



# The Generous Gift of Land



ALC President Larry Comegys at Rose Trace  
Photo Credit: Gary Knoll

By: Katie Roth, *Executive Director, Aiken Land Conservancy*

“I feel as if we’ve saved a life”, said Phyllis Rosen. Phyllis and her husband, Paul, have chosen to leave a legacy in their beloved Aiken by donating a special tract of land to the Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC). “Our intention is to preserve these wonderful woods and protect them for the future.”

In December 2014, the Rosens donated “Rose Trace”, a 132-acre tract of wooded land located near Richardson’s Lake Road and the Huntcliff, Gem Lakes and Southwoods subdivisions. The property, referred to as a “mini Hitchcock Woods” was purchased by the Rosens in 1982 and was used for riding and recreation. ALC is developing a management plan for Rose Trace over the next few months which will determine public access issues.

“The ALC is honored that Paul and Phyllis Rosen have chosen us to become owners and stewards of Rose Trace,” said Larry Comegys, ALC President. “The Rosens have a long history in Aiken and we are honored to take over the reins of this beautiful property. Donating land with conservation value is one of the finest gifts that a person can leave for future generations.”

As avid foxhunters, the Rosens understood the value of their land and were able to appreciate its attributes. They lived on an adjacent piece of property from 1981 – 1994 and were members of Whiskey Road Foxhounds. Fox

## Why Should You Consider Donating Land?

Land donations have a lasting and permanent effect on our communities and our landscape. Donating your land to an organization like ALC is the most straightforward way to ensure that your land is permanently protected and properly managed in perpetuity. When you make a donation, you transfer full title and ownership and management responsibilities. As with any donation, you will be eligible for a federal income tax deduction that can be of substantial financial benefit.

There are many options available on how to donate your land. An outright donation is the most basic and full fee interest in the property is transferred to ALC. This qualifies the donor for a federal income tax charitable deduction for the fair market value of the property as determined by a qualified appraiser.

If you are interested in donating your land for conservation purposes but want to continue to live there, donation with a life estate can be a solution. Generally, the property owner reserves the right to continue to live on the donated property until some triggering event (usually when the property owner moves from the property or dies) conveys possession of the property to the recipient organization.

You may also donate your property through your will or living trust. This allows you to maintain full control of the land during your lifetime. When land is donated through bequest, the donor’s estate receives an estate tax charitable deduction for the fair market value of the property, thus reducing estate taxes that are often substantial.

For more information on land donations, please visit the ALC website [conserveaiken.org](http://conserveaiken.org) or call 855-ALC-LAND (855-252-5263).

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# Executive Director's Report

*Katie Roth*

What a busy fall season we had at the Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC)! In this edition of the *Conservation Chronicle*, we feature photos and wrap-ups from our fall events, including the Katydid CDE Signature Brunch on November 2 and Bloodies & Bagels on Thanksgiving morning on the lawn of the Aiken County Historical Museum. Both events were very successful, and we look forward to bringing them back in the fall of 2015.

One of my favorite features in this newsletter is "The Many Faces of Winthrop Field". The 12-acre polo field, owned by ALC, was the site of some fun club activities last fall. I hope you enjoy the photos, which highlight the many uses and versatility of the field. We are so fortunate to have this treasure right in the center of the historic horse district, and, best of all, it is open to and enjoyed by many residents and their four-legged friends!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 22, as we bring back our popular fundraiser, Clays for Conservation. The event will be held at the Carolina Star Gun & Hunt Club and will once again feature a Sportsman's Challenge, a delicious southern-style BBQ lunch, a raffle with unique items, and pointing dog demonstrations from Sarahsetter Kennels. The event is open to all who share our passion for open space. If you have always wanted to try sporting clays, join us as we offer instruction for beginners. Those more experienced are invited to show off their skills in the Sportsman's Challenge. Clays for Conservation is the day after the Aiken Steeplechase, so if you have guests in town, it is a great way to complete the weekend. What a wonderful way to enjoy the outdoors and the sporting life that Aiken has to offer! See page 9 for ticket information. Reserve your spot today!

ALC's Education Committee is hard at work on revamping our website, [conserveaiken.org](http://conserveaiken.org), which we will launch this spring. The look and feel of the new site really reflects who we are as an organization and will be filled with important information about what we've done and what we need to do to continue to preserve our beautiful Aiken.

