

## Eau Claire Fest Celebrates Arts and Community

Written by Staff Writer

Tuesday, 09 April 2013 09:19 -

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The Eau Claire Community Council and the City of Columbia present Eau Claire Fest, an annual celebration of arts and community, on Saturday, May 11, 2013 in the historic Eau Claire Town Center at North Main St. and Monticello Rd.

A springtime tradition since 2008, Eau Claire Fest (formerly Ribs & Renaissance) will feature local performers including indie soul artist Collette Blakeney, whose North Columbia connections will bring her back to her roots with a special appearance at Eau Claire Fest. Other artists include Jahson and the Natty VibeZ, a popular local Reggae band; Alternacirque, the Southeast's premiere neo-circus company founded in Columbia; and the Post-Timey String Band with its unique, blend of folk, ragtime, and blues.

Bringing back a tradition begun with the Eau Claire Centennial in 1998, a parade through North Columbia's commercial district will take on a spirited revival as the "Fonky Fest Parade" and will feature traditional entries such as the Eau Claire High School No Half-Stepping Marching Band and the JNROTC Color Guard, as well as the Puppy Parade from the NOMA Bark Park. The Parade begins at 11:00 A.M. at the intersection of North Main Street and Sunset Drive and will travel 1/2 mile to the site of Eau Claire Fest at North Main Street and Monticello Road.

Following the parade, visitors will enjoy a day-long excursion into our village where visual and performing artists will be telling the story of the roots of this historic community. As part of Columbia's year-long Civil Rights Initiative, Columbia SC 63, an interactive archive of film and images from the height of Columbia's Civil Rights era will be presented by the University of South Carolina and Historic Columbia in the historic Eau Claire Print Building.

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Carnivale, a celebration of arts traditions of the African-American community will feature juried arts & crafts, drum circles, historic interpreters and dance performances. Eau Claire Fest welcomes artists and crafters to take part. Interactive arts projects sponsored by the Columbia Museum of Art and the Eau Claire High School art department will be sprinkled throughout the festival grounds. Finally, our Gospel Fest stage plays host to the areas best choirs and gospel performers. The Main Street Marketplace will feature a variety of food and retail vendors along with nonprofit displays. There will be plenty of traditional festival fare as well including a Classic Motor Car Show, and the ever-popular KidZone.

Among the special events at Eau Claire fest will be Healthy Lifestyles programs and health screenings sponsored by Healthy Columbia. The City of Columbia Parks and Community Gardens program will provide resources for home gardeners, and Sustainable Midlands with its ever-popular mobile photo booth, will send visitors home with snapshots and resources for smart use and conservation of natural resources and local food production.

Did we mention this is Mother's Day weekend? Be sure to bring your MOM and enter her in the Mother's Day drawing for gifts she's sure to love. There will also be games and drawings throughout the day. And, don't worry about the weather; we'll provide plenty of seating and shelter for eating and entertainment!

Canines are allowed, provided that current leash laws are observed. Coolers, glass bottles, breakable glasses and/or cups, large bags and backpacks are prohibited. Food and beverages will be available for sale at Eau Claire Fest.

To find out more about Eau Claire Fest, visit our web site at [eauclairefest.com](http://eauclairefest.com) and "Like" us on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/eauclairefest](https://facebook.com/eauclairefest). Applications are still being accepted for participation in the Fonky Fest Parade. Food, juried arts & crafts, and Marketplace vendors are welcomed to submit applications for participation as well. And volunteers are needed throughout the day.

For general inquiries, please call 803-454-0088. Parade, 803-513-3357. Volunteers, 466-5731.

*In addition to the Eau Claire Community Council and the City of Columbia, we wish to thank Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina, Select Health, Healthy Columbia, First Citizens Bank,*

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*Pepsi, Budweiser of Columbia, and WXYR for their generous support of Eau Claire Fest!*