allows them to lack the ability to do it themselves.

Purple martins are the largest swallows in North America, according to the state Department of Natural Resources. They have long, pointed wings and a slightly forked tail. The males are iridescent blue and black, while the females have a brownish appearance.

So where does the purple come from? When seen in the air or in a big group, their sheen refracts light giving a purple tint. These birds have a high conservation priority, according to DNR.

Because of their reliance on humans, DNR encourages people to investigate buying gourds to house the birds. These can be found at such spots as Wingard's Market in Lexington.

OSPREY

Osprey, known scientifically as *Pandio haliaetus*, live near water since their main diet constitutes of fish, according to the DNR. People may know them as fish hawks or fish eagles because of their appearance being like that of a hawk or eagle.

Ospreys are medium-size birds, with the females being larger than the males. They average between 21 and 24 inches but with their wingspan average between 55 and 70 inches.

In terms of color, DNR describes them as brownish-black with a white breast. On the breast are brown speckles, and the tail is gray with dark



bars on it. They tend to have a dark stripe along the side of the face going through the bird's eye. On the wings are dark wrist marks, if viewed from below.

Ospreys aren't listed as endangered or threatened, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service categorizes them as a species of special emphasis. They are one of many birds of prey who had a decline in the 1950s and 1960s due to pesticide poisoning, according to DNR. They are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Ospreys migrate across the country. Since there has been a lower number of nesting sites, ospreys regularly nest on manmade structures, such as channel markers.

If you aren't able to witness an osprey in the wild, there is a live cam set up by a couple on Lake Murray. The camera features Lucy and Rickey, who first came to the next in 2013.

Their story, photos and live cam can be viewed at lakemurrayosprey.com.

MALLARD DUCK

The common and familiar mallard is scientifically known as *Anas platyrhynchos*. With a low-pitched voice these ducks are found in a broad range of wetland habitats, including Lake Murray, according to DNR.

They are more commonly seen in the winter months and are easily identified by their conspicuous green head. They are also common in pictures and were featured on a postage stamp.

Mallards have an omnivore appetite, taking in anything from insects and snails to aquatic vegetation and aquatic invertebrates.

Since mallard ducks fall under the migratory waterfowl category, it is unlawful to hunt them within Lexington and Richland counties within 350 yards of a dwelling or marina without written permission of the owner or occupant.

BALD EAGLE

Rounding out the bird species is the country's national bird, the bald eagle. With its distinctive white head, yellow bill and dark brown body it's not uncommon to spot a bald eagle. In South Carolina, the bald eagle, otherwise known as *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, is listed as a threatened species and receives state protection as a nongame species, according to DNR.

Bald eagles in South Carolina tend to be a little smaller than others, averaging between seven and eight pounds while those in the northern part of the country can be twice as heavy.

In our state, bald eagles tend to return to their nest annually in the fall months. They often find large trees, allowing for stick nests that can range from four to six feet in diameter and three feet tall. Most of the bald eagles nest in pine trees but they may also rest in cypress and dead trees.

Since they feast primarily on fish, Lake Murray serves as one of many spots for bald eagles to rest. According to DNR, large manmade reservoirs in the state have provided over 590,000 acres of new inland eagle foraging habitat. There are eagles found below hydroelec-

home to diverse array of wildlife

tric dams, such as the Lake Murray Dam, where they forage on the injured fish.

STRIPED BASS

Moving from air to water, we start with a sought-after fish. The striped bass is the state fish but has very little natural reproduction, according to Jason Bettinger, SC DNR Fisheries Coordinator.

To maintain the striped bass, roughly 1 million fingerlings are stocked every year, Bettinger said.

Because striped bass are sought after in Lake Murray, it provides popular recreational fishing, which also supports local bait dealers, fishing guides and tackle stores. Capital City/Lake Murray Country has a list of fishing tournaments at Lake Murray on their website. Just this year they welcomed the BASS Elite Series.