I encourage you to renew your membership with us, and invite your family and friends interested in land conservation to join us also. A strong membership base is the key for the ALC to succeed in protecting the land and character of Aiken County. 🌿

*The mission of  
Aiken Land  
Conservancy  
is to preserve  
natural and historic  
resources through  
land conservation.*

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# President's Report

*Larry Comegys*

## **Congress and Conservation Easements**

Our mission statement succinctly defines our role as an organization as one to “protect natural and historic resources”. As we start 2015, the 25th anniversary of the founding of Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC), I can report continued solid progress in 2014 to support that mission, as measured by four goals set by your board. First, protect more critical land. Second, continue improving the stewardship (management) of our lands. Third, continue growing our membership and financial resources. And fourth, join the ranks of the nation's most professional land trusts by obtaining accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization for America's 1,700 land trusts.

In 2014, we added a unique property to the more than thirty diverse properties protected by ALC through conservation easement or ownership. Rose Trace is a 132 acre wooded parcel near Richardson Lake Road that has been described as a mini Hitchcock Woods. Surrounded by Gem Lakes, Huntcliff, and other subdivisions, this beautiful and diverse property was donated by horse owners, Paul and Phyllis Rosen of Wellington, who were once very active in the Aiken hunting and showing communities. This is an important and exciting addition to our properties that protects valuable open space adjoining urbanized Aiken. Urban and suburban properties, including Aiken's famed Horse District, are among the areas identified in our Strategic Plan for special focus and protection because of both their conservation value and increased potential for development and loss to the community. Other areas identified in the Strategic Plan include frontage on the Edisto and Savannah Rivers, the 302 Corridor, properties of unique conservation or historic value, and high quality agricultural and timber lands.

Effective stewardship of our many properties depends upon ongoing monitoring to physically visit and review every property. Our dedicated Stewardship Committee has completed in-depth monitoring visits for every property in 2014. Stewardship, which involves hours of annual work on every property, is the backbone of any successful land trust.

Our financial position has been bolstered by strong donations in 2014. These include the largest single cash donation received by ALC to date, generously given by Rob and Pam Johnston to honor former ALC Executive Director Dacre Stoker. Targeted for Winthrop Field, those funds will be used for improvements that will enhance the beauty of that property which is so important to the vibrancy of Aiken's Horse District. The Rosen's donation of Rose Trace, the largest asset donation in the history of ALC, strengthens our balance sheet and provides added flexibility for the future.

ALC has diligently worked toward accreditation for several years. Steps taken by previous boards have been accelerated over the past two years as countless hours of staff and board work have put us in position to withstand the rigorous accreditation review process. There is additional work to do over the next few months that will conclude with a formal application to the Land Trust Alliance for accreditation in late June. Accreditation is very important to our future for many reasons, including greatly strengthening our ability to solicit grant money. In the future, the successful land trusts will be accredited. Many have been involved in this work, but I particularly want to thank board member Joanna Sampson for her time and leadership.

ALC is fortunate to have a very committed board. Four longstanding members have completed their allowed terms and have rotated off the board. Paul Rideout, our immediate past president and Executive Committee member, Wilkins Byrd, vice president and Chair of Board Development, Charlie Fliflet, treasurer, and Bennett

*Continued on page 14*



# ALC Receives Generous Donation Slated for Winthrop Polo Field

The ALC was thankful to receive a generous donation in fall 2014 from supporters Rob and Pam Johnston. Their donation was given in honor of former ALC Executive Director, Dacre Stoker. “We initially met Dacre and Jenne in the fall of 2006 and were immediately struck by their love for Aiken and their unique passion and commitment to preservation and conservation. It has been a complete joy for us to have returned to this idyllic town and we continue to be inspired and motivated by Dacre’s extraordinary efforts and energy,” said Rob.

“As a small organization, the Johnston’s donation will allow us to take on some projects that we otherwise did not have the funding to do.” said ALC President Larry Comegys. “Donations like this are what helps us achieve our mission as a land trust.”

ALC plans to use the funds to attend to maintenance and fencing upgrades at Winthrop Polo Field. “Dacre Stoker was instrumental in his time at ALC in establishing the campaign that helped save Winthrop Polo Field from development,” said Katie Roth, current Executive Director. “His wife Jenne also does a lot of good work for the field, and it is fitting to honor them with our plans to improve this gem of Aiken.”

The 12-acre field, located between Grace and Mead Avenues, is in the heart of Aiken’s historic horse district. Purchased by the Aiken Land Conservancy in 1998, the field will never be developed and will continue to be used for polo, carriage driving, and other equestrian pursuits as well as providing open space for dog walkers and others to enjoy.



