

Bluffton Today

Bluffton hearts & darts

Posted: May 11, 2016

Hearts ... to the 38th edition of Bluffton's annual Mayfest, which took place Saturday.

The Bluffton Village Festival (its official title, of course) routinely brings thousands of people to Calhoun Street and the rest of the Old Town historic district to enjoy live music, local food, arts and crafts from across the South, a pie-eating contest and the famous Ugly Dog Contest.

This is just one of those events that makes Bluffton unique, a day for locals to celebrate many of the reasons it's a great place to live and a big party that draws folks from communities across the Lowcountry.

As always, we salute Bluffton's own Babbie Guscio for having the foresight to launch the festival nearly four decades ago and the Rotary Club of Bluffton for doing an admirable job of coordinating the event. We hope to see everyone back here next May for No. 39.

Darts ... to lingering questions about the dangers of seismic testing for offshore oil and natural gas deposits.

We joined residents up and down the coast in celebrating the federal government's March decision not to include the Atlantic in its next group of energy leases. It meant no drilling off the shore of South Carolina or its neighbors, at least for the time being.

Still, federal officials are considering permits for seismic testing, which blasts sound waves through the ocean to help identify places where oil and gas may lie beneath the floor. Enough environmental groups have raised concerns about the waves' potential harm to marine life that we question whether it's worth the risk — especially when the government has already listened to so many communities that stood up against offshore drilling.

New Jersey's U.S. senators have introduced a bill to ban seismic testing in the Atlantic, the Associated Press reported over the weekend. Their coastal colleagues ought to get on board.

Hearts ... to a new leader for Bluffton High School.

Denise Garrison of Fayetteville, N.C., was selected last week to take over as principal after Mark Dievendorf retires June 30. She will have some big shoes to fill.

Dievendorf has led Bluffton High for the last six years, the third principal since it opened in 2004. He helped the school place seventh in U.S. News and World Report's recent ranking of South Carolina high schools. The Washington Post ranked it the state's 12th most challenging high school.

Yet Garrison will arrive with some impressive credentials of her own, having been principal of Fayetteville's Jack Britt High School since 2009. Jack Britt has ranked first or second in North Carolina the last three years for academic growth, according to a Beaufort County School District news release.

About half of Jack Britt's students are from military families stationed at Fort Bragg and Garrison's background as a mathematics teacher includes designing curricula for Cumberland County, N.C.'s online academy. She also was interviewed by NBC's Tom Brokaw for her school's success in reducing achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students.

We wish Dievendorf luck in his retirement and Garrison continued success as she makes a move to the Lowcountry.

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