

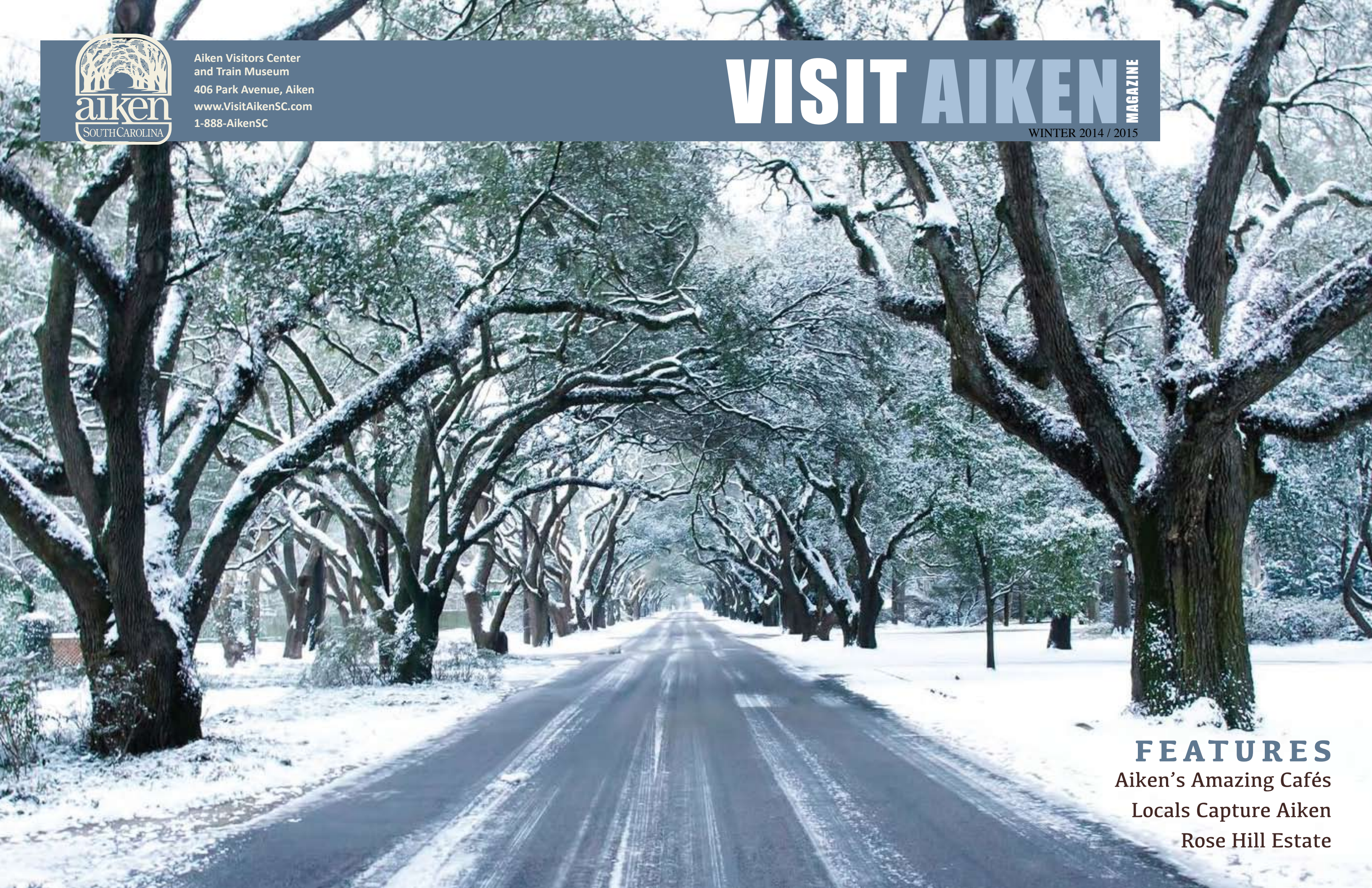


Aiken Visitors Center
and Train Museum
406 Park Avenue, Aiken
www.VisitAikenSC.com
1-888-AikenSC

VISIT AIKEN

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2014 / 2015



FEATURES

Aiken's Amazing Cafés

Locals Capture Aiken

Rose Hill Estate

AIKEN IS MAGICAL

Begin a Holiday Tradition in Aiken

CITY OF AIKEN HOLIDAY EVENTS

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Friday, December 5th at 6:30 p.m.

