

# Learn the county's best stories with Marker Mania



BY RYAN COPELAND

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They rise from the ground like beacons of local history, yet are passed every day with little notice from pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

The 61 markers placed by the Beaufort County Historical Society note everything from Revolutionary War ambushes to popular pre-interstate traffic stops, yet unless you seek them, they're likely not on your mind.

Hopefully, that's about to change.

The Marker Mania Challenge, presented by the Society as a scavenger hunt for the community, gives participants a chance to get to as many markers as possible through Aug. 31, answering questions based on the information on the markers, for a chance at prizes and drawings.

"We hope the challenge will



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The Marker Mania Challenge gives participants a chance to get to as many markers as possible by Aug. 31 for prizes and drawings.

be a reason for the whole county to come together and search out our cool history," said Leah

Roche, the event's organizer.

Roche herself was simply looking for a way to drive traf-

fic to the Society's website in her role as webmaster, a job she volunteered for when she joined as a member a few months into retirement last year. She'd had plenty of experience in website maintenance, after all, as a high school media specialist in Beaufort County.

What she didn't know much about, however, were the markers themselves.

"I thought they came down from God, like the tablets," she said.

It is close to a biblical process, actually, as the information contained on each marker has to be researched, verified and then fit into precise, accurate wording — usually by tireless member Linda Hoffman — before it's ready to be erected on site.

But maybe it was some sort of divine providence that brought that process together with Roche's idea to get people on the website by driving to these markers and providing photographic proof that they had been there.

It takes more than one person to pull off an event like this, of course, and an entire committee helped map out the

SEE MARKER, 5C



markers and come up with the questions that each participant must answer correctly. Though there are 61 markers, only 30 need to be visited for a chance to enter a drawing for a Robert Mills Map of Beaufort, along with a “local history buff” bumper sticker.

The map shows the majority of markers are in Beaufort and on Hilton Head Island, with a smattering of spots along the way in Bluffton, Okatie, Seabrook and Sheldon. Be prepared to get behind the gates in some of the Hilton Head areas, as well as take the boat to Daufuskie for the markers there, should you choose to include that in your adventure.

Also be prepared to read both sides of the marker meticulously.

Some of the questions — such as what is the second oldest town in South Carolina? — are fairly obvious. (Hint: it’s not New Ellenton. It’s not even Old Ellenton). Others require great attention to detail and differentiating between when something was founded versus when something was built to get the correct answer.

Regardless, it is something you should participate in if you have the time.

It hits all the right notes during this pandemic, which is probably why the Society decided to move it up from its intended date of January 2021 to now.

The information you’ll be receiving won’t overwhelm your brain — its bite-sized morsels might just inspire further reading.

You can get outside of your house to get to these markers and still safely distance yourself from others. Those with children at home who might want to learn about their community know the current value of safe activities that get us out of the house.

If nothing else, you’ll learn more about the things that happened right where you live, while putting only local miles on the car.

That’s better than whizzing by each day, isn’t it?

For more information on how to register and participate, visit <https://www.beaufortcountyhistoricalsociety.com/marker-challenge>.