## *The Generous Gift of Land continued...*

hunting was a big part of their lives and they have many happy memories of their times in Aiken, especially those created at Rose Trace.

After purchasing Rose Trace, Paul cut trails and built coops, making it the perfect place to train their horses. The tractor and manure spreader doubled as transport for visitors to enjoy a scenic journey around the property. Phyllis remembers that Jeep Cochran ran her Basset Hounds in these woods. Guests of Whiskey Road Hounds followed on foot.

Although Rose Trace is a picturesque, quiet forest, it did not escape from some wildlife drama as an overpopulation of feral pigs terrorized the property, prompting the Rosens to bring out John Mayer (Dr. Piggy) from SRS to trap and relocate the pesky piglets.

Phyllis’ ties to Aiken began when her parents, Lucille and Gene Fleischer, moved to Augusta from Miami with show hunters. In the mid 70’s, the Fleischers built Ramblewood Horse Show Grounds, which hosted eight “A” horse shows every year for a period of eight years. Ramblewood predated today’s Progressive Show Jumping (PSJ) and Highfields events. Junior riders, young professionals and trainers honed their craft here. Ramblewood Horse Shows produced many equestrian stars including Olympian show jumper Laura Kent Kraut as well as National Champions.

During this period, Paul and Phyllis owned show horses, but the closing of Ramblewood meant converting their show hunters into field hunters. Rose Trace became the perfect place to train for this task. The many hills, springs, streams and ponds on the property helped convert their show horses into brave hunt horses and delighted their retired fox hounds.

The Rosens now reside in Wellington, Florida, and it gives them comfort to know that Rose Trace is in the hands of an organization that shares their conservation values and will take care of the property as they would. “Properties like Rose Trace are a big part of what makes Aiken so special,” said Phyllis. “We wanted to do our part to preserve the beauty, character and open space that drew us here in the first place.” 🌿

# Conservation Conversation

With Sandie and Don Nicolaisen: *The Clark Barn*



*Before*

walkers. The Clark Barn, a stately brick shed row structure, abuts the Winthrop Field and in the morning and evening glow seems particularly picturesque. It stands proudly, like it has been there for all time, blending perfectly into its equestrian surrounds. The walks at Winthrop Field provided our first glimpse of the Clark Barn, and it was love at first sight. But, we were new to Aiken and never suspected that we might some day become its owners.

Last year, we purchased the property. Previous owners had worked with the Aiken Land Conservancy to protect the property and had provided a conservation easement to the Aiken Land Conservancy. That's fitting, because adjacent Winthrop Polo Field is a treasured asset of the Aiken Land Conservancy, and our goals in restoring the barn were consistent with those of the Conservancy. Their support was critical to successful completion of the project, and their support was prompt and unwavering.

Grant Larlee and his associates tackled the reconstruction project with gusto. The barn had good bones, but was in need of considerable repair. Last year's ice storm had damaged many trees and great care was taken to preserve the beautiful live oaks. Over the years, other trees had been planted too close to the barn and roots had grown into the foundation, cracking brick walls. Asbestos siding had to be removed. Infra structure--sewers, water lines, electrical and drainage--were in need of replacement. Portions of brick walls required reconstruction. Termite damaged wood had to be replaced. New roofing was critical. Fences needed repair, and period appropriate hardware and fittings had to be manufactured and installed. It was a much larger undertaking than we had originally anticipated, but we are very happy with the completed project.

Our goal was to preserve the historical character and appearance of the barn, while bringing it up to today's codes and usage demands. Grant keeps everything on track and exceeded our expectations. We are deeply appreciative of his efforts as well as the support and encouragement we received from the Conservancy, the City of Aiken, our contractors and a great many friends. Many have told us of their fond memories of the barn, and we hope that many more great memories will occur in the years ahead."