Celebrate the holidays with this special ceremony hosted by Mayor Fred Cavanaugh.

With music and refreshments for all and a special visit by Mr. and Mrs. Claus, this is an annual tradition for all to enjoy.

Downtown Aiken (intersection of Laurens St. and Richland Ave.)
(803) 642-7634

44th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CRAFT SHOW

Friday, December 5th from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Saturday, December 6th from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Features original designs from over 100 talented artisans from across the Southeast!

Odell Weeks Center / 1700 Whiskey Road, Aiken / (803) 642-7631

CHRISTMAS IN HOPELANDS

*December 12th - 15th, 18th-23rd, 26th and 27th
from 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.*

Free walk-thru exhibit featuring over 1.5 miles of lighted holiday displays beautifully illuminating Hopelands Gardens with over 100,000 lights!

Hopelands Gardens Shuttle Departs from Citizens Park, Aiken
(803) 642-7631

CHRISTMAS AT THE DEPOT

Saturday, December 20th from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Join Santa as he makes one last stop in Aiken at the Visitors Center & Train Museum!

406 Park Avenue, SE, Aiken / (888) AIKEN SC



Discover a FULL HOLIDAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS at www.AikenisMagical.com.



You're always
welcome in Aiken.

Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum
406 Park Avenue, Aiken

www.VisitAikenSC.com / 1-888-AikenSC



Aiken Is



** If accommodations for those with disabilities are needed, please notify the City of Aiken PRT Department 72 hours in advance **

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Cover Image by Josh Rinder, *That One Guy Photography*

You're always
welcome in Aiken.



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VisitAikenSC



Contributing Writers:

Elizabeth Harm, Mike Gibbons,
Mary Rosbach, Claire Perez,
Mark van der Linden, and Lisa Hall.

WELCOME TO AIKEN.

Dear Aiken Visitors,

On behalf of the City of Aiken, I welcome you. We are thankful that you are here and we hope that you have a wonderful experience while in Aiken.

As winter is upon us, there are many things to do and see around the City. As always, our beautiful downtown will be decorated and the businesses are eager to serve you. If you are here during the Christmas Holidays, the light show in Hopelands Gardens is always a popular place to visit.

Arts and cultural activities are abundant around the City of Aiken, anchored by our Aiken Community Playhouse. If you have a chance, take time to enjoy a play or swing by the Aiken Center for the Arts and look around.

If you are unfamiliar with Aiken, please take the time to visit the City of Aiken Visitor Center and Train Museum (located at 406 Park Avenue). Or, you can visit www.VisitAikenSC.com and discover all of the great things to see and do as well as events going on in our City.

Thank you for visiting with us and discovering this beautiful place that we call home.

Sincerely,

Jeff Metz

Athletics and Tourism Superintendent

"My family enjoys many things about Aiken. My girls' favorite is ice cream from Flanigan's!"

-- Jeff Metz





ESCAPE TO AIKEN ROSE HILL ESTATE

Rose Hill Estate
www.rosehillestate.com
 (803) 648-1181
 221 Greenville St., NW



Escape. Relax. Unwind. The website for Rose Hill Estate (www.rosehillestate.com) invites you to participate in all three of these things. A visitor to Rose Hill Estate can add a true Aiken experience to these descriptive words. The Estate, owned and operated by Eva and Stephen Mueller, is a lively expression of Aiken's rich history, unique architecture and gardens.

The Rose Hill garden estate proudly fills an entire historic downtown block with beauty, charm and character unmatched by many other destinations. The property was built as a "Winter Colony Estate" in 1898 by the Phelps family, one of America's first families. Rose Hill Estate today retains the original layout and buildings (11) of the original property and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Proprietors Eva and Stephen Mueller tell visitors, "during your visit some thread of the Rose Hill enchantment will surely enliven your poetic and romantic nature making your visit memorable." These owners surely make the experience just that for all that reach the grounds of Rose Hill Estate.