The average length of a striped bass, otherwise known as Morone saxatilis, is between three and 10 pounds and 20 to 36 inches. But there's always exceptions. The state record is a 63 pound striped bass, Bettinger offered, adding that landlocked freshwater striped bass can reach over 60 pounds. They can also live up to 30 years.

While striped bass are popular it's not uncommon to confuse them with the hybrid striped bass. Bettinger said hybrid bass have much deeper bodies and broken stripes extending to the tail fin. Striped bass are more slender and more often than not have unbroken stripes.

He said there are few, if any, hybrid striped bass in Lake Murray since they aren't stocked into the lake.

Since striped bass prefer cool water less than 76 degrees, the famously hot months of South Carolina summers can stress the bass out. Bettinger said during some summer there isn't enough suitable habitat for striped bass and there have been instances of striped bass fish kills.

In order to reduce the amount of striped bass lost to catch-and-release mortality in Lake Murray, it is unlawful to take, attempt to take or possess more than five striped bass between June 1 and September 30.

BLUE CATFISH

Blue catfish are the largest freshwater fishes in the continent and the largest freshwater fish in the state.

To spot a blue catfish, look for a deeply forked tail fin. This type of catfish has a blueish back and side which gives its name. There is also a lack of black spots and humped back near the dorsal fin.

They primarily eat clams, snails, freshwater mussels, water insects and fish and plant material. They may live up to 34 years and aren't native to the state.

Bettinger said they were initially stocked in Lake Marion in 1964 and have spread to almost every drainage in the state. They are similar to channel catfish but are

distinguished by the shape and length of the anal fin.

Where it's common in many species for the female to guard the eggs, blue catfish are different in that both male and females assist in guarding the eggs.

Lake Murray has a great catfish fishery with opportunities for anglers to catch large blue catfish especially during Spring, Bettinger says.

White-Tailed Deer

Moving on to the land is another sought-after prize. While not endangered or threatened, white-tailed deer may have unhealthy populations in some parts of the country due to an out-of-balance male to female ratio, according to DNR.

These deer are identified by the white underside of their tail, which becomes visible as it flees, giving. It also serves as a communication tool to other deer with the white patch acting as a flag alerting others about predators. Their fur is primarily reddish brown but turns a gray hue during winter.

They generally stand about three feet at the shoulder and are about six feet long. They weigh anywhere between 50 and 350 pounds, averaging 125. Generally, males are heavier than females.

These deer are fairly social animals, according to DNR, and have an herbivore diet, feasting on twigs, leaves, bark and other soft stemmed plants. They may also eat acorns, nuts, fruit and mushrooms among other plant based foods.

COYOTE

The coyote which is a threat to deer, preying on fawns, according to DNR. These creatures have a bad reputation, having first appeared in the state about 30 years ago and continuing to expand greatly and negatively impacting other emails, like deer.

DNR reports they never imported and released coyotes into the state for any reason but since they first appeared in 1978, they have made their way into every South Carolina. They were illegally imported into the state for hound running.

Coyotes may be subject to canine distemper and other diseases such as hepatitis, rabies and harbor a variety of parasites. One of the fears with coyotes is that they are opportunistic feeders, often preying on rabbits, rodents and other small mammals. They also prey on domestic poultry and livestock. They may prey on domestic pets, but this is due to their territorial nature and lack of prey in suburban areas, DNR reports.

As for what can be done about the growing population, there is a coyote harvest incentive program. SCDNR Law Enforcement may issue a shoot-at-night permit, with less stringent weapons restrictions under certain circumstances.

As for hunting or trapping, there are restrictions. Night hunting is permitted on registered properties or with a depredation permit. Trapping season is from Dec. 1 to March 1, and trapped coyotes may not be relocated.



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Another side to Hunting

Words by Kailee Kokes

Hunting is one of the most prevalent hobbies in South Carolina, with a large number of locals taking part and posting pictures of their kills on social media.

But there's also a different aspect to the hunt, which has opened doors to turn it into a business: deer tracking.

Jerry Haselden Jr., a tracker out of Gilbert, and his bloodhound Little Anne spend their weekends helping hunters track and retrieve their deer.