Before



## Congratulations

*ALC would like to congratulate Sandie and Don Nicolaisen as the recipients of the Historic Aiken Foundation's 2015 Stewardship award. Their thoughtful, well-planned renovation of The Clark Barn truly merits this prestigious honor. Since 1974, Historic Aiken Foundation has preserved the historic visual character of Aiken by promoting the preservation of historical sites, buildings, and residences.*

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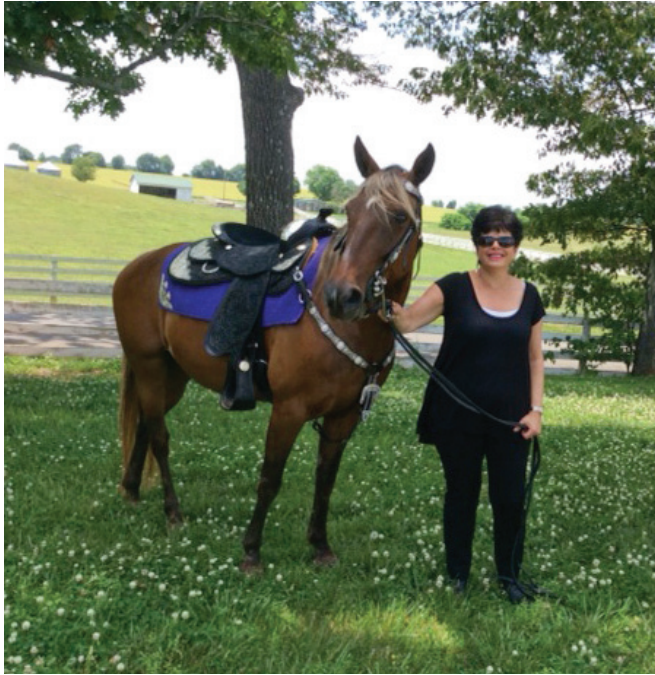
# Katydid Signature Brunch *A Success!*

ALC was pleased to be a part of the Katydid Combined Driving Event (CDE) on October 30-November 2. This show attracts the best drivers in the county and is the only event of its kind in South Carolina. Singles, pairs, four-in-hands and tandems competed for top prizes in each division. This year, Katydid hosted the first ever North American Intermediate Combined Driving Championships and the popular Tandem Challenge and Carolina Challenge returned in 2014.

Spectators gathered in the tent for Sunday's Signature Brunch, with proceeds benefitting ALC. Along with the best views of the competitive action, guests were treated to wonderful eats from Palmetto Porkhouse (the beef tenderloin was a definite crowd pleaser) and enjoyed Mimosas and Bloody Marys. Special thanks to Katrina Becker and Jennifer Matheson for helping us make this fundraiser a success. And, we thank the attendees for supporting the importance of land conservation in Aiken County. We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2015!







# Janet DePrince

## *ALC Welcomes New Administrator*

Janet began working with the ALC in June 2014 as the new Administrator. Originally from Philadelphia, she and her husband, Frank, retired and moved to Aiken in March 2014 from Pittsburgh. Janet has a bachelor's degree from Wharton Business School and spent her career in the corporate world, primarily in supply chain and logistics positions for the chemical industry. Janet, Frank and their horses are happily settled in Three Runs Plantation and are thoroughly enjoying life in Aiken.

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# Bloodies & Bagels 2014

*M*ore than 600 people came out on Thanksgiving morning to enjoy Bloodies & Bagels on the lawn of the Aiken County Historical Museum. This popular tradition continues to grow as Aiken residents, friends, and their houseguests gather in the early morning hours prior to the Blessing of the Hounds in Hitchcock Woods.



*ALC President Larry Comegys, Dione Carroll and Jim Peace enjoy Bloodies & Bagels. Photo Credit: Lisa Hosang*

The sunshine helped to warm the chilly morning temperatures as guests enjoyed coffee, Bloody Mary's, bagels and cream cheese. This year's addition of hot apple cider, graciously supplied by Michael and Marie McFadden, was a crowd favorite.

"We are thrilled that Bloodies & Bagels has become a happening on the Aiken calendar, and we would like to thank the museum for allowing us to hold the event on their beautiful lawn," said Larry Comegys, ALC President. "This event promotes awareness of the ALC and lets us give thanks for Aiken's open spaces."

Bloodies & Bagels would not be possible without the support of sponsors and volunteers. Thank you to our sponsors: Augusta Liquors, Michael and Lisa Hosang with The Carolina Real Estate Company, Harvard's, Innovative Solutions, Nandina Home and Design, The Willcox Hotel, Restaurant and Spa, Charles R. Fliflet CPA, PA, Ms. Lydia Rose and Dr. and Mrs. Harry Shealy.