Eva Mueller came to Aiken from Germany in 1960 and moved with son, Stephen, to downtown in 1972. In 2002 the duo purchased the long neglected Rose Hill. They call this monumental endeavor their labor of love and enjoy sharing the property with locals that may not have previously had the opportunity and with visitors from all parts and all backgrounds.

Rose Hill Estate offers an inn with nine bedrooms, a rental Guest Cottage, a picturesque wedding chapel, conference center, beautifully restored and landscaped grounds, and the ever popular Stables Restaurant. But, Rose Hill Estate offers a visitor (both local and from afar) so much more to be experienced. This Aiken icon is a must experience for anyone exploring Aiken.



AIKEN'S AMAZING CAFÉS WARM UP WITH A NICE, HOT CUP OF COFFEE!

For a full list of Aiken restaurants, go to www.VisitAikenSC.com.

You can get a cup of coffee pretty much anywhere. However, trying one of our unique cafés offers way more than a hot cup of coffee. From the familiar chains to locally owned and operated coffee shops we have it all! Whether it's a gluten free goodie or delectable dessert there is something scrumptious for everyone to enjoy. Soups, salads and sandwiches are also available for lunch or dinner from many of these cafés. Here are just a few of the great places to grab a cup of coffee, pastry or just sit and relax.

ATLANTA BREAD COMPANY
 1944 Whiskey Rd., Aiken, SC 29803 (803) 643-8100

DAVOR'S CAFÉ
 227 The Alley, Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 641-1909

LA DOLCE
 123-A Laurens St., Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 335-1440

MAGNOLIA CAFÉ AND MARKET
 210 York St. SE, Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 649-3339

THE NEW MOON CAFÉ
 116 Laurens St. NW, Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 643-7088

NOBLE BREADS AND GROCERY
 1625 Richland Ave. E, Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 642-8898

RIDGECREST COFFEE BAR
 2502 Wagener Rd., Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 641-9000



All photos are of Magnolia Café and Market.



AIKEN'S GUEST FEATURE *By Claire Pérez* MUCH ADO ABOUT AIKEN

"You're from Paris? And you're visiting Aiken?" People seem surprised that a French journalist is interested in their small town. "But why did you choose Aiken?"

Little do they know that they live in a place surrounded by stories, such as in any other city. Wherever you are, you always make new discoveries. Railroads, horses, mansions ... there is something about Aiken. Soon, as we all get on the bus, parked next to the Aiken Railroad Depot, the historical journey begins.

Wide streets and hundreds of trees. Before France got the TGV (high speed train), Aiken became part of what was at that time the longest railroad in the world in 1833, from Charleston on to Hamburg. This is the reason why it is so spread out – and so lovely.

It would not have happened without the love story between the surveyor Alfred Dexter and Sara Williams, who lived in a frame house on the corner of Ray Lane and York Street. She was the daughter of the local planter William Williams, who needed to get the train close to his fields to haul his cotton. According to the legend, he said to Dexter, "No railroad for me, young man, no girl for you."

When it comes to being romantic, it seems that Aiken has no reason to be jealous of Paris. But unlike Paris, Aiken has this Southern flavor which makes you feel instantaneously like you are in another country – even in another time. Away from a noisy and crowded city, the spectator enjoys the quietness and the scenic view of South Carolina. It is not Paris, and it feels good.

The brick buildings are the remains of some old, charming places. Somewhere you think you have already been, because Western and Civil War movies gave you an insight of the setting. Or just because you have imagined a place where you could rest.

Claire Pérez is a native of Paris, France, who recently graduated from Université d'Évry Val-d'Essonne.

She recently interned with the Aiken Standard and published this story. This feature was her impression of Aiken while traveling aboard the Saturday morning trolley tour.

For more information on the tour, please call (803) 644-1907.



