

Lifestyles

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ANNIE'S MAILBOX

Kathy Mitchell
and Marcy Sugar

Be honest but not overly informative

Dear Annie: Four months ago, my college buddy "Phil" had a bachelor party at a gentlemen's club. We had a great time and I hit it off with one of the dancers, "Sara." I visited her at the club several more times and eventually worked up the nerve to ask her out. We've been dating ever since.

Our relationship has become quite serious and Sara has proved she wants to be with me. However, there is one nagging question: How do I explain to my friends and family where Sara and I met? I don't want to lie, but I also don't want to embarrass Sara or have anyone think less of her. What should I do?

— **Lost in San Francisco**

Dear Lost: You should discuss this with Sara and ask how she wants to address it. She may be less embarrassed than you think, and yes, people will initially be judgmental, but we assume when they get to know Sara, they will see she has other qualities. You also can avoid the issue simply by saying you met her through friends or at a party. Honest, without being overly informative.

Depressed teen recognizes that she needs help

Dear Annie: I'm 16 years old and think I'm depressed. I researched it. I have most, if not all of the symptoms. People have told me I almost always have tears in my eyes even when I'm laughing and joking. I have no interest in things I did last year. I sleep way too much, and when I wake up from my three-hour naps, I feel even more tired than I was before. I don't even like the foods I used to love.

I took several online depression tests and all of them said I need to see someone. I know I should tell my parents, but I'm afraid of what they'll think of me and I don't want them to interrogate me. What do I do and who can I talk to without getting my parents involved?

— **California Girl Who Needs Help**

Dear California Girl: If you aren't ready to open up to your parents, please talk to your school counselor. You also can confide in a trusted adult relative, teacher or family friend who will offer advice and even go with you when you are ready to tell your parents. You may also need to see a doctor because the problem could be medical rather than psychological. Recognizing that you need help is the first step toward getting better, so you're already making progress. We'll be thinking of you.

She placed the blame right where it belonged

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Trying My Best," who was disgusted with couples that try to make weight issues part of a pre-nup.

I was married for 27 years. On my wedding day, I weighed 97 pounds and my groom thought I was perfect. Two children and 27 years added 30 pounds and several dress sizes. I am now 49 years old, weigh 128 pounds and wear a size 8.

Five years ago, my husband took me to a fine restaurant and, in that public place, informed me that he was disappointed in how I had aged and let myself go, and that he was no longer attracted to me. After hearing those words, I realized how shallow he actually was and that I had no desire to spend the rest of my life trying to fight a battle that would forever be fighting back. We divorced.

In the past few years, I have met numerous men, younger as well as older, who find me very attractive. Most of them appreciate my curvy figure and even prefer my current body to pictures of a younger, skinnier me.

I agree that each spouse owes their partner the responsibility of keeping healthy, and if that is compromised by weight issues, those problems should be addressed together. It is not fair to expect one partner to spend his or her retirement years caring for the other because of neglect. But to base an entire marriage on the other's appearance is petty and juvenile.

— **Better Off Now**

Dear Better Off: Congratulations on realizing the problem was your ex's shallowness instead of blaming yourself, as many women do. Good for you.

"A stunning nimbus of orange, yellow and magenta that hovers above the tree line like some moon that has strayed from its orbit, the Peachoid is incredibly surreal."

— ROBERT KLARA / American Road writer

Backcountry roads reveal the heartlands of America

Gaffney's Peachoid is spotlighted in American Road winter issue

By **JOE L. HUGHES II**
Ledger Staff Writer
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The Gaffney Peachoid has for more than 35 years stood high above the Cherokee County skyline as a salute to the state's thriving peach industry, becoming one of the more popular attractions for motorists travelling Interstate 85.

Already hailed by some South Carolina tourism experts as "the most photographed water tank in America," the structure could soon be the target of many more flash bulbs after being chosen as a feature piece in the nationally distributed magazine, American Road.

The magazine devoted three pages to the municipal water tower in its winter edition, chronicling the history of the 150-foot water tower and its rise to fame as one of the Upstate's crown attractions.