## *Bloodies & Bagels*

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# The Many Faces of Winthrop Polo Field

*Winthrop Polo Field, owned by Aiken Land Conservancy (ALC), was a popular place for activities last fall. The park-like atmosphere and convenient location provided the perfect venue for a variety of exciting events!*



*Photo: DeDe Biles*



## OktoberFetch

Winthrop Field went to the dogs on Sunday, November 23 when the Laurel Gate Terrier Trials presented “OktoberFetch”. Chilly temperatures, wind and rain did not dampen the enthusiasm for participants at the terrier practice, training, and fun day. The event was designed primarily for Jack Russell terriers and other earth-working terrier-type breeds, but some of the contests were open to dogs of all kinds. Classes included go-to-ground, brush hunt, high jump, hot dog lure, racing and ball toss. Laurel Gate conducts competitions at various locations in North Carolina and South Carolina, and OktoberFetch was the group’s first event in Aiken. The ALC looks forward to welcoming them back again in the spring!

## Beginner Polo Lessons

Have you ever wanted to learn to play polo? Former professional polo player, Tiger Kneece offered beginner polo lessons at Winthrop Field last fall. Through Aiken Polo Club, Kneece graciously volunteered his time and skills to develop new players and provide a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere where people can learn the sport and have fun!

The lessons were on Tuesdays at 4 p.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. from September through November. The majority of Kneece’s students last fall were children. They started off their lessons with riding exercises and ball-hitting skills. They finished with a fun game of “keep away” on horseback.

Plans are to start the lessons back up in early spring. The program is open to all ages at no cost.



*Photo: George Buggs*



*Photo: Katie Roth*



## Christmas Games

The Aiken Driving Club held their Christmas Games at Winthrop Field on Saturday, December 13. Drivers donned their holiday attire, along with their horses and carriages. Participants enjoyed maneuvering through a cones course on the field, followed by a drive through the historic horse district and brunch afterwards. A large number of spectators were on hand and the festive atmosphere got everyone into the holiday spirit!



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*Donors who have continuously given over the past five years are noted in blue.*



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### *Congress and Conservation Easements continued...*

Tucker, chair of the Stewardship Committee. Although no longer on the board, each will continue an active role by serving on the Advisory Board and will be available in the future to return to the board. Charlie and his firm will continue their important role of maintaining the books and financial records.

We are also fortunate to have an exceptional staff. Katie Roth continues as Executive Director, and she has been joined by Janet DePrince as Administrator. Janet, who has had a successful business career before moving to Aiken, replaced Meg Ferguson who resigned to have more free time. Meg, however, has now joined the board and we will have the continuing benefit of her experience without paying for it! In addition, Frampton Toole, a respected Aiken attorney, has joined the board and is assisting with legal expertise. Finally, Thomas Coleman is also a new board member, moving up from the Advisory Board and assuming the role of Chair of the Stewardship Committee.

The Advisory Board has been an effective tool to involve strong and knowledgeable supporters who in the future may have time available to become regular board members. We are fortunate to have Beth Harpham, Kirk Henckels, Louise Leguizamon, Kiki Murphy, Summers Pendarvis and Caela Paioff join as new Advisory Board members.

The 2015 additional officers of ALC are Holly Houghton, Vice President, Margaret Shealy, Secretary, and Lydia Rose, Treasurer. The officers and Frampton Toole comprise the five member Executive Committee for 2015.

Thank you friends, supporters, donors and landowners for your continued support. 🌿

## ALC Welcomes our New Business Partner, Palmetto Pork House

There is a new choice for great BBQ in Aiken! Founded in August 2014, Palmetto Pork House is a full service catering company located in Aiken. Two long time friends who share a passion for great food started the company. Since conception, the business has really exploded through word of mouth, social networking and great friends. Owners, Christian Carlisle and TJ Herron, with the much needed support of their wives, Jenny Carlisle and Erin Herron are excited about what the future may hold for Palmetto Pork House.