MUCH ADO ABOUT AIKEN *Continued*

"When it comes to being romantic, it seems that Aiken has no reason to be jealous of Paris."

In the 19th century, that very same atmosphere attracted North Americans, who became winter colonists, glad to breathe the fresh air sitting on porches. This same desire links you to historical characters. Your empathy increases. You can almost see the heiress and colonist Evalyn Walsh McLenn, last private owner of the 45-carat Hope Diamond. She was so proud of this stone that, while she was having tea with her friends, her dog would march with the diamond dangling from his collar. This happened on **Hayne Avenue**.

Here comes the fountain, on top of which sits a small, dancing couple. We are on Laurens Street. "To me, it says Aiken. It is one of its most beautiful symbols," explains guide Judith D. Burgess. "We don't know who they are, but they've always been there."

Here comes the boarding school where studied dancer Fred Astaire and former first lady Jackie Bouvier Kennedy – Aiken Preparatory School, now part of Mead Hall Episcopal School.

Here comes Joye Cottage, the 60-room mansion, inhabited by the writers Steven Naifeh and Greg Smith, winners of the

Pulitzer Prize for their biography of Jackson Pollock. When they die, the place will belong to the Juilliard School, whose students are already welcomed each year during the Juilliard in Aiken festival (this year, from March 9-15). This huge, white house is surrounded by a fence. The shutters are closed. The place is silent. It only takes one glance to feel like you're entering private property.

Fortunately, **Hopelands Gardens** brings you some solace since it was bequeathed to the City of Aiken in 1970, when owner Edith Hope Goddard Iselin passed away. Fragrant magnolia flowers, birds' song and the murmur of the water – kind of a fairy tale description, but what else is a haven of rest? "You don't have to go to Charleston or Florida to see green spaces," praises the guide. Citizens understood it very well – the flowers of the camellia garden were planted by Aiken residents.

Away from downtown, the landscape changes into the country. There are horses down the hill. Young, female riders wearing uniforms are following each other in single file. The guide is

delighted, "This is a true Aiken tour!" For what would be Aiken without horses? As one of the most important race training cities in the world, Aiken contains many stables and animals. To remember it, you can find 37 horse sculptures in the city.

In front of the new administration and finance building, a beautiful one painted with the "Star-Spangled Banner" colors and a hunt scene. I wish we had toy Eiffel Towers we could play hide and seek with in Paris.

People take time to talk to you. Several young teenagers hang out in the street, burst out laughing. "Take my picture!" says one of them, and here they are, striking a pose for the camera. A family comes back from the Mardi Gras parade. The father wears a multicolor hat, "That's what we do. We make people laugh."

Finally, one of the tourists comes closer, "My folks live in Orléans, I know a little of French," he says proudly. "Bonjour, je suis enchanté de faire votre connaissance."

He was saying, in a way, I'm delighted to meet you. **So am I.**



DOGWOOD ROOM UNVEILED

AIKEN THOROUGHBRED RACING HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

The Dogwood office and the Campbell's home are filled with trophies and photos which span the stables nearly five decades of racing...and a glorious life. A significant part of this collection will now be on permanent display in the new Dogwood Room in the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum.

"Aiken, South Carolina, is one of the greatest racehorse towns in the world – right there with Newmarket, England, and Chantilly, France," explained Cot Campbell. "The fact that Dogwood has been honored with this special recognition in our wonderful Aiken racing museum is a very big deal to us. The museum already honors Mack Miller, Jim Maloney and Pete Bostwick with permanent displays. That we would belong to such a select group is very meaningful to us."

The Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum is nestled within Hopelands Gardens and has been open to the public since 1977. There are 39 Thoroughbreds enshrined in the Hall of Fame (including Dogwood's champion filly Storm Song) as well as displays honoring Aiken's notable horsemen.

The Dogwood Room is located on the second floor of the museum and will house trophies that range from trays to punch bowls. Photos tell a pictorial history of the stable from the earliest runners to the most recent stable star, Palace Malice. Other memorabilia such as the Dogwood racing silks and saddle cloths will also be on display.

