

# LOWCOUNTRY NOTES

January 2014

It's time to usher in a new year, a clean slate, a do-over, a chance to finally get it right. All of those sentiments are attached to a ball dropping in Times Square. In 1904, the owners of One Times Square began greeting the new year with roof top celebrations. The first ball was dropped in 1907, and it has become the focal point of celebrations world wide.

This year, when the Waterford crystal button is pushed and the sixty second countdown begins, the lighted ball will begin its 70 foot drop. The ball is a geodesic sphere, twelve feet in diameter, weighing 11,875 pounds. It's covered in 2,688 Waterford crystal triangles and lit by 32,256 LEDs.

If that one button-push reflects the Big Apple's world dominance, what happens on smaller stages around the country? Manhattan, KS drops the Little Apple, it's namesake. In Eastport, ME an eight foot sardine takes center stage. Raleigh, NC drops a 1,250 pound copper acorn. Hershey, PA of course has a 7foot, 300 pound kiss. While Atlanta drops a peach, Vincennes, IN raises an 18 foot, 500 pound melon into the air which opens to release 12 of its honored real melons to fall. Watch out below! Reminds me of a WKRP stunt.

Lebanon, PA drops a 100 pound bologna, which is consumed later. Brasstown, NC, possum capital of the world, lowers a possum in a Plexiglas cage to the consternation of PETA. Bethlehem, PA, birthplace of PEEPS, drops an 85 pounder. Plymouth, WI drops an 80 pound wedge of cheese. Bartlesville, OK drops a giant green olive into a martini glass, while Mt. Olive, NC responds with a three foot pickle.

Nothing says party more than a Moon Pie in Mobile, AL where more than 4 million pies are consumed yearly. Eastover, NC pays homage to its original name of Flea Hill by hoisting a three foot replica of a flea at its New Years bash.

Of course, Key West, FL is the most flamboyant of all. They drop a drag queen named Sushi in a giant ruby red slipper. How about us? Folly Beach drops a flip flop, just perfect.

January is a month of rest. Fields lie fallow, waiting for warmer weather, and we seem to follow that pattern. The year begins with a moment to regroup, to rest after the festivities of the holiday season and to reflect on how to better ourselves in the next 12 months. We turn inward during this time, setting goals and planning how to reach them. The gyms get busy with those trying to shed the holiday excess.

In other words, January is a slow month in the Lowcountry. Nothing much going on. Our social season blossoms again right around Valentine's Day and the SouthEasten Wildlife Expo, SEWE, when visitors flock to us once again. So this is our time, the locals' month.

The first of the year wouldn't be complete without one or two Polar Bear Plunges. **The Folly Beach Plunge** has a unique twist. As an homage to local Bill Murray, they are asking that plungers and non-plungers come dressed as their favorite Bill Murray character as they "Freeze their Bills Off." Prizes will be given for the Best Guy, Girl, Team and the Best Overall Bill.

Of course everyone at the **Dunleavy's Pub Plunge to benefit Special Olympics** comes in costume. The Sullivan's Island event has become a tradition with many families.

Then it's off to find collard greens and hoppin' john to fulfill out good luck and prosperity mandate. The local meal time tradition is sacred to locals.

Is one of your goals for this year to learn something new? We have a few suggestions for you. The City of Charleston is having a 2 day class on **Grant Writing** on the 9th and 10th. Knowing where to find and how to write grant applications is a very marketable skill.

**The Rocky Mountain School of Photography Photo Weekend** is scheduled for the Francis Marion Hotel on the 11th and 12th. This is a photo education seminar for beginner and intermediate level photographers wanting to improve their skills. Choose up to 5 of the ten classes offered.

The Charleston Symphony will present **Symphonie Fantastique** January 9th-11th. Harbison's Remembering Gatsby, a foxtrot for orchestra, Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini and Berlioz's Symphonie fantastique will be performed at the Sottile Theatre. Pre-concert talks from the stage are held the half hour before curtain.

South of Broadway Theatre Company will present **Piano Man and the Diva** at their space at 1080 East Montague on the 11th, 12th and 19th.

The College of Charleston School of the Arts presents **Mad Gravity** at the Chapel Theatre on Calhoun beginning on the 15th with both evening and matinee performances.

