

news: MONTH IN REVIEW

LOWCOUNTRYNEWS



Jack's Back

Jack Nicklaus (pictured with Jim Mozley) made an appearance at Palmetto Bluff recently to declare his latest design, The May River Golf Club, officially open. Jack took questions from the press about his latest signature course, seated in front of the expansive 18th green, before trying out a few practice shots and then taking reporters on a tour of the course. This signature course is the latest in the 200+ courses designed by Nicklaus, many in the Lowcountry.

PHOTO BY BARRY KAUFMAN

Beaufort country superintendent honored

Beaufort County School District superintendent Herman Gaither was recognized by the South Carolina Association for School Administrators as "South Carolina Superintendent of the Year." Gaither, set to retire by July 1st, has been with the Beaufort County School District for 44 years, having worked his way up from beginnings as a teacher in segregated schools. He was officially named superintendent in 1995. In his time in the district, Gaither has achieved several noteworthy accomplishments, including increasing technology in the classroom, helping to create programs for non-English-speaking students and working to pass a referendum for building projects in 1995. Gaither will go on to compete for "National Superintendent of the Year" in January.

Golf Digest recognizes Lowcountry resorts

Golf Digest's list of the Top 75 Best Golf Resorts in North America included some familiar destinations on Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands. Out of only five resorts in South Carolina, Sea Pines Resort and Harbour Town Golf Links came in at number 39, and Daufuskie Island Resort & Breathe Spa made its debut on the list at number 49. Not too far down the coast, The Cloister and Lodge on Sea Island, GA made the list at number 4, despite a main building undergoing renovation. The list is published every two years by Golf Digest, with results being tabulated based on a questionnaire sent to the 800 members of a specially selected panel of experts.

DRAWN TO THE NEWS



ILLUSTRATION BY MATT ANDERSON

Bluffton officials, looking to slow growth, are examining the legal implications of setting a cap on development schedules.

Booming Bluffton hopes to slow growth

Following years of seemingly limitless expansion and development that has seen the town grow exponentially, Bluffton leaders are looking for ways to slow down growth. One stumbling block to this plan is the variety of legally binding agreements the town has made with several developers that set a schedule for development. Technically, developers may build faster than the schedule, but Bluffton Mayor Hank Johnston is hoping to use the agreed-upon schedule as a cap. So far, developers have been building behind that schedule, but town leaders worry that might change, and are awaiting word from the state Attorney General on whether or not instituting the cap would be legal. Bluffton town leaders have been meeting with leaders in Mount Pleasant, where growth has been successfully stopped at 3 percent, for advice.

Five island crossroads don't make the grade

The town's annual traffic count found five intersections around the island that weren't up to par, including the intersection where Pope Avenue meets New Orleans Rd. and College Drive; and the intersections where William Hilton Pkwy meets Gumtree Rd., Arrow Rd., Squire Pope Rd. and the northern end of Mathews Dr. In order for an intersection to pass a traffic count, it must not exceed 90 percent of its capacity, and the average delay for motorists must be less than 55 seconds per vehicle. While Arrow Road's inclusion on the list comes as a bit of a surprise, the other four intersections listed have been placed on the list before, and plans are under way to improve their performance.

Bluffton residents rally around the river

An update on a drainage project being undertaken by the town of Bluffton, Beaufort County and the developers of Bluffton Park brought Blufftonians out in droves to protest a project that could hurt the May River. Concerns from residents included whether run-off from the proposed system would be properly treated before entering the May River and how long residents in the Heyward Street/Pin Oak Street area would be dealing with the side-effects of the project – torn-up roads and utilities periodically failing.

Town officials scramble tax plan “B”

With the failure of the 1 percent sales tax to pass the voters of Beaufort County, officials in Hilton Head and Bluffton have begun exercising their backup plans. One option for paying for the laundry list of projects included in the sales tax plan includes allocating impact fees from developers. Unfortunately, some projects, most notably the Bluffton Parkway would not be eligible for the full amount of impact fees (the county has decided that 30%, or 6 million of the parkway must be paid by the town). All traffic studies undertaken by the town of Bluffton have assumed the parkway is completed on time. On the island, there are only two projects that had been on the list, and there’s still a possibility of paying for those based on funds generated strictly within the town.

Saturdays left out of Hilton Head traffic report

The town of Hilton Head Island, in a recent report on the traffic impact of various time shares, neglected to include Saturdays in its findings. Saturdays, as most island residents know, is check-out day for the majority of rental units and is possibly the day where traffic is at its worst during the season. The study is based on industry standards and places higher emphasis on morning and evening rush hours, and the town has cited statistics gathered by the county that states, contrary to popular opinion, that Fridays actually generate more traffic during the peak season. The report also states its impossible to pin Saturday traffic solely to time-shares. The studies’ findings will help dictate town policy.



10 years ago this month in Monthly™

Our 1994 in review issue looked back on a year full of growth and controversy, new horizons and developing neighborhoods. We also sat down with a family who had seen our island weather the seas of change for decades, the Hack family, and toured Honey Horn Plantation with them as they prepared for change in the form of the Cross Island Parkway. □

STATEWIDENEWS

Carolina Investors victims get settlement

In one of the biggest investment fraud cases South Carolina has ever seen, bilked investors brought Carolina Investors to court, trying to recoup some of the estimated \$275 million the nearly 8,000 victims collectively lost when the investment firm went bankrupt. After a trial in which chairman Earle Morris claimed to be merely a puppet, himself duped by higher powers in the company, and investor after investor took the stand with stories of lost wages and broken dreams, U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson approved a \$41 million settlement for investors, averaging 18 cents on the dollar for each investor. One investor chose to challenge the \$9 million in legal fees included in the settlement, but was denied.

State bans telemarketer for five years

The state of South Carolina has sent a clear message to fraudulent telemarketers: don't call here anymore. On-Guard Services, Inc., based out of North Carolina, has been banned from working in the state for five years, and must also pay a \$2,500 fine. The ban and fine result from a campaign in which On-Guard improperly solicited money from South Carolinians to pay for a Greenville police union. The problem, according to Secretary of State Mark Hammond, was that On-Guard failed to make clear that they were donating to a union, stated that donations were tax-deductible when they weren't and didn't disclose the fact that a mere 25% of funds raised by the campaign actually went to charity.

Golf courses may raise birdie population

South Carolina researchers focusing on golf courses along the Grand Strand have made an interesting discovery: golf courses may be helping out the bird population. They credit course designs that favor natural vegetation and dense clusters of trees or shrubs with providing birds food and natural protection from predators. The \$60,000 study, funded by the U.S. Golf Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is the first to establish a relationship between course design and bird populations. It recommends environmental improvements for courses including breaking up patches of turf and letting grass grow.

Ad angling for seafood awareness lands big one

The South Carolina Seafood Alliance's recent campaign urging consumers to ask for local seafood at restaurants and grocery stores seems to have set the hook. A recent telephone survey found that 60 percent of respondents received the message to "buy local seafood" and 31.5 percent said the commercial would make them much more likely to ask for local seafood when out. The ads extolled the virtue of locally-caught seafood up and down the coast.