"Dogwood Stable has been a key component in Aiken's equine history for many years. The creation of a permanent room in the Hall of Fame dedicated to their successes is very appropriate," said Lisa Hall, supervisor of the museum.

For further information and directions to the museum, visit aikenracinghalloffame.com or contact 803-642-7650.

Located inside historic Hopelands Gardens
135 Dupree Place
Aiken, SC 29801

Photo Credit: Dogwood Stables

Dogwood stars, Anne and Cot Campbell



HORSE CREEK WATER TRAIL AIKEN COUNTY'S WATER JEWEL

Nestled in the heart of Aiken County is one of the area's most popular and unique attractions. The first phase of the Horse Creek Water Trail was recently completed and features 9 miles of winding, secluded, and current-driven waters. Kayaks, canoes, and other paddlers are welcome to explore the trail, which currently runs from Graniteville to Clearwater.

The Horse Creek Water Trail features an upper and lower segment, sandwiched around Langley Pond. Paddlers can ride the upper segment, which has a trailhead off of Posner Street in Graniteville and continues to Langley Pond. The second segment's trailhead is just below the spillway at Langley Pond. A gravel path to the west of the boat ramp leads down to the Horse Creek put-in. Once in the water, it is about 4.5 miles to Harrison-Caver Park in Clearwater, which is the exit location for the trail. Paddlers can enjoy either segment, cruise around Langley Pond, or take the entire 9 mile trail.

The secluded water trail is surrounded by beautiful natural habitats as you coast through the mill towns of Graniteville, Warrenville, Burnetown, Langley, Bath, and Clearwater.

An abundance of wildlife can be seen, as well as the remnants of old mills, dams, rail crossings, and the occasional Indian artifact. It is a very peaceful ride, as you get a sense of isolation while meandering along the trail.

The Horse Creek is a 24 mile tributary of the Savannah River, which was once used by the Westos Indians to water their horses. Phase 2 of the Horse Creek Water Trail takes advantage of the creeks path from Clearwater to the Savannah River. The plan calls for an exit location before the creek feeds the Savannah River, with a final take out at Jackson Boat Landing 20 miles down the river.

The Aiken County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department worked with South Carolina's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism's Recreation Trails Program to help fund the water trail, as well as many local volunteers on the cleanup. The ice storm of February 2014 caused a lot of damage along the water trail, but the current trail is cleared from all fallen debris from the storm. Members of the Canoe and Kayak Club of Augusta have helped keep the water trail clean from trash and other debris.

Word of the Horse Creek Water Trail has reached far and wide. Visitors from all over the Southeast and even as far as Canada have taken advantage of this jewel sitting right in Aiken County. With beautiful Langley Pond serving as the midpoint of the trail, Aiken County PRT has developed a connected park system for its citizens and visitors alike.

For more information on the Horse Creek Water Trail, Langley Pond Park, and Tourism in Aiken County, please call 803-642-7559, visit the Aiken County Visitors Center, go to www.discoveraiken.com, or Like the Aiken County PRT Facebook page.





LIONEL SMITH, LTD

...A GROWING AIKEN TRADITION

Aiken has no shortage of locally owned and operated businesses. While you are visiting, be sure to explore these fantastic locations. In each edition of this publication, you will find a featured business along with a brief interview. As you begin your journey, we encourage you to let them know that you read about them in our magazine. This edition highlights Lionel Smith, Ltd. Lionel Smith is a full-service men's clothier that has been located in downtown Aiken for almost 40 years. They have something for men of every age. We hope you will enjoy this little piece of history shared by Lionel's son, Van, the current owner.

WHEN DID LIONEL SMITH, LTD OPEN FOR BUSINESS? My father, Lionel "Smitty" Smith, opened the store in 1976. Previously, he worked for Belk, Manning Owens and Cullum's. Growing up, my father liked the idea of a full-service clothing store where you could purchase quality items and have them tailored to fit you. He had an eye for men's clothing and knew the importance of great customer service.