"A stunning nimbus of orange, yellow and magenta that hovers above the tree line like some moon that has strayed from its orbit, the Peachoid is incredibly surreal," Robert Klara, a writer for American Road, said in the article.

Included in the article are mentions of similarly unique water towers in Collinsville, Ill. (the World's Largest Catsup Bottle), and the enormous pineapple found at the Dole juice plant in Honolulu. Also in the article is a picture of a water tower constructed in Clanton, Ala., modeled after the Peachoid.

"The Peachoid is very unique, especially when another town asks for builders to create a similar structure," Becky Repp of American Road, said.

Along with the Peachoid, articles on the bathhouses found in Hot Springs, Ark., and perfect places in California to take your date are found in the winter issue. The cover photo features giant concrete frogs found on a bridge in Windham, Conn.

American Road is a quarterly publication highlighting people, places and things found around the nation—particularly its two-lane highways. On staff for the magazine are a slew of editors and writers whose sole goal is to locate "things not found everyday on the other side of your window."

"It is not everyday that you are riding down the backroads of America and you see a giant peach on the other side," Repp said. "It is all about finding something that most readers across the country have never seen or heard about."



Ledger Photo / JOE L. HUGHES II

Gaffney's famous landmark, the Peachoid, is featured as one of the many unique attractions along the backroads of America in the winter issue of the nationally distributed publication, American Road.

Clemson Extension regaining some of its lost positions

By **GINGER BOWEN**
County Extension Agent

Often people ask if 4-H is still around or seem a bit surprised when I say I work with the 4-H program in Spartanburg County. 4-H is still alive in our area and all around the world. However, over the past several years our extension budget has been cut and our staff has dwindled. Hence, the 4-H program and other extension programs may

not have been as visible as in the past.

Thank goodness, the Spartanburg County Clemson Extension office is regaining some of its lost positions and we are excited to introduce our staff to you along with their areas of responsibility.

The following folks are employees of the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service who have areas of responsibility in Spartanburg County.

Kim Dillard, administrative assistant; Andy Rollins, commercial fruit and vegetables; Cory Tanner, consumer horticulture and the Master Gardner Volunteer Program; George Dickert, commercial nursery and landscape horticulture and water quality; Matthew Burns, animal agriculture; David Parker, general agriculture; Kristen Welch, EFNEP area coordinator; and Ginger Bowen, 4-H and youth coordinator.

The Clemson Extension office is

located at 142 S. Dean St. in Spartanburg. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. with the office closed for lunch from 12-1 p.m. The office number is 864-596-2993. If you need help in any of the areas listed above, give us a call.

The Extension Service also has a Home and Garden Information Center at Clemson University. The staff is available by phone each weekday from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; 1-888-656-9988.

Local cloggers participating in national competition

The National Clogging Championships will be held Jan. 24-26 at Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium. This is the first year the event has been in South Carolina.

The solo competition and duo/duet competition will be Friday to determine the Grand Champion cloggers in various categories. Kristin Mabry, a member of the Southern Jewels Ruby Team, will be competing in the solo category Friday.

Saturday, there will be 205 team dances throughout the day, beginning at 8 a.m. Teams from all over the United States will be in Spartanburg to participate. Team winners from all clogging dance categories, such as precision, open line, traditional line, hoedown, artistic expression, exhibition, etc., will then dance off from 7-8 p.m. Saturday.

The Southern Jewels Emerald Team will compete Saturday evening. Team members are Caroline Alexander, Taylor Batchler, Rebecca Campbell, Miranda Davis, Alayna Downey, Jenny Harris, Delaney McCraw, Olivia Moss, Kayla Parker, Allison Pennington, Taylor Pennington, Ariel Queen, Emily Russell, Mary Beth Wood and Sydney Wood. The team is directed by Chip and Misty Harrison and Claudia Fowler.

"The Emerald Team has competed in clogging events throughout the past year to qualify to participate in this Showdown of Champions," Fowler said. "They have worked really hard to prepare for the event and would appreciate support Saturday beginning at approximately 7 p.m."



The Southern Jewels Emerald Team will participate in the National Clogging Championships this weekend in Spartanburg.