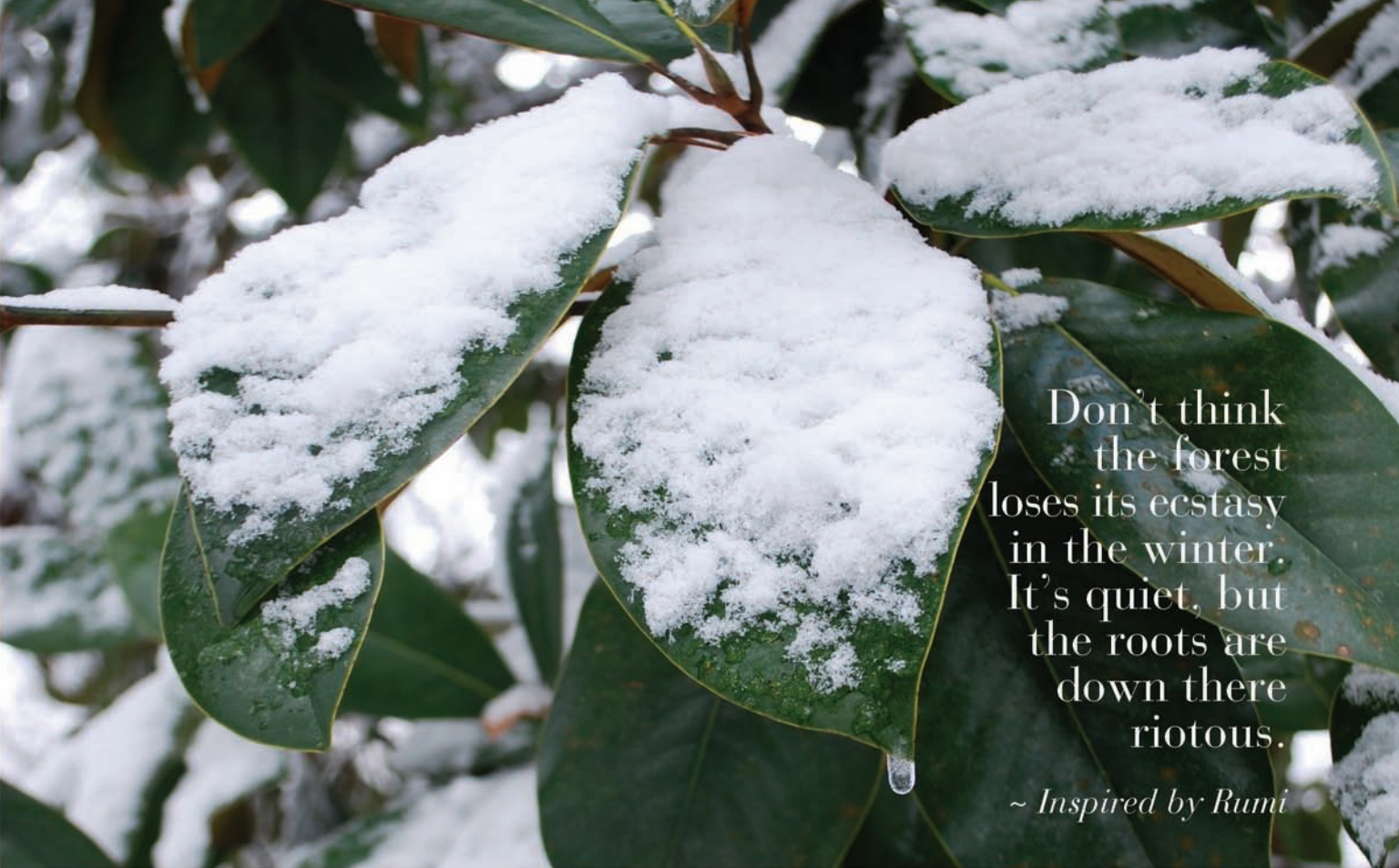
True to their Southern roots, authentic BBQ is the main focus. Palmetto Pork House offers some of the best smoked meats you will ever have, ranging from pulled pork, brisket, turkey, chicken, hash, and ribs. In keeping with their Southern heritage, all of these are cooked the right way, wood fired and smoked low and slow. Traditional BBQ sides and homemade sauces are a great compliment to the main course.

Palmetto Pork House offers mobile service with a 28-foot custom BBQ trailer that can bring the food and service right to you. They have the ability to cater to any size party or event. Look for them at upcoming events including the Aiken Bluegrass Festival on May 8-9, the Beer and BBQ Festival in Aiken on May 29, and Oktoberfest in Aiken.

Contact them at (803) 761-0339, email [palmettoporkhouse@gmail.com](mailto:palmettoporkhouse@gmail.com), or follow them on Facebook.







Don't think  
the forest  
loses its ecstasy  
in the winter.  
It's quiet, but  
the roots are  
down there  
riotous.

*~ Inspired by Rumi*

*Detach form here*

Join us in  
preserving  
Aiken's  
natural  
heritage.

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☐ \$100 Family  
☐ \$250 Friend  
☐ \$500 Supporter  
☐ \$1,000 Patron  
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Donations to the  
Aiken Land Conservancy  
are tax-deductible.

Please make checks payable to:

**Aiken Land Conservancy**

PO Box 3096  
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