HOW HAS THE STORE CHANGED SINCE THEN? The store has undergone minor renovations and maintains its original, homemade cabinets. When it first opened, it was located across the street. It moved to its current location in 1981.

WHAT IS LIONEL SMITH, LTD KNOWN FOR? We are known for our customer service. When my father first started his business, he would travel to Augusta and make off-site sales. He would have 12-15 appointments in a day. At one time, those sales made up one-third of his profits. Many of our customers have been shopping with us for years. They feel like family...that is the difference between good and great customer service.

HOW DO YOU KEEP UP WITH TRENDS? We do our best to stay ahead of our customers. We go to fashion shows in New York and Charlotte to see current trends. It takes about a year for a trend to catch on in Aiken. For example, we now carry more sportswear and a large assortment of brightly colored socks. We look for merchandise that is different and new.

WHEN IS YOUR BUSIEST TIME OF YEAR? We do most of our business at Christmas although we try to balance our sales throughout the year. We have a Facebook page and are currently developing our website. Our ultimate goal is to expand our customer base. Many of our customers expect hands-on service which is something we will continue to offer.

When you walk in the store, one of the first things you will notice is that the walls are lined with pennants. The store started out with 10. Over the years, customers have added to the collection.



AIKEN ARTS ALIVE AND WELL

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES IN AIKEN

The Aiken arts scene is alive and well! From openings of exhibits and private studios to festivals celebrating the arts and paint-your-own pottery, visitors and locals can find plenty to do while in Aiken. The performing arts in Aiken and the many opportunities to sit back and enjoy the show are unmatched by most others. From the worldwide performances brought to Aiken by the Aiken Performing Arts Group (APAG) to the locally cast and directed plays of the Aiken Community Playhouse the calendar of events is always full of something wonderful to experience. Below are some of the upcoming performances planned in Aiken.

Aiken Performing Arts Group
at URS Theater
www.apagonline.org
Presents:

THE BRONX WANDERERS
November 6th – 7th

CONTINUO COLLECTIVE OF THE SOUTH
December 18th

THE SWINGLE SINGERS
February 12th – 13th

Aiken Community Playhouse
at URS Theater
www.aikenplayhouse.us
Presents:

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
November 28th- 29th,
December 5th – 7th, 12th – 13th

ALL MY SONS
January 9th – 10th, 16th – 18th,
23rd – 24th

AUNTIE MAME
February 27th – 28th
March 1st, 6th – 7th

USC-Aiken's Etherredge Center
at The Etherredge Center,
USC - Aiken
<http://etherredge.usca.edu/>
Presents:

ORLEANS SIX BAND
December 5th

THE TEMPEST
January 29th

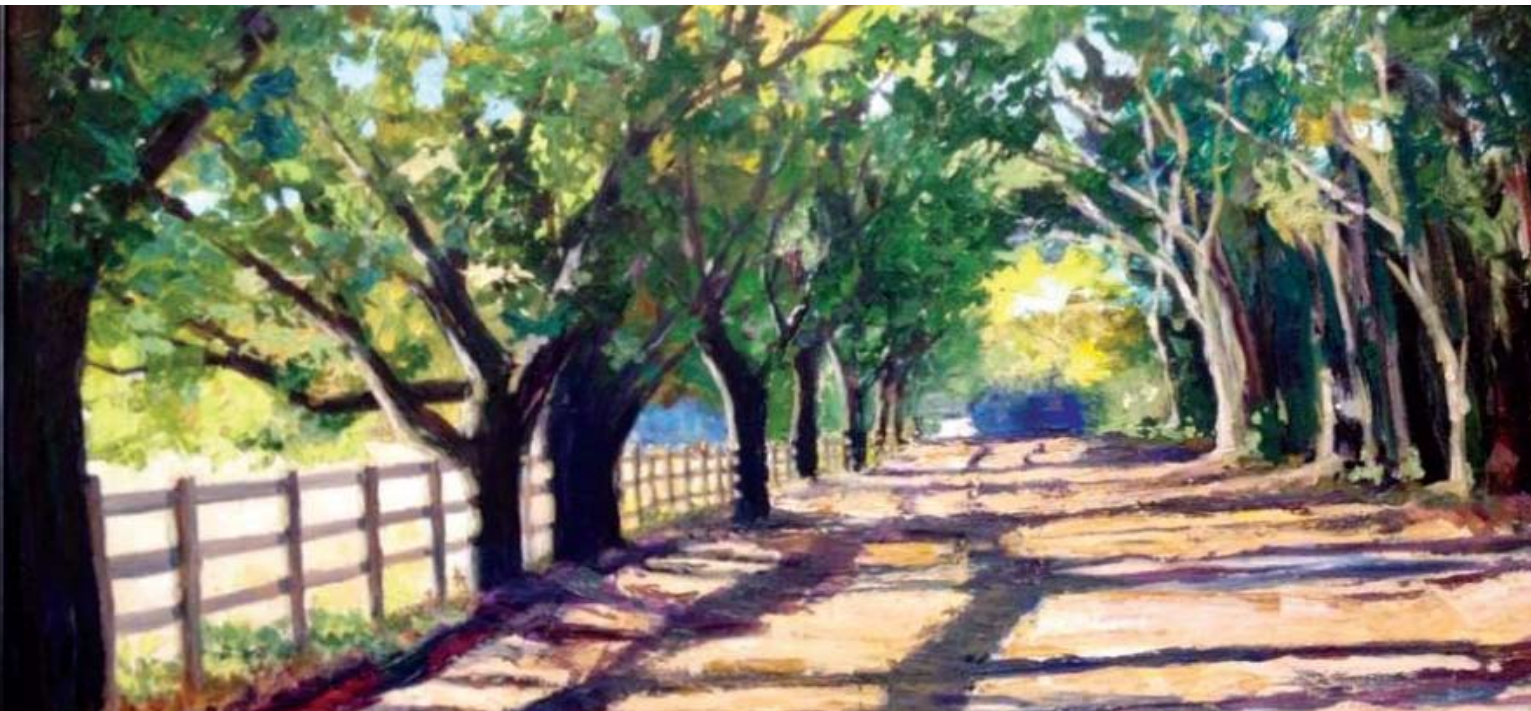
BACK ON BROADWAY
February 14th

RUSSIAN NATIONAL BALLET THEATRE
March 5th

Juilliard in Aiken
March 7th – 13th
www.juilliardinaiken.com

The City of Aiken is proud to welcome the 2014 South Carolina Theatre Association Convention in November!





WHEN I THINK OF AIKEN...

A LOCAL'S PERSPECTIVE by Mike Gibbons

When I think of Aiken, I think of dirt roads.

Dirt roads, in most communities, are the clear identifier that you have left civilization and are heading into a Jeff Foxworthy joke.

Not in Aiken.

Our inner city is one of dirt roads that wind throughout the horse district, roads designed to better accommodate our abundant equine population. While not much of a horseman myself, I have spent a good amount of time on said dirt roads, mainly as a motorist.

It seems simple enough, but driving a dirt road – in particular in Aiken – actually takes a fair amount of driving strategy. The roads change with the seasons and the weather. If you doubt me, take a drive down Two Notch Road after a heavy rainstorm. (Not the paved part. That's pretty easy to drive, even in rain.)

The road that travels past the Aiken Training Track can turn into a washboard that will rattle your car to oblivion. I have heard two very divergent theories on how to navigate this:

1. Drive as fast as you can, thereby covering multiple bumps at once, minimizing the clattering.
2. Drive as slow as you can, easing over each and every bump and taking roughly two weeks to get through the short stretch of roadway.

Local author, Mike Gibbons shares his memories of growing up in Aiken in the book he and local artist, Betsy Wilson-Mahoney published, *When I think of Aiken...*

The book can be purchased at Three Monkey's and the Aiken Center for the Arts in downtown Aiken or at Aiken Office Supply (Whiskey Road). Enjoy this excerpt from the book.



WHEN I THINK OF AIKEN... Continued

Personally, I opt for No. 3 – I don't drive the dirt roads after a rain. I use a similar approach at avoiding traffic jams on Whiskey Road at 5:00 p.m.