Haselden said he and his wife had always wanted a bloodhound, ultimately deciding to get one while their two kids were still young. Shortly after the hound joined the family, Haselden connected with the group South Carolina Tracking Dogs and the journey of turning Little Anne into a tracking dog began.

He detailed that they started Little Anne on a liver drag, where you drag liver to create a trail for the dog to follow, and eventually got her certified through the United Blood Trackers Association.

"It's kind of like a hobby and kind of turned into a second job," he said.

Haselden has since started Paramount Wounded Game Recovery, where he and his hound connect with people across the state, Georgia and North Carolina to help retrieve their deer. He said that Little Anne tracks 60 to 100 deer in a season.

During the off season, though, the dog is still working just as hard. Haselden said he will get the feet of a recovered deer and use it to mic a

deer's trail and scent.

"We'll just walk through the woods like normal and those hooves are sticking into the ground like a deer would while it's walking," the tracker said. "We'll throw in some 90 degree turns and back tracks and just trying to manipulate what a deer would do in the wild, because deer trying to get away from their natural predators as well."

When it comes to actually tracking a live deer, Haselden said there are a few different factors at play — including the amount of land a hunter has access to, with closer proximity meaning the tracker must be more patient so as to not startle the deer.

He said it tends to be a little easier for Little Anne tracking at cooler temperatures because of thermals, which carry scent, being closer to the ground or even sticking on the ground. He said that during the day when the sun is out and beating down on everything around it the thermals rise off the ground, which makes tracking a little harder.

Surprisingly enough, rain makes it easier to track a scent, as the thermals and scent get trapped inside the raindrops, holding the scent to the ground rather than expanding out into the air.

Haselden added that if you see buzzards fly around in circles up in the air, they are catching those thermals that are coming off of the ground the same way Little Anne does.

The scent that Little Anne is tracking isn't blood, though Haselden said

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she will follow a blood trail or hair follicles. Rather, the scent that comes from glands between a deer's hooves. He said that when a deer is injured the hormone that the gland produces changes, that change in scent is what Little Anne is trained on.

While Little Anne is the one who follows the trail and helps lead the hunters to their kill, Haselden explained that there are a lot of things a tracker has to do and know to be able to successfully retrieve the deer.

Haselden is able to tell where the deer was shot by the texture and color of the blood, which helps determine how long to wait before retrieving it. If the blood is bright red with large air bubbles, the deer has most likely been hit in an artery. If the blood has a darker, more purple hue, it was likely a liver shot. Shots to the lung typically produce very little blood and the blood seen tends to be almost a light pink to pink color. A consistent sign of an intestinal shot the blood being soupy and a little lumpy.

The color of the hair within a shot is also a sign of where you hit the deer, with white hairs often indicating that it was a lower body shot.

The tracker said that just because an animal is wounded doesn't mean it is a fatal shot, saying hunters will sometimes see a deer they shot on a trail cam weeks later fine as can be.

Haselden said that as trackers their main goal is to save the meat of the animal since you as a hunter are intentionally shooting it.

"I believe that hunters and policymakers have a moral and ethical responsibility to just do everything in their power to make sure that every wounded animal was recovered," Haselden said. "I just feel if you intentionally shoot a deer to harvest, then you should do everything in your power to recover that deer and put food on the table, and then it's also fun to watch your dog work as well."

"It still blows my mind at some of the stuff she's able to do and recover,"

he added. "It never fails to amaze me how smart dogs are and what they're capable of."



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Chapin is artfully growing with a new downtown mural and an art trail, both unveiled during the town's recent Labor Day festivities. The art pieces are part of a Crooked Creek Art League initiative to bring art into the community.

"The mural will be the latest addition collectively put in place on the Chapin Art Trail," said Barbara Teusink, community arts manager for the league, noting that there are 31 pieces by 31 different artists on the trail, including the new mural located on Beaufort Street.

Teusink said the trail includes a variety of artwork, with signs and markers letting people know the art is a part of the trail.