The Library Society is the place for the **Lifelong Learning Series: The Psalms: Music of the Bible with Elizabeth (Betsy) Kirkland Cahill**. Classes will be held each Wednesday from January 15th-February 19th, noon until 1pm

Good news! **Charleston Restaurant Week** is back from the 8th-21st. Visit restaurants throughout the Holy City for 3 course meals \$20-\$40.

**Second Sunday** downtown on King Street is so much more than I thought! This month on the 12th, check it out for yourself!

On the 14th, the Gibbes partners with the Center for Women to present a panel of distinguished philanthropists in the Lowcountry. Hear Laura Gates, Carolyn Hunter, Susan Romaine and Anita Zucker speak with moderator Jane Perdue about the **Art of Giving Back** at the Sanctuary at 10:30 am.

The **11th Annual Comedy Festival** arrives at many venues downtown with shows from the 15th-18th.

**Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now: A Martin Luther King Tribute Performance** will be held at the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church on the 18th at 7pm. It will feature the CSO Gospel Choir and CSO Spiritual Ensemble, members of the CSO. Performance is free but a ticket is required.

**State and federal holiday** on the 20th to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Charleston Southern University will host a **Candlelight Observance to Honor Martin Luther King** at the Reflection Pond at 8pm on the 21st.

Who's coming to the N Chas Coliseum? How about the multi-million record selling artist, Barry Manilow on the 19th, then on the 25th, the N Chas PAC will host legendary Johnny Mathis.

**The Addams Family** hits the N Chas PAC on the 14th and 15th as part of the best of Broadway series.

Pure Theatre presents **Penelope**, the newest piece by powerhouse Irish playwright, E. Walsh beginning on the 18th.

Come spend some time with a spider named Charlotte and a pig named Wilbur when the Charleston Stage presents **Charlotte's Web** on the 24th-26th at the Dock Street Theatre.

On the 25th, join Gibbes Curator, Sara Arnold, for a private tour of **The Great Wave: Japonisme in Charleston** at 10 am. Then, head over to Redux Contemporary Art Center for lunch and a woodblock demonstration and make your own print.

If you enjoy dark, soul-warming winter beers and slow cooked locally sourced meats and vegetables, **Braise and Brew** is for you. Enjoy the 3 hour feast in front of a roaring fire from 6-9pm on the 26th at Middleton Pavilion.

It's the **31st Annual Lowcountry Oyster Festival** at Boone Hall Plantation on the 26th. Don't miss the world's largest oyster festival. This event has been named one of the top 20 events in the southeast by the Southeastern Tourism Society.

The 11th Annual **A Night in the Valley**, the hugely popular dinner by Trident Tech & Culinary Institute of Charleston will be on the 31st at the College, 6:30pm.

**SC Jr. State Open Championships** will be held at the Citadel beginning on the 10th. USTA Boys and Girls 18, 16, 14, 12, 10 singles and doubles.

The inaugural **Medal of Honor Bowl** will be played at Johnson Hagood Stadium on the 11th. This premier all-star game features some of the nation's top draft eligible football players. The game will be played under NFL rules with NFL officials.

It's women only during the **Women's Tennis Weekends at Kiawah**. During the weekends of the 17th, 24th and 31st, the tennis staff offers award-winning instruction, drills and court time plus the enjoyment of meeting other tennis players from across the country.

On the 18th, Charleston will host its **4th Annual Charleston Marathon**. The 26.2 Mill run will begin downtown and end in North Charleston. Music and performance groups will be located along the route to keep everyone moving.

The Charleston Angler begins its season with **Fly Fishing Classes**. The monthly offering begins on the 18th. Class runs from 9-3 and includes lunch and any tackle you may need. Fly casting, knots and flies selection for Lowcountry species will be covered. 10 person limit.

**The 34th Annual Charleston Boat Show** will be tempting you at the N Charleston Convention Center on the 24th-26th. Parking is free.

The Charleston Running Club will hold its signature running event on the 25th with the **31st Annual Charlie Post Classic 15K and 5K**. It honors the memory of Dr. Charlie Post, a well know Charleston runner, triathlete and family physician who volunteered his time and medical talents to the running community. An 8:30 start in front of the Sullivan's Island Fire Dept.

**What are you doing on June 7th? How about head up to NC for the Asheville Half Marathon? The race runs through the streets of downtown Asheville and along the French Broad River. Race Director Julian Smith is in charge so you know it will be first class. Check out the website at [www.AshevilleHalfMarathon.com](http://www.AshevilleHalfMarathon.com) to sign up or volunteer.**



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