Just as the rain can wreak havoc, so can the lack of rain. A solid dry spell can turn the roads into the consistency of peanut brittle, with a lovely dust coating on top. Follow another motorist down one of these barren paths, and you will be the recipient of a dust cloud smokescreen that, usually, leads you to just stop and let the person go on until the dust literally settles.

I too avoid those in the same manner.

But between the droughts and floods, the dirt roads are a wonderfully scenic drive. It's a mainstay when I have company in town. I cruise the dirt roads, showing them the various horse places and historic homes. I particularly like to take guests past the former home of Andy Williams and recount the tale of how it burned when I was a child, and how my school bus drove by as the flames leapt from the

rooftops. I do say, as required by Aiken tour disclosure rules, that it was not probably actually on fire when my bus passed, but that most of us in school had built that into our collective memory, so it might as well have. (Besides, what's a better story – that we saw Andy Williams' house on fire, or that we passed it, obscured by a brick wall, hours after it had been extinguished?)

There is also something to be said for walking a dirt road. Sure, you can take your laps in the subdivision or go to the Odell Weeks track. But there is something that brings character to your walk when you stroll upon a dirt road. There is just more of a backstory to the road you walk when you can kick a dirt clod as you stroll. Plus, add to the fact that you are walking through the horse district, and there is not a walk better, in my book. Go early enough, and you see the horses out for their morning walks. Go later in the afternoon, you see them in their stalls, being tended

to by the stable hands. Go even later and you have Aiken Public Safety come ask what you're doing at 11:00 on a dirt road by yourself. Simple pleasures.

The roads are a wonderful part of our town's history, and I wouldn't trade them for anything. Unless it's raining. Or exceptionally dry. But other than that ...





D.S. Owens



Warren Westcott

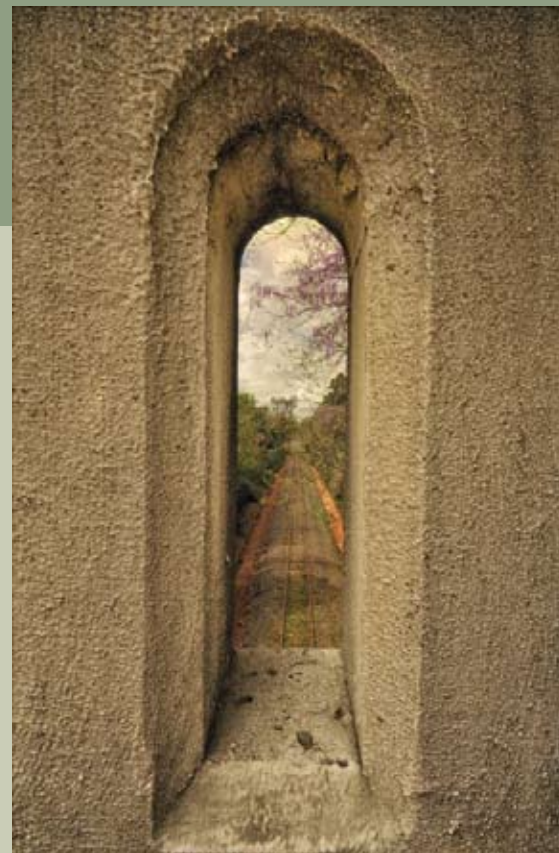
LOCALS CAPTURE AIKEN

The City of Aiken hosted a photo contest to benefit The United Way of Aiken County. Approximately 100 photos were entered and the top 10 were chosen by judges. Through this spread we share the top 10 images and hope that they will inspire you to discover Aiken.



Ali Whittemore

Emory Langston, Special Projects Coordinator, enthusiastically shared, "All the photographs we received are wonderful representations of the City of Aiken. It has been a treat to see what Aiken means in the eyes of so many talented photographers. We hope you enjoy these as much as we have."



Reggie Cofer



Josh Rinder



Jay Thaxton



Jay Thaxton



Mary Pallon



Nancy Moseley



D.S. Owens