There is also a scavenger hunt, with QR codes on the signs next to each art piece for people to scan to learn more about the piece and submit their entry. The hunt can be found on the Crooked Creek Art League website, and there are also brochures around town, including at Town Hall and the Greater Chapin Chamber of Commerce. People who complete the hunt can submit to be entered into a quarterly drawing for a prize, with prizes being paid for through the community arts fund and other grant money.

Funding for the art trail comes from charitable organizations, operational funding, the state Arts Commission, the Town of Chapin, the Chapin Chamber of Commerce and other various sponsorships.

More than 31 pieces were submitted for the trail, but some were auctioned off to private residences and galleries. The pieces submitted were completed by 38 artists and were started before COVID-19, with the project being halted for a time by the pandemic.

In 2020, artists working with the league completed an indoor mural at the Crooked Creek Park, but with the world shutting down, the league couldn't show it off to people.

As 2021 began to bring the world back to life, Teusink said the group wanted to "continue the momentum" with community arts projects so the members worked on some four-foot artistic trail markers, which look like garden posts, painted by various artists. Most of these are on the art trail, but some were auctioned off.

Teusink said the group hopes to add projects in the coming years. So far, the trail has multiple murals, statues and a mix of free-standing pieces. The trail extends as far as Prosperity, Little Mountain and Irmo, with the majority being centered around the Chapin area.

"We serve artists and art lovers from the entire Midlands and Columbia area," Teusink said of the league. "We have 150-plus members and have been growing steadily for years."

The league has an annual art show each March and an additional juried show at

the Still Hopes retirement community in December, in addition to other exhibits scattered throughout the year and galleries and businesses that feature the group's artists.

Mural Takes Off

After working on several projects, Teusink said the league wanted to do a "single, big piece," and grant money along with financial support from the Town of Chapin and the Greater Chapin Chamber of Commerce allowed them to do so.

"Originally, the project was for a free standing piece," Teusink said.

The mural off Beaufort Street, located between Lexington Ave. and Clark St. behind the American Legion Post 193, came into existence, with people taking notice of its eagle wings even before it was fully finished and taking photos with them.

Paul Sadler, president and CEO of the chamber, said the group partnered on the mural because of the "unique value that art has in our community."

"It's going to be the new heartbeat of our town," he said. "Just think of how many people will take a picture or a selfie in front of it and let their followers on social media know where they're at. This will spark interest and people will visit Chapin to take a picture with the mural and while they are here they will shop in our stores and eat in our restaurants which will help improve the economic vitality of our community."

The mural is the brainchild of local artist and art league member Nikki Peeples. The town's second outdoor mural is the first for the artist, who has been professionally painting and selling artwork for the past decade.

Peeples said the league had sent an email explaining the town was looking for "something fun and creative, a new piece of art to add to the Chapin Art Trail."

"My husband and I travel and in traveling to other cities they had these cool murals. I thought it would be a great addition to Chapin," said Peeples, explaining the entire side of the building will be covered with the wings.

"The whole idea and inspiration was Lake Murray," the Chapin High graduate continued. "Chapin is the capital of Lake Murray and it's fitting to showcase not only the beautiful part of town but the recreational part of town."

She said the blue and white wings are intended to be eagle's wings in honor of Chapin High's mascot, though she noted that some people see them as angel wings. She hopes to have the mural finished by the end of the year.

"I went outside of my comfort zone and I'm excited about it," Peeples said. "I love to paint large. Most of my canvases are decent sizes. I don't do small paintings."

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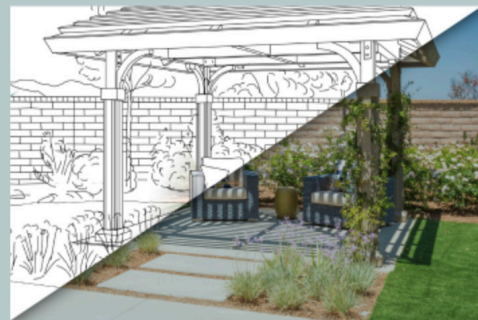
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